

Michigan Tech Guide to Conducting Interviews

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Purpose of an interview

The purpose of an interview is to get the candidate to talk about himself or herself so that you can determine if they are a good fit for the position. Your job is not to sell the candidate on the organization, but to listen to what they have to say.

Make sure that your questions are as open-ended as they can be. Questions that can be answered with a "Yes" or "No" won't help you to get to know the candidate.

The interview is the candidate's opportunity to expand on his or her qualifications, as introduced by the resume and cover letter. They should also have the chance to talk about previous work experience that is applicable to the position for which you're interviewing.

Somebody once defined an interviewer as "an unqualified observer who makes extensive inferences based on limited data obtained in an artificial setting." An interviewee is "a terrified person who provides rehearsed answers based on uninformed guesses as to what interviewers might be looking for."

The Essential Book of Interviewing by Arnold B. Kanter

Defining the goals of your interview

- How will the new person contribute to your unit and add value?
- Define the qualities that the candidate must bring to the position.
- Determine the qualities for which you can provide training.
- Determine what is a 'good answer' to the questions you'll be asking.
- Establish the criteria that you will use to evaluate each candidate.

How long an interview will last is determined by:

What questions to ask – they should be:

- related to the required qualifications and skills (from job description)
- related to the desired qualifications and skills (from job description – for union positions, can only ask external candidates about desired qualifications and skills)
- related to the candidate's past experience(s) in relation to position
- open-ended
- non-discriminatory
- specific to the candidate
- both positive and negative (be careful not to only focus on negative situations)

Number of questions:

- types of questions you need to ask (see below)
- number of required and desired qualities that need to be included in the interview and can't be determined from the application, cover letter or resume

Core questions must be asked of each candidate. You may ask follow-up questions for further clarification of a core question.

Types of questions

- Focused – ask the candidate to provide examples relating to a specific skill or scenario

- Leading – can usually be answered with a 'yes' or 'no' and can lead to follow-up questions
- Situational – usually involve a specific example or scenario related to the requirements of the position
- Behavioral – usually require the candidate to describe a situation where they were involved

Interview Do's and Don'ts

- Once the list of job-related interview questions is created, use it consistently for all applicants for the same position.
- Try to first put the applicant at ease with introductory and welcoming remarks.
- Ask open-ended questions which focus on behavioral descriptions rather than simply "yes or no" questions (i.e., have them describe a work situation in which they handled stress well rather than just asking, "How do you handle stress?").
- Listen; don't do all the talking.
- Stay away from questions that have more to do with personal lifestyles than job experience - phrase the question so that the answer will describe on-the-job qualities instead of personal qualities - if the question is not related to performance on the job, it should not be asked.

A Opening questions

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. What five adjectives describe you best?
3. Could you tell us why you are interested in this position?
4. Why are you thinking of leaving your current position?
5. What do you like the most about your current position?
What do you like the least about your current position?
6. What has been your favorite job? Why?
7. How would past co-workers describe you?
8. What about your current job do you find the most challenging?
9. Describe what you would say if you had to introduce yourself to a group of 15 people who don't know you.
10. What do you know about Michigan Tech?
11. What appeals to you about this job?

B Education/Experience

1. What was your major in college? Why did you choose that major? How does it relate to this position?
2. What previous job gave you the most satisfaction? Why?
3. What special training do you have that is relevant to this position?

4. Describe the most useful training course(s) you've taken. What made it (them) so useful?
5. What licenses or certifications do you have that are relevant to this position?
6. What professional affiliations do you have to that are relevant to this position?
7. How do you think college or continuing education contributed to your overall development?
8. In what ways do you believe your education and training have prepared you for this position?
9. If you were hired for this job, in what areas could you contribute immediately and in what areas would you need additional training?
10. What are the three most important duties in the job you now have or in your most recent position?
11. What skill set(s) do you bring with you that are not listed in the job description that will help you to be successful in this position?
12. In what areas would you like to develop further? What are your plans to do that?
13. What else besides your schooling and job experience qualifies you for this job?

