

INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES: BEST PRACTICES AND SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Developing interview questions for the semi-finalists and finalists:

1. Develop interview questions that will yield sufficient information for the committee to reach a consensus and persuasive recommendation.
2. Develop a common set of questions to ask each candidate. Although most interviews are unstructured in format, all committee members should have a core set of questions that will help them compare candidates.
3. Ask the candidates the same questions in the same order. This ensures that the responses follow the same flow of thought.
4. Stick to professional—and not social—content in your interview discussions. Shared personal preferences, hobbies, or activities that are discussed could influence the “likeability” of a candidate who should be evaluated instead on professional accomplishments and interests, not personal or social ones.

REPOSITORY OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FULL-TIME FACULTY POSITIONS

Reminders:

- These are general questions only and should be tailored to your position description.
- There is no expectation that a search committee will use all of these questions. The questions you develop should adequately address the components of the position for which you are hiring. As an example, if you are hiring a Professor of Practice position and that position demands a retention of existing connections with industry, you’d want to ask at least one question specific to the candidates’ abilities in this area.
- Before proceeding into interviews, be very sure that all committee members understand what types of questions may not be asked of candidates. If you’re unsure about this, please reference the General Guidance for Faculty Search Committees document. You can find this on the [Faculty Searches and Search Committee Training page](#) of the [Provost’s website](#).
- If you have questions about how to design a question or questions to align with your position, please contact Director of Faculty Hiring Tyra Bradford.

Introductory Questions

- What attracted you to this position?
- What will you bring to our college/department/area/school?

Professional Background

These questions were adapted from sites at [UCDavis](#) and [Loyola](#) in Summer, 2023.

- Tell us a little more about your professional experiences in academia, particularly those not mentioned on your CV or in your letter of application.
- Tell us about your preferred work environment. How is this conducive to your success?
- Describe a situation where you did all the right things and were still unsuccessful. What did you learn from the experience?
- What are your professional goals for the next year? Three years? Five years? Ten years?
- What experience have you had in mentoring? Describe an experience mentoring students, faculty and/or staff?
- What professional development activities or participation in professional organizations related to this position have you been involved in over the past few years?

About the candidate and your department/area/school

- The job ad for this position included a statement about our department/area/school. What did you read that encouraged you to apply?
- Please tell us about your research interests and/or creative activities and how you see them fitting in with the department/area/school's/college's mission/direction.
- What do you look for in your academic colleagues?

About the candidate's leadership experience

- Please describe your perspective on shared governance.
- What practices do you implement during conflict situations and are they successful?
- If we were to ask your superiors (i.e., department chair/dean/provost) or your colleagues to comment about your collaboration with others, how would they respond?
- What experiences or skills will help you manage projects?

About the candidate's research/creative activity

- Describe your research agenda/creative activities, and explain how that benefits our unit, the college, and TTU.
- How would you involve undergraduate and graduate students in your research or creative activity?
- What types of resources would you require to successfully continue your research agenda or creative activities?
- What plans do you have to fund your research or creative activities?
- Describe a situation in which you have, due to external factors, needed to shift direction with your research or creative activity. How did you navigate that shift? What worked? What didn't?

About the candidate's teaching:

- What do you think are your greatest strengths as a teacher? In which areas can you use some further development?
- How do you feel your teaching style can serve our student population?
- What is your experience with teaching online or in hybrid modalities?
- What have evaluations for your teaching indicated, both positive and negative? How has evaluation feedback changed how to teach today?

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- What pedagogical changes do you see on the horizon in your discipline?

Topic	Appropriate Questions	Inappropriate Questions
Age	None	How old are you? What is your birth date? What are your retirement plans?
Arrests or Convictions of a Crime	None Texas law prohibits inquiry of criminal history in the selection process. Criminal history findings on a background check are evaluated on a job-related case by case basis.	Have you ever been convicted of a crime? Have you ever been arrested? Do you have a criminal record?
Citizenship or Nationality	Can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the U.S.? Are you fluent in any languages other than English?*	Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you born? You have a distinctive accent or name. What is your background?
Disability	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation? As noted above, for all candidates the interview process should focus on the ability to perform the essential functions of the position. If a candidate has an obvious disability or discloses a disability that reasonably might interfere with his/her ability to perform the duties of the position, it is acceptable to ask the candidate to explain how he/she would perform the essential job functions, with or	Are you disabled? What is the nature or severity of your disability? Have you ever filed a Workers' Comp claim? How much work time have you missed due to illness or other medical condition?

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	without reasonable accommodation.	
Family Status	Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with job attendance or travel requirements?* *Must be asked of all applicants, and not based on assumptions of family or parental obligations.	Are you married? What is your spouse's name? What is your maiden name? Do you have any children? Are you pregnant? Who takes care of your children?
Name	Do you have any professional information or publications under a different name?	What is your maiden name? Do you go by Miss, Mrs., or Ms.? That's an interesting name, what is its origin?
Organizations	What professional organizations are you involved with that relate to the position?	What organizations are you involved with outside of your professional work? Where do you volunteer your personal time?
Race/Ethnicity	None	What is your race/ethnicity
Residence	What is your address?	
Religion	None	What is your religion? Which [place of worship] do you attend? What are your religious holidays?
Sex	None	What is your gender? What is your gender identity?
Sexual Orientation	None	Is your partner male or female?