



Affirmative Action and Equity Compliance

Sample Interview Questions – Diversity and Equity

The questions that follow are intended as sample questions, and do not constitute a required list. These are examples that hiring departments and search committees can use to help them assess candidates' commitment to and experience with creating inclusive and equitable educational and workplace environments.

These samples include a range of questions that might be asked of people applying for all kinds of positions, with various levels and types of responsibility. Not every question is appropriate for every position. In addition, there are many different ways to ask questions seeking particular information, so some of the questions may be similar but with slightly different emphases. Review the questions to see how they are designed, and see whether you find any that are particularly appropriate for the position you are filling. You may adapt questions to make them more relevant to the functions of the job. You may also write your own questions that are tailored to the needs of your unit. We have provided some options for wording [in brackets] that may help in adapting questions for different roles and responsibilities.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY QUESTIONS (i.e. mindset, attitudes, philosophy)

1. Describe your understanding of diversity [inclusion] and why it is important to this position.
2. What is your definition of diversity and how or why do you think diversity is important?
3. In what ways do you think diversity is important to someone in the role of _____?
4. How are diversity [inclusion] issues and [leadership] [teaching or service] [customer service] related?
5. How would you describe your current thinking about diversity, and how has your thinking changed over time?
6. What does it mean for you to have a commitment to diversity? How have you demonstrated that commitment, and how would you see yourself demonstrating it here?
7. What are some concerns you have about working with diverse populations or communities?
8. To what extent do you believe there are significant differences in how one should work with diverse cultures within the US/US minorities and diverse cultures from other nations? Are different strategies appropriate, and if so, what are they?

HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. Pose a situation/scenario involving issues of diversity. Ask the applicant how she or he would respond in that situation.
2. In what ways can you imagine promoting NIU's nondiscrimination policy in your responsibilities in this position?

3. How would you [reach] [serve] diverse groups or traditionally underserved communities?
4. What challenges do you think you will face in working with a diverse population?
5. Why do you think it's important to address diversity and equity issues in this position, and what are some ways you might do that?
6. How would you advocate for diversity education and diversity initiatives with individuals who don't see its value?
7. Explain what you believe to be an effective strategy to introduce diversity to individuals who have only experienced a limited number of cultures.
8. Explain what you believe to be an effective strategy to diversify curricula
9. When dealing with a non-diverse environment or individuals with little experience with diversity, how would you approach making diversity relevant or valued?
10. How would you handle a situation in which someone made a sexist, racist, homophobic or otherwise prejudiced remark?
11. How would you respond to a conversation between [co-workers] [students] [colleagues] that was clearly offensive to others?
12. If you were hired, how would you use this position to increase or enhance diversity at NIU?
13. Sometimes there is a belief that a commitment to diversity conflicts with a commitment to excellence (i.e. we will have to lower our standards to achieve or accommodate diversity). How would you describe the relationship between diversity and excellence? What kinds of leadership efforts would you undertake to encourage a commitment to excellence through diversity?
14. In what ways do you feel it is appropriate to incorporate topics related to diversity and [your discipline] into the classes you teach? How would you do this?

PERFORMANCE OR EXPERIENCE RELATED TO DIVERSITY QUESTIONS
(i.e. past experience or training that can be demonstrated)

1. How has your [education] [previous work experience] prepared you for [working with] [teaching] a diverse population?
2. How has your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment [that values diversity] [is committed to inclusion] [where we see awareness of and respect for diversity as an important value]?
3. What is your past experience or training in [working with] [teaching] _____ populations?
4. What specific experiences have you had addressing concerns of diverse [communities] [students] [populations] at your current or previous institution? What role have you taken in addressing those concerns?
5. Please tell us about an instance when you have demonstrated leadership or commitment to equity in your work.

6. What programs or initiatives have you been part of to [work with diverse populations] [address diversity issues], and specifically what was your role in those efforts?
7. NIU, like many universities, is highly concerned with issues of diversity and equity. How has your past work demonstrated an active commitment to equity?
8. Can you describe an innovative [program] [activity] [teaching strategy] addressing diversity that you were an integral part of developing?
9. In what ways have you demonstrated commitment and sensitivity to the importance of diversity in your previous experience?
10. Describe a time when you worked to incorporate diversity issues or diverse communities into [a project or event you worked on] [a class you taught].
11. What training and experience do you have in developing and implementing [services and programs] [courses] [course objectives] [learning objectives] that incorporate diversity?
12. Describe your experiences in strategic planning related to diversity.
13. Describe your experiences in assessing diversity initiatives and their outcomes.
14. What experiences have you had with recruiting, hiring, training, and/or supervising a diverse workforce?
15. What is the most challenging situation dealing with diversity that you have faced and how did you handle it?
16. If we were to ask your colleagues or supervisor at your current position, what do you think they would say about your diversity background, experience and contributions?
17. What areas of diversity do you think you have to learn more about and how would you go about doing it?
18. What have you done to further your knowledge or understanding about diversity? How have you applied your learning?
19. How has your research incorporated diverse populations?
20. What role has diversity played in your [approach to teaching _____] [teaching strategies] [management of classroom dynamics]?
21. What kinds of experiences have you had in relating with people whose backgrounds are different than your own?
22. Have you ever realized you had said or done something that may have been offensive to a [colleague] [student] [co-worker]? How did you respond to that realization, and what was the outcome?
23. In your experience, what are the challenges faced by members of historically underrepresented groups [in the workplace] [in successfully completing their education]? What strategies have you used to address these challenges, and how successful were those strategies?