

A GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS

Effective Interviewing Techniques



Hawaii National Guard Human Resources Office

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Introduction

The interview is a valuable tool in the selection process and must be conducted properly. This means the interview must be tactful, courteous, objective, and perceptive. The interview can help assess a candidate's experience because it adds a human dimension to the selection process by putting a face to a resume. This is especially true if you are trying to assess the candidate's oral presentation skills, if required for the job.

It is the selecting official's prerogative to select the person best qualified and most likely to succeed in the job; however, selections must be made in a fair, legal, and nondiscriminatory manner. If you follow the rules, outlined herein, and use the proper procedures in judging an applicant's resume in terms of the job requirements, you should be on safe ground. You must avoid practices which could suggest that a person was preselected for a job filled under competitive promotion procedures, or that a promotion was based on favoritism. Among such practices are mis-assignments, excessive noncompetitive details, temporary promotions that create the impression of pre-selection, changes in qualification requirements, last minute additions to referral lists, reappraisals of candidates, appraisals or other recommendations which actually or apparently show bias and inordinately long delays in selection. The power to select adds to your stature and credibility; use it wisely and fairly to pick the best person for the job.

Whether you decide to interview one, some, all, or none of the candidates will depend on the type of referral list received and your internal policies. It is not always necessary or practical to interview; however, in the total picture, it will probably help to nail down the selection. A prepared list of questions and a matrix will help you ensure that all candidates are judged against the same criteria. Do not use the interview to determine the candidate's basic qualifications. The Human Resources Office (HRO) staffing section has already done this for you in the screening process and has referred only those candidates that have met the basic qualifications and have been determined to be best qualified. Instead, the interview should be utilized to [further] differentiate the candidate's qualities, to distinguish the "best" of the best" of those referred.

A supervisor's inherent responsibility to select the best qualified candidate requires that he/she be educated and knowledgeable of the proper selection procedures when making a selection. Accordingly, this guide has been prepared to provide you, the supervisor, with a ready source of basic information about how to conduct a job interview. It is not intended to provide all of the information needed. Instead, it is designed to be practical guide. The HRO staff is available to provide you with information and/or guidance on interviewing candidates

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As a supervisor, your primary responsibility is to accomplish your activity's mission goals through the use of others. As fiscal cutbacks and workload changes require you to achieve organizational objectives with fewer resources, the need for well-qualified, productive employees becomes increasingly more important.

When particular jobs demand specific personnel characteristics and skills on the part of their incumbents, the possession of these attributes is ordinarily a prerequisite to eligibility and is determined during the rating process. Employment interviews, on the other hand, generally bear no relationship to basic qualifications. Such interviews are nevertheless recognized as a useful tool in determining related merit and fitness of candidates who are being considered for appointment to a specific job.

What you are attempting to accomplish in the selection process is to predict the way an applicant will behave, in the future, in an environment with which you are familiar. The question you are essentially trying to answer is: How will this applicant perform in X job, in Y shop/department, in Z activity.

The interview can be a valuable tool in selecting quality personnel. When properly conducted, it provides an opportunity to elicit **job-related, relevant**, information about applicants to help you make well-informed selections.

Your hypothesis of the applicant's probable, future performance in your employ is based on the assumption that people tend to perform somewhat consistently under similar circumstances...that knowledge of present and past performance will establish a basis for predicting future performance. Your knowledge of an applicant's present performance is derived from an assessment of the interview and analysis of the candidate's resume.

Quite obviously, no one can really predict the future performance of an individual with any great accuracy. However, if you know the environment within which the candidate will be required to work, have some knowledge of the candidate's past work history and accomplishment, and have had an opportunity to observe his current behavior in a face-to-face interview situation, you are then able to make an educated guess about how he/she will probably perform on the job.

