

## Interview Questions

**Colleges and units are required to develop a core set of questions for each selection process as a mechanism for gathering consistent information about each candidate they consider.** *These questions can assess candidates based on the position responsibilities/duties (for example, “Can you discuss your experiences using software to create professional presentations and give me an example of a time you did this for a previous organization?”) and should also include questions that assess whether an individual is committed to our institutional values (see previous page). Below is a set of sample questions based on these values. A sample interview guide follows these questions on pages 22-24.*

### Change Management

1. Tell me about the most difficult change you have had to make in your professional career. How did you manage the change?
2. Describe a time when you felt that a planned change was inappropriate. What did you do? What were the results?
3. Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to an uncomfortable situation.
4. Tell me about a time you led a change effort.
5. Describe a time a change effort you were involved in was not as successful as you would have liked.
6. Give me an example of a time you had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
7. Give me an example of a time when you helped another person accept change and make the necessary adjustments to move forward. What were the change/transition skills that you used?
8. Describe a situation where you, at first, resisted a change and later accepted. What specifically, changed

### Collaboration

1. Working with others usually involves some give and take. Describe a time when you worked out an agreement with a peer or colleague. What did you do?
2. Describe a time when you wished you'd been more collaborative with others. What did you do?
3. Leaders often have opportunities to foster positive relationships at work. Give me an example of a time when you did this.
4. Tell me about one of the toughest groups that you've had to work with. What made it difficult? What did you do?
5. Interdepartmental cooperation involves giving and receiving. Tell me about a time you collaborated with others to determine courses of action to achieve mutual goals.

### Continuous Improvement

1. Tell me about a suggestion you made to improve the way job processes/operations worked.
2. Tell me about one of your workplace improvements that another department now uses.
3. Give me an example of when you initiated a change in a process or operation.
4. In your last or current job, what problems did you identify that had previously been overlooked? Were changes made? Who supported the changes as a result of your ideas?
5. Tell me about something new or different that you initiated that improved customer service, productivity, quality, teamwork, or performance.
6. Tell me about a time you found and took advantage of an opportunity to make an improvement in your position or department/team/group.
7. Tell me about a time you had to sacrifice quality to meet a deadline. How did you handle it?
8. In some aspects of work, it is important to be error free. Describe a situation where you tried to prevent errors.
9. Describe a time you caught an error that someone else made that could have affected the outcome of a project (or affected a customer).

10. Tell me about a suggestion you made to improve the processes or operations in your position or within your team.

### **Creativity/Innovation**

1. Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution/idea/project/report to a work problem you had been dealing with for some time.
2. Tell me about a situation when you have had to come up with several new ideas in a hurry. Were they accepted? Were they successful?
3. Describe a creative/innovative idea that you produced that led to a significant contribution to the success of an activity or project.
4. Describe the most creative work-related project which you have carried out.
5. Tell me about a time you were especially creative in solving a lingering problem.
6. Describe the most significant plan or program that you ever developed or implemented.
7. Tell me about a time when you created a new process or program that was considered risky.
8. Describe the most creative thing you have done in a past job.
9. Creativity often means stepping back from standard ways of thinking. Give me an example of a time when you were able to break out of a structured mindset and explore new or different concepts and ideas.
10. Give me an example of how you have been creative in completing your responsibilities.
11. Tell me about the time you thought "outside the box"
12. Give me an example of when someone brought a new idea that was unique or unusual. What did you do?
13. Describe the most creative verbal presentation you have ever made.
14. Tell me about a problem that you've solved in a unique or unusual way. Were you happy with the outcome?
15. Give me an example of when you took a risk to achieve a goal. What was the outcome?
16. What have been some of your most innovative ideas?
17. What innovative procedures have you developed? How did you develop them? Who was involved?
18. Tell me about a creative approach you took to solve a problem. How did you come up with this approach? Did you consider other options?
19. Tell me about a time when your standard approach to problem solving didn't produce the desired solution. What did you do?

### **Customer Orientation**

How do you handle problems with customers? Give an example.

How do you go about establishing rapport with a customer? What have you done to gain their confidence? Give an example.

What have you done to improve relations with your customers?

### **Diversity (Valuing and Encouraging)**

1. Tell me about a time you had to adapt to a wide variety of people by accepting or understanding their perspectives.
2. Tell me about a time you adapted your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you.
3. Tell me about the most difficult challenge you have faced in working cooperatively with someone who did not share your ideas, values, or beliefs.
4. Give me an example of a time when your values and beliefs impacted your relationship with a peer, coworker, supervisor, or customer.
5. Tell me the steps you have taken to create a work environment where differences are valued, encouraged, and supported.
6. Describe a situation when you had to give feedback to someone who was not accepting of others.

## **Goal Setting/Accomplishment/Focus**

### ***Successes***

1. Give me an example of an important goal you had to set and how you accomplished that goal.
2. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
3. Tell me about a time when a team you were involved with was going through long-term changes or working on a long-term project. What did you do to keep yourself and others focused?

### ***Failed/Negative Incidents***

4. Tell me about an important goal you failed to achieve.
5. Describe a time when you set a goal for yourself and did not achieve it because it was too high. What was the standard? Why was it too high? What were the ramifications of your failure to achieve your goal?
6. Describe a time when you set a goal for yourself that was too low.

### ***Processes***

7. Describe how you set your goals for last year and how you measured your work. Did you achieve your goals? If not, why not?
8. Tell me about a major project you recently finished. Specifically, how you set the goals. And monitor your progress?
9. Give me an example of a time when you used a systematic process to define your objectives even though you were not prompted or directed to do so. What type of system did you use? What payoff did you get from using the process?

### ***Challenges***

10. Tell me about a time you were given a goal by someone else that you believed would be impossible to attain.
11. Give me an example of a time you made a major sacrifice to achieve an important goal.
12. Tell me about a time when you were unwilling or unable to make a sacrifice necessary to achieve a goal.
13. Describe your organization's culture and how that culture made it challenging for you to achieve one of your goals.

## **Integrity**

1. Describe a time when you were asked to keep information confidential.
2. Give examples of how you have acted with integrity in your job/work relationships.
3. If you can, tell me about a time when your trustworthiness was challenged. How did you react/respond?
4. Tell us about a specific time when you had to handle a tough problem which challenged fairness or ethical issues?
5. Trust requires personal accountability. Can you tell me about a time when you chose to trust someone? What was the outcome?

### **Personal Accountability**

1. Tell me about a time when you took responsibility for a failure.
2. Tell me about a time when you assumed personal accountability for a situation or event because you realized the role you played in the situation or event?
3. Describe what personal accountability means to you.
4. Tell me about the last time you made a mistake.
5. Please describe what you believe to be the biggest failure in your career. What did you learn from this situation and how have you grown as a result?
6. Tell me about a time you did something you regret.
7. Being fully accountable for results sometimes means acknowledging what more we, personally, could have done to achieve desired results. Share about a time when you did not reach the expected results. What more could you have done in that situation to meet expectations?
8. Tell me about a time when you received negative feedback from your boss.

### **Personal Growth and Development**

1. Think about a time when setting a positive example had a highly beneficial impact on people you worked with. How did you determine that a strong example was needed? What did you do? What was the effect on the people?
2. Tell me the one thing about you as an employee that you hope your current or last boss doesn't tell me during a reference call.
3. Tell me about a time when you were not pleased with (or were disappointed in) your performance. What did you do about it?
4. Tell me about a time when one of your weaknesses got the better of you.
5. Give me an example of a time that you used one of your strengths to help another person or team succeed.
6. Describe a work situation or project that brought out the worst in you. Why did it bring out the worst in you? What did you learn?
7. Give me an example of something that you have done in the past to improve yourself.
8. Describe a situation in which you received constructive feedback about your work. What was the feedback about? What was your assessment of the feedback? What did you do with the information you received? What changes did you make?

### **Results Orientation**

1. Give me an example of an important goal you have had and about your success in achieving it.
2. Describe a time when, against all odds, you were able to get a project or task completed within the defined parameters.
3. Tell me about a time when you were asked to complete a difficult assignment and the odds were against you. What did you learn from the experience?
4. Tell me about a time you had to pay close attention to the tiny details in order to be successful.
5. Describe a time when you had to work very hard and make personal sacrifices to help your organization/department/team reach its goals.

