

---

# MASTERING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

---

*A Comprehensive Guide For  
Hiring Managers*







# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>GOAL OF AN INTERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTERVIEW FORMAT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>REMOTE INTERVIEW SETTING</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DO'S &amp; DON'TS OF AN INTERVIEW</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS</b>	<b>10</b>





# Introduction

To maintain the highest standards of fairness and consistency in the interview process, experienced and novice interviewers should adhere to best practices, legal guidelines, and bias prevention techniques when conducting interviews. This guide reviews the interview format, legal guidelines, and how to evaluate candidates fairly.

## Goal Of An Interview

An interview is an employer's opportunity to learn more about an applicant's experience, skills, and knowledge regarding the applied-for position. Each candidate should be evaluated using the same metrics, which include the same job description and interview questions, to avoid the risk of discrimination. The interview should evaluate the skills and qualifications of the candidate, assess the individual as a cultural fit, and identify the candidate's growth potential.

“Culture Fit” can be used loosely, but it identifies whether a candidate's values align with the company's values, mission, and goals. Hiring based solely on culture fit can lead to a lack of diversity and should only be used as a consideration, not the sole factor in a hiring decision.

# Interview Format



## Phone Interview

Typically, the first interview. This helps interviewers distinguish between qualified and unqualified candidates before conducting in-person interviews. Phone interviews cover general questions about work experience, education, qualifications, and professional background. The phone interview is also a good time to provide additional information about the position and company.



## One-on-One Interview

These interviews are typically in person (although virtual is an option), where the candidate meets with a single interviewer.

This is when the interviewer should utilize skills-based, behavioral, and situational questions to get a better understanding of the candidate.



## Panel Interview

Consists of multiple interviewers meeting with a candidate at one time. Typically, the panel will consist of the hiring manager and other managers or supervisors. Panel interviews can help paint a broader picture of a candidate with a diverse group asking questions. Also, with positions that will regularly interact across departments, panel interviews can give those relevant departments the chance to assess whether the candidate is a good fit.



## Group Interview

Consists of several candidates interviewing with one or multiple interviewers at once. The interviewer can provide additional information to a larger group at one time and have candidates participate in group exercises. This gives the interviewers a chance to directly compare candidates to each other and see how they interact with others.

# Remote Interview Setting

Remote interviews can be a time-saving alternative for both remote and in-person positions. However, they do come with their own unique challenges. Here are some items to keep in mind when conducting remote interviews.



## Understanding Technology

The interviewer should familiarize themselves with the technology platform used for the interview and ensure a solid, reliable connection. It may also be a good idea to conduct a trial run with a colleague to run the software, check the sound device, get accustomed to the camera when speaking, and address any potential minor audio delays.

## Sharing Details with Candidate

The candidate should be notified beforehand with relevant details for the meeting.

**This can include:**

- Time, including time zone
- Whom the candidate will be meeting with, as well as their position title
- Software platform that is being used, as well as instructions on how to launch the software.
- A backup method (i.e., phone numbers/emails) to contact interviewers in case of technology issues before or during the interview.
- General expectations around the time of the interview, subjects to discuss, and any other information the employer wishes to provide.

## Appropriate Location

To ensure optimal interview conditions, interviewers should choose a non-distracting location with good lighting and a simple background. Virtual backgrounds or blur settings can be employed for added privacy. The interview space should also be free from potential interruptions and noise disturbances.



## Record the Interview

Before initiating a recorded video interview, securing the candidate's explicit consent is essential. Recording the interview allows for a more inclusive hiring process, as multiple decision-makers can review the footage. Additionally, it enhances the accuracy of the interviewer's recollection of the conversation.

## Avoiding Bias in Remote Interviews

At times, remote interviews can lend themselves to a less formal process and give insight into a candidate's personal life, but the interviewer must guard against bias around protected characteristics. For example, if the interviewer hears a child in the background, that does not give a reason to ask a candidate about their childcare arrangements.

Suppose the employer interviews some candidates in person and others virtually. In that case, the process should be as consistent as possible between the two formats to avoid inadvertently biasing the outcome and relying on factors that are not job-related in making a hiring decision. In addition, the interviewer should not penalize the candidate for any technology glitches during the meeting.



To comply with state laws, securing consent from all parties involved in a recording is crucial. This means informing them in advance that the conversation will be recorded.





# Types of Interview Questions

To ensure a successful interview, employers should develop a list of targeted questions to ask all candidates. This aids in comparing candidates objectively for the position and provides documentation of your interview process. Alternatively, an unstructured interview may feel more natural and provide an opportunity to discuss topics in more detail. However, it can be challenging to compare candidates, and there is a higher risk of potential discrimination claims.

## Skills-Based

Allows the interviewer to directly assess the candidate's abilities in direct relation to the position, whether this is knowledge of specific tools, practices, or technologies. This can also help determine whether the candidate has practical knowledge of the position.

