

**New York State
Department of Civil Service**

Committed to Innovation, Quality and Excellence

**How to Conduct a
Job Interview**

Opportunities at work.



**Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor**

**Jerry Boone
Commissioner**

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

This guide is intended to be used as a practical and informative resource only and is not to be used as legal authority for any purpose. Specific legal authority comes exclusively from statute, rule and case law. We reserve the right to revise, modify or alter the contents of this guide at any time.

How To Conduct A Job Interview

Contents

Planning the Interview
1

Questions You May/May Not Ask
5

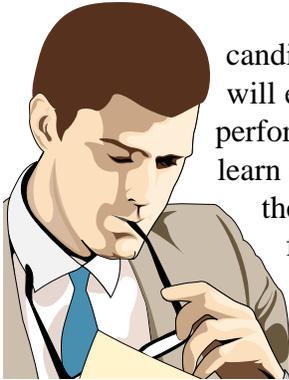
Conducting the Interview
15

Post Interview
20

Appendix
24

Documentation
Sample Interviewing Questions
Interview Schedule
Evaluation Worksheet
History and Reference Form
Interviewing Check Sheet

Planning the Interview



A job interview provides a valuable opportunity for you and the candidate to learn more about each other. Learning more about candidates will enable you to predict more accurately how each candidate might perform in the specific position to be filled. Candidates also have a right to learn about the job for which they are interviewed. You can get the most from the interview by carefully planning in advance what you want to learn from candidates as well as what they will need to learn from you.

There are seven critical areas to focus on before meeting with the candidate:

1. What the Job Requires

- Define the job and what qualifications are required.
- Identify the essential duties and responsibilities of the position and any working conditions that have a significant impact on the performance of those duties and responsibilities.
- Prepare to discuss the job briefly, in terms that the candidate can readily understand, remembering that the candidate is also making an employment decision.

2. Information You Need From the Candidate to Predict His or Her Success in the Job

- Develop a limited set of specific questions pertaining to the essential duties and responsibilities of the position to probe for the candidate's strengths and weaknesses (see page 27).

3. Outline the Interview Process

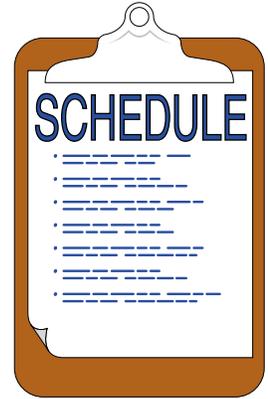
- Include the basic elements discussed under “Conducting the Interview” (see page 15). This will provide you with a framework for interviewing all candidates on a consistent basis and ensure that all important areas have been covered. It will also make it easier for you to observe and assess each candidate and keep the discussion to the point. This plan can be modified as the conversation progresses.
- Preparation, combined with a review of the candidate's application and/or resume, demonstrates that you have looked at the information the candidate supplied. This can be encouraging to the candidate and can assist in establishing rapport.

4. Record and Summarize Observations about Each Candidate

- Develop a form or standardized format to use in the interview (see sample forms on page 29).

5. Schedule Interviews

- Enough time should be scheduled with each candidate to allow for a relaxed, unhurried interview. Whether or not you have a Personnel Office to assist you, it is your responsibility to see that all the steps in the interview process are carried out within a sufficient time period.
- Do not schedule too many interviews for one day.
- Do not take weeks to conduct interviews that can be handled in a few days.
- Consider the location of the interview site, its accessibility to candidates with disabilities and the distance a candidate will have to travel. Make arrangements for a meeting room to conduct the interviews, if needed.
- Consider days of religious observance that might affect a candidate's availability.
- Arrange for any reasonable accommodations that are requested by candidates.
- Develop a schedule that does not adversely affect your other office responsibilities.
- Notify co-workers that you are not to be interrupted for matters that can wait until after the interview. Your focus and attention is centered on the interview.



6. Notify the Candidate

- Typically, the Office of Human Resources telephones the candidate to invite him or her to an interview. The invitation should include the following information:
 1. Title of the position and the salary offered.
 2. Status of the position (permanent, temporary, etc.).



3. Time, location of the interview and directions.
4. Name of the interviewer.
5. Where the candidate should report.
6. Any information required at or prior to the interview, such as a resume or samples of prior work products.
7. Notification that it is your agency's policy to provide reasonable accommodation to people with disabilities to effectively participate in the interview process and directions for requesting a reasonable accommodation, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
8. Procedures for cancellation (if necessary) and rescheduling, including the telephone number of the contact person.
9. Consequences of not responding or failure to appear for the interview.

7. Review the Candidate's Application, Resume or Other Related Material

Typically, the Office of Human Resources will:

- Review all candidate materials before the interview.
- Provide blank personal history/interview forms to the candidates before the interview, if necessary.
- When reviewing personal history forms, it is important to note:
 1. Vagueness about employment history—i.e., starting and ending dates, duties and titles.
 2. Insufficient responses to questions/items.
 3. Inconsistencies or gaps in employment/education background.
 4. Reasons for leaving the previous job (if appropriate).
 5. Spelling and/or vocabulary errors.
 6. Incorrect interpretation of instructions.

- When reviewing resumes, look for:
 1. Work and education experience from which you can develop evaluative questions.
 2. What the individual considers important in his/her background, which may enable you to better understand the candidate's personality and goals.
 3. How the candidate may have prepared the resume to show him or herself in the best possible light.

Questions You May/May Not Ask

The New York State Human Rights Law prohibits discrimination in employment because of the race, creed, color, national origin, sex, disability, genetic predisposition (at risk of having a disease or disability) or carrier status (at risk of having children with a disease or disability), marital status or arrest record of a candidate. Further, except for certain positions involving health or safety, or where the individual's presence on the job is essential, the Human Rights Law prohibits employers from disqualifying a candidate because of his or her religious observance requirements. The Human Rights Law also makes it unlawful to deny a candidate employment because he or she has been convicted of one or more criminal offenses or because he or she lacks "good moral character," when such denial is in violation of Article 23-a of the Correction Law.

Additionally, New York State agencies are prohibited by Executive Order from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation.

During the job interview, it is unlawful to ask questions that *directly or indirectly* seek to provide information about certain factors. The Human Rights Law prohibits employers from asking a candidate questions, directly or indirectly, about a candidate's age, race, creed, color, national origin, sex, disability, genetic predisposition or carrier status, marital status or arrest record, unless based upon a *bona fide* occupational qualification.

The following are examples of questions that you can and cannot ask:

Name

Not Permissible

- To inquire as to a candidate's preferred title, such as Miss, Ms. or Mrs.
- To ask the prior name(s) of a candidate whose name has been changed by court order or otherwise.
- To ask the maiden name of a married woman.

Permissible

- Questions about a change of name, use of an assumed name or nickname, in order to verify the qualifications stated by the candidate.

Address/Residency

Not Permissible

- To inquire about a foreign address, which may indicate national origin.
- To ask the names of and the candidate's relationship to the person(s) with whom he or she resides.

Permissible

- To inquire as to the candidate's place of residence, and how long he or she has been a resident of New York State or a particular city.

Citizenship

Not Permissible

- Questions about the candidate's country of citizenship or the country from which the candidate's parents came.
- To inquire as to whether the candidate is naturalized or was born in the United States and/or when the candidate acquired citizenship.

Permissible

- To ask the candidate if he or she is legally eligible to work in the United States.
- To ask the candidate if he or she is a citizen where citizenship is a qualification for the position sought (e.g. probation officers, peace officers).

Note: The EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination because of National Origin indicate that consideration of an applicant's citizenship may constitute evidence of discrimination on the basis of national origin. The EEOC provides that, where consideration of citizenship has the purpose or effect of discriminating against persons of a particular nationality, a person who is a lawfully immigrated alien, legally eligible to work, may not be discriminated against on the basis of his or her citizenship.

Age

Not Permissible

- For other than a minor, to ask the candidate his or her age, or to require proof of age or date of birth. If the candidate is 18 years of age or older, age cannot be a consideration in the decision to hire the candidate unless age is a *bona fide* occupational qualification for the position, or a maximum or minimum age is provided for in federal, State or local law.

Permissible

- To ask whether the candidate is 18 years of age or older and, if the candidate is not, to require proof of age in the form of a work permit or certificate of age.

Family/Relatives

Not Permissible

- To inquire as to the marital status, pregnancy, future child bearing plans, ability to reproduce, advocacy of any form of birth control or family planning, and number and age of children. (Information needed for health insurance and other purposes may be obtained if and when candidate is employed.) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, makes it unlawful to ask candidates about child care arrangements.
- To inquire as to the number, names, addresses and ages of applicant's spouse, children or relatives.

Permissible

- To ask if any family members are employed by the agency.

Marital Status

Not Permissible

- It is not permissible to inquire whether a candidate is single, engaged, married or divorced.

Sexual Orientation

Not Permissible

- It is not permissible to make any inquiries regarding sexual orientation.

Mobility/Travel/Ability to Get to Work

- Inquiries as to a candidate's mobility or ability to travel should only be asked if they are essential to successful job performance. Such inquiries may tend to discriminate against older workers, people with disabilities and women. If the job requires travel or the ability to work at different locations, you may state the job requirements and ask the candidate if he or she is able to meet such requirements.

Religion

Not Permissible

- To inquire into a candidate's religious denomination or affiliations, parish or church, or whether they observe certain religious holidays.

Permissible

- To state the requirements of the job in terms of work schedule, such as the days of the week, workday and overtime, and ask the candidate whether he or she is able to meet such requirements. The EEOC cautions against asking questions regarding a candidate's availability to work on Friday evenings, Saturdays or holidays.

Note: Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, and the Human Rights Law require employers and unions to accommodate the religious beliefs of employees and applicants, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship.

Organizations

Not Permissible

- To request a candidate to list all clubs, organizations, societies and lodges to which he or she belongs.

Permissible

- To ask a candidate if he or she is a member of any organization that the candidate believes is relevant to his/her ability to perform the job.

Gender of Supervisor or Co-employees

Not Permissible

- It is not permissible to ask a candidate how he or she would feel working for or with men or women.

Disability/Medical Inquiries

Not Permissible

- The Americans with Disabilities Act makes it unlawful to ask a candidate about the existence, nature or severity of a disability. An employer may not ask a candidate with a disability how he or she became disabled.
- Additionally, an employer may not make inquiries which would tend to elicit such information from a candidate.

For example, you should not ask about a candidate's use of sick leave, or whether he or she has ever filed for workers' compensation benefits or been injured on the job. You should not ask a candidate if he or she has a disability that would interfere with his or her ability to perform the job. Further, you may not ask a candidate if he or she has ever been treated for alcohol or mental health problems, drinks alcohol or takes prescription drugs.

- An employer may not ask a candidate how often he or she will require leave for treatment or how often they will need leave as a result of incapacitation because of a disability.

Permissible

- To inquire about a candidate's ability to perform the functions of a job, with or without reasonable accommodation. You may ask a candidate to describe or demonstrate how he or she would perform the job functions only if all applicants for the job title are asked to do so. Also, you may ask a particular candidate to describe or demonstrate performance if he or she has a known disability that may

interfere with or prevent the performance of a job-related function. In either case, if you request a candidate with a disability to demonstrate his or her ability to perform a job-related function, you must provide the reasonable accommodation, if one is needed, or allow the applicant to explain how, with the accommodation, he or she will perform the function.

- You may inquire as to a candidate's ability to meet the attendance requirements of the job.

Medical Examinations

The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits employers from conducting medical examinations before an offer of employment has been made. Once a conditional offer of employment has been made, you can require an examination, provided all candidates offered employment in this job title are required to undergo a medical exam.

Note: For further information regarding permissible and impermissible disability-related inquiries and medical examinations see EEOC Enforcement Guidance: Preemployment Disability-Related Inquiries and Medical Examination under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Credit Record

Not Permissible

- The EEOC has found that, unless justified by business necessity, it is unlawful to reject candidates based on poor credit ratings because this has a disparate impact on minority groups.
- Similarly, unless justified by business necessity, do not inquire into a candidate's financial status, such as bankruptcy, car ownership, rental or ownership of a house, length of residence at an address, or past garnishment of wages, for the purpose of making employment decisions, as this may violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and as amended.

Permissible

- To inquire as to a candidate's credit or garnishment record, if bonding is a job requirement.

