

 <p><b>HIRING PROCESS</b></p>	<p><b>Human Resource Manual</b></p>
<p><b>Interview Questions and Responses</b></p>	<p><b>Section 509</b></p>

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

### **PURPOSE**

1. This section includes the requirements for developing interview questions and identifying suitable responses.

### **APPLICATION**

2. The following guidelines apply to all departments. They also apply to the boards and agencies of the GN whose hiring is conducted pursuant to the *Public Service Act*.

### **PROVISIONS**

3. It is extremely important that the interview questions, including the essential skills, knowledge or abilities questions, and anticipated responses which may be used to identify the top candidates in close competitions, cover all the key areas of the job. This will ensure that the interviewed candidates have the opportunity to present their knowledge, skills and abilities (competencies). The selection committee has to have an opportunity to assess their potential to do the job.
4. The interview questions and anticipated responses that are developed by the selection committee must be used for each candidate. The questions cannot create systemic barriers. An example of a systemic barrier is asking a question that requires GN experience such as “What reports are available from P2K or Freebalance?”
5. Well developed anticipated responses will help rate even the most technical questions. It will also eliminate the tendency to compare candidates’ responses with those of other candidates rather than comparing the response to the expected answers.
6. Questions are to be rated on a 0-10 scale, however more important questions may be assigned additional weighting.
7. There are four (4) main types of interview questions:
  - behavioral descriptive;
  - technical;
  - scenario or hypothetical; and
  - general information



8. **Behavioral Descriptive questions** require applicants to provide practical examples of how they have solved problems in the workplace or in their life experience.
9. Behavioral descriptive questions focus on the candidate's experience and skills, such as analytical thinking, client service, listening, understanding and responding. In order to determine whether the candidate is qualified for the position, the selection committee will ask the candidate to talk about their role in specific situations and to describe how they have dealt with similar issues in previous life or employment experience.

For example for each behavioral interviewing question, candidates should be asked:

- to give a summary of the situation;
  - what led up to the solution;
  - who was involved;
  - what did the candidate think or feel;
  - what did the candidate say or do;
  - what was the outcome;
  - what did the candidate learn from the experience.
10. Note that questions should be phrased in a culturally sensitive way. For example:
    - Teamwork and Cooperation

Describe a situation where you had difficulty getting cooperation from team members.

    - Initiative

Tell us about a time when you had to react quickly or plan in advance to overcome a current or future problem.
  11. **Technical questions** assess whether candidates have the knowledge and skills to do the job.
  12. Technical questions address the candidate's ability to perform the job and should be developed using the job description as a general guide. These



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abilities can be acquired through education, training and/or work experience.

13. The questions in a given area should reflect the duties listed in the job description.
14. **General Information questions** give additional information about the candidate. For example, “Are you willing to work overtime?” or “This job involves occasional travel. Are you willing to fulfill this requirement?” Generally they are not marked or graded.
15. These questions explore the candidates’ suitability for the position. For example, the candidate may want to be a Correctional Officer, but is not willing to do shift-work that is essential to the performance of the job therefore the candidate is not suitable.
16. Communication skills are also assessed. Written and job specific skills can be assessed by having the applicant complete a written or work assignment.
17. People skills include how well the candidate gets along with others and whether the candidate is a team player or has supervisory skills. Positions involving direct contact with clients, especially with the public, would require strong people skills.
18. **Scenarios or Hypothetical questions** may be used to determine how the candidate might handle suggested work situations if he/she has no work experience. For example:

“It’s 10 a.m. You have two documents that need to be typed by noon, the phone is ringing and you have two people waiting for assistance. How would you deal with this situation?”

These questions are different from the behavioral interviewing questions because the candidate tells you what they think they would do, not what they have done in a particular situation. Typically, the candidate will try and provide an answer they think would be acceptable. There is limited usefulness of this type of question for this reason and they should be used sparingly.



19. **Hypothetical questions** can lead into behavioural questions. In the above example a follow up question could be: “Can you please tell us about a time when you were confronted with such a situation.”
20. Most interview questions are rated on a scale pre-determined by the selection committee. However, some **essential skills, knowledge or abilities questions** must be answered correctly as the information or skill being sought is absolutely essential to do the job. Be sure to identify all such questions on the interview question sheets before any candidates are interviewed.
21. Once the questions are prepared, the selection committee should decide upon the pass mark for the interviews. Normally, the pass mark is the equivalent of 60%. Clearly indicate the pass mark on the interview sheets. The pass mark cannot be changed after any interviews but is it acceptable to set a higher pass mark at the outset of the interviews particularly for positions with greater responsibilities.
22. It is also acceptable to ask **post-interview questions** and to provide information requested by the candidate. This includes such issues as:
  - Availability Dates and commitment to position
  - The need for Staff Housing
  - Understanding of Priority Hiring Policy
  - Giving candidates the opportunity to ask their questions

### **AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES**

23. *The Nunavut Public Service Act*  
Sections 16-22
24. *The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*  
Article 23
25. *Nunavut Human Rights Act*
26. *Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*
27. *Canadian Human Rights Act*
28. *Priority Hiring Policy*

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## CONTACTS

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