



Pennsylvania's
STATE SYSTEM
of Higher Education

Search Advocacy Handbook

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office
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No aspect of the Search Advocacy Handbook is intended to replace or circumvent a university's mandatory search committee training requirements. This is provided as an optional resource to all PASSHE Universities.

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Exclusion is derived from fear, ignorance, and power, while inclusion is derived from love, compassion, and respect. ~Michelle Emsom

Introduction

Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education is committed to inclusive excellence. In 2020, the Office of the Chancellor established the system’s first [Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (Office of DEI). The Office of DEI works closely with leadership throughout PASSHE to promote policies and practices that enable all community members to succeed. The Search Advocate Program reflects and continues this work and commitment to collaboration and shared governance.

In 2023, approximately forty faculty and staff participated in Oregon State University’s (OSU) Search Advocate Program, a sixteen-hour, four-week program that advances PASSHE’s commitment to faculty diversity – one of its five systemwide DEI Strategic Priorities. A smaller working group was assembled later in 2023 to determine how best to tailor OSU’s training and other research and best practices to meet the unique needs of PASSHE and its ten universities. The group is responsible for the guidance outlined in this handbook. It includes the following faculty and staff members, who are prepared to serve as Search Advocate Consultants across PASSHE. Having completed OSU’s intensive training program, they have access to an expanded body of resources, including a suite of checklists, which will further assist universities in their search efforts.

PASSHE Search Advocate Consultants

Search Consultants volunteered to participate in developing this Handbook and are eager to support search advocacy capacity building throughout the State System. Questions can be directed to dei@passhe.edu, Subject Line: [Search Advocacy](#).

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This handbook is the culmination of months of dedication and work by many. It is designed and organized in ways intended to comprehensively strengthen faculty and staff searches that include the following components/stages:

- ✓ The Search Advocate Process
- ✓ Factors Impacting the Search Process
- ✓ The Legal and Regulatory Environment
- ✓ The Search Committee
- ✓ Position Description
- ✓ Screening Criteria and Strategies
- ✓ Interviewing Strategies
- ✓ Reference Checking
- ✓ Final Evaluation
- ✓ Onboarding and Integration

While this Handbook reflects a systemwide commitment to policies and practices that reflect PASSHE's mission, vision, and values, it is necessary to acknowledge each university's uniqueness, including its organizational structures and cultures. These realities will inevitably impact faculty and staff search processes across PASSHE and within universities.

Another important note impacting search processes is collective bargaining agreements/memoranda of understanding. These documents establish specific rights and responsibilities that may impact searches and appointments.

PASSHE recognizes individual and collective successes as connected to inclusive excellence, which depends on the full spectrum of faculty, staff, and student diversity. The guidance offered in this handbook is intended to support related mission, vision, and values-driven efforts.

Finally, this guidance was designed to respond specifically to PASSHE's and universities' needs, regulatory requirements, and other contextual factors. Search Advocates are not compliance officers. They have been prepared to advance PASSHE's mission, vision, and faculty and staff diversity goals. Search Advocates collaborate and align with the Offices of Human Resources, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the Office of Legal Counsel, and others as deemed institutionally appropriate.

Important Note: No aspect of the search advocate guidance is meant to replace or circumvent a university's mandatory search committee training requirements. This is provided as an additional resource to all PASSHE Universities.

Search Advocate Guidance Overview

The Search Advocacy Handbook represents a systemwide collaboration to strengthen universities' capacity to prepare and assist search advocates and to support equitable recruitment and selection processes, including the experiences of prospective members of PASSHE and its universities' communities. The effectiveness and impact of such efforts necessitate the examination of myriad topics, including implicit and structural bias research and practice, the strategic importance of faculty diversity and inclusion, and the range of strategies that advance equitable search and selection processes.

The guidance outlined in this Handbook is modeled closely after OSU's Search Advocacy Program (Search Advocate Foundations Workshop © 2009-2023) and the continuation of a pilot program where approximately forty PASSHE and university faculty and staff participated in OSU's Search Advocacy Program. The guidance was also influenced by the work of other universities, including the University of California, Los Angeles, Stockton University, and Rutgers-New Brunswick. The guidance is anticipated to evolve as part of building the culture desired and needed to promote faculty and staff diversity.

Search Advocacy Efforts are Mission-Driven

PASSHE was established on July 1, 1983. However, the universities that comprise PASSHE have a much longer history. The mission of PASSHE is as relevant today as it was at its founding: to provide high-quality education at the lowest possible cost to students; to increase educational attainment in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Commonwealth); to prepare students at the undergraduate and graduate levels for professional and personal success in their lives; and to contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of Pennsylvania's communities, the Commonwealth, and the nation.

The universities combine to enroll the largest number of Pennsylvania residents among all four-year colleges and universities in the Commonwealth. With 85,000 degree-seeking students and thousands more enrolled in certificates and other career-development programs, PASSHE is vital to Pennsylvania's economy.

According to PASSHE's [DEI Data Dashboard](#), in 2022 more than five thousand faculty members were employed across PASSHE's universities to offer more than 2,300 degree and certificate programs in more than 530 academic areas. Approximately 480 of these faculty are from underrepresented minority groups (URMs), which include American Indian and Alaska Native; Black/African American, Hispanic, and two or more races. Faculty, Staff, and Student Diversity is a systemwide strategic priority, which was affirmed during the April 2021 Board of Governors Meeting.

This Search Advocate Guidance aligns with PASSHE's mission and strategic priorities, which include increasing faculty diversity and building an infrastructure to support this systemwide goal.

Search Advocacy Mission and Values

PASSHE and its universities' commitment to building an infrastructure for search advocacy aligns with the Board of Governor's DEI Statement of Affirmation, which affirms its steadfast commitment to ensuring PASSHE operates from a foundation of values that:

- fosters the success of all students, faculty, and staff.
- expects that our universities be places where human dignity is never compromised, and every student that enrolls, an employee or contractor we engage is welcomed and has access to the support they need to succeed; and
- affirms its ability to expand knowledge, challenge assumptions, improve lives, strengthen communities, and disrupt generational poverty.

Faculty and staff diversity is a prerequisite for breathing life into PASSHE's foundational values.

PASSHE's search advocacy efforts aim to improve diversity, reason, and equity in our faculty and staff search and selection processes. OSU has identified seven values that support and inform the search advocate role:

1. Collaboration – working together towards a common goal.
2. Curiosity—letting go of certainty, seeking to understand the unfamiliar, and resisting the rush to judgment.
3. Empathy – imagining what another might think or feel without imposing one's perspective.
4. Equity – ensuring that each person has what they need to succeed, addressing continued barriers to a level playing field.
5. Hospitality – welcoming others with respect, regard, and sensitivity to their needs and desires.
6. Inclusion – demonstrating value for each person, respecting their differences, supporting full involvement, and ensuring all can reach their potential.
7. Respect – honoring, admiring, and treating others courteously.

Use of Pronouns: The Search Advocate Handbook uses singular “they/them/theirs” pronouns so that all members of PASSHE and its universities may see themselves reflected and affirmed through our language.

Values, Role, Characteristics, and Requirements:

Values

- Accountability. We are committed stewards of our stakeholders' loyalty and goodwill and the human, fiscal, and physical resources entrusted to us.
- Diversity. We recognize that diversity and inclusive excellence cannot be decoupled, and together, they enhance our ability to create and maintain vibrant communities that include teaching, service, and research.
- Integrity. We practice honesty, freedom, truth, and integrity in everything.
- Respect. We treat each other with civility, dignity, and respect.
- Social responsibility. We contribute to the Commonwealth's and society's intellectual, cultural, and economic progress and well-being to the maximum possible extent.

Role

As an external advisor to the search process, the search advocate engages with other search committee members throughout the search and selection process. This should begin with a meeting between the hiring manager, search chair, and search advocate to establish expectations, discuss the committee charge, and develop collaborative working arrangements that affirm PASSHE and its universities' commitment to inclusive excellence and faculty and staff diversity.

Building from the hiring authority's charge to the committee, the advocate encourages members to go beyond "the status quo" in developing positions, defining expansive screening criteria, recruiting excellent and diverse candidates, screening inclusively, interviewing effectively, checking references, comprehensively evaluating finalists, and connecting with the new hire. Throughout the process, the search advocates advocate for the search process and help committees recognize, avoid, and/or mitigate unintentional cognitive and structural biases.

Advocates do not substitute their judgment for the judgment of committee members; they ask questions to help them test their thinking and recognize the implications of assumptions, strategies, and practices under consideration. Advocates promote equity, inclusion, diversity, and justice by sharing information, recommending inclusive and equitable strategies, and supporting full committee and stakeholder participation.

Characteristics

To be effective in this complex and consequential role, search advocates bring essential strengths to their work with search committees. In addition to their training and experience, effective search advocates are:

- Committed to equity, inclusion and belonging, diversity, and social justice.
- Fair and open-minded with sound judgment.
- Curious, thoughtful, persistent, and respectful.
- Experienced collaborators, strong communicators, and skillful facilitators.
- Able to cultivate a blame-free environment to discuss implicit bias.
- Respected and trusted by colleagues/peers.
- Experienced in search and selection.
- Able to set aside personal interests to work for the good of the college/unit and the university and
- Available/willing to devote time to learning, committee participation, and consultation for approximately two yearly searches.

Faculty and staff with minoritized identities (historically excluded and underrepresented minorities) have willingly contributed their understanding, awareness, and commitment to search committees in support of equity, inclusion, and diversity. Since many PASSHE universities are predominantly White institutions, this may have unintentionally created a workload inequity. However, we hope that search advocates can help equalize that workload. You need not have a minoritized identity to serve; the search advocate role is open to advocates of any race, ethnicity, gender, or other identity affiliation. Each advocate brings their commitment and understanding to the role. In addition, search advocates are expected to continuously learn about the problems faced by members of minoritized groups in institutions of higher education and the search and selection process.

Requirements

The role of a search advocate is complex and requires appropriate preparation and development. Therefore, completing formal training is a prerequisite for designation as a search advocate. The following suggestions are offered to help guide the selection of advocates:

- If the search is for a Provost's initiated position, the advocate should be a tenured associate or full professor.
- If the search is for an assistant, associate, or full professor (tenure-track), the search advocate is often an associate or full professor. However, advocates in other employment categories are also successful in this role.
- If searching for a leadership position, the search advocate should be a mid- to upper-level administrator/leader, tenured associate, or full professor.
- If the search is for an advisor or other position significantly impacting the student experience, the search advocate is typically any ranked or professional faculty member appropriate to the search.
- If the search is for any other position, the advocate may hold any rank, position, or classification.

An essential aspect of the advocate's role is to ensure that diverse perspectives are present at every stage of the process. The advocate needs to avoid potential or perceived conflicts of interest and minimize the impact of considerations that might limit their abilities to discharge the advocate's responsibilities fully. Advocates are most effective when they are relatively unfamiliar with the position being filled, as they are more likely to ask questions that might not occur to an organizational insider. Therefore, advocates should only serve on search committees outside their departments/work units and when they are not stakeholders of the position. In the case of an academic faculty search, the advocate's academic home is usually in a different department or even a different college; in the case of a leadership search, the advocate often comes from a different college or administrative unit.

The Search Advocate Process

Relationship Building

The search advocate works collaboratively with the hiring official, the search chair, and the search committee. In the following pages, you will find ideas about setting up your participation in the search, performing effectively, and enhancing your advocacy ability during the search experience.

Before the Search Convenes

Execute appropriate confidentiality agreements before any planning discussions begin. Request a meeting with the search chair and the hiring official to discuss your shared work on the search. This conversation could cover several topics:

- Learn about the search context and goals from the hiring official.
- Discuss your approach to the advocate role.
- Plan your collaboration with the search chair to support the search process.
- Negotiate the use of crucial search advocate strategies, including screening criteria development and management of known applicants and conflicts of interest.

- Discuss periodic check-ins between the committee and hiring officials to ensure continued alignment and a successful search outcome.
- Clarify the parameters of the search and the work product.
- Plan or review the plan for the hiring official's charge to the committee at the first search committee meeting.

First Search Committee Meeting

For the advocate, the first committee meeting is an opportunity to introduce yourself, describe your role, and begin forming connections with the other committee members:

- In the committee charge, the hiring official addresses the most important priorities for the search, including the commitment to a diverse and inclusive process and outcome, and expresses support for your role as an advocate.
- If the hiring official has not already done so, the search chair introduces you as the search advocate for this search.
- Briefly tell the committee about your background, your commitment to their success, and how you hope to contribute to that success.
- Solicit questions and concerns from the committee. If concerns arise, try to validate each person's perspective without defending or arguing. Note concerns that need follow-up and say what you will do by when.
- Occasionally, a representative of Equal Opportunity and Access or the Search Advocate Program is included and offers a brief overview of the search process, bias risks, and your role as an advocate. If not, you should plan to do this to establish a shared context and integrate new search committee members who have not previously worked with an advocate (if any).

During the Search

As the search progresses, your relationship to the committee and your influence over the process can be enhanced (or limited) through your participation:

- Be present—attend every meeting and try to be available. If you must be absent, alert the search chair and provide a substitute advocate.
- Be professional—arrive on time and be prepared for each meeting. Engage with the group from developing the position through integrating the new hire.
- Be proactive—your purpose in joining the committee is to advocate for practices that improve equity, inclusion, diversity, and the overall validity of the search process. This requires *active* engagement with the committee, providing search advocate tools, raising questions others do not ask, etc.
- Be a resource—review checklists, tools, and other resources developed by the committee and share others deemed appropriate as the search progresses; volunteer for tasks such as documenting the screening criteria the group develops, drafting possible interview questions, recording applicant disposition reasons during the screening process, or doing search-related research.
- Bring clarity—sometimes, discussion outcomes are unclear, or certain perspectives are overlooked. Provide what is missing in the conversation, whether this means asking someone what they think, confirming your understanding of what has been decided, or checking to ensure everyone is clear about who is responsible for what and by when.
- Collaborate and facilitate—actively participate in the group's work using inclusive communication practices and other performance skills.

- Inform candidates about your role—during the phone and site interviews, introduce yourself by name, institutional role, *and* as the search advocate for this search committee.

After the Search

Your skills and expertise as a search advocate will continue to develop with experience, information, feedback, and analysis. As you become more familiar with this role, it will be essential to understand where you are most effective, how you are making a difference, and where to focus your development. The Search Advocate Program also relies on feedback from individual advocates about what works well, what needs improvement, and what strategies could improve the work. Please consider these assessment tools:

- Ask the hiring official, committee chair, and committee members for feedback.
- Debrief your experience in writing or with another advocate. What did you notice in this search? What made a difference? What could be improved? What new ideas or possibilities do you see?
- Share your insights and feedback from search participants with PASSHE advocates.
- Share your insights and observations with search advocate peers at community of practice luncheons, as a search advocate workshop panelist, or during annual DEI Summits.

Search Advocate Participation DOs and DON'Ts

DO	DON'T
Trust the process	Try to control the outcome
Help the group test its thinking	Substitute your judgment for others
Explicitly acknowledge that you have biases	Assume that your biases are no longer a problem
Represent the Search Advocate Program as a process resource	Impose your personal beliefs and favorite practices on the process
Listen actively, affirm others' views, and identify commonalities	Debate, defend, or engage in "win/lose" interactions
Ask open questions to expand the conversation	Blame, judge, or attempt to trap people
Listen and ask questions for a deeper understanding	Interpret or assume others' motives, goals, or objectives
Be a neutral resource	Take sides if you can avoid it
Offer resources and facilitation to help advance the search	Use your advocate standing to advance your preferred practices
Be selectively assertive	Be too pushy or deferential
Welcome input	Resist feedback
Remain open to possibilities	Embrace certainty too soon
Seek feedback and support from the Search Advocacy Consultants and other advocates	"Go it alone" if you are frustrated, confused, worried, or concerned

Diversity and Inclusion Defined: PASSHE has adopted [shared definitions](#) for diversity and inclusion.

Diversity describes the myriad ways in which people differ, including psychological, physical, and social differences that exist among all individuals, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, religion, economic class, geography, education, age, gender, sexual orientation, and ability/disability. Diversity is about understanding these differences and moving from simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of our differences.

