

# STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

**Test Development & Validation Division  
Department of Civil Service  
City of New Orleans**

## **Abstract**

This document contains information on how to conduct structured interviews, some best practices in the field, and examples of interview questions. The Department of Civil Service recommends that the City departments use this resource guide to select candidates from the certified eligible list.

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# Structured Interview Guide

## Background: Civil Service Testing

### What is an employment test?

From an assessment standpoint, a test is a standardized series of items or questions that assess a person's knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs), or other characteristics. From a legal standpoint in the U.S., the *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures* (1978) defines a test as any method used to make an employment decision.

There are different kinds of tests varying according to their mode of administration (e.g., paper and pencil vs. Web-based), their content (e.g., job knowledge, interpersonal skills), their level of standardization or structure, their development and administrative ease (e.g., cost, time), and many other factors.

### Benefits of Civil Service testing

**Performance and profitability.** Hiring or promoting unsuitable people costs departments and the City time and money. Carefully developed and administered employment tests can provide departments with a way to decide systematically and accurately both positive and negative aspects of potential candidates. Tests can help predict which people have the ability to perform well on the job or will be able to learn from training programs. They can also help determine those who may quit early in career, leading to costly turnover, or those who may engage in counterproductive behaviors.

**Efficient decision-making process.** Tests are a cost effective way to pare down the applicant pool. Tests can make the decision process more efficient because less time is spent with individuals whose characteristics, skills, and abilities do not match what is needed. However, some tests do require more time up-front with individuals to determine who is and who is not qualified. In these cases, tests can still result in savings from not training and compensating individuals whose productivity would be low or who would not remain on the job. Sometimes the sheer number of applicants for a position leads an employer to choose testing as the most efficient and fair means of making a decision in a timely manner.

**Cost Saving.** For certain employment decisions, a wrong decision can be very costly in terms of training costs, errors made by a poor performer, costs of replacement, etc. For these types of decisions, using Civil Service testing may be a worthwhile endeavor if it reduces the number of wrong decisions. Moreover, these tests sometimes assess characteristics that cannot be developed through training but are acquired over long periods of time or even a lifetime (e.g., personality traits, in-depth knowledge of a profession).

**Standardization and Consistency.** Employment tests ensure that the same information is gathered on each applicant and used in a similar way in decisions. Subjective biases can easily creep into decisions if the process for making decisions is unstandardized, and the employment reduce (if not eliminate) such biases from the hiring/promotional processes.

### Pitfalls of Civil Service testing

**Resource Consumption.** To develop hiring/promotional tests for different departments, Civil Service invests a lot of time and manpower. Developing a promotional test involves a number of steps, ranging from job analysis, test-item writing, pilot testing, developing scoring rubric, etc. Testing can be a valuable investment to make in hiring and retaining talent.

**Fear of legal challenge.** As with any other method of making employment decisions (e.g., transfers, merit increases, layoffs), tests can be scrutinized if there is a belief that *unfair* discrimination has occurred. While a good test will discriminate among applicants based on their potential and ability to perform the job, discrimination based on any Title VII demographic groups is illegal and counter to one of the [City's Core Values](#) (i.e., Diversity and Inclusion).

**Practical constraints.** Tests may not be the best choice if not many individuals are being considered in a particular employment decision, if the resources to properly administer the test are not available, or if the timing and logistics of the decision-making process preclude the use of a test.

In summary, tests are useful decision-making tools in employment contexts. Civil Service Rule mandate departments to use hiring/promotional test to fill their positions. Among different types of employment tests, interviews are most popular and relatively easy to develop. Departments can use structured interviews to select candidates from the Civil Service certified eligible list.

## Introduction to Structured Interview<sup>1</sup>

Interviews vary greatly in their content but are often used to assess such things as interpersonal skills, communication skills, and situational judgement. They can sometimes be used to assess job knowledge. Well-designed interviews typically use a standard set of questions to evaluate KSAs and other qualities required for the job. The interview is the most commonly used type of test. Interviews can be either structured or unstructured.

