

Recommended Best Practices for Search & Screening Committees

Roles and Procedures

- - position title - -

The role of the search and screening committee includes the following:

SEARCH role:

- Review the position description and announcement and suggest revisions as needed.
- Make recommendations as to where to advertise the position announcement. Be mindful of opportunities to reach diverse pools of candidates.
- Establish a timeline for the search with the guidance of the chair and consultant, when applicable.
- Seek out and suggest possible applicants for the position with a focus on development of a diverse pool of highly qualified candidates.
- Contact potential applicants, encourage them to apply and direct them to the search committee chair for specific questions about the position and/or search.
 - Determine what personal contacts should be made.
 - Determine what professional association meetings should be contacted for the purpose of distributing the position announcement.
- Assign tasks to search committee members such as making contacts with potential applicants.
- Search committee chair and/or consultant will send a message to potential candidates who have been nominated for the position and encourage them to apply.
- Develop a 'contact plan' among committee members to know who is talking with/to whom; have more than one person from the committee make contact with prospects to give multiple perspectives of the position and institution/unit.

SCREEN role:

- Review applicant materials using a matrix/rubric that lists required as well as preferred qualifications; use this assessment tool to assign a rating for each applicant.
- Prepare a set of questions related to the position to use with all applicants selected for preliminary interviews usually held via phone or web, e.g. Zoom or Skype.
- Participate in phone interviews, Zoom/Skype interviews, or confidential on/off campus interviews with applicants as an initial step in the 'screening' process.
- Screen those applicants who best meet the qualifications and duties/responsibilities of the position based on information known at this point in the screening process.
- Make calls to applicants' references.
 - Obtain permission from applicant to make calls to directed references as well as references who are not on the applicant's provided list (i.e., ask the applicant permission to call off the list to non-directed references).
 - Note: Reference calls are often completed once a list of top candidates is identified to help maintain confidentiality of the candidate pool.
- Make a recommendation to the appropriate hiring official (Dean/Provost/Vice President) as to which applicants should be invited to participate in an on-campus or online interview process.
- Assist with the development of an itinerary for the interview
- Develop a confidential candidate evaluation form to be used by committee members and unit/college representatives involved in the interviews to provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate.

- At the conclusion of the interviews, provide a non-ranked list of names, possibly including the strengths and weaknesses of each applicant.

ADDITIONAL roles:

- Volunteer as appropriate to assist during interview process (e.g., pick up at airport, take to a meal, escort to meetings, receptions, securing appointments, etc.).
- Meet as a committee with each applicant during the interview, if at all possible.
- Introduce candidate during group meetings and seminar(s), normally handled by the search committee chair.
- As an individual:
 - After campus interview, for each candidate make an individual, independent recommendation to the hiring official as to whether the candidate is acceptable or unacceptable for the position; provide comments on candidate's strengths and possible concerns.
 - While preparing your evaluation, avoid making statements that would be considered inappropriate; keep in mind the questions that are not allowed to be asked during an interview (e.g., related to age, family status, ethnicity, etc.) and avoid using such descriptors.

Communications:

- Committee chair will provide an update(s) on the status of the search to the department or unit which houses the position and others as requested by the hiring official.
- Be always mindful the search and screening processes are confidential, and information shall not be shared outside the committee, particularly without the consent of the applicant.
- Committee members should inform the chair of any communication with applicants or candidates to maintain the flow of information.
- Once a candidate has completed a visit, the hiring official will evaluate the information collected from confidential, candidate evaluation forms. They may wish to consult the committee chair and/or meet with the committee as a whole.
- Based on input received, the hiring official may determine the top candidate(s) will be invited for a follow-up visit.
- The hiring official determined a package to be extended as an offer to the candidate selected as the most acceptable/best fit for the position. The hiring official is in charge of making the offer on behalf of the institution/unit.
- At this time of negotiation, it is critical the terms of the offer remain confidential, as well as the candidate's name.
- The committee does not negotiate any terms of employment with the candidate. If a candidate contacts a committee member during the negotiation process, the member shall answer general questions about the position, unit and/or institution and refer the candidate to the chair(s) for additional information. The chair(s) will try to answer questions but cannot negotiate terms.
- If the negotiation process is not successful, the hiring official may reconvene with the chair, if requested, to select another suitable candidate for an offer.
- If the hiring official deems the remaining pool of interviewed candidates is not satisfactory, the committee will continue with the search, unless it is determined the search will be closed.
- The search committee remains in place until a suitable candidate is hired, that is unless the search process is closed or postponed.

