

# Interviewing Guidelines

## Preparation for Interviewing:

- Review the position description and develop a list of job-related interview questions.
- Questions should be open ended. For example, “Describe a situation in which you handled a very stressful situation appropriately.” rather than “Can you handle stress well?”.
- Ask the same interview questions of each candidate.

## During the Interview:

- Listen.
- Probe for details about job related competencies but do not do all the talking.
- Take notes during the interview.

## Once the Interview is complete:

- Provide answers to candidate questions.
- Explain the remainder of the employment process including next steps and expected timelines for a decision.

## Determining the appropriateness of an interview question

Interviews should be based on job related content and specific competencies needed to perform the job. Discrimination based upon race, sex, religion, age, national origin, or disability is prohibited by federal law. Further, Troy University supports diversity and a process void of discrimination. Given that fact, during the interview process, questions about race, gender, age, national origin, disabilities or perceived disabilities, marital status, family status, or veteran status are inappropriate and should not be asked.

The following is a guide of *PROHIBITED* lines of questioning (any exception to this should be discussed with Human Resources).

- **Age** - is irrelevant unless you are concerned about child labor violations under the Fair Labor Standards Act, in which case you can ask for proof that he/she is old enough to work.
- **Arrest record** - do not ask about arrest records but you may ask about convictions that are disclosed on the application. Even then it must be relevant to the position.
- **Bankruptcy and credit affairs** - never ask about bankruptcy since it is illegal to discriminate on this basis under the Federal Bankruptcy Law -- all credit inquiries must comply with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
- **Citizenship** - unless required by law or regulation, you may not ask applicants if they are US citizens since it is considered discriminatory under the Immigration Reform and Control Act. You may ask if candidates are authorized to work in the United States.
- **Disability** - the Americans with Disabilities Act makes it illegal to ask questions about an applicant's disability or perceived disability. If a disability is disclosed, it is crucial to focus on the ability to perform the job, not on the disability.
- **Driver's license** – only ask about the possession of a driver’s license if it is required by the job.
- **Emergency contact information** – is inappropriate at the application stage since it can be discriminatory if it reveals information about the applicant's membership in a protected class.
- **English language skills** - only ask if it is a requirement of the job because it could be construed as gathering information about national origin.

- **Physical Characteristics** – physical characteristics such as height and weight are generally irrelevant to jobs at Troy University.
- **Marital status/name changes/spouse/children** - any questions relating to these issues may be construed as discriminatory, especially against women and are not job related.
- **Organization or club membership** - this might reveal protected class information (i.e. Knights of Columbus, NAACP or Diabetes Association).
- **Race, color, religion, sex, or national origin** - EEOC guidelines prohibit asking questions that may reveal this information.
- **Union affiliation** - could be considered an unfair labor practice under the National Labor Relations Act if the applicant claims he or she was not hired because of the union affiliation.
- **Veteran status/military records** - general questions about a person's background in the military should only be asked if based on business necessity or job-related reasons.

The following is a guide to assist in developing *APPROPRIATE* interview questions.

- Have an interview question list developed prior to the first candidate arriving (HR is a resource available to review interview questions for appropriateness).
- Ask only questions that pertain directly to the job in question and prior work performance that demonstrates knowledge, skill and abilities to perform the job.
- Ask each question to all applicants and record responses.
- Treat all applicants the same during the interview process (if you take one candidate to lunch, you should take each of them).
- Ask some general interview questions as well as specific job content related questions.

Some examples are:

- ○ Why did you apply for this position?
- ○ When looking at a potential job, what elements are important to you and why?
- ○ What are your long term career goals?
- ○ Describe some qualities that you possess and have exhibited at a previous job that you think will make you successful here.
- ○ Tell us about the “best” and worst” manager you have known.
- ○ Describe a time when you were a supportive team player.
- ○ Describe a work problem that you had to deal with that was complex. What was the outcome?