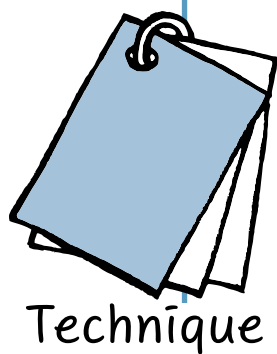


Recruitment and selection

Developing recruitment interview questions



When hiring and selecting employees, interview questions should be based on the requirements of the job role i.e. the selection criteria and the relevant capability level developed from the **Workforce Capability Framework**.

Many interviewers have a pattern they follow in interviews and questions they like to ask.

Questions which ask the candidate to explain their proficiency in specific work skills or areas relevant to the role, often known as **competency-based** questions, are very common and are frequently used by managers.

Behavioural and situational interview questioning techniques are also used and can be much more accurate in extracting relevant information rather than using broad and general interview questions.

- * **Behavioural** questions seek information about how a candidate has responded in the past to certain workplace circumstances.
- * **Situational** questions seek information about how a candidate would respond to a potential workplace scenario.

Most interviews will include a mix of all types of questions.

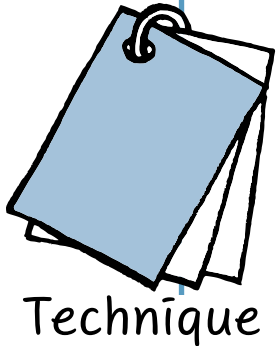
Competency-based Questions

Each selection criterion can be used to develop one or more competency-based questions. The interview or questioning is structured around testing each criterion area at a time. This enables the interviewer to form an opinion in each area applicable to the role.

By using selection criteria that have been developed consistently with the relevant job level in the Workforce Capability Framework; the interviewer is able to ensure that the questions are assessing the right level of capability for the role.

For example, a selection criterion based on the **strategic core requirement** in the area of communication for level 5 in the Workforce Capability Framework could be:

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‘Demonstrates positive and adaptable communication skills in working with individuals and families in a day service setting.’

Competency-based questions explore the candidate's experience and understanding in the specific area covered by the selection criterion. Examples of competency-based questions for this criterion would be:

- * What communication skills do you have that are relevant to working in an activity centre for people with disability?
- * How do you adapt your communication skills to meet the needs of each individual?
- * What do you think demonstrates positive communication skills?

Candidates respond with a summary of their relevant skills, experiences and thoughts on the area and may or may not include examples to back up their statements.

It is good practice with competency-based questioning for the interviewer to then go on and explore a candidate's capabilities in more depth.

Behavioural Questions

Responses to a behavioural interview question demonstrate what a candidate thought, said and how they acted in a true work-related situation. In the response, the interviewers are looking for an example from the candidate's experience that demonstrates that they are or would be, effective at the job level that is being recruited for.

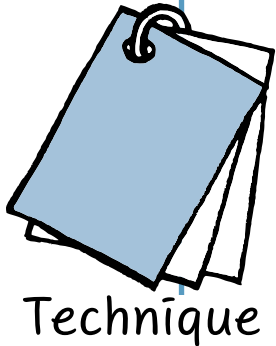
e.g.

Behavioural questions often start with a phrase such as, ‘Tell me about a time when you ...’, ‘Describe a situation when you...’.

Examples of **general behavioural questions**:

- * Can you tell me about a time when you used your initiative to improve the support offered to customers of the program you were working in?
- * Describe a recent work-related problem. Tell me about the action you took to solve the problem. What was the outcome?

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- * Tell me about a situation in which you have had to adjust quickly to changes in customer priorities. What was the impact of the change on you? How did you respond? What was the eventual result and outcome for the customers?

These are all examples of **general behavioural questions**. You can increase the effectiveness of these questions by checking the alignment with the relevant job level capabilities in the Workforce Capability Framework, the position description and the selection criteria that have already been prepared.

To align behavioural questions with the Workforce Capability Framework the examples sought from the candidate need to align with the capabilities relevant to the role. So if, for example, the role in question was at level 5 in the **Direct Service Delivery** job family and one of the selection criteria covered the **strategic core requirement** area of communication, then the question would be based on the capability description which is as follows:

e.g.

‘Uses a range of positive engaging techniques and can adapt style to meet needs of the other person. Effectively collaborates with other teams. Deals regularly with complex matters involving interaction with internal and external professionals and related organisations. Assists with the preparation of complex management reports. Can assist others to resolve conflict. Has a network of contacts internally and externally.’

So a relevant behavioural question could be:

e.g.

‘Tell us about a time when you have had to adapt your style of communication to meet the needs of a person you were supporting. What worked well? What did you learn?’

