

Guide to Acceptable Interview Questions

It is essential for all members of a search committee, as well as other employees interacting with applicants, to be aware of these guidelines and follow them in both spirit and letter. Avoid any direct or indirect questions that touch on material that may not be asked. This information about an applicant should never be discussed with regard to their candidacy for a position.

Subject	What May Be Asked	What May NOT
Name	Whether the applicant has worked for the University under another name. Whether any other information, such as a nickname or initials, is needed to check the candidate's work and educational record.	Maiden name of a married woman. Inquiries about the name that would seek to elicit information about the candidate's ancestry or descent.
Age	Discussion should be kept to questions about the applicant's career stage.	Inquiry into the date of birth or age of an applicant.
Gender	No questions.	Inquiry into an applicant's maiden name or any question that pertains to only one sex.
Sexual Orientation	No questions.	Inquiry into applicant's sexuality.
Religion	No questions, except in extremely rare and narrow circumstances where religious beliefs and practices could be a bona fide occupational qualification for a position, with the employer bearing a heavy burden to show that this is so.	Inquiry into an applicant's religious denomination, affiliation, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed. Avoid any questions regarding organizations and/or affiliations that would identify religion.
Birthplace	No questions.	Birthplace of applicant. Birthplace of applicant's parents, spouse, or other close relatives.
Relatives	Names of applicant's relatives already employed by the University.	Names, addresses, ages, number, or other information concerning applicant's children or other relatives not employed by the University.
National Origin	An employer may require an employee to produce documentation that evidences his or her identity and employment eligibility under federal immigration laws.	Inquiry into the applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, parentage, or nationality; nationality of parents or spouse; applicant's native language.
Citizenship	Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?	Inquiries about citizenship or whether the applicant intends to become a U.S. citizen.
Language	Inquiry into their approach for learning a new language or the steps they have taken to gain fluency in a language.	Inquiries regarding the ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language that seem designed to elicit national original or citizen/foreign status, or information about an individual's family of origin.
Education	Inquiry into the academic, vocational, or professional education of an applicant for employment.	Questions about education designed to determine how old the applicant is.
Experience	Inquiry into work experience. Inquiry into countries the applicant has visited. Inquiry into references.	Inquiry into organizations of which the applicant for employment is a member, the nature, name, or character of which would likely disclose the applicant's protected class status.