

## Step 6: Interviewing the Applicant

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.**

It is suggested that the Interview Panel **should comprise of 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. The panel is chaired by a senior member of the Lodge chosen for his interview skills and experience. The Lodge Membership Officer (LMO) is likely to be a member of the panel. It is recommended at least one member of the Interview Panel be a Master Mason and at least one be a Past Master and that the applicant's sponsors attend to support him but are not involved in conducting the interview.

As a matter of guidance for the Interview Panel it is suggested that unless there are exceptional circumstances, the Lodge should arrange to conduct the interview before the sponsors propose and second the applicant in open Lodge.

It should be confirmed with the Lodge Membership Officer and the sponsors that the screening process has been completed (see Step 5) before sending a written invitation to the applicant with a clear explanation of the purpose of the interview and its three possible outcomes. Allocation of the interview topics should be distributed among members of the Interview Panel who will study all applicant details and prepare appropriate additional questions, taking heed of any comments or concerns received from Lodge members. They should 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.

An interview Panel should wear smart, although preferably not Masonic, dress, including a jacket; demonstrate Masonic principles in the manner the interview is conducted; use the example questions provided to choose suitable questions to fit the situation; 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.

If it becomes clear that the interview serves no purpose to continue then terminate it politely. 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. 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 (in Wiltshire this is the respective Divisional 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.

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.

- Whether he believes in a Supreme Being - A core requirement of membership is to believe in a Supreme Being. If there is any doubt on the definition of Supreme Being, sponsors should seek formal guidance via their Lodge Secretary.
- Overview of self and lifestyle (family, hobbies, work, charitable interests, other organisations). - 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 Masonic 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.
- 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.
- "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.