

**EMPLOYMENT
EQUITY &
COMPLIANCE**



RECRUITMENT & HIRING PROCESS GUIDE

2021

It is U of I policy to prohibit and eliminate discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran. This policy applies to all programs, services, and facilities, and includes, but is not limited to, applications, admissions, access to programs and services, and employment.

Introduction

Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EEO/AA) laws and regulations require the University of Idaho (U of I) to advertise job vacancies and ensure a fair hiring process. Additionally, the University must take positive recruitment efforts to increase employment opportunities for members of protected classes when underutilization within a job classification exists. The University demonstrates its commitment to diversity by extending efforts beyond federal and state EEO/AA requirements, and into the strategies described and set forth in these best practices, as well as the University's Strategic Plan.

This document serves as a "living" guide of preferred practices for attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse and inclusive faculty and staff at the University of Idaho. The guide is supported by [an online toolkit](#) of sample materials and additional resources for hiring authorities and search committees. In the event of any conflict between this guide and University policy, University policy will govern.

In addition to promoting a fair and equitable hiring process, this guide encourages the hiring authorities and search committees to **reimage hiring and retention as ongoing activities** as regular components of academic and professional life, rather than special occasions or as reactions to circumstances. Another broad goal is to encourage units to **work closely with campus partners** to coordinate hiring and retention efforts across boundaries of departments, schools, colleges, and campuses.

As of July 1, 2020, successful completion of the online Search Committee Training and Online Managing Unconscious Bias in Recruitment and Hiring is required to serve on all University of Idaho Search Committees. Successful completion of the training fulfills this requirement for 3 years from the date taken. After 3 years, employees are asked to re-take the training. To access Search Committee Training, please click [here](#).



University
of Idaho

Employment Equity & Compliance

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University of Idaho

Statement of Nondiscrimination

The University of Idaho has a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), national origin (ancestry), sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, pregnancy, disability, marital status, genetic information, or status as any protected veteran or military status. This policy applies to all programs, services, and facilities, and includes, but is not limited to, applications, admissions, access to programs and services, and employment and advancement.

Such discrimination is prohibited by titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, 38 U.S.C. 4212 and requires affirmative action to employ and advance in employment disabled veterans, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Pregnancy Act of 1978, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act Amendments of 1978, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the Rehabilitation Act Reauthorization of 1992, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and other state and federal laws and regulations and university commitments.

Sexual harassment violates state and federal law and policies of the Board of Regents, and is expressly prohibited, see [FSH 3200](#). The University of Idaho also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression, see [FSH 3215](#). The entire *Faculty Staff Handbook* can be accessed online at <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/fsh/>.

Questions or concerns about the content and application of these laws, regulations or University policy may be directed to the Director of the Office of Civil Rights & Investigations (208-885-4285); Director for the Center of Disability Access and Resources (208-885-6307); Idaho Commission on Human Rights (208-334-2873) ; Regional Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education in Seattle (206- 607-1600); Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Seattle District Office (206-220-6883); or Seattle Regional Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, U.S. Department of Labor (206-398-8000).

University of Idaho employees have a responsibility to report cases of discrimination and harassment, see [FSH 3170](#). Retaliation for bringing forward a complaint is prohibited, see [FSH 3810](#). All complaints will be investigated impartially and resolved promptly. Complaints about discrimination or harassment should be brought to the attention of the Director of the Office of Civil Rights & Investigations, Erin Agidius (Title IX and 504/ADA Coordinator): 530 S. Asbury St., Ste. 5, Moscow, ID 83843, 208-885-4285, ocri@uidaho.edu or www.uidaho.edu/ocri.

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Effective July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Recruitment & Hiring Process Guide Key Terms

Active Recruitment- Special recruitment efforts undertaken to ensure that qualified protected-class members are well represented in the applicant pools for positions from or in which they have been excluded or substantially underutilized. Such efforts may include contacting organizations and media with known protected-class constituencies. Open job posting and advertising and "equal opportunity employer" statements necessary in many situations are matters of nondiscrimination rather than measures of affirmative recruitment.

Affirmative Action – Ongoing quantitative and qualitative analysis of equal employment efforts.

Affirmative Action: Compliance - U of I is a federal contractor and is obligated to comply with federal laws and regulations regarding affirmative action. These obligations include:

- Ensuring diverse pools of applicants for campus positions
- Developing and maintaining affirmative action plans that identify areas of underutilization of minorities and women, and
- Demonstrating good-faith efforts to eliminate underutilization

Affirmative Action Goal – The gap between job market availability and the number of women and minorities employed by the University in a particular job group.

Annual Hiring Benchmark – The expectation from the Department of Labor (DoL) that federal contractors must hire and employ a specific minimum percentage of veteran and employees with disabilities each year. The hiring benchmark is adjusted each year by DoL.

Applicant vs. Candidate – An applicant is a job seeker who has applied for a job vacancy. A candidate is a qualified applicant who has been vetted by a search committee and selected for an interview.

Diversity & Inclusion – Fostering an inclusive campus climate where individual uniqueness is welcomed and valued.

EEO Placement Goals- Reasonably attainable numerical projections or targets that are used to measure progress toward achieving equal employment opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities and Veterans. Annual targets are set each calendar by the Department of Labor (DOL).

Equal Employment - Ensuring equal opportunity in employment regardless of individual characteristics or attributes.

Equal Employment-Affirmative Action Coordinator (EOAAC's) – The EOAAC's are the first line of review and involved in all stages of the recruitment and hiring process. EOAAC's are knowledgeable about the U of I recruitment and hiring process. They are cognizant of relevant annual affirmative action goals, advertising, and other recruitment sources for department jobs and professional disciplines.

Hiring Authority – A hiring authority is the supervisor or manager who makes the final hiring decision and has a responsibility to know the policies, procedures, opportunities, and pitfalls to making the right selection and hiring decisions. A search committee assists with this responsibility to ensure a fair search, but ultimate decision-making accountability rests with the supervisor or manager.

Office of Employment Equity and Compliance – University of Idaho office charged with oversight and monitoring affirmative action and equal opportunity compliance in the recruitment and hiring processes.

Search Committee – A role defined by a hiring authority. The primary responsibility is to help recruit a diverse and talented pool of candidates and recommend the best candidate or candidates to the hiring authority.

Search Committee Chair – A role defined by a hiring authority. The primary responsibility is to keep each step of the process compliant with our Equal Employment Opportunity requirements and non-discrimination laws.

Underrepresentation or underutilization – Having fewer women or minorities in a particular job group than would reasonable be expected by their availability in the job market. Once underutilization is quantitatively established, an employer must (1) demonstrate that underutilization results from business necessity or (2) develop an affirmative action program with specific, action-oriented steps to overcome underutilization.

Federal and State Laws/University of Idaho EEO-AA Policies

The University of Idaho supports excellence enriched through intellectual pursuits, interrelationships, diversity, and resourcefulness. We strive to foster inclusivity, civil discourse, and a respectful learning environment. These ideals are embodied within the University's Strategic Plan and Diversity Statement. It is important that hiring managers, search committee chairs and members understand the legal implications of their actions during the search process.

EEO/AA laws and regulations require U of I to advertise open positions and ensure a fair hiring process. In addition, the University must take positive steps to reach out to underrepresented groups historically excluded from employment opportunities.

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) monitors federal contractors with contracts over \$50,000. As a federal contractor, the U of I is legally obligated to prohibit discrimination based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, or veteran status.

For more specific information on the applicable federal and state EEO/AA laws, please click [here](#).

University of Idaho policy outlines authority and responsibility for EEO/AA. Please reference University of Idaho Faculty Staff Handbook ([FSH](#)) for specific policy guidance.

FSH 3200: [Policy of Nondiscrimination](#)

FSH 3060: [Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity](#)

FSH 3065: [Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Hiring](#)

FSH 3210: [Anti-Discrimination Policy](#)

FSH 3215: [Non-Discrimination on Basis of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression](#)

Confidentiality

Search committee members have access to confidential applicant information. Idaho state law requires that all information about applicants and the search process be kept strictly confidential within the search committee even after the search ends. Applicant information should only be discussed between search committee members during search committee meetings. Only the names of five finalists for exempt and faculty searches who are invited to campus for interviews may be released. Those applicants must give written permission to release other information such as a resume or vita. In that case, all personal information should be redacted from the document. Please contact the Office of General Counsel for more information.

Because search records may be accessed through an audit or a public records search, only job- related, professional comments about an applicant should be noted within the search documentation. Personal comments about applicants should not be included.

Confidential documentation includes but may not be limited to:

- All application materials
- Cover letters, resumes, vita
- Reference letters, notes
- Emails
- Itineraries
- Search committee notes
- Applicant evaluation tools
- Screening and interview notes
- Hiring recommendation
- Copy of final offer letter
- All other documents related to the search

Conflicts of Interest

Search committee members may know one or more applicants. A casual personal or business acquaintance does not automatically disqualify a search committee member; however, if a search committee member is closely related to, frequently socializes with, or knows an applicant such that he or she would not be able to be fair in their evaluation of all applicants, the search committee member should recuse themselves from the search. Connections

or previous interactions should be revealed to the search chair and/or search committee. Please contact the office of Employment Equity and Compliance with questions.

A search committee member may not also serve as a reference for an applicant to that search, as that is considered a conflict of interest.

Nepotism

The University of Idaho seeks to employ qualified persons in all positions without regard to a person's relationship with other University employees. However, under university policy, no employee shall supervise, vote, make recommendations, or in any other way participate in the decision of any matter that may directly affect the appointment, tenure, promotion, salary, or any other status or interest of such employee's parent, child, spouse, partner, sibling, in-law, or close relative.

