Interview questions for Core Facility Personnel

General Questions

1. Tell us about yourself and why you are uniquely positioned for the role.
2. Tell us about the last time you went above and beyond for one of your team members/customers.
3. What do you like most about your current position and what do you like the least?
4. How does this position fit into your career goal or path?
5. Why are you interested in this position?
6. What would you bring to this position if hired?
7. Why are you looking to leave your current position?
8. What is your proudest achievement as a professional?
9. What are your best attributes?
10. What are opportunities for your improvement?
11. Describe an unanticipated challenge.
12. Is there a time when you wish you would have handled a situation differently?
13. Can you describe a career failure?

Competency: Collaboration/teamwork/Relationship building

1. Describe a time when you built strong relationships where none previously existed.
2. Describe a time when you made a critically important contribution to meeting the goals of a group or team.
3. Describe a situation in which you were able to positively influence the actions of others in a way to meet a team goal.
4. How do you motivate a junior team member?
5. Describe a situation where you facilitated a climate of trust and respect between colleagues. How did you do it, and how do you know you had impact?

Competency: Communication

1. Describe a time when you had to communicate the same information to different audiences and had to vary your style for each.
2. Describe an idea that you pitched to a senior colleague.
3. Give an example of a time when there was a miscommunication with someone and how did you handle that situation? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a time when you felt a goal was unclear or undefined and how you dealt with that.
5. Describe a situation where you encouraged and facilitated candid and open communication within the team. How did you do it?

Competency: Conflict management/Resilience

1. Provide an example of when you had to say “no” to a group of people, and how this was handled or executed.
2. Give an example of a time when you were able to resolve conflict between others. How did that turn out?
3. Give an example of a time when service/results were not what were expected and conflicted with expected results. How was that handled and how did it turn out?
4. Share an example of a significant personnel issue or dispute that you effectively managed. How did you communicate tactfully in this stressful or tense situation? What did you do to ensure a successful outcome?
5. Describe a time when you took it upon yourself to calm others on the team in an emotionally charged situation. How did you do it, and what where the results?
6. How did you learn from a mistake that you made?

Competency: Flexibility, Customer Service

1. Give an example of when you had to prioritize duties and how you decided to do that.
2. Think of a situation in which information, instructions, or objectives were ambiguous. Describe what you did to clarify the situation.
3. Think of a time when you perceived a gap in your or your team’s ability to meet emerging customer needs. How did you deal with it?

Competency: Autonomy

1. How best do you like to interact with others? What kind of environment do you like to work in?
2. Describe a complex problem you solved at work.

Competency: Influencing

1. Describe a situation where you secured the commitment of teammates to achieve a particular team goal. How did you do it and how did it work out?

Competency: Technical Skills, attention to detail

1. In some environments it is important to follow procedures very closely. Describe something you've done that illustrates your commitment to doing this.
2. To assess a candidate’s actual skill level, aside from what is presented in their resume, ask a technical question that can generate a range of answers. For example:
   1. During library preparation for NGS how would you troubleshoot if you don’t have any library yield, or if you see more than 1 band of products, on Bioanalyzer QC?
   2. During cell preparation for single cell sequencing, what would you do if a user sends you cell preps which look unclean or show limited cell counts?
   3. Your cell sorting client has a panel with four markers in it (including the viability dye). They brought unstained and single-stained controls, but you discover they added viability dye to all these samples. How do you proceed?
   4. A confocal user calls you to the confocal microscope because they “cannot find their sample”. How do you approach troubleshooting this problem?

In addition to these examples, there are many other Competency-based behavioral interview questions to be found via web search. Depending on resource availability, partnering with a talent acquisition firm can also yield more information on this strategy.