Types of Interview Questions

**Direct Questions** are specific, focused and typically relate to skills, experience or education

- Describe your student advising experience.

**Indirect and/or General Questions** do not ask for specific information; hence, the candidate determines the focus of their response

- Tell us about yourself or describe how your experience meets the requirements of this position.

**Technical Questions** seek to specifically assess an applicant’s technical knowledge of his/her field by exploring areas of job-related technical expertise. If the position undergoing recruitment requires a high level of technical expertise, then the interview should consist of a larger number of technical questions. Through using a variety of different types of questions, the Selection Committee will be better able to discern the candidates’ level of knowledge and application of the technical principles.

**Hypothetical or Situational Interview Questions** use a problem solving approach to determine the candidate’s analytical skills and critical thinking abilities. The questions are often phrased as “What if…” and are presented in the form of case examples or a particular situation that is common to the job at hand.

- What would you do if the parent of a student came into the office very upset and angry about the student’s grade?
- A student is in tears because of a financial crisis. How would you handle the situation?
- What would you do if you observed a procedure in a lab where safety precautions were not being followed?
- An academic staff member requests information which is confidential. How would you handle the situation?

**Behaviour Descriptive Questions** or Behaviour Description Interviewing (BDI) is based on the principle that the best predictor of future performance is past behaviour. BDI questions require candidates to isolate specific examples from their past and describe them in detail.

- Tell me about a time when you managed multiple deadlines effectively.
- Tell me about a time when you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker or client.
- Tell me about a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively and met the required deadlines.

**Probing questions** may be necessary if the candidate’s initial response is unclear or requires further details and information. Probing questions may also be used to assess the authenticity of a candidate’s response. Sample probing questions include:

- How recently did this happen and what was your specific role in the situation?
- What was the outcome or result and what feedback did you receive?
- What did you learn from the experience and what would you do differently next time?
- How have you applied this learning since and what feedback have you received?