

Interview Questions

Career & Internship Services

CCAPS • CDes • CFANS

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Sample Interview Questions

Experience, Skills, Potential

Tell me about yourself.

Tell me how your past experiences have prepared you for this position.

What have been your greatest accomplishments in your career?

Do you think you have been effective at your current/most recent job? In what ways?

Why have you changed jobs so frequently? Why have you been unemployed for so long?

Have you ever been fired? Asked to resign?

What kinds of decisions did you make in your last position?

What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses? What are you doing to improve your weaknesses?

What would your previous employer tell me about you?

Educational Background

What is your educational background? What have you studied? Why did you select this major?

How does/did your educational background prepare you for this job?

You have a low grade point average, could you explain why this is the case?

Do you plan to continue your education? How? Why?

What are you most proud of in your educational experience?

How does your academic research relate to our work?

Organization/Position Knowledge

What do you know about our company? What do you know about this position?

Why do you want to work for this organization? Why do you want this job?

What interests you about our products or services?

What is your ideal job/career?

What challenges does our company currently face and what would you suggest we do to address them?

Self-Assessment

How would you describe your own personality?

What do you think has contributed the most to your development? What has hindered your development?

Can you describe for me a difficult obstacle you have had to overcome? How did you handle it? How do you feel this experience affected your personality or ability?

Do you consider yourself to be thoughtful, analytical or do you usually make up your mind fast? Give an example. (Watch time taken to respond.)

Goal Orientation/Motivation/Initiative

Describe your short and long-range goals. Where do you want to be in five years?

What things have you done that show initiative & willingness to work?

Why are you changing fields? Jobs?

How long would you stay with the company if you were offered this job?

Why did you get into this field?

Interpersonal Skills

What kind of person appeals to you the most as a co-worker? What type of person annoys you?

How well do you get along with people?

How have you handled problems with customers/co-workers?

Do you work well on a team? Tell me about an experience working with a team.

Unusual Questions

Be prepared for possible unique questions that get at creativity and ability to think on your feet:

What is your favorite tree? Why?

If you could be any color in the rainbow, what color would it be? Why?

Why are manhole covers round?

Behavioral Based Questions

Review our *Behavioral Interviews* handout for details on answering behavioral interview questions.

Tips for Answering Difficult Questions

Tell Me About Yourself

- Avoid personal information such as age, marital status, hobbies or home town.
- Focus on key items from your background that relate to the position including academic preparation, related experiences, activities and/or career goals.
- Your answer should be roughly 2-3 minutes long...remember that more questions will be asked that allow you to go into more detail about these experiences.

Weaknesses Questions

- Don't select a good quality and turn it into a weakness, employers see this as an attempt to avoid the question. "I am such a hard worker that sometimes I get burned out."
- Avoid selecting a weakness that is a core-personality characteristic that is unlikely to change.
- Pick a weakness that is not critical to being successful in the position.
- Select a weakness that you can quickly learn or one where you have already shown improvement.

Conflict/Mistake Questions

- Spend a minimal amount of time explaining the conflict or mistake and spend the majority of your answer on the steps you took to resolve the situation and what you learned from the experience.
 - When discussing conflict don't talk about other individual in a negative way. Simply explain that you had a different approach or way of doing things without assigning blame.
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