

Interview Questions – Assistant Professor

Stage 1 – Online/Phone Interview

- Usually, 30 minutes.
- Committee may quickly introduce themselves OR might expect you to have done your research on each of them in advance.
- May or may not ask you for a 10-minute power point presentation on your experience.
- More detailed questions regarding research or teaching depending on the advertised position requirements.

Introduction and Motivation

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself and why you are interested in this position?

Research and Grantsmanship

2. Can you speak to your past research experience relevant to this position keeping in mind that external funding and publications are important for tenure at the university?

3. What will be the major goals of your research program at this university?

Teaching and Recruitment

4. What new courses could you design to teach our graduate and undergraduate students?

5. What do you think are some of the best ways to recruit high school students to our BS program and college students to our MS/PhD programs?

Candidate Question (Must prepare at least 2)

6. If time permits, what questions do you have for us?

Optional

What resources will you need to succeed in this role?

Full Interview (Meeting with the Search Committee)

- This varies a lot and depends on the committee chair.
- It can be conversational or there might be prepared questions.
- The objective is to gauge whether you will be able to meet the tenure requirements.

Research

1. Outline your first USDA/NSF/Federal proposal? Provide three aims? Are they feasible in three years?
2. Outline the primary research question of your first manuscript? What experiments will be needed for it? What resources and how many personnel will you need to achieve the goals?
3. How do you envision incorporating students (graduate, undergraduate), into your research projects?

Teaching

4. How do you assess student performance beyond traditional testing?
5. Have you mentored junior researchers or students working under your supervision? Can you give an example and the approach you took to resolve any challenges you faced?
6. How do you handle differing levels of experience or familiarity among students in the lab, ensuring that all students benefit from the class?

Laboratory

7. How do you incorporate the latest technological advances and tools in your laboratory/teaching instruction?

Community

8. Do you actively participate in professional networks or organizations related to plant science? Any leadership roles?
9. Which Scientific conferences or meetings are you attending routinely? What was the last meeting that you attended, and did you present any of your results in that meeting?

Interview Questions (Graduate Students)

Questions to determine whether a student is interested in, persistent/resilient (won't give up on his/her PhD) and whether he/she will be a pleasant person to interact with and have in the lab. (30-40 Minute interview)

1. Tell us about yourself. What are your likes and dislikes outside of the lab?
2. Describe your project that you are currently involved in/were previously involved in. What was the hypothesis, approach and results if you want to share them. What relevant skills did you learn?
3. What is an area of research or a biological question that excites you the most right now?
4. Why do you want to pursue a PhD and why our lab at ____ University?
5. What are your long-term goals beyond a PhD?
6. What would you consider a successful PhD? At the end of 4 years what should you have achieved to call it successful? What do you think is the role of your advisor during this PhD?
7. Do you have any experience training other students?
8. What do you do when facing challenges in the lab? For Example: Imagine a situation in which you need growth space but the one in your lab has broken down and needs repairs. You need the experiment results for a manuscript/presentation. What will you do?
9. Do you have any questions for us?
10. The two projects we have on offer are _____ and _____ which one are you more interested in?