



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT

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INTERVIEW AND  
ASSESSMENT

# A Guide to Preparing for Interviews

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## Welcome

Welcome to the LSE's **Guide to Interview and Assessment Preparation**. This document builds on the School's *Recruitment and Selection Policy (Professional Services Salaried Staff)* and provides further practical guidance to help managers across the School recruit and select staff.

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## Interviewing candidates

Having defined the role, attracted the candidates and managed the applications received, you are now at the selection stage. This will involve interviewing the candidates and making a final selection.

### 1.1 Interviewing candidates

The most common type of interview is an initial face to face where a panel meets the applicant and interviews them about their application and competencies. In some cases, the interview may also include a presentation and/or practical assessment.

#### USEFUL TIP

Panel members may find it helpful to have a **standard setting meeting** prior to any interviews to confirm the criteria being used and to ensure consistency of scoring.

### 1.2 Interview duration

Whilst interview durations will vary across Departments, Divisions, Centres and Institutes, you would typically interview each candidate for **around 45 minutes**.

During this time, it is important to remember that the interview is a two way process:

1. **For the panel** to gather sufficient evidence required to decide if the candidate has the **ability and / or potential** to be successful in the role you are recruiting for.
2. **For the candidate** to decide if the role and the Department / School is right for them.

The interview will also provide the opportunity to:

- Test the candidate's suitability for the requirements of the role
- Guarantee fair treatment at the interview for all candidates
- Provide candidates an opportunity to express their views and present their evidence
- Score candidates based on the requirements of the role
- Recommend which candidate should be offered the role and produce an order of merit based on scores achieved

We would like all of our candidates, whether successful or not, to be positive advocates for the School. Our selection process is one of the ways the School can ensure people walk away with a good perception of us.

We also do not want internal candidates to become dissatisfied if they are unsuccessful. This can be achieved by ensuring that recruiting managers run smooth processes, assess candidates fairly and give meaningful and constructive feedback where appropriate.

*"During this stage, it is important to remember that the interview is a two way process."*

### 1.3 Interview structure

A good interview starts with excellent preparation. The discipline of preparation is needed to ensure that the interview gets all the information required in order to achieve its purpose.

Most, if not all interviews at the School will be led by a Chair and have panel member(s) who will contribute.

## The role of the Chair

### 2.1 An effective Chair

What effective Chairs (plus panel members) do – before and during the interview:

They do ...	They do not ...
Organise sufficient time to read the paperwork and plan the interview properly	Disclose information about previous panels to other panel members
Ensure that the aims and objectives of the interviews are understood and agreed	Impose their criteria or agenda on to panel members
Draw attention to the importance of fairness and avoiding discrimination	Stick rigidly to the interview framework – good interviewing has to have some degree of flexibility
Establish a core list of questions which will explore the essential criteria	Ask closed interview questions
Agree how a record of each interview will be kept.	Ask interview questions that are potentially discriminatory
Ensure the environment for the interview is welcoming and pleasant. This means comfort for the panel and interviewee.	
Time manage the interview process.	
Prepare an initial introduction so that interviewees are put at ease by establishing rapport. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adopt a warm and friendly manner</li> <li>- The usual courtesies are also important in creating rapport</li> <li>- Treat interviewees as equals – eliminate or reduce social / status barriers</li> </ul>	

For further information on **panel composition**, please refer to Section 3 of the *Recruitment and Selection Policy (Professional Services Salaried Staff)*.

Or visit 'Planning Your Recruitment' within the Recruitment Toolkit.

**IMPORTANT:**

Whilst it is the responsibility of all panel members to behave in accordance with the **School's Ethics Code**, the Chair carries the overall responsibility for the proper conduct of the interview including due and full consideration for equality and diversity considerations.

**Guidance for new panel members**

**3.1 New panel members**

Being a panel member for the first time can feel daunting. Making sure you are prepared in advance and understand the format of the interview as this will help you put any fear aside and reap the developmental benefits of being involved in a recruitment process.

As a new panel member you should also consider booking on to the School's *Recruitment and Selection Training*.

**3.2 Helpful tips for new panel members**

- Try to get in contact with the Chair of the panel in advance of the interviews, to go through how the day will operate and what your role will be.
- Read all of the information provided to you beforehand. This includes:
  - The job description and person specification
  - The applications of each candidate
  - The order of proceedings
- Read through the information in the rest of this guidance to ensure you are asking the right questions and do not end up going into an inappropriate line of questioning.
- You must take notes that help prompt you in to scoring candidates at the end of each interview. Try to score as you go along; this will help when you come to make your overall scores.
- When it comes to making a decision, do make sure that your voice is heard. Your views are as useful as any other panel member, and your opinion must be asked.

- Once the process has been completed, take the time to talk through the interviews with the other panel members and Chair. You may also wish to ask the Chair for constructive feedback.

**PLEASE NOTE**

While you are encouraged to take notes during the interview, **do not** make any notes about how a candidate looks, even if it is just to remember who is who.

Do not make any notes about gender, race, religion, age or any other personal characteristics or attributes.

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