

SELECTION INTERVIEWS

These guidelines are intended for anyone who has to conduct interviews or any situation that involves selecting a person to perform a defined role.

Objectives of interview

- ❖ Find out whether the candidate is suitable for the post and the organisation
- ❖ Find out whether the post and organisation are suitable for the candidate
- ❖ Ensure that every candidate experiences fair treatment and is eligible for work in UK

The costs of making a mistake in choosing can be heavy to both parties: loss of confidence, lost opportunity, wasted time, stress, and expense. It will not surprise you that there is an emphasis on preparation as critical to a successful result.

These notes assume that you have shortlisted candidates against a clearly defined Job Description and Person Specification (sample attached), i.e. you know what is expected and in what degree. You can help yourself and the candidates, by sending them this information (and other useful background material) before interview, to save time during the interview and help them choose to attend.

Preparation

- Interview location – consider the need for privacy, lack of noise, comfortable furniture, how formal you intend the layout to be.
- Will you want to involve others e.g. a panel of interviewers (maximum of five), to provide a tour of the workplace, to provide coffee and show the way to toilets etc.
- Decide who will take responsibility for collecting and copying relevant parts of documents required from candidates to comply with Immigration (Restrictions on Employment) legislation, and ensure their safe return at the end of the interview
- Time available – allow sufficient between each candidate to interview, answer the candidate's questions, interviewer "comfort" breaks and to write up your notes.
- Plan a flexible structure for the interview to use as a guide through all relevant areas and ensure nothing important is missed. Using the categories prepared for the Person Specification, prepare key questions that should be asked of each candidate. This will demonstrate fair treatment of each candidate and allow easier validation when assessing candidates against each other and the Specification.
- Familiarise yourself with each candidate's application and pick out the points that you wish to investigate further. Prepare questions related to concerns you have about their background and their ability to do the job.
- Plan how you will supply any further information about the post and/or organisation, usually at the end of the questioning part of the interview.
- Ensure you have all relevant papers at the interview, including information about terms and conditions, remuneration etc.

Open the Interview

1. Greet the candidate, check the name, take requested documents for photocopying, introduce the interviewer/s, and offer a chair and a drink.
2. Explain the process is two-way and that you are happy for them to ask questions if they are not sure of something. Explain what the interview is designed to achieve.
3. Ask if they have an objection to notes being taken. Your notes should be short phrases or triggers, to remind you to return to a point later, or to help summaries.
4. Use a prepared neutral question to break the ice

During the Interview

- Work steadily through each area. Probe the facts presented to obtain the details behind e.g. "What were your responsibilities when you were a supervisor at X?"
- Get the candidate to talk – avoid questions that elicit only yes or no answers. Try using questions that start "**How**", "**What**", "**When**", "**Where**" and "**Why**".
- The best guide to a person's future performance is what they have done in the past e.g. "What did you do in your last job to contribute towards teamwork; please be specific?" Avoid "What would you do if...." – it may test their imagination only.

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- Listen to and observe the candidate. You may pick up additional clues that you need to follow up and you impress the candidate of their importance to you. Avoid prejudice entering your mind; keep to the plan.
- Provide regular short summaries of what you have heard, to give the candidate an opportunity to correct any errors or provide more relevant information.

Close the Interview

1. Check whether the candidate has any further questions.
2. Arrange reimbursement of expenses, if that is your policy.
3. Tell the candidate what happens next, check whether you have details of referees.
4. Return the requested documents to them.
5. Thank the candidate for coming and see him/her out.
6. Write up your record notes

Assessment and Offers of Employment

- Rank the candidates using a scoring system such as 1-6 against each criteria, 1 being “very little evidence”, to 6 being “extremely well qualified/experienced”
- Consider using a standard interview assessment form. Keep records of the interview to be able to prove innocence if rejected candidates later claim unfair discrimination. Valid reasons for rejections are: a) a candidate was selected with more experience of, or skills in, XX; b) the candidate withdrew from the process; or c) the job requirement was cancelled or substantially altered.
- Offers of employment should be subject to receipt of satisfactory references and any other necessary clearances (e.g. Criminal Resources Bureau). Request referees to provide answers to specific questions if possible e.g. “How much sick leave was taken in the past year?” or “What did his/her last job involve?”, rather than a general character reference. It helps to enclose the job description with the request.
- You may consider whether to also require a medical examination (arranged by you at the church’s expense).

Unfair Questions

Unless they are a justifiable requirement for the job, you should avoid exploring the following areas as they provide grounds for unfair discrimination claims, and are an invasion of the right to privacy:

Marital Status	Domestic Circumstances	Significant Others & Interests
National Origins	Financing of Education	Childcare Arrangements
Religious Beliefs	Criminal Offence History	Why Return to Work after Gaps
Group affiliations	Working with older people	Foreign Language Ability
Financial Status	Family Plans	Working for Female Supervisor
Ethnic Origins	Disabilities	Working for Minority Supervisor

Panel Interviews

These take more time to plan and prepare and can introduce a more formal atmosphere which may be intimidating to candidates. However, they also reduce the bias inherent in an individual interview, provide each member with a chance to fully concentrate on the candidate while others question, enable different interests to be represented and allow inexperienced interviewers to learn from experienced ones. The role of the chairperson is key and should include:

Planning the work of the panel	Briefing members about job & candidates
Greeting candidate & effecting introductions	Opening the interview
Calling on other members to question or give information about the job	Closing the interview, thanking them for attending and explaining the next steps

JOB DESCRIPTION for (post title)

Reporting to:

Aims of the post:

-

Scope and dimensions of the post:

-

Key relationships:

-

Main duties and responsibilities:

-

Hours required/budgeted:

Salary Range and benefits:

PERSON SPECIFICATION for

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education and Training •		
Experience eg min X years of project planning •		
Managerial Status eg change management, supervisor •		
People Skills eg team player, communication (written and/or spoken), •		
Technical/Professional Skills •		
Other Skills and Aptitudes eg computers, CRB clearance •		
Personal Characteristics eg initiative, patience, self-reliant, flexible •		

Location of Work:

Recruiters: Date: