

This collection of first interview questions is the result of written feedback from Queen's Commerce students who provided the BCC with lists of questions that they were asked during their interviews. We hope that you will continue this tradition by letting us know about the questions that you experience in your interviews.

BEHAVIOURAL QUESTIONS

Change & Innovation

- Describe a situation in which you have changed something.
- Tell me about a situation where you had to cope with change.
- Tell me of a time when someone changed the scope or goal of your project. How did you deal with it?
- Tell me about a time when you initiated change.

Company & Industry Specific Questions

- Why do you want to work at ABC?
- What are some of ABC's major clients and big projects or problems?
- Who are ABC's major competitors?
- How would you describe the people working at ABC?
- Why do you feel ABC might be right for you?
- What challenges do you think ABC will face in the future?
- What deals has ABC worked on?
- How is the XYZ industry doing this year and in past years?
- What challenges do you think are facing the XYZ industry?
- Why do you want to work in this industry?
- How important are first impressions in this industry?
- Name a company you admire, and why.
- What are our company's main divisions, what activities are done in each?

Dysfunctional Groups & Other Things You Would Rather Forget

- Tell me about a situation involving a conflict. How did you resolve it?
- Tell me about a time when you were in a group that you did not get along with.

- Tell me about an uncooperative group member and how you dealt with them.
- Describe a project that you had to do but didn't want to do.
- Tell me about a situation where you tried to influence someone and didn't get your way.
- Describe a time when you failed and what would you change to make sure it did not happen again?
- What was your biggest disappointment?
- What was your biggest mistake?
- Tell me about a time you were doing a job you did not like.
- Describe an instance where you did not feel confident and how you dealt with it.
- Tell me a situation when you did not receive the recognition that you feel you deserved.
- Tell me a situation where you have failed and how you felt.
- Give an example of how you dealt with someone who was downright uncooperative.
- Tell about a time where your values were in conflict with someone else's and you had to speak up to defend them.
- Tell me about a team that you were on when some of the members were not contributing.
- Describe a time when you were very suppressed in a harsh situation.
- Give a situation where you experienced difficulties working in a particular group and how you alleviated these problems.
- Describe a situation where you dealt with an extremely difficult person and how you reacted.
- What is your greatest regret over the past two years?
- Tell me about a time when you made a poor decision. What did you do about it?
- Give me an example of a person who was extremely difficult to persuade: co-worker, peer,

customer, etc. and what did you do to persuade them

- Give me an example of how you had to deal with a difficult co-worker.
- Tell us about a time when you lacked motivation.
- Give an example of a situation that wasn't working out the way you planned and explain what you did about it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many commitments and how you dealt with them.
- Tell me about a time when you were in a group that you did not like. What did you do?
- Talk about a situation that challenged your integrity and how you handled it.
- Discuss a time you had to make an unpopular decision.
- Describe a situation where you were in conflict with another person and what you did to resolve it.

Future

- Where do you see yourself in 1-2 years/5 years/10 years/ a few years?
- What are the three things you want to be remembered by?
- If you could have one wish for your future after graduation, what would it be?

Leadership

- Tell me about a time when you were in a group and you led it.
- Who do you consider a leader and why?
- Tell me a time when you took the ball and ran with it. Focus on initiative, leadership and creativity.
- Give a situation in which you provided leadership.
- Tell me about an experience when you had to lead people. Why were you the leader? How did you motivate people?
- Have you ever been in a leadership position? Tell me about it.
- Tell me a time when you were a leader.

- What makes a good leader? What leadership qualities do you have?
- How would you describe yourself - a follower or leader and why?
- Name a time when you came up with a new idea. What support did you have to obtain to follow through on your initiative, and how did you gain that support?
- What leadership style do you have?
- How would you react to a situation that called for leadership while working with peers?

"Off-the-Wall" Questions

- Who's your hero?
- What is your favorite colour? Why?
- What kind of animal do you consider yourself most like? Why?
- What is the craziest thing that you have ever done?
- One minute commercial – You're the product, I'm your target market. Sell me on you.
- What was the last book you read for fun?
- What do you want us to remember about you and what do you want us to forget about you?
- It's human to make a mistake – What do you think about that?
- Tell us a joke.
- If I gave you the option of flipping a coin where heads your salary is \$100,000 and tails – your salary is \$20,000, how would you evaluate this opportunity both quantitatively and then qualitatively? What would you choose?
- If I told you that you could succeed with either hard work or brilliance, which would you pick (only one)?
- Who do you admire?
- Other than yourself, which one of your classmates should we hire?
- Compare your best and worst boss.
- If I told you that there is an error on your cover letter would you believe me? If I offered you a gamble, you walk out if there is a mistake or you get the job if not, would you take the gamble?
- If you were on a desert island and you could have only one thing, what would that be?

