



**Structured Interview Guide for Student Employment
at Central Michigan University**

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Content Summary

- I. Structured Interview Overview**
- II. Interviewing Tips**
- III. Interviewing Instructions**
- IV. Structured Interview Questions for all Competencies**
 - Cooperation
 - Persuasion
 - Negotiation
 - Consideration
 - Implementation
 - Problem Identification and Solving
 - Adaptation
 - Innovation
 - Stress Management
 - Leadership
- V. General Scoring Guide**

I. Structured Interview Overview

This interview guide assists supervisors in the selection of qualified student applicants. This guide is called for in order to address the following problematic employment issues within campus departments: high rates of turnover, lack of incumbent job commitment, and lack of incumbent work ethic. Issues such as these can be addressed by hiring more qualified students for open positions. A thorough assessment of applicant knowledge, skills, and abilities is necessary to hire better-qualified students for open positions. Since the majority of students will not have an extensive work history, application information does not adequately assess candidate qualifications. Structured interviews are an efficient and valid means by which to learn important job relevant information about applicants. The interview guide taps the competencies necessary for success in a student employment position. The interview questions assess competencies in ten dimensions. These competencies address the need for interpersonal skills specific to each job. The interview guide offers four structured-interview questions to assess each competency.

Competency	Definition
COOPERATION	Effectively works with others in a group, pursues group goals and interests, and assists group members in achieving group goals.
PERSUASION	Convince others of a particular direction, activity or idea or influence decision-making.
NEGOTIATION	Brings others together to resolve conflict or reconciles differences through negotiation.
CONSIDERATION	Shows consideration for other's feelings and reactions, is sensitive to the needs of others.
IMPLEMENTATION	Sets goals, monitors quality of one's own performance, and takes the initiative to improve one's self and one's work.
PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION & SOLVING	Analyzes problem situations, develops alternative solutions and plans of action.
ADAPTATION	Deals with different types of people, ideas, demands, and situations.
INNOVATION	Generates new and creative ideas, takes press perspectives to a situation, and offers inventive and novel solutions.
STRESS MANAGEMENT	Effectively works under stressful conditions, deals positively with obstacles and failures.
LEADERSHIP	Takes charge of a group, motivates group members, and facilitates performance and decision-making.

II. Interviewing Tips

The following tips help you conduct a smoother and a more valid interview. These tips are general in nature and can be used for any competency in this guide.

Things to Consider Prior to the Interview

- Review the job description of the specific position that you are interviewing for.
- Try to eliminate stereotyping by being aware of your biases and focus on job duties and what is truly need to perform well in this position.
- Do not be swayed by initial impressions, allow the person a chance to get comfortable in the interview and focus on the needs of the position. Your number one objective is placing the right person in the right position.

Things to Consider During the Interview

- Establish rapport with the interviewee through common courtesy, a warm greeting and a limited amount of small talk.
- Set the stage of the interviewing process by verbally informing the interviewee why the organization is hiring, what they are looking for, and how the interview will flow from one step to the next.
- Demonstrate acceptance of the individual, be attentive, prompt, positive, and free from distractions.
- Ask open-ended questions to draw out greater information from the interviewee.
- Focus on comparing the applicants past experiences and current abilities with the requirements of the job. Do not focus solely on the interpersonal skills of the applicant.
- Let the interviewee talk and attempt to obtain meaningful information from his or her communication. Do not take over and talk more than the interviewee, be a listener, remain silent long enough for him or her to answer the question. A good rule of thumb in the 80/20 rule, the interviewee should be doing 80% of the talking while you should only be doing 20% of the talking.
- Focus only on job-related aspects of the position in the interview. Do not ask questions that are specific to the gender, race, age, family, national origin or socio-economic status of the interviewee.
- Use prompts when appropriate, such as: Why did you feel that way? What causes that? Is there anything else? Can you give me another example?

Things to Consider after the Interview

- Close the interview by describing the hiring process at the organization.
- Give an approximate time of future contact, and a thank you.

III. Interview Instructions

The following is a step-by-step guide to conducting an effective interview. Please read the following directions before conducting an interview.

- **Read the introduction to the interview guide.**
- **Read through the interviewing tips.**
- **Each competency assessed has four questions. Choose 2-4 of those questions.**
- **For each question, circle the number best reflecting your opinion of the applicant's response (1 being least desirable and 5 being most desirable).**
- **Each question has a prompt that follows. Prompt the applicant to provide more detail in his or her responses.**
- **Write additional comments about the respondent's answers in the spaces provided. This aids you in comparing answers by different applicants at a later time.**
- **After asking all the questions chosen for a given competency, rate the applicant overall on the competency in the space provided. The overall rating for the competency need not be the average of the responses to the interview questions.**
- **Finally, on the provided scoring sheet write the applicant's scores of each competency in the provided spaces. Add the scores together to get a total interview score.**

IV. Structured Interview Questions for all Competencies

Competency: Cooperation

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to work effectively with others in a group, pursue group goals and interests and assist group members in achieving group goals.