Inclusion refers to actions that foster feelings of being respected, valued, and embraced in the curriculum, co-curriculum, and university community. It means authentically and intentionally bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policymaking in a way that shares power. An inclusive PASSHE is one where all admitted and enrolled students (faculty and staff) feel a sense of belonging.

The following are other ways these and related terms are used across higher education and other sectors.

Diversity

Diversity is the array of critical human differences—characteristics that affect people’s experiences within a social system—present in the members of a group. A diverse group includes members with many different life experiences and cognitive approaches related to their identities, cultures, abilities, circumstances, histories, and other characteristics. (OSU).

“Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability, as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations).” (*American Association of Colleges & Universities* www.aacu.org).

“Diversity means difference understood as a historically and socially constructed set of value assumptions about what/who matters that figure essentially in power dynamics from the local to the global.” (*Adapted from the University of San Diego Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusive Excellence*)

Inclusion

“The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with *diversity*—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.” (*American Association of Colleges & Universities*)

“Inclusion builds a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people. We believe every person’s voice adds value, and we strive to create balance in the face of power differences. We believe no person can or should be called upon to represent an entire community.” (*Ford Foundation*)

Intersectionality

“The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.” (*Oxford Dictionary*)

“The critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that shape complex social inequalities.” *Patricia Hill Collins, “Intersectionality’s Definitional Dilemmas,” vol. 41 (2015): 1-20.*

Key Concepts that Impact the Search Process

Implicit and Cognitive Biases

Implicit Bias is the result of the interaction of cognitive and structural biases. These reinforce each other to produce complex, unintended, unspoken, and frequently unrecognized biases that systematically advantage some social identity groups and disadvantage others. Please watch this video produced by the University of Texas McComb School of Business:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoBvzI-YZf4>.

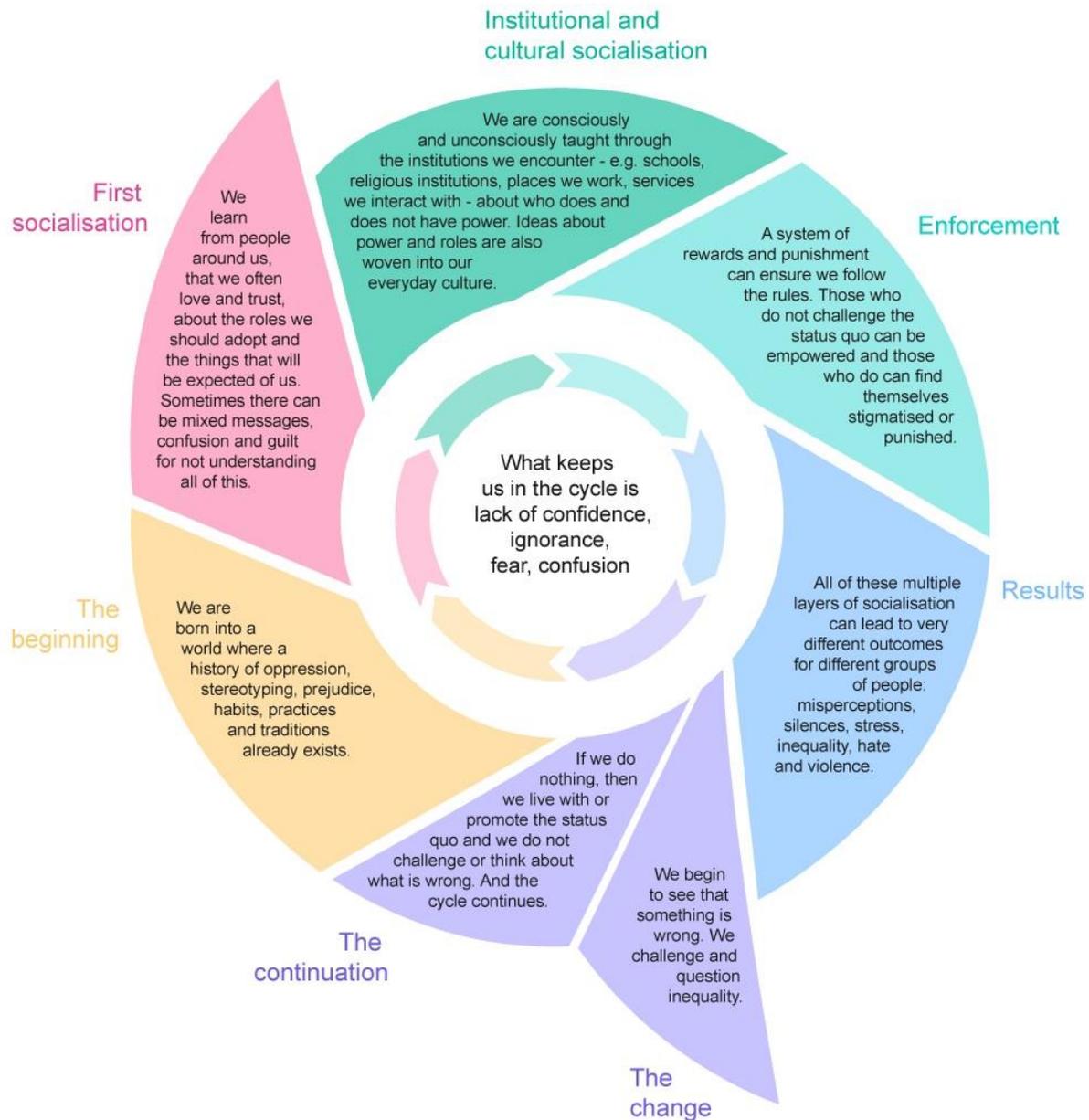
Cognitive Bias refers to unconscious patterns of thought—including cognitive categories and shortcuts or heuristics—which have the unintended effect of conferring advantage to some and disadvantage to others. Please read [How to Identify Cognitive Bias: 12 Examples of Cognitive Bias](#).

Schemas and Stereotypes

Schemas are cognitive shortcuts that we use to function in the world, and they even help us identify and respond to dangerous situations. However, they do not guarantee accurate results, and their use can produce unintended and unfortunate consequences. Schemas develop throughout our lifetimes based on our experiences, others’ opinions, social context, and cultural values. Like a folder of newspaper clippings, each schema contains random information, including “editorials” or ideas that may contradict our conscious beliefs and commitments. When a schema is triggered—typically without conscious awareness—we use it unconsciously to predict what someone will do and how we should respond based on our information about the group to which we have unconsciously assigned them.

Stereotypes describe our expectations of individuals that result from group expectations. In popular culture, the same word describes conscious, intentional, prejudiced notions, so fair-minded people may reject the notion that they would ever engage in stereotyping. However, because our use of stereotypes is often unconscious and unintentional, even a heartfelt belief in fairness does not prevent us from enacting them. Stereotyped expectations influence what we see, how we interpret what we see and remember, and even how accurately we remember. Numerous research studies have shown that humans unconsciously add, subtract, and adjust our recollections of specific details to align more closely with our expectations.

The Socialization of Bias



<https://nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/about/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/conscious-inclusion/how-does-our-mind-and-bias-work/>

In-group/Out-group Processing

When we believe someone is part of a group we belong to (known as an “in-group”), we tend to see them as trustworthy. We expect them to perform well, assume that such good performance results from their intrinsic nature, and believe that their excellent performance in a particular situation accurately predicts their future performance. If they perform poorly, we seek reasons to explain the anomaly; we do not immediately assume they are “poor performers.” We give them the benefit of the doubt.

We are less likely to trust those different from us or “out-group,” and our expectations of them are lower. We anticipate they will perform less well than in-group members; poor performance meets our expectations. When we observe good performance, it is harder to process since it contradicts our expectations. Instead, we look for external factors that could explain it—we do not assume it predicts future performance.

Groupthink

[Groupthink](#) can occur when search committee members make irrational or non-optimal decisions prompted by the inclination to conform or the belief that dissent is impossible or unwelcome. The problematic or premature consensus characteristic of groupthink may be fueled by a particular agenda—or it may be due to group members valuing harmony and coherence above critical thought. The potential for groupthink can be minimized when time is allowed to discuss issues fully and when dissent is encouraged.

Intuitive vs. Analytical Thinking

These automatic, category-based thought processes are sometimes called “intuitive” or “System 1 thinking”. System 1 thinking is rapid, automatic, and effortless, occurring in the more primitive parts of our brain where fight-or-flight responses are processed. We need it to prevent information overload, allowing us to “multi-task”; sometimes, it includes an emotional reaction. Dr. Daniel Kahneman (*Thinking Fast and Slow*, 2013) contrasts intuitive thinking with “analytical” or “System 2 thinking.” He says that analytical reasoning is unique to humans and characterizes it as deliberate, intentional, effortful, and emotionally neutral. System 2 thinking is a *serial* thought process—you cannot parallel process (multi-task) in System 2. It is rule-governed (much like an algorithm or flow chart), which makes it inherently more flexible than System 1; to change the impact of System 2 processing, revise the rules or steps in your analysis.

When you are stressed, tired, hungry, and/or under time pressure, your mind is more likely to use intuitive thinking even when you believe you are thinking analytically. This is risky since intuition is an essential but inaccurate tool. When intuition nudges you to make a judgment, try to reframe the decision as a question unless your immediate safety is at risk. What does your intuition think is going on, and what facts do you need to obtain to confirm or contradict that judgment? Taking the time to identify and question assumptions—placing thoughtful analysis ahead of efficiency—is an important strategy to mitigate cognitive bias.

Cognitive and Structural Bias

Cognitive Bias

The risk of cognitive bias increases as we begin engaging with candidates or reading their application materials. Numerous research studies demonstrate that our perception of identity characteristics such as race, age, sex, gender, disability status, veteran status, religion, and many others serve as a filter or lens that significantly impacts our applicant screening and selection judgments, even though we are not aware this is occurring. A cognitive bias called the “bias blind spot” describes our tendency to believe we are less biased than others, which makes it harder to recognize and address this phenomenon.

Structural Bias

The term “structural bias” describes institutional patterns and practices that confer advantages to some and disadvantages to others based on social identity. Institutional bias develops and operates at the institutional or organizational level. Structural biases create and reinforce the social context for our cognitive biases.

Norms

Structural bias is rooted in organizational/societal norms, practices, and assumptions. Organizational norms tend to reflect the dominant culture's norms and may have been in place since the organization was established; they are difficult to change once formed. To identify the dominant group, ask yourself, “For whose benefit were these practices or expectations established?”

Privilege

Everyone in an organization also has earned and unearned privileges. *Earned privileges* are the benefits that flow from efforts and accomplishments inside an established “merit-based” system with known criteria; they are apparent to those who benefit from them and to the larger community. *Unearned privileges* are advantages or benefits bestowed by family circumstances or assumptions about one’s membership in the dominant or normative group. These are not merit-based and are typically not apparent to their beneficiaries. Our desire to believe in meritocracy can make it hard to recognize unearned privileges; we want to think that anyone can succeed through hard work and commitment.

Merit

Most merit-based systems reflect a combination of earned and unearned privileges. The presence of unearned privilege does not mean that those who benefit from it have not worked hard or do not deserve credit for their accomplishments. It does mean they possess an additional asset that is unavailable to everyone. No group is privileged or disadvantaged on every continuum—each carries privileged and disadvantaged or “targeted” identities.

How do structural biases occur?

Norms, standards, beliefs, policies, procedures, practices, and organizational cultures that mirror the dominant group establish and reinforce structural biases. These biases are powerfully present in many government programs, our legal and judicial systems, institutional values and traditions, and our shared definitions of key concepts such as excellence, merit, potential, promise, and professionalism. Our social systems are frequently centered on and led by dominant group members; excellence tends to be identified primarily with that group and its norms. Other ways of knowing, seeing the world, demonstrating excellence, and other value systems are assumed to be “less than” or inferior. This phenomenon powerfully reinforces the status quo and tends to exclude or disadvantage those who do not appear to be dominant group members.

Structural Bias in the Search and Selection Process

Structural biases are found throughout a typical search and selection process, from defining the position to establishing qualifications and determining how to screen for merit and excellence. If our personnel practices do not actively address cognitive and structural bias, they serve to sustain and support these biases.

Legal and Regulatory Environment

As a public university system and a federal contractor, PASSHE has legally prescribed responsibilities in the areas of equal opportunity and affirmative action that affect all aspects of employee search, selection, and employment processes. We are also governed by Pennsylvania law, Commonwealth Management Directives, PASSHE Board of Governors' policies, and university-specific policies. Finally, our institutional aspirations for diversity and other strategic goals can only be realized when such considerations are central to our search, selection, and employment practices. By providing process expertise, search advocates help search committees recognize and balance these critical considerations.

Protected Status

Each of us has many identity characteristics. Some characteristics are identified in law and policy as *protected statuses*; this means that each of us is protected from discrimination based on those characteristics, which include race, color; religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; genetic information; disability; status as a veteran; or any other characteristic prohibited under applicable federal or state law.

https://www.passhe.edu/policies/documents/BOG_Policies/Policy%202009-03-A.pdf

Definitions of harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination include discrimination and harassment based on race, color; religion, national origin; ancestry, sex; age, marital status; familial status, sexual orientation; gender identity and expression, genetic information; disability, status as a veteran; or any other characteristic prohibited under applicable federal or state law (from now on "protected categories").

Equal Opportunity

PASSHE is committed to a policy of affirmative action. PASSHE assures an equal opportunity to all persons without regard to race, color, religion, creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age, or sex by state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

https://www.passhe.edu/policies/documents/BOG_Policies/Policy%201983-11.pdf

Equal opportunity (or equality of opportunity) is an umbrella term that refers to the absence of protected-status discrimination. Equal opportunity safeguards in employment include:

1. Protection from *unfair treatment* based on protected status.
2. Protection from denial of *reasonable accommodations* needed because of disability or religious beliefs.
3. Protection from *retaliation* for (a) complaining about discrimination and (b) assisting with a discrimination investigation or lawsuit.
4. Protection from *adverse treatment* for engaging in a protected activity.

Theories of Discrimination: For the last four decades, the US legal system has recognized two forms of discrimination:

1. Disparate treatment is the *unfavorable treatment motivated partly by protected status*. Unlawful motivations can include animus against certain protected statuses, stereotyped thinking, or other biases (conscious or unconscious) regarding protected status.

2. **Disparate impact** is a *facially neutral* policy or practice that results in a significant *negative impact based on protected status*—fair in form but discriminatory in outcome—and which is not justified by legitimate business necessity. Motivation/intent to discriminate is not required. Potential evidence of disparate impact discrimination includes statistically significant disparity based on protected status and a specific policy or practice identified as the cause.

Disparate treatment and impact encompass the most prevalent forms of explicit/intentional discrimination that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was intended to address but do not effectively address the range of unconscious/unintended discrimination (rooted in implicit bias) that is common today.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

https://www.passhe.edu/policies/documents/BOG_Policies/Policy%202009-03-A.pdf

Each University President and the Office of the Chancellor will issue or amend, if necessary, their harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination policies to comply with this policy. All policies must comply with federal and state laws or regulations.

Veteran's Preference: <https://www.education.pa.gov/Educators/Certification/Pages/Veterans-Preference.aspx>

Section 1205 of Act 143 directs active-duty military members, veterans, and the spouses or surviving spouses of active-duty military members or veterans to receive preferential application handling and a reduced application fee when applying for any educator certification. To qualify, a veteran is an individual who served at least 180 days of active duty other than for training or was discharged after serving 30 days due to a service-connected disability in the US Armed Forces and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions. Honorable conditions include Honorable and General Under Honorable discharge.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action describes actions (required under Executive Order 11246) designed to overcome barriers to equality of opportunity. These programs assume that, without structural or individual biases, employers' workforce demographics will reflect the demographics of the qualified population in the recruiting region for each job. Affirmative Action efforts include (1) self-analysis and monitoring to identify problems; (2) targeted good faith efforts and action-oriented programs to attract women, people of color, people with disabilities, and veterans, to address problems and shortfalls. Race- and sex-based quotas and preferences are forbidden, and selection decisions must be non-discriminatory.

