WORKING MATERIAL 3.7 · CHAPTER 3 — THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S LENS · SETTING: MUNNAR, INDIA

Interviewing Staff in Their Own Language

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 7b — GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0, subchapter 3.7 (book page 87)

GUIDING QUESTION

An interview is evidence only if the person interviewed could have answered otherwise. When the questions arrive in a language the worker half understands, from the person who sets her rota, in front of her colleagues, what has the auditor actually recorded?

WHO THE RULES BIND

The GSTC Accreditation Manual (AM-I v4.1) cited on this sheet binds certification bodies, not hotels. Where a row refers to it, it describes what the certifier must do and what the hotel can check; it is not a requirement of the GSTC Hotel Standard.

1 · Verification Pact: market claims against the standard

Copied from the book. The last column is for your property: what holds here, and how you know it.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
Department heads are the best interviewers because they know their teams	No	Knowledge of the team is the reason they cannot provide independent evidence of how the team is managed	
English is the working language, so English training is sufficient	No	A7.5 requires materials in languages understood by all relevant staff	
A signed attendance list proves staff understood the training	Only partially true	A7.4 requires records; A7.3 aims at understanding, which only conversation with staff can confirm	
A suggestion box satisfies the grievance requirement	Only partially true	B9.7 requires a safe, confidential system with explicit safeguards against retaliation, and staff who know it	
Contracted security and cleaning staff are outside the hotel's audit	No	B9.1 and B9.3 extend labour requirements to contracted and temporary staff	
An annual staff survey replaces interviews	No	B9.6 requires monitoring of satisfaction; interviews test whether surveys and systems are understood and trusted	

2 · Common mistakes — a self-check

Tick each mistake you recognise in your own property, and note where it shows.

☐ Delegating staff interviews to the department heads whose management is being audited.

☐ Interviewing in the working language of management rather than the first language of staff.

☐ Holding group interviews in shared spaces at the end of a shift.

☐ Asking whether staff know the policy instead of asking what they would do.

☐ Leaving contracted and agency workers out of the sample.

☐ Using a supervisor, or a relative of the interviewee, as interpreter.

☐ Recording names beside answers, or reporting findings that identify an individual.

☐ Treating a high satisfaction score from a survey that only part of the workforce could read as evidence for all staff.

3 · A Checklist for Staff Interviews

The book's checklist, with a column for your own answer.

Question	Why it matters	Our answer
Do I know which languages my workforce reads and speaks most comfortably?	A7.5 and A6.6 cannot be tested in the wrong language	
Is every interviewer free of authority over the people interviewed?	Answers given to a superior are not independent evidence	
Does the sample include contracted, temporary and night-shift staff?	B9.1 and B9.3 extend requirements beyond the payroll and the day shift	
Are my questions open, about what people do, rather than whether they know a policy?	Yes-or-no questions produce uniform agreement	
Can a staff member describe a grievance channel that does not pass through their supervisor?	B9.7 requires a safe, confidential system that staff actually know	
Are answers recorded without names and reported in aggregate?	Protecting interviewees is a condition of hearing the truth from them next time	

4 · What would show this is working

Questions drawn from the subchapter's reading of the standard and its practical application. Indicator references point to the GSTC Hotel Standard v4.0; where the evidence lives is this book's practice, not a requirement of the standard.

Question	Where the evidence lives	Seen?
Are training and reference materials available in languages understood by all relevant staff (A7.5)?	Language map of the workforce; materials by language	☐
Does the attendance record note the language in which training was delivered?	Training attendance lists	☐
Does the grievance system allow concerns to be raised safely and confidentially, with safeguards against retaliation (B9.7)?	Grievance procedure; channel outside operational lines	☐
Are contracted and temporary staff included in the interview sample and covered for labour law and minimum wage (B9.1, B9.3)?	Interview records by contract type; agency contract clauses	☐
Were interviews held by the auditor, privately, in paid time, without names, with an independent interpreter where needed?	Interview records (This book's practice)	☐

Question	Where the evidence lives	Seen?
Has staff feedback been reviewed and documented, and has it led to anything (A7.7)?	Feedback log and actions taken	☐

> *What this sheet is not: the GSTC Hotel Standard does not prescribe this form. It is a working aid drawn from the book; the standard's criteria, indicators and guidelines govern the real case. Independent material; not affiliated with or endorsed by the GSTC. The standard's own text at www.gstc.org prevails.*