

Commonly Asked Interview Questions in LIS

1. Why did you decide to enter the field of library and information science? OR What motivated you to seek a library degree?
2. What kind of position are you looking for when you graduate?
3. Why did you decide to apply for this position?
4. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
5. List three of your most important/proudest accomplishments.
6. What kind of work environment do you prefer?
7. What motivates you? ALSO Have you used these motivators with others?
8. How are you qualified for this job? OR What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be a success at this job?
9. What supervisory experience have you had?
10. How would you characterize your supervisory style?
11. What would you do about implementing the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act (or some other new policy) in our library, and how would you prioritize this among your other duties?
12. The person in this position needs to be innovative and proactive. Can you describe some things you have done to demonstrate these qualities?
13. How would you rate your communication skills and what have you done to improve them?
14. What do you feel is the place of bibliographic instruction in the library? Have you ever taught in a classroom setting? Would you be comfortable teaching BI courses?
15. What else besides your school and job experience qualifies you for this job?
16. What is your experience with collection development?
17. What experience do you have dealing with academic scholars?
18. What is your experience with automated systems and with computers in general?
19. What have you read lately, and what are you reading now?
20. While this position involves some specific skills (language, computer, cataloging, etc.), it is more of a generalist position. How do you feel that your background fits into this?
21. What are the personal characteristics and qualities that you would bring to this position that would be particularly helpful in fulfilling the responsibilities of this position?
22. Why did you choose X University for your graduate education in library and information science?
23. Tell us about yourself. ALSO Tell me about yourself -- why did you choose this type of work?
24. Tell us about X University's online catalog.
25. What professional groups are you a member of, and how active have you been in those groups?
26. You have just had a short tour of this library. Did any aspect or anything you saw or heard about this library surprise you? Would you change anything about this library?

27. Why do you think more students are going into public services than technical services?
28. Tell us about your experience with online searching.
29. How do you work in groups, and what experience have you had working in groups?
30. What appeals to you about this position?
31. Why do you want to move to this area?
32. How do you feel about providing general reference services for undergraduates or for high school or junior high school students?
33. What are some aspects of your present position that you like?
34. What are some aspects of your present position that you dislike?
35. What do you see yourself doing five or ten years from now? OR Where do you see yourself going from here?
36. What is your cataloging experience?
37. What do you think a reference librarian's duties should be?
38. Tell us about your subject background and about your coursework outside of library science.
39. How will your other experiences outside of librarianship aid you in this position?
40. What is your opinion of X University's approach to holistic librarianship? How well is the system functioning?
41. How are government documents handled at X University?
42. What is your interlibrary loan experience?
43. What experience have you had using the Internet?
44. Do you have the skills necessary to create and maintain our WWW home pages?
45. What do you see as the future of the Internet as a reference tool?
46. How will libraries mesh use of print and electronic resources?
47. What do you see as the budget implications of increasing use of electronic resources in libraries?
48. Can you install software on computers and perform basic maintenance on them?
49. What courses (college/graduate school) did you find most satisfying? Least satisfying? Why?
50. What would you say you learned from your college/graduate school experiences that you see being carried over to your life today?
51. Do you plan to continue your education?
52. What kind of people do you like to work with?
53. What kind of people do you find it most difficult to work with? What do you do to improve the situation?
54. Do you prefer working alone or in groups?
55. Starting with your last job, would you tell me about some of your achievements that were recognized by your superiors?
56. What are some things you would like to avoid in a job? Why?
57. What are some of the things on your jobs that you feel you have done particularly well?
58. What does success mean to you? How do you judge it?
59. What are some of the things about your last job that you found difficult to do?

60. What are some of the problems you encounter in doing your job? Which one frustrates you the most? What do you usually do about it?
61. How has your present job developed you to take on even greater responsibilities?
62. What do you have going for you that might make you successful in such a job?
63. Who or what in your life would you say influenced you most with regard to your career objectives?
64. What would you say there is about you that has accounted for your fine progress to date?
65. What traits or qualities do you feel could be strengthened or improved?
66. What motivates you to put forth your best effort?
67. What kinds of things do you feel most confident in doing? Somewhat less confident in doing?
68. What are some of the things you are either doing now or have thought about doing that are self-development activities?
69. Tell me about a time when you had work problems or stresses that were difficult for you.
70. Customers frequently create a great deal of pressure. What has been your experience in this area?
71. What types of pressures do you experience on your current job? How do you cope with these pressures?
72. Describe a time when you were under pressure to make a decision. Did you react immediately or take time in deciding what to do?
73. What types of things make you angry? How do you react?
74. How do you react when you see co-workers disagreeing? Do you become involved or hold back?
75. Do you prefer to have a job in which you have well laid out tasks and responsibilities, or one in which your work changes on a frequent basis?
76. In your current position what types of decisions do you make without consulting your immediate supervisor?
77. What types of experiences have you had in dealing with difficult customers?
78. Describe a problem person you have had to deal with. What did you say or do?
79. What have been your experiences in dealing with the general public? When have people really tried your patience?
80. What important goals have you set in the past, and how successful have you been in working toward their accomplishment?
81. Do you do personal planning? If so, what are your goals?
82. What things give you the greatest satisfaction?
83. How would you describe yourself?
84. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our department?
85. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
86. Describe your most rewarding experience.
87. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?

