Examples of Behavioral Interview Questions

**Accountability**
- "Could you tell me about a time when you encountered an inefficient process or a procedure that didn’t seem to be working?
  - What did you do about the situation?
  - What were the results?
  - What did you learn?"
- "Can you describe a time when you had to plan and coordinate a project from start to finish?
  - How did you handle it?
  - What were the results?
  - What did you learn?"
- "Can you share when the last time you volunteered for an assignment was?
  - What was the situation?
  - What were the results?
  - What did you learn?"

**Attitude**
- When friends describe your attitude, what adjectives do they use? Why?
- "What is one of the worst blows life has dealt you so far?
  - How did you handle it?
  - What did you learn from the experience?
  - How has it changed you?
  - How have you used it to grow as a person?"
- Can you share how do you change your attitude when you realize you are having a bad day?

**Change**
- "Can you share how you describe your basic approach to change?
  - Why?"
- "Could you give me an example of a successful change process you spearheaded?
  - How did it make you feel to take charge of that?
  - What were the results?
  - What did you learn?"
- "Could you give me an example of a time when you were asked to make major changes in how things were done?
  - How did you feel about it? B) How did you respond?"

**Coachability**
- "Could you tell me about a time when your boss gave you an assignment that didn’t seem to make much sense?
  - How did you handle it?
  - What happened?
  - What did you learn?"
• "Can you tell us about a time when you were coached on a task you thought you were doing correctly?
  o How did you take receiving feedback on something you thought you were doing right?
  o How did you handle the feedback?
  o What did you learn?"
• "Can you describe a situation when you needed help understanding or completing a project or task due to a lack of skills or knowledge?
  o What did you do?
  o What were the results?
  o What did you learn?"

Closing Questions
• On a scale of 1 to 10, how interested are you in this job at this point? What interests you most? Least?
• What can you do for us that someone else cannot do?
• What reservations do you have about working here?
• How far along are you in the interview process with other organizations?

Communication
• "Can you tell us how you prefer to communicate - verbally or in writing?
  o Why? "
• "Could you describe a time when you had a miscommunication with a peer?
  o How did you correct it?
  o What were the results?
  o What did you learn?"
• "Can you describe how you decide which communication channels are best with your immediate manager?
  o What were the results with your last manager?
  o What worked well?
  o What could have been improved?"

Conflict Resolution
• "Have you ever experienced a conflict you with a peer?
  o How did you handle it?
  o What were the results?"
• "Could you tell me about a time when you disagreed with your manager?
  o How did you handle the situation?
  o What were the results? "
• "Can you describe an incident in which two of your employees were in conflict?
  o How did you handle it?
  o B) What were the results?"
• "Can you describe a conflict you had with a customer?
  o How did you handle it?
  o What were the results?"
• "Could you tell me about a time you had to diffuse a difficult situation?
  o What happened?
  o How did it work out?"
What did you learn?

"Can you give me an example from your past experience of a procedure or policy you disagreed with?
  o What did you do?
  o What were the results?
  o What did you learn?"

"Can you tell us about a time when you had to manage dealing with several strong leadership personalities?
  o How did you handle the situation?
  o What were the results?
  o What did you learn?"

**Customer Service Skills**

- In your current position, how much interaction do you have with customers directly? What is your relationship?
- "Can you give an example of a time when the customer was having a bad day and took it out on you?
  o What was the situation?
    o How did you handle it?
    o What was the outcome?
    o What did you learn?"
- "What do you enjoy most about dealing with customers or the public?
  o Least?"
- "Can you tell me about a time when a customer had a legitimate complaint?
  o What was the situation?
    o How did you handle it?
    o What was the outcome?
    o What did you learn?"
- "Can you tell me about an example when you were able to make a customer exceedingly happy?
  o What was the situation?
    o How did you handle it?
    o What was the outcome?
    o What did you learn?"
- "Can you describe your basic approach to customers?
  o Why?
    o Can you give me an example of a successful customer interaction? "
- "Could you tell me about the most difficult customer you dealt with?
  o What happened?
    o How did it work out?
    o What did you learn?"
- "Please give me an example of the best customer service you've provided?
  o What happened?
    o How did it work out?
    o What did you learn?"