A structured interview can be defined as a fixed-format interview in which all questions are prepared beforehand and are put in the same order to each interviewee. Although this style lacks the free flow of a friendly conversation (as in an unstructured Interview) it provides the precision and reliability required in certain situations. Departments can conduct interviews either face-to-face or by phone. Advantages and disadvantages of structured interviews are:

### Advantages

- Are expected and accepted by many job applicants.
- Provide an opportunity for a two-way exchange of information.
- Provide a measure of skills such as oral communication skills not measured via typical paper and pencil or computerized tools.
- Have been demonstrated to produce valid inferences for a number of organizational outcomes, if properly developed and administered.
- Are typically less likely to differ in results by gender and race than other types of tests.

### Disadvantages

- May be affected by different kinds of rating errors and biases by interviewers.
- Are often more time-consuming to administer than paper and pencil or computerized tools.
- May be practically less useful when a very large number of individuals must be evaluated because of administration time.
- Can be costly to train interviewers.
- May be difficult to keep interviewers calibrated and the interview process standardized.
- May be susceptible to candidate's impression management.

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the information in this section is gathered from the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology's online resources. More information can be found here: <http://www.siop.org/workplace/default.aspx>

## Effective Interviewing

While no technique is perfect, structured interviewing can alleviate some of the common problems associated with other interview methods which are not as valid or reliable. Although similar to traditional interviewing techniques, structured interviewing employs some elements that make it more legally defensible and useful to employers in identifying qualified candidates. Using the structured interview format, you may create an interview that includes different types of questions (i.e., situational, behavioral, and job knowledge-based).

All interview processes seek to: provide the candidate with an accurate view of the position; gather information about the candidate's suitability (KSAs and other characteristics) not previously assessed in the screening process; and, evaluate the candidate in light of the position and department culture. The information obtained may be used to gauge candidates' job-related competencies and assist employers in determining which candidate from the certified eligible list is most qualified for a position.

The information gathered during the structured interview often reveals a candidate's level of experience and his or her potential to handle critical situations in your organization. The information may also be highly useful in conducting final reference checks, as one may verify that the candidate actually did what he or she has claimed. For any interview to be most effective, it should:

- Be based on a recently updated job description resulting from a job analysis;
- Follow a pre-determined evaluation criteria with which the interview panel is familiar; and,
- Include sufficient, factual documentation of candidates' responses.

## Developing an effective structured interview

Departments can review candidates' responses and their scores for a more accurate selection. This will also serves as a logical, objective, and legally defensible way of selecting candidates off the eligible list.

The following tips can help hiring managers create an effective interview. We recommend that a group of subject matter experts (SMEs) highly familiar with the position perform the steps together to promote objective and balanced thinking, and to generate more thorough information.

### 1. Identify the candidate characteristics that should be assessed during the interview.

Question to be considered: Is this a KSA or characteristic that is important to success on the job or to some outcome of interest (e.g., low turnover)?

### 2. Develop interview questions.

Once the areas to be evaluated are identified, interview questions should be created that will be used with all candidates for a particular position. Past behavior is one of the best predictors of future behavior. Interview questions should be designed so that candidates describe things they actually did or said in a previous situation and the outcome of their actions. While questions about hypothetical situations (what would you do if . . .) can be useful also, these questions need to worded and used carefully within any interview to get the maximum benefit from them. For example, asking an individual about whether he/she would apply a skill in a particular situation can result in his/her giving an obvious, socially desirable response.

### 3. Plan likely probes and follow-up questions.

If interviewers are not allowed to probe, often key information is not elicited. Thus, a suggested list of possible probes can accompany the list of interview questions, and/or training in effective probing be provided to interviewers.

#### **4. Evaluate responses using anchored scales.**

A systematic evaluation of an individual's responses to interview questions is helpful for several reasons. It allows for a comparison across candidates who are often interviewed by different individuals or even by the same individual across a wide time span. It requires the interviewer to evaluate the candidate on the job-relevant characteristics identified as important, not on any idiosyncratic set of criteria. A standardized rating scale is an evidence that all candidates were evaluated on the same basis.

#### **5. Train interviewers.**

Despite the beliefs of many individuals that they are good judges of others, interviewer training has been demonstrated to be effective in improving the judgments of interviewers, in ensuring that all candidates are treated similarly, and in calibrating interviewers with one another.

#### **6. Understand the legal parameters.**

In deciding which questions to ask in an interview, understanding the legal requirements for selection will help the interviewer avoid asking inappropriate questions. For example in the U.S., laws such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964), the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 outline several areas of concern with regard to employment discrimination. These characteristics include race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age (over 40), and disabilities. Generally, questions directly about these characteristics will be problematic, but questions that ask about a job requirement may relate to a characteristic and be acceptable. For example, one cannot ask "Are you a member of a religion that holds services on Saturday?" But one can ask, "This job requires overtime work on the weekends. Can you work on Saturdays and Sundays?" This is discussed in more details later in this document.

