

Interview Questions and Pre-Employment Inquiries

There are numerous laws and executive orders, as well as University policy, which govern the selection and hiring process. In general, the guiding principle should be to ask questions only about what you need to know to evaluate the qualifications of a candidate. If a valid reason to ask a question cannot be easily articulated, the inclusion of that question in the interview should be reconsidered. Other questions, such as those intended to “get to know” someone should only be considered if they pertain directly to the evaluation of a candidate’s qualifications or credentials. If you are unsure whether a question is appropriate or not, seek guidance before posing the question – do not pose a question and follow-up on any concerns after the fact. In addition, the questions posed to one candidate in a search must match as closely as possible the questions asked of all other candidates.

Below are listed some examples of areas of inquiry that must be avoided. In addition, examples of prohibited questions are provided and, where appropriate, an example of an allowable question is provided.

| Subject | Examples of Inappropriate Questions | Notes |
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| Age | How old are you? When did you graduate? | Inquiries about age are only permitted to establish eligibility, e.g. that a person is over 18 |
| Citizenship/National Origin | What is your native language? Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you born? | Questions regarding visa status should be discussed with ISSS beforehand. Questions about language may be asked if it is required by the position (e.g. fluency in French) |
| Family, Marital Status, and Pregnancy | Are you married? Do you have or plan to have children? What are your child care arrangements? | If required by position, you may ask if the individual is willing to travel, work occasional nights/weekends, relocate, etc. Same question should be asked for ALL candidates. |
| Affiliations (Political, Social, etc.) | What clubs or social organizations do you belong to? | May ask candidates to list memberships of professional organizations they consider relevant to the position. |
| Personal/Health | How much do you weigh? How tall are you? How is your family’s health? | |
| Disability | Do you have any disabilities? Do you require an accommodation? | May ask: “Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job, with or without an accommodation?” |
| Arrest/Conviction | Have you ever been arrested? | Consult campus HR regarding criminal background check policy |
| Military Service | If you served, were you honorably discharged? | May ask about work experience: “Which branch did you serve in?” or “What type of training did you receive in the military?” |
| Race, Gender, Gender Identity, Sexual Orientation | Questions regarding any of these topics are inappropriate | |
| Religion | What religious holidays do you observe? | |
| Financial Status/Situation | What is your credit score? | Questions may be appropriate if job requires significant financial responsibility. Consult campus HR before asking any questions related to financial status of a candidate |