



INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

For Hiring Managers and Applicant Evaluation Committees

Human Resources and Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action
Heldenfels Administration Building — 101 Baldwin Blvd, Corpus Christi, Texas 78404

T: (361) 698-1104 F: (361) 698-2179 E: DMCJobs@delmar.edu

I: <https://dmcjobs.delmar.edu/hr>

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Introduction

Our employment goal is to attract, select, retain and promote the best possible candidate for every position. We are dedicated to ensuring our employment processes are fair and open to all who are interested in employment with the college.

DEL MAR COLLEGE MISSION

Del Mar College provides access to quality education, workforce preparation, and lifelong learning for student and community success.

HR MISSION

In support of Del Mar College's mission and with the belief that all employees are vital to the success of the institution, the Human Resources Department provides courteous and supportive services in the areas of: recruitment, development, and retention of a diverse and qualified workforce; administration of benefits; compensation analysis; career guidance; organizational development; employee relations; and management of employment records. This is achieved by promoting confidence and trust through the fair and consistent application of policies and procedures which promotes equal opportunity, diversity, ethics, customer service, and a quality work environment. By aptly responding to the needs and concerns of the campus community, faculty and staff are afforded the opportunity to provide the best services for students, the College's most important asset.

VISION STATEMENT

By serving as knowledgeable resources and advisors to faculty and staff, we will actively support the College's mission while ensuring compliance with Federal and State laws. We strive to foster a diverse, positive work environment that values honest feedback where employees are appreciated for their individual contributions.

Goals of the Interview Process

Our goal is to hire the person who best meets the needs of the position. Interviews assess candidates and determine whether or not capabilities match the position requirements.

Develop interview questions before you begin reviewing applicants and obtain approval from Human Resources. The same questions are to be asked of all interviewed applicants. The interview should create goodwill for Del Mar College, whether or not the candidate is hired. The questions must be job-related and not personal, legal, and non-discriminating. Record all interviewed applicant responses and score numerically.

5-POINT SCORING SYSTEM

<u>Points</u>	<u>Answers</u>
5	Best possible answer an applicant could provide; admirable.
4	Desirable answer; outstanding
3	Acceptable answer that a qualified applicant could provide.
2	Brief answer. Does not address all aspects of question.
1	Poor answer that indicates no knowledge, skill, or ability.



Level 3 should be used as a benchmark and is usually the easiest to develop first.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY NOTICE

Del Mar College is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. As provided by law, Del Mar College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity/transgender status, sexual orientation), age, national origin, religion, disability, genetic information, or any other constitutionally or statutorily impermissible reason.

Applicants requesting disability accommodations can obtain information concerning assistance in the application process by contacting Del Mar College Human Resources at (361) 698-2178. The College is committed to diversity in its workforce.

Interview Questions

INTRODUCTORY

How have your educational and professional experiences prepared you for this position?

How would you describe your ideal job?

Tell me about your last position. What you did, people you worked for, etc.

What were your three most important responsibilities in your last job?

What did you like best about your previous job? Like the least?

Tell me about a work achievement in which you take pride.

How would you describe your character? What five adjectives describe you best?

What personal qualities do you think are necessary to be successful in this job?

What unique qualities or major strengths and weaknesses do you possess that we should consider?

JOB PERFORMANCE

Explain the phrase “work ethic” and then describe your work ethic.

Of all the work you have done, where have you been most successful?

What is the biggest failure you've had in your career?

Tell us about the last time you made a good decision.

Describe a time when you made a mistake at work. How did you deal with this situation and what was the outcome? What means have you used to keep from making mistakes?

Do you consider yourself a brisk worker or one who is slower paced yet persistent and consistent?

What is your experience with planning meetings and calendar maintenance?

How do you handle too large of a workload?

Provide an example of a conflict situation where you had to select between priorities and how did you reach a compromise?

Give me an example of a time you found a unique solution to a problem.

Tell me about the last time you found a cost-effective solution to a problem.

What was the most important project you worked on in your last job?

Provide an example of a strict deadline you had to deal with recently and explain how you kept the deadline.

Describe for me a time when you have come across questionable business practices. How did you handle the situation?

