INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES

The atmosphere established during the interview is important to the success of the interview. It is your role to represent the best that HCC can offer to the applicant. Remember that your time with the applicant is critical in making a sound and legal judgment about their qualifications. Therefore, remain focused on each applicant, minimize distractions around you and maximize every minute of your time with them. The following guidelines have been created to aide you in conducting screening interviews with potential candidates for current and future positions.

- **Create a Friendly Climate**
  Welcome all applicants by shaking their hand and inviting them to be seated. Establish rapport and help them feel comfortable with you and the situation. This approach will aide the applicants in providing the kind of information you need in order to make a valid decision regarding their application. Overall, your body posture and choosing non-threatening opening questions are good strategies for building rapport.

- **Articulate the Purpose**
  Explain the overall purpose of the screening interview and that it will take approximately 10 minutes.

- **Question, Listen, Observe, Evaluate**
  During the body of the interview, the focus turns toward information gathering.
**Strategies for Asking Questions**

- Listen effectively.
- Avoid talking too much.
- Ask questions that assess the applicant’s skills, knowledge, and abilities.
- Ask the same questions of all applicants for consistency purposes.
- Focus on how past behavior suggests success in current position.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Ask probing questions to stimulate further discussion and to obtain more information.
- Probe for information supporting the experience indicated on the resume.
- Maintain an objective, yet friendly attitude, and avoid showing disagreement or disapproval.

- **Agree on Action**
  Before ending the interview explain what will be the next steps.
  - Tell the applicants when you expect to make a hiring decision
  - Do not lead applicants to believe they are qualified or unqualified.

- **End the Interview**
  End the interview on a positive note in order to leave a positive impression of you and HCC.
  - Ask the applicant if there are any additional questions that you might answer.
  - Thank the applicant for participating in the job fair.
CHOOSING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Choosing effective interview questions is a very important step in finding the right person for the job. Oftentimes, questions are chosen that are ineffective and provide unclear and irrelevant information. For example, questions that measure opinions rather than performance are:

- What are your weaknesses?
- Do you work well under pressure?
- Are you a team player?

Questions such as “Where do you want to be five years from now?” often don’t really produce a clear answer. Questions that elicit “yes/no” responses are not recommended. Examples are:

- We need someone who can handle pressure, can you?
- Looking at your resume, it appears that you really like challenges. Do you?

What you really want are questions that rely on past behavior as a predictor of future behavior in similar job circumstances. These types of questions are effective in getting the information you need to make the right hiring decision. The following are sample questions that you may wish to use as a basis in developing your questions that are relevant to your positions.
SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are examples of effective behavioral event interview questions. The headings identify the competencies for which the questions are probing.

Analytical Problem Solving

- Tell about a time when you were systematic in identifying potential problems at work. Feel free to showcase your analytical skills.

Attention to Detail

- Give some examples of things you have done in previous jobs that demonstrate your ability to pay attention to detail. Tell me what resulted from your actions.

Conflict Management

- Give an example of a time when you had conflict with a peer/boss/customer. What was it over, and how did you handle it? What resulted from it? Would you handle it differently now?

Creativity

- Just about anyone can give a routine, standard answer to common problems; however, the payoff is often in the development of unique solutions to common problems. Give an example of one of your unique and novel problem solutions.

Editing Skills

- Describe your experience in editing articles, manuscripts, etc., or any other written communication. Be specific.

Impact and Influence

- Tell about a specific experience that illustrates your ability to verbally influence another person. Please try to use an example that involves changing an attitude, selling an idea, or being persuasive.

Interaction

- Building rapport is sometimes challenging. Can you give me an example of a time when you were able to build rapport with someone at work or in the classroom even when the situation was a difficult one and the odds were against you?
Leadership

- Describe a leadership position you held and indicate the kinds of things you did to get others to follow your directions.

Managing Costs

- Provide some examples of things you have done that demonstrate your ability to manage a budget effectively and would demonstrate your ability to perform this job.
- Give some examples of how you have demonstrated the ability to control costs and still achieve organizational goals.

Managing People

- Have you ever had a difficult subordinate? If yes, tell me how you dealt with him or her and what resulted from your actions.
- Give some examples of specific things you have done that demonstrate your ability to improve employee performance. What did you do, why did you do it, and what resulted from your actions?
- Give some examples of things you have done that demonstrate your ability to manage people effectively. What did you do, and how did the organization benefit from your actions?

Organizational Skills

- Describe a recent project of which you were in charge. Indicate how you organized the project and the impact of your organizational skills on the outcome of the project.

Presentation skills

- What have been your experiences in making presentations? What has been your most successful experience in making presentations to groups?

Quality of Work

- Give some examples of things you have done that demonstrate the quality of work that you do. What did you do, and how did your organization benefit from your actions?
- Give some specific examples of things you have done that demonstrated your ability to meet and exceed performance standards.

Research Skills

- Describe the most significant work experience you have had in which you had to use reference materials, library information, etc., to get the job done. How much time was required? How did the reference materials help you most?
**Response to Deadlines**

- Give some examples of things you have done in the past that demonstrate your ability to respond to tight deadlines. What did you do, and what resulted from your actions?
- Give some examples of things you have done that demonstrate your ability to handle multiple priorities. What did you do and what resulted from your actions?

**Team Building**

- Building team spirit to get results is often a difficult thing to do. Tell me about a time when you had your greatest success in building team spirit. What specific results were accomplished by the team?

**Versatility**

- At times we are required to work with difficult people. An even more demanding factor is to be of service to a difficult person. When have you been successful with this type of situation at work?

**Good Closing Question**

- Is there anything I have not asked you that you may want to add that will demonstrate your ability to perform this job?
**LEGAL VS. ILLEGAL QUESTIONS**

*The rule of thumb:* If a question is job-related, it is probably legal. If it is not job-related, be careful or avoid asking the question. Questions that involve race, religion, gender, national origin, ethnicity, marital status, number of children, disability, and lifestyle are illegal. The table below outlines some of the things you may and may not ask.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>You May Ask</th>
<th>You May Not Ask</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender &amp; Family Arrangements</td>
<td>• If applicant has relatives already employed by the organization</td>
<td>• Gender of applicant</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Number or age of children</td>
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<td>• Marital status</td>
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<td>• Spouse’s occupation</td>
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<td>• Child-care arrangements</td>
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<td>Race</td>
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<td>• Applicant’s race or color</td>
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<td>National origin or ancestry</td>
<td>• Other languages spoken (only if job-related)</td>
<td>• Ethnic association or surname</td>
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<td>• Birthplace of applicant</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Nationality, national origin</td>
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<td>Age</td>
<td>• If applicant is over age 18 (HR will handle.)</td>
<td>• Date of birth</td>
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<td>• Date of high school graduation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>• Whether applicant can perform essential job-related functions</td>
<td>• If applicant has a disability</td>
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<td>• Nature or severity of disability</td>
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<td>• Past or current medical problems</td>
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<td>Religion</td>
<td>• This job requires working weekends and occasional overtime. Is there</td>
<td>• Any inquiry that would indicate or identify religion or religious custom.</td>
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<td>anything that may prevent you from fulfilling these requirements?</td>
<td>• Applicant may not be told any religious identity or preference of the employer.</td>
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<td>• Request a reference or recommendation from a pastor or any other religious/spiritual leader.</td>
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