



Types of Interview Questions

Autobiographical and Career Management

Though most interviews will begin with one of these questions, autobiographical or career management questions can occur at any time during the interview. These questions will ask about your education, experience, credentials and reasons for applying for the job.

Examples:

- Tell me about your educational background in relation to this position.
- Tell me about your most recent professional experience and how it prepares you for this position.
- Tell me about your experience in this industry.

Career management questions gauge the candidate's interest in a position and how it will fit in with their career goals. The questions may try to assess the candidate's commitment to their career, the initiative that they take to learn new skills, set career goals, and grow in their occupation. These questions can focus on career-related training or certification that the candidate has taken or practices they engage in to remain current in their field.

Examples:

- How does this position fit with your career goals?
- What professional development activities have you participated in recently and why did you decide to pursue these activities?
- Tell us what you do to remain up-to-date on research in this field.

Career management questions sometimes overlap with autobiographical questions. In their answer, the candidate should explain how the position they are interviewing for fits within their overall career goals.

Behaviour Descriptive

The behaviour descriptive questions are used to determine what an applicant has done in a particular situation. The principle of the behaviour descriptive question is that past behaviour is an indication of future behaviour. The questions focus on experiences from the applicant's history that are similar to experiences they will have at the job they are being interviewed for.

Examples:

- Using a previous job as an example, please tell us about a time when you did more than was required or expected.
- Tell me about the last presentation you gave. What was the topic? How did the audience respond?
- Tell me about a time you had to work with someone who was frustrated by their illness/injury.
- Describe how you have prepared to teach a lesson/session in the past.
- Doing a lot with a little is becoming a common financial goal. Describe a situation where you had to face both limited financial resources and high expectations.



Hypothetical Questions

These questions will begin with phrases like, “What *would* you do if...?” These types of questions can be answered in the conditional tense, *I would, I could, I may/might*. These differ from behaviour descriptive questions, which ask about past actions and are mainly answered in the past tense.

Examples:

- Let’s pretend it’s almost the first day of school. How would you prepare your classroom? (Education)
- What would you do if a client refused to pay for a design? (Graphic design/illustration)
- What would you do if a black bear wandered into the site? (Fieldwork)
- What would you do if you discovered an error in your supervisor’s work? (Research)

It is also possible that an interviewer may think that they are asking a behaviour descriptive question, but they have used a conditional tense which implies they are expecting you to respond with a “what if/” scenario. When you respond with “what if,” the interviewer may correct you and indicate that they want a previous experience. This is why we recommend that if you have encountered this hypothetical situation in the past, or if you have specific training, refer to the experience or training to answer the question.

Technical Questions

Technical skills usually require specialized training in the method and reinforcement to retain the use of the skill. Technical skills include using Excel, changing an oil filter, applying a tourniquet, or using a stereo microscope.

Refer to the job posting to determine if there are any required or essential technical skills. You may be asked to perform a simulation to measure your technical skills. Example simulations include writing a press release, giving a presentation, translating a paragraph from one language to another, or solving a programming or mathematical problem on a white board.

Occupation Specific Questions

Occupation specific skills are acquired through education and experience. For example, a veterinarian’s duties include performing physical examinations on their patients. The veterinary student has received specific training in a classroom with experiential learning and work experience to learn this task. The veterinarian should improve in their ability to complete a wellness examination with practice over time, and new information or practices may be incorporated into the wellness examination as methods change in the profession.

Examples:

- Tell me about a time when you had to onboard a new employee. (Human Resources)
- Describe how you inspect a property. What are your main points of focus and what do you ask the owner? (Realtor)
- Describe a client’s criteria when selecting a policy. (Insurance agent)
- A member of the public demands that a free publication for 2SLGBTQIA+ persons be removed from the library because minors can also take the publication. How would you respond to this request? (Librarian)

An occupation specific question may also refer to part(s) of a professional code of conduct, practice or ethics.

