



## YOLO COUNTY ORAL INTERVIEW PANEL EXAMINATION OUTLINE FOR PANEL MEMBERS

This outline is designed to assist you in your role as an oral board member. We appreciate your participation in this phase of our recruitment process. Human Resources staff will meet with you briefly before the scheduled interviews to review the process for this examination.

### OVERVIEW

The oral board is one of the several examinations the County uses to evaluate and objectively test each applicant's qualifications for the position. On the day of the interviews you will receive a binder, which will include copies of the candidates' applications, a copy of the job description, a sample of the rating sheet and this outline. We ask that you treat all the material as **confidential**. The binder will be collected from you at the conclusion of the examination. The County uses a structured oral interview examination to ensure the fairness and legality of this examination process. The interview questions are developed and written in advance according to the defined job description and the specific needs of the department. The questions are aimed at eliciting applicant responses which can be evaluated against the requirements for the job.

### PANEL MEMBERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

We ask each panel member to commit him/herself to the following responsibilities:

1. Contribute to a friendly atmosphere in which to allow the candidates to effectively respond to the questions asked.
2. Be consistent in your manner of questioning.
3. Evaluate the candidates objectively in accordance with the requirements of the job.
4. Score the candidates according to their responses to the questions.
5. Inform the Human Resources representative if you have prior personal knowledge of the candidate. You may be required to disqualify yourself if you believe that your knowledge may affect your judgment in any way or if the applicant is not comfortable with your participation.

### **ORAL PANEL PROCESS**

A representative of Human Resources Division and, likely, a representative of the hiring department, will meet with the panel to discuss the following:

- Introduction of panel members;
- Review of interview schedule, questions and rating scale;
- Department and/or County philosophy as it relates to the characteristics of individuals being sought for the position; and
- Interviewing procedures, which include the legal limitations of questioning and the opening and closing of each interview.

### **RATING THE CANDIDATES**

Following each interview, you may discuss the candidate's responses to the questions asked with the other panel members. Please be mindful that your ranking should be based on your overall based on information conveyed by the candidate during the oral interview.

### **EXPLANATION OF RATING STANDARDS**

Assign a rating to the candidate for each of the dimension listed. Rating should be assigned, using the scale shown below:

<b>Rating Standards</b>	<b>Not Acceptable (65)</b>	<b>Satisfactory (70-79)</b>	<b>Very Good (80-89)</b>	<b>Excellent (90-100)</b>
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#### **Rating Standards:**

Ratings should be assigned relative to the extent to which the candidate demonstrates his/her knowledge, skill, ability, or personal attributes pertaining to each of the dimensions covered.

- (65) Not Acceptable – (no evidence of skill)** Assign this rating when:
- There was nothing that the candidate exhibited in the interview to allow you to determine the extent to which the candidate has the set of knowledge, skills, or abilities needed; or
  - The candidate demonstrates a total lack of the requisite set of knowledge, skills, or abilities to handle the situation.

- (70-79) Satisfactory** – (Average evidence of skill) Assign this rating when:
- The candidate demonstrates enough of the knowledge, skills, or abilities to allow him/her to acceptably perform the job.
- (80-89) Very Good** – (Above average evidence of skill) Assign this rating when:
- The candidate demonstrates many of the knowledge, skills, or abilities required for the job. This rating should be given for an average to slightly above average skill level.
- (90-100) Excellent** – (Outstanding evidence of skill) Assign this rating when:
- The candidate exhibits an outstanding amount of knowledge, skills, or abilities required. This rating should be given to applicants who demonstrate an above average to advanced skill level.

### **LEGAL/ILLEGAL QUESTIONS**

Questions asked during an interview should ascertain how well an applicant can perform the duties of the job. Certain areas of questioning are commonly involved in charges of discrimination; don't ask questions that may lead to legal challenges.

There are a number of laws - some of which are listed below - that prohibit discrimination in employment; panel members are representatives of the County and are responsible for compliance with these laws.

