

Questions for workplace needs analysis surveys

Notes

1. These questions come from workplace basic skills surveys that include native-speakers.
2. Interviewers will need to reformulate questions according to local circumstances so it is important that the aim of each question is clear to the interviewer.
3. To help the interviewer and to aid quantifiable analysis, create tick-box answers wherever possible.
4. In selecting questions for inclusion in a survey, consider the report you aim to produce from the survey, but bear in mind that needs surveys serve several purposes:
 - collecting information about the learning needs of individuals and the organisation
 - offering the individual an opportunity to reflect constructively on their experience at work
 - helping the learning provider understand the organisation
 - building trust between the learning and individuals in the organisation
 - generating enthusiasm among staff for a learning programme, etc.

You may wish to include questions that will not generate information required for the report.

5. The content of informants' answers are affected by the sequence of questions and also at which point in the interview they occur. Experience suggests native-speaker informants take about 40 minutes to give a full account of themselves. The initial ten minutes is spent building rapport, so start with factual questions. By the final ten minutes, the informant may be tiring so end with less demanding, more rewarding questions, e.g. what learning the informant would like to pursue.
6. Where the informant's language skills are limited (and no translator is available), the interviewer will benefit from detailed knowledge of the informant's context (i.e. their job role and the structure of the employer organisation). That detailed knowledge will help the interviewer understand and probe the informant's answers.
7. It is likely that different informants will give different accounts of workplace practices and events.
8. Asking informants to consider the needs of their team or department, rather than their own needs, may elicit useful information.

About the interview

Interview time, date, location

Name of interviewer

Examples of introductory remarks

My name is X. I work for Y.

We are doing research to help improve opportunities for training and education in X.

We want to talk to as many people as possible about this.

Thank you for agreeing to help us with the research.

We hope you will find it a useful opportunity to think about what training or personal development you might find useful.

The information you give is confidential.

It will not be reported back to anyone in a way that will identify you.

I want to ask you some questions about yourself; then about your job; then about learning and development.

The whole conversation should take about X [e.g. 40] minutes.

I shall be making notes to help me remember what you say.

You are welcome to check what I write.

You don't have to answer any question you don't want to.

There are no right or wrong answers.

All we want is what you really think.

Would you like to ask me any questions first?

Examples of questions about personal information

Male Female

Date of birth

Age group: 16-19 20-24 25-35 36-44 45-54 55-65

Other (please specify):

Where were you born: UK Other (please specify):

Nationality: UK Other (please specify):

If non-UK national

Status: Permanent Temporary Asylum seeker

Arrived in UK

Main language at home: *speaking* *reading* *writing*

Other languages spoken: *speaking* *reading* *writing*

English: *speaking* *reading* *writing*

English classes attended (a) Where: [locality] Other UK Other overseas

Formal study of English

How long for? (a) School: < 1 year < 2 years > 2 years (b) Adult < 1 year < 2 years > 2 years

Do you have any English language qualifications? No Yes (specify)

What language(s) do you use at work? *speaking* *reading* *writing*

Do you have a disability? No Yes (please specify):
 Do you consider you are dyslexic? No Yes
 If 'yes', have you been assessed dyslexic by an educational psychologist? No Yes
 If 'yes', when (in what year) (iv) Do you have a statement? No Yes
 Ethnicity [ethnic monitoring for equality and diversity]:

Examples of questions about job role

Now I would like to ask you about your role here in the organisation.
 What is your job title?
 What is your department [etc]?
 [Employment status] Do you work: Full time Part time Permanent Temporary Other (specify)
 How many hours are you contracted to work per week?
 How many hours overtime do you work in a typical week?
 What shift pattern do you work? Days Evenings Nights Other (specify)
 How long have you done this job? < 12 months < 18 months < 3 years < 5 years Other (specify)
 Have you done other jobs here? (What?)
 How long have you worked for [this employer]? < 12 months < 18 months < 3 years < 5 years
 Other (specify)
 Why did you first decide to work here? type of work personal contact other (specify)
 When you joined [this employer] how long did you plan to stay?
 How long do you expect to stay now?

