

Interviewing Handbook

Pre-Interview Checklist

- ✓ Do you know how people dress where you're interviewing?
- ✓ Is your interviewing costume clean, pressed, and ready to go?
- ✓ Do you know where the interviewing site is located and how long it takes to get there?
- ✓ Did you research the position, company, and industry?
- ✓ Have you contacted and coached all your references? Have you neutralized any potentially damaging references?
- ✓ Have you memorized a short commercial to highlight your five best selling points?
 - Choose at least five major skills you would like interviewers to remember after the interview. Memorize a short statement about each skill. Make these specific to each employer.
- ✓ Have you rehearsed everything from small talk to answering potential dangerous questions?
- ✓ Have you practiced your answers to anticipated questions?
- ✓ Have you prepared and memorized a list of questions to ask?
- ✓ Have you researched the market salary for the position?
- ✓ Did you gather everything you need? (copies of your resume, list of references, and samples of your work, pen, professional portfolio with paper, business card)

Know yourself

- Make a list of five accomplishments that you enjoyed.
- Make a list of five things you have done that makes you proud.
- Describe three scenarios in which you felt highly motivated to accomplish something.
- Describe three scenarios in which you lacked motivation
- Think of three scenarios in which you felt appreciated by other people. How did they communicate that appreciation for you?
- Make a list of how your colleagues, staff, and supervisors describe you. Include the positive and negative feedback.
- Make a list of how friends and family describe you.
- Make a list of ten of your best personal qualities
- Think of two small and large decisions that you have made.
- Describe how you went about making those decisions.
- Describe two situations that seemed risky to you. What did you do?
- Describe a conflict situation between you and someone else that was resolved to your satisfaction. How was it resolved?
- Describe a conflict situation between you and someone else that was not resolved to your satisfaction. What happened?
- Complete this sentence: When I want to show appreciation for other people, I usually...
- Complete this sentence: I work because...
- Complete this sentence: From a career I want....

Questions to ask every Interviewer

- Please tell me about the position and the skills, competencies and characteristics required for a strong candidate.
- Why did you personally decide to work for this company?
- What are the three most important attributes for success in this position?
- What are the opportunities for growth and advancements for this position?
- How is your company retaining a competitive edge in the market?
- What is the anticipated company growth rate over the next three years?

Questions most frequently asked in a variety of job interviews and settings

1. Tell me about yourself. ***
2. Why should I hire you? ***
3. What do you want to do with your life?
4. Do you have any actual work experience?
5. How would you describe your ideal job?
6. Why did you choose this career?
7. When did you decide on this career?
8. What goals do you have in your career?
9. How do plan to achieve these goals?
10. How do you evaluate success?
11. Describe a situation in which you were successful.
12. What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?
13. What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction in your life?
14. If you had to live your life over again, what would you change? ***
15. Would you rather work with information or with people?
16. Are you a team player? ***
17. What motivates you?
18. Who are your role models? Why?
19. Are you a goal-oriented person?
20. Tell me about some of your recent goals and what you did to achieve them.
21. What are you short-term goals?
22. What is your long-range objective?
23. Do you handle conflict well?
24. What major problem have you had to deal with recently?
25. Have you ever had a conflict with a boss or professor? How was it resolved? ***
26. Do you handle pressure well?
27. What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses? ***
28. Why are you leaving your current position? Why did you leave your last job?
29. Why did you choose to attend your college?
30. What changes would you make at your college?
31. How has your education prepared you for your career? ***
32. What were your favorite classes? Why?
33. Do you enjoy doing independent research?

34. Who were your favorite professors? Why?
35. How would your professors describe you? ***
36. Why is your GPA not higher?
37. Why should we hire you versus another candidate?
38. Do you have plans for further education?
39. What kind of supervisor do you prefer?
40. Are you able to manage multiple asks at once?
41. How much training do you think you'll need to become a productive employee?
42. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have? ***
43. Why do you know about our company?
44. Why are you interested in our company?
45. Do you have any location preferences?
46. How familiar are you with the community that we're located in?
47. Are you willing to travel? How much?
48. Is money important to you?
49. How much money do you need to make to be happy?
50. What kind of salary are you looking for?
51. What attracts you to this organization/setting/position?
52. Where do you see yourself in five to ten years? ***
53. What do you think makes you best qualified for the position?
54. What do you think you can contribute to this position/organization/department/staff?
55. What is the salary you are looking for in this position?
56. Tell me about a project that you handled well and one in which you were not successful. What did you learn from each one?
57. Do you have any questions?

