Conducting interviews remotely: equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) aspects

The present document aims to provide colleagues with some guidance in navigating the migration of ongoing full-time faculty recruitment initiatives to online and teleconferencing formats in the wake of the COVID-19 interruption.

In adapting ongoing recruitment initiatives to the current context, colleagues are encouraged to take a moment to rethink and redesign the interviewing phase of their respective recruitment initiative—rather than simply picking up where they left off in an online medium. In doing so, colleagues should be guided by efforts to ensure that:

- Candidates are not precluded from participating in online interviews (due to geographic location, internet connectivity, incompatibility of software, etc.);
- The chosen interview format is conducive to candidates' full participation (given time difference, lack of personal space, potential health concerns, etc.); and,
- Committee members can most fairly and adequately assess candidates (by reducing fatigue, minimizing bias, etc.).

The following is a non-exhaustive checklist of actions the committee may wish to consider.

(Re)Designing the process and scheduling the interviews

- If the committee conducted in-person interviews with candidates prior to the COVID-19 interruption, consider the implications of conducting two kinds of interviews:
    - Will the candidates interviewed in-person have an unfair advantage? If so, the committee should factor this in to its decision making.
    - Has too much time elapsed for committee members to adequately evaluate the candidates they interviewed in person? Has the context changed too drastically? If so, perhaps candidates having already interviewed can be provided with a brief follow up or addendum.
    - *NB*: In all cases, committees should check in with all shortlisted candidates to explain how the process has changed and provide them with a revised timeline.
- Consider the range of conditions facing candidates when scheduling interviews:
    - Will candidates be interviewing at a time of day convenient for them? For example, not during peak internet usage, meal or bed times, etc., in their location.
    - Is the schedule too heavy or too sparse? While you may wish to schedule interviews as close together to allow colleagues to compare candidates with undue delay, committee members may become fatigued. Consider adapting the length and format of interviews. You may consider, for example;
        - breaking up the interview into sections and running each candidate through a series of shorter interview "rounds" to allow for shorter blocks of time;
        - shortening the standard length of interviews, job talks, etc.; and/or,

- replacing portions of the interview and job talk with different evaluative components (i.e., written responses, pre-recorded portions).
- If possible, provide candidates with the contact of a non-DHC member to discuss concerns or flag changes in circumstances. Where possible, signal flexibility and invite input.

Preparing for the interview and job talk
- Where possible, consult the candidates on preferred teleconference options (i.e., Skype, Zoom, etc). In all cases, provide candidates with relevant instructions and license information for chosen teleconference format.
- In the days or hours preceding the scheduled interview and job talk, provide candidates with the opportunity to test the software and internet connection. Offer technical support to candidates by asking them to contact IITS (help@concordia.ca, (514) 848-2424, ext. 7613) rather than providing it directly (as candidates may be more comfortable seeking assistance from someone in a non-evaluative role).
- The day or morning before the interview, check in with the candidate by phone to ensure that their circumstances remain unchanged. Provide opportunities to reschedule if needed.
- Where you deem it appropriate, remind participating colleagues of videoconferencing etiquette (i.e., muting microphones, distracting body language, reflection in eyeglasses, etc.).

Conducting the interview or job talk
- Approximately 15 minutes before the scheduled start time, hold a brief one-on-one meeting with the candidate to test the connection, audio, video, etc.
- Take several minutes at the beginning of the interview to deal with logistical issues. Establish, for example:
    o In the event of an interruption, who will relaunch the meeting and how;
    o Should it become impossible to proceed because of connectivity issues, who will interrupt the meeting and how it might be rescheduled;
    o How participants will interject, i.e., by waiving hand, interrupting, by private message to moderator, etc.;
    o Whether participants' microphones and cameras should be muted or live; and,
    o How the different (i.e., video, chat) functions of the software will be used.
- Insofar as it is possible, interviewers should choose a space with a neutral background and use the same location for all candidate interviews.
- Provide the candidate with a phone number should the meeting fail to start as scheduled— or be interrupted—and they not hear from you within a specified amount of time.

Resources
- *Response to Coronavirus: Tips for Virtual Interviewing,* University of Massachusetts at Amherst
- *Equity and Inclusion During COVID-19,* University of California
- *DEI Crisis Action Strategy Guide,* National Inclusive Excellence Leadership Academy
- *5 things you must do to have a successful job interview on video during the COVID-19 outbreak,* Fast Company