



## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE & SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

This is an overview of types of interview questions, which can be asked of candidates interviewing for state staff (non-faculty) or management at California State University, Bakersfield. For questions regarding the recruitment and selection process, please refer to the CSUB [\*Recruitment and Selection Guide\*](#) or contact Human Resources for clarification.

This guide consists of two sections:

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## **PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW**

### **Developing Interview Questions:**

There are several types of interview questions that might be asked. Depending on the type of position that is being interviewed for, the content of these questions should be modified to reflect the level and complexity of the position being recruited.

When preparing for an interview, first review the job announcement. Study the duties and responsibilities of the assignment and the job requirements to determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the job. Determine the qualifications a candidate needs to successfully perform the job. Rank these qualifications in order of importance. Use these qualifications to develop your questions.

Structure the questions so the candidate will be able to answer with enough information for the Qualifications Appraisal Board to assess the candidate's competency relative to the questions.

Questions may be asked about job-related knowledge and skills, education and training (if job-related), and type of experience.

Questions that are not directly job-related cannot be asked. This may include questions about:

- |                       |                                                 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Age                   | Marital Status                                  |
| Ancestry              | Number and age of Children                      |
| Medical Condition     | Color                                           |
| Religion              | Race                                            |
| Disability            | Membership in Social or Political Organizations |
| Financial Obligations |                                                 |

For more information on developing appropriate job-related interview questions, please refer to the [\*Pre-Employment/Interview Inquiry Guidelines\*](#).

### **Conducting the Interview:**

The goal is to objectively rate each candidate on their potential ability to perform the job successfully.

During the interview, the applicant should be encouraged to act naturally. Keep eye contact and show genuine interest in each candidate's qualifications.

While each department's interviewing questions may differ it is required to ask the same questions of each candidate per position. If you have doubts about the candidate's understanding of the question, or if their answer is not clear, try rephrasing the question to help clarify their response.

Keep in mind the timeframe allotted to interview and allow each candidate enough time to thoroughly answer each question as well as potential follow up questions.

### **Evaluating the Candidate:**

As a member of a Qualifications Appraisal Board, you must decide whether or not a candidate possesses the minimum qualifications needed to perform the job. You should rank candidates according to the level or quality of knowledge, skills, education (if required) and abilities necessary to perform the job. It is essential to evaluate each candidate on an equal basis.

### **Qualifications Appraisal Rating Form:**

All members of the Qualifications Appraisal Rating Board must complete the Qualifications Appraisal Rating Form. The overall score for a candidate should be supported by the checks in the scoring columns. All scores will be averaged to determine the overall ranked order of applicants. No more than the top three candidates will advance to second interviews (if applicable).

Scores below a 70 must be justified with notes in the corresponding candidate's comments block on the Qualifications Appraisal Rating Form.

### **Interview Question Notes:**

It is important for all members of the Qualifications Appraisal Board to document candidate responses to all interview questions.

## EXAMPLES OF COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **General Work Experience, Background, Education and Job Interest:**

- What achievements were you most proud of in your most recent position?
- What would your former coworkers say about you and your performance? If I asked them to provide constructive feedback and tell me two or three areas where you could improve, what do you think they would say?
- What do you consider your greatest professional strength? Your greatest professional weakness?
- Provide us with a summary of your experience as it relates to this position and why are you interested in this position?
- What kinds of skills have you acquired as a result of your education?
- Describe your experience in dealing with the general public, academic personnel, or community organizations.

### **Career Goals and Self Development:**

- What career path have you established for yourself and how does this position fit into your plans?
- How do you measure success on the job?
- What keeps you challenged and motivated to do your best?
- What have you done to be more effective in your position? What are you currently doing to improve your overall performance?

### **Analytical, Problem Solving, Change Management, and Creativity:**

- Tell me about a time when you've had to use your analytical skills to solve a problem.
- Have you ever had to introduce a change into your department that was met with resistance? How did you handle the situation?
- How often has your work been interrupted by unforeseen circumstances? What do you do when this happens?
- Tell me about a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- Have you ever had to make an important decision when your boss was away? What were the circumstances and outcome?

### **Being Managed:**

- Have you ever disagreed with a decision that your boss has made? What did you do?
- What are the characteristics of an effective manager?
- What management style do you prefer to work under?

### **Interpersonal, Teamwork, and Support:**

- Give me an example of a time when working with others produced something more successful than if you had completed it on your own. What were the advantages of working with others in a team? What are some disadvantages of working in a team?
- We all have parts of our jobs that we don't especially enjoy doing. Tell me about a situation when you were asked to perform one of those tasks.
- Can you give me an example of a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with? How did you handle it?
- Has your boss ever given you feedback about a concern that you weren't aware of?
- Give me an example of a time when you made an extra effort to service a customer.
- How do you ensure that your customers are satisfied?

- What does good customer service mean to you?
- Tell me about an encounter with a customer who was unreasonable in their request. What was the situation and how did you resolve it?

**Management, Supervisory, and Negotiation:**

- Tell me about a time when you had to discipline an employee. Explain the situation and describe what you did.
- Did you have responsibility for a budget in your department? How did you make budgetary decisions?
- What work responsibilities would you prefer to delegate but cannot? Have you ever delegated something that you wish you hadn't?
- How do you motivate your employees?
- Tell me about a time when you have had to compromise significantly during a negotiation.
- Have you ever tried unsuccessfully to improve the performance of an employee? Why do you think it was unsuccessful?
- Have you ever had to develop an employee when you had no budget to do so? What did you do?

**Time Management, Planning, Organizing, Deadlines Prioritization and Initiative:**

- Tell me about an especially busy time on your job at \_\_\_\_\_. Explain how you made it through that time.
- What systems, processes, procedures, etc. have you set up in your department to make things run more efficiently?
- Tell me about a time when you went the extra mile to complete an important assignment.
- If there was a decision to be made and no procedure existed for it, what would you do?
- Give me an example of a situation when you had to follow through on work being done by others. How did you do it?
- What experience do you have with scheduling and coordinating?
- Describe a time when you were faced with multiple high-priority tasks from competing supervisors and how you completed the tasks.

**Written and Oral Communication Skills:**

- Tell me about a time when you didn't communicate things as clearly as you should have. What would you do differently now?
- What kind of writing did you have to do in your previous jobs?
- Have you ever had a time where you weren't successful in delivering a presentation? Why wasn't it successful? What would you do differently now?
- Give me an example of a time when you've had to give a presentation to a group on very short notice. How did you prepare? How well was it received?

**Accuracy and Attention to Detail:**

- Have you had to handle a lot of details in your previous positions?
- Give me an example of a time when you found errors in your work. What caused the errors? How did you correct your mistakes?
- How do you manage details so that they don't fall through the cracks?