

Approved Interview Questions for Positions at the University of Northern Colorado

Reminder: Questions of a personal nature are not to be asked.

General Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Zero in on a couple of the candidate's previous positions and responsibilities.
- What interests you most about this position?
- In what way are you a good fit for this position?
- What are you known for? What is one of your chief gifts/talents that you have consistently called upon?

Competencies

Choose 6-12 questions from the following list of competencies (skills and behaviors) that represent what a candidate must demonstrate to be successful in this position.

Agility – Is open to change and responds by adapting work methods and behaviors; pays attention to changing circumstances and adapts to them.

- Tell me about a time where you reacted quickly and decisively to changing conditions in the immediate environment.
- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to handle a difficult situation.
- Describe a time where you adjusted your behavior to meet the needs of different people or a situation.
- Tell me about a time where you worked effectively in an environment in which the parameters changed frequently.

Analysis – Identifies and analyzes significant problems and opportunities; relates and compares data from different sources.

- Describe a situation or problem you approached where you were able to uncover meaningful patterns in the data.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to discern all the factors impacting the situation.
- Describe a good decision you made as a result of accurately weighing the costs, benefits and risks involved in all the possible options.

Assertiveness – Takes forceful stands on issues without being excessively abrasive; expresses own opinions even when adopting an unpopular position

- When have you expressed an unpopular opinion at work? What was the result?
- Give me an example of a time when you took a forceful stand at work with finesse.
- Tell me about a time when you were assertive and you didn't get the reaction you intended.

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Coaching – Uses a variety of methods such as feedback and personal example to help individuals attain higher levels of performance.

- What experience have you had in the past coaching others to attain higher levels of performance? What techniques worked and didn't work with various individuals?
- Tell me about specific individuals that you helped to develop and grow.

Collegiality – being helpful, respectful, approachable and team oriented, building strong working relationships and a positive work environment.

- Tell me about a time when you were part of a team where there were different opinions about how to complete the work, or who was responsible for what.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to work with another person even when that individual may not have liked you.
- Describe a time where you had to modify your approach in order to work with another person.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to demonstrate respect with someone who you thought was disrespectful.

Collaboration – Models, encourages and facilitates open and effective communication, cooperation and teamwork within and outside of one's own team.

- Tell me about when communication within your work group broke down and what you did to resolve the problem.
- Give me an example in a recent position where you were good at keeping others informed.
- Tell me about a time where you had to work with someone that wasn't collaborative.
- Describe a situation where you had to include someone in work that you might have felt could more easily be done on your own.

Communication-Oral and Written – Communicates effectively one-to-one, in small groups and in public speaking contexts; writes precise, well-organized emails, letters and proposals while using appropriate vocabulary and grammar.

- Tell me about a time you used your spoken communication skills to get a point across.
- Tell me about a time where you had to write a difficult message. What was the situation? What did you write? What was the result?

Compliance – honoring University policies and regulatory requirements.

- Give me an example of a policy that you ended up having to go around in order to get your work done.
- Give me an example of a policy you conformed to even though you did not agree with it.
- Describe a situation where you held a confidence or maintained the confidentiality of information

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Conceptual Ability – Deals effectively, not just with concrete tangible issues, but also with abstract conceptual matters.

- Describe a problem you were solving, idea you were selling or project you were implementing where you had to work with a concept that was abstract rather than concrete and tangible.

Conflict Management – Exhibits understanding of natural sources of conflict and acts to prevent or soften them.

- Tell me a difficult situation you avoided by preventing a conflict.
- Describe a situation where you were able to soften a conflict with another individual.
- Tell me about a time where conflict in the workplace got in the way of you being able to do your work.

Continuous Improvement – thinking of better ways to do things

- Give me an example of a time when you suggested a better way to do a task to make work easier or save money. What was the usual way? What alternative did you suggest? How was your suggestion received? What was the impact?

Creativity – Generates new approaches to problems or modifications to established approaches; shows imagination.

- Describe a time where you used your creativity. Why was it creative or innovative? How was your creativity beneficial to your department/school/others?

Customer Focus – Regularly monitors customer satisfaction; provides suggestions to improve quality and value to the customer.

- Have you ever had to go the extra mile to satisfy a customer? What did you do?
- You may have heard the phrase “the customer is always right.” Describe a time when you felt the customer wasn’t right.
- Tell me about a time when you did your best to resolve a customer concern and the individual still was not satisfied. What did you do next?

Decision Making – Follows and teaches others to follow a process/method for problem solving.

- Give me an example of a time when you have to make a decision quickly with limited information.
- Tell me about a time when you held off making a decision because you didn’t have enough information.
- Describe a decision you made that did not turn out very well. What was the decision, its impact and what did you do once the result was noticed?

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Dependability – Consistently matches commitments with appropriate follow-through.

- Give me an example when you earned the trust of others by being dependable.
- Tell me about a time when it was very difficult to follow through on a task or project and you followed through anyway.

Development – Makes efforts to build challenges into current job responsibilities and apply new skills on the job, recognizes one's own strengths and areas for improvement.

- What did you do in your last job to improve your skills and performance?
- Give me an example of a new task or responsibility you took on and how you went about it.
- Give me an example of steps you have taken to develop yourself over the past year.
- Tell me about a time when you experienced a failure. What was the impact, how did you react to it, and what did you learn from the experience?

Diversity – Creates an environment of understanding and acceptance.

- Tell me about steps you have taken to contribute to an environment that valued and helped people who are diverse to work together cooperatively.
- How have you participated in diversity events and organizations at other colleges and universities (other workplaces)?
- How have you integrated multicultural issues as part of your professional development?
- Give me some examples of efforts you have lead to develop your workplace as a multicultural environment.
- How have you worked with people to foster the creation of climates receptive to diversity in the workplace, in the curriculum, in faculty/staff meetings?

Efficiency – Effectively performs duties and responsibilities; displays attention to detail.

- Describe a project or situation where you created order out of chaos.
- Tell me about a time when you were not able to meet a deadline.
- Give me an example of a time when the details of a task or project were particularly important. How did you ensure accuracy on a consistent basis?

Energy/Drive – Exhibits energy and a strong desire to achieve.

- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.

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Ethics and Integrity – Follows through on commitments; incorporates honesty, respect and fairness in daily actions.

- Tell me about a time where you demonstrated integrity – even when no one was looking.
- Describe a situation where you used to discernment and choose not to be honest and yet still demonstrated integrity.
- Tell me about a time when you did the right thing, even when it was going against the crowd.

Financial Management – Manages financial assets responsibly with a focus on cost effectiveness and productivity.

- What opportunities have you had to estimate and monitor expenditures?
- Give me an example of a typical budget you managed and a time when you met the budget, went over budget and were under budget. What were the circumstances of each?
- Tell me about your financial management responsibilities and successes in this area.

Health and Safety Responsibility – Integrates health and safety precautions into daily activities.

- Give me an example of a time where you adhered to health/safety requirements even when it wasn't expedient or practical to do so.
- Tell me about a time when you didn't adhere to health/safety requirements.

Independence – While committed to team efforts, exhibits a willingness to take an independent stand.

- Describe a time when you were able to accomplish something on your own even when it you might have been more comfortable working with others.
- Tell me about a time where being independent in your thinking or the way you work that caused a problem.
- Describe a time where you held a different viewpoint than others and stood your ground in defending that point of view.

Influencing – motivates others to buy into ideas, able to engage others in looking at a situation in a new way.

- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from?
- Tell me about a time where you had to get others to accept your idea.

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Initiative – Takes and does things that no one has requested, that will improve or enhance job results and avoid problems, follow through.

- Describe a slow time at your work and what you did to fill the down time.
- Describe a situation where you achieved more than what was required.
- What projects have you started on your own this year?

Innovation – Explores opportunities for doing things in new ways; improving processes, initiates and/or supports improvements in work processes to reduce cycle time and increase first-pass yield.

- Give me an example of an opportunity you had or created to accomplish something new or in a new way.
- Tell me about a time when you suggested a better way to do a task to make work easier or save money.

Judgment – Demonstrates consistent logic, rationality and objectivity.

- Give me an example where using good judgment was key to accomplishing a task or completing a project.

Leading people – Involves team members in solving problems and making decisions, inspires people to follow the lead, obtains input from others, facilitates change, and inspires confidence and optimism through a clear vision and by personal example.

- Tell me about a time you included others in the decision-making process even when it would have been easier in the short term not to.
- Tell me about a time when you made an unpopular decision that affected others.
- Tell me about a difficult change that you had to lead others to implement.
- Describe a situation where you were able to have a positive influence on the actions of others.
- Give me some examples of efforts you have led to develop your workplace as a multicultural environment.
- How have you work with people too foster the creation of climates receptive to diversity in the workforce, in the curriculum, in faculty/staff meetings?

