

Sample Opening Questions

- What do you like most & least about (name of profession)?
- Tell us a bit about your work background, and then give us a description of how you think it relates to our current opening.
- What skills, qualifications & training do you have that make you the best candidate?
- Tell me about your present job. Why did you choose it? Why do you want to leave?
- What were your primary achievements in your last position? Biggest challenge?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
- Would you please describe your interest in becoming (title of position)?
- Tell me about your normal experiences during a typical day in your current position.
- What qualities and skills do you think a successful (name of career) professional should have? Which of these qualities and skills you named, do you have?
- What was the best job you ever had? What was the worst? Why?
- Describe an ideal work environment, the perfect job and the perfect supervisor.
- What interests you most about working for OSU?

Sample Questions on Competencies/Knowledge, Skills & Abilities

- Business Acumen:
 - Tell me about a time you used your knowledge of the organization to get an idea approved.
 - Tell me about a time you used financial, industry and economic environment data to support a successful project.
 - What have you done in your positions at other companies that made a difference to the business and for which you believe you will be remembered?
 - You're new to an organization. How do you go about learning how that organization works?
 - You've been approached with a new idea for your department. How do you go about determining the feasibility and possible success of that idea?
 - What role does a "corporate culture" play in the success of a company?
 - How have you participated in planning processes?
- Change Agent:
 - Have you ever had to champion an unpopular change? What was the situation and how did you handle it?
 - Have you ever had to persuade a group to accept a proposal or idea? How did you go about doing it? What was the result and how did you feel about it?
 - Tell me about a time when big changes took place in your job. What did you do to adjust to the change?
 - If you are hired for this position and are still with this department five years from now, how do you think the organization will be different?
- Collaboration Skills:
 - Describe a difficult time you have had dealing with an employee, customer or co-worker. Why was it difficult? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?

- Describe a time when you were instrumental in creating a good relationship with another department within your company.
- You are a committee member and disagree with a point or decision. How will you respond?
- If someone asked you for assistance with a matter that is outside the parameters of your job description, what would you do?
- What would your last boss say about how you collaborate with others?
- If I asked your previous co-workers about you, what would they say?
- Communication Proficiency:
 - Give me some examples of how and when you were the spokesperson for your current company.
 - Give an example of how you carefully considered your audience prior to communicating with them. What factors influenced your communication?
 - Describe a time you used your communications skills to negotiate with an angry person.
 - Have you ever given a presentation to a group? How did you prepare for it? What would you do differently?
 - Describe a time when you were able to overcome a communications barrier(s).
 - Tell me about a time when you thought someone wasn't listening to you. What did you do?
 - How well do you communicate with others? What communication techniques do you use?
 - When do you think it is best to communicate in writing? When do you handle it face-to-face?
 - How do you respond to questions when you are unsure of the correct answer?
- Customer Focus:
 - Describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer. What was the outcome? What did you learn?
 - Tell me about a time when you knew that your customer might not get what he or she needed on time. How did you handle this?
 - Tell me about a time when you had trouble working with a difficult or demanding customer. How did you handle this?
 - Describe a time when you exceeded a customer's expectations.
 - Describe a time when you lost a customer. What would you do differently?
 - Can you share an example of a time when you developed rapport with a customer? What strategies did you use? How did you transfer the use of those strategies to other customers?
 - "Yes" is the word clients/customers/guests like to hear. However, if you had to say "no," how would you do it?
 - What do you like about being in customer service? What do you find is the most difficult part of being in customer service?
 - Describe a process or system that you improved so customers would be better served.
 - When are policy exceptions to customers warranted? Not warranted?

