Appendix D. Conducting a Good Virtual Interview

Faculty recruitment is an integral part of achieving excellence as a university. Interviews using video-conferencing technology are often used for the first meeting of our applicants. In addition to the University and College policies and procedures for search committees,1,2 the following are recommendations for an effective virtual interview.3-5

1. The Search Committee Chair has responsibility for ensuring a smooth and effective interview process.
2. When scheduling the interview, be aware of time zones, allow enough time for each interview and ensure that there is adequate space between interviews.
3. Once the interview has been confirmed, send interviewee and interviewers the relevant information—instructions for accessing the video-conferencing platform (including passwords and dial-in information), names of interviewers, duration of call, etc. in good time, so the interviewee can become comfortable with the platform. Resend the link the day before the interview so it is readily available to all persons involved.
4. Share back-up phone numbers with the candidate and offer a chance to do a test run with a member of your staff.
5. Find out whether the candidate needs any special accommodation for the interview. This becomes important for persons with disabilities.
6. Have reliable internet access and a platform with which you are familiar. Test that your system works.
7. Pre-plan with your team to ensure that everyone is up to speed with all aspects of the process.
8. Try to anticipate technical problems and have back-up options at the ready and someone on hand to facilitate.
9. Ensure consistent treatment of all candidates, including internal candidates.
10. Develop a set of core questions to be asked of each candidate. Follow-up questions will differ. Be aware that certain questions are not allowed. (See some sample questions below.)
11. Be as prepared for this interview as if the candidate were sitting in front of you and conduct the interview with the same level of professionalism and importance.
12. The interview is, for the candidate, a representation of the institution and its culture so be carefully aware of how that is portrayed. Some suggestions:
   • use a quiet space that will not be interrupted and that shows your department in a positive and professional light.
   • tell co-workers or people at home that you’re doing interviews, so they keep the space clear.
   • silence your phone, mute notifications, and mute yourself during the interview when not speaking.
13. Establish eye contact with the interviewee, look into the camera, and not at the image of the person on the screen.
14. Be kind/humane to the interviewee
   - individually introduce committee members
   - committee members need to ensure that they can be clearly seen
   - check for appropriate lighting, camera angle, non-distracting background
   - committee members should be physically present, stay for the duration of the interview, and be fully engaged with the interview and respectful of the candidate while there, even if it becomes clear that the candidate is not a good fit. (Candidates can see you looking at your phones, etc.)
   - have a pre-arranged order of questioners to minimize long silent periods. Recognize that the candidate will be disadvantaged and demoralized by lost time. Use ice-breaker questions at the start to put the candidate at ease.
   - allow all interviewees similar time for the interview. Have extra questions at the ready to minimize lags in the conversation.
   - at the end, let the candidate know the next steps.
15. Set up a separate virtual meeting room for each candidate to avoid one interviewee coming into the space while you are still speaking with another.
Sample Interview Questions for Faculty Positions. You may find this list of sample interview questions useful in helping you develop your core. (See item 10 above.)

Remember that in general, questions that touch upon age, race, ethnicity, national origin, disabilities, gender, religion, children, marital status or sexual orientation should be avoided. See Appendix E. https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.udel.edu/dist/2/11245/files/2021/01/20.07.27-Faculty-Hiring-Best-Practices-for-Search-Committees-UD-ADVANCE.pdf (accessed 07/07/21.)

References and Resources


