

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Most employers use behavioural interviewing in the hiring process. This type of interview is based on the concept that the best way to predict future performance is to examine past and present performance in a similar situation. It focuses on experiences, behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job related.

With the behavioural interview, employers predetermine which skills are necessary for the job they are recruiting and then ask very pointed questions to determine if the candidate possesses those skills.

To prepare appropriate questions, you will need to carefully review the Position Description and also identify if there are any additional aspects to the job that require discussion at the interview (e.g., if frequent travel is involved). Having done that, you prepare the questions that you want to ask the candidate.

Open-ended questions are used to get more than a yes or no answer. Some typical open questions are: "What can you tell me about yourself?", "Why are you interested in the position?" or "What are your most remarkable skills?" Open ended questions will give you the information you need to make an informed recruitment decision.

Closed questions are appropriate only when you need to know a specific piece of information (such as years of experience, technical knowledge, etc.). These questions require a brief and solid answer.

Following are some suggested interview questions – modify them as you see fit. When choosing the number of questions you are going to ask, choose those appropriate for the position being recruited, but be mindful of the length of time you have set down for the interview:

Opening questions

- We have read your application, but to give some context, would you please give us a brief overview of your last ____ years and tell us about the accomplishments that you are the most proud of?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- If we were to ask three of your colleagues what it was about you that they admired, what do you think they would tell us?
- If we were to ask those same three colleagues what they think you could do even better, what do you think they would tell us?
- What do you know about our organisation?
- What attracts you to a career with us? How do you see your studies, skills, experience and personal qualities contributing to the work of our organisation?
- Do you know anyone who works for us?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Have you ever been asked to leave a position?
- What things offend you or make you angry?
- What motivates you to do your best on the job?
- What qualities do you look for in a boss?
- If you had a choice to work on your own or as a member of a team, which would you prefer?

Competencies questions:

Adaptability:

- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a colleague's working style in order to complete a project or achieve your objectives.

Analytical Skills/Problem Solving

- Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do? What was your thought process? What was the outcome? What do you wish you had done differently?

Communication:

- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or *vice versa*). How did you handle the situation? What obstacles or difficulties did you face? How did you deal with them?

Creativity:

- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Tell me about a problem that you've solved in a unique or unusual way. What was the outcome? Were you happy or satisfied with it?

Decision Making:

- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Describe a situation where you have had to overcome a problem or obstacle in order to move forward with something. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed. How did you handle it? Why? Were you happy with the outcome?

Flexibility:

- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy that you did not agree with.
- Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a co-worker understand a task. How did you assist them? What was the result?

Goal Setting:

- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet, achieve or even exceed it.
- What do you consider to be your greatest achievement so far and why?
- Tell me about a goal that you set that you did not reach. What steps did you take? What obstacles did you encounter? How did it make you feel?

Initiative:

- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- What tricks or techniques have you learned to a job easier, or to make yourself more effective? How did you learn that?
- Describe a situation where you have had to use your initiative to solve a problem. What did you do?
- Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something but failed.

Integrity/Honesty:

- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Tell me about a time you had to discipline someone who was a friend.
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
- Tell me about the most difficult customer service experience that you have ever had to handle - perhaps an angry or irate customer. Be specific and tell what you did and what was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.

Leadership:

- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- What has been your experience in giving presentations to small or large groups? What has been your most successful experience in speech making?
- Tell me about a team project when you had to take the lead or take charge of the project? What did you do? How did you do it? What was the result?

Analytical and Interpersonal Skills:

- Give me an example of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to solve a problem.
- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How/why was this person difficult? How did you handle it? How did the relationship progress?

Planning and Organisation/Time Management:

- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.
- Describe a time when you had many projects or assignments due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done?
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritise your tasks.
- How do you prioritise projects and tasks when scheduling your time? Give me some examples.

Teamwork:

- Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- Describe a situation where you have had to work as part of a team to achieve a result. What was your role in this?
- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?

Closing questions:

- I have interviewed a number of people for this position. Why do you think I should hire you rather than the other applicants?
- Thank you for answering all of my questions. Are there any questions that I could answer for you?
- Your application indicates that your availability is _____. Is that correct?

Close the interview by thanking the applicant for taking the time to come for interview, and tell them when they can expect to hear back from you.