Job Applicant Interview Sample Script

When applicant arrives, provide a safe, friendly, business environment to conduct interview. Let the applicant know that you’re glad they have arrived and that you have set aside sufficient uninterrupted time to conduct the interview. You can begin with the following questions:

“How did you hear of the opening?”

“How did you happen to become interested in our organization?”

Depending on the response, you can work in an overview of what you have planned.

“Before we begin, let me give you some idea of what we’d like to cover today. I want to begin with information about our organization and the position. Then, I would like to review your background and experience so that we can determine whether the position is suited to your talents and interests. We would like to hear about your work experience, education, and anything else you would like to let us know about that would provide us with a broader perspective of yourself. After we have covered your background, we can go over any questions that you might have.”

Information Giving
“Now I have information I would like to provide to you.”
Review the organization, the department, the position, benefits, location, etc. Tailor your presentation appropriately.

Work Experience
A discussion of work experience should be widely based in part, on how long the applicant has been employed. Question appropriate to a recent high school or college graduate will make little sense when interviewing a professional with 15 years of experience. For an applicant with substantial experience, a reasonable starting point would be a discussion of the most recent position. In addition to focusing on the jobs themselves, it might also be helpful to discuss why the applicant has changed jobs in the past, the duration of each prior employment, chronological gaps in employment, etc. The following script would be appropriate when interviewing someone who has not been working long.

“A good place to start would be your work experience.”

“I’m interested in the job you’ve held, what your duties and responsibilities were, your likes and dislikes, and what you felt you may have gained form them.”
Let’s start with a brief review of your first work experiences, those you might have had part-time during school or during the summer, and then we’ll concentrate on your more recent jobs in more detail.”

“What do you remember about your very first job?”

Select specific follow-up questions for each job and move forward chronologically. It’s important that you move forward chronologically because there’s a more natural conversational flow and you can see patterns of behavior change.

Your follow-up questions should ask for specific examples of behavior, not general or hypothetical response. It does not benefit you to ask “Are you dependable?” because all you will get in response is a “Yes.”

Instead, you may say, “Tell me about a day when you arrived to work on time, only because of extra effort.” It is based on specific examples of behavior. Similarly, instead of asking, “Are you organized?” say “Tell me about a time when your organizational skills made a project successful” or “How did your organize your work in your last position? And “How did you handle the unexpected?”

Ask specific, clear questions one at a time and let the applicant answer uninterrupted. Resist filling in every lull in the conversation; wait to see if the applicant will do so.

Try to avoid either verbally or physically giving the applicant a clue as to how your regard their answers; remain neutral.

To draw the applicant out without revealing what you’re thinking, try using his or her own words. If the candidate says, ‘I like to work independently, “you could respond with “Independently?” and use the opportunity to ask the applicant to give an example of what he or she did working independently.

Education
As in the case of the work experience portion of the interview, the education discussion must be tailored to suit the applicant’s educational level. The sample interview that follows would be appropriate for a younger applicant who has not bee out of High school for any length of time. When interviewing for a professional position, the focus would shift to the professional education.

“You’ve given me a good review of your work experience – now let’s talk about your education. Why don’t we start with high school briefly and then cover more recent schooling and any specialized on the job training you may have had. I’m interested in the subjects you preferred, your grades, extracurricular activities, and anything else of importance.”

“What was high school like for you?”
Select specific follow up questions for each educational experience and move forward chronologically. Don’t necessarily accept answers at face value. Chronology reveals patterns. Take the information and patterns of behavior that you’re being told and analyze them in terms of the performance skills you determine that you needed before the interview began.

**Activities and Interests**
“Turning to the present, I’d like to give you the opportunity to mention some of your interests and activities outside of work – hobbies, what you do for fun and relaxation, any community activities, professional associations, or anything else you’d like to mention that you think might be relevant to the job.

**Self-Assessment**
“Now let’s try to summarize our conversation. Thinking about all we’ve covered today, what would you say are some of your strengths – qualities both personal and professional that you a good candidate for an employer?”

You can ask additional more specific questions such as:

“You’ve provided us with some real assets and now I’d like to hear about areas you’d like to develop further – all of us have qualities we would like to change or improve. What are some of yours?”

**Closing**
“You’ve provide us with a good review of your background and experience, and I have enjoyed talking with you. Do you have any other questions at this time?”

Close the interview graciously. If you have already decided not to offer the applicant the job, you can let them know at this point. Do so cordially and uncritically; you needn’t be specific about why you’ve rejected the candidate. For example, “I’ve enjoyed meeting with you today, but we will not be able to offer you the position.”

If you think that you would consider the applicant for another position in the future, say so.

If pressed for a reason why an applicant won’t be offered a job, you always have the option of telling the applicant that you do not discuss the reasons for your hiring practices. OR, you may explain that, for example you have already other more qualified applicants. Use your judgment, realizing that it can create a very awkward situation if you merely tell an applicant that he or she is unqualified or lacking experience.” Be honest, but try not to be confrontational.

If you’ve found a promising candidate, you can continue with “what is your level of interest in the position at this point?”

Determine any doubts or reservation that applicant may have.
Inform the candidate of the next steps and what is likely to happen next, whether another interview will be needed and how long it will be before a decision is made.

Thank them for coming in …etc.