**Decision-making Skills**

- "Can you tell us about a time when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision?"
How did it work out?
- How has it affected the way you make decisions now?

"Can you describe a time when you were too indecisive?"
- What impact did it have?
- What did you learn?

On a scale of 1-10 when 1 is unable to make any decisions and 10 where the decisions are made instantaneously, where are you? Give an example of why you say that?

General

- "Can you briefly describe the highlights of your professional experience and your reasons for interest in this position?"
  - What have your major contributions been to the organizations you have served?
  - As you think about your career and our position, specifications, describe how your experiences match out needs.
  - Why you are interested in this position.

- What experiences have you had that you feel have specifically prepared you for the position of: (insert position title)?

- If I have three candidates who all have equal education and experience, why should we select you?

- "When you were last evaluated, what area was rated highest? Why?
  - Lowest? Why?"

- What have you done to improve on the lowest scored area of your evaluation?

- "Can you tell us about the most significant contribution you made to your current/most recent job?"
  - How was it received?
  - What did you learn?

- "Could you give me an example of an important professional goal you set for yourself, or that someone set for you?"
  - What were the results?
  - What did you learn?

- "What are you looking for in this position?"
  - What interests you about this position?

Problem Solving

- "Can you describe the most difficult problem you have had to solve as a manager?"
  - How did you handle it?
  - What were the results?

- How do you determine a problem exists?

- "Can you give an example of a problem where you involved your peers or staff in solving the problem?"
  - Who did you involve and why?
  - What were the results?

- "Can you tell me about a time when you figured out a better way to do a task?"
  - What was the situation?
  - How did you handle it?
  - What was the outcome?
  - What did you learn?"
• "Could you tell me about a time when you identified a problem that your boss needed to know about?  
  o How did you handle that? 
  o What was the outcome?"
• "Could you tell me about a time when you were given an assignment that you were sure wasn’t going to succeed?  
  o What was the ultimate outcome? 
  o What did you learn?"
• "Can you give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to gain information needed to solve a problem?  
  o What were the results? 
  o What did you learn?"
• Tell us about a situation in which you did “all the right things” and were still unsuccessful.  
  o What did you learn from the experience?
• Think about an instance when you were given an assignment that you thought you would not be able to complete. How did you eventually accomplish that assignment?
• Tell us about a time when you had a great idea but were told that you could not implement it.  
  o How did you react? 
  o What did you do?
• Describe the steps you would take to learn your new job in the absence of a formal training program.
• Tell us about the biggest conflict you have ever been involved in at work. Please explain how you went about handling the situation.

Professional Development
• In what professional development activities have you been involved with over the last few years?

Public Speaking
• What types of groups have you spoken in front of? What topics?
• When you are preparing to speak to a group, how do you prepare yourself?
• How do you tailor a speech to a particular group? What do you do to make it interesting?
• What do you enjoy most about public speaking? Least?

Research
• "What research have you personally been involved in over the past two years?  
  o Where has it been published?"
• If we asked your colleagues, what would they say about your research skills? Why?
• "What do you enjoy most about research? Why?  
  o Least? Why?"
• What have you done to involve your students in your research?
• Describe to us your current research interests.

Staff Development
• "What methods have you used to help your employees perform better in their present positions and develop them to take on greater responsibility?  
  o Tell me about one of your successes."
• "Have you ever had an employee who was not performing up to standards? 
  o How did you handle it? 
  o What were the results?"
• "Have you ever had to conduct a disciplinary interview with an employee? 
  o How was it handled? 
  o What were the results?"

