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Illinois State University

Search Committee Training
Faculty Searches

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Training Requirements

Who

- Anyone involved with evaluating applicants
- Anyone involved with interviewing applicants
- Anyone who will be interacting with applicants

When

- Before reviewing any application materials
- Before preparing any interview questions
- Before participating in any interviews
- Before interacting with any applicants

How Often

- Annual training required
- Periodic review highly encouraged

Provide to HR

- List of all search committee members (chair, support staff, and members)
- List of anyone who will be involved with any of the activities listed above

Search Committee Goal

Illinois State University is committed to achieving academic excellence through faculty and staff diversity and equal opportunity. A fair recruitment and selection process designed to promote diversity and equity should begin with the identification of the best possible candidates, proceed with a careful selection process, and end with the successful hiring of the very best candidate.

Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action

Illinois State University, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding affirmative action, nondiscrimination, and anti-harassment. Illinois State University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, order of protection, gender identity and expression, ancestry, age, marital status, disability, genetic information, unfavorable military discharge, or status as a veteran in employment, educational programs and activities, or admissions.

Forming a Search Committee

- Committee members should be individuals who understand the requirements of the position and who are committed to the goals of the Department/School, College, and University.
- Ideally, the search committee should be composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds in order to provide a variety of perspectives.
- Consider including a mixture of tenure-track faculty, non-tenure track faculty, staff, and individuals from other areas of the University.

Search Committee Roles

- **Chair**
 - Communicate timeline and expectations
 - Organize interview questions
 - Lead discussions and interviews
- **Committee Members**
 - Review all candidates fairly and equally
 - Provide professional feedback
 - Make selection recommendations
- **Contact Person**
 - Ideally a person outside of the search committee who plays an impartial role and does not share irrelevant candidate information with the search committee
 - Schedule meetings and interviews
 - Answer logistics questions from candidates

Search Committee Responsibilities

- Commit to time and effort requirements.
- Ensure equal employment opportunity for all candidates.
- Develop a clear understanding of the position's requirements.
- Be proactive in recruiting diverse, qualified applicants to ensure the applicant pool reflects the diversity of the available workforce.
- Adhere to the evaluation criteria stated in the position posting and evaluate candidates according to job-related criteria, without regard to stereotypes or assumptions regarding ability or disability.

Search Committee Responsibilities Continued

- Maintain confidentiality throughout and after the recruitment process.
- Maintain consistency throughout the search process.
- Maintain the highest standards of professional conduct.
- Mitigate unconscious bias.

Search Committee Charge

- The hiring authority or committee chair should define the expectations of the search committee before any applicant review is conducted.
- The charge should be presented to the committee verbally and accompanied with a written copy that can be referenced throughout the search process.
- The charge should clearly describe the committee's:
 - Timeline
 - Budget considerations
 - Vision for the position
 - Final recommendation details and format (ranked/unranked, number of finalists to present, list strengths and weaknesses, etc.)

Confidentiality

- All information about the candidates, including their identities, and the search process must be kept strictly confidential by all search committee members **both during and after** the completion of the search.
- If the finalists will be publicly announced, please work with HR to ensure only allowable information is released.
- Often during the search, the committee may be approached by colleagues requesting information about the search.
 - No quantifiable or descriptive information can be shared. For example, you may not reveal the number of applicants.
 - Acceptable responses include “The search process is progressing nicely,” or “All information about the search is confidential and kept within the committee.”

Consistency

- Screening and evaluation criteria must be applied consistently for all candidates.
- Committee must gather the same job-related information for each candidate.
- Each interview experience should include the same opportunities for all candidates.
 - If a Skype interview is offered to a candidate in lieu of a telephone interview, it must be offered to all candidates.
 - Ask each candidate the same, full set of interview questions in the same manner.
 - Lodging/transportation/food/campus or community tours – If offered to one candidate, it is best practice to offer to all candidates at that stage of the interview process. You may extend the same courtesy to local candidates, although it is not required.
 - The type and amount of contact with search committee members, the hiring authority, and constituency groups must be consistent for all candidates at each round.

Professionalism

You are marketing ISU to the candidates just as much as the candidates are marketing themselves to you.

- Maintain a professional image throughout the entire search process.
- Dress professionally.
- Be respectful of other committee members' and candidates' time.
- Refrain from non-interview related use of cell phones, laptops, tablets, etc. during the interview process. If you plan on taking notes on an electronic device, explain that to the candidate at the beginning.
- Portray positive body language.
- Remain engaged throughout the entire interview and post-interview discussion process.
- Do not discuss any aspect of the search outside of the search committee (e.g. social media, e-mail, break-room, etc.)

