

Checklist for carrying out fair admission interviews

Be aware that – often unconscious – discriminatory practice/behaviour and stereotype threat can lead to losing promising students for your programme, especially those that are traditionally under-represented.

While we are aware that often time and money do not allow for ideal circumstances, below are some suggestions on what could be done to improve the interview situation and also what not to do.

Good ideas for admission interviews:

✓ Make sure more than one interviewer is present while conducting interviews.
✓ Stick to the same questions for all participants.
✓ Foresee separate evaluations on the basis of previously established clear criteria, interviewers should also fill them out separately.
✓ Have written evaluations and compare afterwards (possibly in the form of grading).
✓ Make sure you yourself and the other interviewers are well rested and physically comfortable. Often programme leaders claim that when they are hungry and tired after five interviews, their attention span and patience with candidates decreases. Care for breaks and food etc.!
✓ Make sure that interviewers are also „diverse“ with regard to age or gender, for example avoid two male interviewers in STEM and one female candidate, etc.
✓ Actively reflect on what associations the applicant’s language or linguistic style (accent, dialect, social background,...) triggers in you as an interviewer.
✓ Dissociate content from delivery or at least be aware of possible bias on your part.

No-Go-Questions:

- children and family situation
- financial situation (how applicant will finance studies)
- support structures
- values, belief systems and religion
- sexual orientation and relationships
- addiction

To make sure prospective students are aware of available support structures (child-care, counselling services) it could be a good idea to hand out folders with information about available support to all applying students in order to make sure that those who are in need receive it for sure.