- Describe a time when someone failed to provide satisfactory service to you. How could that person improve his or her performance in that particular situation?
 - Give an example of one thing that is important in building repeat-customer business.
 - What types of behaviors do you find most annoying or frustrating in a customer? How do you handle those behaviors?
 - What specific process do you go through when a customer is dissatisfied?
 - How do you think your customers would describe you and your work?
 - Please tell me about a time when a client disagreed with your advice. What did you do?
 - Describe a situation in which you received an unfamiliar customer request. How did you handle it?
- Decision Making:
 - Tell me about a time you had to make a work-related decision and the steps you took to reach your decision.
 - Give a specific example of a decision you made that was not effective. Why do you think it was not effective, and what did you do when this realization was made?
 - You have a critical decision to make for your department, and all alternatives will likely be unpopular with your staff. What input do you gather before deciding? What factors do you take into consideration?
 - What methods do you use to make decisions? When do you find it most difficult to make a decision?
 - Please describe your experience interpreting federal laws and regulations, contracts and policy. How do you go about determining what is and is not allowable for a given circumstance and then communicating that information to stakeholders?
- Diversity & Inclusion:
 - What has been the most challenging aspect of being in a diverse working environment? What steps have you taken to meet this challenge?
 - How have you handled a situation when a colleague was not accepting of diversity of others?
 - What strategies have you used to address diversity challenges? What were the positives and negatives?
 - Describe a time when you included someone in your team or a project because you felt he or she would bring a different perspective.
 - What kind of leadership efforts would you make to ensure a commitment to diversity?
 - What kind of people do you find it most difficult to work with? For example, assume you are in a situation where you have to deal with a person very different from yourself and you are finding it difficult. What would you do?
 - What kinds of experiences have you had working with others with backgrounds different from your own?

- What does it mean to have a commitment to diversity, and how would you develop and apply your commitment at this company?
- What is the diversity value at your current employer? What impact did you make on this value?
- What efforts have you made or been involved with to foster diversity competence and understanding?
- What have you done to further your knowledge about diversity?
- OSU strives to build an organizational culture that will allow each individual to enter, participate and thrive – unimpaired by barriers related to his/her identity status. Describe how your background and experience has prepared you to be effective in an environment that values diversity.
- Describe your professional experiences with promoting and enhancing diversity.
- Tell us about a time that you adapted your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you.
- Have you ever realized that you had said or done something that may have been offensive to a colleague? How did you respond to that realization, and what was the outcome?
- In your experience, what are the challenges faced by members of historically underrepresented groups in the workplace? What strategies have you used to address these challenges, and how successful were those strategies?
- What does it mean for you to have a commitment to diversity? How have you demonstrated that commitment?
- What efforts have you made, or been involved with, to foster multicultural understanding and cultural competence?
- Have you encountered concerns about "chilly climate" raised by members of identity groups that have historically experienced discrimination? If so, how have you handled them?
- What measures have you taken to make someone feel comfortable when some people seemed uncomfortable with his or her presence?
- What do you see as the most challenging aspects of an increasingly diverse academic community, and what steps have you taken to meet such challenges?
- Ethical Conduct:
 - Describe for me a time when you have come across questionable business practices. How did you handle the situation?
 - Have you ever faced a significant ethical problem at work? How did you handle it?
 - Describe a time when you made a mistake at work. How did you deal with this situation and what was the outcome?
 - Have you worked in a situation where an employee, vendor or supplier had a conflict of interest? How did you handle this?
 - Suppose your supervisor asked you to get information for him or her that you knew was confidential and s/he should not have access to. What would you do?
 - If you observed a co-worker who made inappropriate sexual or racial remarks to another employee, and it was obvious to you that the situation was creating an uncomfortable environment, what would you do?

- Define professional behavior and/or conduct appropriate in the workplace.
- Explain the phrase “work ethic” and describe yours.
- Confidentiality and respect for privacy is extremely important for this position. Tell us about a time when you have had to manage a highly confidential matter and what steps you generally take to ensure that confidentiality isn’t breached.
- A faculty member or administrator has requested assistance with a situation that may not comply with OSU regulations. Describe how you would handle the situation?
- Flexibility:
 - Give an example of a time when you were trying to meet a deadline, you were interrupted, and did not make the deadline. How did you respond?
 - Give an example of a time when you had to quickly change project priorities. How did you do it?
 - Suppose you are in a situation where deadlines and priorities change frequently and rapidly. How would you handle it?
- Initiative:
 - Can you tell me about a time when you suggested a better way to perform a process?
 - Tell me about a career goal that you have accomplished and why that was important to you.
 - Could you share with us a recent accomplishment of which you are most proud?
 - Describe a time when you performed a task outside your perceived responsibilities. What was the task? Why did you perceive it to be outside your responsibilities? What was the outcome?
 - Describe a time when you kept from getting bored when dealing with routine tasks.
 - What was the most creative thing you did in your last job?
 - Describe how you take responsibility for seeing that tasks/jobs are completed, even when your particular part of the process is done and the task has been sent on to someone else.
- Leadership:
 - Describe a situation where you had to lead a group of peers? How did you handle it? Tell me about problems you had and how you handled them.
 - Tell me about a time when you organized, managed and motivated others on a complex task from beginning to end?
 - Give me an example of how you have motivated your employees.
 - A new policy is to be implemented organization-wide. You do not agree with this new policy. How do you discuss this policy with your staff?
 - Describe an ideal supervisor or manager.
 - Tell us about your management style.
 - What is the largest number of employees you have supervised and what were their job functions?
 - What is your own philosophy of management?

