

Sample Interview Questions from internship directors:

"The information I have been looking for in the interview is:

1. How professional and clearly they can communicate
2. Their understanding and commitment to the profession and our internship
3. Clarification of the level of experience they have (i.e. did they observe things or actually perform them, which I found difficult to tell from some applications)
4. Their ability to accept constructive feedback and ability to grow from it
5. Their ability to utilize resources versus requiring hand-holding."

Possible questions:

1. How did you become interested in the field of dietetics?
2. What is your current area of interest?
3. Why would you like to do your internship at Glendale Memorial Hospital? (PROBE: Is there some unique quality or skill you will bring to us?)
4. How will you add value to our institution as an intern?
5. What are your expectations of the internship?
6. What is the future of the dietetic profession?
7. Briefly summarize your work experience and/or volunteer activities, and tell us how these experiences have helped you prepare for an internship?
8. Which professional organizations do you currently participate in and what benefits have you received from this involvement?
9. Tell us about a time when you had to deal with an extremely difficult or unhappy customer, patient or coworker. How did you deal with the situation & what was the outcome? Would you do anything differently next time?
10. Have you ever worked in an ethnically diverse setting? If so, please tell us what that experience was like for you.
11. Summarize yourself in 3 words, with one word describing a strength, a weakness, and the third is up to you.
12. How has your "weakness", _____, impaired your ability to achieve a goal? (if necessary, PROBE with: What goals have you made with regard to overcoming your weakness? & What steps have you taken to achieve these goals?)
13. What steps have you taken to improve upon your "weakness?"
14. What is the most difficult thing you've ever done or your greatest challenge in your life (not work related). What/how did you overcome it & tell us what you learned from it?
15. We have all had an experience either professionally or personally where we did not live up to the expectations of another. Describe a situation in which this may have happened to you including your reaction and how you were affected by this experience.
16. The internship will require a large commitment of time, energy and financial resources over a 12 month period. Do you anticipate any problems achieving this level of commitment?
17. Please describe any patient or client contact you have had in a nutrition related setting. Please describe the setting and tell us, what was the most enjoyable aspect? What was the least enjoyable or most challenging aspect?

18. In the internship you will be required to remember information that you learned as an undergraduate. If you don't remember something please explain to us what you would do about it?
19. What course did you enjoy the most during your undergraduate program? Why?
20. If we were to ask your work supervisors to describe you, what would they say?
21. If we were to ask your co-workers or classmates to describe you, what would they say?
22. The DI/MPH program requires that you handle multiple projects and assignments. Give an example which illustrates your ability to deal with such situations.
23. What project or work from your undergraduate program are you most proud of? Least proud of?
24. Why should we choose you for this program? Are you aware that you cannot work while in the Dietetic Internship Program? Have you made plans for this?
25. You receive a consult for diet education for a client. The client arrives and is not interested in making any dietary changes. How would you handle this situation?
26. You are not personally interested in a particular DI rotation. How will you motivate yourself to complete the requirements of the rotation?
27. What course did you enjoy the least during your undergraduate program? Why?
28. Why did you choose to apply to the DI/MPH program at Benedictine University?
29. How have your extracurricular activities influenced your development as a person?
30. What are your short term and long term career goals?
31. What influenced your choice of dietetics as a profession?
32. What do you see as the future for the profession of dietetics?
33. How do you go about researching new information for school or work?
34. How do you handle stress in your life?
35. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?
36. What is your favorite professional journal? Why?

