**Typical Interview Questions**

Don’t try to memorize (or fabricate) the “right” answers to interview questions. The only “right” answers are those that truthfully describe an event in your life, including what you learned from the event, what skills you developed, what skill you used, or what you would have done differently. Have confidence that your response is strong if it reflects active self-assessment, specific details and relates to the question being asked.

Also try to understand the question under the question; understand why the question is being asked and what the employer is evaluating. Respond with specific, thoughtful descriptions of your real past and present experiences, the skills developed and lessons learned from them.

_Have you skipped ahead to this section—not reading this entire handbook? If so, you won’t be prepared—and you won’t succeed in the interview._

If you have thoroughly prepared for all aspects of the job search and followed us carefully to this point, you will know what to say and how to respond. Questions are not as important as answers. However, a list of potential interview questions must be included, so here they are:

## Reasons for Studying Engineering

1. What led you to choose your field of major study? Why did you select UW–Madison? Was it a good decision?
2. What classes were the most challenging? The least challenging?
3. Describe your most rewarding college experiences.
4. Are your grades an accurate indication of your academic achievement?
5. Do you have plans for graduate or professional school?
6. Why weren’t you more involved in college activities?
7. What was the best part of your college experience?
8. A college degree is nothing special; everyone I am interviewing has one. What else do you have to offer me?
9. Provide an example of how you acquired a technical skill and converted it into a practical application.
10. How frequently did you skip classes while in college?

## Employer Knowledge/Interest

11. How have you prepared for this interview?
12. Why are you interested in opportunities with my company? What do you know about our company?
13. Why should we hire you instead of other equally qualified candidates?
14. Which trade publications do you read to keep informed about current trends?
15. What technical skills would you bring to this position?
16. What qualities do you think this position requires?
17. What interests you least about this job?
18. What do you see as the major trends in the field?
19. Why do you want to leave your current employer?
20. What salary would you anticipate?
Work and Academic Experiences

21. Describe a situation in which your ideas or work conflicted with the ideas or work of a co-worker or supervisor.

22. What type of people do you find difficult to work with?

23. What have you learned from your past jobs?

24. How did your co-op/intern position contribute to your career growth?

25. Tell me of a situation where you worked under pressure.

26. You seem to have limited work experience; why do you think you could do this job?

27. What part of the position’s responsibilities interests you most?

28. If I contacted your references, what would they each say about you?

29. Have you ever been fired?

30. Do you make your opinion known when you disagree with a supervisor?

31. How would you handle a situation in which you couldn’t get along with your boss?

32. What new idea or suggestion did you make to your immediate supervisor in the last couple of months?

33. How would you describe the perfect supervisor?

Motivations and Goals

34. Tell me about the last time that you made a change in your life.

35. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?

36. Give me two examples of good decisions you have made in the last six months. Why were they good?

37. What have you done that demonstrates your initiative?

38. What would you change about yourself if you could?

39. When have you been a leader?

40. Would you rather write a report or give an oral report? Why?

41. What was the latest book you’ve read or movie you seen?

42. Are you a risk-taker?

43. How do you handle pressure situations?

44. How do you relieve stress?

45. Tell me about yourself.

46. How have you gone about determining that this field is right for you?

47. What is the biggest risk you have ever taken?

48. What is your strongest transferable skill? How has it been helpful to you?

49. What accomplishment has given you the most satisfaction? Why?

50. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?

51. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?

52. How do you define success?

53. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
Response to Failure or Criticism
54. How do you react to criticism?
55. Think about something at work or school that you consider a failure. Tell me about it.
56. Tell me about a mistake you made, and how you handled it.
57. What is the worst communication problem you have experienced?
58. Tell me about a time when you put your foot in your mouth (misspoke).
59. Describe the biggest problem you have faced within the last six months. How did you handle it?
60. What is the most unethical situation you have encountered?
61. Have you ever been convicted of a crime?
62. When was the last time you lied?
63. Who is currently angry with you?
64. Tell me about a team you were on when all members did not carry their weight.

Interaction with Others
65. Describe an instance where you made effective use of facts to secure the agreement of others.
66. Describe a creative idea that you produced which led to a significant contribution to the success of an activity or project.
67. Describe your vision of a leader.
68. What qualities are essential for success in business today?
69. What is leadership?
70. When is it time to follow?

Future Goals
71. What are your short-range goals? How are you preparing for them?
72. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
73. Which of your personal goals have you reached and not reached?
74. What are your long-range career objectives?
75. Tell me about a time you overcame obstacles to reach a goal?