Please reference University of Idaho Faculty Staff Handbook ([FSH](#)) for specific policy guidance:

FSH 6241: [Nepotism](#)

Consideration of Internal Candidates

If there are internal applicants for a position, the search committee must be especially vigilant about maintaining confidentiality. Avoid storing interview questions or search committee notes on the applicant tracking system in the early stages of hiring, shared computer drives or putting detailed information in electronic calendars to which an internal applicant may have access. Internal applicants should not be involved in processing other applicants' materials or evaluating their candidacy, even if the internal applicant is no longer being considered for the position. Additional communication with internal applicants may be an appropriate professional courtesy, such as informing an unsuccessful internal applicant that finalists are being invited to campus for interviews.

Roles and Responsibilities in the Search Process

Hiring Authority

A hiring authority is authorized to hire and dismiss employees and take additional actions specified for each employee classification—faculty, non-faculty exempt, classified, and temporary/student. Generally, hiring authorities include vice presidents, associate vice presidents, deans, and associate deans.

When a job vacancy occurs, the hiring authority or a designated representative selects or approves the composition of the search committee, including the appointment of the search committee chair. When the search committee is convened to discuss the hiring procedures for the specific position, the hiring authority or a designated representative meets with the search committee and indicates without any ambiguity the committee's task, deadline, budget, and the ideal applicant that the hiring manager wishes to attract. The hiring authority is

responsible for instructing the committee on their responsibilities, including reminding them of their EEO/AA responsibilities.

Search Committee Chair

The search committee chair is usually appointed by the head of the college/administrative area/department to which the position will report. The search committee chair acts as the committee's facilitator, official spokesperson, and liaison to the hiring authority. Specific search committee chair roles and responsibilities include:

- Serving as a contact person with the hiring authority, applicants, and candidates.
- Implementing the search committee charge.
- Scheduling and directing all search committee meetings.
- Keeping the search committee on track and on task; assuring compliance with applicable laws and policies.
- Providing application materials and related instruction to search committee members.
- Serving as liaison between search committee members and candidates.
- Assuring completion of administrative tasks of the committee, such as screening and interview forms.
- Advises the Hiring Authority of finalists' strengths and weaknesses.
- Maintaining a record of all search committee meetings.
- Collecting all screening and interview forms, records and other search documents from committee members and forwards to the search coordinator.

Search Committee Members

Search committee members are generally appointed by the head of the college/administrative area/department to which the position will report and/or search committee chair. Committee members should be familiar with duties and responsibilities of the position, qualifications for the position, and represent a diverse cross-section of the University community.

Roles and responsibilities of the search committee include:

- Developing a thorough understanding of the qualifications of the open position and the mission and priorities of the department/unit and the University. Generally, search committees' function in an advisory capacity, recommending one or more individuals for a position.
- Ensuring compliance with EEO/AA guidelines and promoting diversity and excellence.
- Developing and implementing an advertising plan that provides extensive exposure of the position vacancy, particularly to qualified applicants from ethnic/racial minorities, women, protected veterans, individuals with disabilities and those from other underrepresented groups.
- Screening applicants for required and preferred qualifications
- Selecting candidates for initial and on-campus interviews.
- Seeking the advice and opinions of individual faculty, staff, students, and administrators in all phases of the recruitment and hiring process to help ensure commitment to the new colleague.
- Encouraging members of a wide range of university constituencies, including protected groups, to

participate actively in the selection process.

- Interviewing the candidates.
- Providing a list of finalists and a recommendation to the Hiring Authority (which may or may not be ranked, at the request of the Hiring Authority).

EO/AA Coordinator

EO/AA Coordinators are staff members assigned to their role by a hiring authority. EO/AAC's assist their respective administrators, deans, and department chairs in developing and implementing an effective and responsive EEO/AA program. The EO/AAC also works with the hiring authority and search committee to document all searches in the departmental search file. For a current list of EOAAC's, please click [here](#).

Office of Employment Equity and Compliance

The Office of Employment Equity and Compliance, a unit within the University of Idaho Office of General Counsel. Employment Equity and Compliance is charged with planning, developing, implementing, and monitoring programs and activities to ensure compliance with laws governing equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. This charge includes responsibility for overseeing all search committee activity.

Appointments Exempt from the Search Process

U of I Temporary Hiring Process

Some types of temporary staff, student and faculty positions may be appointed without a formal search process. For more information, please refer to the [U of I Temporary Hiring Process](#).

Search Waivers

Waivers to completing an open, competitive recruitment and hiring process may be made only with the approval of the director of Employment Equity and Compliance. For more information on faculty and staff search waivers, please click [here](#).

Search Exceptions

A search exception is a request to modify the job posting requirements for an open recruitment and hiring process. Search exceptions may only be made with the approval from the Office of Employment Equity and Compliance. For more information on faculty and staff search exceptions, please click [here](#).

