Common Interview Questions

General

- What attracted you to this position?
- Why did you choose this field of work?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you know about this organization? What interests you about this organization?
- What do you know about this particular job?
- What can you bring to our organization?
- How will working here help you to reach your goals?
- You have so little substantive experience relative to our work; how do you know that this field is right for you?

Graduate School of Foreign Service-related

- Why did you choose the School of Foreign Service?
- Why are you pursuing a master's degree in your specific program, e.g. Foreign Service, Arab Studies, etc.?
- If you are interested in the private sector, why didn't you choose an MBA?
- How does your degree differ from an MBA?
- Tell me about your experiences in the foreign policy, security studies (etc.) field of study.
- What courses did you enjoy the most? Least? Why? What courses did you find most difficult?
- What have you gained from your CPASS, CLAS (etc.) education?
- Tell me about your practicum. How did you choose the topic? What is your methodology? What software have you used?
- What are your plans when you finish graduate school?
- Where do you see yourself after graduate school? ... in 5 years? ... in 10 years?
- How has your graduate program contributed to your preparation for your career transition?

Personality Traits

- What strengths do you bring to this position?
- What do you see as your greatest strength?
- What is your biggest weakness?
- What would your colleagues/boss say if I were to call her for a reference?
- When have you assumed positions of leadership?
- What kind of leader are you?
- What motivates you?
- Are you an independent worker or more of a team player?
- Use three adjectives to describe your personality.
- Use three adjectives to describe your work habits.
- How do you think a colleague who knows you well would describe you?
- How would a previous boss describe you?
Sample Behavioral

- Tell me about a time that a project you were managing experienced problems and how you dealt with the challenges.
- Tell me about one of your greatest successes.
- What would your proudest accomplishment be if you came to work here?
- What is one of the toughest problems you’ve ever had to solve or decisions you’ve ever had to make? Why was it difficult? How did you solve it?
- What have you done when a group project started going awry?
- If you had to manage a totally diverse work group, what would your strategy be?
- Give an example of a time you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get the job done.
- Tell about an unpopular decision you made. How long did it take to make the decision? Why did the decision arise? How do you think you handled it?
- Tell me about a time when you “bent” the rules. When is it okay to do so?
- Describe the last mistake you made on the job.
- Have you ever dealt with an employee morale problem? How did you address it?

In the Future?

- How has your approach to your job changed in the last year?
- How have you changed your management style (in the past year)?
- If you came to work for us, who would you bring with you?
- Describe a typical day at your current job and how that might apply in a new organization.
- What would make you accept a counteroffer from your organization?

Miscellaneous

- Why should I hire you?**** (This is a critical question; do not hesitate when answering.)
- Why did you leave your last job?
- What aspects of your previous job did you like? Dislike?
- What have you read? Are you a member of one of the professional associations that covers our field?
- Your resume reflects a series of fairly short-term jobs. Can you explain?
- Do you have any questions for me?
- Is there anything else you would like to talk about?
- What do you hope to get from this internship/job?
- What do you want to learn in this job?

Questions to Ask Interviewers

- What attracted you to your current position?
- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- What are the most important characteristics someone in this position should have?
- What do you expect from your staff?
- What is your management style?
- What opportunities are available for professional development?
- Why are you hiring for this position?
- What is the timeline for hiring?
- When can I expect to hear from you?