

## Prescreening Candidates by Phone

Prescreening candidates by phone follows the resumé screening process and provides a way to further assess candidates who appear, from their resúmes, to have relevant skills and experiences.

### What is a Phone Screening Interview?

A phone screening interview follows the resumé screening process. This is a way to assess candidates who appear, from their resúmes, to have relevant skills and experiences. The phone screening should help determine candidates you want to interview in person; this saves valuable time for you and the candidate because you are only having face-to-face interviews with the strongest candidates.

Phone screening interviews can be scheduled throughout the search process. However, the longer the length of time between the phone screen and the actual face to face interview, the less likely the candidate is to sustain interest in the position.

Also, be prepared for follow ups from candidates with whom you have spoken. If you know, and if it is appropriate, let the candidate know where he or she stands in the process. Let the candidate know when in-person interviews are likely to take place.

### Scheduling a Phone Screening Interview

In their cover letters, candidates often tell you their preferred method of contact. If not, call their home or cell phone number and leave a message asking them to contact you. Do not use a work phone number unless you have permission to do so.

When the candidate returns your call, identify yourself as a representative of your DLC and MIT and the position for which you are screening. Let them know that the purpose of your call is to schedule a phone screening interview that will take about 30 minutes. Be sure they are still interested in the position. Respect their need for confidentiality in their workplace and try to be flexible in scheduling the phone screen.

To facilitate scheduling, it is often more efficient to send an email to the candidate rather than to call. Use the sample email message is below as a guide:

*Thank you for your interest in the \_\_\_\_\_ position. I would like to invite you to an exploratory phone conversation about the position. The purpose of the call is to explore your background and interests a little further and to answer any questions you may have at this time. It should take about 20-25 minutes. Are you available to do this in either of the following time frames?*

*Day of week, Date            Time Range (AM/PM)*

*Day of week, Date            Time Range (AM/PM)*

*I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Sincerely,*

### Phone Screening Interview Checklist

Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Hiring Salary or Hourly Pay Rate Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Use the checklist below as a guide for specific prescreening questions.**

Identify the job and make the candidate aware that this is one of the first steps in the selection process. At this point, it is important to clarify the candidate’s pay expectations for the position and, if appropriate, let the candidate know what the range is for the position. ***Do not ask the candidate to provide current pay or pay history. This is not permitted under the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act.***

Questions and Comments	Candidate's Answers	Your Comments
<p>The hiring pay range for this position is _____.</p> <p>What are your <b>pay expectations</b> for this position?</p> <p><b><i>Do not ask the candidate to provide current pay or pay history. This is not permitted under the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act.</i></b></p> <p>(If the candidate shares current pay, make a note in the comments column indicating that this information was volunteered.)</p> <p>Please tell me why you’re interested in leaving your present job?</p>		
<p>What does your current position entail?</p>		

Candidate Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Questions and Comments	Candidate's Answers	Your Comments
What do you like most about your current role?		
What do you find most challenging about your current role?		
What interests you most about this position?		
What is your ideal work environment?		
Review key job requirements and ask the candidate to share related skills and abilities.		
<p>If you have questions about the candidate's resume (gaps in employment, for example) ask the candidate to explain.</p> <p>If the target hiring range you are working with is outside the candidate's expectations, explain what the range is and see how they respond. Some will still want to continue exploring this opportunity, others may not.</p>		
Ask if the candidate has any questions.		
Thank the candidate for their time. Review next steps and likely time frame for follow-up.		