

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

Guidelines for Interview Questions

Questions that are not job-related are inappropriate and illegal during all phases of the search process, including formal interviews, informal interactions between candidates and search representatives (including mealtime conversations), and reference checks.

Interview questions should be occupational questions aimed at discovering what the candidate can bring to the position and the university, and must be limited to issues that directly relate to the job to be performed. There are inquiries that are not permitted because they request or allow use of information that may lead to an unfair or discriminatory decision.

There is a fine line between being social and genuinely interested in the candidate as a person, and asking questions that can be interpreted as discriminatory or illegal. Therefore, avoid asking personal questions.

Examples of legitimate questions include:

1. Work history and references
2. Ability to perform the job
3. Educational experience
4. Interpersonal skills
5. Potential starting date of employment
6. Relationship with current or last employer
7. Career goals, objectives
8. Research expertise and experience
9. Future research directions
10. Experience with teaching

Examples of inappropriate questions:

1. Marital status
2. Inquiries about children
3. Childcare arrangements
4. Family concerns
5. Health concerns
6. Arrest record
7. Religious affiliation

Sample questions that are potentially illegal include:

1. Your name is unusual. Where are you from originally?
2. Will your husband / wife need help looking for employment in our community as well?
3. Sometimes the college has open houses on Sundays. Would this interfere with your attending religious services?
4. We have a great childcare center on campus. Do you have children?
5. The students on this campus tend to be pretty conservative. How would you describe your political views?
6. Would you like information about the quality of schools in the area?
7. What is your native language?
8. Have you ever been in the military?
9. You don't look old enough to have a Ph.D., how old are you?
10. Have you been treated for mental illness?