Equal Employment Opportunity is **THE LAW**

Private Employers, State and Local Governments, Educational Institutions, Employment Agencies and Labor Organizations

Applicants to and employees of most private employers, state and local governments, educational institutions, employment agencies and labor organizations are protected under Federal law from discrimination on the following bases:

RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, SEX, NATIONAL ORIGIN

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, protects applicants and employees from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), or national origin. Religious discrimination includes failing to reasonably accommodate an employee's religious practices where the accommodation does not impose undue hardship.

DISABILITY

Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, protect qualified individuals from discrimination on the basis of disability in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment. Disability discrimination includes not making reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee, barring undue hardship.

AGE

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, protects applicants and employees 40 years of age or older from discrimination based on age in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment.

SEX (WAGES)

In addition to sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, as amended, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, as amended, prohibits sex discrimination in the payment of wages to women and men performing substantially equal work, in jobs that require equal skill, effort, and responsibility, under similar working conditions, in the same establishment.

GENETICS

Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 protects applicants and employees from discrimination based on genetic information in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment. GINA also restricts employers' acquisition of genetic information and strictly limits disclosure of genetic information. Genetic information includes information about genetic tests of applicants, employees, or their family members; the manifestation of diseases or disorders in family members (family medical history); and requests for or receipt of genetic services by applicants, employees, or their family members.

RETALIATION

All of these Federal laws prohibit covered entities from retaliating against a person who files a charge of discrimination, participates in a discrimination proceeding, or otherwise opposes an unlawful employment practice.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU BELIEVE DISCRIMINATION HAS OCCURRED

There are strict time limits for filing charges of employment discrimination. To preserve the ability of EEOC to act on your behalf and to protect your right to file a private lawsuit, should you ultimately need to, you should contact EEOC promptly when discrimination is suspected:

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), 1-800-669-4000 (toll-free) or 1-800-669-6820 (toll-free TTY number for individuals with hearing impairments). EEOC field office information is available at www.eeoc.gov or in most telephone directories in the U.S. Government or Federal Government section. Additional information about EEOC, including information about charge filing, is available at www.eeoc.gov.

Employers Holding Federal Contracts or Subcontracts

Applicants to and employees of companies with a Federal government contract or subcontract are protected under Federal law from discrimination on the following bases:

RACE, COLOR, RELIGION, SEX, NATIONAL ORIGIN

Executive Order 11246, as amended, prohibits job discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin, and requires affirmative action to ensure equality of opportunity in all aspects of employment.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, protects qualified individuals from discrimination on the basis of disability in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment. Disability discrimination includes not making reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee, barring undue hardship. Section 503 also requires that Federal contractors take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities at all levels of employment, including the executive level.

DISABLED, RECENTLY SEPARATED, OTHER PROTECTED, AND ARMED FORCES SERVICE MEDAL VETERANS

The Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. 4212, prohibits job discrimination and requires affirmative action to employ and advance in employment disabled veterans, recently separated veterans (within

three years of discharge or release from active duty), other protected veterans (veterans who served during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized), and Armed Forces service medal veterans (veterans who, while on active duty, participated in a U.S. military operation for which an Armed Forces service medal was awarded).

RETALIATION

Retaliation is prohibited against a person who files a complaint of discrimination, participates in an OFCCP proceeding, or otherwise opposes discrimination under these Federal laws.

Any person who believes a contractor has violated its nondiscrimination or affirmative action obligations under the authorities above should contact immediately:

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210, 1-800-397-6251 (toll-free) or (202) 693-1337 (TTY). OFCCP may also be contacted by e-mail at OFCCP-Public@dol.gov, or by calling an OFCCP regional or district office, listed in most telephone directories under U.S. Government, Department of Labor.

Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance

RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX

In addition to the protections of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance. Employment discrimination is covered by Title VI if the primary objective of the financial assistance is provision of employment, or where employment discrimination causes or may cause discrimination in providing services under such programs. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities which receive Federal financial assistance.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity which receives Federal financial assistance. Discrimination is prohibited in all aspects of employment against persons with disabilities who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job.

If you believe you have been discriminated against in a program of any institution which receives Federal financial assistance, you should immediately contact the Federal agency providing such assistance.



HUMAN RESOURCES

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Definitions

Conformity bias - Caused by group peer pressure.

Halo effect - We see one great thing about a person, and we let the halo-glow of that significant aspect affect our opinions of everything else about that person.

Horn effect - Direct opposite of the halo effect We see one bad thing about a person, and we let it cloud our opinions of their other attributes.

Contrast effect - Compare the skills and attributes of one candidate to those of another candidate.

Attribution bias - Make judgements and assumptions about why people behave in certain ways

Confirmation bias - When we make a judgment about another person and we subconsciously look for evidence to back up our own opinions of that person.

Cultural noise - A candidate answering questions based on information they think will get them the job – what they think the interviewer wants to hear.

First impression - Forming an entire assessment of a candidate based on the first few minutes of the interview.

Gut feeling - Relying on an intuitive feeling that the candidate is a good, or bad, fit for the position without looking at whether or not the individual's qualifications meet the criteria established.

Leniency - Evaluating a candidate less critically, giving them a higher rating than is warranted and justifying it with an explanation.

Negative emphasis - Allowing a small amount of negative information to outweigh the positive information.

Similar to me (also known as affinity bias) - Favorably rating a candidate due to their personal or professional similarity to the interviewer, causing the interviewer to overlook negative aspects about the candidate.

Stereotyping - Assuming a candidate has specific traits or will perform a certain way because they are a member of a group or based other characteristics such as appearance, race, gender, age, etc.

Diversity - Variety of different and unique identities, characteristics, experiences, and perspectives.

Equity - Making available to everyone what they need to succeed by increasing access, resources, and opportunities for all – especially for those who are underrepresented and have been historically disadvantaged.

Inclusion - Creates a welcoming culture where differences are celebrated and everyone is valued, respected and able to reach their full potential.

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS FOR FACULTY PROFESSOR/DEPARTMENT HEAD

	Required Qualifications			Preferred Qualifications				Candidate Rating			
Last Name/First Name (Please list candidates in the order they appear on the Cornerstone, the applicant tracking site)	Earned Doctorate in Human Development and Family Science, and/or a related discipline	A strong record of promoting high quality teaching, research, and/or extension/community engagement	Demonstrated effective leadership and management of multidisciplinary programs and people	History of promoting ethical behavior and societal responsibility	A thorough understanding and appreciation of the land grant mission of the Department of Human Development and Family Science	Demonstrated commitment to promotion of diversity and inclusion within every aspect of the department; experience in recruitment, retention, and support of diverse faculty, staff, and students.	Demonstrated ability to foster a departmental culture wherein diverse faculty, staff, and students thrive	NOTES	HIGHLY QUALIFIED	QUALIFIED	LESS QUALIFIED

ASSESSMENT OF APPLICANTS FOR STAFF ACADEMIC ADVISOR II

	Required Qualifications		Preferred Qualifications			Candidate Rating			
<p align="center">Last Name/First Name</p> <p align="center">(Please list candidates in the order they appear on the Cornerstone, the applicant tracking site)</p>	Earned Master's degree	One - three years of experience in a related setting	Earned bachelor's and/or master's degree in a discipline represented in the College of Arts and Sciences	Demonstrated experience related to academic advising	Demonstrated ability to foster a culture wherein diverse students thrive	NOTES	HIGHLY QUALIFIED	QUALIFIED	LESS QUALIFIED

