Competencies & Sample Interview Questions for Faculty Positions

The best interview questions originate from a determination of the top five to six competencies the hiring unit is seeking in its ideal candidate. From those competencies, the search committee should develop a set of core questions based on job-related criteria. The competencies listed below provide sample questions that may be modified based on department and discipline specifics.

**Competency #1: Teaching – Applying knowledge in a field of study towards the education of students to create a vibrant learning community.**

- Describe your style of teaching and interacting with students.
- Provide an example that highlights how you have used technology in the classroom.
- How do you engage students, particularly in a course for non-majors? Tell me about a time when a student excelled because of this engagement.
- How do you define excellence in teaching?
- Tell us about your philosophy regarding the importance of diversity in teaching. How have you fostered, or would you foster, multicultural skills in the classroom?

**Competency #2: Research – Systematically investigating and studying materials and sources to establish facts, reach conclusions, and promote a robust environment.**

- Describe your current research project.
- What do you think are your greatest strengths as a researcher and scholar and why?
- Tell us about a professional development activity that has made a large impact on your career.
- We all have areas to develop further. In which areas do you feel you can use some further development? What steps have you taken to develop these areas?
- Describe books and articles read recently that are influencing your current research project or initiatives.

**Competency #3: Valuing Diversity & Solidarity - Making decisions and initiating action to ensure the capabilities and insights of individuals with diverse backgrounds, styles, abilities, and motivation are taken into consideration.**

- Tell me about a time when you led a group in reaching a consensus on a difficult issue.
- Tell me about a time when your opinion on a matter changed after receiving input from others. How did this affect your actions or attitudes?
- What have you done to promote collaboration and cooperation with your colleagues to create new opportunities within your unit?

**Competency #4: Building Trusting Relationships – Developing effective relationships with faculty, staff, stakeholders, and internal partners; interacting with others in a way that promotes openness and trust and gives them confidence in one's intentions.**

- There are many ways to show respect to others. What ways work best for you? Give me a specific example.
- Provide an example of when you made a decision in which others did not agree. How did this impact your relationship(s)?
o Describe how you have encouraged divergent perspectives in a group setting. Give a recent example of when you used this approach.

**Competency #5: Innovation/Entrepreneurship** - Using an understanding of higher education and key market drivers to create and seize opportunities; using one’s understanding of major business functions, industry trends, and position of one’s institution to contribute to effective strategies and tactics.

  o What innovations have you brought to the teaching of (insert area of research/discipline)?
  o What systems have you put in place to recognize or reward those who suggest or make effective changes?
  o Describe how your research is innovative and could contribute to the University.

**Competency #6: Leadership** - A lucid and authoritative communicator and an excellent, active listener, effective in delegating authority while guiding and monitoring critical operations; enthusiastic and effective in dealing with students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders; adept at collaboration in all facets.

  o Briefly describe your most defining leadership experience.
  o What are some of the most effective traits of a unit chair or leader with which you have worked? Tell me how you have incorporated at least one of those traits into your own leadership style.
  o Describe how you have worked with a unit or group of individuals to set measurable objectives. How did you monitor the process toward achieving these objectives?