

# Preapproved Interview Questions



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# General Work Experience/Background

- What were the most important responsibilities in your most recent position?
- Tell me about a typical day in your job at \_\_\_\_.
- What special skills did you utilize in your position at \_\_\_\_?
- What achievements were you most proud of in your most recent position?
- How did you feel about your workload at \_\_\_\_?
- Why have you changed jobs so frequently?
- What have you learned in the jobs you have held?
- Why are you interviewing with us? What do you know about UCM (for internal candidates, this department)?
- Why do you want to leave your current position?
- What are you looking for in a job/position?
- What would your references say about you? What would your current boss say about you and your work performance?
- What do you consider your greatest strength? Your greatest weakness?
- What did you like most/least about your last job (or your job at \_\_\_\_)?
- What other information should I know about you that would be helpful to me in making my decision? Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about yourself?
- What circumstance brings you here today?
- Why are you interested in this industry/occupation?
- What's your ideal company/organization?
- What attracted you to this organization?
- Why do you think you'd like working for our organization?
- What special skills do you possess that would make you stand out from other candidates?
- Why should we hire you?
- Of all the work you have done, where have you been most successful?
- When were you most satisfied in your job?
- What have you done to reduce your department's operational costs or to save time?
- What would your current supervisors say makes you most valuable to them?
- What is the most important thing you learned at a previous job?
- If there were two things you could have changed about that job, what would they be?
- How did your job change while you held it?
- Describe a typical day at work.

- What kinds of people do you deal with on the job?
- What qualifications do you have that make you successful in this field?
- What aspects of your previous position did you find professionally challenging?
- What were your two most important achievements in your current job?
- What types of criticisms are leveled at you most often?
- What parts of your job do you consider most important?
- What job tasks do you feel most successful doing?
- I see you were unemployed for a period of time. Tell me about it.

### **The Job/Position**

- How do you feel about the position?
- What interests you most/least about the position?
- What can you offer to this position that someone else cannot? What special characteristics about you should I consider?
- What questions do you have about the job or the department?
- What qualities do you possess that would help you to be successful in this job?
- What qualities do you think are necessary to make a success of this job?
- How did you find out about this job?
- What do you know about the job?
- What interests you most about this position?
- What is your most relevant experience as it relates to this position?
- How have your previous positions prepared you for this one?
- What do you see as your major strengths as they apply to this position?
- Discuss a specific accomplishment you've achieved in a previous position that indicates you will thrive in this position
- You have a lot of experience. Why do you want this job?
- Which of your personality traits do you feel will be most effectively utilized in this position?
- If we're sitting here a year from now celebrating what a great year it's been for you in this role, what did we achieve together?
- Are there any skills or experiences etc. that we have not discussed that you feel would be relevant to this position?

### **Education (Also for applicants coming directly out of school)**

- How did you select your major in college?
- What jobs did you hold in college? What was your biggest challenge in these positions?

- What has been your least and most valuable work experience?
- How did you stay organized in school? How did you prioritize in school?
- What subjects did you excel in at school? Why?
- What courses have you taken that are directly transferable to the job?
- What kinds of skills have you acquired as a result of your education?
- Please describe your most rewarding college experience.
- If you could re-live your college experience, what would you do differently?
- How has your coursework prepared you for this position?
- What's the most important thing you learned in school?
- If you could start again, what major would you choose?
- Why are you applying for a job in a field other than your major?
- Are your grades a good measure of your ability?
- Give me an example of a problem you've had at school and how you solved it.
- How does your degree prepare you (a) for a career in \_\_\_ or (b) to excel as a \_\_\_?
- What qualifications do you have beyond academics that qualify you to make a successful transition into business?

### **Career Goals**

- Where do you want to be five years from now in terms of your career?
- What are your career goals?
- What kind of work interests you most?
- What are you looking for in this (your next) job?
- How do you measure success on the job?
- How do you keep up with changes in your field?
- What keeps you challenged?
- In what areas would you like to develop?
- What are your long-range career goals and how are you preparing to achieve them?
- What are you looking for in terms of career development?
- What kind of goals would you have in mind if you got this job?

### **Behavioral Interview Questions**

- What was the last project you headed up, and what was its outcome?
- What was the most difficult period in your career, and how did you deal with it?
- Give me an example of a time you did something wrong. How did you handle it?
- What is your greatest failure, and what did you learn from it?

- What do you do when you're having trouble with your job?
- Your supervisor left you an assignment, and then left for a week. You can't reach him/her and you don't fully understand the assignment. What would you do?
- Describe a project that required a high amount of energy over an extended period of time.
- Describe the top of your desk.
- Tell me about a time you had to work according to a policy you disagreed with.
- Please give an example of a situation where you were asked to do something that was not part of your job description. What did you do? What if the person was not your supervisor?

### **Power Questions**

- In the next 2 minutes, tell me about your professional experience/history.
- What kind of professional development and training would make you a more effective employee?
- What aspects of your previous position did you find professionally challenging?
- Did you get along well with the people on your last job? Explain.
- What types of people seem to "rub you in the wrong way?"
- What experience do you have with (equipment, procedures, tasks, etc.)?
- What do you expect from the company that hires you?
- In what ways could you contribute to this job?
- How long do you think it would take you before you could contribute to this job?
- What do you consider to be the ideal reporting relationship?
- How do you feel an employee should be approached regarding his/her job performance?
- Where does this position fall along your career path?

