

Tricky questions

To prepare yourself for possible questions in a job interview, we at Career Services have made a list of questions and answers about possible obstacles.

As you answer these questions, think of some examples to back up your answers! If you do not immediately know what to say, feel free to ask:

- *What do you mean (by this question)?*
- *Is it relevant for the job position?*
- *I am afraid I do not understand. Can you be more specific, please?*

About yourself

- ☐ What can you tell us about yourself? Or as a statement: "Tell us something about yourself"
- ☐ Please walk us through your CV.
- ☐ What are your strengths or positive qualities?
- ☐ What are your weaknesses or negative qualities?
- ☐ If we would call your best friend, what would he/she tell us about you?
- ☐ What are your hobbies or interests?
- ☐ What do you do in your free time?
- ☐ Is there anyone on whom you can rely, someone who supports you?
- ☐ What accomplishments are you proud of?

Education

- ☐ Why have you chosen your degree programme?
- ☐ Why did you choose this university?
- ☐ What topics did your degree programme cover?
- ☐ What subject did/do you like the most?
- ☐ Why did it take you so long to graduate?
- ☐ Why are you (not) taking additional courses?
- ☐ What else do you still want to learn? In what areas would you like to develop further?
- ☐ Why have you not finished your studies?

Your ambition

- ☐ What is your long term goal?
- ☐ What is your vision for the future?
- ☐ What is your ambition?
- ☐ Where do you see yourself in five years?
- ☐ How successful have you been so far?
- ☐ Have you ever failed in your studies or work? What happened? How did you deal with this?
- ☐ Are you satisfied with your career so far?

You as a colleague

- Can you cope with stress?
- Can you work alone or independently?
- Can you work in a team? Are you a team player?
- Are you a generalist or a specialist?
- How do you deal with criticism?
- What are the types of colleagues with whom you like or do not like to collaborate?
- How do you deal with problems?

Motivation

- What do you know about our organisation?
- Do you know who our competitors are?
- What do you know about this vacancy?
- Why do you want to work here?
- What can you offer us that others cannot?
- Why should we choose you?
- You do not have the required work experience, how do you intend to compensate for this?
- Why did you apply for this vacancy?
- What do you think is the most interesting thing about this job position?
- Why did you make certain choices in your career?
- What is the most important thing for you in this job?
- What do you expect of this job?
- What do you expect from us as an organisation?
- Are you willing to work overtime, take additional training, etc.?
- We think you are overqualified for this job, what do you feel and how will you deal with this?
- How long do you expect to stay with our organisation?
- Did you apply for other jobs?
- What are you looking for: a job or a career?
- How committed are you, because not every day will be challenging?

If you already have a job

- What are your most important tasks?
- What did you do in your previous job? What are your main activities in your current job?
- Why have you had so many jobs?
- What is your greatest success?
- What have you learned so far?
- What is the most difficult thing in your current job?
- Why are you looking for another job?
- Why were you fired?

In closing

- Do you have any questions?
- When can you start?
- What is your notice period?
- What is your impression of our company?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- Do you have a driving licence?
- Do you have a car?
- What did you think of this job interview?

Inappropriate questions

- ❑ Are you pregnant?
- ❑ Do you want children?
- ❑ Are you religious?
- ❑ Are you a member of a political party?
- ❑ How do you think you can combine this job with your family life? *Please note: there are job positions for which you do not apply for a short term job, but a career of 25 years. In such a case, this question would be relevant.*

What you can ask

- ❑ How did this vacancy come about?
- ❑ What training / courses does the organisation offer?
- ❑ What career development opportunities does the organisation provide?
- ❑ Would you be able to explain the selection procedure?
- ❑ Could you tell me something about the department in which I will be working?
- ❑ What will be my first task / tasks?
- ❑ What will my first day be like?
- ❑ What is my position within the organisation?
- ❑ What is the team composition?
- ❑ What expectations do you have regarding my position / performance?
- ❑ What is the most important thing in relation to this job position?
- ❑ Can you tell me something more about the company culture?
- ❑ What makes it fun to work here?

Possible obstacles

It may be that during your interview you need to handle obstacles, such as “you're too young”. Below we provide some possible answers that you can use to get around such obstacles.

You're too young

- ❑ Young, new ideas;
- ❑ Motivated and enthusiastic;
- ❑ Flexible and malleable;
- ❑ Cheaper;
- ❑ Just graduated and therefore equipped with up-to-date knowledge;
- ❑ People with years of experience were also young and had to start somewhere.

You do not have sufficient work experience

- ❑ I developed my skills in other situations.
- ❑ I have unpaid experience with this kind of work.
- ❑ I gained experience during my internship.
- ❑ I am ready to develop myself (with additional training / courses).
- ❑ I know I can do it (*provide an example to demonstrate why!!*).
- ❑ I would like to take this opportunity.
- ❑ I am a fast learner and adapt easily.
- ❑ I am extra motivated.
- ❑ I am committed to this position / organisation.
- ❑ I have had good training with above-average grades.
- ❑ I meet the qualifications for this position.

Too highly-educated

- I am very motivated for this job.
- I do not constitute a threat to my colleagues / supervisor.

Changing positions in the past

- I am not afraid of a challenge.
- I have broad interests and abilities.
- I am entrepreneurial, curious and open to new things.
- I carefully thought about this job.
- I do not wish to limit my possibilities.
- I have worked continuously, indicating that I am always willing and flexible to take up something new.
- Try to show the similarities between various experiences.

Wrong experience / background

- I have the basic knowledge / educational level.
- I have broad interests.
- I have been able to gain my experience from another perspective.
- My interests clearly lie in this area.
- My competencies and skills are a match with the position.