COMMUNICATION / INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Describe a time you used your communications skills to negotiate with an angry person.

Describe a time when you were able to overcome a communications barrier(s).

Tell me about a time when effective listening skills helped you in a problematic situation.

What does the "open door" policy mean to you? Do you think it works?

Tell me about a time when you thought someone wasn't listening to you. What did you do?

Management requires both good writing and verbal skills for effective communication. When it comes to giving information to employees that can be done either way, do you prefer to write an email/memo or talk to the employee? Why?

PRESENTATION SKILLS

Have you ever given a presentation to a group? How did you prepare for it? What would you do differently?

Give an example of how you carefully considered your audience prior to communicating with them. What factors influenced your communication?

Give us an example of how and when you were the spokesperson for your current or most recent company.

COOPERATION WITH CO-WORKERS

Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?

How would your co-workers describe you?

Tell us about the last time you had a conflict with a co-worker.

What do you find most challenging in working with co-workers?

What types of people have trouble getting along with you?

The successful candidate for this position will be working with individuals who have been with the company for a long time. How will you mesh with them?

Define cooperation.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

What kinds of experiences have you had working with others with backgrounds different from your own?

What does it mean to have a commitment to diversity, and how would you develop and apply your commitment at Del Mar College?

What has been the most challenging aspect of being in a diverse working environment? What steps have you taken to meet this challenge?

Tell us about a time you had to alter your work style to meet a diversity need or challenge.

How have you handled a situation when a colleague was not accepting of diversity of others?

What strategies have you used to address diversity challenges? What were the positives and negatives?

Describe a time when you included someone in your team or a project because you felt he or she would bring a different perspective.

What was/is the diversity value at your current/former employer? What impact did you make on this value?

What efforts have you made or been involved with to foster diversity competence and understanding?

What have you done to further your knowledge about diversity? Have you included diversity in your professional development? How have you demonstrated what you have learned?

MANAGEABILITY

Describe the best manager you ever had. The worst manager you ever had.

What do you expect of your supervisor? Your coworkers?

What do supervisors tend to criticize most about your performance?

How does your boss get the best out of you?

What are some of the things about which you and your boss disagreed?

I would be interested to hear about an occasion when your work or an idea was criticized.

ADAPTABILITY / FLEXIBILITY / TIME MANAGEMENT / ORGANIZATION

Give an example of a time when you were trying to meet a deadline, were interrupted, and did not make the deadline. How did you respond?

Was there a time when you struggled to meet a deadline? Tell us about it.

Give an example of a time when your project priorities had to quickly change. How did you do it?

What do you do when you have a great deal of work to accomplish in a short period of time?

Have you worked under time constraints before? Can you give us an example?

Tell us about the last change which occurred in your office. How did you handle it?

What level of management are you most comfortable with?

When did you go above and beyond the call of duty to get your job done?

Would you have any concerns about sharing an office space with a colleague in a cubicle setting?

How do you keep track of incoming and outgoing correspondence?

Tell me about your productivity and time management skills.

How do you determine what amount of time is reasonable for a task?

Describe the workload at your current position. How do you feel about it? What would you change about it, if you could?

Describe the top of your desk.

What do you do when you're having trouble solving a problem?

What do you do when things are slow? What do you do when things are hectic?

Your supervisor left you an assignment, and then left for a week. You can't reach him and you don't fully understand the assignment. What would you do?

STRESS

Tell me about a deadline you had to meet. How did you plan for it?

What pressures do you feel in your job? How do you deal with them?

Tell me about the last time pressure led you to a poor decision or mistake on the job.

What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?

What is the most difficult work situation you have faced?

You have worked in a fast paced environment. How do you handle the stress?

Describe times in the past year when you have been most upset with yourself at work.

Describe times in the past year when you have been most upset with someone else at work.

Describe the last time a person at work (customer, co-worker, boss) became irritated or lost his/her temper. What did they do? How did you respond? What was the outcome?

Tell us about a situation in which you became frustrated or impatient when dealing with a person (customer, co-worker, boss). What did you do?

Give me an example of when your ideas were strongly opposed by a co-worker or supervisor. What was the situation? What was your reaction? What was the result?

