

Faculty Interview Questions Compilation

Questions to ask by interviewee:

Do not ask questions that are clearly answered on the employer's web site and/or in any literature provided by the employer to you in advance.

Never ask about salary and benefits issues until those subjects are raised by the employer.

Don't ask a question if you are not truly interested in the answer;

Research Related

- How well does the library meet departmental needs? Are the reserves adequate?
For Chemistry, do you have access to Scifinder and electronic journals?
- How long does it take to obtain a paper not readily available online or in the library?
- What resources for research are available within the department (e.g., stockroom, computer facilities, NMR, IR, UV-Vis, EPR, X-ray, surface techniques, liquid nitrogen, dry ice)?
- Do you have departmental/divisional seminars?
- Is there a cost for service (i.e. gas cylinder delivery)?
- Would you be able to comment on service and maintenance times?
- Are there any problems/regulations with chemical shipping?
- How is chemical waste handled?

Teaching Related

- What courses do you expect new faculty to teach?
- What is the normal class size?
- Do faculty grade homework/exams by themselves or by TA's?
- Is summer teaching available? Expected?
- How many classes does a faculty member teach per semester? Per year?
- What courses are you looking to fill?
- What kinds of technology are available in the classrooms?
- How does the department support the improvement of teaching?
- How is a faculty member's teaching evaluated?
- What is the department's expectation for teaching?
- Are there course reductions for junior faculty and for faculty to pursue research?

For Promotion & Tenure

- Are mentors available for new faculty?
- Normally how many papers are required to get tenured? What about the quality of the research?
- What is the nature of the tenure review process?
- What's the relative importance of teaching, research and service for promotion and tenure?
- How important is research in determining tenure and promotion?
- About what percent of faculty receive tenure?

- Is outside grant support essential for promotion and tenure?
- What is the average time that faculty spend in each academic rank?
- How long is it before assistant professors are reviewed for promotion and tenure?

For Grant Writing

- Is there a research office on campus to help faculty write grants?
- Can grants be used to supplement salary?
- What kinds of financial support are available for research and supplies?
- Does the university have any special research support for junior faculty?

For Departmental Service

- What committees are junior faculty expected to serve on?

For Position

- Is this a new or a replacement position?
- If the position is a new positions, what is the purpose for this position? What do you expect from the candidate for this position?
- If the position is a replacement position, why did the faculty member leave?
- How do you view the research of the department of XXXXXXXX?
- What is the strength of the department?
- What challenges does the department face?
- Where do you see the department in next five years?

About Graduate Students

- How many graduate students are presently in the department (university)? How is the number changing?
- How are graduate students supported? How much does a graduate student cost?
- How do graduate students select research advisors? When can they join research groups?
- Where do the graduate students go after graduation?
- What are the graduation requirements for a typical graduate student?

About Undergraduate Students

- How many undergraduate students majored in XXXXXXXX?
- How many are in the honors program?
- How many honors students does one faculty member typically mentor?
- Where do the undergraduate students go after graduation?
- How do the undergraduate students get involved in research?
- Do you have any organization for students, such as, XXXXX club?
- Tell me about your student population in the whole school. How is the number changing? Where are they from?

For department:

- How are hiring decisions made?
- What are the department's plans for growth and hiring?
- What are the department's research strengths and weaknesses?
- How often are departmental meetings held? Are decisions made in departmental meetings? Who is eligible to vote on departmental decisions (e.g., all faculty or only tenured faculty)?
- Where do you see the department within five years? (Or what is the organization's plan for the next five years, and how does this department fit in?)
- How are departmental decisions made?
- How is the university organized? What are the major units and administrators of the school and what are their responsibilities? What does the organizational flow chart look like? (Note that you should do your homework beforehand and be somewhat familiar with the university; ask additional questions to clarify your understanding.)

For benefits

- What type of retirement programs are available?
- Are there tuition waivers for spouse, dependent of faculty?
- What kinds of spousal accommodations are available?
- What type of health programs exist? What are the costs and benefits?

For local life

- Where do the faculty live? Is there affordable housing in the area? Where do the other faculty live?
- What is the average price for a house? How does the price fluctuate?
- Do you live close to campus? Do you drive to campus? How about the traffic? Is it easy to get a parking spot on campus? How far is the parking lot from the department?
- Which neighborhood has better preschools, elementary schools, and high schools? What types of childcare facilities are available, and where do faculty send their children to school?
- What are the typical outdoor activities available in summer? In winter?
- What kinds of museums are available?
- If you would like to go out to relax, where do you normally go?
- What is the weather like during the year?
- Would you be able to describe the available health services?

General

- Why do you work for the department?
- What do you perceive the strengths and weaknesses of this place to be?
- How is your research funded?
- What courses are you teaching?
- How does faculty collaborate with faculty in other department?

Questions to be asked:

1. Why did you apply for our university?
2. What do you consider as your strongest attribute?
3. What do you consider as your weakest aspect?
4. What do you think is the biggest challenge as a professor? Generally for all professors.
5. What is your opinion regarding teaching and research? Which one is more important?
6. How well do you think you can fit into our department?
7. What can you bring to our department (why you are special)?
8. When you have disagreement with someone, how would you solve the problem?
9. Tell us about your professional experience.
10. What are the biggest discoveries of the last ten years?
11. Where do you want to be in your career in 5 years? 10 years?
12. What do you want to be known for in 10 years? 25 years?
13. What do you like to do in your free time?
14. Are there any other factors about which we have not spoken that would be important to your decision to come to Pullman if we were to make an offer?

Research questions:

1. Tell me about your research. (Be ready for 1-minute version and 5-minutes version)
2. What collaboration opportunities exist with our current faculty?
3. What is your research plan, specifically, what you want to target on in the next 4 to 6 years?
4. What do you think you need to do in the next 4 to 6 years in order to get tenure?
5. What are the possible funding sources for your future research?
6. What do you think about interdisciplinary research?
7. Do your proposed research projects depart from your mentors' work and if so, how?
8. What facilities do you expect to need?
9. What kind of startup package do you need to achieve your goal?
10. What is the expected cost of setting up your research? What are major items that go into that cost and what is the time scale over which you need that money?
11. What lab space you require?
12. Are you aware of any competitors in the areas of your proposed research? How will you deal with that competition?
13. What group size do you like initially and after 5 years?
14. What type of group structure do you envision for your research program?
15. How many graduate students, undergrads, postdocs?
16. How do you plan to integrate students into your research projects?
17. What will be your approach to mentoring and supervising student progress?
18. If you could only fund one project which one would it be and why?
19. What is the biggest result that could come out of this research?

Teaching questions:

1. Tell us about your teaching experience
2. Experience with graduate and undergraduate students?
3. What is your most exciting teaching experience?
4. What do you think is the difference between undergraduate and graduate education?
5. What percentage of teaching/research/service?
6. What courses are needed but not in our curriculum?
7. How do you integrate research into teaching?
8. How do you involve students into your research?
9. What funding sources are you looking to target?
10. What conferences do you attend?
11. What is the graduation plan for your students?
12. What attracts you to apply for our school?
13. If you are going to design an introductory programming course, what language/topics you will use?
14. What courses can you teach? undergraduate/graduate?
15. Which XXXX courses you want to teach and you don't?
16. What's your teaching philosophy?
17. What are your weakness and strength in teaching?
18. Some students think they know more than you and question you, how do you handle this kind of situation?
19. There are many professionals in our department, how do handle this kind of students?
20. Given the courses that are in the Catalog and that you are expected to contribute to the service courses, which courses do you prefer to teach?
21. What are your thoughts about teaching large sections (about 400 students) of freshman chemistry?

PUI Specific Questions:

1. Why do you want a position at a PUI?
2. How do you envision involving undergraduates and master's students in your research?
3. What facilities will you require?
4. What courses do you feel you could teach?
5. XXX University is a very collaborative department. Who on the faculty do you feel you could collaborate with?
6. Where do you see yourself seeking external funding?