



RECRUITMENT PANELIST SELECTION AND INFORMATION

Panel interviews are advantageous over interviewing alone. Even an experienced interviewer can miss vital information or be misled by personal biases; the best check against this is to compare conclusions with other interviewers. To the extent possible, members of an interview panel should be diverse and composed of individuals having various working relationships and interactions with the position.

All panelists act as representatives of the state; therefore, offer critical training to panelists on proper interviewing techniques. Send information to panelists for their advance review or conduct a brief panel training prior to the interviews. An agency may ask panelists to sign a panel member agreement.

HR or the hiring manager should explain to the panelists that only an appointing authority has the power to hire a candidate. A panel documents responses or makes recommendations to the hiring manager. The hiring manager, in turn, makes effective recommendations to the appointing authority.

Note: If a candidate asks who is on the hiring panel, the hiring manager may provide this information. If a candidate makes a legitimate request that a particular panel member not be present during his or her interview, the hiring manager can honor the request.

Panelists should remember the following when assessing a candidate during an interview:

- Remain objective throughout the process
- Welcome candidates as if they are guests
- Honor everyone's time by keeping to the schedule
- Take good notes that will help evaluate the candidate's knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Maintain confidentiality
- Work at understanding other panelists' views
- Evaluate all candidates with the same criteria

Panelists should avoid the following when assessing a candidate during an interview:

- Rater errors:
 - Halo and horns effect: letting one great accomplishment or one failing sway the whole interview
 - Positive, negative or central leniency: grading everyone high, low or in the middle
 - First impressions: not allowing thoughts to change based on first impressions

- Contrast effect: comparing to everyone else
- Personal stereotypes: allowing personal bias to sway thinking
- Similar to me: staying in a personal comfort zone
- Asking questions regarding:
 - Origin of a name
 - Age or date of birth
 - Religion
 - Race or color
 - Ancestry
 - Gender or sexual preference
 - Candidate's family life or situation
 - Marital status
 - Height, weight, physical or mental health history
 - Ownership of a car
 - Financial status
 - Where the candidate lives (other than to confirm the address)
 - Birthplace or citizenship (once hired, the candidate will complete an I-9 form, however; the panel should not discuss this topic)
 - Disability (except to ask all candidates if they can perform the duties with or without reasonable accommodation)
 - Education (can ask only as it relates to the position and can ask about languages spoken if they relate to the position)
 - Asking the person to explain absences from the workforce or what they do in their spare time (helps to avoid information about personal life)
 - Conviction and arrest record (the interview is not the time to discuss this information. The candidate may be subject to a criminal background history check if statute, Executive Order, or an applicable CBA permits the agency to do so)
 - Relatives (other than whom to notify in case of emergency, asked after hire)
 - Union, political or other affiliations with organizations
 - Military experience (unless the candidate presents the experience or training as relevant to the job).

Panelist tips for presenting interview questions

- Don't talk too much. Remember, talk 20% of the time and listen 80%.
- Don't be too quick to judge. If you do not understand something the applicant says, paraphrase or summarize the point to check your understanding.
- Ask follow-up questions if you do not understand the candidate's response to an interview question or if you need more information about the response. It is not necessary to pose the same follow-up question to each applicant.
- Look for the positive or what's right with the candidate. Give each candidate a real chance at the job.
- Cover all questions before you finish.
- Be silent as the candidate formulates a response to questions.
- Do not tell the candidate during the interview whether or not the candidate will get the job.

See the following: Panelists Letter
Panelist Interview Member Agreement