

# THE MEMBERS' PATHWAY

## STEP 6: INTERVIEWING THE APPLICANT

### STEP GUIDE

This Step covers the formal applicant interview, the purpose of which is to determine whether an applicant is suitable both for Freemasonry and for the specific Lodge. Prior to the interview the applicant will have discussed membership of the Craft in some detail with his sponsors.

[An Introduction to the Members' Pathway](#) explains the Pathway and how this Step fits within its framework.

#### SUGGESTED COMPOSITION OF THE INTERVIEW PANEL

- Interview Panels should comprise three members of the Lodge, all of whom should be skilled interviewers. They conduct applicant interviews and report to the Lodge Committee.
- As a panel that reports to the Lodge Committee, the Master does not have to be a member.
- If the Lodge has a pool of skilled interviewers, a panel may be formed for each interview selecting members from the pool who are most appropriate for the applicant. In many cases the membership of the panel will be reasonably permanent.
- The panel is chaired by a senior member of the Lodge chosen for his interview skills and experience. He may have been selected during Step 1 of the Pathway.
- The Lodge Membership Officer (LMO) is likely to be a member of the panel.
- We recommend at least one member of the Interview Panel be a Master Mason and at least one be a Past Master.
- The applicant's sponsors attend to support him but are not involved in conducting the interview.

#### GUIDANCE FOR THE INTERVIEW PANEL

- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, arrange to conduct the interview before the sponsors propose and second the applicant in open Lodge.
- Confirm with the Lodge Membership Officer and the sponsors that the screening process has been completed (see Step 5).
- Send a written invitation to the applicant with a clear explanation of the purpose of the interview and its three possible outcomes.
- Allocate the interview topics (see below) among members of the Interview Panel.
- Study all applicant details and prepare appropriate additional questions. Take heed of any comments or concerns received from Lodge members.
- Have all relevant documents available, including the membership application, a copy of the Book of Constitutions, Lodge by-laws, interview guidelines and questions and mentoring materials.
- Wear smart dress, rather than formal Lodge dress.
- Demonstrate Freemasonry's principles in the manner the interview is conducted.
- Brethren are reminded of the statements in Step 5 relating to respect for the dignity and privacy of individuals and to the need to avoid unfairly discriminating against applicants.
- Use the [example questions provided](#) to choose suitable questions to fit the situation, ensuring you seek the information required.
- Be willing to adapt the specific questions and the flow of the interview in response to the applicant's responses while still seeking the necessary information.
- Use additional probing questions to clarify the applicant's responses and to gain further information.

- If it becomes clear that it serves no purpose to continue then terminate the interview before all of the questions have been asked. Grounds for early termination include:
  - The applicant confirms that he does not believe in the Supreme Being.
  - The applicant has a recent criminal conviction or disciplinary action.
  - The applicant no longer wishes to pursue the application.
- In such events, explain why the interview is being terminated, thank the applicant for his interest and his time and wish him well for the future.
- Pay attention to the applicant's [reasons for wishing to become a Freemason](#) and for joining this Lodge. Research has shown that these can be quite varied.
- Satisfy yourselves that the Lodge is compatible with the applicant's reasons for wishing to become a Freemason and able to meet the applicant's expectations.
- At the end of the interview, thank the applicant for attending and inform him that he will hear from the Lodge Secretary within the next few days.
- The applicant now leaves the meeting with one of his sponsors, leaving the other to address any questions raised by the panel.
- Continue the meeting without the applicant, to [decide which of the following outcomes](#) applies:
  - The applicant meets the qualifications for membership, is suited to the Lodge and the Lodge is suited to the applicant. The panel will recommend the applicant for proposal, ballot and Initiation.
  - The applicant meets the qualifications for membership but the panel believes that he would be best suited to joining another Lodge. It will refer him to the Provincial Membership Officer who will help him to find another, better suited, Lodge.
  - The applicant does not meet the qualifications for membership at the current time and the panel will not pursue the application any further.
- More detailed advice and [guidance on interview techniques](#) is available.
- A training package, covering the skills of interviewing, is available. Contact your Metropolitan, Provincial or District Grand Lodge for further information.

### INFORMATION SOUGHT AT INTERVIEWS

Earlier, during Step 5, the applicant will have confirmed that he meets the essential qualifications for membership. The following table sets out topics for discussion at the formal interview. There is purposely some overlap with topics discussed during the screening process. Choose from the [example questions provided](#) suitable questions to fit the situation.

| Information sought  | Reason why it is sought   |
|---|---|
| Overview of self and lifestyle ( <i>family, hobbies, work, charitable interests, other organisations</i> ). | To set a context for the rest of the interview and to provide information that can be explored further.         |
| Questions specifically relevant to this Lodge.  | To explore and expand on the applicant's suitability for this specific Lodge and its characteristics.           |
| Personal characteristics, qualities and values.   | To get the applicant to talk about his values without first telling him about ours.                             |
| Alignment with Freemasonry's values / principles.   | To check that his values / principles are compatible with ours.   |
| Reason for interest in Freemasonry and motives for joining.   | To identify the applicant's motives and to ensure they are compatible with the Craft's values and expectations. |
| Existing links with Freemasons.   | To identify any background in or experience of Freemasonry.   |
| Hopes and expectations on becoming a Freemason.   | To check that the applicant's expectations are compatible and can be met by the Craft and by the Lodge.         |
| Likely contribution he could make as a member.  | To identify the strengths the applicant will bring to the Lodge and any likely future contribution.             |
| Family and their opinions or support for membership.  | To ensure the applicant's family is supportive and will not hinder the applicant's development if he joins.     |
| Support for the Lodge's charitable activities.  | To prepare the applicant for future charitable contributions.   |

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| Ability to meet time and cost commitments. | To ensure that the applicant is able and willing to meet the commitments expected, in time and money.                          |
| Awareness of the normal progression.       | To check he knows of the normal progression through the three Craft degrees, taking office and Exaltation into the Royal Arch. |
| Any other information.                     | "Catch all" final questions.   |

### FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- The Chairman of the Interview Panel reports the result of the interview to the Lodge Committee and seeks its endorsement. The Lodge Committee need not meet for this purpose; the process can be completed by phone or email.
- The Lodge Secretary informs the applicant of the outcome of the interview.
- If all parties agree to accept the application, the applicant is now a candidate for Initiation.
- The sponsors prepare the candidate for Initiation (Step 7).
- Responsibility for co-ordinating the activities on the Pathway now passes from the Lodge Membership Officer to the Lodge Mentor, who allocates a Personal Mentor and introduces the candidate to him.
- The Lodge Secretary completes all administrative activities required for the admission of the candidate.

*Note: For ease of reading, throughout the Members' Pathway we refer to Provinces. All references to Provinces should be taken to apply equally to Metropolitan and District Grand Lodges / Chapters.*

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