

Interview questions

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1 Interview Questions

Most of these questions come from Joint Math Meeting interviews and phone/skype interviews. Most were for visiting positions or tenure track positions at liberal arts schools though a few were for research positions.

1. Why are you interested in working at a liberal arts school generally? Why are you interested in working at *University X* specifically?
2. What contributions would you bring to this position and university?
3. What is your single greatest research contribution to date?
4. No one else at this university is a topologist. Do you think your research is sustainable without having colleagues in the department to talk with?
5. What topic in the calculus sequence do you think is a weakness for you? What topic do you think you teach better than most?
6. Which calculus books have you taught from? If there is more than one: compare and contrast their relative merits. If there is only one: what do you like and dislike about it?
7. What classes could you teach? Which classes would be most excited about teaching?
8. What sort of outreach projects do you want to participate in/develop while at *University X*? (this was for a 2-year visiting position so they were not looking for long-term plans)
9. Tell me a story about teaching.
10. How do you address diversity (broadly defined, including first-generation college students) inside and outside of the classroom?
11. (Specifically for liberal arts universities) Your educational experience is primarily at research institutions. Why is that, if you are interested in liberal arts education?
12. (Specifically for liberal arts school) What is the last non-math book you read?
13. (For a school in an isolated or otherwise “less than desirable” location): If you would genuinely be willing to/interested in moving to that location, be prepared to convince the interviewer(s) of that.
14. How does *specific, personal background X* inform your teaching perspective? (In my case this background was my undergraduate psychology double major. But be prepared for thoughtful comments about any non-traditional teaching experiences you have had)

15. In fact, be prepared to comment on any unique characteristic of your application including department service, gaps in schedule, time abroad, extracurriculars, etc.
16. What are your office hours like?
17. What does a typical day in your class look like?
18. How do you assess your effectiveness as a teacher?
19. What sort of activities do you think make good group work activities?
20. Tell us something that you tried in a class that didn't work well. How did you respond?
21. On your teaching statement/CV/research statement, you stated X. Could you elaborate on X?
22. How do you see your work connecting with our department?
23. You tend to work in collaborations, to what extent do you have an independent research program?
24. What is your experience in applying for grants? Outline your plans for future grant applications for the next couple of years.
25. What specific projects do you have in mind for undergrad/grad research problems.
26. Do you have any questions for me/us? (You should have questions.)

2 Questionable questions

1. Graph a function on a TI-84 calculator. Here, use this calculator.
2. So, what did you think of our school's motto? (Interviewee was expected to be familiar with school motto.)
3. So, are you married? What's your spouse do?
4. So, we see you have a ring on your finger. Do you want to tell us what we'd be getting into if we made you an offer? (Actual question posed to female candidate. This was several years ago.)

3 UK Questions

1. What papers would you submit to the next REF?
2. Describe a difficult (teaching, general work) situation and how you handled it.
3. What admin and leadership experience do you have?
4. How would you make the case for funding pure mathematics to a government minister?