Listening – Actively listens to others' opinions and ideas; respects and seeks to understand differences in opinions.

- Give me an example of a time when you actively listened in order to understand another person with whom you had a difference of opinion.
- When has not actively listening to what was said caused you some difficulty?

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Managing people – empowers others through delegation key tasks/functions; establishes clear understanding of roles and accountabilities, setting clear expectations, providing feedback and guidance, holding people accountable.

- Give me an example of a time when you successfully managed a group.
- What strategies have you used to get the individuals of a group to work well together to achieve the same goal?
- Tell me about a time when you had difficulty managing an individual.
- Walk me through your approach to ensuring that you hire, develop and retain great staff. Give me some examples.
- Describe a situation where you were able to successfully coach an employee to better performance.
- Tell me about a time where you positively influenced a morale problem.
- Tell me about your most difficult management challenge.
- What do you like about managing?
- Give me some examples of your efforts towards creating an environment that affirms and utilizes diversity for added value.

Mentoring – Actively and successfully trains and coaches people for current assignments, and develops them for promotion into position where they succeed.

- Give me an example of a time where you successfully guided another person's development.

Meet Deadlines – Displays consistency and success in adhering to deadlines

- Give me an example of a time where you met a particularly tight deadline.
- Tell me about a time where you were unable to meet a deadline. What were the circumstances? How did you recover? What would you do differently next time?

Negotiations – Finds common ground to accommodate the conflicting needs and wants of different stakeholders.

- Tell me about a particularly tough negotiation that you successfully managed.

Organization & Multi-Tasking – Plans, organizes and schedules in an efficient and productive manner, demonstrates ability to work on multiple projects simultaneously

- Tell me about a time where you created order out of chaos.
- Give me an example of a time when your schedule was suddenly interrupted or changed. What did you do?
- Give me an example of a time where you had to work on multiple projects simultaneously. How

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did you manage it?

- Explain a situation you've been in where multiple demands have been placed on you. How did you handle it?
- How do you determine what project or request constitutes a high priority?
- Have you ever been in a situation where the amount of work assigned to you exceeded the allotted time? How did you handle that?

Political Savvy – Shows awareness of political factors and “hidden agendas;” builds informal network to influence information sources and influence.

- Tell me about a time when you had to effectively assess and work through the politics of a situation in order to get your work done.

Problem Solving – Assesses the major elements of a specific situation from a number of viewpoints and considers an array of alternatives.

- Tell me about a time when you had a complex problem to solve. What options did you generate? How did you choose the best one?

Project Planning – Devises and implements clearly defined strategies to achieve project objectives.

- When working on a project, how do you decide what gets top priority? Give me an example.

Quality Orientation – Strives for quantitative measures of quality in one's own job.

- Describe work or a project for which you were responsible that demonstrated your commitment to producing a high quality product or result.
- Give me an example where you achieved more than was required.

Results Driven – Sets clear, challenging objectives and regularly monitors progress.

- Describe a situation where you and/or your team were able to achieve a particularly challenging goal.

Strategic Thinking – Works on initiatives that have the greatest strategic impact for the organization; anticipates changes that may impact department or school.

- Give me some examples that demonstrate your ability to see the big picture and foresee the impact of potential changes on your department/school.

Stress Management - Recognizes stress triggers and works to mitigate them, maintains work/life balance, responds appropriately to stressors outside of one's control

- As your manager, how would I know if you were under stress? What would be the signs?

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- Tell me about a time in the past year when you felt you were under pressure.
- Tell me about a recent workflow or production problem, such as a co-worker calling in sick. How did you respond?

Team Builder – Achieves cohesive, positive, mutually supportive team climate; treats subordinates fairly and shares credit; shares information.

- Describe the processes you put in place to ensure good communication among your staff.
- Describe a situation where you were able to satisfactorily resolve a confrontation or disagreement among staff.
- What have you done in the past to build a strong and productive team that worked well together.

Team Player – Seeks to build collaboration by encouraging trust, mutual respect and shared purpose among the various participants in an engagement.

- What did you do in your last position to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
- Describe a time when you helped someone on your team at their request when it wasn't convenient for you to do so.
- Describe an ineffective teamwork situation in which you were involved.
- Describe a team you were on where communication was strong. What made it strong? How did you achieve and maintain that level of communication?

Training – Actively and successfully trains/coaches people for current assignments, and develops them for promotion into positions where they succeed.

- Give me some examples where you were able to successfully train someone to perform better.