

## Guide to Interviewing

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### Introduction

These guidelines have been prepared to help interviewers conduct fair and objective interviews. An interview should provide as much information as possible about an applicant's potential to perform the duties of a particular position. The most valuable interview is objective and permits the interviewer(s) to determine the knowledge, skills and abilities of a prospective employee.

### Interview Development

#### Form the Interview Team

If feasible, use a team approach. The team approach is preferable because it saves time and allows for comparison of the applicant by the team members. The size of the interview team may vary.

#### Familiarize the Interviewer(s) With the Position

The interviewer(s) must be familiar with the major duties and responsibilities, and the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities of the position at entry level. Be sure that each interviewer reviews the position description carefully.

#### Establish Criteria for Selection

The selection criteria must be consistent with the complexity and level of the job. The selection criteria have been set forth in the position announcement. Focus on performance factors that can be demonstrated in the selection procedure. Understand the departmental and organizational goals as they relate to this position. Such criteria must be job-related and might include performance during the interview, relevant training, education and experience, affirmative action goals, etc. Example: To what extent is job success dependent upon effective oral communication skills, on-the-spot reasoning skills, and the ability to effectively present oneself to strangers?

#### Develop Job-Related Questions

"Nice to know" questions are not permitted! Lawsuits may result from applicants who are rejected on the basis of irrelevant questions asked by interviewers.

#### Develop Interviewing Strategies

There are many different interviewing strategies. Develop strategies that are appropriate for the position level and skill requirements.

### **Establish a System to Evaluate the Responses**

It might be beneficial to set up a formula for rating or ranking the applicant's responses to the questions based on the selection criteria. Evaluating the responses in this manner will help make the selection process easier and more objective.

## **Interview Suggestions**

### **Preparing Questions**

When developing questions, always keep in mind that they must be job-related and appropriate for the complexity and level of the position. Below are six main categories of questions that are commonly used by interviewers. Different types of questions may be combined to obtain a certain response.

1. **Close-ended questions.** These questions may sometimes be helpful when an interviewer(s) wants to know certain information at the onset or needs to determine specific kinds of knowledge. Close-ended questions are typically answered „yes“ or „no“. Example: "Have you traveled internationally?"
2. **Probing questions.** These questions allow the interviewer(s) to delve deeper for needed information. Example: "What stands out as most significant about your international travel?"
3. **Hypothetical questions.** Hypothetical situations based on specific job-related facts are presented to the applicant for solutions. Example: "What would you do if...?", "How would you handle...?"
4. **Loaded questions.** These questions force an applicant to choose between two undesirable alternatives. The most effective way to employ a loaded question is to recall a real-life situation where two divergent approaches were both carefully considered, then frame the situation as a question starting with, "What would be your approach to a situation where...?". One must be a very proficient interviewer to employ loaded questions effectively. If not, loaded questions can engender unnecessary anxiety and a negative reaction to the interview experience.
5. **Leading questions.** The interviewer(s) sets up the question so that the applicant provides the desired response. When leading questions are asked, the interviewer cannot hope to learn anything about the applicant. Example: "You've been on a tour of Manhattan and it is a very nice place, don't you think?"
6. **Open-ended questions.** These are the most effective questions, yield the greatest amount of information, and allow the applicant latitude in responding. Example: "What did you like about your last job?"

### **Evaluating Responses**

As part of evaluating the responses, the interviewer(s) should review the job description to ensure thorough familiarity with the requirements, duties, and responsibilities of the position.

Furthermore, the interviewer(s) should review the work history and relevant educational credentials of each candidate and consider the intangible requirements of the job. Finally, the interviewer(s) should review the selection criteria, evaluate and rate the response, and rank the applicants based on that criteria.

## **Interview Process**

### **Pre-Interview**

1. Schedule interviews to allow sufficient time for post interview discussion, completion of notes, etc.
2. Secure an interview setting that is free from interruptions or distractions.
3. Review applications and vitae/resumes provided by the applicants.

### **Opening the Interview**

1. Review the functions of the agency, department, or unit in which the position is located.
2. Allow the applicant an opportunity to pose questions or seek clarification concerning the position.
3. Explain the interview process to the applicant.

### **Questioning**

1. Question the applicant following the method established and using any questions developed.
2. Be consistent with all applicants.
3. Allow the applicant sufficient time to respond to each question.
4. Record any relevant information elicited from the questions.

### **Closing the Interview**

1. Inform the applicant when the decision will be made and how notification will occur.
2. Confirm the date of the applicant's availability to begin work.
3. Confirm the applicant's correct address and telephone number.
4. Give the applicant a final opportunity to raise any questions.
5. Obtain all necessary information from the applicant about references, if they have not already been checked.

### **Post-Interview**

1. Review the selection criteria.
2. Review and complete notes.
3. Avoid prejudgment and discussion of applicants between interviews.
4. Use the selection criteria established in the developing stages.
5. Develop profiles of excellence based upon the selection criteria and the responses of the candidates.

6. The profiles of excellence will be used by the hiring authorities to determine the order in which offers are to be made.
7. Notify all applicants interviewed of the results prior to announcing the selection.

