

Interviewing



Best Practice Guide

FOR SUPERVISORS

**HUMAN
RESOURCES**



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Overview

Recruitment of the best talent is a vital function for any organization. This is especially true at UIC, where the individual contributions of each member of our faculty and staff have significant impact on the success of our mission.

Planning an efficient interview process and utilizing effective techniques is essential to identifying the best qualified candidate for a job position.

Effective interviewing:

- Focuses on qualifications most important to success in the job position
- Elicits meaningful responses from candidates
- Provides a framework for evaluating and comparing candidates
- Ensures fairness and equal treatment during the hiring process
- Minimizes subjectivity and bias in hiring decisions
- Results in better hiring decisions, reducing turnover and talent acquisition costs while improving operational effectiveness

The interviewing process can seem daunting, especially as so few managers and supervisors have participated in specialized training. Proper preparation is important as so much of the selection process is riding on the interview itself.

This resource guide, associated toolkit, and job aids will help UIC hiring managers to plan and conduct effective interviews.

Objectives

1. Understand the importance of non-discrimination policies and laws.
2. List the minimum and preferred qualifications that contribute to success in the job position.
3. Decide which qualifications you will assess for the job position.
4. Plan an efficient and fair interview process.
5. Develop effective questions for each qualification you intend to assess.
6. Determine how you will objectively rate answers to your questions.
7. Conduct the interviews and evaluate the candidates.

Related Resources

<https://www.hr.uic.edu/hiring/interviewing/>

Question Development Toolkit

A step by step guide to help you develop meaningful interview questions.

Developing Qualifications Job Aid

A form to aid in identifying the job qualifications to be assessed.

Developing Questions Job Aid

A form to record the questions to be asked during each round of the interview process.

Candidate Score Sheet Job Aid

An example score sheet to use in assessing candidates during the interview.

Pre-Interview Checklist

Post-Interview Checklist

Non-Discrimination in Hiring

If you are involved in the candidate selection process, either by contributing to the development of questions or participating in interviews, you should first review the non-discrimination guidelines established by university policy and employment related laws.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Policy Statement: The commitment of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) to the most fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity requires that decisions involving students and employees be based on individual merit and be free from invidious discrimination in all its forms.

UIC will not engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, genetic information, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran and will comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders and regulations. This nondiscrimination policy applies to admissions, employment, access to and treatment in the University's programs and activities.

Care should be given to design interview questions that avoid disclosure of these subjects. If a candidate volunteers such information it should not be recorded or considered for evaluation purposes. Politely steer the conversation back to questions related to job qualifications.

RESOURCES

Non-Discrimination Question Guidelines

See Appendix

REFERENCES

UIC Non-Discrimination Statement

<http://oae.uic.edu/discriminationharassment/policies/>

SUPPORT

Office for Access and Equity

<http://oae.uic.edu/discriminationharassment/>

Employment Laws

There are several key laws that you should be aware of concerning interviewing and the selection process.

Both state and federal laws govern the recruiting and hiring processes, including laws and regulations containing non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and affirmative action provisions. As you are aware, these laws may be interpreted through the courts. A number of groups are legally protected from discrimination, many of which are specified in the **University's Non-discrimination Statement**.

Basically, the following factors should not be considered during the recruiting process or in an employment decision unless there is an exception for a bona fide occupational qualification: age, ancestry, arrest record, citizenship, color, disability, marital status, military status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy (including childbirth or related medical condition), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, unfavorable discharge from the military, use of lawful products, and certain veterans categories.

As a federal contractor, the University is required to maintain and update affirmative action plans for minorities, women, special disabled veterans, veterans of the Vietnam Era, and veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized. Descriptions of recruitment efforts to attract and hire these groups are included in the affirmative action plans. Efforts to recruit underrepresented groups should be a part of any recruitment effort or search plan.

RESOURCES

Laws Impacting the Selection Process

See Appendix

REFERENCES

Equal Opportunity Employment Commission

<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/>

<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/other.cfm>

SUPPORT

Office for Access and Equity

<http://oae.uic.edu/discriminationharassment/>

Accommodation Requests

Candidates with Disabilities

Several federal and state laws include non-discrimination and/or reasonable accommodation provisions for people with disabilities. Employers are required to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, as defined by law, throughout the recruiting process and after employment. Requests for accommodations and/or the provision of accommodations must not adversely affect a person's consideration for employment.