Military Record

Not Permissible

- To ask a candidate if he or she has received a discharge from the military in other than honorable circumstances.
- To inquire into a candidate's military experience *other than* in the Armed Forces of the United States or in a State Militia.

Permissible

- To ask a candidate if he or she received a dishonorable discharge.
- To ask about a candidate's military experience in the Armed Forces of the United States or in a State Militia, or into a candidate's service in a particular branch of the United States Army, Navy, etc.

Note: Inquiries regarding military service should be accompanied by a statement that a dishonorable discharge is not an absolute bar to employment and that other factors will be considered in making a final determination to hire or not to hire.

Criminal Offenses

Not Permissible

- The Human Rights Law prohibits inquiring about any prior arrests or criminal accusations not then pending against the candidate that were terminated in the candidate's favor. **This prohibition does not apply to an application for employment as a police officer or peace officer.**

Permissible

- To inquire as to whether the candidate has ever been convicted of a crime.
- To inquire as to whether there are currently any arrests or criminal accusations pending against the candidate.

Note: No application for employment may be denied on the basis of the candidate's having been convicted of one or more criminal offenses, or by reason of a lack of "good moral character" based upon one or more criminal convictions, unless:

1. there is a direct relationship between the criminal offense and the employment sought; or
2. employing the individual would involve an unreasonable risk to property, or to the safety or welfare of specific individuals or the general public. (Correction Law, section 752)

In assessing whether to disqualify a candidate on the basis of one or more criminal convictions, consider the following:

- The public policy of the State is to encourage the licensure and employment of people previously convicted of one or more criminal offenses.
- The specific duties and responsibilities of the position sought.
- The nature and seriousness of the offense(s).
- The age of the individual at the time of the criminal offense or offenses.
- The extent of the individual's rehabilitation and good conduct.
- The time that has elapsed since the conviction(s).
- The legitimate interest of the agency in protecting property, and the safety and welfare of specific individuals or the general public.
- The bearing, if any, the criminal offense(s) will have on the candidate's fitness or ability to perform the job duties and responsibilities. (Correction Law, section 753)

Generally, only the Department of Civil Service has the authority to disqualify an applicant or eligible candidate who has been guilty of a crime pursuant to Civil Service Law, Section 50.4. However, the Commissioner of Corrections has the authority to disqualify candidates for the position of Correction Officer. Questions concerning disqualification should be addressed to the Investigations Section of the Department of Civil Service, Alfred E. Smith State Office Building, Albany, New York 12239, (518) 457-5360.

Language

Not Permissible

- To inquire as to a candidate's native tongue.
- To inquire as to how a candidate acquired the ability to read, write or speak a foreign language.

Permissible

- To inquire whether a candidate speaks or writes a language fluently, when it is required to successfully perform the duties of the position sought.

Education

Not Permissible

- To ask a candidate for years of school attendance or dates of graduation.

Permissible

- To inquire into a candidate's academic, vocational or professional education and the schools attended.

References

Not Permissible

- To ask for a reference from a member of the clergy.

Permissible

- To ask for the names of people willing to provide professional references for the candidate.

Licenses

Permissible

- To inquire whether a candidate has a valid professional or driver's license, if the license is required for the position sought, and to require that a candidate produce such license.

Conducting the Interview

Approach each interview in a positive frame of mind remembering that, although you are a prospective employer, you are also a salesperson for your agency and the job you want to fill.

As you are evaluating the candidate, the candidate is also evaluating the position and you as a potential Supervisor. Be cognizant of keeping on schedule; leaving a candidate waiting for a long time is very rude and discourteous. Remember your behavior during this interview reflects directly on you and your agency.



A. The Six-Step Interview Plan

The following is a six-step approach to interviewing that can be modified to fit your own particular needs and circumstances.

1. Introduction

Introduce yourself and greet the candidate with a handshake and a friendly smile. The more nervous a candidate is, the more important it is that you make an attempt to put him or her at ease. You should offer the candidate a glass of water before beginning the interview. Use “small talk” to break the ice.

2. Review the Application

Go over the information supplied on the application and/or resume, and ask the candidate to elaborate on his/her previous job responsibilities or special projects. The nature, direction and enthusiasm of the candidate's responses can provide you with valuable insight into the candidate's communication skills. These responses may also give you an indication about what the candidate finds interesting or challenging, and how he or she is likely to fit into the particular job.