#### **7. Use the interview to provide a realistic job preview.**

Interviews are not just opportunities to learn more about candidates; they are also opportunities for managers to help candidates learn more about the job. When candidates have a realistic understanding of their job, their expectations are more likely to be met and they are less likely to leave the position. It is essential for the hiring managers to offer information on negative as well as positive aspects of the job and the department.

**NOTE.** Please contact the Test Development and Validation Division if you need help developing interview questions for hiring candidates from the eligible list.

### **Additional tips**

#### **Before the interview**

- Conduct the interviews in a private setting in which candidates can feel relatively comfortable.
- Short and simple interview questions are better than long and complex ones.
- Have a pre-determined set of follow-up questions to ask candidates as necessary.
- Conduct brief introductions of the interview and the candidate to establish a rapport.

#### **During the interview**

- Allow candidates time to think about the questions to receive more thorough responses.
- Keep comments and gestures neutral to maintain objectivity and reduces the likelihood of leading (or misleading) candidates. For example, saying "thank you" and nodding is more appropriate than saying "that's great!" or frowning.



- Restate the question to elicit a more specific response; however, limit clarifying questions because they can reduce the reliability of the interview process if only certain candidates are asked extra questions.
- Take notes regarding the candidates' responses.

### After the interview

- Score each response independently of all other responses made by the candidate based upon the rating/evaluation criteria for that question.
- Go over the ratings given to each response to provide an overall score
- Allow sufficient time between interviews so that the process is not rushed.
- Be sure to give candidates the opportunity to ask questions of you.
- Inform candidates approximately when they may expect to be informed of your decision.
- Store interview questions and interview notes from the interview; if stored as e-copy, access needs to be password protected; if stored in lockable filing cabinet, HR personnel should own access to files.<sup>2</sup>

NOTE: These records must be maintained for candidates that are hired as well as those that are not.

### Panel interview

The panel interview is a more objective format since each interviewer gives his or her evaluations of the candidate.

- Include future teammates, direct supervisor, and other personnel who often interact with the position to be filled.
- Provide each panel member with the job description, interview questions, follow-up questions (if available), and candidate's resume
- Allow panel members to take turn in asking questions. It keeps the panel involved in the process.
- When scoring candidate's responses, discuss significant differences in score (perhaps those of more than one point). While consensus is preferred, panel members are entitled to their individual decisions and should not be required to change a rating (if they do not wish to). They may, however, choose to do so as a result of the discussion.

## Some Dos and Don'ts of Interviewing

### Managing candidate reactions

Structured interviews are the best way to create positive reactions towards the City of New Orleans and your department. Following are some recommendations

**Use job-related selection procedures.** The selection procedure should be job-related; this is directly aligned with the recommendation that selection systems be transparent.

**Provide candidates with an opportunity to perform.** It is essential that interviews are comprised of multiple items and that the full range of relevant competencies is assessed.

**Treat candidates with consistency.** This can be accomplished by using standardized procedures and interviews that ask the exact same questions of candidates.

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<sup>2</sup> The EEOC Regulations require that employers keep all personnel or employment records for one year. If an employee is involuntarily terminated, his/her personnel records must be retained for one year from the date of termination. See here for more information: <https://www.eeoc.gov/employers/recordkeeping.cfm> or <http://ilcounty.org/upload/files/HR%20Training/Federal-Record-Retention-Chart.pdf>

**Provide feedback to candidates about their status.** This rule is derived from models of fairness. If interviewers can provide feedback to candidates, the interview process is perceived as fair by applicants.

**Provide explanations and justifications about the selection procedures.** When providing explanations, give the candidates as much information as possible and be sure to put it in context, such as the number of applicants. It is also important to provide explanations regarding the procedures used. Ensure that the entire process is transparent.

**Treat candidates with respect.**

**Encourage two-way communication.** Ensuring opportunities for candidates to ask questions towards the end of the interviews is also critical, and can be accomplished by including open-ended questions for candidate feedback (e.g., “Do you have any questions or comments at this point?”).

