

Developing the Interview

There are three types of questions that may be developed to assess candidates. The majority will be past-oriented questions, or **behavioural** questions, that tap into past performance. A few should be future-oriented, or **situational** questions, capable of assessing intentions. A few should be **goal-oriented** questions to help understand the candidates' career plans and work preferences.

Behavioural Interviewing Questions

- assess the candidates' previous experience in comparison to the performance expected on the job, based on the premise that the best single predictor of future job performance is past job behaviour.

The benefits of using behavioural interviewing questions include:

- asking the candidates for actual job behaviours not what they might do or would like to do
- giving more objective information, rather than relying on 'gut feeling'.

Studies show that behavioural interviewing exceeds traditional interviewing accuracy by three to seven times which makes it cost effective. (Janz, 1986)
Two or more interviewers reviewing data will come to the same hiring conclusion 88% of the time. (Campion, 1988).

Examples of the behaviour and behavioural interviewing question:

Behaviour	Definition	Question
Shows initiative	recognizing and taking opportunities to do work without being told	Tell me about a work idea you suggested. Describe the situation and the outcome.
Influential	using a positive approach to convince people to do something they weren't willing to previously	Describe a time when a colleague didn't agree with an approach you wanted to take. What was the end result.
Tact and diplomacy	understanding and following protocol, carefully challenging information if it appears to be incorrect	Tell me about a time when a student disagreed with a procedure and demanded something outside of policy. Describe how you handled the discussion.

Situational Interviewing Questions

- assess the candidates' intentions by presenting a situation based on a significant aspect of the job
- write an incident of either effective or ineffective behaviour that has been observed over the past 6 to 12 months, include a description of the circumstances, the effective or ineffective behaviour and the consequences, i.e. why the behaviour was effective or ineffective
- describe a critical incident or dilemma, write a "What would you do if" question
- consult with experienced staff and experts to get the best possible action in answer to the question. Then construct a 3 level scoring guide. Rating: 1, 3 and 5.

The benefits of using situational interviewing questions include:

- asking questions that are not transparent force the candidates to express their true intentions. Research shows that stated intentions correlate with future behaviour. (Latham, 1996)

An example of a situational question:

"A student and her parent come to the front counter at a time when there are several students in line. Over the next 5 to 10 minutes you notice that they become involved in a heated argument that begins to disrupt the office. The other students are moving away from the pair and it appears that the parent may become violent. What would you do in this situation?"

Goal-Oriented Interviewing Questions

- assess the candidates' work preferences and career plans
- cover such areas as the candidates' view of the best match in work environments, the training and development required, and career plans
- establish whether the candidates' goals and preferences match the needs of the organizations, not designed to elicit any specific behaviour. (Latham, 1996)

Examples of a goal-oriented questions:

"What would be the ideal job for you? Why?"

"What are your short-term and long-term career goals?"

"What's the best type of working environment for you?"

"What training or development would you need to fulfill the requirements of this position?"

"What courses of study that you have completed are particularly relevant to the requirements of this job?"

Sample Interview Questions

Behaviour	Behavioural Question & probes	Notes
1. Approachable	What do you do to make your clients feel attended to? Describe a situation, your actions and the outcome.	
2. Confident	Describe a time when you had to talk to a person or group you didn't know well. What did you do to display your confidence? How did it go?	
3. Conflict management	Describe a situation in which you and a co-worker or client were in conflict with each other. What did you do to resolve the conflict? What was the outcome?	
4. Detail-oriented	Describe a task where you had to use fact-finding skills. What did you do to ensure the accuracy of your work?	
5. Flexible	Tell me about a time when you dealt with frequent changes. What were the tasks? How did you handle this?	
6. Goal attainment	Describe a project that required you to meet a goal. Give me an example of the steps you took to accomplish the goal. What was the outcome?	
7. Good Listening	Tell me about a time when a client could not effectively communicate a need to you. Describe the situation and the steps you took to resolve or understand the situation.	
8. Influential	Tell me about a time when you had to convince someone to make a decision they wouldn't have otherwise made. What did you do that made you successful?	
9. Initiative	Tell me about a task that required you to be a self-starter. What did you do when there were no immediate directions? What were the results?	

Behaviour	Behavioural Question & probe	Notes
10. Patience	Describe a situation where you had to be especially patient with a client or co-worker. What was it about the situation that required more patience on your part? What did you do to display your patience?	
11. Problem solver	Tell me about how you resolved a work-related problem. What was the outcome?	
12. Reliable	Tell me about a time when someone had to rely heavily on your work. What did you do to ensure that you satisfied this person?	
13. Stress management	Tell me about your most recent hectic day at work? How did you keep under control? How did you ensure that all your priorities were done?	
14. Take direction	Tell me about a task that required you to take direction. What did you do to ensure that you met the requirements?	
15. Team player	Describe a time when you established a cooperative working relationship with a team. What did you do to work effectively with them?	
16. Time management	What examples can you give that demonstrate your ability to meet deadlines and react to priorities? How are you able to decide?	
17. Trustworthy	Describe a task that required your colleague to trust you a great deal. What actions did you take to maintain your colleague's trust?	
18.	Tell me about a time when you had to speak up in order to be sure that other people knew what you thought. What did you say and what was the outcome?	
19.	Describe the most significant written document or presentation that you had to complete. How did you accomplish it? What were the results?	

Behaviour	Behavioural Question & probe	Notes
20.	When you have an uninteresting job to do, how do you handle it? Describe a situation and the steps you took to get the job done.	
21.	What types of decisions can you make without consulting your manager? Give me an example of one, and the steps you took to make the decision.	
22.	Tell me about something creative you have done at work. How did you accomplish it and what was the outcome?	
23.	Describe an instance when you decided not to follow a standard policy or procedure. What did you do and why? What was the outcome?	
24.	Give me an example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree. What did you do and why? What was the outcome?	

Behaviour	Situational Question	Scoring guide
Crisis intervention	“A student and her parent come to the front counter at a time when there are several students in line. Over the next 5 - 10 minutes you notice that they become involved in a heated argument that begins to disrupt the office. The other students are moving away from the pair. What would you do in this situation?”	(1) I'd stay behind the counter and call for the manager. (3) I'd ask for staff back-up and approach the pair, and mention that the disturbance is affecting others then ask them how I could be of assistance. (5) I'd ask for staff back-up and approach the pair. I'd tell them in a firm manner that their loud arguing is inappropriate behaviour because it is disturbing others. I'd offer options of either a room down the hall for them to resolve the problem or that perhaps they could discuss this at home and come back. However, in either case, this behaviour must stop, or the campus police will be called.

Behaviour	Goal-Oriented Question	Notes
Self development	What training or development would you need to fulfill the requirements of this position?	
Career goals	What are your short-term and long-term career goals?	

