



Questions You May Want to Ask for Academic Job Interviews

Note about questions: *DO NOT plan to ask ALL of these questions. These are meant to get you thinking about things you may want to know. You should be prepared to slip some of these into your conversations with folks throughout your interview day(s).*

University/Department

- How is the university organized? What are the major units and administrators of the school and what are their responsibilities? What does the organizational flow chart look like? *(Note that you should do your homework beforehand and be somewhat familiar with the university; ask additional questions to clarify your understanding.)*
 - ♦ May I have a copy of the college/departmental annual report and/or strategic plan? *(You should probably already have this, but you can ask a question, demonstrating that you have researched this.)*

Department

- How are departmental decisions made?
- How often are departmental meetings held? How are decisions made in departmental meetings? Who is eligible to vote on departmental decisions (e.g., all faculty or only tenured faculty)?
- What's the relative importance of teaching, research and service for promotion and tenure?
- What is the average time that faculty spend in each academic rank? How long is it before assistant professors are reviewed for promotion and tenure?
- Is outside grant support essential for promotion and tenure?
- What is the nature of the tenure review process?
- About what percent of faculty receive tenure?
- Can grants be used to supplement salary?
- What are the department's research strengths and weaknesses?
- What resources for research and teaching available within the department (e.g., computer facilities, equipment, technology support?, university teaching/pedagogy institute)
- How well does the library meet departmental needs? Are the reserves adequate?
- What kinds of technology are available in the classroom?
- What type of support for research is available?
- What types of support are available for professional travel?
- Is there a research office on campus to help faculty write grants?
- Do faculty collaborate with each other? How is collaboration work supported by the university? How does this count in the tenure process?
- Who is involved in curriculum development decisions and how are they made?
- What are the department's plans for growth and hiring?
- What is the department climate like?
- How is the department perceived within the larger college?
- What courses are you looking to fill?
- Is this a new position? If not, why did the faculty member leave?

Student Related Questions for Faculty Members or Graduate Studies Head, etc.

- Tell me about your student population.



Questions You May Want to Ask for Academic Job Interviews

- How many undergraduate and graduate students are presently in the department? How are the numbers changing?
- Where do the undergraduate students go after graduation?
- How are graduate students supported?
- How do graduate students select research advisors?

Questions to Ask Students

- What's it like to be a grad student here?
- What is the process like to get your degree? *Your preparation may be different than the university you are interviewing with (example: dissertation defense)*
- What are you looking for in a new faculty member?

Benefits/Area

Typically, these kinds of questions should be directed to an HR representative or college rep. It is now common practice to have some time scheduled into your interview schedule for you to receive info related to this area.

- What do the benefits look like for this position?
 - ♦ What type of retirement program is there? What percentage of the salary goes to retirement? What does the school contribute?
 - ♦ What type of health program exists? What are the costs and benefits?
 - ♦ Are there opportunities for dual-hire?

Questions for potential colleagues in less formal interview settings (meals, transition times)

- How do you like the area?
- What kinds of child care settings are common for faculty here?
- Where do most people go for groceries... etc...?
- Are there any health-food stores...weight-clubs, etc?

Prepared by Erika L. Grafsky, PhD, Human Development, Virginia Tech University (erikagrafsky@vt.edu)

Additional resource on the academic job interview: <http://www.virginia.edu/vpr/postdoc/docs/AcademicInterviewing.pdf>