## Managing legal issues<sup>3</sup>

Federal and state law states that decisions about employment cannot be made on the basis of:

### Race

- Do not ask questions of minorities that you would not ask of non-minorities
- Do not ask an applicant’s personal views on race/ethnicity
- Do not ask applicants of one race if he/she would be comfortable working with people of another race or in a neighborhood of another race

### Age

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 protects people aged 40 and older from discrimination on the basis of age in hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation, or terms, conditions or privileges of employment.

- Do not ask questions that allow you to determine age, e.g.: “How old were you when Katrina hit?”
- Do not ask if a person can “keep pace” with the other staff.
- Do not ask how applicant feels about working with younger people or for a younger supervisor

### Sex

- Do not ask a woman anything you would not ask a man and vice-a-versa
- Do not ask questions about domestic life- if married, number or age of children, occupation of spouse, babysitting arrangements, husband’s/wife’s reaction to their working, etc.
- Do not assume that jobs are inappropriate for a particular sex

### Religion

- Do not ask origin of last name
- Do not ask if religious beliefs or practices will interfere; “Do you miss work for religious holidays?”; “Do you attend church regularly?”

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<sup>3</sup> Most of this information is obtained from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s website. Please refer to: [https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/index.cfm#application\\_and\\_hiring](https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/index.cfm#application_and_hiring) and <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/index.cfm>. These resources have more information on the legality of different HR practices (including hiring and promotions).

- You can ask if applicant is available every Saturday or Sunday if it is a real requirement to work that day.

### **National Origin**

- Do not ask how applicant learned a foreign language
- Do not ask whether or not applicant is a US citizen before making an offer of employment
- Do not ask where they, their spouse, nor their family members were born

In compliance with federal law, all persons hired will be required to verify identity and eligibility to work in the United States and to complete the required employment eligibility verification document form upon hire.

### **Disabilities**

- Do not eliminate an applicant based on a disability unless the disability will measurably and directly affect job performance
- Do not ask questions about height, weight, and previous illness
- Describe the nature of job and ask if the applicant can perform the tasks with or without reasonable accommodation. That is the legal requirement when interviewing.

