



Interviewing candidates that apply for an opening is important; preparing yourself for the interview is crucial. To determine the best hire for the job, follow these guidelines to make your interviews as productive as possible.

- Schedule in advance who else may be interviewing the candidate. Coordinate the efforts of your interview team by deciding who is going to ask what questions, or at least focus on a particular line of questioning.
- Plan your questions around the five or six factors that you believe will be most important for successful job performance. These include core competencies, attributes, skills, and abilities. You may find it useful to prepare a simple matrix with your factors as a basis upon which to take notes during or after the interview.
- Take a few minutes to review the candidate's resume and PAIRE application, which the candidate should bring to the interview.
- During the interview, make sure your questions are open-ended. Ask for examples, not facts. And make sure your questions are legal. See examples below for what you can and cannot ask.

#### **FAQ'S FOR INTERVIEWING:**

*Why should I worry about what questions I ask an applicant in an interview?*

PAIRE is committed to Equal Opportunity Employment and maintains an Affirmative Action Plan. It is the philosophy of the organization that all individuals are valued and that employment at PAIRE should be free from discrimination. Oftentimes, in the interview process, hiring managers are uncertain what questions can or cannot be asked in an interview. One method that ensures fair treatment of all applicants is to have your questions written out on a separate sheet of paper in advance and ask the same questions of all applicants.

*How should I prepare my interview questions?*

Reviewing the applicant's resume prior to the interview and familiarizing yourself with the applicant's work experience and education makes the interview flow more smoothly. When asking a question at the interview, you should always ask yourself, can I demonstrate a job-related necessity for asking this question? It is the intent behind the question that is important, as well as how the information is used that determines if any discrimination has occurred. Ask yourself if this question is needed in order to judge the applicant's qualifications, level of skills and overall competence for the job.

*Are there unacceptable interview questions?*

Generally, problem areas are discriminatory questions that are posed on the basis of the applicant's gender, race, age, national origin, religion, or other non-job-related basis. Prohibited interview questions, for example, would be asking female applicants different questions than male applicants, or asking different questions of married female applicants than single female applicants. See the attached *Acceptable and Unacceptable Interview Questions*.

*What are some examples of questions that I may ask?*

1. Describe a time when you faced problems or stresses at work that tested your coping skills. What did you do?
2. Give me an example of a time you used your fact-finding skills to gain information needed to solve a problem. Tell me how you analyzed the information and came to a decision.
3. Describe the most creative work-related project you have completed.
4. What did you do in your last job to contribute towards a teamwork environment? Be specific.
5. Describe the most significant document, report, or presentation you have completed.
6. Give me an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
7. Give me an example of a problem you faced on the job, and tell me how you solved it.
8. Tell me about a situation in the past year in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or coworker.
9. Describe a situation in which others within your organization depended on you.
10. Describe your most recent team effort.

*Should I send notification to applicants that I interviewed but did not hire?*

Yes. It is best practice and courteous to notify those applicants who made the effort to complete the interview process. This also serves as documentation in case there are questions stemming from the hiring process. However, it is important that the notification be succinct. Below is a recommended response that may be sent via email:

*“We have chosen another applicant for the position of (name of position). Although you are not being selected for our present opening, I do thank you for applying with us and cooperating in the interview process.”*

If you have any questions regarding the interview process, please contact Human Resources at x60170 or email [hr@paire.org](mailto:hr@paire.org).

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**Resources:**

This information was modified from a whitepaper from the Society of Human Resources, TriNet’s Manager’s Guide and an article regarding interview questions. This information is offered to assist you in conducting interviews in a lawful, i.e., discrimination free, manner.

TriNet’s Manager’s Guidebook, [www.trinet.com](http://www.trinet.com)  
Interview Do’s & Don’ts, article on [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org)  
Interview Question Guide, [www.bizactions.com](http://www.bizactions.com)

## ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Subject	Acceptable Questions ☺	Unacceptable Questions ☹
Age, gender	Can you verify that you meet the legal age requirement for employment?  <i>Note: No questions about gender.</i>	What is your age?  What is your birth date?
Arrest, Criminal Record	Have you ever been convicted of a crime?  If so, when, where and what was the disposition of the crime?	Have you ever been arrested?  Or any inquiry about convictions that are not related to job requirements.
Birthplace, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, languages spoken	Are you legally eligible to work in the United States?  If employed, can you submit verification of your legal right to work in the U.S.?  <i>Note: If job related, you may ask about foreign languages the applicant can read, speak, or write.</i>	Where were you born? Where was your spouse born? Where were your parents born?  Are you a citizen of another country?  What is your native tongue?  How did you learn to read/write/speak a foreign language?
Disability, handicap, physical condition	Are you able to perform the duties of the position that you have applied for in a reasonable and safe manner?  <i>Note: You can inquire about disabilities and health after making a job offer; especially if you need to establish a reasonable accommodation for the employee.</i>	Do you have any disabilities or handicaps?  Do you have an illness or chronic condition?  Do you have or have you ever had a drug or alcohol problem?
Marital status, family responsibilities, religion	Are there any limitations on the hours, days, or time you are available to work? If so, explain.  Can you work on weekends and/or holidays?  <i>Note: Questions as to availability to work should be job-related. No questions related to religion should be asked.</i>	What is your marital status?  Are you pregnant?  What will your childcare plans be? (If asked to female applicants only)  Does your religion prevent you from working weekends and holidays?  <i>Note: Do not ask any questions about pregnancy, family plans, or medical history of pregnancy.</i>
Military Service	Did you serve in the military?  If yes, what was your period of service, rank at time of discharge, and type of training/work experience received while in the service?	Did you receive other than an honorable discharge from the military?"
Race or Color	There are <u>no</u> job related considerations that would justify asking an applicant a question based on race.	Asking the race, or color or complexion of applicant's skin.
References	Can you provide references that we may contact?  How did you learn about this opening?	What is the name of your pastor or religious leader?
Relatives, friends	Do you have any relatives working here? If yes, who?  <i>Note: Check with HR on policy regarding employees who are related working together.</i>	What is the name and address of your relative or your friend applicant?  <i>Note: Exception would be for those relatives already working here.</i>
Worker's Compensation	No acceptable questions	Have you ever filed a workers' compensation claim? Have you had any prior work injuries?