

Sample Interview Questions

Excerpted and adapted from *The Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition
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SUMMARY

The time has come to interview a potential employee. What questions should you, the employer, ask? Below is a list of questions you can ask to obtain key information concerning an interviewee's work experience, education, interpersonal skills, career goals, work style, and management style.

JOB INTERVIEWS

Job interviews are a two-way process. The firm evaluates the candidate, and the candidate assesses the firm. Individuals in the firm who will participate in the interview process should review the candidate's materials in advance, and be trained to conduct interviews.

It is not possible to learn absolutely everything about a prospective candidate. The following sample questions, however, may help you develop your own set of questions to learn enough about a candidate to make an informed decision:

Experience/education

- Why did you select architecture as your field of study?
- Can you share details or insights gained from your college internships?
- How did your education prepare you for employment as an architect?
- What skills did you acquire that are particularly relevant to this position?
- How many principals or managers do you support?
- How do you prioritize work assignments?

Career goals/job satisfaction

- What were the most significant challenges and most satisfying aspects of your last job?
- How did you meet those challenges?
- As you consider different job opportunities, what characteristics do you look for?

- What aspects of your last job did you find to be least satisfying?
- Can you provide an example of an important goal that you have set in the past, and describe your success in reaching it?
- What kind or style of management brings out the best in you?
- What are your career goals?
- How do you feel this position will help you achieve those goals?
- What time commitment are you prepared to give us as your employer?
- What qualities do you have that would make you an asset to this firm?
- Why are you interested in this particular position?

Interpersonal skills

- Can you provide an example from your previous employment that illustrates your ability to interact effectively with a wide variety of people?
- Can you provide an example of a situation that illustrates your ability to handle a fast-paced, demanding job?
- What qualities would you identify in yourself that make you an effective coworker or team member? Can you provide examples of situations in which you have exemplified these qualities?
- Can you describe a difficult situation in which you successfully negotiated a win-win solution? Can you describe one in which you were unsuccessful?
- Can you provide an example of a difficult client situation?
- Can you provide an example of something you would find difficult to communicate to staff?
- In your most recent job, how did you contribute toward a team working environment?

- Can you describe the type of person with whom you would most prefer to work, and the type of person with whom you would least prefer to work?

Work style

- How do you organize and prioritize your work?
- What types of decisions do you find easiest to make?
- What types of decisions do you find most difficult to make?
- Can you provide an example of a specific situation or occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree? How did you feel about the situation?
- Can you provide an example of a situation or occasion when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done?
- What tasks do you delegate?
- What tasks do you do yourself?
- Can you describe your leadership style?
- How do you help maintain an overall consistent image for your firm?
- How do you perceive your image to be within the firm?
- How do you perceive your image to be outside the firm?

Management style/skills

- How would your staff evaluate your management style?
- What are your management strengths and weaknesses?
- Can you provide an example of a disciplinary situation with an employee in which you were able to successfully mentor the employee?
- Can you provide an example of a disciplinary situation with an employee in which it was necessary to terminate the employee?
- How do you establish the workload for individual staff members?
- How do you address contract negotiations? Project budgeting? Staff and project scheduling? Staff organization?

Other questions

- What are some things you do particularly well?

- What are some of your greatest personal achievements?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What are some things you find particularly difficult to do?
- How do you handle these situations?
- In what ways or areas would you like to grow and develop professionally?
- What skills would you like to acquire or improve?
- What frustrates you most about your current job, and how do you handle it?
- How do you feel about the progress you have made with your present company?
- How have your present or past jobs prepared you to assume more responsibility?
- Why did you leave your last job? Why do you wish to leave your current job?
- Describe the types of deadlines or schedules you have worked under in the past. How did you meet them?
- What is important to you in a firm?
- Have you ever made suggestions to your manager or supervisor on how to improve work flow or procedures? If so, what were they, and what was the result of your suggestions?

RESOURCES

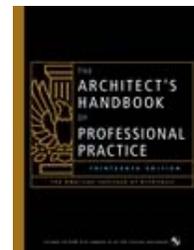
More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

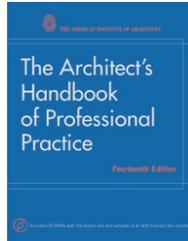
- 07.02.02 Basic Elements of New Employee Orientation
- 03.01.01 Tips for a Successful Job Interview
- 03.01.07 Navigating the Job Search Process and Beyond

For More Information on This Topic

See also “Recruiting and Hiring,” by Laurie Dreyer-Hadley and Kathleen C. Maurel, Assoc. AIA, *The Architect’s Handbook of Professional Practice*, 13th edition, Chapter 9, page 229.



See also the 14th edition of the *Handbook*, which can be ordered from the AIA Bookstore by calling 800-242-3837 (option 4) or by email at bookstore@aia.org.



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Keywords

- Practice
- Personnel management
- Hiring
- Employment interviews