



## Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance

### Sample Interview Questions – Diversity and Equity

The questions that follow are intended as sample questions, and do not constitute a required list. These are examples that hiring departments and search committees can use to help them assess candidates' commitment to and experience with creating inclusive and equitable educational and workplace environments.

These samples include a range of questions that might be asked of people applying for all kinds of positions, with various levels and types of responsibility. Not every question is appropriate for every position. In addition, there are many different ways to ask questions seeking particular information, so some of the questions may be similar but with slightly different emphases. Review the questions to see how they are designed, and see whether you find any that are particularly appropriate for the position you are filling. You may adapt questions to make them more relevant to the functions of the job. You may also write your own questions that are tailored to the needs of your unit. We have provided some options for wording [in brackets] that may help in adapting questions for different roles and responsibilities.

#### COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY QUESTIONS (i.e. mindset, attitudes, philosophy)

1. Describe your understanding of diversity [inclusion] and why it is important to this position.
2. What is your definition of diversity and how or why do you think diversity is important?
3. In what ways do you think diversity is important to someone in the role of \_\_\_\_\_?
4. How are diversity [inclusion] issues and [leadership] [teaching or service] [customer service] related?
5. How would you describe your current thinking about diversity, and how has your thinking changed over time?
6. 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?
7. What are some concerns you have about working with diverse populations or communities?
8. To what extent do you believe there are significant differences in how one should work with diverse cultures within the US/US minorities and diverse cultures from other nations? Are different strategies appropriate, and if so, what are they?

#### HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. Pose a situation/scenario involving issues of diversity. Ask the applicant how she or he would respond in that situation.
2. In what ways can you imagine promoting NIU's nondiscrimination policy in your responsibilities in this position?

3. How would you [reach] [serve] diverse groups or traditionally underserved communities?
4. What challenges do you think you will face in working with a diverse population?
5. Why do you think it's important to address diversity and equity issues in this position, and what are some ways you might do that?
6. How would you advocate for diversity education and diversity initiatives with individuals who don't see its value?
7. Explain what you believe to be an effective strategy to introduce diversity to individuals who have only experienced a limited number of cultures.
8. Explain what you believe to be an effective strategy to diversify curricula
9. When dealing with a non-diverse environment or individuals with little experience with diversity, how would you approach making diversity relevant or valued?
10. How would you handle a situation in which someone made a sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise prejudiced remark?
11. How would you respond to a conversation between [co-workers] [students] [colleagues] that was clearly offensive to others?
12. If you were hired, how would you use this position to increase or enhance diversity at NIU?
13. Sometimes there is a belief that a commitment to diversity conflicts with a commitment to excellence (i.e. we will have to lower our standards to achieve or accommodate diversity). How would you describe the relationship between diversity and excellence? What kinds of leadership efforts would you undertake to encourage a commitment to excellence through diversity?
14. In what ways do you feel it is appropriate to incorporate topics related to diversity and [your discipline] into the classes you teach? How would you do this?

**PERFORMANCE OR EXPERIENCE RELATED TO DIVERSITY QUESTIONS**  
**(i.e. past experience or training that can be demonstrated)**

1. How has your [education] [previous work experience] prepared you for [working with] [teaching] a diverse population?
2. How has your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment [that values diversity] [is committed to inclusion] [where we see awareness of and respect for diversity as an important value]?
3. What is your past experience or training in [working with] [teaching] \_\_\_\_\_ populations?
4. What specific experiences have you had addressing concerns of diverse [communities] [students] [populations] at your current or previous institution? What role have you taken in addressing those concerns?
5. Please tell us about an instance when you have demonstrated leadership or commitment to equity in your work.