Planning and Initiating the Search

Search Committee Size and Composition

The search committee lays the groundwork for an equitable and inclusive search. All search committees must demonstrate gender diversity and should be composed of individuals with a variety of perspectives and sensitivities. When possible, minorities and individuals from other underrepresented groups who are familiar with the advertised position should serve on the committee. A committee that lacks diversity is less likely to recognize unconscious bias, limiting the committee's ability to recruit and evaluate the best applicants. Three to six committee members are ideal for staff and faculty search committees. A committee should have no less than three members.

First Search Committee Meeting

The first search committee meeting should include a charge from the hiring authority, review of equal opportunity and affirmative action obligations, active recruitment strategies, and discussion of committee expectations, recordkeeping and decision making.

Search Committee Charge

A formal search committee charge should be provided to the search committee during the first search committee meeting. In the committee charge, the hiring authority or designee relays to the committee how the information collected by the committee will be used. In some cases, the search committee is instructed to make a hiring recommendation or recommendations of the top candidates in their opinion. In other cases, the committee is instructed to make the hiring decision. If the committee is instructed to rank candidates for the hiring authority, the charge should make clear that the hiring official is not bound by the committee's ranking in making his or her selection. He or she should also clarify how the recommendations of faculty and staff from other department or unit employees not on the committee will be used. The charge will also include concrete recommendations for integrating diversity issues in the evaluation process.

A search committee charge should also include:

- An overview of the position duties and responsibilities.
- Selection criteria, including preferred and minimum qualifications for the applicant and all other evaluation criteria.
- The tasks and role of the search committee.
- The scope of the search (e.g., internal, local, national).
- Timeline for the search, including a deadline for receiving recommendations from the search committee.
- A plan for Active Recruitment. These plans should be established prior to beginning the search.
- Affirmative Action considerations presented by the Affirmative Action Coordinator or someone from the Employment Equity and Compliance Office.
- Confidentiality overview.

Recruitment Periods

The recruitment period is the time between the commencement of advertising (posting on the U of I website counts) and the closing date, first consideration or preferred screening date. The length of time a position must be posted depends on the type of position.

For the most up-to-date recruitment period requirements, please click [here](#).

Advertising and Active Recruitment

Federal law and policy require that positive recruitment efforts be made to increase employment opportunities for members of protected classes when underutilization within an employee job classification exists. For more information on active recruitment, please click [here](#).

Recruitment goals are provided to units within the applicant tracking system. If the applicant pool is not sufficient to help the University reach its required goals, the recruitment and hiring process may need to be extended to increase the diversity of applicant pool with respect to the hiring goals for that group.

Developing a Positive and Active Recruitment Plan

Federal law and policy require positive recruitment efforts be made to increase employment opportunities for members of protected classes when underutilization within an employee job classification exists. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) has determined it is not enough to simply advertise positions, sit back, and expect that affirmative action goals will be met. When recruiting, it is important to actively seek applicants who are members of under-represented groups to fulfill federal positive recruiting requirements.

Positive recruitment efforts assist federal contractors to achieve compliance with EEO/AA. The basic components of positive recruitment efforts are: (1) outreach and recruitment measures to broaden candidate pools to include ethnic and racial minorities, women, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities and all other underrepresented groups; and (2) systematic efforts to ensure that hiring selections are made without regard to prohibited factors. Results of these efforts are measured in terms of their effectiveness in assisting the contractor in meeting or making progress toward targets set to correct underutilization.

A recruitment plan should contain strategies for outreach to members of groups where there are affirmative action goals to be met, especially individuals with disabilities and protected veterans. The Employment Equity and Compliance staff publishes updates on affirmative action evaluation goals at least annually and is available to discuss recruitment goals and outreach plans.

The following list serves as a foundation for a positive recruitment plan:

- Potential applicants suggested by current department/unit members.
- Names of people acquainted with the field who may be called upon to nominate individuals.
- Journals read by individuals in the discipline/profession.
- Professional associations, organizations, and websites in the discipline/profession.

- Web sites visited by people in the discipline/profession.
- The relevant professional or community organizations, advocacy groups, etc. that respond to the needs of ethnic/racial minorities, women, and individuals from other underrepresented groups.
- Places where people in this discipline/profession congregate (professional meetings, concerts, lecture series, etc.), to consider recruiting at these venues.
- The department's/unit's web site on which the announcement may be placed.
- Contact information for affinity groups and placement offices at U of I and other universities and institutions.
- A system for obtaining nominations from alumni and members of the University.

For a more comprehensive list of active and diverse recruitment resources, please click [here](#).

The OFCCP has created additional “best practice active outreach resources.” Please see below for links:

- [Best Practices for Fostering Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Best Practices: Creating an Inclusive Workforce for Native Americans](#)
- [Recruitment and Hiring of Qualified Individuals with Disabilities](#)
- [Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act \(VEVRAA\) Best Practices for Federal Contractors](#)

Public Disclosure of Search Committee Members

Some parts of the recruitment and hiring process are subject to public disclosure. Regulated by state law, committees must take care to abide by relevant regulations. The names and titles of search committee members are public information and, therefore, subject to public disclosure.

