

Penn 7 Competencies - Mock Interview Web Resources

Are you able to incorporate and illustrate Penn 7 Competencies in your interviews? Are you skilled in discussing your competencies in clear ways? Often students will answer interview questions without thinking to mention competencies gained (or are continuing to gain) in past positions. If you are unsure and would like to discuss strategizing how to best incorporate the Penn 7 Competencies, please contact an advisor to discuss interviewing strategies or conduct a mock interview with you. Remember, a great formula to keep in mind when answering behavioral questions during interviews is **S.T.A.R.**: **S** – Situation, **T** – Task, **A** – Action, **R** – Result.

Below are some sample questions related to the Penn 7 Competencies that could be asked in an interview and possible responses one can answer.

Self-Management & Personal Wellness (Sample Interview Questions)

Q: “When have you had failure in your life? Have you become resilient because of it? What steps did you take to overcome your failure?” (To an undergraduate, pre-med student)

A: “*During my quest to complete my pre-med requirements, I had to take organic chemistry during my junior year summer. It was a struggle for me to understand all the concepts of the class because the pace of the class was quite rapid. It was the first time I struggled with keeping up with a course and staying vigilant with assignments. Unfortunately, because of not having a firm grip on the course at the beginning of the summer semester, I did poorly on my first exam. I began to realize my usual study tactics would not work in this course due to the challenging content. I began to make a schedule for study and review. I formed a study group and I checked in with my professor. I did not receive my best grade in this course, but I gave it my all after that first exam grade. I learned from this course how to manage my time better and acquired appropriate strategies for myself for specific study supports. I sought help from my TA and professor when I needed it and they were more than willing to extend that help. I am pleased to report that I performed better on subsequent exams and my grade improved.*”

Active Listening & Effective Communication

Q: “Are you confident communicating effectively and professionally through diverse channels (social media, emails, verbal communication)?” (To a graduate student, Higher Education)

A: “*Yes, in my work as a graduate assistant at the Graduate Student Center, I am being stretched to communicate with varied populations, including students, administrators, and faculty. I work on drafting email documents to share with many stakeholders across the university. This has taught me to be careful about my wording and more aware of my audience. It causes me to think about how my language will affect the way the messages will be received. I kept a close eye on how faculty and administrators responded to my initial email outreach to them, and noticed that while their styles of communicating next steps were different, they always sounded professional when I read them aloud. I have improved in my email communication to my peer groups outside of my work at the Graduate Student Center as well. I have also been in charge of all our social media channels, which include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as updating our Center’s website. I make sure my language is consistent across all platforms, and appropriate for the current platform I am using. This requires careful thought and consideration and such exercises have developed my confidence in my growing communication skills.*”

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving

Q: “How have you used prior experiences and knowledge (i.e. data) to resolve existing issues with your organization/company?” (To an undergraduate student, Business)

A: “During my last internship, I worked for a local, startup company surveying prospects for an upcoming new product launch and collecting data to better understand our targeted customer base. For my current internship at Google, I am working on a team to crunch data analytics for a large corporation. It was a bit daunting at first, but I realized much of what I am doing now builds upon my experience from last semester at the start-up company. I have been able to take some of the issues that occurred in my position last semester and apply them to how I can avoid pitfalls in my current position. In addition, some of the skills sets I gained from last semester helped me tackle some complex data sets at my current position. I believe my previous experience allowed me to take a leading role at my internship. I did not think the positions correlated initially, but as I reflected critically on solutions, though I was in a different industry, some of the same issues could arise. I am thankful for my previous experience and the seemingly small duties I did. It enabled me to do much bigger things for my current internship at Google.”

