

SECTION 7: RECRUITMENT STAGE 4 - THE INTERVIEW

This section covers:

- Preparing for the interview
- Conducting the interview
- The role of the Chair – checklist
- Assessing the interviewees
- Tips for giving feedback
- Candidates with a disability
- Record keeping

Preparing for the Interview

The panel should meet earlier than the time of the first interview in order to plan how the interviews will be structured and conducted. The purpose of the interview will be to:

- Help the candidates to provide information with which you can assess how closely they match the specification
- Give them an insight into how you operate as an employer

There is nothing to gain by making a candidate feel uncomfortable and under pressure unnecessarily.

Arrangements should be made to:

- Greet the candidates
- Provide a waiting area
- Provide refreshments if candidates are being asked to remain available beyond their interview

The panel needs to identify the criteria they will use to assess candidates during the interview and from the other activities if used. They need to decide how they will score each criterion. A sample form is attached in the appendices, which can be used or adapted for this purpose ([Appendix 7.1](#)).

Interview Questions

Questions should then be formed to explore each area (unless it is a criterion that will be scored from another source, eg presentation or test). Questions should be 'open'.

Examples include:

- What gave you most satisfaction in your last job?
- What have been the most significant developments in this area in recent years?

AVOID using 'closed or 'leading' questions, such as:

- Do you think that is a good idea?
- So, you graduated last year?

and 'marathon' or 'multiple' questions such as:

- How does your current job compare with your last one, which aspect presented greatest difficulty and how difficult did you find it to keep up to date?

The panel should agree:

- The questions to be asked
- Who will ask the questions
- The order in which the questions will be asked

Questions must relate to the person specification and be aimed at drawing out information relevant to the scoring criteria.

It is helpful to candidates if groups of questions are asked by each panel member.

The same areas of questioning should be asked of all the candidates. The same lead questions should be put to each candidate. It is acceptable for follow up questions to vary. This reflects the varying answers candidates will give to initial questions.

DO NOT include questions which explore any issues relating to the candidates' sex, race or disability either directly or indirectly. The panel should assume that candidates can meet the requirements as set out in the specification. Any areas of concern about an individual's circumstances can be explored at a later stage.

Psychological contract

- It is key to manage expectations in all your communication with potential new employees.
- In all type of communications (job ad, notes to interviewees, interview, conversations) you are creating expectations about the job and the Methodist Church
- Be clear about what they can expect from the job, do not oversell the position if you cannot keep your promises
- Do not promise Training & Development if you cannot follow through on it
- Legally; anything promised, verbally, at the interview is legally binding.

The Role of the Chair – Checklist

Ensure all members of the panel are properly prepared.

Initiate, control and close the interview.

- Ensure that the selection process is conducted fairly and in accordance with the Methodist Church's Equal Opportunity Policy. The Chair will be responsible for answering any queries or complaints that may arise from candidates.
- Ensure that all questions are relevant and that all selection criteria are covered.
- Ensure all candidates are asked the same set of questions (although follow-up questions may vary if formed in response to the answers).
- Provide links between panel members.
- Ensure that adequate notes are taken to enable a proper assessment of each candidate against the selection criteria.
- Lead the evaluation of the candidates in relation to the selection criteria; ensure that the evaluation is based on relevant points and supported by evidence; ensure records are made and that any points of disagreement between panel members are noted. (See Section 14 for further information on the Data Protection Act and how it affects records of candidates).
- Ensure two satisfactory references are available: one should be from the current or most recent employer. The chair should read the references prior to the interview but should not share the contents with the other panel members at this stage. (See below.)
- Ensure arrangements are in place to inform candidates of the outcome of the interview and offer feedback if requested (notes will be useful to do this).
- Liaise with the successful candidate to ensure a Disclosure application is made (if applicable).

- Make arrangements for the commencement of employment (start date will be subject to Disclosure if relevant); prepare and issue an induction programme.
- Issue the offer letter and written statement of terms and conditions of employment.
- Ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Assessing the Candidates

It is advisable to use a standard form for scoring. The form provided at [Appendix 7.1](#) invites panel members to:

- Define the criteria they are assessing
- Make notes
- Record a score against each criterion.

The form should be extended to cover all the areas of principal questioning.

Panel members are encouraged to record ***evidence*** that leads them to decide on a particular score, that is, information provided by candidates during the interview.

Panel members should score each candidate independently, using the system which will have been agreed prior to the interviews.

The Chair should ask panel members to rank the candidates' scores ensuring everyone uses the same order of ranking, that is, 1 high or low. The rankings should be added and a composite ranking compiled. The panel members may be agreed on the best candidate but they may have ranked differently. The panel members should discuss the scores and explore the differences that have emerged referring to the evidence that has been recorded. Panel members may or may not wish to alter their scores but should agree a final decision. It is possible that none of the candidates interviewed are appointable.

The panel should agree which candidate is ranked second and discuss whether this candidate is appointable. This will ensure a second offer can be made if the preferred candidate does not accept the offer.

References

It is recommended that references are not shared or discussed prior to the interview to ensure that subjective opinion is not allowed to unduly influence the selection process. It is recommended that the chair of the panel reads the references, if they are obtained prior to the interview, and notes any points that need to be explored at interview. The chair should then ensure that questions cover the points of concern without relating to a specific candidate.

Once the panel has agreed the preferred candidate, the references for that person can be considered in detail by the full panel.

In the event that the panel is concerned about the content of a reference, the chair should decide whether:

- To seek further information
- To appoint in spite of the concern
- Not to appoint

Tips for Giving Feedback to Candidates

- Only give feedback if a candidate wishes to receive it.
- Ask the candidate what he/she thought went well and what did not go as well.
- Confirm or share positive points.
- Agree with negative points if they coincide with the points you have.
- Only offer one or two negative points; concentrate on the most significant issues.

Try to concentrate on information that would assist the candidate to prepare for an interview on another occasion.

Candidates with a Disability

Candidates with a disability should be asked the same questions and assessed in the same way as other candidates. If a candidate with a disability is assessed as the best candidate then a discussion should take place after the interview to establish what special needs the person may have and whether any adjustments to the job need to be considered.

Employers are required to make 'reasonable adjustments'. This may involve simple and inexpensive adjustments. Alternatively the adjustments may be assessed as impractical. Decisions should be made with the facts, not on assumptions about the nature and effect of the disability. You may find it helpful to seek independent advice from the applicants GP or an Occupational Health Adviser.

Candidates who believe they have been the subject of discrimination can pursue a claim with the Employment Tribunal. There is no upper limit for discrimination awards.

Record Keeping

Interview records are covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that interviewees have a right to access their interview records. See Section 14 for further information.

It is recommended that a record be kept to show why each candidate was or was not selected in case of a subsequent enquiry. Records should not be destroyed for at least six months, and must not be kept for more than one year.