

# Behavioral Interviewing Outline

The following is a structure for a one-hour behavioral interview. The premise behind behavioral interviewing is that past performance is the best predictor of future performance in similar situations. Begin by identifying the competencies that are desirable for the position and then structure open-ended questions and statements to elicit detailed responses.

## **Step 1: Establish rapport and get background information. (5 minutes)**

- Introduce yourself and give your professional background, length of time at Smith, and your role at the College.
- Set the stage by stating the purpose of the interview, what will be covered, and the sequence of events.
- Communicate how you plan to conduct the interview (“I’ll be taking notes,” etc.).

## **Step 2: Ask questions to get background information on the candidate’s education and professional experience. (10 minutes)**

- Discuss past work experience including duties, responsibilities, skills, abilities, performance, reason for leaving, etc. Begin with earliest jobs and proceed to most recent.
- Discuss educational experiences including degree and, if appropriate, grade average, best and worst courses, etc., if interviewing a recent graduate.
- Inquire about outside experiences and extracurricular activities such as volunteerism or professional groups, if indicated on résumé.

## **Step 3: Obtain behavioral information on major responsibilities and competencies. (35 minutes)**

- To assess a candidate for each responsibility or competency:
  - Ask direct questions to get an overview of a specific situation.
  - Probe for details and what actions were taken.
  - What were the results of the actions?
  - What could have been done differently?
- Follow candidate’s answers with probing questions such as:
  - “What were you thinking at that point?”
  - “Lead me through your decision process.”
  - “Help me understand” or “Could you explain?”
- Go through the same process for all the jobs major responsibilities and competencies, or to the areas assigned to you as an interviewer.

## **Step 4: Tell and sell. Do this after the interview questions are asked so that the candidates do not tailor their answers to suit the requirements of the position. (7 minutes)**

- Give an idea of the typical daily job routine and provide examples of duties, responsibilities, and work to be performed.
- Describe Smith’s structure and culture.
- Solicit questions or comments.

**Step 5: Close the interview. (3 minutes)**

- Determine candidate's interest.
- Describe next steps.
- Thank candidate for his/her time.