- What do you do to develop employees you manage?
- Please tell me about your experience as a lead worker or supervisor. How do you give feedback?
- Describe your experience training, coaching, mentoring or leading other administrative staff.
- *Learning Orientation:*
 - Describe a time when you took a new job that required a much different set of skills from what you had. How did you go about acquiring the needed skills?
 - What area of your last job was most challenging for you? Why was this specific part of the position difficult?
 - Tell me about a time when you volunteered for an assignment to expand your knowledge and skills.
 - Tell me about the one person who has influenced you the most during your career? What did you learn from him or her?
 - How do you stay informed of current ideas on management and (industry)??
 - Under what kinds of conditions do you learn best?
 - In what areas would you like to develop further? What are your plans to do that?
 - What are your career path interests?
 - What are your major professional reading sources?
 - What sorts of things have you done to become better qualified for your career?
 - What's the most valuable thing you've learned in the past year? Why?
 - Do you feel you are knowledgeable about current industry-related legislation or trends? Why or why not?
 - What was the last work-related educational seminar or class you attended? Why did you attend this course? How have you transferred the knowledge gained in the course to your work?
- *Performance Management:*
 - What was the most challenging employee performance issue you've had to deal with and how did you handle it?
 - Describe a time when you needed to discipline an employee who reported directly to you.
 - Describe your coaching or mentoring experience. What were the results?
 - Describe the steps you take when making a decision to terminate employment of an employee.
- *Personal Effectiveness & Credibility:*
 - What strengths did you rely on in your last position to make you successful in your work?
 - What do you do when you know you are right and your boss disagrees with you? Give me an example of when this has happened in your career.
 - Tell me about a situation you wish that you had handled differently based on the outcome. What was the situation? What would you change (or will you change) when faced with a similar situation?

- Describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult boss, co-worker or customer. How did you handle the situation?
 - How do you get people not under your authority to do work on your project?
 - Give us an example of how you stay organized when juggling multiple tasks.
 - How would your co-workers describe your work style?
 - Describe an experience or project in which you worked independently, and resolved a problem.
- *Problem Solving/Analysis:*
 - Describe a decision you made that would normally have been made by your supervisor? What was the outcome?
 - What was one of the toughest problems you ever solved? What process did you go through to solve it?
 - Tell me about a time when you had a work problem and didn't know what to do?
 - Tell me about a time when you solved one problem but created others?
 - How have you approached solving a problem that initially seemed insurmountable?
 - How do you analyze different options to determine which is the solution?
 - Give an example of when you used analytical techniques to design solutions to solve problems.
- *Project Management:*
 - What types of projects have you managed in the past?
 - Describe how you handled it when you had a non-productive team member on your project team?
- *Results Driven:*
 - Tell me about your current position and how you helped the organization accomplish its goals and mission.
 - How have you reacted when you found yourself stalled in an inefficient process?
 - Tell me about a time when you inherited a process that wasn't working and you had limited time to fix it.
 - How do you procure needed resources outside your direct control?
 - When you design a process to get something done, how do you establish the steps?
 - What are some of the most effective ways you use to keep tasks on track?
 - Did you have assigned goals, objectives, quotas or targets? What are they and have you met them?
- *Stress Management/Composure:*
 - Tell me about a work 'nightmare' you were involved in. How did you approach the situation and what was the outcome?
 - You are angry about an unfair decision. How do you react?
 - Describe what you would classify as a "crisis."
 - How do you know when you are stressed? What do you do to de-stress?
 - What do you do when others resist or reject your ideas or actions?