C Tell us about you

1. What would you want in your next job that you are not getting now?
2. What do you feel are your strengths? Areas where you would most like to improve?
3. What do you feel you can bring to this position that someone else may not be able to?
4. What do the words "accurate" and "efficient" mean to you?
5. What types of work do you dislike or find frustrating? How do you approach these jobs?
6. What kinds of tasks do you feel most confident doing? Somewhat less confident?
7. What work-related accomplishment are you most proud of?
8. How do you see this position fitting into your career?
9. What do you want to be doing five years from now?
10. What does success mean to you? What does failure mean to you?
11. Describe your last two positions. Explain what you did, how you did it, who you did it with and for, the people you worked for, and the people you worked with.
12. What could your most recent employer have done to keep you from looking for a new job?
13. What do you like about your current position? What do you dislike about your current position?
14. Give an example of a personal or career goal that you have accomplished and why that was important to you.
15. What strengths did you rely on in your last position to make you successful in your work?

16. What are the three most important things you have learned from your previous work experiences?
17. What have you learned from any hobbies or outside interests that would help you in this position?
18. Is it more important to you to be a detail-oriented person or a big picture person? Explain your reasons.
19. What do you look for in an organization as an employee?
20. Please describe any specific things in your past experience that influenced your present career objective.
21. Which of your traits or qualities do you feel could be strengthened or improved? What have you done to improve them?
22. What motivates you to put forth your best effort?
23. Describe something you are either doing now or have planned on doing about that would be classified as a self-development activity.
24. What do you think will take for you to be successful as an employee of Michigan Tech?
25. Where would you like to go from here in your career? How do you plan to accomplish your goals?
26. What is your preferred learning style (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)? What things have you changed in your workplace to accommodate your preferred learning style?
27. What are some of the things your last employer could have done to help you be more successful in your position?

D Budget responsibilities

1. What steps have you taken to improve the bottom line of your department or organization?
2. Describe any budget responsibilities you have had, either for an area or a department.
3. Describe your experience in developing budgets.
4. Describe any difficulties you had in staying within the budget and why.
5. What was the most expensive fiscal mistake of your career? What did you learn from that mistake?

E Building trust

1. Keeping others informed of your progress/actions helps them feel comfortable. Describe your methods for keeping your supervisor or other team members advised of the status of projects.
2. If you can, tell me about a time when your trustworthiness was challenged? How did you react/respond?
3. Give examples of how you have acted with integrity (walked your talk) in your job/work relationships.

F Communication/interpersonal skills

1. How would you define someone who has superior interpersonal skills?
2. What communication skills do you feel you are strong in and what communication skills do you feel you are weak in?
3. How would you rate your communication skills? What have you done to improve them?
4. Describe how you keep others aware of information and organizational activities that might affect them.
5. When it comes to sharing information with others, would you prefer to write a memo/email OR talk with them?
6. Tell us about how you motivated your staff/others when faced with a specific, tight deadline.
7. Describe your experience with writing (be specific about context – communicating with employees, management, those outside the university, etc.).
8. What do others say about your writing ability?
9. Describe your experience with public presentations. Please include their purpose and any visual aids you may have used. How do you prepare for public presentation?
10. Would you prefer to give a written or a verbal report to your supervisor? Why?
11. Describe your participation in major reports that have to be written.
12. Describe a time you found it necessary to tactfully but forcefully say things others did not want to hear.
13. Describe a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that person did not want to hear what you had to say.
14. Give an example of how you have dealt with a customer on the phone who needed information from an individual that was not in the office at that time.

G Computer/software experience

1. What software programs are you familiar with and what do you use them for?
2. When would you use a database rather than a spreadsheet or word processor?
3. Give examples of documents and/or reports that you have prepared using word processing, spreadsheet or database software.

H Conflict management

1. What is your approach in dealing with disagreement or conflict with other staff members? With your supervisor? With a customer?
2. How would you handle a conflict with a customer over the telephone?
3. Describe how you react when you see co-workers disagreeing? Do you become involved or do you hold back and let them work it out themselves?

4. Give an example of when you “went to the source” to address a conflict. Do you feel levels of trust were improved as a result? Why or why not?
5. Give an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person, even when you felt the individual did not value your perspective.
6. Describe a time when you took personal accountability for a conflict and initiated contact with the individual(s) involved to explain your actions.
7. Suppose your supervisor asked you to get information for them that you know is confidential and he/she should not have access to. What would you do?