A candidate with a disability may request:

- Assistance when the job interview is conducted
- An accommodation to perform the essential functions of the position
- Physical adjustments to the employee's work area

Religion

Even if an applicant's religious observance prevents him or her from working certain hours, this fact cannot be used to bar that applicant from employment. Except in cases where undue hardship can be proven, employers must make reasonable accommodation for religious practices of an employee or prospective employee. Such accommodation could include flexible scheduling, lateral transfer, or change of job assignments. Requests for accommodations and/or accommodations made must not adversely affect an individual's consideration for employment.

Documenting Accommodation Activities

Once you receive a request for an accommodation, do not ignore it! You must keep a detailed departmental record of any candidate requests for accommodation and how you have responded. Work with the **Office for Access and Equity** for any accommodation request.

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REFERENCES

Equal Opportunity Employment Commission

<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/>

<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/other.cfm>

SUPPORT

Office for Access and Equity

<http://oae.uic.edu/disability-accomodations/>

Defining Job Qualifications

Job qualifications describe the nature of the *job position* itself, not the employee who occupies that position currently or who may do so in the future.

Your goal is to identify (list):

- the minimum qualifications required for the position
- the preferred qualifications for the position

These qualifications fall into three conceptual categories:

- Specific Job Knowledge
- Workplace Competencies
- Work Styles

See the associated job aid for a form to help you collect this information.

Once you have identified these qualifications you will select which will be assessed during the interview process and develop one or more questions related to each.

RESOURCES

<https://www.hr.uic.edu/hiring/interviewing/>

Question Development Toolkit

Developing Qualifications Job Aid

Developing Questions Job Aid

Candidate Score Sheet Job Aid

Minimum Vs. Preferred

Generally speaking, job qualifications refer to a collection of expected capabilities in a range of performance categories that contribute to success in the position. Qualifications can be defined as minimum or preferred.

Minimum Qualifications

A minimum qualification is **required** for the job position.

During the interview process, you should verify that each candidate possesses the minimum qualifications identified for the job position. This may require requesting certification or education records.

For Civil Service positions, the candidates referred by Human Resources will already have minimum qualifications verified.

Preferred Qualifications

A preferred qualification is **in addition** to minimum qualifications. Preferred qualifications include such things as advanced degrees, certifications, or knowledge that would be helpful but are not required. This can include those work styles, attributes, or personal characteristics that would contribute to the success of an individual in the position.

Examples of attributes include:

- Enjoying contact with the public
- Being able to work without constant supervision
- Preferring to work with multiple deadlines

Categories of Qualifications

There are three conceptual categories of qualifications you should consider when developing your list.

Specific Job Knowledge

These are capabilities acquired through training, education, or experience, such as ability to use particular software applications, technical or trade skills, familiarity with professional practices, fields of study, years of experience within a particular role, licensing, certifications, degrees, etc.

Workplace Competency

These are the capabilities necessary for successfully completing tasks related to the workplace environment, such as communication or collaboration.

Work Style

These are the habits, dispositions, and behaviors that contribute to success in the job position, such as assertiveness, caution, or creativity.

Gathering Resources

Success in a job position often requires a range of knowledge, competency, and experience that is not immediately apparent when considering the core responsibilities. Understanding both the operational and organizational demands of the position is crucial to defining the candidate qualifications that will best predict success.

Job Description

The official Job Description is the basis for establishing the qualifications for the position. The Job Description is a written description which includes information regarding the general nature of the work to be performed, specific responsibilities and duties, reporting relationships and the employee characteristics required to perform the job. The Job Description is initially created when one makes a request to fill a vacant position.

Civil Service Class Specifications

If the position is classified as Civil Service you can refer to the State Universities Civil Service System to review the class specification.

Search Committee

Some job classifications at UIC require a formal search committee. If a search committee exists qualifications should be developed with input from the members.

Administrators, Supervisors, Co-Workers, and Customers

Interviews with individuals within the organization who are impacted by the job position can be helpful in identifying less obvious qualifications that are nonetheless important to success in the position.