I. Describe a time when you had to work with others toward a common goal.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: What were the outcomes of the experience?

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Describe a time when you participated in an unsuccessful group, one that did not meet its objectives. What, if anything, could you have done differently?

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: What were the outcomes of the experience?

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Tell me about a time when you were a member of a successful team. What were the most outstanding characteristics of that team? What did you contribute?

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt. What were the outcomes of the experience?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. Imagine you supervise a group of student workers, who appear to be at odds with administration. What steps could you take to improve the teamwork between students and administration?

1 (low) Applicant finds great difficulty in coming up with a solution to the problem.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but comes up with a feasible solution.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt. What were the outcomes of the experience?

Comments about response to question: _____

Cooperation overall rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

Competency: Persuasion

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to convince others of a particular direction, activity or idea or influence decision-making.

I. Describe a time in a previous job when you had to persuade someone to do something they did not want to do.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: What were the outcomes of the experience?

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Describe a time when you have had to communicate an idea or opinion to a group of people.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: What were the outcomes of the experience?

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Tell me about a time when you were unable to persuade a group of people to take certain actions.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: What could you have done differently or what did you do well?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. Imagine, once again, that you manage a group of students and that you have to institute an unpopular procedure or policy. How would you go about ensuring that the students comply with this policy?

1 (low) Applicant finds great difficulty in coming up with a solution to the problem

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but comes up with a feasible solution.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: Could you please elaborate?

Comments about response to question: _____

Persuasion overall rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

Competency: Negotiation

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to bring others together to resolve conflict or to reconcile differences through negotiation.

I. Describe a situation where you had to resolve a conflict between two co-workers or work teams.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: **How were you able to reconcile their differences through negotiation?**

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Tell me about a time when it was critical for you to remain objective and impartial during a conflict at work.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: **Why was it so important to remain neutral?**

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Describe a time when you were not successful in resolving a conflict between co-workers.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: What could you have done differently?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. Imagine, once again, that you supervise a group of students, two of which do not get along and yet must work together. How would you go about resolving this interpersonal conflict?

1 (low) Applicant finds great difficulty in coming up with a solution to the problem.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but comes up with a feasible solution.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: What techniques would you use to ensure effective group functioning?

Comments about response to question: _____

Negotiation overall rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

Competency: Consideration

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to show consideration for other's feelings and reactions, and sensitivity to the needs of others.

I. Tell me about a situation in a previous job, when you had to exhibit tact or sensitivity when dealing with a difficult situation.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: What was the outcome of the situation?

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Tell me about a time when you did not show enough consideration for a fellow workers' feelings (e.g. betrayed a confidence). What were the consequences of your actions?

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: How could you have handled the situation differently?

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Tell me about a time when you had to develop working relationships with individuals with whom you did not get along.

1 (low) Applicant does not describe such an experience.

2

3 (average) Applicant provides a general description, but with few details.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes a situation in detail, including questions asked and appropriate information provided.

Prompt: What was the outcome of the situation?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. Imagine, once again, that you supervise a group of student workers, one of which has not been performing well. How would you make this student aware of his/her poor performance without causing hard feelings?

1 (low) Applicant finds great difficulty in coming up with a solution to the problem.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but comes up with a feasible solution.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: Have you ever handled a situation like this before?

Comments about response to question: _____

Consideration overall rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

Competency: Implementation

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to set goals, monitor quality of one's own performance, and take the initiative to improve one's self and one's work.

I. If you were given multiple tasks, how would you accomplish these tasks?

1 (low) Applicant cannot suggest a plan.

2

3 (average) Applicant suggests a feasible plan that includes prioritizing.

4

5 (high) Applicant suggests an ideal plan that includes prioritizing and/or goal setting.

Prompt: Have you ever handled a situation like this before?

Comments about response to question: _____

II. How important is it for you to monitor your work performance?

1 (low) Applicant does not feel that is important to monitor his/her performance.

2

3 (average) Applicant feels it is somewhat important to monitor performance.

4

5 (high) Applicant feels that it is very important to monitor performance.

Prompt: How do you go about monitoring your performance?

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Describe a time in which you decided to improve your skills/lifestyle.

1 (low) Applicant has not engaged in self-development.