6. What programs or initiatives have you been part of to [work with diverse populations] [address diversity issues], and specifically what was your role in those efforts?
7. NIU, like many universities, is highly concerned with issues of diversity and equity. How has your past work demonstrated an active commitment to equity?
8. Can you describe an innovative [program] [activity] [teaching strategy] addressing diversity that you were an integral part of developing?
9. In what ways have you demonstrated commitment and sensitivity to the importance of diversity in your previous experience?
10. Describe a time when you worked to incorporate diversity issues or diverse communities into [a project or event you worked on] [a class you taught].
11. What training and experience do you have in developing and implementing [services and programs] [courses] [course objectives] [learning objectives] that incorporate diversity?
12. Describe your experiences in strategic planning related to diversity.
13. Describe your experiences in assessing diversity initiatives and their outcomes.
14. What experiences have you had with recruiting, hiring, training, and/or supervising a diverse workforce?
15. What is the most challenging situation dealing with diversity that you have faced and how did you handle it?
16. If we were to ask your colleagues or supervisor at your current position, what do you think they would say about your diversity background, experience and contributions?
17. What areas of diversity do you think you have to learn more about and how would you go about doing it?
18. What have you done to further your knowledge or understanding about diversity? How have you applied your learning?
19. How has your research incorporated diverse populations?
20. What role has diversity played in your [approach to teaching \_\_\_\_\_] [teaching strategies] [management of classroom dynamics]?
21. What kinds of experiences have you had in relating with people whose backgrounds are different than your own?
22. Have you ever realized you had said or done something that may have been offensive to a [colleague] [student] [co-worker]? How did you respond to that realization, and what was the outcome?
23. In your experience, what are the challenges faced by members of historically underrepresented groups [in the workplace] [in successfully completing their education]? What strategies have you used to address these challenges, and how successful were those strategies?

## **OWU Sample Interview Questions for Faculty Candidates Regarding Diversity** Measuring Diversity and Inclusion Key Competencies during the Interview Process

As a component of *The OWU Strategic Plan and the Statement of Aims*, Ohio Wesleyan University embraces its historic commitment to Education for Leadership and Service and strives to become an institution that is recognized for excellence in teaching, the accomplishments of its faculty, the reputation of its programs, and the engaged learning experiences of its students that can prepare them to be world citizens. Consequently, all our faculty members are expected to demonstrate diversity cultural competencies.

The following are among the questions faculty-hiring committees can ask to potential candidates of employment to measure whether they meet the essential functions of the job relating to diversity competency. To help facilitate the search process, the Office of the Provost has compiled a list of questions that faculty might use during telephone, conference, and/or on-campus interviews. However, all of the questions are unbiased and appropriate to ask.

Good luck in your search for your next colleague and we hope you find this helpful.

The Office of the Provost

### **Sample Questions**

1. Ohio Wesleyan University's goal is transforming into a premier liberal arts college. This opportunity is grounded in a vision for liberal education that enriches the life changing education offered to OWU students. We empower each other and value our diversity, celebrate our success. What is your model of success and how will you fit into this culture and further this goal?
2. Please describe strategies that you have used to create an inclusive learning environment for your students.
3. Please describe how you would work to create a campus and classroom environment that is welcoming, inclusive and increasingly diverse.
4. Describe how you, as a faculty member, function and communicate effectively, sensitively and respectfully within the context of varying beliefs, behaviors, identities and backgrounds.
5. What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in diverse, multicultural and inclusive settings.
6. What is your definition of diversity? How do you encourage people to honor the uniqueness of each individual? How do you challenge stereotypes and promote sensitivity and inclusion?

7. How do you seek opportunities to improve the learning environment to better meet the needs of students from all over the world and from students who have been historically marginalized in the USA, such as the Native Americans, African Americans, Latinx/Hispanics, Asians, and other communities?
8. What is your method of communication with students who are different from the Professor? How do you procure their academic success? How do you convey thoughts, ideas, or adverse conclusions?
9. Describe your experience or explain how you have been educated to understand the history of African Americans, Latinx/Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans and other historically marginalized communities in the USA.
10. Describe if you have had experience in mentoring and/or teaching students of diverse backgrounds. Offer an example. What methods have proven to be effective and what have you learned from the experience?
11. Describe if you have had experience in mentoring and/or teaching students of underrepresented backgrounds. Offer an example. What methods have proven to be effective and what have you learned from the experience?
12. Students of color are not well represented in the field, including ours. How do you see yourself contributing to the recruitment and retention process of students of color?
13. Tell us about a time when you had to work with someone who had the direct opposite personality of yours?
14. Give an example of how you walk in the shoes of people we serve and those with whom we work.
15. Give an example of how you honor commitments and describe a time when you were asked to compromise your ethics. What did you do? What would you do in the future?
16. How do you think a Higher-Ed institution benefit from multiculturalism?
17. How do you define social justice?
18. Describe a situation in which you encountered a conflict with a person from a different cultural background than yours. How did you handle the situation? (Please be specific)
19. In previous work experiences, what has been the greatest obstacle in developing a multicultural-competent staff? Where there institutional efforts in developing a multicultural-competent environment?

