

A Structured Interviewer Guide




Presented by the

Idaho National Guard
Human Resource Office



HIRING FOR SUCCESS
A PRACTICAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interviewer Objectives

- 
- A vertical strip on the left side of the slide showing a close-up of the American flag, with the stars and stripes visible.
- Section 1: Overview of Structured and Unstructured Interviews
 - Section 2: Developing a Structured Interview
 - Section 3: Conducting a Structured Interview
 - Section 4: Evaluating a Structured Interview
 - Section 5: Tips to Avoid and Tips to Do for an Effective Interview

Structured vs. Unstructured Interviews

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide showing a portion of the American flag, with the stars and stripes visible.


Structured Interview

- All candidates are asked the same questions in the same order.
- All candidates are evaluated using a common rating scale.
- Interviewers are in agreement on acceptable answers.

Unstructured Interview

- Candidates may be asked different questions.
- A standardized rating scale is not required.
- Interviewers do not need to agree on acceptable answers.

Key Features of a Structured Interview

- 
- All questions are developed by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) based on job-related competencies
 - A panel of trained interviewers takes detailed notes on candidates' responses
 - All responses are evaluated using the same rating scale and standards for acceptable answers
 - Validity
 - Reliability
 - Fairness
 - Practicality
- Allows the structured interview to meet legal and professional standards for an assessment method

How to Develop a Structured Interview

Eight Key Steps

1) Conduct/Review Job Analysis Material

- *Review the job tasks and responsibilities
- *Obtain confirmation from SMEs
- *Identify the competencies that are required upon entry



2) Determine the Competencies to be Assessed

- *Teamwork
- *Oral Communication
- *Interpersonal Skills
- *Conflict Management
- *Influencing/Negotiating

3) Develop the Interview Questions

- *Reflective of the job and tied to competencies identified through the job analysis

*Open-ended

*Clear and concise

Try the STAR Model

- Interview questions should elicit three important pieces of information from the candidate:
 - **Situation or Task:** Describes the context or background for the event of the tasks involved
 - **Action:** Describes exactly what was done or what would be done
 - **Result:** Describes the consequence of the candidate's actions



How to Develop a Structured Interview Cont.

4) Develop the Probe Questions

- *Do not use leading probes that convey the answers
- *Do narrow in on the candidate's specific roles and actions
- *Seek clarification when candidates say "we did..." or "our group..."
 - Do Seek clarification when candidates are vague
 - Do ask open-ended questions unless looking for a yes/no response

5) Develop the Rating Scale

- *Decide on one proficiency level range for all competencies
- *Typically it is best to have 3 levels; (see Table next slide 5 levels)
(e.g., unsatisfactory, satisfactory, superior)
- *SMEs individually determine how employees at each proficiency level rated
- *SMEs discuss these example responses and reach consensus on the most representative responses for each proficiency level
- *Use any and all hypothetical responses as a general guide to match the candidate's response with a proficiency level

Example of a Rating Scale

Table 1: Rating Scale

Proficiency Level	General Competencies	Technical Competencies
Level 5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations.• Serves as a key resource and advises others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations.• Serves as a key resource and advises others.• Demonstrates comprehensive, expert understanding of concepts and processes.
Level 4 - Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations.• Generally requires little or no guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations.• Generally requires little or no guidance.• Demonstrates broad understanding of concepts and processes.
Level 3 - Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in difficult situations.• Requires occasional guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in difficult situations.• Requires occasional guidance.• Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes.
Level 2 - Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations.• Requires frequent guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations.• Requires frequent guidance.• Demonstrates familiarity with concepts and processes.
Level 1 - Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in the simplest situations.• Requires close and extensive guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applies the competency in the simplest situations.• Requires close and extensive guidance.• Demonstrates awareness of concepts and processes.

