

Appendix C: Summary Checklist Structured Interviewing in the Appointment Process

Before the interview

- Determine the composition of the interview board:
 - To the extent possible, ensure consistency of board members for all interviews;
 - Ensure that they are qualified and free from real or apparent conflicts of interest or biases that may affect the outcome of the process;
 - Determine whether an assessment expert would add precision and efficiency; and
 - Consider representation from employment equity groups.
- Determine if all applicants will be interviewed or only those who are screened in based on predetermined qualifications.
- Determine the positioning of the interview in the appointment process.
- Design an Interview Booklet:
 - Identify and define, in behavioural terms, the qualifications to be assessed based on the Statement of Merit Criteria;
 - Determine the types of interview questions to be developed, such as situational or behavioural, depending on collected events or challenges that happen on the job; and
 - Develop the structured interview questions:
 - Ensure all questions are job-related;
 - Avoid all prohibited or inappropriate topics;
 - Ensure questions require applicants to describe their own previous or hypothetical behaviours in their responses; and
 - Ensure all questions are fair, free from bias and do not create any barriers.
 - Develop questions specifically for each qualification being assessed (although one question may assess more than one qualification);
 - Determine the number of questions to be asked in the interview – keeping time constraints in mind – and the order in which they will be asked;
 - Develop standardized probing/follow-up questions to ensure all necessary details are elicited ; and
 - Pre-test the interview questions to determine how much time will be needed, whether the questions are clear and to assess the intended qualifications.

- ❑ Develop assessment criteria:
 - Consider the effective and ineffective behaviours (i.e., the good and the bad answers to the questions);
 - Determine if a rating scale will be used. If so, the type of scale and the number of points on the scale must also be determined; and
 - For each qualification, provide verbal descriptors of behaviours that define various points on the rating scale (e.g., Very Strong, Strong, Moderate, Poor, Very Poor) to anchor each point on the scale.
- ❑ Develop the interview process:
 - Introduction, instructions, time limit and conclusion; and
 - Decide whether the applicants will be given time to prepare prior to the interview.
- ❑ Train all board members – ensure they are familiar with:
 - The major duties and responsibilities of the position to staff;
 - The qualification definitions and behavioural indicators to be assessed;
 - The [Guidelines for a Fair Assessment in a Diverse Workplace](#) and the [Guide for Assessing Persons with Disabilities](#);
 - How to build rapport with the applicants, ask questions, control the interview and assess applicants' performance on the qualifications;
 - The importance of taking good notes and how to do so;
 - The proper assessment procedure;
 - Assessor biases and common assessment errors and how to avoid them; and
 - How to arrive at a final board assessment and integrate results with other information.
- ❑ Contact the applicant prior to the interview:
 - Provide the applicant with information on the format of the interview, the types of questions that will be asked and the qualifications that will be assessed;
 - Remind the applicant of his or her right to receive accommodation and determine what is required, if anything; and
 - Notify the applicant of the interview date and time and the expected duration of the interview.
- ❑ Ensure that the interview room will be well-lit and free from distractions.
- ❑ Ensure all necessary materials are ready for the interview and ensure accommodation is in place, if applicable.
- ❑ Ensure board members meet at least 15 minutes before the first applicant arrives, to discuss the interview format, if not already determined, appoint a lead interviewer and determine which board members will ask what questions.

During the interview

- Ensure water, pens/pencils and paper are available to the applicant.
- If applicants are allotted time to prepare, provide them with a copy of the interview questions and instructions, including the time allowed to prepare, in a private room (supervised or not, depending on the nature of the questions).
- The lead interviewer should greet the applicant, thank them for coming and introduce the members of the interview board, and:
 - Provide the applicant with a detailed explanation of the interview process;
 - Ask the first interview question, including any necessary probes;
 - Inform the applicant of the next steps in the appointment process; and,
 - Thank the applicant, collect the questions and any notes and escort the applicant out of the room.
- All interviewers should:
 - Not divulge the specific behavioural indicators being assessed by any question, but respond to reasonable requests for clarification;
 - Take detailed notes of the applicant's responses throughout the interview.
 - Record only what the applicant said or did;
 - Ensure time limits are respected;
 - When necessary, intervene to bring the applicant back on topic or to a conclusion; and
 - Allow the applicant to ask clarifying questions, while still respecting time limits.

After the interview

- Immediately assess the applicant's responses.
- All members of the board review definition of the first qualification to be assessed and its behavioural indicators.
- The board members independently review their notes and determine which of the behavioural indicators associated with the qualification were demonstrated in the interview. They record examples of the applicant's demonstration of the behavioural indicators.
- Each board member then independently assesses the applicant on the first qualification:
 - Use all the behavioural evidence provided by the applicant, even if it appears in responses to questions targeting other qualifications;
 - Try not to place undue weight on isolated incidents;
 - Look for overall patterns in the evidence;

- Ensure that responses are weighted in the same way for all applicants; and
- Be mindful of assessor biases and common assessor errors and take precautions to reduce their effect on assessments.
- ❑ Board members discuss their individual assessments of a qualification and determine a group assessment for the applicant. This discussion continues until a consensus is reached.
- ❑ The consensus evaluation is recorded along with a rationale for the assessment in terms of the specific behaviours that the applicant demonstrated.
- ❑ Proceed to assess the remaining qualifications, in turn.
- ❑ In the applicant's file, document the final group assessments and notes for the rationale.
- ❑ Once everyone has been assessed, integrate interview results with other tools and ensure that the pattern of evidence and behaviour is consistent:
 - If negative information is uncovered, consider its source and, to the extent possible, verify its accuracy with other sources of assessment information before making a decision about the applicant and
 - If information is conflicting, continue checking until you are satisfied that a pattern is evident.
- ❑ Determine whether applicants meet the qualifications and select the "right fit" for the job.
- ❑ Ensure the entire appointment process has been documented from the beginning through to the appointment of a person. Be sure to include the reasons for the appointment decision.
- ❑ Make arrangements to provide feedback to applicants, if required. Feedback may be provided through informal discussion:
 - Obtain the appointment process file and review the documentation regarding the person who was eliminated from consideration;
 - Review the [PSC Policy on Informal Discussion](#);
 - Review the [PSC Guide to Implementing the Informal Discussion Policy](#);
 - Determine the official language to be used in the informal discussion and whether any accommodation is required; and
 - If necessary, consult with other persons involved in the appointment process (e.g. other assessment board members, the HR advisor, etc.)
- ❑ Review the documentation regarding the person who was eliminated from consideration.
- ❑ Explain the appointment decision and provide information that will assist the person in understanding the decision.

- Stay focussed on what is relevant to the discussion: the requirements of the position, the merit criteria, how you assessed the qualifications and why the person was eliminated.
- Listen to the person and provide them opportunity to explain any concerns and present any supporting information.
- Maintain a non-defensive and non-confrontational manner throughout the discussion.
- Seek assistance if the issue is beyond what you are comfortable dealing with or if the discussion goes beyond the decision to eliminate the person from the appointment process.
- Demonstrate a willingness to review a decision if an error was made.
- Consider deferring a contentious or heated discussion in order to allow time to reflect and to address the issue at a later time and with assistance, if necessary.