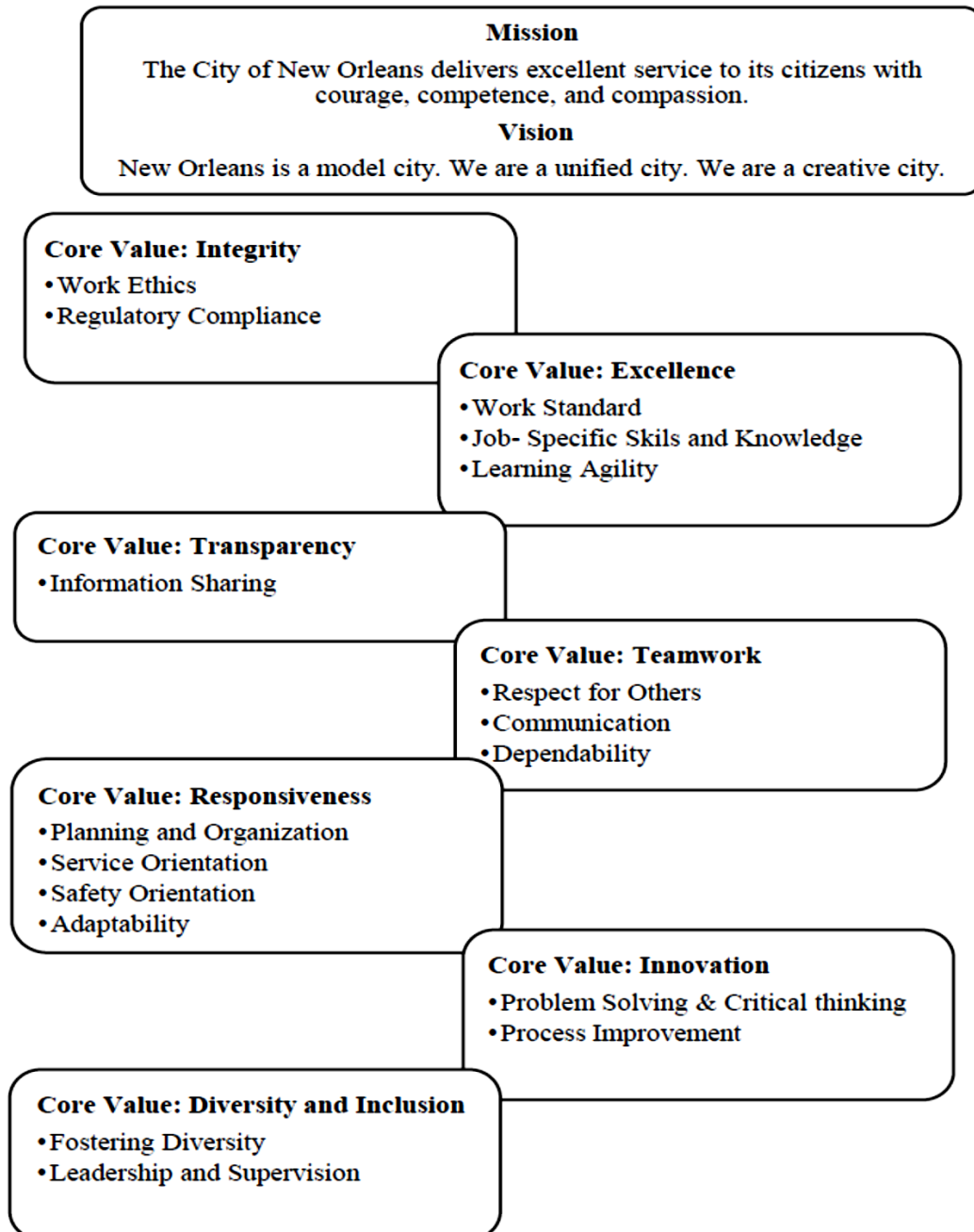
### **Volunteered Information**

- If the information volunteered could provide the basis for a charge of discrimination:
  - Do not ask questions about the information
  - Attempt to somehow stop the applicant from volunteering additional information
  - Be careful of informal chitchat. Indirect/unintentional discrimination is just as illegal as direct discrimination.
    - May appear you are digging for information
    - May reveal actual or perceived prejudices

## Using Civil Service Eligible Lists

After the departments have been provided with a certified eligible list, we recommend they interview candidates on the list to fill the positions. You may plan to interview either *all* the candidates, *only the top scorers* (e.g., top 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the list) or only those indicating relevant experience or training on their resume.

The Department of Civil Service has used a Competency Mapping approach to develop a list of Competencies and KSAs based on these Core Values. These Competencies and KSAs apply to a broad range of jobs across different departments within the City. We present some examples of interview questions that the departments can use. The departments can develop other interview questions, and Civil Service's Test Development and Validation Division can assist departments in developing them.



## Some structured interview questions

### Core Value: Integrity

**Work Ethics.** Demonstrating integrity, honesty, and professionalism in all interactions at work.

- Describe a time when you had to go above and beyond what was expected on the job to accomplish a task. What was the task? What did you do? What was the result?
- Describe the most significant ethical challenge you have ever faced on the job.

**Regulatory Compliance.** Following rules and regulations laid down by the City, State, and Federal government.

- Describe a time when someone at work asked you to perform an unethical task. Without naming names, what position did this person hold (for example, supervisor, colleague, citizen/customer), and how did you respond to this person?
- Tell us about a time you saw someone at work bend the rules which you felt was unacceptable. What was the rule? What did you do? Why did you take that action?

### Core Value: Excellence

**Work Standards.** Quality and volume of work.

- Describe a situation in which you had to complete a large-scale project at work. What did you do to complete it, and what were the most obvious successes and failures of your method?
- Tell us about a time when you were criticized for the work you did. What was the situation? Why do you think you were criticized? What did you do after you received that feedback?
- Describe a situation when you were praised for your work. What was the situation? Why do you think your work was praised?

**Job-Specific Skills and Knowledge.** Technical and professional skills to perform successfully on the job.

- This is adequately assessed by the entry-level and promotional tests that the Department of Civil Service administers to the applicants. That said, the individual departments can design a technical question to test candidate on this.

**Learning Agility.** Ability to learn quickly and continuously.

- Describe a time when you had to learn a new skill or acquire new knowledge to perform a certain task. What was the task? What did you have to learn? How did you learn it? And, how did you use the newly learned skill/knowledge on later occasions?
- Tell us about a time when you were asked to do something you had never done before. How did you react? What did you do?