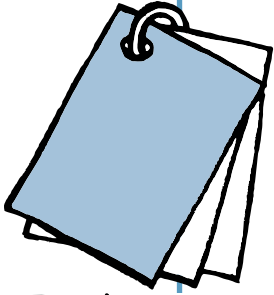
or

e.g.

‘Describe a situation where you have assisted other people to resolve conflict between them. How did you decide what to do? What responses did you get? How did you progress the situation towards resolution?’

Another strategic core requirement, Innovation, also for level 5 reads as follows:

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Technique

e.g.

'Adopts a resourceful and adaptable approach to work. Encourages creativity in others. Identifies opportunities for improvement to services provided. Able to address and mitigate risk and advise others; assists in risk assessments. Recommends changes to procedures and standards that impact beyond own team.'

A relevant behavioural question could be:

'Provide us an example of when you have identified an opportunity for improvement to the services being delivered. How did you recognise the opportunity? What sort of things did you take into account? What did you do to follow through? What was the final outcome?'

In this case the interviewer is looking for evidence that the candidate has demonstrated capability consistent with the capabilities described for level 5 in the strategic core requirement of innovation.

Situational Questions

Responses to a situational interview question involve the candidate imagining a set of circumstances and then indicating how they would respond in that situation – this is often also called the 'hypothetical' or the 'scenario' style of question. This type of questioning allows the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate his/her analytical and problem solving skills, as well as apply any relevant experience.

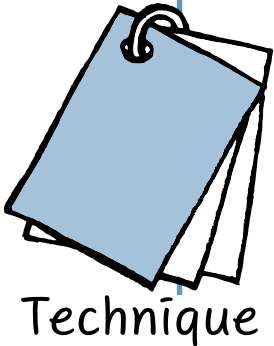
An advantage of situational questions is that all candidates can respond to the same hypothetical situation rather than describe experiences unique to them from their past. Situational questions also allow candidates who have had no direct experience at the relevant job level to provide a hypothetical response demonstrating their relevant capability level in line with the Workforce Capability Framework.

General situational questions:

e.g.

How would you deal with an angry phone call from a person being supported by you? Why would you take this approach? What other things could you try if it seemed appropriate?

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- * What would you do if you came across a work task that you had never done before? What would you do if there was no one around to ask?
- * How would you respond to a team member who was reluctant to take on new responsibilities? What do you think would be the result? What would you do if your approach didn't seem to be working?

To increase the accuracy of these questions and align the situational questioning with the Workforce Capability Framework, the example sought from the candidate needs to once again align with the capabilities relevant to the role. So, using level 5 in the Workforce Capability Framework in the strategic core requirement area of communication, the question would be based on the capability description which is as follows:

e.g.

'Uses a range of positive engaging techniques and can adapt style to meet needs of the other person. Effectively collaborates with other teams. Deals regularly with complex matters involving interaction with internal and external professionals and related organisations. Assists with the preparation of complex management reports. Can assist others to resolve conflict. Has a network of contacts internally and externally.'

So a relevant situational question could be :

e.g.

'Imagine a situation when your communication with a person you are supporting is not working well. How would you adapt your style of communication to meet the needs of the other person? How would you know if things were improving?'

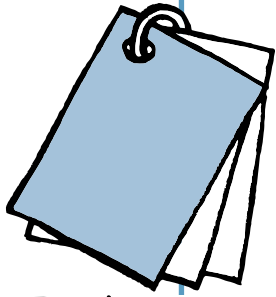
or

e.g.

'What would you do if you became aware of some conflict between two members of your team? How would you decide whether to get involved? What would you do to progress the situation towards resolution?'

The strategic core requirement of innovation for level 5 reads as follows:

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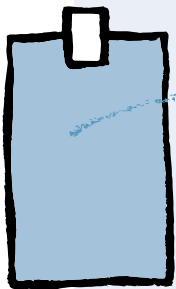


Technique

'Adopts a resourceful and adaptable approach to work. Encourages creativity in others. Identifies opportunities for improvement to services provided. Able to address and mitigate risk and advise others; assists in risk assessments. Recommends changes to procedures and standards that impact beyond own team.'

A relevant situational question could be:

'How would you go about encouraging creativity in other people in the team? Would this be different if you had a leading role in the team or not? How would you know if you were making progress in this area?'



Tips

There is limited time available in interviews so it is usually not possible to ask all the questions a manager, a customer, etc. wish to. It is about prioritising the key areas for seeking information and interpreting the responses in light of the capability requirements and job level of the role.

Most interviews are made up of a combination of all question types.

