

Questions to Use for Stay Interviews

Asking too many overarching questions can be overwhelming to an employee and lead to a lowered success rate than keeping to a well-rounded series of five to seven questions. We recommend using the following questions and expect each overarching question to lead into more probing questions also supplied here. Following this order and format should lead to insights into how to more fully engage employees and improve retention rates when we address some of the issues brought forward.

Question 1: What do you look forward to each day when you commute to work?

Effective probes for this question might include:

- Give me an example
- Tell me more about...
- Who do you look forward to working with the most?

Question 2: What are you learning here and what do you want to learn?

Effective probes for this question might include:

- What are the most challenging but exciting aspect of your current role?
- Are there actions that we can take to further challenge you?
- What type of feedback would you like to receive about your performance that you're not receiving from me now? From other co-workers?
- What other jobs here look attractive to you?
- What skills do you think are required for those jobs?
- What additional skills do you think you need to acquire to excel in that job?

Question 3: Why do you stay here?

Effective probes for this question might include:

- Tell me more about why that is so important to you.
- Is that the only reason you stay or are there others?
- If you narrowed your reasons to stay to just one, what would it be?

Question 4: In order for you to feel like you're doing the best work of your life, what would need to happen?

Effective probes for this question might include:

- Do you feel like you and the work you're doing makes a difference to the university?
- Do you feel utilized appropriately?
- Are there things I could be doing to fully use your talents and skills?
- Do you feel like you're part of the larger mission and vision? Why or why not?



Question 5: When was the last time you thought about leaving us and what prompted it?

Effective probes for this question might include:

- Tell me more about how that happened? Who said what?
- What's the single best thing I can do to make that better for you?
- How important is that to you now on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being very important?
- Can you help me understand what kind of negative factors which might cause you to consider leaving? (This can include both job and overall work place factors)

Question 6: Can you share with me what you feel are your strongest motivators and, on the other spectrum, what your strongest de-motivators are?

Effective probes for this question might include:

- What brings you the most joy in the work that you do?
- What causes you the most angst in the work that you do?
- What do you want more of?
- What would you like to have less of?

Question 7: What can I do to make your job better for you?

Note: It is critical to not become defensive here. Your role is to listen.

Effective probes for this question might include:

- Do I tell you when you do something well?
- Do I say and do things to help you do your job better?
- What are three ways I can be a better manager for you?
- Is there anything else that is important to you that we did not cover during this meeting?
- Do you have suggestions about how we can improve as an organization?

Sources:

- [How to Conduct Stay Interviews: 5 Key Questions by Richard P. Finnegan posted on SHRM](#)
- [Stay Interviews: 20 Possible Questions You Should Consider Asking by Dr. John Sullivan posted on TLNT.com](#)
- [Stay Interview Sample Questions by Susan M. Heathfield posted on thebalancecareers.com](#)