Final Steps to the Interview Development

6) Pilot test the questions and interview process

- Determine how many interviewers will be on each panel
- Determine how final ratings will be determined
 - (e.g., consensus, majority, average)

7) Develop an Interviewer's Guide

- General Instructions about the Interview Process
- Definitions of Competencies Being Assessed
- Questions and Rating Scales with Example Responses
- Example Probes for Each Question
- General Interviewing Tips and Practices to Avoid



8) Document the Development Process

- Descriptions (e.g., name, job title, level of expertise) of all participants
- Interview development materials (e.g., reference materials, manuals)
- A description of the development of the interview, including the job analysis and the question and rating scale

Conducting a Structured Interview

Interviewers Need To:

- Create a comfortable atmosphere for candidates
- Be good and unbiased listeners
- Take comprehensive notes
- Remain objective and fair during evaluations
- Treat all candidates the same
- Provide all candidates the same opportunities to excel
- Be organized and prepared for every interview
- Look and act cordial, interested, and professional

Prior to the interviews, all interviewers should have and review

- Interviewer's Guide
 - Forms with competencies, definitions, and questions
 - Individual rating forms with example responses
 - Consensus rating form, if applicable

Interview Timeline: Preparing

All candidates should be considered for the same amount of time

- Introductions and instructions
- Responses to each question
- An informal discussion about the position and for the candidate to ask questions
- Evaluating each candidate, including individual and consensus ratings
- Ensure the interview location is quiet, comfortable, non-threatening, and easily accessible
- Candidates waiting to be interviewed should not be allowed to converse with those who have already been interviewed



Upon arrival of the candidate, the chairperson

- Greets the candidate
- Leads the candidate to the designated interview location
- Initiates introductions
- Explains the interview process; this may include a written description
- Asks the candidate if he/she has any questions
- Formally begins the interview

Interview Timeline: Questioning

Conducting the Interview: Questioning

- Interviewers ask only their assigned questions, in order
- Probes may be used if necessary to clarify a response, get a candidate back on track, or obtain additional information
- Make sure that your style of questioning, body language, and probes do not convey socially desirable responses



Interviewers should never ask questions about or make comments about a candidate's:

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- National origin
- Religion
- Marital or familial status
- Disabilities or health status
- Or any other job-irrelevant factor

Interviewers should focus on taking detailed notes of candidates' responses and making eye contact

In the event of an appeal, notes can be reviewed and may serve as the basis for upholding or overturning a rating

Interview Timeline: Evaluating Interviewee

1. Maintaining Control

- The chairperson ensures the interview stays on topic and within time constraints
- The chairperson may need to make polite and tactful interruptions:
 - To control the pace of the interview
 - If a candidate is talking too much
 - If a candidate goes off topic

2. After the candidate has answered all of the questions, the chairperson concludes the interview by

- Thanking the candidate
- Explaining the next steps in the hiring process

3. Making Individual Ratings

****** Immediately following the interview, interviewers should read their notes to one another on the candidate's responses:

- Reviewing the competency definition and associated question
- Reviewing the example responses for each proficiency level
- Reviewing notes for each question
- Choosing the most appropriate rating
- Signing and dating the rating form

Structured Interview Panel Evaluation Form				
<small>Instructions: Translate each individual evaluation for each competency onto this form. If all of the individual competency evaluations are within one rating scale point, enter the average of the evaluations in the column labeled Group Evaluation. If more than one point separates any two rates, a consensus discussion must occur with each party justifying his/her evaluation. The lead interviewer or his/her designee should take notes on the consensus discussion in the space provided. Any changes in evaluation should be initialed and a final evaluation entered for each competency.</small>				
Competency (EXAMPLES)	Final Individual Evaluations			Group Evaluation
	(1)	(2)	(3)	
Interpersonal Skills				
Self-Management				
Reasoning				
Decision Making				
Problem Solving				
Oral Communication				
Total Score				
Consensus Discussion Notes:				
Signature Panel Member 1: _____				
Signature Panel Member 2: _____				
Signature Panel Member 3: _____				

Things to Avoid While Conducting an Interview



- Rater bias
 - Interviewers should refrain from considering any non-performance related factors when making judgments
- “Similar to me”
 - Giving higher than deserved ratings to candidates who appear similar to you
- “Halo” effect
 - Allowing ratings of performance in one competency to influence ratings for other competencies
- Leniency/Strictness
 - A tendency to give high/low ratings to all candidates, irrespective of their actual performance
- Central tendency
 - A tendency to rate all competencies at the middle of the rating scale (for example, giving all “3s” on a 5-point scale)

Things to Do While Conducting an Interview

- Know the competencies being assessed, the questions, and the rating scale with example responses
- Focus on the candidate's responses (not on the candidate)
- Take detailed notes on the responses (not on the candidate)
- Compare the candidate's responses to the example responses for each proficiency level
- Objectively rate the candidate
- Build a positive atmosphere
- Ensure a positive atmosphere



Steps for a Successful Structured Interview

A Model Structured Interview Process

