

Career Development Center



POTENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

Below is a list of potential interview questions. There is no way to guarantee exactly what questions may be asked, but this list can serve as a primer as to what types of questions to expect.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

- What are the most relevant and specific items in your background, which show you are uniquely qualified for this job?
- What do you think you could present that would be a stronger asset than other candidates?
- Why should we hire you?
- What makes you want to be a _____ ?
- How are you doing in your present job search?
- What other organizations are you looking into?
- What do you expect to get out of your career?
- What aspects of a job are most important to you?
- What are your goals for the next 4-5 years or ten years from today?
- What is your greatest accomplishment to date, and why?
- What do you consider to be your weakness?
- What do you consider to be your strength?
- How would you define success?
- Describe a situation in which someone was unhappy with your performance and how you responded.
- Do you read, speak, or write a foreign language?
- How would you spend your spare time?
- Tell me about the way you work under pressure.
- Describe a team experience and your role on that team.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Describe a time when you were able to effectively communicate with a co-worker even though you may not have had a positive, personal relationship.
- Tell me about a time when you had to defend your ideas/projects in the face of opposition.
- Describe a time when you and a good friend/co-worker were in a competitive situation. What happened?
- How would you describe your work style?
- How well do you work independently? With others?
- How do you feel about routine work? Regular hours? Overtime work?

DRIVE, AMBITION AND MOTIVATION

- Give me an example when you were exceptionally motivated. Describe this experience.
- Tell me about a time when you were told that a goal that you set was unattainable. What was your reaction?
- We often have long hours and we expect a great deal from your people. Describe a time when you went about and beyond the "call of duty."

INDEPENDENCE, MATURITY, STRESS

- Describe a time when others looked to you for leadership and guidance. What was the situation and how did you conduct yourself?
- Tell me about a situation in which you had to juggle several high-priority tasks. What was the outcome?

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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- Why did you decide on this course of study?
- What quantitative courses did you take?
- Which did you enjoy?
- What elements of your major program appealed to you the most?
- What areas of interest will you continue to pursue on your own?
- How effectively do you balance your course load at school with any jobs or extracurricular activities that you may have?
- Why did you choose Mount Holyoke College?
- How has your field of study prepared you for this position?
- Do you plan for further education?
- Describe a time when you were faced with a challenge and how you developed an innovative way to meet that challenge.
- Tell me about an innovative response to challenging work or client situation.
- Describe a time when your analytical skills were put to the test. What was the challenge, how did you react, what was the outcome?
- What Project provided you with the greatest challenge?
- How do you analyze information and arrive at decisions? Give me an example.

CO-CURRICULAR RELATED

- What activities have you been involved in?
- Which one do you find most rewarding and why?
- What is the most important thing you've learned from your co-curricular activities?
- Tell me about a challenging situation you faced in _____, how did you deal with it?
- Describe a situation where you had to take the initiative to start and begin a project, and what you learned from it.

WORK EXPERIENCE RELATED

- How did you like your summer jobs, or internship?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What was the most regarding thing about this job?
- What kind of boss would you prefer?

INDUSTRY QUESTIONS

- What do you consider to be the most important skills for this position?
- What personal characteristics are necessary for success in this field?
- What is your understanding of this industry?
- Where do you see our industry heading?

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SPECIFIC FIRM QUESTIONS

- What contribution could you make to our firm?
- Why are you interested in this organization?
- What interests you about our products/services?
- What do you know about our organization?
- How do you judge a company when you're looking for a job?
- What sources did you use to find out about us?
- Why do you want to work for a large/small firm?
- Why do you want to work for an international/local company?
- What do you think you'll be doing in this position?
- What do you think this job requires, and how do you match those requirements? Are you free to relocate? How do you feel about traveling?

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

- Do you regularly follow the national financial news or business news? (Wall Street Journal, WWW, Business Week, etc)
- What are your sources for current financial information?
- How do you think current market could affect an individual's investment strategy? How would you advise them?
- Where do you see interest rates heading in the short term (six months, to one year) and in the long run?
- What is the current rate on the 30-year US T-Bill?
- Today, if you were to design a balanced portfolio of assets, what would it consist of and what would be the percentage of holding among the assets (real estate, stocks, bonds, gold and precious metals)?
- How was the Dow Jones doing as of yesterday?
- Does the name Alan Greenspan mean anything to you?

INVESTMENT BANKING

- What is an "Investment Banker?"
- What does one do?
- What aspects of career investment banking appeal to you most?
- As a new employee at global firm, what would you bring into the firm?
- Why do you think you would be successful?
- How would you cope with a demanding schedule?
- Are all investment bankers the same, or are there differences among investment bankers?
- Many investment bankers today are given high profiles in the national news and in the business news. Are there any you can think of who presently command national attention?
- What have they done to gain notoriety (publicity, fame)?
- How does an investment banker calculate the rate of return on assets?
- What is the difference between calculating the rate of return on assets and calculating cash flow?
- In the past year, which mergers can you think of that rank among the all-time mega-deals in merger history?
- What was the role of investment bankers in all of this?
- What are your expectations for the first five years of your investment-banking career?

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QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYER

- What are your plans for this department next year?
- Which is the faster growing department in your company?
- How did you enter this field?
- What sorts of changes are occurring in your field?
- How are employees assigned to projects?

COMPANY RELATED

- Beyond the statistics, what differentiates your firm from other firms?
- How old is your organization?
- Has your firm shown substantial and consistent growth?
- What is the financial condition?
- Are there any plans for expansion?
- Who are your most immediate competitors?
- What would you say are the objectives or the “the mission” of the organization?
- What do you like most or least about this organization?
- What are the training opportunities available in the company?
- What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the firm in the next five years?
- What percentage of the managing directors are female or minorities?

CULTURE RELATED

- How are decisions made in the organization – by “committee” or participatory management?
- Would you say the people here feel more closely tied to their group, their division, or the firm as a whole?
- How much contact and exposure to management is there?
- How much freedom is given and discipline required of the new people?
- Can I progress my own pace or is it structured?

CAREER PATH RELATED

- How long does it take most people here to become managing directors? What’s the path?
- Is there a definite career path in your organization?
- How did you reach your current position?
- Would you recommend it to others?

OTHER

- What kind of person are you looking for?
- Please describe the job responsibilities for me.
- How often are performance reviews given?
- What do you do in the typical workday?
- What are your major responsibilities?
- What do you deal with?
- How many hours do you work in the average week?