Exit interview

A conversation with a leaver, and a form they can fill in themselves · meeting 30–40 minutes

Example: a fictional QA engineer leaving a 300-person software company. Names and details are made up.

01 HOW TO USE THIS FORM

1. Who runs it: someone from HR or the manager's manager, not the leaver's own line manager.
2. When: one to two weeks before the last day, not on the last day. Offer the form instead of a meeting if the person prefers. A short follow-up three to six months later is optional.
3. Say up front that it's voluntary, that any question can be skipped, and that it won't affect references or final pay.
4. Keep the answers apart from the personnel file. Handover of work belongs in the offboarding checklist, not here.
5. When to stop: if the person raises harassment, discrimination, safety or a breach of the law, pause, explain that this part has to go to [grievance procedure or reporting channel], and follow that process. Employers with 50 or more workers in the EU must have a reporting channel.

02 OPENING AND PRIVACY

Read or share this before the first question.

Why we ask

We want to understand why people leave and what we should change. Your answers help us, not your file.

Taking part

Voluntary. You can skip any question, and saying no has no effect on references or final pay. We rely on our legitimate interest in learning why people leave, not on your consent.

Who sees your answers

HR only. Leadership sees a summary without names; results for a team appear only once at least five people have left it. This is confidential, not anonymous: we know who we spoke to.

How long we keep them

12 months, then deleted. You can ask for a copy and for mistakes to be corrected.

What not to share

Please don't tell us about your health or other sensitive matters unless you want them recorded.

How we may use your words

Only in a summary without my name

03 ABOUT THE ROLE

Use ranges, not exact dates: the summary should not point to one person.

Name (optional, never in summaries)	Marios Ioannou
Team	Mobile
Role family	QA engineering
Length of service	2–5 years

Country	Cyprus
Way of working	Hybrid
Type of leaving	Resignation
Interviewer	HR business partner

04 REASON CODES

Use these codes for the main reason and up to two contributing reasons, so answers add up across leavers.

Code	Reason	Covers
PAY	Pay and benefits	Salary, bonus, pension, benefits, pay clarity
GROW	Growth and career	Promotion, skills, learning, career path
MGR	Manager relationship or support	Feedback, fairness, recognition, support
ROLE	Role and workload	Scope, workload, how the job matched its description
CULT	Culture and inclusion	Belonging, respect, team dynamics
FLEX	Flexibility and location	Hours, remote or office, commute
TOOL	Tools and processes	Systems, bureaucracy, ways of working
DIR	Company direction	Strategy, stability, leadership decisions
PERS	Personal	Family, health, study, relocation
INV	Involuntary	Redundancy, end of contract, dismissal
RET	Retirement	
OTH	Other	Describe in the notes

05 REASON FOR LEAVING

What is the main reason you decided to leave? (one code)

GROW — there was no next step for QA here; the new role is test automation lead.

Did anything else play a part? (up to two codes)

PAY — the offer is about 15% higher. MGR — my manager supported me but couldn't create a lead role.

How long had you been thinking about leaving?

3–6 months

Did you talk to anyone here about it before deciding?

Yes, my manager in April. We agreed to come back to it at the review, but nothing changed.

Did you look at ways to stay, such as a move to another team?

I asked about the platform team; there was no opening.

06 ABOUT YOUR TIME HERE

Two questions per theme, one idea in each. Skip what doesn't apply.

Role: did the job match how it was described when you joined?

Mostly. Manual testing took more time than the job ad suggested.

Workload: how was it?

Uneven: very heavy before releases, light in between.

Manager: what did your manager do that helped you most?

Regular one-to-ones and honest feedback on my test plans.

Manager: what could they have done differently?

Pushed earlier for a lead role or told me sooner that there wouldn't be one.

Growth: did you have real conversations about your development?

Yes at reviews, but without a plan or dates.

Growth: did you know about internal openings?

Only through people I knew; there was no list.

Pay: how did your pay compare with the market?

Below for my level.

Pay: was it clear how your pay was set and how it could grow?

No. I didn't know the bands or what would move me up.

Culture: did you ever feel excluded or overlooked?

No. The team was very inclusive.

Tools and processes: which tool or process would you drop first?

The manual regression spreadsheet.

07 HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE?

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree, N/A = doesn't apply. The theme code lets you average answers across leavers.

Statement	Theme	Rating
My role matched what I was told when I was hired.	ROLE	4
My workload was manageable.	ROLE	3
My manager gave me regular, useful feedback.	MGR	5
My manager treated me fairly.	MGR	5
I had real opportunities to grow here.	GROW	2

I understood how my pay was set.	PAY	2
My pay was fair for my role.	PAY	3
I felt included in my team.	CULT	5
I had the tools I needed to do my job.	TOOL	3
The company's direction was clear to me.	DIR	4
I would have stayed if my main reason had been addressed.	—	5

08 RECOMMEND AND RETURN

How likely are you to recommend us as an employer? (0–10)

7

What is the main reason for that score?

Good people and a sensible pace; growth for QA is the gap.

Would you consider coming back?

Maybe

What would need to change?

A lead role in QA or test automation.

09 KEEP AND CHANGE

Three things we should keep

Code review culture. Hybrid flexibility. Team retrospectives.

Three things we should change

A career path for QA. Clear pay bands. Faster answers on internal moves.

One change that would have kept you

A QA lead role, or a plan with a date to get there.

10 INTERVIEWER NOTES (HR ONLY)

Codes confirmed

Main: GROW. Contributing: PAY, MGR.

Could we have prevented it?

Yes

Do we regret this loss?

Yes

Follow-up: what, who, by when

Add a QA track to the career framework — Head of Engineering — Q2 2027.

Escalation

None

Summary read back to the person, and how their words may be used

Yes, on 3 March 2027. Only in a summary without the name.

11 SUMMARISING ACROSS LEAVERS

1. Every quarter, report the share of each main reason, the share that could have been prevented, regretted losses, average agreement by theme and the recommend score.
2. Show results for a team or a manager only when at least five people have left it; otherwise combine teams.
3. Paraphrase quotes and remove details that could point to a person.
4. Use the answers for changes that affect everyone, never for decisions about one person, and don't keep lists of who took part.
5. Compute the recommend score only from ten or more answers: the share of 9–10 minus the share of 0–6. With fewer, show the spread.
6. Read it next to engagement survey results and turnover figures.