TEMPLATE - Interview Guide

Candidate: [name]

Candidate portfolio: [insert link to online portfolio or pdf]

Job Description: [link to internal copy] [link to live JD]

Call length: 90 minutes

Date and time of interview: [interview date and time]

Interviewers

- [hiring manager]
- [interviewer #1]
- [interviewer #2]

Role Summary

[Insert summary of the role and why we are hiring for it. Include success criteria.]

Candidate Summary

[insert brief summary of candidate here. This section should be a useful briefing for any unfamiliar interviewers.]

Interviewer Instructions

- Please score the candidate after each behavioral question
- Score the candidate generally in the “Interviewer Scoring” section at the end of this document

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Interview Begins

0:00 – 0:05 Welcome

- Introductions of interviewers and their roles
- Today's interview is 90 minutes long
- For today's interview, we'll start with about 30 minutes of behavioral interview questions
- Then, we'll have you walk us through one or two projects.
- We'll leave some time for your questions at the end.

0:05 – 0:40 Behavioral/Situational Interview Questions

1. **Tell us about a problem you solved while you were working as a [job] at [company]. Something where the normal solution didn't work, and you had to find a new solution to the problem.**
    - Probes
        - Why didn't the normal solution work in this scenario?
        - How did you know the solution was a success?
        - Tell me why you chose the approach that you did.
        - What did you learn from solving this problem?

We need people who are resourceful and creative problem solvers. The candidate should not buckle under pressure. They should describe rising to the challenge and finding an outcome that made the situation successful.

Weak	Strong
Negative or defeatist about encountering the problem	Fully understood the problem and thought through options
Did not look for multiple solutions	Considered many options for solving the problem
Did not ask for help or feedback	Asked for feedback on the proposed solution early in the process
Complicated the situation	Simplified the situation
	Defined what success looked like, including deadline
	Used multiple resources outside of self (e.g. peers, subject matter experts, previous research, competitive analysis, etc.)
	Communicated the solution well

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How would you rate the candidate's resourcefulness and problem-solving ability?				
Very Weak	Weak	Average	Strong	Very Strong

Notes

2. **Tell us about a time you disagreed with someone on your team. How did you handle that?**

    - Probes
        - Tell me more about why you chose to approach the conflict the way you did.
        - How did you learn to solve conflicts this way?
        - Is there anything you wish you did differently?
        - What did you learn from experiencing this conflict?

Weak	Strong
Said they never face conflict	Able to see situation from multiple perspectives
Backed down immediately	Offered suggestions for resolving the conflict
Insisted they were right. Inflexible.	Thought about other people's feelings. Showed empathy through thoughts and actions.
Blamed others	Showed respect to team members
No self-reflection or self-awareness	Actions led to a productive outcome for all parties
	Explained what they learned from the experience

How would you rate this candidate's conflict resolution skills?				
Very weak	Weak	Average	Strong	Very Strong

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3. **Tell us about a time that you had to complete a research project where the instructions and expectations were unclear. How did you handle that?**
    - Probes
        - What skills did you rely on to get this project done?
        - How did you know for sure that your approach was what your stakeholders were expecting from you?
        - How did you know the project was a success?
        - What did you learn from this experience?

Weak	Strong
Passed off responsibility to someone else	Able to add structure to the assigned task through a defined research process
Did not complete the project	Asked for help from the right people
Negative or defeatist about the task	Involved stakeholders to clarify their expectations
Did not ask for help	Asked for feedback early in the process
Blamed others for not clarifying the ask	Consulted outside resources to improve their own understanding (e.g. internal project documentation, subject matter experts, academic studies, competitive analysis)
	Gained consensus between stakeholders about the project's goals
	Took a leadership role in making sure the project got done

How would you rate this candidate's ability to handle ambiguity?				
Very weak	Weak	Average	Strong	Very Strong

Notes

4. **Tell us about a time that you failed to meet a goal. What happened, and how did you handle it?**
    - Probes
        - What did you learn from this situation?

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- Looking back, is there anything you wish you did differently?

Weak	Strong
Blamed others	Accepted responsibility
Didn't put in the effort to accomplish the goal	Learned from the experience
Overextended themselves	Adjusted approach to still have a good outcome
Overly critical of themselves	Understands that failure is part of innovation and growth
	Shows themselves compassion

How would you rate this candidate's ability to handle setbacks and failure?				
Very weak	Weak	Average	Strong	Very Strong

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0:40 – 0:80 Project Review

“Please share a research project with us. Present the project outcomes to us as if we are the client or key stakeholder. Make sure to include the project goal, what questions or hypotheses you had going into the research, what insights you learned about the people you were studying, and the recommendations or solutions that resulted from the research. We’ll be jumping in and asking questions throughout your presentation.”

Probe questions

- How did you decide on the methodology? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this method?
- What was the deadline/timeframe for this project? How did you manage your time?
- How did you collaborate with stakeholders?
- How did you make sure that your stakeholders were aligned on the research questions?
- Tell me about your approach to writing the facilitation guide/interview questions.
- Tell me about your approach to writing recommendations.
- What industry standards or principles did you use during this project?
- How did you know the project was successful?
- What was the impact of this work?
- How did this work make the product better for users?
- What went wrong during this project?
- What was the most challenging part of this project?

Weak	Strong
Only responsible for a small part of the project	Led research project from beginning to end
Disorganized and unstructured approach to research	Structured and mature research process
Works in a vacuum; no collaboration during the research process	Collaborative process with frequent reviews
Complex and jargon-heavy deliverables	Explained how results made an impact for users
Only shows final result with no discussion or visualization of process	Communicated recommendations in a clear, jargon-free format
Cannot describe success criteria for project	Findings and recommendations had an audience in mind (designers, product managers, etc.)
Does not clearly define their role and the contributions of others	Demonstrated understanding of user centred design process
Work does not line up with their resume	Educated team members and stakeholders about user research
Says they had no challenges	Can tell a story with data in an engaging and impactful way

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	Very strong: Evangelized findings beyond a read-out to make sure they were implemented
	Very strong: Communicated strategic insights that go beyond the scope of the project
	Very strong: Showed results in a creative format that suited the intended audience (e.g. video, storyboard, etc).

0:80 – 0:90 Candidate Questions and Next Steps

- Any questions for us?
- At this stage, we're still talking to candidates before moving to the next step, which would be two 60-minute conversations with folks from the design and product teams. We want you to get a good look into how our team functions and collaborates. It also allows us to get to know you better.
- The recruiter will be in touch with you
- Thanks for your time and have a great day.

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Interviewer Scoring & Notes

Include any additional notes about the candidate below.

General Notes

-

What surprised you about this candidate?

-

Any concerns about this candidate?

-

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