

Tips for managing interviews and assessments (Participants)

This guide presents some tips to keep in mind when conducting interviews and assessments.

Tips for in-person interviews

- If you are conducting an in-person interview, choose a place where you won't be distracted, make sure the candidate is seated comfortably and provide them with a glass of water.
- Introduce yourself and any other assessors.
- Before you begin your questions, explain to each candidate the process they will go through so they know what to expect and can give their best. For example: how long the interview will last, who will ask questions, how many questions there will be, whether they will have an opportunity to ask questions, etc.
- Let them know it's OK to ask for a question to be repeated.
- Let the candidate know that you (and any other assessors) will be taking notes throughout.
- Give the candidate an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview.
- At the end of the interview, let candidates know what the next steps will be, for example contacting their referees, and when you expect to make a decision.

Tips for virtual interviews

COVID-19 has changed the way we work, with many meetings and interviews conducted by video. The approach to designing and asking questions is the same as for in-person interviews. However, these tips may be useful:

It's a good idea to have two interviewers, but no more. Facing multiple people on screen can be intimidating for candidates.

- Be ready early: Virtual interviews are prone to technical difficulties. Allow time before the interview to check your video and audio, so that you are ready when the candidate joins the meeting.
- Let candidates know if you are using more than one screen. For example, if you are looking at interview questions or taking notes on another screen, it can feel as if you are not paying attention to the participant, which could make them feel discouraged. Let them know that you may look away from the camera, but that you are still paying attention.
- Allow for delays and technical difficulties: Have a back-up. If using a virtual platform like zoom or teams, make sure you have the candidate's phone number and let them know in advance that if it drops out you will call them back.

Tips for assessment

- Make sure you take account of all sources of information when coming to a decision.
 - The CV is a good source of information on prior experience and current capabilities.
 - The covering letter can tell you about the person's understanding of the role, their attitude and values, and their communication skills.
 - The interview is one way of assessing communication skills, ability to think on the spot, attitudes and values, etc.
 - Practical exercises such as role plays, responses to scenarios or tests are a good way to test specific capabilities across different areas of attitude, knowledge and skills.
 - Referee reports are a key part of the assessment and should not be used simply to confirm a decision already made. They can provide crucial information in response to questions such as "can you tell me what you see as (the candidate's) strengths and what you see as areas they need to develop?", "would you re-employ (the candidate)?", "can you give me an example of when they demonstrated (a key requirement or capability from your selection criteria)? You can also follow up with referees on any areas you identified for further probing from your review of their CV/ application or their interview.
- Understand and account for bias. There are many forms of unconscious and conscious bias that can impact perceptions of a candidate. Everyone's perceptions and assessments are influenced by their own personality and experiences. While this can be challenging to overcome, some useful ways include asking the same questions and using similar methods to assess all candidates, involving more than one assessor to provide you with an additional perspective, and rating each candidate using your agreed selection criteria before comparing notes and making a decision.

Tips for a great candidate experience

- Respond to every candidate to thank them for their application.
- Be present and attentive for assessments or interviews, ensuring that you and other interviewers are not distracted (for example, by phones or other interruptions)
- Be on time and respect that candidates have given their time to go through your recruitment process.
- Offer to provide feedback on performance if you are comfortable to do that.
- Keep candidates up to date with the process, let them know when they can expect to hear the outcome of your decision.
- Let candidates know the outcome as soon as possible after you have made a decision.