

College Teaching Interview Questions

compiled by Lin Foulk Baird

Dress professionally—more like a college teacher and less like a grad student (suit/tie for men; suit/skirt for women with appropriate scarf/jewelry and some makeup). Don't wear perfume.

Find out who is on the search committee if possible and read/memorize their bios. Look at the school calendar—see what big concerts are coming up. How many large ensembles are there? Study both the school, college, and department websites. What is the universities mascot and how are the sports teams?

Get lots of people (particularly well-known conductors/performers) to write letters or call committee members on your behalf.

Questions asked of me at WMU interview:

What common deficiencies do you find in freshman/sophomore students and how do you go about addressing those? Any particular method books you use with these younger students?

What do you think about changing a student's embouchure?

What do you do with the music ed student who says "I'm just a music ed major—you're pushing me too hard?"

Do you consider yourself a teacher who performs or a performer who teaches?

Why did you go into the DMA program?

Do you prefer that students use particular equipment and do you suggest equipment changes?

What are your ideas for recruitment?

Any classes you would like to teach?

What is your teaching experience?

Questions asked of me at UNM interview:

Tell me about what you do at Western.

What makes you think you can teach sophomore theory here? What is your piano background? Tell me about the academic courses you took at UW.

What do you think is the value for students playing in a wind ensemble versus an orchestra (address both undergrads and grads)?

What are your recruitment ideas for grad students?

The salary is \$40,000. Will you come for that? Why do you want to leave WMU and come here?

Questions asked of former GA Dan Spencer at his UT-Martin interview:

Can you describe your teaching philosophy?

What recruitment strategies would you use? How do you feel about horn players in marching band?

Talk about your performing in the New Music ensemble and in classical improvisation.

Talk about teaching experience for theory and history

What is your vision for the studio, short and long term.

Random Person- how would you go about recruiting students of color or of less represented backgrounds and how would you use university funding available for that.

Have you worked with people of disabilities?

Other questions you should prepare

Emphasize why you want to work at that institution specifically. What makes it unique from other programs in the state/region? (possible answers might be the faculty [possibly play in faculty ensembles or conduct research with particular faculty], facilities, specific degree programs, tradition/reputation of the program, the region/area, other unique aspects of that institution or program)

Be able to summarize and articulate your career and professional goals

Be able to provide a four-year plan for horn study and a curriculum guide for graduate students. Be able to provide a list of courses or subject areas taught and a list of courses within your ability to teach.

Be able to answer: You're so young and have limited experience. Why should we hire you? What are your plans for developing an active, professional reputation?

Describe your ideas regarding studio development/recruiting along the following lines: 1). Past/present recruiting activities: what has worked, what hasn't, what else

you would like to try. 2). The role of scholarships/assistantships in the recruiting/studio development process. 3). How do you envision your “ideal” studio being structured in terms of size, activities, undergraduate/graduate balance, etc. 4). Ads/Announcements in professional publications

Given that it is hoped that the person filling this position will assume a leadership role in the _____ Area, how do you see yourself functioning in a leadership role in the areas of curriculum, area structure, student requirements, procedures, etc.

Describe your goals and teaching philosophy regarding your students.

How do your long-term goals, especially in solo performing, fit in with the WMU position? How would you handle absences from your teaching duties while touring?

Describe some of your interests outside of music.

Do you have any particular concerns that would make it difficult for you to accept the WMU position?

Questions you might ask:

- What is the salary and what benefits are included? Specifically, when do I start?
- How large is the horn studio and in what do the students typically major?
- Does the studio currently have a website? If not, is it possible to create one?
- What is the faculty ensemble’s rehearsal and performance schedule? Any big projects in the works? What is a typical recital program for them?
- Are the faculty unionized and what does that mean for me?
- How is the music library?
- If I am teaching theory, how many sections of each level are offered? Will I have a graduate assistant or other help with grading?
- What constitutes a full load (how many applied lessons will I teach, will faculty ensembles count in my load, what else will be added to my load to make it full?)
- When can I expect to hear back from them?

One-on-one

- Do faculty get along? How do you like working here? How do you like living in this city?
- How do you recruit?
- What are the gigging opportunities? Summer/recruitment opportunities?
- Do you give a solo recital every year? Is that expected?
- What are your current projects?
- What do you do in the summer?
- Do you arrange a weekly studio class? What do you do in those classes?

- What is your greatest frustration here?
- What are the performing opportunities for students?
- What is the quality of the ensembles (especially orchestra)?
- Are competent accompanists available for both faculty and student performances?

meeting with the Dean/Director:

- Think about questions pertaining to that person's responsibilities. Get that person to talk about him/herself.
- Ask about scholarships and fundraising plan.
- What is the unit's five-year strategic plan? What is that person's vision for the unit?
- How are junior faculty mentored?
- What are service expectations and how can I best be of service?
- How has the unit been affected by the economy? Is the state experiencing major cuts (is it possible my position might be cut after a year?)
- How are the arts/music specifically valued within the campus and the community?
- How would you describe my duties/responsibilities? What is expected of me?