

Interviewing Guidelines – for the interviewer

The goal of an **employment interview** is to “gather relevant and accurate information that will assist in making an informed hiring decision.” Following a structured interview process with clear guidelines can assist in this decision.

Following are some guidelines that can assist your process in being fair, equitable and credible for both the interviewer and interviewee.

1. **Make the candidate feel important.** The candidate may be anxious about the interview process. The more comfortable and important they feel, the more you will get out of them during the interview.
2. **Use relaxing small talk and find a common denominator at the beginning of the interview.** People like people who are like themselves. If the candidate ‘likes’ you, they will feel comfortable and more relaxed and be more open during the process.
3. **Manage the interview: have an agenda.** Loss of control in the interview leads to stress and a collapse of the process, resulting in you not obtaining the information you need and possibly making an ill informed hiring decision.
4. **Explain you will be taking notes.** Note taking can be a threatening procedure. Eliminate this stress by asking permission. Take notes consistently on both positive and negative issues so you do not tip off the candidate. Explain that the notes are to jog your memory following the interview where necessary.
5. **Ensure privacy.** Interruptions indicate a lack of commitment to the hiring process. It is your duty to give applicants the same courtesies you would expect in a similar situation.
6. **Learn to recognize "red flags."** When a person says something like, "Can I tell you something in confidence?" they usually have something important to tell that is negative in nature. You should respond that you would rather not have it in confidence but will handle it with the greatest sensitivity and integrity.
7. **Use empathy, not sympathy.** Empathy means you understand; sympathy means you feel sorry for the person. When you become emotionally involved during the interview process, you can lose your objectivity.
8. **Listen with an interpretive ear to determine what was *said* versus what was *meant*.** Continue to probe deeper into subject matter when you get general answers. Get specific to the candidate’s actions.
9. **Ask the candidate if there is anything they would like to add before closing** the interview that you haven’t covered. This provides the opportunity for them to disclose anything they may be withholding, feel uncomfortable about, or that they thought might be covered during the interview. Also allow for them to ask questions.
10. **Explain the next steps of the process,** including when they can expect to hear back from you, further interviews or assessments, contacting referees etc.
11. Lastly, ensure you thank the candidate for their time and make sure they feel important and comfortable when leaving. **Last impressions can be lasting impressions.**