

Competency-Based Interview Guidelines

The chart below lists example interview questions, designed to align our interviews with the desired competencies for college staff and administrator positions. These competencies are to align with those on staff/administrator performance appraisals so that we are properly preparing candidates to meet their performance expectations and the desired outcomes/responses that may be provided. The purpose of this chart is to provide guidelines for hiring managers when developing job-specific interview questions. Note that the desired response(s) provided below is a guideline to evaluate candidate responses, and individual responses may vary.

As a hiring manager, you lead the way in reviewing the eligible applicant pool and selecting candidates for interviews. Hiring managers are responsible for maintaining and providing the completed interview notes in Workday. Please refer to our hiring guide located in our Workday Resources.

Competency Measured	Sample Interview Question	Outcome/Response: What are we looking for?
Communications/Customer Service	Describe a situation where you felt you had not communicated well. How did you correct the situation?	Is able to identify communication improvements and resulting steps.
Communications/Customer Service	Describe a time when you were faced with an upset student (or stakeholder). How did you handle this situation? What actions would you take?	Is able to identify a pertinent situation, steps to de-escalation and resolution, checking back, etc.
Communications/Customer Service	How do you go about establishing rapport with a student (or colleague)? What have you done to gain their confidence? Give an example.	Provides detailed example that demonstrates care and consideration of others and ability to instill confidence.
Communications/Customer Service	When have you chosen to communicate a particular message in person as opposed to via email even though the email channel would have been a lot faster?	Provides detailed example that meets customer needs, and is able to overcome barriers to ensure commitments to customers/clients are met on time.
Collaboration	How would you describe yourself when working in a team? When you are on teams, what role do you typically hold or volunteer for? What do you enjoy most about working on a team?	Appropriately identifies a situation and understands the importance of building relationships with customers.
Collaboration	Tell me about a time when you worked closely with colleagues to achieve a certain goal. What was your specific role?	Candidate describes the application of skills related to teamwork, communication, listening skills, and emotional intelligence and the ability to clarify an appropriate role in such.

Collaboration	Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a colleague on a project. How did you resolve the disagreement, and what was the outcome?	Candidate describes conflict resolution and an appropriate response using skills related to teamwork, communication, listening skills, and emotional intelligence.
Core Values	If you were asked to identify 3 values or ethical principles that are most important to you for your own personal mission statement, what 3 would you identify?	Ensure that personal or professional values closely align with the college's core values (or are not inapposite of those values).
Core Values	Collin College's core values are Learning, Service and Involvement, Creativity and Innovation, Academic Excellence, Dignity and Respect, and Integrity. Which of Collin College's core values connect with you the most and why?	Exhibits alignment with the college's core values by specifically identifying use of integrity, dignity, and respect and providing examples of how core values are exemplified.
Core Values	Describe a situation where you had to make a difficult decision based on your own set of values.	Candidate describes the practice of emotional intelligence in managing situations. Exhibits alignment with the college's core values.
Decision Making/Problem-solving	Describe the most difficult professional relationship you've ever had and what steps you took to improve it.	Candidate defines the situation and decision to be made, set priorities, selects appropriate solutions, and logical reasoning in changing and critical thinking in the process.
Decision Making/Problem-solving	Tell me about a time when you deviated from your original plan for a specific project and what caused you to do so.	Candidate defines logical reasoning in changing course and critical thinking in the process.
Decision Making/Problem-solving	Can you give me an example of when you solved a problem using logic and sound judgment?	Candidate is able to identify an example and application of sound judgement.
Initiative	What types of tasks or projects did you generate that required you to go beyond your job description?	Candidate describes a scenario in which they have taken on a task or project in order to exceed expectations and improve overall quality.
Initiative	Tell me about a time when your initiative caused a change to occur and what the impact was.	Candidate describes a scenario in which they have taken an opportunity to improve a problem, procedure, and/or overall quality of example.

