

## Checklist for Opening an Interview to Determine Refugee Status

1. **Introductions** – The Eligibility Officer (EO) should introduce himself and anyone else in the room (interpreter, for example) and explain who they are.
2. **Gender Issues** – If the applicant has requested a male or female EO and/or interpreter but the person of the requested sex is not available, the EO should explain this to the applicant and consider any factors indicating that the interview should not proceed under the existing arrangement.
3. **Interpretation** – The EO should confirm the language of interpretation and ensure that the applicant and the interpreter understand one another. The applicant should be advised to notify the EO immediately of any problems with the quality or accuracy of the interpretation.
4. **Explanation of the Interview Procedures** – The EO should explain the purpose of the interview and how it will proceed including the applicant's right to ask for breaks during the interview.
5. **Confidentiality** – The applicant should be reassured that all information disclosed in the interview will be treated as confidential and not shared with the authorities in the country of origin without the express consent of the applicant. The EO should explain that the interpreter is also under a duty to ensure the confidentiality of all information he learns in the course of the interview.
6. **Obligation to tell the Truth** – The applicant should be advised of the obligation to be truthful. If he does not know the answer to a question he should say so. If he does not understand a question, he should request a clarification. The EO should explain that misrepresentations during the interview may cast doubt about the truthfulness of other statements provided by the applicant. This, in turn, may have a bearing on the outcome of the application for protection.
7. **Duty to Cooperate** – The applicant should be informed of his duty to cooperate with the national refugee authority in all aspects of the procedure to examine the refugee claim.
8. **Applicant's Fitness to Proceed** – The EO should ask whether the applicant is physically and mentally fit to proceed with the interview. If the applicant indicates that he does not feel well, the EO should ask some follow up questions to assess the nature of the problem. It may be possible to proceed or the interview may have to be re-scheduled. The EO should be aware of applicants with vulnerabilities ( for example, survivors of torture, women with special needs, elderly asylum seekers, disabled persons, unaccompanied and separated minors, applicants who require medical assistance) and be prepared to accommodate them in a sensitive and effective manner.
9. **Opportunity to Question** – The applicant should be given an opportunity to ask questions before the interview begins.