

## Tutor's Guide

### Activity 13. Graduate Vacancy Application<sup>10</sup>

#### Aim

The aim of this activity is to provide students with practice of applying for a vacancy, structuring their CV to a specific vacancy, and gain experience of being interviewed. Students will also gain a useful insight into the interviewing process as they form an interview panel and interview a group of applicants.

#### Activity A. Applying for the vacancy

The students should be assigned to groups of 4-6. They will remain with this group to form the interview panel in the second part of this activity. Each group should be allocated one of the five vacancies provided. They should then structure their CV and covering letter to meet, as far as possible, the job specifications. Although the scientific content of their course should be relevant for all of the vacancies, the students need to be aware of how to prioritise their skills for each individual vacancy. For example, those applying for the medical representative vacancy would prioritise their team working and communication skills. Those applying for the synthetic organic chemist vacancy would highlight this area of scientific expertise and understanding before skills considered to be less relevant for this particular post.

Prior to the following session, the students should submit their CV and covering letter in a sealed envelope to the tutor. On the outside of the envelope they should clearly mark their name, group and vacancy applied for. This will be passed onto another group of students who will interview that group for the post. The tutor should then distribute the applications to the relevant groups.

### **Activity B Interviewing for the vacancy**

Every member of the group who applied for a vacancy should be interviewed by a panel consisting of another group of students. Mutual interviewing between groups should be avoided, so students should not be interviewed by the same group that they interview.

The tutor does not take part in the interviewing process but is present to ensure each candidate is considered fairly. Also, the tutor will award a mark to each of the interview panel for their contribution and questions to the interviewee.

Each applicant should be interviewed one at a time and only the interview panel, tutor and interviewee should be present in the room during the process. Each interview should take around five minutes; if more staff are available different interviews could be carried out simultaneously. Each of the students should take turns as the chairperson and it is their responsibility to ensure that the interview runs smoothly, the interviewee is put at ease and each of the panel members asks a fair question.

The interview panel should have a prepared list of questions. This ensures that the process is fair as each of the applicants are asked the same questions. Students find being on the interview panel particularly difficult at first and usually gain confidence as the process continues. This is usually reflected in the improvement of the panel performance from the first interview through to the last applicant.

Each panel should reach a decision about whom they would appoint to the position. This decision should be justified and based on the applicant's CV and interview performance. The panel should provide *constructive* written feedback to the unsuccessful candidates about areas that could be improved. The interviewees are awarded a mark by the tutor based on the ranking of candidates by the panel.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate how the interview and application grouping systems work.



Figure 1. An overview of the application process. Each of the four groups shown applies for a vacancy advertised by a different group.

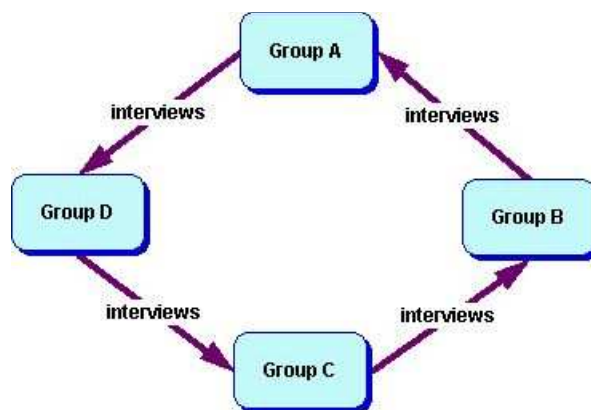


Figure 2. An overview of the interviewing process. Each of the four groups shown interviews a different group to the one they were interviewed by.

The number of groups varies with the number of students and the number of tutors available. At the end of this activity, the tutor should lead a final discussion on the interviewing process and what the students have learnt from it.

### **Assessment**

The interviewees are awarded a mark by the tutor based on how they performed in the interview and on the feedback from the panel. Each member of the interview panel is awarded a mark based on the questions they ask during the interview process.

### **Reference**

10. Launch-a-Lab: Encouraging Chemists to Prepare for Employment

Simon Belt, Tina Overton and Stephen Summerfield, RSC Publication, 2002

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Tutor's Interviewing Record Sheet

<b>Group A</b>	<b>Score</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
<b>Group B</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
<b>Group C</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
<b>Group D</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

## Meta data

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