Personal Characteristics

- What intimidates you?
- What is your greatest weakness?
- How do you prioritize?
- What are the best traits your friends would say you have? Worst?
- What do you do to relax?
- What do you do for fun?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Do you regard yourself as a self-confident person?
- What kind of working environment do you prefer – structured/unstructured, small/large company etc.?
- What on your resume differentiates you from everyone else?
- Give me three of your strengths and three of your weaknesses.
- Take a few minutes to tell me about yourself.
- Tell me how you make a presentation.
- What extracurricular activities are you involved in and how many hours per week do they entail?
- Give me the five-minute “tell me everything I should know about you” presentation.
- What are three of your strengths?
- Tell me about the most important/impressive item on your resume.
- How do you organize your time?
- Say something about yourself that will make us hire you.
- What type of company do you want to work for?
- What’s your weakness - a weakness that’s not also a strength?
- What makes you better than the other applicants?
- Why should we hire you? What can you offer our company?
- What makes you better than another candidate?
- List three adjectives your best friend would give us if we asked him/her to describe you. How will these make you valuable to our organization?
- What would your boss say about you?
- What would you like to change/improve about yourself if you could? What have you done to accomplish this?

Queen’s & Courses

- What are the most difficult courses you took at Queen’s?
- What are the most important things you have learned at Queen’s?
- What course did you like best at Queen’s?
- Why did you choose Queen’s?
- Discuss the variances in your marks.
- Tell us about your electives and why you chose them?
- Indicates low mark on transcript and questions what happened in this course.

Risk

- Define risk and give an example of when you took one.
- What is the riskiest thing you’ve ever done?
- Tell me about a situation in which you took a risk and how it turned out.

Successes

- Describe a challenging experience.
- What has been your biggest success?
- What are your two major accomplishments? What makes them so special?
- Which work experience in the past were you most proud of?
- What project are you the most proud of?
- Describe an instance where you set your sights on a high or demanding goal and saw it through to completion despite obstacles.

Teams

- Give me an example of how you excelled in a team situation.
- When have you worked closely in a team and what were the results?
- What role do you play in a team/group?
- Tell me about a time when you had turned things around in a team that led to success.
- How well do you work with people? Are you a team player?
- Who plays the most important role in a group?

- Tell me how you have acted as a team leader, and give examples.
- Name the strengths and weaknesses of working in a group.
- It's 3 o'clock in the morning and we are working on a presentation. Why do we want you on our team?
- Describe a group situation when you set guidelines for the group, and describe the outcome.
- Give me an example of a time where your role in a team situation proved to be invaluable.

The Recruiting Process

- What are things you are looking at while making your decision to accept a position?
- Why do you think that you are the best candidate?
- Where else have you applied?
- What sort of people would you like to work with?
- What is your ideal work environment?
- Do you have an offer from the company you worked at last summer?
- What companies are you targeting in your job search? What stage in the process are you with each company?
- What firms are you interviewing with? How do we rank in your process?

Everything Else

- Have you ever worked part-time during university? What did you do? Why did you work?
- How did you choose extracurricular activities and why?
- Describe a situation where you had to learn something really quickly and explain how you did that.
- If you could go back in time, what would you do differently with respect to your summer job?
- What specific suggestions would you have for a peer bringing a confidentiality concern to you?
- Describe a time when you were creative.
- Can you think of a decision that you had to back up/defend to someone? How did you defend your position?