Making selections then is no more than the making of an educated guess; however, you can greatly improve the odds of your guessing correctly by basing your selections on as much information as you can collect. Unfortunately, while a wealth of information is available to help prepare job seekers for successful interviews, little attention has been given to helping the supervisor prepare for the interview. As a result, the objective of this guide is to provide you, the supervisor, with information needed to help you conduct better interviews.

Interview Objectives. Interviews are conducted:

- To clarify data in the resume - - apparent inconsistencies, time gaps, or other missing information.
- To obtain additional information not presented in the resume
- To determine, to a degree, the candidates, truthfulness regarding information in the resume.
- To obtain detailed information on the candidates' experience in order to better evaluate his/her qualifications and suitability for the desired position.
- To obtain information from the candidate which will help to appraise his/her character and motivation, and to judge his/her appearance and personal characteristics face-to-face.

Interview Limitations. While the interview can be a helpful tool in the selection process, its limitations should be recognized. In the “artificial” interview setting, it is difficult to discern such important performance traits as reliability, problem solving capability, learning potential, work performance, aptitude, work habits, judgment, and motivation. These traits are more accurately assessed through review of material provided such as performance ratings, training and awards, supervisory references, etc. While the interview can serve to clarify and elicit further **job-related** information, it should be used only as one part of a comprehensive evaluation process.

An interview can inadvertently be the source of numerous prohibited questions. (Will be covered further in legitimate and prohibited questions section). For an interview to be defensible, it must be properly developed and conducted passing such criteria as:

- a. Being specifically job-related; and
- b. Filling a true business need.

A casual, unplanned, unsystematic interview can have dire ramifications and can lead to such common interviewing errors as:

1. **Failure to establish rapport with the candidate.** The interview never gets off the ground – resulting in no substantive discussion about the applicant or his/her qualifications.
2. **Failure to have a strategy.** Lack of an interview system or an understanding of what information needs to be elicited can lead to an inappropriate and counterproductive interview.
3. **Briefness of interview.** An interview that is too brief is usually superficial, yielding little valuable information about the applicant. There are times, however, when we have no control over the allotted time for interviewing; therefore, it is important to carefully plan the interview to insure needed information about the applicant is obtained.

4. **Over emphasis on initial impression.** First impressions are not necessarily true indications of typical behavior. Avoid making final decisions early in the interview before you have gathered appropriate information.
5. **Unconscious biases or preferences.** Do not allow one specific trait or characteristic to influence your overall evaluation of a candidate. Common areas of unconscious bias include sex, age, race, physical handicap, and physical characteristics (weight, height, etc).
6. **Excessive talking.** When the interviewer does most of the talking, little can be learned about the applicant.
7. **Reliance on intuition.** Conclusions based on intuition can be inconsistent and invalid. Only a complete understanding of what an applicant has done in the past will help to predict what he or she will do in the future.

Statutory and Regulatory Requirements. When President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, he was translating one of his key political promises into Federal law. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in all industries engaged in interstate commerce. Since 1973 its provisions have applied to all such businesses that employ fifteen or more people. Title VII extends coverage to all aspects of employment, including hiring, promotion, termination, and layoffs.

President Richard M. Nixon issued Executive Order 11478, effective August 8, 1969, extending Title VII to Federal employees and protecting them also against discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Title VII also prohibits discrimination by employment agencies and by labor unions.

The “Uniform Guideline on Employee Selection Procedures (1978)” describes how title VII is to be applied, not only in the hiring of new employees, but also in the treatment of current employees.

Equal Employment Opportunity Concerns

It must be remembered that all applicants have the constitutional right to charge a prospective employer with discriminatory hiring practices. In some cases, the individual is correct in the accusation, and a court will uphold the complaint. In other cases, when the applicant has been rejected for employment for **proper and legal reasons**, the court will decide in favor of the employer.

