

Update notes to:
Using Structured Interviewing Techniques

Note: *This guidance is designed to ensure that GAO policies on evidence and generally accepted government auditing standards are met. The guidance conforms to the generally accepted principles and practices of the appropriate disciplines. Statements that particular actions “should” be taken are practices that are expected to be followed, unless there are good reasons for not doing so. Before deviating from a practice expressed as a “should” statement, staff members must consult with an appropriate staff member in Applied Research and Methods (ARM) or a team specialist and must document the consultation.*

Although some of the specific terminology, tools, procedures and GAO references may have changed since this paper was written in 1991, much of the guidance it offers on structured interviewing remains valuable today.

Some material that has changed or is more fully described elsewhere:

- Chapter 3, “Designing a Structured Interview” –
 - The discussion of older Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology is generally not applicable today. Consult an ARM/CDMA specialist for help with tools and techniques available today.
 - The choice of ranking as a measurement technique as opposed to rating scales should be discussed with an ARM/CDMA specialist.
- Chapter 6, “Training Interviewers” –
 - For large-scale CATI interviewing, ARM/CDMA maintains a contract with an external survey research firm to conduct CATI interviews; GAO analysts will generally not need to select, train, or supervise interviewers for interview projects not conducted solely by GAO staff.
- Chapter 7, “Selecting and Contacting Interviewees” –
 - ARM/CDMA specialists can offer additional insight on interview administration issues, such as “should I share questions with interviewees in advance of an interview?” and “should I make requests for data or other records in advance of the interview?”
- Chapter 9, “Analyzing the Data” –
 - The discussion of the “Nonrespondent Problem,” while generally still relevant, has been updated in more recent guidance. See [Addressing Nonresponse and Nonresponse Bias Issues in Surveys](#) and consult an ARM/CDMA survey specialist or statistician.
- Finally, be aware that additional or revised guidance may have modified or replaced information in sources referred to by this paper. For example, current ARM/CDMA guidance should be used instead of the 1992 “Using Statistical Sampling” paper.

More recent guidance on interviewing:

[Structured Interviewing Guidance For Interviewers](#)