REFERENCES

Job Description

<https://www.hr.uic.edu/hiring/>

Civil Service Class Specifications

<http://www.sucss.illinois.gov/specs/Default.aspx?osm=c19>

Office for Access and Equity

<http://oae.uic.edu/ah/>

Create a Plan

Different hiring situations call for different approaches to planning the interview process. You may have a large initial pool of candidates, many stakeholders involved in the hiring decision, multiple interviewers, or a high degree of detail and nuance required to make informed candidate assessments.

Standardize the Interview Process

The structure of the interview including the length and questions to be covered should be uniform for all candidates.

Treat all candidates with respect and ensure they experience UIC positively during their visit.

Consider special approaches to maximizing a candidate's comfort level and experience of our faculty, staff, and environment whole on campus.

The interviewer should avoid inappropriate questions, sometimes topics may arise that are "sensitive". If unsolicited personal information is volunteered or introduced by an applicant, do not worry, just move the conversation back the position to be filled.

Fairness and Equity

Hiring decisions can be structured in stages and utilize various methodologies, as long as candidates are afforded equal opportunity and consideration at each stage. Each candidate should be assessed on the same qualifications in the same manner at each stage.

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Non-Discrimination Question Guidelines

See Appendix

Interview Methodologies

You might assess particular qualifications using one methodology, rank the responses objectively, and then invite the top respondents for a second round using a different methodology.

Some methodologies include:

- Email Questionnaires
- Phone Interviews
- In-Person One-On-One Interviews
- In-Person Panel Interviews

Preliminary Rounds

The purpose of first interviews is to quickly eliminate weak candidates. It is impossible to tell whether someone is a good hire just from the first interview.

The remainder of the interviewing process is designed to provide further insight into an individual's fit for the vacant position.

After the first interview, you will know whether or not you would like to interview them again. If you use this technique you can save yourself significant interviewing time.

Hiring is a process of filtration wherein you try to find the best person among a pool of eligible candidates. It may be impossible to conduct face to face interviews with every candidate, which is why each step of the process narrows down the selection.

Preliminary rounds of either email surveys or phone interviews help to reduce the pool and save time.

- First interviews are not about the difference between the best and second best candidate. First interview questions do not go into a lot of detail in individual competencies. Therefore first interview questions are not strongly competency focused like the second interview behavior questions.
- First interview questions are more about a general check to see if this is the sort of person that does good work and will fit in well in the organization.
- Good first interview questions provide actionable information in a short period of time.

Develop Questions

Once you have identified the qualifications to be assessed questions must be developed for each that will elicit meaningful responses from candidates.

The manner in which a question is asked can impact what the candidate reveals about the relevant qualification. Choosing the question format carefully will provide better insight into each candidate's experience, knowledge, and professional competency.

Types of Questions

Some qualifications can be determined with binary answers ("Do you have a bachelor's degree?"). Others are more difficult to assess. The more specific and narrowly the question is focused on the particular qualification the more revealing the candidate's answer is likely to be.

For guidance in selecting and developing the appropriate type of question for each qualification to be assessed, see the Developing Questions Toolkit.

Preliminary (Screening) Questions

To reduce a candidate pool by "screening in" and "screening out" candidates

"This is a 2nd shift position 11:00 pm. – 7:00 a.m., are you available to work second shift?"

Traditional Questions

Direct questions about a candidate's background

"Do you have experience handling irate customers?"

Technical Questions

Focus on specific technical aspects of completing the job, associated certifications/education, or trades skills

"Do you have a certificate in customer relationship management?"

Situational Questions

Asks candidate to describe how they handle typical workplace situations

"How do you handle irate customers?"

Case Questions

Describes a hypothetical situation and asks the candidate to solve it

"If a customer is irate and will not listen to your solution, what would you do?"

Behavioral Questions

Based on the thought that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior

"Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer. What did you do? What were the results?"

Standardizing and Assessment

To help ensure a fair and consistent interview process you should write down each question and establish how the candidate answers will be assessed.

Preparing a Question Guide

For each round during the interview process list the specific questions that should be asked of each candidate.