When enforcing Title VII, the EEOC will consider nearly all complaints, whether right or wrong, but a ruling against the prospective employer will usually be rendered only in cases in which the facts presented match up with one or more of the following discriminatory practices:

1. **Disparate treatment.** Applicant receives treatment that is different from the treatment received by other applicants solely because he/she is of a different race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.
2. **Adverse impact.** The employer does not hire an applicant because of factors that clearly are not job related and that statistically have a disproportionately negative effect on certain groups of people. For example, suppose that an employer requires that its plant security guards be at least six feet tall and weigh 185 pounds. The activity must be able to prove that these height and weight requirements are necessary for the successful performance of the work to be done. Otherwise, this practice may be found to be discriminatory (and illegal) against groups of people who typically do not possess such physical characteristics.
3. **Perpetuating past discrimination.** At first glance, an employer's current employment practices may seem nondiscriminatory; yet, the current practices may have a discriminatory effect when they are examined in the context of past discriminatory practices. As an example, suppose that a company usually hires from a pool of applicants made up of people referred by current employees. This practice may not seem discriminatory unless the entire current work force is black or white because of past discriminatory practices. An all black or all white work force is likely to refer a steady supply of applicants that are all black or all white.
4. **Lack of reasonable accommodation.** Discrimination may occur if an employer refuses to try to find a reasonable solution to problems that pose minor obstacles to employability because of a person's religion, handicap, or disability. (The term **reasonable** is not always clear and may depend on a variety of factors such as collective-bargaining agreements or cost of solving the problem). Suppose that for religious reasons an applicant is unable to work on Sunday. In most cases the employer could arrange a work schedule for the other six days of the week. But if the employer refused to hire the applicant on the basis of his or her refusal to work on Sunday, a court might uphold a charge of religious discrimination.

Legal Pitfalls in the Interview Process. The five-member Equal Employment Opportunity Commission established under title VII believes that organizations are more susceptible to discrimination charges stemming from the selection process than from any other area of employment practice. The implication here is that every manager, every supervisor, every recruiter, anyone who interviews an applicant or candidate before hiring must be conscious of areas in which even seemingly innocent questions, asked openly and in good faith, can leave the organization open to expensive, time consuming charges of discrimination.

The purpose of the various discrimination acts, statutes, legislation, guidelines, orders, and laws is to force the prospective employer to base the hiring decision on the candidate's ability to do the job. The applicant's skills, knowledge, experience, and employment record are the principal

legal criteria on which the applicant should be hired, not some abstract or discriminatory criteria, such as those prohibited by Title VII.

Three rules govern the kinds of questions you may ask in the employment interview:

- 1) The basis for any question asked must be to measure the person for the job
- 2) No question may have an adverse impact on any person or class of persons.
- 3) You must be able to prove that the question is job related.

In short, questions should not violate Federal, state, or local laws that prohibit discrimination. The burden is on the employer to ensure legal compliance. Usually, discrimination applies to unfair or unequal treatment in employment practices, including hiring, promotion, transfer, or termination based on factors other than the person's ability to perform the job.

Legitimate and Prohibited Questions. Because there are many complicated laws and regulations that govern the interview process it is sometimes difficult for a selecting official to know what questions they can and cannot ask. However, as the law has evolved, one part has remained constant: **selection procedures must be job related; that is, they must be based upon the official duties as described in the position description for the position being filled.**

During the various phases of the hiring process many topics are likely to be examined by the servicing personnel office. However, during the interview process you are prevented from raising certain issues or asking certain kinds of questions. Within the context of equal employment opportunity, the following examples can be used as general ground rules for the types of questions that may be asked during the interview. Keep in mind that the law allows exceptions to each of these ground rules if you can demonstrate (prove) that the subject or questions asked represent a valid job related requirement. The following are some of the topics that may come up during the interview; topics that you **may or may not** ask the applicant about; and questions that may be legitimate or prohibited (again, the test is whether the question is job related).

