

Rating Guide

Rating guides put all of the panel members on the “same page” when scoring interview responses. Too often, panel members have varying opinions of what constitutes a “good” answer to the interview question and, as a result, come to different conclusions about the candidates. By anchoring the scales in interview, you can reduce a great deal of this confusion and conflict.

After constructing a good set of job-related questions for your interview, you should also produce a rating guide. This guide consists of a simple rating scale and your predetermined expectations for the quality of the applicant’s response at each level of the scale. You should restrict the rating scale’s range so one level of response can be effectively distinguished from another.

Note that the example on the following page allows for intermediate judgment calls at the 2- and 4-point score levels. It is sometimes useful to allow yourself an intermediate score area to deal with applicant responses that don’t precisely fit your matrix.

You can use a form similar to the one on the next page to score and tabulate individual applicant responses during each interview. If one or more of the questions you ask deal with a skill or experience that is particularly important, you can provide for weighted scores on the form.

Alternately, you can choose to anchor the scale only at the ends (Poor) and (Excellent) and use the intermediate ratings to score responses that fit in between the two anchor points. A third, but less precise, option would be to anchor the score only in the middle (Acceptable) and rate on either side of the mid-point based upon the responses.

Leave enough space between question entries to allow for any notes that will assist you in evaluating this information later.

How many questions should you include in your interview? There’s no absolute answer to that question, but you should limit the number to allow for the interview time available. Keep in mind that this type of interview requires a good bit of time because the applicants must be allowed time to provide detailed examples and responses.

Rating Guide Example

COMPETENCY BEING EVALUATED

PERFORMANCE UNDER STRESS: The degree to which the applicant possesses the ability to react calmly and rationally under stress.

INTERVIEW QUESTION

Our employees must be able to react calmly and rationally in stressful situations. Describe a situation in which you had to perform under stress. What did you do, and why did you do these things? What in your background demonstrates that you possess the ability to react appropriately in stressful situations?

5 OUTSTANDING – The applicant described a situation of direct relevance in which he or she performed successfully under stress. The applicant’s examples provided clear evidence of calm, rational performance. Nothing in the applicant’s background, including his or her performance during the interview, indicates potential problems in this area.

4 *Intermediate score*

3 SATISFACTORY – The applicant has had some exposure to situations involving stress and seems to have handled himself/herself reasonably well. The applicant is able to articulate reasonable strategies for handling such situations. Nothing in the applicant’s background, including his or her performance during the interview, indicates potential problems in this area.

2 *Intermediate score*

1 MARGINAL – The applicant has not been exposed to situations involving mental or physical stress but is able to articulate reasonable strategies for handling such situations. Nothing in the applicant’s background, including his or her performance during the interview, indicates potential problems in this area.

0 UNACCEPTABLE – The applicant has handled himself/herself poorly in stressful situations. Or, the applicant is unable to articulate reasonable strategies for handling such situations. Or, something in the applicant’s background indicates potential problems in this area. Or, his or her performance during the interview indicates difficulty reacting appropriately under stress.

