



University of New Haven

THE OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES

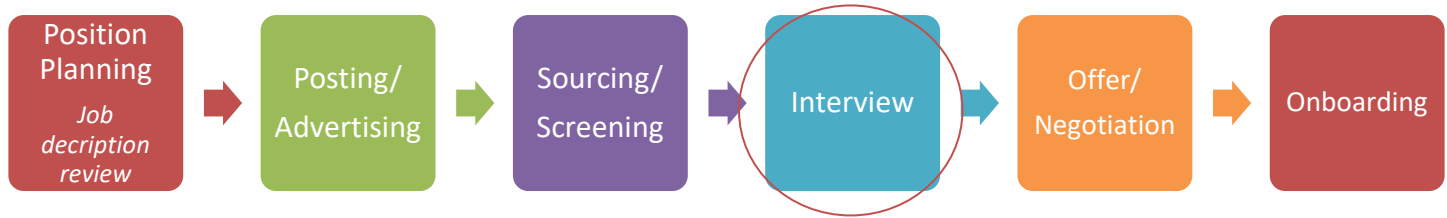


Behavioral Based Interview Questions

For hiring managers and search committees to use during the Interviewing Process

Introduction

The [Hiring Guide](#) provides a detailed overview of the hiring process. This reference guide is specific to the **Behavioral Based Interview**, which is a critical part of the overall process, and the most effective way to evaluate your candidate slate.



The list below, in alphabetical order by competency, provides you and your search committee with behavioral questions. As mentioned in the [Hiring Guide](#), Behavioral interviewing is a highly effective technique because it focuses on a candidate's past experiences. By asking candidates for specific examples of how they have demonstrated certain behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities, and responses should be verifiable and provide evidence as to how a candidate has managed various scenarios. This information should provide the interviewer(s) with a gauge as to a candidate's level of experience and their potential to manage various situations.

Behavioral interviews are structured, and questions should be probing and specific. A structured interview provides the opportunity to compare candidates by asking a specific set of job-related questions. It is also helpful to use a rating scale to evaluate all candidates. The interview report can be used for this purpose, also found in the [Hiring Guide](#). This straightforward approach limits the amount of discretion for each individual interviewer, making it easier to evaluate and compare candidates fairly because all applicants are asked the same questions and evaluated using the same criteria in the interview report.

Please be sure to have a "grounding" meeting with your interview team/search committee. It's important that each member understand which competencies are critical to the position, and which ones they each focus on, to not duplicate efforts.

In closing, please reference back to the [Hiring Guide](#) for legal considerations during the interview, how to turn down applicants you did not select, and how to complete the **Candidate Selection Form**.

University Core Competencies

To ensure that candidates and future employees are not only qualified for a role based on skills and abilities, but also possess the competencies important in how the work gets done, the Core Competencies should also guide the questions asked in every interview.

Below, you will find behaviorally based interview questions categorized by the University’s Core Competencies first. We’ve also included competency based behavioral questions for an additional list of competencies provided.

The University Core Competencies are:

1. **Communicates Effectively**
2. **Customer Focus**
3. **Diversity & Inclusion/Values Differences**
4. **Problem Solving/Continuous Improvement**
5. **Development of Self & Others**
6. **Trust & Integrity**
7. **Hiring & Staffing (*manager positions only*)**

	University Core Competency	Behavioral Based Questions
1	Communicates Effectively	<p><i>Verbal communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe a time when you had to verbally communicate sensitive information to a group of people, perhaps related to a change effort. How did you decide what to tell? How did you structure your verbal communication? Please describe the situation and what you said or did. • Give an example of a time when you were upset or offended by something that was said to you. How did you give that person feedback about what they said? Describe the situation and what you said or did. • Tell about a time when you were ineffective in a verbal communication. What was the situation, and what did you do differently because of that experience?" <p><i>Written communication:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe a time when you had to communicate in writing information that you knew would be received negatively. What was the situation, and how did you structure your written communication to mitigate the negative impact? • Tell me about a time when you had to communicate in writing very detailed procedural information or instructions. What was the situation? How did you structure your writing to address all the detail? • Give an example of a time when an email or a memo you sent to someone had an unintended effect. What was the situation, and what did you learn from that experience that you incorporated into your subsequent writing projects?

2.	Customer Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe a time when you chose to exceed, rather than meet, a customer’s expectations. Why did you do so, and what were the results? • Describe a time when you went way beyond the call of duty to ensure reliability and make sure your customer’s needs were met. • Describe a situation in which you took initiative to create or improve the customer experience through a work group you managed or were part of. How did you ensure the success of this effort? • Describe a time when you invested time and effort in helping a customer evaluate his/her needs. • What was a challenging situation you encountered relating to customer service that worked out well? How did you manage that situation? • Tell me about a customer service situation that you have addressed that, given the opportunity, you would have managed differently. What was the situation, what was the outcome, and what would you change? • Tell me about the most successful customer or client service program you ever developed and implemented. • Describe for me a time when you were unable to meet a customer or client’s request. What did you do? • How do you ensure that your group delivers superior customer service?
3.	Diversity & Inclusion/Values Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please tell me what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean to you and why they are important. • What is your approach to understanding the perspectives of colleagues from different backgrounds? • How would you advocate for diversity equity, and inclusion with colleagues who don’t understand its importance? • Tell me about a time when you advocated for diversity and inclusion in the workplace. • Can you give me an example of how you make your direct reports feel a sense of inclusion, belonging, and equity on a daily basis? • What steps will you take to eliminate bias from your hiring process?
4.	Problem Solving/ Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you are leading a group through a problem-solving process, what are the steps in that process? Please describe a recent situation in which you used a problem-solving process and state • each step. • Give an example of a time you were trying to solve a problem on your own. Specifically, what was the situation, and what did you do to determine the potential solutions? • Describe a situation in which you thought you had solved a problem, only to have it resurface.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the situation, and how did you approach the problem differently? What did you learn that you applied to subsequent problem-solving processes?
5.	Development of Self & Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about a time when you coached someone to become more successful. • Tell me about a time when you worked with a direct report to identify opportunities for development. What kind of assignment did you give to help them develop specific skills? Describe how you supported this individual.
6.	Trust & Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about a time when you observed, encountered, or experienced behavior (on the part of others) that was – from an ethical perspective – questionable or concerning to you. What did you do in that situation? • Describe a situation in which you questioned the ethics of your own behavior? What was the situation, what were your concerns, and what conclusions did you reach?
7.	Hiring & Staffing (Managers Only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an example of time when you were responsible for hiring a new employee. How did you approach the task? • What was your biggest mistake in hiring someone? What happened? How did you manage the situation? • What is your philosophy when it comes to hiring an employee and how has it guided you in your recruiting/hiring process in the past? • What is your experience in managing or supervising a diverse group of employees with varied backgrounds and skills? How have you ensured the best fit of employees for each job? • Tell me about someone you hired who didn't work out as well as you had hoped. What were the reasons for this? How did this change your future hiring process? • Give an example of when an employee left your department. How did you determine what skill sets were needed in a replacement? What other things did you consider? Who else did you involve?

Additional Competency-Based Behavioral Questions:

	Competency	Behavioral Based Questions
1.	Action Oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an example of something you've done in previous jobs that demonstrates your willingness to work hard. • Tell me about a challenging project you worked on. • Describe a time when you had to act with very little planning. • Sometimes people delay acting on something. Describe a time when you saw other people in the organization who were not acting, and you took it upon yourself to lead the effort.
2.	Compassion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe a time when you had to deliver difficult news. How did you do it? • What do you do when someone comes to you with a problem? • Talk about a time when you got angry at work. How did you deal with it?
3.	Courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you give an example of a 'risky' decision that turned out positively? • What was the biggest risk you ever took in your life?
4.	Cultivates Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the strategies you have used to facilitate a major innovation within your group, team or organization. Which strategies have worked well, which have not? • Give me an example of an innovative idea that you supported that had an impact on your organization. What was your role? How did you show outward support for it?
5.	Ensures Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a specific example of how you have demonstrated your ability to manage multiple priorities and deliver results. Describe the situation and the way you addressed it. • Think of a time when you had many demands placed on your time. How did you ensure that you were available to meet the needs of your customers, as well as your coworkers, supervisors, and subordinates? • Describe one service, activity, or process for which you have been held accountable. How did you make sure you achieved results for this process or activity? • Describe a time when you were unable to follow through on a commitment you made. What happened? How did you explain this to the other party? • Some jobs may be very hectic at times. Provide an example of how you managed to "get everything done" in a very busy time. What strategies did you use to ensure timely, quality results? • Provide an example of a time when you had many demands placed on your time. How did you ensure that you were available to meet the needs of your customers, as well as your coworkers, supervisors, and subordinates?

