

Phone Screening Tips

1. Understand the goal of the interview

- Begin to establish a relationship with candidates
- Describe the position and organization
- Obtain clarification on any information in the application materials
- Gain a deeper understanding of the applicant's qualifications
- Select candidates for in-person interviews
- Inform candidates of the interview process and timeline

The screening interview streamlines the hiring process by efficiently delving into candidates' qualifications and providing a realistic preview of the job so that both parties can make a decision about moving forward with an in-person interview.

2. Prepare for the interview

- Review the job requirements and qualifications
- Prepare a brief overview of the position and the hiring department
- Review the candidate's application and resume, identify areas where you would like additional information
- Determine how many interviewers will participate in the screening interview
- Prepare questions
 - Standard questions that will be asked of all candidates
 - Clarification questions specific to the individual candidate and follow up needed on the application materials
- Establish your screening criteria for assessing answers to your questions
- Anticipate questions that the candidate may have and prepare answers
- Schedule an appropriate time and a quiet location for you to conduct the interview

The screening interview is not a casual conversation. It is a purposeful part of the process and is designed to engage your most promising candidates.

3. Conduct the interview

- Eliminate outside distractions – focus on the interview, as you would in person
- Have the job details and application materials in front of you
- Take detailed notes
- Use your introduction to create a positive first impression
- Present a general overview of the open position and answer any questions the candidate may have
- Ask your prepared questions and follow up on any missing or inconsistent details
- Wrap up
 - Take time to answer the applicant's questions
 - Allow the candidate to indicate if he or she is still interested after hearing more about the position
 - Inform the candidate of the next steps and timeline
- Do not rate the candidate **while** gathering information; do that after you have completed the process

A great screening interview requires preparation, active listening and a focus on building a relationship with each candidate.