

EVALUATION PROCESS

Assumptions Shape the Review Process!

We all like to think that we are objective scholars who judge people based entirely on their experience and achievements, but copious research shows that every one of us brings a lifetime of experience and cultural history that shapes the review process.

The results from controlled studies in which people were asked to make judgments about subjects demonstrate the potentially prejudicial nature of the many implicit or unconscious assumptions we can make. Examples range from physical and social expectations or assumptions to those that have a clear connection to hiring in various academic positions.

It is important to note that in most of these studies, the gender of the evaluator was not significant, indicating that both men and women share and apply the same assumptions about gender. Recognizing biases and other influences not related to the quality of candidates can help reduce their impact on your search and review of candidates. Spending sufficient time on evaluation (15-20 minutes per application) can also reduce the influence of assumptions.

The committee should develop criteria, based on the qualifications included in the job posting, for evaluating candidates and apply them consistently to all applicants. An applicant cannot move forward in the selection process if she or he does not meet **all of the required (minimum) qualifications**. However, do not eliminate an applicant for lacking a preferred qualification if you are moving forward someone who also does not have that preferred qualification. Evaluate each candidate's entire application; don't depend too heavily on only one element such as the letters of recommendation, or the prestige of the degree-granting institution or postdoctoral program.

While there is not standard screening method, a search or assessment matrix can be a useful tool in objectively assessing applicants' qualifications. Matrices, may be as simple or complex as the members believe is necessary and help to ensure that all applicants are subject to the same evaluation criteria, and that member of the search committee apply the selection criteria consistently. The creation of an assessment matrix requires the search committee, in consultation with the unit, up front, preferably while writing the job announcement, before the committee begins its evaluation of applications. Since different qualities and experiences may be expected from candidates at different states of their careers, when the posting is approved as an "open rank" search (i.e., a search open to more than one rank of professor) the committee will need to consider creating more than one assessment matrix.

The committee needs to screen applications consistently, applying the same standards to everyone applying for the same position. Consistency, ensuring how you evaluate one applicant is how you evaluate all applicants, and what you do for one applicant you do for all, helps ensure that a search is fair and equitable. A consistent approach to evaluating applicants increases the committee's ability to identify the best qualified individual for the position. It also helps support the search results when complaints that there was discrimination, or that unacceptable preference was given to one applicant over another, are received. It is recommended that all members of the search committee review all application materials to ensure more than one, or only a few, assessing and evaluating qualifications and thus avoiding that individual's, or small groups, biases. Search committees are assembled to ensure procedural fairness, to provide different stakeholders with an opportunity to express their views, which calls for collective decision making. Committee member who review applicant materials at a given stage in the process should review all of the materials for all applicants being considered at that stage to assure fairness.

Before Evaluation

- Agree on standard criteria and ground rules for the evaluation process before the search begins.
- Use the same criteria in review of all candidates.
- Rely on qualifications described in the position announcement.
- Do not create any extra hurdles for women and candidates from underrepresented groups in the search progress.
- Agree on rules of discussion and how to handle disagreement.
- Agree on a method for determining who will be invited to campus.

Practices to Enable Equity—Reviewing Applicants

- Learn about research on biases and assumptions. Consciously strive to minimize their influence on your evaluation of candidates.
- Develop criteria for evaluating candidates and apply them consistently to all applicants.
- Calibrate the committee by discussing one or two randomly selected CVs as a group.
- Use a candidate evaluation tool that incorporates the agreed-upon criteria (included in the job posting and advertisements).
- Evaluate each candidate's entire application; don't depend too heavily on only one element such as the letters of recommendation, or the prestige of the degree-granting institution or postdoctoral program.
- Slow down. Spend sufficient time (15-20 minutes) evaluating each applicant.
- Make time to review the entire application.
- Do not rank the finalists; instead summarize the strengths, weaknesses and likely contributions to the campus, program and unit for each candidate. An alternative idea is to create several lists, each ranking the finalists based on one particular criterion. This way you have several different "top choices" to contemplate.
- Be able to defend every decision for rejecting or retaining a candidate by asking committee members to back up their statements with evidence, not opinions.
- Periodically evaluate your decisions and consider whether qualified women and applicants from underrepresented groups are included. If not, consider whether evaluation biases and assumptions are influencing your decisions.
- Debrief as a committee after each evaluation or interview to gain lessons learned for future searches.

Myth: "We are focused on quality as our criterion for hiring. Adding diversity means compromising quality."

No one recommends sacrificing quality for diversity, and no qualified candidate wants to be considered on the basis of diversity alone. But our current practices may unintentionally exclude highly qualified people because we act on our biases. By recruiting a pool that reflects the availability of candidates from all groups, and by ensuring that we do not use criteria that may disadvantage women or candidates from underrepresented groups, quality will increase, not decrease. Diverse employees can enhance the educational experience of all students, an important goal of the University.

Extending the Recruitment Period

In some cases, there may be a need to extend the recruitment period. Reasons such as inviting more applicants because the pool wasn't sufficient or advertising to obtain a more diverse pool of applicants may be considered. Extending the recruitment period is determined on a case-by-cases basis. Search chairs should consult with their Academic Personnel Staff in the school and/or in the Academic Personnel Office well in advance of the closing date. Once the closing date has passed extending the recruitment period is no longer an available option.

Request to Extend the Close/Final Date of a Search

In the event that it may become necessary to extend the deadline date for submitting applications, email the appropriate AP Analyst with the following information for review:

1. Recruitment number: JPFxxxxx
2. Reason why the deadline needs to be extended.
3. If the purpose is to broaden the pool, describe efforts that will be taken to encourage additional applications.
4. Requested new Close Date in AP Recruit
5. Requested new Final date in AP Recruit
6. List the changes that will be made to the advertisement, both external and internal ("Description" field in AP Recruit).
Note: it is recommended that a statement is included in the updated advertisement alerting applicants that it is not necessary to reapply if they have already submitted an application.

Once approval is granted:

1. Academic Personnel office will change the deadline dates in AP Recruit and will notify the department when changes have been made.
2. The department will make the changes in the "Description" field as necessary.
3. If external ads will be updated, the department will upload the new advertisement in AP Recruit (in Advertisement section). Any current advertisements should not be deleted.