

Interview guide for hiring managers

One page to hand every interviewer on the panel before their round. The 5 habits, the follow-ups, the notes format, and the path from first shadow to calibrated interviewer.

1. Before the round

Your round: [name] · **Length:** [minutes] · **Level:** [level]

Your criterion: [the one criterion this round measures]

Strong looks like: [one line from the bar]

Your 3 questions: the same for every candidate at this level.

1. [question] · follow-up: [follow-up]

2. [question] · follow-up: [follow-up]

3. [question] · follow-up: [follow-up]

2. The 5 habits

1. **Read the bar first.** Know which criterion your round owns.
2. **Prepare 3 questions.** Same questions for every candidate, follow-ups written down.
3. **Let the candidate talk.** Ask, then wait. Silence after a question is thinking time.
4. **Write evidence.** What they said or did, close to verbatim.
5. **Score before the debrief.** Submit before reading anyone else's notes.

3. Follow-ups that go one level deeper

- "What did you try first?"
- "What would you change now?"
- "Who disagreed, and what happened?"

Ask about the candidate's own past example. Hypothetical questions measure how well someone talks.

4. Three mistakes to avoid

MISTAKE	WHAT IT DOES TO THE SCORE
Talking too much	Every minute you explain is a minute the candidate is not observed.
Deciding in the first 5 minutes	The rest of the hour collects proof for the first impression.
Testing your own speciality	The round measures your field instead of its criterion.

5. The notes format

QUESTION	WHAT THE CANDIDATE SAID OR DID	CRITERION
1		
2		
3		

Score: strong / mixed / weak · **Submitted:** the same day, before the debrief.

At the end of the round, tell the candidate what happens next and when. No verdict: the decision belongs to the panel.

6. How a new interviewer learns

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS	DONE
Shadow	Watch 2 or 3 interviews. Score alone, compare with the lead afterwards.	
Reverse shadow	Lead 2 or 3 interviews while an experienced interviewer watches.	
Calibrate	Each quarter, score the same 3 real scorecards alone, then compare.	

smarthiring.tech · Structured interviews: validity .42 against .19 for unstructured, Sackett, Zhang, Berry and Lievens, 2022.

SmartHiring by Elman Huseynov · the post behind this file: smarthiring.tech/how-to-be-a-good-interviewer/ · Use it inside your company as you like; please link the post rather than re-hosting the file.