*** = Top Ten Interview Questions

Questions asked in a pharmacy/residency setting might include the following

1. What do you want to get out of a residency?
2. Why do you want to come here?
3. Describe a clinical intervention you have made.
4. What practice areas are you interested in?
5. How much hospital experience have you had?
6. What is one of the major issues facing pharmacy today?
7. What would your pharmacy preceptors say about you?
8. What would your colleagues say about you?
9. Would relocating be a problem?
10. What were your least favorite rotations and why?
11. What qualities do you expect in a preceptor?
12. Do you have any ideas for your major project?
13. How do you handle stress?
14. Have you ever had a major conflict with a preceptor/doctor? If so, how did you handle it?

Behavioral (Star) Interviewing Questions

General:

1. Here's a scenario we would like you to consider: you are the only pharmacist in the pharmacy. On the phone, a nurse wants to know dosing for a dopamine drip for a patient who is crashing. At the window is a doctor who is ranting and raving about an enoxaparin order that wasn't approved. On the other line is a nurse calling about a patient with a vancomycin level of 15. In what order do you handle these problems?
2. How would you deal with an unmotivated student?
3. If you were alone on a deserted island, what three medications would you bring with you?
4. What makes you better for this position than other candidates?
5. What do you anticipate a typical day in your career to be like?
6. If you could be any drug, what drug would you be and why?
7. Choose a topic relating to clinical pharmacy, and we'll ask you a question about it.

Coping abilities:

1. Pick an example from your current job that would reflect on your ability to deal with pressure.
2. Give me an example of when your ability to cope was not as effective as you would have liked for it to have been. Use any situation you like.
3. What types of things make you angry? Pick any situation in which you were able to hold back your angry feelings, and tell me what that situation says about you.
4. Tell me about a time when your anger was obvious to another person
5. Customers (co-workers) frequently create a great deal of pressure. What has been your experience in this area? Be specific.
6. When has a customer (co-worker) been able to make you act less mature and professional than you normally do?

Creative abilities:

1. What is the most creative thing you have done at work?
2. Sometimes it's just impossible to be as creative as we would like to be. When were your creative skills not up to par?
3. What types of activities were you involved in with your last job that successfully tapped into your creative skills? Be specific.
4. Tell me about a time on your last job when you were disappointed with your ability to creatively solve a problem.
5. Some creative individuals require a stimulating environment to facilitate their productivity. Other creative personalities seem to be productive regardless of their immediate work environment. How do you evaluate yourself on these issues? Provide a specific example.
6. One's creativity does not always match the expectations of others. When has someone else been disappointed with your creative solution to a problem?

Organization and Planning:

1. Give me a detailed example of what you do on your current job to organize yourself and/or your associates. Take your time if you need to
2. Tell me about a time when your organizational and planning skills failed you.
3. Describe how you scheduled your time on an unusually hectic day. Give a specific example.
4. Some days just don't go right. When have you had a "bad day" that made you question your planning skills?
5. How far ahead do you plan? Tell me about a time when planning ahead benefited you.
6. Tell me about a time when your carefully laid plans were fouled up. How did you react? What happened?
7. Describe a situation in which you had several things to do in a limited time period. What led up to the situation? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
8. Describe a project you were required to complete for school or work. What steps were involved? What was the outcome?

Decision Making and Problem Solving:

1. Tell me about a time when you were proud of your decision making skills. Pick a technical problem you had to solve, give me the details involved in it, and tell me what you did in creating the solution to that particular problem.
2. When have your problem solving skills failed you?
3. Describe a situation in which you found yourself to be an analytical and thorough decision maker.
4. It's good for each of us to know our own limitations. Tell me about a time when your skills were not a match for the problem you were solving.
5. Would you describe yourself as being more logical or intuitive in solving problems? Give me an example that shows your style.
6. When has your problem-solving style worked against you, instead of for you?
7. Describe the most difficult problem you have ever faced at work or school. What steps or actions did you take to solve the problem? What results were achieved?
8. Give me a situation in which you have been able to use a newly acquired skill or knowledge. What was the particular skill or knowledge? What was the situation? What was the outcome?

Interpersonal Skills:

1. Describe a time when you had to deal with the public. Who was involved? What did you do? How did those involved respond?
2. Give an example of a time when you helped solve a problem within a group. What precipitated the problem? What action did you take? What was the outcome?

Communication skills:

1. Tell me about a situation when something you said or wrote was misunderstood. What did you do to resolve the situation? What was the result?

2. Describe a situation in which you misunderstood something a supervisor or teacher wrote or said. Why did the misunderstanding occur? What were the results?

Questions you ask when looking at residency programs?

