Interview Guide for Intern Positions

**Interviewer Instructions**

This guide is designed to provide common interview processes and techniques with instructions and customizable tools that can be tailored to your organization’s preferences and needs. The contents of this document include:

1. Preparing for the Interview
2. The Interview Structure
3. Candidate Offer and Rejection Letter Templates

1. **Preparing for the Interview**

Interview preparation involves several key actions to help prepare an interviewer to effectively assess candidates and gain valuable insights into their potential. Review the following guidelines for assistance with the preparation process.

* **Review Resume and Application:** Familiarize yourself with the candidate's background, experiences, and skills.
* **Define Role Requirements:** Clearly outline the skills and qualifications needed for the internship position.
* **Set Up the Interview Environment:** Create a comfortable atmosphere. Ensure a quiet, comfortable space for the interview, whether in-person or virtual. Encourage open dialogue to help candidates feel at ease.
* **Review the Interview Structure Outline:** An interview session typically involves four sections: introduction, candidate background, interview questions, and closing. Become familiar with the process, instructions, and example questions in each section.
* **Review the Post-Interview Evaluation:** Use the structured evaluation form to assess the candidate’s performance based on the evaluation criteria to compare candidates objectively. Tally the overall impression score, provide additional feedback, sign/date, and submit the completed evaluation form to the hiring manager.
* **Customize the Candidate Letter Templates:** The offer and rejection letter templates are customizable to easily be copied and pasted for email messages.
* **Review Interview Tips:** The following tips will help to ensure the interview process is smooth and effective.
  + **Be Consistent:** Use the same set of questions for all candidates to ensure a fair evaluation.
  + **Listen Actively:** Pay attention to the candidate's responses and ask follow-up questions as needed.
  + **Probe for Depth:** If a candidate provides a brief answer, follow up with probing questions to gain more insight (e.g., “Can you tell me more about that experience?”).
  + **Encourage Questions:** Allow time for the candidate to ask questions about the company, team, or role. Their questions can provide insight into their interests and priorities.
  + **Take Notes:** Document your impressions and specific examples from the interview immediately after to ensure accurate evaluations later.
  + **Focus on Potential:** Since interns are often early in their careers, focus on their potential, willingness to learn, and enthusiasm, rather than just their experience.

1. **The Interview Structure**

The interview structure consists of an interview session outline, including the interview timeframe and scoring the interview. The instructions and tools provided below can be modified to meet your organization’s needs.

Interview Timeframe:

A typical internship interview timeframe is between 30-45 minutes. Below is an example of a 45-minute interview session:

* Introduction (5 mins)
* Candidate Background (5 mins)
* Interview Questions (30 mins)
* Closing (5 mins)

Scoring the Interview:

The STAR technique is a valuable tool to help an interviewer listen to key aspects of a candidate’s responses and help collect objective data when using competency-based interview questions.

* **S**ituation/**T**ask: What was the situation or task involved?
* **A**ctions: What actions were taken?
* **R**esult: What was the outcome?

A rating scale is used so that all interviewers can easily understand the scale being used and the meaning of each rating on the scale to help minimize interviewer bias, differences in questions, and interpersonal factors when evaluating the candidate’s response. Below is an example of a 4-point interview performance rubric:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 4  Extensive | The candidate excelled in every aspect of the interview displaying confidence and professionalism. They provided insightful and thorough responses, demonstrating deep knowledge of the subject matter that showcased critical thinking. Their communication was clear, confident, and engaging, and they showed a strong passion for the role and the organization. |
| 3  Moderate | The candidate exhibited good knowledge and preparation, providing well-articulated and relevant answers to most questions. They demonstrated solid communication skills and were able to engage in conversation, although some responses could have benefited from greater detail and insight. |
| 2  Limited | The candidate showed some preparation but struggled to articulate their thoughts clearly. Answers were occasionally relevant, but gaps in knowledge were apparent. Communication was somewhat effective, though there were signs of disengagement. |
| 1  Not Noted | The candidate demonstrated a lack of preparation and relevant knowledge. Responses were vague or unrelated to the questions asked. Communication skills were weak, and there was little to no engagement. |

Interview Session Outline

The example outline below consists of instructions for each section during the interview which includes an introduction, candidate background, interview questions, and a closing.

Consider using the structured Internship Candidate Interview Evaluation Form that correlates with the outline below to assess the candidate’s performance throughout the interview session based on the following criteria: responses to competency-based interview questions, enthusiasm, and cultural fit.

