

Sample Interview Questions Sorted by Competency

Here are lists of sample questions grouped by different competencies. The list is not meant to be all-inclusive. You may use these questions as a starting point to developing your own for the position. As you review these questions, please remember that competencies help to describe “how” work gets accomplished (by engaging knowledge, skills, and abilities).

Below are two suggestions on how you might utilize these sample questions:

- Identify the competencies for the position and then copy and paste your selected questions into a Word document.
- Identify the competencies for the position and then utilize the STAR method. You will be looking for the candidate to describe the **S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction they took, and the **R**esults of that action. You are evaluating not only the situation they describe (i.e. what), but their responses, their thought processes, their decision-making and their ability to communicate and prioritize (i.e. how).

Openers/Ice Breakers/Fillers

Questions designed to put the candidate at ease and learn general background information about the candidate.

Tell me a little bit about your background, education and experience as it relates to this position.

What motivated you to apply for this job?

How or where have you done similar work in the past?

How would you describe your career path?

What have you learned about the University or University Advancement?

What makes you want to work for the Moody Global Ministries?

Why did you choose this particular field of work?

What are your greatest strengths?

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

How does this position further your career goals?

What do you enjoy most about your current position?

Ability to Conceptualize

Mentally assembles diverse pieces of information and grasps their significance as a coherent, meaningful whole.

Tell me about a time when you had to gain support for one of your new ideas. How did you get your team or supervisors to “buy-in” to the new concept?

Tell me about a time you had to implement a new idea and how you fit it into the existing framework of how things “have always been done”.

Working in Development, we frequently have to change direction or our course of action to accommodate shifts in the economy. Describe a time when you had to forecast trends and align your work in a shifting climate.

Describe a time when you weren’t quite sure what direction to take on a project. How did you move forward?

Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.

What steps do you usually follow to study a problem before making a decision? Tell me about a time when you implemented those steps.

Describe a time when you had to develop a new idea from scratch.

Accountability

Takes responsibility for accomplishing goals and achieving quality results. Follows through on commitments; is always there in the clutch.

Please describe in detail a project that you managed. How did you carry out the project and what were the end results?

Describe a situation in which you felt it was necessary to break company policy or alter procedures to get things done.

How have you adjusted your style when it was not meeting the objectives and/or people were not responding appropriately?

Describe a project or situation that demonstrates your analytical abilities.

Give an example of an important goal you set for yourself. What obstacles did you encounter along the way? Did you reach the goal?

Could you provide an example that illustrates your ability to manage multiple priorities with pre-defined deadlines? How did you handle it? What was the result?

Can you think of a situation in which an innovative course of action was needed? What did you do?

In your present position, what standards have you set for doing a good job? How did you determine them?

Tell me about a colleague or subordinate whose performance was consistently marginal. How did you handle this?

When given an important assignment, how do you approach it?

How have you developed goals in the past and what measures did you put into place to ensure you met those goals?

Tell me about a time when the outcome of your work was less than desired. How did you prevent this from happening again?

Tell me about a time when a subordinate or teammate made a mistake that affected the team as a whole. How did you respond?

Tell me about the last time you made a mistake.

Describe a time in your previous employment when you had to explain "what went wrong." How did you handle this situation?

Describe a time when you took personal accountability for a conflict and initiated contact with the individual(s) involved to explain your actions.

Tell me about an occasion when you chose, for whatever reason, not to finish a particular task.

Give me some examples of how you've reacted to changing or unreasonable timelines.

How do you motivate yourself to complete more undesirable assignments?

Adaptability/Flexibility

Effectively adjusts to changes in work processes and environment and alters behavior to align with evolving situations. Openly receives new ideas and accepts other perspectives.

Tell me about a situation when you had to adjust quickly to a change in organizational, departmental or team priorities. How did the change affect you?

Tell me about the manager/supervisor/team with whom you had the most effective relationship. Why was the relationship so effective?

Tell me about your most challenging manager/supervisor/team leader. How did you handle this difficult relationship?

