

Handbook for Selection Committee Members

The main objective of these guidelines is to help you, current and new members of the Selection Committee, to select and recruit new employees in accordance with the OTM-R policy (Open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment of researchers).

Without talented, qualified and successful scientists, the Institute would not be able to fulfill its role as an excellent research institution in the long run. When recruiting new staff, we now comply with the [Code of Conduct for Recruitment](#), following the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Ethics for Researchers of the Czech Academy of Sciences](#).

The Vice-director for Science, prof. Patrik Španěl, is responsible for coordinating the recruitment of researchers at the J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry. You, as members of the Selection Committee, are responsible for selecting the most suitable candidate.

Thank you for fulfilling an important role in the further development of our Institute.

prof. Martin Hof, Dr. rer. nat., DSc.

Director

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Selection Committee

The Selection Committee (SC) is appointed by the director of the J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry (HIPC). The term of office of the current Committee from 2017 till 2021. All members of the Selection Committee have undergone proper training to perform this function, and training is a condition also for future members of this Committee.

The Committee is responsible for the course of the selection procedure and consists of at least three members ([Statutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences](#), Article 51). It usually includes the researcher to whose team the candidate is selected, typically the project leader or the head of the department. This scientist is always appointed by the Director as a full member of the Selection Committee.

The Committee is gender-balanced (at least one-third of members is a woman) and usually includes a human resources officer. The composition of the panel shall be designed to ensure open, transparent, and merit-based assessment of characteristics, abilities, experience, knowledge, potential and suitability of each candidate.

The Chairman/ Chairwoman of the Committee is responsible for the proper conduct of the selection procedure, prepares the minutes of the selection proceedings, and communicates with the Secretary of the Vice-director for Science.

Confidentiality of information

The members of the Committee must observe strict confidentiality of information in all aspects of the selection of candidates and must not disclose any details about candidates or discuss aspects of the selection process with any person inside or outside HIPC who is not a member of the Selection Committee, except relevant employees within the Human Resources Department.

The members of the Committee may contact an independent expert who has provided an opinion in favour of the candidate, or obtain information about candidates from current or former employers or work colleagues, but only with the consent of the Committee chairperson.

Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest occurs when a member of the Selection Committee knows the candidate(s) from a professional or private environment, as this fact may influence decision-making. In this case, the member shall communicate this circumstance to the Committee chairperson.

A conflict of interest is considered to be any family, financial, or other personal relationship with any candidate for a position.

If the Chairperson evaluates the conflict of interest as an obstacle to membership in the Committee, the Secretary of the Vice-director for Science (hereinafter "Secretary") shall be contacted or the Human Resources Department during the Secretary's temporary absence. They will manage the selection of other members for the Selection Committee.

Discrimination

Discrimination: "...consists in the fact that a certain person or group of people is treated in a comparable situation in a less favourable way than others, and this occurs for reasons that are not legally justifiable, on the basis of any of the discriminatory features or is done arbitrarily, i.e. without a possible reasonable justification for such treatment." (ŠTANGOVÁ, Věra. Equal Treatment and Prohibition of Discrimination in labour Law. Prague: Publishing house Aleš Čeněk, 2010. P. 49. ISBN 978-80-7380-6).

In other words, discrimination means different treatment in comparable situations without reasonable justification.

The anti-discrimination law addresses race, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, belief and worldview. Other laws also include other reasons, such as property, membership in trade unions or political parties and movements, marital status, etc.

In the chapter Second round of the selection procedure, you will find a list of questions that are discriminatory in nature and that should not be asked at the job interview.

Selection procedure

If you have been selected as a member of the Selection Committee, you will be contacted by the Secretary. If you do not agree with your appointment, inform the Secretary immediately. The appointed chairperson must confirm by e-mail both consent or disagreement with his/her appointment.

The appointment of members is approved and electronically signed by the director of HIPC no later than on the day of the end of the validity of the job advertisement.

First round of selection procedure – shortlisting

Job applications are stored on a common disk with limited access rights and are handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The saving of received applications to the disk falls within the competence of the Secretary, who informs the Selection Committee members in a timely manner about where they find the received applications and the list of those candidates who meet the administrative criteria. Applications from candidates who have not passed the administrative check will be formally rejected by the Secretary by placing them in a separate file “Excluded candidates” (pre-screening).

The researcher to whose team the candidate is recruited will create a list of suitable candidates from the received applications that have passed the administrative check. This shortlist is provided to other members of the Selection Committee together with the materials of all candidates (i.e. also those that have been excluded). The Selection Committee members will assess all applications received in the selection procedure and will either approve, narrow down, or add other suitable candidates to the shortlist.

Phone interview

When creating a shortlist, the researcher may contact the candidates by phone for a phone interview. In one competition, please always ask the same set of questions to each participant to ensure objective assessment of their answers.

The phone interview should consist of four parts and usually lasts from 5 to 10 minutes.

During the phone interview, please follow the steps below:

- i. introduce our institute and, if appropriate, the specific department or laboratory;
- ii. ask for information that interests you, e.g. skills, experiences, motivation;
- iii. leave room for the candidate's questions;
- iv. verify that he or she is still interested in the offered position.

Ask open-ended questions, avoid questions that can be answered yes or no.

Common phone interview questions

- What are your qualifications?
- What are your salary expectations?
- When could you start working?
- What specific tasks did you perform?
- How would you deal with ... if ... ?
- How did you deal with ... in your former job?
- Why did you decide to leave your current job?