Diversity

Advancing diversity may not be a basis for race-conscious hiring decisions in employment. Permissible diversity efforts include:

- Race-neutral practices – for example, recruiting for performance skills and experiences to enhance the organization's capacity to benefit from a diverse workforce or serve a diverse clientele. Candidates of any race may meet these qualifications, which should be evaluated based on the position's relevance (not the candidate's race).
- Race-based non-allocation practices—such as extra recruiting efforts to ensure members of historically underrepresented groups are informed about employment opportunities. No benefit or resource is being allocated to an individual based on race or

any other identity; this practice broadens the applicant pool by reaching out to members of groups that are often underrepresented.

Position Description & Qualifications

The greatest opportunity to move beyond the status quo in hiring occurs when the search committee participates in designing, developing, and/or refining the position description, screening criteria matrix, and recruiting materials/search plan as soon as possible.

Bias Risks

- Writing the position description like a scientific article or a grant proposal; formal, concrete, third person, “just the facts” – uninspiring.
- Holding a narrow position view based primarily on past incumbents.
- Basing position description and qualifications on unexamined assumptions about merit and excellence.
- Overlooking/failing to provide important information like context, roles, contributions, opportunities, challenges, future initiatives, emerging interests, etc.
- Overemphasizing applicants’ length of employment.
- Thinking and writing from the privileged/dominant perspective only.
- Expressing ideas in ways that may be offensive to potential applicants, especially based on identity group memberships.
- Establishing needlessly rigid/exclusive qualifications or qualifications that may produce disparate impact based on protected status (e.g., requiring a driver’s license when driving is not an essential function).
- Establishing qualification thresholds that are higher than necessary for the position so that the qualifications (rather than the committee) will screen the pool.

Principles for Developing the Position Description

- **Approach** announcements and ads as informative documents *and* marketing tools, using a more conversational style and interesting language.
- **Develop** a clear statement of the position’s mission, attending to diversity and the position’s current and future role in the unit and institution’s work (see *Diversity Aspects of the Position Description* below).
- **Emphasize** aspects of the position likely to attract people from identity groups you have missed before:
 - Identify and describe needs/opportunities for the person in this position to connect with historically underrepresented or under-served communities.
 - Highlight position, unit, and community features *beyond* just those that will appeal to the “dominant culture;”
 - Be aware of challenges that someone from a historically underrepresented group may face in this position and be certain you know how the unit addresses those challenges.
- **Describe** the position, the college, the department, the university, and the community. Articulate the unit’s commitment to teaching, advising, diversity/inclusion/justice, community connections, and building a peer-reviewed publication record (if relevant). Align with organizational and departmental strategic plans and goals.
- **Review** each draft for statements or language that may inadvertently discourage, offend, or raise concerns for some candidates based on their identities. Pay attention to implied assumptions about age, gender, race, religion, family status, ability status, first language, sexual orientation, social/economic class, etc.
- **Seek** ideas from other institutions and current faculty and staff.

Discuss the Position: Begin your discussion by exploring these framing questions:

1. What is the mission of the institution and the hiring unit?
2. What is the *current* context at the university and in the hiring unit—what is new, what is changing, what is challenging, what is exciting, and what is needed to realize our vision?
3. What is the present context for *diversity* at the institution and in the hiring unit—what is new, what is changing, what is challenging, what is exciting, and what is needed to realize our vision?
4. What is the mission of the position you are filling?
 - a. What is the purpose of the position, and why does it exist?
 - b. What are the position's top priorities?
 - c. How does the work of the position contribute to the mission of the unit and the university?
 - d. How does it impact colleagues, students, the university, and the community?
5. How is diversity related to the work of the position? For example,
 - a. Will the appointee interact with a diverse group of colleagues, students, stakeholders, clients, and/or customers?
 - b. Will the appointee engage in teaching, scholarly inquiry, service, or other job duties directly or indirectly related to diversity and inclusion?
 - c. How frequently will the appointee need to understand and work respectfully/effectively with multiple aspects of human difference? In what kinds of situations?
 - d. What skills will the appointee need to perform the diversity-related work of the position?
6. What qualities or characteristics would predict better performance in the position?
7. What other unmet unit needs outside the immediate position duties might hiring a new colleague allow the unit to address (depending on the appointee's abilities/skills/life experiences)?

Position Description and Announcement: Institutions should strive to incorporate the following best practices into their search process, understanding this process may look different depending on the institution and the type of position.

- Position summary: write a brief overview of the university and hiring unit, and describe the mission of the position, based on your answers to the first 5 “framing questions.”
- Position duties: describe in more detail the top 3-5 functions of the position, using specific present-tense action verbs.
 - Position qualifications: identify the most important qualifications.
 - Suggested Categories for Organization of Qualifications:
 - Basic Qualifications - measurable minimum qualifications such as degrees, minimum years of experience, or other professional certifications.
 - Other Qualifications – additional critical qualifications necessary to perform the position's duties but not “measurable.” “A demonstrable commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity” (or similar) is a required qualification for leadership positions.
 - Preferred Qualifications – qualifications which would enhance the appointee's performance in the position—include qualifications related to “framing questions” 6 and 7 in this section. For all non-leadership positions, “a demonstrable commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity (or similar) must at least be preferred and may be required.
 - Ensure that each qualification relates to essential job functions.
 - Minimize basic and other required qualifications—do not expect them to eliminate the need for the search committee to use judgment:

- Avoid or limit arbitrary numeric measures such as a specific number of years—these privilege quantity, sometimes at the expense of quality.
 - Use words like “should” instead of “must;”
 - Keep basic and other required qualifications as open as possible—suggest multiple ways to meet them (such as “BA/BS in a natural resources discipline or other combination of relevant education and experience”)
 - Treat basic and other required qualifications as the *first* steps in screening, not the last...limiting these qualifications does not lessen the quality or rigor of the search.
 - Be sure that any basic and required qualifications are necessary to perform the job's essential functions. For example, a driver's license is usually only required if the position duties require driving (such as a delivery driver).
 - Describe what must be done rather than how it must be done— “must move boxes weighing up to 50 lbs.” rather than “must lift boxes weighing up to 50 lbs.”
- Open the door to non-traditional or atypical career paths and transferable skill sets as you design the qualifications.
 - Identify critical “technical” skills—*what* they must do—and crucial “performance” skills—*how* they will do it. Performance skills are almost always transferable; examples include teamwork, persistence, organization, creativity, problem-solving, conflict management, consensus-building, leadership, understanding formal and informal systems, multi-tasking, intercultural communications, navigating complex organizations, etc.
 - Feature qualifications related to the diversity responsibilities and needs of the position.
- **Screening criteria:** test your draft qualifications' accuracy, inclusiveness, and flexibility by developing screening criteria for each using the process described in the next chapter. Adjust qualifications based on insights you gain from this step before posting the position.
 - **Application process:** decide what materials you need to evaluate a candidate's qualifications—typically, we request a summary of education and employment (resume, CV, applicant profile), a letter of application addressing how the candidate meets the qualifications for the position, and the contact information for three or more professional references. You may also ask applicants to respond to questions about their qualifications. Examples include:
 - Please describe your teaching philosophy
 - Please describe your research plans
 - Please explain how you have contributed to a just and inclusive workplace environment in your current or previous employment.
 - **Position announcement:** use the position description to write a position announcement and position advertisements. Make the language engaging and attractive, and market the position, the university, and the community to a diverse audience of prospective applicants.

Sample Diversity Language for Position Description

Diversity language is most effective when it authentically reflects the thinking and efforts of the search committee or hiring unit. Truly compelling diversity statements result from the concerted effort and introspection of a group of people, such as department faculty or a search committee. With that in mind, the following sample language is provided to help you think about these topics, NOT as a menu of options from which to choose.

Although it may be tempting to import some of these statements into your own materials, remember that doing so may reduce the effectiveness of your diversity efforts. Repeated use of the same words and phrases could give the impression that you are using a “boilerplate” statement; candidates from minoritized groups may wonder whether your unit has a sophisticated understanding of equity and inclusion or even whether you are truly committed to diversity. That risk is reduced when search committee members take the time to develop their own language describing current diversity issues and goals.

...about the University

- The University is engaged in building a culturally diverse educational environment.
- Each member of the university community contributes to developing and maintaining a healthy and equitable working environment in which diversity is valued.
- The University is committed to building a culturally diverse and pluralistic faculty committed to teaching and working in a multicultural environment.
- The University particularly seeks candidates interested in contributing to the diversity and inclusive excellence of the academic community through research, teaching, and outreach.

...about the Department/School/College

- The department/school is committed to enhancing the diversity of the university community and curriculum.
- The department/college is particularly interested in candidates who have experience working with students from diverse backgrounds and have demonstrated commitment to improving access to higher education for disadvantaged students.
- The College develops multi-culturally competent researchers, scholars, learning leaders, and practitioners who make a difference by promoting innovation, social justice, and lifelong learning with a focus on STEM and cultural and linguistic diversity.
- We value a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to research and teaching learners of all ages and cultural and ethnic backgrounds.
- Faculty in the School have identified Global Justice as the School’s central theme, with emphases in social and environmental justice, food insecurity and food sovereignty, and Latino/a Studies.

...about the Position

- Successful candidates will work strategically with diverse colleagues, students, and community members.
- The position requires active engagement in learning and practicing principles of social justice and inclusion, both in the classroom and through co-curricular activities.
- Position facilitates a work environment that encourages knowledge of, respect for, and development of skills to engage with other cultures or backgrounds.
- Successful teaching will foster a commitment to diversity as a learning outcome because it enhances our education and provides tools to be culturally respectful, professionally competent, and civically responsible.
- Provide nutrition information and coaching to multicultural/multi-lingual stakeholders.

...in the Qualifications

- Demonstrated commitment to equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- Demonstrated interest in developing/implementing curricula addressing multicultural issues.
- Experience with a variety of teaching methods and/or curricular perspectives.
- Demonstrated knowledge of effective strategies for working with diverse faculty, staff, and students
- Successful candidates must be committed to working with diverse colleagues, students, and community members.
- The position requires active engagement in learning and practicing social justice and inclusion principles.

- Applicants should describe in their cover letters how their teaching, scholarship, and service will further the goal of building a culturally diverse educational environment.
- Applicants should describe how multicultural issues have influenced and/or been a part of their teaching, research, and/or outreach/service.
- Candidates should have a strong record of commitment to human and intellectual diversity.
- Candidates should describe previous experience mentoring students and colleagues from underrepresented groups.
- Demonstrable commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity.
- Demonstrated success teaching students from different backgrounds with diverse life experiences and learning styles.

The Search Committee

The composition of the search committee may be determined by the respective bargaining unit covering the vacant position. The individual committee members' experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints are valuable. The hiring manager charges the committee, which is accountable to the hiring manager for all aspects of the search.

Members of underrepresented minority groups frequently serve on more than their share of committees because of our desire to benefit from diverse perspectives.

- *Do not* rely on these committee members as the primary spokespeople for diversity or their racial/ethnic or other identity groups.
- *Do* listen generously—to all members—when they share their perspectives.

The job of search committee members is to actively participate in the search process to promote optimal outcomes and overall success. By accepting an appointment to a search committee, each member agrees to the following:

- *Confidentiality*: keep the search committee work strictly confidential (including applicant names, committee discussions, etc.).
- *Commitment*: recognize and set aside the time needed to participate fully in the search effort; do what you say you will do or renegotiate the commitment.
- *Accountability*: attend to the charge and the principle of excellence through diversity in every aspect of the search.
- *Communication*: realize the value of different opinions:
 1. Listen generously (seeking first to understand, without resistance)
 2. Speak up, especially when your opinion differs from the group.
 3. Discuss disagreements openly and respectfully.
 4. Assume the best motives for fellow committee members.
 5. Support the group's decisions.
- *Consensus*: stay in conversation until committee members fully understand each other's perspectives *and* can live with the decisions (unlike voting, which requires only a majority of the group to support the decision).
- *Bias recognition*: accept that everyone shares the potential for unintentional and cognitive biases and has difficulty identifying structural biases among the institution's familiar norms. Everyone must commit to working together to recognize and counteract bias.
- *Diversity*: discuss how diversity, the ability to contribute to a just and inclusive environment, and the skills to support the success of people from all different backgrounds are relevant to the specific position being filled; ensure that those aspects of the job are addressed in the position description and qualifications.

- *Criteria development:* discuss the position description, qualifications, screening criteria, and inclusion until the committee understands.
- *Searching:* cast a wide net through vigorous, active, individual recruiting with the explicit intent to produce a diverse, highly qualified pool.
- *Screening:* use the agreed-upon criteria to screen candidates, and if these criteria create problems or inequities, bring concerns back to the committee.
- *Research:* gather balanced and accurate information about candidates from application materials, reference checks, interviews, and stakeholder input.
- *Evaluation:* collaboratively assess each candidate based on all available information, seeking more data as necessary.
- *Final work product:* as a committee, provide the unit head with:
 1. Evaluation of acceptable candidates, including in-depth discussion of strengths and weaknesses and sources of information:
 - An unranked alphabetical list is often considered the best practice to ensure equity and support appointee success.
 - A ranked list may be requested by the unit head or advocated for by faculty seeking to ensure accountability to shared governance principles.
 - Either can be effective with thorough and fair evaluation.
 2. Summary of screening reasons for each candidate eliminated through the screening and evaluation process.

First Meeting of the Committee: The first meeting establishes a precedent for how the search will proceed. Key ingredients of the first meeting should include:

- The hiring manager charges the committee and establishes parameters and expectations.
- Committee members introduce themselves, including roles, perspectives, experiences, relevant interests, and connections to the positions being filled.
- The group develops agreements about how they will work together collaboratively.
- Search Advocate introduces key concepts such as the potential impact of unconscious, cognitive, and structural biases on the search process.
- Members bring calendars and develop a tentative timeline.
- The committee begins working on the development/refinement of the position description.

Developing Screening Criteria

Regardless of whether they have had the opportunity to contribute to the position description and qualifications, before opening the search, the committee should now discuss the qualifications in detail to identify the criteria by which each will be measured. Everyone needs to reach a shared understanding of the meaning of each criterion, how it relates to the position, and the different ways an applicant might meet it. This understanding will enable committee members to converse knowledgeably with prospective applicants when they engage in personal recruiting during the search/application phase. It will also provide a strong foundation for the screening stage.

Bias Risks

- Poorly defined screening criteria. For example, “We all know what this means” or “I’ll know it when I see it;”
- Specific position expectations are not addressed; the committee does not fully understand what the unit needs from this position in each area of responsibility given the current circumstances. For example, the committee establishes criteria to evaluate the “potential for success in research leading to publication in peer-reviewed journals.” If the committee does not recognize that the position is expected to build interdisciplinary research programs, the criteria may not adequately address predictors of success in relationship-building, collaboration, navigating differences, etc.
- Unnecessary rigidity—not allowing several ways to meet a qualification.
- Narrow view of how the qualification may be met that excludes capable candidates. Examples include scholarship, scholarly potential, and measures of scholarly merit, such as publication counting and favoring the “best” journals or “prestigious” institutions.
- Inconsistent prioritization – failure to agree on the relative importance of qualifications.
- Waiting too long—advertising before establishing criteria; correcting qualifications that we discover are problematic; failing to establish criteria before reviewing applicant files (even informally) leads to cognitive bias.

Premises

- Required qualifications are necessary to perform the essential functions of the position. Some are evaluated at the application stage, but others are only evaluated accurately at the interview and/or reference check stage. All required qualifications must be met.
- Preferred qualifications predict better performance in the position.
- Each qualification is evaluated individually/separately.
- Not all qualifications are equally important.
- Determining why a qualification matters and defining how a candidate can meet it *before* screening begins will help mitigate bias.

