

INTERVIEW TIP SHEET

PURPOSE: The purpose of this tip sheet is to provide managers with guidance for planning and conducting interviews to determine the best position-candidate fit. (Check your Component/Service Agency instructions as they may contain specific requirements that you must follow.)

INTERVIEW PROCESS

PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW

- Determine what type of interview you will be conducting (traditional vs. structured).
For structured interviews, refer to OPM's Structured Interview Guide for proper procedures.
<http://apps.opm.gov/ADT/ContentFiles/SIGuide09.08.08.pdf>
- Determine whether or not you will be using an interview panel.
- Decide who to interview (Generally, you have the option of interviewing all, some or none of the candidates. Check your local bargaining agreement, if applicable.)
- Arrange for the logistics.
- Set aside a private area where you can interview without interruptions. Candidates will be more at ease and you will learn more in a non-threatening environment.
- Arrange for facility access in advance following your local procedure.
- Develop your questions and evaluation criteria. *See Interview Guidelines.*

SCHEDULE THE INTERVIEW WITH THE CANDIDATES, INFORMING THEM OF:

- The position being interviewed for, including the name of the interviewer(s).
- The date, time and location of the interview.
- Any special Pass and ID requirements.
- Contact information in case of rescheduling or any facility access issues.

REVIEW THE INFORMATION ON THE CANDIDATE

- Review just before the interview so that the details are fresh in your mind.
- Resolve gaps in employment.
- Identify special skills. *Example: computer software*
- Words such as “assisted” and “arranged” when describing a project often mean the candidate was involved in a project, but was not actually responsible for it.
- Many short-term jobs. Ask in detail why the candidate made each move from job-to-job to understand the motivation behind it.

CREATE A NOTES SHEET TO CAPTURE RESPONSE INFORMATION FROM THE CANDIDATE

- Capture: Candidate Name, Position Title, Date and Interviewer
- Include a listing of the interview questions/competencies, with benchmarks for each level of expertise, with room to capture specific responses. *Example:*

Competency	Individual Assessment in Accordance with Benchmarks				
	Awareness	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert

For additional assistance regarding interviewing, please contact your HR professional.

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DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Welcome the candidate and make introductions.
- Break the ice to relax the candidate.
- Explain the particular purpose of the interview as it relates to the position and explain the interview process.
- Take notes. Notes are helpful when several top candidates emerge and a close comparison becomes necessary.
- Mention to the candidate that you will be taking notes. Telling them this upfront makes them feel more comfortable.
- Limit note taking to short entries since it is more important to listen. Allow time to go over the notes immediately after the interview.
- Establish a friendly tone, but stay in charge.
- Control the interview; don't let forceful candidates lead or talk incessantly. Apply the 70/30 rule: candidate talks 70% of time; you talk 30% of the time.
- Have the candidate do most of the talking.
- Allow silence. During the interview, the candidate needs time to think.
- If a candidate seems reluctant to answer a difficult question, don't rush on to the next question. An awkward silence can indicate that you have reached an area which you may want to probe further, or simply that the candidate needs more time.
- Tell candidates about the job and about working in your organization.
- Allow enough time to talk in more detail about the opening, provide an overview of your organization's structure, how it fits into the command as a whole, etc.
- Sell the job to a good candidate; show the benefits of working at your organization.
- Allow some time for candidates to ask you more questions based on what you say, and pay attention to the kinds of questions they ask. This can tell you a lot about their interest level in the job.
- Do NOT discuss specific salary rate or compensations at this time or promise any future promotion since you may not be able to meet them later.

CLOSE THE INTERVIEW

- Give all candidates a general idea of your decision timetable. *Example: "We are still interviewing for the job, but expect to wrap up the process in the next two weeks."*
- Inform the candidates that you may be contacting their supervisor in the near future for reference checks.

SHOW THEM OUT

- Escort all candidates to the entrance.
- Thank them for their time.

EVALUATE YOUR INTERVIEWED CANDIDATES

- Review your notes and evaluate each candidate.

WHAT'S NEXT?

After you have completed all your interviews, decide on your top candidates and begin the reference checks of your top candidates. *Refer to the Reference Checking Guidelines.*