

Sticky Situations

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

As the interviewer turns to talk about your qualifications, be prepared to deal with aspects of your background that could be construed as negative. Here, interviewers are looking for one of the following: a reason to hire you or a reason to eliminate you. In order to answer these questions, it is up to you to convince the interviewer that although these points appear negative, positive attributes can be found in them. Review the situations and possible answers below to help answer some of your sticky situations.

Why did you leave your last job?

You were fired	To be honest with you, I just did not fit into the organization. Finally, my supervisor and I decided it was best for me to leave. While this was a difficult experience, I feel your organization would provide a much better fit and I am ready to begin again to do the caliber of work of which I am capable.
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Why weren't your grades higher?

Part-time job	Initially I had a hard time balancing a part-time job with coursework, but as I developed stronger time-management skills, I was better able to handle a tremendous number of responsibilities. Now I'm ready to take on multiple tasks and deadlines to get the job done.
Excessive partying	I wish I could tell you why I didn't work my hardest that first year, but that person is so different from who I have become. Fortunately, I can say that today I am hard working and the grades in my most recent courses reflect this.

I see here that you weren't involved in any extracurricular activities. Why?

Full-time job (Fully supporting yourself financially)	As you'll see, I financed 100% of my college expenses with a full-time job. Through balancing my schoolwork and an 8-5 job, I didn't find a whole lot of extra time for extracurricular activities like I would have liked. However, I did gain many valuable skills from my job that I will be able to apply to this position, including many qualities that other college graduates might not yet have developed.
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I'm concerned about your lack of work experience.

Concentrated on studies	<p>I wanted to give as much effort as possible to my studies. I came from a high school in a small town where I received all A's, but this didn't prepare me well for college. So I studied hard. I have, however, found time to help tutor my friends and participate in the college program at my church.</p> <p><i>OR discuss your other experiences: internships, organization involvement, leadership roles, classroom team projects, team athletic sports, and volunteer work.</i></p>
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Why have you switched jobs so often?

Working in temporary positions (internships, summer jobs, campaign work, etc.)	I did hold many different jobs during college, as you'll see on my résumé. This is largely in part to the fact that I was living at home during the summers, and having to find new employment upon coming back to school in the fall. In addition, you will also see my internship listed.
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