

Emergency HR Processes: Staff Hiring – Virtual Interview Guidance

Audience: Hiring Managers

Virtual Interview Guidance and Best Practices

Effective March 16, 2020, the Office of Human Resources is requiring all staff interviews to be conducted virtually either by video conference or by phone.

Since departments may have active searches underway, following [CMU Staff Hiring Guidelines](#), keeping best practices in mind and treating all candidates the same remain vital during this challenging time.

Below are some steps to guide you through the process, including best practices:

Video conference technology - [Zoom](#)

- Zoom is the preferred web conferencing solution for Carnegie Mellon University.
- Zoom provides a high-quality video, audio, and/or screen sharing solution for conferencing and collaboration.
- All staff has access to a CMU Zoom license with their Andrew ID and password.
- Once the software is installed, you will be able to video conference by sharing a link with the candidate and interview committee members.
- For more information on setting up your account, installing the software, end user guides and more, [click here](#).
- Marketing and Communications has [created a Box folder](#) with campus images for use as custom Zoom backgrounds. Options include aerial views of campus, the Fence, Hamerschlag Hall tower, Tartan wave, Kraus Campo, Pausch Bridge at night, Carnegie Mellon wordmark and other campus scenes.

Interview Process

1. Interview team

It is always best practice to interview more than one candidate. Continue to involve all members of the interview team that are available to participate. Being consistent with your interview team still applies to virtual interviews. [Your HR Recruiter](#) can assist with the interview process.

2. Communicating with and preparing the candidate

When an interview is on-site, most candidates know what to expect. They will enter the building, let the front desk know they are there for an interview, be shepherded into an interview room, etc. A virtual interview is different, and your candidate may not know what to expect; possibly has never participated in a virtual interview before.

Make sure to be transparent when calling to schedule the interview. Here are some quick tips:

- Explain that during this time CMU is [practicing social distance strategies](#) and would like to proceed with an interview via phone or video conferencing.
- Set them at ease by communicating and preparing them for what to expect during the interview:
 - Communicate the format – phone or video
 - Be *sure* the candidate understands the format – no one wants to log into the interview and find that it's a video interview, when they thought it was only by phone.

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- If using video conferencing, explain the instructions thoroughly to ensure the candidate is prepared.
- Remind them to test functionality and offer to connect them with our IT resources for any troubleshooting.
- Let the candidate know who will be participating in the interview and approximately how long the interview will last. It is best practice to email candidates the names and titles of each person involved in the interview, so the candidate has time to prepare and knows who will be participating.
- Follow up with an email and give your candidate an outline. This helps them know what to expect and when to speak. The outline can include the interview start time, the name of the interviewer and names and titles of other participants and the general order of events.
- Just as you would with an on-site interviews, send an agenda (work with your [HR recruiter](#) to obtain a template), as it will contain valuable information (i.e. format – phone or video, attendees, benefits, disability resources, contact information for the day of, etc.).
- Your [HR Recruiter](#) can field any questions and provide agenda templates to assist.

3. Prepare questions and practice.

Prepping for the interview will help you feel more comfortable and give off a more professional tone.

- Questions/Information
As with any interview, questions should be prepared in advance and shared with the interview team. At the time of the interview, have the list of prepared questions readily available. In addition to interview questions, be prepared to provide the candidate with information about role, job responsibilities expectations, the team and/or CMU. Document their answers to all questions as you would if the interview was conducted in-person.
- Equipment - before the interview, test any equipment:
 - Ensure Zoom functionality is working properly, and work out any bugs beforehand.
 - Test your microphone level and be sure you can be heard - think about the candidate and consider how stressful it would be if they can't hear the interview questions.

4. Check your environment.

Consider the following during a test run of the interview:

- Consider what the candidate will see during a video interview – what will the camera pick up in the background that might prove distracting.
- Don't sit directly in front of a bright window or light that might cause glare.
- If it's a phone interview, find a comfortable location free from distractions.
- If others are around, let them know you are conducting an interview and should not be disturbed.

In summary, as with an in-person interview, virtual interviews should be conducted with little or no interruption.