

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

## 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."