

An inclusive search is one that provides equal opportunity to all applicants, regardless of their background. When decisions are made in a fair and equitable manner, free from biases that are for/against any individual or group, we can focus on the merits of each individual and hire the person best suited for the role. This document outlines best practices for being equitable and inclusive throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Inclusive Outreach and Recruitment

Inclusive Job Descriptions/Position Announcements

- Developing a well-written, gender-neutral, and inclusive job description/position announcement will demonstrate to candidates that the University is an inclusive employer that considers all applicants, regardless of their background.
- Refer to the [Equity Consultants](#) for guidance of Writing Inclusive Job Descriptions and Position Announcements.

Select the Search Committee

- The composition of the search committee is critical to its success.
- Build a diverse committee that includes individuals who:
 - Have different backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise.
 - Have knowledge of the substantive area and the technical expertise to effectively evaluate candidates' qualifications.
 - Are the appropriate stakeholders, such as peers of the new hire, supervisors, and those with similar positions.
 - Are committed to conducting an open, fair, and equitable search.
 - Are welcoming to all applicants.
 - Have enough time to devote to the expected timeframe.
- It is strongly recommended that both the search committee and stakeholders during on-campus interviews include diverse individuals.
- Diversity is more than race/ethnicity. Diverse identities can include age, gender, religious affiliation, veterans, individuals with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, national origin, etc.
- Members can be individuals from outside a hiring department or the University.

Train the Search Team

- Anyone participating in the search process must have completed Search Committee Training (in Blackboard) within the past two years.
- Search Committee members should complete the [Inclusive Hiring Toolkit Training](#).
- All Search Committee members must submit a [Search Committee Relationship Disclosure & Conflict of Interest Certification](#) to the Office of Equal Opportunity, Access, and Title IX

Coordination (EOA) and indicate whether they have a potential conflict of interest with any candidate. EOA staff will review the forms and determine whether or not any committee members should refrain from attending the interview of the person with whom they have an established relationship.

Confidentiality

- To maintain the integrity and fairness of the search, confidentiality is critical.
 - Those found to have breached confidentiality may be removed from the search committee.

Strategies to Increase Diversity of the Applicant Pool

- Utilize a wide variety of recruiting methods, including applicable national and international organizations.
- Do not rely on the same sources repeatedly or rely solely on Human Resources to post to recruiting sites.
- Revisit your pipeline—our networks tend to look just like us.
- Assess efforts by reviewing the candidate pool at the close date. If you need to extend the search to increase the diversity of the candidate pool, do so.

Applicant Pool Diversity Report

- Applicant Pool Diversity Reports will be prepared by the EOA office and shared with the Search Committee Chair when the position closes.
- The report will provide aggregated data. No identifying information is included.
- This data can be used to assess if the candidate pool is diverse and whether the application deadline should be extended.

Inclusive Evaluation and Interviews

Application Evaluation

- Before reviewing any applications, the Search Committee should invite the Equity Consultants to the first meeting. During that meeting, Equity Consultants will share information about equitable hiring practices, including any placement goals related to the position.
- Determine the job-related criteria used to evaluate applications, based upon the required and preferred qualifications as listed in the job posting. Be sure all committee members agree on/understand the criteria.
- Develop a rubric that outlines the evaluation criteria to be used in reviewing all applicants. Sample rubrics can be found in the [Inclusive Hiring Toolkit Training](#).
- Have the Equity Consultants review the rubric for objectivity and inclusivity.
- To ensure equity, spend sufficient time reviewing each application.
 - If you think you have made a decision quickly, and you haven't read the entire application materials, spend the rest of your time trying to disprove your conclusion.
 - Quick decisions are more likely to be a result of implicit bias (both positive and negative).
- Question your judgements to see if unintentional bias may have impacted your selections.
 - Does it seem like most of the highest rated applications seem to have either male-sounding or white-sounding names?
 - Does it seem that candidates with degrees from major research universities are being rated higher?
- Recognize that applicants can be qualified in a variety of ways. Even if they come from a different industry, they may have transferable skills.
- Keep in mind that soft skills—such as communication, teamwork, active listening, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and adaptability—are just as important as technical skills.

Veteran Applications

- Many military veterans went straight from school to the military. It is possible they have never applied for a job before.
- Translating skills from military to civilian roles can be difficult for some veterans.
- Keep transferrable skills in mind when reviewing applications.
 - Customer services example: Even though they may not have customer service experience in an office setting, they may have military experience that is applicable to providing customer service.

Interview Questions

- Create a list of interview questions based upon the required and preferred qualifications of the position as listed in the job posting. This set of questions should be asked of all applicants interviewed.
- Committee members should be familiar with what questions should not be asked (noted in the Search Committee Training in Blackboard).
- Be sure to have the Equity Consultants review the questions for objectivity and inclusivity.

