

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hiring student employees is a unique opportunity to support emerging talent while meeting the operational needs of your department. As a supervisor, your role in the hiring process is essential, not only in selecting the right candidate but also in creating a positive and equitable experience for all applicants.

This guide is designed to support you in conducting effective, fair, and legally compliant interviews for student employee roles. It provides practical tools and best practices to help you identify candidates who are well-suited for your team and the responsibilities of the position.

Following the guidance in this document will better equip you to make informed hiring decisions that both support student development and departmental success.

Job Relevance is the Key Factor. Your interview questions should be designed to determine a candidate's capability to perform the essential functions you have defined for the job. Ensure you your inquiries in job-relevant language, and do not make assumptions about a candidate's abilities.

INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES

- Plan interviews ahead of time and provide the candidate with their point of contact.
- Provide interview questions on paper if the interview is in person or electronically via the chat at the start of the interview, if it is virtual. This practice facilitates the interview process by recognizing that some applicants may comprehend information more effectively when it is presented visually rather than verbally. Having questions in writing during the interview can also help candidates better organize their thoughts and provide more complete responses.
- Be consistent. What you do for one candidate, make sure you do for others.
- Keep accessibility in mind. If accommodations are needed, please contact Student Employment for further guidance.
- Listen and engage actively.
- Introduce everyone in the room or in the video (Zoom or Teams) interview and how their roles work with the position.
- Ensure everyone involved in the interview process has reviewed the list of appropriate and inappropriate questions to ask.
- Document all questions and candidate responses.
- Follow up with candidates, answer questions, and send notifications of how the search is progressing or provide an estimated timeline.

GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDELINES

Below are questions that may lead to a bias in hiring and need to be avoided, unless they are related to expected ability to perform the job.

- Affiliations: Do not ask about clubs, social organizations, or union membership; you may ask about relevant professional associations.

- Age: Do not ask a candidate's age other than, "if hired," can a candidate produce proof that he or she is 18 years of age. If the individual is a minor and would like to work, prior to employment, a Minor Consent Form will need to be submitted and signed by the parent or legal guardian of the individual.
- Alcohol or Drug Use: The only allowable question relating to current or past drug or alcohol use is, "*Do you currently use illegal drugs?*" for positions requiring drug screening.
- Criminal Record: Do not ask if a candidate has been arrested; you may ask if the candidate has ever been convicted of a crime.
- Culture/Natural Origin: You may ask if the individual can, "upon hire," provide proof of legal right to work in the United States. You may ask about language fluency if it is relevant to job performance.
- Disability: You may ask if candidates can perform essential job functions, with or without reasonable accommodation; and you may ask them to demonstrate how they would perform a job-related function. You may ask about prior attendance records.
- Marital/Family Status: Questions about marital status and family issues are discouraged except as they relate to job performance.
- Personal: Avoid questions related to appearance, home ownership, and personal financial situation.
- Race/Color: No race-related questions are legal.
- Religion: If Saturday or Sunday is a required workday, you may ask candidates if they will have a problem working on those days.
- Sex: Be sure not to make gender-related assumptions about job capabilities.

SELECTION MATRICES:

A Selection Matrix is a structured tool used to evaluate job candidates objectively by scoring them against predefined criteria. It helps reduce bias, ensure consistency, and support fair hiring decisions. This can be especially useful when candidates have limited work experience. After the interview, you may use the [Selection Matrix](#) Sample on the UTRGV Recruitment website to assist in the evaluation process of the candidate(s).

How to Build a Selection Matrix:

1. Define Key Criteria
 - Chose 4 – 6 competencies or qualifications relevant to the role
2. Assign Weights
 - Prioritize criteria based on importance to the role (for example: Communication = 30%, Administrative Skills= 20%)
3. Create a Rating Scale
 - Use a consistent scale (for example: 1 – 3) with clear definitions for each score
4. Score Candidates
 - After interviews are finalized, rate each candidate on each criterion and calculate a weighted total.

EXAMPLES OF LEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The questions below are only samples and are recommended to be used based on the specific tasks to be performed by the position. The interview questions should be different based on the level of experience and education needed for each job title.

A. GENERAL QUESTIONS

- Can you tell us about yourself as it pertains to this position?
- Tell me about a successful collaborative project you worked on in the past year. (The questions below can serve as follow up questions; however, it is encouraged to ask one question at a time to avoid confusion from the applicant.)
 - With whom did you work?
 - What was your role?
 - How did it turn out?
- Can you give us an example of a recent leadership challenge you have had to face in the workplace or during a school project?
- How would you describe your performance at your last position? Or, if the candidate does not have prior work experience, you can ask: How would you describe your performance in group projects or class assignments?
- Why should we hire you?
- What are your strengths / weaknesses?
- How can you take advantage of your strengths? The question below can serve as a follow up question; however, it is encouraged to ask one question at a time to avoid confusion from the applicant.)
 - How do you compensate for your weaknesses?

B. EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

- How do you think your education has prepared you for this position?
- What special aspects of your work or classroom experience have prepared you for this job?
- What specific skills acquired or used in previous jobs or class assignments relate to this position?
- What area of your skills/professional development do you want to improve at this time?

C. SUPERVISORY SKILLS

- How much supervision have you typically received in your previous job?
- In your present job, what approach do you take to get your people together to establish a common approach to a problem? Or, if the candidate does not have prior work experience, you can ask: Can you describe a time when you worked with a group in a class project to solve a problem? How did you help the group come to an agreement or shared approach?
- What approach do you take in getting your people to accept your ideas?

D. TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Describe a time when your workload or schoolwork seemed overwhelming.
 - How did you organize/prioritize the work?
 - What would you have done differently?
- Tell me some specific techniques you have used to improve your organizational and time management skills.
- Tell me about a time when you had to delay finishing an assignment because you did not have enough information to come to a good decision.

E. SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Can you tell me about a time you helped promote an event, project, or idea for work, a class, club, or student organization?

- Who did you have to work with to pull it off?
 - What happened?
 - What, if anything, would you do differently next time?
 - Why?
- Tell me about any work or school experience that you have had that required you to use computers.
 - What computer programs have you used?
 - For what purposes?
 - What is your level of competence with each of them?
- In this position, you will interact with a variety of individuals. How well do you communicate in writing and orally? Give me some examples.
- Tell me about key strengths you have in dealing with people.
 - Can you provide a recent example of an incident in which your strengths proved to be valuable?

F. TEAMWORK

- Do you prefer working with others or alone?
- Tell me about a time when you worked most effectively as a member of a team. How successful was the group in completing the task?
- Give an example of a time when you had to take the lead with your work or class group to get a task done. How did you achieve cooperation from your team? From other departments? Be specific.

G. CLOSING QUESTIONS

- Do you have any questions you would like to ask?
- After reviewing the job description and discussing the essential job duties, can you perform the job with or without reasonable accommodation?