

Best Practice: How to conduct a successful job (or promotion) interview

For a job interview to be effective, fair, and provide reliable and comparable information on the candidates, it is important to conduct it professionally according to clear guidelines, such as:

Preparation:

- Ensure interviewees are invited two weeks in advance of the interview.
- Select an interview location where you receive minimal interruptions.
- Provide interviewees with the right information before the interview.
- Ensure Interview Panel members are available to conduct the interview and inform them of the date, time and location well in advance.
- All interview panel members should prepare by reviewing the Job Description, details of the school, each candidate's documentation and application, and the Interview Score Chart.
- They should also check their knowledge on the relevant subjects, be well informed and develop their listening skills.
- Prepare a checklist of questions and focus areas based on the Recruitment Score Chart. The questions must be suitable for the interview situation and be easy to manage and record. Use the same scores as in the score card.
- Select one panel member to lead the interview.
- Distribute questions between the members of the interviewing panel.
- Plan the structure of the interview to ensure you have sufficient time to cover all the points.

During the interview:

- All candidates should be asked the same questions and go through the same procedure.
- Adopt a relaxed, professional and interested attitude.
- Be focussed and avoid distractions during the interview, both external and within the panel, the members of which should all follow these or equivalent guidelines.
- Start by reminding the interviewee the purpose of the meeting and how you will approach it.
- Make the interviewee feel relaxed and comfortable .
- Ask open questions – *what?, how?, why?* – to encourage the interviewee to give more than one-word answers.
- To elicit brief factual information ask closed questions – *when?, where?, who?, have you?*
- Probe fully to elicit full responses – *what else?, tell me more about...?, what then?, what do*

you put that down to?

- AVOID leading questions – *so you like teaching children?, you always apply learner-orientated teaching methods?*
- Summarise regularly to ensure you fully understand, capture all points and give the interviewee an opportunity to correct and deepen their response.
- Do not patronise or speak down to the interviewee.
- Make sure you take accurate notes throughout and complete the score chart correctly.
- Manage time during the interview and make sure the panel does not take up too much time on any one point.
- At the end of the interview, thank the interviewee for his or her time.
- Allow time between interviews to review and organise notes and plan the next interview.

Adapted from Penny Hackett, Training Practice, CIPD London 2003/2008, pp. 41-42

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