

10

common interview questions for college graduates

 Talent Solutions



Tell me about a time when you had to juggle multiple assignments. How did you manage your workload?

What this question assesses:

This question helps you assess how they'll handle busy periods at work. You need to know they can prioritize tasks rationally and effectively.

Notes:

What to listen for:

- Evidence that they're resilient in the face of a challenge and can self-motivate to achieve a goal
- Strong time management skills, including a method for planning their priorities (ex: a task list)
- Signs that the candidate does not procrastinate



What extracurricular activities did you participate in at college? What did you learn from them?

What this question assesses:

Activities can help students develop their skills: 66% say participation strengthens leadership skills and 40% say it boosts communication skills.

Notes:

What to listen for:

- Evident passion that signals their investment in learning and developing
- Evidence of skills that are relevant to the job (ex: teamwork learned through school athletics)
- Clarity about the specific role they played (ex: organizing events or assisting with fundraising)



Who was your favorite college supervisor and what did you like about them?

What this question assesses:

Learning what kind of supervisor a college graduate worked well with can tell you whether they'll thrive under their boss's management style.

Notes:

What to listen for:

- A professional answer that doesn't dwell on what they disliked about other supervisors
- Evidence that the candidate can both work well independently and take direction
- A clear understanding of what motivates them



Describe a situation during your college years when you displayed leadership skills.

What this question assesses:

This question can help you spot talent with the potential and confidence to take charge and direct their peers.

Notes:

What to listen for:

- A detailed example, whether it took place during class, an internship, or extracurricular activities
- Evidence that the candidate is able to delegate tasks effectively and rally other people
- Enthusiasm about stepping into a leadership role, rather than feeling obligated



Think about a time when something went wrong on a group project. What happened and what did you do?

What this question assesses:

Sometimes, things don't go to plan. How the candidate reacts in those situations can tell you a lot about how they'll handle issues at work.

Notes:

What to listen for:

- A solution-oriented approach, rather than dwelling on the problem
- A calm attitude about overcoming challenges, instead of trying to pass the blame
- Reflection on what could be done better next time to avoid encountering the same problem



What three words would your friends use to describe you? What about your professors?

What this question assesses:

This question can tell you whether a candidate is self-aware about how others perceive them. It can also give you a better sense of their personality.

What to listen for:

- A thoughtful, humble, and genuine answer that highlights strengths without seeming exaggerated
- Personality traits that will help the candidate thrive in your particular work environment
- A sense of tact and self-awareness (ex: avoiding overly personal or negative answers)

Notes:



When you were studying or completing class projects, did you prefer to work alone or in groups?

What this question assesses:

This question tests a candidate's team orientation and fit. Depending on the role, the new hire may have to work primarily one way or the other.

What to listen for:

- Self-awareness about the conditions under which they do their best work
- Details about why this is their preference, with an emphasis on end results
- If the job requires it, evidence that they work well under both conditions, regardless of preference

Notes:



Did you complete any internships while at school? What did you get out of the experience?

What this question assesses:

Internships can provide hands-on experience. In many cases, they also establish or fuel a candidate's passion for their chosen career path.

What to listen for:

- Signs that the candidate learned new skills or applied school-taught skills in a real-world setting
- Examples that illustrate how the candidate added value to the company where they interned
- Details of other relevant work or volunteering experience if internships were unavailable

Notes:



What do you feel you would bring to this role and organization that other candidates wouldn't?

What this question assesses:

This question is designed to evaluate the candidate's fit for the role and their level of understanding about the job and the company.

What to listen for:

- Unique or rare skills or traits that align with the requirements and the company's mission
- A humble answer that highlights the candidate's strengths without boasting
- A keen understanding of their own strengths and how they will add value to your company

Notes:



Looking back on your entire college experience, what was the most rewarding part?

What this question assesses:

The candidate's answer will be a good indicator of where they'll find the most meaning in their work and if the role will be rewarding to them.

What to listen for:

- Alignment with the company's mission and values
- Specific details about why they found it so rewarding, as opposed to vague or overly broad answers
- Signs that the experience helped the candidate grow professionally or personally

Notes:

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