Other possible questions:

You can be almost certain that you will be asked why you chose to apply to this particular program, what contributions you feel you can make to the program, and what your strengths and weaknesses are. Also be prepared to answer questions on teamwork, cooperation, and positive attitudes. In fact, these are characteristics you should stress. If these characteristics do not honestly describe you, avoid them. Do not present yourself as something you are not. This will cause you future problems or indicate that you are a person who is not in touch with your own reality. Other possible interview questions might be:

- What are your long-term goals? What are your short term goals?
- From your experience in food administration, what do you feel is the greatest experience you received or learned that is applicable towards your future in dietetics?
- Have you had any clinical experience, for example, consulting with patients or writing in medical charts?
- Name one professor you admire and tell why. Name one professor you do not admire and tell why.
- What innovative change do you see occurring in dietetics?
- How would you describe a dietitian's role?
- What is a diet history, and what does it include?
how would you lead a sanitation class, what would you cover?
- What is the most recent journal article you've read?
- What did you learn from your last job?
- What has been your experience with TPN, tube feeding, acid/base balance?
- Discuss patient focused care.
- You've got a care plan due and another group project; a head supervisor asks you to work on another project. What would you do?
- What would you do if you did not receive an internship appointment?
- What does it mean to be a leader?
- How do you handle a group member who isn't "pulling his or her weight"?
- When you work with a group, what position do you take? Describe how you consider yourself in a group.
- Which group skill (interpersonal) would you need to improve?

Legal and Illegal Questions in Interviews

Inquiry Area	Illegal Questions	Legal Questions
National Origin/ Citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you a US citizen? • Where were you/your parents born? • What is your "native tongue"? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you authorized to work in the US? • What language do you read/speak/write fluently? (This questions is OK only if this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How old are you? • When did you graduate? • What's your birth date? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you over the age of 18?
Marital or Family Status	<p>What's your marital status?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With whom do you live? • Do you plan to have a family? When? • How many kids do you have? • What are your child-care arrangements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? • Would you be able and willing to travel as needed for the job? (This question is OK if it is asked of all applicants for the job.) • Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (This question is OK if it is asked of all applicants for the job.)
Affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What clubs or social organizations do you belong to? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How tall are you? How much do you weigh? (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable <i>unless</i> minimum standards are essential for the safe performance of the job.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as this is part of the job?
Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any disabilities? • Please complete the following medical history. • Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list them and give dates when these occurred. • What was the date of your last physical exam? • How's your family's health? • When did you lose your eyesight? How? • Do you need an accommodation to perform the job? (This question can be asked only after a job offer has been made.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? (This question is OK if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.) • Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions? • As part of the hiring process, after a job offer has been made, you will be required to undergo a medical exam. (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on exam results.)
Arrest Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been arrested? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been convicted of ____? (The crime named should be reasonable related to the performance of the job in question.)
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what branch of the armed services did you serve? • What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

Your turn!

You've sat through most of the interviews and have answered all the recruiter's questions. You know you've made a good impression because you prepared for the interview, and your answers were articulate and decisive. Then the interviewer asks something you didn't anticipate: "Do you have any questions?"

If you don't have any questions prepared and you try to cover your mistake by asking a spur-of-the-moment question, chances are you will have lessened the impact of a successful interview. Some recruiters refuse to hire people who don't ask intelligent questions. Don't ask questions just for the sake of asking questions – make sure it is information you need.

Prepare questions in advance

You should have a list of questions prepared for this crucial part of the interview. Every question you ask should demonstrate your interest and confirm your knowledge of the organization.

You should read publications in the field. You can get information about new products or policies by surfing the employer's web site or by reading general magazines or trade publications. It is appropriate to address some of your questions to what you have read.

Questions not to ask

Not only should you know what questions to ask during the interview, but it is important to know what questions not to ask. You don't want to alienate the interviewer by putting him or her on the defensive. The following areas should generally be avoided:

1. Avoid asking questions that are answered in the literature you received about the program or company or the employment brochure. Interviewers are familiar with their own information and will recognize when you haven't done your homework. If some information isn't clear to you, however, by all means ask for clarification.
2. Don't bring up salary or benefits in the initial interview. The interviewer may choose to bring up the information, but you should not initiate the topic.
3. Avoid asking any personal questions or questions that will put the interviewer on the defensive. This includes questions such as the interview's educational background, marital status, past work experience and so on.
4. Don't ask questions that have already been answered during the interview. If you have prepared a list of questions and some of them have been addressed during the interview, do not repeat them unless you need clarification.

