



Government
of Canada

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Canada

THE 50 – 30 CHALLENGE

YOUR DIVERSITY ADVANTAGE



Appropriate & Inappropriate Interview Questions

Differences between inappropriate and discriminatory:

According to Canadian Human Rights Act, employers are prohibited from asking questions that might result in discrimination in hiring (Skrzypinski, 2019). Not only is this information irrelevant, but it can unconsciously create biases in evaluation of job candidates. The exact rules may differ provincially and territorially, and exemptions may exist, please check with your location for more information.

See the chart below for examples of appropriate and inappropriate interview questions related to protected grounds.

| Category | Appropriate | Inappropriate |
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| Birthplace, ancestry, ethnicity, place of origin | Ensuring candidate is legally entitled to work in Canada (see citizenship). Asking which language(s) they read, speak and/or write fluently in, if this is relevant to the role. | Any other inquiries, particularly those that do not pertain to the job. It is not relevant where someone was born (see citizenship), where they are from, where their family is from, etc. |
| Sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, etc. (SOGIESC). | Asking candidates what pronouns they use, ensuring it's clear a response is voluntary. For example, "Please introduce your name and feel free to include your pronouns if you feel comfortable sharing". | Any inquiries which elicit information about the candidates' identity. Any personal information such as legal/chosen name that is pertinent to an employee pension, insurance, payroll, or other service can be discussed privately post-interview with the appropriate person. |
| Marital status, family status. | An applicant may be asked to identify their relationship to another employee if the employer has an anti-nepotism policy regarding spouses, children, parents, partners in the workplace. A candidate can be asked if they're willing to relocate, travel and/or work overtime as necessary <i>if</i> all candidates are asked equally and it's relevant to the role. | All other inquiries. Any personal information that is pertinent to an employee pension, insurance, or other program can be discussed privately post-interview with the appropriate person or union representative. |

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| Age | “Are you at least 18/21 years of age and under 64?” | All other inquiries. |
| Race, skin colour | None. | All inquiries or comments that would elicit information about race and/or skin colour. |
| Religion, creed, spirituality | None. | Any accommodation required for religious or spiritual reasons may be discussed privately post-interview if the candidate requests it. |
| Disability status, ability | Jobs requiring specific physical tasks such as heavy lifting or operating machinery are permitted to clarify with candidates whether they are aware of these requirements. Such inquiries should be done with every candidate and not based on assumptions about a candidate’s physical ability. E.g., “Are you aware this position requires regular heavy lifting of objects over 50lbs and the ability to stand for at least 1 hour? If you would like to know more, you can discuss this privately with me post-interview.” “Are you a licensed driver?” if the job requires the operation of a motor vehicle. | Any inquiries about health or ability which are not directly related to the applicant’s ability to perform an essential duty. Any accommodation required for religious or spiritual reasons may be discussed privately post-interview if the candidate requests it. |
| Citizenship status | As mentioned, you may ask, “Are you legally entitled to work in Canada?” You may also inform candidates if preference is given to Canadian citizens. | All other inquiries (see birthplace, ancestry, ethnicity, place or origin). Inquiries which are pertinent to an employee pension, insurance, or other program can be discussed privately post-interview with the appropriate person or union representative. |

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| Education | Inquiries designed to determine the merits of an applicant's advertised qualifications and skills. | Inquiries or comments which state explicitly or implicitly that international institutions and qualifications are less reliable or trustworthy than Canadian ones. It is the responsibility of the hiring team to ask the right questions that elicit evidence of competency regardless of institution or educational background. |
| Record of offenses | Inquiries, such as a criminal record check, to determine whether an applicant is bondable are acceptable if this is a genuine and reasonable qualification of the job. | Inquiries about record of offenses which are not job-related. For example, if the position requires handling money, it would be acceptable to ask if a candidate has ever been convicted of financial crimes such as fraud, theft, etc. Asking if a candidate has ever been arrested. |