The Program’s POV: Strategies for Structured and Virtual Interviewing

Titania Juang, PhD
Assistant Professor
Radiation Medicine & Applied Sciences

UC San Diego Health
Goals of Interviewing

- Gain a fuller understanding of each candidate
- Accurately assess candidate suitability
- Bring in the best person for the job
Structured Interviews

- What is a structured interview?
- What are advantages of structured interviewing?
- How do we develop structured interviews?

Virtual Interviews

- Recommendations
- Rationale
- Challenges & solutions

Best Practices

- From start to finish!
Components of an Interview

Content

What happens during the interview

Evaluation

How interview performance is assessed
Unstructured Interviews

Content

Discretionary Questions

Evaluation

No System for Scoring

- Susceptible to biases (e.g., race, gender, disability)
- May not reflect job requirements

Structured Interviews

Content

- Standardized Questions

Evaluation

- Standardized Scoring Scales

+ Focuses the process on job-related factors
+ Limits the influence of information that can trigger biases

What are advantages of structured interviewing?

**Structured interviews improve…**

- **Reliability**
  Consistency of candidate evaluations and the evaluation process.

- **Validity**
  Accuracy of job-related inferences from the interview.

- **Fairness**
  Applicants are evaluated on the same metrics.

What are advantages of structured interviewing?

Structured interviews can also…*

**Assess non-cognitive attributes**
- *Examples:* teamwork, adaptability, conscientiousness, communication skills, stress tolerance, professionalism…

**Reliably predict job performance**
- *Including:* patient care and clinical performance


Creating a structured interview

1. Define competencies
2. Create standardized interview questions
3. Develop standardized rating scales
Creating a structured interview

1. Define competencies

What makes a good…

- Identify characteristics that have led to successful performance
- Categorize these into competency areas

**Examples**

- Interpersonal Skills
- Communication
- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Motivation & Initiative
- Dependability
- Respect for Diversity


Creating a structured interview

1. Define competencies

- What makes a good…
  - Identify characteristics that have led to successful performance
  - Categorize these into competency areas

- Define “fit” → compatibility with the job and your organization
  - What does a “good fit” mean for your workplace?
  - Define work/job-related characteristics (attitudes, knowledge, skills) and incorporate them into your competency areas

Align these to the mission of your program and institution.

resident? medical physicist?
healthcare team member?
Creating a structured interview

2. Create standardized interview questions
   ...that can assess the competencies you’ve identified

- **Behavioral** questions
  - Past behavior predicts future behavior
  - What have you done in a past job-related situations?

- **Situational** questions
  - Intentions predict future behavior
  - What would you do in a hypothetical job-related situation?

*Can you tell me about a situation when…*
*…How did you handle it?*

*Imagine that you are…*
*…What would you do?*
Creating a structured interview

3. Develop standardized rating scales

- Rating scales can evaluate responses for individual questions, competencies, or overall suitability
- Consider anchoring your rating scales with written examples for each score value
Predicting Performance of First-Year Residents: Correlations Between Structured Interview, Licensure Exam, and Competency Scores in a Multi-Institutional Study

Marcus-Blank, Brittany PhD; Dahlke, Jeffrey A. MA; Braman, Jonathan P. MD; Borman-Shoap, Emily MD; Tiryaki, Ezgi MD; Chipman, Jeffrey MD; Andrews, John S. MD; Sackett, Paul R. PhD; Cullen, Michael J. PhD

Author Information

doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000002429
Example: ➊ Define Competency

Competency *

Teamwork – Cooperation

Behavioral Descriptors *

- Identifies and utilizes team member strengths to achieve results
- Develops constructive working relationships with others
- Looks for ways to help people, and pitches in to help others
- Works as part of a team, contributing to the group’s effort to achieve goals

Example: 2 Standardized interview question

BEHAVIORAL QUESTION *

Can you tell me about a situation when you effectively cooperated with team members to accomplish a difficult task?

What challenges did you face?
What strategies did you use to work together?
What was the outcome?

EXAMPLE FOLLOW-UPS

COMPETENCY Teamwork – Cooperation

**Example: 3 Anchored rating scale**

**BEHAVIORAL QUESTION**

Can you tell me about a situation when you effectively cooperated with team members to accomplish a difficult task?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation Complexity</th>
<th>Behavioral Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task/Team Difficulty</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teamwork/Cooperation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Extremely Difficult</td>
<td>□ Extremely Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Task not valued, team uncooperative)</td>
<td>(Built rapport, facilitated cooperation, task completed effectively)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Moderately Difficult</td>
<td>□ Moderately Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Task not highly valued, team not motivated to cooperate)</td>
<td>(Built some rapport, task completed adequately)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Not Difficult</td>
<td>□ Not Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Task valued, team cooperative)</td>
<td>(Unable to build rapport or cooperation, task completed suboptimally)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structured Interviews

