**SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

General:

• Tell me about yourself.

• Why did you decide to apply for this position, and what qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in it?

• As you know, our program focuses on [subject x]. How do you anticipate contributing to this field?

• What do you think the biggest problem is with [subject x] today, and how would you solve it?

• Describe the research that you envision contributing to our institute.

Self Awareness:

• How would you describe yourself?

• What led you to choose the career for which you are preparing?

• Do you work best alone, or as part of a team?

• Would you describe yourself as a follower, or a leader?

• Why have you switched career fields?

Weaknesses/Negatives:

• What major problems have you encountered and how did you deal with them?

• What have you learned from your mistakes?

• What do you consider to be your greatest weakness?

• Have you ever had problems with a supervisor?

Skills/Abilities/Qualifications:

• What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?

• Are you creative? Give an example.

• What qualifications do you have that makes you think you will be successful at this job?

• What 2 or 3 accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction in your career so far?

Knowledge of the Organization:

• Why did you decide to seek a position with this organization?

• What do you know about our organization?

• Do you have any questions about our organization?

Values:

• What rewards do you expect in your career?

• How do you work under pressure?

• What two or three things are most important to you in a job?

• Under what conditions do you work best?

Experience:

• What have you learned from some jobs you have held?

• What did you like most/least about your last job?

• Give an example of a situation in which you worked as part of a team, and what the outcome was.

• Have you ever worked on a team in which one or more team members didn’t pull their own weight? How did you resolve that situation?

Goals/Objectives:

• What are your short range and long range goals and objectives?

• Where do you see yourself in five/ten years?

Education:

• How has your education prepared you for this position?

• Do you have plans for continued study?

• Why did you decide to study [program area; for example, Maternal and Child Health]?

Interests:

• What do you do in your free time?

• What types of books do you read?

• If you didn’t have to work for a living, what would you do?

Stress Questions:

• What causes you to lose your temper?

• Have you ever had trouble with other people on the job?

• Tell me about a difficult situation you faced on the job or at school, and how you handled it.

• Tell me about a time when you put your foot in your mouth.

• Rating it on a scale of one to ten, how do you think this interview is going?

Brain Teasers: (The point of teaser questions is not necessarily to answer the question correctly, but to show that you can think on your feet.)

• Why are manhole covers round?

• How many barbershops are there in Portland, Oregon?

Questions for the Interviewer

Remember that the interview is also your opportunity to determine whether the organization has the qualities you are seeking. Below are a few areas to think of as you form the questions you would like to ask.

• Environment – Before your interview, you need to determine the type of environment in which you would be most successful. Do you want to work in a fast paced environment, family friendly environment, or a small laid back environment? Consider what is important to you, and then be sure to ask about it in the interview. How would you describe the environment of the department?

• Advancement – Asking about advancement is important, but it’s even more important how you ask about advancement. Everyone wants to get ahead, but you don’t want to give the impression that the job at hand is too junior for you. Don’t just ask what advancement opportunities are available with out first prefacing your comments. Explain that you understand that you would expect to be in the current position for 3-5 years but then from that point, where do employees typically move up in the organization?

• Growth – Another way to ask about advancement is to find out what growth is expected. As a new employee, if you work hard and the company is growing, the advancement will come naturally. I read that the organization has grown by 25% in the last 5 years, where do you anticipate future growth to come from?

• Training – It is always good to ask a question centered on training or development opportunities. This shows your interest in learning more. You could ask the interviewer to describe the training opportunities available to new employees. Or, what can I expect in the way of training as a new employee?

• Mission – Now here, an employer is going to expect you to have done some research. However, you can ask a question about the mission as it relates to the information your research. I understand that customer service is integral to the corporate mission, how do you feel your department supports this mission?

• Challenges – What challenges does your department face currently? What are the challenges I am most likely to face as a new employee in this department?

• Anything Else – You should ask any question that will help you in your decision making process for determining if this employer offers the ideal work environment for you.

• Closing – At the end of the interview, you always want to ask what the next step in the process will be. Be sure to exchange business cards and thank the interviewer for their time. Also, at this point, you can show enthusiasm for the opportunity by saying that you are interested in the position and you hope they will consider you strongly.

Things to Avoid

• Don’t ask about salary or benefits in the interview unless the interviewer initiates. These areas are left better to negotiate if you are made an offer.

• Do not ask questions that are too personal and unrelated to the interview unless the interviewer brings up something while small talking.