

Tips for Virtual Interviewing

With the recent guidelines established to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the University has implemented a plan to move all interviews to a virtual platform. Below are some helpful tips for departments to utilize as they navigate through the virtual interview process.

Prepare

Prepare for a virtual interview as you would if the candidate were attending in person. Have a set of interview questions you will ask to each candidate that is interviewing for the position. Make sure your interview panel or search committee understands each candidate must be treated the same throughout each stage of the interview process. Internal candidates are to follow the same interview process as external candidates, i.e., if an external candidate is interviewing via Zoom, the internal candidate will interview via Zoom as well.

Set Your Space

Choose a professional background, where your face is the focal point of the interview. The area should be quiet, well lit, with neutral colors and furniture. Avoid areas that will pose any sort of distraction to either you or the candidate.

Body Language

Keep in mind the candidate can see you at all times during the interview, just as if you were meeting with them in person. For this reason, your body language is extremely important in order to show you are engaged and interested. Remember to sit up straight, maintain eye contact, look at the camera and not your computer screen, and interact just as you would in person. Avoid looking at your cell phone, answering emails, talking to the people, etc., as this could send the wrong message to your candidate that you are uninterested or not taking the interview seriously.

Technology

Test your internet connection and video conferencing software beforehand to ensure everything is working properly. Avoid using your cell phone camera as a video option, as phone calls and text messages can be unwanted distractions during the interview.

Professional Attire

Even though you may be in the comfort of your own home for the interview, you want to dress as if you were meeting with the candidate on campus. A business professional or business casual outfit is recommended. Avoid anything that could distract the candidate, i.e., flashy accessories or overpowering patterns. Remember that candidates are interviewing UMass as a potential employer, and we want to make sure we are giving them the right first impression.

Practice Run

The first time you log in to your Zoom account or other video conferencing software should not be minutes before the interview. Make sure you test your username and password to ensure you can log in correctly. Familiarize yourself with the camera, and where you should look when asking and answering questions.

Importance of the Interview

As the candidate may not have the opportunity to visit campus during the interview process, it is important they have a clear understanding of how the position will function within the campus community. Be sure to emphasize the role's purpose and career path, as well as promoting UMass Amherst as an employer of choice. Discuss our culture and give the candidate an accurate view of what it is like to work at UMass.