



HR TIP SHEET

Interview Questions

In an interview, you want to ask questions that will help you determine if the candidate has the skills to successfully fulfill the job, how well they function under pressure, and how well they will fit into your team / organization.

Why are interview questions important?

- Behavioural interview questions evaluate a candidate's qualifications, experiences, and behavioural competencies to help determine their capability to meet and exceed the job's requirements.
- Situational questions assess a candidate's ability to handle stressful situations. It further evaluates their ability to work effectively in your organization's work environment and deal with demanding circumstances.
- Competency-based questions can decipher if the candidate has the technical qualifications and behavioural competencies to meet the needs of the position.
- Classic interview questions can help conclude whether the candidate has the desire to work, grow, and thrive within your organization, or whether they see the position as a means to an end or a temporary placement.
- Ultimately, there are a variety of questions that are commonly asked in interviews that provide no added value or insight as to whether the candidate is the right person for the job. However, by asking appropriate interview questions you can gain great insight as to whether you are selecting the best candidate for the job.

Common types of interview questions:

Behaviour-based questions

Behaviour-based questions are designed to elicit information about how the candidate has performed in the past. Past behaviour is believed to be a good indicator of future performance thus, it is important to develop questions around the traits and skills deemed as critical for succeeding in the position and organization.

Behaviour questions usually begin with the following phrases:

- Tell me about a time ...
- Describe a situation in which...
- Recall an instance when...
- Give me an example of...

Situational / Hypothetical questions

Situational questions are used to determine how the candidate would react to and handle real-life situations that they are expected to face on the job. For situational-based questions, candidates must have a good understanding of the job and its requirements.

Situational questions usually begin with the following phrases:

- What would you do if...
- Describe how you would handle...
- How would you deal with...

Competency-based questions

Most other questions in the interview are designed to address the candidate's technical knowledge or abilities to handle certain situations. Competency-based questions provide the opportunity to assess the key behavioural competencies required for successful job performance. Each competency-based interview question is linked to the competencies identified for the job. For example,

Competency: Initiative

- Tell me about some ideas you have put forward recently. Which of them have been acted on?
- What have you done to make your job easier and more rewarding?

Competency: Results Management

- Describe something you have done to improve the performance of your work unit.
- Describe something you have done to maximize the use of resources beyond your own work unit to achieve improved results.

Classic interview questions

Classic interview questions often enquire about a candidate's knowledge of your organization and interest in working for your company. Classic interview questions can help evaluate a candidate's desire to gain either long-term or temporary employment. When looking for a suitable employee, it is best to know their intentions and to hire someone that has an interest in working, learning, growing, and contributing to the betterment of your organization.

Classical questions include:

- What do you know about our company?
- What is it that interests you in working for us?
- What specific goals have you established for your career?

Illegal interview questions

Employers are prohibited to ask questions that are of a personal nature or to ask questions that are not job specific.

Employers should refrain from asking a candidate about their:

- Age
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Marital / Family Status
- National Origin
- Disabilities
- Personal information (weight, height)
- Conviction of Criminal Offense
- Affiliations

For more tools and tips on appropriate interview questions to ask your ICT human resources, go to the Information and Communications Technology Council website www.ictc-ctic.ca and inquire about their HR tools to help you manage your ICT human resources more effectively. Look for the *ICT Competency Profiles framework* to inform you of the competencies needed for 36 ICT work streams or ask about their latest version of the *Human Resources Management Guide*.