Tell me about a time you had to meet a scheduled deadline while your work was being continually disrupted. What caused you most difficulty and why?

Tell me about the last time you disagreed with a new policy or procedure instituted by the senior management. Why? What did you do?

In your last position, how long did it take you to feel comfortable doing the new work? How did you go about orienting yourself to the new work?

Tell me about an important assignment that you were working on in which the specifications changed significantly but the deadline wasn't extended. What did you do?

Describe your most challenging work-related social experience and how you handled it.

Balanced Decision-Making

Makes effective decisions in a timely manner, sometimes with incomplete information and under tight deadlines and pressure; uses a mixture of analysis, wisdom, experience and judgment.

We sometimes work in an environment where the rules or guidelines are not clear. Tell me about a time you have experienced this and how did you react to it?

Some people consider themselves to be “big picture people” and others are “detail oriented”.

Which are you? Give an example of a time when you displayed this.

Give an example of a time when you had to make an important decision quickly.

Give an example of a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed. How did you arrive at a decision and what might you have done differently?

What is the toughest challenge you have had to overcome? How did you approach it?

Give me an example of when you took a risk to achieve a goal. What was the outcome?

Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. What was your thought process?

Describe the steps you go through in order to make an important decision.

Tell me about a problem that you did not solve on the first try. What did you do? [Listen for how they varied the approach.]

Give me an example of when you had to make an exception to a rule.

Provide an example of a complex project you’ve been assigned to manage at work. How did you do it? What analysis or research was necessary? Who else was involved?

Describe a project you’ve managed where you had to assign pieces to staff members. How did you decide who was responsible for each piece?

When have you sought help from others for decision-making?

Talk about a time when you feel that you made a poor decision. What happened, and what would you have done differently?

Builds Partnerships

Invests in the development of strategic and external partnerships; collaborates to reach productive agreements and fosters goodwill.

Tell me about two of your direct reports/team members that are the most different from one another. How have you managed/worked with each one?

What was the most effective teambuilding exercise you’ve led and/or participated in?

Give an example of a successful team effort that you’ve led or been involved with at work. What were the challenges involved? What were the measures of success?

Describe your experience working with various types of donors/prospects. What was your contact like? Was it direct or behind the scenes?

Tell me about your experience working with and/or managing volunteer boards. What successes have you had with previous boards and how did you overcome any challenges?

Whose help do you rely on to get your job done?

Communication – Oral

Presenting information verbally in an engaging, dynamic and concise manner.

Describe a situation when you were able to strengthen a relationship by communicating effectively. What made your communication effective?

Describe a time when you felt you had not communicated well. How did you correct the situation?

What kinds of communication situations cause you difficulty? Give an example.

Tell us about a recent successful experience making a speech or presentation. How did you prepare? What obstacles did you face? How did you handle them?

Tell us about a time when you had to present complex information. How did you ensure that your audience understood?

Tell us about a time when you had to use your verbal communication skills in order to make an important point.

Tell us about a time when you were particularly effective in a talk you gave or a seminar you taught.

Tell us about an experience in which you had to speak up in order to be sure that other people knew what you thought or felt.

Communication – Written

Presenting information in a clear, organized, concise manner that is both grammatically and technically correct.

What kinds of writing have you done in your current or previous positions?

What kinds of proposals have you written? Tell me about one of those proposals.

Give me an example of the most difficult writing assignment you have had. How did you approach it?

Of which writing assignment or writing achievement are you proudest?

Tell me about any letters or other communication that you've written in response to complaints.

Tell me about one of the most important reports you have written. What reactions did you get?

Talk about your experience writing procedures or policies for customers or others in your organization. Please provide a recent example.

Talk about your experience writing technical material for non-technical people. Please provide a recent example.

Talk about your experience writing instructions for other people. Tell me about a time when someone followed your instructions easily and a time when someone was unable to follow your instructions.

What marketing materials or ads have you written? Tell me about one of those projects.

Talk about your experience writing project reports. Tell me about the best report that you wrote.

Why do you think it was good?

