

INTERVIEW GUIDE



REMEMBER

An effective interviewer looks for reasons to qualify a candidate rather than disqualify a candidate. You are representing UW-Madison throughout your interaction. Make a good impression while creating a positive candidate experience! Partner with your HR department for a successful interview.

PREPARE

- Review the job description & candidate materials.
- Determine how a new employee can contribute & add value to the department.
- Develop questions & identify elements of good answers in advance.
- Review questions & make revisions to avoid unconscious bias.
- For panels, identify who will lead the interview & who will ask each question.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Start & end the interview on time.
- Introduce yourself & create a welcoming environment.
- Give an overview of the position, the department/division & the interview format.
- Ask the same job-related questions of all candidates.
- Give the candidate time to think about their answers.
- Allow the candidate to speak without interruption.
- Take fact-based notes.
- Inform the candidate of the next steps in the hiring process.
- Ask the candidate if they have any questions.

POST-INTERVIEW

- Gather feedback through use of an interview evaluation form.
- Debrief & discuss candidates with the interview panel.
- Create a summary evaluation for all candidates.
- Check the references for the finalist candidates.
- Follow-up with candidates in a timely, customized manner, even if they are not selected as a finalist.
- Provide feedback to the candidates who did not advance.

WHAT NOT TO ASK

- Avoid questions that may be considered discriminatory under federal & state law regarding:
 - An arrest record
 - Military status
 - Pregnancy status
 - Sexual orientation
 - Disabilities
 - Age, race or gender
 - National origin
 - Citizenship
 - Religion
 - Marital status
- Examples of what not to ask:
 - Is English your first language?
 - Are you married? Do you have children?
 - How much sick leave did you take last year?

VIRTUAL INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES

What virtual interview platforms are available to conduct the interview/presentation?

UW–Madison supports the following free platforms:

- Google Meet
- Microsoft Teams
- WebEx Meetings
- Zoom

What are best practices for using the virtual interview technology?

- If you do not already have the platform's software installed on your computer, do so prior to the first interview, if applicable.
- Depending on the platform you choose, you may need to select an audio source (phone or computer).
 - It is strongly recommended that you select computer audio. Remember to mute/unmute yourself when appropriate.
 - If you opt for phone audio, there may be a dial-in, meeting ID, or participation number that will be necessary to receive sound.

It is recommended to have your computer or tablet plugged in to power during the interview. Video conferences can drain the device's battery.

VIRTUAL INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES

What are best practices for conducting a virtual interview?

- Be transparent. Provide each candidate with information and logistics about how the virtual interview will work prior to the scheduled interview.
- Inform candidates that participating in a virtual interview opposed to an in-person interview will not harm or affect their candidacy.
- Have a back-up plan in case technology does not cooperate.
 - Make sure you have the candidate's phone number in case you must call them.
- Find a quiet, private, well-lit place to conduct the interview, free from potential noise or activity interruptions.
 - Avoid coffee shops and other communal spaces.
 - Limit light coming in from the background. Facing toward a window works well.
- Check that your computer's audio is working ahead of time.
- Test your webcam ahead of time.
- Maintain professional attire and demeanor.
- Position your webcam so that you have a neutral background, free from distractions.
- Monitor your body language.
 - When listening, nod and smile to show you are engaged.
 - Look directly into your device's camera as much as possible. When you are looking at your computer screen, you are not making eye contact with the candidate.
 - Be authentic and courteous.
 - Be sure your facial expressions communicate what you want to convey.
 - Be careful not to shuffle papers, tap your pen, or any other distracting behaviors that may detract from what you want to get across.
 - If you are concerned about your body language when interviewing, try the "gallery view" function which will allow you to see a small picture of yourself throughout the interview.
- Ask the same relevant and non-discriminatory questions you would in a phone or in-person interview situation.
- Treat each candidate equally by focusing on skill, experience, and ability to do the job.
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking. This will reduce background noise and allow everyone to hear.
- Leave a few minutes at the end of the interview for the candidate to ask questions.
- In an interview with multiple panelists, you may consider stating your name anytime you speak, either to introduce yourself or before asking a question.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

BEHAVIORAL

Candidates are asked to describe past behaviors.