I Creativity/Innovation/Flexibility/Adaptability

1. In your work experience, what have you done that you consider truly creative?
2. Please describe a problem you have encountered when the old solutions didn't work and you came up with a new solution.
3. Of your creative accomplishments, big or small, at work or home, what gave you the most satisfaction?
4. What kind of problems have people recently called on you to solve? Describe what you came up with and factors you considered.
5. How effective has your organization been in adapting its policies to fit a changing environment? Explain your reasoning.
6. What was the most significant change made in your company or area in the last six months which directly affected you and how successfully do you think you implemented this change?
7. The person in this position needs to be innovative and proactive. Describe some things you have done to demonstrate those qualities.
8. Do you prefer a situation where your work changes on a frequent basis or one where you have well-laid out tasks and responsibilities? Why?
9. Are you a person who likes to try new things or stay with regular routines? Please give examples.
10. Describe a time when you created a new process or program that was considered risky. What was the situation? What did you do? How did you promote the program? Describe your success and what you might have done differently.
11. Describe a time when you reached out for additional responsibility.

J Customer relations

1. What are the characteristics most important to the success of a customer service employee?
2. Describe a situation where you encountered a dissatisfied customer. Please explain how you handled it.
3. At your current or past job, who are your customers? How do you work to ensure their satisfaction?
4. Describe an example of exceptional customer service in one of your past jobs.

5. Give an example of a problem you faced on the job and how you resolved it?
6. How would you handle a situation where you had difficulty understanding what the customer was saying?
7. What would you do in a situation where someone was requesting information from you that was confidential and it wouldn't be appropriate for you to release the information?
8. Tell us about a time when you went out of your way to give great service to a customer.
9. Tell us about a time when you asked for feedback on your customer service skills from your manager or co-worker and then used that response to improve your work.
10. Tell us about a time when you had to say "no" to a customer because it was against company policy.
11. Give a specific example of a time when you had to address an angry customer. What was the problem and what was the outcome? How would you assess your role in defusing the situation? What would you do differently if you were confronted with a similar situation in the future?
12. Give an example of when you initiated a change in process or operations in response to customer feedback.
13. What skills, abilities or training do you feel you would bring to the position in terms of working with the public?

K Dealing with difficult people/situations

1. What kind of people do you find it most difficult to work with? What would you do to improve this type of situation?
2. Give an example of a time when you had to deal with a difficult co-worker. How did you handle the situation?
3. Describe a time when a person's cultural background affected your approach to a work situation?
4. Describe a situation in which you had to separate the person from the issue when working to resolve differences.
5. Tell me about a time that you adapted your style in order to work effectively with those who were different from you in training or work experiences.
6. Your supervisor tells you to do something in a way you know is dead wrong. What do you do?
7. Describe a situation in which it was necessary for you to mediate or negotiate a solution or compromise.
8. Describe a politically complex work situation in which you worked and what you did to make it productive.
9. What do you do when you are really bothered by something in the workplace?

L Decision making

1. Describe your process for handling important decisions.
2. Describe the type of independent decisions you make on a routine basis.
3. Describe some typical decisions that you make and what factors you include in making those decisions.
4. Tell us about the last time pressure led you to indecision, a poor decision, or a mistake? What would you have done differently? Have you found yourself in a similar situation since? What did you do?
5. Do you anticipate problems well or merely react to them? Please provide examples.
6. Your supervisor tells you to do something in a way you know is dead wrong. What do you do?
7. Please describe the circumstances around an unpopular decision you had to make. How did you communicate it with those around you? What was the final result?
8. Describe your comfort with taking risks in making decisions and provide examples, if applicable.
9. Give an example of a decision you made that backfired and what you did about it.
10. Give an example of a decision you made that turned out better than you believed possible.
11. Describe a time when you made a decision in the absence of a clear policy regarding the issue.
12. Describe the most creative idea you ever had that was turned down and the circumstances surrounding the decision.
13. What would you do if someone asked you for assistance with a matter that is outside the parameters of your job description?
14. Describe what you would classify as a crisis.
15. Describe a situation you wish that you had handled differently based on the outcome. What was the situation? What would you change (or will you change) when faced with a similar situation?
16. Describe a decision you made which would normally have been made by your supervisor. What were the circumstances and what were the outcomes?
17. What methods do you use to make decisions? When do you find it difficult to make a decision?
18. What types of decisions do you find easy to make? What types of decisions do you find it difficult to make?
19. What was your most difficult decision in the last six months? What made it difficult?
20. Describe a specific time when you were given new information that affected a decision that you had already made.
21. In a current job task or process, what steps do you go through to ensure your decisions are correct/effective?

