

Interviewing and Hiring

Know the Market

Students have many employment options; what does your job have to offer other than a paycheck? What does your department have to offer students in terms of learning opportunities, pleasant work environment, sense of community, on-the-job training, and fun? It may be helpful to think about the learning objectives for this position.

Prepare for the Interview

Create a list of questions ahead of time, and clear your desk before the interview. Attempt to ask all applicants for the same job the same type of questions, although individual experiences and follow-up questions may send you down different paths. Do what you can to minimize interruptions, and focus on each candidate.

Help the Student Relax

Job interviews can make even the most seasoned employees stressed, and it is likely that you may have applicants who have no formal employment experience. Take a few minutes at the beginning of the interview to get to know the student instead of jumping straight into the questions. This will help your student relax and let their true personality come through during the interview.

Give Some Perspective

Go over the job description from the posting, and put it in the framework of the function of your office or department. For example, "Our department is responsible for on-campus employment, and the student hired for this position will be helping newly hired students complete the hiring paperwork".

Ask the Right Questions

Review the guidelines for legal questioning. Use open-ended questions instead of ones that result in "Yes" or "No" answers. Open-ended questions will give you more of an opportunity to understand the student you are interviewing. You can use the sample questions below to help guide your interview:

General/Introduction Questions

Tell me about yourself.

What type of work, paid or volunteer, have you done?

What type of work do you like to do?

Why are you interested in this job?

How did you decide on your course of studies?

What has been your favorite, or least favorite, class? Why?

What would you consider to be your greatest strength?
What area have you identified as one you'd like to develop further?

Questions Related to Qualifications for the Job

What type of experience do you have in (software applications, computers, answering the phone, working with a cash register, customer service, filing etc.)?
What, specifically, interested you about this job?
Tell me about a recent accomplishment and that made you exceptionally proud.
Tell me about a time when you showed initiative in a previous job or project.

Questions about Work Experience

What other types of jobs have you had?
What have you learned from your past jobs/volunteer experiences/memberships in organizations?
Describe a course, project, or work experience that was complex. How did you overcome the complexity?
What types of skills or experience do you have that relate to the position?
What did like most, or least, about your last job?
Tell me about a time when you were responsible for a program or project.
Describe a time when you were not happy with your performance on the job or in the classroom. What did you do?
Tell me about a time when you encountered a difficult customer. What did you do?
Have you ever supervised another worker? What was that like?

Questions about Working Style and Characteristics

To what organizations do you belong? How do you participate? What do you get out of this experience?
Tell me about a time when you went out of your way to help someone.
Describe a situation where you found yourself to be very different from other individuals. How did you handle this situation?
Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others? Why?
Discuss an important decision you have made regarding work or school.
Describe your most difficult work or school project. Why was it hard for you?
What type of person do you see yourself becoming?
Tell me about a situation in which you had to work under pressure. How did you make sure you were successful?
How do other people describe you?
What sets you apart from other candidates?