- Describe a time you had to build partnerships to achieve a shared objective.
- Tell me how you effectively work under pressure.
- Recall a situation in which you made a mistake while working with others and had to fix it.
- Describe a time when you challenged an idea or approach.
- Tell me about a time you went the extra mile for your customer.

SITUATIONAL

Candidates are asked to respond to a specific situation they may face on the job.

- When taking on multiple projects with varying deadlines, how would you stay on track?
- Describe the work environment that would allow you to do your best work.
- How would you respond to a co-worker who has criticized your approach to solving a problem?
- How do you communicate a complex process or task to others?
- How do you define great customer service?

COMPETENCY

Candidates are asked questions targeting a specific skill set or competency.

- Communication: Tell us about a time you had to adjust your communication approach during a project.
- Leadership: Describe a situation when you assume the role of the leader. Were there challenges? How did you address these?
- Technical: What technical training have you received? Can you provide examples of how you've applied this training?
- Collaboration: Tell us about a time you assisted a co-worker with a project. Why and how did you assist?
- Integrity & Trust: This position plays a critical role in enhancing the employee experience through engagement. What is your definition of employee engagement? Describe your experience in projects related to engagement & the role you played.

PROS & CONS

Pros for Behavioral & Situational:

- Get examples from the past to assess future performance.
- Storytelling allows candidates to interview more effectively.
- Goes into deeper detail.
- Allows for the ability to assess how a candidate will react to on-the-job situations.
- Able to understand a candidate's decision-making skills.

Cons for Behavioral & Situational:

- Candidate may feel put on the spot to recall a scenario to share.
- How a candidate solved a problem in the past may not be the way to solve a problem today.

Pros for Competency:

- Gives the candidate an opportunity to best understand what you're looking for.
- Candidate has an opportunity to outline, explain & demonstrate their qualifications.
- Allows the ability to gauge a candidate's knowledge & comfort level with competencies.
- Easier to prepare questions in a structured manner.

Cons for Competency:

- If a candidate lacks competencies you seek, it may create unease.

INTERVIEW DOS AND DON'TS

DOS

Before

- Find an appropriate interview location and time.
- Address logistical details before the interview regarding location, parking arrangements, who the candidate should ask for when arriving for the interview, etc. Provide a link to the Campus Map for candidates who are unfamiliar with the campus: <https://map.wisc.edu/>
- Before the interview, provide candidates with information about accommodations, names and titles of interviewers (if using a panel), selected interview questions for advance preparation, a copy of the job description, an organizational chart, and links to benefits information.
- Read résumés and other application materials ahead of time.
- Have a thorough understanding of the position and its requirements.
- Develop questions and identify elements of good answers in advance. Ensure all panel members understand what a good answer looks like for each question so that the panel can assess candidates consistently.
- Review questions for unconscious bias.
- For panels, identify who will lead the interview and coordinate who asks which questions.

During

- Start and end the interview on time.
- Introduce yourself and create a welcoming and open environment.
- Give an overview of the organization and the position.
- Outline the interview format to the candidate.
- Ask only job-related questions.
- Use the interview as an opportunity to market and showcase the highlights of working at UW–Madison.
- Ask the same questions of all candidates interviewing for the position. Ask follow-up questions if you do not have a clear understanding of a response or to get more detailed examples.
- Give the candidate time to think about past experiences and examples while answering questions.
- Provide the candidate with information about the next steps of the hiring process.
- Remember that the role of a good interviewer is to look for reasons to qualify a candidate rather than disqualify a candidate.

After

- Evaluate the candidate on predetermined criteria soon after the interview.
- Follow up with candidates in a timely manner, even if they are not moving forward in the process.

INTERVIEW DOS AND DON'TS

DON'TS

- Don't take extensive notes, which can make the candidate tense up and stop talking.
- Don't ask only questions that can be answered with one word, such as "yes" or "no."
- Don't ask leading questions that prompt the answer you want, such as "We value individuals that can adapt quickly...how well do you adapt to new situations?"
- Don't ask simple questions related to information the candidate has already provided on the résumé or cover letter.
- Don't let the interview get off track.
- Don't look impatient or bored.
- Don't bring a cell phone or laptop to the interview.
- Don't forget to ask candidates if they have any questions.
- Don't rush candidates if they struggle to respond to a question. Allow for silence. Offer to come back to the question if needed.