2

3 (average) Applicant understands that he/she need to improve but does not take advantage of opportunities to.

4

5 (high) Applicant takes advantages of self-development opportunities.

Prompt: What was the motivating force behind your decision to improve yourself?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. Has there been a time when you did something that you thought was not your best work? How would you improve the work that you did?

1 (low) Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with ways to improve work.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a way to improve work.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a way to improve work seemingly with ease.

Prompt: Was there a reason why you could not perform your best?

Comments about response to question: _____

Implementation overall rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

Competency: Problem Identification and Solving

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to analyze problematic situations and develop alternative solutions and plans of action.

I. Describe a time in which you had to come up with several solutions to the same problem.

1 (low) Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with a feasible plan/idea.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a feasible plan/idea.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: How did you come up with those solutions?

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Suppose your supervisor gives you a problem to solve without direction. How would you go about solving it?

1 (low) Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with a way to solve the problem.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a way to solve the problem.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a way to solve the problem, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: How would you determine that the solution you picked was the best/most appropriate?

Comments about response to question: _____

III. How do you deal with problems that unexpectedly appear?

1 (low) Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with a feasible plan/idea.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a feasible plan/idea.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: Are you comfortable in these types of situations?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. Can you think about a time when you identified a problem that went unfound for sometime?

1 (low) Applicant has shown not to check up on tasks or equipment.

2

3 (average) Applicant checked up on equipment but did not know how to proceed.

4

5 (high) Applicant identified a problem and remedied it.

Prompt: How did you find the problem and how did the situation improve?

Comments about response to question: _____

Problem Identification and Solving Overall Rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

Competency: Adaptation

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to deal with different types of people, ideas, demands, and situations.

I. Recall an instance when you had to interact with an individual who was upset. What were the outcomes of this experience?

- 1 (low)** Applicant interacts with individual in an ineffective manner.
- 2**
- 3 (average)** Applicant interacts with individual in modestly.
- 4**
- 5 (high)** Applicant interacts with the individual with no problem.

Prompt: How did you keep your cool?

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Do you find it difficult to deal with new situations?

- 1 (low)** Applicant has great difficulty dealing with new situations.
- 2**
- 3 (average)** Applicant has is a bit uncomfortable with new situations.
- 4**
- 5 (high)** Applicant feels very comfortable with novel situations.

Prompt: Why or why not?

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Tell me of a time when you had to meet several deadlines at once.

1 (low) Applicant has no experience with meeting deadlines.

2

3 (average) Applicant has a couple of experiences with meeting deadlines.

4

5 (high) Applicant has multiple encounters with deadlines and handles them appropriately.

Prompt: How were you able to handle this situation?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. If you were in charge of a group and needed one solution to a problem, how would you combine the groups' ideas into one solution?

1 (low) Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with a plan.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a feasible plan.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: How do you handle people with opposing ideas?

Comments about response to question: _____

Adaptation Overall Rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

Competency: Innovation

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to generate new and creative ideas, consider differing perspectives in situations and offer inventive and novel solutions.

I. Describe a time when you applied creative thinking to solve a problem.

1 (low) Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with a creative idea.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a creative idea.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a creative idea, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: What helped or hindered you in creating the solution?

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Give me an example of a time you found a new solution to an old problem.

1 (low) Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with a new solution.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a new solution.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a new solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: How did you go about gathering and analyzing information to solve the problem?

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Describe a time when you approached a problem from a new perspective.

- 1 (low)** Applicant has no experience approaching a problem from a new perspective.
- 2**
- 3 (average)** Applicant has some experience approaching a problem from a new perspective.
- 4**
- 5 (high)** Applicant has a lot of experience approaching a problem from a new perspective.

Prompt: What was the outcome?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. If you have multiple sources of information, how would you go about sorting or prioritizing them?

- 1 (low)** Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with a feasible solution.
- 2**
- 3 (average)** Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a feasible solution.
- 4**
- 5 (high)** Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with solution.

Prompt: Have you ever had to do this before?

Comments about response to question: _____

Innovation Overall Rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

Competency: Evaluative Pressure/ Stress Management

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to work under stressful conditions and to deal with obstacles and failures in an effective fashion.