Physical disabilities. You **may ask** if the applicant will need an accommodation to perform a specific job duty. If the response is yes, you may then inquire as to what the accommodation would be. The employer may require the applicant to perform on a physical test such as lifting, hoisting, and physical dexterity if moving heavy weights or physical dexterity is required to perform the job. It is **permissible** to ask:

- The warehouse job requires that you stack 40 pound boxes of ---- on wooden pallets. Let's go out to the warehouse so you can show me you are able to fill up a pallet.

Do not ask:

- Do you have any physical disabilities that would prevent you from doing the job we are discussing?

Handicap and/or mental diseases. You **may not** ask questions about specific handicaps or mental diseases. **Do not ask:**

- What caused your blindness?
- Do you have an artificial limb?
- Do you have asthma?
- Have you ever had a nervous breakdown?
- Have you ever been confined to a mental institution?

Physical characteristics. You **may not** ask about the applicant's physical characteristics such as height, weight, color, or sex or about any physical characteristic for purpose of determining national origin. **Do not ask:**

- How tall are you?
- How much do you weigh?
- Most women who want to work in the warehouse cannot lift 50 pounds or more. Would you find that hard to do?

Health problems. You **may not** ask about the applicant's general health and you may **not** require that the applicant pass a physical examination as a hiring contingency once the job offer has been extended [unless that position requires such – the physical agility test for security guards for example]. It is not permissible to ask if the applicant is in good physical health. You cannot ask questions concerning the applicant's health problems or physical characteristics, even though the answers to these questions would be reflected later in the results of a thorough physical examination. **Do not ask:**

- Have any of your adult teeth been pulled?
- How long has your symptoms of skin cancer been in remission?

Marital status. You **cannot** question the applicant about his/her marital status or ask about the applicant's spouse or children.

Name. You **may ask** for the applicant's full name. It is permissible to ask:

- What would you like me to call you?
- May I call you ----?

Do not ask questions about the applicant's name for purposes of determining his/her race, religion, national origin, or ancestry.

Religious beliefs. You **cannot** ask any questions about the applicant's religious beliefs or creed.

Sexual preferences. You **cannot** ask any questions that are related to the applicant's sex, sexual preferences, or sexual habits.

Work-related knowledge. You **may ask** questions concerning the applicant's work-related knowledge, skills, experience, or habits, e.g., punctuality, absenteeism, reasons for wanting the job. It is permissible to ask:

- What are three major work accomplishments that qualify you for this job?
- What's the most positive, satisfying work experience you have had?
- How many times have you been absent during the past year for reasons other than health?
- Will you work the midnight to 0800 shift?
- Why do you want to leave your current job?

Race, religion, sex, etc. You **cannot** ask the applicant any questions for the purpose of determining the applicant's race, religion, sex, creed, national origin, or ancestry. **Do not ask:**

- Have you ever worked for a religious organization?
- Will you work on Christmas Day?

Preparing for the Interview

The most important attribute of a good interviewer is being well prepared. You can prepare for the interview by:

- Carefully reviewing the job description, qualification requirements, and all materials submitted by the applicant.
- Allocating sufficient time for each interview.
- Arranging for an appropriate interview site which is comfortable, well-lighted, and private – with no interruptions
- Selecting and/or developing interview questions that are related to the position being filled. Recommended types of questions are those which:
 - Elicit information on past experience and training related to on-the-job performance, and
 - Ask applicants how they would respond to hypothetical situations likely to be encountered on the job.

Keep in mind that many of the prohibited questions may actually be legitimate if you can demonstrate they are job related. Also note that even if you do not ask a specific question of the applicant, the applicant may volunteer any information he so desires.

Interviewing Tips

Do:

- Review the candidate's resume before the interview so you can frame sensible questions without wasting time.
- Conduct yourself in a business line manner. Do not interpret this to mean being cold and unfriendly. However, joking and humor can be misinterpreted. It is best to be professional. In most cases, just be yourself, but be cordial and civil.
- Stick to the subject. Wandering and getting off the subject can lead to trouble.
- Use proper questioning techniques.
- Listen to the candidate.
- Remove distractions. Close the door and hold phone calls.
- Schedule interviews for the same amount of time for each candidate.