### **Stewardship/Corporate Citizenship**

1. Tell me about a collaborative effort you led between an organization or group and the community.
2. Give me an example of a community issue that you have helped to address.
3. Describe a community effort you have been involved in where both the community and businesses located in the community benefited.
4. Tell me about a way that you have championed the concept of citizenship/stewardship within your team/department/organization.

## **Teamwork (Encouraging and Building)**

### ***Getting Groups/Individuals to Cooperate***

1. Describe a time you led a team of people who didn't always see eye to eye. What did you do? Why did you choose to do that? How did it work out?
2. Tell me about a time you were able to gain commitment from others to really work as a team.
3. Provide an example of a time when it was critical that you establish an effective working relationship with an individual or group outside your department to complete an assignment or deliver a service.
4. Tell me about a time you needed to get two groups or people to work together effectively, who historically had never done so.
5. Give me an example of a time that your leadership transformed a group of people into an effective, healthy, productive team.
6. Tell me about a time you led a team that had one or more unproductive/negative members. How did you find out about the unproductive member? What did you do? Why did you choose to do that? How did it work out?
7. Describe a time when you had to have coworkers with different work styles or ideas work together on a project. What, specifically, did you do to pull them together?

### ***Team/Team Member Strengths***

8. Tell me about a time you recognized a team member for having made a valuable contribution to the team.
9. Tell me about a time where, if it hadn't been for teamwork, your goal might not have been achieved.

### ***Miscellaneous***

10. Describe a time when you were able to build team spirit in an environment of low morale.
11. Tell me about a time you needed to lead an intact, project, or ad hoc team toward a goal that you, personally, did not completely support or believe in.
12. Give me an example of a time you successfully built a project team from scratch. What was the project? How did you go about selecting team members? How did you get these individuals to work as a team? What was the hardest part of getting them to work as a team? Was the team successful on the project?
13. Tell me about a time when you were able to provide your team with recognition for the work they performed.
14. Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or help others to compromise. What was your role? What steps did you take? What was the end result?
15. Describe the types of teams you have been involved with.
16. Describe your leadership style and give an example of a situation when you successfully led a group.
17. Some people work best as part of a group – others prefer the role of individual contributor. How would you describe yourself? Give an example of a situation where you felt you were most effective.
18. Tell us about the most difficult challenge you faced in trying to work cooperatively with someone who did not share the same ideas. What was your role in achieving the objective?
19. What is the difficult part of being a member, not leader, of a team? How did you handle this?

## **Teamwork (Working as a Team Player)**

### ***Problems Among/With Fellow Team Members***

1. Give me an example of a time when others with whom you were working on a project disagreed with your idea.
2. Describe a time when one of the members on your team did not complete (or wasn't doing) his fair share of the work.
3. Tell me about a time when you helped others compromise for the good of the team. What was your role? What steps did you take?
4. Tell me about a time when you were part of a team that did not get along or did not work well together. What happened?

### ***Positive Incidents***

5. Give me an example of when you worked cooperatively as a team member to accomplish an important goal. What was the goal or objective? What was your role in achieving this objective? To what extent did you interact with others on this project?
6. Give me an example of a time where you were willing to compromise on something relatively important to you in order for the team you were a member of to proceed with a project.
7. Tell me about a time you were recognized and rewarded for being a valuable team member.

## **Trust**

1. Tell me about a time you mistrusted another employee, resulting in tension between the two of you. What did you do to improve the relationship? Were you successful?
2. Give me an example of a time you failed to keep your boss informed of your actions or progress on a task or project.
3. Tell me about a time you had to give the benefit of the doubt to someone at work.
4. Tell me about a time when your trustworthiness was challenged. How did you react/respond?
5. Tell me how you have developed trust and loyalty between you and your direct reports.

## **Vision and Purpose**

1. Tell me about a time where your vision of the future was so inspiring that you were able to convert nay-sayers into followers.
2. Tell me about a time you lost track of the vision/mission/purpose of your team/department/organization and it turned out to have repercussions.
3. Describe a time you established a vision for your department/unit. What process was used? Were others involved in setting the vision and, if so, how? How did the vision contribute to the functioning of the department/unit?
4. Tell me about the relationship of your goals in your current position to the organization as a whole.
5. Tell me about a time when you anticipated the future and made changes to meet these future needs. Did the anticipated future occur?