

Civil Service Interview Guide



We are EIU!

**Department of Human Resources
August 2014**



INTRODUCTION

America draws its strength and vitality from the diversity of its people. Eastern Illinois University is enriched by building a campus that celebrates and draws upon the talents of all its students, faculty, and staff.

Eastern Illinois University provides equality of opportunity in education and employment for all students and employees. Discrimination based upon race, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other basis of discrimination precluded by federal and state statutes, is strictly prohibited.

Moreover, as prescribed by federal guidelines, the University is committed to a program of affirmative action to alter patterns of employment which indicate under-representation of members of minority groups and women. The University further pledges itself to a program of affirmative action as prescribed by statute to employ, and advance in employment, qualified disabled individuals, Vietnam-era veterans, and special disabled veterans.

This interview guide has been prepared as a tool for hiring officials who interview and hire for Civil Service positions.

Eastern Illinois University Human Resources
217-581-3415
<http://www.eiu.edu/~humanres/>

INTERVIEWING

The objective of an interview is to obtain information to evaluate an applicant's qualifications. There are three main steps to the interview process:

1. Planning
2. Conducting the Interview
3. Follow Up

PLANNING

Planning provides structure, consistency, effective time management, and avoids biases. Planning involves assembling a team, knowing the job responsibilities, studying, and preparing your interview questions. It is also important to know what types applicants you may be interviewing.

1. Assemble a Team

- Have more than one person involved
- Same people should participate in all interviews
- If team member has any type of relationship with an applicant, they must be dismissed from team
- If applicant is related to someone in the department:
 - Email Human Resources contact person with information about relationship
 - Refer to IGP 11, Conflicts of Interest in Supervisory Relationships

2. Know Job Responsibilities

- What skills and personal traits are required?
- What qualities would disqualify an applicant?
- What are the working conditions and physical demands?
- Are there promotional possibilities?

3. Study

- Human Resources will provide a copy of each candidate's application and other relevant documents
- Review all documents carefully before interviewing

4. Have Interview Questions Prepared

- Ask same basic questions of all applicants
- 3 different types of questions
 1. Open-ended- designed to get applicant talking about a specific subject: Tell me _____.
 2. Close-ended- designed to get specific facts: Did you _____?
 3. Probes- designed to cross-check or supplement information: Your application says you were fired from your last job. Tell me more about that.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS



Work Experience

- What can you contribute to this department?
- What were the most and least desirable aspects of your last job?
- What are your expectations?
- How has your work experience prepared you for this position?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What were your major accomplishments at your previous job and how did you achieve them?
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict on the job? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a specific situation when you prevented a problem before it occurred.
- Give me an example of how you contributed to an atmosphere of teamwork.
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Give me an example of how you motivate others on the job.
- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation at work that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Tell me about a time when you were successfully able to deal with
- another person who was not easy to get along with.

Educational Experience

- What education or special training do you have that might be helpful to this position?
- Have you considered further schooling or specialized training?
Did you have any special achievements that relate to this job?
- How have your educational experiences prepared you for this position?
- Tell me about a time when you have too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Did you participate in any extracurricular activities that would help prepare you or qualify you for this position?

Attendance

- How would you evaluate your attendance in your previous position?
- If your employer were contacted, how many absences will they indicate occurred during the last year?

Non-work Experience Related to the Position

- What skills do you possess in your personal time that would help you in your performance of this job?
- Do you speak any foreign languages that may help in your performance of this job?

Other Employment Topics

Have you ever had to deal with an incompetent boss? How did you handle it?

What type of supervisor do you like to work for?

What are your biggest strengths and weaknesses?

Have you ever been terminated involuntarily by a previous employer?

Interest in Organization

Why are you interested in our organization?

Why did you decide to apply for this particular position?

Do you have any questions about our department or the job?

Illegal Questions

There are many questions that are illegal to ask during an interview.

Questions regarding personal information about age, race, religion, sexual orientation, family, marital status, criminal charges, financial stability, health, physical appearance, home and auto ownership, and non-work related activities are NOT appropriate to ask.

How old are you?

What does your spouse do?

How many children do you have?

What is your race?

Where do you go to church?

Are you pregnant?

What is your sexual preference?

Do you own a home?

Do you have any disabilities?

REMEMBER: There are many questions other than the examples provided that may be appropriate to ask. Always avoid asking personal questions that are not related to the position. Be sure to ask all applicants the same basic questions.

DO NOT ASK THE QUESTION UNLESS IT IS RELEVANT TO THE POSITION!

