Designer interview scorecard

Ask every candidate the same ten questions, in the same order. Score each row straight after the call. 3 is a clear, specific answer with proof. 2 is a fair answer with no proof. 1 is vague, evasive or wrong.

Candidate: _____ Date: _____

Criterion	Question to ask	A good answer	A weak answer	Score
Business goal	What should this site do for me in a year?	Names a measurable goal, asks about customers	Talks only about looks and trends	1 2 3
Relevant work	Show me two live sites like mine	Live URLs, explains their exact part	Mockups only, vague about their role	1 2 3
Process	Walk me through the first four weeks	Discovery, sitemap, content plan, dated milestones	"Send your logo and I'll start"	1 2 3
Content and search	Who writes the copy, and how will people find it?	Clear owner, plan for search and AI answers	"SEO is included", or guaranteed rankings	1 2 3
Ownership	Whose name goes on the domain, hosting and code?	Yours, with a written copyright assignment	"Easier if it stays in my account"	1 2 3
Accessibility and speed	Which standard and page weight do you target?	WCAG 2.2 AA, a real number for weight	"It'll be fast and modern"	1 2 3
References	Can I call two clients from this year?	Yes, offers names and numbers	Only testimonials on their own site	1 2 3
Changes and exit	What happens if scope changes, or the project ends early?	Written change process, exit and handover clause	No contract, or verbal promises	1 2 3
After launch	Who updates, backs up and patches the site?	Named plan, response time, training for you	"Just call me"	1 2 3
Team	Who exactly will work on my site?	Names people, says what's subcontracted	Senior pitch, unnamed people deliver	1 2 3
Total				**___ / 30**

24 to 30 is strong. **18 to 23** means probe the low rows before you decide. **Below 18**, keep looking. A 1 on ownership ends the conversation, whatever the total.

Follow-up questions

Criterion	If the answer was vague, ask
Business goal	What would you measure first, and how?
Relevant work	What did you do yourself on this one?
Process	When do I see the first page design?
Content and search	Who keeps old URLs working after launch?
Ownership	Can I see that clause in your contract?
Accessibility and speed	How do you test it before launch?
References	Which project went wrong, and what happened?
Changes and exit	How are changes priced and approved?
After launch	What happens if you're away for a month?
Team	Will the person I'm talking to design it?

Reference call script

Ask for two clients from the past 12 months. Then ask each one:

[ ] Did the project finish on the date and scope you agreed?
[ ] What happened when something went wrong?
[ ] Do you have full access to your domain, hosting and site today?
[ ] Would you hire them again for the next site?
[ ] What would you ask for differently in the contract?

Contract checklist

[ ] Scope: pages, features and integrations, listed.
[ ] Milestones: discovery, design sign-off, build and launch, with dates.
[ ] Revisions: rounds per stage, and what counts as a new request.
[ ] Change requests: how they're priced and approved, in writing.
[ ] Ownership: domain, accounts and copyright assigned to you on payment.
[ ] Standards: accessibility level and performance targets.
[ ] Handover: logins, files, documentation and training.
[ ] Exit: what happens to work, files and payments if either side ends early.

Compare three candidates

Criterion	Candidate A	Candidate B	Candidate C
Business goal			
Relevant work			
Process			
Content and search			
Ownership			
Accessibility and speed			
References			
Changes and exit			
After launch			
Team			
Total			
References called			
Contract checked			

Notes

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