- Describe the steps you took to convince someone to do something.
- Describe a time when you used a relationship to help further a business goal.
- Have you ever had to give something up to obtain your goals?
- Discuss how you operate when it is hectic.
- Tell me about a time you dealt with something unexpected, and what you learned from it.
- Tell me about a time that you tried to influence someone.
- Tell me about your summer job.
- What is self-management/effective communication?
- Give an example of when you had to think on your feet.
- Tell me about a time when you had difficulty communicating and how you overcame that?
- How do you use time differently than other Queen's students?
- Describe a time when you had to work with people of different cultures.
- Tell me something exciting/interesting about your jobs or extracurricular activities.
- What does customer service mean to you?
- How do you balance conflicting priorities on projects?
- Describe a time when you were creative and challenged accepted process.
- How would you get people to hand their work in on time?
- Have you ever been involved in a situation where a project needed immediate "turn-around"? What did you do?
- Give an example of where you started a project and saw it through to completion, in the last six months.
- Give an example of a time you had to really do a lot of data research and analysis and describe how you went about it.
- Why did you like your summer job?
- Describe a time you had to make a gut decision. How did you feel at the time?
- Why did you choose your specific summer opportunities?

- Tell me about a time when you were really busy and how you prioritized what needed to be done.
- Discuss a time you had to convince someone of something.
- Tell us about a time when you looked at some data and used it to change things.
- Provide an example of how you acquired a technical skill and converted it into practical application.
- Describe an emergency situation and how you coordinated it into your tight schedule.
- What is the hardest decision you have had to make?
- What is your ideal job?
- Tell me about a situation that was extremely stressful and how you dealt with it.
- What skills did you especially develop during your summer job and how can you use them at our company?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you had to persuade people on a critical point and how did you persuade them?
- How did you adjust to living away from home in your first year?
- Describe a time when you were behind in something and explain how you got up to speed.
- Tell us about a crisis and how you overcame it.
- Give me an example of a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty for a customer.
- What does global competition mean to you?
- A client who is thinking about hosting the next Olympic games approaches you. The entry fee is \$20 million. Should your client go for it?
- How many fast food joints/stairs/tennis balls/shoelaces/light bulbs are there in Canada?
- How big is the cardboard market in Canada?
- Estimate the annual revenue of a grocery store in Orillia. Break down the store's costs by %. What would the effect on profits and revenue be of a Shopper's Drug Mart opening next door? How would you increase profits of your store?
- You are a consultant to a manufacturing company which sells summer sports equipment. The company is thinking of entering the ski market. Estimate the number of skis sold in Canada each year. What considerations would be important to ski market decision? How would you assess the viability of the market accepting this brand?
- A lumber company bought the largest capacity mill in the world to become the largest producer. Then their competitors matched them. The result was that the original firm still underperformed the market. Why?
- An airline has a net loss. Describe the revenue and expense side of the income statement. How can they turn things around? Your plan only saves \$10 million and the board needs \$20 million in cost reductions. What are your options now?
- A paper manufacturer is successful in Canada but unsuccessful in US. What is the key item to research and why? Describe one "best" way to approach the problem.
- Home Depot has lower costs than Beaver Lumber. Why?
- Graph for me the daily utilization of a bank machine. Calculate the number of users at peak time. Show me how the graph changes if you have a 2nd machine. Give me a number for the difference between graphs. If the cost of a machine is \$60,000, installation is \$40,000 and charges are \$1.00 for someone not from bank, \$0.75 for someone from bank and \$0.50 for someone checking their bank account book, should we go ahead with the installation of a 2nd machine?

TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

Case-Based

- A bank is initiating an Internet banking service. Should they use their own name or a third party brand?
- A health insurance company in the US lost \$50M last year, and will lose \$100M this year. What are the four key things you will present to the CEO?
- A client has been running his business for 20 years. What do you know just out of school that he doesn't know? How can you help him?
- It costs \$100M to obtain rights to sell an exclusive contact lens that lasts forever. Is it a good deal?

