

OPW – Industrial Staff Selection Process – The Interview

Interview Objectives

The objectives of the interview are:

- Assess each candidate in the context of the requirements of the position
- Place the suitable candidates in order of merit based on the comparative depth and breadth of their experience, practical nature of their experience, level and significance of achievements, ability to meet the OPW's requirements for the position and to add value to the organisation, competence and relevant skillset

While the Interview Board obtains part of its evidence for decision making from the contents of the candidate's application form, it is a function of the Interview Board to facilitate the candidate, in providing evidence of his/her suitability for appointment, by asking appropriate and relevant questions, within the context of the marking scheme and in a suitable interview setting.

Before The Interview

Firstly, it is important that the Interview board Members review all of the available information, particularly the person specification which includes the role, job description and requirements (knowledge, experience and skills) of the position. The person specification details the main 'person' requirements, criteria, competencies and application of relevant skills associated with effective job performance. The interviewers should study the candidates' applications.

Marking Scheme

A weighting system is applied to different elements of the required person specification and arrangements are made to score candidates on them. This approach facilitates a comparative assessment where there is more than one candidate. It is also a valuable way of clearly specifying what's most and least relevant and scoring\marking, appropriately, under the various headings. The marks attributable to the headings in the marking scheme should be apportioned to reflect, in order of priority, given appropriate weightings, the Board's assessment of the key requirements for effective job performance. Factors affecting weightings of each element of the marking scheme will be how important the Board consider the contribution of relevant experience, skills, knowledge and attributes within each competency area and overall.

Interview Time Management

The Interview Board should meet in advance to agree the coverage plan and timescales (i.e. who will cover what and when). Timescale considerations are also important for ensuring that the job is done right (e.g. that adequate time is allocated to assess each interviewee and for the post-interview assessment phase). It is the Chair's responsibility to co-ordinate the Board's activities and to ensure that all interviewers know the (agreed) ground rules and their specific role in the process.

Practical Arrangements

Arrangements should be made to prevent interruptions and distractions, together with consideration of the seating and desk positioning. Furthermore, it is important that the process allows all candidates to compete on an equal footing (e.g. are adjustments for people with disabilities required?). All mobile phones should be switched off.

During The Interview

The Chair is responsible for initiating the interview, explaining the interview format and duration to the candidate, outlining the purpose and structure of the interview, and, directing and closing the interview. It's important that the Interview Board maintains a consistent approach, including with regard to the areas to be questioned and the Board member asking the questions. The Interview

Board should follow the agreed coverage plan, interview in turn and maintain that sequence through all the interviews. The Chair should mention the fact that there will be notetaking. Interview Board Members should not engage in crisscross questioning, i.e. interrupt or interject in another Interview Board member's line of questioning. Interview Board Members should listen as much as possible. This is the key to good interviewing and can entail up to 85% of the interview time, as you elicit enough relevant factual information to enable an 'informed decision'. Alongside open-ended questions, clarifying and reflecting are useful techniques for getting an interviewee to open up, whilst probing and close-ended questions can counter evasiveness and enable specificity. Interview Board Members should maintain eye contact and give appropriate positive feedback (verbally and non-verbally), to show your interest in the interviewee and to encourage them to talk\open up. Don't rush this important interaction or be afraid to use 'silence' if and when appropriate.

Treat all candidates equally and ensure that through approach, structure, timescale, questions, arrangements etc, all interviews are held in a consistent and similar manner. Ensure that the time dedicated to each marking scheme area reflects the proportion of marks assigned to that area. The interviewer should ensure that targeted questions are appropriately selected for use and that time provided to the candidates to respond is sufficient but limited in order to allow an opportunity for the candidate to provide evidence and facilitate the timely progression of the interview. Questions should be designed to elicit information directly relevant to the scoring system.

Having checked that his\her colleagues have no further questions, the Chair should invite the candidate to ask questions and to volunteer additional information. This is a good time to inquire with the candidate as to whether clarification is sought in respect of any relevant organisation/site and job-related information. Thank the interviewee for coming and for sharing their information and advise them as to the estimated timescale for issuing the competition results.

Notetaking

During the interview, Board Members, who are not asking questions, may take notes during the course of the interview. Notes are not required to be verbatim but should be sufficient to reflect what was communicated by the candidate at interview. Notes are not required to include the observations, views or opinions of the Board Members; the final marks awarded represents the Interview Board member assessment of each candidate.

Discrimination

Under the Employment Equality Acts, an employer cannot discriminate against an employee or a prospective employee in relation to age, gender, sexual orientation, race, marital status, family status, disability, religious belief and membership of the travelling community. In its actions, statements, questions, behaviour and determinations, the Interview Board should ensure that no discrimination occurs, intended or otherwise. Questions related to family, home and personal issues, in addition to abilities and the gender environment of any workplace, should be avoided. All interview questions should be relevant to the marking scheme areas. A question or statement of how far the candidate had to travel to attend the interview or whether the candidate had to make special arrangements to attend may be misinterpreted and such question types should also be avoided.

Scoring the Interviewee

This assessment - against the person specification related scoring system - may begin immediately after the candidate has left the room. While the individual interviewers should independently assess each candidate, the Interview Board should collectively engage in discussions focusing on their assessments of candidates, so that the marking, which may consist of variations in individual assessments, is also an informed process that achieves consensus with regard to the overall marks

awarded which are an average of the individual marks independently decided by the Interview Board members. Keep in mind that the selection process must determine suitability in order of merit, so, in terms of comparison, the relative marking of candidates may be a fluid process until all candidates have been interviewed. The Interview Board's notes represent a useful assessment and reassessment tool at both the post interview point in time and the post completion of interviews assessment. The final marks for all candidates are decided by the Interview Board when all interviews have taken place. The retained records of the Interview Board should not include any draft marks, only the final marks awarded to each candidate

The scoring\assessment process should concentrate on the evidence available to and presented to the Interview Board, including the evidence available on the application form, the evidence presented by the candidate and the evidence elicited by the questioning. The available evidence of what the candidates did in the past and what they learned from their past experiences indicate what they would be capable of, in future, in the advertised position.

Where communication, verbal and non-verbal, is a factor in determining the degree of suitability of a candidate, that should be reflected, on a cross-cutting basis, in the marks awarded across the areas in the marking scheme. Similarly, the ability of the candidate to speak from and about different types of relevant experience (direct, related, indirect) rather than from knowledge alone may also be an area that the Board may give appropriate marking credit to, on a cross-cutting basis.

Record Keeping

The retained records of the Interview Board are the Marking Sheets (signed by all Board Members) and the notes (signed by the relevant note-taking Board Member).

Feedback

There is no requirement for Board Members to provide interview performance feedback to candidates. However, Board members may volunteer to do so. It is not appropriate for candidates to directly approach Board Members when seeking feedback or otherwise communicating in relation to the interview. Where candidates wish to seek feedback from an interview, such requests will be facilitated by Industrial Personnel Division in instances where Board Members have volunteered to provide feedback.