M Employee performance (from a supervisor's perspective)

1. Describe your philosophy of working with employees to improve their performance.
2. How do you typically monitor your staff's performance?
3. How do you motivate employees? Give us an example when you succeeded in motivating an employee. When you didn't succeed?
4. Explain, step by step, how you handle poor employee performance.
5. Give an example of a time when you were disappointed by an employee's lack of accomplishment and what you did about it.
6. As a manager (or supervisor), how do you go about getting the best from the people who report to you?
7. What was the most challenging personnel issue you've had to deal with and how did you handle it?
8. Describe a time when you had to give feedback to an employee who displayed a lack of professionalism in their work. What did you say? What standards did you set? What was the outcome?
9. Setting high expectations implies you believe the employee can deliver. Give an example of having done this.
10. Describe a time when you were able to provide an employee with recognition for the work they performed. What did you do?
11. What methods do you use to ensure that staff feel valued for their contributions?
12. Describe a time when you needed to address an employee's poor attitude. How did you approach the situation? What was the outcome?
13. What have you done to develop the skills of your staff? How many of your employees have received training during the past year? What were the specific topic areas? Did they ask for the training or did you suggest it to them?

N Hiring/firing

1. Describe your experience hiring people. Approximately how many people have you personally hired in your career?
2. Describe your hiring philosophy. For example, would you prefer to hire for skills and train for customer service skills or hire for customer service skills and train for other skills?
3. What was your biggest hiring mistake and what did you do about it?
4. Describe the steps you take to help a new employee settle in.
5. Describe your process for analyzing the training needs of your department or of a specific individual.
6. Have you ever had to fire an employee? If yes, what led up to the decision to fire? Please describe the process followed.
7. I am your administrative assistant. I consistently fail to complete assignments on time. Fire me.

8. Tell me about a time when you were responsible for hiring and orienting a new employee. What did you do to help them adjust?

○ Job performance (candidate)

1. Give an example of a time when you took the initiative on a project?
2. What is your most important job-related achievement and why?
3. This position takes direction from multiple individuals. How would you handle setting your priorities? What do you think it will take to make this work well?
4. What do you see as your greatest challenge when starting a new job?
5. How do you feel about temporarily taking on additional work?
6. Tell us about a typical day at your current job. How much time do you spend on the phone? In meetings? In one-on-one dealings with customers? Working by yourself? Working with your team (or others)?
7. Describe a time when you went "beyond the call of duty" to accomplish a task.
8. Explain the phrase "work ethic" and describe yours.
9. Describe an ideal work environment or "the perfect job".
10. What would you have liked to do more of in your last position? What held you back?
11. When you have been told, or discovered for yourself, a problem in your job performance, what have you typically done? Please provide an example.
12. Describe some of the things on your job you feel you have done particularly well or in which you have achieved the greatest success. Why do you feel that way?
13. What were some of the things about your last job that you found most difficult to do?
14. Do you consider yourself to be a self-starter? If so, explain why and give examples.
15. What things frustrate you the most? How do you usually cope with them?
16. What in your last review did your supervisor suggest needed improvement? What have you done about it?
17. Give an example of a time when you took responsibility for an error and were held personally accountable.
18. If someone had told you that you had made a somewhat serious error, describe how you would act and what you would say in your defense.
19. Give an example of a time when you were trying to meet a deadline, you were interrupted, and did not make the deadline. How did you respond?
20. Describe a situation where following established procedures made the difference between success or failure.
21. Share a situation where working around established procedures actually helped to accomplish a given task or project.
22. Describe a situation where you had to do "more with less" and were successful in accomplishing the task.

23. Give an example of a time when you had to make a decision that involved a non-routine procedure or policy and your supervisor was not immediately available.
24. Give an example of when you provided assistance in the interpretation of instructions, policies or procedures.