Unconscious Bias

- Unconscious bias refers to stereotypes formed outside of conscious awareness.
- Research has shown that most people hold some form of unconscious bias as a result of our natural tendency to make associations that help organize our social worlds.
- Research has repeatedly demonstrated that unconscious bias can influence hiring decisions if not consciously mitigated.
- In addition to taking the steps outlined on the following slide, we encourage search committee members to watch the presentation linked here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLjFTHTgEVU&t=61s> (Brian Welle, Director of People Analytics at Google)

Mitigating Unconscious Bias

- Commit to a specific set of evaluation criteria before reviewing any application materials and consistently apply all criteria to all candidates.
- Spend sufficient time evaluating each applicant. Biases often emerge when evaluators are under time pressure.
- Do not depend too heavily on only one element of the application (e.g. resume/cv, references, cover letter, etc.).
- Use an inclusion rather than exclusion selection strategy while evaluating candidates. Inclusion strategies determine who meets the criteria rather than who does not.
- Clearly document the quantifiable, job-related reason(s) for non-selection or retention of a candidate.
- Use structured interviews, in which the same set of predetermined questions are asked of every candidate.

Responsible Use of Google and Social Media Searches

- Internet searches on candidates are likely to expose the researcher to protected class information (e.g. gender, race, marital/family status, age, disabilities, religious beliefs, medical history, etc.) that cannot be used in hiring decisions.
 - It is nearly impossible to forget this information once obtained and can easily lead to non-job related biases in the hiring process.
- It is good practice to have the Search Committee Chair or designee conduct this type of research to avoid exposure to protected class information.
- Use of internet research on candidates should be used with caution and applied consistently.
 - If you search one candidate, search all candidates.
 - Search for the same type of information on all candidates.

Responsible Use of Google and Social Media Searches

- Only focus on topics directly related to the candidate's ability to perform the job successfully. Permissible search topics are:
 - Credentials
 - Educational information
 - Articles written
 - Awards won
 - News stories involving the candidate
 - Communication skills
 - Work ethic
 - Ability to work as part of a team

Conflict of Interest

- A committee member should excuse him/herself from evaluating a candidate if prior professional or personal experience with the candidate will affect the member's ability to provide an unbiased, objective evaluation.
 - Exclusion from the evaluation of one candidate, does not require full removal from the committee.
- A committee member is not allowed to also serve as a reference for a candidate. If a committee member is listed as a reference, the committee can ask the candidate for an additional reference.
- **Please seriously consider potential conflicts of interest before agreeing to evaluate candidates.** If in doubt about whether a conflict of interest exists, contact HR.

Candidate Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty Searches

1. Screen applicants.
2. Document the “non-selection” reasons for all applicants that will not be interviewed on applicant spreadsheet provided by HR.
3. Obtain approval of phone interview list and not-selected list from the Department Chair/School Director (make sure to include all applicants in one of these two lists).
4. Department Chair/School Director should obtain approval from Dean prior to scheduling telephone/skype interviews. Please copy Human Resources on the request and the approval.

Candidate Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty Searches

5. Conduct telephone/Skype interviews.
6. Perform initial reference checks, if desired.
7. Document the “non-selection” reasons for all applicants that will not be invited for on-campus interviews on applicant spreadsheet.
8. Repeat the approval process before scheduling on-campus interviews (Department Chair/School Director and Dean approvals).
9. Conduct on-campus interviews.
10. Perform final reference checks (if needed).

Candidate Review Process for Tenure-Track Faculty Searches

11. Department Chair/School Director must obtain approval from their Dean prior to making a verbal offer to the top candidate.
12. Upon request, Human Resources can review offer letters.
13. Obtain approval of written offer letter from the Dean, and Office of the Provost.
14. Send approved offer letter to the top candidate.
15. Send Human Resources the signed offer letter and any other necessary hiring documents (located in the Faculty Search Committee Handbook).

Applicant/Candidate Screening

- The selection criteria and scoring process must be established before reviewing any applicant materials.
 - Match criteria to job description
 - Must be objective, nondiscriminatory, and directly related to job performance.
 - Develop and agree on ranking and weighting of evaluation criteria and method of evaluation.
- Selection criteria must be applied consistently to each applicant.
- Applicants must meet all advertised minimum requirements to remain in the applicant pool.

