

Guidance for Conducting Interviews in Faculty Searches

Office of the Provost
Northeastern University

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Inquiry Area	Legal Inquiry	Illegal Inquiry
Name	Whether the applicant has worked under another name for the purpose of reviewing work history.	Inquiries about the name that would seek to elicit information about the candidate's ancestry, descent or marital status.
	Have you ever worked for Northeastern under a different name? Is any additional information about change of name, use of an assumed name, or a nickname necessary to enable a check on your work record? (If yes, can elicit explanation).	What is your maiden name? Have you ever worked under another name or address?
Age	Can inquire if applicant meets minimum age requirements.	Cannot require applicant to state age or date of birth. Any question that may tend to identify applicant's age.
	Are you over 18 (or 21 for certain jobs?)	How old are you? What is the date of your birth?
Sex/Gender	Inquiry appropriate only when a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification exists (in faculty hiring, not appropriate.)	Any inquiry that would indicate gender of applicant. Note: Applicant's gender cannot be used as a factor for determining whether an applicant will be 'satisfied' in a particular job.
Immigration Status	Can tell employee that he/she must be eligible to work in the US when he/she is scheduled to begin work.	Inquiries about citizenship or whether applicant intends to become a U.S. citizen. Cannot require that an applicant produce naturalization papers.
	Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?	Are you naturalized or native-born citizen? Date when applicant acquired citizenship? Parents or spouse are citizens of the US?
Nationality/Residence	Can inquire about place of residence.	Inquiry into foreign address that would indicate national origin of applicant or applicant's

		relatives. Whether applicant rents or owns a home.
	Where do you reside?	Do you rent or own your home? How long have you lived at each particular address?
Race, Physical Characteristics, Color	None.	Inquiry into applicant's race, color of skin, eyes or hair or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color.
	None.	Information concerning an applicant's race or physical characteristics can be voluntarily submitted to Northeastern's Office of Institutional Diversity as part of the pre-employment application. Both state and federal law prohibit employers from considering race and/or physical characteristics in any employment decision.
Marital / Family Status	Whether applicant can meet work schedules so long as inquiry does not seek to elicit family or marital status of applicant.	Marital status or number of dependents. Names or addresses of spouse, children or relatives.
	Are you able to meet the given work schedule?	Are you married? Where does your spouse work? What are the ages of your children? What was your maiden name? Will you need childcare?
Sexual Orientation	None.	Questions about sexual identity, orientation or preference.
Disability/Mental Illness	Can ask an applicant questions about his or her ability to perform job-related functions, as long as the questions are not phrased in terms which would seek to elicit whether the applicant has a disability.	General inquiries that would tend to reveal disabilities or health conditions that do not relate to fitness to perform the job. Unlawful to ask whether applicant is healthy or disabled or about the nature or severity of his or her disability.
	Are you able to perform employment requirements?	Do you have a disability? Have you ever been treated for any

		disease/disability? Has any member of your family been treated for any disability/disease?
Education	Inquiry into the academic, vocational or professional education of an applicant and the public and private schools he or she has attended.	Date last attended high school (reflects age of applicant.) Inquiry into religious or racial affiliation of school.
Work Experience	Applicant's work experience, including names and addresses of previous employers, date of employment and reasons for leaving.	None.
Military Experience	Service in the Armed Forces if needed for employment history. Voluntary submission of veteran status may be made.	Any question into applicant's general military experience. Type of military discharge.
Criminal Record	Inquiry into actual convictions (not arrests) that reasonably relate to fitness to perform a particular job.	Inquiry into an applicant's arrest record.
	Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If so, when, where, and what was the disposition of the offense? Have you been convicted of a misdemeanor during the last five years (except for a first conviction for simple assault, disturbing the peace, drunkenness, speeding, or other minor traffic violations?)	Have you ever been arrested?
Affiliations	Inquiry into applicant's membership in professional organizations.	Inquiry into applicant's membership in non-professional organizations.
	Are you a member of any professional societies or organizations? (Exclude organizations where name or character indicates the race, creed, color or national origin of its members.)	Do you belong to any clubs, lodges, etc?
Languages	Proficiency in foreign languages.	Inquiry that would indicate nationality, citizenship, ancestry of applicant.
	What languages do you read fluently? Write fluently? Speak fluently?	Inquiry into how applicant acquired ability to read, write or speak a foreign language.

Permissible Diversity-Related Questions

1. Northeastern is committed to diversity in faculty, students and ideas. How has your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment that places such an emphasis on diversity?
2. Explain how diversity has played a role in your career.
3. What does it mean for you to have a commitment to diversity? How have you demonstrated that commitment, and how would you see yourself demonstrating it here?
4. Describe the climate for diversity at your present position. What impact have you had on that climate? What impact has that climate had on you?
5. What efforts have you made, or been involved with, to foster multicultural understanding and cultural competence?
6. In what ways have you integrated multicultural issues as part of your professional development?
7. In what ways is it important to incorporate topics related to diversity into your discipline and into the classes you teach?
8. What books/materials/authors that reflect diverse perspectives do you incorporate into your classroom curriculum?
9. Have diversity considerations played a role in shaping your teaching and advising styles?
10. Have you participated in diversity events and/or organizations at other colleges and universities?
11. Please give us one example of how you have managed diversity in your classroom experiences.
12. Tell us about a time that you adapted your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you.
13. Have you developed any programs in the area of diversity?
14. As faculty member, have you done any research in the field of diversity?
15. Have you been involved in writing or shaping a diversity plan?
16. Have you served on any committees at previous institutions?
17. What do you see as the most challenging aspects of an increasingly diverse academic community and what steps have you taken to meet such challenges?

Legal Interviewing Questions and Notes

Topic	Legal Areas for Comment	Areas to Avoid	Sample Notes
Family Status	General comments made by applicant regarding conflicts with job attendance or travel requirements.	Comments that include marital status, spouses name, maiden name, children, pregnancy, childcare arrangements.	<p>“Applicant is unable to travel on weekends and can only work until 2:00p.m. on Fridays.”</p> <p>“Applicant is only interested in flexible work hours, and this position requires Monday-Friday, 8a.m. to 5p.m.”</p>
Race	None.	Comments that include racial background, color, nationality, place of birth.	None.
Religion	None.	Comments that include types of religions practiced, churches attended, religious holidays celebrated, applicant dress that indicates religious affiliation.	None.
Residence	Listing of applicant’s current address or verification of the address listed on the resume.	Information that includes whether the applicant rents or owns their home, and/or who lives with applicant.	“Applicant provided new address and phone number for contacting her: ADDRESS and PHONE #.”
Gender	None.	Comments that indirectly indicate that applicant is Male or Female, listing physical attributes that would indicate one gender or another, type of clothing worn.	None.
Arrests or Convictions	Details provided by the applicant to explain positive information about felony convictions related to job performance.	Notes about arrest information shared by applicant.	“Applicant discussed assault conviction.”
Citizenship or Nationality	Comments about eligibility to work in the U.S. Notes regarding the ability to speak a foreign language (if job related.)	Comments indicating that applicant is not a U.S. citizen, that applicant was born in a country other than the U.S.	“Applicant is eligible to work in the U.S.”
Disability	Comments about applicant’s response to the question “Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job?”	Interviewer comments regarding the applicant’s use of assistive devices or physical attributes.	“Applicant is able to perform job functions.”
Age	Applicant’s response to question “Are you 18 years of age or older?”	Comments listing a specific age of applicant or any note regarding an affiliation that indicates specific age group.	“Applicant is able to provide proof he/she is over 18.”

Adapted from University of Michigan, Human Resources Materials