Questions about what is done in the job

Do you know the overall objective of your job? Yes No What is it?
 What responsibilities do you have in your present job?
 What are you personally responsible for in your job
 Do you have a job description? Yes No
 Does it describe your job accurately? Yes No (How not?)
 Is your job important to the organisation? (How / why not?) Yes No
 Who reports to you? (How many?)
 Do you manage/supervise any staff? No Yes How many?
 Who do you report to? *Supervisor:* *Manager:*
 Do you work in a team? No Yes How many in the team
 [If 'yes'] What is the team responsible for?
 Describe a typical day at work
 Do you train others (e.g. explain tasks, equipment)? Now Future *informal, on the job training*
formal training courses *If courses, specify:*
 Do you feel comfortable in this training role? (Why not?) Yes No
 What's the best thing about your job? Responsibility Tasks People Other (specify)

Is there anything that can make your job awkward? Workload Specific tasks Colleagues
Managers Customers Equipment Other (specify)

What do you find most stressful about the job?

Do you feel well-supported in your job [by the organisation / managers]? (How / why not?) Yes No

Do you feel valued [by the organisation / your managers]? (How / why not?) Yes No *development opportunities staff awards informal acknowledgement other (specify)*

Do you feel fairly rewarded (pay/conditions) for the work you do? (Why?) Yes No

Is there anything you would like to change about your job? (What?) Yes No

Questions about the organisation

What is the organisation's overall objective? Don't know What:

What is your department's overall objective? Don't know What:

How does the organisation measure its overall performance / success? Don't know How:

How does the organisation measure performance / success in your own area of work? Don't know How:

Do you feel that overall the organisation does what it sets out to do well? (Why / why not?) Yes No

Do you feel that in your own area of work the organisation does what it sets out to do well? (Why / why not?)
Yes No

Have you experienced change in your own area of work? (What?) Yes No

Have you experienced change in the organisation in general? (What?) Yes No

Have the changes been positive in your own area? (Why / why not?) Yes No

Have the changes been positive elsewhere in the organisation? (Why / why not?) Yes No

Have you found the changes stressful? (Which changes / why / why not?) Yes No

Who do you see as 'senior management'?

Does senior management keep you in touch with what it is doing? (How) Yes No *briefings newsletter personal letter / e-mail global e-mail / intranet notice board other (specify)*

Does senior management keep itself in touch with what you are doing? (How) Yes No

Are you and your colleagues able to influence what happens here? (How / why not?) Yes No

Are you and your colleagues able to feed back to your manager and above? (How / why not?) Yes No

Would you like to be more involved in the decisions that affect you? (How / why not?) Yes No

Does your manager check you know what is expected of you in your job? (How / how often / why not?) Yes

No *formal appraisal informal review team briefing individual briefing other (specify)*

Does your manager/supervisor ask you for your ideas about improving the job? (How / how often / why not?)
Yes No

Is the workplace unionised? Yes No *[name of union] other (specify)*

Are you a union member? Yes No *[name of union] other (specify)*

Does the union play a helpful role? (How?) Yes No *representation health and safety education other (specify)*

Can you suggest any improvements in your area of work? (What / why not?) Yes No

Questions about communication in the job

Is communication important in your job? (Who with / why not?) Yes No *customers colleagues supervisors/managers colleagues in other depts admin staff suppliers other (specify)*
 Where is communication most important in your job? (Why?) *team-work managing own workload managing staff customer care other (specify)*
 What communication issues/problems typically arise in the job: None Don't know Other (specify)

Spoken communication

Who do you have to talk to in the job? No one [Own dept] Co-workers Supervisors Admin Managers || [Other depts] Staff Supervisors Admin Managers || External suppliers External customers || General public Other (specify)
 Do you attend meetings at work? (Why?) Yes No *formal informal daily weekly monthly other (specify)*
 Purpose of any meeting(s) identified:
 Could meetings be used more effectively? (How?) Yes No *agendas minutes chairing other (specify)*

Written communication

Does your job involve paperwork? (What / why not?) Yes No *record keeping report writing reading for info (e.g. H & S) (specify)*
 Is the paperwork important? (Why / why not?) Yes No
 Do you have to fill in any paperwork on a regular basis: No Yes (specify)
 Is the paperwork easy to use: No Yes (specify)
 What written information do you need to be aware of in this job? [*check Safe working/H&S, Quality, Customer service, Team work, Materials/equipment*]:
 How do you keep up-to-date with it: [*check access issues (physical and understanding)*]

Information and communication technology

Do you use IT in your job? (How / why not?) Yes No *equipment pc e-mail other (specify)*
 Do you use a computer at work: No Yes (If yes) work email address Intranet Internet Records Reports Other (specify)
 [If no] Can you access your employer's intranet at work: No Yes
 Do you use a computer at home: Email Internet Word Spreadsheets Other (specify)
 Do you use any other kind of ICT[*gloss as appropriate*]: No Yes (specify)

Number skills

Does any of the work you do involve numbers or calculations: No Yes (specify)
 [If 'yes'] How straight-forward do you and your colleagues find this?