Competency-based questions establish the initial evidence of relevant capabilities.

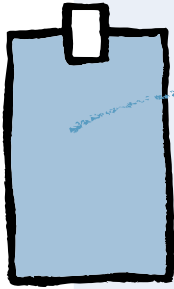
Use both behavioural and situational questioning to supplement the competency-based questions including:

- Why did you decide to do that?
- What do you think you would do next?

This enables the candidate to get into the flow of a response and reveal the depth of their skills and experience rather than just responding to one-off questions, or questions about their competencies or specific skills.

When using behavioural questions it is surprising how many times a candidate starts off with 'Well what I would do is'. In other words, they are answering a behavioural question as if it was a situational question. Make sure that, if necessary, the candidate is reminded that the question is seeking an example of what they have done rather than what they would do.

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Tips

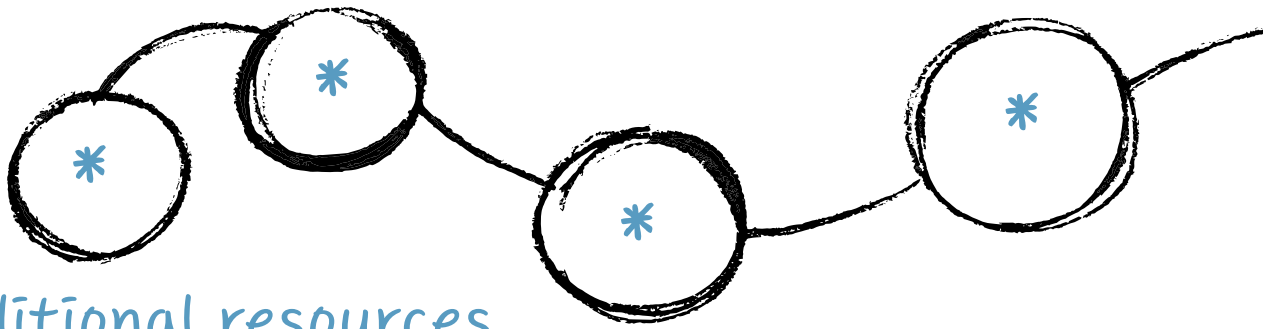
When using a behavioural question, it is important to be prepared to ask either a situational question as an alternative [particularly for candidates who are external to the organisation or sector and may not have a specific example they can draw on] or to be ready to adapt the question.

For example, if a candidate cannot provide an example involving a person with disability, they may be able to give a practical customer service example from their experience in other sectors that demonstrates relevant qualities.

If a candidate has no example or can't think of one, they may have no choice but to answer a behavioural question in a situational way. Just remember that the different type of response will reveal information about the candidate's capabilities in a different way. You are likely to learn more about analytical and problem solving skills this way and less about experience and past approaches to situations.

There can be a good case for second interviews for one or more preferred candidates. This is where questioning can be explored in more depth – after all, the hiring decision is a key one that will impact on the customers and the team for many months and possibly ahead.

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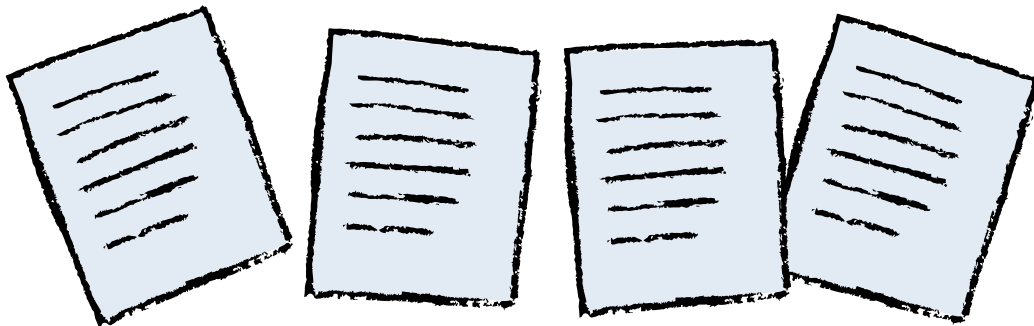
Additional resources

- * The Workforce Capability Framework
- * The disability career planner and capability framework implementation guide
- * Tips – selecting a preferred candidate
- * Tips – using non-interview selection techniques
- * Tips – involving individuals, their families and/or circles of support in the interview process

Definitions

The term **individual(s)** refers to an individual with a disability and their family and/or circle of support.

The terms **staff/employee(s)** refer to paid or unpaid members of the workforce regardless of their employment relationship with their employer i.e. permanent, casual, full-time, volunteer, etc.



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