



a New Day for Federal Service

Interviewing Candidates from the Certificate of Eligibles

HR's Role in the Process

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Purpose of Federal Interviews

- Federal job interviews are used:
 - As a part of the competitive examining process, to rate and rank eligible applicants who have been evaluated for basic qualifications
 - By the hiring official to verify qualifications of candidates from the certificate(s) of eligibles prior to making a hiring decision

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Hiring Official's Role

- Review applications of eligible candidates
- Develop interview questions
- Schedule and conduct interviews
- Check references
- Sign and return Certificate(s) of Eligibles identifying selected individual(s)

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Human Resources' Role

- Advise hiring official, for example:
 - Communicate interview policy
 - Provide expertise on question development
 - Identify delivery method options
 - Recommend actions to increase timeliness

Human Resources' Role (Cont'd)

- Issue Certificate(s) of Eligibles
- Provide timeline to hiring official for returning signed Certificate(s)
- Communicate with hiring official throughout process



Scheduling Interviews

- Contact candidates via telephone or email
 - Provide information
 - Point of contact(s)
 - Building access requirements
 - Ask if an accommodation is needed



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Scheduling Interviews (Cont'd)

- Ensure appropriate interview setting
 - Secure a quiet, private room
 - Provide a separate area for candidates waiting to be interviewed
 - Ensure the facility and interview room are accessible to candidates with disabilities

Developing Interview Questions

- Create questions, in advance, focused on job-related experience, knowledge, skills, training using sources including:
 - Job analysis
 - Position description
 - Requirements in the JOA



Interview Delivery Methods

- Methods
 - Telephone
 - In-person
 - Video
- Formats
 - One-on-one
 - Panel





Interview Formats: Structured vs. Unstructured

Structured Interview	Unstructured Interview
Each interviewee is asked the same set of questions	Interviewees may be asked different questions
Each interviewee is given the same amount of time to respond to each question	Interviewees may be given varying amounts of time to respond to questions
Responses are formally scored using the same procedures across interviews	Responses may not be formally scored but can provide information used to make a hiring decision

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Interview Coverage

- Interviews are well-suited for assessing general competencies such as:
 - Teamwork
 - Oral Communication
 - Problem Solving
- Focus on a small number (4 – 6) of the most important competencies
 - Highly specialized or high-level (e.g., managerial or executive) jobs likely will cover more competencies

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Question Types

- Behavior-based
 - Responses based on events or experiences
 - “Tell me about a time when you...”
- Situation-based
 - Responses based on hypothetical events or situation
 - “If you were in the following situation...what would you do?”

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Question Types (Cont'd)

- Resume-based
 - Responses based on candidate's resume
 - “Tell me about your job at...”
- Getting-to-Know-You
 - What is your greatest strength?
 - “Why should I hire you?”

Question Type: Behavior-based

- Behavior-based questions draw on a candidate's experiences
 - Objective
 - Measurable
 - Repeatable



Responses to Questions

- Record responses using the STAR Model
 1. **Situation or Task:** Provides the context
 2. **Action:** Describes exactly what the applicant did
 3. **Result:** Specifics about the outcome



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Sample Behavior-based Question

Competency: *Interpersonal Skills*

Describe a time when you dealt with an individual who was difficult, hostile, or distressed.

- Who was involved?
- What specific actions did you take?
- What was the result?

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Sample Behavior-based Response

- Interviewers should seek:
 - Basic information (e.g., see STAR Model)
 - Examples from experience (paid or unpaid) clearly demonstrating competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities for the job
 - Quantified achievements such as:
 - If they saved money, how much
 - If they improved a process, what was improved (saved time, money, helped more customers, increased sales)

What is Not a Behavior-based Response

- Responses that are:
 - Opinion-based
 - Theoretical
 - Vague



Questions Interviewers Can Ask

- Interviewers may ask about:
 - Specific roles and responsibilities at past or current jobs
 - Likes and dislikes related to candidate's work
 - Job knowledge and job-related factors (experiences, education, training, skills, etc.)



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Questions Candidates May Ask

- Hiring official should be ready to respond to candidate's questions, for example:
 - What is a typical day like?
 - What projects or assignments would I be responsible for?
 - What is your management style?
 - What is the career path?
 - When do you expect to make a decision?

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Day of the Interview

- Hiring official should:
 - Review candidate's resume
 - Bring a copy of the resume and JOA
 - Ask open-ended job-related questions
 - Consider candidate's paid and unpaid accomplishments and how they link to the position's requirements
 - Provide realistic job preview and answer candidate's questions
 - Take detailed notes

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After the Interview

- Hiring official is responsible for:
 - Conducting reference checks before signing the Certificate(s)
 - Contact at least two previous employers
 - Ask only job-related questions
 - Making selection(s) and returning signed Certificate(s) in a timely manner
 - Within 1 day (2 at most) of completing the interviews/reference checks

Questions



usajobsrecruit@opm.gov