88. What do you know about our library? University? Community? Company?
89. You mentioned you enjoyed your last job. What did you enjoy most? Least?
90. Why do you think this library should hire you?
91. What will your last supervisor tell me are your two weakest areas?
92. If you were hiring someone for this job, what qualities would you look for?
93. How do you feel about your ability to write, spell, and communicate? What kind of feedback have you received about your writing ability?
94. Describe your experience in creating documents, proposals, research findings, or any other form of written copy.
95. What does the term two-way communication mean to you? When have you successfully used two-way communication?
96. Some people get to know strangers quickly; while others prefer to take their time letting people get to know them. Describe how you entered relationships when you were "new" on a job.
97. Some people have the ability to "step into another's shoes." When has this skill been required of you?
98. How did you organize your work in your last position? What happened to your plan when emergencies came up?
99. Describe how you determined your priorities on your last job.
100. Describe how you schedule your time on an unusually hectic day. Give a specific example.
101. Are you a person who likes to "try new things," or "stay with regular routines"? Give an example.
102. What is your philosophy of reference?
103. What are your 3 (or 5) favourite reference books?

[Common Mistakes - Interview Tips](#)

All that hard work sending out resumes has finally paid off and you've been called in for a face-to-face job interview.

Congratulations!

This is an important step in your job search. It's also your only chance to make a lasting first impression.

On the day of your interview, sweating palms and stomach butterflies are to be expected. But you can reduce your stress level by knowing some common mistakes that interviewees make when meeting with potential employers -- and avoiding them.

Here are 10 of the most common mistakes people make on job interviews:

- 1. Not taking the interview seriously:** Don't make the mistake of thinking the interview is just a formality. Even if all the preliminaries have gone well, don't be cavalier and start imagining how you'll start spending your new salary. The biggest error you can make is to assume that, because you've gotten this far, the job is in the bag.
- 2. Dressing down:** How you present yourself during your initial meeting with a potential employer is very important, and your physical appearance can speak volumes to someone who is meeting you for the first time. Even if you know that the firm allows employees to wear jeans, don't sabotage yourself by showing up to the interview in casual clothing. Err on the side of conservative and show up in neat, professional clothing, preferably a business suit.
- 3. Not showing why you're the best choice:** Be familiar with the job description of the position you're interviewing for so you can illustrate how your experience, abilities, and strengths are in line with the company's needs. Many potential employers want to know why they should hire you specifically. Make it clear to them.
- 4. Being too modest:** Failing to talk yourself up during an interview is one of the most self-defeating mistakes you can make. This is not the time for humility, so sing your praises! Don't be afraid to talk up everything you've accomplished, whether in school or in previous companies. This is your time to shine.
- 5. Talking too much:** Be careful not to talk over the interviewer. This meeting should be a two-way conversation, and many interviewees cover up their nervousness by blathering on. Sit calmly and listen carefully, answering questions thoughtfully.
- 6. Focusing on the funds:** Don't start talking about money too soon into the interview. Focusing on your salary requirements and previous salary history right off the bat may cause you to reveal too much. While the topic of salary will certainly come up, follow the interviewer's lead. He or she may be saving that topic for a later conversation.
- 7. Trash talking:** Even if you hated your former boss or felt you were treated unfairly by your previous employer, a job interview is not the place to launch into a litany of complaints. Don't go there. If you were laid off or fired from a previous position, be prepared with an explanation that puts a positive spin on the circumstances.

8. Failing to ask questions: Your résumé may be impressive on paper, but employers also appreciate a candidate who can ask several intelligent questions during an interview. Prepare at least 3 or 4 questions in advance to ask the interviewer. Interviews are an exchange of information, and not having questions to ask can reveal a lack of preparation.

9. Lack of enthusiasm: This is your first and sometimes only chance to showcase your personality. Don't walk in announcing how you're having a bad day. Be polite and upbeat. Show your enthusiasm for both the job and the opportunity to interview for it. And don't forget to thank the person at the end of the interview!

10. Forgetting the follow-up: Make sure to send a handwritten thank-you note or polite email to the interviewer expressing gratitude for his or her time and consideration. And while you don't want to start calling the company on a daily basis, a phone call checking in a week after the interview is perfectly acceptable.

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