General Interview Questions

1. Tell us a little more about your professional experiences, particularly those not mentioned on your resume.
2. Why are you interested in leaving your current assignment, and why do you feel this assignment would be better for you?
3. How is our institution similar to or different from other organizations or institutions where you have worked?
4. Do you feel this position is a promotion, a lateral move, a broadening of your processional experience, or just a change? Why do you think so?
5. How does this position fit into your overall career goals?
6. Describe the duties of your current job and your current reporting relationship to others.
7. What do you dislike most about your current job?
8. What is your favorite part of your current job, and why is it your favorite part?
9. What are the three best college courses that best prepared you for your current job?
10. What is the best method of creating a ______ [i.e., a relevant product or service]?
11. What qualities or experiences make you the best candidate for this position?
12. Describe two or three major trends in your profession today.
13. On the basis of the information you have received so far, what do you see as the major challenges of this position, and how would you address them?
14. Describe a situation in which you did “all the right things” and were unsuccessful. What did you learn from the experience?
15. Discuss the committees on which you served and the impact of these committees on the organization where you currently work.
16. Why did you choose this profession/field?
17. What new skills have you learned over the past year?
18. Think about an instance when you were given an assignment that you thought you would be unable to complete. How did you accomplish the assignment?
19. Have you ever had a great idea but were told that you could not implement it? How did you react? What did you do?
20. Describe the best supervisor and the worst supervisor you ever had.
22. How would you describe your ideal work environment?
23. If you were to check your references on you, what would your past supervisors say about you? How about past coworkers?
24. If you had one big idea that would significantly improve your work environment, what would it be?
25. Can you describe how you go about solving problems? Please give us some examples.
26. What is the biggest conflict you have ever been involved in at work? How did you handle it?
27. What new programs or services would you start if offered the position?
28. Please share with us your philosophy about customer service in an academic environment, and give us some examples of service that illustrate your views.
29. Tell us how you would learn your new job in the absence of a formal training program.
30. How would you characterize your level of computer literacy? What are some of the non-traditional applications you use that would illustrate your competency?
31. Think about a coworker from the present or past whom you admire. Why do you admire him or her?
32. What characteristics do you prize the most in an employee/coworker? What behaviors or characteristics do you find intolerable?
33. Can you share with us your ideas about professional development?
34. Describe some basic steps you would take in implementing a new program.
35. Describe one or two of your proudest professional accomplishments.
36. What is your understanding of the unique role of a ______ [i.e., two-year college/ liberal arts college/ research university]?
37. How do you feel about diversity in the workplace? Give us some examples of your efforts to promote diversity.
38. Tell us how you go about organizing your work.
39. Describe how you have used computers or other technology to improve your work.
40. Please tell us what you think are the most important elements of a good______ [e.g. service, activity, product, class, etc.].
41. Describe your volunteer experiences in community-based organizations.
42. What professional associations do you belong to, and how involved in them are you?
43. Tell us about your preferred work environment.
44. What experiences or skills will help you manage major projects?
45. In what professional development activities have you been involved over the past few years, and why did you choose those activities?
46. What volunteer, civic, or social activities have helped you develop professional skills?
47. What things have you done on your own initiative to help you prepare for your next job?
48. Do you have any concerns that would make you have reservations about accepting this position if it is offered to you?
49. What do you think most uniquely qualifies you for this position?
50. What unique skill set(s) would you bring to this position?
51. How have you prepared yourself over the past few years for your next opportunity?
52. What have you learned over the past six months to a year that is new?
53. In what areas do you feel you need further professional development?
54. What are your professional development or continuous learning plans?
55. Do your assignments normally come from your boss, or do you go to your boss with suggestions?
56. What development activities have you completed recently that help to qualify you for this position?
57. What professional development activities have you completed in the past two years?
58. Have you ever spent your own money on your professional development? When, how and why?
59. What social, civic, or community organizations do you belong to that have helped you grow professionally?
60. Tell us what you know or have heard about the culture of higher education and why this environment might interest you.
61. Have you ever worked in a nonprofit organization, and how do you think such an organization is run compared to for-profit companies?
62. What were some of the things your supervisor said about you during your last performance appraisal?
63. How are your job duties different from what they would be for similar jobs in other organizations?
64. Describe your activities during a typical day on your current job.
65. What subjects did you like the least and best in school? Why?
66. Are your grades from college a good reflection of your ability? Why or why not?
67. If you had it to do over again, would you have chosen the same course of study? Why or why not?
68. What were your major duties and responsibilities in your last job?
69. Describe the largest project you were involved with and your role in its success.
70. How would you describe your work ethic? Give us two examples that demonstrate it.
71. How has your current job helped you grow as a person and as a professional?
72. What could your past employers count on you for without fail?
73. What is the most disappointing aspect of your current job?
74. What part of your current job would you describe as fun?
75. What excites you most in your current job?
76. Do you feel that your workload in your current job is too great, too light, just right, or other? Why?
77. What did you do in your last job that made you more effective?
78. Has your present job changed while you have held it? If so, how?
79. Tell us about a time when you and a supervisor disagreed and how the issue was resolved.
80. Would you return to work for any or all of your previous employers? Why or why not?
81. Do you think you are fairly compensated for the work you currently do? Why or why not?
82. What suggestions have you made in your current job to improve how work is performed?
83. What policies or procedures of your current company do you disagree with?
84. How would you describe your relationship with your current supervisor?
85. Have you ever asked for new responsibilities or assignments? What happened?
86. What motivates you?
87. Tell us what about our mission resonates with you most?
88. Would you rather take initiative and some risk or play it safe and steady? Why? Give an example.
89. If hired, what would you do in the first 30 days?
90. Describe some specific contributions you would make during the first six months in this position.
91. In your opinion, what does it take to be a "success"?
92. What are the most challenging parts of your current job?
93. What have you done at work to make your job easier?
94. What tools or methods do you use to keep your supervisor informed of what you are doing?
95. In what kind of environment are you most comfortable?
96. How is your education related to your career?
97. Tell us about three professional skills you have developed, and how that knowledge makes you qualified for this position.
98. Tell us about the last time you lost your temper at work.
99. Tell us of a time when you had to handle a highly emotional employee or customer.
100. What do you do to encourage others to do their best?
101. What expertise do you have that coworkers come to you for assistance in?
102. How do you attempt to persuade others to your way of thinking?
103. Tell us about a time when a supervisor criticized your work.
104. How do you assert yourself to get what you need?
105. What do you know about our college/university?
106. What are three keys to successful _________ [i.e., important aspect of position]?
107. What should a _________ know about students [i.e., name of position in question]?
108. Tell us about a personal or career goal you have accomplished, and why it was important to you.
109. How do you go about solving problems?
110. Tell us about a specific time when you eliminated or avoided a potential problem before it happened.
111. Think about an instance when you were given an assignment that you were not sure of or thought you would not be able to complete. What did you decide, and how did you eventually accomplish the assignment?
112. What professional associations do you belong to and at what level are you involved with them?
113. If someone told you that you had made an error, describe how you would react and what you would say in your defense?
114. You are a committee member and disagree with a point or decision. How will you respond?
115. Describe what you would classify as a crisis.
116. What strengths did you rely on in your last position to make you successful in your work?
117. Tell us about your present or last job. Why did you choose it? Why do you want to leave?
118. Do you have any additional information you would like to share?
119. Do you have any questions for us?
Interview Questions for Administrators, Executives, or Supervisors

