

General Guidelines for Asking Questions Site Visit Interview Tips and Techniques

- Be prompt in starting the interview.
- Introduce yourself: "Hello, I'm _____ from the TPE Examiner team." Ask the person's name if it is not offered. Ask the person some questions about his or her background to help put him or her at ease.
- Begin the interview by telling the applicant that examiners are not looking for right answers but, rather, that they are trying to fully understand processes and results.
- Ask if anyone else from the examiner team has spoken to the interviewee.
- Let him or her know you will be taking notes.
- Keep a separate page for each person with whom you talk. Note his or her name, department or unit, and other pertinent information. Keep a separate page for each SVI. This permits easier sharing of information among the examiners.
- Ask simple, straightforward questions using the applicant's language. Avoid Baldrige or other types of jargon.
- Do not ask leading questions, and be careful not to inadvertently prompt answers. For example, you should ask, "How often does the planning team meet?" rather than "Does the planning team meet every week?"
- Ask the person if he or she would like to add anything. You may have missed something the applicant feels is vital.
- Thank the interviewee for his/her time, and communicate appreciation for the applicant's effort.
- Record materials requested and received.

Applicants are typically interested in assessing their progress on a site visit, and they may ask you how their site visit is going. While this is a simple question, it is one that is premature to answer while the site visit is ongoing and the team is gathering information on its SVIs. Accordingly, if the applicant asks you, "How are we doing?" you should simply tell the applicant that the team is still in the process of gathering information on its site visit issues and, as such, it is premature to answer the question. However, you can compliment the applicant on its hospitality, flexibility, and cooperation in helping the team obtain the information needed to close out the SVIs.