**Interview Chair's brief**

**Purpose of the interview**

The main purpose of the interview is to obtain evidence of the skills, experience and competence of a candidate in order to determine their suitability for the position. The interview should also be a forum through which each candidate can obtain information about the Department, the University and the vacant position, and should thus be structured to allow a two-way communication process

**Equal Opportunities statement**

The policy and practice of the University of Oxford require that all staff and applicants are afforded equal opportunities within employment. Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment are determined solely by criteria which are related to the duties of a particular post and the relevant grade; and support career development and progression with the aim of ensuring diverse representation and participation at all levels.

Subject to statutory provisions, the University seeks to ensure that no applicant or member of staff will be unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of any of the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, or sexual orientation.

**Chair’s responsibilities**

* To ensure that the Panel members are aware of the University’s Equal Opportunities statement.
* To ensure that all panel members\* have undertaken appropriate training in Recruitment and Selection; Implicit Bias in the workplace (see <https://pod.admin.ox.ac.uk/course-listing>)
* To nominate a panel member who will take responsibility for monitoring equality and diversity issues during the selection process
* To ensure that the interview format is explained and consistently applied to each candidate.
* To liaise with the HR team over interview arrangements and communication with candidates after the interview. The HR team will communicate decisions to unsuccessful candidates.
* Calling the successful candidate with a conditional formal offer, prior to a written offer being sent by the HR team.
* Returning the Chairs report to the HR team so that a formal offer letter can be sent

This includes:

* + agreeing the questioning strategies with the other panel members in advance of the interviews;
  + ensuring that questions cover the areas detailed in the person specification;
  + introducing the panel to candidates;
  + explaining the interview plan;
  + dealing with discriminatory or other unacceptable behaviour by other participants;
  + keeping to time in each interview;
  + ensuring that evidence is collected on selection criteria;
  + giving candidates an opportunity to ask questions;
  + ensuring that the views of panel members are sought on each candidate and;
  + that a consensus is reached;
  + ensuring an interview record form is completed for each candidate with clear reasons for their selection or rejection which is signed by each panel member
  + ensuring that requests from candidates for feedback on their application and/or interview are dealt with promptly via the Chair **(no other panel member should give feedback to a candidate unless it has been agreed with the Chair).**

\*Panel members external to the Department and University are not able to complete the University training, the panel chair should ensure that the external panel member is aware of and has read the University guidance for recruitment and equality. <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-process> <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-policy>

**Questions**

Questioning strategies should be agreed in advance, ensuring that questions cover the criteria detailed in the person specification and selection criteria.  Your questions should be focussed on obtaining evidence that the candidate has the skills and knowledge to do the job. It is important that each candidate is asked a *broadly* similar range of questions in order to be consistent and provide a valid basis for comparison and that the requirements of the job are the main focus of the questions and not the personal circumstances of the candidate.  Keep notes and send them to the HR team post-interview.

Under the data protection regulations, candidates have a right to access data we hold about them; this includes interview notes.

Please ensure that you discuss the following with all candidates:

* Their notice period and availability to start. (It is advisable to discuss any visa requirements at this stage too)
* The timetable in which a decision will be made and when they will hear the outcome of the interview

**Administration**

If necessary, a member of the HR can attend the interview panel, but it is not essential or the norm.  Whether on the panel or not, HR are always available to:

* assist on issues of policy or procedure,
* establish any restrictions on the candidates ability to work in the UK
* establish a preferred start date and starting salary
* Make a formal written offer
* Obtain references and advise on action when they raise issues about a candidate’s suitability.

**Post Interview**

All documentation, along with any notes made, should be collected from Panel members and returned to the HR team.

The panel chair would normally contact the preferred candidate and confirm they are the preferred candidate and that they will receive a written conditional offer, subject to references, right to work and other pre-employment checks as required by the role (eg criminal records checks).

You should also discuss a provisional start date, taking the following into account:

1. The individual’s notice period and any holiday booked or other commitments
2. That HR need at least 4 weeks to do all the necessary pre-employment checks,
3. That if a visa is needed, this may take a few months to arrange (the average time is 4 months)
4. If you need to order new IT equipment and haven’t done so already, they can have long lead times for delivery.

The panel chair should discuss salary expectations with the candidate. Explore the individual’s salary expectations and consider how their skills and knowledge compare with others in the team in comparable roles before determining how much you want to offer. It can be helpful to know their current/most recent salary when considering where to pitch an offer. Chairs can discuss the salary proposal with a member of the HR Team prior to contacting candidates. The formal offer will be made by HR and HR should be consulted on any negotiations around salary level after the initial contact from the panel chair.

Any discussion with the candidate about relocation expenses should be within what has been discussed and agreed at the outset of your recruitment with the Head of Finance.

The Chair’s Report must be completed, signed off and then returned to the HR team, in order for them to send out an official offer letter to the preferred candidate. **No written offer will be made to a candidate without a completed Chair’s report**. Please ensure you indicate the proposed start date and starting salary on the form.

Rejection notification to unsuccessful candidates are sent by HR. Recruiting managers may contact unsuccessful candidates if they wish but please check with HR first if any feedback is to be provided.

References will be sought by HR for successful candidates only and can only be obtained by HR once the candidate has confirmed their referees can be approached.

Where there is a need for recruiting managers to approach a referees directly even in an informal capacity please consult with HR before doing so. This is especially pertinent to internal candidates that may not have shared with their current line manager that they are applying for other roles.

For Information

* Probation periods are 6 months for posts grade 1-5 and 12 months for all other posts with the exception of where the probation period would be greater or equal to the length of the contract, in this instance probation period is half the duration of the contract length.
* Probation periods for candidates already employed within the University, whether in the same department or not, do not apply unless there is a significant change to role. Please check with HR if there is any uncertainty.