Screening Criteria Strategies

Use the Search Advocate Criteria Development Matrix to record the results of your discussion at this stage. This process has several benefits—it helps identify and reduce structural bias in the qualifications, provides a tool to help committee members mitigate cognitive bias during screening and selection, and serves as a blueprint for the remainder of the search/selection process. Discuss *each* required and preferred qualification in-depth, covering these topics:

1. **Relationship to the job** – the purpose is to understand the qualification and confirm whether it is required, preferred, or unnecessary:
 - What parts of this position require it? Why do they need it?
 - How is it used on the job?
 - What would be difficult or impossible to do without it?
 - Is this qualification a proxy for specific performance skills? If so, are they included in the qualifications separately...and should they be?
 - Why is it important? Why does it matter?
2. **Screening criteria** – the purpose is to broaden our understanding of how to meet the qualification to reduce structural bias:
 - What will meet this qualification? And what else? And what else??
 - Could a candidate meet it by [suggest a different approach]? Would you consider [suggest ANOTHER approach]?
 - Do we know someone (who is not interested in this job) who would be an excellent candidate but would not qualify because of how we define this qualification? How can we correct this error?
 - What strengths might we miss by limiting ourselves to the criteria we have developed for this qualification?
 - What cognitive or structural biases might be influencing our thinking?
 - How can we expand our definition of what it means to meet this qualification to be more inclusive?
3. **Transferable** – purpose is to increase inclusion by identifying skills that could come from a different context/atypical career path:
 - Is this a portable skill that might be acquired and used in multiple settings (professional, educational, social, personal)?
 - Is this a performance skill that someone uses in approaching work rather than a technical/job-specific skill? (Virtually all performance skills are transferable)
4. **When to assess** – the purpose is to ensure equitable screening and avoid inconsistently giving only some candidates the “benefit of the doubt”:
 - At what stage will we assess this qualification?
 - If we assess at more than one stage, what are we looking for at each stage?
 - At which stage will we eliminate applicants because we can confirm they do not meet this qualification?
5. **Priority** – the purpose is to determine which qualifications matter most.
 - Required qualification: How important is this *compared to other required qualifications?* (High/Med/Low)
 - Will someone who exceeds this qualification be better prepared?
 - Will someone who is stronger in this area be a better performer, or is this mostly a “threshold” to be met?
 - Preferred qualification: How important is this *compared to other preferred qualifications?* (High/Med/Low)

Use the resulting information to develop a matrix that lays out each qualification, why we need it, and how we can tell that someone meets it. To be considered further, a candidate must meet the letter (and should meet the intent) of the minimum qualifications.

“Good Fit”

During the criteria development stage, hiring managers and others should consider discussing what the committee thinks would make someone a good fit for the position and the hiring unit. Without this conversation, a good fit can be a powerful subconscious interest that can have the unintended effect of favoring homogeneity or preserving the status quo.

This can be accomplished effectively by asking the committee to brainstorm a list of all the characteristics contributing to a *good fit*. Once the list is complete, ask them to identify which items are specifically related to the position and which reflect their personal preferences. By the end of this process, the committee will

- define what *good fit* means in terms of specific performance skills,
- determine whether/how each skill is related to the position's duties
- Review each characteristic for possible discriminatory impact
 - Can you clearly explain what it means?
 - Can you describe its relevance to the duties of the position?
 - would you be uncomfortable if others knew you considered it?
 - Can you demonstrate how or whether each applicant meets it based on your collected information?
- Agree not to include preferences for personality characteristics like “sense of humor,” “informal communication style,” “good eye contact,” “firm handshake,” etc., that can be related to someone’s culture, gender, religion, ability/disability, or other identity characteristics.

By the end of the conversation, committee members should reach a shared understanding of “*good fit*” as a set of performance skills related to the job. Now is the time to consider whether they are thinking too narrowly about how the job must be done and broaden their vision of how a person could succeed. Finally, they should develop a set of inclusive criteria by which each of the performance skills can be evaluated. If this is done before the job is posted, performance skills may be listed with other qualifications in the advertising materials.

Recruitment

The search committee actively engages in the development and execution of both aspects of the recruiting plan:

1. *Broadcast advertising*: a broad advertising strategy that targets relevant print publications, websites, social media, and other listservs.
2. [*Higher Education Recruitment Consortium \(HERC\)*](#): HERC is a nonprofit consortium of colleges, universities, and related groups committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the higher education workforce. PASSHE is a member of HERC.
3. *Personal networking*: a targeted strategy of personal phone calls and connections to recruit individual candidates for the applicant pool.

Bias Risks

- Insufficient recruiting efforts.
- Insufficient efforts to attract people beyond those we typically attract.

- Passive reliance on broadcast advertising – if all qualified and interested candidates will respond to our ads, web announcements, and listserv emails. Broadcast advertising often *attracts* those actively on the job market who see us as a possible next step in their career paths. Broadcast advertising often *does not* attract those who already have good jobs or are concerned about coming here. Only half of faculty hires result from broadcast advertising.
- Reliance on existing informal networks—networking is a powerful tool, but if our informal networks are not diverse, we may miss large groups of excellent candidates. Most people’s informal networks show the effects of unconscious and structural biases. Relying only on existing informal networks increases the risk of producing a demographically skewed applicant pool. One-third to one-half of faculty hires result from personal contact or invitation (typically by phone) from someone within the institution.
- Assumptions about the job market, such as:
 - *what appeals to us will appeal to the people we are trying to attract*
 - *we cannot compete for _____ (targeted identity group)*
 - *people of color will not move here*
 - *a ___ (person of color/woman/single person/person with a disability/ LGBT person/young person/person with a trailing partner or spouse) will not ___(be successful/be happy/stay) here if we recruit them*
 - *the pipeline is too limited for us to get a diverse applicant pool*
 - *our salaries are not competitive enough*
 - *if we get enough qualified applicants, we have done enough recruiting*

Recruiting Strategies

- Broaden the advertising efforts in addition to your usual advertising. Take advantage of listservs, web sites, peer departments at other institutions, and organizations serving people from historically underrepresented groups, for example:
 - Land grant institutions including the 1890s and the 1994s.
 - Other higher education institutions that serve students from historically underrepresented groups
 - Identity caucuses in relevant professional organizations
 - PASSHE System Leadership Groups:
 - Council of Chief Diversity Officers
 - Council of Chief Academic Affairs Officers
 - Council of Chief Student Affairs Officers
 - System Leadership Groups
 - Faculty Council
- Use structured personal outreach: Each committee member intentionally goes beyond their usual networks to seek a highly qualified and diverse applicant pool, then personally invites potential candidates to apply. This is most effective when the efforts are pre-planned within the committee, done by phone, and documented using an outreach journal.
- Expand your possible contacts for personal outreach.
 - *Build relationships* with faculty and graduate students at universities that enroll a high proportion of students from historically underrepresented groups. This should be done continuously, even when you are not recruiting for a position.
 - *Review recent journals* to find relevant articles by people whose names suggest they are people of color or women.
 - *Search the web* using appropriate keywords to find online CVs/resumes.
- Ask faculty and staff, especially those from historically underrepresented groups, if they can suggest specific recruiting strategies or contact their own networks to support your search.

- Seek synergy between searches: Look for ways to combine search efforts in different disciplines within the college, develop mutual recruiting strategies, and capitalize on the advantages of new “faculty cohorts” in recruiting.
- Monitor the pool: Intensify your recruiting efforts if the application deadline is approaching and the pool is not large/qualified/diverse enough.

Personal Outreach to Colleagues

- Review the analysis that went into developing the position and the screening criteria so you are familiar with the job you are recruiting for.
- Begin by contacting colleagues and peers you know personally, then those you know by reputation, and then those you learn from your earlier calls.
- Introduce yourself, briefly describe the job, and tell them that you are looking for highly qualified potential candidates or other colleagues who could suggest potential candidates.
- Let them know we need their help identifying people we often fail to reach. Our institutional research indicates we are least successful in reaching women and candidates of color.
- Ask if they can suggest possible candidates who would be good for this job or other colleagues who might be able to suggest possible candidates.
- Make notes about any candidates they recommend and get contact information for potential candidates and faculty sources.

Personal Outreach to Prospective Candidates

- Remind yourself about important characteristics of the job.
- Telephone each potential candidate.
- Introduce yourself and explain that a colleague suggested they would be a good candidate for your open position.
- Briefly describe the position and any relevant context about the department, the cohort of which the position is a part (if any), etc.
- Say, “We would like to consider an application from you as part of the competitive search underway for this position.”
- Convey interest in and enthusiasm for the potential candidate.
- Ask if they are interested or have questions and do your best to answer. Offer to call back later with any information you do not have now.
- Offer to send an electronic copy of the announcement and any other materials about the university, the community, resources, or amenities that interest the candidate (then do it!). Contact Human Resources to help locate information for a specific candidate request.
- Provide your contact information and encourage the person to call you with further questions.
- Make notes about your conversation and any follow-up required.
- Do not overcommit to the potential candidate that will be interviewed.

Follow-up Contact

Keep in touch with prospective candidates until and after they apply to assure them of your continued interest in their candidacy and provide updates about the search timeline. Otherwise, people often assume they have been screened out and move on to other opportunities.

Screening

Committee members individually evaluate each application using the screening criteria established at the beginning of the search. Committee members then collaboratively review their assessments, reach consensus, and divide the applicant pool into categories, such as:

1. *Unqualified* (does not meet one or more of the published quantifiable minimum qualifications for the position)
2. *Minimally qualified* (meets all the minimum/required qualifications for the position)
3. *Well-qualified* (meets all minimum/required qualifications for the position, exceeds some, including preferred qualifications)
4. *Highly qualified* (meets all the minimum qualifications and many of the preferred qualifications; strong in qualifications identified as high priority in the criteria matrix)

This may involve several screening discussions and require the committee to collect additional information about applicants (through requests for written statements, etc.) before finalizing the “short list.” The end product of the screening stage is a list of candidates to invite to an interview and a list of screening reasons for those who will not be invited to the interview.

Bias Risks

- Poorly defined screening criteria.
- Conflict of interest among committee members who have undisclosed or unaddressed close relationships of a personal or professional nature with one or more applicants.
- Early application review that allows committee members to review applicant files before the committee has defined/clarified criteria.
- Delegating screening to an individual or a small subset of the committee, particularly if the small group is more homogeneous than the larger committee.
- Unnecessary rigidity and narrowly applying criteria without attention to transferable skills or alternate career paths.
- Inconsistent weighting—failure to agree on the relative importance of preferred qualifications, which (in extreme cases) leads to each committee member screening for a *different* position.
- Unstated criteria—evaluating candidates less favorably based on criteria not discussed with and agreed to by the other committee members.
- Unexamined assumptions.
 - about quality of graduate programs—may increase attraction to candidates from the most elite institutions or postdoctoral research groups, even when such experience may *not* be a reliable predictor of success at your university.
 - about non-traditional career paths
- Numeric formulas and ranking schemes. Numbers offer a false sense of confidence that screening is completely “objective” and can suggest that the relative merits of applicants can be evaluated fully and ranked accurately before information from interviews and reference checks is collected.
- Speculation—assigning meaning to information contained in the application based on personal or group assumptions without exploring possible biases. This may occur when committee members see:
 - Gaps in employment
 - Missing information

- Appealing or unappealing application materials (can you tell how well someone will do the job based on how well they have *applied* for the job? Yes—if you are hiring someone to apply for jobs)
- Unconscious bias
 - “Similar to me” phenomenon—the tendency to look for people like us—educational background, social skills, values, and behaviors.
 - The tendency to favor those like us or those we are accustomed to seeing in similar positions in assessing their qualifications or potential.
 - Tendency to respond less favorably to candidates based on unconscious schemas/stereotypes about identity background.
- Known candidates—being an “insider” can be both a blessing and a curse. When committee members compare known candidates with unknown candidates, they rely on different types and levels of information. Some efforts to overcome “knowledge bias” for/against an insider (such as ignoring relevant information not included in the application materials) can cause more problems than they solve.
- Failure to discuss/define “good fit” early in the process.

Screening Strategies

- Declare and address known candidates and potential conflicts of interest before discussing any candidates.
- Review your criteria matrix to identify the highest priority qualifications you will evaluate at this screening stage.
- Include diverse perspectives of all committee members at every stage of screening.
- Address potential conflicts explicitly, referring to the relevant policies and the CBA.
- Refer to screening criteria developed by the committee in advance—*what* each qualification means, *how* it relates to the work of the position you are filling and to the other qualifications, *why* it matters, *how* you will know it when you see it, and *when* you will evaluate it.
- Expand screening criteria through discussion with the committee if applicants demonstrate ways of meeting qualifications that the committee overlooked initially—make certain that all applicants are evaluated using the expanded criteria.
- Use a screening matrix for each applicant to document strengths, shortcomings, and questions.
- Be intentionally flexible in screening—look for reasons to screen applicants in instead of reasons to screen them out.
- Adopt a bias in favor of every applicant who meets minimum qualifications—document all strengths and reasons to interview them before evaluating weaknesses or areas for development.
- Broaden the assessment of academic merit (if relevant):
 - Define scholarship broadly: creative intellectual work validated by peers and communicated—including creative artistry and the discovery, integration, development, and application of knowledge.
 - Consider diverse teaching experience (beyond the classroom)
 - Suspend judgments about where applicants have studied or worked until the information is available to confirm or counter such conclusions about this individual.
- Seek transferable skills in applicants’ professional experience:
 - What they *learned* from the experience, as well as what they *did*
 - Identify technical/performance skills developed in other settings that may be relevant to this position.

- Capture and research questions that arise to avoid speculation—ask, “Do we have enough information for an answer, or is this still a question?”
- Recognize and discuss the potential for bias.
 - Share research about unconscious bias, which strongly suggests:
 - Unconscious/structural bias *will* impact your evaluation and colleagues—using human judgment without bias is impossible.
 - Bias is unintentional; it occurs even when good, well-intentioned people do their best to be fair and equitable.
 - Seek to create an environment that allows people to explore possible bias without judgment, blame, or defensiveness.
 - Ask questions to help the group identify/counteract bias:
 - What are we reacting to?
 - Why do we see this applicant this way?
 - Could our norms or other structural assumptions be factors?
 - Do we have the information we need to make this judgment?
 - Pay attention to every perspective, especially when one member’s evaluation of applicants differs from that of the rest of the group. That person’s perspective may help the group recognize a lack of clarity in the screening criteria or help uncover unconscious bias.
- Group qualified applicants into categories (minimally qualified, well-qualified, highly qualified). Discuss applicants who are grouped differently by different committee members, especially those on the border between “well-qualified” and “highly qualified.” Each person’s perspective is crucial at this stage, so committee members must exercise patience to ensure that all voices are heard and understood. The goal of this conversation is not to change people’s minds but to see that each member fully understands other members’ perspectives before moving to consensus.
- Evaluate the demographic impact of screening—request assistance from Human Resources. If one round of screening produces a strong negative effect on a particular identity group, explore whether a particular qualification or criterion is responsible; if so, discuss with the committee whether that qualification or criterion could have been evaluated too rigidly or narrowly.
- Record detailed screening reasons for each applicant not advanced to the next stage so committee deliberations can be reconstructed later if needed. The record does not need to be lengthy but should cite a specific reason for not advancing an applicant. For example, do not simply say “not as strong as other candidates;” rather, explain *why* or in *what areas* they were not as strong and why the committee felt this was important. If possible, complete the applicant screening worksheet during the committee’s deliberations. Also, committee members’ hard-copied records of the search should be gathered and kept as archival documents for the 3-year records retention period.

Further thoughts about known candidates:

“How should we handle conflict of interest?” is one of the most frequent questions we receive from search advocates in the search process. A conflict of interest occurs when a committee member’s personal interests, real or perceived, could supersede or compete with their dedication to the unbiased and independent evaluation of candidates in a search and selection process. Committee members must be able to put the institution’s interests ahead of their own, so anything concerning their ability to do this could constitute a conflict of interest. When a conflict of interest exists, it is recommended that the search committee member take the following steps:

- Disclose relationships with/knowledge of candidates: At the beginning of the review process, each person with personal knowledge of individual applicants should be asked to disclose

this to the other committee members. Sometimes, committee members do not think to mention this unless asked, which can cause problems later.

