

## A Guide to Appropriate Interview Questions Across Canada

| Item  | Appropriate   | Inappropriate   | How to ask a question appropriately?  |
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| <p><b>Race, Colour, Ancestry, Place of Origin, Ethnic Origin</b><br/>           *Race and colour are prohibited grounds in all jurisdictions;<br/>           Ancestry/Place of Origin/Ethnic Origin are prohibited grounds in all jurisdictions</p> | <p>You may only ask questions regarding whether the candidate is legally permitted to work in Canada. You may also ask questions to find out if the candidate speaks and writes a language well enough to perform a job when there is a legitimate need for them to be fluent in a particular language for the position. You can ask about the candidate's highest level of education as well as the names and locations of post-secondary institutions a candidate has attended.</p> | <p>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's place of birth, previous addresses, citizenship, race, colour, ancestry, mother tongue, nationality or experience in Canada, unless a specific type of experience is objectively required for the job, in which case the nature of the experience must be specified. You may not ask for elementary or secondary school information which might reveal a candidate's national, ethnic or aboriginal origin. After hiring you may ask for documentation which may disclose this information. For example, for enrolment in a benefits plan, you may ask for a birth certificate.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you legally permitted to work in Canada?</li> <li>• Fluency in [Spanish] is an important requirement of this job position, are you fluent in [Spanish]?</li> <li>• Could you please tell me the highest level of education that you have attained as well as the names and locations of post-secondary institutions you attended?</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Religion/Creed</b><br/>           *Prohibited ground in all jurisdictions</p>   | <p>You may only ask questions regarding religion/creed when adherence to a particular religion is an attribute required for a job or justified by the religious nature of a non-profit institution. Employers may ask if the candidate is available for certain hours of work or travel. After the candidate is hired, the employer can ask if any accommodations are necessary.</p>  | <p>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's religious beliefs, religious holidays, customs observed by the candidate, or religious dress.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you able to do shift work?</li> <li>• Does your schedule allow you to travel when necessary for job-related purposes?</li> </ul>   |

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| <p><b>Physical or Mental Disability (or Handicap)</b><br/>           *Prohibited ground in all jurisdictions<br/>           *The province of Ontario also includes the <i>perception</i> that someone may have or have had a disability</p> | <p>You may only ask questions regarding whether the candidate can perform the essential requirements of the job. For example, medical services employees face stressful work conditions on a daily basis. As such, it is appropriate to ask whether a candidate is physically and mentally capable of undertaking such work. After the candidate is hired the employer can ask if any accommodations are necessary.</p> | <p>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding the candidate's general state of physical and mental health, appearance, height or weight. You may only specify that, for example, heavy lifting or other physical requirements are required for a job. It is inappropriate to inquire about general disabilities, limitations, present or previous health problems, drug or alcohol dependencies, hospitalization, and compensation for previous employment injuries.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The position that you are applying for is [physically demanding], would you be able to perform all the essential functions of the job [which include heavy lifting]? (Please note that all candidates must be asked this question and no candidate should be singled out).</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Age</b><br/>           *Prohibited ground in all jurisdictions</p>  | <p>You may only ask age related questions to determine whether the candidate is legally entitled to work in the province, or if the candidate needs to be of a certain age due to the requirements of the job (i.e. serving alcohol).</p>   | <p>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding the candidate's date of birth, health insurance number, driver's license number, etc.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you legally entitled to work in [province/country]?</li> <li>This position requires everyone to be over the age of 18 because the establishment [serves liquor], are you over the age of 18?</li> <li>What are your long-term career goals?</li> </ul>                            |
| <p><b>Sex (Includes Pregnancy and Childbirth)</b><br/>           *Prohibited ground in all jurisdictions</p>  | <p>You may only ask questions regarding sex when it relates to a reasonable requirement for a job. For example a women's shelter may only hire women. These situations will be very rare.</p>   | <p>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding the candidate's sex, including questions relating to gender, pregnancy and child-bearing.</p>  | <p>N/A</p>   |

