REFERENCE DOCUMENT

In this guide you will find an explanation on how to use the InVista Select Interview Guide, including descriptions of its components; information on structured interviews and why it is important to conduct a structured interview during the hiring process; and best practices when conducting your interviews, including how to prepare for a structured interview.

When paired with other InVista Select hiring tools, a structured interview with the InVista Select Interview Guide will help you collect more behavioral information to better understand your candidate, see how they may fit into the role and the organization, and get additional data to determine the likelihood they will be successful on the job.

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ELEMENTS OF YOUR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Items

The **Competency and Definition** provide the name of the work-related skill, attribute, or characteristic that the item is assessing and an explanation of what the item is measuring.

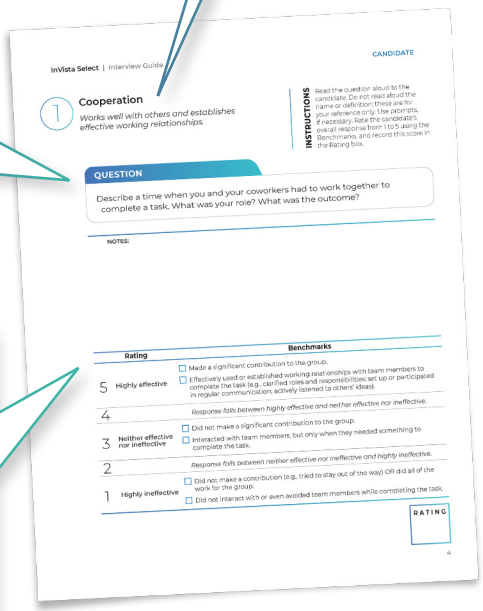
1 **Cooperation**

Works well with others and establishes effective working relationships.

QUESTION

Describe a time when you and your coworkers had to work together to complete a task. What was your role? What was the outcome?

The **Question** will be either behavioral (i.e., asks the candidate how they have responded to a situation in the past) or situational (i.e., asks what they would hypothetically do in response to a given specific situation.) If the candidate does not provide all the information necessary to rate the response, you can prompt them by asking, "Can you tell me about X in more detail?" When prompting the interviewee, avoid prompts that would lead them to the correct or best answer.



Rating		Benchmarks
5	Highly effective	☐ Made a significant contribution to the group. ☐ Effectively used or established working relationships with team members to complete the task (e.g., clarified roles and responsibilities; set up or participated in regular communication; actively listened to others' ideas).
4		*Response falls between highly effective and neither effective nor ineffective.*
3	Neither effective nor ineffective	☐ Did not make a significant contribution to the group. ☐ Interacted with team members, but only when they needed something to complete the task.
2		*Response falls between neither effective nor ineffective and highly ineffective.*
1	Highly ineffective	☐ Did not make a contribution (e.g., tried to stay out of the way) OR did all of the work for the group. ☐ Did not interact with or even avoided team members while completing the task.

The **Ratings and Benchmarks** allow you to evaluate the effectiveness of the candidate's response. The Benchmarks are not an exhaustive list of all possible responses; instead, they provide examples of behaviors at each level of effectiveness.

ELEMENTS OF YOUR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Items

Complete the **Notes** during or immediately following the interview. Include behavioral examples from the candidate's response and how the answers demonstrated the candidate's effectiveness on the competency the item is assessing.

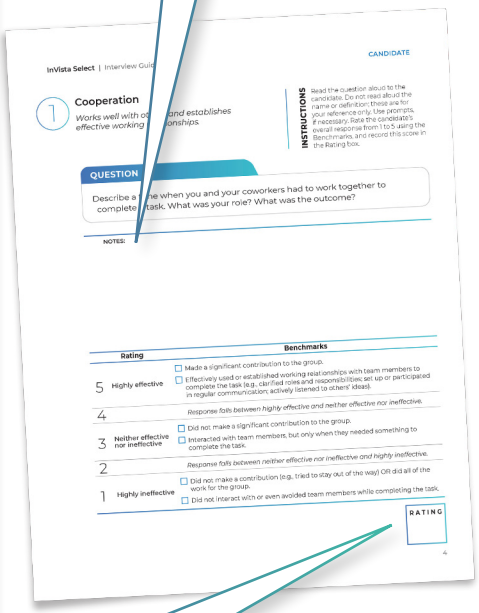
NOTES:

Immediately following the interview, use your notes to fill in the **Overall Rating**. To determine your rating, you can mark the checkboxes next to any statements that align with the candidate's answer. If you marked boxes across different rating levels, you may choose a rating that falls between the two rating levels.