## **Specific Skills**

### **Able to Handle Pressure**

- Describe a situation where you were under a great deal of pressure. How did you handle it?
- We have a real pressure-cooker position here. (Explain why) Have you had a position that relates to this situation? How did you handle the pressure?
- Constant pressure gets to all of us after a long period of time. Describe an incident where you did not handle pressure well.
- Did your position have cyclical periods when you were extremely busy and then dead periods? How long did they last? What was it like during both periods of time?

- What flusters you when a deadline is near?
- If I called your supervisor, what would he/she say about your ability to handle pressure? What would he/she say you needed to improve on?
- How would you handle a situation where someone is pressuring you for his or her work to be completed?

### **Accountability**

- What kind of system or method are you currently using for reporting progress on your work?
- What kind of metrics or measure do you currently use to measure the work in your area?
- How do you follow through on projects that you delegate to others? Can you give an example?

### **Accuracy/Attention to Detail**

- Give me an example of a time when you found errors in your work. What caused the errors? How did you correct your mistakes?
- Have you ever had to proofread or check detailed information? How well did you do?
- Tell me about how you make your work as accurate as possible.
- How do you manage details so that they don't fall through the cracks?
- Have you had to handle a lot of details in your previous positions?
- If you had to choose one, would you consider yourself a big-picture person or a detail-oriented person?
- Have you ever worked for a supervisor that demanded accuracy of you? What activities required accuracy?
- Suppose we called your supervisor and asked: "Is (name) accurate in what he/she does?" What would your supervisor say?
- When it comes to accuracy, what do you need to improve on?
- Could you give me an example of the type of work you did on a day-to-day basis that required accuracy?
- Are you strongest in the areas of accuracy or speed? Why? Working on what?
- Did the pressure of your past job lend itself to a mistake environment?
- In some positions it is very easy to make errors. What do you do to control errors?

### **Analytical Skills**

- Tell me about a time when you've had to use your analytical skills to solve a problem.

### **Assertiveness**

- How would you handle a boss who gave you an assignment without complete instructions?



- How do you handle a situation where you found mistakes on an assignment someone else gave to you to type and/or process?
- How do you minimize interruptions on the job?

### **Being Managed**

- How do you take direction?
- What kind of supervisor do you like? How do you like to be supervised?
- Give me an example of something that you and your boss have disagreed about. How did you handle the situation? Have you ever disagreed with a decision that your boss has made? What did you do?
- How could your boss have done a better job?
- Which one of your bosses managed you the best? Why?
- Describe the best boss you have ever had.
- Tell me about a time when you were reluctant to talk with your supervisor about something.
- When do you need help from your supervisor? Give me a recent example.
- What are the characteristics of an effective manager?
- What was the management style of the last person you worked for? How did you like this style?
- What kind of manager do you find most difficult to work for?
- What kind of direction do you like to receive from your supervisor?
- Do you like detailed instructions, or would you rather just know the highlights? Do you want them in writing?
- Can you describe a time when your work was criticized?
- If I were your supervisor and asked you to do something that you disagreed with, what would you do?
- What are the qualities of a good leader? A bad leader?
- Do you think a leader should be feared or liked?
- How do you feel about taking no for an answer?
- How would you feel about working for someone who knows less than you?
- What kinds of things did you refer to your supervisor? What kinds of things did your supervisor refer to you?

### **Change Management**

- Tell me about a change that you have had to manage within your organization.
- Describe a time when you have had to respond quickly to something within a changing environment.

- Have you ever had to introduce a change into your department that was met with resistance? How did you handle the situation?
- Have you ever worked hard on something and then had your priorities change mid-stream? How did it make you feel? What did you do?
- How have you had to adapt your work style to fit the needs of others?
- Tell me about a difficult adjustment that you have had to make in a job/position.
- How often has your work been interrupted by unforeseen circumstances? What do you do when this happens?
- How have you had to reinvent or redefine your job to meet your company's changing needs?

### **Competency**

- What do you do on an ongoing basis to keep your professional skills up to date?
- Indicate some of the significant development efforts you have undergone in the last few years
- What do you see as the key competencies needed in your current assignment and how have you gone about developing these?

### **Communication Skills (Oral)**

- Tell me about a time when you didn't communicate things as clearly as you should have. What would you do differently now?
- What is the worst communication problem you've ever experienced? Please explain.
- Give me an example of a time when your communication skills saved a situation for you.
- Describe a time when you've had to communicate difficult information to someone. Were you successful at it? Why or why not?
- How did you and your boss communicate?
- How would you describe your communication style?
- When do you have trouble communicating with people?
- How do you manage meetings?
- What does an "open door communication policy" mean to you?
- How do you ensure that you communicate clearly and effectively?
- Tell me about a work situation you had that required excellent communication skills.
- Do you prefer to speak directly with someone or send a memo?
- How would you grade your ability to communicate with upper level management, customers, and peers?
- How important is communication and interaction with others on your job? How many departments did you deal with? What problems occurred?

- Describe a situation when you were able to strengthen a relationship by communicating effectively. What made your communication effective?
- What do you do to show people that you are listening to them?
- What was more important on your job, written or oral communication?

