

## Interview techniques

### Types of interviews

There are two main types behavioural and situational questioning:

#### Behavioural Interviewing

- Link your areas of questioning to their actual experiences, or their behaviour in the past
- Ask for examples – and probe for evidence

#### Situational Interviewing

- Questions relate to a situation they may face in the role.
- This type of interview can test knowledge and how the candidate analyses a problem, but will not be as good at predicting future behaviour.

## Questioning Skills

### Useful questioning techniques

Open Questions	<b>Why ...How ... When ... Where ... Who ... What ?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ These provide scope for the candidate to talk – the more they talk, the more you will find out</li></ul>
Closed Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ These are useful to gather factual information and can discourage candidates giving long answers</li></ul>
Short and Simple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Make sure you don't spend too long “setting the scene ..”</li><li>▪ Avoid multiple questions – they should be unambiguous</li></ul>
Avoid Rigid Lists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Be flexible in your questions, and listen to the answers to develop your next question</li></ul>
Probing questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Follow up your initial questions by asking for more specific information –this will help you check your understanding and encourage the candidate to give full answers (also see building questions below)</li></ul>

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<b>Pauses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Give the candidate plenty of time to answer before throwing them a “lifeline”</li><li>▪ Encourage them to take their time</li></ul>
<b>Summaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ A summary can help ensure you have understood an answer given and encourage the candidate to tell you more about this area of their work.</li></ul>

## Varying Levels of Questioning

You may well ask the same question of different grades around competency areas. What will change are the answers/depth you might expect in reply.

Questions operate at three different levels:

### FACTUAL

Level 1                    Descriptive, i.e. describing job/school/duties. Can the candidate collect their thoughts; can they present answers logically? Are they methodical? Can the candidate recall an example of evidence?

### OPINION

Level 2                    Does the candidate have ideas of their own or are they repeating someone else’s views? Can they commit themselves to a point of view? Is their point of view well balanced? Do they have the ability to make decisions stick?

### ANALYSIS

Level 3                    Seeing things in terms of issues. Ability to handle ideas rather than facts. Arguing pros and cons, and reaching conclusions.

An individual interview can swing between the stages i.e. you might start off all interviews at a factual level to settle the applicant down, but the important thing is that you recognise at what level you are and mark the applicant accordingly. With a poor applicant you may have to drop down to opinions and never reach the analysis stage. This will effect how you assess the applicant.

### **Building Questions**

Examples of questions that go through the three stages and use behavioural interviewing as a basis:

"Have you ever dealt with a difficult teenager?"

"What exactly did you do?"

"Did that work?"

"Why did/didn't it work?"

### Question types to avoid

<b>Leading questions</b>	These can lead the candidate to the answer you expect e.g. I suppose you would check that...?
<b>Multiple questions</b>	Candidates will either answer the last question or the questions they can most easily answer. The others will be forgotten. E.g. When did you start there? How long were you there? What did you do? And why did you leave?
<b>Hypothetical questions</b>	Frequently get a hypothetical answer. The answer you get cannot be relied upon to tell you whether the candidate will do what they say. They can be useful to see how the candidate explores new ideas and to test their value systems. e.g. What would you do if pupils started to become disruptive?

## Problem Situations

### An applicant who says very little

– reason: they are shy or inarticulate

- Try to put them at their ease
- Give the applicant plenty of time to collect their thoughts
- Give encouragement, look attentive and smile
- Do not try to help by talking more yourself

– reason: they have few ideas or opinions

- Encourage them to speak freely
- Do not display signs of disapproval
- Get them talking about something simple and then raise the standard
- Open questions

### An applicant who talks too much

When to interrupt

- When you have all the information you require on the topic
- Their answer is irrelevant
- If you are not competent to assess the content of what they are saying

How to do so

- Break eye contact
- Use their name
- Use closed questions
- Change the subject firmly but politely
- Look for a pause for breath and break in

### Candidate who avoids the question

- Repeat the question
- Give some background to your question if necessary and repeat it
- Do not let them avoid answering
- If they genuinely do not know, move to another question.