

Checklist for reviewing resumes or application forms

Sort applicants by job for which they are applying. Save miscellaneous ones for last.

- Review the job description(s) for the position(s) you are attempting to fill. Note minimum requirements needed and refer to them often as you review resumes/applications.
- Ignore the applicant's name, address or personal information to limit subconscious biases.
- Attempt to ignore superficial issues such as style, typographical areas in favor of content, unless such issues are directly related to the position for which they are applying. Such scrutiny may unintentionally rule out members of protected classes.
- Check work experience for applicability to the position for which they are applying, length of the time in each position, promotions or awards received, reason for leaving each position.
- Note gaps in employment but do not assume they were caused by negative reasons.
- Check educational background for qualifications necessary to successful job performance.
- Note special skills (i.e. computer software, office equipment).
- Note on a separate piece of paper any pertinent questions that arise when reviewing the resume/application and ask those during a telephone screen.
- Divide resumes into 3 groups – one for those that closely match job requirements and for which a telephone screen is appropriate, one for those who meet some requirements and may be considered secondarily and one for those who do not meet the requirements at all.
- If necessary, screen the top group again to further narrow down the candidates. On average, about 10 resumes per open position should be sufficient.
- During telephone screening briefly describe the position, location, hours and salary range (if appropriate) and ask if the candidate is still interested in being considered. If so, ask for brief clarification on any important questions raised during your initial review.

Interview Do's and Don'ts

- Once the list of job-related interview questions is created, use it consistently for all applicants for the same position.

- Try to first put the applicant at ease with introductory and welcoming remarks.
- Ask open-questions which focus in behavioral descriptions rather than simply “yes or no” questions (i.e. have them describe a work situation in which they handled stress well rather than just asking if they can “handle stress well”).
- Listen; don’t do all the talking.
- Stay away from questions that have more to do with personal lifestyles than job experience- phrase the question so that the answer will describe on-the-job qualities - if the question is not related to performance on the job, it should not be asked.

In almost all instances, the following topics should be avoided in an interview:

- **Age-** is irrelevant unless you are concerned about child labor violations under the Fair Labor Standard Act, in which case you can ask for proof that he/she is old enough to work.
- **Arrest record-** do not ask at all- you may ask about convictions, but even then it would have to be relevant to the position in order to lead to immediate rejection.
- **Association with present employees-** this information is not relevant to an applicant’s ability to perform successfully in a particular job, and the tendency to either encourage or prohibit the employment of friends or relatives of existing employees may create an adverse impact on members of protected classes.
- **Bankruptcy and credit affairs-** never ask about bankruptcy since it is illegal to discriminate on this basis under the Federal Bankruptcy Law – all credit inquiries must comply with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
- **Citizenship** – unless required by law or regulation, you may not ask applicants if they are U.S. citizens since it is considered discriminatory under the Immigration Reform and Control Act. You may ask if candidates are authorized to work in the United States.
- **Disability** – the Americans with Disabilities Act makes it illegal to ask question about an applicant’s disability or perceived disability – it is crucial to focus on the job, not on the disability.
- **Driver’s license** – Avoid asking about it unless the job requires one since it could statistically screen out females, minorities and/or individuals with disability.

- **Educational attainment** – relevant if it is directly related to successful job performance – if not, avoid it because it could potentially screen out minorities.
- **Emergency contact information** – unnecessary at the application stage – and it can be discriminatory if it reveals information about the applicant’s membership in a protected class.
- **English language skills** – only ask if it is a requirement of the job (i.e. an English teacher) – otherwise it could be construed as national origin discrimination.
- **Height and weight** – can be discriminatory against females, Hispanics, and/or Asian – it is important to focus on what the job requires, not the person’s physical characteristics.
- **Marital status/name changes/spouse/children** – any questions relating to these issues may be construed as discriminatory, especially against women – none are job-related.
- **Organization or club membership** – this might reveal protected class information and it is irrelevant (i.e. Knight of Columbus, NAACP or diabetes Association).
- **Race, color, religion, sex, or national origin** – EEOC guidelines prohibit asking questions that may reveal this information; rejected applicants could have grounds for a discrimination suit if any of these questions were part of the application process.
- **Union affiliation** – could be considered an unfair labor practice under the National Labor Relations Act if the applicant claims he or she was not hired because of the union affiliation.
- **Veteran status/military records** – general questions about a person’s background in the military should only be asked if based on business necessity or job-related reasons. If requested, such information should include a statement that general or dishonorable discharge will not be an absolute bar to employment but that other factors will be taken into consideration.
- **Weekend work/shift changes** – unless required for the job, the applicant should not have to state whether or not they can work on the weekends - this could screen out applicants who cannot work on some weekend days because their religious beliefs.