- Address conflicts of interest: If a member has a personal relationship with a candidate that would pose a conflict of interest, such as those described in relevant policies, *or* if there is any other factor that might compromise the member’s objectivity in evaluating that candidate, it may be advisable for that person to remove themselves from the committee altogether. Recusing oneself from the committee removes the risks of engaging in favoritism and appearing to engage in favoritism. If the committee has trouble reaching a consensus, contact Search Advocate Consultants for assistance. The appearance of favoritism or negativity towards candidates in a search can make it hard for the successful applicant to be accepted, even when there is no impropriety in the actual selection process. Information about a candidate should be factual (not just an opinion) and relevant to the position's qualifications and critical performance skills.
- When to consider it: See the “Working with Known Applicants” quick checklist for a stage-by-stage discussion. At the application review stage, the primary focus is reviewing and discussing the materials applicants provide. Typically, it is best to delay sharing information about known candidates until after the first round of application screening discussions so more nuanced conversations about the remaining candidates can occur. Try to balance this goal with the following considerations about ensuring equity.
- Equity principles when considering “known” information:
 - Seek comparable information: If you consider “known” information about a candidate that leads to a decision to screen in or out, you should seek similarly detailed information about other candidates under consideration at that stage. Also, look for contrary evidence about the known candidate, which might balance the perspective of the search committee member or members.
 - Do not assume that a lack of information about a known candidate means something: Everyone has a story; we just know some people’s stories better than others. For example, if you hear concerns about a known candidate, do not assume that other candidates do not have problems in the same area just because no one has mentioned it yet.
 - Use information about known candidates to develop questions, not to disqualify. Ideally, the committee will decide to explore the skill or qualification under discussion for all candidates through questioning or references.
 - Ask whether all important performance skills are being evaluated: Sometimes, someone is concerned about a particular candidate and points to a performance skill or qualification that the committee has not realized they are considering.
- Cautions and pitfalls with known candidates:
 - It is hard to ignore what we “know”: We want everyone who applies to receive equal consideration. Since, as human beings, we cannot “un-know” what we already know, our thoughts about some candidates can undermine this goal. Being a known candidate can be a blessing or a curse (or both), but it is not necessarily eliminated by simply not talking about what is known.
 - Beware of over-advocating for people we know: While it can be tempting to lobby hard for someone whose performance we know, there is a risk that such advocacy can undermine the goal of finding the best person for the position. Good search committees stay curious about and interested in all candidates—known and unknown—as long as they remain under consideration.
 - Do not withhold vital information: Sometimes, there is information that is critically important that should not be withheld; for example, if a search committee member knows that one of the candidates was dismissed from a recent job because they were found to have engaged in prohibited activity such as sexual harassment, discrimination, violence in the workplace, etc., it may be vital to consider that

information at whatever stage in the process it becomes available (depending on the position).

- **Protect the reputations of internal candidates:** People are sometimes reluctant to risk their reputations by competing for an internal vacancy. If they are not selected, they are sometimes seen as “failures.” Do everything you can to keep their applicant status confidential until the on-site interviews. If an internal candidate is not advancing to on-site, they may wish to withdraw rather than be eliminated.

The Interview

During the campus visit, the search committee engages in/hosts a face-to-face process designed to learn more about each interviewee’s qualifications for the job and to strengthen each interviewee’s interest in/understanding of the position, the organization, and the community. This is when stakeholders, constituents, and future colleagues may also be involved. The interview is a mutual process and can include opportunities for “Campus Connections” – candidate-specific meetings with offices/groups/etc. where there may be overlapping scholarly interests and potential for collaboration.

Bias Risks

- **First impressions:** Research shows that we form impressions about others within the first 15 to 30 seconds of meeting them but on appearance, nonverbal communication, tone of voice, strength of handshake, etc. These impressions are not based on job-related information and often reflect unconscious stereotypes.
- **Fair vs. the same:** Treating every candidate “exactly the same” in a rigid or unexamined manner may inadvertently favor some candidates over others in ways related to identity status rather than to job qualifications.
- **Assumptions**
 - Untested beliefs about what characteristics of leadership, creativity, potential, collegiality, etc. “look like” can disadvantage candidates from historically underrepresented groups.
 - Assuming a candidate’s needs and interests based on identity status—instead of providing all candidates with options—can be offensive.
 - Showing surprise (even unintentionally) when meeting a candidate from a historically underrepresented group is likely to offend.
- **Speculation:** If questions or concerns arise during the interview demonstrate candidate deficits. Speculation about the meaning of public self-promotion is a key example—interviews favor those who are skillful at public self-promotion, but cultural and gender norms often prohibit “bragging” or “selling oneself,” thereby significantly disadvantaging certain candidates. We may incorrectly equate effective self-promotion with self-confidence, assertiveness, skill in advocating for programs or projects, etc.
- **Poorly designed/executed interview**
 - Phone interviews disadvantage certain candidates when cultural characteristics or communication styles are not accommodated.
 - Not covering the same topics with all candidates.
 - Not pre-planning interview topics/questions.
 - Trying to cover too many questions.
 - Poorly designed interview questions:
 - Too many closed-ended/narrow/scenario questions.
 - Lack of clarity about how you will evaluate answers.
 - Questions not directly related to the position's work; questions leading to information you cannot legally consider.

- Not asking appropriate follow-up questions.
- **Poorly designed campus visit**
 - Important stakeholders/colleagues not included.
 - Participants outside the committee were not briefed in advance.
 - Outside participant's input is invited/captured in an unstructured way—too little detail, too little guidance about what input is sought.
 - Failing to make time and provide resources to address candidate interest in housing, partner/spouse employment, childcare, community connections with identity groups, and other related issues.
 - Insufficient attention to candidate's personal needs such as bathroom breaks, special dietary needs, regular fluid intake, need to self-administer medication, time and privacy for nursing/pumping breast milk, need to communicate with family or others at home, candidate illness, etc.
 - Little or no opportunity for candidates to debrief, ask questions, and share concerns at the end of the process.
- **Failing to provide reasonable accommodations** for candidates with disabilities or candidates' religious beliefs.
- **Ordeal by interview**; designing the interview as a test of strength or a process of assessing the candidate “under fire.”
- **Failing to provide an equitable experience for internal candidates**; expecting them to manage their own visit while external candidates have a host to accompany them; not offering all the same opportunities (visiting office space/lab space, meeting with staff, discussing benefits, taking a campus tour, etc.) that external candidates receive.

Interview Strategies

- **First, review your criteria matrix to identify the highest priority** qualifications you plan to evaluate at each interview stage.
- **Be aware of the potential for bias**—pay particular attention to first impressions and cognitive bias risks. Awareness of our own bias potential reduces the impact of unconsciously biased thinking; the search committee should discuss this possibility during the debrief of each interview.
- **Fairness is more than “exactly the same”**— Interact with each candidate individually—in accordance with their needs—to obtain the most complete information possible about qualifications, skills, and potential. See below for specific strategies to accomplish this during phone interviews.
- **Questions are questions**—distinguish between strengths, questions, and areas for development. Follow up on questions or concerns during the interview visit by seeking more information about past performance rather than speculating or assuming. Cognitive AND structural bias often occurs when you speculate, assume, or jump to conclusions.
- **Pre-plan the campus visit**
 - Invite the right participants—stakeholders, potential colleagues, clients, students, etc. can provide valuable input. Involving them gives them “buy-in” to the search outcome and the appointee’s success.
 - Provide a standard input process for participants to provide relevant input *about the criteria* you are evaluating, more than just a “yes/no” vote. Ask participants to indicate which candidates’ sessions they attended—did they see all candidates or only some? Ask participants to describe what the candidate said or did (descriptive words rather than judgment words) as evidence for any assessments they offer and to clarify any misunderstandings.

- Provide information about candidates and guidance about appropriate/inappropriate interview questions to stakeholders and others attending open forums, public talks, or meet and greets.
- Attend to candidate needs and interests in the schedule. Negotiate this with the candidate prior to the visit, offering options and the opportunity to schedule uncommitted time themselves. Provide a standard list of potential contacts for all candidates.
- Provide the candidate with a draft and final written itinerary well before the visit, including names and roles of people with whom they will interact.
- Offer to schedule a 50-minute personalized student-led campus tour for off-campus candidates.
- Let the candidate know how to request accommodation in advance.
- Plan a site visit experience for any internal candidates that is comparable to external candidate experiences:
 - Have someone accompanying the internal candidate throughout the day as you would with an external candidate.
 - Request participant RSVPs for all candidate forums so you can monitor anticipated attendance for each person’s presentation and step up recruiting efforts if needed.
 - Offer the internal candidate all the same amenities (including meetings, lab/office tours, campus tours, etc.) that external candidates receive.
- **Pre-plan the structured interview questions**
 - Using the criteria matrix, identify the technical and performance skills to be evaluated at this stage.
 - Include “behavior-based” interview questions to elicit information about performance skills (see below).
 - Plan to manage the interview as a dialogue—each pre-planned question is a “jumping off point” for comprehensively exploring the performance skill or topic.
 - Encourage/expect relevant follow-up questions from all committee members to seek additional information or clarification from the candidate about the example they have offered or ask for different examples (positive and negative).
- **Include a final “wrap up” conversation for each candidate** with the unit head that includes the following:
 - questions to the candidate about qualifications for the job.
 - consider offering the candidate an opportunity to provide any additional information they had hoped to share/would like the committee to consider but were not asked about in the interview.
 - discuss the remaining steps and timeline for the hiring process.
 - summary of general conditions of employment.
 - offer to provide other information or answer questions.
 - request feedback about the interview process and any “disconnects” the candidate may have experienced.
- **Remember what it feels like to be a candidate.** Focus on helping each candidate feel comfortable and welcome and supporting their success in the interview by providing what they need.

Virtual Interviews: Sometimes, limited funds and geographic separation support phone or Zoom interviews to help with final screening before campus visits.

- **Advantages:**
 - Opportunity to interact with a greater number of candidates.
 - More information available before the campus interview.
 - Some candidates are comfortable and good at phone interviewing.

- **Risks:**
 - Can be unsettling and confusing for candidates unless committee members take extra care to help the candidate feel comfortable.
 - The phone may disadvantage people with “high-context” communication styles and favor people with “low-context” communication styles.
 - Candidates may lack access to virtual (e.g., Zoom) technology.
 - Committee members may form incorrect conclusions about candidates.
- **Strategies:**
 - Offer to set up a virtual connection at a business center in the candidate’s community (candidates who do not need this can decline)
 - Acknowledge the potential discomfort of phone interviews at the beginning of the call.
 - Introduce yourself by name and role at the beginning of the call, then re-introduce yourself by name each time you speak.
 - If time is needed to finish taking notes about an answer, tell the candidate, “We’re just making some notes so we can remember what you said—it should just take a moment.”
 - Check in with candidates through the process about how they are doing and what they need.
 - Consider allowing candidates to contact you by email within 24 hours of the interview to add to or clarify what they have said.

Structured behavior-based Interviewing: In behavior-based interviews, candidates are asked to recount specific past experiences that predict their probable response to similar situations in the future. These questions help evaluate performance skills, transferable skills, and non-traditional or bonus skills. A well-designed behavior-based interview includes ample time for follow-up questions and dialog related to each performance skill. Six to eight well-designed questions—including good committee follow-up questions—will usually fill the better part of an hour-long interview.

To prepare for the interview:

1. Identify the most important performance skills to assess based on the job description.
2. Develop a brief list of open-ended questions—see *Performance Skill Dimensions and Sample Interview Questions* at the end of this section or this [web-based question generator](#) for examples. Questions typically follow this format:
 - ✓ Tell us about a time when you encountered XYZ type of situation.
 - ✓ Describe the circumstances.
 - ✓ Tell us exactly what you did and describe the results.
3. Revise your initial questions so they are as conversational as possible.
4. Develop follow-up questions (or use those suggested by the web-based question generator*) to help the candidate provide you with relevant and detailed information. Here are a few examples:
 - Tell us more about the steps you took and what happened.
 - How did others react, and what did you do with those reactions?
 - What did you do next? Why?
 - What was your thinking at that moment—why did you choose that course of action?
 - What did you learn from this experience?
 - Would you do anything differently if faced with that situation again? If so, what and why?
 - Can you tell us about another situation with a different (positive/negative) outcome?

Conduct the interview:

1. Explain that you will ask them to recount specific situations and describe how they handled them.
2. Allow silence after asking each question.
3. Ask follow-up questions – probe for details and encourage dialogue.
4. Ask for positive and negative examples--seek a range of performance examples for each skill to build a balanced picture of the candidate.
5. Expect to hear about mistakes—mistakes occur when people take risks.
6. Take notes, including any questions not resolved by follow-up questions.

After the interview:

1. Conduct a structured debrief of the interview with the other search committee members.
2. Identify any questions that remain or any new questions that have arisen.
3. Avoid numeric scoring*, which risks obscuring nuanced differences and promoting unconscious cognitive bias.

*The web-based question generator recommends a numeric scoring scheme that, if used, would result in a final interview “score” for each candidate. **Note:** PASSHE’s Search Advocates do NOT recommend using numeric scores, as they tend to obscure the nuanced differences between candidate answers and can encourage unconscious bias.

Performance Skill Dimensions and Sample Interview Questions

Coping: Ability to maintain a mature, problem-solving attitude while dealing with interpersonal conflict, hazardous conditions, personal rejection, hostility, or time demands.

1. Tell me about when you had to cope with strict deadlines or time demands.
2. Give me an example of a time at work when you had to deal with unreasonable expectations.
3. When have you had to cope with the anger or hostility of another person?
4. Sooner or later, we all deal with interpersonal conflict or personal rejection at work. Give me an example of when you had to cope with these demands.
5. Tell me about a high-stress situation in which it was desirable for you to maintain a positive attitude.

Tolerance of Ambiguity: Able to withhold actions or speech without important information; deal with unresolved situations, frequent changes, delays, or unexpected events.

1. Describe a time when you were able to postpone your comments until you had all the facts necessary for a good response to a situation.
2. What has your experience working with conflicting, delayed, or ambiguous information? How did you make the most of the situation?
3. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an unresolved situation on the job.

Decisiveness: Able to make decisions quickly on available information and act; make commitments and not change decisions when challenged; deal with emergencies as necessary.

1. Describe a situation where you had to draw a conclusion and take speedy action.
2. Describe a time when you had to commit to a plan of action in an emergency.
3. Describe a time when you were pressured to make an immediate decision. Did you act immediately, or were you more deliberate and slower?
4. Tell me about a situation when you had to defend your decision even though it was unpopular.

Oral Communications: Able to clearly present information through the spoken word; influence or persuade others through oral presentation in positive or negative circumstances; listen well.

1. Tell me about your most successful experience when making a speech or presentation to a group.
2. Tell me about an experience of yours that illustrates your ability to influence another person verbally.
3. Tell me about a specific time when your listening skills helped you communicate better.

Assertiveness: Able to maturely express one's feelings and opinions despite disagreement; accurately communicate to others regardless of their status or position.

1. Tell me about a time when you could express your opinions maturely despite disagreements or objections.
2. Tell me about a time when you successfully expressed your ideas/opinions in a tactful and careful way.
3. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with another person to achieve a positive outcome.
4. Describe a time when one of your decisions was challenged by higher management. How did you react?

Energizing: Able to build energy (motivation) in both individuals and groups.

1. Give me an example of a time when your positive attitude caused others to be motivated or energized.
2. Tell me about a time when your use of recognition and encouragement created positive energy in another person or group.

Diversity: The ability to create and sustain an inclusive workplace climate in which all are welcomed and can thrive.

1. Tell us about your engagement with different communities—what communities, how you worked with them, what you learned, and the outcomes you achieved.
2. Describe a time when you worked to welcome and include someone who was different from the rest of the group.

Policy and Procedure: Able to relate to routine operations in a manner that is consistent with existing solutions to problems; conform to established policies and procedures; log work activities.

1. Give me an example of a time when you were expected to act in accordance with a policy even when it was not convenient.
2. Describe when you felt an action you needed to take was inconsistent with established policies/procedures. How did you handle it?
3. What have you done when you felt existing solutions to routine operations were ineffective?

Alertness: Ability to be attentive to all aspects of the environment while working; to monitor the environment during routine activity.

