

## Handling Inappropriate or Discriminatory Questions

If you are troubled by an interview experience, or you experience overt discrimination, please report it immediately to the Office of Career Services while the dialogue is still fresh in your mind. Make notes of the conversation as soon as you can after the interview. If you are faced with an inappropriate question during an interview, you may decide to answer the question as asked without reference to the inappropriateness of the question. Another option is to ask the interviewer to clarify the question so that you can understand how the inquiry relates to your candidacy for the position. Or, you can simply decline to answer the question.

The following questions are likely inappropriate for a job interview:

**X: Are you a U.S. citizen? Which language is your native tongue?**

Interviewers may ask if you can, upon hire, provide proof of legal right to work in the United States. They may ask about language fluency if it is relevant to job performance.

**X: Where did you grow up?**

Interviewers should not inquire about where you live, what type of housing you occupy, or whether you rent.

**X: What year did you graduate from high school?**

Interviewers should avoid questions that may indicate your age.

**X: What does your wife do for a living? Are you planning to have a family? When? Do you have children or child-care responsibilities?**

These questions could be discriminatory, especially if asked just of women. Interviewers may ask if you can work the normal hours of the job, whether you are available for overtime (if overtime is a requirement of the position), and whether you have obligations that would prevent you from business travel.

**X: Are you available for work on Saturdays or Sundays? Will you need personal time for particular religious holidays?**

Interviewers should not ask any questions about religion. If Saturday or Sunday is a required workday, interviewers may ask you if you will have a problem working on those days.

**X: Do you have a visual, speech, or hearing disability?**

Interviewers should avoid questions or comments about an applicant's disability. They should not ask about medical conditions, past hospitalizations, past medical, psychiatric, or psychological treatment, prescription drugs or medications or the number of days you were sick during previous employment. They may ask whether you need reasonable accommodation or are able to perform the job, with or without reasonable accommodation, if you have an obvious disability or when all applicants are asked the same exact question.

**X: Have you ever used illegal drugs?**

The only allowable question relating drug or alcohol use is, "Do you currently use illegal drugs?"

**X: Have you ever been arrested?**

Interviewers should not ask if you have been arrested; they may investigate your criminal record if relevant to a particular position.

### Other resources/articles

<https://www.glassdoor.com/blog/inappropriate-interview-questions/>

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/how-to-answer-inappropriate-interview-questions-2061334>