

PROCEDURES FOR THE SELECTION BOARD DURING THE INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES:

PURPOSE

The main purpose of the interview is to assess the skills, experience and competence of a candidate in order to determine his/her suitability for the position that was advertised. The interview should also be a forum through which each candidate can obtain information about the Ministry/Department. As such, the interview should be structured to allow a two-way communication process.

THE ROLE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SELECTION BOARD

THE CHAIRPERSON:-

- Ensures that the interview room is quiet and free from interruptions.
- Agrees to the questioning strategies with the other panel members in advance of the interview.
- Advises on any rules, Regulations or precedents of the Public Service Commission and provides clarification on the Marking/Rating Scheme.
- Ensures that questions cover the areas detailed in the job specification.
- Ensures that the candidates are asked the same set of questions, in the same order, by the same member of the panel.
- Ensures that someone greets the candidates.
- Welcomes the candidate and introduces the panel to the candidate.
- Puts the candidate at ease by explaining the interview plan.
- Verifies information submitted on candidate and obtains any additional information on education and work experience that may not be recorded, including current academic pursuits and future aspirations.
- Ensures that the views of panel members are sought on each candidate.
- Ensures that consensus is reached.

- Ensures that the Mark Sheets are completed for each candidate with clear reasons for their selection or rejection.
- Ensures that the candidates are given an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview.
- Gives the candidates an approximate time in which he/she will be informed of the outcome of the interview.
- Thanks the candidates for attending the interview.

MEMBERS:-

- Create an atmosphere in which the candidates can suitably present their qualifications to the fullest extent.
- Evaluate the candidates' capacity and suitability to perform the essential functions of the position.
- Rate and score the candidate according to observed factors relevant to job elements.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- All members of the Selection Board must meet prior to date of the interview.
- All members should be familiar with the job specifications.
- Each member of the panel should actively participate in every interview. No one member should dominate the interview.
- Pay attention to the candidates' words and overt behaviour.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Ask one question at a time. Give the candidate an opportunity to respond. Avoid long periods between the questioning of the candidate and his/her response. If the candidate freezes on a question, rephrase or move on to another question.
- Probing is acceptable if it will elicit additional information from the candidate.

TECHNIQUES

YOUR TECHNIQUES SHOULD AIM AT:

- 1) enabling the candidate to 'open up' about himself not at demoralising or intimidating him; and

- 2) eliciting within a pre-arranged time-frame all the information (strengths and weaknesses) relative to the candidate's potential to fulfil the several details listed in the job specifications (the candidate must do most of the talking).

QUESTIONS:

- 1) you should use 'open-ended' questions, and avoid the use of questions to which the answer is a 'yes' or 'no';
- 2) your opinion should be so clear and explicit that the candidate is left in no doubt about the thrust of your questions;
- 3) you should not use the lawyer's leading questions nor try to trick the candidate into giving inconsistent or factually incorrect answers;
- 4) you should ask one question at a time (it is easy to lapse into multiple questioning, which is confusing and ineffective);
- 5) you should not use questions with obvious answers i.e. "would you accept a bribe", "would you be prepared to double up if there's a staff shortage";
- 6) the candidate must be asked at the end of his/her interview whether there are any questions which he wishes to address to the Selection Board.

USE OF EVALUATIVE STATEMENTS:-

You should not make any evaluative statements about:-

- 1) opinions expressed by the candidate (try to keep your opinions to yourself);
- 2) the candidate's performance;
- 3) the candidate.

CANDIDATE'S RESPONSES:

When asked a question, the

- 1) the candidate must be allowed to answer; and
- 2) the candidate's answer should not be cut short with another question or with evaluative or other remark.

DURING THE INTERVIEWS

You should avoid the temptation of TALKING TOO MUCH. This is the MOST PREVALENT FAULT at present.

COMMON ERRORS:

- 1) The interviewer is influenced by first impressions based on the candidate's clothes, accent, particulars in the record, etc., these impressions should be carefully checked against better information about the candidate gained during the interview.
- 2) The interviewer tries too hard to construct a consistent picture of the candidate and may be unwilling to recognise that a candidate may be both intelligent and lazy or both creative and neurotic, for example.
- 3) The interviewer is over-generous to candidates from the same background etc. as himself, and less generous to those from a different background. This is particularly the case with differences in social class.
- 4) The interviewer pays too much attention to the candidate's behaviour in the interview and not enough to evidence about how he behaves in more common social situation.

THE USE OF SILENCE

The kind of questions you ask and the way you ask them are important, but you should remember the equal significance of the way you listen and the way you use silence. It is an essential part of the co-operative nature of the good interview that the interviewer should maintain a concerned interest in what the candidate has to say, and the search for evidence may often lead beyond the meanings of the words used. There is a tremendous force in all social interactions that impels people to fill in silences, and it is easy for the interviewer to rush on with his questions, when a short silence after a candidate's answer might elicit more information. Finally it is worth bearing in mind that the way in which an interviewer responds to the candidate's answers – whether he is 'rewarding' or critical – will influence the tenor of the candidate's further replies. The interviewer should try to maintain a neutral, but sympathetic, attitude towards the candidate.