Professional Interviews

Guidance Notes For Candidates

1. Introduction

1.1 All applicants for Full Membership are required to attend a professional interview. This procedure is a common entry requirement for most professional bodies. Interview dates are set in advance and there will normally be two interview days per year in each of the Institution's Regional Centres. Upcoming interview dates can be found on the CIWM website.

1.2 The Interview Panel will consist of three senior members of the Institution. Normally at least one member will have some knowledge of the candidate's area of expertise. This member of the panel will take the lead when asking questions about your work experience.

2. Objectives of the Professional Interview

2.1 The interview will be conducted so as to enable you to demonstrate that during your employment you have:-

i. developed and proved your technical competence, including the exercising of independent judgement requiring both practical experience and the application of theoretical principles;

ii. attained an understanding of the role of the professional waste manager;

iii. acquired an understanding of the industry beyond your own area of expertise. This should include financial, commercial, statutory, safety and environmental considerations.

2.2 You will mainly be assessed on the criteria listed below:-

- Industry Knowledge
- Management Skills
- Technical Competence
- Professionalism
- Ability to Organise
- Independence and Awareness
- Communication
- Presentational Skills

2.3 Interviewers will bear in mind current legislation regarding equal opportunities and will judge applicants on their technical and professional merit regardless of racial or ethnic origin, sex, marital status, age, religion or disability.

The Chartered Institution of Wastes Management

3. Preparing for the Interview

3.1 You will be informed of who will be on your panel when the time and location of your interview is confirmed (a minimum of two week's notice will normally be given). If the applicant and interviewers are known to each other either professionally or socially, thus compromising a fair assessment by the panel, they are asked to contact the Membership Services Department prior to the interview.

3.2 You are advised to prepare thoroughly by re-reading your application form (of which you should have kept a copy), together with any other documents you have previously forwarded. The Interview panel will ask you questions on your work in the waste industry based on the information given in your application.

3.3 You should take with you to the interview any reports, project work, etc that you feel would complement and support your application.

3.4 Reading the CIWM's monthly Journal will assist you to answer questions that test your knowledge of the industry as a whole. Back issues can be obtained from the Membership Services Department. You should also use the CIWM's weekly newsletter 'News On-line' and follow the links to other websites which will contain the very latest information on developments in the waste industry. Attending meetings of your local Centre and other conferences, seminars exhibitions etc organised by CIWM and other relevant professional institutions can also help to develop your industry knowledge.

3.5 It is recommended that you discuss the interview process with your sponsors (and Mentors in the case of Graduate Members) so that they can advise you on what to expect and how to prepare.

3.6 A workshop for candidates will normally be held in your region approximately two months prior to your interview date (for dates and venues visit the CIWM website). At the workshop advice will be given from interviewers and previous candidates on what to expect at your interview. It is strongly recommended that you attend one of these workshops or download copies of the presentations which are available on the website.

4. The Interview

4.1. Interviews will last about 50 minutes, although they will normally be arranged at 60 minute intervals so as to give some flexibility over the timing.

4.2 The Chair will introduce the members of the Panel and then invite you to give a ten minute presentation. (See section 5). You will then be asked questions on your presentation.

4.3 The interviewers will further explore your work history from the information provided on your application form.

4.4 You will be required to demonstrate to the panel that you have an understanding of the wastes industry beyond your own specific area of expertise and show that you have an up to date knowledge of key developments. You will also be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the latest legislation affecting wastes management. The Institution does not wish to exclude specialists or those working in a narrow field but in all cases you will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the wastes industry as a whole. Information on the likely areas to be covered can be found on the CIWM website. This is an extremely important part of the interview and most candidates are referred for failing to demonstrate a broad knowledge of the industry beyond their own specialism. You should therefore follow the advice given in 3.4 above, to ensure that you have prepared thoroughly for this part of the interview.

4.5 The Panel will ask you about your knowledge of the Institution, your reasons for joining, and what your contribution to the work of the Institution might be.

4.6 The Panel will ask you to outline your ambitions and aspirations for the future of your career, and how you might see it developing in the future.

4.7 You will also be given an opportunity to ask the interviewers any questions concerning the Institution and your application.

4.8 Interviewers will avoid asking candidates questions which might encroach on the commercial confidentiality of the candidate's, or their employer's, business.

5. Candidates Presentation

5.1 At the start of the interview you will be invited to give a ten minute presentation which demonstrates your involvement in wastes management and you may bring with you material to illustrate the work you have been involved in.

5.2 If you wish to use Powerpoint you should use your own laptop as a tabletop presentation for the panel to view. It is strongly recommended, even if you are using Powerpoint, that you bring a hard copy of your presentation for all of the panel members.

5.3 The presentation should include a description of a specific project that you have worked on which demonstrates your level of involvement in wastes management. You must concentrate on a single project and not give a summary of your career.

5.4 You should focus on the work that you have personally been involved with and not the activities of the company or organisation you are employed by. When preparing your presentation you should look to demonstrate how you meet some of the assessment criteria set out in section 2.2 of these guidance notes.

5.5 You should ensure that the length of your presentation does not exceed 10 minutes and the chair of the panel will ensure that you keep within this timescale. The questions following the presentation will allow you to expand on the key areas you have talked about.

6. Result of Interview

6.1 You will be informed of the result of your interview, in writing, within 14 working days of the date of your interview.

6.2 The panel will recommend one of the following:

a) That you be admitted to Full Membership

b) That you be admitted to an alternative non-corporate class of membership. In these cases the panel will make suggestions on how you can progress to Full Membership in the future, which will include recommending a programme of Structured Learning and Development. The panel will also state whether or not you will be required to attend a further interview.

c) Graduate Members, applying to upgrade to Full Membership, who do not meet the required standard will be advised to undertake a further period of SLD.

Candidates not recommended for Full Membership will be given a full explanation of their weaknesses and advice on how they can progress to Full Membership in the future.

6.3 The interview panel's decision is final but if the candidate feels they have been unfairly treated, they should put their concerns in writing to the Membership Services Department.