



Interview tips for employers

Key considerations when recruiting candidates who are displaced or in high risk settings

Candidates living in refugee situations often face challenges when participating in interview processes due to their circumstances. By applying the following tips, employers can work with TBB to facilitate effective and safe interview processes that help to overcome these challenges.

Mitigating communications challenges

Connectivity: Electricity, internet networks and cell phone reception may be interrupted at times or inconsistent during interviews or skills testing. We recommend:

- Agree a backup plan with TBB in the event of poor internet connection
- Offer to move to audio only interview if video requires too much bandwidth (but note this may result in a less optimal interview experience given the candidate is not able to see you or read visual queues).
- Avoid giving long assignments that require internet use as part of the interview process and be mindful that a delayed response may not be a sign of disinterest but rather of safety or connectivity issues.
- It may be helpful to send the candidates the questions in advance or after the interview in the circumstances where internet connectivity is poor.

Emotional intelligence: People you're communicating with may be experiencing unprecedented stress which may interfere with their ability to showcase their skills and capabilities. Candidates may be nervous in the interview given the stakes are so high. To get the most out of your interview we recommend:

- Communicate one step at a time
- Feel free to offer calming words and reassuring noises throughout the interview and if conducting the interview on video, positive body language
- Individuals may feel shy or uncomfortable communicating any accommodations needed in the interview process. In these situations, try to anticipate what the individual may need and offer it directly. For example, "Would you like to conduct the interview with or without video?" Not only do such choices provide a sense of agency in a context where many may feel powerless, but they also can eliminate some of the perceived stigma/power dynamics

associated with accommodations offered as favors given the individual's situation and context.

- Be aware that culturally, people may reject such an offer before accepting and this is very normal in their context. You may need to make the offer more than once.

English communication: You will be generally interviewing someone who speaks English as a second (or perhaps third or fourth) language. Given a job interview is a stressful event, it is likely that the candidate's English communication skills may not come across as well as they would otherwise be in a normal working environment. We recommend:

- Speaking slowly and clearly
- If the interviewee doesn't understand your question, try to ask it in a different way
- For candidates with lower English language capacity we recommend allowing full or partial interpreting in the interview (TBB can provide this)
- Note that TBB assists candidates to hone their English skills prior to migrating to take up a new job opportunity. TBB candidates must all complete an English test prior to securing their visa. If you are concerned about the candidate's English abilities but are otherwise happy to proceed to hire them, TBB can work with you and the candidate on an English development plan.

Other matters to be aware of

- **Professional attire:** Candidates may not have access to professional attire (or attire may not reflect your cultural understanding of professional attire) for the interview.
- **Environment:** Understand that a quiet space free of distractions may not be possible for all conversations given the circumstances. Individuals may be staying in temporary cramped accommodation, a camp or safehouse, or with relatives at this time. It may not be possible to eliminate all distractions such as children and background noise.
- **Gaps in employment:** Candidates may have gaps in their formal work experience. This is often a result of the security situation, the need to relocate, as well as prohibitions on legal work in their places of current residence. We recommend you take these issues into account and be sensitive when asking candidates about gaps in employment.
- **Start date:** Often in an interview you may ask candidates when they are ready to start. Please be mindful that candidates may not be able to provide you with an estimate in the interview, depending on their circumstances, as this will depend on visa processing timelines. TBB can advise you on the specific timeframe for relocation in each case.
- **Traumatic subjects:** Recognise that candidates may have experienced significant trauma and do not necessarily want to disclose information regarding their personal circumstances as a result of this. We recommend you do not ask direct questions about a candidate's refugee status or personal risk profile in the interview as this may be distressing.

Additional measures for candidates in very high risk environments

For some candidates in high risk environments (such as inside Afghanistan), interviews may require additional risk mitigations. Simply communicating with Western organizations could pose a security risk to your interviewee. Given this, employers liaising with candidates in high risk contexts should put in place safe communications protocols. This includes:

- **Streamlined communications:** TBB should be the main point of contact for candidates who are still in Afghanistan/other high risk contexts. We recommend employers do not maintain direct communications with candidates unless and until this is required. Employers should nominate a single point of contact within the company to liaise with the candidate in the exceptional circumstances this is required.
- **Safe use of digital communications:** Employers should NOT communicate with candidates by email or phone or social media applications as these can be monitored in certain contexts. When conducting interviews, TBB will advise the most suitable platform to use. TBB advises the use of Signal (<https://signal.org/en/>) or Wire (<https://wire.com/en/>) to conduct interviews where the candidate has sufficient bandwidth.