I. Describe an experience when you were required to make quick decisions under a great deal of stress.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1 (low) | Applicant does not describe such an experience or describes ineffective decision-making skills under pressure. |
| 2 | |
| 3 (average) | Applicant provides a general description of an experience but with few details or describes moderate decision-making skills under pressure. |
| 4 | |
| 5 (high) | Applicant describes an experience in detail, including specifics of the situation or describes effective decision-making skills under pressure. |

Prompt. **What were the outcomes of the experience?**

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Tell me about a time when you stayed cool under pressure, that is, kept your composure in a difficult situation.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 (low) | Applicant does not describe such an experience or describes that he/she was not very composed. |
| 2 | |
| 3 (average) | Applicant provides a general description of an experience but with few details or describes that he/she was moderately composed. |
| 4 | |
| 5 (high) | Applicant describes an experience in detail, including specifics of the situation or describes that he/she was very composed. |

Prompt. **Do you think there was value in keeping your composure? Why?**

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Describe a time in your life (or at a former job) when you had to balance your time spent on multiple important priorities at once.

- 1 (low)** Applicant does not describe such an experience or describes ineffective behavior in the given situation.
- 2**
- 3 (average)** Applicant provides a general description of an experience but with few details or describes moderately effective behavior in the given situation.
- 4**
- 5 (high)** Applicant describes an experience in detail, including specifics of the situation or describes effective behavior in the given situation.

Prompt: What did you like/dislike about working in that type of environment?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. Discuss a time when you continued to be productive, even though you were under stress (for example, from many demands on you at once).

- 1 (low)** Applicant does not describe such an experience or describes ineffective behavior in the given situation.
- 2**
- 3 (average)** Applicant provides a general description of an experience but with few details or describes moderately effective behavior in the given situation.
- 4**
- 5 (high)** Applicant describes an experience in detail, including specifics of the situation or describes effective behavior in the given situation.

Prompt: What helped/hindered you in being productive?

Comments about response to question: _____

<i>Evaluative Pressure/ Stress Management overall rating</i>					
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>General comments about the applicant:</i> _____					

Competency: Leadership/ People Management

The following questions aim to assess the applicant's ability to take charge of a group, motivate group members, and facilitate performance and decision-making.

I. Describe an experience when you took a leadership role in a group situation.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1 (low) | Applicant does not describe such an experience or describes poor leadership skills. |
| 2 | |
| 3 (average) | Applicant provides a general description of an experience but with few details or describes moderate leadership skills. |
| 4 | |
| 5 (high) | Applicant describes an experience in detail, including specifics of the situation or describes effective leadership skills. |

Prompt: What did you like/dislike about taking that role?

Comments about response to question: _____

II. Tell me about a time when you inspired someone to work hard or extend himself or herself. How effective were you?

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 (low) | Applicant does not describe such an experience or describes that he/she was ineffective in motivating. |
| 2 | |
| 3 (average) | Applicant provides a general description of an experience but with few details or describes that he/she was somewhat successful in motivating. |
| 4 | |
| 5 (high) | Applicant describes an experience in detail, including specifics of the situation or describes that he/she was successful in motivating. |

Prompt: Do you like or dislike motivating others to achieve more? Why?

Comments about response to question: _____

III. Do you typically prefer to be a driving force in work goals or do you prefer to offer support to others who lead?

1 (low) Applicant explains that he/she does not prefer to be a driving force, but rather prefers to simply support those who lead.

2

3 (average) Applicant explains that he/she sometimes prefers to be the driving force and sometimes prefers to offer to support to those who lead.

4

5 (high) Applicant describes that he/she prefers to be the leader (as well as offering support to those who he/she leads).

Prompt: What do you like/dislike about being that driving force?

Comments about response to question: _____

IV. How would you go about motivating and preparing people to accept change when they are used to doing things the way they have always been done?

1 (low) Applicant has great difficulty in coming up with a feasible plan or idea.

2

3 (average) Applicant struggles, but eventually comes up with a feasible plan/idea.

4

5 (high) Applicant comes up with a feasible solution, seemingly with ease.

Prompt: What do you think are some resistances to change?

Comments about response to question: _____

Leadership/ People Management overall rating

1 2 3 4 5

General comments about the applicant: _____

V. General Scoring Guide

This scoring guide aids the interviewer in assessing the abilities of each applicant by placing totaled scores of each competency onto one sheet. Fill out the applicant's name on this page to keep track of necessary documentation. Refer back to the pages at the end of each competency and transfer the total score from each page onto the appropriate location on this scoring guide. The competencies with which you are rating the applicants are the researched competencies determined to be the most important for a student's success on the job.

Applicant Name _____

Interviewer Name _____

Job Interviewing for _____

Competencies	Score
Cooperation	_____
Persuasion	_____
Negotiation	_____
Consideration	_____
Implementation	_____
Problem Identification and Solving	_____
Adaptation	_____
Innovation	_____
Stress Management	_____
Leadership	_____

Add the scores for each of the competencies assessed for a total interview score.

Total Interview Score _____