

Behavioral Interview Questions



This tool is designed as a resource for developing job-related interview questions.

Tips:

- Ask for specific examples. Answers such as “I usually” or “In the past, I have done...” are too general. It’s important to redirect the candidate to think of a real-life scenario or interaction with individuals.
- Follow-up each answer as appropriate. It’s best to start probing questions with “who, what, when, and where.” Try to avoid, “why,” as that tends to put the candidate on the defense.

Examples of strong probing questions include:

- How did you accomplish that?
- What process did you take?
- What was your role?
- Who did you work with?
- When did you do that?
- What was the outcome?
- What did you learn?
- What was your thought process?

NOTE: Some sample probing questions are in parenthesis after each question.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- Describe your process for controlling errors in your work.
- Give me an example of when you were able to catch an error no one else had.
- What has been the most awkward/difficult ethical dilemma you’ve been faced with?
(What did you do?)
- Give me an example of a time where you identified and pursued training and/or education for a skill or new role?
- What did you have to learn to be effective at _____?
(How long did that take you? Which parts took the most time? Which parts were the hardest?)

ANALYTICAL SKILLS

- Tell me about a time you reached a decision by reviewing the facts and weighing options.
- Tell me about a time you were systematic in identifying potential concerns with a patient.
- Tell me about your standard approach to analyze a situation or concern.
(What are your mental steps to assessing the situation?)

COPING

- Tell me about a time you were challenged to do your best work.
(What kind of things were present that made it difficult?)
- What kinds of pressure have you felt in your job/school?
(What did you do to overcome the pressure?)
- We all have frustrations on the job. Think of a time you were most frustrated—what was the situation?
(What did you do to address it?)
- Tell me about a time you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands.
(What about the situation made it most difficult?)
- When have you had to cope with the anger or hostility of another person?
(What was the result?)
- Tell me about a high-stress situation when it was desirable for you to keep a positive attitude.
(What happened?)
- Give me an example of a time another person really tried your patience. Specifically, talk about a time you were angry or frustrated.
(What triggered you the most?)

DECISION MAKING

- Describe a situation when you received a new procedure or instructions with which you disagreed.
(What did you do?)
- Describe a time you weighed the pros and cons of a situation and decided not to take action, even though you were under pressure to do so.
(What were the results?)
- What were the toughest decisions you had to make while you were at _____? Tell me about them.
(What alternatives did you consider?)
- Tell me about a time you were proud of your ability to exercise good judgment.
(What were the barriers you are proud you worked through?)
- In many problem situations, it's often tempting to jump to a conclusion to build a solution quickly. Tell me about a time you resisted this temptation and obtained all facts associated with the problem before coming to a decision.
- Describe a clinical situation where you had to quickly draw a conclusion and take action.
- Tell me about a decision that you had to uphold even though it made you unpopular.

DISCRETIONARY EFFORT

- Describe a specific time you created or adapted a process to be more efficient.
- Tell me about ideas (not necessarily your own) that were sold, implemented, or carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts.
- What changes have you tried to implement in your area of responsibility?
(What have you done to get them underway?)
- Give me some examples when you did more than required in your job.
(What made you go the extra mile?)
- Tell me about some patients you generated on your own.
(What prompted you to contact them?)

ENGAGEMENT

- Think about all your favorite bosses/teachers. What characteristics do they possess that you helped perform your best?
(What was it about their approach that made you successful?)
- Give me an example of one of your greatest achievements or projects.
- Give me an example of when you worked hard and didn't achieve what you intended.
(What about that was disappointing?)
- Tell me about a time when you weren't very pleased with your performance.
(What about it made you disappointed?)
- Describe a time in the last year when your manager/teacher gave you corrective feedback regarding your performance.
(How did you respond to the feedback? What steps did you take to rectify?)
- If I were to call your boss/teacher today, what would he/she say about you?
(What is it about you that they have that perception? What have you specifically done to add more value and/or correct the perception?)

GOAL SETTING/PLANNING

- What have been your experiences with defining long-range goals?
(Tell me what specific goal was set, how it was set, and how successful you were in its achievement.)
- Where do you see yourself in five years? Where do you see yourself in ten years?
- Give me an example of a time when you led the group to reach a common goal under difficult/challenging circumstances.
- Time management has become a necessary factor on personal productivity. Give me an example of a time management skill you have learned and applied at work. What resulted from the use of the skill?