6.	Institutional Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you give an example when your institutional knowledge (organizational knowledge) was helpful in completing a project on time? • How have you motivated your staff to gain broader institutional knowledge? • Can you describe how you've maintained institutional knowledge when your leader (or another leader) has left an organization? • What does having an institutional perspective mean to you?
7.	Interpersonal Savvy/Peer Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is especially important to build good relationships at work but sometimes it doesn't always work. If you can, talk about a time when you were not able to build a successful relationship with a difficult person. • Tell us about a time when you built rapport quickly with someone under difficult conditions. • What, in your opinion, are the key ingredients in guiding and maintaining success. • We've all had relationships start out on bad terms. Think of a time this happened to you with a supervisor or coworker. What did you do to improve the quality of the relationship? Were your efforts effective? Why or why not? • Dealing with other people on the job is sometimes not an easy task. Describe a situation in which you had to develop a relationship with someone with whom you did not like to work. How did you develop and maintain a professional working relationship with that person? • Give a specific example of a time when you participated in a conflict at work. Describe your approach to conflict resolution. Was your approach effective? Why or why not? • Briefly describe a particularly good working relationship you've had in the past. Why was this relationship so successful? What did you do to maintain the quality of the relationship? • Conflict exists in all workplaces. Give me a specific example of a conflict you have had with a coworker. How did you resolve that conflict? How were you able to maintain a working relationship with that individual? • Give a specific example of a situation when you had difficulty establishing a relationship necessary for task completion. How did you overcome this? • Describe an occasion when you disagreed with your boss or supervisor on a job-related issue. How did you manage the situation? • Tell me about a time when you anticipated conflict was going to occur. How did you know conflict was likely to occur? What did you do to minimize the conflict? What was the outcome? • Give me an example of a time when you had to build an effective working relationship with an external partner to be successful.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes it can be difficult to work across functional boundaries. Tell me about a situation in which you had difficulty collaborating with people from various cross-functional areas. • Sharing information is critical to effective collaboration. Can you think of a time when important information was not shared? What happened and how did you manage it? • Interacting with others can be challenging at times. Have you ever had difficulty getting along with a business partner (e.g., peer, external vendor, others at work)? How did you manage the situation?
8.	Leadership Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give me an example of an interaction with a team or employee that demonstrates your leadership abilities. • Give an example of when you've shown initiative or taken the lead on a project. • Give an example of a time in which you felt you were able to build motivation in your coworkers or subordinates at work. • Give an example of your ability to build motivation in your coworkers, classmates, and even if on a volunteer committee. • Have you ever had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas? What was your approach? Did it work? • Have you ever been a member of a group where two of the members did not work well together? What did you do to get them to do so? • What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from? Describe how you managed it. What was the outcome?
9.	Manages Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conflict situations, it is often tempting to jump to a solution quickly, without identifying the issues involved in the conflict. Tell me about a time when you resisted this temptation and worked in conjunction with others to obtain a result accepted by those involved. • Sometimes, people's emotions can get in the way of resolving a conflict. Describe a time when your communication skills helped diffuse a tense situation. What was the situation, and what exactly did you do or say to help? • Describe a time when you were able to help resolve a conflict. Specifically, how did you demonstrate effective listening skills? Tell me what skills you used and the impact your listening skills had on the conflict situation. • Conflict can be an uncomfortable experience. Can you think of a time when you did not address a situation because of the conflict that might arise? Tell me about the situation, and what happened because of your approach. • Conflict can be an uncomfortable experience. Can you think of a time when you addressed a situation, even though you were sure that conflict would arise? Tell me about the situation, and what happened because of your approach.

<p>10.</p>	<p>Managing Vision and Purpose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about a time you set aggressive goals for your area of responsibility. • How do you align your department goals to your organization’s mission/goals? How did you communicate these goals to your team? • Please give me an example of a situation where your assessment of internal or external trends or issues impacted a strategy you developed for your unit? How did you identify these trends and issues and what were they? What were the challenges or opportunities facing the Unit? • Great yet radically new opportunities are sometimes realized only because somebody championed their cause. Describe a time when you did this successfully. • Tell me about a time when you carefully set a long-term organizational goal. How did you do it? • Often one’s communication of a vision is essential to its organizational support. Describe how you have communicated your vision for the future. • Describe a time when you were responsible for helping a group envision the future (new process, new partnership, reorganization). What did you do and what was the result? • Have there been changes in your organization’s vision and values that have affected your direct reports. Tell me about a specific action you took to help your direct reports incorporate the change into their day-to-day work activities. • Describe a time when you helped a group of employees understand why the organization was going a particular direction. What did you do? • Tell me about a time when you were given responsibility for revamping an existing program, or initiative. How did you approach the project? • Tell me about a time when you needed to plan and execute a project about a subject with which you initially had little familiarity or experience. What did you do?
<p>11.</p>	<p>Motivation of self and others</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe a situation in which you were able to positively influence the actions of others. • Can you describe a situation when you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince others to see things in the best interest of the organization? How did you present the information? • Tell me about a time you had to convince your boss to change their mind. • Tell me about a time you had to influence someone, or “sell” an idea, to an individual more senior than you that was not your boss