Do not:

- Ask questions about or allude to the candidate's personal life or appearance.
- Discuss physical characteristics unless **directly** related to the duties of the position.
- Ask questions related to military service unless experience is related to the duties of the position.
- Discuss dress standards
- Use trick or gimmick questions
- Try to counsel the candidate. (Interviews are for information gathering)
- Argue with candidates
- Make promises that are **not** within your authority
- Display any item or make a statement that might be interpreted as showing prejudice.
- Differentiate in your interview questions or technique when interviewing of the opposite sex.
- Allude to or make direct comments about reference checks of a candidate. Do not divulge information obtained from references; treat this as privileged information.

Following, as attachments, are sample interview questions for categories of applicants. These samples are not all inclusive nor are they mandatory. Instead, they should be used as a guide for the type of questions that may be asked.

All-Purpose Interview Questions

Tell me about your present job.

- What do you like best about it?
- What do you like least?
- What frustrates you?
- What have you learned on this job?
- Where do you rank your present job with other jobs you have had? Why?

How have you changed the content of your job when you first assumed it, e.g., expanded its scope, improved its contribution to the organization, etc?

What are some of the things in a job that are important to you?

In general, what type of work have you enjoyed the most? The least? Why?

Within a work environment, what are your strengths? Your weaknesses?

For what things have your superiors complimented you?

What are some of the problems you encountered on the job? How did you solve these problems?

What are some of your more important accomplishments?

- What are the reasons you were successful in achieving these accomplishments?
- Where there any unusual difficulties you had to overcome to achieve these accomplishments?

What are some important decisions or recommendations you are called upon to make?

- What decisions are easiest for you to make? Which are more difficult?
- How has your previous work experience helped you to improve your decision making abilities?
- Cite an important decision which you would make differently if you could do it over again?

Do you prefer working with others or working independently? Why?

Considering your relationships with co-workers, customers, supervisors, etc:

- Cite an example of how you have been effective in relating with others.
- Cite an example of how you might not have been particularly effective.
- What might you do differently next time in that situation?

How do you prioritize your work?

How well do you work under pressure?

- Cite an example of a pressure situation you faced on the job. How did you handle it?

What motivates you?

What computers/software packages have you worked with?

- For what purposes?
- What computer training have you had?

What was your most difficult assignment?

What was your most rewarding assignment?

What are your short-term goals?

What are your long-term goals?

- Have your long-term goals changed in recent years? If so, how?
- What are you doing to achieve your long-term goals?

What have you done about your career development in the last few years?

What kind of supervisor gets the best performance out of you?

Describe your relationship with your supervisor.

Regarding the vacant position:

- Why are you interested in the position?
- What in your background particularly qualifies you for this position?
- Why do you think you would excel in this position?

Do you have any other special qualifications relating to this position that I should know about?

How do you feel about working overtime? Working on a particular work schedule? Travel?
(Explain what specific requirements will be: amounts of travel, overtime, etc.)

What questions do you have for me?

Interview Questions for General Schedule Supervisory Positions

How do you view the job of a supervisor?

How many people have you supervised/lead? In your current job? In previous jobs?

What type of positions have you supervised/lead?

Describe your supervisory responsibilities and the extent of your authority.

Describe your leadership style.

What do you like best about being a supervisor? What do you like least?

What responsibility did you have in recruiting and selecting your staff?

- What criteria did you use in making hiring selections?
- How many immediate subordinates have you selected in the past two years?
- Regarding your selections, any surprises or disappointments? If so, explain.

What types of problems have you faced in directing subordinate employees?

- How did you handle them?
- What was the outcome?