RATING

Rating	Benchmarks
5 Highly effective	☐ Experienced a situation that most people would consider challenging (e.g., a coworker was not contributing; had a supervisor who was hard to contact). ☒ Demonstrated a situationally appropriate reaction that did not impact their performance. ☒ Took action to address the issue (e.g., had a conversation with the coworker; identified solutions).
4	*Response falls between highly effective and neither effective nor ineffective.*
3 Neither effective nor ineffective	☒ Experienced a situation that some but not all people would consider challenging (e.g., inconsistent schedule). ☐ Did not become overwhelmed but suffered an impact to their performance. ☐ Took action to overcome the issue that ultimately did not address the issue (e.g., tried to ignore the issue; "powered through").

In this example, a rating of 4 is appropriate.



- **How to rate the candidate's answers when there are multiple interviewers in the session.** If more than one interviewer is present during the interview, ask each interviewer to take notes separately. Compare notes and ratings after each rater has filled out the guide.
- **When to rate a response as a 0.** Sometimes it's appropriate to assign a score of 0. For example, a nonresponse (i.e., the candidate does not answer the question, even after prompting) deserves a 0 rating. Responses that are unprofessional or inappropriate for work (e.g., the candidate suggests they would bully coworkers, uses profanity, or makes offensive jokes or phrases) also warrant a rating of 0.

ELEMENTS OF YOUR INTERVIEW GUIDE

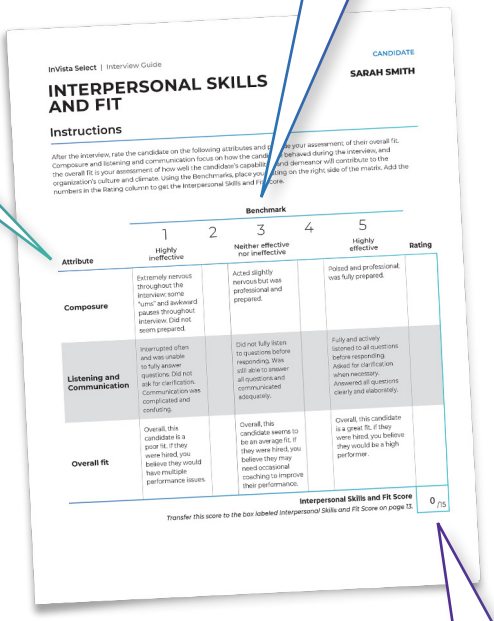
Interpersonal Skills and Fit

Attribute
Composure
Listening and Communication

Attributes
Attributes are aspects of the candidate that you'll be evaluating in the interview by observing their behaviors.

Benchmark				
1	2	3	4	5
Highly ineffective		Neither effective nor ineffective		Highly effective

Use the **Benchmarks** to rate the candidate's interpersonal skills. The benchmarks include examples of how the behaviors may look during the interview.



InVista Select | Interview Guide

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND FIT

CANDIDATE
SARAH SMITH

Instructions

After the interview, rate the candidate on the following attributes and the your assessment of their overall fit. Composure and listening and communication focus on how the candi behaved during the interview, and the overall fit is your assessment of how well the candidate's capabili and demeanor will contribute to the organization's culture and climate. Using the Benchmarks, place you ing on the right side of the matrix. Add the numbers in the Rating column to get the Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score.

Attribute	Benchmark 1 Highly ineffective	2	3 Neither effective nor ineffective	4	5 Highly effective	Rating
Composure	Extremely nervous throughout the interview; some "ums" and awkward pauses throughout interview. Did not seem prepared.		Acted slightly nervous but was professional and prepared.		Poised and professional, was fully prepared.	
Listening and Communication	Interrupted often and was unable to fully answer questions. Did not ask for clarification. Communication was complicated and confusing.		Did not fully listen to questions before responding. Was still able to answer all questions and communicated adequately.		Fully and actively listened to all questions before responding. Asked for clarification when necessary. Answered all questions clearly and elaborately.	
Overall fit	Overall, this candidate is a poor fit, if they were hired, you believe they would have multiple performance issues.		Overall, this candidate seems to be an average fit, if they were hired, you believe they may need occasional coaching to improve their performance.		Overall, this candidate is a great fit, if they were hired, you believe they would be a high performer.	
					Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score	0 /15

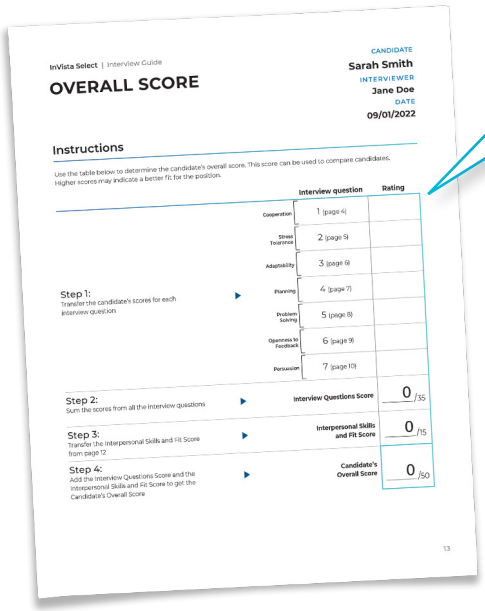
Transfer this score to the box labeled Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score on page 13.

Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score	
Transfer this score to the box labeled Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score on page 13.	0 /15

Use the notes taken over the course of the interview to determine the candidate's **Interpersonal Skills/ Fit Score**—your rating of their interpersonal skills and your assessment of their overall fit with the role and organization.

ELEMENTS OF YOUR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Candidate Results



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OVERALL SCORE

CANDIDATE
Sarah Smith
INTERVIEWER
Jane Doe
DATE
09/01/2022

Instructions

Use the table below to determine the candidate's overall score. This score can be used to compare candidates. Higher scores may indicate a better fit for the position.

	Interview question	Rating
Cooperation	1 (page 4)	
Stress Tolerance	2 (page 5)	
Adaptability	3 (page 6)	
Planning	4 (page 7)	
Problem Solving	5 (page 8)	
Openness to Feedback	6 (page 9)	
Persuasion	7 (page 10)	
Step 1: Transfer the candidate's scores for each interview question	Interview Questions Score	0 /35
Step 2: Sum the scores from all the interview questions	Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score	0 /15
Step 3: Transfer the Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score from page 12	Candidate's Overall Score	0 /50
Step 4: Add the Interview Questions Score and the Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score to get the Candidate's Overall Score		

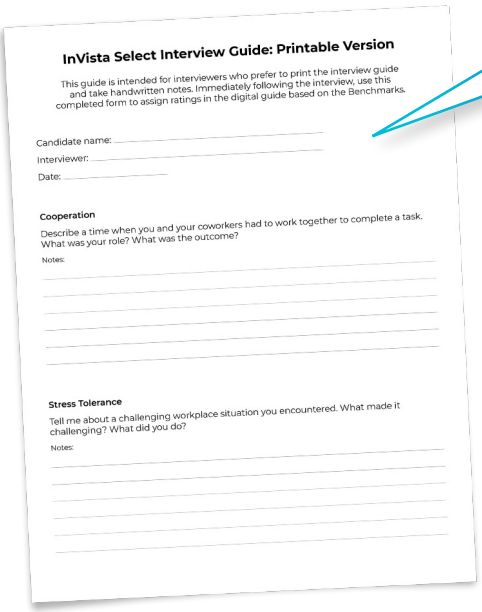
13

	Interview question	Rating
Cooperation	1 (page 4)	
Stress Tolerance	2 (page 5)	
Adaptability	3 (page 6)	
Planning	4 (page 7)	
Problem Solving	5 (page 8)	
Openness to Feedback	6 (page 9)	
Persuasion	7 (page 10)	
Interview Questions Score		0 /35
Interpersonal Skills and Fit Score		0 /15
Candidate's Overall Score		0 /50

If you're using the printed version of the interview guide, fill in the scores for each section and sum them to get the candidate's **Overall Score.** If you're using the digital version, these scores will be calculated for you.

ELEMENTS OF YOUR INTERVIEW GUIDE

Condensed, Printable Interview Guide



InVista Select Interview Guide: Printable Version

This guide is intended for interviewers who prefer to print the interview guide and take handwritten notes. Immediately following the interview, use this completed form to assign ratings in the digital guide based on the Benchmarks.