3. Describe the Job

Provide a written job description (or class standard) to the candidate, and summarize or review the major job responsibilities. Describe the position in terms of the organization's structure, also mentioning the individuals he/she will be working with, and a brief description of their positions. You might find it helpful to work from a checklist of essential job elements,

responsibilities and requirements that you can review with each candidate. The key consideration is that all candidates are left with basically the same impression of what the job is and requires.

For example, a certain job might require the employee to travel overnight from time to time. Some candidates may regard this as a hardship while others see it as a benefit. You should describe the requirement as precisely as possible in terms of how often and where the prospective employee is likely to travel. Avoid describing the requirement in subjective terms such as “extensive” or “occasional” or “long distance” and so forth. These are subjective assessments, which, in this case, are best left to the individual to make.

4. Candidate Self-Assessment

Encourage the candidate to assess him or herself against the job. In order to obtain as much information as possible regarding the candidate in relation to the job, encourage responses with open-ended questions such as, “How do you see yourself in relation to this job?” or “What contributions do you think you can make to the work of this agency?” Avoid asking a candidate, “Do you think you can do the job?” Encouraging an open-ended assessment of this type will also provide you with feedback on how well you have described the job and its requirements.

5. Candidate Clarification

Ask the candidate if he or she has any questions about the job requirements, working conditions, prospective co-workers, supervisors, subordinates or other considerations. Let the candidate know that you and the Personnel Office will be available to answer any questions that might arise after the interview.

6. Closing

Finally, close the interview by explaining what happens next in the hiring process and thank the candidate for his or her time. If appropriate, explain that once the hiring decision has been made, job offers may be conditioned on favorable results of any necessary professional and/or physical examinations or successful completion of academic requirements.

Avoid stating any type of appointment commitment, even when you are in a position to guarantee it. Beyond the obvious inherent unfairness to other candidates yet to be interviewed, reference checks or agency hiring limitations may cause you to reverse your decision, thereby creating a difficult or embarrassing situation and/or leading to litigation. Typically, the Personnel Office will make the job offer.

If the candidate indicates that he or she has already received another job offer and will be forced to accept that offer unless you make a decision immediately, explain to the candidate that you are unable to make a commitment until all the interviews have been completed. You should inform the candidate when you expect to be making your final decision.

B. Controlling the Interview

The Six-Step Interview Plan provides a good framework for conducting effective and consistent employment interviews. However, in order for it to help you obtain the information you need to make a sound employment decision, you must have control over the interview. Establishing and maintaining control of the interview requires effective listening combined with good questioning techniques.

The key to effective listening is for you to do minimal talking during the interview. After establishing rapport and describing the job and its requirements to the candidate, let the candidate do most of the talking.

It is important that you pay attention to the candidate. Do not let your mind wander or think ahead to the next question instead of listening to what the candidate is saying. Occasionally, restating a candidate's reply or observation in your own words may be useful.

As noted previously, it is always a good technique to ask questions that require more than a simple “yes” or “no” answer. Your questioning should encourage the candidate to communicate information that will shed light on his or her capability to perform the job effectively. Phrase some of your questions in terms of “who, what, why, when, where and how.”

C. Topics to Cover

Attempt to gain knowledge about the candidate's career growth, stability, achievement, interpersonal skills and interest in the position. Examine the following areas:

Work Experience—Compare the duties and responsibilities, supervision and the candidate's likes and dislikes of past and present positions with the position you are seeking to fill. Also find out the candidate's reasons for leaving a past or current job.

Relevance of Education—A person's educational choices can reveal important aspects of his or her personality, motivation, character and interests. Key areas include: subjects studied, academic performance, class offices held, night school attendance and work experience while in school.

Outside Interests—Because a candidate has the freedom to choose leisure activities, when relevant to the job, outside interests, such as organization and association memberships, and volunteer work, may be revealing.