How would you handle a situation where one of your workers changes from a reliable, hardworking employee to a problem person?

Describe your method of motivating people.

- Which approaches have worked best?
- Which approaches have failed?

How do you get the best work from your subordinates?

What responsibility have you had in orienting and training new people?

Some managers keep a very close check on their organization; others use a loose rein. What pattern do you follow?

How do you convey information to your people?

How do you maintain discipline in your organization?

- What types of discipline problems have you had to deal with?
- How do you handle them?

How is your group's morale? On what do you base your opinion?

Discuss your staff's turnover record.

- To what do you attribute this good/poor record?

What planning processes have you found useful?

- How do you go about them?
- In what way do you feel you have improved in your planning abilities/methods?

What systems and procedures have you developed to improve the efficiency of your organization?

- How well did they work?

What experience have you had dealing with unions/labor relations?

- Are you familiar with any negotiated agreements?

What do you know about the EEO program?

- What are your personal EEO contributions?

How does your past experience bear on your qualifications for this position?

What things do you think would contribute to your effectiveness as a supervisor?

What things might interfere with your effectiveness as a supervisor?

What are the two or three most important things you have learned as a supervisor?

What would you recommend that would help this activity to more effectively accomplish its mission?

What questions do you have for me?

Interview Questions for Journeyman Level General Schedule Jobs

What are you seeking in this position that you are not getting in your present job?

Why do you want to make a career/job change at this time?

Discuss some special assignments or projects you have worked on.

- How were you selected for the assignment?
- Did you work on the assignment alone or with others?

Discuss some of your most significant career accomplishments. Concentrate on those within the last five years.

Most of us can look back on a new idea or innovation we feel proud of introducing. Describe one or two such innovations you were particularly proud of.

What changes have you made in the nature of your job during the period you have held it?

What was the toughest assignment you have had?

- What factors made it so difficult?
- How did you handle it?

How much leeway does your supervisor give you in working out problems?

Cite some examples of important decisions or recommendations you are called upon to make.

As you have gained greater experience, how have you improved in your decision-making abilities?

Considering your work relationships both inside and outside the activity, how have you been particularly effective in relating with others?

Why do you feel you are management potential?

In what ways have you contributed to your organization's success?

What computer/software packages/automated systems have you worked with?

- What planning or data management functions did you use for them?
- What mainframe systems did you tie into?
- For what functions?
- How have computers helped you to better accomplish your work?

What have you done about your career development in the last few years?

What were your original career goals?

- How have they changes over the years?
- What are you doing to help accomplish your current career goals?

What experience have you had in research and development of new equipment? Products? Processes?

What has been your greatest technical achievement in your current position? In your career?

How do you stay abreast of the changes that occur in your technical field?

How do you approach and resolve a technical controversy?

Describe your significant off-complex contacts in your functional area.

- How do you maintain good relationships with them to further your technical contributions?

In what way has your present job prepared you for greater responsibilities?

What in your background particularly qualifies you for this job?

What questions do you have for me?

Sample Interview Questions for Clerical, Secretarial, and Assistant Jobs

What are your office responsibilities?

In what administrative or management areas are you particularly interested?

- What training or experience have you had in these areas?

In your current job, what are your highest priorities?

What is the pace of your current job?

- What is the extent of your workload?
- What types of pressure situations do you face? How often?

What are some of the more unusual assignments have you been given?

- What new skills/initiative did they require?
- How successful were you in completing them?

In your present job, what do you spend most of your time on?

In what ways do you contribute to your organization's success?

What responsibility do you have for dealing with other departments?

What equipment or supplies have you purchased or recommended?

With what computers/word processors are you familiar?

- What software packages have you used?
- Do you have any other computer experience or training?

Cite some examples of experience you have had in arranging meetings/conferences, etc. involving coordination with several people.

- What types of meetings/conferences were they?
- How many and which people were involved?

Describe your experience in maintaining records.

