

Common Interview Questions

Questions that could be asked by the interviewer/recruiter

Personal and Motivational Factors:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What three words best describe you?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What motivates you?
- How do you measure success?
- How do you handle failure?
- Why should I hire you?
- What would you like us to know about you?
- What do you want us to remember about you?
- What separates you from the other candidates?
- How would your friends/teachers/employers describe you?

Skills and Abilities:

- What is your greatest strength/weakness?
- How do you try to strengthen your weakness?
- How would you define analytical skills? Discuss yours.
- Can you give an example where you had to persuade someone to do something?
- Can you give an example where you worked on a team and had to confront/persuade a team member?
- Do you consider yourself a team player, team leader, or independent worker? Explain.
- How would you describe your time management skills?
- How do you keep track of multiple projects so that you will meet deadlines?
- How would you describe your communication skills?
- How would you describe your problem solving skills?
- Tell me about a time when you discovered a problem and had to choose one solution over another one?
- Give me an example when someone confronted you in front of others. How did you respond? What did you learn from that situation?
- Describe your leadership style.
- How would you handle difficult people?
- What frustrates you?

Career Goals and Objectives:

- What are your career goals? How have you 'mapped' out your career path?
- If you could learn one thing from your co-op experience, what would you want it to be?
- Why do you want to co-op?

Extracurricular Activities and College Experiences:

- How do you spend your spare time?
- What personal accomplishment has given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- If you wish you could rewind time, what would you do differently in your past?
- What was your biggest success?
- Explain your duties as the (president, secretary, publicity/recruitment chair, etc.), of this organization (i.e. fraternity/sorority/band/professional organization, etc.)?
- What challenges did you face in this position?
- What has been your best/worst experience in college? Why?

Academic Programs and Achievements:

- Why did you decide to come to Northwestern University?
- Why did you decide to major in your chosen field of engineering (i.e. chemical, industrial, mechanical, etc.)?
- What high school/college course(s) did you like the most/least? Why?
- Explain your grade performance levels.
- Do you think your previous quarter grades are a good indication of your academic abilities? Explain.
- What courses are you currently taking? Identify a few major concepts/theories you have learned so far.

Work Experience

- Explain your duties while working at _____?
- Describe your work environment? Did you like it? What would you change if given the opportunity?

Knowledge of Position and Company/Organization:

- In what two ways do you feel you can contribute to this company as a co-op?
- If you could construct your own co-op position, what factors would you include?
- What type of work environment do you like?

Questions that could be asked by the interviewee (the student)

Industry/Company Information

- What makes your company different from its competitors?
- How would you describe the company's culture and management style?
- What are the company's strengths and weaknesses? (Compared to your competition).
- What characteristics does a successful person have at your company?
- Why did you choose to work for this company?
- What do you like most/least about it?
- Does the company place focus on teamwork or individual accomplishments?
- Could you briefly explain your organizational structure?

Department Information

- How many people are in this department and what are their roles?
- What are the lines of communication in the company/department?
- How important does the other departments/upper managements consider the function of this department?
- What is the organization's plan for the next 3-5 years, and how does this department fit in?
- How does this department fit in the company's organizational structure?
- Describe the work environment.

Co-op Position Information

- Describe the typical first co-op assignment(s)
- How do the co-op assignments typically progress as I return to the company over the next three years?
- What are your expectations of the incoming co-op?
- What qualities do you look for in your new hires?
- Who will be my supervisor? Where does his/her position fit in the organizational structure?
- How would you describe my supervisor's management and leadership styles?
- Does your co-op program include a mentor component?
- What type of support system is available for co-op students?
- How are co-op students evaluated, outside of the NU Co-op Office Evaluation Process?
- Can you describe the training given to new co-ops?
- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this co-op?
- What are some skills and abilities necessary for a co-op to succeed in this position?
- How much opportunity is there to see the end result of my efforts?
- Is there an opportunity to rotate co-op terms into different departments/locations?