Virtual interviews, including telephone interviews, can be an effective method of assessing a candidate’s competencies as they relate to the position for which they are being considered. The Recruitment and Employment Center has prepared the following best practices guide to assist managers who anticipate scheduling virtual interviews in place of in-person interviews as a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak. Be mindful that not every candidate will be able to access virtual interview technology and may need to reschedule or determine an alternate method for interviewing.

Coordination Details

- Provide login details, instructions (see below) and an itinerary to candidates at least 2-3 days in advance
- Zoom technology allows for recording. If you are going to record the interview, inform the candidate when you schedule the interview
- Set-up a dry run and test technology, lighting, and sound in advance
- Assign clear roles such as a moderator and tech support
- Ensure that everyone on the search committee has the job description, interview questions and application materials in advance
- Create a method to collect feedback (Qualtrics)
- Determine interview format and communicate it to the search committee (once around or assigned questions)
- Build in ample time at the end to allow candidates to ask questions
- Schedule 15 minutes at the end of the interview with just the manager to wrap-up and allow for any additional questions that may come up

Housekeeping and Introductions

- Ask that all attendees mute their mics when not speaking to reduce background noise
- Begin with introductions – once around

Interview Committee Tips for Participating Remotely
• Review the candidate materials, position description and interview questions in advance.
• Find a quiet, private, well-lit place, free from possible interruptions.
• Ensure your internet connection is stable.
• Check that your computer’s audio is working.
• Test your computer’s webcam.
• Close any unnecessary web browser tabs and applications.
• When listening, nod and smile to show you are engaged.
• Use hand gestures when appropriate.
• Place your phone in silent mode.

Overcoming Bias

Awareness of biases can help to mitigate its effects during interviews. Some biases that your interview team should look to mitigate are:

• **Similarity**: Tendency to give preferential treatment to those whom people perceive to be like them.
• **Stereotyping**: Associating group membership with differing traits and abilities (i.e., The candidate mentioned she has children, so I know she is not interested in putting in long hours)
• **Atypical experience**: Not considering a candidate because of non-standard or mismatched employment history (i.e., I see a gap in employment on this resume, it must mean there is something wrong with this candidate)
• **Loss aversion**: The tendency to prefer avoiding losses by maintaining the status quo than by acquiring equivalent gains (i.e., My internal candidate will leave if I don’t give them this job, so I don’t want to take a risk hiring an external)
• **Conformity**: The tendency to do or believe things because many other people do, often due to a desire for harmony or conformity in a group (i.e., The previous interviewer said they didn’t think the candidate would be a good fit for the role, and she must be right) members of their own groups (i.e., the candidate attended my college, so I know they are smart)

Preparation

Tips for Using Zoom

* Scheduling a Zoom Meeting
* Configuring a Zoom Meeting
* Recording a Zoom Meeting