P Leadership skills

1. You are serving on a committee and a problem arises that the group cannot solve. You realize the group is disorganized and has not collected some important information. What do you do?
2. If you had an idea to improve your work or the work of your department, what would you do? How would you promote your idea?
3. Describe a time you had a leadership role. How did you gain it and why did you take it on? What were the most important things you learned from this situation?
4. Describe how you evaluate the effectiveness of your leadership.
5. Have you ever had to champion an unpopular change? Describe how you handled it.
6. How do you stay informed of current ideas on management skills?
7. Describe your approach in getting your people to accept your ideas or departmental goals.
8. What do you do specifically to set an example for your employees?
9. What sort of leader do your people feel you are? Are you satisfied? If not, what would you change?
10. How would you get people who do not want to work together to establish a common approach to a problem?
11. If you do not have much time and your employees have seriously differing views, what would be your approach to getting them to get the job done?
12. Have you ever led a committee or task force where the members don't report to you, but from whom you have to get work done? How did you accomplish it? What were the satisfactions and disappointments? How would you handle the task differently in the future?
13. In your current or former position, what were your short and long-term goals? How long ago did you set them? Who else was involved in setting them? Which ones were achieved?

Q Office skills

1. What important information do you try to include in a telephone message? What about when transferring a call?
2. You are given the following tasks. How would you prioritize them and what criteria would you use to decide on the order?
Answer frequent phone calls
Schedule a meeting in two weeks for your supervisor
Order airline tickets for your supervisor's trip in May

Deal with a customer who has come to your office and is gathering information about an upcoming project
Begin typing a report due next week
Design a chart for a presentation early next week
Process payroll, due at noon
Type a letter for your supervisor, due tomorrow

3. Describe the kinds of telephone and receptionist duties you have had, being specific about the number of calls and walk-ins you received in a typical day.
4. Describe your past experience with scheduling appointments.
5. Give an example of a task you performed that required specific attention to detail and what you did to ensure accuracy.
6. Describe some of the more unusual assignments you have been given.
7. Describe the filing systems you have used and/or created.
8. Describe the decisions you could make on your own and which you referred to your supervisor.
9. Describe your experience in preparing materials for reports and/or presentations.
10. Describe the types of reports you have developed, created, or produced.
11. Describe the kinds of correspondence you have written independently or of your own initiative.
12. Describe your experience that will meet the budgeting/bookkeeping requirement.
13. Describe your experiences in the creation of databases and/or spreadsheets and what they were used for.
14. Give examples of advanced features of software packages you have used in the course of your work (word processing, spreadsheets, and/or databases).
15. Describe your experiences in extracting and compiling data from either a database or spreadsheet and what you did with the information.
16. Please give examples of your experience working with individual accounts in departments. How do you work to maintain them? What types of weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly reports have you generated for those accounts?
17. Give an example of how you have closed out an account by the end of a fiscal year.
18. Give an example of how you have worked with student employees. What is your role in their supervision? How do you keep track of their hours within your department?

R Organizational skills

1. Describe the top of your desk. (Are you organized?)
2. What would your current/past employer tell us about your ability to organize your work?
3. How do you organize your work?
4. Describe your experience when others have needed to find information/files in your office. How would that change how you organize your office?

S Problem solving skills

1. What were some of the problems you encountered in your last job?
2. Give an example of a problem which you faced on any job you've had and tell me how you went about solving it.
3. Describe typical problems and/or grievances your staff might bring to you. What is your process for dealing with those problems and/or grievances?
4. What kind of work related situations do you find frustrating?
5. Think of a specific time when you faced a challenge in the area of _____. Can you relate the steps you took to overcome that challenge?
6. Tell us about a time you identified potential problems and resolved the situation before the problems became serious.
7. We have an ongoing problem with _____. Solve it.
8. Tell us about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem. What did you learn from that situation?
9. Describe a situation when you correctly anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
10. Describe the types of problems you most enjoy taking on. Give some examples of such problems you faced. What did you enjoy about them?
11. Describe the types of problems you least enjoy tackling. Give some examples of such problems you faced. What was it about the problems that bothered you?
12. To whom did you turn for help the last time you had a major problem at work? Why did you choose that person?

T Supervisory/management skills

1. Describe the job of a manager or a supervisor.
2. Describe the major responsibilities of a supervisor.
3. Describe the level and types of positions you have managed.
4. Describe your management style.
5. How would employees who reported to you describe your management style?
6. Describe the relationship that you feel should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him/her.
7. Describe how you follow-up on work assigned to others.
8. Describe the factors you take into account when scheduling employees.
9. Explain the limit of your management responsibilities by explaining the types of decisions that you feel would be beyond your authority.
10. Describe a sticky situation with an employee and what you did about it.
11. Describe the recognition and reward systems you have found to be most effective with your employees.
12. Describe the most serious complaint an employee brought to your attention and what you did about it.

