Transition Planning Interview: Instructions for Interviewer

# DESCRIPTION

This two-part document provides guidance and a sample script for the Transition Planning Interviewer. These instructions should be used in conjunction with the [IC Name] Facilitated Transition Planning Interview Process Guide/Checklist to successfully prepare for and conduct a Transition Planning Interview.

# INTERVIEWER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

* Before conducting the interview
* Review the Facilitator's Transition Planning Process Guide/Checklist
* Familiarize yourself with the [IC Name] Transition Planning Interview Guide
* Remind yourself of your role; the main goals as interviewer are to:
* Help the interviewee stay focused and within time
* Focus should be on selecting the questions the Key Position incumbent feels are most applicable to success in this position
* Stay objective and neutral
* When beginning the interview (*see sample script on page 2*):
* Have everyone introduce themselves and their role (e.g., interviewer, note taker, interviewee, supervisor, successor/backup)
* State the purpose of the interview and intended results
* Discuss how the information obtained will benefit the organization
* Explain why the interviewee was selected for an interview
* Briefly walk through the interview guide
* State we cannot guarantee confidentiality. The information shared is intended to be limited in distribution; it’s intended that only the interview team, their supervisor, successor, and organizational leadership will have access to the transcript
* Assure the interviewee that if at any time they feel uncomfortable with a question or if it isn’t easy for them to answer that they can skip that topic and move on to the next question
* When conducting the interview:
* Ask questions in the guide following the order given, but skip a question if already covered in a previous response ­­­­to maximize use of interviewee’s time
* Focus on the topics and questions where the interviewee can offer the most value and insight. Not all questions will be applicable; in this case the interviewee has the option to skip to the next question
* Bulleted sections and sections with facilitator notes should be read as written, until you have conducted several interviews
* Use follow-up probes to clarify the interviewee’s answers or help the interviewee answer the questions (e.g., “Tell me more about that” or “Can you elaborate on that?”
* Avoid probing questions that are out of scope or can be interpreted as judgmental (e.g., that is surprising, were you given a reason?)
* If the interviewee begins to answer questions out of scope by discussing their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with management practices or policies, remind them that they will have an Exit Interview with their supervisor to provide feedback and insights on the culture and management of the organization such as what can be improved, changed, remain intact, or nature of the relationship with management. Another opportunity to provide feedback is through participation in the NIH Exit Survey
* When concluding the interview:
* Inform the interviewee that they will have the chance to provide final input to the transcript
* Copies of the final transcript will be sent to the supervisor and the interviewee for their use and distribution. *Note - If the interviewee has exited the Institute, we will not be able to send them a copy of the transcript. This is due to the 1995 Paperwork Reduction Act, which precludes government agencies from collecting from and providing information to the public*

# SAMPLE INTRODUCTION SCRIPT FOR INTERVIEWER

Good morning/afternoon:

We are pleased to be meeting with you this afternoon. Before we start, let’s introduce ourselves and our role in this interview. I will get us started; my name is XXX, I am a member of [Name of IC Workforce Planning Office], and I will be facilitating this interview. As the interviewer, I will provide you with background information about the [IC Name] Succession & Transition Planning Program, overview of the transition planning interview process, as well as guide you through the interview questions. My colleague XXX is here to transcribe the interview, so that we accurately capture your responses.

**Important note:** If others are present during the interview (e.g., supervisor, successor), set expectations at the beginning of the meeting that time is limited and the focus is on gathering as much information and knowledge from the incumbent as possible. If time allows at the end of the conversation, the supervisor will be invited to contribute. Otherwise, a separate discussion following the meeting can be scheduled with the supervisor upon their review of the transcript.

The goal of this exercise is to assist you and your organization with transition planning. Today’s interview has three primary purposes: 1) to honor your time spent in the organization by preserving the knowledge, work experiences, and accomplishments you’ve contributed to [IC Name]’s mission and scientific advancements – your legacy, 2) to ensure the continuity of the Institute’s mission and scientific direction by developing a plan of action to seamlessly transition the work when a vacancy is anticipated or realized, and 3) set up the next incumbent for success in the role or the activities performed within. **The benefit/value of the interview and this service comes well after the Transition Interview meeting – the follow-up activities, the outcomes from the interview that prompt the incumbent to take action.**

Your time has been selected for this interview because you have valuable insights into your position, the organization, and have built internal and external relationships that are critical to the mission and future success of this position/role.

This interview guide includes questions that prompt you to think about your experiences and lessons learned in your position as well as provide you with an opportunity to share with us any forethought that you may have for the position, office, and Institute. Some questions may also prompt you to think about what could be improved, changed, or remain intact that are beyond your work duties such as the nature of your relationship with management, team dynamics, policies, and culture. If you experience this, rest assured that you will have the opportunity to provide your feedback and insights on the culture of the organization, management practices, and policies during your Exit Interview conducted by your supervisor and through participation in the NIH Exit Survey. Let’s walk quickly through the Interview guide. There are five sections:

1. **Introduction to Your Position**
2. **Your Unit**
3. **Looking Forward**
4. **Advice for Your Successor**
5. **Your Legacy**

Before we begin, I want to note a few things **1)** the information shared will not be held confidential, it is intended to be limited in its distribution to those who have a need to understand the work of the position, for example, your supervisor, successor, organizational leadership, **2)** we’re still relatively new at this service, we’re learning, so please do share feedback with us so that we can continue to refine and improve and make it as valuable a service as possible to our customers,” and **3)** at any time you feel uncomfortable with a question or if it isn’t applicable, let me know and we can move on the next question.

**Important note(s):** You could also give the interviewee the reigns a bit and offer that they answer the questions they see as most important first, then fill in the concepts not covered as time permits. Another approach to consider would be to first ask a few questions from the “introduction to your position” then skip to “Advice for Your Successor” to optimize time and ensure that the most important content is captured. **Start interview…**