

COMMON ACADEMIC JOB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It is rare for you to be able to predict which of the thousands of potential questions you will be asked during an interview. The best preparation focuses on dedicating time to practice aloud, identifying examples and developing short narratives to evidence your skills, and anticipating and understanding what an interviewer (or committee) seeks to learn about you. Below are examples of potential (not exhaustive) questions that an interviewer may ask about common topics, which may be helpful to practice.

Talking about Yourself

The interviewer seeks to learn about you, as it relates to the opportunity.

- Tell us about yourself.
- Tell us about your work/ research.
- Tell us about your goals.
- Tell us about your dissertation.
- Tell us about your service activities.
- Describe your degree of involvement in your professional associations/conferences.

Talking about Your "Fit"

The interviewer is interested in determining if your experience, skills, values, perspectives, and knowledge align with the needs and goals of the department/institution.

- Why did you apply for this job?
- Why are you interested in our university/college?
- What is it about our department that interests you?
- What are your impressions of our curriculum?
- What experience do you have working at this type of institution?
- How would you teach a class on...?
- Why do you want to teach at a liberal arts college/research institution/community college/state university?
- (If applicable) As a faith-based institution, how might you contribute to our mission and campus atmosphere?

Talking about Your Dissertation

The interviewer wants to know about your dissertation focus and research, as well as hear how you talk about it. If there are individuals interviewing you from fields of study outside of your discipline, they will be determining if you can discuss your research in ways that can be universally understood.

- Tell me about your dissertation.
- When will your dissertation be completed?
- What questions led you to your focus and what new ideas have emerged?
- What impact will your dissertation have on the field?
- How do you explain your dissertation to someone outside of your discipline?
- What will you need to do to revise your dissertation for publication?
- What impact will your dissertation have on the field of [X]?

Talking about Your Research

The interviewer wants to be able to understand your past, current, and future research.

- What are your research plans?
- How do you see your research fitting within our department and what we already do?
- How would you incorporate others in your research?
- What plans do you have for future research?
- With whom might you collaborate in our department?
- What types of interdisciplinary research might you do?
- In what ways might you include undergraduates in your research?
- What are your research strengths/weaknesses?
- What funding sources are you aware of that might support your future research?
- What resources, technology, equipment, etc. do you need to do your research?

Talking about Your Publications/Presentations

The interviewer wants to learn about the roles you have had in the publications and presentations cited on your CV, as well as what future topics you seek to explore.

- What was your contribution to publication [X]?
- Which of your publications do you see as being the most significant and why?
- What are your goals for publishing?
- On what topics do you intend to publish in the future?
- You presented at the [conference], tell us more about that.

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Talking about Your Teaching

The interviewer wants to be able to create an image about what you are like as a teacher and what the student experience is in the classes you teach.

- Tell me [us] about your teaching experience.
- Which of our current classes can you teach?
- What teaching techniques do you use in the classroom?
- What methods do you use to engage diverse students?
- What new classes would you want to teach?
- What are your teaching strengths/weaknesses?
- Describe a time when you felt challenged in the classroom?
- What steps have you taken to improve your teaching?
- What technologies have you used in the classroom?
- How would you engage undergraduates in this field?
- What ideas do you have for collaborating with another faculty member on a topic of interest?
- What steps would you take to teach a course you have not previously taught?

Note: An interviewer typically seeks to answer six questions about the candidate:

- Is the candidate competent?
- Can the candidate work with others?
- Does the candidate demonstrate a range of interpersonal skills?
- Does the candidate seem friendly?
- Could I consider the candidate a colleague?
- Will the candidate add something beneficial to our department?

Interview Tips from UConn Faculty

Pre-Work

- “Learn everything you can about the institution, the faculty, and the department.”
- “Have a sense about with whom in the department you might want to collaborate.”
- “Gain an understanding about the students attending the institution.”
- “Be able to talk about yourself and your work in the past, present, and future.”
- “If interviewing by phone or Skype, practice with a friend to ensure your technology is working properly.”
- “If having a virtual interview, arrange your space to convey your professionalism.”
- “Participate in a practice interview and ask for feedback on any distracting habits you might have.”

During the Interview

- “Know your audience. Are all the interviewers in your field?”
- “Provide examples to feature your skills and strengths.”
- “Convey enthusiasm.”
- “Limit any distracting habits.”
- “Ask a clarifying question if you don’t understand what the interviewer is asking.”
- “Always talk about the experiences and skills that you do have to offer; don’t talk about what you don’t have to offer.”

After the Interview

- “Do something you find relaxing.”
- “Begin drafting individualized thank-you notes and/or emails to everyone with whom you interviewed.”
- “Use your thank-you notes to more thoroughly answer a question for which you felt you did not initially give the best answer.”
- “Use your thank-you notes to convey the ways that you feel you would be a good fit with the department and institution.”
- “Keep a log with any questions that you would like to practice answering with greater competency; also write down what you felt you did particularly well.”
- “Consider tweaking your presentations and documents based on your experiences using them.”

Resources

CCD Resources

- [Academic Job Search Website](#)
- [Professional Interviewing Guide](#)
- [Schedule a Practice Interview](#)

Online Interview Practice

- <https://uconn.biginterview.com/>