13. Give an example of the most novel idea an employee presented to you and what you did about it.
14. Describe how you have participated in planning processes.
15. What is the best part of being a manager or a supervisor? What is the most difficult part of being a manager or a supervisor?
16. Describe what kind of tasks you feel most comfortable in delegating to someone else. What steps do you take in delegating tasks?
17. What is the largest number of employees you have supervised at one time and what were their job functions? What difficulties did you encounter while dealing with a large number of employees?
18. When judging the performance of those who report to you, what factors or characteristics are most important to you?
19. What was the most important idea or suggestion you recently received from your employees? What happened as a result?
20. Describe a project you were responsible for that required a lot of interaction with people over a long period of time.
21. Talk about a time when you needed to give negative feedback to an employee with emotional or sensitive problems. Describe the method you used. What was the outcome?
22. Talk about a time when you felt your staff was under too much pressure. What did you do about it then? What have you done to try to avoid a similar situation in the future?
23. Using a specific example of a project, talk about how you kept those involved informed of the progress and how you involved them in the process.
24. Give an example of a time when you helped a staff member accept change and make the necessary adjustments to move forward. What were the change/transition skills you used?
25. Describe a time when your department was going through long-term changes or working on a long-term project. What did you do to keep your staff focused?
26. Describe a time when you needed to delegate parts of a large assignment. How did you decide whom to distribute them to? What problems occurred? What was the outcome? What did you learn from the situation?
27. Give a specific example of how you have empowered your staff to make independent decisions.
28. Describe the expectations you create for staff. What factors do you consider in setting and communicating your expectations?
29. Describe your experience working with employees who are part of a union.
30. Describe your experience supervising student workers.

U Time and stress management

1. Give an example of how you have dealt with several, simultaneous demands on your attention by equally important urgent individual tasks.

2. How do you handle frequent interruptions of your work?
3. How do you determine priorities for managing your time?
4. Give an example that demonstrates the volume and pace of past workloads.
5. Describe a stressful time when you performed well.
6. Describe the type of stress that hurts your efforts and the type that helps. Give examples.
7. Describe your organizational/prioritizing skills.
8. Describe how you respond to stress. Please give examples.
9. Describe how you handle change. Please give examples.
10. Describe how you work under pressure. Please give examples.
11. How do you structure your daily work schedule prioritize tasks and projects?
12. Suppose you are in a situation where deadlines and priorities change frequently and rapidly. How would you determine your priorities?
13. How do you know when you are stressed? What do you do to de-stress?
14. Describe how you schedule your time on an unusually hectic day. Give specific examples.
15. Are you better at working on many things at a time or are you better at working on and getting results on a few specific things? Please give examples to illustrate.
16. Describe a time when you had to complete multiple tasks/projects within a tight timeline.
17. Describe your experience where you had pressure of constant deadlines that had to be met.
18. Give an example of how you have dealt with several simultaneous demands which had equal importance and deadlines. Describe how you determined priorities and got the work done.
19. This position frequently requires long and/or unusual hours. Describe your comfort/discomfort with this situation.

V Working together

1. Describe your involvement with committees, your role on them, and what you learned from those experiences.
2. Describe experiences you have had working with groups.
3. Tell us about the types of people you would rather work with. Tell us about the types of people you have trouble getting along with.
4. What does it mean to you to be a team player?
5. What experiences have you had working in close proximity with others?
6. What in particular have you been praised for in other positions? What have you been criticized for?
7. What do you do when (if) there are slow times?

