# DITAP Stakeholder Interview Assignment Playbook

For Use by All Vendors

Updated: X Date

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## **Assignment Overview**

### **What It Is**

The Stakeholder Interview Assignment is a cornerstone of the DITAP learning experience. It provides participants with a structured opportunity to:

* Engage with influential figures in their agency
* Practice leading strategic, high-stakes conversations
* Deepen their understanding of internal dynamics and readiness for change
* Begin building a network of champions and collaborators to support digital transformation

Participants will conduct two to four structured interviews with stakeholders who influence digital services, procurement, or policy within their agency. This assignment is not just about conducting interviews. It’s about practicing influence, building empathy, and gaining real-time insight into the systems participants are trying to understand, influence, and improve.

**Who will DITAP participants interview?**  
Stakeholders should meet the following criteria:

* Currently work in the participant’s agency
* Are not enrolled in the DITAP cohort
* Are not direct peers or regular collaborators
* Hold influence or decision-making power in areas like digital services, procurement, operations, or policy

**Suggested roles include:** CIO, CAO, HCA, SPE, CFO, product owners, procurement officials, policy leaders, digital services champions, or others with relevant influence.

**Suggested Project Timeline:**

* Module 2, Sprint 2: Introduce [the assignment](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T5Ukd_61KKbiNkUpYh0ezQMlPPPxg0H7s91QjyJGCxA/edit?tab=t.4rdsnwj8jmvo)
* By the end of Module 2: Submit 2–4 proposed stakeholders for facilitator review via Learning Portal
* Module 3: Check in on progress, troubleshoot challenges
* By Penultimate Class: Conduct and submit two completed interviews (including summaries and reflections) via Learning Portal

## **Facilitator Guidance**

Facilitators are responsible for:

* Introducing the assignment in class
* Reviewing proposed stakeholders for relevance and fit
* Providing feedback on participant interview plans if needed
* Checking in on participants’ progress and troubleshooting as needed
* Verifying that interviews are completed thoughtfully and submitted on time
* Encouraging learners to be bold but respectful in their outreach

## **Preparing Participants**

Introduce this assignment live during Module 2. Sprint 2

* Set context: why stakeholder engagement matters in digital service delivery
* [Review the assignment instructions](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T5Ukd_61KKbiNkUpYh0ezQMlPPPxg0H7s91QjyJGCxA/edit?tab=t.4rdsnwj8jmvo) and [FAQs](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1f4UqERYM7KTXvPC8hkfc6fpnlNMxiFDL7KLCOA5QpTk/edit?tab=t.cd4p9ofyhxhg).
* Demonstrate how to identify stakeholders using “stakeholder landscape map” or “circle of influence” (like the one in [Navigating the Stakeholder Landscape Cont’d](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1T5Ukd_61KKbiNkUpYh0ezQMlPPPxg0H7s91QjyJGCxA/edit?tab=t.a9i0ajj5c4hv#heading=h.dsa8ddc9x5dq), Module 2 sprint 2)
* Preview the [interview guide](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EeM-nUBObeCAHfccZFf7mHQygP1tiMbe/edit)
* Normalize the discomfort: acknowledge that reaching out to senior or unfamiliar stakeholders may feel daunting.
* To help participants build confidence before reaching out to actual stakeholders, consider adding time for peer-to-peer practice interviews in class. This is an opportunity to use the formative participation rubric.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

**Definition of Done: Each assignment is:**

1. Located the assignment submissions in the designated platform (LMS, email inbox, shared folder, etc.)
2. Reviewed using the criteria below
3. Approved or returned for revision, providing constructive and specific feedback
4. Confirmation sent to the participant
5. Logged in tracker

### **Evaluation Metric for SELECTION**

**Each interview selection will be assessed Pass or Fail based on the following criteria:**

* Selected 2–4 potential interviewees with name, role
* Interviewees are from current agency
* Interviewees are not regular collaborators
* Interviewees are major influencers or gatekeepers
* Interviewees are not in DITAP

When reviewing stakeholder selections, facilitators are encouraged to verify that proposed stakeholders meet the criteria and are likely to provide a meaningful learning experience. This may include:

* Verifying the stakeholder’s position via [GovTribe](https://govtribe.com) or agency websites
* Reviewing the stakeholder’s public-facing career information (e.g., [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com)) to understand their expertise and sphere of influence
* Reviewing participant-submitted interview questions to ensure they are likely to spark thoughtful, strategic discussion

**Sample Responses:**

* “Your Stakeholder Interview Selections are received and approved.”
* “Selections received and approved pending receipt of the following missing information: XXXX.”
* “Selections are approved, however please include why you consider the stakeholder a gatekeeper or major influencer in your final assignment submission.”