GOAL SETTING

Did you inaugurate new procedures in your previous positions? Tell us about them.

Tell us what "success" means to you. What does "failure" mean to you?

How do you set goals for yourself? What motivates you?

What do you do when you are having trouble with your job?

What would you change about your current job?

Why have you decided to leave your organization?

What would you like to be doing five years from now?

LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

Describe a time when you took a new job that required a much different set of skills from what you had. How did you go about acquiring the needed skills?

Have you had an occasion when a prior strength actually turned out to be a weakness in another setting? How did you cope?

Throughout your career, have you learned more about your profession through coursework or through on the job experience? Explain.

Tell us about a time when you volunteered for an assignment to expand your knowledge and skills.

Tell us about the one person who has influenced you the most during your career. Was he or she a manager or mentor? What did you learn from him or her? Why do you think you learned so much from him or her?

What is more important to your profession: experience or continued education?

Under what kinds of conditions do you learn best?

In what areas would you like to develop further? What are your plans to do that?

Why should employees seek to improve their knowledge and skill base?

What was the best training program in which you have participated?

What are your major professional reading sources?

How do you stay informed of current ideas on management and the (industry field for your department)?

What professional or trade groups do you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job?

Where do you see your career now? Why? What are you doing to sustain it?

Do you feel you are knowledgeable about current industry-related legislation and/ or trends? Why or why not?

What was the last work-related educational seminar or class you attended? Why did you attend this course? How have you transferred the knowledge gained in the course to your work?

INITIATIVE

Could you share with us a recent accomplishment of which you are most proud?

Describe a time when you performed a task outside your perceived responsibilities. What was the task? Why did you perceive it to be outside your responsibilities? What was the outcome?

What do you do in your job that is not covered in your job description?

What do you do differently from other people in the same position?

Describe a time when you kept from getting bored when dealing with routine tasks.

Have you found any ways to make your job easier or more rewarding?

Have you found any ways to make other employees' jobs easier or more rewarding?

We've all had occasions when we were working on something that just "slipped through the cracks." Can you give me some examples of when this happened to you? What was the cause? Result?

Can you think of some projects or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were carried out successfully primarily because of your efforts?

What new ideas or suggestions have you come up with at work?

This job requires much time working alone. Tell us about a job or project where you worked unsupervised and were given only general guidelines for job/project completion.

Can you tell us about a time during your previous employment when you suggested a better way to perform a process?

Have you ever recognized a problem before your boss or others in the organization? How did you handle it?

In your past experience, have you noticed any process or task that was being done unsafely (incorrectly)? How did you discover it or come to notice it?

Tell us about a career goal that you have accomplished and why that was important to you.

What did you do to change the aspects of your job that you dislike?

CLERICAL SPECIFIC

When typing, what sorts of mistakes can you catch quickly and correct for the original writer?

When typing a document, which things do you feel comfortable changing without needing to check with the one who has assigned you the work? What do you feel is necessary to ask about before changing or rewriting?

What type of letters, memos, etc., can you set-up and write "from scratch"?

How much writing have you done from incomplete instructions or notes? Explain.

What formats or form letters have you had experience working with?

How much rewriting do you usually do when working on someone's proposal/report?

How many phone lines are you comfortable handling?

TECHNICAL

Describe the types of documents you deal with on a daily basis.

What software programs do you use most often in your current position?

Give an example of a project or report that you have completed using (insert here name of program/software).

How do you work with confidential information?

Do you have any special training we should know about?

What training have you received in _____?

Walk me through the procedures you would follow to_____.

Describe your experience with the following tools and equipment: (insert list)

What equipment have you been trained to operate? When/where did you receive that training?

Describe your experience performing the following tasks: (insert list of job related tasks).

Have you ever identified potential malfunctions of equipment? How did you discover the potential malfunction? What did you do to correct the problem?

Being a _____ certainly requires a lot of technical knowledge. How did you go about getting it? How long did it take you?

Do you consider your technical abilities basic, intermediate, or advanced?

What would you add to or subtract from your technical background to make you more qualified for this position?

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Describe some recent projects you were involved in to improve accounting's efficiency/effectiveness. What did you do?

Describe for me a time when you have come across questionable accounting practices. How did you handle the situation?