8. How would you respond to constructive criticism that has been offered by another staff member? How would you respond if you felt someone criticized you unfairly?
9. What did you do in your last job to contribute toward a team environment?
10. What type(s) of people do you prefer working with? How do you deal with different personalities?
11. What do you feel are the advantages and disadvantages of working as a member of a team?
12. Define cooperation.
13. Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others? Why?
14. Your supervisor left an assignment in your "in" box and then left for the week. You can't reach her and you don't fully understand the assignment. What would you do?
15. Could you please tell us about any experiences you've had in dealing with a variety of different people working at various levels at the same time?
16. You observe a co-worker making inappropriate remarks to another employee and it is obvious to you that the situation was creating an uncomfortable environment. What would you do?
17. What do you do when others resist or reject your ideas or actions?
18. What do you think are the best and worst parts of working in a team environment? How do you handle it?
19. If I asked several of your co-workers about your greatest strength as a team member, what would they tell me?
20. In what way(s) do you express your personality in the workplace?
21. Define professional behavior and/or conduct appropriate in the workplace.
22. Why do you think a team of people may not always work well together? What can be done to improve how a team functions?
23. Some people get to know strangers quickly, while others prefer to take their time letting people get to know them. Describe how you entered relationships with co-workers when you were "new" to a job.
24. Describe the most difficult challenge you faced in trying to work cooperatively with someone who did not share the same ideas you had about work. What was your role in achieving the work objective? What was the long-term impact on your ability to get things done while working with this person?
25. How have you handled an important relationship you had to maintain?

W Working with management

1. Describe the characteristics of the best manager you ever had. Describe the toughest manager you've ever had.
2. How have past managers gotten the best out of you?
3. Describe any disagreements you have had with previous supervisors and how they were resolved.

4. Describe a time when your supervisor found it necessary to change a plan or approach to which you were committed. How did you explain the change to others? How did you feel about that change?
5. What was the most radical idea you ever introduced to an employer and what was the result?
6. Give an example of a time when you questioned a policy or procedure when it might have been better or easier to just go along with it.
7. Describe any of policies and procedures have you created and to whom you took them for approval.
8. It's 4:30 on a Friday afternoon. Your supervisor gives you an assignment that needs to be finished by 8:00 Monday morning. You have already made plans to be away for the entire weekend. What would you do?
9. Describe how you like to be managed and also the best relationship you've had with a previous boss.
10. A new policy is to be implemented organization-wide. You do not agree with this new policy. How do you discuss this policy with others? With your boss?
11. In what ways do you and your supervisor think alike? How do you differ?

X Transition to end of the interview

1. If you are the successful applicant, how would you expect to be different after a year in the position?
2. What do you find most attractive about this position? What seems to be least attractive about it?
3. If you were hiring someone for this job, what qualities would you look for?
4. What would you most like to accomplish if you had this job?
5. Now that you have had an opportunity to learn about Michigan Tech and the area in which you would be working, what hesitation or reluctance would you have in accepting this position if we offer it to you?
6. If you were sitting in my seat, and I was in yours, what would you ask me?
7. In a sentence or two, tell us why you feel you are the best person for this position.

Questions the candidate might ask

Which are the most important duties and responsibilities of this position?

What results are expected of this position?

What are the limits of responsibility and authority of this position?

What are some of the typical opportunities and problems associated with this position?

What support is available for this position?

Are there on-going projects for which I will inherit responsibility? What is their status and history?

What are the goals of this department/area (and of the organization)?

What criteria will be used to evaluate my performance? When are evaluations scheduled?

What can you tell me about my peers in the organization?

Why did my predecessor leave?

Why did you come to work here and why do you stay?

What advancement is available at Michigan Tech if I start in this position?

What characteristics does it take to succeed in this position? What characteristics cause people to fail in this position?

What are the two or three greatest challenges the department/organization faces in the next year?

Developing scenarios

When developing scenarios, focus on events that have happened in your area or may happen in the future. Make sure that you protect the privacy of any individuals that may have been involved. Be careful not to require knowledge that might be specific to your department or area that the candidate may not know about. Ask an open-ended question at the end of the scenario. Encourage the applicant to think out loud and explain the reasons/criteria for making the decision.

Example:

You are working at the front desk of a very busy office. You are responsible for answering the phone and dealing with walk-in customers. Just before closing on a particularly busy day, a new faculty member approaches your desk at the same time one of the other office professionals, who is a good friend of yours, comes in the door crying and is headed toward your desk. At the same time, two lines start ringing on your phone and your caller ID shows that a third ringing line is a call coming from the President's office. What are you going to do?

Another example:

The supervisor of another area in your department is on vacation and, as a result, you are temporarily in charge of the area. One afternoon, you overhear two employees talking about an incident that occurred a week earlier. They are discussing a new employee in the department (one that you hired) and describe her losing his temper with a student. You have suspected that the employee might have a nasty temper, but had nothing firm on which to base your suspicions. This is the first time you have heard of this incident. What would you do about it?

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