

# INTERVIEWING

*Tool Book*

AFOA.CA





## OVERVIEW

This guidebook is intended to be used as a tool to help identify some things to consider, checklists, and best practices when interviewing candidates.

All interviews should include an introduction of the panel participants, the position for which the candidate is interviewing, and the organization. This should be kept concise and professional but welcoming to the candidate. Let them know this is an opportunity for them to learn about you as much as you about them and try to make them feel at ease while maintaining professional boundaries. After which, ask the candidate to introduce themselves and their professional background.

The first collection of questions should focus on functional competencies (technical skills and ability to perform the duties of the job), followed by a collection of questions focused on behavioural competencies. Common competencies to assess are teamwork, leadership, communication, problem-solving, and adaptability, using past situations from the candidate's work experience to assess those skill sets. Finally, ensure you offer the candidate an opportunity to ask questions of the panel participants about the job or the organization, salary and benefits, or others.

It is critical for fairness and consistency that each interview candidate be asked the same series of questions by the same panel for a single position. You need to be assessing candidates against the same set of criteria for the position.





# INTERVIEW

## *Checklist*

### **BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**

- Complete interview training
- Review candidate application packages
- Prepare functional competency questions by choosing which functional competencies (up to 3 are recommended) to assess. These should be reflected in the current job description, but if not, for each, think of the "minimum requirements"; what do you want the candidate to have done/know? What must they demonstrate from day one to be successful in the role? Your functional competencies should represent the breadth and depth of the job requirements. If they are too specific, then only a very limited view of the candidate's competence will be seen.
- Choose the behavioural questions by considering the role and required behaviours to be successful. Ask two to three questions to assess each of the top three competencies which may include growth, communication, problem-solving and collaboration. Ask them to reflect on previous experiences and detail the situation, their role or reaction, and the outcome. It is also helpful to ask what they might do differently in hindsight.


### **DURING THE INTERVIEW**

- Be welcoming to the candidate; try to put them at ease
- Introduce yourself, your role on the panel, and the position for which they are interviewing
- Cover the relevant housekeeping items (ie.washroom locations, emergency exits, etc)
- Introduce the interview process/what they can expect during this time together
- Ask questions:
  - Encourage the candidate to give specific examples and explore their answers by using probing follow-up questions using the STARR model as a guide
    - Situation–ie. What was the context/project/background?
    - Task–ie. What did you have to do? Why?
    - Actions–ie. How did you respond or act on that? What actions did you take?
    - Relationships–ie. Who else was involved?
    - Results–ie. What was the outcome? What was the impact?
  - Ask appropriate and relevant questions (ie. Open, singular and non-leading questions, avoiding inappropriate topics such as gender, ethnicity, or religion)
- Take detailed notes without inappropriate judgments
- Be an active listener (ie.nod) but avoid evaluative comments (ie. Perfect, that's great)
- End the interviewing by explaining the next steps in the process, when/how they can expect to hear from you. Offer them an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

### **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

- Review your notes and assess against your scoring matrix with objectivity. Decide which competency each piece of evidence measures, making sure that you only measure each piece of evidence once.
- All ratings must be based on evidence/what the candidate has said during the interview.Do not provide a rating based on what you interpret their ability to be, despite how they may have presented the information. Do not make assumptions about the situation or their role in their example. Only assess the information they have provided to you.



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- Only rate evidence/behaviours which are related to the competency you are assessing in that question.
  - Do not allow your impression of the individual (whether you like or do not like them) to cloud your ability to objectively assess their competency to perform the duties of the role.
  - Be mindful of your biases or perceptions of different groups/characteristics, as these can impact your reactions to or judgments of candidates.
  - As a group, all panellists shall submit their individual ratings for the questions, and the numerical average of the interviewer's ratings shall make the decision for each candidate—suitable for offer or rejection.
  - Only those candidates who obtain an average rating of 3 or more on all competencies should be considered as suitable, but a number of factors may affect this guideline.
  - DO NOT POSTPONE a decision on whether a candidate is suitable or not—complete this decision-making process as a group immediately after the interview.
  - Log your evaluation on the scoring matrix for the candidate, and consult your HR business partner, Executive Director or designate to advise you on storage of your interview notes and scoring, and making an offer to the selected candidate.
  - Do not reject any suitable candidates until your selected candidate has accepted a job offer in writing, and satisfied any conditions. Once this has been confirmed, advise other candidates that the position has been filled.

