University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Facilitating Accessible Interviews for Individuals with Disabilities*

The University of Hawai‘i is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to the hiring process. The Work-at-UH website has captions on disability access to invite applicants to request needed accommodations. Below are some helpful tips for scheduling and conducting accessible interviews. These suggestions are also applicable to meetings with students and colleagues.

Scheduling the interview

- When scheduling interviews, let all applicants, including individuals with disabilities, know what is involved in the process (e.g., writing exercise, computer exercise, walking tour, luncheon), and invite applicants to request accommodations, if needed for the interview.
- Be aware that applicants with disabilities may need to arrange for transportation following the interview. Provide each candidate with an estimate of the interview timeframe.
- Extended interview time may be a reasonable accommodation for some individuals with disabilities.
- Schedule interviews at an accessible location (e.g., accessible parking, accessible route to the interview room). If the space is not accessible, be prepared to conduct the interview at an alternate accessible location.

Interviewing Persons Who Use Mobility Aids

- Make sure the interview location is accessible. Check on the location of available disability accessible parking spaces, accessible route from parking space to building entrance and interview location, available ramps and elevators, and accessible restrooms and water fountains.
- People who use mobility devices (e.g., canes, crutches, walkers) may prefer to keep them within reach during the interview.
- Be aware that some wheelchair users may choose to transfer from their wheelchair into an office chair for the interview.
- When interviewing a person in a wheelchair, sit in a chair to place yourself (also for all members of an interview panel) at that person’s eye level to facilitate conversation.
- Never touch or lean on a person’s wheelchair. It is part of that individual’s personal body space. Ask the person if he or she requires assistance; do not just push someone in a wheelchair.

* Adapted from “Interviewing Courtesies for Individuals with Disabilities,” with permission from the University of Washington Human Resources; reviewed by the UH Mānoa KOKUA Program and the State of Hawai‘i Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB).
Interviewing People with Vision Impairments

- When greeting a person with a vision impairment, always identify yourself and introduce anyone else who is present. Also remember to inform the person if you leave the room, as the person may not be otherwise aware of your departure.
- Ask the person if they need assistance or would like you to guide them. Offer your arm, elbow, or shoulder (whatever she or he prefers) so that you may guide rather than propel the person. Inform the person if you are approaching steps and how many there are.
- When offering seating, provide verbal directions as to the location of the seat in relation to the blind person, e.g., "The chair is to your right," and offer to place the blind person's hand on the back of the chair.
- When conversing in a group, give a verbal cue by always announcing the name of the person to whom you are speaking.
- Let the person know if you move or need to end the conversation.
- If the person uses a service dog, do not pet, feed, or distract the service dog.
- Prior to the interview, inform the candidate if there will be a test or exercise involving written material or a computer. Ask what type of accommodation the individual prefers or recommends.

Interviewing People with Speech Impairments

- If you do not understand the person’s speech, acknowledge it respectfully, as the purpose of the interview is to elicit and understand the interviewee’s responses. Ask the person to repeat or rephrase what you do not understand. Another alternative is to repeat back to the candidate what you understood and ask if what you heard is correct.
- Allow sufficient time for the person to speak, particularly when using an augmentative communication device. Do not complete words or phrases for the person.
- Concentrate on the content of the conversation, not the delivery.
- Communicate as naturally as possible. Do not shout or raise your voice.
- Depending on the type of communication device the person uses, offer to send material prior to the interview. This allows the candidate to program appropriate vocabulary into the communication device or to prepare a response and program it into the device.
- Provide a pen and paper, chalk or dry-erase boards to facilitate communication.
- Allow the use of email or instant messaging.

Interviewing People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Ask the candidate what his or her preferred method of communication is and provide that accommodation for the interview [may be an assistive listening device (ALD), American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter, oral interpreter, real time captioner, or notetaker].
- If the person lip reads, provide a clear, unobstructed view of yourself. Speak clearly at a normal volume and pace. Only raise your voice if requested. Do not exaggerate your lip movements or shout. Speak expressively because the person will rely on your facial expressions, gestures, and body movements to try to understand you. Maintain eye contact.
• Hold your interview in a quiet, well lit room. Place yourself facing the light source and keep your hands away from your mouth when speaking. If the interviewer is sitting with his or her back to a window, draw the shades to make it easier for the interviewee to see the interviewer and/or interpreter.

• Remember that lip reading alone is not the most effective form of communication.

• Using an ASL interpreter (if requested by the Deaf or hard of hearing person)
  – If an interpreter is present, the interpreter should be seated beside the interviewer, across from the Deaf interviewee.
  – Speak to the interviewee, not to the interpreter, and always maintain eye contact with the interviewee, not the interpreter.
  – Interpreters facilitate communication. They should not be consulted or regarded as a reference for the interviewee or interviewer.
  – The hiring unit is responsible for interpreter charges. The Deaf interviewee is never to be charged for interpreter services. For assistance with arranging for ASL interpreting services, UH Mānoa hiring units may contact the KOKUA Program, kokua@hawaii.edu; Phone 808-956-7612 (voice/TTY); Fax 808-956-8093 - at least 2 weeks prior to the event. Ask the interviewee if he or she has a preferred interpreter, and provide this information to the KOKUA Interpreter Coordinator when placing the request.

In addition to the above suggestions, persons with other, often hidden, disabilities may need accommodations in an interview or meeting. Always keep in mind to respond to each person as an individual and to address accommodation requests on a case-by-case basis. Contact the following offices for more information:

**UH Mānoa Campus**
KOKUA Program
Queen Lili‘uokalani Ctr. for Student Services 013
2600 Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-7511 (voice/TTY)
(808) 956-8093 (fax)
kokua@hawaii.edu
www.hawaii.edu/kokua

**UH Mānoa Campus & UH System Offices**
Equal Employment Opportunity &
Affirmative Action Office (EEO/AA)
Administrative Services Building 1-102
2442 Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822
(808) 956-7077 (voice)
(808) 956-5804 (fax)
eeo@hawaii.edu
www.hawaii.edu/eoo

**State of Hawai‘i**
Disability & Communication Access Board (DCAB)
919 Ala Moana Blvd., Rm. 101
Honolulu, HI 96814
(808) 586-8121 (voice/TTY)
(808) 586-8129 (fax)
dcab@doh.hawaii.gov
http://www.state.hi.us/health/dcab/home/index.htm