



Guide for Developing a Behavioral Based Interview

Department of Natural Resources interviews are conducted to give the candidate a realistic preview of the job; identify the competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), education and training possessed by the candidate; and evaluate if the candidate is a match to the job and the organizational culture.

Behavioral based interviewing seeks to identify specific examples of a candidate's past performance that are applicable to the competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities, education and training required of the job. Questions must focus on specific incidents that have happened rather than hypotheticals. The best predictor of a candidate's future performance is his or her past performance. Therefore, structured behavioral based interview questions ask the candidate to describe things that they have actually done, as opposed to what they would do in a given situation. The intent is for answers to these questions to provide verifiable evidence regarding how a candidate has performed or what they have accomplished in the past and how the accomplishments demonstrate the competencies, KSAs, education and training required in the job.

Effective Behavioral Based Interviews Include the Following Tools Available to DNR Hiring Managers:

- Updated job description for the job, available in TeamWorks (Employee Self Service – Job Description Report);
- Confidential Interview/Evaluation Form containing a standard rating scale and critical job requirements to be assessed during the interview;
- Factual documentation (interview notes) regarding the candidates' responses to be noted at the bottom of the Confidential Interview/Evaluation Form and/or on additional sheets of paper.

These tools will provide a basis for selection, as well as documentation of a logical, objective, and legally defensible selection process.

How to Develop a Behavioral Based Interview:

1. Identify competencies, knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), education and training that are required in the job by reviewing the requirements of the position listed in the job description. Interview questions should focus on competencies that are needed by the candidate upon hire.
2. Write behavioral questions to gather information.

For each key competency or skill, create a question by describing a job-related scenario in which the competency or skill is demonstrated. This may be done by describing in detail the requirements of the job. For example, if one of the position's key competencies/skills is the ability to manage projects, the question below is an appropriate behavioral based question.

This job requires the management and coordination of multiple projects. This position involves the management of multiple teams, facilitation of communication between the teams and distribution of limited resources among the teams. Describe a situation in which you led multiple projects and had to manage resources and coordinate multiple teams towards a common goal. Be specific about the type of project, what your project management role was and what you accomplished.

This type of question should elicit detailed information regarding project management including the communication, team management, and leadership skills that you have determined are required and that you have listed as critical factors on the Confidential Interview/Evaluation Form.

3. Identify the criteria for the successful demonstration of the competencies and skills.

The interview questions should identify for each interviewer the specific behaviors or criteria of an appropriate response. For each question, identify the key behaviors or criteria that separate an above average demonstration of the competency by the applicant from a below average demonstration of the competency. The key is to have clear, relevant statements describing what you seek to use to measure the competency. These statements will be used by interviewers to rate response to the interview questions on the Confidential Interview/Evaluation Form.
4. Provide the interview panel members with the interview documents prior to the interview process.

Provide the interview questions and other information to interview panel members at least 2 days prior to the interview process. This will allow panel members to become familiar with the questions, the criteria and the process prior to the first interview. Ensure panel members know how to score candidates' responses and allow them to ask questions and receive clarification.
5. When the interview process has concluded, complete the Selection Summary Sheet.

If the interview process is challenged, a strong defense is to demonstrate the fairness and objectivity of the interview. A summary of the scores from a comparison of candidates' responses to the job related rating criteria by each member of the panel demonstrates a fair and objective process.