

It is best to create a standard list of **job-related** questions that you ask each candidate. Notes on the answers should be job-related only with no references to appearance, race, age, disability, etc. Behavioral or experience questions should be asked. A question that can be answered “yes” or “no” give very little insight into the level of skills and abilities of the candidate.

1 Flexibility/Reliability/Adaptability

- This position requires a person that is dependable and can be counted on to be here. Why do you feel you would be this person?
- The position I'm considering you for sometimes requires a change in priorities (drop one project and pick up another). How would you handle this?
- Tell me about some situations in a past job or research lab where you had to abruptly change what you were doing.
- What did you do?
- How did it affect you?

2 Self-Organization

- How do you schedule your time? Set priorities?
- What is your procedure for keeping track of matters requiring your attention?
- How do you plan your daily activities?
- Describe a typical day . . . a typical week. (Listen for planning.)
- What were your objectives for last year? Were they achieved?

3 Job Motivation

- How would your previous co-workers or team members describe your relationship with them?
- Have you ever participated in a team activity?
- If so, describe your participation.

4 Team Work

- What do you like best/least about your current research work?
- Give me some examples of experiences in a past job, internship, or at school that were satisfying (or that gave you the greatest feelings of achievement)?
- Which supervisors have you worked most effectively for, and why?

5 Ability to Work Under Stress

- Under what conditions do you work best?
- How have you dealt with pressure on your previous jobs or school?
- What kinds of pressure do you feel in your job/school?
- Tell me about them?
- How do you deal with them?
- What conditions at _____ are most frustrating to you?
- When dealing with employees, how do you cope with their feelings of frustration and impatience? (may not be relevant for students)

6 Written Communication

- What kinds of writing have you done?
- What reports that you are currently preparing (or have recently prepared) are the most challenging and why?

7 Communication

- At one time or another, we have all had some problems getting our point across when talking with another person (directly or on the telephone). Give me some examples when this may have happened to you.
- What different approaches do you use in talking with different people?
- (How do you know you are getting your point across?)

8 Rapport Building

- We've all had to work with someone who is very difficult to get along with. Give me some examples of when this happened to you?
- Why was that person difficult?
- How did you handle that person?
- How do you go about developing rapport with co-workers and/or people from other parts of the organization?

9 Initiative

- Can you think of a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was sold, implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts?
- Give me some examples of your doing more than required in your job or at school?
- Tell me about a project you generated on your own.

10 Career Ambition And Self-Development

- What are your career goals in the next five years?
- What would be your normal career path to reach those goals?
- Why do you want a position as a materials scientist?
- In what areas do you lack qualifications?

11 Learning What Motivates a Candidate

- Of all the projects and assignments you've worked on, what was the most personally rewarding and satisfying for you, and what was the least rewarding and satisfying?
- Under what conditions do you find yourself going the extra mile or putting forth extra effort?
- Under what conditions do you find yourself pulling back from a job, decreasing your effort?

12 Finding out How Determined a Candidate Is to Do a Good Job for You

- If I were to ask your last boss or advisor which three of your qualities she/he appreciated the most, what would she/he say?
- What do you have to offer that would make me glad that I hired you?
- If in making the final selection decision for this job, I am considering two finalists— An exceptionally hard worker with reasonably good skills and a reasonably hard worker with exceptional skills—which one would you advise me to hire and why?

13 Determining the Applicant's Leadership Style

- How did you resolve a recent performance problem of one of your employees?
- What do you do to make your subordinates tell you both the good news and the bad news, the things they think you want to hear and the things you need to hear?
- What experience have you had managing people with diverse backgrounds, values and demographics?

14 Predicting If the Candidate Will Be a Team Player

- Do you work better by yourself or in a team environment?
- If you get the job, should you be evaluated more on your personal excellence or on your ability to contribute to the excellence of a team?
- What are some of the problems that arise when people are assigned to work in teams?

15 Knowing How Much Freedom and Autonomy the Candidate Needs or Expects

- Give me examples in previous jobs where you thought you were given too much autonomy and examples where you thought you were given too little?
- With what kinds of management controls do you feel most comfortable and why?
- When do you think management controls are necessary?

16 Pre-Offer Questions You Can Ask According to EEOC Opinions

- How was your prior attendance record?
- How often were you tardy at your previous employment?
- How do you as a person handle stress?
- How do you respond to the pressure of deadlines?