BRIEF GUIDELINES FOR CONTEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWING

The University of Wisconsin-Superior is fully committed to a program of affirmative action, ensuring equal opportunities for all faculty, staff and students. Concern for fellow human beings dictates these principles. At the same time, federal regulations have created a need for employers to have specific knowledge of legal obligations concerning employment. This brochure is a summary of “Guidelines for Contemporary Employment Interviewing” and serves as a reference guide about appropriate kinds of questions to ask on application forms or during interviews. It is intended to serve as a useful tool for departments and units in the interviewing process, and it is designed to help make the university’s philosophy of equal opportunity a reality for all. Information provided here should not be taken as a substitute for legal counsel or a full study of employment laws.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11246 (as amended by 11375)
Prohibits discrimination in employment - including hiring, upgrading, salaries, fringe benefits, training, and other conditions of employment - on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or sex.

REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973
(as amended by the Amendments of 1974)
Prohibits discrimination in employment under any program or activity against any qualified handicapped person on the basis of handicap.

WISCONSIN'S FAIR EMPLOYMENT ACT (Chapter 111.31 to 111.37)
Prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, handicap, sex, creed, national origin, ancestry, arrest or conviction record or sexual orientation. The act also prohibits harassment or retaliation against employees or applicants for employment or licensing.

WISCONSIN CIVIL SERVICE REFORM LAW
(Chapter 230)
It is the policy of Wisconsin State government to provide equal employment opportunity without regard to age, race, creed or religion, color, handicap, sex, national origin, ancestry, political affiliation or sexual orientation, and to take affirmative action to correct civil service workforce racial, ethnic, gender or handicap imbalances and to eliminate the present effects of past discrimination.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990
Prohibits employers from discriminating against applicants or employees with disabilities in regard to any employment practices or terms, conditions, and privileges of employment including: application, testing, hiring, assignments, evaluation, disciplinary actions, training, promotion, medical examinations, layoff/recall, termination, compensation, leave or benefits.

LEGISLATION
A number of federal and state laws and regulations are applicable to ensure fair employment practices. Most of the items contained in the four-panel table in this brochure reflect several of the usually quoted laws. For your convenience, these laws and regulations are cited in part below.

TITLE IX (of Education Amendments of 1972)
“No person...shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance...”

WISCONSIN'S FAIR EMPLOYMENT ACT (Chapter 111.31 to 111.37)
Prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, race, color, handicap, sex, creed, national origin, ancestry, arrest or conviction record or sexual orientation. The act also prohibits harassment or retaliation against employees or applicants for employment or licensing.

TITLE VII (of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)
Prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, and religion under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1975
It is unlawful to discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of age.

EQUAL PAY ACT OF 1963 (as amended by the Educational Amendments of 1972)
Prohibits discrimination in salaries – including almost all fringe benefits – on the basis of sex.

AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1967 (as amended in 1978)
It is unlawful to discriminate against employees or job applicants because of age when they are between the ages of 40 and 70.

VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ACT OF 1974
To promote the employment of, and job advancement opportunities for, qualified disabled veterans of the Vietnam era.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA OF INQUIRY</th>
<th>WHAT YOU MAY NOT ASK</th>
<th>WHAT YOU MAY ASK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>Whether a person has worked under a different name, or questions which divulge marital status or ancestry.</td>
<td>Correct legal name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDRESS/HOUSING</td>
<td>Any inquiry which may indicate ethnicity or national origin.</td>
<td>Place and length of current and previous address. Phone number or how he or she can be reached. Address may be requested so that the applicant can be contacted. Names of persons with whom applicant resides may be requested for compliance with the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>Questions which require giving age.</td>
<td>NOTHING before hiring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEX/SEXUAL ORIENTATION</td>
<td>Questions which would indicate sex unless job related. Questions regarding sexual orientation.</td>
<td>NOTHING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARITAL STATUS</td>
<td>Whether person is married, single, separated, divorced or engaged.</td>
<td>NOTHING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY</td>
<td>About family planning, family size, children’s ages, child care plans, spouse’s employment or salary.</td>
<td>Freedom to travel if job required and ability to meet work schedule requirements. All applicants must be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREGNANCY</td>
<td>About medical history concerning pregnancy and related health matters.</td>
<td>Anticipated duration on, or absences from, the job. Same questions must be asked of males and females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIGHT/WEIGHT</td>
<td>Unless related to job requirements, laws indicate that unless employer proves otherwise, height and weight requirements are discriminatory.</td>
<td>For proof of ability to perform the job requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISABILITIES</td>
<td>Any pre-offer questions about disability.</td>
<td>Whether person can perform specific tasks with or without accommodation. Within certain limitations, the person can be asked to describe or demonstrate how tasks will be performed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITIZENSHIP</td>
<td>Whether a U.S. citizen.</td>
<td>Whether visa/immigration status prevents person from lawful employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE/ORIGIN/RELIGION</td>
<td>About race, religion, ancestry, birthplace of applicant, parents or spouse.</td>
<td>Ability to speak, read or write English or a foreign language if job requires it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTOGRAPHS</td>
<td>Any requirement or suggestion that a photo be supplied or taken before hiring.</td>
<td>Statement that a photo may be required after hire for purposes of identification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK SCHEDULE</td>
<td>Willingness to work any particular religious holiday.</td>
<td>Willingness to work required work schedule. If applicant has military reservist obligations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>About education that is not related to job performance.</td>
<td>About training and experience related to job requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>For references specifically from clergy or any other persons who might reflect race, color, religion, sex, national origin or ancestry, or disability.</td>
<td>For general and work references not relating to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry or disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILITARY SERVICE</td>
<td>For military service records. About military service in the armed services of another country. About discharge type.</td>
<td>About service in U.S. armed forces. About branch of service, rank and any job-related experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALARY LEVEL</td>
<td>What is the lowest salary you will accept?</td>
<td>Are you interested in the position at the level that has been budgeted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATIONS</td>
<td>For a list of all clubs applicant belongs to or has belonged to.</td>
<td>About professional organizations or union membership and offices held.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CREDIT RATING</td>
<td>Anything, unless specifically job related.</td>
<td>NOTHING, unless specifically job related.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRIMINAL RECORD</td>
<td>About arrests. About convictions, unless the information is related to job performance.</td>
<td>Should ask all candidates about job-relevant convictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE</td>
<td>Prior to offer of employment – cannot ask if applicant is a drug addict or an alcoholic, what medications they are currently taking, or if applicant has been in a rehabilitation program.</td>
<td>Prior to offer of employment – can ask if applicant currently uses any illegal substances, or any legal substances illegally. After conditional offer of employment – any questions concerning past or present drug/alcohol use, but applicant can only be excluded after careful consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELOCATION</td>
<td>Any question related to spouse’s attitudes or other subject that is likely to be perceived by covered group members, especially women, as discriminatory.</td>
<td>Would you be willing to relocate?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERFORMANCE/BEHAVIORAL BASED
INTERVIEW QUESTION BANK

SKILL – Communication:

Able to clearly present information through verbal and written communication; read and interpret complex information; talk with colleagues and students; listen well.

INTERPRETIVE GUIDES
Has the candidate had experience making presentations? Does the candidate match presentation modalities and content to the audience? Does the candidate express his or her ideas clearly in writing? Does the candidate’s writing demonstrate attention to the intended audience?

QUESTIONS

What have been your experiences in making presentations or speeches to small or large groups? What has been your most successful presentation?

Careful listening and effective communications go together. Tell me about a specific time when your skill in listening helped you communicate better.

Describe your experiences writing or editing the work of others. Be specific.

SKILL – Conflict Resolution:

Able to use a win-win approach to resolve controversy; stay objective and fair when dealing with sensitive situations; maintain constructive working relationships despite disagreement.

INTERPRETIVE GUIDES
Does the candidate approach conflict professionally and move the situation toward a productive outcome?

QUESTIONS

Arguing in front of uninvolved parties is usually considered unprofessional. Tell me about a time when you delayed such an argument, despite temptation, until an appropriate forum could be arranged.

Tell me about a time when you had the opportunity to settle a difficult dispute. How did you ensure a fair solution?

Tell me about a situation in which you pursued a win-win approach to conflict resolution, even though other alternatives were easier.

Tell me about a time when you were required to deal with a difficult person. How did you handle this?

Tell us about a specific time when you had to deal with a difficult situation with a parent and/or student and how you handled it.

Can you provide me an instance where you had to deal with a problem or conflict, or react under pressure? How was this resolved?

SKILL – Life Long Learning:

Able to stay informed of current trends, learn and apply new concepts, identify opportunities for professional development and set and monitor goals. Demonstrated commitment to lifelong learning skills, staying current with skills, knowledge and trends in higher education.

INTERPRETIVE GUIDES
Does the candidate embrace and become proficient at the skill or material through asking questions, studying, practicing, etc? Does the candidate identify concrete, actionable, measurable goals that require some effort to achieve?

QUESTIONS

As technology has become a greater part of university life, it is a common tool in daily tasks, teaching and learning. Tell me a time when you had to use new technology. Were you challenged in this regard?