20. Describe a situation in which you utilized your multicultural skills to solve a problem.
21. What ideas do you have for educating students about diversity?
22. How has diversity played a role in shaping your social style?
23. Tell us about a time when you changed your style to work more effectively with a person from a different background.
24. Tell us about a time you took responsibility/accountability for an action that may have been offensive to the recipient and how you did that.
25. Talk about a time when you had to abide by a policy that you did not personally agree with.
26. Talk about a time when you had to deal with conflict at work.
27. Talk about a time when you were placed on a team and you or someone on that team didn't see eye-to-eye.
28. Describe the most difficult person you've ever had to deal with at work.
29. What students do you find most challenging to teach?
30. Describe a time when you needed to work cooperatively with someone that did not share the same ideas as you.
31. Give an example of a time when you had to make an adjustment to your personal style in order to successfully work with a coworker.
32. Give an example of a time when you had to expend social capital to champion social justice.
33. Give an example of a time when you could not be tolerant of another person's point of view.
34. What research or work, if any, have you done in the area of diversity, cultural competency, health disparities, etc.?
35. Have you done any research or work in the area of social justice in the community?
36. Have you done any research or work in the area of service in the community?

37. What do you see as the most challenging aspects of an increasingly diverse academic community? Follow-up question: What initiatives have you taken to meet such challenges?
38. What is your sense of the complexities and leadership challenges related to social justice and multiculturalism?
39. How would you work with people under your supervision to foster a climate receptive to diversity in the department, the curriculum, staff meetings, printed materials, initiatives, etc?
40. Suppose that in working with a University unit you discover a pervasive belief that diversity and excellence are somehow in conflict. How do you conceptualize the relationship between diversity and excellence? What kinds of leadership efforts are needed to encourage a commitment to excellence through diversity?
41. In what ways have you integrated multicultural issues as part of your professional development?
42. Talk about how you responded to a co-worker who made an insensitive remark.
43. Talk about a time that you successfully adapted to a culturally different environment.
44. What have you learned from working with diverse populations?
45. What issues have arisen from your work with non-traditional and first-generation students? What has gone smoothly and what has been challenging in this work?
46. Do you speak any other languages other than English? If so, what language(s) and to what extent are you fluent in that/those language(s)?
47. What are some specific things you are going to do within the next two years to further your development in cultural competency?
48. How does your own identity impact your work with a diverse staff and student body?
49. Tell us about a time when you successfully managed a difficult student and a time when you did not successfully manage a difficult student. What did you learn about yourself?
50. When interacting with a person from a different culture than your own, how do you ensure that communication is effective?

**Source documents:**

Portland State University

<https://www.pdx.edu/hr/sites/www.pdx.edu.hr/files/Interview%20Questions%20Regarding%20Diversity.pdf>

Iowa State University,

<http://www.provost.iastate.edu/administrator-resources/recruitment/guide/appendix-5>

University of Massachusetts, Lowell

<http://www.uml.edu/hr/pdf/REVISED-F-Sample%20Interview%20Qs-%20Faculty.pdf>

Search Committee: A Tool for Human Resource Professionals, Administrators, and Committee Members  
by Christopher D. Lee, Ph.D. SPHR, CUPA-HR



## **Sample Interview Questions for Faculty Candidates**

To help facilitate the search process, the Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the Office of Academic Personnel have compiled a list of questions that faculty might use during telephone and/or on-campus interviews. However, all of the questions are unbiased and appropriate to ask. **We hope you find this helpful.**

### **Introductory Questions**

- What attracted you to this position?
- What contributions can you make to our college/department?
- The University is committed to building a culturally diverse and inclusive environment. How would you further this goal?

### **About the candidate's professional background**

- Tell us a little more about your professional experiences, particularly those not mentioned on your resume/application.
- What do you consider to be your particular strength(s)?
- What motivates you to do your best?
- Describe how you go about solving a problem? Please give us some examples.
- What is the biggest conflict you have ever been involved in at work? How did you handle the situation? What did you learn?
- What experiences or skills will help you manage projects?

- Tell us about your preferred work environment.
- Describe a situation in which you did all the right things, and were still unsuccessful. What did you learn from the experience?
- In your opinion, how should the workload of a faculty member be split and into what areas?
- What are your professional goals?
- What pedagogical changes do you see on the horizon in your discipline?
- How do you view your role in the faculty development process?
- What experience have you had in mentoring? Describe an experience mentoring diverse students, faculty and/or staff?
- What professional development activities have you been involved in over the past few years?

