INTERVIEWING STUDENT EMPLOYEES

Interviewing Basics

Student employment should be a mutually beneficial situation for both the department supervisor and the student employee. The college gains a versatile employee at a relatively low cost while the student worker gains valuable work experience, job skills, contact with potential professional references, and of course, earns a paycheck.

During the interview, the employer should let the applicant know exactly what the job entails and confirm with the applicant that this position is something in which they would be satisfied. Replacing a student worker who quits because the job was not clearly communicated to them will cost the department time, money, and productivity.

For the supervisor, the interview is used to determine if a student applicant’s purposes, skills and potential are relevant to the position. Interviewing also provides an opportunity for the supervisor to ask questions and gain information that was not provided on a resume or job application.

For students, the interview process should provide information about job responsibilities and supervisor expectations. It should also provide a synopsis of skills and expertise that the student should expect to gain or enhance during the course of employment. The following items are good topics to cover during the interview:

Overview of the job duties

Attendance requirements (including punctuality and reliability)

Dress code

Acceptable behaviors

Pay rate

Skills that will be developed and enhanced

Types of technology, tools or practices on which the student will be trained

Interview Questions

The supervisor should understand what questions can and can’t be asked during the interview.

**All questions or inquiries related to gender, race, color, age, religion, national origin, disability, pregnancy status, marital status, or genetic information are prohibited at the federal or state level.**

In general:

Do not ask questions designed to learn things about an applicant that cannot be considered in making a hiring decision.

Avoid any indication that the selection might rely on personal feelings instead of job related experience and criteria.

Ask open-ended questions that allow the student applicant to do most of the talking.

If an applicant provides unsolicited information about a protected status, it is best not to expand on the topic\* or include the information in your notes.

\*With the exception of the declaration of a disability, which may require a reasonable accommodation or assistance from the accessibility services department.

Examples of questions not to ask:

Are you married or do you have kids?

Where were you born?

Do you have any physical or mental disabilities of which I should be aware?

Do you have a car so you can get here on time?

Have you ever been arrested?

Do you belong to a sorority or any social organizations?

Examples of “job related” questions:

Tell me about the duties in your previous job.

What do you feel are your strengths related to this position?

Tell me about your attendance at your previous job.

Please give examples of MS Office products or other software that you have used?

Tell me about any courses that you have taken that might relate to this opening?

Do you feel that you can perform the duties of this position as outlined?

Some great questions to ask:

What attracted you to this position?

What expectations do you have of me as your supervisor?

What does your perfect work environment look like?

Tell me about a challenge you’ve overcome in your work or educational experience.

How would you handle a situation like… (give example of common event in your department.)

Tell me about at time that you witnessed or were part of a customer service failure. How would you handle the situation differently?