1. Describe a specific experience you have had in which it was necessary for you to react quickly because of a change in the environment.
2. Tell me about an experience you have had in hazardous conditions in which your alertness paid off, saving you from a bad outcome.
3. Tell me about your experience in dealing with routine work. What kinds of problems did you have to overcome to concentrate on the details of the job?

Perception and Analysis: Ability to identify and integrate the critical elements of a situation; to make correct inferences from data; to specify alternative courses of action.

1. Describe a technical or personnel problem you solved on the job that demonstrates your analytical ability.
2. Sooner or later, everyone makes mistakes. What was the most significant mistake you made in your last job, and why/how did you make it? What did you learn?

Goal Setting: To define realistic, specific goals and objectives; to prioritize objectives.

1. Tell me about important goals you set and prioritized in your previous work. How successful were you?
2. Give me an example of your usual process for goal setting. What type of system do you use? How do you go about achieving those goals?

Written Communication: Able to write clearly and effectively present ideas to document activities; to read and interpret written materials and extract information.

1. Describe a situation in which you had to communicate with others in writing. How did you know whether your communication was effective?
2. Tell me when you needed to use research, journal articles, or other written materials to accomplish your work. How did you use what you read?
3. In some positions, it is necessary to be a thorough, meticulous reader; in other situations, it is important to scan quickly through large amounts of information. Describe your most significant scanning experience.

Interaction: Able to communicate with other individuals while simultaneously building credibility and rapport.

1. Tell me about when you “put your foot in your mouth.”
2. Describe a time when you had to interact with a “difficult” person.

Perceptiveness: Able to interpret verbal and non-verbal behavior; to develop accurate perception and understanding of others’ feelings, needs, values, and opinions; to be sensitive to and aware of personality differences, political factors, the social environment, and conflicts.

1. Give me an example of how your interpretations of verbal and non-verbal behavior have helped you communicate.
2. Tell me about a time during a negotiation when your perceptiveness helped you to make sense of another person’s behavior.
3. Do you trust the people you supervise to complete their jobs in your current position? How do you know? Describe a time when you were convinced of their trustworthiness or untrustworthiness.
4. What do you consider to be the critical strategies or skills in handling conflict? Describe a time when you used those strategies or skills.

Organization and Planning: Able to organize and schedule people or tasks; to develop realistic action plans for specific goals while being sensitive to time constraints and resource availability; to plan effectively.

1. How did you organize your work in your last position? What happened to your plan when emergencies came up?
2. Describe an example of when you used realistic schedules and timetables to generate a plan for a specific goal.

Creativity: Able to develop unique and novel solutions to problems; use intuition and a new way of thinking to give birth to new ideas; to present information in an attention-getting and interesting manner.

1. Give me an example of a time when you used your creativity to come up with a solution to a problem at work.
2. Give me an example of a time when you used a new strategy or intentionally chose not to use a new strategy to communicate a complex idea. Focus on how your methods produced results.
3. Creativity often means stepping back from regimented ways of thinking. When have you been able to break out of a structured mindset and intuitively play with concepts and ideas?

Versatility: Able to modify one's own behavioral style to respond to the needs of others while maintaining one's own objectives and sense of dignity.

1. Tell me about a time when you were able to change to meet the needs of others.
2. Tell me about a time when you felt it necessary to set aside your immediate interests to be flexible and accept another person's needs.
3. Describe when you were in an unfamiliar setting or working with an unfamiliar group.

Shrewdness: Able to recognize and use information about organizational climate and key individuals to accomplish legitimate organizational goals; be aware of the importance of timing, politics, and group processes in managing change; to avoid creating the impression of being manipulative.

1. Tell me about a time when your understanding of organizational climate or culture helped you to achieve your desired results.
2. Though politics at work is often seen as negative, clearly, it is sometimes necessary to be careful and strategic about what you say and do. Describe a situation when it was important to be careful in this way.
3. Give me an example of when your political awareness, ability to "read the system," and knowledge of how groups work enhanced your ability to generate a change.

Team Building: Able to work with people in such a manner as to build high morale and group commitment to goals and objectives.

1. Describe when you had difficulty getting others to establish a common approach to a problem.
2. Tell me about a time you managed/provided leadership to employees who were jointly resistant to leadership.

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving: Able to act in solving problems while exhibiting judgment, a systematic approach, and a realistic understanding of issues; able to identify the important dimensions of a problem, determine potential causes, obtain relevant information, and specify alternate solutions; to use reason, even when dealing with emotional topics.

1. Tell me about a time when you were proud of your ability to be objective even though you were emotionally involved in a problem.
2. Tell me about a time when you resisted the temptation to "jump to conclusions" and thoroughly obtained all facts associated with a problem before coming to a solution.
3. Describe a major work problem you faced/how you dealt with it.
4. Tell me about a situation where you felt you were "part of the problem." What did you do?

Leadership: Able to influence the actions and opinions of others in a desired direction; to exhibit judgment in leading others to worthwhile objectives.

1. Give me an example of when you needed to be persuasive in getting your idea across, even though the odds were against you.

2. Give me an example of how you have used your own personal qualities and appeal to lead others.
3. Tell me about a time when you made an unpopular decision.
4. Give us an overview of your leadership experience, including specific examples that exemplify your leadership style.

Prohibited Questions: Do not ask candidates about their:

- Race or color
- Gender
- National origin
- Citizenship
- Age
- Religion
- Marital Status
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity/gender expression
- Arrest Record
- Military discharge
- Other personal information, such as dependents, height, weight, medical information, etc.

References

The search committee gathers broad, well-balanced additional information about each candidate's performance and potential. Telephone reference checks can occur both before and after the site interview visit. These provide an opportunity to research questions and concerns that arose from the application or during the interview. Notify candidates that you are beginning reference calls before you contact their references.

Bias Risks:

- Written references: Reference letters may not address your interests and do not allow you to follow up for clarity. Avoid requesting letters of recommendation during the first round of screening. This practice can perpetuate gender bias and privilege and shrink your candidate pool. Especially for academic jobs, requiring personalized written reference letters for all applicants can discourage some people from applying because they do not want to “wear out” their references.
- Biased references: Some references may have a bias against the candidate for reasons unrelated to their ability to do the job or may reflect unconscious bias through subtle language choices that may not be obvious to you or them.
- Failing to notify candidates: If references are contacted without the candidate's knowledge, it can jeopardize their standing with their current employer *and* impact the accuracy of the reference information you receive.
- Insufficient references: Relying only on the reference contacts provided by the candidate—or considering only information contained in letters of reference—may create an unbalanced picture of the candidate.
- Poorly designed reference check: Inadequate attention to structured reference checking can favor an already preferred candidate and may lead the conversations into unacceptable areas of inquiry.

- Reading between the lines: Inaccurately forming conclusions about what a referee may be implying but not actually saying without asking questions to test that perception.
- Misunderstanding or misconstruing reference opinions: When only one person hears what a reference says, there is a risk of misunderstanding or even missing important information.

Reference Strategies

- Use phone references instead of or in addition to letters of reference.
- Use behavior-based questions asking for specific examples of performance can help counteract possible bias on the part of the reference.
- Notify the candidate before contacting any references and contact candidates to let them know where you are in the selection process and that you are about to begin checking their references. Explain that our usual practice is to begin with the references they have provided but go beyond those individuals to talk with others in the organization to get a well-rounded picture of the candidates. Be respectful if a candidate expresses concerns and try to accommodate those. Candidates should be told that, before an offer is made, they will eventually need to talk with the appointee's current employer, but you can save that contact for the end of the search process.
- Contact several people as a variety of perspectives will help you obtain a balanced view of the applicant, identify possibly inaccurate references from people who are anxious to retain the applicant or to see them move on, and provide a larger context in which to evaluate a poor reference. See the *Types of References* section below. Most people have had one job with a strained or difficult supervisor relationship. Checking with several supervisors can help you determine whether poor work relationships are a pattern for the applicant or whether this was an isolated situation. Reference information is confidential and is never shared with the applicant.
- Plan reference checks in advance using what you know about behavior-based interviewing, plan the reference checks in detail.
- Have two or more committee members present for the reference call. It helps to have two people listening and taking notes so you can compare reactions and resolve discrepancies after the call.

Types of References for Consideration

Former major professors or employers: Because on-the-job performance is one of the best predictors of future performance, it is important to speak with people responsible for monitoring, assessing, and documenting that performance—preferably people who have directly supervised or mentored the applicants you are considering. They can speak about work quality and potential, reliability, areas of excellence, potential problems, and important job behaviors.

References not listed by the applicant: References supplied by the applicant are more likely to be positive. Therefore, it is often appropriate to seek contacts beyond the references they have provided. A broader set of reference contacts can help you explore the most recent work experience, other relevant experiences, and various perspectives about the applicant. Be sure to talk with the applicant before you seek other references in case it is not widely known that they have applied for this position.

People who did not supervise the applicant: Candidates may interact differently with people across “power divides.” Explore reference information from peers, students, those supervised by the candidates, office staff, etc.

Letters of reference: Reference letter requirements can be burdensome for potential applicants and their references and may even discourage some from applying. Reference letters can be useful to document complex scholarship, teaching, or other academic credentials. It is preferable to request reference letters only from semi-finalists or finalists and to think carefully about how these letters will be used, given recent research findings about reference letter bias noted above. Regardless of whether you require written references, you should still perform telephone reference checks.

Planning and Conducting Reference Conversations:

The information you seek from references must directly relate to the applicant's ability to carry out the job responsibilities. Whenever possible, have two people listen to each reference's responses; different people may pick out other details or notice nuances in a conversation.

Reference Questions:

- Decide what to tell each reference about the position's key responsibilities.
- Design broad, open-ended questions to learn about the candidate's experience, ability, and transferable skills related to the position.
- Use more specific questions to explore the applicant's accomplishments, performance, potential, productivity, and work record with supervisors, colleagues/peers, and subordinates.
- Design behavior-based questions to learn how the applicant performed in specific situations relevant to the position you are filling and to explore questions that arose during the interview visit.
- Encourage each referee to describe what the candidate did that led to the formation of the opinion they share with you; do not just ask for judgment.
- If relevant, would the reference rehire the candidate? Why or why not?
- Conclude with a request for any other information relevant to the candidate's ability to be successful in the position.

Reference Form:

Use a checklist or form to keep your inquiries consistently on track, ensure that you cover the same topics, and record key points. Include:

- Your name
- Date
- Applicant name
- Position applied for
- Name, title, and contact information for the reference.
- Working relationship between the reference and the candidate
- Questions you plan to ask about each applicant, with room to note responses.

Reference Call:

It would be beneficial to contact references by phone or email to schedule the reference call at a time that will work for both of you. Ensure you are in a private location and have set aside enough time to converse thoroughly. Then make the call to ensure you have all the necessary information, including the position description, applicant application, and reference form.

- Identify yourself, the applicant, and the position you are filling.
- If you have scheduled the call, confirm that this is a good time and that the reference is still available to talk to you.

- If you have not scheduled the call, ask whether the reference will speak with you and if now is a good time. If not, try to schedule a telephone conference at a time that will work for both of you.
- Briefly describe the position you are filling and assure the reference that the information they provide will be held in confidence as the law allows.
- Confirm the reference’s professional relationship with the candidate, the reference’s professional relationship with the candidate, and the duration of that relationship.
- Use your planned open-ended questions to explore relevant job-related information about the candidate.
- Use follow-up questions to explore specific details and to encourage a conversation rather than a question/answer session.
- Listen for hints—tone of voice, hesitation or stumbling, unenthusiastic word choice, missing information, etc.—that suggest you must follow up about a particular topic. Use these as cues to probe further about the topic.
- Thank the reference for speaking with you and offer your contact information in case they think of any other relevant information about the applicant’s skills or performance to share.
- After you hang up, read through your notes to be sure they are complete and understandable while the conversation is still fresh in your mind.

Final Evaluation

The search committee does not select the appointee. Its role is to meet when interviews and reference checks are complete and input has been requested and received from stakeholders. The work output for the selection stage is usually a list (preferably unranked and alphabetical) of acceptable applicants—including written analysis of strengths and areas for improvement—and the job-related screening reasons for applicants determined to be unacceptable. The search chair shares the committee’s conclusions with the unit head.

Bias Risks

- **Biased input:** People sometimes provide information to the search committee without meeting the candidate or including assessments based on hearsay, assumptions, or personal concerns.
- **Screening biases:** Refer to the screening section for details.
- **Incomplete evaluation**
- **Misleading analysis:** Raw data may suggest a particular concern or strength for a candidate because a small group of people have contributed a disproportionate number of comments. If committees list all comments without such context, the list may lead to an inaccurate conclusion about the pervasiveness of a particular concern.
- **Good fit:** Not fully explored and defined in the context of the job duties, producing “similar to me” cognitive bias.
- **Not evaluating the search process itself**

Evaluation Strategies

- Evaluating input: Input should not be ignored; when it differs significantly from other assessments, it may mean more information is needed. Input from people who did not participate in the interview visit may be questionable.
- Screening strategies: The screening section provides strategies to overcome bias that can be applied to the final screening evaluation.

- **Collect all screening information:** Pull together a wide array of information collected through the screening process, including:
 - Position description.
 - Position qualifications and screening criteria.
 - Written application materials.
 - Record of application screening results—the strengths and areas of concern that the committee identified prior to the interview stage.
 - Interview results, including committee member notes about applicant interview responses and committee member assessments of applicant strengths and weaknesses.
 - Input from stakeholders who interacted with the applicants during the campus visit (through public forums, colleague interviews, seminars, supervisor interviews, undergraduate teaching, etc.).
 - Input collected from references.
 - Any input from people interested in the position or knowledge of the applicant but who did not participate in the search/selection process.
- **Monitor committee dynamics**—pay attention if one committee member sees an applicant differently. Committee members are selected for good judgment and diverse perspectives. The committee loses its intended contribution if someone is silenced or overwhelmed by majority rule. Instead, explore the reasons for that person’s opinion, and discuss whether more information is needed.
- **Evaluate each applicant:** Draw information from the application materials, the interviews, and the reference checks. If you wonder or speculate about some characteristic or what something means, you probably do not have enough information to assess the applicant in that area—instead, note the question for later follow-up. To evaluate each applicant thoroughly, the committee should discuss and document:
 1. Whether they have described or demonstrated the ability to perform the position's essential functions.
 2. How well they meet each required and preferred qualifications.
 3. Demonstrated skills that will enable them to perform well in the position.
 4. Transferable skills, abilities, or understanding—perhaps demonstrated in a different context or content area—that they might use in this position.
 5. Unanticipated or “bonus” strengths (e.g., new ideas, a diverse perspective, valuable expertise, unusual life experiences).
 6. Demonstrated commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity.
 7. Areas in need of development.
 8. Areas of significant concern.
- **Consider “good fit,”** which was discussed and defined at the beginning of the search. If you have not already done so.
 - Define what *good fit* means in terms of specific performance skills.
 - Determine whether/how each skill is related to the position duties.
 - Avoid preferences for personality characteristics like “sense of humor,” “informal communication style,” “good eye contact,” “firm handshake,” etc., that can be related to someone’s culture, gender, religion, ability/disability, or other identity characteristics.
 - Review the definition of “good fit” for possible discriminatory impact. For example,
 - Can you clearly explain what it means?
 - Can you describe its relevance to the duties of the position?
 - Would you be uncomfortable if others knew you considered it, or would you mind if the newspaper published a story describing what you considered and how it influenced your decision?
 - Can you demonstrate how or whether each applicant meets it based on your collected information?

- Explore and document how each applicant has demonstrated effectiveness in your identified performance areas.
- **Put it All Together**
 1. Revisit areas of concern for applicants identified by the stakeholders or others in the hiring process. Answer these questions:
 - Is the applicant otherwise qualified and acceptable?
 - Is it a relevant consideration?
 - Can you resolve it based on the information you have gathered?
 - Do you need to seek more information?
 2. Collect and evaluate any missing information—do not hesitate to contact references again, or even explore inviting top applicants back for second interviews.
 3. Do one more review of all finalists to check your thinking:
 - Does each applicant on your acceptable list meet all the required qualifications for the job?
 - Are you giving some people the “benefit of the doubt?” Is everyone receiving this advantage?
 - Can you identify any possible unintentional bias, either in your screening decisions or in how you describe the applicant’s strengths and weaknesses?
 - Is every consideration directly related to each applicant’s ability to successfully perform the duties of the job?
 - Has the committee reached a consensus? Has it shared each candidate’s strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities?
 4. When the committee agrees that their assessment is complete, fair, and accurate, the search chair shares it with the hiring official.
- **Hiring official** reviews, the applicant assessment supplied by the search committee and may make any of the following choices:
 - Select one of the applicants found acceptable by the search committee.
 - Conduct further investigation.
 - Ask the committee to revisit candidates not yet invited for campus visits.
 - Reopen the search.
 - Close the search without hire.