### **Communication Skills (Written)**

- What kind of writing did you have to do in your previous jobs?
- How do you go about writing a lengthy or involved document?
- Tell me about the most difficult piece that you have ever had to write.
- What information do you think is important to document?

### **Cooperation**

- Give me an example of a time when working with others produced something more successful than if you had completed it on your own.
- We all have parts of our jobs that we don't especially enjoy doing. Tell me about a situation when you were asked to perform one of those tasks.
- Have you ever needed to gain cooperation from individuals who weren't in your department? Were you successful at getting their help? Why or why not?
- Tell me about a difficult group of people that you have had to work with. How did you resolve the situation?
- What irritates you about other people, and how do you deal with it?
- Tell me about a time where you had to deal with conflict on the job.
- Describe a time when you had to work on a project with people outside of your immediate work group. How were you successful in gaining their cooperation?
- Define cooperation.
- Do you function more effectively as a team member or as an individual contributor?
- What do you do when you know you are right and others disagree with you?

### **Creativity**

- What is the most creative idea you have ever come up with?
- Tell me about a time when you approached an issue creatively.
- I'm going to present you with a problem. Tell me what creative approaches you might use to solve it.
- We're constantly making things better, faster, smarter or less expensive. We leverage technology or improve processes. In other words, we strive to do more--with less. Tell me about a recent project or problem that you made better, faster, smarter, more efficient, or less expensive.

### **Customer Service Skills**

- Tell me about a challenging customer service situation and how you handled it.

- What does customer service mean to you?
- Who are your customers (internal and external)?
- Give me an example of a time when you made an extra effort to service a customer.
- Tell me about the nicest compliment you've ever received from a customer.
- How many interactions with customers did you have in your position at\_\_\_?
- How do you ensure that your customers are satisfied?
- How do you decide the best way/method to sell something to a customer?
- Define excellent customer service.
- How are you gathering feedback from your customers and how do you use this feedback?
- Depict a situation where you had to give repetitive information, or answer similar questions. How did you make the situation tolerable?
- Give me an example of the type of work experience you have had on a day-to-day basis with the public.
- What has been your most rewarding experience dealing with the public/customers?
- What "new way of doing things" did you introduce in your last job in dealing with the public?
- What typical kinds of customer dissatisfaction were inherent in your last job? How did you deal with this?
- What types of things were you able to do to help in alleviating this customer dissatisfaction?
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to help an angry customer with a problem.
- What would others say about how you handle customers? Would they want you to wait on them? Did anyone ever ask for you?
- What kind of recommendation would your previous supervisor give you regarding your customer relations skills?
- Do you like working with the general public? Would you prefer to work alone?
- Give me an example when you were praised for your people skills in a past job.
- You have an angry customer that comes up to you. His/her past dealing with the department has been negative. This time he/she is going to get it done right. He/she demands you put him/her on top priority basis. Your department is now running a major project for your supervisor and can't accommodate this customer. How would you handle the customer?

### **Decision Making Skills**

- What is the most difficult decision you have had to make on the job?
- What kinds of decisions have you had to make in your previous positions?

- Have you ever had to make an unpopular decision? Walk me through how you handled it.
- What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you to make?
- Describe a time when you had to make a decision under severe time constraints.
- Walk me through how you go about making an important decision.
- Have you ever had to make an important decision when your boss was away? What were the circumstances?
- Have you ever had to bend a rule to accomplish something? Please explain.
- Give me an example of a time when you weren't comfortable making a decision. What did you do?
- How much decision making power do you give to your employees?
- If you found out your company was doing something against the law, like fraud, what would you do?
- What assignment was too difficult for you, and how did you resolve the issue?

### **Delegation**

- What are some examples of tasks, etc. that you consider inappropriate to delegate?
- What kinds of things do you delegate?
- What are some projects, tasks, etc. you would like to delegate but cannot?
- Do you think you delegate responsibilities as effectively as you should?
- Walk me through the process you use to delegate work to your employees.
- Who is in charge of your area when you are gone?
- Have you ever delegated something that you wish you hadn't?

### **Dependability**

- When we call your supervisor, what will he/she tell us about your ability to be dependable?
- When the workday starts are you the first one there?
- How would you define a dependable employee? Are you known as a dependable individual? Why?
- Describe how you have organized yourself in your present job so that you could create a dependable atmosphere with your clients/customers.
- When we check for references what will your supervisor tell us about the number of days you were absent last year?
- During a typical month, how many days are you late to work?

### **Detail Oriented**

- Give me an example of the deadlines that needed to be met in your last job. How did you make sure things got done?

- Give me an example of a time when you thought you had "it all nailed down" but a detail you missed fell through the cracks. What happened?
- Give an example of the most detail-oriented positions you have had.
- Describe a situation where you had to multi task. How did you handle it?
- How do you keep track of duties that must get done concurrently?

### **Getting Started Questions**

- How would you go about establishing your credibility quickly with the team?
- How long will it take for you to make a significant contribution?
- What do you see yourself doing within the first 30 days of this job?
- If selected for this position, can you describe your strategy for the first 90 days?

### **Goals**

- What are your 5-year goals?
- Tell me what "success" means to you.
- Do you consider yourself successful?
- What does "failure" mean to you?
- Do you set goals for yourself and how do you do that?

