



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Don't underestimate the importance of an interview. It is the single most important part of an employer's selection process. There's no need to get butterflies or sweaty palms if you're prepared to effectively package and present your skills and abilities, work and volunteer experiences, academic accomplishments, and career interests. Below is a list of frequently ask job interview questions, along with tips for answering them. For additional practice consider scheduling a mock interview.

1. Tell me about yourself.

Use this as an opportunity to clarify your abilities and experiences in relation to what the employer is looking for. You will seldom have a better opportunity than this to sell yourself to the employer. Your answer should be no longer than two minutes and trace your interest in the field, relevant experiences, and what you are looking forward to in a future career.

2. Why do you think you would like to work for our company?

This questions tests whether you've done your homework on the company. This question is your opportunity to hit the ball out of the park, thanks to the in-depth research you should do before any interview. Best sources for researching your target company: annual reports, corporate newsletters, contacts you know at the company, and articles about the company. Aside from being knowledgeable, employers are also looking for you to show enthusiasm about the company and the work you would be doing.

3. What jobs have you held and/or why did you leave your last job?

As you report your employment history, give a summary description of each job... but keep it brief. If there were any problems, do not give an answer that reflects badly on the previous employer. Prepare yourself ahead of time to be able to answer about leaving past jobs in a calm, comfortable way without sounding tense or complaining.

4. We have many qualified applicants. Why do you think should hire you for this position?

One of the best approaches here is to convey that you are not in a position to evaluate the other candidates, but that you can answer well about yourself. Summarize why you believe that your background, experience, and interest in the job equip you to handle the work well. It is important to say "believe," because you will actually not know until you do the job how well you can do it. But if you can be convincing enough about your belief in yourself, you might get hired.

5. What are your weaknesses and what are your strengths?

Smile at this one... and be ready with a mental list made up for yourself about what you do best. Try to give three strengths and provide an example of how you use those strengths or how they will help you in the position. In describing your weaknesses, state them as possible strengths, such as "one of my weaknesses is that I find it difficult to delegate responsibility, so I tend to spend more time doing the job myself than sharing the load." You can also state a weakness and provide an explanation of how you are working to improve this area of your work.



6. What would you do if...?

This type of question presents a hypothetical situation that tests your knowledge of the job and ability to handle a difficult situation. Your attitude in dealing with the question is often more important than the actual solution you propose. It is better to cushion your statements with answers like “one of the things I might consider would be...” thus you are not committed to one single solution in the event that your answer is not what the employer wants to hear.

7. Are you willing to go where the company sends you?

Be honest when answering this question. If you are not willing to move at some point in the future, a company may not give you consideration for a position. You have to decide now as to whether the job or your location is more important to you in the event that the company needs you to move. Once hired, you can negotiate terms.



8. What are your salary requirements?

Most people are not really prepared to negotiate a salary. If the stated salary is not already openly quoted, the company still has a range in mind. You can ask, “can you discuss your salary range with me?” You can then compare this to what you think you are worth. Try to find out salary information before the interview so that you will be ready to negotiate. Until you receive a job offer, it’s best not to bring up the subject; wait for the interviewer to bring up the issue. For more information about salary negotiation please see the Salary Negotiation and Offer Evaluation Guide.

9. Do you have any questions about the company or position?

Do your homework on the company. This is another chance to demonstrate your interest and investment in this job and this company. Prepare three to six questions ahead of time that demonstrate your interest and curiosity in learning more about the company. Asking the employer questions is an important opportunity for you to learn more about whether this position is a good fit for you.

10. In what ways do you think you can contribute to our company/organization/department?

This question provides a great opportunity for you to sell yourself. Highlight relevant skills, experiences, and accomplishments.



11. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

The interviewer is assessing motivation and commitment to the company and position. It's important to have career vision that is consistent with the job. If this position does nothing to facilitate your long term goals, the interviewer may doubt your commitment or appropriateness for the position. However, while it's important to have a long-term career path in mind, make sure that you convey eagerness and commitment to the position.

12. What will your former supervisor or coworkers say about you?

Focus on strengths. You may note a weakness but frame it in positive terms. Convey a balance of confidence, humility, and your desires to grow as a professional.