1. Is code team participation required or optional?
2. How many hours are spent with service commitments per week/month?
3. Are residents ever pulled from clinical areas for service commitments?
4. Can rotations be changed during the year?
5. How easy is it to get a desired elective rotation?
6. How is the topic of the residency project decided?
7. Are there any opportunities to teach or precept pharmacy students?
8. Are there any opportunities to publish?
9. Is it possible to do a rotation at another institution?
10. How do you think this year's residents are doing?
11. What are the current residents' research projects?
12. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?
13. What will participation in the program do for me?
14. How are residents evaluated during the program?
15. Does the pharmacy faculty ever work with the medical faculty on research projects?
16. How would you describe the relationship between the distributional pharmacists and the clinical pharmacists or residents?
17. Are residents given the opportunity to attend national pharmacy meeting (e.g., ASHP, APhA, ACCP, SCCM)? If so, is funding available?
18. Do pharmacists or residents ever give lectures to medical house staff?
19. Can residents select their own ambulatory clinic?
20. What clinics are available?
21. Is it possible to tailor the structure of the residency to meet my interests (infectious disease, pediatrics, etc.)?

Questions to Consider Asking Only Resident (or other staff)

1. What is your typical day like?
2. What time do you get to work, on average?
3. Have you had any problems working with the residency director/preceptor?
4. Do you ever spend time with the other residents outside of work?
5. What do you plan to do next year?
6. What would you change about this residency program?
7. What are the best and worst things about this residency?
8. Is photocopying paid for or is there an allowance?
9. How accessible is the library?
10. Are you ever on call?
11. What do you do on the weekends?
12. Do you have to pay for parking?

13. Is the medical and nursing staff easy to work with at this institution?
14. Are health, life, dental, and disability insurance and retirement benefits provided or available?
15. How many calls have you received in the middle of the night while on call?
16. Do the current residents work well together?
17. How far do you live from work?
18. How long does it take you to get to work?
19. Is the neighborhood near the institution safe?
20. Have you had the opportunity to give lectures to pharmacy students? How many?
21. Have you received enough positive or negative feedback throughout your residency?
22. What is the policy for working on holidays?
23. Have you had the opportunity to write or publish during the residency (review articles, hospital newsletter articles, case reports)?
24. Do you have free time after work? How do you spend your free time?
25. Are your suggestions to medical staff taken seriously?
26. How much impact do you have on drug therapy decision?
27. Are you asked for input?

TOPIC	UNACCEPTABLE Q's	ACCEPTABLE Q's
Attendance	-Who is going to baby-sit? -What religion are you? -Do you have pre-school age children at home? -Do you have a car?	-Are there specific times that you cannot work? -Do you have responsibilities other than work that will interfere with specific job requirements such as traveling?
Reliability	-Number of children?	-What hours and days can you work?
Citizenship/National Origin	-What is your national origin? -Where are you parents from? -What is your maiden name?	-Are you legally eligible for employment in the U.S.? -Same as above -Have you every worked under a different name?
For Reference Checking	-What is your father's surname? -What are the names of your relatives?	-None -None
Arrest and conviction	-Have you ever been arrested?	-Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, when, where and what was the disposition of the case?
Disabilities	-Do you have any job disabilities?	-Can you perform the duties of the job you are applying for?
Emergency	-What is the name and address of the relative to be notified in case of an emergency?	-What is the name and address of the person to be notified in case of an emergency? (Request only after the individual has been employed)
Credit Record	-Do you own your own home? -Have your wages ever been garnished? -Have you ever declared bankruptcy?	-None -Credit references may be used if in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act of 19870 and the Consumer Credit Reporting Reform Act of 1996 -None
Military Record	-What type of discharge did you receive?	-What type of education, training, work experience did you receive while in the military?
Language	-What is your native language? Inquiry into use of how applicant acquired ability to read, write or speak a foreign language.	-Inquiry into languages applicant speaks and write fluently. (If the job requires additional languages)
Organizations	-List all clubs, societies and lodges to which you belong.	-Inquiry into applicant's membership in organization, which the applicant considers relevant to his or her ability to perform job. -Are you a union member?
Race or Color	-Complexion or color of skin.	-None
Worker's Compensation	-Have you ever filed for worker's compensation? -Have you had any prior work injuries?	-None -None
Religion or Creed	-Inquiry into applicant's religious denomination, religious affiliations, church, parish, pastor or religious holidays observed.	-None
Gender	-Do you wish to be addressed as Mr/Mrs/Ms?	-None
Addresses	-What was your previous address? -How long did you reside there? -How long have you lived at your current address? -Did you own your own home?	-None -None -None -None
Education	-When did you graduate from high school or college?	-Do you have a high school diploma or equivalent? -Do you have a university or college degree?
Personal	-What color are you eyes, hair? -What is your weight?	-Only permissible if there is a bona fide occupational qualification.

This information is a compilation of several leadership lectures I have attended. Thanks to the following speakers for their knowledge:

- Cardinal Health-Joanne Stacey, Nikki Price, Alicia Cook
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- APhA Clinical Rotation Survival Kit. Career & Professional Development articles: reprinted from Resume's, CVs & Interviewing and Pharmacy Student-Careers. APhA;Washington, DC: Pages 17-25.
- Community Health Network