More About Stakeholder Input

Input from stakeholders and other community members can be both useful and challenging. Search committees often wonder how to make use of this information in a fair and equitable way.

Useful: People who take the time to provide input to a search process often are interested in the appointee’s success. Sometimes they represent diverse viewpoints that are not present in the committee. They may work closely with the new appointee, so have an investment in that person’s success. They all want the best applicant to be selected for the position, even though they may disagree on who the best applicant is. Stakeholders sometimes pick up on things others may miss because their experiences, perspectives, and needs differ.

Challenging: Stakeholders usually are not involved in your committee’s in-depth discussions of the position needs, so their input may not focus on the criteria you believe are most important. They may not understand the risks and remedies for unintentional bias. Some did not meet all the applicants, so their input is inconsistent or incomplete. Others supply only a terse “hire this person” or “do not hire that person,” with no explanation or rationale. You may have trouble knowing whether their assessments have been affected by potentially biased or unreliable information such as stereotypes, hearsay, or gossip.

Using stakeholder input: Stakeholder perspectives from those present during the interviews can help you determine whether you need more data. You may need additional reference-checking, a second round of interviews, or even to revisit the applicant pool if stakeholders:

- strongly support applicants the committee finds unacceptable.
- strongly object to applicants the committee finds acceptable.
- identify an important area of strength or concern you have not addressed elsewhere in the information-gathering process.
- raise concerns about the applicant's interactions with people from a particular identity background.

Debriefing the Search and Selection Process

Before concluding the hiring phase of the search and selection process, ask the committee to reflect on the learning from the experience. The Search Advocate should consider administering a brief anonymous survey (using Qualtrics or another tool). Here are a few questions to consider:

- What was particularly successful at each stage?
- What strategies or contacts most effectively attract candidates from historically underrepresented groups?
- What did not work well, and why? How might this be improved for future searches?

Onboarding and Integration

The role of the search committee does not end with the hire. Members know more about the appointee than anyone else and should do everything possible to welcome the new person and position them for success.

Bias Risks

- **Rumor mill** - gossipy statements of “facts,” explanations, or assumptions about why this candidate was hired (without actual information). This might show up in comments like “they were a “diversity hire” and “they were not the top candidate.”
- **Sink or swim** - hiring new faculty members and abandoning them to their fate. New hires from privileged groups may have advantages that enable them to withstand such treatment better; new hires from targeted/historically underrepresented groups may be set up to fail if this *laissez-faire* approach is used. Processes like promotion and tenure are often described as a “black box” or a “moving target” by those trying to figure out how to succeed without effective colleague support.
- **Assimilation culture** - the expectation that new hires adapt to their new unit by fully adopting/conforming to the norms and behaviors of the dominant/privileged group. Attempting to retain the strengths of a diverse identity may be seen by colleagues as a failure to “fit in.”
- **Failure of good intentions** - colleagues often wish to help new faculty “feel better” as they adapt to their new community. This can go awry when colleagues fail to accept the meaning new faculty (especially those from underrepresented identity groups) assign to their lived experiences, especially the experience of microaggressions. Statements like “You’re taking that too personally,” “I’m sure they didn’t mean it that way,” “I’ve never known them to behave that way,” “Are you sure that’s what happened?” and “They must have been having a bad day,” have the effect of invalidating the legitimate emotional reaction of the individual.

- **Failing to recognize/address challenges** for members of historically underrepresented groups—current research demonstrates that many faculty of color have firsthand experience of challenges which can include (but are not limited to) racial and ethnic bias and intimidation at work and in the community. Both based on race and gender, women faculty and faculty of color report that they:
 - must work harder/contribute more than white or male colleagues,
 - receive more attention for their racial or gender identities than for their credentials,
 - are treated as tokens,
 - lack support or validation if their research is identity-related,
 - are expected to handle “minority” or “gender” affairs,
 - are often treated differently/disrespectfully by students,
 - encounter few others of their identity group in the unit/organization/ community,
 - face extraordinary service demands (both formal and informal).

Integration Strategies

- **Plan a public announcement** of the search outcome and who was hired. Include information about the strengths and abilities the new appointee brings—the reasons that person was selected—but be careful not to “over-sell” the person (which can produce resistance or resentment)
- **Do not tolerate rumors:** If rumors about a new hire begin circulating, ensure that they are brought to the attention of the hiring official and addressed immediately. Respond right away to any suggestion that someone is an “affirmative action hire” (and the related implication that they were, therefore, less qualified than others in the pool)
- **Personal mentoring** is one of the best strategies to support the success of new faculty and staff. New hires need people both inside and outside the unit who will:
 - commit to their success.
 - “show them the ropes.”
 - share the informal norms and culture of the unit.
 - help them steer around invisible pitfalls.
 - support them in understanding/adapting to their new roles.
 - introduce them to key colleagues, potential collaborators, and informal leaders.
 - help them make other connections in the institution and community.

No matter what other mentoring programs are available, search committee members should plan to take the lead at the beginning of this mentoring effort since they are intimately familiar with the position and the appointee.

- **Cohort/peer mentoring:** If possible, introduce the new person to others in similar positions who joined the unit or the institution around the same time. New faculty may fear that voicing concerns with senior colleagues in the department could negatively impact their future success. It may feel safer for them to debrief/problem-solve certain issues with peers instead.
- **Support plan:** With the new appointee and ideally before the first day on the job, the new supervisor should develop a set of goals, a plan to support their success in attaining those goals, and a strategy for checking in with them frequently about the plan implementation. Update or adjust as needed. Be sure to provide frequent feedback, including recognition of accomplishments and constructive ideas for improvement. Seek the same kind of feedback from the new employee. Assist the new person in managing the overwhelming request for

assistance and service they may encounter, especially if they belong to a historically underrepresented group.

- **Mentoring network map: Help the new appointee develop a “mentoring map” of people who can serve as resources for the position’s various priorities.**
- **Mutual accommodation of difference:** Develop a stated practice of adapting the culture to accommodate new hires and expecting new hires to adapt to the existing culture. Allow and expect people to retain those characteristics that make them unique and valuable.
- **Empathetic listening:** Listen to others’ experiences without correcting, explaining, or judging. A person’s emotional reaction to a particular set of facts is based on an entire life of living with their identity—you cannot know what that is like any more than they can know what it is like to live with your identity. Respect that they are experts in life experiences and be supportive/understanding if they share concerns.
- **Recognize/address challenges for members of historically underrepresented groups** before the search begins. Seek perspectives from others with this identity about what challenges they face and what can be done to improve these circumstances. Be honest with new employees about these challenges and let them know what is already being done. Encourage them to let you know as they encounter other challenges or develop ideas to improve these situations. Be sure to follow through if someone comes forward with an idea.

Failed Searches

- A search can fail if a successful candidate cannot be identified to fill the vacant position and all good-faith efforts to find viable candidates have been completed.
- The committee should vote to fail the search and, if approved, would draft a memorandum to the dean, Provost, and Human Resources requesting that the search be failed. The committee can request that a new search begin in the same memo.
- Human Resources will review search committee minutes, the applicant files and pool and the process before recommending to the provost, who ultimately will decide if the search failed.

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Appendices

Quick Checklists (Adopted from OSU's Search Advocacy Training Program)

- 1a. Writing the Position Description
- 1b. Principles for Establishing Qualifications
- 1c. Develop Screening Criteria
2. Recruit
3. Screen
4. Interview
5. References
6. Final Evaluation
7. Integration

1a. Writing the Position Description

Discuss the position using the “framing questions”.

- What is the mission** of the position now and in the future? Why is it important? What is the role of this person (in addition to the tasks they will perform)? How does it relate to the unit and university mission?
- What anticipated, emerging, or unmet needs might the new person in this position** address? Are any of these needs related to increasing inclusion or participation of identity groups or under-served/underrepresented minority populations? How might someone from a different background be valuable to the unit in this position?
- What demographic groups are entering or already present in this field** (clientele, stakeholders, leaders, consumers, etc.) whose roles or interests are not being fully addressed?
- What is attractive** about the job, the unit, and the organization for *traditional* candidates? What else would be attractive to someone who IS NOT from a *traditional well-represented* background (assuming her/his life experiences, commitments, perspectives, interests, etc. may differ somewhat from those of a *traditional* candidate)?
- What does the position description say about who we are** as an organization and what matters to us?
- Would someone reading this document be excited** about this possibility?
- Is it written in a manner that is engaging and inviting?**
- Who will “see themselves” in this position** as it is presently described? Who will not? (Consider people who are single, urban, younger, older, disabled, Latino/a, Black/African American, international, parents, not parents, LGBTQ, not “outdoorsy”)
- How can the description or even the position be changed or broadened** to engage the interest of a different or more diverse group of qualified people?
- Is there anything** about the language in this document that may be **unintentionally hurtful or offensive** to someone based on their identity or life experience?

- Does the description **strongly express our commitment to diversity** without sounding like “boilerplate” language?

1b. Principles for Establishing Qualifications

- Organize qualifications into three categories:**
 - Basic Qualifications - measurable minimum qualifications such as degrees or other professional certifications.
 - Other Required Qualifications - additional critical qualifications necessary to perform the position's duties but are not “measurable.” For leaders, “a demonstrable commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity” (or similar) is required.
 - Preferred/Special Qualifications - qualifications that would enhance the appointee’s ability to successfully perform the position's duties. For all non-leadership positions, “a demonstrable commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity (or similar) must be preferred and may be required.
- Limit basic and other required qualifications**—these should be used only to establish a minimum threshold for consideration; they are not a full description of “what it takes to succeed.”
- Avoid absolute language** like “must” when possible; replace it with flexible language like “should.”
- Avoid arbitrary numeric measures** (such as a set number of years)
- Identify and seek transferable skills and/or performance skills**
- Avoid unnecessary qualifications and thresholds set unnecessarily high.** Ask yourself if you can imagine someone who could do the job without meeting one or more of the minimum qualifications (e.g. bachelor’s or master’s degree, driver’s license, etc.); if you can, revise the qualifications accordingly
- Ensure that all qualifications are related to the duties and role of the position.**
- Include relevant qualifications related to diversity**
- Discuss *good fit*** as a way of identifying/evaluating performance skills
- Ask yourself:**
 1. What does the list of qualifications say about the position, the unit, and the institution?
 2. Are the lists of required and preferred qualifications too long?
 3. Will they be daunting to applicants or the search committee?

1c. Develop Screening Criteria Matrix

- Relationship to job:**
 - How is it directly related to the duties of the position?
 - What will the appointee be able to do if they meet this qualification that they might not be able to do otherwise?
 - Are you using this qualification as a “proxy” for certain skills? If so, what are those skills/experiences? Could they be listed as individual qualifications?
 - Why is this qualification important?

- Transferable:** Could this skill have been learned in some other setting (personal or professional), and be adapted to be used in this setting?
- Screening Criteria:**
 - Given its relationship to the job, what experiences, accomplishments, or learning meet this qualification?
 - If it could be assessed in an interview, what **MUST** the candidate include in their answer—at a minimum—to meet the need? Go beyond *quantity* (such as number of years) to define indicators of acceptable *quality* in their performance or understanding.
 - Broaden the criteria by asking, "Who might we miss?" and "What ways to meet this have we overlooked?"
 - Ask "How else might someone meet this?" several times to broaden access to the applicant pool.
 - **Priority:** How important is *strength* in this qualification compared to other qualifications? *High, medium, and low* priority apply to preferred AND required qualifications.
Required qualifications: If meeting a qualification *strongly* (vs. minimally) strongly predicts *better* performance, it is a *high priority* for the committee to spend more time evaluating. Conversely, once an objective numeric qualification is met, the committee does not need to spend more time on it; it is a *low priority*.
Preferred qualifications: Those most strongly predict better performance are a *high* priority. Those that least strongly predict better performance are *low* priority.
- Strength:** For medium- and high-priority qualifications, what are indications that a candidate meets them strongly (beyond just meeting them) in relation to the job? What *ways* of meeting (or exceeding) the qualification predict better performance? Go beyond quantity (how *much*) to include quality (how *well*).
- When to Assess**—At what stage will we have enough information to assess this qualification for all applicants? If it is a high priority and will be evaluated at more than one stage, what are we looking for at each stage? When will we eliminate candidates who do not meet it?

2. Recruit

Learn the market

- Ask people from historically underrepresented groups and other new hires how they found their jobs here and why they applied.
- Research how other universities/institutions/employers advertise.
- Recruit for multiple jobs/cohort or cluster hires to attract a broader pool.
- Decide where the people who could do this job are; how can we reach those from organizations we might not usually see represented in our pool?

Advertise (broadcast recruiting)

In addition to using the required listserv and other resources available through [OSU's Recruitment Resource Guide](#)

- Print publications – explore:
 - Standard publications in the field or in higher ed ("*Everyone* reads XXX")
 - Disciplinary publications that target diverse populations
 - General publications that target diverse populations
 - Consumer/client publications
 - Metropolitan newspapers (Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Washington)
- Listservs – explore:
 - Targeted disciplinary/professional listservs
 - Related disciplinary/professional listservs

- Identity caucus listservs for disciplinary/professional organizations
- Identity group organizations for professions or disciplines (Society of Black Engineers, Association of Women in Science, etc.)
- Websites – post the position anywhere you can find that you can afford, including websites for the journals and organizations you have already identified, higher ed websites, recruiting websites, etc.
- Social media

Network (personal recruiting)

- Identify organizations/geographic regions/individuals to target to broaden the applicant pool and increase diversity.
- Plan individual phone calls to colleagues and potential candidates:
 - Describe your position and what you are seeking
 - Ask for help identifying colleagues and possible candidates
 - Specifically, ask for help reaching people you might otherwise miss.
- Go several steps beyond people you already know.
- Document your calls.
- Keep in touch with candidates you invite to apply as the search/selection process continues.

3. Screen

- Include all committee** members at every stage of screening.
- Address known candidates and conflicts of interest** explicitly before discussing applicants (see quick checklist #4).
- Use screening criteria** developed and agreed on by the committee before beginning applicant review.
- Expand screening criteria** as necessary to reflect possibilities the committee initially missed—evaluate all applicants using the expanded criteria.
- Use a screening matrix** to document each candidate’s strengths, shortcomings, and questions; remember to base this on the criteria matrix you developed.

Required Qualifications	Meets?			Strengths	Comments
	N	Y	+		
Preferred Qualifications					

- Adopt a bias in favor of every applicant** who meets minimum qualifications—document all strengths and reasons to interview them *before* evaluating weaknesses or areas for development.
- Look for transferable skills** in applicants’ experiences.
- Capture and research questions** that arise rather than speculating—ask, “Do we have enough information for an answer, or is this still a question?”
- Recognize and discuss the potential for bias**
 - Strive to discuss possible bias without blaming or defensiveness

- Ask questions to help the group to help identify/counteract bias:
 - What are we reacting to?
 - Why do we see this applicant this way?
 - Are we making assumptions that could come from unintentional cognitive or structural biases?
 - Do we have the information we need to make this judgment?
- **Group qualified applicants into categories** (minimally qualified, well-qualified, highly qualified). Do not use number schemes or rank candidates individually.
- **Give qualifying veterans affirmative preference per OSU policy** (see [Consideration of Veterans in the Hiring Process](https://eo.oregonstate.edu/consideration-veterans-hiring-process) <https://eo.oregonstate.edu/consideration-veterans-hiring-process>)
- **Evaluate the demographic impact** of screening after each round (seek assistance from the Search Advocate Director, EOA staff, or HR business partners)
- **Revisit screening** if demographic analysis suggests it is disproportionately screening out members of a particular identity background

4. Known Applicants – Best Practices

Before reviewing applications

- **Committee members should disclose their relationship** with any applicants they *know* or with whom their relationship may pose a *conflict of interest*.
- **Members should consider stepping down** if they have a conflict of interest unless their content expertise is essential to the search process.
 - *Even the appearance of favoritism can make it difficult for the successful applicant to be accepted and damage their chance of success.*
- **Refrain from providing personal knowledge** of an applicant's strengths or weaknesses until after the initial application review, preferably after the first interview.
- **Egregious problems or other significant considerations** may be shared privately with the search chair, search advocate, or hiring manager.