- What types of records?
- For what purpose?
- What computational skills were required?

What types of filing systems have you used? Organized yourself?

Describe your experience in assembling materials/reports from several different sources.

Describe your experience in collecting and compiling data, e.g., statistical, financial, inventory, etc.

What experience have you had in making travel arrangements? Are you familiar with DTS?

What type of directives, instructions, manuals, etc have you worked with? For what purposes?

What new methods for accomplishing your work have you suggested?

- Were they tried? If so, how successful were they?

What English, mathematics, or business courses have you taken?

- Where were the courses taken, e.g., high school, college, work, etc?
- How recently?
- What grades did you get?

Do you have any other special qualifications for this position which we have not discussed? If so, describe.

What questions do you have for me?

Sample Interview Questions for Foreman/Supervisor Wage Grade Jobs

Describe your experience supervising others.

- Tell me about the numbers and kinds of workers you supervised.
- Describe the nature of work directed.
- What relationships did you have with operating groups other than your own work unit?
- Describe your supervisory responsibilities and the extent of your authority.

What kinds of inspection have you done of your own work or that of others?

- What mechanical or electrical instruments have you used to check work?
- What was the purpose of the inspection?
- What instructions, specifications or other guidelines did you use?

Describe your experience in estimating time, materials and cost.

- Discuss the type and complexity of the operations
- What was the purpose of the estimating?
- Tell me about any new or prototype work you did estimating for.

What questions do you have for me?

Sample Interview Questions for Leader, Wage Grade Jobs

Have you ever taught or lead helpers, apprentices or intermediate workers? If so:

- Discuss the kind of instruction or leadership you gave.
- Explain how you encouraged those led to work effectively.
- How successful were you?
- What other leading have you done, e.g., in the military, community activities, etc.?

What questions do you have for me?

Sample Interview Questions for Journeyman Level Wage Grade Jobs

On what types of equipment/system/facilities have you worked?

- Where did you work on this equipment?

Give some examples of the more difficult work you have done.

Have you done any work on prototype equipment? If so, describe.

What tools, instruments and/or equipment have you worked with?

- Where have you used them?
- On what type of work?
- What type of training did you receive?

What types of test equipment have you worked with?

- What degree of exactness was required?

What precision measuring instruments have you used?

- For what purpose?
- To what tolerances?

Give some examples of your work which required precise timing, accurate dimensions, precise fit, etc.

Describe work you have done which required speed and accuracy of hand.

What are some of the more common problems you encounter in your work?

For equipment used, describe your experience in:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| - Troubleshooting | - Disassembling |
| - Testing | - Installing |
| - Preventive maintenance | - Aligning |
| - Repairing | - Constructing |
| - Assembling | - Calibrating |
| - Overhauling | - Other |
| - Modifying | - Reconditioning |

Tell how you have gained and used your knowledge.

- From the theoretical aide (as in books).
- From the practical aide (as in “hands on” work experience)

- How recently was this knowledge acquired?
- How recently was it last used?

Where did you learn the skills of your trade? On-the-job training, apprentice program, other training?

Give some examples of work you have done requiring up-to-date knowledge of trade practices.

Tell me about your studies in sciences, mathematics, mechanical drawing, and trades.

- Where did you study these subjects?
- What grades did you get?
- What types of measurements can you perform?

Discuss any hobbies you have that show your interest in trades, technical or scientific fields.

What kinds of materials have you worked with?

- Where did you use them?
- For what kind of work?

Tell me how you gained your knowledge of shop practice, e.g., conserving materials, using correct parts, keeping exact tolerances, handling different situations, “tricks of the trade”, etc.

What experience have you had in planning, layout, and set up operations?

- What was the size and scope of this work?
- What were the more difficult types of planning, layout, and set up you have done?
- Describe the tools you used, calculations involved, tolerances, etc.

What new methods for accomplishing your work have you suggested?

- Were they tried? If so, how successful were they?