## BIASES

Interviewing bias is when an interviewer judges a candidate based on preconceived criteria, reducing the objectivity of the interview. Types of interviewing bias include:

- **Stereotypes:** Making assumptions about people based on a group to which they belong, not on evidence.
- **Similarity effect:** Favouring people similar to us, which may skew our assumptions of their capabilities.
- **Halo and horns effect:** When we judge all aspects of a person based on a single positive (halo) or negative (horn) characteristic.
- **Primary and recency:** A tendency to remember the first and last events in a series, and miss, or misremember the details in the middle. It is important to detail the entire response by the candidate for later review.
- **Contrast effect:** Interpreting information about people by comparing them to each other. Evaluate interviews by comparing evidence to the pre-defined criteria rather than against the performance of other interviewees, or the current incumbent.

## INTERVIEW SCORING MATRIX

If you don't already have a rating matrix in place which defines a scale on which you can assess the evidence provided by the interviewee in response to any question you are asking, you need to develop that first. It doesn't have to be complicated, or even specific to the question of competency. However, it does need to provide an objective set of criteria by which you assess each interviewee's responses for consistent application and assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities. A basic example is shown below for functional competency assessment.

1 <b>BELOW EXPECTATIONS</b> Major development required for the job	2	3 <b>MEETING EXPECTATIONS</b> Acceptable level for the job, some scope for development	4	5 <b>ABOVE EXPECTATIONS</b> Real strength, no development required for the job	N/A (NO EVIDENCE PROVIDED)
Struggles to give details on the more complex technical/ functional theories, models and/ or concepts.		Shows a solid understanding of some of the more complex technical/ functional theories, models and/ or concepts.		Can clearly explain and critically evaluate a diverse range of complex technical/ functional theories, models and/ or concepts.	
Provides limited or no evidence on their ability to apply functional skills consistently and effectively.		Provides clear evidence on how they apply functional skills consistently and effectively.		Provides clear evidence on how they apply the functional skill consistently and effectively even in the most difficult situations.	
Shows limited or no evidence on their commitment to best practices.		Shows commitment to best practices.		Is pragmatic in their approach—can critically analyze what can/not be compromised professionally and why.	
May use complex and unfamiliar language to communicate functional specific information to people from other professional backgrounds.		Is able to communicate complex technical or functional information in simple terms for people from different professional backgrounds.		Clearly communicates technically or functional information, making it comprehensible to people from different professional backgrounds.	
Provides limited or no evidence on the impact of their functional expertise outside of their immediate team.		Clearly describes the impact and potential impact of their functional expertise on the wider business.		Clearly describes how their functional expertise can be leveraged to add value to the wider business.	
Provides a superficial self-assessment of own strengths and development needs in professional or functional area.		Shows a clear understanding of own strengths and development needs in professional area and has some ideas on how to address development areas.		Is clear on what exactly needs to be done to address their professional development needs and to maximize their potential.	
Demonstrates limited enthusiasm and interest in pursuing professional development.		Is enthusiastic about own profession and shows motivation to develop professionally.		Is enthusiastic about own profession and shows clear intention to actively pursue opportunities to enhance professional competence.	
Shows limited knowledge of the latest developments in own professional area and lack of curiosity to learn more about them.		Demonstrates eagerness to keep up to date with the latest developments in own professional area.		Is able to critically analyse the benefits/ disadvantages of the latest developments in own professional area.	

## DISCLAIMER

This is not an exhaustive tool. It is imperative that you consult your provincial/territorial/ federal legislation on human rights, and accessibility in your considerations. Only those managers/employees who have been properly trained in interviewing best practices should participate on an interview panel.