Additional Resources for Search Committees

For additional information, templates, and checklists please refer to the [Employment Equity and Compliance](#) website.

Conducting the Search

Faculty Job Descriptions

The Office of the Provost is responsible for administering the University’s faculty classification and compensation plans. A job description should include the position summary, major job functions, duties, and responsibilities essential or marginal to the position, and the qualifications required of the applicants.

For more information on faculty job descriptions, please click [here](#).

Staff Job Descriptions

Human Resources is responsible for administering the University's staff classification and compensation plans. A job description should include the position summary, major job functions, duties, and responsibilities essential or marginal to the position, and the qualifications required of the applicants.

For more information on staff classification and compensation, please click [here](#).

Salary Information

Salary range information is determined by Human Resources at the same time the position description is written. Usually, the salary or a salary range will be included in the posting. In advertising, the statement "commensurate with experience" or similar language may be used for salary information for specified positions. An offer outside the stated range may affect the applicant pool and must be approved and documented with Employment Equity and Compliance.

For more information on faculty compensation, please click [here](#).

For more information on staff compensation, please click [here](#).

Definition of an Internet Applicant and Basic Qualifications

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) has provided definitions for applicants who apply for a position through the internet. A person who applies through the internet is considered an internet applicant if they satisfy all four of the following criteria:

- The individual submitted an expression of interest in employment through the Internet or related electronic data technologies.
- The contractor considered the individual for employment in a particular position.
- The individual's expression of interest indicated that the individual possesses the basic qualifications for the position; and
- The individual, at no point in the contractor's selection process prior to receiving an offer of employment from the contractor, removed himself or herself from further consideration or otherwise indicated that he/she was no longer interested in the position.

The OFCCP describes basic qualifications as those which an applicant must possess that the contractor advertised to potential applicants or criteria which the contractor established in advance. The qualifications must be:

- Non-comparative features of a job seeker (e.g., three years' experience in a particular position, rather than a comparative requirement such as being one of the top five among the candidates in years of experience; must not use qualifying adjectives).
- Objective (e.g., a bachelor's degree in accounting, but not a technical degree from a good school), and
- Relevant to performance of the position.

The required qualifications at the University of Idaho are written using the “basic” guidelines for qualifications given by the OFCCP. The requirements should be as few as possible to attract the broadest pool of qualified applicants. Required qualifications should be easily measured. An evaluator should be able to answer yes or no, whether the applicant has met the required qualifications. Examples of required qualifications include what type of and how much education a person has, what type of and amount of experience needed, and licenses or certifications held. Preferred qualifications are those not necessary for the position, but desired for the position.

Requesting Application Materials

When requesting application materials, search committees should ask for enough information to evaluate an applicant’s ability to do the job but should guard against overburdening them with complex application requirements. For example, asking for the names of three references must still be requested and contacted before hire even if the committee also asks for three letters of reference. Requesting that portfolios or journal article reprints be included with initial application materials can make it more difficult to apply. Additional information can be requested once a search committee determines an applicant is a viable candidate. The additional information should be requested of all candidates who are moved beyond the application and screening process.

Job Vacancy Announcement and Advertising

The job vacancy announcement must be advertised following advertising guidelines set forth annually by Employment Equity and Compliance. For an extensive list of active and diverse recruitment resources, please click [here](#). For the most up-to-date recruitment period requirements, please click [here](#).

Legal Requirements for EEO Statements

Federal laws require the University of Idaho to include equal opportunity statements in print and online versions of university publications, including job postings, that are made available to students, applicants, employees, program participants and the public. Publications that must include an equal opportunity statement include departmental, division, and University-wide catalogs, handbooks, applications, magazines, newsletters, brochures, posters, and job advertisements. For the most up-to-date EEO/AA language, please click [here](#).

Screening and Selection Process

Use the following guidelines for reviewing applicants:

- Learn about research on biases and assumptions. Consciously strive to minimize the influence of bias and assumptions when reviewing applicants.
- Develop criteria for evaluating applicants and apply them consistently.
- Standardize how the committee will evaluate the applicants by discussing the criteria to be used.
- Use a screening tool that incorporates the agreed upon criteria.

- Evaluate the entire application; do not depend too heavily on only one element such as letters of recommendation or the prestige of the degree granting institution or postdoctoral program.
- Spend enough time evaluating each applicant thoroughly.
- Summarize and document the strengths, weaknesses, and likely contributions to the campus, program, and department for each one. If you are planning to rank the applicants, create several lists, each ranking the finalists based on one criterion. This way you will have several top choices to contemplate.
- Be able to defend every decision for rejecting or retaining an applicant using qualifications and facts, not opinions.

