



**Role of the Equal Employment Opportunity
Observer
on
Interview Panels**

EEO and Diversity: Collaborating for Mission Success

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I. Purpose:

The EEO and Diversity Office is frequently asked to provide an EEO Observer to serve on interview panels. The Observer is usually a member of one of the Special Emphasis Programs. The EEO and Diversity Office is responsible for designating an EEO Observer on interview panels, and advising that person on his/her role. This document outlines the EEO Observer role in the interview process.

II. Interview Process

- The Selecting Official is the management official who has the delegated authority to make selections from properly constituted certificates of eligibles for vacancies within their organizations.
 1. The Selecting Official is responsible for developing descriptions of specialized experience; selective placement factors; Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs); crediting plans and/or competency questions; and interview questions.
 2. The Selecting Official recommends subject matter experts and panel members.
 3. Selecting officials may interview all of the applicants referred, or none of the applicants referred.
 4. Selecting official may conduct personal interviews or use an interview panel. Telephone interviews are acceptable.
 5. Give fair and objectives consideration to all candidates and select candidates in accordance with merit principles, without regard to nonmerit factors such as political or religious affiliation, marital status, race, color, national origin, sex, age, or nondisqualifying physical or mental disability.
 6. Maintain confidentiality on all personal information learned when reviewing applicants.

III. Role of the EEO Observer

- The role of the EEO Representative is to validate the process was fair and equitable and ensure interview panel proceedings are based upon merit principles without regard to nonmerit factors such as race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or nondisqualifying physical or mental disability(ies). Remember that each interview panel member takes their role seriously, and that the panel's deliberations mean a great deal to the careers of each candidate they interview. The EEO Representative/Observers is responsible for the following actions:
 1. Ensure you explain your role as the EEO and Diversity Representative/Observer to the interview panel and applicants.
 2. Review interview questions, have an understanding of rating process, and ensure interview questions are applied consistently and uniformly.

3. Ensure that all information considered during the interview is based only on evidence provided by the employee during the interview and/or documented in the employee's application package.
4. Ensure the interview process is applied consistently and fairly, and that nonmerit factors are **not** considered, e.g., personal friendship or special treatment of any one employee. In addition, questions may not be asked regarding political or religious affiliation, marital status, race, color, national origin, sex, age, or nondisqualifying physical or mental disabilities.
5. Remain with the interview panel for the entire process to ensure fairness and consistency.
6. After each interview, observe the interview panel discussion concerning the employee's responses to the interview questions.
7. Advise panel members promptly of any actions he/she believes results in unequal treatment of candidates. This can be done by asking the interview be stopped and requesting interviewee leave the room temporarily. Observations should be discussed with interview panel members. After correcting the problem, the employee can return to the room to continue the interview.
8. If unable to resolve the concern, immediately stop panel deliberations and consult with the EEO and Diversity Manager, or Human Resources Consultant if applicable, to arrive at a proper resolution.
9. The EEO Observer is responsible for ensuring the confidentiality of the interview panel proceeding and the privacy rights of all candidates.
10. Document observations on the "Statement of EEO and Diversity Representative" form, note any violations, the action taken to correct the situation, and sign/certify, date, and return the EEO Representative Statement to the EEO and Diversity Manager upon completion of the interview panel.

This statement will be reviewed by the EEO and Diversity Manager and the Human Resources Consultant and retained in the merit promotion file for the position.