

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Not all interviews are the same – and this has consequences for the quality of hiring decisions.

Job interviews can be distinguished by their level of structure. In unstructured interviews, interviewers ask different questions – often spontaneously and without a clear system. This makes it difficult to compare candidates and opens the door to biases such as likeability effects. Fully structured interviews follow a fixed set of questions with no room for small talk – offering high comparability but often feeling impersonal to candidates. The most common format is the semi-structured interview: it combines standardised questions with space for a natural conversation – balancing objectivity and interpersonal interaction.

Fully structured interviews are demanding – for both sides. They are based on critical success situations from the job, for which targeted questions and evaluation scales are developed. Unlike behavioural interviews, the focus is not on past behaviour, but on potential responses to hypothetical scenarios – also known as situational interviews.

When conducted professionally, such interviews provide strong predictive validity. In practice, however, they are relatively rare – which says more about recruitment culture than about the method itself.

Articles on structured interviews (all articles)

- A job interview is like a joke
- How not to communicate your transferable skills