Interview Questions You Can and Can't Ask

	Permissible Inquiries	Inquiries to be Avoided
1. Arrest Record	None	Number and kind(s) of arrests.
2. Conviction Record	Inquiry into conviction, if job related.	Any inquiry about conviction, unrelated to job requirements.
3. Availability for work on weekends and/or evenings	If asked of all applicants and it is a business necessity for the person to be available to work weekends and/or evenings.	Any inquiry about religious observance.
4. Child Care	None	Inquiry into child care arrangements of female applicants.
5. Citizenship	Whether applicant is lawfully eligible to be employed in this country.	Whether applicant is a U.S. citizen.
6. Creed or Religion	None, except where religion is a bona fide occupational qualification.	Applicant's religious affiliation, church, parish, or religious holidays observed.
7. Credit Records	None, unless job related.	Inquiries about charge accounts, bank accounts, etc.
8. Family Status	Whether applicant has responsibilities or commitments that prevent him/her from meeting work schedules if asked of all applicants regardless of gender.	Marital status, number, and age of children, spouse's job, etc.
9. Disability	Whether applicant can physically perform the job functions in question.	To ask applicant to explain his/her disability.
10. Height and Weight	None, unless job related.	Any inquiry unrelated to job requirements.
11. Military Service	Military experience or training.	Reason for discharge.
12. Language	Languages applicant speaks or writes fluently, if job related.	Language used by applicant at home, or how applicant acquired the ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language.
13. Name	Whether applicant has worked under a different name.	The original name of an applicant whose name has been legally changed or the national origin of an applicant's name.
14. National Origin	None, except whether or not applicant is legally eligible to work in the U.S.	Applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, parentage, nationality of applicant, or applicant's parent or spouse.

	Permissible Inquiries	Inquiries to be Avoided
15. Organizations	Applicant's membership in professional organizations if job related.	All clubs, social fraternities, societies, organizations, or lodges of which an applicant belongs.
16. Photographs	None, except after hiring.	Photograph with application or after interview, but before hiring.
17. Pregnancy	None.	Any inquiry into pregnancy, medical history of pregnancy, or family plans.
18. Race or Color	None	Applicant's race or color of applicant's skin.
19. References	Names of character or work related references.	Name of applicant's pastor or religious leaders.
20. Gender	None, except where sex is an occupational qualification.	Any inquiry except where occupational qualification.
21. Vaccination Status	OSU requires all employees (Stillwater, Tulsa, CHS) to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 unless a medical or religious accommodation is requested and approved. Only provide a yes or no answer and do not provide any additional information: if hired, will you be able to meet this requirement?	Questions that result in the applicant revealing information regarding their disability status or religious affiliation.



Interviewing Over a Meal

Interviewing over a meal can be an effective assessment method in observing candidates in a more natural and relaxed environment revealing things about a candidate you may have not learned in a formal interview. This interview method can assess conversational and interpersonal skills to determine how well the candidate would fit in with the organization.

1. **Follow the same rules for standard interviews** - different scenery doesn't mean different rules apply. Even if the candidate brings up topics that are typically taboo – like religion and politics – refrain from commenting or use it to pivot to another topic that you are comfortable talking about.
2. **Remember your biases** - before making a hiring decision, review your personal biases. Ensure your decisions are based upon sound and credible business decisions.
3. **Keep your conversation topics appropriate** - appropriate topics to ask about or talk about include:

CAREER BACKGROUND	EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
THE RESTAURANT	THE FOOD
SPORTS	TRAVEL
CURRENT EVENTS	THE WEATHER
FILM OR TV	

4. **Refrain from drinking alcohol**
5. **The meal should be used not only as a decision-making tool, but as a way to draw in the right people** - it helps you find candidates who match your company culture, and it demonstrates what your culture is and that hiring people who fit is a priority.
6. **It is also important to have an organized process for the team to come to a decision** - this should start immediately after the meal, when the candidate has left, while memories are fresh. Consider using interview scorecards for consistency in your practices.

