

Search Committee Video Interview Tips

Video interviews are a cost effective means for search committees to engage candidates early in the search process. Here are a few tips to ensure a well-planned and successful video interview process that serves the interest of both the search committee and candidates.

Initial Assessment - - Is a Video Interview Feasible and Optimal?

Confirm availability of a conference room equipped with video conferencing technology that will accommodate the full search committee. In consultation with your search partner, confirm all candidates have access to a high speed internet connection and access to necessary computer equipment (at this stage, consistency is important across all candidate interviews; if one person is unable to conduct a video interview, you may need to delay interviews or consider a different mode of interaction—such as telephone interviews—with all candidates).

1. Determine which video conference technology platform will be employed and provide instructions for users (links, access codes, etc., for candidates and any remote committee members); ensure you have the correct contact information for each candidate you are interviewing (Skype or other address, a phone number in the event you need to call the candidate); your search partner will relay this information on to all scheduled candidates.
2. Secure an IT technician to test all equipment in advance and ensure an optimal room set-up for the search committee (ideally all committee members should be visible to the candidates; evaluate and configure seating arrangement and enhance lighting as needed).
3. Identify a contact person at your institution who will be available to “test” connections with candidates prior to their scheduled video interview—this will limit technical challenges later and help candidates build familiarity with the video interface.
4. Confirm all committee members who will participate in video interviews in advance. If not all members will be present for every interview, strive to have two or three individuals who participate in all interviews so reporting out to the entire group is possible at the close of the video interview and before campus finalist selections are made. Or, determine if the video interviews can be taped to allow committee members, who were unable to participate in the video interview, an opportunity to view the taped interview.
5. Establish the interview format. Typically 45 minute video interviews work well.
 - a. The search chair or moderator begins with a quick welcome and introduction (candidates should have a list of participating committee members in advance which will eliminate the need for more lengthy introductions at the start of the interview)
 - b. Anticipate about 30 minutes to raise five or six core questions with each candidate
 - c. Allow about five minutes to address questions more unique to individual candidates
 - d. Provide five to ten minutes at the close of the interview for candidates to raise questions of interest to them with the search committee

Committee Advance Work - - Before the Video Interview

1. Build familiarity with candidate's application materials.
2. Prepare a core set of interview questions (see 5b above) and assign individual questions to specific committee members (or decide in advance if the search chair will serve as the primary spokesperson asking all core questions).
3. Determine if there are special areas of interest the committee wants to explore with each candidate (in addition to core questions).

On the Scheduled Video Interview Day(s):

1. Search committee must arrive early; silence all cell phones and clear from view any unnecessary materials, water bottles, snacks, etc.
2. Ensure an IT technician is on hand to trouble-shoot any problems.
3. Position search chair or moderator in clear view of the camera at all times.
4. Offer a brief but warm welcome to each candidate. Ensure that all participants are quickly identified at the start of the video interview, including any committee members that might be off-camera or linked solely by phone.
5. Prepare for "Plan B"—have a conference speaker phone available if you need to default to a phone conversation in the event of "technical difficulties."
6. During video interviews, it is important that every committee member remain fully engaged—no sneaking a peak at emails or "side bar" conversations should occur—all activity of the committee will be visible to the candidates and even seemingly inconsequential actions may adversely impact candidates' impression of interest on the part of committee members.
7. During breaks between scheduled video interviews capture your impressions, jot down strengths and areas of concern and note additional topics or questions you would want to explore if the candidate advances to the next stage of the search process (refrain from extensive note taking during the actual interview).
8. Maintain your energy and enthusiasm for the position and opportunity to get to know each candidate; avoid scheduling more than three back-to-back video interviews to limit the likelihood of "interview fatigue." Remember, candidates are also evaluating the opportunity and the colleagues with whom they would expect to work with throughout the interview.
9. Close each video interview on time with an expression of appreciation to the candidate and an indication of when they may expect an update on their candidacy.