Give me an example of when a writing assignment was returned to you with suggestions for improvement. How did you handle it?

Describe the most significant written document, report or presentation that you've had to complete.

Creativity and Innovation

Uses the imagination to create something new or different, such as work products, inventions, works of art or performances. Identifies new and different approaches or solutions to situations, problems and opportunities.

Provide an example of when you worked with your direct reports or team members to develop new and creative ideas to solve business problems.

Describe how you have improved the productivity or profitability of your work unit. How did you identify these opportunities for improvement?

Tell me about a problem you were responsible for solving that you knew required a unique solution. How did you know established methods wouldn't work, and what did you do?

Tell me about a problem you tried to solve but couldn't. What solutions did you try? How did you come up with new ideas?

In your current or most recent position, what have you done differently from your predecessors? Why?

Give me an example of a time when your standard approach to problem solving didn't produce the desired solution. What did you do?

Tell me about a time one of your direct reports or team members wanted to do something new but you said no. What was the idea? Why did you say no?

Give me an example of an idea you had to improve your organization's processes or procedures. How did you develop this idea? What happened?

In your professional career, what is the most unique or creative idea you have ever contributed?

Critical Thinking

Practices objective rather than subjective modes of reasoning and action. Maintains perspective when assessing qualitative and quantitative information. Appropriately challenges and questions common beliefs.

How have you approached your career search?

Tell me about a time when you recognized a problem before your manager did. What did you do?

Describe a complicated problem you have had to deal with in your job. How did you identify or gain a better understanding of that problem?

Walk me through a situation when you had to get information by asking a lot of questions of several people. How did you know what to ask?

What sources of information have you used to monitor/uncover problems in your work area? Tell me about a situation in which you used one of those sources.

Give me an example of when you were able to identify a small problem before it became a big one.

What kind of information have you been required to analyze? Describe one of the most difficult analyses.

What sources of information have you used to solve problems? Tell me about a time when you used one of those sources. [Listen for the effective use of information]

Tell me about a time when you had to analyze or interpret numerical or financial information.

Tell me about a time when you had to review detailed reports or documents to identify a problem.

Tell me about a time when you first learned of a problem when someone complained. How did you respond? Why wasn't the problem detected sooner?

Give me an example of when you had to use your fact-finding skills to gather information and solve a problem. How did you analyze the information to come to a decision?

Customer Focus

Making customers (i.e. coworkers, donors, constituents, etc.) and their needs a primary focus of one's actions; developing and sustaining productive customer relationships.

How do you ensure that your customers' needs are met? Give me an example.

How much customer interaction have you had in your current or previous positions? What percent of time do you spend with customers? Tell me about a recent memorable interaction.

Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond in order to satisfy a particular customer.

Talk about the most challenging customer that you have had to handle. What happened, and what did you do?

What skills or qualities are important for dealing effectively with customers? Give me an example of a time you displayed these skills or qualities with a customer.

Tell me about a time when you effectively handled a customer complaint.

What lessons have you learned about keeping customers satisfied? How did you learn them?

Give me an example that illustrates how you have used that knowledge.

Tell me about a time when you were not effective in handling a customer complaint.

How do you know if your customers are satisfied? Give me an example of a customer you know who was satisfied as a result of your efforts.

Describe a situation when you chose to involve others to help solve a customer's problem. What was the customer's problem and how did this help?

Describe a time when you had to ask questions and listen carefully to clarify the exact nature of the customer's problem.

Describe a time when it was particularly important to establish a good relationship with a customer. How did you go about doing that?

Delegates/Shares Responsibility

Appropriately allocates decision-making authority and/or task responsibilities to others; maximizes the use of individual resources to increase organizational effectiveness.

Tell me about a time you delegated an important task to someone.