Teamwork & Collaboration

Q: “Do you have any experience or understand how to problem solve when encountering challenging team dynamics?” (To a graduate student, Social Work)

A: “Yes, as a Master’s student in Non Profit Leadership, there are final projects that require collaboration to produce meaningful work. When it came to working on a group class projects, it proved challenging to make sure everyone got their work done within the designated deadline. We did have a problem with one particular student not doing his portion of the work. This proved to be disconcerting to the rest of the members. I contacted this student since I knew him from another class, and asked if there was anything we could do to help him. I was concerned for our group project grade as well, but thought that if I approached him from a helping stance, he might receive it more favorably. He apologized and said that he had been overwhelmed with family responsibilities, work, and course assignments. The next day, he sent us his draft and we were able to give him appropriate feedback. He could then modify what he needed to in order for the rest of us to finish the final project. In the end, it worked out beautifully, but for a few weeks, my group members and I were very unsettled. Our approach in reaching out to him proved to be collaborative and professional, and thus very well received.”

Leadership & Project Management

Q: “In what ways have you developed your leadership skills in a professional setting? Have you had experience in organizing, prioritizing and delegating work?” (To a post-doc, Arts & Sciences)

A: “Yes, I have most definitely developed and grown my leadership skills in a professional setting this past year. Recently, I have been involved with several national grant funded projects, where I am working with several researchers across different campuses and regions of the world. As you can imagine, at times with varying time zones and work schedules, it was a challenge to find time to meet deadlines and work collaboratively. However, as the principal investigator for several of the projects, I delegated and outlined a workflow schedule so that we could remain on the same page. There were adjustments to our timeline as well as our methodology, particularly as we found what worked and did not work for our study, but we had an outlined skeleton of our research agenda to modify. This made working with individuals who were sprawled across different campuses and time zones much easier. There were times I had to make the final call for tough decisions on our projects, some financial, some methodological, but I made them based on what would move our projects forward in the best way possible. It was a growing experience for me as this was my first time

being part of such largely funded projects. It was uncomfortable at times to be the individual who had to make the final decision for my research group, however, I did the best job I could with what was available to me at the time. We actually have two separate publications coming out from this body of work, and I am first author on one of them. The fact that we have been so productive in getting the data analyzed and the papers written is in part because of the nature of effective collaborations that we created. Overall, it was a collaborative, enriching experience. There were some challenges, but the experience of working as a PI really enhanced my leadership skills and helped me be better organized and not afraid to delegate work appropriately.”

Professionalism & Work Ethic

Q: “How have you demonstrated professionalism and strong work ethic in your workplace?” (To an undergraduate, Nursing)

A: “As a student nurse, I am training to develop these sound professional habits. One such example this past semester was on my first day at my older adults’ rotation, I accidentally administered the medication wrong to my first patient of the day. I immediately realized it when I went to write in her chart and realized that she needed the medication crushed and not whole. I quickly backtracked, told my preceptor, and we went into the room together to tell the patient and her family, who happened to be visiting. The patient had issues with her throat and the doctors had specifically ordered crushed or liquid forms of medication. In my rush to get the patient the appropriate medication, I did not double check her chart. The patient said she struggled to take the medication, but that eventually it did go down. I took ownership of my mistake and told her it would not happen again. I then explained to her that today was my first day as a student nurse on this particular rotation. My preceptor was gracious, but firm with me to say that I needed to double check everything in the chart at all times. As a healthcare provider, my patients are relying on me and it was my job as their student nurse to make sure they receive the best care possible. From this experience, I learned to quickly rectify my mistakes, and be detail-oriented in reviewing patients’ charts so that I can meet their needs in the best way possible.”

Career Management

Q: “What are your career plans for the next five years? What kinds of professional development opportunities do you hope to take advantage of to help you grow?” (To an undergraduate with an interest in Entertainment)

A: “I am really looking forward to pursuing opportunities in the entertainment industry. In the next five years, I am most looking forward to gaining more hands-on production experience. Through my current involvement as a board member of the Undergraduate Media & Entertainment Club, I helped coordinate events that bring industry speakers to campus and learn more about media trends. Last summer I gained experience working on script coverage as a production assistant for HBO, but in the future I would appreciate the chance to learn more about production related to films. As a newly minted college graduate, my hope is to pursue a career in entertainment and I look forward to seeking out professional development opportunities in this area. I hope to gain insight from other board members where I am currently serving, as well as networking with alums to find out what professional development opportunities are available for those seeking a career in the industry.”