- How would your past employers describe your response to hectic or stressful situations?
- What kinds of events cause you stress on the job?
- What methods do you use to prioritize your work?
- Tell us about a time when you were short on staff and up against a deadline. How did you handle the situation? Was the deadline met?
- Describe a fast-paced environment in which you have worked, and tell us about your responsibilities in that environment. What tools do you use to maintain accuracy in your work?
- Strategic Thinking:
 - Give me an example of a time when you had to engage in future planning.
 - Tell me about a time when you participated in developing organizational business strategy. What was your role? How did you approach it?
 - Tell me how the duties and responsibilities of your current (or past) position related to the organization's business strategy.
 - What types of decisions do you make in your current position without consulting your manager or department head?
- Teamwork:
 - We often work in teams. Tell me about a time when a team project failed.
 - When groups work together, conflict often erupts. Tell me about a time that conflict occurred in one of your work groups and what you did about it.
 - Tell me about a time you pitched in to help a team member finish a project even though it "wasn't your job." What was the result?
 - Tell me about a situation where political power plays affected team dynamics. How did you or could the team have overcome or avoided this situation?
 - Tell me about a time when you were a part of a great team. What was your part in making the team effective?
 - Tell me about the most effective contribution you have made as part of a task group or special project team.
 - What do you think are the best and worst parts of working in a team environment? How do you handle it?
 - If I asked several of your co-workers about your greatest strength as a team member, what would they tell me?
 - What is essential for a team to be successful?
 - What methods do you use to work collaboratively with team members? How do you work to resolve issues with a team member?
 - Give us an example of a time when you had to pull together constituents, both for and against your methods for completing an important project or task. What was your strategy to get everyone to work together? What was the outcome?
- Technical Capacity:
 - Describe the last time that you experienced a technical problem. Whom did you go for help and why?

- Tell me about a time when you used your technical knowledge to solve a problem that appeared to be unsolvable.
 - Describe a technical report that you had to complete. What did the report entail? What was the purpose? Who was the audience?
 - How would you describe your skills in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access (relevant software used in the job)? Beginner, intermediate or advanced?
 - How many words per minute can you type?
 - What brands of hardware do you feel most comfortable dealing with?
 - What software have you had the most success supporting?
 - What characteristics do you feel are necessary for success as a technical support worker?
- *Thoroughness:*
 - When there's a decision for a new critical process, what means do you use to communicate step-by-step processes to ensure other people understand and will complete the process correctly?
 - Tell me the steps you take to monitor the quality of your work in your current job.
 - How do you decide when something is "good enough" or when it needs to be as close as possible to perfection? When have you had to make this determination? Explain.
 - Tell me how the quality of your work impacts others around you. Give me an example.
 - Tell us about a time when you were required to perform what you felt were boring or mundane tasks. How did you keep yourself motivated while performing these tasks?
- *Time Management:*
 - Was there a time when you struggled to meet a deadline? Tell us about it.
 - Describe a time you identified a barrier to your productivity and what you did about it.
 - Tell me about your productivity and time management skills.
 - What do you do when someone else is late and preventing you from accomplishing your tasks?
 - How do you determine what amount of time is reasonable for a task?
 - Describe the workload at your current position. How do you feel about it? What would you change about it, if you could?
 - Share with us a time when you have had to handle multiple projects and competing needs all at once. How did you maintain your effectiveness on the job?

Sample Closing Questions

- Describe what you see as your strengths related to this job/position. Describe what you see as your weaknesses related to this job/position.
- If we offer you this position, what contributions would you expect to make on the job?
- Why should we hire you?
- If you were offered this position, when would you be available to start?

- Now that you have learned about our company and the position you are applying for, what hesitation or reluctance would you have in accepting this job if we offer it to you?
- Tell me anything else you would like us to know about you that will aid us in making our decision.
- What questions can we answer for you?
- Verifying references is part of the hiring process. Are there any issues with contacting your current or previous employers?