General

1. What are you expectation for this position?
2. Give us a recap of your SQL progression to this point?  In other words, how did you get to this point in your career?
3. Why should we hire you?

Technical

DBA I & DBA II Questions

1. How do you find the duplicate records in a table and delete those
2. What are the differences between User Defined Functions and Stored Procedures as far as the usage of those.
3. Where is the business logic implemented: functions or stored procedures
4. What is an Orphaned User
5. What is the difference between Having and Where clause
6. What is the default port number where SQL Server listens to
7. What are the different options to move a database
8. What are the advantages of moving a database with Backup/Restore vs Attach/Detach
9. How to find out when was the last time SQL Server was started
10. Explain the difference between an Instance and Database.
11. Have you prepared for any Certs?  Pass any?
12. Explain what an index is and what is it used for.
13. What types of indexes are used within SQL Server?
14. What is a view?  Why would I want to use it?
15. What is the main tool you use to manage a SQL database?
16. What questions did you ask more senior DBA’s in current or previous position?
17. What is your knowledge of PowerShell? Command Shell? Scripting in general?

DBA III & DBA IV

1. What is your strategy to determine if an index is needed or not?
2. How would you determine if an index is being maintain but not used?
3. Explain how checkpoint works.
4. What is the difference between a transaction rollback and roll forward?  When does each occurs during a system crash?
5. Explain what is a Fixed Server Role?  Fixed Database Role? What are they and their uses?
6. You are reviewing a table with an index and noticed the index is fragmented?  How did you know it was fragmented?  Would you re-index or reorganize this index?
7. Maintaining company confidentiality, what process(es) did you use to build, deploy, and\or schedule a new process in your past job(s)?
8. What tools have you used to track performance?
9. Tells us about the various Replication forms.
10. If I have a replication error, what tool would I use to determine what the error is?
11. If I get a missing record in replication, what type of error is this? In other words, what is it trying to do at the subscriber. (either Update or Delete).
12. What new templates are added to Profiler for SQL 2014\2016?  (Either they will give a BS answer, say I don’t know, or the correct answer, there are none)
13. What is Extended Events?
14. In your previous jobs, what would you have liked to accomplish that you were unable to achieve?
15. What is the difference between SQL 2012 and SQL 2014 column stores?
16. Why would you a use an Azure SQL database verses an on premise database?
17. What is the advantage and disadvantage in using Clustered servers?
18. Explain setting up a database mirror to us?
19. What are the steps you would go through when setting up Extended Events?
20. You are tasked to stand up a new instance?  Give me some steps you would accomplish in order to complete this task?
21. Why are you good enough to be a Senior Level DBA here at SCUSA?
22. What is the most important attribute you will bring to the team?  (looking for mentorship, knowledge, and willingness to learn and adapt)
23. What is the difference between RAID 10 and RAID 01
24. Are all index scans bad
25. In general where would place your nonclustered indexes
26. Walk me through the process of restoring the master database
27. What is the lazy writer
28. How would you tune tempdb
29. What are wait stats, how do you obtain that information, and in general how do you use them
30. Imagine you notice a bookmark lookup in query plan due to 2 columns in select (projection) that are not currently part of the nonclustered index; how would you tune.
31. How do you go about generating a deadlock graph
32. Have you ever implemented TDE; what is the instance impact if you turn on it
33. If auto update stats is turned on; when will the system generate new statistics
34. Have you worked w/ SQL hosted on VM
35. What are the new features in SQL 2014 that you are most interested in learning
36. What are the new features in SQL 2015 that you are most interested in learning
37. What are volume mount points
38. Have you worked with SQL hosted in a cluster; how
39. Oracle has fully contained databases, why does SQL only offer partially contained database
40. What are some common perform metrics to baseline a system
41. What is the difference between a GAM and SGAM
42. What steps would you take to secure a instance of SQL Server
43. What are some best practices to setting parrellism
44. How would enforce business logic to only allow a discrete list of values for a given column
45. Are columns physically stored on disk in the order as what is defined table definition
46. How do you determine if an index is being used or not
47. What is partition elimination
48. What is a schema
49. How would baseline an instance of SQL server
50. Have you used Extended Events; what are some of the options available to store the 'trace'
51. What do you do for fun
52. How hours per week do you spend trying to learn something new
53. What does a statistic represent
54. Tell me briefly about a function in SQL Server that you think I would not be familiar with. What is significant about it? How do you use it?

