

Setting Up Your Applicant Evaluation Process

It's important to evaluate each applicant using the same process. When doing the initial screening, you may want to rank candidates numerically, have multiple reviewers, and/or set a basic standard for establishing whether or not an applicant is qualified.

Here are some tips to help you in the process:

1. Determine the criteria for the specific position (be sure to get these directly from the position description). What skills are necessary? What skills can be taught and which ones should they already possess?
2. Consider what are your best opportunities to get the information you need from applicants to determine whether they meet the criteria:
 - During screening and initial contacts
 - Through questions on the application
 - In the face-to-face interview
 - By checking references
 - Using all of the above
3. Apply your evaluation criteria. Think about all the ways you can "get to know" the applicant (and use them to examine the individual's qualities such as energy, promptness, communication skills):
 - E-mails: Are they professional?
 - Writing samples: Are the grammar and spelling correct?
 - Phone calls: Do candidates sound professional? Do they return calls promptly? Can they solve problems themselves or do they need help?
 - References: What is (and isn't) said by references?
 - Questions in interviews: Do they ask thoughtful questions about the program and the position?
4. Examine evaluation criteria and assign value to each one to help you make a decision.

As you screen applicants and review applications, fill out a member position score sheet. Remember to first check the following:

- Does the applicant meet the age requirement (18 years old or 17 with parental permission)?
- Is the applicant a lawful, permanent resident or a U.S. citizen?

At the end of the score sheet, the reviewer should summarize his or her feelings and thoughts about the application as a guide for the interviewer. These remarks should include any achievements and positive qualities noted, as well as any red flags to be addressed in the interview. If the applicant has had any legal issues, make sure to record that information.

The score sheet should also include a place for the reviewer to check if the candidate should be interviewed or not. And leave room for the reviewer to list appropriate placements if the applicant is applying for an individual placement. What placements are the applicant interested in, qualified for, and/or still available for?