The Committee members compare the skills, experience and qualifications of each candidate with the job requirements stated in the job description. They also evaluate the number of years since obtaining the scientific degree of PhD, the number of publications and the number of citations of these publications. The purpose of this process is to select the most suitable candidates for the next selection of the selection process.

The output is a narrower list of candidates advancing to the second round, which is a personal interview. The members will also fill in and sign a Selection Protocol - Round 1 (Shortlist).

Second round of selection procedure – interview

How many candidates will you invite to an interview? It depends on the number of suitable candidates. If possible, invite 2 to 8 people to the interview.

What should the interview look like?

A personal interview is generally more appropriate, but in specific cases you can also use a video call (via Skype, Zoom or other application).

At the interview, introduce yourself and the other members of the Selection Committee, introduce in detail the job position offered and the benefits offered by the employer. Offer the candidate sufficient space to present his/ her previous experience and motivation for the job. Finally, leave room for other questions that arise during the interview. Inform the candidates of the date of the result of the selection procedure without undue delay.

Below you can find examples of common interview questions. Specific questions concerning the specification of the job in which the candidate is interested are usually asked by the scientist to whose team the candidate should be admitted.

The Selection Committee shall include a brief record of each interview in a selection protocol (Selection protocol - second round). In this document, the Commission determines the order of the candidate for employment for the advertised position to the Director of the institute. The protocol must be signed by all members of the Committee and subsequently by the Director.

Candidates must be informed of the outcome of the second round without undue delay. In most cases, the most suitable candidate will be contacted by the scientist himself, to whose team the candidate joins, if the Chairperson of the Committee and the Secretary agree.

Common interview questions

- What motivated you to apply for this position?
- What are your expectations, what could we offer you?
- Why did you decide to leave your current job?
- What should your work look like to be happy with it?
- What is your idea regarding the length of work contract at our institute??
- When could you start and in what regime (time, form of employment)?
- What else should we know about you?
- What would you like to know about us?
- What are your salary expectations?
- What are your three strengths?
- What are your three weaknesses?
- What is your biggest success?
- What is your biggest failure?
- Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years?
- Would you give us a phone contact to your supervisor so that we can ask him or her for a reference?

Other example questions

- What does your typical daily activity in your current/ previous work look like?
- What were your usual duties in your previous work?
- Why did you choose this profession?
- Why are you interested in this particular position?
- In your opinion, what skills make you a suitable candidate for this position?
- What activities did you do at school/university? What interested you the most?
- What kind of people can upset you?
- If money was not important to you, what would you like to do?

- In what situations are you indecisive? Please give us an example.
- What kind of situation do you consider difficult and why?
- What should your current/ previous employer do to be more successful?
- Can you give us an example of the work you would rather leave to others and an example of the work you would like to do yourself?
- Do you know something exceptional or do you have any exceptional skills that our institute could benefit from? Something others cannot offer us?
- Do you prefer to work in a team or alone?
- What are your interests/ hobbies?
- Do you prefer to be led at work or to lead others?

Inappropriate interview questions

During the interview, please strictly avoid questions that are ambiguous, misleading, unethical, unlawful, manipulative or degrading. These are mainly questions concerning the following:

- Religion, beliefs: What is your religion? Are you a believer? Do you believe in God? Are you a member of any church?
- Sexual orientation: What is your sexual orientation?
- Marriage, marital status, partnership: Do you plan to get married? What is your marital status? (married, single, divorced) What is your partner doing for living?
- Origin: You have an unusual accent. Where are you from? What nationality are you?
- Child/ children, desire to have a child: Do you plan to start a family? When? Do you plan to have child? When? Do you have a small child? How often is your child ill? How often are you usually absent from work due to a child's illness?
- Pregnancy, health: Do you smoke? Are you pregnant? What is your health condition? Do you suffer from any diseases?
- Debt, financial situation, prosecution: Do you have any debts? What is your current financial situation? Have you ever had an execution? Have you ever been prosecuted?
- Membership in unions, parties or associations, political preferences: Are you in any political party? Are you involved in any clubs or social organizations? What are your political preferences?
- How do you spend your vacation?

In some cases, asking about a family is not considered an inappropriate question when it is related to specific projects (e.g. the OPVVV MSCA mobility project). On the contrary, it is desirable to find out the family situation, because these projects provide funding for the mobility of researchers and their families.

Specificities for selection of candidates for R4 position

Delivery of a reference from an independent recognized foreign expert is required when selecting and recruiting a researcher for position R4 (i.e. V5 and V6). The shortlisted candidate for R4 position will be invited for a personal interview at the expense of HIPC or at the expense of the relevant project and, in addition, the Institute will organize a public lecture on his/ her scientific work. In this case of the selection procedure, the director of the Institute or the vice-director for science is always a member of the Selection Committee.

Retention of recruitment information

The results of the selection procedure are always stored at the end of the selection process in the Secretariat and kept in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016.

If you need any further advice

If you have any questions regarding selection and recruitment, please contact the Vice-director for Science, the Secretary of the Vice-director for Science or the Human Resources Department. They will be happy to help you.

This handbook was created with the support of the project Capacity Development ÚFCH JH, v.v.i. for research and development (reg. no. CZ.02.2.69 / 0.0 / 0.0 / 16_028 / 0006251) financed by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the EU - European Structural and Investment Funds in the Operational Program Research, Development and Education.



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