A well designed and executed interview process can provide the search committee and hiring manager with data and information to inform the hiring decision. It can help to promote fairness in the process and provide a standard basis from which to evaluate candidates' fit for the role, department and University. A professional and well-conducted interview process also reflects well on the department and University and may influence a candidate's decision to join to team. Interviews are a two-way process and the candidate is interviewing us just as we are interviewing him/her.

Take time to plan prior to meeting with the candidate. Preparing for the interview will provide a road-map for the discussion and help each member of the committee agree on and understand the approach and their role.

## Interview Types

**Telephone –** an initial screening tool to determine which candidates to invite to for an on-site interview. These interviews are useful, especially if the initial pool of candidates is large. Phone interviews are also useful for candidates who are located far from the main interview location.

**Video –** generally used to determine which candidates to invite for an on-site interview. Can be done using teleconferencing, Skype, FaceTime, etc.

## On-site Interviews

On-site interviews can take various formats depending on the stage and purpose of the interview.

**Basic One-on-One –** the hiring manager or other authority meets individually with the candidate. This is generally done at the stage when the list of candidates has been narrowed down (during the final stages).

**Panel –** a group interview comprising the search committee (and others, as relevant).

**Town-hall/Open Forum –** a larger interview session in which members of the various stakeholder communities are invited to participate. This session may be preceded by a talk or presentation by the candidate.

**Meals/Receptions –** social events used to introduce candidates to stakeholders and members of the University community.

Observe a formal approach for all interviews. During interview scenarios that seem more informal, it may be easy to cross over into areas that may be off-limits or illegal. This may include lunch or dinner interviews or the space before the interview the interview starts or after it ends. Additionally, the candidate may mention or offer details of their personal lives (e.g., mention which school a child attends, reference a spouse/partner). If this occurs, don't acknowledge or make notes of this information and don't ask follow-on questions. Refer to the guidance on interview questions.

## Interview Checklist

### Before Interview

- Gather availability from the search committee and candidate
- Schedule a welcoming conference room for interview
  - For phone interviews, ensure there is a private conference line secured
  - For interviews requiring off-site or a location for a town-hall or open forum ensure space and logistics (e.g., audio visual, food, transport to and from location, etc.,) are scheduled
- Review the position description and identify the position requirements (skills, attributes, competencies)
- Develop interview questions (behavioral-based) and determine any other evaluations that will be asked of the candidate during the interview process (e.g., case interviews, tests, work samples)
- Develop an evaluation matrix to determine how interview questions will be scored/weighed; determine interview evaluation scales and thresholds
- Agree on interview format
- Determine who on the committee will ask each question and the order in which questions will be asked
- Review the candidates' application and resume
- Alert individuals in the department that the candidate will be on campus to help facilitate a welcoming reception when the candidates arrive
- Plan for no disruptions during the interview time
  - Turn off phones and other distracting sounds
  - Book rooms for sufficient time so that there is ample time for the meeting
- Have copies of the interview questions, evaluation matrix or form as well as the candidate's resume and applicable ready and available for the search committee
- For phone/video or other teleconferencing
  - Provide everyone with number for the call
  - Test speakers, phones, or other conferencing equipment
- For onsite-interviews
  - Determine whether the candidate should meet with other stakeholders while on campus
  - Develop an interview day itinerary/schedule (inform all parties or itinerary and their role)
  - Make travel accommodations or direct candidate on how to make travel arrangements and accommodations (e.g., flight, hotel, ground transportation, etc.,)
  - Provide candidate with travel reimbursement information / policy
  - Provide the candidates with office location, directions, parking permits etc.,
  - Send welcome packet of information to candidate

### During Interview

- Introduce committee members, names, titles and roles in the interview and selection process
- Describe the format of the interview
- Take notes / document evaluation of the candidate's interview
- Leave time for the candidate's questions

- Explain expectations for the remainder of the search and selection process (e.g., next steps, timing, etc.,)

## After Interview

- Review evaluation forms and notes on candidates
- Discuss the candidate and summarize strengths and weaknesses
- Follow-up with the candidate in the timeframe that was articulated
- Provide summary evaluations and recommendations to the hiring manager
- Record evaluations in the human resources information system

## Interview Questions Dos

1) Prepare questions in advance
2) Ensure questions are related to the job; utilize the position description when developing questions
3) Use behavioral-based interview questions
4) Use consistent questions for each candidate; however, you may also consider questions based on the candidate's resume that are applicable to the role
5) Probe and follow-up based on the candidate's individual responses
6) Be a good listener
7) Think through potential questions that may be posed by the candidates and be prepared to answer questions
8) Take notes; ensure items are covered/documented on the evaluation form
9) Ensure appropriate documentation on the entire process is maintained
10) Thank the candidate for his/her time

## Interview Question Don'ts

1) Ask illegal questions
2) Speak more than the candidate, let the candidate do most of the talking
3) Forget to leave time at the end for candidate questions, this can be an invaluable way of understanding their interest and level of preparation
4) Lose control the interview, keep the interview and interviewee on track
5) Use overly wordy or confusing questions; stay on point
6) Ask questions that are too similar
7) Prepare too many questions that won't fit into the allotted interview time

## Evaluation Process

### Evaluation Matrix or Form

Below are examples of matrices or forms that can be developed to provide a reliable and consistent approach to the candidate evaluation process. Example templates in Excel format are available for download (you will need to determine and insert the questions appropriate for the position).

**Rating:**
The rating is the candidate's individual score based on the response provided to the question. Example Scores: 5 = Excellent Response, 1 = Poor Response; 5 = Outstanding, 1 = Unsatisfactory

**Weighting:**
The weighting is the level of importance that a particular question is given in the evaluation process. The question weighting is decided in advance.

Example Weighting: 3 = High, 2= Medium, 1=Low

It is good practice to take notes during the interview to support the score given to the candidate.

| # | Question | Response | Score | Weighting | Subtotal (Rating * Weighting) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Position Requirements from Position Description* | | | | | |
| *1* | Tell me about your experience using cutting edge or best in class technology to improve your work | | | | |
| **Position Competencies** | | | | | |
| 2 | Describe a time when you had to change direction in the middle of a project? How did you manage it and what was the outcome? | | | | |
| **Total Score** | | | | | |

| Area of Evaluation | Response | Score | Weighting | Subtotal |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Qualifications | | | | |
| • *Education and experience* | | | | |
| • *Technical experience* | | | | |
| • *Supervisory/management experience* | | | | |
| Competencies | | | | |
| • *Communication* | | | | |
| • *Decision-making* | | | | |
| • *Working with others/relationship building* | | | | |
| Total Score | | | | |

## Evaluation Dos

1. Agree on criteria and scale in advance of the interview
2. Determine the weights that will be assigned to each question in advance
3. Be specific (take notes during the interview process)

**Evaluation Don'ts**

1. Introduce vague or ambiguous criteria
2. Rate based on assumptions, use facts and specific observations from the interview
3. Change weighting based on the strength of a given candidate's response

**Common Evaluation Errors**

1. Using yourself as the measure by which to compare candidates
2. Using different standards for different candidates; developing ambiguous criteria
3. Allowing personal bias to impact decision-making
4. Allowing one characteristic (positive or negative) to overly influence the rating – "Halo / Horn Effect"