

CAA Career Services

Sample Interview Questions

Openers:

- Why did you decide to apply for this position? What was it about the position that interested you most?
- What in particular captured your attention regarding this opportunity?
- Tell us about yourself.

Philosophy:

- Please share what sparked your initial interest in archives and how have you pursued this interest.
- Is there a philosophy, model, or mentor that has guided your work as an archivist?
- What is important to you in a position?
- What part of your past work are you most proud of or has given you the most satisfaction?
- What efforts have you made or been involved with to foster multicultural understanding or cultural competence?
- How does a commitment to diversity apply to this position?
- How do you see this position contributing to the mission of _____?
- How do you see this position fitting into the larger company/university/institution?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges facing this position?

Collegiality:

- This position requires collaborating with colleagues. Please describe a situation or project you worked on that required collaboration and the role you took in that collaboration.
- How do you collaborate with colleagues on a day-to-day basis?
- Would you please talk about an experience you had with a significant project that required teamwork and collaboration? What went well? What was frustrating?
- Can you please describe your communication style?
- What would your colleagues identify as your strengths and weaknesses?
- Describe your experience working with colleagues who have differing expertise on a project? What do you see as effective communication in that situation?
- What kind of work environment is most productive and comfortable for you? How do you handle distractions, interruptions, or changes in priorities?

- How do you set priorities when you have competing projects and limited time?
- Give us an example of how you would explain a complicated procedure to someone new to the situation or did not share your professional understanding?

Skills:

- Please tell us your experience in developing policies and procedures relating to appraisal, accessioning, records transfer, digital records, compliance, etc.
- Describe a significant processing project you have completed. What was the most and least enjoyable? Did the project have a time frame for completion and did you meet that deadline?
- What factors do you consider to determine the priority for processing a collection?
- Please describe your experience with digital records.
- Please describe your experience with records management.
- Discuss your experience with outreach relating to archives.
- Describe your experience with donors and their records/collections.
- Can you please describe your experience with primary source teaching? What would a successful instruction session look like for archives/special collections?
- This position requires attention to detail while working on multiple projects at the same time. Can you describe how you would keep track of progress and set priorities?
- Please describe your area of research and ideas you have for professional publication in that area.
- Please describe your experience with supervising others? What aspect of supervision do you find most difficult?
- How would you handle a performance problem with an employee under your supervision?
- Describe a situation in which you had to enforce a rule or policy with a researcher/faculty member/donor/colleague who was asking for special treatment or exemption.
- How do you go about delegating work/tasks to those you supervise?
- Please describe your experience in a corporate/academic/museum/government setting? If this is a new setting for you, please describe how your past experience would be relevant.

Aptitude:

- What about the archival profession keeps you engaged and interested?
- Tell us about a great idea you witnessed in the archival world lately and what impressed you about it.
- Describe a way you have improved the organization of a system in your current position.
- How do you go about learning a new skill?

- What do you think you need to learn or augment in order to be effective in this position?
How will you go about this?

Technical questions

- Please explain your experience with _____ software/platform?
- Please describe a project you worked on that used _____ software/platform? What were the pros and cons of using _____ software/platform? How did you handle technical problems that arose?
- Can you give an example of when you had to learn a new piece of technology and how you went about it?

Closers:

- Do you have any questions for us? Is there anything you'd wished we'd asked that you'd like to answer now?
- We've heard your presentation, and based on the questions asked - or not asked of you - in the group setting, is there anything you'd like to clarify or elaborate on for us?
- What do you see as the biggest difficulty in this job? How would you minimize it?
- What do you see as the biggest opportunity in this job?
- How does this position fit into your career plans?
- What skills or characteristics do you have that you feel would be especially useful if you were the successful candidate for this position?