### Core Value: Transparency

**Information sharing.** Delivering the message of higher authorities to your fellow workers and subordinates.

- The Appointing Authority/Head of the department is implementing a new rules which you know employees will not welcome. How will you address this situation? What actions, if any, would you take?

- If you attended a weekly staff meeting with your supervisor, in the past, how have you ensured that the information you have received is communicated to your reporting staff and coworkers?

## Core value: Teamwork

**Respect for Others.** Ability to demonstrate polite and courteous behavior to others at work.

- Tell us the last time you had to deal with an angry coworker or citizen. What was the situation? What did you do?
- Tell us about a time when you had an argument with your coworker about something. What was the argument about? How did you handle the situation?

**Communication.** Skill of interacting with everyone at work clearly through oral or written medium.

- Describe a time in which you had to teach someone a job-related skill.
- Tell us about a time when you had to present complex information. How did you ensure that the other person understood?

**Dependability.** Ability to demonstrate reliability on the job through attendance, meeting deadlines, and accurate work.

- Tell us about a time when you were pulled away from work by something beyond your control.
- Tell us about a time when it was very difficult to follow through on an important task or a project. What was the situation? What did you do?
- Tell us about a time where you were unable to meet a deadline. What was the situation? What would you do differently next time?

## Core Value: Responsiveness<sup>4</sup>

**Planning and Organization.** Ability to prioritize, coordinate, and perform different work assignments in methodical manner.

- Please describe a time when you had to work on multiple assignments with competing deadlines or address multiple requests made of you. Be specific about the nature and number of the assignments/requests, and how you prioritized them. Also describe if you met expectations.
- Tell me about a time when you had to manage a large project/task? What steps did you take to ensure the project/task was completed on time and met standards?

**Service Orientation.** Focusing on stakeholder/citizen's needs and well-being

- Describe a situation in your career when you failed at achieving a goal or could not complete a given assignment. What was the situation/goal/assignment? What were the obstacles in your path, and what specifically did you do to overcome them?

**Safety Orientation.** Demonstrating concern for safety at workplace.

- How would you explain to the new employee on your team the importance of following safety measures at work?
- Explain the safety precautions you use when you are operating your equipment.

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<sup>4</sup> Note that "Service Orientation" and "Safety Orientation" may be applicable to selective jobs within the City.

**Adaptability.** Ability to tolerate uncertainty and demonstrate flexibility in dealing with emergencies at work.

- Recall a time when you were unexpectedly assigned a task outside of your job description. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- Tell us about the biggest change that you have had to deal with at work or outside work. How did you adapt to that change?

## **Core Value: Innovation**

**Problem Solving & Critical Thinking.** Ability to resolve difficult work situations or problems to come to successful resolution.

- Tell us about a time when you recognized a problem at work and then devised a solution to it. Be specific about the nature of the problem, the solution you devised, and the most difficult obstacle you overcame in the process.
- Describe a time when you came up with a creative solution to a problem in your past/current work.

**Process Improvement.** Thinking of ways to improve things at work.

- Describe a situation when you made a substantial change to a system, process, or a program at work. Why did you do it? How did you do it?
- Tell us about something new or different that you did in your department that improved customer service, productivity, quality, teamwork, or performance.
- How do you stay abreast with the state of the art processes in your field of work? Explain in detail what specific actions you take to do so.

## **Core Value: Diversity and Inclusion**

**Fostering Diversity.** Encouraging minorities to get involved in projects/work.

- Tell us about a time when you worked with individuals from different backgrounds. What did you like about the experience? What did you dislike about the experience?
- What does it mean for you to have a commitment to diversity? How have you demonstrated that commitment, and how would you see yourself demonstrating it here?
- How would you advocate for diversity/inclusion especially to individuals who do not see its value?

**Leadership and Supervision.** Motivating, delegating, controlling, and mentoring lower-level employees.

- Describe a situation when you led a team at work. Be specific about the team, your common goal, the kind of leadership role you played in bringing everything together, and the outcome of the situation.
- Tell us about a time when you had to deal with a difficult employee/subordinate. Without naming names, what position did this person hold, and how did you respond to this person?
- Tell us about a time you had to provide constructive feedback to an employee who was not meeting performance expectations.
- Tell us about a time you coached or mentored someone to a higher level of performance or a higher level position.