Where is communication most important in the job (Why?): Safe working/H&S Quality

Customer service Team work Resource management (e.g. materials, equipment) Supervision
Management Other (specify)

Communication in the work area/department

Overall, how do you rate communication and information-sharing in the department? (Why?) Good

Room for improvement Poor No opinion

How could better communication improve dept'l performance (Why?): Don't know or,

Question about work organisation

To help me understand what you have told me so far, I would like to ask about how work is organised.

Thinking about the way you do things here, are there any changes you think could usefully be made? No

Don't know Yes (specify)

Who is best placed to make these changes: Respondent Colleagues Supervisor Managers

Employer Other (specify)

Here is a list of things. Please tell me if they happen here and, if so, how helpful they are (for doing a good job.)

(a) Regular contact with supervisor: No Yes Frequency:

How helpful: Very Quite Not

(b) Feedback on performance: No Yes Frequency:

How helpful: Very Quite Not

(c) Annual appraisal/6 month review: No Yes How helpful: Very Quite Not

How helpful: Very Quite Not

(d) Regular team meetings: No Yes Frequency:

How helpful: Very Quite Not

(e) Regular updates from senior management: No Yes How:

Frequency: How helpful: Very Quite Not

Questions about morale, engagement, motivation

Here are six statements from the [employer] staff survey. [Show card 2] Do you agree with them?

(a) I find my job interesting

Agree Neutral Disagree

(b) My job makes good use of my skills and experience

Agree Neutral Disagree

(c) I have a clear understanding of what is expected of me in my job

Agree Neutral Disagree

(d) I have the opportunity to use my initiative in my job

Agree Neutral Disagree

(e) I feel I accomplish something worthwhile in my job

Agree Neutral Disagree

(f) Considering my duties and responsibilities, I feel my pay is fair

Agree Neutral Disagree

Comments:

Questions about education, training and personal development

First, your education

How old were you when you left school/full-time education? Years
When you left full-time education, were you in: Primary Secondary (middle/high) Further
Higher Other (specify)
Did you leave full-time education with qualifications? No Yes (specify)
Would you describe your experience of full-time education as: Positive Negative (specify)
Have you gained any qualifications since leaving full-time education? No Yes (specify)
[national vocational qualification] (specify type/level) Other (specify)
Are you doing any courses now? No Yes (specify) Work-related Non-Work-related
Sponsored by employer Sponsored by union In work-time In own time
Have you done any courses in the last two years? No Yes (specify) Work-related Non-Work-related
Sponsored by employer Sponsored by union In work-time In own time

Now, about training and qualifications in your work here...

Training

Have you had any training offered to you within the last year? (What?) Yes No
Did you do the training? (Why not?) Yes No *release problems* *low confidence*
Do you have a Personal Development Plan? No Yes (specify)
Have you received any training in your current job? No Yes (specify) Induction Basic job training (i.e. initial training) H&S/risk management training Customer care training Other (specify)
When did you last receive training here? < 6 months ago < 12 months ago < 18 months ago
< 24 months ago Other (specify)

Qualifications for work: Are qualifications important in the job you do now? No Yes
Entry requirement Regulation requirement Promotion requirement Other (specify)
Have you been offered a chance to gain a qualification in your current job? No Yes (specify)
Would you like the opportunity to gain a qualification in your current job? (Why?) No Yes (specify)

Questions about personal development

Do you have longer-term goals in your working life? (What / why not?) Yes No *promotion*
sideways move *job with another organisation* *other* (specify)
Do you think it is important to have opportunities for training/development at work? (Why / why not?)
Yes No
Could developing your knowledge and skills benefit you? (Why?) No Yes (specify) Improve performance
Take on new responsibilities Progress career Improve life outside work Other (specify)
Do you have enough opportunities in your job for training and career development? No Yes (specify)

How do you find out about training and development opportunities offered by [the employer]?