Initiative	Over your career, if one of your former supervisors were asked to describe what kind of leader you are, what do you think that supervisor would say?	Candidate identifies key initiative and/or leadership qualities that align with both taking on additional responsibilities and achievement.
Performance of Job Duties	How do you typically plan your day to manage your time effectively?	Candidate identifies organizational approach and ability to prioritize a plan appropriately.
Performance of Job Duties	Describe how your individual contributions have supported your organization's/department's goals. What are these goals?	Candidate defines contribution and skills used to achieve organization/department goals and a high level of contribution toward those goals.
Performance of Job Duties	Describe a time when you needed to create and follow a specific procedure to accomplish a project successfully.	Candidate defines the sequenced steps, skills and exhibits the qualities of a high-level performer.
Performance of Job Duties*	Scenario-based examples listed below.	Candidate assesses scenario or written exercise well and demonstrates an appropriate response.
Talent Management	Give an example of a time in which you were able to build motivation in your team members. How did you accomplish this?	Example positively motivates team members to achieve or exceed goals; is easy to approach with ideas and opinions.
Talent Management	At your prior employer, what efforts did you engage in to ensure succession planning for your position or for related functions?	Candidate identifies some experience in succession planning and/or talent development.
Talent Management	Describe a time when you had to manage a performance or behavior issue with one of your team members. How did you go about addressing this issue and what end results did you receive?	Candidate defines a high standard of professional performance and displays an ability to address issues clearly and fairly to achieve or exceed goals.
Talent Management	Give a specific example of how you have helped create an environment in which all team members are valued, encouraged, and supported.	Candidate identifies ways to include all team members and demonstrates appreciation and value of their contributions.
Workplace Culture	In what kind of work environment do you thrive or produce your best work?	Candidate identifies professional or positive work traits that will fit well with the desired workplace culture (accountability, hard-working, dedication, etc.)

Workplace Culture	What aspect of the workplace culture of your prior job(s) did you like the best? Or what aspect of the workplace culture of your prior job did you not enjoy?	Candidate identifies items that provide an insight into the candidate's view of a positive workplace culture.
Workplace Culture	If you were hired for this position, how would you measure success or the value that you could add?	Candidate identifies items that provide an insight into the candidate's view of a positive workplace culture.
Workplace Culture	If you were hired for this position, what three things do you need to succeed in this position?	Candidate identifies items that provide an insight into the candidate's view of a positive workplace culture.

***Performance of Job Duties:**

Scenario-based questions are also encouraged in order to determine the candidate's ability to perform job-specific duties with proficiency.

Below are examples of scenario-based questions that can be used in the interview process. Please partner with your campus HR Consultant to review your job-specific interview questions.

- You're in the middle of working on a project when your supervisor asks you to stop working on your current tasks and prioritize another project. How do you react? What are your next steps?
- You are in a meeting. Your supervisor makes the statement that you failed to complete a project in front of all your peers and managers from other divisions. You believe that your manager is wrong in their critique and that they have come to this conclusion hastily without knowing all the information. What would you do in this situation?
- How would you describe how the College develops communication deliverables to an internal stakeholder? To an external stakeholder?
- If you were asked to build 42 bookshelves for a campus, how would you approach this project? (Allow to Answer). And how would you balance this with the directive to start closing older work orders?
- How would you stay informed of new State or Federal guidelines, regulations, or laws pertaining to this department's work? Further, how would you work with the local authorities?
- What would you say are the most important factors of a successful interaction with a student?

- We are going to describe a potential scenario that could occur in this position and ask you to respond on what your actions would be. You are working on entering invoices when you see that there are not enough funds to process them. While you are trying to figure out what to do, the phone rings. It is coming from one of the other campuses, and the other assistant is meeting with a new student. There is also a department employee who has been sitting in the office waiting for you to help them complete a form. What do you do?

Written exercises can also be used to determine a candidate's job-related skills and abilities. Below are examples of written exercises that may be used as part of the interview process.

- You receive a letter of complaint regarding an interaction a student and/or community member had in your department. Please provide an example email you would send to the student/community member, acknowledging the concerns and trying to resolve the situation.
- Our department is preparing to launch a new project, but before announcing it to all employees, we need to notify our campus leaders. Please write an example describing the project to the leaders, based on the summary of details provided.
- Write a report on the pros and cons of a takeover bid, based on the pages of material provided.
- Summarize the facts of a case file, listing its strengths and weaknesses.
- Please read the brief financial statement provided. Write an example of the major error and/or concerns with the report, and any additional findings that should be addressed with your supervisor.