# PLANNING AND CONDUCTING CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

# IDENTIFYING COMPETENCIES, QUESTIONS, and SCORING MATRIX

Understanding the key competencies required for the job and their relative importance is an important first step in planning interviews and will guide you in selecting a set of competencies and related interview questions you will use for candidates.

Refer to the [Behavioral Interview Question Inventory by Competency](https://hr.uw.edu/talent/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2023/02/Behavioral-Interview-Question-Inventory-by-Competency-20230213.docx) to help identify different job competencies and suggested interview questions for each competency.

Develop an Interview Matrix that includes Competency, Question, Weight, and Score that can be used to rate/score interviews with candidates. Refer to our [Sample Interview Matrix](https://hr.uw.edu/talent/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2023/02/Candidate-Decision-Matrix-Example-20230213.docx).

Create a scoring matrix that will show the relative performance of the job candidates using your pre-determined competency weightings and your scores. Refer to our [Candidate Decision Matrix Example](https://hr.uw.edu/talent/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2023/02/Sample-Interview-Matrix-20230213.docx).

Develop a proposed interview timeline (sample at bottom of this document).

# CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

Greet the candidate by name, establish rapport. Keep your body language open and make an effort to smile and make eye contact. Do not frown, cross your arms, or turn your body away from the candidate. When a candidate is more comfortable, their answers are more genuine.

1. You have an important role in keeping pre-employment inquiries/questions made of job applicants lawful and fair. Refer to [UW Guidelines for Pre-Employment Inquiries](https://ap.washington.edu/eoaa/pre-employment-inquiries/) for details.
2. For an in-person interview and if available, ask if the candidate needs to use the restroom prior to the interview. Also offer water or a beverage.
3. Introduce yourself and your current role along with a brief synopsis of your career as appropriate.
4. Explain the interview process:
   1. Share that you ask a series of questions that require the candidate to tell you about their past experiences and provide specific examples about how they handled situations in the past, and that you will record their answers. Assure the candidate that there are no right or wrong answers, but that you may ask clarifying questions. **DO NOT** offer an example of what you are looking for, which may bias your interview and skew the data.
   2. Assure the candidate that pausing before answering the questions you pose is okay. **Silence is okay.**
   3. Aim to listen for 80% of the interview and talk for 20% (or less!).
   4. Tell them that there will be time for them to ask you questions at the conclusion of the interview.
5. Take notes during the interview on the interview matrix. Notes should include important points made by the candidate during their responses. **DO NOT** rate a response during the interview.
6. Monitor the time spent on each question so that the interview runs efficiently.
7. Close the interview by thanking the candidate for their time, providing your contact information, and giving specific follow-up steps and timelines.
8. Complete your interview matrix immediately after the interview. Do not assume that you will remember details of the interview, especially if you are interviewing several candidates.

# LISTENING FOR INFORMATION

Utilize the **EAR** Model:

E: **Event**, example, or problem the candidate experienced

A: **Action** the candidate took in response to the event or situation

R: **Result** (outcome or effect) of the actions the candidate took

If the candidate does not provide all the information required, the interviewer should ask probing questions to elicit a complete response. Often, the answers to these questions provide just as much, if not more, information than the original question.

Incomplete answers include:

* Incomplete event, action, result
* Hypothetical response
* Improper EAR
  + Specifics missing, or (or lack of E, A, and/or R)
  + Qualifying words – would, should, usually, always, generally
  + Lack specific example

To elicit more information about the EVENT:

* Could you give me a specific time when you used that approach?
* Can you give me a specific example of when this happened?
* What were the circumstances surrounding…?
* What was the most memorable time when that happened?

To elicit more information about the ACTION:

* Tell me specifically how you did that.
* Exactly what did you do?
* Walk me through the steps you took.
* What did you do first, second, etc.?
* What was your role on the team?
* Exactly what part did you play?

To elicit more information about the RESULT:

* What was the result?
* How did it work out?
* What feedback have you gotten?
* How did you know that what you did was effective?
* So, what happened?

Also consider whether the experience the candidate describes occurred recently and whether or not it is similar or applicable to the open position.

# TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE INTERVIEW MATRIX

1. Take notes beside each question but do not score the answer.
2. Record questions that the candidate asks you.
3. After the interview concludes:
   1. Rate each competency separately based on the behavioral evidence you collect.
   2. Analyze each candidate independently. Try not to compare candidates to each other as you complete the Interview Matrix.
   3. *A candidate’s score serves as an indicator, not a final decision. The hiring manager passes on to the peer interview process only those qualified candidates the manager would be comfortable hiring. This approach supports the success of the peer interview team.*
4. Each manager or leader conducting an interview should complete a separate Interview Matrix with different questions around the core competencies identified for the position.

# INTERVIEW TIMELINE SAMPLE

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Conducting the Interview** | **Approximate Time to Allow** |
| Establish rapport and review background information.   * Allows the candidate time to relax * Fosters openness from the candidate * Promotes clarification and expansion of information provided   Note: Personal information shared by the candidate during this time is illegal to utilize to  discriminate against them (e.g. if they mention a medical condition, family situation, etc. etc.) | 5-7 minutes |
| Ask behavioral-based questions.   * Plan questions to correspond to specific competencies necessary for the job. * Take notes. * Clarify and rephrase if needed, but do not offer an example of what you are looking for. * Be patient; silence is okay. * Ask follow-up questions and probe for more information as needed. * Ask other questions (e.g. “What value would you bring to our organization?”) | 30-40 minutes |
| Communicate information regarding the position and answer the candidate’s  questions.   * Offer job specific information (e.g. job duties, schedule, location, etc.). * Ask candidate, “What questions do you have for me?” | 5-10 minutes |
| Close the interview.   * Ask the candidate, “Is there anything else you would like to tell me about yourself or your experience?” * Review next steps and the timeline for the selection process * Thank the candidate for the interview. | 5-10 minutes |