*Ex. "Explain how \_\_\_\_\_ works."*

*"What skills do you need to develop the most?"*

## Situational

Allows the candidate to explain how they would approach a given scenario. This also allows the interviewer to assess their decision-making abilities and confidence in the role.

*Ex. "What would you do if you made a mistake at work?"*

*"What would you do if an angry customer confronted you?"*

## Behavioral

Assesses the candidate's character and how they have approached challenging situations to assess how they would act in similar situations on the job.

*Ex. "Tell me about a time when you didn't agree with a company policy or procedure."*

*"Give me an example of a goal you reached and how."*

Your FrankAdvice HR Consultant can assist you with building interview guides.



# Legal Considerations in the Interview Process

Several federal, state, and local laws have been enacted against discrimination in employment. Federal laws that may affect an interview –

- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (Title VII)** prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, and sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity). Title VII applies to employers with 15 or more employees;
- **The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)** protects people aged 40 and older from discrimination because of age. The ADEA covers employers with 20 or more employees;
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** makes it illegal to discriminate against qualified individuals with a disability. The ADA applies to employers with 15 or more employees
- **The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA)** prohibits employers from using an applicant's or employee's genetic information to discriminate against them in any aspect. GINA also covers employers with 15 or more employees

Most states and many municipalities have enacted similar laws, which may be more encompassing than those enforced on the federal level. The hiring manager or supervisor should know and review all applicable laws before conducting a job interview.

Failure to abide by these equal employment laws can put your organization at risk of a lawsuit and/or fines for discriminatory employment practices. If discrimination is found, the organization may be liable for both compensatory and punitive damages brought on by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

All employment interviews must be conducted within the parameters of the law. That is, the interviewer must not ask questions nor screen out candidates based on characteristics protected by the law.

Remote interviews make compliance with federal, state, and local laws essential, as both parties can record. If an inappropriate question is asked, the candidate who feels they may have been discriminated against could use that evidence in a complaint or lawsuit.

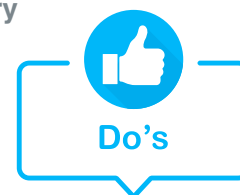


# Do's & Don'ts of an Interview

Interviewers should document their observations on a pre-screen document, interview guide, or a specific form. To avoid potential legal issues, interviewers should refrain from taking notes directly on applications or resumes.



If an applicant begins to disclose information that could fall into a discriminatory or risky area, the interviewer should politely stop them and advise that the information is unnecessary.



Below are suggestions on how to correct common interviewing mistakes:

## Potential Sex/Gender Discrimination

### Do Not Ask:

What is your maiden name?

Question about the other persons who reside with the applicant. Question about the number or ages of children, dependents, or plans to give birth.

Questions about gender identity or sexual orientation.

Do you wish to be addressed as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms.?

### You May Ask:

Have you ever used another name?

What is the name and address of your parent or guardian (minor)?

Review policies and procedures over company attendance policy.

Use the candidate's preferred name or avoid using titles altogether.

## Potential Disability Discrimination

### Do Not Ask:

Questions about the applicant's general medical condition, state of health, or illnesses.

Questions regarding job-related injuries or the receipt of workers' compensation benefits.

Do you suffer from any mental or physical illnesses?

### You May Ask:

Ask whether the applicant will need a reasonable accommodation for the hiring process.

Ask whether the applicant can perform the job's essential functions with or without a reasonable accommodation.

State that offers may be contingent on the applicant passing a job-related physical examination. (as long as the same physical exam is required of all persons entering the same position.)

## Potential Age Discrimination

### Do Not Ask:

*How old are you? What is your date of birth?*

*When did you attend/complete high school?*

*Questions that tend to identify applicants over age 40.*

### You May Ask:

Make a statement that hiring is subject to verification that the applicant meets legal age requirements.

Are you over 18 years of age? If hired, can you provide proof of age?

If under 18, can you, upon beginning employment, submit a work permit (if required by your state)?

## Potential Natural Origin Discrimination

### Do Not Ask:

Questions as to the nationality, lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, or parentage of the applicant, the applicant's parents, or spouse.

Are you a U.S. citizen? Or any questions about the citizenship of the applicant's parents, spouse, or other relatives.

### You May Ask:

Can you, upon beginning employment, submit verification of your legal right to work in the U.S.?

If the use of a language other than English is relevant to the job for which the applicant is applying, you may ask about the language the applicant reads, speaks, or writes.

## Potential Race Discrimination

### Do Not Ask:

Questions regarding the applicant's complexion, skin color, eyes, or hair.

Questions about political and/or social organizations.

### You May Ask:

Make statements regarding the regular days, hours, or shifts to be worked and ask if the applicant can meet those requirements.

## Arrest/Criminal Record Discrimination

### Do Not Ask:

Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

Have you ever been arrested?

### You May Ask:

Would you be willing to allow us to do a criminal background check?



## Potential Discrimination Based on Religion

### Do Not Ask:

Questions about the applicant's religion.

