Phone/Skype Interviews: Best Practices

All applicants, being seriously considered, should be given equal access to decision makers. In other words, if one candidate is interviewed via Skype, all such introductory interviews should be managed in the same way.

A good methodology is, with the help of selection tools such as rubrics, to devise approximately 1-4 key questions that can help identify the most qualified candidates to bring to campus for on-site interviews.

Please note that this part of the process is one in which candidates are met squarely with hidden or unconscious bias on the part of reviewers:

- Male voices are thought to resonate better with listeners.
- Persons for whom English is their second language are at a disadvantage.
- Persons with a speech impediment are disadvantaged.
- Candidates with a hearing disability may not be able to participate fully without an accommodation.

Set the initial screening interview for 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the scope of the questions planned. At the outset of the interview, introduce all the persons that are on the call. Give the candidate a sense of how long each question may take to answer. Re-introduce each speaker, if turns with questions are taken. This helps the candidate shift more smoothly between topics. Give the candidate at least 10 minutes at the end to ask questions and/or fill in an answer more fully. Let them know up front that this time will be allotted, as it will help alleviate pressure on the candidate at the outset. Also, let them know that you will be concluding the interview, at the end of the scheduled time.

Use a few minutes, post interview, to discuss performance and rate the candidate. Please review with one another the information about bias in the selection process and tips to minimize the influence of bias and assumptions, as you move through review and candidate pool winnowing steps.