



Interview Panel Guide

INTERVIEW FORMAT

Interviewers should evaluate candidates on consistent and position-related criteria. The format of the interview may include a Human Resources (HR) interview, a panel interview with subject matter experts, or opportunities for the candidate to present information. If desired, the interview could include a variety of other elements, such as site tours, job shadowing, or opportunities to meet with employees. The candidates should be prepared to allow full evaluation of their knowledge, skills, and abilities as they relate to the position.

It is important to remember that the candidates will also be evaluating us! Please be professional and courteous.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Candidate confidentiality is protected by Washington State statute. Consider all candidate information highly confidential*.

Interview panel participants must review, sign, and return DOC 03-442 Interview Participant Confidentiality Statement to the HR representative.

*please review related RCWs, 42.56.230 subsection (3) and 42.56.250 subsection (2) and (3)

INTERVIEWING

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and most courts assume that every pre-employment question is asked for a purpose, and any answer will then be used to influence hiring decisions. Thus, the simple act of asking a question could be used as evidence of discrimination unless there is a legitimate job-related reason for asking**.

If an interviewer asks questions that are not clearly job-related or that tend to reveal a candidate's membership in a protected class, s/he is risking a potential discrimination claim. Be sure that all questions are related to a candidate's ability to perform the job and suitability for the position.

**see reverse side to review "Topics to Avoid" and "Common Interviewer Errors"

BACKGROUND AND REFERENCE CHECKS

Please be aware that background and reference checks will be conducted on the final candidates according to applicable policy or collective bargaining agreement. The Appointing Authority will have the benefit of reviewing those reports when making the final hiring decision.

COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Be sure to print your name at the top of any notes taken during the interview.
- Please limit notes, comments, and observations to the skills, knowledge, or attributes relevant to the candidate's ability to perform in the position.
- It is not appropriate to make personal comments about the candidate or his/her appearance.
- At the conclusion of the interview process, please sign the evaluation documents used in the process and ensure that any decisions regarding the candidate have been noted.
- Return the interview documents to the Human Resources representative to archive.

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Please note the following are general guidelines and may not all apply in every situation.

Topics to Avoid

- Race and ethnic origin
- National origin
- Disability
- Gender - Do not ask about a candidate's maiden name, marital status or status as a state registered domestic partner, spouse/domestic partner, title preference (i.e., "Miss," "Mrs.," or "Ms."), pregnancy, family plans, or childcare arrangements.
- Age
- Religion - Do not inquire about religious holidays observed. The ability to work on weekends or holidays may be asked if such availability is job-related. Accommodations may be necessary for candidates whose religious observances conflict with work schedules if it is not an unreasonable burden.
- Union membership
- Military status
- Arrest or criminal record
- Financial status
- Legal off-duty activities
- Equal employment opportunity information - Do not ask about prior equal opportunity claims, sexual orientation, or non-professional memberships since these inquiries may indicate the candidate's protected class.

Common Interviewer Mistakes

- **Similarity:** Finding things in common with the candidate or seeing similar qualities can sometimes lead to overlooking other characteristics.
- **Halo:** Allowing one skill, attribute, or characteristic to influence the entire evaluation can impact the ability to gather an overall impression of the candidate.
- **First impression:** Relying too heavily on the first judgment or drawing conclusions based on the first impression of the candidate can leave an incomplete or incorrect picture of the candidate.
- **Leniency/Severity:** Going "hot or cold" with assessments of the candidates may seem like a simple method to use in scoring, but it is very limiting and can make comparing candidates after the interviews more challenging.
- **Restriction of range:** Be cautious not to avoid using the extreme ends of the scale when it is appropriate, so all of the candidates don't end up in the middle of the range.
- **Stereotyping:** Individuals come with unique strengths and weaknesses. Judging people based on broad generalizations is easy to do, but very ineffective. Instead, use specific information about the candidate.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to assist in making these very important decisions.