### **Handling Deadlines**

- Give me an example of a time when you had to work on a project under an immediate deadline. How did you handle it? Were you successful at meeting the deadline? Why or why not?
- How do you handle working under pressure and immediate deadlines? Please explain.

### **Initiative**

- What have you done in your position that demonstrates initiative?
- Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile.
- Is it ever necessary to go above and beyond the call of duty to get your job done? Give me an example.
- Have you ever suggested an idea that saved the company money?
- What are some examples of situations where you improved something in your department?
- If there was a decision to be made and no procedure existed for it, what would you do?
- What proactive steps did you have to take to increase the output of your position?
- Do you consider yourself a self-starter? Why?
- How do you begin a complex work assignment?
- What do you do when you have slow/down times at work? Please be specific.

## **Innovation**

- Tell us about an innovation that you've introduced in your work area.
- What have you done to introduce change or redefine the way work gets done in your area?
- What continuous improvement methodologies are you familiar with? Tell us about your experience.

## **Integrity**

- Tell us what you do to ensure that you meet the work commitments you make to others?
- Tell us about an experience where you had to confront someone or give candid feedback? How did you do it? What did you say?

## **Interpersonal Skills**

- Tell me about a time when you worked on a project that required you to interact with different levels within the company.
- Have you had any interpersonal challenges? How did you handle them?
- Did you work alone much in your previous job?
- In working with new people, how do you get to know their work styles?
- What are your interpersonal strengths?
- Do you prefer working alone or with others?
- How do you interact differently with different people?
- Can you give me an example of a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a situation where you wish you had acted differently with someone at work.
- Have you ever had to deal with someone who is very sensitive or easily offended? What did you do?
- Has your boss ever given you feedback about a concern that you weren't aware of?
- Many of us improve our personal interaction with others as we mature. Looking back over the past two years, in what way have you improved?
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict?
- Tell us about a time when you had to adapt to a wide variety of people by accepting/understanding their perspective.
- Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.
- Give an example of how you have been successful at empowering either a person or a group of people into accomplishing a task.
- Tell us your experience in working with others of diverse background from yours. How do you handle differences that come from different backgrounds?

- How do you deal with people who have angered or frustrated you?
- How do you handle and resolve a conflict situation with a co-worker?
- What job has given you the most job satisfaction in relationships with other employees? With customers? With your supervisor?

### **Management Skills**

- Describe the management/supervisory responsibilities in your most recent position.
- How would you describe your management style?
- How do you lead by example in your management style?
- How do you motivate your employees?
- How do you think your subordinates would describe you as a manager and supervisor?
- Give me an example of your ability to facilitate progressive change within your organization.
- How do you typically stay in the information loop and monitor your staff's performance?
- How do you typically confront subordinates when results are unacceptable?
- What kind of mentoring and training style do you have?
- Do you naturally delegate responsibilities, or do you expect your direct reports to come to you for added responsibilities?
- How would you describe the amount of structure, direction, and feedback that you need to excel?
- In terms of managing your staff, do you "expect" more than you "inspect" or vice versa?
- Tell me about a time you were placed in charge of a group of people.
- What did you like about being in charge?
- What did you not like about being in charge?

### **Negotiation Skills**

- Tell me about a successful negotiation that you've had.
- Walk me through the steps you use for successful negotiation.
- Have you ever had an unsuccessful negotiation? Why wasn't it successful? What would you do differently next time?
- How did you learn to negotiate?
- If I was negotiating with you for \_\_\_\_, walk me through how you would handle the negotiation.
- Tell me about a time when you have had to compromise significantly during a negotiation.

### **Office Skills**

- Do you feel the results of the Office Skills Test are representative of your skills?



- What kind of training, schooling, or experience do you have regarding office skills and abilities?
- How would you rate your Microsoft Word skills? Why did you rate yourself that way? How long have you used it on the job? Have you had formal training or did you learn on the job?
- Give me an example of the types of things you would use MS Word for. What functions are you familiar with and use daily? Which functions do you use occasionally?
- Are you as familiar with Quattro Pro/Excel as you are with WordPerfect/MS Word? Have you created spreadsheets and macros with Quattro Pro/Excel?
- Which of your former jobs required the use of your office skills to their optimum? Describe.
- Which firm utilized your telephone skills? What type of clientele did you work with?
- Tell me what your supervisor would say about your secretarial skills and abilities. What particular things would he/she tell me are your strong points clerically? What would he/she tell me that you would need to improve upon?

### **Personal Motivation & Traits**

- How do you feel about your present workload?
- What motivates you to do your best work?
- How can we best help you get your job done?
- Tell me about a time you went “out on a limb” to get the job done.
- What are the disadvantages of this line of work?
- What do you find most frustrating at work?
- Tell me about a project that got you really excited.
- How do you define doing a good job?
- What makes a job enjoyable for you?
- Under what conditions do you work best?
- Tell me about a work task you enjoy.
- What was the last job related book you read?

### **Planning/Organizing**

- How do you organize your day? How did you organize yourself in your position at \_\_\_?
- What kinds of tools do you use to stay organized?
- Do you believe more in planning, or in “diving in head first” and starting to work immediately? Why? Give me an example of when this strategy has worked for you.
- How far ahead do you plan? How had planning ahead benefited you in the past?
- Describe a time when you had carefully laid plans and things changed at the last minute. How did you react?

- Which would you say you are better at doing? Planning or implementing?
- Give me an example of a situation when you had to follow through on work being done by others. How did you do it?
- What experience do you have with scheduling and coordinating?
- It's almost the end of your day and your boss gives you a project that is due first thing in the morning. What would you do?
- How do you organize and plan for major projects?
- Walk me through how you would set up and complete an (job specific) assignment. What are the most trouble spots you anticipate?

### **Presentation Skills**

- What experience do you have giving presentations? What kinds of presentations have you delivered (i.e. on what topics did you present)? Did you present to large or small groups? What was the level and size of your audience?
- Tell me about a stressful time that you had delivering a presentation. How did you handle it?
- How do you typically prepare to deliver a presentation?
- Have you ever had a time where you weren't successful in delivering a presentation? Why wasn't it successful? What would you do differently now?
- Give me an example of a time when you've had to give a presentation to a group on very short notice. How did you prepare? How well was it received?

### **Prioritization**

- How do you prioritize your work?
- Give me an example of a time when you had had multiple priorities, and explain how you handled them.
- You have several projects that are all "high priority." How do you manage them all?
- Describe how you would handle a situation if you were required to finish multiple tasks by the end of the day, and there was no conceivable way that you could finish them.

### **Problem Solving**

- Describe a time when you felt you were resourceful in solving a problem.
- What do you do when you're having trouble solving a problem?
- How do you stay aware of problems in your work area?
- Describe a complex issue that you've had to resolve and tell me the steps you took to handle it.
- What sources of information do you use to solve difficult problems?
- What are the biggest problems you have faced in the last 6 months? What did you do to overcome them?

- Describe a frustrating or challenging experience you've encountered and tell me how you dealt with it.
- What was a major obstacle you were able to overcome in the past year?
- In what ways do you raise the bar for yourself and others around you?
- Tell us about a specific time when you had to handle a tough problem which challenged fairness or ethical issues.
- Give me an example of the last major project you worked on. What was your role? Did you work as a team? What were the issues involved?
- Do you have any statistical background, either in school or on the job?
- Could you describe a decision you recently made that was initially unpopular with your supervisors or staff? How did you handle it?
- Describe how you think through a difficult problem.
- Have you ever had to "sell" top management on a decision you made? Please describe the situation.
- Describe a project you recently worked on that got "bogged down" for some reason and what you did to put it back on line.
- What types of problems do you solve on a day-to-day basis?
- Did you make any changes in the firm you felt particularly proud of?
- Give me an example of a very complex problem or issue you have faced. How did you solve the problem?

### **Respect for Resources**

- What type of budgetary responsibility do you carry in your current assignment? How well have you kept within that budget?
- Have you had significant experience with cost reduction efforts? Tell us about an experience.
- Can you share an experience of how you have maximized the benefit produced from limited resources you were given to work with?

### **Risk Taking**

- Do you consider yourself a risk taker? Why or why not?
- What risks have you taken in your last few jobs, and what was the result of those risks?
- Tell me about a risk that turned out successfully. Tell me about a risk that turned out unsuccessfully. What would you do differently?

### **Salary**

- What salary are you seeking?
- What's your salary history?
- If I were to give you this salary you requested but let you write your job description for the next year, what would it say?

- When comparing one company offer to another, what factors will be important to you besides starting salary?

### **Software/Technical Information**

- What types of office equipment have you used?
- Tell me about the types of word processing you did on your last job.
- What would you say are the major technical skills needed for this position?
- How do you merge a file in Microsoft Word?
- What certifications/classes have you completed this last year? Were any of them required by your supervisor?
- Describe the types of documents you deal with on a daily basis.
- What software programs do you use most often in your current position?
- Describe in detail your experience with computer software programs.
- Tell me about the spreadsheets you have created.
- Give me an example of a technical problem you had to solve. How did you implement the solution?
- Tell me about the PowerPoint presentations you have developed.
- What software do you have experience with? How would you describe your experience level for that software?

### **Self-Development**

- What have you done to be more effective in your position? What are you currently doing to improve your overall performance?
- How do you stay current in your field?
- In what areas do you think you need to develop? What do you consider to be your weaknesses? During past performance appraisals, what have been cited as your developmental areas?
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- What motivates you?
- What are your major strengths?
- When compared to others in your field, where do you excel?
- What would your former coworkers say about you and your performance? If I asked them to provide constructive feedback and tell me two or three areas where you could improve, what do you think they would say?
- As you look at your qualifications for this position, what do you see as some of your development needs?
- What do you need to accomplish to feel successful?
- How do you know that you are doing a good job?

- What is your greatest weakness and what have you done to try to overcome it?
- How do you want to improve yourself in the next year?
- If I were to ask your last supervisor to provide you additional training or exposure, what would he/she suggest?
- How do you define continuous improvement? What is the last new procedure you integrated into your job?

### **Staff Development**

- Tell me about your most recent employee development success story.
- How important do you consider staff development?
- What are some ways that you've developed your staff?
- Do you concentrate on developing your employees' weaknesses or strengths?
- Have you ever tried unsuccessfully to improve the performance of an employee? Why do you think it was unsuccessful?
- What are you doing to prepare a back-up for yourself?
- Do you focus on developing poor performers or outstanding performers?
- How would you handle an employee who has been performing his/her job successfully for 15 years and doesn't want to develop?
- Have you ever had to develop an employee when you had no budget to do so? What did you do?

