

Questions Students Can Ask in Interviews to Tell If a Company Really Cares About Diversity & Inclusion

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Everyone wants to feel like they belong, but how do you know if an organization will welcome your whole authentic self to work? When looking for a new job or internship it's important to do your homework. Like any good job searching candidate, it's important to start with researching the company, but with a few extra steps. Do you see people who look like you? Do they talk about diversity, equity, and inclusion on their website? Check LinkedIn to see who works there; and check to see if they have had cases brought against them for things like "harassment" or "racism". And most importantly, ask the right questions in the interview.

Below is a list of possible questions to ask either the hiring manager or your contact in human resources. Depending on your comfort level and how important diversity and inclusion are to you and your career, choose one to two questions, three tops, to ascertain your comfort with the organization's culture. And remember, some questions are more appropriate for new graduates, but those at a more senior level, may feel more directed questions are appropriate. Dictionary.com defines "belonginess" as "the quality or state of being an essential or important part of something." Only you can decide if the organization will make you feel like you belong.

"What's it like to work here?"

"Can you describe some of your company's core values?"

"How would you describe the company's culture?"

"Have the racial events of 2020 changed any of your organization's DE&I priorities going forward? If so, how?"

"You mentioned – or on your website you mention – ZYX has a commitment to diversity. How has the organization demonstrated that commitment?"

"What are some of the key DE&I actions your organization has taken in recent months?"

"What does diversity, and inclusion mean here?"

"What does your company do to ensure inclusiveness?"

"What do you do to create an inclusive team environment?"



"How do you measure inclusion?"

"What resources does the company provide to support trans employees, black employees, veteran employees, etc.?"

If they mention that they have ERGs, ask if it would be possible to talk to the volunteer leaders from one to two of the ERGs.

"Are there any programs or initiatives in place at your company geared toward promoting diversity?"

"Are there any specific internal DE&I groups, resources or initiatives you are particularly proud of?"

"Does your company use any training programs to help create an inclusive work environment?"

"How can employees get involved in DE&I initiatives in your workplace?"

"In your opinion, what is the most challenging aspect of working in a diverse environment?"

"Can you give me an example of how you make your direct reports feel a sense of inclusion, belonging, and equity on a daily basis?"

"Can you tell me about a time you had to have an uncomfortable conversation to resolve an issue?"

"How do you celebrate diversity of ideas and people?"

"What tangible goals does the organization have surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion? Who is responsible for making sure these goals are met?"

Crucially, if the organization has made a meaningful commitment to ED&I, then each interviewer should be able to share explicit examples of progress made.

Whenever you're trying to understand something like core values of a company, it's good practice to pick a few questions and ask those same two or three questions to every person that you meet during the interview process. Compare the answers: Is there consistency across the board, or are there conflicting perspectives?



Resources

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