Personnel Management

1. Tell us about your best and worst hiring decisions.
2. What type of employee do you find the most difficult to manage?
3. Have you ever terminated an employee? Why?
4. How do you reprimand people who work for you?
5. What was the most challenging personnel issue you’ve had to deal with, and how did you handle it?
6. How would you build a team from scratch?
7. How do you handle performance appraisals?
8. How do you train a new staff member?
9. What has your experience been in supervising others?
10. How do you determine what to delegate and what to do yourself?
11. How do you give feedback to your staff members?
12. How do you manage, monitor and direct and the performance of your staff?
13. What do you want your staff to do when they encounter problems?

Decision making

1. Tell us about any unconventional methods you have used to solve problems.
2. What criteria, factors, or methods do you use to make decisions?
3. How long does it typically take you to make a decision?
4. What is the last major decision you had to make?
5. What kinds of decisions are the most difficult for you to make and why?
6. What kinds of problems are you best at solving?
7. What is the biggest error in judgment you have made in a previous job? Why did you make it? How did you correct the problem?
8. To whom did you turn for help the last time you had a major problem, and why did you choose that person?
9. Tell us about a time when you had to make an unpopular decision.
10. What do you do when you need to make a decision, and there are no procedures in place to do so?
11. Describe a recent decision you made that would normally have been made by your supervisor. What was the outcome?

General administration

1. How do you “sell” or persuade others to accept and support necessary change?
2. How do you make your opinion known when you disagree with your boss?
3. What do you do when you know you are right and your boss disagrees with you? Give us an example of when this happened in your career.
4. What did you do for a past employer that made a difference and for which you believe you will be remembered.
5. Tell us about your experience in leading and managing an organization similar to ours.
6. Tell us about your fiscal management experience: budgeting, reporting, cutting costs, building and maintaining reserves.
7. What is the largest budget you have ever managed?
8. How do you manage meetings?
9. Have you ever had a great idea and were told that you could not implement it? How did you react? What did you do?
10. Describe for us a time when you came across questionable business practices. How did you handle the situation?
11. A new policy is to be implemented organization-wide. You do not agree with this new policy. How do you discuss it with your staff?
12. How do you communicate priority projects to your staff when you are concerned that they already feel overloaded?

Leadership

1. How would your subordinates describe your leadership style?
2. On a scale from 1 to 10, how well would your employees say you listen?
3. What do you find most difficult when managing others?
4. What characteristics help you to be effective as a leader?
5. What would it be like working for you?
6. What does it mean to be a leader?
7. How do you reward the people who work with you?
8. What do you do with your staff to develop teamwork?
9. What is the most important job of a leader?
10. What sort of criticism have you received from your staff?
11. Before you fire someone, what factors would you take into consideration?
12. How many women and minorities have you hired?
13. What have you learned from your experience as a manager?
14. Tell us about your current boss or supervisor. What is his or her leadership style?
15. What has been your most significant leadership responsibility?
16. If you were promoted and had to hire someone to replace you in your current job, what kind of person would you look for?
17. Describe your communication style.
18. Tell us about a new project you initiated.
19. What would you like to have done more of in your last job? What held you back?
20. If your supervisor got sick and you had to step into his or her job for six months, what would you do first?
21. How do you and your staff celebrate success?

Reference