Developing Interview Questions

- Interview questions must be clearly job-related and designed to help the search committee determine which candidates have the training, experience, skills and ability to best perform the essential functions of the job.
- Inquiries designed to elicit information about race, color, ancestry, age, gender, marital/family status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or arrest and court records must be avoided unless based upon a bona fide occupational qualification.
- Review the [Pre-Employment Inquiry Guide](#) for specific examples of permissible and non-permissible inquiries.
- Inquiries about salary history are prohibited by law and must not be asked.

Refer to the Faculty Search Committee Guide for more information about developing interview questions.

Interviewing

- Effective interviewing depends primarily on three basic skills:
 - Understanding the nature of the position being filled
 - Asking the right questions
 - Fully listening to the applicant's responses
- Each committee member should make attending every interview a priority. If an interview must be missed, the committee member should refrain from evaluating and voting on the particular candidate they missed unless the interview was recorded and the committee member views the missed interview.
- If you plan on recording the interview (video or audio), you must follow these steps:
 - When arranging the interview, request the candidate's written consent (email is allowable) to a recorded interview.
 - Ask for verbal consent to record the interview at the beginning of the interview.
 - If recording one interview, you must record all interviews.
 - Retain the recordings at the conclusion of the search according to retention guidelines outlined in the Faculty Hiring Guide.

Interviewing

- Reminders
 - Develop a list of standard questions and give all applicants the opportunity to answer all prepared questions.
 - Follow-up or probing questions to seek clarification on a previous answer or the candidate's resume/vita are allowed.
 - Review the [Pre-Employment Inquiry Guide](#) as a refresher before conducting each interview.
 - Do not ask about a candidate's salary history.
- The following reasonable accommodations language must be included in the information sent to candidates prior to interviews:

"If you are an individual with a disability and need a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or other state or federal law you may request an accommodation by contacting the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access at 309-438-3383."

Interviewing

- Describe the requirements of the position at the beginning of the interview. Make sure the candidate understands exactly what the position will entail and what the requirements are.
- If a candidate asks immigration (e.g., visa sponsorship) questions, explain that the committee cannot address those questions and that if offered the position, they should pose the questions to Human Resources.
- No interaction with a candidate is off record.
 - When engaging in small-talk, you must still follow the permissible/non-permissible inquiry guidelines. Do not ask about children, spouses, etc.
 - Throughout the entire search process, politely redirect the conversation if a candidate brings up a non-permissible topic.

Market ISU

- You are marketing ISU just as much as candidates are marketing themselves.
- Schedule time in the interview to describe ISU's mission, vision, and values.
<https://strategicplan.illinoisstate.edu/>
- Showcase ISU's culture and what it means to be a part of the Redbird family.
- Share with the candidates information about ISU benefits and the surrounding community:
 - Prospective Employees: <http://hr.illinoisstate.edu/prospective/>
 - Community: <http://www.visitbn.org/>
- HR offers recruitment packets – ask your Employment Consultant

Recruit to Mission

- When evaluating candidates, it can be useful to assess the degree to which they fit the mission, vision, and values of the University, as well as the Department/School.
- Aligning assessment criteria with the University's and unit's goals and strategic plans will help ensure selection of a candidate with great potential for success.
- This should not be a separate assessment, but rather a consideration that is embedded in all aspects of the search process.
- You can incorporate criteria based on observable, measurable, stated, and documented factors while maintaining a fair and equitable search.
- Search committee members must define the organization's or unit's values, goals, and practices, and agree on evaluation criteria before reviewing materials.
- **The assessment must not be used to screen for protected class criteria.**

Reference Checks

- May be conducted before or after video-conferencing/on-campus interviews.
- Must occur prior to offer of employment.
- If any of the provided references are unavailable or deemed unsuitable, you are allowed to ask the candidate to provide additional references.
- Secondary (off-list) references may only be contacted after a candidate has been determined to be a finalist and permission has been granted by the candidate.
- Questions must be clearly job related and directly relevant to a candidate's potential success in the position.

Retention of Search Documents

- Retain the following for **five years** in a secured, locked location within the department:
 - Evaluation and reference check forms
 - Correspondence between committee members and candidate
 - Anything in hard copy form from the candidate
 - Any audio or video recordings of interviews
 - Interview materials and notes made by committee members

Contact Information

Human Resources

Faculty Employment Consultants

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Thank you!

The University acknowledges the extra time and attention serving on a search committee requires as you work to ensure your colleagues are some of the finest. Your participation in this important process is highly valued and we thank you for your service.

Gladly
we learn
and teach

A large, light gray watermark of the University of Illinois seal is centered in the background. The seal is circular and contains the text "ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY" around the top and "1857" on the sides. In the center of the seal is a shield with a sun, a sheaf of wheat, and a lamp of knowledge.

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