



UC Master Gardener Program Screening Interviews

Our Mission:

“To extend research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to the residents of California.”

Recommended Interview Process

1. Designate one volunteer or staff person as the facilitator of each session. This person will direct the “action,” starting with activities and introduction described below. The other volunteers or staff members can take turns asking the questions listed below. In a group interview setting, address one question to each applicant in turn so that all applicants answer the same questions. The facilitator will ensure that all applicants have an opportunity to address all questions. The facilitator will remind the applicant(s) about the training program time/dates and dismiss the applicants at the end of the session.
2. Be sure to write on this form each applicant’s name, name(s) of interviewer(s), and the date and time of the interview. Where applicable, rate each applicant’s answer to each question. For most questions, space has been left for interviewers to make additional comments. Please write legibly on the forms.
3. While sessions should have a warm and friendly tone, interviewers must rate each of the candidates according to the UC Master Gardener Program position description and criteria. If an interviewer determines that a candidate should be rejected, the interviewer should clearly document specific reasons for the low rating. “Not a fit” is not an acceptable explanation.
4. Per [UC ANR’s Non-discrimination policy](#), interviewers must not ask questions pertaining to a candidate’s age, race, gender, marital status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, or other protected categories. Avoid asking personal questions other than those on the interview sheet. Keep the conversation focused on topics that are pertinent to the candidate’s experience in public education, community organizing, volunteering, or gardening experience and willingness to participate in the program.
5. Finally, interviewers may not speculate or assume any information about a candidate or assess a candidate against any criteria not listed in the UC Master Gardener Program Volunteer Position Description. For example, interviewers may not assume any information about a candidate’s available time for volunteering, motivation for volunteering, or length of time they may volunteer.

Warm-up activity for group interviews

Instruct candidates to spend five minutes finding two things they all have in common and two thing about each of them that is unique. Similarities can be simple things like use of corrective lenses, dog ownership, or morning beverage preference. The similarities don’t have to be garden-related. After five minutes, instruct the group members to share what they learned about each other. While candidates are participating in this activity, interviewers will discuss their approach to the interview (such as who will ask the first question, rotation of questions, and so on).



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Warm-up activity for individual interviews

Ask participants to share their first garden memory (grandmother's flowers and herbs, community vegetable garden, and so on).

Introduction script

Hello and welcome to the UC Master Gardener Program screening interview process. The UC Master Gardener Program is a statewide program of the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR). Our mission is to "To extend research-based knowledge and information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to the residents of California." UC Master Gardener Program Trainees complete an extensive training, followed by 50 hours of volunteer work in their first year. In subsequent years, volunteers will complete 25 volunteer hours and 12 continuing education hours. Trainees must attend all Training sessions.

Today we are going to ask a few questions about your volunteerism, education, and gardening experiences. Some of the questions may be similar to those asked on the application form. Please feel free to restate or expand upon your application responses. Before we begin, we are required to inform you that if you are selected to participate in the UC Master Gardener Program training, you will be required to sign the UC ANR Adult Volunteer Code of Conduct and to submit to a criminal background check (Department of Justice Livescan). Some offenses may bar you from participation as a UC Master Gardener Program volunteer.

Conclusion script

Thank you for your interest in the UC Master Gardener Program training. Do you have anything else to share? Do you have any questions for the interview panel at this time? We will be notifying all applicants via e-mail with regard to timeline and next steps. Please contact our University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) office with any additional questions. Thank you.



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Candidate Name:

Date:

Time:

UC Master Gardener Volunteer Name: (Interviewer)

Indicate your ranking of the candidate’s answers as: Exceptional = 5; Acceptable = 3; Unacceptable = 1

1. Please share what draws you to the UC Master Gardener Program. How will you use the education you receive to improve and strengthen our community? 5 4 3 2 1

2. We serve a diverse clientele *in terms of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, veteran status, faith/nonfaith, disability status, and much more.* Can you tell us about your experience working with and serving such a diverse population? 5 4 3 2 1

3. Please share about a time when you were successful in teaching someone else a new concept or task. Your example can relate to gardening, volunteerism, or some other context. 5 4 3 2 1

4. Do you have any skills outside of gardening that might be helpful in the UC Master Gardener Program? These skills could include speaking a language other than English, social media, community organizing, leadership in equity and inclusion, public speaking, and so on. 5 4 3 2 1

5. Like many organizations, the UC Master Gardener Program relies on technology to deliver its mission. Please describe your proficiency with technologies such as email, video platforms (like Zoom), blogs, and so on. Can you describe a time when you learned a new technology or software? 5 4 3 2 1



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6. UC Master Gardener Program volunteers often work together in groups. What role do you typically play in a group or on a team? Please share about a challenging team experience. What did you learn from this experience? 5 4 3 2 1

Comments:
