# Tool 1: Sample FAQs Sheet

### Overview

This tool provides answers to many foundational questions about behavioral-based interviewing (BBI). Facilities and HR leaders should prepare responses to common questions about BBI’s purpose and value to hiring managers and other stakeholders.

### Instructions

Distribute this document to relevant stakeholders, or compose your own version using this as a guide. Relevant stakeholders may include directors, unit leaders, and HR business partners. Possible distribution methods include posting publicly, attaching to an email, or presenting at a town hall.

**Frequently Asked Questions About BBI**

*Question 1: What is behavioral-based interviewing (BBI)?*

BBI is a method of questioning that encourages candidates to describe how they responded to past challenges. The technique is based on the premise that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations. By getting candidates to discuss past experiences related to crucial job competencies, managers can more accurately predict each candidate’s probable job performance, improving the precision of their hiring process.

*Question 2: Why should my team use BBI questions?*

There are two primary skill sets that determine a candidate’s success on the job: technical and behavioral. Technical skills (such as licensure and past experience) determine whether the candidate has the background and qualifications to perform the job. Behavioral skills (such as customer service and teamwork) are integral to job performance but not linked to specific technical competencies.

Traditional interviewing techniques often provide insufficient insight into behavioral skills, even though those skills greatly affect overall work performance. By soliciting information about the candidate’s behavioral skills, managers are better able to assess whether the candidate is a good fit for the role. Getting the hire correct the first time around saves time and money by avoiding turnover.

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| **Behavioral Skill:** a skill that relates to a candidate’s habitual behavior rather than acquired experience |
| **Behavioral Competency:** a grouping of similar behavioral skills that impact one another |
| **Technical Skill:** a skill necessary to perform the job function that can be acquired through experience |

*Question 3: What are the benefits and drawbacks of BBI?*

Incorporating BBI questions into interviewing requires an up-front time investment. Managers must isolate the behaviors necessary to perform the job well and craft questions accordingly. If executed poorly, BBI can represent a significant time expenditure for hiring managers and confuse candidates. However, if executed well, BBI allows candidates to feel welcomed to the institution because they are able to fully discuss their previous experiences outside of the workplace, and managers are able to make intelligent hiring decisions based on all skills necessary to do the job well.

*Question 4: What makes BBI questions different from other types of questions?*

BBI questions are open-ended questions about how the candidate has handled past work and/or life experiences. An open-ended question prompts more than a simple yes/no or factual response. Open-ended questions allow candidates to share their thoughts and opinions and also help interviewers maintain a conversational tone.

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| Examples of closed-ended questions | Examples of open-ended questions |
| When did you start working in landscaping? | Why did you choose to work in landscaping? |
| How did you learn about this opening? | Why are you interested in working here? |
| Did you like your last supervisor? | If we called your last supervisor, what would he or she say about you? |

BBI questions are firmly rooted in the past and do not address hypothetical situations or the candidate’s self-reported personality traits. By forcing candidates to detail concrete examples, BBI questions pinpoint a candidate’s real-world capabilities.

*Question 5: What does not constitute BBI?*

BBI is frequently confused with other types of nontraditional interviewing, such as situational interviewing or peer interviewing. Situational interviewing asks candidates to describe how they would react in theoretical situations. While this technique may uncover whether a candidate is aware of acceptable behaviors, it does not ask for concrete previous actions taken. Peer interviewing allows unit members to interview candidates together, but this interviewing method does not necessarily include BBI questions.

*Question 6: What are the main components of a BBI question?*

BBI questions consist of three sequential parts:

1. Prompt candidate to identify a past experience where he/she had the opportunity to exhibit a certain job competency
2. Ask candidate to outline the concrete situation
3. Inquire about his or her response to that situation

BBI questions are always phrased in the past tense to ensure that the candidate discusses a specific occurrence in the past rather than a hypothetical example.

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| Examples of non-BBI questions | Examples of BBI questions |
| If you were behind on documentation, an angry student was demanding attention, and your manager handed you a new task, how would you prioritize your work? | Think back to the last time were overwhelmed by several tasks at once. How did you prioritize your tasks? |
| How do you usually deal with difficult customers? | Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult customer. How did you react? |
| What did you like and dislike about your last supervisor? | Tell me about a time when your supervisor just didn’t understand what you were trying to say. How did you get your point across? |

*Question 8: Should our interviews include only BBI questions?*

BBI questions should make up only one portion of a candidate interview—typically40 to 80% of interview time, depending on the position. Recruiters and hiringmanagers must still ask questions about technical skills to determine whethercandidates have the qualifications and experience to fulfill the nonbehavioralfunctions required by the position.

*Question 9: Following implementation, how will we determine if BBI is effective at our institution?*

There are many ways to track BBI efficacy, including these:

* Assess 90-day and one-year turnover
* Collect positive manager feedback
* Perform engagement surveys

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| **Basic Legal Guidelines for Interviewing** | | |
| **Topic** | **Sample appropriate questions** | **Discriminatory questions** |
| Age | If hired, can you offer proof that you are at least 18 years of age? | * How old are you? * What is your date of birth? |
| Arrests or convictions | Have you ever been convicted of a crime? *(You must state that a conviction will be considered only as it relates to fitness to perform the jobs being applied for.)* | * Have you ever been arrested? |
| Citizenship or nationality | * Can you show proof of your eligibility to work in the US? * Are you fluent in any language other than English? (*You may ask this question only as it relates to the job being applied for*.) | * Are you a US citizen? * Where were you born? |
| Disability | Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation? *(Show applicant the position description so he or she can give an informed answer.)* | * Are you disabled? What is  the nature or severity of  your disability? |
| Family status | Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with job attendance or travel requirements (*if applicable*)? | * Are you married? * What is your spouse’s name? * What is your maiden name? * Do you have children? * Are you pregnant? * What are your childcare arrangements? |
| Race | NONE | * What is your race? |
| Religion | NONE (*you may ask about availability for weekend work if applicable*) | * What is your religion? * What church do you attend? * What are your religious holidays? |
| Residence | What is your address? | * Do you own or rent your home? * Who resides with you? |
| Sex | NONE | * Are you male or female? |
| Sexual orientation | NONE | * Are you married? * What is your spouse’s name? |
| Worker’s compensation claims | NONE | * I noticed you walk with a cane.  Do you ever have to take  medical leave? |