### Guidelines for Interview Questions

The following chart is to be used as a guide to formulate questions which will elicit the information needed to make employment decisions.

| SUBJECT AREA              | PERMISSIBLE INQUIRIES   | INQUIRIES WHICH MUST BE AVOIDED  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Name                      | Questions which will enable work and education records to be checked.   | Inquiry about the name which would indicate lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, or marital status.  |
| Age                       | If age is a legal requirement, whether applicant meets the minimum or maximum age requirements; upon hire, proof of age can be required.  | If age is not a legal requirement, any inquiry or requirement that proof of age be submitted must be avoided.<br><br>NOTE - The Age Discrimination in Employment Act, as amended in 1986 prohibits discrimination against persons over age 40. The Kansas Act Against Discrimination prohibits discrimination against persons age 18 and over. |
| Race or Color             | Race may be requested for affirmative action statistical recording purposes. Applicants must be informed that the provision of such information is voluntary.   | Any inquiries which would indicate race or color.  |
| Gender                    | Inquiry or restriction of employment is permissible only where a bona fide occupational qualification exists. (This BFOQ exception is interpreted very narrowly by the courts and EEOC.) The employer must prove that the BFOQ exists and that all members of the affected class are incapable of performing the job. | Any inquiry which would indicate gender.   |
| Marital and Family Status | Whether applicant can meet specified work schedules and/or will be able to travel.  | Any inquiry which would reveal marital status; information on applicant's children, child-care arrangements or pregnancy.  |

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| <p><b>Disabilities</b></p>                   | <p>Under the provisions of the Kansas Act Against Discrimination, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, applicants may be asked if they are able to perform the essential duties of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.</p>  | <p>Whether an applicant is disabled or inquiry about the nature or severity of the disability. Inquiries about any association with or relationship to a person with a disability.</p> <p>NOTE - Except in cases where undue hardship can be proven, employers must make reasonable accommodations for an employee's disability. Reasonable accommodation may include making facilities accessible, job restructuring, modified work schedules, modifying examinations, training materials or policies, acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, or providing qualified readers or interpreters.</p> |
| <p><b>Religion</b></p>                       | <p>Employers may inform applicants of normal hours and days of work required by the job.</p> <p>NOTE - Except in cases where undue hardship can be proven, employers must make reasonable accommodations for an employee's religious practices. Reasonable accommodation may include voluntary substitutions, flexible scheduling, lateral transfer, change of job duties, or use of annual or vacation leave.</p> | <p>Any inquiry which would indicate applicant's religious practices and customs.</p>   |
| <p><b>Address</b></p>                        | <p>Address may be requested so that the applicant can be contacted. Names of persons with whom applicant resides may be requested for compliance with the nepotism policy.</p>   | <p>Any inquiry which may indicate ethnicity or national origin.</p>  |
| <p><b>Ancestry or National Origin</b></p>    | <p>Languages applicant reads, speaks or writes and the degree of fluency if a specific language is necessary to perform the job.</p>   | <p>Inquiries into applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, birthplace, or native language; how applicant learned a foreign language.</p>   |
| <p><b>Conviction &amp; Court Records</b></p> | <p>Inquiry into convictions which relate reasonably to fitness to perform a particular job.</p>  | <p>Ask or check into a person's arrest record; ask or check into a person's court or conviction record if not substantially related to functions and responsibilities of</p>   |

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|                                     | CONVICTION - The employer must consider the nature and gravity of the offense(s), the time that has passed since the conviction and/or completion of the sentence, and whether the conduct for which the applicant was convicted is job-related.                           | the particular job in question.  |
| <b>Birthplace &amp; Citizenship</b> | If United States citizenship is a legal requirement, inquiry about the citizenship of an applicant is permissible. The Employment Eligibility Verification (Form I-9) must be submitted by those who are hired to provide evidence of identity and employment eligibility. | Any inquiry which would indicate the birthplace of the applicant or any of the applicant's relatives.  |
| <b>Military Service</b>             | Type of education and experience gained as it relates to a particular job.   | Type of discharge.   |
| <b>Photographs</b>                  | Statement that a photo may be required after hire for purposes of identification.  | Any requirement or suggestion that a photo be supplied before hiring.  |
| <b>Education</b>                    | Applicant's academic, vocational or professional education; schools attended.  | Any inquiry which would indicate the nationality, racial, or religious affiliation of a school; years of attendance and dates of graduation. |
| <b>Experience</b>                   | Applicant's work experience, including names and addresses of previous employers, dates of employment, reasons for leaving, and salary history.  | Any inquiry regarding non job-related work experience.   |
| <b>Financial Status</b>             | If required for business necessity, questions concerning financial stability. Examples of agencies that make inquiries into applicants' financial status are the Kansas Highway Patrol, Kansas Bureau of Investigation, and the Kansas Lottery.                            | If not required for business necessity, questions concerning financial stability.  |
| <b>Notice in case of Emergency</b>  | Name and address of person(s) to be notified in case of accident or emergency may be requested after selection is made.  | Name and address of relative(s) to be notified in case of accident or emergency.   |
| <b>Organizations</b>                | Inquiry into the organizations to which an applicant belongs and offices held  | A list of all organizations to which the applicant belongs.  |

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|                   | <p>relative to the applicant's ability to perform the job sought.</p> <p>NOTE - An applicant should not be required to provide the name of an organization which will reveal the religious, racial, or ethnic affiliation of the organization.</p> |  |
| <b>References</b> | Names and addresses of persons who will provide professional and/or character references for applicant.  | Requirement that a reference be supplied by a particular individual.   |
| <b>Relatives</b>  | Names of applicant's relatives already employed by the state agency in which employment is sought for compliance with the nepotism policy.   | Name or address of applicant's relatives who are not employed by the state agency in which employment is sought. |

**ANY INQUIRY SHOULD BE AVOIDED WHICH, ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFICALLY LISTED AMONG THE ABOVE, IS DESIGNED TO ELICIT INFORMATION WHICH IS NOT NEEDED TO CONSIDER AN APPLICANT FOR EMPLOYMENT.**