

## How to get the most out of your interviews

- You need to prepare a list of core interview questions to ask all applicants
  - Use open questions (what, why, how)
  - [Imperial template](#) is available online to help you
  - Make LOTS of notes
  - Do **not** try to evaluate the candidate during the interview
-

## Your interview approach

**Purpose is to assess skills, experience and background of applicant to make an objective decision on their suitability:**

- Design questions to check facts, obtain relevant information, test achievements and assess aptitude
  - This needs specific questions on **relevant** work experience, qualifications, skills, abilities, ambitions, motivations, strengths and weaknesses
-

## Ask ....



- Challenging questions (but not in an intimidating tone or manner)
- For examples of real situations & check what the candidate learnt from the experience
- Factual questions about past experience and behaviour (refrain from making assumptions) that provide an insight into the scale/results of a candidates work

## What to ask and what not to ask

Don't say	Do say
<p>Are you planning to get married/have a family in the next few years?</p>	<p>What are your general aims/goals over the next three/five years?</p>
<p>Who would look after your children if you were asked to travel for business?</p>	<p>The job involves frequent/regular travelling (try to be as specific as possible). Are you able to meet this requirement?</p>
<p>If we needed you to work late at short notice, how would this affect your childcare arrangements?</p>	<p>The job might occasionally require you to work late at short notice. How would you respond if asked to do this?</p>

# Getting what you need from a candidate

- If their answer is:
    - Too brief - ask 'is there anything else you would like to add?' or use another probe
    - Off the point – politely interrupt & repeat/specify question
    - Too broad/general - ask them to be specific/focus on 1 particular example
    - Too detailed - interrupt & move on/encourage them to be concise
-

# At interviews be aware of....



- **Primacy and Recency effects**

psychological phenomenon associated with memory that says items at the beginning (**primacy**) and items at the end (**recency**) of a string of information are more easily recalled than items in the middle

- **Unconscious bias**

implicit or unconscious bias happens by our brains making incredibly quick judgments and assessments of people and situations without us realising. Our **biases** are influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences.

**Helpful Links:**

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/resources/unconscious-bias/>

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/careers/about/careers-library/exclusive-online-resources/linkedin-learning/>

# Four recruitment biases you may not be aware of and how to avoid them

## 1. Confirmation bias

This occurs when we have a preconception about a job candidate, which might come from something we've noticed about them on an application, such as their name or place of study. Confirmation bias occurs when we look for information that supports that initial belief and filters out other information. Using a structured interview process that asks every candidate the same questions is one way to avoid falling into a confirmation bias trap.

## 2. Affect heuristic

Heuristics are mental shortcuts that help us to make decisions. The “affect heuristic” means that many of us make decisions based on our emotions at the time rather than on measurable outcomes. Asking candidates to complete a task that can be independently measured is one way to help counteract this.

# Four recruitment biases you may not be aware of and how to avoid them

## 3. Anchoring bias

This is where the recruiter fixes on one particular aspect of a candidate's CV/application/interview and gives it more weight than it deserves. Simply being aware of this bias can help recruiters avoid it.

## 4. Halo or horn effect

This is where an interviewer becomes focused on one good (halo) or bad (horn) trait, skill or piece of information and allows it to colour their overall judgement. By using a formal scoring process for candidates and getting each panel member to justify their selection decision, you can help avoid this bias.



## Legal Overview



There is no single Act governing recruitment and selection, but there are many Acts dealing with the employment relationship that have an impact on pre-employment issues as well.

The most significant example is the [Equality Act 2010](#).

## Discrimination

**Unlawful to discriminate against job applicants (and existing workers) because of a 'protected characteristic,'**

Age

Pregnancy and maternity

Sexual orientation

Marriage and civil partnership

Race

Religion or belief

Sex

Gender reassignment

Disability

## Discrimination continued...

- Discrimination law applies throughout recruitment
  - Candidates have three months\* to lodge a tribunal complaint
  - No limit on compensation
  - Indirect and direct discrimination
  - Intention is irrelevant and not a defence
-

## Candidates should not be asked about

- marital status/marriage plans
  - childcare arrangements
  - general family commitments/domestic arrangements
  - actual or potential pregnancy/maternity leave
  - partner's occupation and mobility
  - actual or potential absences from work for family reasons
-

## Your interview notes

You must take interview notes and make a record of your rationale for all your decisions:

- After a full day of interviews, you will not remember everything when assessing candidates

### **REMEMBER**

- You are unlikely to recall specifics of interview if required by an employment tribunal
- A tribunal may conclude process was subjective in absence of records
- **All notes should be sent to HR**
- **N.B. Candidates can ask to see your notes**