Interview Tips and Strategies

Focus on 21st Century Skills and Attributes for Museum Professionals:
- Critical Thinking
- Creativity
- Collaboration
- Communications

Remember the goal of interviewing:
- To verify and validate the information you know about the candidate
- Uncover the skills and talents of the individual
- Determine if the candidate is the right fit for the internship and the organization based on your needs and the candidate’s qualifications.

Tips:
- Review the candidate’s resume in advance of the interview.
- Review the internship description to understand the skills required to successfully complete the internship
- Determine what talents an individual could bring to the internship for it to be successful for both the organization and the individual.
- View the interview as a conversation, not a yes/no question and answer session
- Be respectful of each candidate as there is a reason the person has come to the interview.

Steps:
- Create questions to determine the candidate’s fit to the position – these questions should be asked to all interviewees.
- Create a set of questions that relate directly to the job responsibilities.
- Create a set of questions pertaining to the individual’s resume and skill set.
- Create a set of questions to find the individual’s talents.
- Create questions to focus of the 21st century skills (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, & communications)
- Questions should be open ended; avoid questions that only require a yes or no answer.
- Be familiar with illegal or impermissible interview questions (applies to unpaid positions as well).
- Allow the candidate to do most of the talking.
- Allow time at the end of the interview for candidate to ask questions.

Sample Interview Technique
Behavior Based Interviewing can be summarized as:
- Past performance is indicator of future performance
- Probe past experience – both successes and failures. (How the candidate approaches the question and how the candidate expresses handling failures can be a good indicator of what he/she is like to work with.)
• Ask questions that require more of an answer than "yes" or "no."
• Start with "why," "how," "where," "what kind of ..."
• Don't let periods of silence fluster you. Give the interviewee a chance to think of what she wants to add before disregarding the question asked and moving on.

Examples of Culture Fit questions
These questions can help determine if the candidate will be a good fit with your organization’s culture and work environment. The interviewer should have an understanding of their own work culture and ideal answers s/he would like to hear before asking these questions.

• Describe the work environment or culture in which you are most productive and happy.
• What were the characteristics exhibited by the best boss you have ever had - or wished that you have had?
• In your experience, how does an organization encourage use of your discretionary energy and effort? Discretionary energy can be described as the willingness one goes the ‘extra mile’, pushes harder, spends more time, and does whatever is necessary to get the job done?
• Describe the management style that will bring forth your best work and efforts.
• Describe what you believe are the most effective roles that a good manager plays in his or her relationship with reporting staff members.
• What are the positive aspects of your current job and work environment, or the last position you held before coming to this interview?
• What is the single most important factor that must be present in your work environment for you to be successful?
• What is your preferred work style? Do you prefer working alone or as part of a team? What percentage of your time would you allocate to each, given the choice?
• How would your coworkers describe your work style and contributions in your former position?
• What are the three to five expectations that you have of your supervisor?
• When you work with a team, describe the role that you are most likely to play on the team.
• How would coworkers describe the role that you play on a team?
• When working with people, in general, describe your preferred relationship with them.

Questions not to ask for legal reasons:
http://humanresources.about.com/od/interviewing/a/interview_quest.htm
Questions based on the following categories have potential to make your organization liable in a discrimination lawsuit. These include any interview questions that are related to a candidate’s:
• Age
• Race, ethnicity, or color
• Gender or sex
• Country of national origin or birth place
• Religion
• Disability
• Marital or family status, or pregnancy
Especially in the course of a comfortable interview during which participants are relaxed, don’t let the interview turn into a personal chat session. Seemingly innocuous interview questions such as the following are illegal.

Sample Legal and Illegal Job Interview Questions by Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>LEGAL</th>
<th>ILLEGAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>• If hired, can you offer proof that you are at least 18 years of age? <em>(this question may be asked only for the purpose of determining whether applicants are of legal age for employment).</em></td>
<td>• How old are you? • What year did you graduate? • What is your birth date? • There is a large gap in age between you and your coworkers. Is this a problem for you? • How long do you plan to work until you retire?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE, ETHNICITY, OR COLOR</td>
<td>• None</td>
<td>• What is your race? • Where were you born? • Where were your parents born?</td>
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<tr>
<td>GENDER OR SEX</td>
<td>• None</td>
<td>• Are you comfortable working for a female/male boss? • Are you male or female?</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATIONAL ORIGIN, BIRTH PLACE, CITIZENSHIP</td>
<td>• Are you fluent in any languages other than English? <em>(You may ask this question ONLY as it relates to the job being sought).</em> • Are you currently authorized to accept employment with any employer in the United States on an indefinite basis, without employer sponsorship? • If the answer is “no” to the question above, what employment authorization would you anticipate requiring?</td>
<td>• Are you a U.S. citizen? • Of what country are you a citizen? • Where did you live while you were growing up? • What is your native language? • Where were you/your parents born?</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td>• None • You may inquire about availability for weekend work.</td>
<td>• Will you need personal time for particular religious holidays? • What religious holidays do you observe? • Does your religion prohibit you from working any particular days?</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISABILITY</td>
<td>• Are you able to perform the essential duties of the position with or without reasonable</td>
<td>You may not ask questions regarding an individual’s physical or mental condition which are not</td>
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accommodation?  
Show the applicant the position description so he or she can give an informed answer.

directly related to the requirements of a specific job and which are used as a factor in making employment decisions in a way that is contrary to the provisions or purposes of the American With Disabilities Act.  
Examples:
  • Have you experienced any serious illnesses in the past year?  
  • Have you ever filed a Workers' Compensation claim or been injured on the job?  
  • Do you have any physical impairment that would prevent you from performing the job for which you're applying?  
  • Is there any health-related reason you may not be able to perform the job for which you're applying?  
  • Have you ever been hospitalized? If so, for what condition?  
  • Have you ever been treated by a psychiatrist or psychologist? If so, for what condition?  
  • How many days were you absent from work because of illness last year?

| MARITAL OR FAMILY STATUS/PREGNANCY | • Would you be able and willing to travel as needed for the job?  
(only if required by the position)  
• This position requires occasional overtime (nights and/or weekends); would this present a problem?  
• Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?  
_Note: If the position requires the determination of availability, travel, or relocation, the same question should be asked of ALL applicants_  
• Is your spouse employed by this employer?  
| • Are you married?  
• What is your maiden name?  
• What is or was your spouse’s name?  
• Is your spouse employed?  
• What is your spouse’s line of work or where is s/he employed?  
• Are you pregnant?  
• Do you have children? How old are they?  
• What arrangements are you able to make for childcare while you work? |

| ARRESTS OR CONVICTIONS | • If you have a policy to conduct background checks, CORI’s or SORI’s, advice the applicant of the policy.  
| • Have you ever been convicted of a crime? |

| AFFILIATIONS | • List any professional or trade  
| • What clubs or social organizations |
| PERSONAL / PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES | • Are you able to lift a ‘X’ lb weight and carry it X distance, as this type of physical activity is part of the job? (only when specifically required in main duties of the job / should be noted on job description) | • How tall are you?  
• How much do you weigh? |
| MILITARY RECORD | • In what branch of the armed services did you serve?  
• What type of training did you receive in the military? | • If you were in the military, were you honorably discharged? |