INDUSTRY AWARENESS

- To which optometry organizations do you belong?
(What is the extent of your participation? What do you get out of it?)
- How do you keep informed of what's going on in the industry?
- What publications have you read recently and found useful?
- What important changes are taking place in the field of _____? Give me an example of a time you applied that information to your current work.

INFLUENCING

- Tell me about a time you were able to provide your own motivation to produce results even though there wasn't much incentive.
- Describe an experience in which you were too persistent. What happened?
(How could you have improved the outcome?)
- Tell me about a time you were able to be persistent to reach a goal. Be specific.
- Describe a situation in which your initial attempts to gain someone's support or cooperation failed.
(Did you try again? What approach did you use the second, third, or fourth time?)
- Give me an example of a time when you used facts and reason to persuade another person to take action. Be specific.

INNOVATION/CREATIVITY

- Give me an example of a time you uniquely solved a problem.
(What were the barriers? What was the result?)
- Give me an example of a time you were inventive and explored new ways of thinking.
- Tell me about a situation you had to handle and old solutions didn't work.
(What happened?)
- Tell me about a new policy or new idea that you recently implemented which was considerably different from the standard procedure. What approach did you take to get others to go along with the idea?

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- From time to time, all of us are confronted by someone who wastes our time at work. Tell me about the people who waste your time with a lot of unnecessary problems.
(How do you manage it?)
- Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone very thin-skinned.
(How did you manage?)
- Tell me about a time you were able to make someone feel comfortable when dealing with an emotionally charged situation.
- Tell me about a time that demonstrated your ability to "read" another person.
(What clues do you look for?)
- We all have ways of showing concern for others. How do you demonstrate concern for others?
- How do you go about developing rapport with patients /coworkers?
- We've all worked with someone who's difficult to get along with. Give an example of when this happened to you.
(How was the person difficult? How did you handle that person?)
- How do you break the ice in a first conversation with a patient?
- Once you've established rapport, how do you go about enhancing the relationship?

LEADERSHIP

- Describe a work situation where your example served as a model for others.
- Give me an example of a time you were able to influence the way others thought or acted, in a very difficult situation.
- Give me an example of a time you used your authority to influence another individual.

MANAGING OBSTACLES

- Tell me about a situation in which you had to adjust quickly to changes in priorities and justify your rationale.
(What was the impact of the change on you?)
- Tell me about some situations where you dealt with unexpected events on the job. What did you do?
(How did it affect you?)
- Tell me about a time you felt it was necessary to compromise your own personal interests to be tolerant of someone else's needs.
- Tell me about some of the most difficult objections you received and how you were successful in turning it around.
(What was the biggest barrier in turning things around?)

MANAGING OTHERS

- Give me an example of the greatest success you've had with delegation.
(What was the result?)
- How do you delegate? What do you usually delegate? What do you not feel comfortable delegating?
- What do you do to set an example for your coworkers?
- How would your peers/coworkers describe you?
- If I were to call your teacher/boss, what would they say are your top three attributes as a leader and your top two development areas?
- How do you motivate the people you work with? Give me an example of how you identified the motivators and what made the team successful.
- Give me an example of a time you addressed a negative comment or negative behavior/s from someone you worked with.
(What was the discussion and your approach?)
- Tell me about a time you had your greatest success in building team spirit.

TECHNICAL

- Tell me about the process you use to _____ on a patient.
- When you are analyzing _____, what are the criteria you use to get the best results?
- Walk me through the steps you used in a specific exam to determine_____.
- What were some alternatives you've used to assist one of your most difficult patients?

VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS

- At one time or another, we've all been unclear. Give me an example when a patient misunderstood your message.
- What were some of the more complicated kinds of medical advice you've had to explain to a patient?
- Describe a time you communicated something unpleasant to your boss/patient.
- Describe the steps you take to prepare for making recommendations for patients.
- Tell me about a time an eye exam didn't go as planned.
(How did you remain on target?)
- What was one of the most awkward situations you have had with a patient?
(How did you handle it?)

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

- How do you go about writing clinical material for laypeople?
- What are some of the toughest clinical writing assignments you've ever had?