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| <p><b>Sexual Orientation</b><br/>*Prohibited ground in all jurisdictions</p>  | None  | It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's sexual orientation.                            | N/A  |
| <p><b>Gender Identity / Gender Expression</b><br/>*Gender Identity is a prohibited ground in Ontario, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories<br/>*Gender Expression is a prohibited ground in Ontario</p> | None  | It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's gender identity or expression.                 | N/A  |
| <p><b>Marital/Civil Status</b><br/>*Prohibited ground in all jurisdictions</p>  | <p>You may only ask questions regarding whether the candidate is able to work the shifts required of the vacant position, if they are able to travel for work, or if they are willing to relocate. After hiring, an employee may be asked for information that discloses this information if it is required for a legitimate purpose. For example, a legitimate purpose may include questions that are necessary for income tax purposes or enrollment in group benefits plans.</p> | It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's marital/family status or second family income. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you able to do shift work?</li> <li>• Can you work overtime if required?</li> <li>• Would you relocate if required for your position?</li> <li>• Does your schedule allow you to travel when necessary for job-related purposes?</li> </ul> |

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| <b>Photographs</b>   | You may only ask candidates to submit photographs when required for modeling and entertainment job positions. | It is inappropriate to make any requests for a photograph to accompany an employment application, or for a photograph to be submitted before the aptitude test or interview.             | N/A   |
| <b>Social Condition</b><br>*Prohibited ground in Quebec, Northwest Territories, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, Manitoba   | You may only ask if the candidate would be able to obtain a car if it is necessary for the position.          | It is inappropriate to ask whether a candidate has a car.<br>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's social condition (e.g. whether they are a landlord or tenant). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you be able to access a car if required for the position?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Source of Income</b><br>*Prohibited ground in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Yukon, Nunavut | You may only ask questions regarding former employment.   | It is inappropriate to ask questions that do not relate to the specific job to be performed.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have any job-related work experience?</li> </ul>                    |

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| <p><b>Clubs and Organizations</b></p>  | <p>You may only ask questions regarding membership in professional associations, clubs or organizations, hobbies or interests, if they are job-related. Membership in a professional or technical association may be a requirement for licensing purposes or employment.</p>  | <p>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's club and organization memberships that would indicate race, colour, religious beliefs, ancestry or place of origin.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you a member of any professional associations, clubs or organizations, or have any hobbies or interests specifically relating to this job position?</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Political Belief</b><br/>*Prohibited ground in Yukon, Newfoundland, British Columbia, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Northwest Territories</p> | <p>You may only ask questions regarding a candidate's political belief when the candidate's belief is a legitimate requirement for the job, as it often is for employment with a political party.</p>   | <p>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's political activities or memberships, or affiliations with political parties.</p>  | <p>N/A</p>  |
| <p><b>Criminal Record</b><br/>*Prohibited ground in Yukon, British Columbia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island</p>  | <p>In British Columbia and Prince Edward Island you may only ask questions regarding whether a candidate has a criminal record if there is a legitimate employment related reason to know this information. For example, when working with children, it is acceptable to ask if they have been convicted of a crime related to children. In Ontario and Yukon there is no such specification.</p> | <p>It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's criminal record unrelated to the specific job.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This position requires [working with children], have you ever been convicted of an offence in relation to children?</li> </ul>                                     |

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| <b>Pardoned Conviction</b><br>*Prohibited ground in Yukon, Ontario, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Federal | None   | It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's pardoned convictions.   | N/A  |
| <b>Smoking</b>   | You may only indicate that the successful candidate will be required to work in a non-smoking environment.   | It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's asthmatic or permanent respiratory conditions that may be affected by smoke.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The successful candidate will be required to work in a non-smoking environment. Are you comfortable with that?</li> </ul>                             |
| <b>Education</b>   | You can ask about the candidate's highest level of education as well as the names and locations of post-secondary institutions a candidate has attended. | It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding a candidate's religious or racial affiliation, schools or other institutions attended as it could reveal religious beliefs or race. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could you please provide me with the names, locations of educational institutions attended and the nature and level of education received?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Name and Contact Information</b>  | You may only ask for the candidate's last name and contact information including the candidate's address and phone number.                               | It is inappropriate to ask questions regarding whether a candidate has an address outside the country.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could you please provide me with your full name, address and telephone number so that we can reach you?</li> </ul>                                    |

Always remember that it is important to ask questions that will give insight into how the candidate will perform their job functions and be suitable for the organization. Although the foregoing speaks to certain limitations or appropriate questions in the interview process, there are a myriad of useful questions that can lead to the hiring of the right candidate. These include the following:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What interests you about this position?
3. How would your qualifications make you a good candidate for the position?
4. What risks did you take in your last position?
5. How do you think you could contribute to the company?
6. Can you give an example of when you have taken initiative or a leadership role?
7. What is the first thing you want to accomplish with this position?
8. What was the most useful criticism you ever received?
9. Talk about a time when you had to overcome major obstacles?
10. How would you handle a stressful situation at work?