Is there a union learning representative (ULR)¹ on site? No Yes (specify, including which union)

[If 'yes'] Have you had any personal contact with the ULR: No Yes (specify)

Would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- | | | |
|--|-------|----------|
| (1) I want to develop my knowledge and skills at work. | Agree | Disagree |
| (2) Having the chance to learn at work makes the job more rewarding. | Agree | Disagree |
| (3) My employer actively supports me to learn at work. | Agree | Disagree |
| (4) Developing my knowledge and skills is a realistic way for me to get a better job in this organisation. | Agree | Disagree |

What barriers do you see to developing your knowledge and skills: No opportunity for release

Age Shift patterns No personal time to learn Lack of confidence Caring responsibilities

Cost Location/travel Lack of study skills Fear of exams No motivation Other (specify)

Questions about development of literacy, language and numeracy skills

Would you like free training in paid work time in any of the following?

Communications Customer care Assertiveness Influencing / Leadership skills
Counselling skills Record keeping Report / letter writing General English (*punctuation, grammar, spelling*)
English language training *other (specify)*

Maths skills Calculations Decimals, fractions / percentages Charts and Graphs Weights
and measures 24 hour clock Money and finance *other (specify)*

Computer skills General intro Word processing Spreadsheets/ databases e-mail / internet
Other (*specify*)

Do you have access to a computer (a) at work? **Yes** **No** *now / soon* (b) ...at home? **Yes** **No** *now / soon*

Would IT training help you at work? (How?) **Yes** **No** *do job better confidence other (specify)*

[Only for staff with English as an additional language] Can you give me an example of when you find it difficult to communicate at work in English?

(a) Speaking:

(b) Listening

(c) Reading:

(d) Writing:

Wants training to improve English: No Yes

Did you know that there are national certificates in English for adults? Yes No

Wants more information about these certificates: No Yes [*take name, address on separate sheet*]

Would be willing to pay for English classes: No Yes (If 'yes', how much per class): £

¹ A union official whose role is to encourage and support employee learning

[For native speaker staff] How useful would training in **Spoken communication** [if possible, relate 'spoken communication' to work activity] be for

(a) the department? Very Quite Not useful

(b) you personally Very Quite Not useful

(c) Why?

How useful would training in **Written communication** [if possible, relate 'written communication' to work activity] be for

(a) the department? Very Quite Not useful

(b) you personally Very Quite Not useful

(c) Why?

How useful would training in **Maths** [if possible, relate 'maths' to work activity] be for

(a) the department? Very Quite Not useful

(b) you personally Very Quite Not useful

(c) Why?

How useful would training in **IT skills** [if possible, relate 'IT skills' to work activity] be for

(a) the department? Very Quite Not useful

(b) you personally Very Quite Not useful

(c) Why?

Did you know that there are national certificates for adults in maths and English? No Yes

Wants more information about these certificates: No Yes [take name, address on separate sheet]

What sort of training would work best for you: Classroom group E learning 1:1 coaching

At work: Away from the job Near the job Support on-the-job At college At home (distance learning)

Own time Work time Start of shift During shift End of shift

Learning for life outside work

Thinking about your life outside work, could learning help you do any of the things you want to do now or in the future? No Yes (specify)

Would you like any other kind of information about education or training? No Yes Specify

[If yes, take name, postal address and contact phone number on separate sheet]

Section for informant to complete

What is your date of birth? __/__/__

When you came to work here, how long did you plan to stay?

How long do you expect to stay now?

How might free training in communications, IT and/or maths benefit you and your colleagues?

[space for informant to write]

Ending the interview

[Note to interviewer] At this point summarise and reflect back the learning goals that the employee has mentioned in the course of the interview. If more than one learning goal has been identified:

What do you feel is the order of priority for developing these skill areas for your work or home life?

What would be the best thing you could get out of the training?

How do you feel about working in a small group?

Do you have any other concerns about the training?

Best time(s) of day for you to attend the training: Bad time(s) of day for you to attend the training:

Questions about this interview

Have you found this interview worthwhile? No Yes Specify

Any other comments: No Yes Specify

That's all! Many thanks for taking part in this survey.