Sensitive Topics—There may be situations in which you will have to ask sensitive questions or probe for more factual information, even though this may make the candidate uncomfortable. After reviewing the previous section of this guide, you should have a good idea of what you can and cannot ask the candidate. As long as the topic is job related and within permissible parameters, do not hesitate to try to find out what you need to know to make a hiring decision. If the candidate seems upset by this, explain that a fair evaluation depends on clarification of all issues that have a relationship to the job.

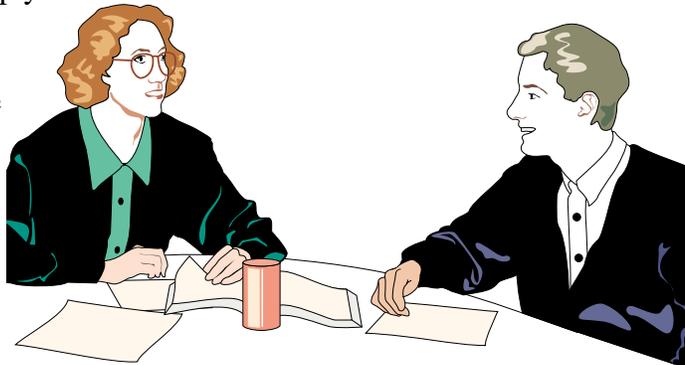
D. Note Taking

Unobtrusive note taking during the interview is necessary to have a record of the information gathered that you can refer to later. Inform the candidate at the beginning of the interview that you will be taking notes so that he or she does not perceive it as a threat or distraction.

E. Interviewing Techniques

The following techniques will help you conduct a successful interview:

- *Pay Attention/Listen*—Effective listening cannot be stressed enough. However, be aware that you may be revealing your immediate impression of the candidate through your gestures, expressions and actions. Be certain not to let negative reactions become obvious to the candidate.



- *Echoing*—Echoing can be used to encourage a candidate to elaborate on a topic. It is useful because you get additional information without asking direct or probing questions. For instance, the candidate has just said, “I didn't like the work.” You echo with the words “didn't like the work?” and the candidate knows that you want more information on this matter. The echo technique avoids the appearance of a cross-examination; it prods the candidate into disclosing more specific information without making him or her uncomfortable.

- *Level of Language*–Use language appropriate for the position for which you are interviewing; don't talk above or below a candidate's comprehension level.
- *Handling “Problem” Candidates*–Occasionally, a candidate can present problems during the interview. Try to keep the candidate on track. For example, do not let a talkative applicant waste time going off on a tangent. If a candidate evades an important question, be sure to ask the question again to elicit an appropriate response. If a candidate becomes nervous and freezes up, try some “small talk” to put the candidate at ease. Some candidates may be overly prepared or confident and have rehearsed responses to most of your questions. In this case, try direct, probing questions to obtain more information from them.

Post Interview

The post-interview process should consist, at a minimum, of the five following elements:

1. Record Your Observations

Immediately after each interview, take time to summarize the observations made during the course of the interview. How well did the candidate compare with your concept of the ideal person for the job? In what specific ways did he or she fail to measure up? What were your overall impressions of the candidate? How would you rate the candidate against each of the critical job factors?

Note your observations right away, so you can assess each candidate more objectively against the requirements of the job and not subjectively against the preceding or succeeding candidates.

2. Narrow the Field

After you have interviewed all the scheduled candidates and before you make your final hiring decision, narrow the field to those you would consider hiring for the position. Don't center all consideration around one person and exclude all others from contention, because if your first choice turns down the position, you may have trouble remembering the merits of the other candidates.



3. Check References

Begin with your first choice and check the references the candidate provided. References from former employers may be helpful in finding out about the candidate's work habits and personal characteristics. Note, however, that many employers today are hesitant to share too much information about a former employee. In fact, some employers will provide no information other than verification that the candidate previously worked for them.

Inform the candidate beforehand that you will be checking references. Ask for at least two professional references and, if necessary, secure his or her written consent. This may make it easier for former employers and school officials to release information. Unless this is the candidate's first job, you should do a reference check with at least one recent former employer. Check this reference first.

Be prepared to ask probing questions about the candidate. However, if the employer tells you that the candidate has had some work-related problems, do not automatically exclude the candidate from your list of possible hires. Many good employees have occasional job difficulties that are not completely of their own making which resolve themselves once the employees are able to change job environments. Nonetheless, be concerned about a candidate who has experienced one employment problem after another.

