

Sample interview questions for OHSU Core Competencies

The OHSU core competency definitions are listed below. Following each competency are sample questions which can be posed to applicants to assess the degree to which they have internalized the competency into their approach to work. As you present the questions, consider to what degree their response provides you with illustrations that match the definition.

The core competencies are behaviors that can be reinforced and encouraged but very difficult to “train”. If a candidate does not demonstrate evidence from prior experience, it is unlikely they will do so as an employee of OHSU. Screening in candidates who do demonstrate a level of proficiency with the core competencies suggests a greater likelihood of success at OHSU.

1. Accountability: Ability to establish mutual agreements that result in clear responsibility, taking personal action to accomplish an agreed result and assuming personal responsibility for the results of behavior and actions. Makes sound decisions. Self-starter who accomplishes performance objectives with little supervisory intervention. When mistakes occur, focuses on finding solution rather than placing blame. Adheres to work schedule, deadlines and guidelines on attendance and punctuality.

Q: Describe a situation where you made a decision that you felt was solid: What was the issue, how did you go about making the decision, and what was the result of the decision?
Q: Think of a work situation when it wasn't clear who was responsible for a specific task/action that needed to be completed. What was the situation and what did you do?
Q: In your past position, describe how you approached your daily work responsibilities (once you were past your orientation period). What was your routine relationship with your supervisor?
Q: We all make mistakes in our work. Think of a time when you made a mistake. What was the situation and what did you do?
Q: Every position has deadlines. Describe a situation when you were having difficulty meeting a due date. What was the situation and what did you do?

2. Integrity: Actions are consistent with ethical values. Honest in communication and actions. Ensures personal actions comply with the OHSU Code of Conduct, OHSU policies and procedures, and applicable rules, regulations and laws. Follows the reporting process in the Code of Conduct to raise concerns or report potential compliance problems. Uses discretion in dealing with confidential/sensitive information and shares only with those who have a legitimate need to know and have the authority to access such information. Makes decisions in an ethical manner.

Q: OHSU has defined code of conduct, policies and procedures which applies to all employees. Describe a time when there was a policy or procedure that you didn't agree with. What was the policy and how did you deal with your disagreement?
Q: Confidentiality is essential at OHSU. Please describe a work situation where you have been expected to know/have access to sensitive information. What was most challenging for you to maintain confidentiality?
Q: Describe a decision you had to make that tested your values. What was the issue? What values did you feel were being tested? How did you resolve the personal conflict?

3. Diversity: Honors the uniqueness of each individual, challenges stereotypes and promotes sensitivity and inclusion. Understands and utilizes cross cultural perspectives to strengthen quality of interaction with others. Treats others with fairness, dignity and respect regardless of cultural diversity. Able to recognize and correct own attitude and actions when forming stereotypes about other individuals. Intervenes in an appropriate manner when others are engaged in behaviors that show cultural insensitivity.

Q: Describe a situation where the work setting was diverse. What made it diverse? What kind of impact did the diversity have in the environment? What lessons did you learn from this experience?

Q: How do you define diversity, and what value do you think diversity adds to the workplace?

Q: Have you ever intervened in a situation where you observed discriminatory remarks or treatment in the workplace? Please explain. If not, how would you respond if you overheard a joke that singled out individuals based on race, gender, sexual orientation, etc?

Q: Have you ever had any diversity training or other training or experiences that have given you an understanding of different cultural perspectives?

4. Respect: Demonstrates consideration and appreciation for colleagues, clients and customers.

Honors the uniqueness of each individual and values the contribution of others. Makes every effort to demonstrate courtesy to colleagues and customers. Is direct in sharing concerns with only individuals who are involved. Does not speak disrespectfully of others. Recognizes the importance of getting along well with colleagues, clients and customers.

Q: What are the three most important factors that make you an effective, valued coworker in your current job? What would your supervisor say are the three most important factors?

Q: Describe a conflict you were involved with at work. How did you resolve the conflict? What happened next with the co-worker or team?

Q: Tell me about a time when you worked with a coworker who became a friend. What did you do to ensure that the friendship bore positive results for your company?

Q: When you have entered a new workplace in the past, describe how you have gone about meeting and developing relationships with your new coworkers, supervisors, and reporting staff. (if applicable)

5. Service Orientation: Seeks opportunities to improve work and work environment to better meet the needs of internal and external customers.

Participates in establishing and monitoring service standards. Utilizes standards to evaluate self and peer performance. Adaptable and initiates changes to create on-going improvement at OHSU. Demonstrates flexibility and a willingness to change for continual improvement

Q: In your past position, who were your customers? How did you learn what they expected of you and how well you were meeting those expectations?

Q: Describe a time when customer needs required you to change the way you did your work. What was the change and how did you respond?

Q: Describe a situation where you had an internal customer who was not satisfied with your work/services. What was the issue and what did you do?