Have you completed month end/year end closing? How much experience do you have with this?

Describe your most challenging encounter with month end/year end closing. How did you resolve the problem?

Have you ever been over budget? Why? How did you handle this?

Describe your budget creation and management experience.

Tell me about your fiscal management experience: budgeting, reporting, cutting costs, building and maintaining reserves.

Describe your reconciliation experience.

What type of inventory audits have you been involved in? Describe challenges you've faced.

What experience have you had with tax accounting?

Have you ever done a cost-benefit analysis? Tell me about it.

What experience do you have with financial planning and analysis?

CUSTOMER SERVICE / CLIENT FOCUS

Give me an example of when you've demonstrated your customer service skills.

What do you like about being in customer service? What do you find is the most difficult part of being in customer service?

Tell us about a time when you knew that your customer might not get what he or she needed on time. How did you handle this?

Tell us about a time when you had to say “no” to a customer because it was against company policy.

Have you ever contacted a customer with the sole purpose of seeking feedback about a product or service you delivered? What did you learn? What did you change?

Describe a process or system that you improved so customers would be better served.

When are policy exceptions to customers warranted? Not warranted?

Describe a time when someone failed to provide satisfactory service to you. How could that person improve his or her performance in that particular situation?

SUPERVISORY

Tell us about your management style—people, teamwork, direction?

How do you motivate people?

What do you do when you're having trouble with your employee?

What type of supervisory training have you completed?

Tell me about a difficult situation that you have had with an employee. How did you handle it?

Describe an ideal supervisor/manager. What do you expect of your supervisor?

How would you handle rude or disrespectful behavior from staff?

Give me an example of a time when you needed to help other employees learn a new skill set. What did you do?

Have you ever been in a position where you had to lead a group of peers? How did you handle it? Tell me about problems you had and how you handled them.

Have you ever managed a situation where the people or units reporting to you were in different locations? Tell me how this worked.

Tell me about your experience working with a board of directors. What approach and philosophy did you follow in working with boards?

Tell me about a time when you organized, managed and motivated others on a complex task from beginning to end?

Have you ever had to make unpopular decisions? How did you communicate it to your workers?

A new policy is to be implemented organization-wide. You do not agree with this new policy. How do you discuss this policy with your staff?

What is the largest number of employees you have supervised and what were their job functions?

Tell me about your experiences with staff development.

EXEMPT OR MANAGEMENT-LEVEL DECISION MAKING

Give a specific example of a decision you made that was not effective. Why do you think it was not effective, and what did you do when this realization was made?

What methods do you use to make decisions? When do you find it most difficult to make a decision?

You have a critical decision to make for your department, and all alternatives will likely be unpopular with your staff. What input do you gather before deciding? What factors do you take into consideration?

In your last job what kinds of decisions did you have authority over? Describe the degree of authority you had over these decisions.

Describe a program you have developed.

Tell me about a time when you participated in developing your departmental or organizational business strategy. What was your role? How did you approach it?

Tell me about a time when you identified a need for a new approach or product to meet a market need.

Is it more important to be a detail-oriented person or a big-picture person? Explain.

What do you think is the role of the President in strategic planning for the College?

When there's a decision for a new critical process, what means do you use to communicate step-by-step processes to ensure other people understand and will complete the process correctly?

Tell me the steps you take to monitor the quality of your work in your current job.

Tell me how the quality of your work impacts others around you. Give me an example.

What kind of leadership efforts would you make to ensure a commitment to the diversity initiative or value?

How do you feel a meeting should be organized to be most effective?

RECENT GRADUATE

What extracurricular activities were you involved in?

What activities did you enjoy the most?

What classes did you enjoy the most? The least?

Why did you choose your education major?

If you could start again, what major would you choose?

Why are you applying for a job in a field other than your major?

What did you learn from your summer jobs?

In what courses did you get the worst grades? Why?

Are your grades a good measure of your ability?

Give me an example of a problem you've had at school and how you solved it.

Tell me about an educational achievement in which you take pride.

FACULTY SPECIFIC

Describe your teaching philosophy.

Describe your teaching style.

What kind of techniques have you found to be effective?

How do you define the educational philosophy of the community college and that of a four-year institution?

