

SUNY SCHEENECTADY
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SUNY Schenectady County Community College

Selection and Interview Guide

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Evaluating a Resume

The foundation to a solid search process begins with a clear understanding of the job and the qualifications an applicant will need to be successful in the role.

Prior to reviewing and evaluating the resumes of potential candidates, it is important for the search committee to have a full understanding of the job requirements as well as the minimum qualifications for the position. This is done by reviewing the job description. To avoid legal implications in the future, it is important that only candidates who meet the minimum required qualifications are considered for an interview.

The resume is the "first impression" that a potential candidate makes on you. Every resume contains messages that can provide you with valuable information about the candidate's attributes, both positive and negative. Picking up on these signals at the earliest possible stage can help ensure that you hire the best candidate.

The following tips outline key indicators that will assist the chair and search committee in narrowing down the applicant pool:

- Screen OUT resumes by narrowing down those candidates who are not qualified (don't meet the education, experience or salary requirements).
- Screen OUT resumes that have typos, poor grammar or errors.
- Look for relevant experience (i.e. someone who has worked in same setting, if appropriate).
- Look for consistent history of work doing the same or similar job as the one we are recruiting.
- Look at job titles to be certain that applicant is applying for something that matches what they have done.
- Look for evidence of achievement and accomplishment. The best indicator of successful future performance is successful past performance.
- Be sure to review the cover letter.

The Interview

After the committee has reviewed and selected qualified candidates, an interview for each candidate will be established. Through interviewing, the search committee will evaluate a number of skills, knowledge and abilities. Interviews need to be standardized, structured and job-related. Although the end product of an interview is a recommendation to hire or not to hire, that recommendation depends upon a full understanding of the applicant's strengths, limitations and potential for growth.

Planning for the Interview

An interview requires a plan of action and a procedure if it is to be effective. With a structure for the interview, the committee will increase the possibilities for obtaining necessary information and giving the candidate more of an opportunity to be evaluated fairly.

The following tips will help prepare the search committee for a successful interview.

- Plan a sequence of questions for discussion.
- Establish interview questions and who will ask which questions.
- Decide on an introduction and keep it consistent for all candidates.
- Set a date, time (including time limit), and place for the interview.
- Assemble the group prior to escorting the candidate into the interview.
- Review each resume prior to the interview.

The Interview

The following tips will help ensure a smooth interview.

- Greeting - Bring the candidate in as soon as they arrive. Extend a warm and cordial greeting. Find out his or her preferred name and use it often.
- Introduction - The Chairperson should lead the interview with an introduction to the college and introduce all members of the search committee.
- Maintain Control – Through the use of interview questions, know in advance what information must be collected. Systematically collect it and stop when everything needed has been discussed. Remember, control does not mean a lot of talking.
- Provide a realistic job preview - Provide the applicant with an accurate picture of the job and organizational realities.
- Interview Questions – To ensure fairness and consistency, every candidate should be asked the same questions.
 - Ask job related, open ended, behavioral questions.
 - Avoid questions that can easily be answered with a simple yes or no.
 - Focus on the candidate's earlier jobs and education and then progress to the present. This will help the committee assess developmental trends.
 - Ask the candidate to summarize his or her pertinent career strengths and areas or opportunities for growth.

Closing the interview

The closing of the interview is just as important as preparing and conducting an interview. The closing of the interview establishes a tone for the post interview period. The objective of the close is to establish a positive post interview climate, whether or not you have interest in the candidate. The candidate's impression of the search committee and interviewer will determine their later acceptance or rejection of a job offer.

The following tips will help you accomplish that objective.

- Thank the candidate for his/her interest.
- Ask the candidate if he/she has any follow up questions.
- Explain next steps, time frames, and follow-up procedure (all communication about the search is with the Human Resources Office).

Interview Questions

There are many types of interview questions, but the following four types of questions will yield the greatest and most valuable responses when evaluating your candidate's potential.

- **Open-ended questions** – Applicants are asked questions about a major topic or time period and applicants are encouraged to express ideas freely.
- **Self-appraisal questions** – Applicants are asked to evaluate a portion of their work history or qualifications.
- **Situational questions** – Applicants are asked about realistic job related situations, and to evaluate the problem and provide a reasonable solution.
- **Probing questions** – Applicants are asked to provide a step-by-step description of how they accomplished specific assignments.

Interview Questions to Avoid

For legal reasons, the following topics and questions should never be asked of an applicant. Remember to always keep the interview questions about the job.

Topics:

- Race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age
- Height and weight
- Marital status
- Children and child care arrangements
- Economic status
- Medical condition
- Physical or Mental Disability

Questions:

- Can you show proof of US citizenship?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- What organizations do you belong to?
- Have you ever filed for bankruptcy?
- Have you ever filed a workers' compensation claim?
- How you became disabled?
 - Instead, you may ask the individual to explain or demonstrate how he/she can perform the essential functions of a job with or without reasonable accommodation if you require this of all applicants for the position.

Exercises During the Interview

Work exercises provide an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate their skill while performing a task that would typically be required on the job. They provide an opportunity to observe the applicant in doing a job related task. The exercise must assess skills required of the job, all applicants must complete the same exercise(s), and candidates must be notified prior to the interview that there will be a work exercise as a part of the interview.

Sample Interview Questions

Below is just a sample of the many interview questions a search committee can develop. These questions are only meant to be a guide. The Human Resources Office can help you and the search committee develop additional questions, if needed.

1. *What is the best job you ever had? Why?*
2. *What kinds of people do you find most difficult to work with? Why?*
3. *What kinds of people do you like to work with? Why?*
4. *How do you organize a typical day in your present job?*
5. *Why are you interested in this particular position?*
6. *Describe your management style or describe how you like to be managed.*
7. *As a supervisor, what are your expectations of your employees?*
8. *Rate your computer skills on a scale of 1-5 (Word, Excel, Email, etc)*
9. *What is your ideal working environment?*
10. *What does it mean to you to provide good customer service?*
11. *Tell me about a time when you had to work under tight deadlines.*
12. *Describe a time you had a conflict with a supervisor, peer, or customer and how you handled it.*
13. *If I were to call your current/previous supervisor, what characteristics would he/she use to describe you? How would you describe yourself?*
14. *If it comes down to you and one other person for the position, what one thing would you want to tell us about yourself?*
15. *How would you describe your interactions with your co-workers?*
16. *What type of setting do you prefer to work in?*
17. *What have been some of the more rewarding aspects of your present or past positions?*
18. *Tell me about a time when you had to demonstrate initiative?*
19. *Tell us of a time you could not finish a job due to lack of support or incomplete information. How did you try to remedy the situation?*
20. *What is your experience working in a confidential setting or with confidential matters?*
21. *Describe your customer service philosophy.*
22. *Have you had experience coordinating schedules?*
23. *If you could improve one thing about your job performance, what would it be?*
24. *When have people you were working with been dishonest? What did you do?*
25. *When have you felt pressured to compromise your integrity?*
26. *What is the most important aspect of your current job?*

- 27. Tell me about a time that you pulled a team together. How did you build morale?*
- 28. Why did you leave your last job?*
- 29. Tell me of an occasion in which you achieved something as a member of a team. What was your role in the group and how was the project organized?*