

## Guidance on Interview Questions

### **General Guidance**

Interview panel members should remember that an interview is a two way process. Candidates are seeking to understand if the University is an employer they wish to work for as well as the recruitment panel seeking the best candidate.

All candidates should be asked the same questions as far as possible. This does not mean that you cannot ask different probing questions based on the answers the candidate gives. As required, you should ask questions that will elicit more information or clarify what has been said.

Questions should give candidates the opportunity to provide more information about their skills and therefore the use of open questions is essential.

It is a useful interviewing technique to use situational questions, thereby asking candidates how they would use their experience and what their approach would be to handling a situation.

Short questions can also be highly effective way of gathering information about techniques, specific skill sets but these should be balanced with experiential/situation based questions.

*“What are your greatest strengths?”* This is a classic interview question and provides the candidate with the chance to prove they have the right skills for the role. Keep the job description in mind to see whether the interviewee understands how their skills relate to the role. Remember you’re looking for transferable skills, not proof that they’ve done the role before.

*Probing questions.* These questions are useful for gaining clarification and encouraging candidates to tell you more information about a subject. Probing questions are usually a series of questions that dig deeper and provide a fuller picture. For example:

- Looking back, what would you do differently now, if anything?
- What kind of feedback did you get?
- Can you think of another example of this?
- What did you learn?'

Useful for: seeing the bigger picture, encouraging a reluctant speaker to tell you more information, and avoiding misunderstandings.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The University is committed to equality of opportunity, to eliminating discrimination and to creating an inclusive working and learning environment. Personal characteristics, beliefs or identities will not be a barrier to employment with us. We encourage candidates who align with our core value of inclusion to apply. We encourage applications from individuals who identify as Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic background, who are underrepresented at the University.

In line with this commitment all prospective employees should be asked an EDI focused question as part of their interview process. This should reflect the level of the role and the responsibilities of the post holder. Example questions are provided on the next page.

Further to this you should ensure that none of your questions are related to any protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) as this could lead to unlawful discrimination. For example, you should avoid questions about health, childcare arrangements, living arrangements, plans to get married or have children.

### **Things to watch out for**

If a candidate is not providing direct evidence or is going off on a tangent, refocus them by rephrasing the question.

If a candidate uses 'we' instead of 'I' when providing examples of past performance, remind them to focus on actions taken personally.

If you have given a candidate plenty of opportunity to provide evidence and it is still lacking, move the questioning on. Include reference to this in your notes as it will help support your scoring decisions later on.

Avoid showing any signs of your feelings about the candidate's responses. Saying things like 'that's great' or 'excellent' may give candidates a misleading impression about whether or not they have been successful.

Avoid personal comments or engaging in debates with interviewees; people who feel that they have been treated unfairly are likely to share their experiences with others.

Use the amount of time you have planned to spend on each question as a general guide and, where required, move the questioning on. This will help ensure and to ensure consistency in the process and avoid you running late for seeing other candidates.

### **Sample EDI questions**

The following is a non-exhaustive list of questions that may be of assistance for any role:

- How would you advocate for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with colleagues who don't understand its importance?
- Describe your understanding of inclusion and why it is important to this position.
- What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in a diverse, multicultural and inclusive setting?
- Tell us about a time you adapted your style in order to communicate and work effectively with those who were different from you.
- How have you increased your knowledge or understanding concerning being inclusive of people who are diverse

The following is a non-exhaustive list of questions that may be of assistance roles involving supervision/management:

- In your opinion, what is the most challenging aspect of working in a diverse environment?
- Tell us how you work with people to create and foster an inclusive workplace?
- What are some examples of ways that you have incorporated diverse or underrepresented populations into your planning or decision-making?
- As a higher education professional, what specific things have you done to promote diversity/inclusion in the community?
- What have you done in your current position to create a more inclusive environment? What does an inclusive campus look like?
- How do you go about teaching the importance of diversity and inclusivity? Why is it important?
- What is the educational value of having a campus environment that is diverse and inclusive?
- Tell us about a time you adapted your style in order to communicate and work effectively with those who were different from you?
- How would you advocate for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with colleagues who don't understand its importance?
- How have you increased your knowledge or understanding concerning being inclusive of people who are diverse?
- Describe your understanding of inclusion and why it is important to this position.
- In what ways can an organization enhance their customer experiences for diverse customers?
- If you were the successful candidate for this position, how would you connect colleagues and contacts from diverse communities to this university? What do you expect the challenges would be? What do you expect the benefits would be?
- What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in a diverse, multicultural and inclusive setting?
- What is your approach to understanding the perspectives of colleagues from different backgrounds.
- Have you ever had to handle a situation when a team member was not accepting of another team member's background? How did you do this

The following is a non-exhaustive list of questions that may be of assistance for roles involving leadership:

- What strategies have you used to respond to diversity challenges?
- In your opinion, what is the most challenging aspect of working in a diverse environment?
- What do you think is the most common mistake in an organisation's thinking about diversity?
- Please describe how you would work to create a campus environment that is welcoming, inclusive and increasingly diverse?
- Tell us how you work with people to create and foster an inclusive workplace?
- What are some examples of ways that you have incorporated diverse or underrepresented populations into your planning or decision-making?
- As a higher education professional, what specific things have you done to promote diversity/inclusion in the community?
- What have you done in your current position to create a more inclusive environment? What does an inclusive campus look like?
- How do you go about teaching the importance of diversity and inclusivity? Why is it important?
- What is the educational value of having a campus environment that is diverse and inclusive?
- Tell us about a time you adapted your style in order to communicate and work effectively with those who were different from you?
- How would you advocate for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with colleagues who don't understand its importance?
- How have you increased your knowledge or understanding concerning being inclusive of people who are diverse?
- Describe your understanding of inclusion and why it is important to this position.
- What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in a diverse, multicultural and inclusive setting?
- What are some examples of ways that you have incorporated diverse or underrepresented populations into your planning or decision-making?

The following is a non-exhaustive list of questions that may be of assistance roles relating to instruction/research:

- Describe how you, as a School member, function and communicate effectively and respectfully within the context of varying beliefs, behaviours, and backgrounds?
- For School, please provide us with examples of how you incorporate the diversity of your students in your classroom curriculum?
- Explain how diversity/inclusion has played a role in your career and contributes to the (School) you are today?
- How has your research incorporated diverse populations?
- How would you advocate for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion with colleagues who don't understand its importance?
- What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in a diverse, multicultural and inclusive setting?
- Tell us about a time you adapted your style in order to communicate and work effectively with those who were different from you?
- How have you increased your knowledge or understanding concerning being inclusive of people who are diverse?