### **Evaluation Metric for INTERVIEW**

Submissions are reviewed for completeness and alignment with the approved stakeholder list. Facilitators assess the quality of the summaries and confirm all required components are present before approving in the portal and updating the tracker.

**Each interview selection will be assessed Pass or Fail based on the following criteria:**

* Interviewed same names from approved selection
* Included interview questions and summary of answers
* Included a comprehensive summary
* Submitted two interviews
* Passed stakeholder selection metric

**Sample Responses:**

* “Your Stakeholder Interviews are received and approved.”
* “Interviews approved pending receipt of the following missing information: XXXX.”
* “Interviews are approved, but due to a change in selections, please include why you consider this stakeholder a gatekeeper or major influencer in your final assignment submission.”

This assignment is often one of the most powerful experiences in the program. Encourage participants to reflect not just on *what* their stakeholders said—but how those conversations shifted their own thinking about influence, communication, and systems change.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Q1: How do I select the right stakeholders for this assignment?**Choose individuals within your agency who have significant influence over digital services, procurement, or operations—especially those you don’t normally interact with. Ideal stakeholders might include CIOs, CAOs, HCAs, SPEs, CFOs, or policy leads. Aim for those whose decisions impact digital transformation efforts.

**Q2: What if I already know who I want to interview?**That’s fine—as long as they meet the assignment criteria: influential, within your agency, not a peer or frequent collaborator, and not currently enrolled in the DITAP program. Be sure to explain why they’re a relevant and strategic choice.

**Q3: Can I interview more than two stakeholders?**Yes. While the requirement is to complete at least two interviews, participants are encouraged to interview up to four stakeholders. More conversations often lead to a richer understanding of your agency’s landscape.

**Q4: What should I include in my interview summary?**Your summary should capture the stakeholder’s insights about innovation, digital services, and procurement in your agency. Include what you learned about their priorities, perspectives, and any challenges or opportunities they raised. Reflections and next steps are also valuable.

**Q5: Do I need to follow up after the interview?**

Yes. Following up is considered best practice—it shows professionalism and helps build relationships. Use the follow-up to thank them, share any takeaways, and keep the door open for future collaboration.

**Q6: What if a stakeholder is unavailable or declines to participate?**If a stakeholder is unavailable, select someone else within your agency who meets the same general criteria. Be flexible, but intentional in finding someone who can offer insight into your agency’s systems and decision-making.

**Q7: Are there any questions I should avoid during the interview?**Avoid overly personal, irrelevant, or closed-ended questions. Focus on open-ended prompts about their work, priorities, pain points, and views on innovation and change. Stay curious, professional, and respectful of their time.

**Q8: How should I prepare for the interviews?**Research your stakeholder’s role and any related digital or procurement initiatives in your agency. Use the interview guide to draft thoughtful questions. Practice your introduction and clarify your goals for the conversation in advance.

**Q9: Can I ask the stakeholder for feedback on how I conducted the interview?**You can—especially if you’re aiming to build rapport or improve your communication skills. But keep the focus on their insights, not on evaluating your performance. If you ask for feedback, do so briefly at the end of the conversation.

**Q10: How will I know if my assignment is approved?**You’ll receive confirmation through the learning portal or directly from your facilitator. If anything is missing or needs revision, your facilitator will follow up with clear guidance.

**Q11: Can I conduct interviews virtually or asynchronously (e.g., by email)?**Interviews should ideally be conducted live—via phone, video call, or in-person—to allow for dynamic conversation and follow-up questions. Email can be used if scheduling is a barrier, but it may limit the depth and spontaneity of the dialogue.

**Q12: What if I learn something sensitive or surprising during the interview?**Respect confidentiality. Use your summary to reflect on themes and insights, but avoid including identifying details unless they were shared in a public or professional context. When in doubt, check with your facilitator.

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