

## Employment Interviewing Guidelines

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As you may know, the University is committed to applying its hiring processes fairly and consistently to all applicants in all phases of the hiring process, including the employment interview. Discrimination complaints may arise as a result of improper questions asked during the employment interview. To avoid such complaints, it is important for interviewers to remember that the purpose of the employment interview is to provide information about the job, to obtain information about the applicant's qualifications, and to answer any questions that the candidate may have about the job, including salary and benefits. ***In short, all questions should be relevant to the job for which the applicant has applied.***

### PRE-EMPLOYMENT OFFER INQUIRIES UNDER THE ADA

The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) makes it unlawful to make inquiries as to whether an applicant is an individual with a disability or as to the nature or severity of such disability. Please click [here](#) for important information regarding pre-employment offer inquiries into disabilities under the ADA.

### SUBJECTS THAT MAY NOT BE ADDRESSED IN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

- Age [Federal law prohibits employment discrimination against people 40 years of age and older, and the District of Columbia law protects age discrimination without a three Please refer to the information provided under Pre-Employment Offer Inquiries into Disabilities Under the ADA should. A person's age should not be asked nor should inquiries be made as to the dates of high school or college graduation, unless it is a bona fide requirement of the job that is stated in the classification description, such as for police officers needing to be at least a minimum age.]
- Alcohol or Drug Use [.]
- Birthplace [This may be construed as national origin discrimination.]
- Citizenship [The interviewer may inquire whether the candidate is eligible to work legally in the United States. However, if this question is asked, it must be asked of all candidates interviewed.]
- Marital status and family status [For example, questions concerning the number of children a candidate has, child care arrangements, or whether the candidate intends to have children.]
- Arrest record
- Sexual preference
- Religious or political affiliations
- National origin [Lineage, ancestry, descent, mother tongue, including national origin of parents.]

- Frequency of change of address
- Personal lifestyle [For example, questions concerning candidate's living arrangements.]
- How ability to write or speak a foreign language was acquired [Questions about the extent of such abilities are permitted if the job requires knowledge of a foreign language.]
- Credit history or status of personal finances [Unless they relate to the specific job functions.]
- General health, or physical or mental disabilities [Generally, disability related questions may not be asked at the pre-offer stage. Please refer to the information provided under Pre-Employment Offer Inquiries into Disabilities Under the ADA.]
- Worker's compensation claims made in the past [[Please refer to the information provided under Pre-Employment Offer Inquiries into Disabilities Under the ADA.](#)]
- Personal appearance [Except that height or weight requirements are permissible if essential for and related to the specific job functions.]

***Hiring decisions may not be based on the factors listed above.***

- Questions that indirectly elicit the same information should also be avoided: for example, just as "are you married?" may not be asked, neither should "do you live alone?"
- Of course, if the *candidate* asks a question that pertains to one of these areas, the interviewer may respond, if he or she knows the answer. For example, occasionally, a candidate will inquire about the availability of childcare, or the job market in the Washington area in his or her spouse's field. This does not, however, allow the interviewer to ask impermissible questions.

#### SUBJECTS THAT MAY BE ADDRESSED IN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

- Job related training, experience, skills and qualifications
- Education and licensing
- Work history and responsibilities
- Conviction of a crime other than minor traffic violations - Questions may be asked if a candidate identifies that they have been convicted of a crime so that a determination can be made as to whether the conviction reasonably relates to performing the job the candidate is interviewing for, and whether the conviction constitutes grounds for not considering the candidate for the position. Please contact the Staffing and Compensation Specialist assigned to the vacancy to discuss whether a particular conviction constitutes grounds for not considering a candidate.
- Knowledge of foreign language, if job related
- Gaps in employment as noted on the application or resume
- Whether the candidate is legally eligible to work in the United States [As distinct from citizenship-however, as stated previously, if the question is to be asked

- regarding the candidate's eligibility to work legally in the United States, it must be asked of all candidates interviewed.]
- Whether a candidate can meet the work schedule

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CONDUCTING AN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

- "Try to conduct all candidate interviews in the same basic manner.
- Compile a core list of questions that will be asked of all candidates; this will help ensure that meaningful comparisons between candidates can be made.
- Try to avoid making statements during the interview that may leave the impression with the candidate that someone else has already been selected for the position.
- Avoid being overly encouraging or discouraging during the interview about the candidate's chances of obtaining the job. The interview should be viewed as one evaluation tool in the hiring process, and not necessarily the definitive one.
- Ask how their work experience to date and skills relate to the job for which they have applied.
- Ask what contributions they feel they would make to the department, should they be hired.
- Ask questions that expand upon statements made on the employment application or on the resume.
- Pose a hypothetical problem that might be encountered in the job and listen closely to the response.
- Inquire about the candidate's level of responsibility in their current job or a previous job.
- Ask the candidate to discuss what they believe to have been their most significant challenges and accomplishments in their current job or a previous job.
- Ask the candidate what their salary requirement would be for the position if selected as the final candidate and/or give the candidate, in general terms, a range within which the salary could fall. You should, however, state clearly that the discussion is not a job offer or a guaranteed salary level if a job offer is extended at a later date.
- Suggest that the candidate review the benefits information available on the HRS web site and provide the candidate with the phone number for the Employee

Benefits Administration Division ( 202-994-9620 ) if they have any questions.