Teaching
• If we asked your students, what would they say are your strengths as a professor? Why?
• "What do you enjoy most about being a professor? Why? 
  o Least? Why?"
• "What have you done in the last year to improve your course content and/or presentations to make them more interesting or relevant? 
  o How was it received?"
• "What do you enjoy most about teaching? Why? 
  o Least? Why?"
• "How have you seen the student populations needs change over the last 3-5 years? 
  What have you done to change your style of presentation to meet their needs? 
  o How has it worked, or not?"
• What courses have you created or proposed in the past 5 years?
• What changes have you brought to the teaching of _____?
• Give an example when you or someone you worked with exuded good teaching styles and what that looked like to students
• Describe how you have developed your teaching philosophy? What events lead up to this ideology?
• What do you think are your greatest strengths as an instructor? Tell us about a time when you had to overcome or move past your weaknesses as an instructor.
• Tell us about a time when you had to use your teaching style to serve a diverse student population similar to one of UMKC.
• Describe a situation where you had to engage students, particularly in a course of non-majors.
• Tell us about a time when you had to adjust your teaching style to the less motivated or under-prepared student.

Team-Oriented
• "Could you tell me about a time when you were given an assignment that really didn’t fall within your role? 
  o How did you react? 
  o What were the results? 
  o What did you learn?"
• "Could you tell me about the most difficult colleague you dealt with? 
  o How did you handle that colleague? 
  o What were the results? 
  o What did you learn?"
• "Could you tell me about a time when you heard some pretty disturbing news about one of your coworkers? 
  o What did you do with the information? 
  o What were the results?"
What did you learn?”
  - Think about a co-worker from the present or past whom you admire. Why?
  - What are the characteristics that you prize most in an employee? What behaviors or characteristics do you find intolerable and why?

**Technology**
- Describe to us how you use technology in your day-to-day job
- Tell us about a time where you had to utilize technology applications in the classroom. What technology applications have you utilized in the classroom before?
- Tell us how you go about being an advocate and resource for the use of technology in the teaching and learning process?

**Vision and Leadership**
- ”Can you describe your best effort at building a team and leading them toward a goal? What techniques or tools did you use? What was the goal? How successful were you?”
- ”Can you tell us about the largest of most far reaching impact you had outside your own organization? What was the context or situation? What exactly did you do? What was the impact of your actions?”
- ”What do you see as the most important challenge facing higher education today and colleges/schools of education? How, if you assumed this position, your knowledge, skills and experiences would enable you to meet those challenges?”
- ”Can you describe the toughest administrative challenge you’ve faced in your professional career? What was the issue? What made it challenging? How did you respond? What was the outcome?”
- ”Can you describe your most challenging budgeting experience? How did you handle it? What were the results? What did you learn?”
- ”Can you describe how you have handled peers or staff vying for limited resources? How did you handle it? What were the results? What did you learn?”

**Willingness to Learn**
- ”Can you give me an example of a time when a project required knowledge or skills you didn’t already possess? What was the situation? How did you handle it?”
What was the outcome?
What did you learn?"

"When was the last time you attended a formal training session (seminar or workshop) that was work-related?
What was it?
Who paid for it - you or the company?"

How do you keep up with all the changes in your field or industry now?
"Do you have an interest in working on job related certifications?
When were you last in a learning situation?
What was it?"

Work Ethic
Can you describe a time you pitched in and helped out your team in a pinch?
What was the situation?
How did you handle it?
What was the outcome?
What did you learn?"

"What do you consider excessive absenteeism?
How many days did you miss last year?"

Punctuality is important for the position you’ve applied for, will you have any problems being here by _____ every day?
Our organization’s policy has more than ____ absences is unacceptable, will you be able to comply?
What do you consider tardy? How many days were you tardy last year?
How have you contributed to your organization?
"Can you describe a time when you worked on a project or completed a task that was outside the normal scope of your job description?
What was the situation?
How did you handle it?
What was the outcome?
What did you learn?"

"Can you tell me about a time when you went “above and beyond” at work?
What was the situation?
How did you handle it?
What was the outcome?
What did you learn?"

Written Communication
What comments or feedback have you received about your writing?
"Can you tell me about a project or assignment that required a tremendous amount of writing?
How difficult or easy was it for you to complete the project or assignment?"

"Can you give me examples of the types of written communiques you have had to draft from scratch, i.e., proposals, brochures, reports, etc.?
How much red ink comes back?
How have they been used?"

If you were asked to rate your written communication skills on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being high, how would you rate yourself? Why?
Adopted from:

Search Committee: A Tool for Human Resource Professionals, and Committee Members

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