Note Taking in the Employment Interview

Interview Note Taking
- Note taking in the employment interview involves the interviewer making written notes during the employment interview in relation to a candidate’s responses.

Benefits of Interview Note Taking
- Note taking in the interview can help interviewers:
  - Reduce the impact of memory decay
  - Aid in recall of important information
  - Increase consistency in ratings and increase reliability
  - Reduce rating disagreement or variance
  - Increase accurate recording of what is being said
  - Focus on responses
  - Avoid primacy and recency effects and other potential bias*
  - Demonstrate a sense of interest in the candidate
  - Stay alert
  - Reduce the influence of impression management by focusing on what is being said
  - Make and justify a candidate’s rating
  - Provide documentation for legal defensibility
  - Provide documentation to support future feedback and potential training needs

Guidelines for Interview Note Taking
- In order to ensure interviewers get the most out of note taking interviewers should:
  - Inform the candidate at the beginning of the interview that notes will be taken
  - Listen intently at what is being said
  - Take notes during the interview as the candidate is speaking versus at the end of the interview
  - Take notes in proximity of the interview questions (i.e. on a standardized form)
  - Avoid taking notes that contain, directly or indirectly, information identifying a candidate’s status under the Human Rights Code
  - Avoid notes that are subjective, false, offensive, impressions or opinions
  - Take notes that are detailed summaries of the candidates answers using bullet form when needed
  - Take notes that detail what is actually said
  - Take notes for behavioural based questions that ensure the situation, what the candidate said and did and the result is captured
  - Always ensure a hiring committee chair is determined, and all interview paperwork (including notes) is collected and stored in a safe and secure area for at least one year

*Primacy and Recency Effects – A tendency for interviewers to remember information provided at the beginning and at the ending of the interview better than the middle.

References: