

Guidelines for Student Employee Interview Process

These interview guidelines have been developed to provide student employee supervisors with the steps that must be followed when interviewing applicants to fill student employment positions in their work areas.

The Interview Process

The College requires all departments to conduct a thorough search to fill its open student employment positions. While interviewing all applicants is not required, it is suggested that departments interview all qualified applicants for each open position. There must be at least two (2) college employees involved in the search process, including applicant interviews.

Ethics and Confidentiality

A fundamental part of the search process involves ethics and confidentiality. Each member of the search committee must agree to honor the commitment to the confidentiality of applicant information (written and otherwise), deliberations, and recommendations.

Checklist for Reviewing Resumes or Application Forms

Review the job description for the position you are attempting to fill, noting minimum requirements necessary for the position and refer to them often as you review applicant employment applications, along with any other application materials. Attempt to ignore superficial issues unless they are directly related to the position. Note on a separate piece of paper any pertinent questions that arise when reviewing the applicant's application materials and ask those questions if the applicant is granted an interview.

Developing Interview Questions

The way in which questions are phrased is very important. The following are examples of acceptable and unacceptable interview questions. The first question is unacceptable and the second one is acceptable.

- No: Are you a U.S. citizen? Yes: Are you lawfully employable in the United States either by virtue of citizenship or by having authorization from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration services?
- No: How old are you? Yes: Are you over the age of eighteen? (If the applicant is not over the age of eighteen, the Office of Human Resources must be contacted for consultation on any relevant Child Labor Laws.)
- No: Do you have any children or what are your child care arrangements? (Questions about family status are not job related and should not be asked.)
- No: What clubs or organizations do you belong to? Yes: What professional or trade groups do you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job?
- No: Have you ever filed a worker's compensation claim? (You may not ask this question or any related question during the pre-offer stage.)

- No: What disabilities do you have? Yes: Are you able to perform the essential functions of the job to which you are applying? (Be sure you tell the applicant what the essential functions are by going over the job description.)
- No: When did you graduate from high school? Yes: What schools have you attended?
- No: What is your maiden name? Yes: Have you ever been known by another name? (Only ask this question if you need to contact a former employer, because a legal liability may exist if an applicant claims that you were trying to determine her ethnic background and consequently didn't hire her because of it.)
- No: Do you smoke? Yes: Our smoking policy is such—can you adhere to it?
- No: Do you have AIDS or are you HIV-positive? (There is no acceptable way to inquire about this, or any other medical condition.)

In almost all instances, the following topics should be avoided in an interview: age (unless under age 18 where the Office of Human Resources must be contacted for consultation on any relevant Child Labor Laws); arrest record; association with present employees; bankruptcy and credit affairs; citizenship; disability; driver's license (unless job related); educational attainment (unless job related); emergency contact information; English language skills (unless job related where it is permissible to ask the applicant if he/she can speak/write English fluently); height and weight; marital status/name changes/spouse/children; organization or club membership; race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; union affiliation; veteran status/military records (unless job related); or weekend work/shift changes (unless job related). For additional information on these topics, please refer to the Interview Do's and Don'ts document posted on the College's web site.

Ask open-ended questions that focus on behavioral descriptions rather than simply "yes or no" questions (i.e. have them describe a work situation in which the applicant handled stress well rather than asking the applicant if he/she can "handle stress well").

Additional sample interview questions can be found on the College's web site by referring to the Interview Question Form and Sample Questions document. The number of interview questions developed will depend upon the job's requirements/responsibilities and will also vary from department to department.

Final Interview Reminders

Once the job-related interview questions have been created, they must be added to the Interview Question Form found on the College's web site where it states "Insert Interview Questions Here". This form must then be used consistently for all applicants for the position.

During the interview, try to put the applicant at ease with introductory and welcoming remarks. If the applicant feels comfortable, he/she will be more likely to share information with you.

If the applicant freezes on a particular question, you may want to go on to the next question. It takes time for some applicants to relax and feel comfortable with the interviewing process.

Individuals with Disabilities - Discussing Disability during the Interview Process

Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination based on disability. The College is required to provide reasonable accommodations for any otherwise qualified disabled person. This issue should be addressed only after a person has been offered employment.

No applicant should be asked if he/she has a disability. If an applicant initiates a discussion about his/her disability (whether visible or not), the interviewer should respond in a manner that clearly states that our interest is to find the best-qualified person for the job, and that the College does provide reasonable accommodations for employees at their request. Focus your comments and questions on the essential duties and responsibilities of the job.

Pre-employment inquiries can be made regarding an individual's ability to perform job-related functions. Focus on **what** needs to be performed rather than **how** it needs to be performed. For example:

1. "This position requires moving boxes and other objects weighing up to 50 lbs. Can you do this?"
2. "Do you have a driver's license?" (Only ask this question if driving is an essential function of the job.)
3. "This position performs computer data entry 50% of the time. Can you enter data into a computer several hours per day?"

An interviewer must not ask questions that are directly about a disability or that could indirectly elicit information about a disability. Pre-employment inquiries cannot be made regarding the nature or extent of an applicant's disability. For example:

- Do not ask the applicant about any visible physical characteristics, i.e., scars, burns, and missing limbs.
- Do not ask if the applicant is in good health.
- Do not ask if the applicant has ever had an emotional illness or has consulted with a psychologist or psychiatrist, had an injury or disease, or had a drinking or drug problem.

The best practice is to ask **each** applicant if he/she is capable of performing each essential function listed in the job description.

Evaluating Interview Results

Applicants interviewed for the position must be evaluated and the evaluation must be documented. Sample applicant evaluation forms are located on the College's web site to assist you in evaluating the interview results.

Reference Checking (Optional)

References may be checked for the chosen candidate and if conducted, must be done before an offer of employment can be extended. Sample reference checking forms are located on the College's web site to assist you in recording the reference checking results.

Documentation

In the interests of avoiding any notions of inequality in its conduct, the search committee must maintain accurate records (including interview notes taken by each search committee member) and information available for review and scrutiny, i.e. how each member evaluated each applicant, what information references volunteered about the applicants, etc.

Returning Recruitment Files

At the conclusion of the interview process, all recruitment files (employment application copies, interview notes, applicant evaluation forms, reference checks, etc.) must be returned to the Office of Human Resources for recordkeeping purposes.

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