Screening for Required Qualifications

Applicant screening is based on the required and preferred qualification of the posted position. Initial screening is based on the required qualifications and submitted application materials. An applicant must address the qualifications in the application materials. Personal knowledge by a search committee member alone is not enough. An applicant must meet ALL of the required qualifications to be considered for an interview. Initial screening asks yes or no as to whether the applicant meets ALL required qualifications. If there is even one qualification the applicant does not meet within the application materials, then that applicant may not advance to be considered for interview.

Intermediate Screening – Preferred Qualifications

After screening out applicants who do not meet required qualifications, the next step is to select the best qualified applicants for interview. An applicant selected for interview is considered a candidate for the position.

An applicant must address the qualifications in the application materials. Personal knowledge by a search committee member alone is not enough. If the hiring authority determines there are certain qualifications that are more important than others, extra weight may be assigned to those more important. Narrow the pool weighing the qualifications, and after discussion among the search committee, select the candidates best qualified for interview. It is best to make your selections through discussion, rather than relying totally on the committee's numerical ratings of a candidate. Using only mechanical means may not result in selection of the best qualified candidates.

Three to five candidates are considered a sufficient interview pool, although the committee may initially select more applicants to interview. Make interview selections based on all the qualifications. Applicants should be interviewed before a decision to hire is made, and references checked, to support the claims applicants make in their applications. If there are many well qualified applicants, and there are only small qualification differences, consider gathering additional information to help you make your selection. Some tools you may consider using are pre-interview reference checks, work samples, supplemental questions, initial screening interviews, which are usually shorter than second interviews. Along with the request for interview, upload into the applicant tracking system reasons for selection and non-selection of applicants for interview.

Interviewing Guidelines

Equal Opportunity Issues in Interviewing

Equal opportunity issues of concern in conducting interviews include the following:

- Treat the entire time with candidate as part of the interview process, not just the “formal” interview with the search committee. This includes any lunch meetings, escorting the candidates to the airport or hotel and back, and to and from meetings.
- The interview method and agenda must be the same for all candidates interviewed and each type of interview conducted.
- Internal candidates who are interviewed must be treated the same as external candidates who are interviewed.
- The same set of questions should be asked of each candidate interviewed by the search committee.
- The search committee and anyone else who will be interviewing the candidates, including other members of the department/unit or any external constituents, must be aware of the questions that you can and cannot ask the candidates. EEO/AA recommends that the search committee chair remind everyone present at the interviews to keep questions objective and job related.
- Public forums or department/college open forums for candidates of exempt and faculty searches may have different individuals attending for each candidate without creating inequities. While attendees may be asked to provide comments regarding the candidates’ presentations, they do not have the same role in the process as members of the search committee.

Formulating Interview Questions

Sample behavior-based interview questions and information on acceptable/unacceptable pre-employment inquiries are available on the [Employment Equity and Compliance website](#). Additional interview questions are available on the [Human Resources website](#).

All interview questions must be related to the performance of the specific job duties and should be formulated in advance. Interview questions should be objective, and job related. Questions should be fact based, and designed to elicit information about a candidate’s background, education, or suitability for the position.

Asking the same questions of each candidate ensures that consistent information is gathered, and the responses of each candidate can be compared. Of course, interviewers also should respond to candidates’ questions. Information that is volunteered by the candidate but does not address a bona fide occupational qualification should not be recorded.

Conducting Telephone and Virtual Interviews

To reduce travel costs and time associated with interviewing out of area candidates, a telephone or virtual interview may provide an alternative method to an in-person interview.

To ensure fairness and equity in the interviewing process, invite all candidates to the same type of interview. Out of area candidates should be provided an opportunity to interview in the same manner as local candidates during each stage of the interview process. If a candidate is not able to participate in-person, offer them an opportunity to participate in a telephone and/or virtual interview and get their response via email. Check whether every candidate has access to the application being used and a good internet connection. A room for quiet concentration and suitable for the number of committee members conducting the interview, and one that will accommodate speakerphone or teleconferencing equipment, will be needed. A back-up plan should be identified in advance in case there are technical difficulties.

The interview should be conducted by the search committee. Search committee members who are not able to participate in interviews, may not comment on the candidates they did not interview, nor can they participate in discussions comparing candidates with each other. It is important to ensure consistency in how questions are handled so information gathered may be compared by the search committee. To put candidates at ease, it is recommended that everyone present at the interview be introduced to the candidate.

Conducting On-Campus Interviews

The campus visit is an extremely important part of selecting the best finalists. Communication and interaction with a candidate should represent the University in the most positive light possible. Just as search committee members will be evaluating the candidates, the candidates will be evaluating us to determine if the position and the institution are a good fit for them. The candidates' early impressions of the University play a major role in the decision-making process.

Disclosure of Candidate Names

According to Idaho law, only the names of the finalists in exempt and faculty searches may be released to the campus or the general public. At the time an invitation to interview on campus is extended, the finalists should be informed that their names may be made public. Request permission through email from the candidates if you want to also release their resumes or CVs and redact all personal information from the documents.