Following are some general questions you might ask, depending on the information you are seeking on an individual's past employment:

- How long have you known the candidate? In what relationship/capacity?
- What was the candidate's position? To whom did he or she report?
- What were the candidate's responsibilities? Scope?
- How did the candidate get along with superiors, peers and subordinates?
- Describe the candidate's attitudes and other personality factors.
- What were some of the candidate's outstanding accomplishments?
- How effective was the candidate in terms of quantity and quality of work?
- How creative was the candidate? How much initiative did he or she display? Motivation level? Resourcefulness?
- Describe the candidate's leadership ability and responsibility levels.
- What were the candidate's strengths? Aptitudes? Weaknesses?
- How well does the candidate express him or herself orally? In writing?
- Did the candidate meet deadlines?
- Why did the candidate leave?

- Would you rehire the candidate? (This is probably one of the most important questions to ask, if it is answered honestly.)
- Do you feel that the candidate can work effectively as a (title of job)?

Carefully assess each reference. Be aware of employers who speak too favorably or use faint praise to avoid giving a negative response about a candidate. Conflicting references will have to be evaluated in terms of their relative recency, objectivity and credibility with respect to the work situation.

4. Make The Hiring Decision

Review all the information you have obtained on the candidates. Consider the following factors in arriving at your final decision:

- Ability to do the work.
- Interest in doing the job.
- Potential for growth.
- Ability to adjust to the job environment.

After careful thought, make the decision to hire or not to hire. A valid selection occurs when the “merit and fitness” of the candidate are the primary determining factors in the decision. Inform the Personnel Officer of your choice.

5. Notify Selected Candidate

Follow your agency procedures with respect to notifying selected candidates. Typically, the Personnel Office notifies the selected candidate by telephone to ensure that he or she is willing and able to accept appointment, and follows up with a written confirmation. Generally, such notification should be made within five business days following the interview and include the following information:

- Full particulars on the position including title, grade, pay, location of employment, its nature and duration, starting date, where to report and any necessary information about living and working conditions.
- Instructions for submitting any documents desired before reporting to work such as proof of veteran's status, college transcripts, licenses or other forms.



- Any conditions the selected candidate will be required to fulfill after reporting to work such as a probationary period or further investigations.

If a candidate declines the job offer, the Personnel Officer or the interviewer should secure a written declination from a candidate who refuses an offer of employment. See the next section for guidance in preparing this document.

6. Notify Unselected Candidates

Good personnel practice, common courtesy and the New York State Civil Service Law require that the Personnel Office inform candidates not selected of your decision and thank them for their interest. When possible, each candidate should be sent a personal letter. When large numbers are involved, a form letter may be sent.

After all candidates have been notified, the interview process is concluded.

Appendix

Documentation

Sample Interviewing Questions

Check Sheet

Interview Schedule Form

Evaluation Worksheet

History and Reference Form

Documents

1. Documentation Requirements

- **Declinations**

If a candidate declines a job offer, the Personnel Officer or the interviewer should document this in the personnel record and indicate the reason. A written statement including the specific title, location of the position and reason for the declination should be sent to the candidate to confirm the declination. The candidate should be instructed to notify the Personnel Officer if any of the information is incorrect.

- **Selection Memo**

The selection memo substantiates the selection decision. It is prepared by the person responsible for filling the position and is retained in the Personnel Office. The selection write-up must demonstrate that the selected candidate is the best candidate to perform the duties of the position in question. The relationship between the candidate's knowledge, skills and abilities and the duties and responsibilities of the position should be clearly explained. This is an important document in the event of a challenge under the Human Rights Law and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

In preparing the selection memo, incorporate the selection criteria that were established for the position. Also include information from the application, resume, job analysis, interview, references and/or any other criteria established during the selection process.

- **Documentation to Retain**

During the interview process, a large amount of information is typically collected. Following is a list of items that should be retained:

- Application forms and/or resumes for each applicant.
- Date, time and place.
- Name, address and job title of the interviewer(s).
- Questions and responses for each applicant.
- Description of the interview format, interview guides, rating scales, etc.
- Access to Interview Records.