Think of a professional development goal you set. How did you make and monitor your progress?

Describe an effort you undertook to proactively identify your own weaknesses and areas of opportunity.
Describe a situation when you chose to set development goals for yourself. What goals did you set and how did you set them?

**SKILL – Coping:**

Able to maintain a solution-oriented approach while dealing with interpersonal conflict, personal rejection, or time demands.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate cope through positive action or problem resolution? Does the candidate show emotional control, understanding, or objectivity?

**QUESTIONS**

Tell me about a time when you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands. Give me an example.

Give me an example of a time when you disagreed with a colleague. How did you handle the situation?

Sooner or later we all deal with interpersonal conflict or personal rejection at work. Give me an example of a time when you had to cope with these demands.

When have you had to cope with the anger or hostility of another person? Be specific.

**SKILL – Decision Making & Problem Solving:**

Able to take action in solving problems while exhibiting judgment and a realistic understanding of issues; able to use reason, even when dealing with emotional topics; able to review facts and weigh options.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate systematically gather and evaluate information, and use priorities to guide a decision? Does the candidate gain accurate information and analyze it in order to make a good decision, perhaps despite pressure to make a decision quickly, or was the decision made on impulse?

**QUESTIONS**

Describe when you used good judgment in solving a problem.

In many problem situations, it is often tempting to jump to a conclusion to build a solution quickly. Tell me about a time when you resisted this temptation and thoroughly obtained all facts associated with the problem before coming to a decision.

Tell me about a situation when you had to stand up for a decision you made even though it was unpopular.

Tell me about a time when you were proud of your ability to be objective even though you had strong feelings about a problem situation.

Describe a time when you made a difficult decision and acted on it.

Even though you may be dealing with a complex problem, it is often important to use a common sense approach in making a decision. Tell me about a time when your common sense paid off for you.

**SKILL – Leadership:**

Able to exhibit an approach that will inspire others to excel; able to advocate new ideas, even when risk is involved, set an example for coworkers, delegate responsibility and empower associates to make decisions provide constructive feedback to others.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate help people focus on a meaningful goal, motivate others, advise and help others, or fulfill other leadership roles? Does the candidate model desired behavior for colleagues or students? Does the candidate express confidence and provide specific feedback about weaknesses, along with demonstrations of successful alternatives?

**QUESTIONS**

Provide an example/experience where you felt you were most successful as a leader.

What have you done to help faculty and staff balance their responsibilities in teaching, service, scholarship, and creative activities?

Tell me about a time when you effectively inspired an individual or group to excel on a task or project. How did you do it?
Give me an example of a time when you successfully confronted a colleague or student with a negative attitude.

Some situations require us to express ideas/opinions in a very tactful and careful way. Tell me about a time when you were successful with this particular skill.

Think of a situation or project in which you had no formal position authority, yet still assumed a clear leadership role. Walk me through how you demonstrated leadership.

Championing a new idea can be risky, since the implementation could fail. Describe a time when you championed a new idea because you believed in it, even though you recognized the risk.

Describe a work situation when your example served as a model for others?

Describe something you’ve done that shows your skill in delegating.

Tell me about a time when your mentoring a colleague was effective because of the constructive feedback you provided.

Describe a time when you made a point of communicating and enforcing organizational policy and procedure. How did you do it, and what impact did it have?

Describe a time when you found a policy or procedure challenging or difficult to adhere to. How did you handle it?

**SKILL – Flexibility:**

Able to remain open-minded and change opinions on the basis of new information, perform a wide variety of tasks, manage transitions effectively from task to task.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate accept the new information and revise opinions and actions to reflect this? Does the candidate change tasks quickly in order to be responsive to the new priorities?

**QUESTIONS**

Tell me about an instance in which you changed an opinion or action plan after receiving new information.

Tell me about a success you had because of your open-mindedness.

Tell me about a time when the demands on you changed quickly, possibly before you had a chance to finish what you had been doing.

**SKILL – Initiative:**

Able to bring about great results from ordinary circumstances, prepare for problems or opportunities in advance, undertake additional responsibilities and respond to situations as they arise.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate prepare an approach that would be ready to launch upon the event’s occurrence? Did the candidate volunteer for a task despite an already full workload and succeed without undue compromise to other responsibilities?

**QUESTIONS**

Tell me about a time when you anticipated an opportunity or problem and were ready for it when it happened.

Many people have good ideas. Tell me how you’ve acted upon a good idea.

Describe a time when you voluntarily undertook a special project above and beyond your normal responsibilities.

