



## Interview Panel Guide

Thank you for taking time to assist in making this very important hiring decision. This guide works in tandem with the following: [DOC 03-442 Interview Participant Confidentiality Statement](#); [DOC 810.800 Recruitment, Selection, and Promotion](#) policy; and [DOC 03-068 Applicant - Authorization to Release Information](#) form.

### INTERVIEW PANEL EXPECTATIONS

- Panel participants must thoroughly review this guide and sign and return [DOC 03-442 Interview Participant Confidentiality Statement](#) to the assigned Recruiter or HR Consultant prior to interviews.
- It is recommended the interview panel pre-meets with the hiring manager to appoint an individual to lead interviews and to discuss and understand the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities of the position.
- Make sure you enter your name, the candidate's name, and date of the interview at the top of the interview notes taken.
- Limit interview notes, comments, and observations to the skills, knowledge, or attributes relevant to the candidate's ability to perform in the position.
- It is not appropriate to make (or note) personal comments about the candidate's appearance. See page two for other topics to avoid and common interview mistakes.
- Keep in mind, the candidate is also evaluating us; remember to act professionally and represent our agency in line with our [Mission, Vision, and Values](#).
- At the conclusion of the interview process:
  - Ensure any decisions regarding each candidate have been noted.
  - Return all interview documents to the Hiring Manager and to the Recruiter or HR Consultant for proper archiving.

### IMPLICIT BIAS

Per OFM's [State Human Resources Directive 20-02](#).

- Bias is simply a preference for one thing over another. As humans, we all have biases that we have learned throughout our lives. Implicit Bias refers to preferences that influence our behaviors without us being aware of it because they operate beneath our conscious awareness. If we are unaware that biases can function outside of our awareness or if we do not take the time to examine our own biases, we may unknowingly give preference to a candidate or a group who share a common characteristic.
- In terms of hiring, implicit bias can harm the candidates' ability to gain employment because some candidates may receive a preference that a panel member wasn't aware they gave. When implicit biases are present that focus on a person's age, national origin, race, sex, etc. it creates a barrier for those who don't receive that preference, which can (and does) lead to groups of people being disadvantaged in employment, which then carries over into other parts of their lives and ultimately our communities.
- A diverse workforce is beneficial for Washington State for several reasons. It improves the ability of Washingtonians to see the whole of themselves reflected in state government. It brings together divergent perspectives, which leads to more innovation, productivity, and improves our ability to provide culturally competent services. A diverse workforce also helps the Department of Corrections fulfill its commitment to operate a safe and humane corrections system and partner with others to transform lives for a better Washington.

## EEOC

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and most courts assume that every pre-employment question is asked for a purpose, and any answer will then be used to influence hiring decisions. The simple act of asking a question could be used as evidence of discrimination unless there is a legitimate job-related reason for asking. If an interviewer asks questions that are not clearly job-related or that tend to reveal a candidate's membership in a protected class, they are risking a potential discrimination claim. Make sure all questions are related to a candidate's ability to perform the job and suitability for the position.

## TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

The different types of interviews covered under this guide may include pre-screenings; panel interviews with subject matter experts; one-on-ones; or a variety of other elements that may include site tours, job shadowing, or informational meetings.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Candidate confidentiality is protected by Washington State statute. Consider all candidate information highly confidential. Refer to the following RCWs: [42.56.230 subsection \(3\)](#) and [42.56.250 subsection \(2\) and \(3\)](#).

### Topics to Avoid

- Age, race, and national and ethnic origin.
- Disability.
- Gender – Do not ask about a candidate's maiden name, marital status or status as a state registered domestic partner, spouse/domestic partner, title preference (i.e., "Miss," "Mrs.," or "Ms."), pregnancy, family plans, or childcare arrangements.
- Religion - Do not inquire about religious holidays observed.
  - The ability to work on weekends or holidays may be asked if such availability is job-related.
  - Accommodations may be necessary for candidates whose religious observances conflict with work schedules if it is not an unreasonable burden.
- Union membership.
- Military status.
- Arrest history or criminal record.
- Financial status.
- Legal off-duty activities.
- Equal employment opportunity information – Do not ask about prior equal opportunity claims, sexual orientation, or non-professional memberships since these inquiries may indicate the candidate's protected class.

### Common Interview Mistakes to Avoid

- Similarity: Finding things in common with the candidate or seeing similar qualities can sometimes lead to overlooking other characteristics.
- Halo: Allowing one skill, attribute, or characteristic to influence the entire evaluation can impact the ability to gather an overall impression of the candidate.
- First impression: Relying too heavily on the first judgment or drawing conclusions based on the first impression of the candidate can leave an incomplete or incorrect picture of the candidate.
- Leniency/Severity: Going "hot or cold" with assessments of the candidates may seem like a simple method to use in scoring, but it is very limiting and can make comparing candidates after the interviews more challenging.
- Restriction of a scored range: Do not be afraid to use the extreme ends of the scale when it is appropriate, otherwise candidates may end up in the middle of the range.
- Stereotyping: Individuals come with unique strengths and weaknesses. Judging people based on broad generalizations is easy to do, but very ineffective. Instead, use specific information about the candidate.