Questions you should ask

Now that you know what you shouldn't ask during the interview, determine what questions you should ask.

1. Ask specific questions about the position. You need to know what duties will be required to see if there is a fit between your interests and skills with the job you seek.
2. Try to find out as much as possible about qualities and skills the interviewer is looking for in job candidates. Once you determine this, you can then explain how your background and capabilities relate to those qualities.
3. Ask questions concerning advancement and promotion paths available to see if it fits your career goals. You may also want to ask about periodic performance evaluations.

4. Ask specific questions about the company training program if that information isn't covered in company literature.
5. Ask questions about location and travel require. If you have limitations, this is the time to find out what is expected.

Questions you may ask in an interview

During the initial interview, ask questions that show you are interested in and knowledgeable about the organization and the position for which you are interviewing. "What's in it for me?" questions (salary, benefits) should be left for later interviews with the organization or until a job offer has been made.

Information about the organization

- What makes your organization different from others?
- How did the organization get where it is today?
- Where does this organization plan to be in 5 years? In 10 years? In 20 years?
- How does the organization plan to get there?
- What is the greatest challenge, from your perspective, that the organization faces in the next year?
- What are the core values of this organization?

Position and infrastructure

- How does the job for which I am interviewing fit in with the mission of the organizing?
- What would a typical day be like in the position for which I am interviewing?
- How does this position relate to others in this department?
- Which departments would I interact with most?

Advancement opportunities

- What is the organization's policy on promotions?
- How is the position for which I am applying evaluated? How often?
- How long should a person plan, on average, to be in a position before being eligible for promotion?
- Does the organization have formal career paths established?
- What is the organization's policy on lateral transfers?
- In your opinion, where would the supervisor for this position intend to be in 1 year? In 5 years?

Job security

- How did the opening for which I am applying occur?
- Where is the person who held the position before the opening now?
- How secure is this position?
- Your organization has recently reorganized. Do you anticipate further changes in the next year? Would they affect the position for which I am applying?

USU Dietetic Internship - Phone Interview Questions – supplement

1. Question in clinical dietetics/medical nutrition therapy: Describe the nutrition assessment process.
2. Situation in administration: You have an employee who is frequently showing up to work late. What would you do?
3. What would you do if you had a preceptor whom you thought was treating you unfairly? (assertive communication)
4. Describe a time when you worked on a team – what was your role and what was the result of the team's efforts?
5. Why are you interested in dietetics as a profession? What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in five years?
6. Why are you interested in applying to the USU Dietetic Internship?
7. Dietitians work in a variety of settings with a wide variety of patients/clients. Does working with any particular group really interest you?
8. Does working with any particular group make you apprehensive and why?
9. Describe a time when you were working towards an impossible deadline. How did you deal with this situation? (stress management strategies)
10. Do you have any questions for me?

Professional development

- Is training provided for the position for which I am interviewing? How is it provided? How long is it provided?
- Are training opportunities available through the organization?
- What is the organization's policy on continuing education through colleges? Professional seminars?
- How does the organization handle days away from work to attend classes or seminars?
- Does the organization support membership and participation in professional organizations?

Mobility

- What is the organization's policy on relocation?
- How often would a person be expected to move in this position?
- Does the organization cover relocation expenses?
- Does the organization assist with the relocation process (finding housing, job assistance for spouse, etc.)?

Benefits (Best to ask after an offer is made)

- What type of benefits program does the organization offer – fixed or cafeteria style?
- Which of the following are available: medical, dental, vision, accidental death/dismemberment, company care or mileage allowance, clothing allowance, athletic/exercise facilities, bonuses, profit sharing, stock options, retirement plans?
- How much does the organization pay for?

Compensation (Best to ask after an offer is made)

- What is the starting salary?
- What is the maximum salary, if any, for this position?
- How are raises awarded? According to tenure? According to merit? Cost of living?
- How often is a person eligible for a raise?
- How often are paydays?

(Adapted from WSU Career Services *Interviewing Packet*)