Application review

- **Focus on discussing only the materials provided by applicants**
Everyone has a story, but committee members only know the stories of a few. Keep the application review equitable for all applicants.
- **If known information is shared** (by accident or because it is critically important), discuss how to obtain similar information for other candidates before the next round of screening decisions.

Interviews

- **Without sharing specific information** about known candidates, committee members may suggest interview questions to explore related qualifications or performance skills relevant to the job.
- **After the interviews**, relevant information about known applicants may be appropriately shared if necessary:
 - Share information, not judgments or feelings: *"They were often late to meetings"* vs. *"They were lazy and disorganized."*
 - If the information about an applicant comes from someone else, consider the source's reliability.
 - Consider whether the information is relevant to the job: *"Their driving is dangerous"* may not be an issue unless the job requires driving.
 - Avoid assumptions. Does the new information lead to conclusions or raise questions requiring follow-up?
 - Track and gather similar information for unknown applicants through second interviews, reference checks, etc.

Reference checking

- For known applicants:** Ask questions of references that may confirm or contradict the hypotheses you have developed based on what people who know the applicant have told you.
- For unknown applicants:** Fill in gaps by asking intentional questions to address areas you have discussed for known applicants.

5. Interview

- Discuss the potential for bias**—pay particular attention to first impressions and cognitive bias risks.
- Fairness** – interact with each candidate *in accordance with their needs* to get the best information possible about qualifications, skills, and potential.
- Treat speculation as a question**—follow up by seeking more information about past performance. For example, rather than assume that good self-promotion involves several performance skills (leadership, self-confidence, critical thinking, advocacy, etc.), do additional research to find out how strongly the candidate has demonstrated those performance skills in the past.
- Pre-plan stakeholder/colleague participation in the campus visit** – Invite the right participants, provide a way for participants to provide relevant input *about the criteria* you are evaluating, furnish information about candidates in advance, and provide guidance about appropriate questions and behavior as appropriate.
- Plan for candidate needs and interests** in the schedule. Ask about candidate needs/interests/options. Offer a draft itinerary for comment and send the final (detailed) itinerary well before a campus visit.
- Reasonable accommodations**--let candidates know how to request accommodations for disability in advance.
- Pre-plan behavior-based interview questions** to evaluate specific technical and performance skills.
- Tell candidates** that you will ask “behavior-based” questions, seek specific examples of past performance, and take notes.
- Manage the interview as a dialogue** with follow-up questions, request follow-up questions, request more specifics and clarification, seek other examples, etc., until the topic of each interview question has been fully explored with the candidate.
- Expect the unexpected.** During the visit, the candidate may become ill or have a family emergency, inclement weather may disrupt travel arrangements, or the university could have an unscheduled/emergency closure.
- Schedule a “wrap up” conversation** with the unit head to address candidate questions about what comes next and conditions of employment and seek feedback about the interview experience.
- Remember what it is like to be a candidate.** Focus on helping each candidate feel comfortable and welcome and supporting their success in the interview by providing what they need.

6. References

- Contact candidates** before you begin checking references. Tell them where the search is in process, that you are starting to check references, and that our usual practice is to begin with the references they have furnished but go beyond them to get a well-rounded understanding of how the candidate functions within their organization. Be responsive to concerns they raise about contacting current employers.
- Plan reference checks in advance**—design the reference conversations in detail, including what context information you need to gather about the reference’s relationship with the candidate, key information about the position, etc.
- Develop behavior-based questions**—asking for specific examples of performance can help you identify possible bias on the part of the reference and can also provide helpful information to answer questions or concerns that may have arisen during the interview.
- Create a reference checklist** or form to keep your inquiries on track, ensure that you cover the same topics with each reference for each candidate, and help you capture an appropriate conversation record. If you use a reference form, it should include:
 - Your name
 - Date
 - Applicant name
 - Position applied for
 - Name, title, and contact information for the reference
 - Working relationship between the reference and the candidate
 - Questions you plan to ask about each applicant, with room to note responses
- Use phone references** instead of or in addition to letters of reference.
- Contact people** at different levels of the organization to get a variety of perspectives and build a balanced picture of the candidate.
- Keep reference information confidential**—do not share it with the applicant or others outside the search committee.
- Have two or more committee members present for the reference call (if possible)**—it helps to have two people listening and taking notes, so you can compare reactions and resolve discrepancies after the call.
- Do not rely on “reading between the lines”**—if a reference implies something, carefully check your perception of the person.

7. Final Evaluation

- Collect the information** gathered during the process:
 - Position description
 - Position qualifications and screening criteria
 - Written application materials
 - Record of application screening results—strengths and areas of concern
 - Interview results, including committee member notes and assessments
 - Stakeholder input (if credible/well-founded)
 - Information from references
- Revisit screening strategies** from initial application screening to reduce bias
- Revisit “good fit,”** defined as specific, relevant performance skills:

- Steer clear of personality traits like “sense of humor,” “informal communication,” “good eye contact,” “firm handshake,” etc.
- ☐ **Evaluate each candidate thoroughly.** Did they:
 - describe/demonstrate the ability to perform essential job functions?
 - meet each required and preferred qualification?
 - demonstrate skills that will support success in the position?
 - show relevant transferable skills, abilities, or understanding—perhaps demonstrated in a different context or content area?
 - offer “bonus” strengths (new ideas, a diverse perspective, valuable expertise, unusual life experiences)?
 - demonstrate commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity?
 - show areas in need of development?
 - raise significant concerns among evaluators (and why)?
- ☐ **Revisit areas of concern** that stakeholders or others have identified:
 - Is the applicant otherwise qualified and acceptable?
 - Is it a relevant consideration?
 - Can you resolve it based on the information you have gathered?
 - Do you need to seek more information?
- ☐ **Collect and evaluate any missing information**—contact references again, or even explore inviting top applicants back for second interviews if needed
- ☐ **Create an assessment** of acceptable candidates (ranked or unranked per the hiring official’s charge) and screening rationale for unacceptable candidates
- ☐ **Do a final bias check:**
 - Are you giving some people the “benefit of the doubt
 - Is there bias in your decisions or your candidate descriptions?
 - Is every comment directly related to their ability to do the job?
- ☐ **Confirm committee consensus**
- ☐ **Share final assessment with hiring official**

8. Onboarding and Integration

- ☐ **Plan a public announcement** of the search outcome, who was hired, and what they bring to the university and/or State System.
- ☐ **Do not tolerate rumors**—ensure that they are brought to the attention of the hiring official and addressed immediately. Respond immediately to any suggestion that someone is an “affirmative action hire.”
- ☐ **Welcome** new faculty or staff members when they arrive – individual colleagues could invite them out for lunch or to their homes for dinner during the early weeks
- ☐ **Personal mentoring**—support the success of new faculty by involving people both inside and outside the unit who will:
 - commit to their success.
 - “show them the ropes.”
 - explain the informal norms and culture of the unit.
 - help them steer around invisible pitfalls.
 - support them in understanding/adapting to their new roles.
 - introduce them to key colleagues, potential collaborators, and informal leaders.

- help them make other connections in the institution and community.
- **Cohort/peer mentoring**—introduce the new person to their cohort of new peers and support regular meetings of that group
- **Support plan**—with input from the new person, the supervisor should
 - develop a plan to support their success.
 - check in frequently about the implementation of that plan.
 - update/adjust as needed.
 - give regular feedback about accomplishments as well as constructive ideas for improvement.
 - seek feedback from the new employee.
- **Mentor map** – help the new person develop a “map” of people who may be resources for different responsibilities of the new position.
- **Check-in** – schedule regular informal check-ins with new faculty members and encourage informal discourse about any questions/problems/ideas.
- **Mutual accommodation of differences**—adapt the culture to accommodate new hires as well as expect new hires to adapt to the existing culture. Allow and expect people to retain those characteristics that make them unique and valuable.

APPENDIX

Search Advocate Tools

The forms contained here are optional templates that units may modify as needed for internal use. They support recommendations to minimize the effects of bias in employment screening. Like all search materials, they become part of the search record and should be retained in the unit for three years.

- 1. Criteria Development Matrix:** Use to help develop and record criteria for screening each qualification. Position information and qualifications may be inserted electronically. Add/delete rows as needed; may also be adjusted to 8.5 X 14 or imported to Excel to allow more comments.
- 2. Candidate Screening Matrix:** Evaluators record an assessment of the candidate's qualifications prior to committee discussion of individual candidates. Use the *Criteria Development Matrix*. Position information and qualifications may be inserted electronically. Add/delete rows as needed; may also be adjusted to 8.5 X 14 to allow more comments. Use the *Criteria Development Matrix*.
- 3. Multiple Candidate Screening Summary:** Use to compare candidate qualifications visually. Qualifications are numbered and refer to the detailed qualification criteria recorded in the *Criteria Development Matrix* and *Candidate Screening Matrix*. Position information and qualifications may be inserted electronically. Add/delete rows as needed. Formatted for paper size 8.5 X 14; may also be adjusted to 8.5 X 11 as needed.

NOTE: SEARCH ADVOCATES advise committees to evaluate candidates both quantitatively and qualitatively, but without using numeric scores/ranking. Candidates may be grouped together (unqualified, minimally qualified, highly qualified) for further committee discussion and analysis.

Templates

Criteria Matrix Template

Candidate Screening Matrix Template

Candidate Screening Summary Template

Applicant Disposition Summary Template

Criteria Matrix: Step-by-Step Guidance

Introduction

Implicit bias research strongly suggests a need to invest time early in the hiring process (ideally before posting, at least before applications are reviewed) for the committee to reach a shared understanding of the qualifications in relation to the job. The full search committee participates in developing this tool, discussing what meets or demonstrates strength for each qualification, which qualifications most strongly predict better performance, and how/when to evaluate each qualification. Doing this before advertising double-checks the qualifications for effectiveness, allows them to be refined as needed, and uncovers structural bias. Rigorous accountability to the matrix at each successive stage helps mitigate cognitive *and* structural bias.

Qualification and Required or Preferred – Copy each qualification word-for-word from the job description, one qualification in each cell. In the second column, indicate *R* for required or *P* for preferred. Remember, a candidate **must** meet all the required qualifications to be hired. Preferred qualifications predict better performance.

Relationship to Job – To understand how broadly we can evaluate/interpret a qualification, we must understand what it enables the appointee to do in the position. Which position duties require it? Why is it needed, how is it used in the job, and what might be difficult or impossible without it? Does this qualification tie directly to duties described in the job description, or have we failed to show the part of the job this qualification supports? Is it a proxy for skills not otherwise articulated? If so, what skills? Might it be better to list them individually?

Transferable? -- Is this a transferable skill? Transferable skills are portable skills that one can learn in any setting (professional, personal, or educational) and take to any other setting; when a skill is transferable, the screening criteria are highly flexible.

Screening Criteria – This column broadens our understanding of how candidates may meet each qualification so we can consider more candidates and those who are qualified in less typical ways. Given its relationship to the job, what experiences, accomplishments, or learning meet this qualification? If it could be assessed in an interview, what **MUST** the candidate include in their answer—at a minimum—to meet the need? Go beyond *quantity* (such as number of years) to define indicators of acceptable *quality* in their performance or understanding. Ask “Who might we miss?” and “What ways to meet this we have overlooked?” to broaden the criteria.

Complete these first columns for all required and preferred qualifications before continuing to Priority.

Priority – How important is *strength* in this qualification compared to other qualifications? Required qualifications: If meeting a qualification *strongly* (vs. minimally) strongly predicts *better* performance, it is a *high priority* for the committee to spend more time evaluating. Conversely, once an objective numeric qualification is met, the committee does not need to spend more time on it; it is *low priority*. Preferred qualifications: Those most strongly predict better performance are a *high* priority. Those that least strongly predict better performance are *low* priority. *High, medium, and low* priority apply to preferred AND required qualifications.

Strength – For medium- and high-priority qualifications, what are indications that a candidate meets them strongly (beyond just meeting them) in relation to the job? What *ways* of meeting (or exceeding) the qualification predict better performance? Go beyond quantity (how *much*) to include quality (how *well*).

When to Assess—At what stage will we have enough information to assess this qualification for all applicants? If it is a high priority and will be evaluated at more than one stage, what are we looking for at each stage? When will we eliminate candidates who do not meet it?

Criteria Development Matrix

Job Title:

Full Consideration Date:

Final Closing Date:

Qualification	Required or Preferred?	Relationship to the job – What aspects of the job might they not be able to do/do well without this?	Transferable ?	Screening Criteria – what are the different ways someone might meet this qualification?	Priority – relative importance	Strength – (for medium & high-priority qualifications) What are indicators that someone meets the qualification? STRONGLY – what ways of meeting it predict better performance?	When to Assess (and eliminate for not meeting)
					Low		Application Video/phone interview
					Medium		Site Interview References
					High		Application Video/phone interview
					Low		Video/phone interview
					Medium		Site Interview References
					High		Application Video/phone interview Site Interview References

Sample Candidate Screening Matrix

Candidate: _____

Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

- Unqualified-doesn't meet MQs
- Meets MQs – *minimally-qualified*
- Meets or exceeds MQs – *well-qualified*
- Meets or exceeds MQs & PQs – *very well-qualified*
- " " " " AND strong in high priority MQs/PQs – *highly-qualified*

Comments/questions

	Required Minimum Qualifications (MQs)	Meets?			Strengths	Comments
		N	Y	+		
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
	Preferred Qualifications (PQs)					
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

Applicant Disposition Worksheet

Job Title _____
 Posting Number _____
 Position Number _____

Search Committee Chair _____
 Phone _____
 Date ADW Completed _____
 Applicant Communication Method _____
 Please select from the drop-down menu to the right (click on cell to activate menu) to indicate how unsuccessful candidates will be notified for this search

To quickly fill in applicant names: (1) click on the Reports tab in the posting. (2) Click on Applicant List Report to open a window titled Messages. (3) Once the report status is "Completed", hover over Actions on the right side of the window and click Download to Excel. (4) Copy the Last Name and First Name sections. (5) Paste into this worksheet's Applicant Last Name and Applicant First Name sections.

Applicant Last Name	Applicant First Name	Veteran?	Applicant Status	Specific Disposition Reason	Responsible Party	Other Responsible Party - Role or Name	Comments
			Not minimally qualified – incomplete application		SC-Search chair/committee		
			Not minimally qualified – did not meet objective/ measurable MOS		SA – Search Administrator/ search support person		
			Not advanced beyond application stage		HM – Hiring manager/hiring official		
			Not advanced beyond phone interview		HR – Human Resources		
			Not advanced beyond on-site interview		Other – Specify role or name in column E		
			Not advanced beyond reference check				
			Not advanced beyond post-interview certification				
			Not advanced beyond post-offer check				
			Withdraw prior to offer				
			Offer declined by recommended appointee				

You must select one of these statuses for every applicant "SCREENED OUT" by the end of the recruitment/selection process.

Enter the specific, detailed, job-related reason(s) you decided not to advance or hire this particular applicant. Character limitation of 195, including spaces. See "User Help" tab for more information.

If you did not select a "Responsible Party" code, enter role and/or name of person/group responsible for deciding not to advance/hire this applicant. See "user Help" tab for details.

Optional information and/or intermediate disposition statuses (such as "hold for possible interview later"). May also be used if additional space is needed beyond 195 character limitation from the Specific Disposition Reason field.

Cultivating and Maintaining a Garden of Faculty and Staff Diversity



"A garden's beauty never lies in one flower." ~ Matshona Dhlwayo

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