# MANAGING THE IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL CANDIDATE VISIT

The campus visit – which may be either in-person or remote – provides an opportunity for U-M faculty and students to learn more about the candidate's work, and for the candidate to learn more about U-M. We'd like candidates to feel welcome and able to show us their very best.   We'd also like to show them our best.

The suggestions here, gathered into four categories, are based on the STRIDE Committee's reading, work, discussions, and experience.
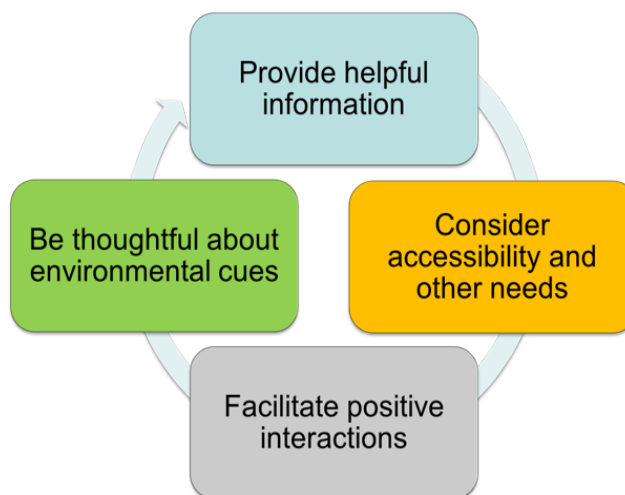
Provide Helpful Information About the Visit, Institution, and Community

Faculty candidates deserve a chance to be well-prepared for their interview, and providing information about the campus and the community allows candidates to see how U-M supports employees and to imagine a life here.

- **Provide information to the candidate well ahead of the interview.** Provide a written itinerary that includes a schedule of interviews and presentations. It is most helpful if candidates receive this information well ahead of time, so they can prepare for each interaction.
- **Share expectations about the visit**, such as the length, format, and audience for the job talk. Sharing this information helps level the playing field; don't rely on the candidate's mentors to provide this information. It may be helpful to discuss the Q&A culture in the department (will questions begin immediately, or are they held to the end of the talk?).
- **Provide all candidates with information on dual-career support and family-friendly policies.** This information can be provided in a packet or set of links to relevant materials so that candidates can review the material at their leisure. Note that interviews should aim to evaluate qualifications that are relevant to the faculty position; questions about matters that are not job-relevant (e.g. family status) are not appropriate.

- **Provide general information about campus as well as Ann Arbor and surrounding communities.** Maps, brochures, and links to community information (e.g. schools, restaurants, museums, housing – such as in the Ann Arbor Observer's City Guide) can all be helpful. Remember to look beyond Ann Arbor.

Additional Tips for Remote Interviews

- **Pay attention to logistics, setting, and technology.**   Keep different time zones in mind. Choose a professional location free of distractions; turn off cell phones. Encourage candidate and interviewers to use headset and microphone to minimize background sound and ensure sound quality; sending candidates a headset could insure best performance for a minimal cost. Test the technology at both ends: a staff member should arrange a time to do a test call. Have a backup plan ready in case the connection is lost (who calls back?). If interviews are to be recorded, obtain necessary permissions.

Consider Accessibility and Other Needs

Faculty candidates might have needs related to diet, disability, or other circumstances that should be accommodated during an interview. We recommend that a **staff member** supporting the faculty search:

- **Ask all candidates if there are arrangements that would make the visit more comfortable, welcoming and successful.** For example, a candidate may need to minimize travel among different locations, require materials printed in a larger font size, sit instead of stand when giving presentations, or may have dietary needs or preferences. A candidate interviewing remotely from a distant time zone may require a schedule that is shifted from the usual one.
- **When possible, avoid discussing these needs with those who are meeting with and interviewing the candidate.** For example, the visitor's schedule might list "break/travel time" when the candidate is using a lactation room. Faculty should respect those breaks, and not assume that this is extra time they can use as part of their meeting with the candidate.
- **Include breaks** for both virtual and in-person interviews. Avoid a full day of meetings.
- **Routinely include information on the building and relevant rooms, and on any restaurants, in communication with all candidates.**   Note that several local restaurants have restrooms that can be reached only by a stairway. Don't forget the room in which the candidate will be giving the job talk; some of these have steps up to stages or podiums. (E.g. "A ramp, leading to power doors, is located at the north entrance of the University Building. Your seminar will be in room 200, accessible by elevator or stairs.