Does your religion prevent you from working weekends or holidays?

### You May Ask:

Make statements regarding the regular days, hours, or shifts to be worked and ask if the applicant can meet those requirements.

What days are you available to work?

## Military Service Discrimination

### Do Not Ask:

Questions about the applicant's service in a foreign military.

Questions about an applicant's required service in the National Guard.

Questions about an applicant's discharge from military service.

### You May Ask:

If the candidate disclosed military service on their application or resume, you may reference this experience as you would any other job history.

## References

### Do Not Ask:

Questions of the applicant's former employers or acquaintances may elicit information regarding the applicant's race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, marital status, sex, or age.

### You May Ask:

Who is willing to provide professional and/or character references for you?

How many years have you known (the reference)?



## Fairly Evaluating Candidates

Once all interviews are completed, ratings from everyone who interviewed the candidates should be compiled and compared. The candidate with the highest rating should be considered for hire.

# Frequently Asked Questions

**1. *My managers like to go with their gut feeling when it comes to candidates. Would our company be at risk for this type of behavior?***

Making a hiring decision based on "gut" feelings or because the person is "likeable" is subjective. Instead, the hiring supervisor should prepare a list of questions, ask each candidate the same questions, and evaluate each candidate based on those answers, which should reflect KSAs and fit in the organization.

**2. *A pregnant woman applies for a job, but you want to hire a long-term employee. Can you refuse to hire her because she inevitably will need time off due to her pregnancy?***

No. Refusing to hire a pregnant woman is a form of sex discrimination, provided that she can perform the essential functions of the job.

**3. *Our company does not run background checks but asks applicants in the hiring process if they have committed a crime and reviews county arrest records. Is this within our rights?***

While your company may not conduct formal background checks, asking applicants about criminal history and reviewing county arrest records can raise legal and ethical concerns. It should be noted that arrest records do not mean a person has committed a crime. Even a conviction is not necessarily cause to eliminate an applicant, depending upon the circumstances of the crime, such as how long ago it was committed, what occurred, the age at which it was committed, and if the crime is relevant to the job. Furthermore, you should run background checks if your company asks about prior allegations.

**4. *An applicant comes into a job interview wearing a gay-rights pin. You know some of your employees have strong feelings about homosexuality. You refuse to hire him because of his sexual orientation and to keep harmony in your team. Is this legal?***

Discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity is considered discrimination based on sex under Title VII. In addition, many state and local

laws prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It should be noted that wearing a gay-rights pin does not mean that the individual is gay, nor is sexual orientation a job-related factor. A hiring decision should be made based on the candidates' knowledge, skills, and abilities, not on the bias of the supervisor or the workforce.

**5. *Is it permissible to inquire about a candidate's current compensation?***

Although this has been a customary practice, it is advisable to refrain from using this information to exclude candidates or determine salary offers. In addition, states have enacted Salary History Bans, making asking about current or past salaries illegal. To make the workplace more equitable, employers can review FrankCrum's Blog – What Employers Need to Know about Pay Equity and Salary History Bans.

**6. *I would like to get to know my candidates on a personal level to determine if they would fit in with the rest of the team. Are there any issues with this?***

While no law explicitly prohibits this, asking questions that do not directly relate to the job can elicit information from a candidate that you should not have and can lead to claims of discrimination. Asking questions about what they like to do on the weekend, for example, can lead to the candidate disclosing that they attend a certain type of religious institution or undergo treatment for a disability. It's best to keep questions about the position and opt for behavioral and situational questions to better understand how they would behave in various work-related situations.

**7. *I interviewed five candidates for an open job posting. However, I only needed to hire two. Is it required to follow up with the candidates not chosen for the position?***

While it is not required, it is considered best HR practice to follow up with candidates who were not chosen for the position. Not following up with a candidate can directly impact the company's reputation. When you follow up with a professional denial email or phone call, you display a strong employer brand, which may allow you to keep the candidate in your talent pool for future consideration.



# Why FrankCrum

As a PEO, FrankCrum has been in business for more than 40 years, offering a comprehensive range of HR solutions along with personalized, white-glove service.

Our clients begin with a structured yet flexible implementation process to ensure efficient and accurate onboarding. Upon completion, they are introduced to a dedicated account manager who connects them with the full range of FrankCrum's value-added services, such as benefits products, workers' compensation certificates of insurance, claims support for workers' compensation, unemployment, and employment practices liability (EPLI) claims support, discounted background checks and drug testing, dedicated HR support through our experienced FrankAdvice team, safety and risk management assistance, and more.

FrankCrum's personalized service is designed to provide clients with a high level of support and expertise, while also allowing them to retain control over their businesses. Our HR technology platform, MyFrankCrum, also helps them and their employees to manage their HR, benefits, and payroll needs from any device.

**At FrankCrum, our mission is to help businesses become the best they can be. To learn more about our comprehensive services, [contact us today](#).**