VIRTUAL INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT TOOL

Applicant Name: _____

Evaluator _____

1= Greatly exceeds expectations; 2=Fully meets expectations; 3= Does not meet expectations

EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES	1	2	3	NOTES
Initial impression: professional appearance, appropriate dress, sense of dignified and sophisticated person, charisma and polish of person.				
Articulateness: vocabulary, intelligent flow of conversation, ideas well organized and clearly presented, spontaneity of answers, and getting to the point of the question without being either too lengthy and/or too brief in answers.				
Depth and content of responses: does the candidate really understand the issue being discussed and are the answers ones that confirm experience with those issues?				
The candidate has thought about Oklahoma State and the special identity it has: answers were specific (if they indeed needed to be specific) versus rather generic and non-specific responses, and the candidate shows genuine interest in Oklahoma State University.				
Interpersonal skills: sense of comfort in this group of “strangers,” which a search committee is, and ability to deal with the “unknown” in this setting.				
Evidence of leadership skills suitable to be effective in this position.				
Notes:				
Totals for each column ----->				

Total Score _____

Search Committee Checklist

Pre-Search Activities

- Review [Best Practices for Faculty Search and Screen Committees at Oklahoma State University](#)
- Attend training on how to hire available online through the [learning management system](#) (a customized, instructor-led option is available through the [talent acquisition team](#))
- Identify search committee members
- Modify or create the [job description](#) (link requires user to have PeopleAdmin access)
- Complete and submit a [Request to Staff Position](#) form for approval
- Create requisition in [OSU Jobs](#) (requires Cornerstone manage requisition access)
- Determine [advertising](#) (optional) – if advertising position, attach ad to the OSU Jobs requisition

Search Committee Activities

- Develop recruitment plan
 - Hold search committee meeting to establish timeline, prepare screening tool and interview questions
- Screen qualified applicants
 - Does the applicant meet minimum qualifications?
 - Utilize the applicant statuses in OSU Jobs appropriately
- Select candidates for interview
- Contact [OSU Human Resources](#) to remove the listing from the career site (optional)

Interview Candidates

- Follow a standardized [interview](#) process
 - Ask the same question of each applicant, ask questions related to job duties and competencies, avoid unacceptable inquiries
- Assess the suitability of each candidate interviewed for the position

Pre-Offer

- Determine finalist(s)
- Contact [references](#)

Offer/Post-Offer

- Finalize and extend the offer to the candidate
- Contact candidates who were not selected
- Hold final search committee meeting to evaluate the process
- Provide documents related to the search and screen process to the hiring official
- Prepare for the [employee's first day](#)

Adjustments to the order of search activities may occur based on the preference of the department. Maintain all records regarding recruitment for a minimum of three years. Recruitment records include the job announcement, interview notes, reference and other actions taken during the recruitment period.



HUMAN RESOURCES

The Search for OSU Talent

Search Committee Members

- Recruit a qualified & diverse pool of candidates
- Identify the objective evaluation criteria
- Periodically step back, evaluate yourself & realign to the criteria
- Conduct structured interviews using standardized, sequential questions
- Collaborate with committee members to ensure a fair & inclusive search process
- Maintain confidentiality during the search & after the search
- Collect all related search materials & provide to the hiring official (retain records for 3 years)

Typical Search Committee Timeline



Screen



Interview



Contact References*



Offer Letter



Criminal Background Check



Contact Candidates Not Selected



Onboarding Plan and Final Committee Meeting

**Adjustments to when the committee will contact references may be made to fit the hiring needs of the department.*

Resources Available

- [Online courses](#) to deepen your knowledge on hiring practices and unconscious bias
- [OSU Human Resources](#) Talent Acquisition
- [Recruiting Resources](#) for Search Committees found on the Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute at University of Wisconsin-Madison

Oklahoma State University Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

"At Oklahoma State University, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) matter. Providing a wide range of ways to understand and engage with the world, identifying opportunities and creating solutions are core to our mission as a land-grant university. We fulfill our mission and enrich our campus community by maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment that appreciates, values and fosters a sense of belonging for all." [Read More](#)

Questions? Contact Us:

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