12.	Negotiating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give an example of a time when you successfully negotiated and maintained the relationships involved. Specifically, what was the negotiation situation, and what actions did you take so as not to damage the relationships? • Describe the tactical approach you take to negotiating. Tell me about a negotiation you either initiated or responded to that demonstrates your tactical approach. • Explain how you gain the trust of others involved in a negotiation. Give a recent example that demonstrates your ability to gain trust.
13.	Perseverance and Resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been the biggest disappointment you ever encountered in your work? How did you deal with it? • Can you describe a good idea that nobody was really interested in? What did you do to have it implemented anyway? • Have you ever encountered a big disappointment in your work that you found hard to take? What exactly did you find difficult? How did you solve the problem? • • Could you give an example of a situation in which you feel you did not persist long enough?
14.	Planning/Managing and Measuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think of a recent project in which you had to plan the course of the project. Describe what tools you used for your planning purposes, and how you used them to plan what was needed to successfully complete the project. • Tell me about a time in which you effectively dealt with emergencies or surprises. Specifically, explain how your planning efforts helped you to deal with the unexpected. • Think of a recent experience you had in planning work. What was the situation, and specifically how did you proceed, once you identified your goal? • Tell me about an experience in which your project plan did not accurately reflect the difficulty or length of time needed to complete a project. At what point did you discover the inaccuracy, and what steps did you take to address it?
15.	Resourcefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the last time you tried a method to improve your work performance? • Tell me about a time you used your resources to their fullest potential at work. • Tell me about a time you solved a problem at work
16.	Teambuilding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about a time when you used your people skills to build a network of contacts to reach a goal. • Give me an example of when you used your interpersonal communication skills to work with and build consensus among various constituents in your organization. • Tell me about a time when you thought you knew how to manage a situation yet chose to solicit opinions from others.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe a time when you chose to cooperate with others on a non-essential project even though it would require a sacrifice on your part. • Tell me about a situation when you provided full support for a group decision, even though you didn't agree with it. • Give me an example of an effort in which you have been involved that required working collaboratively across work units. What was your role? • Describe efforts you have made to build a culture that supports the sharing of best practices and other information across your Unit or the organization. • What did you do in your last job to contribute to a collaborative work environment? • Tell me about a time when you were asked to establish working relationships with people in key departments and leaders across different parts of an organization. • Describe a time when you were assigned to collaborate with a person or team from a different part of your organization, one with which you had never interacted before. • Give me an example of a time when your timing, political awareness, and knowledge of how groups work enhanced your ability to generate a change. • Explain a time when you leveraged your understanding of political dynamics at work. • Describe the types of teams you've been involved with. What were your roles? • Describe a team experience you found rewarding. • Describe a team experience you found frustrating. What could you do differently? • Describe a situation where others on a project team disagreed with your ideas. • Tell me about a time you collaborated with your team to accomplish an important goal or objective. What was the goal? What was your role in achieving the goal? • Tell me about a time when you collaborated with a colleague who was not pulling their weight. Who, if anyone, did you talk to about it? How did the situation get resolved? • Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise. • Give me an example of your past work history that demonstrates how you acclimate to a new environment and build rapport with co-workers. • Tell me about a time/situation when you went out of your way to help colleagues even though you were under time pressure. • Describe a time when you were praised individually for something to which a whole team or group contributed. What did you do to ensure that the rest of the team members received due credit? • How have you recognized and rewarded a team player in the past?
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17.	Technical Savvy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe a time when you successfully demonstrated your technical knowledge. Contrast this with a time when you couldn't do so. What did you do differently?
18.	Timely Decision Making/Quality Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When deciding in conjunction with others, how have you sought their opinions? Give an example of a recent group-based decision process. • What methods have you used to ensure that a decision you have made was an effective decision? Give a recent example of using those methods to ensure a quality decision. • When making a decision that affects others either inside or outside your work group, what methods do you use to communicate that decision to others? Give an example of a decision that you made and how you communicated it.