

Effective Practices for Assessing Faculty Application Materials

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Workshop & Webinar Sequence

Preparing for Next Year's Hiring (April 2024)

- > Forming and informing search committees
- > Drafting job ads and rubrics
- > Planning for outreach

Effective Practices for Assessing Faculty Application Materials (October 2024)

Effective Practices for Interviewing (November 2024)

- <https://www.washington.edu/diversity/faculty-advancement/webinars/> (OFA)
- <https://advance.washington.edu/resources/?text=webinar&op=Search> (ADVANCE)



Today's topics

- > Brief review of bias in assessment
- > Committee dynamics and high functioning teams
- > Criteria consensus
- > Prevention strategies
- > Records management

- > Questions and discussion



2 Key Takeaways from Research on Bias in Assessment

- > People who assert “objectivity” often do a worse job . . .
- > We are most susceptible to biases in the form of “quick thinking,” “knee-jerk thinking,” or “stereotypical thinking” when
 - we feel tired, overworked, overwhelmed, rushed, or
 - we are unsure of exactly what we are supposed to do, or
 - we have ambiguous or incomplete information

. . . all conditions of serving on a search committee . . .



Bias in Assessment

- > Bias can take many forms
 - We tend to focus on forms of “negative” bias, but bias can also be “positive”
 - “Positive” bias reflects our tendency to gravitate towards the familiar
- > Working with incomplete information
- > Reviewing large numbers of applicants



Bias in Assessment

- > Tempting cognitive and decision-making shortcuts
 - We are tempted to focus attention on the familiar . . . and to ignore the unfamiliar
 - We are tempted to base decisions on a single data point
- > Our default is to hire for “sameness”; hiring for “difference” requires deliberate effort
- > Our goal is prevention and mitigation of common forms of bias



Committee Dynamics and High Functioning Teams

Cautions:

- > Time pressure and sense of urgency
- > Power imbalances and dynamics
- > Lack of consensus about criteria and/or process



Committee Dynamics and High Functioning Teams

Characteristics of High Functioning Committees:

- > Every member understands the task at hand
- > Work as a team with clear roles and responsibilities
- > Create a shared understanding of assessment criteria
- > Use structured processes
- > Anticipate challenges and articulate strategies to address challenges in a timely manner



Structured Process Example

Components

> Roles

> Tools

> Timeline

Example

> Non-voting facilitator

> Primary/Secondary reviewers

> Bias literacy check-in

> Focused discussion questions

> Speaking order strategy

> Consistent time per application

> Regular breaks (e.g., after 5-8 applications)

> Phased evaluation

Assessments Don'ts and Dos

Don't:

- Allow biases to proceed uninterrupted
- Engage in prohibited practices (e.g., asking illegal questions)

Do:

- Seek consensus on the criteria before beginning evaluation
- Explore key terms (e.g., what do we mean by “excellence,” “impact,” “relevant lived experiences”)
- Emphasize structure and use systems to promote consistency and fairness
- Create a strategy for check-ins (e.g., use a calibration round, decide what will happen if the criteria are not working well)



Human Resources

EOAA

Mission and vision

Affirmative Action program and placement goals

Equal Opportunity statements and reasonable accommodation

Pre-employment inquiries

Affirmative Action data form guidance

Search waiver request policy

Frequently asked questions

Community

HR Programs

HR Tools

Workplace policies

Professional Staff Program

Nonpermanent employment

HR News

Workplace posters

UW holiday calendar

Guidelines for pre-employment inquiries

Last updated: September 22, 2023

Pre-employment inquiries which discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, protected veteran or disabled status, or genetic information are prohibited by the University of Washington's policy and state and federal laws. Further, pre-employment inquiries which objectively convey to a reasonable person that the information will be used in connection with a discriminatory purpose are prohibited. Hiring officials must ensure that all pre-employment inquiries made of job applicants, whether written or oral, are lawful and fair.

Department administrators/search committees should take the following steps to comply with the University's equal opportunity policy:

- Direct all individuals who participate in any part of the hiring pre-employment process to comply with the guidelines provided below.
- Review all hiring procedures and related forms for compliance with these guidelines.
- Direct all individuals who make inquiries to obtain candidate information or recommendations to comply with the guidelines below.

Note: The guidelines chart applies to inquiries made of any applicants to the UW. This includes contract covered, classified, professional, academic, nonpermanent, student, or any other employee type within the University.

Chart for Fair and Unfair Pre-employment Inquiries

Search:

Subject	Fair Inquiry	Unfair Inquiry
Age	Inquiry related to birth date and proof of true age.	Any inquiry not necessary to establish that applicant meets a minimum legal age requirement, including any inquiry that implies an age preference for persons under 40.
Arrest/Conviction	Request criminal conviction history information in compliance with UW practices.	Other inquiries concerning convictions and imprisonment will not be considered justified by business necessity if they do not reasonably relate to the job duties.
Citizenship	Whether applicant can be lawfully employed in this country because of visa or immigration status; whether applicant can provide proof of legal right to work in U.S. after being hired.	If the applicant is a citizen; requirement before hiring that applicant present birth certificate, naturalization, or baptismal record; any inquiry into citizenship that would tend to divulge applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, or birthplace.

<https://hr.uw.edu/eoaa/pre-employment-inquiries/>



Fair and Unfair Inquiries

- > Subjects with Fair and Unfair Inquiries
 - Age, Arrest/Conviction, Citizenship, Credit, Disability, Family, Military/Veteran Status, Name, National Origin, Organizations, Photograph, Pregnancy, Relatives, Residence
- > Subjects with No Fair Inquiries
 - Height/Weight, Marital Status, Race or Color, Religion or Creed, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Expression, or Gender Identity
- > What if the applicant raises identity-related information in their application?