SCUSA Values

Our People

Key Traits - Empathize with customer base, build relationships, recognizing peers, collaboration

1. You have just had a great idea on how to improve the environment, but your idea is completely new to us. How do you go about getting me and the team on board w/ your idea?
2. You have just been assigned to develop a SQL 101 training class for some new business analysts to the company, how would you go about generating the material for the training class?
3. Imagine you are given the task of tuning a stored procedure; you start to review the stored procedure and have some ideas on how to improve it; how would you ensure those changes are incorporated into the next release for that application?
4. How would you mentor an end-user who is habitually writing poorly performing queries?
5. Tell me about a time that you went out of your way to mentor a junior DBA?
6. Imagine that an end-user calls at 4:30PM with a problem w/ an Excel workbook that connects to a SQL Database and they tell you they need to generate a report before the close of business, how would you handle that situation?
7. How comfortable are you in a large DBA team environment?

Fiscal Responsibility

Key Traits – being careful with cost, time or resources

1. Which is better, a solution that is perfect that you know will never fail or a solution that you have a good deal of certainty that will work in most circumstances?
2. Our core/main instances of SQL Server are utilizing Enterprise Edition. Imagine there is a new project that is starting that will require its own instance of SQL Server but will not make use of any advanced features. What version of SQL Server would you suggest using for this new project?
3. You have been assigned to perform space planning for a new project that will require a new instance. Customer advises that the DB will most likely be around 100GB after 6 months and then will grow slightly going forward. How much space do you request for the new instance and why?
4. Tell me about a time that you assisted in bringing in a 3rd party tool into former team/environment. Why did you bring it in and how did you justify the cost of the tool?

Service

Key Traits – responding to requests or problems from our customer base

1. You are on call and you notice that an ad-hoc query is generating a great deal of blocking on one of our major transactional systems. You decide to kill the blocking session and then a few minutes later you get call from the owner of that session and that user is irate as they have to get a report out within the hour. How would you handle that situation?
2. You’re on call and a high level VP calls you telling you to run a DDL in prod while on the phone with that VP. There is no change ticket and production is down. How do you handle that situation?
3. You are reviewing a stored procedure that a developer created that has not gone to production yet. You notice a single small typo in the procedure that could cause it to fail under certain circumstances. Further, the proc is scheduled to production that day. What do you do?
4. You notice in change management system that a change is scheduled for later that evening but the change has not been approved as of yet. What do you do in that scenario?
5. You are in the middle of watching a training webinar and a group of developers comes up to your desk to ask some questions. How do you handle that situation?

Performance

Key Traits – going above and beyond, helping out your team, asking for more work or responsibility

1. Have you had an IT Administration role before? How do you protect yourself from causing system issues? How do you handle it if you are not sure how to complete a specific task?
2. If you are given a task, but not sure how to accomplish it, how would you handle it? What would you do to get your questions answered? If no one is available, what would you do?
3. If you had multiple projects and tasks come in at the same time, how do you determine which task you will work on first? How do you handle when project requirements change?
4. Describe a project or situation that best demonstrates your analytical abilities.
5. Tell me about a time that you took it upon yourself to document a previously undocumented process?
6. You are currently not on call. However, the prior week you were on call and as such are going into the ticketing system to follow up on an open ticket from last week. You notice, that there are a large number of requests that have come in and have not been responded to as of yet. What do you do?

Respect

Key Traits – how do they deal with people with varying skills sets or opinions

1. Tell me about a time in which you had a conflict with someone on your team and how did you resolve that conflict?
2. What is your learning style? What works best for you? Are you comfortable receiving instruction from peers? Why or why not? What benefits could you receive from a team environment?
3. You notice that a peer is struggling in completing an assigned task; how would handle that situation?
4. How would you convince an application developer to alter stored procedure that generates a high level of IO but executes in less than a second to tune their query so that in generates less IO?

Excellence & Entrepreneurship

Key Traits – how do they seek out ways to add values to the team, dept., and company; how do they go about trying to improve the environment; do they innovate or utilize new tools/technologies to solve existing problems or deliver new services to customer base

1. Where are you wanting to be in 1 year? In 5 years? What do you want to accomplish? What are you going to do this next year to move in that direction?
2. What was your greatest achievement in prior position?
3. What do you consider a “weak point” that you want to improve in regards to your understanding of SQL Server?
4. How do you keep yourself up-to-date on the latest SQL Server versions and emerging trends?
5. have you created a VM on your machine at home
6. What do you do for fun? How do you let off steam when you are off work?
7. Tell me about a time that you automated a manual process and then mentored your team on how to use the new automation that you created?
8. Tell me about a when you suggested and then implemented a solution to a common problem faced by customer base. What was it and what was its impact?
9. Are team or company standards set in stone or are they malleable? If malleable, how do you go about changing those standards?
10. Imagine that you notice that certain department is consistently submitting tickets to alter a single field in a table and the queries always use the same filter set. How do you help the customer?