### **Supervisory Skills**

- Tell me about a time when you had to discipline an employee. Explain the situation and describe what you did.
- Describe how you make your feelings known to a group or an individual when you disagree with their view?
- What types of work situations frustrate you and why?
- Describe the most challenging employee discipline situation you've had to handle.
- Walk me through the steps you use when dealing with a difficult employee.
- How do you give your staff feedback? How often do you give your staff feedback?
- How did you communicate with your employees?
- What was the turnover rate in your department over the last \_\_\_ years?
- Have you ever had to terminate an employee? Walk me through the situation and how you handled it.
- How many people have you hired? What steps do you take to make sure you hire effective employees?
- Tell me about typical issues that your staff brings to you. How do you handle these issues?

- Have you ever had to communicate information to your staff that you didn't agree with? How did you handle the situation?
- Did you have responsibility for a budget in your department? How did you make budgetary decisions?
- Were you involved in long-range, organizational planning? How so?
- How many people reported to you? What were their titles and responsibilities?
- What type of employees do you work best with?
- What are some of the day-to-day problems you have faced when supervising others?
- How do you train your employees?
- How do you recognize positive results of your employees?
- What would others say is your style of managing?
- What do you like most and least about managing others?
- How often do you meet with your employees? How do you track your employees' projects?
- Tell me about a time when you had to give someone difficult feedback. How did you handle it?
- How do you motivate people?
- What type of supervisory training have you completed in the last two years?
- How did you communicate bad news to your staff?
- What makes someone a good supervisor?
- What programs have you put in place to build morale?
- How do you plan your day?
- Describe your management style.
- How do you measure success as a supervisor?
- How do you decide who needs what training?
- How do you measure success in training?
- Describe one change you made in your last job that was very beneficial.
- How do you proceed when you need to make a decision and no policy exists?
- How would you define "leadership"?
- Describe a time when you were able to influence an outcome in a positive way.
- What have you done to become more effective in your job?
- How do you orient new employees to your department?
- How do you plan an interview?
- What do you look for on resumes and applications?

- What criteria do you use for making decisions on hiring?
- How many people have you supervised at one time? How many were Part-time? Full-time? How long were you their supervisor?
- Did you have the sole responsibility of hiring/firing these people? Did your supervisor have any say in who was hired/fired?
- Give me an example of a time when you handled an employee grievance that resulted in better working relationships.
- Give me an example of a time when you handled a grievance that did not result in better working relationships. What would you have done differently?
- What have you done to motivate your employees? Were they motivated? Give me a time when they were or were not.
- What kind of management style do you take with your employees? How do you treat your employees? How do you resolve discipline problems?
- What would your employees say about you as a manager? Were you an example of what you expected from others?
- How did you elicit cooperation from your employees? Give me an example of a time when an employee would not do what was asked. How did you handle this?
- What is required of a good leader? Which of these skills are you better at? What skills would your supervisor say that you would need to improve upon to be a better leader/supervisor?

### **Teamwork Skills**

- Tell about the most recent success that your team has had. How did you help them to achieve success?
- Give me an example of a time when you pulled your team together under difficult circumstances.
- Have you ever had a team effort that wasn't successful? How do you think you might have contributed to its failure? How might you handle it differently now?
- Have you ever had to lead a team on a project? How did you lead the team?
- What do you consider to be the advantages of working on a team? The disadvantages?
- Think of a specific time when you emerged as a leader of a group.
- Do you prefer to work independently or on a team? Please explain.
- Discuss some of your past leadership/teamwork roles and your accomplishments.
- Have you ever been on a team where someone was not pulling their own weight? How did you handle it?
- How do you build consensus?
- Define teamwork.

- What are some of the things you are doing to ensure the effectiveness of the team you are leading?
- Have you been on a dysfunctional team? What did you do as a team member or team leader to address the problems?
- Tell us about a time where you disagreed with the objectives or direction of a team you were on. How did you handle this?
- How do you currently encourage people on your team to express their ideas and opinions? Can you give an example?

### **Telephone Skills**

- What percentage of time do you spend on the phone?
- How do you handle difficult people over the phone? Tell me about a challenging situation that you have had to handle over the phone.

### **Time Management**

- Tell me about a time when your time management skills really paid off for you.
- How do you manage your time?
- Tell me about an especially busy time on your job at \_\_\_\_\_. Explain how you made it through that time.
- How often are you presented with unexpected projects or priorities in your current job? How do you handle them?
- Walk me through an unusually crazy day for you. How did you manage everything?
- How do you handle interruptions at work?
- We've all had times when we couldn't complete everything on time. When has this happened to you, and how did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you missed a deadline. How did you handle it?
- What systems, processes, procedures, etc. have you set up in your department to make things run more efficiently?
- What causes the most stress for you on the job? How do you manage this stress?
- Give me an example of a time when you felt excessive demands was placed on you. How did you handle the situation?
- How do you start a typical day?
- How do you manage paperwork?
- What kind of deadlines have you had to work under? How did you manage these deadlines?

### **Work Style**

- What type of work environment do you prefer?
- Tell us about a time when things didn't go the way you wanted-- like a promotion you wanted and didn't get, or a project that didn't turn out how you had hoped.