INTRODUCTION

* Welcome the candidate and introduce yourself
* Briefly explain the structure of the interview

Candidate Background

* Ask the candidate to share a brief overview of their education, experiences, and interests related to the internship

**Example Questions:**

* Tell us a little bit about yourself and why you are interested in this internship position
* What specific skills or experiences do you hope to gain during the internship?
* What motivated you to apply for this position?

Competency-Based Interview Questions

Competency-based interview questions are valuable for assessing relevant skills and experiences by using behavioral and/or situational interview questions.

* Behavioral questions
  + Ask interviewees to explain how they have dealt with actual situations in their past.
* Situational questions
  + Ask interviewees to explain how they would react to hypothetical questions in the future.

**Competency Categories:**

Below are five example competency categories that can be used for interview questions:

* Communication skills
  + Assess clarity, conciseness, and effectiveness in verbal and written communication.
* Teamwork and Collaboration
  + Evaluate the candidate’s ability to work effectively with others.
* Problem-solving and Critical Thinking
  + Assess the candidate’s ability to analyze situations and develop solutions.
* Adaptability and Flexibility
  + Evaluate how well the candidate adjusts to new situations and challenges.
* Time Management and Organizational Skills
  + Assess the candidate’s prior experience related to the internship role.

**Competency-based Questions:**

Below are example questions for each competency category provided below. Selected or newly created questions can be entered in the Internship Candidate Interview Evaluation Form for your interviewers.

[Competency Category: Communication Skills]

**Example Questions:**

* Can you describe a time when you had to explain a complex concept to someone?
* How do you handle feedback or criticism?
* How would you handle a disagreement with a team member during a group project?

[Competency Category: Teamwork and Collaboration]

**Example Questions:**

* Tell me about a successful team project you were part of. What was your role?
* How do you handle conflicts within a team setting?
* Have you ever worked in a team environment? Can you provide an example of your role and contributions?

[Competency Category: Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking]

**Example Questions:**

* Describe a challenging situation you faced in a project. How did you approach it?
* Can you give an example of a time when you had to think critically to make a decision?
* Present hypothetical scenarios to the candidate to assess problem-solving abilities and thought processes.
* If you were assigned a task with unclear instructions, how would you approach it?

[Competency Category: Adaptability and Flexibility]

**Example Questions:**

* Can you share an experience where you had to adapt quickly to a new environment or task?
* How do you handle unexpected changes or challenges in your work?
* Tell me about a time when you faced a challenge. How did you overcome it?

[Competency Category: Time Management and Organizational Skills]

**Example Questions:**

* Can you describe a time when you successfully managed your time to complete a project?
* How do you prioritize your tasks when you have multiple deadlines?
* Describe a situation where you had to meet a tight deadline. What steps did you take?

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

* Thank the candidate for their time and interest.
* Outline the next steps in the selection process.
* Provide an estimated timeline for when they can expect to hear back.

1. **Candidate Offer and Rejection Letter Templates**

Candidate Offer Letter Template

[Your Company Letterhead]  
[Date]

[Candidate's Info]

Dear [Candidate's Name],

We are pleased to offer you an internship position at [Your Company Name] as a [Internship Title] within the [Department/Team Name]. We believe that your skills and enthusiasm will make a valuable contribution to our team.

**Internship Details:**

* **Position:** [Internship Title]
* **Location:** [Company Location or Remote]
* **Start Date:** [Start Date]
* **Duration:** [Duration of Internship]
* **Hours:** [Specify Hours/Days]
* **Compensation:** [Paid/Unpaid, or specify stipend if applicable]

As an intern, you will have the opportunity to [briefly outline key responsibilities or projects]. You will report to [Supervisor's Name], who will provide guidance and support throughout your internship.

Please confirm your acceptance of this offer by [Specify Deadline]. If you have any questions or need further information, feel free to reach out.

We look forward to having you on our team!

Sincerely,

[Your Name]  
[Your Job Title]  
[Your Company Name]  
[Your Contact

Candidate Rejection Letter Template

[Your Company Letterhead]  
[Date]

[Candidate's Info]

Dear [Candidate's Name],

Thank you for your interest in the [Internship Title] position at [Your Company Name] and for the time you invested in the interview process. We appreciate the opportunity to learn about your skills and experiences.

After careful consideration, we regret to inform you that we will not be moving forward with your application at this time. We genuinely appreciate your interest in our company.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]  
[Your Job Title]  
[Your Company Name]  
[Your Contact Information]

*Optional Addition (if applicable):*

We encourage you to apply for future opportunities with us and wish you the best of luck in your job search.