Candidate name: _____

Interviewer: _____

Date: _____

Cooperation

Describe a time when you and your coworkers had to work together to complete a task. What was your role? What was the outcome?

Notes:

Stress Tolerance

Tell me about a challenging workplace situation you encountered. What made it challenging? What did you do?

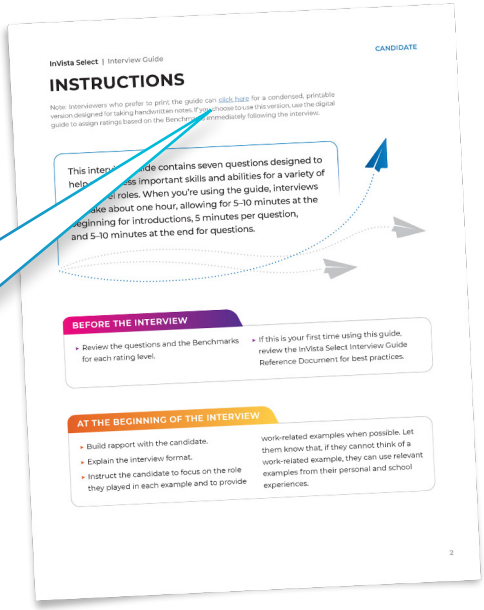
Notes:

The **condensed version** of the guide is printer-friendly and designed for taking handwritten notes. If you choose to use this version, use the digital guide to assign ratings based on the Benchmarks immediately following the interview.

INSTRUCTIONS

Note: Interviewers who prefer to print the guide can click here for a condensed, printable version designed for taking handwritten notes. If you choose to use this version, use the digital guide to assign ratings based on the Benchmarks immediately following the interview.

To access the **condensed guide**, click the link located on the top of page 2.



InVista Select | Interview Guide

CANDIDATE

INSTRUCTIONS

Note: Interviewers who prefer to print the guide can click here for a condensed, printable version designed for taking handwritten notes. If you choose to use this version, use the digital guide to assign ratings based on the Benchmarks immediately following the interview.

This interview guide contains seven questions designed to help assess important skills and abilities for a variety of entry-level roles. When you're using the guide, interviews should take about one hour, allowing for 5–10 minutes at the beginning for introductions, 5 minutes per question, and 5–10 minutes at the end for questions.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

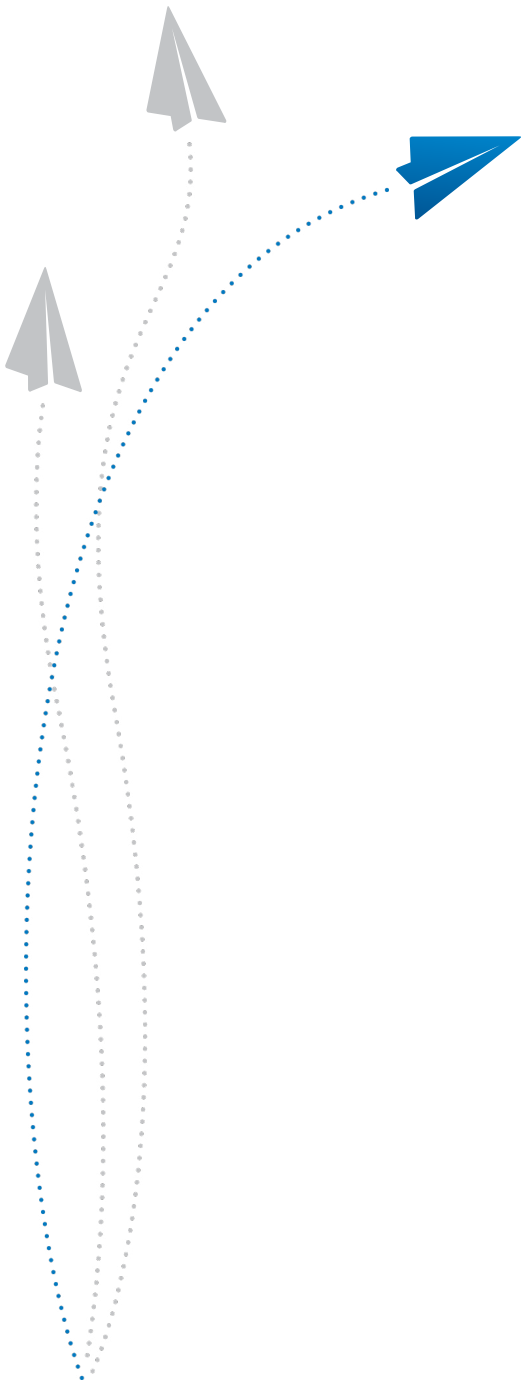
- Review the questions and the Benchmarks for each rating level.
- If this is your first time using this guide, review the InVista Select Interview Guide Reference Document for best practices.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE INTERVIEW

