

Individual Interviews (one-on-one)

Different Types of Interviews

- Structured – intent is to control the data collection process and environment as much as possible. One downside to using a structured interview is that it limits the information being collected as you are only asking the questions provided.
 - Follow a controlled format with pre-establish questions and no room for deviation from the interview protocol; most questions tend to be close-ended
 - Guidelines for structure interview:
 - Never get involved in long explanations of the study; use the standard explanation provided in the protocol
 - Never deviate from the study introduction, sequence of questions, or question wording
 - Never let another person interrupt the interview; do not let another person answer for the respondent or offer his or her opinion on the question
 - Never suggest an answer or agree or disagree with an answer. Do not give the respondent any idea of your personal views on the topic of the question or survey.
 - Never interpret the meaning of a question; just repeat the question.
 - Never improvise, such as adding answer categories or making wording changes.
- Semi-structured – intent is to explore a topic more openly and to allow interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words.
 - Format is less rigid or controlled; referred to as an in-depth interview
 - Questions are not nearly as “fixed” as those in a structured interview
 - Interviewer is provided with a guide (topic areas and questions) to provide some structure to the interviews but there is freedom to vary the course of the interview based on participant’s answers and flow of the interview.
- Unstructured – to provide interviewers freedom to ask their own questions and conduct interviews as they see fit

Suggestions and Considerations for a Successful Interview

Interviewer	The Interview	Follow-up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Have an Interest in the Topic •Develop rapport and trust •Actively listen •Talk Less •Use positive body language •Be careful not to lead, rather follow up on what is said •Don't interrupt •Maintain eye contact if culturally appropriate •Don't show discomfort if you are uncomfortable with responses •Share personal experiences sparingly •Don't over-reinforce participant's responses •Be patient with silence •Avoid a counseling relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ask Open-Ended Questions •Avoid close-ended questions that are dichotomous (e.g. yes and no) •Avoid leading questions •Ask "what" instead of "why" unless there is a specific reason for asking why •Ask direct questions about an event, instead of asking participants to "remember" •Explore laughter – it can mask a number of responses •Maintain focus of interview •Ask for concrete details, examples, stories •Record the interview to collect word-for-word account, but always ask permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Record Notes Right After interview •Notes should include details about the setting, interactions with the participant, non-verbals you witnessed •Transcribe interview soon afterwards while the experience is still fresh •Record your own personal impressions of the interview •Thank participant for her/his time •If possible, follow up on any confusing portions of the interview or points that need to be further clarified

Interview Guides

- One of the first items to develop when conducting an interview is the interview guide.
- The interview guide typically lists the main topics and wording of questions, as well as some suggestions for follow-up questions.
- First step in developing an interview guide is determining what kinds of questions to ask. Participants can be asked questions about their experiences or behaviors, opinions or values, feelings, factual knowledge, sensory experiences, and personal backgrounds.
- Once questions have been decided upon, it is best to categorize questions by topics and determine a sequence of topics; this will help guide the flow and direction of the interview.

- One of the first items to develop when conducting an interview is the interview guide. See an example of an interview guide on the next page.

Interview Guide Example

Purpose: To gather qualitative data pertaining to how Peru State College can improve the Student Experience for new students by asking randomly selected students three open-ended questions, with a sample size of 75.

Who and How: Each staff member will randomly select five students to ask three focused questions and will collect their responses by a recorder, which are available for check-out.

Deadline: All responses must be submitted by Friday, December 6th at 3:00 p.m.

- **Follow-up**

- Notes should include details about the setting, interactions with the participant, and non-verbals you witnessed
- Transcribe the interview soon afterwards while the experience is still fresh and email Director of Assessment
- Provide a summary of your own personal impressions of each interview

Script:

We are conducting brief interviews with students around campus to determine how we can improve our services for new students. It should only take about 5-7 minutes, would you mind participating? If yes, ask them if they don't mind being recorded and let them know that it won't be shared.

Please state your name and ID number.

Questions:

- 1) Think back to your first semester at Peru State, please tell me about your experiences outside of the classroom the weekend before and the 1st week; both positive and negative.
- 2) What advice would you have for new students in their 1st couple weeks of class?
- 3) What could Peru State have done or provided to help improve your new student experience?

Probing Questions

- Would you explain further? Please describe what you mean.
- Can you give me an example of what you mean?
- Would you say more?
- Is there anything else?
- Tell me more about that.
- If they only provide a negative experience, ask them to share a positive experience.