

## Interview Etiquette

A lot of focus and attention is dedicated to the questions that you are going to ask a candidate during a job interview. Sometimes we forget that we, the employer, are being interviewed by the candidate as well. The impression that we make upon a candidate starts well before they set foot on campus for the interview. More importantly, their lasting impression will be determined by the way the interview and post-interview follow-up is conducted. Here are a few tips to help make that lasting impression a positive one.

### PRE-INTERVIEW

- Make sure to engage the candidates in frequent communication
  - Update them on the status of the search
  - Provide information on the community and local realtor information
  - Provide information on University benefits
  - Provide anticipated timeline for subsequent steps in the search process
  - When calling to schedule the interview, be discreet if leaving a message. You do not know who is going to retrieve or overhear the message so simply identify yourself and that you are calling from \_\_\_\_\_ department/college/program with Ohio University, and leave contact information.
- Tell the candidates what to expect when they arrive on campus
  - Tell the candidate who they will meet with during the interview and their titles
  - Let them know how long the interview is going to last
  - Provide driving directions to the interview location.
  - Provide a campus map and identify parking options (meters, garage, temporary parking permit, etc).
  - If the candidate is coming in the day of the interview, make them aware of any expected travel delays they may encounter (i.e. road construction, special campus events,, etc).
- Provide the candidate with a detailed agenda at least two days prior to arrival on campus.
  - Inform them where to arrive for their interview
    - Identify the street address, building name, and room number where the interview will take place and who to ask for upon arrival
  - Provide the candidate with contact information for the day of the interview. This contact should be someone who can assist in the event the candidate gets lost, is running late, can't find parking, etc. Contact information should include name, cell phone, email, and office phone.
  - If you anticipate reimbursing the candidate for any expenditures such as mileage, supply them with a Payment Compliance Form/W-9 available at:  
[www.ohio.edu/finance/accountspayable/index.cfm](http://www.ohio.edu/finance/accountspayable/index.cfm)
- If you expect the candidates to bring something – tell them. (i.e. Please bring 10 copies of a professional writing sample to share with the search committee)
- Be prepared to provide reasonable accommodations to any candidate who may need modification to effectively participate in the interview process. When inviting the candidate to

interview, always notify them who to contact should they request special accommodations. Include the same contact information in written correspondence as well.

- If the interview is going to include a plated lunch, ask the candidates if they have any dietary restrictions.
  - If lunch is going to be on their own, make sure to provide recommendations.
- Let the candidate know the consequences of not appearing for an interview (i.e. Failure to appear for the interview without notification can result in the candidate's dismissal from consideration).
- If the candidates are being asked to include a presentation as part of their interview, ask them what technology needs they have
  - Will they bring their own laptop or just a jump drive?
  - If the candidate is not a current employee and needs access to the internet, contact the IT Help Desk at 31222 to arrange a guest user account.
- Do not assume that an internal candidate knows all the logistics. Treat an internal candidate with the same hospitality that you would extend to an external candidate.
- A welcome packet left at the hotel is a nice personal touch to provide candidates that are staying overnight.
  - Packets should include general information about Athens and neighboring communities, exciting information about the University or your specific department/school/program.

## **Interview**

- Location, location, location.
  - A small conference room is ideal for most interview situations.
  - A large, open conference room can be quite overwhelming and can have a negative impact on the interview process when dealing with a small group.
  - The use of a large conference room is appropriate if the search committee is extremely large or the interview includes an open forum. An over-crowded room can be just as distracting as one that is too open.
  - Try to arrange seating in a conversational setting. Try to avoid placing the candidate at the head of the table or directly across from the entire interview committee.
  - Make sure to confirm the location the day before the interview.
- Ideally, someone will accompany the candidate to and from interview locations, however; if the candidate is on their own, make sure the location is clearly marked, accessible, and properly arranged.
  - A candidate should not be the first person to arrive at the interview location. Ensure that a member of the search committee or department representative is on site to greet the candidate upon arrival.
  - Introduce yourself and greet the candidate with a firm handshake and genuine smile.
  - Offer the candidate a glass of water or coffee/tea prior to the beginning of the interview.
  - Identify the location of restroom facilities.
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- Ask the candidate if they are parked at a meter and if so, make certain they have an opportunity to move their vehicle prior to the meter expiring.
- If the interview includes a meal in the same room the interviews are being conducted, arrange to have the food removed during a break. Lingering odors can be quite distracting.
- Turn off your cell phone or mute the ringer. It is extremely distracting to the candidate and other search committee members if someone is checking incoming messages, texts, etc. during the interview. This goes for laptops and iPads as well.
  - If you are expecting an urgent message that simply can't wait until the conclusion of the interview, alert the candidate at the beginning of the interview and apologize for your need to check your messages.
  - Be as discreet as possible when checking your messages and respond to messages only in emergency situations.
- If possible, add a "do not disturb" note to the door so that you are not interrupted. An unexpected interruption can de-rail a conversation and have negative impact on both the committee and the candidate.
- Be familiar with the candidate's resume prior to the interview. You should not be reviewing the material for the first time during the interview.
- Be respectful of the time allotments.
- The candidate should never be left completely alone for long periods of time not knowing what to do.
  - Have a back-up plan in case something happens and you need to fill a large block of time. A campus tour, a tour of the building, the town, etc.
- If the interview is extensive (more than 2 hours), make sure to add "health breaks" into the agenda.
  - Provide directions to the restrooms along with other housekeeping items.
  - Ask the candidate if they need anything such as water, coffee, etc.
- After the introductions are completed, let the candidate do most of the talking.
  - The key to effective listening is to be quiet
  - Avoid the temptation to "tell your story" or describe your own career.
- Taking notes during the interview is extremely beneficial.
  - Make sure to let the candidate know at the beginning of the interview that you will be taking notes to remind yourself of all the important things they are saying.
  - Note taking will help you stay focused on the interview.
- Close the interview with a handshake and thank them for their time.
  - Let them know the next steps and when they can expect the next update.
  - If the candidate has receipts to turn in for travel reimbursement, now is the time to collect that information.

## Post-Interview

- Follow up is very important. If you gave the candidates an expected timeline for updates, adhere to that timeline. Communicate something even if you simply indicate that the process is taking longer than expected and you do not have any new news to report.
  
- Bad news is better than no news at all.
  - If a candidate has participated in an on-campus interview, they deserve a personal telephone call notifying them they were not the successful candidate.
  - Be especially mindful when making public announcements about successful candidates when there were internal candidates in the pool. Make certain that the internal candidates have been notified that the position has been filled prior to sending out an announcement of congratulations or introduction of the successful candidate.
  - In the instance of only receiving a telephone or e-interview, an e-mail or letter is acceptable.
  
- If the candidate is someone you would like to consider for future opportunities, ask their permission to keep their contact information on hand.
  
- After the offer is extended and accepted, don't forget about the new employee.
  - It may be several weeks or even months before they arrive on campus. Keep them engaged with frequent communications and reminders that the department is anxious for their arrival.
  - Forward interesting department and/or University news items.
  - Get their business cards ordered and send them a few before their arrival on campus.