- Build rapport with the candidate.
- Explain the interview format.
- Instruct the candidate to focus on the role they played in each example and to provide work-related examples when possible. Let them know that, if they cannot think of a work-related example, they can use relevant examples from their personal and school experiences.

2

WHAT IS A STRUCTURED INTERVIEW?



A job interview is a key step in the hiring process. The candidate meets with one or more individuals in the organization who have some level of interaction with the role. During the interview, the interviewer asks the candidate questions to elicit examples of the candidate's behavior, skills, abilities, or characteristics. Those responsible for hiring use the assessment of these behaviors in conjunction with other information gathered in the hiring process to determine if the candidate may be successful in the role and the organization.

A structured interview is a specific type of interview in which the interviewer asks predetermined questions in a standardized fashion. Interviewers ask all candidates consistent questions about job-relevant behaviors, use behavioral rating scales to evaluate responses, and take thorough notes on their observations. Each component helps you conduct quality interviews that identify top talent, limit bias, and draw on job-relevant competencies.

Your interview guide contains a mixture of behavioral and situational questions. Behavioral questions appear in the first portion of your guide and ask what the candidate *has done* in a past situation. Situational items appear in the second portion and ask the candidate what they *would do* in a given situation.

Benefits of Using Structured Interview Guides

When used properly, structured interviews have multiple benefits, including:

- Introducing objectivity to the hiring process, which minimizes bias and adverse impact
- Comparing candidates based on consistent and equitable information
- Measuring competencies that are relevant to the job and organization
- Identifying potential high performers and employees
- Allowing for effective comparison of candidates
- Identifying opportunities for the individual's development, if they are hired

BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWING

Preparing for the Interview

To get the most information during your time with the candidate, it's important to prepare. Preparing will increase the chance that your candidate will have a positive experience during the interview process, helping to keep high potential candidates interested in the role and enhancing your organization's public image. Take the following steps to set yourself up for success before conducting the interview.

1. Review the job description or job analysis to be familiar with the qualifications and responsibilities of the role.
2. Review the candidate's resume to look for relevant work experience and skills and assess the alignment of their experience and skills with the role.
3. Review the interview guide questions and benchmarks to become familiar with what you will ask and what to pay attention to as you take notes.
4. Prepare your space to ensure it makes a great first impression. While you are assessing the candidate, the candidate is also assessing you and your organization.
5. Determine the next step in the hiring process so you'll be able to provide that information to the candidate at the end of the interview.

Conducting the Interview

When you use interview guides in your hiring process, the quality of information you gather depends on how you use and implement the guide. For your structured interview to be most effective, you must use the interview guide as intended. This means you must ask questions in a consistent way, thoroughly observe and record the candidate's responses, and use the scales properly. As an interviewer, your goals when conducting the interview are to:

1. Establish rapport with the candidate at the beginning of the interview.
2. Collect job-relevant information.
3. Correctly score the interview by avoiding common pitfalls that invalidate scores.
4. Conduct and score the interview in a standardized fashion.

BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWING

1

Establish rapport with the candidate

It's important to establish rapport with the candidate at the start of the interview to help them feel at ease with the interview setting and environment and give them a favorable impression of you and your organization. Establishing rapport also helps the candidate feel more comfortable showing their personality and demonstrating behaviors that will help you assess their fit with the company culture. To build rapport, be sure to introduce yourself, be mindful of your body language, actively listen, and use job-relevant small talk. One way to start the interview that will help build rapport is to ask the candidate about their experience finding the interview location.

2

Collect job-relevant information

An important component of structured interviews is asking job-relevant questions. The questions in the InVista Select Interview Guide were developed to be used in combination with the InVista Select Assessments. They measure competencies that apply broadly across most jobs, as supported by the scientific literature. If you find that a question does not apply well to the role you're hiring for, you can skip that item; however, you must do so for all candidates applying for that role. If more than one question does not apply to your role, please reach out to InVista to explore the use of alternative questions.