Campus Visit Preparation

- Make travel and lodging arrangements. Departments may elect to cover the travel costs associated with out of area candidate interviews but are not required to do so. When possible, pay for travel arrangements rather than reimburse candidates.
- Arrange for transportation to and from the airport or have a person available to escort the candidate.
- Be sure to give the candidate an opportunity to request disability-related accommodations.

Preparing the Candidate

Taking the time to prepare a candidate for his or her visit sends an important message about the University as a potential employer. The following items should be sent to each final candidate prior to the visit:

- Letter of welcome confirming the day and time of the visit, travel and lodging arrangements, list of expenses that are reimbursable, and contact information.
- Itinerary for the visit including a complete schedule of events and the names and titles of individuals who the candidate will meet.
- Provide another opportunity for the candidate to request disability-related accommodations by asking if there is anything they may need to assist with their visit.
- Brochures and information about the University, including benefits and diversity efforts, and the community.
- Information about the department or unit, including its mission and goals.

Welcoming the Candidate for Interview

- Arrange for someone to meet and greet the candidate at the airport.
- Arrange for a host to give the candidate a tour of the campus and accompany the candidate to and from interview and open forum locations.
- Schedule open forums at an accessible location and invite students, staff, faculty, and interested members of the community.
- Allow candidates ample time (1-2 hours) for visits with special interest groups or employees with whom she or he may have a particular affinity. A list of faculty and staff associations and ethnic groups and multicultural alliances includes, but is not limited to, Athena, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Women's Center, the Native American Center, and the LGBTQA. Contact information is available from Employment Equity and Compliance. Copies of the list should be provided to all interview candidates.
- Arrange for the candidate to attend campus events.
- Host a meal with the candidate and key representatives at an accessible location.

Interviewing the Candidate

Formal interviews consist of common questions or a program for evaluating all the candidates equally. Interviews with each candidate should also provide an opportunity to fill gaps in the materials already collected in the individual's file. Careful preparation of questions before the interview minimizes the risk of asking questions that could be viewed as discriminatory. If there is one recorder, the names of all committee members who participated in the interview should be included with the interview notes.

Semi-formal interviews may be conducted for exempt employees and faculty and provide opportunity for interested persons from within and outside the hiring department or unit to meet the candidates and contribute to the hiring decision. Participants are expected to be consistent in their participation and submit a review form at the close of the interviews. Evaluator names should be printed on all forms and signed by the evaluator.

Informal interviews provide opportunities to discuss qualities of the candidate, the University, and the community, and to explore other relevant issues. The format might be conversation during transport to and from the airport, a reception for the department or unit members and their guests, or a tour of the community by someone other than the hiring authority or future supervisor.

During the interviews, some inquiry about the candidate's experience in promoting the professional development of individuals from underrepresented groups should be included, especially if the job description or job posting contains diversity content. Likewise, information should be given to all candidates about the University of Idaho's commitment and activities that promote the careers of ethnic and racial minorities, women, and individuals from other underrepresented groups.

Selecting the Finalist or List of Finalists

Prepare a list of finalists or make a recommendation on which candidate to hire, depending on what was requested by the hiring authority. It is best to decide on the finalist or finalists by discussing each candidate's qualities and qualifications and come to consensus as a group. Using a quantitative method alone might cause important information and or opinions from search committee members to be overlooked.

Selecting a Candidate for Hire

Reference checks are used to identify strengths and weaknesses that indicate whether the candidate will fit the demands of the position. Reference checks are an integral part of the recruitment process. When conducted properly, they can assist in determining who the strongest candidate is, and they may help to identify weaknesses or problem areas not otherwise uncovered previously in the interviews. A failure to conduct reference checks could expose the search committee and the University to charges of negligent hiring if a troubling issue follows a new employee into the workplace, which could have been uncovered with proper reference checking. The committee may choose to contact the references of all candidates before interviews, or only the references of the finalist.

It is an important professional courtesy to inform the candidate before contacting references. Request permission to contact anyone not on their reference list. Contacting anyone without permission violates the confidentiality of the search. At least three references are recommended as best practice to assure a complete record.

A single response, whether positive or negative, should not determine the status of the candidate. Elimination from further consideration because of negative reports must be handled the same for all qualified candidates.

Requesting Letters of Recommendation

Letters of reference do not replace reference checks. The recent literature on recruitment, including recruitment in higher education, encourages search committees to abandon the traditional practice of procuring letters of recommendation in the initial stages of a recruitment and hiring process. Rather, the committee may request a

short list of candidates to provide letters of recommendation by a specific deadline. **As a reminder:** Search committee members should not write letters of reference for applicants. This constitutes a conflict of interest. Candidates should be notified if letters are not received.

Reference Checking

Reference checks after receipt of applications allow the committee to ask questions about information not provided in the candidate's application, such as how the candidate completes specific tasks enumerated in the resume or vitae.