### **About the candidate and your department**

- Please tell us about your research interests and how you see them fitting in with the department's/college's mission/direction.
- Tell us how you go about organizing your work. Also, describe any experience you have had with computers or other tools as they relate to organization.
- Students of color are not well represented in the field, including ours. How do you see yourself contributing to the recruitment and retention process of students of color?
- What do you look for in your academic colleagues?

### **About the candidate's leadership (management/supervisory) experience**

- Are you most comfortable with verbal or written presentations?

- What are three leadership competencies you possess? Please provide an example of when you have used these to provide effective leadership during a difficult time.
- Have you ever experienced a situation in which you had difficulties getting people to accept your ideas? What was your approach to handling these situations?
- What practices do you implement during conflict situations and are they successful?
- If we were to ask your superiors (i.e., department chair/dean/provost) or your colleagues to comment about your leadership how would they respond?
- Who have you coached or mentored to achieve success?
- Have you ever had to make a decision without knowledge of all the necessary data?
- What are the techniques that you use to clarify the meaning of unclear messages?
- How do you maintain a positive discussion?

### **About the candidate's research**

- What grants have you received in the past and what plans do you have to fund your research?
- What is your research agenda and how does that benefit this college or university?
- What types of resources would you require to successfully continue your research agenda?
- What research, if any, have you done in the area of diversity, cultural competency, health disparities, etc.?

- With whom would you collaborate, if you were selected for this position?
- How would you involve undergraduate and graduate students in your research?
- Please identify your most significant work and why you picked it.

### **About the candidate's teaching**

- What kind of teaching experiences, if any, have you had with computer technology?
- Tell us about your teaching methods, philosophy and goals.
- What is your experience with distance learning, on-line courses, and using technology in the classroom?
- What is your experience in teaching students of diverse backgrounds? What methods have proven to be effective and what have you learned from the experience?
- Describe strategies that you have used to create an inclusive learning environment for your students.
- Tell us about a time when you successfully managed a difficult student and a time when you did not successfully manage a difficult student.
- What students do you find most challenging to teach?
- What have evaluations for your teaching indicated, both positive and negative? How has evaluation feedback changed how to teach today?

### **About the candidate's clinical experience**

- Describe your experience in providing care to a patient who presented unusual social or ethical issues. How did you manage the treatment for this patient? What could you have done differently?

- Tell us about a time when you felt a patient was difficult to diagnose and how you approached the diagnosis.

### **About the candidate's outreach**

- Please tell us your experience in developing programs and partnerships with external constituents and how you would apply that experience to UCDHS?
- Describe your experience in professional practice or outreach.
- Describe some service activities you have been involved in.

### **Source documents:**

Iowa State University, <http://www.provost.iastate.edu/administrator-resources/recruitment/guide/appendix-5>

University of Massachusetts, Lowell

<http://www.uml.edu/hr/pdf/REVISED-F-Sample%20Interview%20Qs-%20Faculty.pdf>

Search Committee: A Tool for Human Resource Professionals, Administrators, and Committee Members by Christopher D. Lee, Ph.D. SPHR, CUPA-HR

## Sample Interview Questions

In response to a suggestion from a faculty member to help facilitate the search process, The Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office has compiled a list of questions that faculty might use during telephone and/or on-campus interviews. Some of the questions deal with the same content but are phrased differently; other questions may not pertain to a specific discipline. However, all of the questions are unbiased and appropriate to ask. **As time progresses, we hope to update the list, but wanted to provide you with this list before many of the searches get underway. We hope you find this helpful.**

- What do you consider to be one of your greatest achievements? Why?
- What is one of the more promising educational innovations of which you are aware, why is it valuable, and what, if anything, have you done to adopt it?
- What is the relevance of the liberal arts in the contemporary world?
- What motivates you to do your best?
- Please tell us your experience in developing programs and partnerships with external constituents and how you would apply that experience to SRU.
- Why did you choose to become a \_\_\_\_\_ professor?
- What kind of an institution would you consider an ideal match for your professional talents and interests?
- If you could choose a course that you have always wanted to teach, what would it be and how would you teach it?
- What do you consider to be your particular strength(s)?
- What areas would you like to improve during the next couple of years?
- Why are you interested in SRU? What specific things attracted you to apply for this position?
- What do you consider to be the appropriate role of service in the teaching, research and service mix?
- What types of resources would you require to successfully continue your research agenda?
- How do you view your role in the faculty development process?
- What is your philosophy of teaching and learning?

