

Conducting the Peer Advisor/Mentor Group Interview

Before the interview:

- Be clear on the attributes of good PA/Ms. Know what you are looking for in each applicant. Take a look at the job description if you need a reminder and keep in mind what characteristics our best PA/Ms possess.
- Be familiar with the activity and the evaluation sheet.
- Decide who will describe which parts of the interview process, who will keep time, and which applicants each observer will primarily focus on evaluating during the activity taking good notes on that applicant.

Starting the Interview:

1. Begin by introducing yourselves to the candidates and telling them what you do at the advising center. Establish a friendly, professional tone.
2. Have the applicants introduce themselves to you and to each other. They can say their name and major, but don't allow too much time (you need to let them get started on the activity). Help them relax and encourage openness by smiling and nodding.
3. Note if any candidates did not show up, or were late for the interview.
4. Briefly explain the activity and how the group interview process works.
 - a. Mention that they have 45 minutes for the activity and they should use the entire time. Also that they can use the whole room, the board, etc... candidates decide how to handle the activities!
 - b. One of the advisors will keep time and let them know when they have 5 minutes left.
 - c. Also explain that this is not a race. If they do not complete the entire activity, that is fine. They will not be penalized if they don't finish. They should spend as much time on the activity as they feel is necessary. The reason for the time-limit is to keep the interview time reasonable.
 - d. NO voting allowed to make decisions!
 - e. Let them know that you can not answer any questions about the activity and that they need to work only with the information we have given them on the activity description. They should act like you are not there.
 - f. Do NOT give them a description of what a good PA/M should be. Tell them they will have time to ask questions about the PA/M position, role, and application process at the end of the interview.

Conducting the Interview:

5. Pass out copies of the activity and start keeping time.

Observation Tips:

- Do not sit across one side of the room; it makes you look like a firing squad.
- Feel free to get up the move to a different seat during the activity so you can have a different view.
- Watch your candidates! If you are not looking at them, you can't comment on non-verbal communication or their reactions to each other.
- Take detailed notes!! (don't assume you will remember!)

- Indicate any funky or unusual group dynamics on the evaluation forms. Also use very specific examples of the point you make. We need as much information as possible to make our selection decisions.
- Listen for the quality of answers while also evaluating how candidates respond to each other in the group format. Does someone always speak first or last? Is everyone getting the opportunity to respond? Is someone emerging as a facilitator? Do people add to previous answers, or are they repeating what has already been said?
- If you feel your group could explore a certain aspect of the activity in more depth, feel free to ask open ended questions to help them probe a little deeper.

Ending the Interview:

6. When time is up, ask them to complete the "Written Portion of the Interview Process" and turn it in.
7. Collect the activity sheets. Remind them that the same scenarios are used in all the PA/M interviews, so ask them to refrain from talking about the activity, especially specifics of the situations, with their friends. We want to make sure the interviews are as fair as possible and don't want others to have the unfair advantage of "preparing" for their interview.
8. Ask if they have any questions about the PA/M position.
9. Remind them: must be able to attend all training
10. Tell them about the rest of the application process and selection timetable.
11. Tell them they will be notified *by campus email only* in approximately one week.
12. Thank the candidates for their interest (try not to hint at your evaluation)!

After the Interview:

- Fill out evaluations RIGHT AWAY!!
- Discuss as a team each evaluation and decide on an overall rating for each candidate. Come to a joint decision on the applicant's potential as a PA/M.
- Give evaluation forms to XXXX.

Goals of the group interview:

- To observe and assess candidate communication skills (listening, speaking, giving feedback).
- To observe and assess candidate interpersonal skills.
- To observe and assess candidate leadership and team skills.
- Applicants meet current staff of advising center and begin to know each other.