BEST PRACTICES FOR VIRTUAL INTERVIEWING

For the foreseeable future, faculty search committees are going to have to interview candidates virtually, instead of inviting them for a campus visit. Please see information below for best practices to ensure that your virtual interview is consistent and equitable across candidates.

Planning the Interview

- Consider potential barriers for individuals with disabilities. Ensure invitations to virtual interviews make it clear that the University provides accommodation in interviewing upon request.
- Virtual interviews are best held between a single candidate and no more than 6 interviewers.
- Allow plenty of time within the interview to address technology or sound issues without impacting the time for candidate interaction.
- Provide candidates with an alternative method of contact, and make sure you're able to contact them alternatively as well.
- Provide for contingency plan, having candidate's phone number to reach them should the technology fail
- If stacking interviews, allow extra time between interviews so there is a grace period should connection issues pop up.
- Sound fluctuations may impact the ability of both parties to hear. Test the sound prior to beginning the interview. Allow sufficient time if questions need to be repeated.
- Consider providing candidates with a written list of interview participants and questions prior to the interview.

Prepare to Use the Technology

- Provide candidates with detailed instructions to test the audio and video components of the web-based tool well in advance of the interview.
- Test the setup using the actual room setup, hardware, and time of interview whenever possible.

- Ensure candidates and the committee can try out the technology if they wish prior to interview time; this may mean offering a separate time on a different day.
- If downloading software is required, notify individuals in advance to ensure they are able to do so. They may need additional time to obtain or configure appropriate equipment.
- If sound could be an issue, recommend headphones.

Interview Logistics

- Treat the interview as an on-campus interview
- Create environment with minimal distractions
- Avoid utilizing personal devices during interview.
- Follow on-campus interview guidance by asking the same set of questions to each candidate.

For group/committee interviews, where there are multiple people participating:

- Virtual interviews are best held between a single candidate and no more than 6 interviewers.
- Decide who will be the moderator for the interview. You might consider having a "script" to follow, so that each member of the group understands their role.
- All participants should keep their mics on "mute" unless they are speaking.
- Decide whether or not all candidates will have their video on for the entire interview, or have their video on only when speaking with the candidate.
- Greet each candidate and introduce yourself, turning on your camera and mic to speak.
  - If you have decided to use cameras only for those speaking:
    - Leave your camera on until the candidate's response to your question is complete. Thank the candidate before turning off your camera.
    - All committee members should have cameras & mics off until it is their turn to ask a question.

- Use the "raise your hand" function to respond to candidate questions; turn on your video and mic when speaking.

- Try – as much as possible – to project interest, engagement, etc. when you are on camera. Do your best to build rapport and connection, despite the remote setting. Keep in mind that you are in "evaluation and recruitment" mode.

- If using Zoom, do not "chat" during the session, as these messages have the potential to go awry if sent to the wrong people. If you need to jump in, use the "raise your hand" function, so that the moderator can recognize you.

- If there is a presentation required, make sure that "screen share" is enabled for the candidate, and/or a copy of the presentation is provided to each member of the Committee. If there is a need to record the interview, please make sure to get the candidate's written permission.

During the Interview

- If connection is not stable, agree on a way to signal or communicate that either side cannot hear, or see, what is going on on-screen. Repeat any question or response that was interrupted by an unstable connection.

- Everyone should introduce themselves at the start of the interview. They should re-introduce themselves if they are asking either scripted or follow-up questions.

- If technology fails, do not waste time attempting to fix it but switch to the alternative method so the candidate's performance isn't impacted.

- Visual cues that indicate active listening are typically lost in a virtual interview. Instead, look into the camera to demonstrate eye contact (but keep in mind the candidate may be more focused on trying to see the interview panelists on their screen). Be careful to eliminate as much outside or ambient noise as possible. Allow for additional pauses while questions or responses are transmitted.

- Regardless of an individual's request for accommodation, be aware that visual cues to who is speaking may be lost in translation of a virtual interview, even when the

interview panel is displayed by video to the candidate. Have each participant introduce themselves at the beginning of the interview and again as they ask questions.

- Remember, you are evaluating a candidate per your criteria and issues of technology, background scenery, familiarity with technology, internet connections, and nonverbal communication we normally use during an in person interview, if not job related should not be part of the evaluation process.

Communicating nonverbally – 6 Easy Tips (Remember, the candidate is interviewing you also)

In the age of virtual interviews, it can be difficult to effectively get your message across or get to know someone through a computer screen. Here are 6 Tips to help you:

- **Look at the camera**. When video chatting, a lot of people tend to stare at themselves or the image of the person they're talking to. Don't do either – look at the camera in order to maintain eye contact.
- **Use good posture**. Sit up straight in a chair instead of slouching on the couch. Good posture shows the candidate you're alert and engaged.
- **Lean forward slightly**. Don't get too close to the camera, but leaning forward slightly while the candidate is speaking can show your interest in what they're saying. Stay about an arm's length away from the camera.
- **Cut back on gesturing**. On the small computer screen, gesturing can be particularly distracting. Try to keep your hand movements to a minimum.
- **Don't cross your arms**. Keep your arms relaxed at your sides – folding your arms can come across as grumpy or hostile.
- **Nod and smile genuinely**. It's important to silently acknowledge what the candidate is saying, but be careful not to overdo it. Too much nodding or smiling can come across as disingenuous.

Evaluating a Virtual Interview

- If you experience a technology failure, discuss that during the evaluation of the candidate to ensure that the evaluation remains focused on the candidate's presentation, not any impact of the technology difficulty

- Click here to access: [Consistency and Equity in Online Interviews](#)

Resources used to create this document:

[Tips for Successful Remote Interviewing: University of Oregon](#)

[Virtual Interview Guidance: University of Virginia](#)

[Conducting virtual interviews? 6 easy body language tips](#)