**SKILL – Planning, Prioritizing and Goal Setting:**

Able to manage multiple projects, determine project urgency in a meaningful and practical way, use goals to guide actions and create detailed action plans, organize tasks.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate meet deadlines? Does the candidate construct realistic action plans, including all relevant resources, deadlines, timetables, etc.?

**QUESTIONS**
As a comprehensive university, our teaching load is 12 credits each semester (equivalent to 4 courses). How do you envision making time for scholarship?

How do you prioritize?

Describe a situation that illustrates how well you manage multiple projects at one time.

Describe how you’ve defined and used goals to guide your action.

Priorities can be set meaningfully based on ease of task, deadlines, or a number of other factors. Describe a time when it was challenging for you to prioritize.

Think of a project in which you skillfully coordinated people, tasks, and schedules. How did you do it?

Many people are better at identifying where they want to get than in deciding how to get there. Describe a time when you generated an elaborate action plan to lead to an identified goal.

**SKILL – Quality:**

Able to maintain high standards despite pressing deadlines, establish high standards and reinforce excellence.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate maintain high quality through investing additional resources, moving deadlines, or making a statement of “work in progress?” Does the candidate identify meaningful ways to measure quality, assess results, and use data for continuous improvement?

**QUESTIONS**

Describe a situation in which a crucial deadline was nearing, but you didn’t want to compromise quality. How did you deal with it?

Tell me about a time when you chose to enhance quality by setting quality standards or by measuring quality. How did you go about it?

**SKILL – Campus Culture:**

Able to identify key people to bring about change and understand underlying political dynamics of work, develop a network of contacts to reach goals, be aware of significant contributing factors to manage change.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate take initiative in meeting people and maintaining genuine relationships to achieve productive goals? Is the candidate friendly and professional?

**QUESTIONS**

Sometimes getting results requires a full understanding of the organizational climate or culture. Tell me about a time when your astuteness helped you to get results.

Give me an example of a time when your timing, political awareness, and knowledge of how groups work enhanced your ability to generate a change.

At times it is very important to understand how communication channels, interpersonal networks, and politics influence decisions at work. Describe a time when your understanding of political dynamics at work was put to good use.

Organization change is often guided by friendships and relationships which can influence how things happen. Tell me about a time when you used your interpersonal skills to build a network of contacts to reach goals.

**SKILL – Respecting Diversity:**

Able to adapt behavior to others’ styles; able to interact with people who are difficult, or have different values, cultures, or backgrounds; able to optimize the benefits of having a diverse workforce.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate’s behavior demonstrate respect for others’ values while working toward mutual objectives? Did the candidate try to learn from the diverse approaches and use the differences to maximize success?

**QUESTIONS**

Please describe your efforts to recruit, retain and advance faculty, staff and students of diverse populations.
UW-S is engaged in an effort to be a leader in Wisconsin’s movement toward increased diversity and inclusiveness. Given the value placed on diversity, how have you integrated the value of diversity into your various roles and responsibilities?

Given the value UW-S places on diversity, how might you see yourself integrating this value into your roles and responsibilities as a faculty member?

What is your experience working with students from diverse backgrounds, especially multicultural students or students from economically distressed families?

Please provide an example that shows your skill in interacting with people who have different values than you.

Describe an effort you undertook to ensure that diversity was accepted and facilitated in your work area.

Describe a series of interactions you had in which you adapted your behavior around the other people’s styles.

Diversity can bring with it a barrage of perspectives on various aspects of work. Describe something you’ve done to optimize the benefits of having a diverse group of colleagues.

Describe a time when you were able to adapt to a person from a background or culture that was different from yours.

**SKILL – Collaborative Team Work:**

Able to share due credit with coworkers, display enthusiasm and promote a friendly group working environment, work closely with other departments as necessary, support group decisions and solicit opinions from coworkers.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate make a clear point of praising others with whom she or he worked to complete a project? Does the candidate recognize that others’ perspectives might add value and actively seek their help?

**QUESTIONS**

How do you work to contribute to collegiality as a member of a department?

How would you describe your style and/or skills in working with different constituencies (students, faculty, supervisors, staff and the community)?

Please give us an example of when you used your interpersonal communication skills to work with and build consensus among various constituents in the campus community.

Tell me about a time when you thought you knew how to handle a situation, yet chose to solicit opinions from other members.

Describe a time when you chose to cooperate with others on a non-essential project even though it would require a sacrifice on your part.

Tell me about a situation when you provided full support for a group decision, even though you didn’t agree with it.

Describe a time when you were praised individually for something to which a whole team or group contributed. What did you do to ensure that the rest of the team members received due credit?

