

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	<p>Inquiry appropriate only when a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification exists (in faculty hiring, not appropriate.)</p> <p>What are your salary expectations for this position?</p>	<p>Any inquiry that would indicate gender of applicant.</p> <p>Note: Applicant's gender cannot be used as a factor for determining whether an applicant will be 'satisfied' in a particular job.</p> <p>Salary questions must abide by the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act.¹ Asking specifically about a candidate's salary history is in direct violation of this law.</p>

¹ According to the Massachusetts' Equal Pay Act, "[n]o employer shall discriminate in any way on the basis of gender in the payment of wages, or pay any person in its employ a salary or wage rate less than the rates paid to its employees of a different gender for comparable work."

Immigration Status	Can tell employee that he/she must 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	What are your salary expectations for this position?	Questions about sexual identity, orientation or preference. Salary questions must abide by the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act. ² Asking specifically about a candidate's salary history is in direct violation of this law.
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.

² According to Massachusetts' Equal Pay Act, "[n]o employer shall discriminate in any way on the basis of gender in the payment of wages, or pay any person in its employ a salary or wage rate less than the rates paid to its employees of a different gender for comparable work."

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

Subject	Permissible Questions	Impermissible Questions	Rationale
Age	<p>Are you over 18? (for certain jobs)</p> <p>Are you over 21? (for certain jobs)</p>	<p>What year were you born?</p> <p>What is your birthdate?</p> <p>What year did you graduate from high school/college?</p> <p>How old are you?</p>	<p>These could be considered unlawful age discrimination.</p>
National Origin	<p>What languages do you read/write/speak fluently? (if this is a requirement or preference for the position)</p> <p>Have you ever worked for Northeastern under a different name?</p> <p>Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?</p>	<p>Where were you born?</p> <p>Where were your parents born?</p> <p>What is your native language?</p> <p>How did you learn to speak a foreign language?</p> <p>Where are you from?</p> <p>Where is your accent from?</p> <p>Where did you get that accent?</p> <p>What is your original/birth name? (If name has legally been changed)</p> <p>When did you become a United States citizen?</p>	<p>These could be considered unlawful national origin discrimination.</p>
Gender/Sexual Orientation	<p>What are your salary expectations for this position?</p>	<p>What is your gender identity? What is your current salary?</p> <p>What is your salary history? Do you have children?</p> <p>What are the ages of your children? Are you married?</p> <p>What does your partner do?</p>	<p>These could be considered unlawful gender, sex, or sexual orientation discrimination.</p> <p>Salary questions must abide by the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act.1 Asking specifically about a candidate's salary history is in direct violation of this law.</p>

		What is your maiden name?	
Race/Ethnicity	No questions about an applicant's race/ethnicity are permissible.	Do you identify as a minority? What race do you identify with? What is your ethnicity?	These could be considered unlawful discrimination based on race and ethnicity.
Disability ³	Do you have a driver's license? (if the job requires) Are you able to perform specific tasks that are essential to the position?	Do you have a disability? Have you ever been treated for a disability? Have you ever received Workers' Compensation? Are you receiving a military service-connected disability pension?	These could be considered unlawful discrimination based on disability.
Religion	No questions about an applicant's religion are permissible.	What are your religious obligations? Do you celebrate [insert religious holiday]? Do you go to church/temple/etc. regularly?	These could be considered unlawful discrimination based on religion.
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 the applicant.	"Applicant discussed assault conviction."

³ During the application process, Human Resources Management will give applicants the option to voluntarily disclose their disability for purposes of assisting Northeastern in its affirmative action efforts. They should make it clear that this information will be used solely in connection with affirmative action efforts, will be kept confidential, and that non-disclosure will not subject the applicant to adverse treatment. Disability status should not be mentioned during the interview unless applicant has voluntarily disclosed their status to the interviewer. If provided during the interview, the information must be kept confidential and should not be factored into any hiring decision.