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

1. Set up the interview. Human Resources will contact candidates to schedule the interviews for you. After preparing your questions, you must provide Human Resources with an interview schedule including:
 - Interview times
 - Duration
 - Length of lag time needed between interviews
 - Location
 - Names of interviewers
2. Introduce the applicant to all of the interviewers by name and position. Try to make the applicant feel at ease. Present information about the position, department, and how both fit into the organization.
3. Explain working hours, location of work, physical demands of the job, and any particular or unusual requirements. Let applicant know if there is a physical fitness exam or a drug screen required before beginning employment. Ask the applicant if he/she finds these conditions acceptable and can meet these demands.
4. If this is a Position of Trust, explain that the successful applicant will undergo a criminal background check before beginning employment.
5. Ask your questions and be sure to take notes on the applicant's qualifications.
6. If, during the interview, someone indicates that he/she is disabled, ask what accommodations may be necessary in order for that person to do the job. Contact Human Resources if this occurs.

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APPLICANT EVALUATION FORM

Applicant's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Position Applying For: _____

| | Points 1-5 | Comments |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Related Experience | | |
| Related Education | | |
| Skills | | |
| Fit with Department and University | | |
| Other | | |
| Overall Rating | | |

CLOSING

At the conclusion of the interview, thank the applicant for his/her time and interest. Let the applicant know when you expect to make your decision and that Human Resources will make the offer of employment and notify candidates that were not selected. Always ask the applicants two final questions:

1. Is there anything that we have not covered that you would like to know more about?
2. Are you interested in this position?

Applicant Types

You may have several different categories of applicants in your interview.

1. The first type is reassignment. Employees may request to be considered for reassignment to a different position within their classification. When this happens, they will be contacted, and if they are interested in an interview with you, up to three reassignment individuals may be added to your list of applicants. If a reassignment person has already completed a probationary period in the class, they will not be required to complete another. If they have not completed their probationary period, they will complete whatever remains of their probation in their new position. If you select a reassignment, you are not required to interview other candidates on the register.
2. The second type is a current employee who is interested in a promotion within their promotional line, or a move to a new promotional line. Promotional applicants are listed in order of score and given higher priority on a register than are any applicants new to the promotional line (also called Original Entry). All other original entry applicants are ranked in order of score, regardless of whether they are a current employee or someone from outside the University.

FOLLOW UP

1. Review the applicant immediately after the interview, making specific notes of what impressed and did not impress you.
2. Check references. Make sure the applicant has given permission to contact the applicant's current employer. This should be marked on the application but it is best to ask the applicant during the interview as well. All Telephone Reference Check Forms should remain with each candidate's application. The hiring department needs to complete and document **all** candidate employment background verifications. Human Resources will not check references.
3. After you have made your selection, return all applications, resumes, and reference check forms to the Department of Human Resources along with the completed Interview Data Sheet. In accordance with University policy and Board of Trustee Regulations, Human Resources will make the offer of employment for you.
4. Prepare the workplace for your new employee making sure all necessary resources are in place. Human Resources will schedule any necessary employment physicals or background checks. Use the New Supervisor Checklist for Civil Service Employees found in the "Forms" link on the Human Resources web site.

Telephone Reference Check Form

The interviewer is responsible for all reference checks. This form provides questions you should ask a candidate's current employer. Human Resources will not do reference checks. Remember to make sure the candidate has agreed to allow you to contact his/her employer.

Applicant Evaluation Form

The form that follows is a sample form which you may use to help evaluate candidates. Taking notes about specific qualifications the applicant has and giving them a rating for how well he/she fits the job requirements will help in selecting the right candidate.

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TELEPHONE REFERENCE CHECK FORM

Candidate's Name _____

Organization Contacted _____ Job Description _____

Individual Contacted _____ Date _____

(Note: Try to speak with the applicant's supervisor, but be sure the individual you talk to has a factual basis for his or her comments.)

A. "_____ has applied for a job with Eastern Illinois University. He/She has stated that he/she worked in the _____ department as a(n) _____. Is this correct?" _____

B. "What were his/her primary responsibilities?" _____

C. "How would you rate his/her overall work performance?" _____

D. "What are his/her strengths?" _____

E. "In what areas do you feel he/she is more challenged?" _____

F. "What did he/she leave?" _____

G. "Would you reemploy her/her?" _____

H. "How would you describe her/her:
Attendance? _____ Dependability? _____ Attitude?" _____

I. "How effectively did he/she interact with co-workers?" _____

With Management? _____

J. "Is there anything else you would like to add that would help us in our selection process?"