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The room has a small stage for the speaker that is reached via 3 steps. A gender inclusive restroom is located on the third floor next to the elevator.")
- **Ask all candidates about dietary preferences.**
- For remote or in-person interviews, consider **using meeting software that includes automatic transcription, or hire someone to provide real-time closed captioning, as necessary.**

Additional Considerations for Remote Interviews

- Ask candidate for **optimal times that will reduce household distractions** or offer the best internet access.
- Remember to **build in break time** for remote interviews. Consider breaking video interviews into multiple days to prevent zoom-fatigue.
- **Consider having the candidate pre-record their seminar** and use the live interview to engage in a moderated Q&A with the candidate.

Be Thoughtful About Environmental Cues

Consider the many cues in a physical or virtual environment that may signal belonging, or not.

- **Ensure that all candidates meet a diverse set of** people so that they are more likely to meet someone like them. Consider including graduate and undergraduate students.
- **Work to maximize attendance at the seminar.**
- **Consider altering undesirable cues in the environment.**   For example, examine the photographs in the seminar room, and whether they reflect department's current demographics.

Additional Considerations for Remote Interviews

- **Consider how to ensure that the virtual audience is diverse, visible and welcoming** to the candidate.
- **Plan virtual introductions**. For larger groups, this may mean having groups raise their hands or turn on their video, (e.g. "All of the graduate students, please raise your hand").
- **Remote interviews might include a virtual tour of your spaces**; which areas best show off your department's style?
- **Don't comment on the candidate's home setting**, which may be visible during the interview.

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Facilitate Positive Interactions

Ensuring a positive experience for the candidate includes ensuring an equitable experience, paying attention to the physical and virtual environment, and preparing departmental faculty, staff and students to understand their roles and expectations in the process.

- While inquiries regarding gender, gender expression or gender identity are inappropriate for interviewers, it may be important to know someone's pronouns so they can be treated respectfully and appropriately throughout the interview. We recommend that a staff member **ask candidates if they wish to share their pronouns** ahead of the interview.
- **Treat all candidates as valuable scholars and educators**, not as representatives of a social group.
- If at all possible, **use the same format** (in-person, video, or phone) for interviews of all candidates (at all stages of the process).
- **Make sure that everyone meeting with the candidate understands their role and expectations**. Review the list of appropriate and inappropriate questions (page 8 of the Faculty Handbook on Hiring).
- **Manage the visit – identify a host who can set the proper tone for each activity or event.** It is helpful to have a moderator for Q&A at the job talk. **Provide a warm and welcoming introduction of the candidate**, including a description of their work and why the department is excited to host the candidate. Leave references to the work of the candidate's mentors out of the introduction.

Additional Considerations for Remote Interviews

- **Orient the candidate during the interview.** Make sure participant names, roles (e.g. chair) and if preferred, pronouns are labeled (use "Rename" option in Zoom). Don't neglect introductions. For phone interviews, keep using names to preface questions or remarks ("This is Professor Smith again.").
- **Use waiting rooms for individual meetings so that the next person doesn't enter the meeting unexpectedly.** Have an administrative person control the waiting room.
- **Be mindful of how technology shapes impressions.** In video and phone connections, delays and distortion can make candidates appear awkward or less articulate. You may need to speak more slowly and double-check the meaning of what has been said and invite the candidate to do so as well. Don't let awkwardness on either end of the conversation overshadow a candidate's excellent record. Consider too how it may look to the candidate if most people are not sharing video, and they see a panel of black boxes.

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Additional Considerations for Remote Interviews (continued)

- **Try to replicate some "in-person" events so that the candidate gets a better understanding the department culture.** Host a remote lunch with the candidate, give a remote tour of the office, send them a swag bag or share videos of their co-workers talking about the culture. Go the extra mile, and your candidate will remember that you go above and beyond.

Additional Resources

- U-M building information (ramp access, elevator access)
  https://maps.studentlife.umich.edu

- U-M gender inclusive restrooms:
  https://spectrumcenter.umich.edu/article/gender-inclusive-restrooms
  https://www.engin.umich.edu/about/diversity/inclusive-spaces/

- U-M lactation rooms:
  https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center/lactation-resources/lactationroom-locations-across-campus

- Style guide on appropriate and accurate language to use when writing or talking about people living with disabilities: http://ncdj.org/style-guide/

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