Describe experience you have had where you were required to make reports or keep records, logs, inventories, etc.

Describe experience you have had where you were required to keep things neat, clean, and in order.

Cite an example where you had to meet a time schedule, deadline, or emergency.

- How did you handle it?

Have you used parts manuals and/or catalogues in your work? If so:

- Which manuals/catalogues?
- For what purposes?

What kinds of instructions have you had to follow in shop work, on jobs, or in the military?

Describe your experience working with blueprints, diagrams, schematics, etc.

What responsibilities have you been given on jobs, in the military, in your community, etc?

How much help do you get from your supervisor in doing your work?

- What work can you do by yourself, without the help of a supervisor?
- Have you ever helped or guided others, e.g., helpers, aides, etc?

Describe work you did where you had to observe safety rules to avoid injuring yourself or others.

- What dangers were involved?
- What safety training have you had?
- What is your safety record?
- Tell about any accidents you have had in the last 5 years.

Do you have any other specialized qualifications I should know about? If so, discuss.

What questions do you have for me?

Sample Interview Questions for Upward Mobility/Developmental Jobs

Regarding the vacant position:

- What do you know about this position?
- Have you discussed the duties/requirements of this position with anyone performing similar work? If so, who?
- Have you read the PD for this job?
- If you were selected, what do you think would be expected of you?
- What do you think would be the most difficult part of adjusting to this position?

Why did you apply for this position?

Discuss the duties of your present job and/or any other jobs you have held which would help you to perform successfully in this position?

Have you ever had any training experience in the field of _____? If yes, describe.

What outside activities are you involved in?

- Have you held any leadership positions? If so, describe.
- Have you ever organized individuals to accomplish a goal? If so, explain.

What hobbies or outside interests do you have which would help you in the performance of this job?

What have you done that shows initiative, persistence, and willingness to work hard in order to accomplish a goal?

In either your work experience, schooling, or outside activities, what accomplishments are you especially proud?

What are your career goals?

- What position would you like to hold in the future?
- In what way does this job meet (or lead you towards) your career goals?

What do you perceive to be some of your shortcomings and developmental needs?

What factors in your past work experience, education, or other activities do you feel will contribute to your ability to learn and advance in this field?

Describe your last training experience (forma, OJT, correspondence course, etc).

- Did you complete the training? If not, why?
- What grades did you receive?

- What difficulties did you encounter

The person selected for this position will receive a specialized training plan requiring on-the-job training, short courses, correspondence courses, college evening courses, etc (specify appropriate for position).

- Are you willing to go to night school?
- Travel for training purposes?
- Work on correspondence courses at home, on your own time?
- In addition to the requirements of the training plan, what else could you do to improve your performance in this position?

Do you have any additional questions about the position or the training requirements?

Sample Interview Questions for Recent Graduates and/or Non Federal Candidates

What do you know about employment in the Federal government?

In considering employment with the Federal government, what are some of the factors that you took into account?

Why do you think you might like to work for this activity?

Why did you choose your particular field of study?

What course did you like best? Least? Why?

Have you ever changed your major field of interest? If so, why?

What courses did you start and later drop? Why?

Discuss some of your term papers and/or special projects.

In what school activities have you participated? Why?

- Which did you enjoy the most?

What positions of leadership have you attained?

- Were you elected? Appointed? How did the role evolve?
- How successful were you in achieving goals of the groups you headed?

What were your ambitions in school?

- How did they change over the course of your education?

What are your plans for further education?

What hobbies or other outside activities do you pursue?

- How long have you been interested in these activities?

What have you done that showed initiative, persistence, and willingness to work hard in order to accomplish a goal?

Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?

In what type of position are you most interest?

If you joined our organization, where do you think you could make your best contribution? Why?

In what way has your education and training prepared you for this position?

What qualifications do you have that make you feel you will be successful in this job/field?

What questions do you have for me?