**SKILL – Visioning:**

Able to pursue potential expansion opportunities for the organization, champion radically different ideas and be a leader, identify long-term goals and invest appropriate resources as needed, communicate vision in a way that inspires others.

**INTERPRETIVE GUIDES**

Does the candidate call attention to a problem and an unusual yet optimal solution, and rigorously support, manage, or promote the solution?

**QUESTIONS**

Great yet radically new opportunities are sometimes realized only because somebody championed their cause. Describe a time when you did this successfully.

Tell me about a time when you carefully set a long-term organizational goal. How did you do it?
Often one’s communication of a vision is essential to its organizational support. Describe how you have communicated your vision for the future.

**SKILL – Teaching:**

Able to help students learn information, clearly present information to a student with varying abilities and learning styles, use a variety of pedagogical techniques, stay current in the field.

**BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS**

- How do you provide feedback to students about how they are doing?
- What motivational techniques have you used to help students reach their maximum learning potential?
- What kinds of instructional strategies do you or would you use to facilitate student learning?
- Please describe your experience teaching undergraduates. What methods have you used?
- What strategies have or would you use when teaching a class of 200 students or larger?
- How do or will you determine if students are learning? What evaluation techniques do you use?
- How do you handle the different ability levels of students? How do you help a student who is having difficulty?
- What have you done to reinforce major ideas or concepts that you wanted students to learn?
- How have you handled a student who refused to work in your class or do what you asked?
- How have you dealt with a student who is consistently late for class?
- Describe a teaching strategy you used to maximize the learning potential of all students.
- Define cooperative learning and give an example of how you have used it.
- What curriculum materials have you developed?
- How do you individualize your teaching?
- What have you done in terms of professional development to develop your skills as a teacher?
- How have you used technology in your teaching?
- Please discuss your experience with college students. In what capacity have you worked with them?
- How do you evaluate your students’ academic performance and growth?
- Tell us about one of your proudest moments teaching. Tell us about one of your most frustrating moments teaching.

**OTHER QUESTIONS**

- What do you consider rewarding and exciting about teaching?
- What do you see as one of your major strengths as a teacher?
- What do you see as one of your major challenges as a teacher?
- In your opinion, what are some of the most significant challenges we face in teaching today’s undergraduate students and how do you meet those challenges?
- Please describe your general teaching philosophy.
- What kind of learning environment do you try to create?
- Besides teaching in your area of specialization, what other courses are you interested in developing/teaching?
- What unique teaching experiences and qualifications would you bring to our students and department?
- What do you feel are the most important things students learn in your classroom?
Describe an ideal classroom.

Tell us about your interest and/or experience in on-line teaching?

How do you think your students would describe you?

The faculty at UW-S are expected to be effective teachers and productive scholars who provide service to the university and our profession. How will you prioritize teaching, research, and service?

How do you make students feel at ease around you, while still respecting you?

What is the toughest aspect of teaching today? What are some of the greatest challenges of being an educator?

**SKILL – Research/Scholarship:**

Able to develop and maintain a program of scholarship, research or creative endeavors.

**QUESTIONS**

Tell us about your research program. How do you see yourself continuing or modifying that program here?

Tell us about any experiences you have in involving undergraduate/graduate students in your research. What do you see as the pros/cons of undergraduate research assistants?

UW-S places a high value on undergraduate student research. In what ways can you envision yourself getting involved in motivating students to do research and in serving as a mentor to students doing research?

What type of support does your research require?

Start up funds at UW-S are limited. What would you need in terms of research space and equipment in order to develop a successful research program at UW-Superior?

What do you see as a potential source of external funding for your particular type of research?

Describe how you might develop a successful program of scholarship involving undergraduates.

As a comprehensive university, our teaching load is 12 credits each semester. How do you envision making time for scholarship?

Tell us how you view the relationship between your research/scholarship and your teaching.

**General:**

Please tell us a little bit about yourself and what attracted you to this position at UW-Superior?

As you researched this position, what factors caused you to apply? Why do you want this position?

What is it about this position that seems to be a good fit for your goals as a teacher and a scholar?

Tell us about the responsibilities of your current or previous relevant position(s) and why you are interested in this position at UW-Superior.

How have your past responsibilities prepared you for this position?

Have you had any experience advising students? If so, what do you see as important advisor attributes?

What type of experiences and level of expertise do you have working with technology in your previous positions?

What books/journal articles have you read in the last six months/year?

What do you want to accomplish as a [insert job title]?

What issues in education are of greatest concern to you? Why?

What are your long-term career goals and how does this position fit into them?

What would your co-workers say are your strongest qualities?
What areas challenge you professionally that you may be looking to improve upon?

What would you consider to be your professional strengths and challenges?