- ⇒ The Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972
- ⇒ California Fair Employment and Housing Act
- ⇒ Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- ⇒ The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ⇒ The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- ⇒ Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (1987)
- ⇒ Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 (part of Title VII)
- ⇒ State and Federal Equal Pay Laws
- ⇒ American Disabilities Act

All of these laws are aimed at prohibiting discrimination in employment based on race, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, medical condition or handicap.

### **Do not ask any questions related to the following:**

- ⇒ Age or date of birth

- ⇒ Arrest record
- ⇒ Citizenship or national origin
- ⇒ Credit or garnishment records
- ⇒ Ethnicity
- ⇒ Family matters, number and ages of children, child care, etc.
- ⇒ Health history, workers compensation claims or handicap
- ⇒ Marital status or maiden name
- ⇒ Political, religious or any other non-job related affiliations
- ⇒ Sex or sexual orientation
- ⇒ You cannot ask a disabled person how their disability would affect their job performance

### **COMMON RATING ERRORS**

**Central Tendency Error** is the desire to “play it safe” and see all applicants as average. Sometimes people fail to use the top and bottom of the range of scores on the assumption that “nobody could be that good or bad”. However, it is still important to make distinctions among candidates and the full use of the rating scale is the most reliable way of achieving this. This is a most critical area to be aware of in grading.

**Contrast Effect** occurs when applicants are compared to one another rather than against job standards. Compare applicants to the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform the job, not against each other.

**First Impression Effect** occurs when an applicant who makes a good or bad first impression can be artificially rated high or low because they look right for the job, or don’t look right for the job. Don’t rate applicants on first impression; rate applicants on ability to perform the job.

**Halo Effect** is the tendency to allow a candidate’s performance on one dimension influence the grading on all other dimensions. It is absolutely imperative that evaluators try to keep the dimensions as distinct as possible. For example, a candidate may show a great deal of effective oral expressions, but this does not necessarily imply an equal amount of interpersonal skills. Some of the dimensions are closely related, of course, and skill in one area often goes with skill in another. Nevertheless, careful attention to the amount of actual behavior justifying a score will help to avoid the “halo effect”.

**Leniency Effect** is the tendency to give people the benefit of the doubt, or to be an “easy” grader. It is sometimes more comforting to be generous than to give an objective, but lower grade. When this happens, the best applicants become lost in the crowd because everyone is good.

**Severity Error** is the tendency to be too tough on all applicants and rate them unfavorably. Just like the leniency error, the best applicants become lost in the crowd because no one is good enough.

**Similar to Me/Dissimilar to Me** effect is a tendency to rate applicants higher because they resemble the interviewer in personality, values, attitudes or background. A tendency to rate applicants lower because they do not resemble the interviewer in personality, values, attitudes or background. Keep in mind that you are grading the behavior observed.

## **Focus on Ability: Interviewing Applicants with Disabilities**

As employers well know, the pre-employment examination process plays a critical role in the hiring process, allowing them the opportunity to identify the individual who possesses the best mix of knowledge, skills and abilities for the position available. Below is information that may assist employers in ensuring maximum benefit from an interview when the person being interviewed happens to have a disability.

### **Conducting the Interview**

- Relax and make the applicant feel relaxed. If the applicant has a visible disability or reveals a disability during the interview, concentrate on the individual, not the disability.
- Treat the individual with the same respect you would treat any candidate whose skills you are seeking. Likewise, hold individuals with disabilities to the same standards as all applicants.
- Ask only job-related questions that speak to the functions of the job for which the applicant is applying.
- Concentrate on the applicant's technical and professional knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences and interests.
- Do not try to imagine how you would perform a specific job if you had the applicant's disability. He or she has mastered alternate ways of living and working. If the applicant has a known disability, either because it is obvious or was revealed by the applicant, you may ask him or her to describe how he or she would perform the job.