

Video Interview Best Practices

In response to the need for social distancing due to COVID-19, UMBC is primarily conducting video interviews. Video interviews can be a valuable tool not just to protect the health of the individuals involved, but to assist with scheduling difficulties and reduce the need for travel.

Video interviewing allows Hiring Managers and Search Committees to utilize technology to connect in real time with candidates via smartphone, mobile devices, and computers.

There are many platforms that can be used for video interviews: WebEx Meetings, Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts Meets, and Microsoft Teams to name a few.

WebEx is the platform that UMBC supports and encourages the campus to use. Instructions for using WebEx can be found at: <https://wiki.umbc.edu/display/faq/Webex>

[Video Interview Instructions](#) are available to provide guidance on how to schedule first, second, and third video interviews in PageUp, as well as how to schedule the interview/meeting in WebEx (or other platform). In addition, these instructions provide sample email communications to introduce candidates to the video interview details.

Video Interviewing Best Practices

Video interviews should be handled in very much the same manner as in-person interviews. Video interviews should be scheduled so that all search committee members are in attendance. The search committee should conduct the video interview(s) using a structured set of questions and rating criteria.

Do:

Set Up & Scheduling

- ✓ Schedule each applicant using a separate meeting link or allow time breaks between interviews. Avoid the awkward scenario of an applicant logging in early to the video interview to find that another applicant is still in the process of finishing the interview.
- ✓ Consider the security of the video platform you are using. Be aware of potential hackers and consider using password protected video platforms.
- ✓ Provide breaks when scheduling long interviews or multiple meeting sessions for applicants. Allow time for lunch and other breaks throughout the day.
- ✓ Send clear instructions to all applicants. This should be done after the interview has been accepted. Include items such as: how to log into the interview, interview timing, links to any software they should download ahead of time, how many people they can expect in the video interview, and contact information for any last-minute emergency technical difficulties.
- ✓ Limit the number of search committee members. In-person interviews may have an interview panel but too many individuals in a video interview can be distracting. The more individuals in the meeting, the more screen space that is taken and the greater the possibility for interruptions and distractions. If more than 5 individuals need to be involved, consider scheduling several smaller groups to meet with the applicant.

Be Prepared

- ✓ Be sure all search committee members have the correct time on their calendars and the meeting link.
- ✓ Check your own internet connection and camera placement ahead of time. Remember you are the person who invited the candidate for the interview, so there should be no glitches on your end. This may include doing a test interview with a search committee member or coworker prior to the scheduled interview.

- ✓ Evaluate candidates on a written set of criteria. Using an unchanging set of written criteria to evaluate each candidate will help to ensure a fair and equitable process for the candidate.
- ✓ Treat video interviews like regular interviews. Ask candidates a standard set of questions. Having a standard set of questions, as with in person interviews, is the best way to avoid the appearance of bias.
- ✓ Dress professionally. A candidate has a limited number of things to evaluate UMBC on during a video interview, and they will use whatever small things they can from the video interview to form an opinion. Therefore, it is important to present a professional appearance during the interview process.
- ✓ Review with your Search Committee the Video Interviewing Do's and Don'ts. Make a plan ahead of time with committee members to discuss who will ask which questions.
- ✓ If you normally share the job description with the candidate during the interview, consider emailing the document the day before or using the screen share option in WebEx to review the document.

Be Focused and Attentive

- ✓ Focus on what the candidate is saying in response to questions, not on the environment around them. Through no fault of their own, the candidate may be limited in where and how they are able to have the interview. A candidate's surroundings should play no role in assessing how they will potentially perform on the job.
- ✓ Be patient if there are occasional interruptions from home noises like children, dogs barking, etc. Many candidates are sharing limited workspace with other household members during these unprecedented times.
- ✓ Stay present in the interview. It is easy to feel that since the candidate is not sitting in the chair across from you that they will not notice that your attention has wandered, but they will. Nothing leaves a worse impression than inattentiveness. Remember to silence your cellphone and resist the temptation to look at your phone or emails.
- ✓ Turn cameras on. Remember, if you can see the candidate, the candidate should be able to see all the interviewers.
- ✓ Be flexible with requests. If a candidate is not able to access a computer or has technical difficulties, consider offering a phone interview.

Create a Positive UMBC Experience – We are a Great College to Work For

- ✓ Remember that staging is important. Choose a location that has a neutral, clean, well-lit, and professional background to perform the interview. A cluttered or messy background could potentially leave a negative impression with the candidate.
- ✓ Be in the video meeting forum prior to the scheduled interview time so that the candidate is not left wondering where everyone is, or unable to get into the meeting.
- ✓ Save time during the interview to highlight the culture and environment of both UMBC and your department. Candidates will not be able to experience firsthand the campus and office setting as during an in-person interview, so it is important to paint a clear picture of what to expect.
- ✓ Consider sharing photos of the campus or the office during the interview or after in a follow-up email. See the follow-up section below for suggested links.
- ✓ Remember that candidates are likely evaluating UMBC based on the information provided and the professionalism of the interview experience.
- ✓ Be sure to save time to answer questions from the candidate.
- ✓ Provide information regarding the next steps and timeline.

Follow-up

- ✓ Send a follow-up email to the interviewed candidates with links to campus photos and other resources to assist them in gaining a sense of the UMBC campus and community.

Suggested resources include:

Campus 360 Tour: Explore the UMBC campus with a virtual walking tour.

<https://www.umbc.edu/360/>

UMBC Flickr Account: View photo albums of the campus, academics, campus life, Shady Grove, and much more.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/umbc/albums>

My Perspective: A Day At UMBC: A YouTube video showing our lively campus from dawn until well after dusk. Students shift from class, research and creative endeavors to sporting events, festivals and concerts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FveXkmP8o3I>

- ✓ Notify candidates by phone or by using a regret email in PageUp if they are not moving forward in the process. Candidates appreciate being notified in a timely manner.
- ✓ Update candidates if there is a delay or if the hire is put on hold. You can send candidates an email using the PageUp bulk communicate feature.

Don't

- Be critical of a candidate if they face technical difficulties from their end during the interview. Keep in mind, that internet connection speeds can vary drastically for numerous reasons (location, weather, time of day), and may be outside of the candidate's control. Technical issues can affect how much is heard and hinder the flow of conversation. If the technical issues persist and/or are impactful enough that most of the interview is affected, consider rescheduling or having the candidate call into the video meeting.
- Don't make comments or ask questions regarding the candidate's background or things you may see. You may see a young child in the background. It is not appropriate to ask who the child is or how old they are. Remember all interview guidelines still apply. You may not ask questions about marital status, children, living arrangements, etc. Keep focused on the structured interview questions.
- It is not recommended to record the interview. If recording is necessary, you must notify and have the candidate's permission. You must also state what the recording will be used for, who will have access, and how long it will be stored.

Questions?

Contact a member of the Human Resources Employment Staff at hrrecruitment@umbc.edu

*Human Resources
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