This guideline is intended as a resource for search and screen committees. The information provided are general best practices and concepts for consideration in the process of evaluating and hiring the most qualified applicant.

INTERVIEW GOALS:

The interview is essentially an information-gathering activity for both the employer and the candidate. Interviews enable employers to collect information to assist in making a hiring decision. For the candidate, the interview provides information to help him or her decide if the position is a match for his or her educational/work background and career goals.

Therefore, a good employment interview should accomplish the following:

- Provide the employer with facts and information to make a decision about whether a match exists between the position and the candidate in terms of what is required for success.

- Provide the candidate with information to help make a decision on whether a match exists between his or her interests; goals; qualifications; and the organization’s needs.

- Treat all candidates fairly, equally, and professionally. This can help the employer select the best candidate, persuade a candidate to accept a job offer, and also prevent public relations and/or legal challenges.

- Present both the department and UWM in a positive light and employer of choice.

INTERVIEW PROCESS:

Interview processes may include a pre-screen phone interview and/or in person interviews. NOTE: Please remember to follow the guidelines on requests for interviews prior to finalist interviews.

1. Planning for Interviews: Interviews must be carefully planned and conducted. Job-related questions should be developed and the interviewers must assess how the information they collect will be used to evaluate the candidates. To develop good interview questions:

   a. Analyze the job. Identify the critical or essential elements of the job by reviewing the position description and screening tools. The interviewers should focus on key job responsibilities and required knowledge, skills, and abilities and the person’s qualifications to perform those key responsibilities.

   b. Develop job-related questions to collect as much information from the candidate as possible. These questions can take several forms:

      i. Situational/Experience-based questions ask the candidate to provide specific examples of how and when he or she has successfully performed certain activities that are important to the job.

      ii. Job knowledge questions assess whether the candidate has the required knowledge to do the job.
iii. Simulation questions require the candidate to analyze job situations and describe how he or she would react or perform.

iv. Questions that focus on job-related areas like “willingness” to meet work requirements (e.g., travel and shift work), motivation, and interest.

c. With all questions, the supervisor must know in advance what he or she considers to be a strong response. One approach is to develop a sample response that will enable the interviewers to systematically evaluate each candidate’s responses. Sample responses are quite specific, and they clearly suggest that some answers are better than others.

2. Selecting a Panel: It is critical to form a balanced, knowledgeable, and impartial interview panel. This will ensure that the recruitment process remains fair and effective.

a. Individuals chosen for interview panels should be knowledgeable in the field and know the requirements of the position. Generally, interviewers’ pay ranges should be equal to or above the pay range of the vacancy. However, there are situations where it may be worthwhile to have people who are at lower pay ranges participate on the panel (e.g., subordinates interviewing candidates for a supervisory position).

b. At least a three-member interview panel is recommended. The appointing authority may or may not be a part of the interview panel depending upon the organizational structure. Panels should include individuals who are familiar with the position and/or are “customers” of the position.

c. A strong effort should be made to have a diverse panel. A balanced or diverse panel is inclusive of gender, race, ethnicity, diversity of thought, persons of veteran’s status or individuals with disabilities and individuals from multiple generations. There may be situations where it is not possible to find panel members who meet all of the above criteria, however, every effort should be made to have a panel that is representative of not only our institutional but also Milwaukee community.

3. Scheduling Interviews: Contact each candidate by telephone, mail, or e-mail to ascertain his or her interest in interviewing. Schedule the interested candidates to interview at a specific date and time (NOTE: Interview panels should consider providing a couple of options for dates/times of interviews, but let candidates know if there is a limit to availability). Ask each candidate if he or she needs any reasonable accommodations for the interview. The following steps are also recommended:

a. If possible, provide each candidate with information regarding the position, e.g., copy of the Position Description (PD), organizational chart, etc.

b. Provide the candidate with details on where the interviews will be held (e.g., a map or directions to the building, parking options and charges, where to go once the person is in the building, etc...).
c. In some cases, an interview panel may wish to provide the list of interview questions in advance. This may be done at the discretion of the panel.

d. In some situations, it may be necessary for the candidates to provide a presentation or meet with various stakeholders during a period of time. Provide the candidate with the schedule and purpose for each of the stakeholder meetings.

e. Provide the candidate with the names and titles of the interview panelists.

f. Inform the candidates of what they are expected to bring to the interview (e.g., resume, names of references, writing sample, presentation).

g. In some cases, the hiring department may wish to provide the salary range limitations of the position to gauge continued interest in the position prior to the interview.

4. **Conducting Interviews:** Arrange appropriate interview space in an area free from traffic and distractions. Have a separate waiting/holding area. Set up the room to ensure that it is not intimidating to the candidate. Once everyone is seated, follow these guidelines to ensure a successful interview:

a. Introduce each member of the interview panel, their name, and title/position. Outline the interview procedure so that the candidate is aware of what will happen in the interview.

b. Give an overview of the position and department/division. Use the interview as an opportunity to market and showcase the highlights of working at UW–Milwaukee.

c. Ask the pre-determined questions. In order to ensure that all interviewees are treated equally, it is imperative that they all be asked the same questions. Ask follow-up questions if you do not have a clear understanding of a response or to get more detailed examples.

d. Off-list questions may be permissible in an interview setting if the question is relevant to the individual’s previous experience and how they might apply what they had done in the past to the current position if given the job.

e. Take notes on each candidate’s responses, but listen carefully and maintain frequent eye contact.

f. Allow the candidate some time to ask the panel questions about the position. (The panel should be comfortable with silence)
g. Describe what will happen next in the selection process. If possible, provide some time estimates of when the candidate will be contacted again. Thank the candidate for their time.

5. **Evaluating Interview Results:** After the interview, the panel must evaluate the responses to determine whether or not the candidate demonstrated that they are the best fit for the job. The panel should focus on job-related substance. All panelists must be given an equal opportunity to provide their evaluations during these discussions. Do not collect panel member’s notes, however, one member of the panel should annotate the key pros and cons of each candidate for that document to be retained as the summary notes in the recruitment file.

6. **Checking References:** This is often the final selection activity a hiring manager engages in, making it an important part of the selection process. When conducting reference checks, follow these guidelines to ensure that a proper candidate selection is made:

   a. Check at least two references. Obtaining multiple references allows you to look for consistency among comments and to demonstrate that reasonable care was used in the hiring process. The best references generally come from former supervisors, professional peers and subordinates. The most effective approach is to contact references by telephone, as this most easily allows for follow-up questions.
      
      i. If the list of identified references do not include the type of affiliation (friend, colleague, supervisor, etc...) the panel may ask for this clarification.

      ii. If the individual does not identify their current supervisor the panel may ask if they can contact the current employer but should respect the wishes of the candidate should they say no.

   b. When calling an individual for a reference, identify yourself. Assure the contact that any discussion will be held in confidence and used for hiring purposes only. Ask the person if they are available to answer your questions; if not, arrange a time to call back. Briefly explain the position and ask your prepared questions.

   c. Ask open-ended questions about job performance. Avoid questions that can be answered with “yes” or “no.” Ensure that all questions relate directly to job performance and the position to be filled.

   d. Be consistent with each contact. Ask the same questions about each candidate.

   e. Maintain documentation on all reference checks.
**INTERVIEW AND REFERENCE CHECK PROCESS GUIDELINES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATED DOCUMENTS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sample Interview and Reference Check Questions (UWM Department of Human Resources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Legal Issues in the Recruiting Process (UWM Office of Legal Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fair Hiring and Avoiding Discriminatory Interview Questions (State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>