

Illegal Interview Questions

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Various federal, state, and local laws regulate the questions an interviewer can ask you. To report illegal questions in an **on-campus interview**, contact the Interview Coordinator immediately. Otherwise, file a report through your local [Equal Employment Opportunity Office](#).

	Illegal	Legal
Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you a US citizen? • Where were you/your parents born? • What is your "native tongue?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you authorized to work in the United States? • What languages do you read, speak, or write fluently?
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How old are you? • When did you graduate college? • What is your birthday? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you over the age of 18?
Arrest Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been arrested? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever been convicted of (crime)?
Marital/Family Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's your marital status? • Who do you live with? • Do you plan to have a family? • How many kids do you have? • What are your child care arrangements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be willing to relocate/travel if necessary? • Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary?
Affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what clubs do you belong? • What is your denomination? • What religious holidays do you observe? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you belong to any professional organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job?
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your maiden name? • How tall are you? • How much do you weigh? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you worked under any other name? • Can you lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as is part of the job?
Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have any disabilities? • Please complete the following medical history. • Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list and give dates. • How's your family's health? • When did you lose your eyesight? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations?
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged? • In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

Facing the illegal question

You have several options when faced with an illegal interview question.

1. **Answer.** Realize that you are providing information that is not relevant to the job and could harm your candidacy by giving a "wrong" answer.
2. **Refuse.** You'll be within your rights, but run the risk of coming off as uncooperative.
3. **Respond.** Examine the intent of the question and respond as it might apply to the job. For example, an interviewer asks, "Are you a US citizen?" Answer with, "I am authorized to work in the US."