



Academic Interview Questions Cheat Sheet

Congratulations on being called to interview for a new academic job. Now is the time to prepare for the range of probing questions you will be asked. Get ahead of the competition by using these 80 sample interview questions as inspiration for planning and practising your answers.

General

- Why do you want this job?
- Why do you want to work at this institution?
- Why should we hire you?
- What skills can you offer us?
- What makes you different from other candidates?
- What is your greatest professional achievement?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- How would your peers describe you?
- Why are you leaving your current job?
- Can you explain why you changed career paths?
- What are you looking for in a new position?
- What type of work environment do you prefer?
- How do you cope with pressure?
- Tell us about a challenge or conflict you've faced at work, and how you handled it.
- Describe a significant setback you have experienced and how you responded.

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- Describe a time you learned a new skill and how you went about it.
- What would your priorities be for your first 30/100 days in post?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What are your professional goals for the next 10 years?

Research

- What are your research interests?
- How would you tell a layperson in two minutes why your research is valuable?
- What are the major issues in your research field? How have they affected you?
- Please describe how you have developed a research idea.
- Describe the research methods you have used. What problems did you experience using this methodology/ approach?
- What's distinctive about your approach to research?
- Why would a researcher want to work with you, rather than one of your peers?
- What would you do differently if you began X research project again?
- What research plans do you have for the next three years?
- What significant funding have you secured in the past, and what was your role in securing it?
- How will you source funding for your next project, and what would you do if your funding applications were turned down?
- How does your research align with current funding priorities?

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- How will your research interests fit in with departmental priorities?
- How might your research serve the university's wider stated goals?
- How will your research inform your teaching?
- How do you approach collaboration, and what learning has informed this approach?
- Who has had the greatest influence on you, in terms of your research?
- What opportunities are there for collaboration with industry? How have you explored these?
- What publications do you have planned?
- What have been your most significant publications, and why?

Teaching

- What can you offer in terms of teaching?
- What new courses could you offer?
- What topics would you like to teach?
- What is your teaching philosophy?
- What are your teaching strengths?
- What are your weaknesses, and how are you addressing them?
- How has your teaching improved over the last year?
- What training do you think you will require?
- What innovations have shaped your teaching in the last year?
- How have technological changes impacted your teaching?
- What would you change about X course?

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- What experience do you have in curriculum development?
- How would you market X course to an international audience?
- Please describe your experience of doctoral supervision. What's your philosophy? What have you learned through supervision?
- What would your advice be to someone supervising for the first time?
- How successfully have you combined research and teaching in the past? What have you learned, and what strategies do you use?
- What would be the best feedback a student could give you on your teaching?
- How do you engage less-motivated students?
- Drop-out rates are high amongst first year undergraduates. How would you address this?
- How would you improve student satisfaction?

Management and administration

- What professional development activities have you undertaken in the last 3 years?
- How would you describe your management style?
- How would others describe your management style?
- How do you organise your work and time?
- Describe an idea faculty member. In what ways do you fit the description, and in what areas do you have the most progress to make?
- What efforts have you made in the last year to become a better faculty member?

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- What service roles have you held?
- What is your service philosophy?
- What experience do you have of managing a budget?
- What experience do you have of committee work?
- What have you learned from your experience of committee work?
- Describe an ethical issue you have faced, and what you did.
- Describe your commitment to diversity and give an example of a way you have demonstrated this.
- How would you contribute to the administration of the department?
- How would you seek to contribute to the administration of the institution?
- How would you like to contribute to the development of the culture of the institution?
- How do you see yourself contributing to the institution over the next 10 years?
- What do you consider the most pressing issues affecting HE today?
- What significant challenges do you see on the horizon for the HE sector?
- What do you see as the major leadership challenges of this role and how would you meet them?