

Below is an overview of the interview process, as well as tips to assist hiring managers in creating an interview process that adheres to all federal and state employment laws and helps them hire the best candidate possible for their open position.

The interview process can be broken down into four steps:



STEP 1: Interview Purpose and Structure

Purpose

If an applicant is selected for an interview, they should have already passed a careful evaluation of their qualifications and are considered to possess at least the minimum qualifications of the job. Please see tips on Reviewing Candidate Resumes for assistance in reviewing resumes. The purpose of the interview is to collect additional information on the applicant's job-related knowledge, skills and abilities that would be helpful in deciding whether they are likely to succeed in the job. This time also allows candidates to ask questions about the job to determine if Midwestern University is a fit for them.

Structure

An interview should be as structured as possible. Evaluate each candidate according to the same general criteria to produce reliable and valid information. This will also ensure Midwestern University is compliant with all federal hiring regulations.

Both staff and faculty candidates must undergo a separate 30-minute interview with Human Resources, in addition to the interview with the hiring manager/hiring committee.

Department interviews may be performed one-on-one or as a group interview. Interviews typically range from 30-60 minutes. When determining the length of your interview, consider scheduling breaks into longer interview days. Second interviews may be conducted with the top candidate(s) if desired.

Interviewers

Select your hiring committee carefully to ensure the selection process is fair and defensible. All interviewers must have a clear and thorough understanding of the vacant position and a thorough knowledge and understanding of the laws related to selection and discrimination. Hiring managers must be present when candidates are meeting with other administrative staff. Please reach out to the HR recruitment team if you have any additional questions regarding these laws.

STEP 2: Prepare for the Interview

Review the Job Description

- Review the job description to have a solid understanding of the essential functions of the job, education and experience requirements, and preferred skills.
- Identify specific knowledge, skills and characteristics that would help an individual be successful in the role. Also consider and note what unsuccessful employees lacked and how much of the job can be learned and developed while on the job.

Develop Interview Questions

- Only ask for information that will serve as a basis for the hiring decision.
- Develop questions based on each major task and responsibility, as well as the required knowledge, skills, and ability. Know how the information will be used to decide on the right candidate.
- Include problem solving questions and open-ended questions that require a response more than “yes” or “no”.
- For consistency purposes, ask the same questions to each candidate.

Inappropriate Topics to Discuss

Improper questions, unkept promises and inappropriate remarks will reflect badly on Midwestern University and might be legally indefensible. Below are questions or topics that should be avoided during an interview.

- Questions related to sex, age, color, race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability are inappropriate during interviews. All applicants should be treated in the exact same way.
- Hiring managers may ask if the rate of pay for the position is acceptable or ask for the candidate’s desired salary range, but hiring managers may not ask for the candidate’s salary history.
- Do not indicate an interest in hiring a minority candidate to improve your department’s affirmation action/equal opportunity profile.
- Do not inquire about an individual’s marital status, parenthood or childcare arrangements, a spouse’s income, probability of transferring to another location due to a family situation, or political views.
- Avoid bringing up stereotypical prejudices regarding men or women. If asked, provide accurate information about the number of minority employees within the department.
- Do not use language to reflect an age bias such as the desired applicant is young, up and coming, entry level, mature, or stable.
- Do not assume the University is located too far from the applicant. You may ask if the commute to the University is acceptable.
- Do not place un-due emphasis on conditions of employment such as travel, heavy lifting, long hours, etc. in hopes that an applicant will withdraw their application.
- Avoid assumptions about the tasks an applicant with a disability can perform. Review all essential functions of the job. Any accommodation requests would be handled through Human Resources at time of offer and should not be discussed during the interview.

Sample Interview Questions

In order to yield more revealing answers, use words or phrases such as: “why”, “how”, “what”, “describe”, or “tell me about”. Below are some examples of those types of questions.

- Describe a time when your supervisor provided constructive criticism and how you handled it.
- Give me an example of a time when you dealt with a difficult task and how you went about it.
- Tell me about a time when you dealt with a conflict with another coworker.
- What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What made you want to apply for this position? Why did you leave your current/previous job?
- What makes you a great team player? Can you provide an example of a time when you worked as a team?
- Describe a time you took a risk in making a decision at work and describe the outcome.
- How do you delegate tasks in stressful situations? Can you provide an example of how you faced an unexpected challenge?
- Provide an example of a time when you went above and beyond at your current or previous job.
- What makes you the best candidate for this position?
- People react differently when job demands are constantly changing. How do you react to constant changes in the workplace?
- What type of supervisor helps bring out your best performance?
- What specific aspect of any of your previous jobs did you find most exciting and motivating? Why?

Review the Resume

Review the resume and make note of specific points of interest in the resume to discuss during the interview such as:

- Areas that require clarification
- Gaps in employment history
- Inconsistencies in facts

STEP 3: Conduct the Interview

Interview Goals

- Gather enough information to adequately evaluate the candidate’s ability to perform the job functions.
- Create a positive image of Midwestern University.
- Present a realistic description of the position.
- Ensure all applicants are treated fairly and consistently.
- Establish adequate records in the event the hiring decision must be justified in the future.

Establish Rapport

- Provide a warm greeting with a suitable introduction such as name and title to help create a pleasant atmosphere.

- Brief small talk after the introduction may assist with relaxing the applicant and create an atmosphere that allows for open communication. For example, “Did you have any trouble finding us?” or “How is your visit going so far?”.

Set Agenda and Describe the University

- Set the pace of the interview and provide the applicant with the details and schedule of the interview.

Gather Predictive Information

- The interviewer must combine active listening with good use of questions.
- The interviewer should talk no more than 25% of the time. The interviewer’s job is to listen and evaluate. Provide non-verbal signs of listening such as head nodding and making eye contact. Avoid facial expressions, gestures or comments that are un-sympathetic or disapproving.
- Do not provide personal opinions.
- Avoid asking questions that would provide a yes or no response, and instead ask open ended questions.
- Avoid asking leading questions such as, “We prefer a Macintosh environment, don’t you?”.
- Don’t be afraid to ask follow up questions such as, “Will you expand on that?”, “Can you give me more details?”, or “Could you provide an example?”.

Describe the Job

- Provide a realistic overview of the specific job duties, work hours, and travel (if required).
- It is not recommended to discuss the salary for the position during the interview. Any discussion of salary, promotional opportunities and tenure or other job security must be carefully worded. The applicant may interpret this information as an implied employment contract. Any promises made during an interview might subject the University to lawsuits by discharged employees for breach of implied contract.
 - If the candidate enquires about the salary for the position, the hiring manager may ask for the candidate’s desired salary range, but hiring managers may not ask for the candidate’s salary history.

Interview Conclusion

- Allow the applicant to ask questions and to provide any additional information about their knowledge and experience.
- Thank the applicant for taking the time to interview and provide them with an outline of what will happen next.

STEP 4: Make a Hiring Decision

- Evaluate the information from the interview such as the applicant’s knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Do not use information that is unrelated to the applicant’s ability to perform the job satisfactorily. Only use objective information discussed during the interview when making hiring decision.

- HR will perform reference checks for all staff candidates. The hiring committee should request letters of recommendation for all faculty candidates.
- For staff candidates, the hiring manager will need to request approval to make an offer from their supervisor via email and forwarding that approval to the Director of Talent Acquisition.
- For faculty candidates, the hiring manager will need to complete the Faculty Contract Request Form, route it for signatures, and confirm with the Dean that the salary was approved prior to making an offer.