Tell me about a time when you delegated more to an employee than you wish you had.
Tell me about a time when you didn't delegate enough. What happened?
How have you decided (1) what to delegate and (2) to whom? Give me an example of when you've applied these guidelines.
Give an example of a time when you asked someone to fill in for you at a meeting or presentation. How/why did you make that decision?
What kinds of decisions have you delegated to your direct reports? Provide a recent example.
Describe a time when you assigned work to direct reports and didn't get the results you expected. What happened?
When assigning work to direct reports, how have you determined the amount of instruction to give? Give an example.
Tell me about a situation when you asked a direct report/team member to gather information for you.
Tell me about the last major assignment you delegated. How did you decide to whom to delegate?
Tell me about a time when you delegated an important assignment to the wrong person? What happened? Why?
What kind of assignment wouldn't you delegate? Why?
When delegating an important assignment, it is important to convey your trust and confidence in that person's ability to do a job. Give me a recent example of how you did this.
Tell me about a major assignment you delegated. What resources did you provide to ensure its success?
Tell me about a situation when someone was reluctant to accept responsibility for a delegated assignment. How did you respond?

Develops Self and Others

Continually strives to develop work skills; identifies and pursues learning and career development goals; effectively applies new learning and development in daily work and career progression.

How would you describe your leadership and management skills and style?
Describe a time when you were not very satisfied with your own performance or the performance of someone who reported to you. What did you do about it?
How do you decide when to delegate work?
Give me an example of an important goal you set and tell me about your progress in reaching that goal. What steps did you take? What obstacles did you encounter?
How do you go about setting goals with subordinates? How do you involve them in this process?
What performance standards do you have for your unit? How have you communicated them?
Describe a time when you tried to persuade another person to do something that they were not very willing to do.
Give me an example of a situation that you believe highlights your leadership skills.
How do you coach an employee in completing a new assignment?
Give an example of a time when you helped a staff member accept change and make the necessary adjustments to move forward. What skills did you use?
How do you coach a subordinate to develop a new skill?
What have you done to further develop the skills of your staff?
What one area would you like to focus on for self-improvement?
What was your biggest mistake in hiring someone? What happened? How did you deal with the situation?
What was your biggest success in hiring someone? What did you do?
What have you done to further your own professional development in the past 5 years?

Diversity and Equity

Demonstrates a commitment and appreciation for equity and diversity in one's work. Collaborates with and involves others with divergent viewpoints, as well as diverse people and groups, contributing to developing an environment that is equitable, inclusive, respectful and cooperative.

How has your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment that is committed to diversity and equity?

Tell me about a time that you adapted your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you.

Can you recall a time when you gave feedback to a colleague who was not accepting of others? How did you do it?

Describe a time when you said or did something that may have been offensive to a colleague. How did you respond to this realization, and what was the outcome?

Tell me about a time when you had to adapt to a wide variety of people by understanding and accepting their perspectives.

In your experience, what are the challenges faced by members of historically underrepresented groups in the workplace? What strategies have you used to address these challenges, and how successful were those strategies?

What does it mean for you to have a commitment to diversity? How have you demonstrated that commitment, and how would you see yourself demonstrating it here?

What have you done to further your understanding of diversity? How have you demonstrated your learning?

Tell us how you work with people to create or foster diversity in the workplace.

In what ways have you integrated multicultural issues as part of your professional development?

What do you see as the most challenging aspects of an increasingly diverse academic community, and what steps have you taken to meet such challenges?

In what ways do you feel it is appropriate to incorporate topics related to diversity into the workplace? How would you do this?

How has diversity played a role in shaping your mentoring and advising style?

What is your vision of diversity at an institution such as the Moody Global Ministries?

Ethics/Integrity

Exercises good judgment in the face of competing needs; trusted, authentic, self-aware, above reproach. Operates by and adheres to University's core values and holds others accountable for them as well. Interacts with others in a way that gives confidence in self and the organization. Acts in the University's best interests and puts that interest above personal gain. Works within the limits of authority to achieve goals.

What does integrity mean to you?

Describe a time when you were asked to keep information confidential but felt the right thing would be to share the information.

Give an example of how you have acted with integrity in the workplace.

Talk about a time when your trustworthiness was challenged. How did you react?

Describe a time when you were confronted by dishonesty in the workplace. How did you handle it?