Assessment

To help ensure all candidates are evaluated using the same criteria you should prepare guidelines for how answers to questions should be rated.

There are various approaches to developing a standard rating system. The Job Aid associated with this guide provides one such example. Regardless of the method you use it should incorporate the following features:

- Determine what aspects of the candidate's answer will be evaluated
- Specify a standard rating system
- Determine whether some qualifications will be weighted as more or less important when comparing candidates.

RESOURCES

<https://www.hr.uic.edu/hiring/interviewing/>

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Conducting the Interviews

Getting Started

In order to establish an important element in building rapport, the interviewer must attempt to put the candidate at ease.

- Make sure that the setting for the interview is private and free from distractions.
- Allow the candidate to adjust to the environment. The candidate will undoubtedly be nervous or apprehensive if they are not familiar with the surroundings. This is normal. Allow the candidate a moment to get settled.
- Simple courtesies can go a long way to facilitate the conversation, things like explaining the interview process up front and sharing that you will take notes during the interview are two such examples.

Know Your Objectives

Reference your prepared questions to guide the conversation along productive lines.

- Begin with questions that prompt the candidate to answer conversationally before asking questions that have specific or finite answers.
- Avoid comments that could be construed as either positive or negative feedback about the candidate's answers. Your goal is simply to draw out information that reveals the candidate's qualifications.
- Be prepared to redirect if the candidate introduces information that is not relevant to the qualifications you are assessing.

Prompting Without Leading

Interviewers often push forward too quickly and receive incomplete information. Waiting a few extra seconds can help the candidate reflect and provide additional bits information about the question at hand.

- Repeating phrases spoken by the candidate can prompt them to expand on a thought or provide more relevant details without introducing bias.
- Non-verbal means of rendering assistance in conversation, such as a slight nod can be effective to move the conversation along.
- Occasionally summarizing information can help with clarity and provide the candidate an opportunity to correct any misunderstandings.

Listening With Purpose

People are generally inclined to avoid silence in conversation. This can inhibit the interview process as the candidate may not have sufficient time to consider and provide the best answer. Although interviews are often under strict time constraints it is best to allow the candidate time to think and answer fully.

Individual biases and attitudes as well as role perceptions and stereotyping can contribute to selective perception of the candidate's answers. Interviewers need to be aware of their own personal filters.

Take the time to truly listen to the candidate. Instead of thinking about your next question, listen to the information the candidate is providing so you can make the best hiring decision.

During the periods of silence an interviewer may ponder the question "What is he/she really trying to tell me?"

Concluding the Meeting

Once the interviewer has asked the questions in their plan and the candidate has had an opportunity to ask any questions they may have, it is time to conclude the meeting. This may include an indication of next steps, when the candidate may hear from the organization again and who may contact them. Make sure all appropriate contact information is shared.

Next Steps

- After the meeting is concluded the interviewer should complete their notes from the interview.
- Adequate notation of significant events, impressions, and agreed-on information are valuable when trying to reconstruct the interview at a later time.
- Making notes helps interviewers to remember what transpired in the interview, it also allows the interviewer to reflect on the discussion.

Appendix

Non-Discrimination Question Guidelines

TOPIC	MAY ASK	MAY <u>NOT</u> ASK
Age	Are you at least 18 years of age?	What is your date of birth? When did you graduate high school?
Disability	Are you capable of performing the position's essential job functions with or without accommodation? Can you meet the attendance requirements of this job?	Do you have a disability? Do you have any previous major medical problems? How many days were you sick last year? What prescription drugs are you currently taking? Have you ever been treated for alcoholism or mental health problems?
National Origin	Are you legally employable in the United States? Are you able to speak/write English fluently? (if job related) What languages other than English do you speak? (if job related)	What kind of last name is "Smith"? What is your maiden name? Where were you born? Were your parents born there? What is your lineage or national origin? What is your spouse's nationality? Are you a citizen of a country other than the United States? What is your native tongue? How well do you speak English?
Marital / Family Status	Do you have any relatives, or a spouse, already employed by the University? Have you used any other name(s) on employment or education records?	What is your maiden name? When do you plan to have children? How many children do you have? What are the ages of your children?
Civil Rights	You may ask applicants to volunteer racial information – <i>when it is not seen by the individual or office involved in the hiring decision.</i> What professional organization do you belong to? Are you available to work weekends? (if job related) Have you used any other name(s) on employment or education records? For purposes of checking your work record and credentials, have you ever changed your name or assumed another name?	You may not ask applicants to supply a photo in the application process. What race are you? What place of worship do you attend? Tell me the clubs you belong to. Do you wish to be addressed as Mrs. Miss, or Ms.? What is your spouse's name? Where is your spouse employed?