- Please tell us about your research interests and how you see that fitting in with the department's/ college's mission/direction.
- Is there anything else you would like us to know? Do you have any questions of us?
- How would you make the most of the opportunity to work on a developing campus?
- What efforts have you made in the last year to become a better faculty member?
- Faced with many competing demands on your time, how do you determine your priorities?
- Tell us about your research interests and how you see your research program developing over the next few years. How well developed will your network of research contacts be when you get here?
- In what areas would you like to work to improve (in research or teaching) during the next couple of years?
- What *specific* research projects would you bring to SRU? Briefly describe a couple. What types of research resources and support do you require? (e.g., computer, database, library, ...)
- We are a small, relatively new, growing university that places emphasis on a balance of teaching, research and service. What factors attracted you to apply to SRU rather than to a more established university?
- What are your teaching interests? What is your “teaching philosophy”?
- What do you see as the most important issues or challenges in your discipline within the next few years? Does your research relate to these issues? [Follow-up question: thus far what has been your primary research approach?]
- What specific skills and talents would you bring to SRU?
- Describe your ideal academic work environment (i.e. in what type of academic environment would you like to work?).
- Describe your ideal percentage weights for teaching and research.
- What do you look for in your academic colleagues?

- Have you taught courses before?
  - a. What were they?
  - b. What level?
  - c. Required or elective?
- What specifically do you do in your classes to enhance student learning?
- What content areas would you most like to teach in?
- What are your research interests?
- Would you classify your research interests as applied or theoretical?
- What journals would you target for your work?
- In your research, do you prefer to collaborate or work alone? Why?
- How do your personal and professional interests and research agenda contribute to your teaching in multicultural/multilingual education?
- The College/Department of \_\_\_\_\_ is in the process of adjusting its existing program to meet new state and/or accreditation standards. What is your program revision experience? What role do you think you can play in this process?
- If you had the power to effect one major change in the education of \_\_\_\_\_, what would that change be and how would you go about effecting that change?
- Tell us about your vision of the field: where do you think the field is headed in the next five years? How does that relate to the preparation of professional educators?
- Students of color are not well represented in the \_\_\_\_\_ field, including ours. How do you see yourself contributing to the recruitment and retention process of students of color in \_\_\_\_\_?
- What instructional strategies would you use in order to bring about the greatest understanding of multiculturalism/multilingualism among your students?
- We encourage integration of a wide range of course content, including the broadest range of diversity issues, in our teacher preparation program. How would you integrate a multidisciplinary and multicultural focus in your courses? Especially courses in your area of specialty?



- Tell us how the mission statement of the College of \_\_\_\_\_ resonates with your work.
- What do you consider your most profound reasons for wanting to join the faculty at SRU?
- What difference do you want to make through your professional work over the next five to ten years?
- What do you consider to be the major issues and challenges facing public education in [*insert year*]? What are the issues and challenges just now beginning to emerge?
- How would you describe the role of an effective faculty member in an effective College/Department of \_\_\_\_\_?
- What are the most important skills and abilities \_\_\_\_\_ majors must take into their workforce?
- What teaching strategies do you use in your University classes? Why? What are the intended outcomes of these strategies?
- How do you assess the learning outcomes of your instruction?
- Describe a successful team teaching experience you have participated in as either a K-12 or University teacher. What made it successful?
- How will you develop your research agenda as a faculty member?
- How will your teaching, research and service activities interrelate, and how will you work to integrate them?
- Describe your ideal faculty colleague. In what ways do you fit the description, and in what areas do you have the most progress yet to make?
- What do you need to know about us to make sure we're a good fit for you?
- What types of resources would you require to successfully continue your research agenda?
- How do you view your role in the faculty development process?
- What is your philosophy of teaching and learning?
- What are your professional goals?
- What is notable about your teaching?

- You have an interesting research program. How would you maintain it in a growing department such as ours?
- What kind of teaching experiences, if any, have you had with computer technology?
- Do you have any general ideas on how to encourage more minority students and women students to study \_\_\_\_\_?
- What ways do you expect to interact with other faculty here who are in your department/college, but not in your specialty?
- Service is important at SRU because we are a growing university. How would you see yourself contributing to the development of the department/college and the university?