What do you think are the most important attributes of a good instructor?

What do you think are your greatest strengths as an instructor? In which areas do you feel you can use some further development?

What can you bring to the department that is uniquely yours?

Tell us how you keep current in your field. What have you done to develop professionally?

In what professional development activities have you been involved over the past few years?

What are your current research interests? Have you involved your students in your research?

Please explain the composition of the student bodies you have taught.

Describe your relationship with (to) your students.

How do you feel your teaching style can serve our student population?

How do you engage students, particularly in a course of non-majors?

How do you adjust your style to the less-motivated or under-prepared student?

How would your background and experiences strengthen this academic department?

In your opinion, how should the workload of a faculty member be split and into what areas?

How would you go about being an advocate and resource for the use of technology in the teaching and learning process?

What technology applications have you utilized in the classroom?

Describe your grading criteria.

What courses have you created or proposed in the past five years?

Think about a co-worker from the present or past whom you admire. Why?

What is your view of the relationship between faculty and administration?

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS / CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Describe the teaching techniques or strategies that are most effective for you.

Describe how you assess your students to determine how well they are learning (include formal and informal methods).

What specific techniques have you used to keep students actively involved during a lesson?

Describe different student learning styles or modalities of students and how you adjust lessons to benefit those differing styles.

Give me a specific example of a time when you encountered someone unmotivated to learn what you had to teach them.

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS / CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT Cont.

What kind of rules do you have in your classroom? How are they established?

How do you create and promote a safe environment in your classroom?

Share three interesting teaching techniques used in your classroom.

What kinds of materials have you used to assess pupil strengths and/or weaknesses?

Are there any materials you have used that you find are especially effective for slow learners or bright students?

In what specific ways do you encourage student accountability?

Describe your classroom management style and specific techniques that have been effective for you.

Tell me about the most difficult disciplinary situation you've had to manage.

Tell me about a specific lesson plan in which you presented the material in a way that met the needs of students of all learning styles.

Describe how you conduct a lesson. What are the components of an effective lesson plan?

Would you rather teach a slow learner or an advanced learner? Why?

How do you handle the different ability levels among students?

List specific ways in which you have provided feedback to students in a previous learning environment.

What do you include in your daily lesson plans? How closely do you follow your plans?

What has been the greatest challenge that you have faced in your past teaching position? How did you address that challenge and what was the outcome?

FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

Although the same general questions used to evaluate candidates for an open position should be asked of all candidates, the search committee is free to ask any follow-up questions that are necessary to gain additional clarification or insight into the candidate's answer. If you do not understand a candidate's answer or are not sure whether or not the answers given demonstrate a match for the job position, ask follow up questions such as the ones below.

What steps did you take?

What happened after that?

What did you say?

How did you handle that?

What was your reaction?

How do you feel about that?

What was the outcome/result?

Were you happy with the outcome?

What do you wish you had done differently?

What did you learn from that?

How did you resolve that?

Why did you decide to take that course of action?

Who else was involved?

What was your role?

Why? How?

What obstacles did you face?

What were you thinking at that point?

Lead me through your decision process.

How did you prepare for that?

When?

Where?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- Why did you apply for this position?
- Why should I hire you over others who apply?
- What are your salary expectations for this job?
- Where do you see yourself professionally five years from now?
- If you have questions about this job, who will you ask?
- If you were hired, when could you start?
- Any questions for us?

ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

Never ask about an applicant's age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, children, ethnic origin/race, religion/politics, and/or disabilities.

- Are you married? Do you intend to get married?
- How old are you?
- Do you have children?
- Where does your spouse work?
- Where are your parents from?
- What's the origin of your name?
- What church are you a member of?
- With what political party are you affiliated?
- What health problems do you have?
- When were you last in the hospital?

Retention of Records

Not Hired = Two (2) years.

New Employee = Five (5) years *after* termination / resignation / retirement date.

Human Resources and Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action
Heldenfels Administration Building — 101 Baldwin Blvd, Corpus Christi, Texas 78404
T: (361) 698-1104 F: (361) 698-2179 E: DMCJobs@delmar.edu
I: <https://dmcjobs.delmar.edu/hr>