Q: What experiences do you have in setting and monitoring customer service standards for your work. What were the standards and how did you monitor them?

Q: (for patient care positions) Tell me about a time when you felt your compassion really made a difference in the experience of one of your patients.

Q: (for patient care positions) Describe a situation in which the patient's preferences required you to respond in a way that was contrary to established policy.

Q: (for patient care positions) Describe a time when one of your patients experienced terrible service. What did you do to make things better?

6. Teamwork & Collaboration: Works cooperatively and productively with others to achieve shared goals.

Finds common ground, gets and gives cooperation. Approaches work with a "can do" attitude. Shares success with others. Resolves conflict directly and quickly.

Q: Give an example of a successful project you were part of. What was your role? Why was the project

successful?
Q: Describe two situations from your past work experience in which you have determined a team was the best potential solution to a problem, a needed process improvement, or a planned change. How did each work out?
Q: What actions and support, in your experience, make a team function successfully?
Q: Give me an example of a time when your work group or department worked especially well with another work group or department to accomplish a goal.
Q: Have you been a member of a team that struggled or failed to accomplish its goal? If so, what assessment did you make of the reasons for the failure?

7. Communication: Demonstrates the ability to convey thoughts and ideas as well as understand others' perspectives. Listens to understand and respects the views of others. Actively seeks out information related to individual responsibilities and OHSU. Remains focused on the issue in conflict situations and works directly with others involved to resolve disagreements constructively. Is able to give and receive feedback constructively.

Q: Tell me about a time when you created agreement and shared purpose from a situation in which all parties originally differed in opinion, approach, and objectives.
Q: Tell me about a time when you had to work closely with a coworker whom you disliked or with whom you had trouble working. What did you do to make the relationship work so you could succeed for your company?
Q: Tell me about a time when you disagreed with the actions or decisions of your manager or supervisor. How did you approach the situation? Was the situation resolved to your satisfaction or did nothing change?

Additional Leadership core competencies

8. Systems Thinking: Ability to see and understand whole systems and how elements within systems relate. Works cooperatively with others to use appropriate systems strengths, knowledge and cooperation to improve performance. Challenges others to consider the impact of their actions on areas outside immediate work group. Is inclusive and considers the impact of decisions and actions on others. Works to maintain alignment of personal area of responsibility to the larger organization. Adapts and modifies actions and redirects work of team to meet evolving system needs.

Q: As a leader within an organization, you must often build support for goals and projects from people who do not report to you and over whom you have no authority. Tell me about a situation in which you demonstrated that you can build the needed support.
Q: Describe a problem situation where the root cause was not obvious. What was the situation and what analysis methods did you use to solve the problem?

9. Managing Resources: Consistently operates area of responsibility to meet or exceed financial expectations and operating plans, effectively prioritizes use of available resources to accomplish goals. Understands OHSU's financial systems and uses them effectively. Demonstrates the financial acumen for managing budgets aggressively. Meets goals within financial parameters, effectively manages resources. Effectively manages vendor relationships to maximize contributions.

Q: Describe the size and scope of budgets for which you have been responsible. How did you manage situation when the budgets were over spent?
Q: Describe a situation where you had more needs than resources to finance them. What did you do?
Q: Describe the methods you used in your previous role to prioritize projects and expenses.

10. Change Leader: Ability to act and provide leadership throughout the change process. Engages employees in the entire process and develops commitment for sustaining change. Is realistic, honest and direct about the challenges, threats inherent in any change. Gives people realistic, balanced information throughout a change. Encourages innovation in others. Coaches others to support their increased resiliency and capacity for change. Provides employees with necessary support resources. Able to turn vision into a workable plan and enlist others involvement toward a common goal. Charts a clear direction for the department.

Q: Describe a controversial change which you were expected to implement with your team. How did you approach it and what happened?
Q: Thinking of organizational changes you have been involved in – how have employees within your team responded to the changes. What role did they have in the change?
Q: Describe a change that you have initiated. What was the change and how did you manage it? What was the outcome?

11. Developing Organizational Talent: Ability to recruit, retain and develop high performing individuals aligned with OHSU’s goals and values. Selects employees who demonstrate understanding of organizational culture and job-specific capabilities and provides continuous feedback, encouragement and coaching to employees. Effectively addresses and redirects those who are not meeting performance expectations. Ensures all employees have development plans that increase their effectiveness and/or prepare them for future opportunities and expanded roles. Facilitates meaningful recognition for team and individual accomplishments.

Q: Describe the process you use to select employees. How do you approach orienting new employees? Describe a recent new hire situation and how you worked with the new employee.
Q: Tell me about the last major assignment that you delegated and why you delegated? How did you delegate it and what was the outcome?
Q: How do you recognize contributions others make? Give us a specific example.
Q: Describe a situation where you had an employee who was not meeting performance expectations. What did you do and what was the outcome?
Q: How do you maintain a “pulse” of your team?