13. If I asked the people you know well to describe you, what two words would they use?

This question is much like the previous question. Do not merely state what two words that would be used to describe you, include an explanation or example that backs up why those words would be selected.

14. Give me an example of a:

- a. Time you took initiative.
- b. Mistake you made and what you learned from it
- c. Situation where you had to resolve a conflict.
- d. Time when you led a group.

These are behavioral questions. Behavioral interview questions usually start with the following prompts "Tell me about a time when," "Describe a situation when," or "Give me an example of." Strong responses to behavioral interview questions use the STAR technique.

S - Situation - Describe the problem, decision, project, etc.

T - Task - What were the major tasks involved?

A - Action - What did you do?

R - Result - What were the outcomes of your actions? What did you learn?

Responses to these types of questions are difficult to create on the spot and should be prepared ahead of time. Think about various situations from work, classes, rotations, or student organizations and use the STAR technique to identify key pieces of information.

15. If you could be a box of cereal, what would you be and why?

Off-the-wall questions like this one are meant to catch you off guard. They provide a window into your personality, values, and how you cope with odd situations. Don't stress, there is usually not one right answer to questions like these. Be yourself and be sure to provide an explanation of your choice.

Common Interview Questions

Reviewing commonly asked interview questions and the position description can help you identify and select relevant skills, values, and experiences that you may need during an interview. Focus your preparation on identifying how your skills, values, and experiences will enable you to be successful in the position.



TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your career objectives? What factors did you consider when making those objectives?
- Why did you choose to go into pharmacy/pharmaceutical industry?
- Why are you interested in pharmacy/specific area of pharmacy?
- What is your most significant accomplishment to date?
- What do you feel are your strengths and how do they relate to the position?
- Why are you the best candidate for this position? / Why should I hire you?
- What weakness would you want to improve? How would you go about improving it?
- What was your least favorite class/rotation? Why?

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Give an example of a time when you had to make a difficult decision.
- Describe a situation when you had to defend a position or decision.
- Describe a time when other members of work team disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Give an example of when you had to arrive at compromise or guide others to a compromise.
- Give an example of a time when you were assigned to a complex project. Specifically, what steps did you take to prepare for and finish the project? What would you have done differently?
- Describe a situation in which you had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
- Describe a particularly stressful time you faced? How did you manage your stress during this period?
- Have you ever disagreed with a rule or procedure? What did you do?
- Give an example where you pushed yourself to do more than the minimum?
- Describe a situation where you had to do a number of things at the same time. How did you handle it? What were the results?
- Give an example of an important goal which you set in the past. How did you reach it?
- Give an example of time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle the situation?

JOBS IN ACADEMIA

- What are your research and/or teaching interests?
- Describe your previous research/teaching experience.
- What is your personal philosophy towards teaching/research/service?
- What are some characteristics of successful faculty members and researchers that you admire?

PHARMACY RESIDENCIES

- What areas of pharmacy most interest you?
- Where do you see yourself after a pharmacy practice residency? What is your ideal position in five years in all barriers were removed?
- What is your definition of pharmaceutical care?



- What was your favorite/least favorite rotation?
- What is your experience with research? What are your thoughts about completing a research project during your residency?
- Describe the most significant contribution you made to a patient's care this past year.
- If I were to ask your preceptors to describe you, what words would they use?
- Describe or discuss the most recent medical journal article you have read recently.

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

- Where does the position fit within the organization?
- Who are the primary people with whom I would be working?
- What are some examples of the best results produced by people in this job?
- What are the opportunities for growth?
- What areas need the immediate attention of the person you hire?
- What skills are most valuable in this job?
- What are your plans for new products or services?
- How would you define your organization's management philosophy?
- What are you looking for in the person who will fill this job?
- Describe a typical day.
- What kind of training would I receive?
- How much input will I have in requesting certain assignments or projects?
- What activities could I engage in now that might help me on the job if I'm hired?
- How is one evaluated both formally and informally?
- What is the retention rate for people who have been in this position after one year? After two years?
- Why do you like working here?
- What types of support services are available for families?
- How important a role does teamwork play in your company?
- What opportunities for advancement exist in your company?
- What makes people want to stay here?
- How open are managers/supervisors to different viewpoints?
- Does your company offer a mentoring program?
- What role does diversity play at this company?
- What are the next steps in the interview process?