

How to Conduct an Effective Interview Process

Preparing for the Interview

1. Establish your Selection Committee and determine a schedule for interviewing. Allow for the group to meet for 15-30 minutes before the first interview to discuss the process and to clarify any questions.
2. When scheduling interviews, ensure you have allowed for adequate time. You are creating a first impression of McMaster University for the candidates – you do not want to fall behind schedule. A typical interview should include about 7 or 8 behaviour-based interview questions, and should last approximately 45 minutes. Plan to leave approximately 15 minutes in between candidates for scoring.
3. Contact the candidates by telephone to extend an invitation for an interview. Remember that this is a recruitment process and that you are representing McMaster University – your best candidate may have several other offers on the table. Be cordial, responsive, and inquire about accommodation needs. Allow for as much lead time as possible – a week’s notice for an interview is ideal.
4. Once scheduled, email each interviewee individually to confirm the details of the interview. In this email, you may want to include the following information:
 - Date, place, time of interview
 - Names and titles of selection committee members
 - Salary range for the position
 - Link to directions to McMaster and campus map
 - Information about parking
 - Job Description
 - Summary of testing/assignment/presentation (if applicable)
 - Statement of accommodation availability, i.e.: “Job applicants requiring accommodation to participate in the hiring process should contact the Human Resources Service Centre at 905-525-9140 ext. 222-HR (22247) or the Faculty of Health Sciences Human Resources office at ext. 22207 to communicate accommodation needs.”
 - FIPPA – Interview Consent form
5. Provide all selection committee members with copies of the job description, candidate resumes, interview questions, and scoring guides well in advance of the interviews.
6. Book a meeting room that is quiet, comfortable, and will ensure confidentiality. If a reception area is not feasible for this meeting room (i.e. in the Student Centre), have the candidates meet elsewhere and arrange to have someone escort them to the meeting room when the selection committee is ready to see them. Ensure that the greeter will be friendly and welcoming.
7. Have a pitcher or bottle of water available to offer the candidates.
8. Prepare tent card name tags for each of the selection committee members.

9. Have a copy of the interview questions available to provide to the candidate. Have large print copies of the interview questions available. Some candidates may be better able to process the question if they have it available visually in front of them. This copy should not include the criteria on which you are evaluating, nor the probing questions you may/may not ask. The copy should remain in the interview room once the candidate leaves.

Conducting the Interview

1. Begin the interview by welcoming the candidate and thanking them for their interest in working at McMaster University.
2. Introduce each of the selection committee members.
3. Ask the candidate to sign the FIPPA – Interview Consent form. This consent is required because you will be collecting personal information throughout the interview. **NOTE:** this could also be provided to the candidate prior to the interview.
4. Pour the candidate a glass of water. Engage the candidate in friendly small talk to break the ice (neutral subjects such as the weather, the directions, finding parking, etc.).
5. Explain the outline for the interview. The comments you make may include:
 - We have several behaviour-based questions prepared to ask of you. In these questions, we are looking for you to tell us about a specific example of an experience in your career.
 - Please feel free to take a few moments to think about the best example for each question. Silence or a pause is okay.
 - We will be taking notes as you speak.
 - At the end of the interview, we will give you an opportunity to ask questions of us.
6. Begin asking the interview questions, each selection committee member taking a turn. Maintain control of the interview to stay on schedule.
7. You must ask the same basic questions of every candidate. Additional probing questions may be used as needed to help candidates provide all the information you are looking for. Keep in mind that some candidates may be nervous, so additional questions may be needed to fully explore their qualifications and experiences.
8. Take notes of the candidate's responses to your questions. Remember that your notes become a legal record of the interview process and your hiring decision – you should write down what the candidate says; not your interpretation or reaction to their statements. Notes from all selection committee members, along with the job posting and applicant resumes, must be retained on file for at least one year.
9. Allow the candidate time to ask questions once the selection committee has finished asking all interview questions. At this point, feel free to discuss more about the job and the expectations of the incumbent. Discuss any working conditions that are out of the ordinary (i.e. evening and weekend work, heavy lifting, etc.). Only if a need for an accommodation is disclosed, start to explore possible options.

Closing the Interview and Evaluating the Candidates

1. Tell the candidate what the next steps are, and when they can expect to hear from you. Make sure that you can meet the commitment you make.
2. Thank the candidate for their time, and escort them to the door.
3. Each selection committee member should individually summarize and score the candidate before discussing as a group.
4. Schedule 30-60 minutes at the end of all interviews for the selection committee to debrief. Discussion should focus on each candidate's strengths and gaps as it relates to the job requirements.
5. Once you have determined your top candidate(s), determine the next step in terms of evaluation. It is recommended that you have at least two steps in your evaluation process.

Important Reminders

- Do not ask questions that in any way address the following:

race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status and disability

Hiring decisions based on any of the above grounds are illegal according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

For more information, refer to the **Appropriate and Inappropriate Human Rights-Related Questions** tip sheet

- Do not misrepresent the job, responsibilities, working conditions, or commitment you are able to make. To ensure a good fit, it is important the candidate has realistic expectations of the position.
- If none of the candidates meet your criteria or expectations, consult with Human Resources Services for advice on expanding your applicant pool. Hiring the right person can be time consuming in the front end, but the investment will be more than worth it in the long run.