Interview Questions – Faculty Positions

“Who are you”

- Tell us about yourself.
- Tell us a little more about your professional experiences, particularly those not mentioned on your CV/application.
- Why did you choose this profession/field?
- Tell us about your preferred work environment.
- Describe your ideal position.
- Where do you see yourself in ten years?
- Describe the duties of your current position.
- What do you dislike most about your current position?
- What is your favorite aspect of your current position and why is it your favorite?
- Think about a colleague from the present or past whom you admire. Why?
- What are the characteristics that you prize most in an employee? What behaviors or characteristics do you find intolerable?
- What is your optimal balance between teaching and research?
- Describe the best and the worst bosses you have ever had.
- What would your colleagues or your supervisor say about you?
- What are one or two of your proudest professional accomplishments?
- What do you see as your greatest accomplishments in your career to date? What shortcomings have you dealt with?
- What do you do in your spare time? What are your hobbies? Outside interests?
- Tell us how you go about organizing your work. Also describe any experience you have had with computers or other tools as they relate to organization.
- How would you characterize your level of computer literacy? What are some of the programs and applications with which you are familiar?
- Tell us how you would use technology in your day-today position.

Fit with Institution

- You have seen our mission statement. How would you see yourself contributing to our mission and campus atmosphere?
- How will your work/research assist the university’s initiatives, the department’s mission, and the program’s goals?
- Why are you interested in leaving your current assignment and why do you feel that this assignment would be better fit for you?
- How does this position fit into your overall career goals?
• How will you complement our program?
• What is it about our school that made you apply for this position
• 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 meet them?
• Tell us how you would learn your new roles in the absence of a formal training program?
• How would your background and experiences strengthen this academic department?
• What strengths do you bring to the University, and particularly our department, if you were to be hired?
• How will your family feel about moving to this city?

Thought Provoking
• What is the relevance of the liberal arts in the contemporary world?
• In your opinion, how should the workload of a faculty member be split and into what areas?
• What do you consider to be the most controversial problem in higher education? Why?
• What is the best or worst decision you have made in the past year? In your career?

Professional Development/Service
• Share your ideas about professional development.
• What professional development activities have you been involved over the past few years?
• What new skills have you learned over the past year?
• What things have you done on your own initiative to help you prepare for this position?
• Can you summarize the contribution you would make to our department?
• What institutional issues particularly interest you?
• We conceive of our campus as one large community. What non- or extra-academic activities would you be interested in sponsoring or participating in?
• You list a number of interesting community service activities on your CV. Would you want to continue with that sort of extracurricular involvement if you came to this institution?
• How would you contribute to the administration of the department?

Teaching
• What is your definition of a good teacher?
• What characteristics do you have that make you a good teacher
• Are you a good teacher?
• What makes a good advisor? Do you think it is important to challenge your students? How would you do that?
• What is your approach to advising graduate students?
• It is the third week of your introductory class and you notice that some students really aren't paying attention, some are sleeping and some aren't showing up - what do you do?
• How do you feel about having to teach required courses?
• How would you encourage students to major in your field?
• In your first semester you would be responsible for our course in _____. How would you structure it? What textbook would you use?
• Have you had any experience with distance learning or technology in the classroom?
• How would you describe your interactions with students?
• How do you define good teaching?
• Describe your teaching style.
• Describe your teaching philosophy.
• What methods do you use to teach?
• Which texts do you use in your teaching and why?
• What would your students do in one of your classes?
• What assignments do you require and why?
• Discuss your grading policy.
• What would you do if you found students cheating in your class?
• What are some of the things that you have done in your teaching career particularly well or in which you have achieved the greatest success?
• What do you think are the most important attributes of a good instructor?
• What do you think are your greatest strengths as an instructor? In which areas do you feel you can use some further development?
• If I were to come into your classroom, what would I see? What do you do that is unusual or particularly effective?
• How do you feel your teaching style can serve our student population?
• What experience or knowledge do you have in working with specific student populations such as veterans or students with disabilities?
• Can you give me examples of your ability to work effectively with a variety of students?
• How do you motivate students?
• How do you engage students, particularly in a course of non-majors?
• How do you adjust your style to the less-motivated or under-prepared student?
• What pedagogical changes do you see on the horizon in your discipline?
• What is one of the more promising educational innovations of which you are aware, why is it valuable, and what, if anything, have you done to adopt it?
• What technology applications have you utilized in the classroom?
• Tell us how your research has influenced your teaching. In what ways have you been able to bring the insights of your research to your courses at the undergraduate level?
• Your degree is from Prestige Research University—what makes you think you would like to (or would know how to) teach in a small liberal arts college?
• How would you go about being an advocate and resource for the use of technology in the teaching and learning process?
• Have you taught distance courses? How does your teaching style differ between online and in-person courses?
• What courses have you created or proposed in the past five years?
• If you could teach any course you wanted, what would it be?
• What courses have you taught previously?
• What changes have you brought to the teaching of ____________?
• Describe a successful experience that you have had in the classroom.

Research
• How many MS and PhD students would you try to have in your lab? And what about technicians and post-docs?
• Please discuss your dissertation/current research project.
• Why did you choose your dissertation (post-doc) topic?
• What contribution does your dissertation make to the field?
• What changes would you have made to your dissertation or post-doctoral work if you were to begin again?
• How long did it take you to complete your research and write your dissertation?
• Do you have the permission of your mentor/advisor to take this work with you? (mostly asked of postdocs)
• What are your current research interests?
• Tell me about your research. (Asked by a Dean who didn’t know the field)
• How does your research fit in with this department?
• Who on our faculty would you like to collaborate with?
• What are your research plans for the next 2/5/10 years?
• Tell us about the theoretical framework of your research.
• What research experiences or skills will help you manage projects?
• How have you gone about making your research relevant to communities outside of the university?
• Have you involved your students in your research?
• How would you involve undergraduates in your research?
• Have you taught graduate or professional students?
• Have you supervised any undergraduate or graduate students?
• What grants/funding have you applied for and received? Will these funds move with you?
What are other possible sources of funding to support your research?
What are your plans for applying for external funding?
When will you have sufficient preliminary data for a grant application?
What facilities do you need to carry out your research?
What kind of startup package do you need?
This is a “publish or perish” institution with very high standards for tenure review--what are your plans for earning tenure?

Behavioral

Describe a situation in which you did “all the right things” and were still unsuccessful. What did you learn from the experience?
Think about an instance when you were given an assignment that you thought you would not be able to complete. How did you accomplish the assignment?
Have you ever had a great idea but been told that you could not implement it? How did you react? What did you do?
Can you describe how you go about solving a problem? Please give us some examples.
What is the biggest conflict you have ever been involved in at work? How did you handle the situation?
Tell us about an ethical/moral issue you have faced in your career? What impact has that experience had on your career plans?

End of Interview Questions

When could you start in the position?
What makes you different from the other candidates?
Do you have any concerns that would make you have reservations about accepting this position if it is offered to you?
Do you have any additional information that you would like to share?
If you have more than one position offer, how will you decide?
What will it take to persuade you to take this position?
What kind of salary are you looking for?
Do you have any questions for us?