

## **Initial Phone Screen, In-Person, Virtual/Online, and Telephone Interview Best Practices**

Conducting effective interviews amid this pandemic is allowing us the opportunity to re-think processes. Departments have many options to choose from for conducting interviews. Before deciding on a method in which to conduct interviews, please make sure to follow any departmental and/or college level guidelines you have been given.

### **General Guidelines**

There are some elements pertaining to all interview methods.

- Be prepared and give your full attention to the interview.
- Choose a place where there are little or no distractions and make a plan.
- Prepare questions beforehand. Creating an agenda can be helpful.
- Silence personal devices and email notifications while interviewing.
- Review and be familiar with the position description, the job posting, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the job.
- Read resumes and become familiar with the work history and related job skills.

### **Initial Phone Screens**

A phone screen is a short call with an applicant to determine if they are a good fit to move forward with the selection process. It can save time and resources.

If you are making unscheduled calls, make sure to introduce yourself and ask if they have 15-20 minutes to go over a few questions regarding the job posting and their application. If they are unable to talk, set-up a time to call back and provide them with your contact information. The goal is to collect basic information. This is meant to be a short initial interview. Document this conversation of an initial phone screen on the Interview Feedback form in Kenexa. If the position has been open for an extended time period this is a way to ascertain if the applicant is still interested.

- Determine what really matters. Is this an immediate opening? Are you flexible with the start date? Is there a certain skill, knowledge, or ability required for the position? Develop 1-2 questions.
- Availability – Determine the applicant's target start date. Assess availability for each in-person interview and/or virtual interview.

- In closing: Ask if the applicant has questions. Be prepared with a timeline for filling the position and next steps in the process.

## **In-Person Interviews**

When setting up the time for the interview, remind the applicant if they are sick or have experienced flu like symptoms in the days prior to the interview they should not come to the office. Also, if anyone in their household has been sick or is experiencing flu like symptoms, the applicant should not come to the office. If anyone in the applicant's immediate household, including the applicant, has tested positive for COVID-19, you must comply with the directed quarantine/isolation timeframes.

### **During the interview**

- Masks are required for everyone.
- Practice social distancing by ensuring everyone is at least 6 feet apart.
- Ensure there is handwashing access.
- Have hand sanitizer available and easily accessible.
- Explain there is no handshaking to maintain social distancing.
- Always disinfect tables, doorknobs, light switches, desks, phones, keyboards, chairs, pens, etc. once the interview is complete. Make sure to leave enough time between consecutive interviews to thoroughly clean all surfaces.

## **Virtual/Online Interviews**

Do not assume all applicants have access to the technology required to participate in video conferencing. Computer equipment and internet access and speeds vary from person to person.

### **Preparing for virtual or online interviews**

- Send the applicant expectations of the process.
- Send an invite with clear instructions on the virtual method being used. Include names/titles of those conducting the interviews. This is also a good time to ask the applicant to send samples of work or other documents, if appropriate.
- Review and be familiar with the position description.
- Let the applicant know what the process is for unforeseen disruptions or technical difficulties and provide a contact number in case of a connection issue.
- Provide the applicant with enough time to make all necessary technical arrangements.
- Recognize and be understanding that the applicant may be at home.

- Test technology
  - Microphone
  - Camera
  - Screen sharing function
  - Check for latest updates
  - Practice and test all connections
- Be cognizant of your surroundings in view of your camera; some digital backgrounds can cause technical issues.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to highlight TTU by screen sharing webpages, videos, etc.

## Telephone Interviews

There are some important and unique aspects of telephone interviews.

- Let the applicant know what to do should the telephone connection be interrupted unexpectedly.
- Be aware of your tone of voice and volume.
- Recognize and be understanding that the applicant may be at home.
- Keep the same principles of an in-person interview. Give the applicant adequate time to answer the questions thoroughly.
- Be clear and provide instructions on the selection process and next steps.

*Note: Regardless of interview type, it should always be documented in Kenexa.*