Candidates should be informed as early as possible in the recruitment and hiring process that references will be called if the candidate becomes a finalist, including individuals who may know the candidate or their work, but may not appear in the candidate's list of references. A candidate's request that his or her current employer not be contacted should be respected. Otherwise, a candidate's current employment could be jeopardized. The reason a request not to contact a reference is made may be discussed.

Sample behavior-based reference check questions and guidelines are available on the [Employment Equity and Compliance website](#). A reference check guide for managers and telephone reference check form is available on the [Human Resources website](#).

For consistency, references for each candidate should be conducted by the same person or team of people. The reference checkers should use a standardized protocol of questions, record the answers, and include the notes in the candidate's file.

If a candidate is eliminated from further consideration based upon a reference check, the source and the specific information procured should be documented in the candidate's file. Upon the candidate's request, federal law requires disclosure of all information received or procured regarding the candidate.

Contingent Offer of Employment

Once a candidate is selected for hire, a hiring proposal must be started in the applicant tracking system. In the hiring proposal documents section, enter a comparison of the candidates based upon business strengths and weaknesses with a rationale as to why a particular candidate is selected. After the proper authorizations are obtained, the hiring authority may contact the candidate and offer the position contingent upon the successful results of a criminal background check.

Background Checks

University policy dictates that all faculty, exempt staff, classified staff, teaching and research assistants and many temporary staff receive a criminal background check before they are approved for hire. If an initial offer of hire is made before the background check, the offer must be contingent upon the successful completion of a criminal background check.

Please reference the University of Idaho [Administrative Policy Manual: 50.16 - Criminal Background Check Procedures](#) for specific policy guidance.

Final Offer of Employment

After the criminal background check and any other contingencies are met, a final offer may be made to the candidate. An offer letter should then be sent to the candidate for signature and uploaded into the hiring documents section of the hiring proposal in the applicant tracking system. Faculty offer letter information is available on the [Provost's Office website](#). Staff offer letter templates for staff are available on the [Human Resources website](#).

Extending or Reopening a Recruitment and Hiring Process

If an applicant pool contains no qualified applicants, or when candidates decline offers for interviews and/or employment, it may become necessary to extend or reopen the recruitment and hiring process. Current applicants and candidates not selected should be notified, by email or letter, that the process has been extended. Such notice should provide information about the new application deadline. Individuals who are included in the applicant pool at the time the process is extended are ordinarily not expected to resubmit application materials.

Documentation and Record Keeping

In compliance with federal civil rights record-keeping regulations, departments/units must maintain the pre-employment records of all applicants for all positions. In addition, all phases of the recruitment and hiring process must be documented. This includes the application and all material submitted as part of the application, copies of all advertising, and the completed screening forms and interview feedback forms. A list of interview attendees and, when interview forms are used, the printed name and signature of the note-taker. All other materials, including emails and notes must also be retained. Please reference the [University of Idaho Administrative Policy Manual: 50.02 C-17: Hiring Process](#).

Documentation Retention Periods

The search coordinator should retain all information pertaining to the search, including emails, advertising, applications, screening, and interview forms until the process is completed. After screening applications, it is recommended that all applicants no longer under consideration receive some type of communication regarding their status in the process.

U of I requires maintenance of all recruitment and hiring files, including paper and electronic files with supporting documentation for at least three (3) years. It is recommended that documentation be kept for a period of five (5) years. In response to a complaint or litigation, records may need to be maintained beyond the five-year period.

While conducting a recruitment and hiring process, the issue of public disclosure of process-related information or

documentation may arise. Reports or records produced during the recruitment and hiring process such as screening matrices, interview questions, and committee notes, should remain confidential among search committee members and other key individuals on a need-to-know basis only. Under no circumstances should members of the committee or other departmental personnel release information or documentation to unauthorized individuals. If someone requests a record, they will have to make a public records request through the Office of General Counsel.

Miscellaneous Information

Dual Career Accommodation

Dual accommodations may be granted when a potential hire has a spouse or partner they request also be hired at the University. Policies for dual Accommodations are outlined in [FSH 3085: Dual Career Accommodation](#).

International Scholars and International Faculty/Staff

The University of Idaho occasionally sponsors applications for permanent residence on behalf of faculty and staff. Care must be taken to anticipate Department of Labor (DOL) labor certification requirements. Please visit the [Office of International Programs](#) for more information on International Scholars and International Faculty/Staff.

Conclusion

This document serves as a “living” guide of preferred practices for attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse and inclusive faculty and staff at the University of Idaho. The guide is supported by [an online toolkit](#) of sample materials and additional resources for hiring authorities and search committees. In the event of any conflict between this guide and University policy, University policy will govern.

To further assist with training and remaining compliant in the hiring process, everyone who sits on a search committee is required to take [online Search Committee Training and Unconscious Bias Training](#).

For more resources and information, visit the [Employment Equity and Compliance website](#).

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