

## Interviews

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Interviews are an established part of the selection process for both general and academic staff. In some cases, where the applicant is interstate or overseas, it is not practicable to hold an interview. This should not disadvantage any applicants. Alternatives to interviewing in person include tele-conference and video-conferencing.

### **Interviewing by tele- and video-conferencing**

Interviews can be conducted using the Vision Net Tele-Meeting facilities operated by Audio Visual Services, Information Technology Services. Further information can be obtained from Audio Visual Services.

Interviews are a two-way process during which:

- information is obtained from the candidate in relation to the selection criteria which cannot easily be gained from other sources
- information is provided to the applicant about the position, conditions of employment and working environment
- the applicant is given the opportunity to ask questions.

### **Maximising the validity of the interview as a selection tool**

Interviews remain a popular choice as a selection tool, despite research evidence that suggest that other tools are better predictors. Employers value the interview as a means of assessing whether the candidate has beliefs in line with the organisational values. The interview also allows the candidate to find out more about the position.

It is important to recognise that the interview as a selection tool does have shortcomings, and that steps can be taken to improve the way in which interviews are conducted. These include:

1. ensuring that the selection criteria include all the essentially required elements of the position, including items such as the values of the University, Faculty and School, as well as team skills, etc.
2. preparation of open questions around the selection criteria which can elicit information both about past performance and how the candidate might handle particular scenarios in the new role
3. awareness of equity issues such as stereotyping and making assumptions of performance based on irrelevant criteria
4. validating information gained at interviews against other selection tools, eg. referee checks, seminars, skills tests etc.

It is important that the time allocated to the interview is planned in such a way as to maximise the information that the Committee is able to obtain, while at the same time taking into account equity and diversity issues.

## **Interview Questions**

A series of job related interview questions, based on the agreed Selection Criteria, should be agreed upon before the interviews commence. These core questions should be asked of all applicants but this does not preclude follow up questions or other questions specific to an applicant arising from their application. Follow up questions are important because they help the Committee to explore candidates' experiences in depth – giving the Committee the information they need while giving the candidate the opportunity to demonstrate competence in the selection criteria.

The questions should be designed to elicit information and evidence in relation to the selection criteria for the position.

### **Behavioural interview questions**

These ask the candidate to provide specific information about the selection criteria, drawing on recent and relevant situations where they have had to demonstrate certain skills and attributes. The list below show some examples of behavioural questions.

#### **Questions relating to a specific situation or task**

Describe what led up to...?

Could you give us a specific situation in which you used... approach?

What was the most memorable time when that happened?

What caused you to...?

Why did you...?

When was that?

What were the circumstances surrounding...?

Who was that customer/co-worker/team member?

What were you reacting to?

Questions relating to a specific action

Exactly what did you do?

How were your actions different here from...?

How did you react?

Describe specifically how you...?

What was your part in the project, and how did you handle it?

Take us through the steps you took to...?

What did you say?

What did you do first... second...?

#### **Questions relating to a specific result**

How did... work out?

How did... affect...?

How were... outcomes directly related to what you did?

What problems/successes resulted from...?

How did you know that what you did was effective?

What feedback have you had regarding...?

## Questions/topics to avoid

Type of question	Example
<b>Leading questions</b> These result in answers that the candidate thinks you want to hear	I imagine you found being a team leader to be very fulfilling?  So it sounds like you enjoyed the challenges of leadership?
<b>Closed questions</b> These are likely to result in a 'yes' or 'no' answer	Did you enjoy working on your last project?
<b>Potentially discriminatory questions</b> There may be situations where there is a legitimate need to know certain information but where questions traditionally have been asked in a discriminatory way. Availability, for example, may properly be a matter for consideration and can be explored in a non-discriminatory way	<b>The following topics should be avoided:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• marital status (or plans); spouse or partner's employment</li><li>• children or other dependents; childcare arrangements</li><li>• birthplace; racial or ethnic origin; length of residence in Australia</li><li>• sexuality</li><li>• age</li><li>• religious or political views or affiliation.</li></ul>