Focus on the information in the interview guide to avoid asking off-topic or inappropriate questions. This will help you follow Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines, which specify the types of questions that should not be asked during the hiring process. These guidelines direct interviewers to avoid questions that may compel a candidate to disclose their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, health, family status, or disabilities. Candidates may react negatively to these questions and may perceive that you will base a hiring decision on personal information that is not fair or job-relevant. By avoiding questions outside the scope of the interview materials, you can ensure all your questions are appropriate and conform to EEOC guidelines.

▸ **Beware of risky questions**

DON'T SAY: "In this position we're sometimes required to work late hours. Would this be a problem with your family's or children's schedule?"

DO SAY: "Is there anything that would prevent you from working evenings and weekends?"

BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWING

3

Correctly score the interview

A key element of a structured interview is the use of the same rating scale to score all candidates' interview responses. When you use a numeric rating scale anchored to how effectively the candidate demonstrated the competency, you ensure candidates are scored accurately and consistently, even if they have different interviewers. To properly score the interview:

- Take detailed notes. After conducting multiple interviews, you may find it difficult to remember key details about each candidate. Taking detailed notes helps support and confirm your recall of each candidate's responses and improves the accuracy of ratings. Focus your notes on behaviors revealed by the candidate's answer, keep notes objective by writing down only information explicitly stated by the candidate, and be concise yet detailed so you remember key information.
- Match the candidate's answers to the benchmarks. Review your notes to identify the candidate's behaviors and rate these behaviors based on the benchmarks. Mark the benchmarks that are most in line with the candidate's answer.
- Avoid the following common pitfalls that invalidate ratings. DON'T...
  - ...assign question ratings based on your general impression. The overall fit rating at the end of the guide is an appropriate place for your overall impression of the candidate. To avoid being influenced by notable responses, pay close attention to the differences among questions. This will help you keep each response distinct.
  - ...overemphasize first impressions of the candidate, which can impact later observations. Instead, keep an open mind and pay attention to the candidate's unique answers throughout the entire interview. If you have an early impression, search for evidence that contradicts that impression.
  - ...rate high or low based on a special or extraneous meaning you are attaching to the candidate's answer; instead, focus on the content of each answer. Not doing so can result in limiting the score range, making it challenging to differentiate between candidates. For example, if the candidate provides a creative answer you've never heard that doesn't necessarily demonstrate the desired behavior, and you assign the highest rating, you are basing your rating on the creativity of the answer versus the behaviors next to that anchor.
  - ...allow your evaluations to be influenced by information that is not pertinent to the interview, including any non-job-related prior knowledge of the candidate. Some examples include attending the same school as you, living in a fun or exotic location, or having an accent.
  - ...interpret the scales and anchors on any standard other than their written, behavioral meaning. For example, don't use the 1–5 rating as a general effectiveness scale; instead, judiciously use the behavioral anchors next to each effectiveness rating.

BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWING

- ...be distracted by other candidates during the interview. Keeping other candidates out of mind allows you to avoid making premature comparisons. Interviews are not relative, and all candidates should be evaluated separately using the same interpretation of the rating anchors. Introducing comparisons during the interview will create different standards or inequality among your candidates.
- ...discuss the candidates or their answers with others, including other interviewers who are conducting their interviews in the future.

Conduct and score the interview in a standardized fashion

Follow a standardized process across multiple interviewers to ensure all interviews are consistent. To ensure standardization of your interview process:

- Ask the same questions of all candidates. When you do so, you can compare candidates fairly. Because you're evaluating all candidates using identical information, you can more impartially determine which candidates are more proficient in a competency (Dipboye, 1994).
- Keep in mind the common pitfalls to inconsistency in the interview process listed previously. Your major goal is to conduct and score your interview in such a way that someone else interviewing the same candidate giving the same answers would produce the same score. The identity of the interviewer should not impact the candidate's score.
- Closely follow the interview guide to ensure interactions between you and all members of your candidate pool include exactly the same questions in the same order. This reduces bias and influence from outside factors during the interview. Asking the same interview questions in the same order also increases fairness by reducing the temptation to "go with your gut." These gut instincts may appear to be based on years of experience but may actually reflect your own unconscious biases.

- **For more information or training on best practices for conducting interviews, please contact InVista at 888.891.9918 or info@invistainsights.com.**

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