## Rating Scale for Interview Questions<sup>5</sup>

This rating scale ranges from 1 (*ignorance*) to 5 (*expert*), explaining different levels of expertise in using a specific competency/KSA in different situations. It is generic in nature and can be used to rate a candidate's response.

Individual departments can seek assistance from Civil Service to train interviewers/raters. The training shall ideally include going over the scale points and their descriptive anchors, what they mean, and some common rating errors to avoid. Interviewers can minimize these rating errors by thoroughly understanding the competencies being assessed and by learning to compare the behaviors exhibited in the interview with the rating scale provided below.

Proficiency Level	The candidate's response demonstrated that he/she can/shall:
Level 5 - Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always apply this competency/KSA in all situations, especially exceptionally difficult ones.</li> <li>Serve as a key resource for this competency/KSA to others at work.</li> </ul>
Level 4 - Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply this competency/KSA in considerably difficult situations most of the time.</li> <li>Generally requires little or no guidance in using this competency/KSA at work.</li> </ul>
Level 3 - Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occasionally apply this competency in situations at work.</li> <li>Requires occasional guidance in using this competency/KSA at work.</li> </ul>
Level 2 - Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply this competency/KSA to some extent in some situations.</li> <li>Requires frequent guidance in using the competency/KSA.</li> </ul>
Level 1 - Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize the importance of this competency/KSA but does not (or have not had the opportunity to) use it on the job.</li> <li>Requires close and extensive guidance in developing this competency/KSA.</li> </ul>
Level 0 – Ignorance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fail to recognize the importance of this competency/KSA at work.</li> <li>Demonstrate inability to learn/use this competency/KSA at work.</li> </ul>

## Common Rating Errors

Interviewers need to be aware of some common rating errors, because one way to minimize these errors is to make them aware of the most common types of error, which are summarized below. It is essential to note that committing any of these rating errors can lead to hiring a wrong person on the job. The interview allows the department to interact with candidates to gauge their overall suitability to the job in question.

<sup>5</sup> This rating scale is adapted from the "Structured Interview: A Practical Guide" developed by the United States Office of Personnel Management. See here for more information: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/structured-interviews/guide.pdf>



- 1. Rater Bias:** Allowing general prejudices about certain groups of people to interfere with being able to fairly evaluate a candidate's performance. Please note that these can be either positive or negative. For example: Asians are good at Mathematics.
- 2. Halo Effect:** Allowing ratings of performance in one competency to influence ratings for other competencies. For example, allowing a high rating on Communication to bias the rating on Problem Solving, irrespective of the candidate's performance on Problem Solving.
- 3. Central Tendency:** A tendency to rate all competencies at the middle of the rating scale (for example, giving all "3s" on a 5-point scale). Playing safe when rating candidate's performance may lead to hiring a wrong person on the job.
- 4. Leniency:** A tendency to give high ratings to all candidates, irrespective of their actual performance. Interviewers should allow their ratings to reflect some between and within individual differences. When hesitating over a low rating, interviewers should realize it does not mean the candidate does not possess the competency; it means he/she did not demonstrate much of the competency in his/her interview responses.
- 5. Strictness:** A tendency to give low ratings to all candidates, irrespective of their actual performance. There may be outstanding candidates whose demonstration of competencies warrants high ratings. When hesitating over making a high rating, interviewers should realize such a rating does not indicate perfect performance; it means demonstrating more of the competency than is generally exhibited (given candidate's answer to the interview question).
- 6. Similar to Me:** Giving higher than deserved ratings to candidates who appear similar to you. People have a natural tendency to prefer others who are similar in various ways to themselves. Interviewers should concentrate on the responses given by the candidate in making evaluations, rather than on the outward characteristics and personality of the candidate.

NOTE: As an additional resource, Departments are encouraged to send their hiring managers to attend specific Civil Service courses, such as SUPV 620 Personnel Interviewing. A complete listing of Civil Service courses and more information about how to sign up for them can be found in our Employee Growth and Development Training Catalogue posted here:

<https://www.nola.gov/civil-service/resources/>

## Important Resources<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> There is a plethora of research on employment interview practices. If interested, take a gander!

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Online Resource:

1. [https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/inquiries\\_citizenship.cfm](https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/inquiries_citizenship.cfm)
2. <http://www.siop.org/tip/backissues/tipjul96/church.aspx>
3. <http://www.siop.org/tip/july12/06dantonio.aspx>
4. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/complyingwithemploymentrecordrequirements.aspx>