- If you got hired, loved everything about this job, and are paid the salary you asked for, what kind of offer from another company would you consider?
- How would you define a good working atmosphere?
- Is there anything that will prevent you from getting to work on time?
- Is there anything that will prevent you from working the job's regular hours?
- What kinds of work interest you the most?
- What things do you not like to do?
- Describe your ideal job.
- How have you added value to your job over time?
- What was the most important project you worked on in your last job and why did you choose this example?
- Describe how you have progressed through the ranks and landed in your current position at \_\_\_?
- Which office do you feel exhibited the most professional atmosphere? Was the dress standard written or unwritten? What do you feel creates a professional atmosphere? How did you contribute to the overall professionalism of the office?
- Do you prefer to see a project through from beginning to end, or just do a part of it?
- What type of things should be kept confidential? How would you handle co-workers who ask too many questions regarding confidential information?
- Tell me about two memorable projects, one success and one failure. To what do you attribute the success and failure?

### **Work with Little Supervision**

- Give me an example of a time when you were able to complete a project without immediate supervision. Was this normal? Did your supervisor often give you tasks to do which did not require direct supervision?
- Give me an example of the kind of tasks or projects your supervisor would closely supervise.
- What would your supervisor say about your abilities to complete tasks as assigned? What kind of a recommendation would this supervisor give me?
- Do you prefer working alone, or with others?
- Would you rather be closely supervised and given good direction, or work out the solutions for yourself?

## **“More About You”**

- How would your best friend describe you?
- How do you alleviate stress?

- What are your short and long term goals?
- What are 3 goals that you have achieved in the past year?
- How would you describe your work style?
- What would be your ideal working environment?
- What do you look for in terms of culture -- structured or entrepreneurial?
- Give examples of ideas you've had or implemented.
- Tell me about your proudest achievement.
- What is your greatest achievement outside of work?
- What are you most proud of?
- When have you been most satisfied in your life?
- Was there a person in your career who really made a difference?
- Who has impacted you most in your career and how?
- What kind of personality do you work best with and why?
- What do you like to do?
- What are your lifelong dreams?
- What do you ultimately want to become?
- What is your personal mission statement?
- What are three positive things your last boss would say about you?
- What negative thing would your last boss say about you?
- What three character traits would your friends use to describe you?
- What are three positive character traits you don't have?
- If you were interviewing someone for this position, what traits would you look for?
- List five words that describe your character.
- What is your greatest fear?
- What is your biggest regret and why?
- What will you miss about your present/last job?
- Tell me the difference between good and exceptional.
- There's no right or wrong answer, but if you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be?
- What's the last book you read?
- What magazines do you subscribe to?
- What's the best movie you've seen in the last year?
- What would you do if you won the lottery?

- Who are your heroes?
- Who is your role model, and why?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- What is your favorite memory from childhood?

## Position Specific Questions

### **Accommodations Specialist**

- Please tell us why you are interested in this job and give us an overview of your experience with emphasis on how you think that experience makes you qualified for this position.
- Describe your understanding of disability management.
- What are the most critical legal issues related to disability management?
- Describe an effective interactive process.
- What strategies do you use to balance your responsibilities to the employee with the responsibility to the organization?
- One of the functions of this position is to assist supervisors in modifying jobs to meet an employee's work restrictions. Imagine you are dealing with a supervisor who is reluctant to make the necessary accommodations. How would you persuade this supervisor to change their mind?
- Describe your experience working in the California Workers' Compensation system and how you have applied that knowledge to provide services to injured workers.
- Please tell us your experience working with employment issues related to individuals with non-industrial medical conditions/disabilities. Describe a situation where you provided technical consultation to management on these issues.
- Describe a situation where you worked as part of a disability management team and applied knowledge of human resources, disability benefits, compensation, employment law, recruitment and collective bargaining, etc.
- Please describe a situation where you had to evaluate medical information and job functions and then make recommendations for an accommodation and a return to work plan. How did you determine which functions of the job were essential? What was the design of your plan? Was the plan successful?
- What do you perceive the challenges to be in a start-up university campus?
- Describe your organizational skills as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor when faced with work in a fast-paced environment with multiple, competing demands, a heavy workload, and strict guidelines. Provide a specific example of a busy day.

- You are in a meeting with an employee who has been released to return to work without restriction. The employee states she/he is in pain and she/he is unable to perform the duties of her/his position. The employee is unwilling to accept your recommendations for modified work and is very upset. The employee's job is covered by a union. How would you handle this situation?
- What interests you most about this job?
- Is there anything you would like to add?
- Do you have any questions for us?

### **Administrative Assistant**

- What work have you done that involved working with sensitive or confidential issues?
- Please give us an example of a time when you explained policies and/or procedures to others.
- Describe your computer experience including applications used (MS Word, Excel, etc.), computer environments (Windows, Macintosh, etc.), word processing, database and spreadsheet skills.
- Please brag to us about a client relationship that you have built that seems especially effective, where you needed to overcome some obstacles to establish this effective relationship. What do you think makes it work?
- Tell us about a situation when you were working with a very demanding customer. How did you handle the situation? And what was the result?
- How are memos and correspondence prepared in your current position? Who proofs the documents? What types of documents do you prepare?
- What type of reporting structure did you work within in previous jobs?
- Have you had experience in maintaining office equipment? If so, what type of products?
- What type of documents and formats have you generated in the past?
- Are you comfortable using a phone with multiple lines and handling a high volume of telephone calls?
- What is your typing speed, and what is your average error level?