Tell us about a specific time when you had to handle a tough problem that involved fairness or ethical issues.

Trust requires personal accountability. Can you talk about a time when you chose to trust someone? What was the outcome?

Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem and what you did as a result.

Give a specific example of a policy you conformed to even though you did not agree. Why?

We are sometimes confronted with choosing between what is right and what is best for the employer. Give an example of when you faced this dilemma and how you handled it.

Give an example of an ethical decision you have had to make on the job. What factors did you consider in reaching this decision?

When have you observed someone stretching the rules at work? What did you do about it?

Tell me about an instance when you had to go against company guidelines or procedures in order to get something done.

There are two philosophies about regulations and policies. One is that they are to be followed to the letter; the other is that they are just guidelines. What is your opinion?

How do you handle receiving credit for work that was mostly completed by others?

Facilitates Change

Recognizes and fosters implementation and accepts constructive changes within the workplace.

Describe a time when you had to introduce a policy change to your work group. How did you do it?

How do you handle resistance when implementing a new idea or policy to a work group?

When is the last time you had to introduce a new idea or procedure to people on the job? How did you do it?

Tell me about a time when you experienced a major change to your normal work practices. How did you handle it?

Tell me about a time when you were very much opposed to a change that affected your work practices. How did you get through it?

Describe a time when you wanted some change in the working style of the team but others were reluctant. How did you move forward?

Follow Up

The ability to communicate time frames, gather appropriate information and evaluate results.

Describe your role in a recent team project. What was the end goal, and how did you help the team stay on task?

How do you track assignments to your direct reports? Give a specific example.

Talk about a direct report who was not following your instructions. How did you become aware of it and what did you do?

Tell me about a time when you delegated an assignment that didn't get completed on time. How did you handle this?

How do you track progress on your personal projects? Give an example.

Describe a time when you forgot to follow up with a customer. How did you resolve this?

How have you made sure that materials were ready and delivered when you needed them? Give an example.

How do you follow up on assignments that you've delegated? Give an example.

Tell me about a situation when you received an activity report on the status of a delegated assignment. How did you utilize that information?

Give an example of a time when you utilized milestones to monitor the progress of a project.

Tell me about a time when you trusted colleagues or direct reports to get something done and they let you down. What did you do?

Formal Presentation/Facilitation

The ability to communicate ideas effectively to individuals or groups when given time to prepare; delivering presentations suited to the characteristics and needs of the audience.

What presentations have you made? Can you give me a recent example?

What experience do you have with public speaking? Tell me about one of those presentations.

What approaches have you used in presenting to different audiences? Give me a specific example. How did you vary your approach to meet the needs of the audience?

Talk about your experience with classroom or workshop training. Give an example.

Tell me about one of the most demanding groups to whom you have made a presentation. What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them?

Talk about your experience giving presentations in which you made recommendations about a new product, service or procedure. How did you do it?

How do you handle speaking to an uninterested audience?

When have you presented the results of a project in a group setting? Give a specific example. Talk about your experience presenting business plans to senior management. Describe your approach to a specific presentation.

Tell me about one of your formal presentations that didn't go as well as you had hoped. What would you do differently?

Tell me about one of your most successful presentations. Why was it successful?

Describe a time when something went wrong with a presentation. What happened, and how did you handle it?

Tell me about the last time you didn't have enough time to prepare for a critical presentation. What happened?

Gains Commitment

Effectively explores alternatives and positions to facilitate agreements with the support and acceptance of all parties. Uses appropriate interpersonal styles and strategies to gain acceptance of ideas or plans.

Give an example of a time when you were able to motivate your co-workers, subordinates or volunteers at work.

Describe a time when you had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas. What was your approach? How did you alter it?

Talk about a time when you were part of a group where other members did not work well together. What did you do to help the group move forward?

What is the greatest challenge you've faced in getting buy-in and/or cooperation from a group?

Describe how you handled it. What was the outcome?

Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.

Tell me about an initiative you've had to implement and how you gained buy-in from your team.