

# Interviewing Best Practices for Supervisors

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RESOURCE	Guide

The opportunity to interview working learners or student employees is a wonderful chance to truly get to know them and match their interest and goals, explore their skills, and reflect on the role they will be filling. Unlike other interview experiences, supporting a student through an interview process should be much less about “fit” in skill and experience and much more about matching interest and goals.

Though institutions may have a variety of processes related to student employee recruitment, hiring, and onboarding, these tips can act as overarching best practices to support in your process of preparation prior to the interview, during the interview, and after the interview.

## General Best Practices for Student Employee Interviewing

### Prior to the Interview

- Ensure you did your due diligence in advertising the position through a central process. This may be through job boards your institution utilizes, list serves, or online systems.
- Identify the skills and knowledge important for the job based on the job description and duties and responsibilities
- Provide equity in the process and ensure that each candidate’s application material is reviewed against the same matrix and reviewed by the same people
- Include any and all information you can in the job description to ensure transparency in expectations as well as skills and opportunities for development within the role
- Create a hiring committee, as needed, to ensure an unbiased experience for all candidates
- Consider how many interview rounds will take place and what modality you will use to carry out the interviews based on the needs of your office, the responsibilities of the position, and your timeline
- Communicate with all candidates with the same language and information using templates to provide the same experience for each candidate
- Remember that this may be the first interview and/or first job a student has had. In order to be as equitable in the interview process as possible and ensure students have the chance to best prepare, consider providing resources to your candidates prior to the interview:
  - Provide interview questions to candidates can eliminate barriers to students and ensure they have the chance to best prepare
  - Consider being transparent and requesting your candidates bring 2-3 questions of their own to the interview when scheduling with them
  - If you plan to use certain styles of questions such as behavioral interviewing questions, provide the STAR or PAR method for students to practice and prepare their answers in the format you are hoping to hear

- Interview expectations such as location, modality, clothing/dress, time frame with number of questions to be asked, who will be present, etc.
  - For a half hour interview, it is suggested to ask 5-7 questions to candidates
- Share campus resources they may tap into that can support them in interview prep such as career services or workforce development offices
- Allow for questions that will ensure each candidate can share their experiences, regardless of whether they have carried out a paid position. Consider asking for skill-related examples as opposed to paid experience-related examples.
- Select interview questions that are related to the skills and responsibilities of the job as well as the ways in which you can support the student through professional development that can be provided to your student employee
- If you do not set an expectation with the candidates about what to wear to the interview, expect students to come in a range of “professionalism”
  - Don’t let what the student wears reflect their ability as outlined in their responses. Remember that access to professional clothing may be a privilege not all students have.

## The Interview

- Invite at least 3 students to an interview
  - Consider their skills and the qualifications of the role, but remember students may not have a depth or breadth of experiences quite yet and this employment opportunity can be the thing that gives them those skills
- Be consistent in your process by asking the same questions of all candidates and take notes during the interview to remember the responses of the candidate to refer to after all interviews are concluded
- Be specific and intentional with the questions you ask while avoiding assumptions about a student's ability or skills
- Devote a few minutes at the start of each interview to build rapport with the candidate and put their nerves at ease by sharing in small talk with them
- Use the interview to share and reiterate some overarching expectations of the role and the responsibilities of the position such as if it is a highly independent position or maybe largely a customer service position
- Ensure you provide space for students to ask questions at the end of the interview
- Be clear about expectations and confirm the students' understanding of the role during the interview
- Consider some of the following topics to discuss in the interview if not already shared in the job posting:
  - Work schedule and availability (to include hours of operation of your department or office)
  - Rate of pay and opportunities of increases, if applicable
  - Training to be provided and when (will they be expected to come back to campus early, for example)
    - Anticipated start date and end dates of the position
  - Dress code or expectations
  - Hiring decision timeline

## After the Interview

- Review interview notes and based on number of position openings, decide who you would like to hire for the position
  - It's helpful to have alternatives in mind in case your top candidates do not accept the position
- Based on your institution's human resource and hiring process, inform students that are offered the position as well as those who are not
  - Include information and feedback to those who were not offered an interview as well as not offered the position after an interview to ensure the entire experience is a chance to learn and grow for future opportunities

## Additional Resources:

[Interviewing Students](#)

[Interview Toolkit for Student Employment](#)