Under the Personal Privacy Protection Law (Article 6-A of the Public Officers Law), a candidate or employee has the right to see a portion of his or her records. However, the law also prohibits disclosure of references, as well as advice or recommendations prepared by an interviewer or personnel staff.

To obtain additional information, contact the Records Access Officer at the State agency possessing the records or the Committee on Open Government, 162 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12239, (518) 474-2518.

Sample Interviewing Questions

- What were/are your last/present job duties?
- Could you describe a typical day at your past/present job?
- What attracted you to this type of work?
- What aspects of the job were challenging?
- What aspects of the job gave you the most trouble? Why?
- If you had it to do all over again, would you still go into the same kind of work? Why? Why not?
- How do you feel about the progress you made?
- Why did you decide to make a change?
- What might be the toughest aspects of the job if you were to accept the position? What will be the most enjoyable aspects? The least enjoyable?
- What do you think your greatest contribution to the job will be? Where and how do you think you would be able to make your greatest contribution?
- What do you feel were your most significant accomplishments on the job?
- Which of your accomplishments in your past/present position are you most proud?
- What personal accomplishments and attributes make you the proudest?
- What are your goals in your present position for the next one, two and three years?
- What would you have liked to accomplish in your present position that you were not able to? What prevented you from accomplishing these goals?
- What made you decide on majoring in that particular field?
- Were there any accomplishments you felt particularly proud of at school?

For Recent College Graduates

- How did you feel about the college you attended?
- To what extent did it live up to your expectations?
- What made you decide on majoring in that particular field?
- Were there any accomplishments you felt particularly proud of at school?

Evaluation Worksheet

The following are suggested areas to consider in your interview. Keep in mind that questions and decisions must be based on job-related factors. This evaluation worksheet will become a part of the reviewable records file.

Candidate's Name	
Item # Being Filled	Title
Salary Grade	Division
Section	Supervisor

Skills	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments

Factors	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Rapport or confidence established during the interview					
Replies to questions completely and accurately					
Appearance					
Work experience					
Ability to make sound judgments					
Sense of responsibility shown					
Ability to deal with people					
Adaptable and flexible to interruptions/changes in work routine					
Adaptable to highly predetermined and repetitive activities					

interested in hiring
 possible interest in hiring
 no interest in hiring
 candidate has no interest

Reasons:

History and Reference

The following are suggested areas for a reference check. They may be used in a telephone check or in letters to places of employment or people named. This worksheet or your letter will become a part of the reviewable records file.

Item # being filled
Title
Division
Section
Supervisor

Name of Candidate

Name of reference: _____

Factors	Reference's Estimation				Comments
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	
Quality of work					
Volume of work					
Attitude toward work					
Attitude toward staff/co-workers					
Management/supervisory practices					
Subordinates' opinions of candidate					
Attendance and punctuality					
Promotions/awards					

Check Sheet

Planning the Interview

- 1. Know the job.
- 2. Identify the information you will need from each candidate.
- 3. Outline the interview as you would like it to proceed and consider the following topics to be covered during the interview:
 - work experience
 - education
 - outside interests
- 4. Develop a form or standardized format to use during the interview.
- 5. Schedule the interviews.
- 6. Send written notification to the candidates.
- 7. Review candidates' personal history forms/resumes.

Conducting the Interview

- 1. Introduce yourself and try to make the candidate feel at ease.
- 2. Review the candidate's application/resume with the candidate.
- 3. Describe the job/position.
- 4. Ask candidate for self-assessment.
- 5. Provide clarification for candidate.
- 6. Explain to candidate what happens next and then close the interview.

Post-Interview

- 1. Record your observations.
- 2. Narrow the field to possible candidates you might hire.
- 3. Check references of these candidates.
- 4. Make the hiring decision.
- 5. Notify the selected candidate and then the unselected candidates.

It is the policy of the New York State Department of Civil Service to provide reasonable accommodation to ensure effective communication of information to individuals with disabilities. If you need an auxiliary aid or service to make this information available to you, please contact the New York State Department of Civil Service Public Information Office at (518) 457-9375.

**Visit the New York State
Department of Civil Service website
www.cs.ny.gov**



**New York State
Department of Civil Service
Albany, NY 12239**

**Content last updated:
March 2008**