



Candidate Phone Screens

Sci.bio SOP

After you've [scanned candidate resumes](#), you'll start the phone screening process.

Purpose

Phone screens should be utilized as another opportunity to determine if candidates possess the must-have and preferable-to-have skills for a specific position. Questions in a phone screen are focused on the technical candidacy, so reserve complex interview questions (such as behavioral and situational ones) for in-person interviews. The primary objective is to move qualified applicants who could be ideal candidates for the role into the [next stage](#), which is often an in-person interview (depending on the company's preference). As a recruiter, phone screens help recognize a potential star or disqualify a poor fit.

Scheduling

Move the candidate from "First Contact" to "Phone Screen" in the Scibase Flowbar. Depending on if the candidate is *Active* or *Passive*, you will contact them accordingly. *Active Candidates* either applied or were referred to the position. *Passive Candidates* were sourced by the Recruiter, and after initial outreach, demonstrated interest in the role. It is important to keep in mind that passive candidates may need to be "sold" on the position. Don't assume that just because they answered your email or call pertaining to the job that they are automatically interested. You may need to provide a bit more insight and contextual information before vetting them on the phone.

Reach out to candidates in a consistent manner, typically using a template email (as shown below) and scheduling software such as [Calendly](#) or the Scibase Scheduling tool. Be sure to include the specific job title and the expected length of the phone call.

Active Candidate - Phone Screen Outreach

{{Candidate First Name}},

I hope this message finds you well! Thank you for your application to {{Client Name}}'s {{Job Title}}. I am interested in scheduling a phone conversation regarding your experience for this role. Will you be available for a phone call over the next few days?

I use an online scheduling tool, so please review my calendar availability [here](#) and schedule a 30-minute meeting that works best for you. Looking forward to speaking with you!

Passive Candidate - Phone Screen Outreach

{{Candidate First Name}},

I hope this message finds you well! I am excited to proceed with your candidacy for {{Client Name}}'s {{Job Title}}. Will you be available for a phone call over the next few days to further discuss your experience regarding this role?

I use an online scheduling tool, so please review my calendar availability [here](#) and schedule a 30-minute meeting that works best for you. Looking forward to speaking with you!

Each phone screen should be no longer than 30-minutes. Begin each call with an introduction to the company and the position, providing information not readily available on the client website and job description, and then proceed into questions from you to the applicant. Leave some time at the end of the call to address any questions the candidate may have, and remind them that they will have plenty of opportunities to ask questions later by email or during their on-site interview if they receive one.

Specific Criteria

Hiring Manager - Well-structured phone screens will save the Hiring Manager time, and provide the candidate a more cohesive picture of the role and company. It is therefore important to align with the Hiring Manager, prior to the call, on specific criteria regarding what to ask and what the ideal candidate profile looks like. This can often be done by benchmarking LinkedIn candidates who you think may be close to the mark.

Candidate - Before you dial, learn more about the candidate by analyzing the resume. Study the candidate's LinkedIn profile and read the candidate's resume in order to:

(1) highlight key areas that offer opportunities for growth and those that might be of concern to you; (2) calculate the duration of each project and research each company the person worked at; (3) research the candidate's current company and industry so as to ask informed, relevant questions during the call.

For the last step, Google the candidate's name to see what may come up! Make sure you are looking at the right person; it may help to put in the current or previous company name or locations.

FAQs

Be sure to take thorough notes during the phone screen; this will serve as an evaluative review for you, and a draft version of the candidate's potential presentation to

the Hiring Manager. Take advantage of the phone screen process by getting commonly asked questions out of the way; this will save the Hiring Manager time. Examples are:

- (1) Why are you leaving your current job? Why are you interested in this job?
- (2) Who did you report to?
- (3) What are some specific and relevant skills that you are “best” at?
- (4) Discuss specific skills or competencies that the Hiring Manager asks for the role.

In addition to assessing technical skills, pay mind to the context behind the answers.

- (1) Does the person speak with confidence?
- (2) Does the person express himself/herself in an intelligent and thoughtful manner?
- (3) Does the person focus on the question concisely and then offer to go deeper or address the more thoroughly?
- (4) Does the person have the capacity to communicate on a lateral level, to his/her superiors, and at all levels of an organization?

Today’s candidate is tomorrow’s client, so it is very important to treat all individuals with respect and professionalism. You cannot ask the following in a phone screen:

- (1) Race, Color, or National Origin.
- (2) Religion.
- (3) Sex, Gender Identity, or Sexual Orientation.
- (4) Pregnancy status.
- (5) Disability.
- (6) Age or Genetic Information.
- (7) Citizenship.
- (8) Salary Information (in MA and CA).
- (9) Marital Status or Number of Children.

Post-Phone Screen

If the candidate isn’t as well suited for the role, ask the candidate if you can stay in touch should any further opportunities arise, connect with the candidate on LinkedIn, and if comfortable, ask the candidate for referrals. Move the candidate from “Phone Screen” to “Disqualified” in the Scibase Flowbar.

If they are a good fit for the role, send their resume along with your revised phone screen notes to the Hiring Manager (an evaluative write-up) for further consideration. Move the candidate from "Phone Screen" to "Hiring Manager Review" in the Scibase Flowbar.