Compliance with EO 31 and I-200

- > EO 31 and I-200 **prohibit discrimination and preferential treatment** based on identity.
- > Search committees cannot use identity markers such as race, ethnicity, gender, or national origin as a **criterion or factor in evaluation**.
- > Assessment *criteria* and assessment *processes* should be uniform for all applicants, candidates, and finalists.



Seek Shared Understanding

- > Generate early conversations about values, goals, and process
 - What is the goal and purpose of this position?
 - What does our unit value?
 - How are our values reflected in this process?

- > Decision making
 - What do we need to know to advance candidates to the next stage?
 - What should be evaluated and when?
 - What if an important criteria was missed?
 - What is our decision-making process?



Criteria Consensus

- > Identify and calibrate criteria
 - What are we actually evaluating, and how will we make assessments?
 - What do we mean when we say _____?
 - Do the criteria exacerbate bias or privilege some groups over others?
- > Provide structure for better decision making
 - Avoid moving targets
 - Align with long-term strategic plans
 - Align with goals and values
- > Focus discretion and flexibility
 - Promotes purposeful discretion and flexibility
 - Promotes articulation of reasons for choices



Example 1: Teaching criteria and assessment

What kind of prompt did you provide in the job ad?

When you say “will contribute to the unit’s teaching mission,” do you mean

1. an ability to teach specific courses in specific ways, or
2. an ability to create new courses or develop new pedagogies, or
3. an ability to work with specific student populations, or
4. something else?

Have you considered relevant contexts for your candidates?

e.g., career stage, relevant training, prior teaching requirements or opportunities



Example 2: “DEI” criteria and assessment

What kind of prompt did you provide in the job ad?

When you say “will contribute to the unit’s DEI mission,” do you mean

1. a basic knowledge of and asserted commitments to DEI goals, or
2. a concrete record of prior relevant actions, or
3. concrete plans for future relevant actions, or
4. something else?

How might “lived experience” factor into your criteria?

Have you considered relevant contexts for your candidates?

e.g., career stage, location of school or program, opportunities



What should you do if you have concerns?

- > You feel the rubric is not working well
 - Should the rubric be modified at this point in the process?
 - How should the rubric (criteria) be modified?
 - What happens next?

- > Possible actions you could take
 - Propose revised criterion
 - Stop assessing and call a meeting to discuss and recalibrate the rubric
 - Design an opportunity to better assess the criterion at the next stage of evaluation



What should you do if you have concerns?

- > You disagree with some part of the process
 - What is the protocol for disagreement or dissent?
 - How is disagreement related to our primary job of making recommendations?

- > Possible actions you could take
 - designate time during a committee meeting
 - revisit the charge to the committee
 - talk to the chair of the committee
 - talk to the chair of the department or unit leader



What should you do if you have concerns?

- > You witness bias in an assessment meeting
 - How can you effectively interrupt bias?
 - How can you steer conversation back to appropriate assessment?

- > Possible actions you could take
 - Ask the committee to pause (“I need to take a break”). Then ask a general question about the issue (“Help me understand ...” or “Is it appropriate for us to discuss” or “What do you mean by ...”)
 - Direct conversation back to the rubric criteria
 - Articulate your discomfort (“I’m feeling uncomfortable with the direction this discussion is going.”)
 - Direct conversation back to the structured process





Records Management Services

Home > Records Related to Faculty Searches

Records Related to Faculty Searches

To be compliant with state law, every employee has the legal responsibility to demonstrate proper care and management of the records they create, handle, and receive. This is especially important when it comes to handling the records relating to the search process for new faculty appointments. This resource is meant to assist all three campuses of the University of Washington with how to manage the records created and received throughout each stage of the faculty search process and the specific roles faculty, staff, students, and leadership play at each stage.

Search Committee - Preparation Stage

Search Committee - Outreach & Assessment Stages

General Participants - Selection Stage

Eligible Voting Faculty - Recommendation Stage

Hiring Authority - Recommendation Stage

Records Management:

<https://finance.uw.edu/recmgt/resources/records-related-faculty-searches>



Updated Handbook of Best Practices for Faculty Searches

<https://www.washington.edu/diversity/faculty-advancement/handbook/>



[Home](#) / [Faculty Advancement](#) / Handbook of Best Practices for Faculty Searches

Handbook of Best Practices for Faculty Searches

This document is meant to serve as a concise Handbook of Best Practices for hiring and retaining a diverse and inclusive faculty across the three campuses of the University of Washington, and thus it is meant to assist the university community in meeting its goals of promoting equity and of enhancing excellence through diversity. The Handbook is supported by an online Toolkit of sample materials and additional resources for search committees and unit leaders.

FACULTY HANDBOOK TABLE OF CONTENTS

[INTRODUCTION](#)

- [1.1 Interfolio](#)
- [1.2 Hiring in a virtual environment](#)

Units should plan to **“localize” the Handbook’s suggestions** to their specific needs, and units should develop conventions and tools relevant to their particular disciplines and to their particular missions in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

For the purposes of this document, the concepts of **equity** and **diversity** are understood as the right of all faculty job applicants and all hired faculty to be treated with equal fairness and to have the opportunity to excel without bias due to their race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, or protected

Faculty Advancement	↑
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Handbook of Best Practices for Faculty Searches	
- Part 1: Scouting	
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Key Takeaways

- > Focus on planning and prevention
- > Evaluation criteria – and shared understanding
- > Committee processes – and shared understanding
- > Have a plan for how to address potential issues



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