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Virtual Interviews

• Recommendations
• Rationale
• Challenges & solutions

Best Practices

• From start to finish!
Virtual Interviews

AAMC Recommendations for 2022-2023 *

+ Virtual interviews for all applicants
+ Hybrid interviewing strongly discouraged
+ Share interviewing plans clearly and early on

Virtual Interviews: Rationale

+ Reduction in interviewing costs

Total cost of interviewing categorized by range


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Virtual Interviews: Rationale

- Reduction in interviewing costs
- Reduction in time away from other commitments

Applicants’ reasons for declining interview invitations (excerpt)

Virtual Interviews: Rationale

- Reduction in interviewing costs
- Reduction in time away from other commitments
- Potential for wider range of applicants

Virtual Interviews: Challenges

- Limitations in communication/interactions
- Inability to see workplace/city in person
- Potential introduction of bias
  - Increased cognitive load
  - Interviewing environment


* Chaisson NF, Ashton RW. Virtual Interviews and Their Effect on Cognitive Load for Graduate Medical Education Applicants and Programs. ATS Sch. 2021 Apr 15;2(3):309-316.
Virtual Interviews: Challenges

Challenges

Prolonged Monotony ("Zoom Fatigue")

Unable to see workplace/city in person

Solutions

• Schedule breaks
• Keep it short
• Prerecord program/clinic information & send out ahead of time


* Chaisson NF, Ashton RW. Virtual Interviews and Their Effect on Cognitive Load for Graduate Medical Education Applicants and Programs. ATS Sch. 2021 Apr 15;2(3):309-316.
Virtual Interviews: Challenges **,*

Challenges

Technical Issues
(e.g., internet connectivity)

Solutions

• Back-up contacts
• Provide virtual platform instructions
• Paste questions into chat


* Chaisson NF, Ashton RW. Virtual Interviews and Their Effect on Cognitive Load for Graduate Medical Education Applicants and Programs. ATS Sch. 2021 Apr 15;2(3):309-316.
## Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eye Contact</th>
<th>Nonverbal Cues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Solutions

- Camera at eye level
- Video placement directly under camera
- Face/shoulders/mid-torso visible

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* Chaisson NF, Ashton RW. Virtual Interviews and Their Effect on Cognitive Load for Graduate Medical Education Applicants and Programs. ATS Sch. 2021 Apr 15;2(3):309-316.
Virtual Interviews: Challenges

**Challenge**

**Backgrounds**
- Distractions (virtual or physical)
- Bias introduced due to home/interview space

**Solutions**
- Keep the focus on you: avoid complex or messy backgrounds
- Test ahead of time

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Best Practices

Before Interviews

- Interview dates ➤ SDAMPP Calendar
- Inform applicants of...
  - Decision timeline
  - Interviewing plans (virtual/on-site)
- Send candidates program information

www.sdampp.org/calendar.php
Best Practices

Before Interviews

+ Develop structured interview
+ Train participants
  - Unconscious bias
  - Interview conduct (do’s/don’ts)
  - Interview questions
  - Use of rating scales

2021 SDAMPP December Webinar

www.sdampp.org/2021DecemberWebinar.php
Best Practices

During Interviews

- Give overview of interview process at start
- Use standardized questions & evaluations
- Avoid potentially discriminatory topics
- Schedule in breaks, interaction opportunities
Best Practices

After Interviews

+ Finalize evaluations & ranking in a timely manner

+ Review and evaluate, adjust and improve!
  - Did questions yield relevant information on competencies? Differentiate candidates?
  - Did the rating scale(s) work as intended?
  - Do your scores show any sign of systematic bias?
AAMC Resource

Best Practices for Conducting Residency Program Interviews

The AAMC guide for residency programs as they prepare to interview candidates.

https://www.aamc.org/media/44746/download
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Structured Interviews


- Predicting performance in Canadian dental schools: the new CDA structured interview, a new personality assessment, and the DAT. Poole A, Catano, Cunningham DP. *Journal of Dental Education.* 2007 May;71(5):664-76.

- Enhancing the residency interview process with the inclusion of standardised questions. Black C, Budner H, Motta AL. *Postgrad Medical Journal.* 2018 Apr;94(1110):244-246.
### References

**Virtual Interviews**

- AAMC Interview Guidance for the 2022-2023 Residency Cycle

- Virtual Interviews at Graduate Medical Education Training Programs: Determining Evidence-Based Best Practices. 

- Virtual Interviews and Their Effect on Cognitive Load for Graduate Medical Education Applicants and Programs. 
MedPhys Match


• MedPhys Match Rules and Ethics: Training Modules for Program Directors
  https://www.sdampp.org/2021DecemberWebinar.php

AAMC

• Results of the 2016 Program Directors Survey
  https://store.aamc.org/results-of-the-2016-program-directors-survey.html

• Best Practices for Conducting Residency Program Interviews
  https://www.aamc.org/media/44746/download