- You own Universal Studios. How much would you pay for the rights to the next Star Wars film?
 - If a company has income of \$30,000 and you want to sell the company, how would you price this company? How would you make the price of this company higher or lower?
 - If a bank is losing market share and customers, where do you look for solutions? How would you increase market share?
 - A courier service found profits were declining - what would you recommend? Suppose you now find it's a revenue problem and your client hypothesizes that they are losing business to bike couriers. How can you check this out? What are the critical success factors? How can you improve their profitability?
 - What should the Canadian Government do with its tax surplus?
 - If you were responsible for a small, entrepreneurial, professional firm that was performance oriented, what proportion of annual total compensation would you make subject to a discretionary bonus? How and why?
- Finance Specific Questions**
- What decision criteria will you use in deciding among investment banks?
 - Explain the meaning of diversification and risk in a portfolio.
 - Explain the meaning of interest rate risk and duration.
 - What is the impact of changing interest rates on different portfolios?
 - What are the most important aspects of sales/trading?
 - Why would you invest in company "X" given the current economic situation?
 - How do you value a company?
 - How do you value a company with no earnings?
 - Give a five-minute presentation on a public company whether to buy or sell. Now support the opposite recommendation.
 - Are you in touch with the Canadian business scene?
- Company A doubles sales in five years; Company B grows at 20% each year for the next five years. Who is growing faster?
 - How would you value BCE?
 - What is the difference between investment banking and merchant banking?
 - Describe the mechanics of a basic interest rate swap.
 - Why is the Canadian dollar in its current situation? Can the government really do anything to improve the situation?
 - Would a pharmaceuticals company whose profits were either huge or nothing have a low or a high BETA?
 - Is there a market solution for child labour in developing countries?
 - If you had to sell oil to an electric company that wanted to relate the price of oil to the price of electricity, what derivative products would you use to make the sale?
 - A firm is considering acquiring one consumer goods company. They have two possible targets, both with the same earnings, the same distribution network etc. What could you quantify to assess which company our firm should acquire?
 - I'm giving you an option to take \$10.00 now and an option to open two envelopes. One envelope has no money and the other holds \$20. Which option will you choose?
 - What questions would you ask the CEO of a company if given five minutes to determine the state of his/her business?
 - If other I-banks offered you the same position, how would you choose?
 - Describe five things that make up a derivative contract.
 - You are long 10,000 shares, how do you hedge? What is the payoff if the stock goes up?
 - How do you get the discount rate?
 - How have equities been doing? What would you invest in and why?
 - Do you think the Bank of Canada should raise rates? Why?
 - You've done significant analysis on a company and the industry in which it participates and have

- developed a report. How do you sell it to the client?
- What happens to a company's earnings per share if they issue equity to retire debt?
 - Tell me about a merger/acquisition you have liked and why.
 - How is the market impacting our dollar?
 - What is the top US bank and how would you rank US Banks and Canadian Banks?
 - Where did the markets close yesterday?
 - What happens to a firm's earnings and balance sheet if it issues debt to re-purchase shares?
 - What are deferred taxes and how do they arise?
 - Where does depreciation appear on the financial statements?
 - Where do you think the markets are going?
 - How would you value a Mexican brewery for an American company?
 - How would you value a company using cash flows and then using its share price?
 - How do you value a high tech company?
 - Explain CAPM.
 - Describe different valuation techniques.
 - What are the three types of derivatives?
 - What is the difference between options and futures?
 - If you had \$1,000, what stock would you buy?
 - How do you research a stock?
 - List three factors that will affect the Canadian markets over the next year.
 - How would Quebec separating affect the Income Statements of a gold mining company in B.C.?
 - What are the three most important trends next year in Canadian financial industry?
 - What will globalization do in terms of financial competition in the Canadian context?
 - What kinds of things (non-numeric) would you look at when valuing a company?
 - What are the four most important factors that have contributed to volatility in Canadian markets in the last six weeks?
 - What would you do in a situation where you could benefit from a trade which hurt someone else's desk?
 - What business publications do you read?
 - How are the markets doing? Is it a buying opportunity? If so, why?
 - Have you been following the interest rates in Country X?
- Marketing/Advertising Specific Questions**
- Describe and evaluate your favorite advertisement.
 - "Barque's has bite!" Describe what this ad means to you?
 - If you had to market Kraft to Queen's Commerce, how would you do it?
 - How are you as a consumer? Tell me about your buying habits.
 - Sell this watch/clipboard etc.
 - I have a talking lawn ornament. How do I sell it?
 - If you were in a bookstore, what books would you buy and why?
 - Tell me about a movie you've seen recently.
 - Name a brand and tell me about it.
 - What role does advertising play in society?
 - Comment on "advertising promotes products that people do not even need".
 - Talk about an effective ad and an ineffective ad.
 - What makes an ad good?
 - Tell me about an ad that stood out.
 - What is your favorite ad and why?
 - Describe an unexploited market opportunity that intrigues you.
 - What do you know about our brands?