



HIRING MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES **AND HR PROTOCOL FOR VIDEO INTERVIEWING**

Due to the COVID-19 crisis and the associated restrictions in place regarding physical distancing, it is not currently possible to conduct interviews face to face. In these circumstances, it is proposed to progress interviews for priority posts using video conferencing technology, on the understanding that recruitment protocols as advised by the HR Department are fully complied with. A number of licences for Zoom video-conferencing technology have been purchased by the organisation to aid this purpose and this document details Hiring Manager responsibilities and HR protocols to be followed when conducting interviews through this forum.

When conducting interviews using video-conferencing technology, the interview board must:

- comply with normal recruitment policies and procedures as outlined in the [Teagasc Recruitment Policy](#);
- ensure the principles of selection based on merit, equality and fairness are adhered to.

In order to ensure adequate time for each interview and to allow extra time for ICT set up between candidates, a minimum of 10 minutes will be allocated between interviews on the interview timetable.

1. ICT Infrastructure

- The hiring manager will ensure that each interview board member has the required ICT infrastructure in order to participate on the board via video link – i.e. laptop or PC with good quality camera and speakers/headset, and good quality broadband in the area in which they are based.
- The hiring manager will provide the name of the software package which is being used for the video interview to all members of the interview board, and will advise if they need to download any particular software in order to participate on the interview board.
- The hiring manager will organise the set-up of the video-conferencing facility. This will include booking the video-conferencing slot, and the set-up of links and relevant login details for each board member. He/she will provide these details to each board member and will liaise with the Teagasc ICT Department for any ICT assistance required.
- The hiring manager will obtain phone contact details for each interview board member, to ensure they can be contacted in the event of technical difficulties on the day of interviews.

- The hiring manager will schedule a time-slot on Zoom, for each individual candidate being interviewed – in line with the agreed interview timetable.
- The hiring manager will provide the relevant HR Officer/Clark with the login details for each candidate. This will in turn be provided to the candidate by the HR Officer/Clark, along with details of the ICT requirements to facilitate the interview.
- In advance of the interviews, each interview board member will test their camera, microphone, and headset/speakers. A test call should be arranged at least one day in advance of the interviews.

Other than the test call all of the above must be complete no later than one week in advance of the date of interview.

2. Conducting the Interview

- All board members must ensure that the interview is conducted in a location that is free of interruptions from people, pets or noises. Computer notifications (e.g. Outlook, Lync) should be placed on mute and mobile phones should be silenced. Good lighting, privacy and a de-cluttered background are essential to ensure that professionalism is maintained throughout the interviews.
- The Chairperson of the interview board will ensure that the candidate is introduced to each interview board member and the competency area they are assessing is clearly identified – this should be done at the start of the interview and again when moving from one interview board member to the next during the interview process.
- Board members should help the candidate to feel comfortable by maintaining eye contact and ensuring full attention.
- Interview board members should be clear and concise when asking questions.
- Interview board members should refrain from creating additional noise when asking questions – e.g. moving papers, writing etc. – as this can be distracting.
- It is recommended that if an interview board member is not asking questions they will mute their microphone to reduce unnecessary noise.

3. Technical Issues During Interview

Where the video link with either a board member or a candidate fails at the start of an interview, or during the interview, efforts should be made to connect/re-establish the video link in the first instance and/or to reschedule the interview to a later time on the same day. If this proves unsuccessful the following protocols should be followed:

- Where a **candidate's** connection/video link fails at the start or during an interview and an attempt to re-connect proves unsuccessful, the interview may progress using audio – either on the video conferencing software (if working) or by using Lync.

- If this candidate is subsequently panelled for the job, a 2nd round video interview or face to face interview will be required, before any offer of employment can be progressed. Where there is indecision or a degree of ambiguity regarding a second video or face-to-face interview, guidance should be sought from the HR Officer/Clark, as required.
- In the event that the interview cannot commence or be progressed to the fullest extent due to technical difficulties despite following the above procedures, the candidate will be eliminated from the process. This will be noted by the hiring manager on the Interview Board Report section of the Interview Marking Sheet. Proposed exceptions to this approach (e.g. to reschedule the interview for another date) should be discussed with the HR Officer/Clark before a final decision is taken.
- The HR Officer/Clark will advise all candidates regarding the above in advance of interviews.
- Where **an interview board member's** video link fails at the start or during an interview, the interview can continue using audio for that interviewer. The Chairperson of the interview board should exercise discretion, in consultation with the interview board, regarding the requirement for a follow-up (2nd) video or face-to-face interview given the circumstances. Board members must keep in mind equity and fairness in the interview process when taking this decision. Guidance should be sought from the HR Officer/Clark as required.
- **Note: For clarification, a 2nd round face-to-face interview, following a video-interview, is always required for permanent posts, even if there are no issues with the video-link, unless waived by the relevant Head of Directorate.**

4. **Completing Interview Documentation**

- The Interview Marking Sheet must be completed on a collaborative basis by all board members at the end of the interviews. The hiring manager/chairperson of the interview board will share their screen with the interview board and the final marks will be agreed and input on to the Interview Marking Sheet.
- A copy of the Marking Sheet will be included with documentation for each board member. In the event that the video-link/above step fails, each board member will use their copy of the marking sheet to engage in discussion with the hiring manager/chairperson with regard to the marks to be allocated and the marking sheet will then be completed by the hiring manager/chairperson as outlined above.
- Once the Marking Sheet is complete, the hiring manager/chairperson of the board will issue the completed marking sheet to all board members in rotation via email with a request that they attach their electronic signature to the document and then promptly return it to the hiring manager/chairperson of the board. Should any difficulty arise with regard to attaching a board member's signature, that board member should

respond to the hiring manager/chairperson via email to confirm their agreement with the marks and should attach a copy of the Marking Sheet (on which the marks are recorded) for the record. For clarity, the Marking Sheet should be completed in full on the day of interviews.

- Once the Marking Sheet is fully complete, the hiring manager/chairperson will forward the completed Marking Sheet together with notes taken at interview (see below step) to the relevant HR Officer/Clark. It should be noted that the Board Report form is incorporated into the Marking Sheet and a separate Board Report form is therefore no longer required.
- **Notetaking** will remain an important part of the interview process regardless of whether interviews are held face to face or via video conference. Prior to interview, the hiring manager/chairperson should agree the approach to note-taking with the interview board. It is recommended that interview board members take notes for each other.

Legible handwritten notes should be taken by respective board members, on the official notetaking forms provided, and each page should be subsequently signed by the board member, then scanned (using mobile phone if printer/scanner is not available) and emailed to the hiring manager/chairperson of the interview board (as agreed) on the day of the interviews. The hiring manager/chairperson of the interview board (as agreed) will then collate and forward all documents to the HR Officer/Clark.

As an alternative to the above, board members may choose to type up their notes, on the official notetaking forms, save them as a PDF (with an electronic signature on each page) and then forward them on the day of interview to the hiring manager/chairperson of the interview board, who will in turn submit them to the HR Officer/Clark.

5. **Summary Documents to be returned to the HR Officer/Clark** following video-conferencing interviews (refer to section 4 above for further details):

- 1) Completed Interview Marking Sheet with electronic signature from each board member.
- 2) Interview Notes

Note: Offers will only be progressed when the completed paperwork as outlined above has been received by the HR Officer/Clark.