



Interview Worksheet

Purpose – to provide a general overview of best practices for conducting interviews to collect data

Interviews are often the most expensive method for collecting data, but they also allow the greatest flexibility for responses from people who are providing data to answer your investigative questions. The formality of an interview can vary widely, from a conversational interview which is a fully unstructured discussion, to a guided interview where topics are identified on a protocol but can be covered in any sequence with no standardized wording, to a formal, standardized open-ended interview where question wording and order are the same for all individuals. Here are key questions to ask yourself when planning for interviews as a data collection method:

Number of Interviews – how many individuals, from which sub-groups, will be interviewed? are you striving for representation (how common is an issue or opinion in the larger group) or striving for discovery (identify anything that might impact performance)?

Interview Protocol – how formal will the interview be? who will create the protocol? do you need the same questions answered by all individuals? or are some questions specific to some groups or demographic targets?

Interviewers – who will conduct the interviews? how will they be trained? how will they be matched to the key demographics of their interviewees? will the interview be conducted in person? on phone? via the internet?

Data Capture—how will notes be captured during the interview for the purposes of data analysis? Typically, there is not a separate note taker during a one-to-one interview, so who will create either the paper or electronic template to facilitate note capture?

Tips:

- Be sensitive to the genders, status, and ethnicity of both the interviewee and interviewer, and ensure they are paired as equally as possible on all relevant attributes.
- If cultural, gender, age, or ethnicity issues are anticipated, consider the less structured interview approaches as they are more likely to surface issues you cannot foresee from across boundaries.
- In general, the more structured the interview the less extensive the training needed for those conducting the interview.