TOPIC	MAY ASK	MAY <u>NOT</u> ASK
Conviction Record	Please avoid all questions in this area. A conviction record does not bar an individual from employment at the University. Your Human Resources office can assist in this area.	Have you ever been arrested?
Arrest Record	Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, when, where, and what was the disposition of the case? (Criminal background checks are conducted for all employees, information may affect ability to employ individuals based on relationship to type of work performed. Consult with Human Resources.)	Have you ever been arrested? Have you ever spent a night in jail? Inquire about number and types of arrests.
Military	Describe the relevant work experience that you acquired from United States armed forces as it relates to this position. What training did you receive in the United States military?	Do you plan to take leave to serve in the military? Veteran status, discharge status, branch of service.
Labor Organizations	Please avoid all questions about labor union associations or relationships with unions.	Are you a union member? What do you think of unions?
Sexual Orientation	No questions are appropriate.	Are you straight or gay?
Miscellaneous	About academic, vocational, or professional schooling, certifications Membership or affiliations with trade or professional organizations related to position Professional references	Height or weight. Exception – if it is a bona fide occupational qualification.

Laws Impacting the Selection Process

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission provides an overview of these and other laws that impact the selection process/

<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/>

<https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/other.cfm>

Age Discrimination in Employment Act

- Prohibits discrimination against person 40 years of age and older
- Promotes hiring, promotion, and other terms and conditions of employment of older people
- Requires hiring decisions based on abilities rather than age

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Requires facilities to be accessible to the disabled
- Prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of disability
- Prohibits pre-employment medical inquiries and examinations
- Prohibits and organization from excluding a qualified person if her or she can perform the “essential functions” of the job either unaided or with “reasonable accommodation”

Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)

- Prevents employment of illegal aliens
- Requires employers to ensure applicants are legally employable in the United States
- Requires employees to complete and Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9 Form)

Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978

- Prohibits discrimination based on pregnancy
- Women affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions shall be treated the as non-pregnant employees for all employment related purposes, including fringe benefits

Title VII of the Civil Right Act

- Prohibits discrimination in hiring, compensation, and terms, conditions, or privileges of employment based on race, religion, color, sex, or national origin

Federal Executive Order #11246

- Requires federal contractors to engage in affirmative action to address underrepresentation in the work force based on race, ethnicity, or gender

Equal Pay Act

- Prohibits discrimination based on sex in the payment of wages or benefits when men and women perform work requiring similar skills, effort, and responsibility for the same employer under similar working conditions

Illinois Human Rights Act

- Provides for freedom from discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, physical or mental handicap, military status, or unfavorable military discharge, in connection with employment.

Common Unconscious Biases

Category	REd Flag	Examples
Inconsistency in questions	Asking different questions of candidates for the same position	Only asking women about gaps in employment
First-impression	Making snap judgements, good or bad, of first impressions	Being impressed with a candidate's "charisma"
Negative Emphasis	Rejecting candidate based on a small amount of negative information	Candidate did not have polished shoes
Halo effect	Interviewer lets one strong positive point overshadow all other information	Candidate went to the same alma mater as interviewer
Horn effect	Interviewer lets one negative point overshadow all other information	Candidate went to the rival school of alma mater of interviewer
Nonverbal bias	Undue emphasis placed on nonverbal behavior not related to job performance	Person regularly flings hair to side or taps on table
contrast effect	Candidate is compared to the last person interviewed	Second person may appear more qualified than they are or than the job would require compared to the weaker candidate
similar to me	Selecting candidates that have the same personal characteristics	Candidate is from same town, knows same people
cultural noise	Candidate provides socially acceptable rather than factual response	Why did you leave your last employer? "I am looking for more challenging opportunities."