

Interview Questions for Interior Designers

Questions to determine your fit with the firm

What do you know about our company? (I want to hire candidates who are sincerely interested in working for our firm. It's a big plus if they've put in the effort to look up our web site to find out what type of projects we do.)

How did you find out about us? (This helps us target our future recruiting efforts.)

Why are you interested in working for our firm?

What do you expect from us as a company?

Are you interested in working for a large firm or do you prefer a small firm?

Are you interested in summer or long term employment? (We want to assure that the time invested in employee training will provide a sufficient return.)

Do you like to have fun? (We have a lot of stress and pressure from deadlines and budgets. I want to be sure that a person works hard but also has a venue to let off steam.)

How do you feel about relocating for the internships (summer) in order to complete an internship at our institution? (We ask this question because we don't provide for housing. It is the intern's responsibility to find housing and relocate. Sometimes students just don't think about the whole picture of relocating for 10-12 weeks.)

Why should we hire you? What do you think will be your major contributions to our firm?

Questions to identify your work style and problem solving abilities

Describe your work style. (We want to hire self-starters, people who can work on a team, who aren't afraid to ask questions, etc. Hiring decisions are based more on how we think the candidate will fit in with our company culture, than on actual experience.)

Please give an example of an assignment you were asked to perform that was outside of your knowledge/comfort level. What steps did you take to perform the task?

What is your design approach and which tool(s) do you find most effective?

How do you handle challenges? (How a person handles a challenge tells me how they are going to work with the group and under pressure.)

Describe a time within a project that something went wrong. How did this get resolved and what did you learn from it?

Please describe a situation where you had to work with a difficult student or professor. What made them hard to work with and how did you work through this challenge?

Being a successful student requires the ability to quickly adjust to change--new classes and instructors, new assignments and projects, new dorms or apartments, etc. Describe how you have learned to deal with all these changes and give an example of a recent change you had to adapt to quickly.

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Questions to identify your professional commitment and goals

Tell me about your future plans?

What are some of your professional goals?

Tell us about who you are as a person. (We need to know not just are you a competent designer but will we LIKE to work with you every day!)

What are your short and long term goals? (We want to know if you plan to pursue licensure, obtain a master's degree and advance professionally. We want to know overall drive to work & grow in the business.)

Have you been an active participant in student professional organizations?

What do you feel are the most important attributes for an interior designer?

What do you feel your strengths are? (Space planning, grasping the "big picture, attention to the details, construction knowledge?)

Design is a dynamic and every changing field. What steps do you take to keep yourself informed of current trends?

Questions to determine your experience, knowledge and interests

Tell us about a specific project included in your portfolio.

What did you learn from your internships?

Describe sequences you would use to resolve design problems?

What knowledge do you have of products and sources for interior design?

Are you familiar with green practices in architecture and the USGBC LEED guidelines for sustainable design?

Are you familiar with the resources that we access for designing with protection of life, health, safety, and welfare of occupants?

What, if any, construction experience do you have?

Have you prepared a purchase order, communicated with a vendor or visited a workroom?

Are you familiar with the world of sources and craftspeople that provide the components of our design work?

Tell me about specific projects that you worked on during your internship. What was your involvement in the project?

Are you "detail" or "big picture" oriented? Of the projects you have discussed, which one was the most challenging experience and why?

Have you worked on any group projects in school or in the workforce? Tell us how you interacted with the individuals in the group and how you contributed toward the goal(s) of the project.

Questions to determine your professional interests

What is your inspiration and why did you get into this field?

What types of projects do you want to work on? (commercial, residential, other?)

Are you interested in corporate or residential design? Why this

Interview Questions for Interior Designers

preference?

What is your design niche?

What is your understanding of how interior architecture and exterior architecture complete the project design?

Based on your professional/educational experiences, what expectations do you have for your first six months of employment?

Describe one of your most enjoyable projects. (This helps me see what excites them and how they like/prefer to work. I want to be sure that the person hired really enjoys what they are doing.)

Questions to determine technical abilities

On a scale from 1-5 with 5 being the highest, how would you rank your computer skills in: AutoCAD, 3D Programs (Viz, Max, Accurender, Sketch-up, Rev-it, PhotoShop or In-Design) and PowerPoint.
Suggestion: brag about your AutoCAD skills if you have them.

How have you used excel, word, outlook?

I know you have a familiarity with CAD, but how extensive has your hand drafting experience been?

Questions relating to communication and client relations

What are the most important questions to ask a client to complete a design project?

Describe the strengths you would use to relate to Architects, Engineers, vendors, contractors and clients?

Questions to learn about your academic preparation

What sets your ISU education apart from other design school programs?

Describe the most interesting or challenging class you have taken. What was it about this course that intrigued you?

Other suggestions from interior design professionals

"I ask questions to determine their ability to communicate on a topic they may have no prior knowledge about. (It tells me their willingness and ability to talk to a total stranger about business issues, as a professional. This ability is paramount when interviewing clients to determine their needs.)

Do you have questions for us regarding the position or our firm?

Focus mostly on what YOU can do for the company - and less on company benefits, compensation, vacation time, etc. You have to make them WANT you FIRST!

Be prepared to talk about money. Have an idea of what salary you would expect to receive.

NOTE: These questions were submitted by design professionals who interview and hire interior designers on a regular basis.