

With the COVID environment we reside in, interviews are to be conducted virtually at this time. The following information may be helpful to departments planning virtual faculty interviews.

Tips/Best Practices

There are numerous websites that offer tips to applicants on how to interview well online. Units might recommend that candidates review such sites.

There are fewer websites that focus on best practices for interviewers, or on how to structure interviews. If you have ideas or find interesting things, please pass along so we can include in this document.

Would extending the interview to 3 (or more) days make it easier for the candidate? Sitting in front of a computer for 2 days is intense.

What expectations should we have for our faculty, staff, and students for participation? Will these groups join as a group (in one room, practicing social distancing and wearing campus masks)? We strongly encourage all to participate individual via a virtual platform.

It is recommended that a single virtual platform be used for the entire process, with a phone backup. Webex has training that is posted at:

<https://it.wisc.edu/learn/guides/getting-started-with-webex-meetings/>.

It is recommended that a staff member become very familiar with the technology to moderate and/or troubleshoot while using the virtual platform.

Campus has recently initiated a soft launch of Zoom. Support will be initially limited.

<https://kb.wisc.edu/zoom/page.php?id=105271>

Campus has provided the following best practices. Although they do not necessarily translate well to multiple day interviews, they are attached for reference.

Several departments have conducted virtual interviews. An example of a 3-day virtual interview schedule they have used, is also attached for reference.

Virtual Interviews

03/16/2020

Temporary guidance provided by OHR Talent, Recruitment, and Engagement (TRE).

What virtual interview platforms are available to conduct the interview/candidate presentation?

UW-Madison supports the following free platforms:

- Google [Hangouts](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [WebEx Meetings](#)
- [WisLine](#) (fee associated with use - contact UW-Shared Services Media Production for more information on services and pricing)

What are the best practices for conducting a virtual interview?

- Be transparent: provide each candidate with information and logistics about how the virtual interview will work prior to the scheduled interview.
- Inform candidates that participating in a virtual interview opposed to an in-person interview will not harm nor affect their candidacy.
- Have a back-up plan in case technology does not cooperate – make sure you have the candidate's phone number in case you must call them.
- Find a quiet, private, well-lit place to conduct the interview, free from potential interruptions.
 - Avoid coffee shops and other communal spaces.
- Check that your computer's audio is working ahead of time.
- Test your webcam ahead of time.
- Maintain professional attire and demeanor.
- Position your webcam so that you have a neutral background, free from distractions.
- Monitor your body language.
 - When listening, nod and smile to show you are engaged.
 - Be authentic.
- Ask the same, relevant and non-discriminatory questions you would in a phone or in-person interview situation.
- Treat each candidate equally by focusing on skill, experience and ability to do the job.
- Virtual interviews may be recorded. You should let the candidate(s) know in advance.
 - Recording an interview creates a business record subject to the university's records retention policies and obligations under the Wisconsin Public Records law.
 - Before destroying a recording, refer to the university's [records retention policy](#)

What should I tell candidates who are scheduled for a campus interview that I want to postpone or switch to a virtual interview?

The following is sample language to inform candidates that the interview will either be postponed or changed to a virtual interview format. If changing to a virtual format, please provide the candidate with details and next steps after the first paragraph.

With regret we are informing you that in-person interviews are discouraged out of concern for the safety of our community due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. This action is consistent with public health guidance to limit non-essential gatherings and practice social distancing. We value your interest in working with [division] and look forward to being able to meet with you [at another time or via a virtual interview format].

Example of a three day virtual interview schedule

This format, spreads the interview out over 3 days (including the day the individual would have been traveling here). Instead of having individual meetings with faculty, this format has meetings of small groups of faculty, to shorten the time in front of a computer and to encourage more of a conversational approach (larger group formats may be a bit more awkward).

This format also includes breaks between meetings, as well as a before and after check-in each day to ensure all is going smoothly on both ends and to allow tweaks to be made to improve effectiveness.

Faculty Interview, <Position Working Title>

<Candidate Name>

<Department Name> Host: <faculty host name>, <host phone number>

Time	Event	Location	Participants	Notes
<u><date></u>			(list of individuals who will be participating)	
10:00 – 10:30	“Breakfast” with search committee chair			
11-noon	Research Seminar			
12:30 – 1:30	Meet with Department Chair			
2:00 – 2:30	Meet with staff			
2:45-3:45	Meet with faculty			
4:00-4:15	Check-in			

Virtual Interview Tips/Best Practices

<u><date></u>				
10:00-10:15	"Breakfast"			
10:30 – 11:30	Extension seminar (when position has an Extension component)			
12:00-1:00	"Lunch" with students and postdocs			
1:30-2:30	Meet with faculty			
3:00– 4:00	Meet with faculty			
4:15-4:30	Check-in			
<u><date></u>				
9:45-10 am	"Breakfast"			
10:15-10:45	Meet with Deans*			
11:00-12:00	Meet with search committee			
12:30-1:30	Meet with faculty			
2:00-3:00	Meet with external stakeholders			
3:30 – 4:00	Exit/goodbye			

*As part of the interview process, a meeting with the Dean(s) is not required.

However, if a meeting with the Dean(s) is desired during first round interviews, that can be arranged. Often, a meeting with the Dean(s) will not occur during first round interviews, but more often during a second or follow-up round.

In regard to positions with an Extension component, please speak with the Associate Dean for Extension and Outreach to determine if he/she wants to be included in first round.