### **Compensation Consultant**

- Briefly explain why you are interested in joining UC Merced as a Compensation Consultant.
- Describe your experience with market based compensation programs.
- Describe a specific experience you have had administering a compensation program which required high-level negotiation skills.
- Based on your experience is internal or external equity more important in the development of a compensation program in higher education? Why?
- Describe two of your professional accomplishments in the compensation area that you are especially proud of and explain the impact they had on your employer.

- Based on your experience, what attributes are essential to a successful performance management program?
- Describe a compensation or other human resource program which required you to identify stakeholders and gain their support for a particular course of action and specifically explain how you sought to achieve that support.
- Based on your experience, what professional and personal attributes are important to success in managing compensation programs and tell us about three attributes you have that have contributed to your success in compensation management.
- Describe your experience applying information technology to compensation management?
- Describe your experience working in other area(s) within Human Resources besides compensation management? What areas are you interested in and why?

### **Laboratory Animal Resource Center**

- Describe your animal related work experience.
- Have you worked with animals specifically used in biomedical research?
- Why are you interested in working with research animals?
- The incumbent in this position is exposed to animal dander and hair, hay, straw and wood shavings. This position requires independently moving objects weighing up to 50 pounds on a daily basis. This position requires moving cages and racks from one location to another. Shelves range in height from 12 inches from the floor up to 6 feet high. The cages are placed in or on the rack one row on top of the other. This position requires moving from place to place and doesn't allow the opportunity to sit as much as other jobs may allow. Would you be able to safely perform the duties of this position?
- What do you consider your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your thoughts about using live animals in biomedical research and teaching?
- At this facility, healthy animals may be euthanized at the end of a project. Explain your reaction to this type of work and clarify why you think you can work in a research environment.
- With the proper safeguards, what are your thoughts about working with biohazards and projects using infectious agents such as HIV, salmonella, Q-fever, etc.?
- If you saw another employee mishandling an animal or engaging in an unsafe work practice, what would you do?
- What if that person were a research investigator or their technician?
- Would you have any reluctance about reporting this to your supervisor?
- Do you prefer to work independently or as part of a team?
- At this facility we may have students that work for us. Do you have any experience working with or supervising students?
- Can you provide an example from your past employment where you have had to make independent decisions and have shown initiative?

- If you are asked to work overtime on weekends and holidays as necessary can you do this? How much notice would you require?
- This position requires that you wear a uniform or scrubs, which will be provided to you at no cost. Do you have any objections to wearing a uniform or scrubs?
- If I were to ask your prior supervisors about your record of tardiness, attendance (excessive absences) and conflict with co-workers or others on the job, what do you think they would say?
- How do you feel that this job would benefit you, both personally and professionally?
- How does this job fit into your career goals?
- Do you think that you will have any problems getting to work on a regular basis and on time?
- What precautions have you taken to ensure your safety and the safety of others in a laboratory environment?
- Give me an example that demonstrates your dedication and devotion on-the-job to:
  - Animal well-being.
  - Timely and thorough completion of job responsibilities.
- If you are the person selected for the job, when could you start?
- Do you have any questions for us?

### **Police Department**

- What training, education and experience do you possess which will enable you to be successful at the University of California, Merced Police Department?
- What do you know about the University of California, Merced and why do you want to work for the UC Merced Police Department?
- Imagine that you are assigned to swing shift. Your supervisor is not available. An officer approaches you and asks you to run a license number to find out an address of a female driver who he saw driving a sporty vehicle and was interested to see where she lived. What actions will you take?
- Imagine you are a University of California, Merced police officer assigned to foot patrol. You walk into building which houses students; you recognize a student standing in a hallway that you believe is not at least twenty-one years of age holding a can of beer. What actions will you take?
- Describe an ethical dilemma either personal or professional that you have had in your lifetime; tell us how you handled the dilemma and explain how you would handle the same dilemma if it faced you today.
- What are your goals for the future? Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?
- Do you have anything you would like to ask us or tell us?

### **Recruitment Analyst**

- Tell us about yourself; including your experience and education.

- What interested you in this position and tell us what special skills you can bring to this position.
- What experience have you had in developing, revising, or implementing recruitment and other Human Resource procedures?
- What have you enjoyed most in your career?
- Least?
- What do you enjoy the most about recruitment?
- Least?
- How many recruitment positions did you post in your previous position at one time?
- We are going to be recruiting for various service positions, including: custodial, maintenance, grounds, food service, library, bookstore clerks etc., all between July and August. What thoughts do you have to manage this volume of recruitments?
- A department comes to you on Thursday afternoon, and says they need a position, classified, posted on the web site and advertised by Friday. What do you do?
- How would you determine if you have a diverse applicant pool or if you would need to re-open a position? What information is important to obtain on every application in order to verify this information?
- What experience have you had with benefits, and reconciliation of premium payments versus actual expenses?
- What experience have you had with electronic application/HRIS systems?
- Is there anything that we didn't ask you wished we had?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add that would be helpful to us in our decision-making process?
- Do you have any questions for us?