

Interview Tips

Expand allAsk Open Ended Questions

Avoid asking questions that require only a "yes" or "no" answer. Instead ask questions that encourage the applicant to express ideas and information and allow more freedom in the response. For example, if you ask, "Did you like your former job?" you might receive a "yes" or "no" answer. However, if you ask, "What things did you like most about the job?" you should receive responses that will contribute to your understanding of the applicant's motivation and ability to perform the job.

Be Consistent

Require the same standards for all applicants. For example, if heavy lifting is part of the essential functions of the job, apply the same standard to each applicant whether they are male or female, young or old, etc.

Check References

Always check references by contacting the past or current supervisor(s). If you are talking to a past supervisor, the most important question to ask is "Would you rehire this person?" If the applicant is one of the final candidates, explain that you will not make an offer without contacting the present supervisor.

Check your Bias

Don't ask any questions that may be interpreted as bias against any protected group. Protected groups can be defined by age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, veteran status, and disability.

Do not ask questions about date of birth, graduation date, gender, race, marital status, children, child-care arrangements, transportation, financial commitments, religion, disabilities or arrest records. You may ask about attendance in prior jobs, ability to work the specified work schedule, career objectives and conviction record if stated on the application and if related to the functions and responsibilities of the job.

If you wonder if it is OK to ask a question and you can't get an answer before the interview, don't ask it.

Develop a List of Standard Questions

Ask the same general questions of all applicants, and ask only for information that you intend to use to make a hiring decision. Know how you will use the information to make that decision.

Questions you might ask include:

- Describe a typical day on your most recent job. What were (or are) your primary responsibilities?
- What would you say is your most significant achievement in your current (or previous) job?
- Why do you want to leave your current job?
- What are your key strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you handle stressful situations?
- How would your co-workers describe your personality?
- Describe the last time you took the initiative to solve a problem in the workplace.

Encourage Diversity and Inclusion

The Talent Acquisition Office has no requirements on the number of people a department should interview for a job opening. However, we do monitor applicants who are interviewed for a position in order to encourage a diverse applicant pool.

Encourage Reflection

Behavioral questions can elicit information about what a candidate has done, or will do. For example you could say "Describe the most difficult decision you ever had to make in your past employment. Reflecting back, was your decision the best possible choice you could have made? Why or why not?" Or "Describe a time when you received a complaint from a customer about the service given in your office, and how you handled it?"

Listen

Allow the applicant to do most of the talking. Your objective is to encourage the applicant to talk so that you can find out about the applicant's qualifications, abilities, experience, motivation, etc.

Put the Candidate at Ease

Make sure you make the applicant feel comfortable. Put yourself in the applicant's place so you can understand how they may be feeling.

Review the Job Description

Prepare for the interview by reviewing the job description. Consider what questions will help you identify the best person to accomplish the work described.