

Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

People often ask for lists of acceptable or unacceptable questions. As a rule of thumb, ask only questions which are strictly related to the job and treat candidates consistently, asking similar questions which cover the criteria areas. More information is provided below.

Acceptable

- Do evaluate applicants on job-related criteria necessary for successful performance on the job.
- Do ask *job-related questions* necessary for determining an applicant's qualification for the position.
- Do question applicants for a position in a consistent and uniform manner.
- Do keep objective notes of why an applicant is or is not hired. Unsupported subjective characterizations such as "bad attitude" could lead to trouble.
- Do make reasonable accommodations to the needs of disabled individuals during interviews, eg. by providing interpreters for the hearing impaired or scheduling interviews in rooms accessible to individuals in wheelchairs.
- Do return all applicable documentation for each interview conducted (including rough notes and information on the candidates not hired).

Unacceptable

- Do not ask questions regarding the general physical or mental condition of an applicant. An employer may ask if an applicant is able to perform the functions of the job. If an applicant voluntarily discloses a disability, the employer may then ask whether he or she can perform the functions of the job notwithstanding the disability or with reasonable accommodation, and what type of accommodation would be required.
- Do not ask questions of a female applicant that would not be asked of male applicants, including such matters as marital status, birth control methods, child care arrangements, or hindrances to work hours.
- Do not ask questions concerning colour of eyes or hair, height or weight, marital status or maiden name, or number of children, since such questions are not viewed as job-related.
- Do not assume that because a candidate introduces a topic, that it is ok to probe further.

- Do not inform an applicant that the position must be filled by a female or minority group applicant due to equal opportunities or affirmative action obligations or regulations.
- Do not ask questions of one religious or racial or ethnic group that would not be asked of another, such as whether an applicant could work in a facility with members of another religious, or racial or ethnic group.
- Do not devise testing requirements as part of a pre-employment screening procedure unless those requirements are clearly job-related and validated as such. If tests are used ensure that they are used with all candidates consistently.
- Do not set minimum education or experience requirements, such as diplomas or degrees unless you can prove that they are essential to job requirements.

When in doubt, don't ask!