Interviews

- If a candidate needs accommodations during the interview, contact ACCESS to make the necessary arrangements.
- Create a welcoming environment.
- Treat all applicants with the same respect.
- Focus on established evaluation criteria.
- Consider giving candidates an opportunity to demonstrate skills, rather than just answer abstract questions.
- Hold off on comparing the finalists or picking a favorite.
- Minimize conversations/topics that are not related to the position.
 - Some candidates may share personal information (age, pregnancy status, etc.). While you cannot remove the conversation from memory, you can choose not to pursue the topic in further detail.
 - Do not make note of the conversation in the evaluation, and do not use the information in making selection decisions.
- If a candidate mentions difficulty with any medical condition or references a disability during questions about the job, refer them to ACCESS for information.
- Remember that interviews are a two-way conversation, and the applicant is interviewing the University as well.

Online/Virtual Interviews

- Ensure the interview platform being used is accessible and user-friendly.
 - If someone isn't familiar with the platform, provide clear instructions for how to use it.
 - If someone would prefer a phone interview instead of a video interview, be flexible and accommodate the request if feasible.
- Create a fair starting point for all finalists by sharing best practices in advance.
 - Encourage virtual backgrounds or offer to provide them with a virtual background.
 - Remind them of the importance of good lighting, testing the volume/speakers in advance, and eliminating distractions.
- Offer the interview agenda and questions in an accessible form ahead of time if requested or as an inclusive practice.
- If planning to use interactive features, such as a whiteboard, check in with participants in advance to determine if they will be able to use the feature or, if not, what alternative can be used instead.
- Utilize a closed captioning feature or enable automated transcription, if available.
- Ask participants to state their first name when speaking.
 - Those who are blind or participating via phone will know who is speaking.
 - Anyone relying on a sign language interpreter will be able to engage more fully.
 - Transcription services will identify the speaker.
 - It is easier to manage when two or more people start speaking at the same time.
- When sharing a screen, verbally describe what is being shown visually.
- If any documents are shared during the video call, be sure they are in an accessible format.

In-Person Interviews and Presentations

- Create a fair starting point for all finalists by sharing information in advance, such as where to park, how to dress, an itinerary, and interview topics.

- Consider individual mobility limitations. Where are you holding interviews? Do you have multiple seating options? And so on.
- Do not impede doorways, hallways, or restroom entrances.
- For larger presentation-type interviews:
 - Be sure you invite individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing to move to the front.
 - Have the presenter use a microphone, unless it interferes with their own accommodation request.
- Provide alternative format printed materials when needed (i.e., large print, audio, etc.)

Interviewing Individuals with Disabilities

- Some candidates may need an accommodation for the interview. Examples include:
 - A sign language interpreter.
 - An advance copy of interview questions.
 - A time of day for interviews that is best for their ability to communicate or focus.
 - A room that is appropriate for someone using a mobility device.
 - A quiet interview setting.
- Many people with disabilities do not disclose if they have a disability.
- If an applicant has a noticeable disability or reveals a disability during the interview, concentrate on the individual, not the disability.
- If there has been an accommodation request made prior to the interview, it should not be discussed with the search committee or discussed during the interview.
- If a candidate indicates they would like to request an accommodation, please contact ACCESS to coordinate on the candidate's behalf.

Interviewing Veterans

- Professional behavior in a military setting is different than a civilian setting.
 - Some veterans may not be comfortable selling themselves. Hiring and promotion in the military is based on performance record, and self-promotion is frowned upon.
 - May hesitate to ask follow-up questions. They are used to receiving orders, not questioning authority.
- Keep transferable skills in mind when interviewing.
- Remember to keep the interview legal.
 - Do not ask questions related to the candidate's type of discharge or current military status.
 - Do not ask someone in the National Guard if they will be deployed soon.
 - Do not ask questions that could relate to or uncover information about injuries sustained during service, a potential disability, or PTSD.

Social Media

- In general, your review should focus on the application materials requested.
- The use of social media checks should be **limited and used with great caution**, as it could reveal information that is not related to qualifications or disclose a protected class.
- Unless a candidate lists a professional social media account on their application materials, search committees should limit any social media checks to LinkedIn, as that is a professional-oriented site (other sites should be considered personal and not relevant).

- If there is a job-related reason to check social media, keep the following in mind:
 - Only look at public content. Never ask for candidate's passwords
 - Be consistent—if reviewing one candidate's social media, then review all candidates.
 - Social media should be checked later in the process (i.e., after interviews).
 - If the review affects the hiring decision, document why and save a screenshot.
 - Focus on candidate's own content, not what others have said about them.

Evaluating the Finalists

- Only members of the search committee, those who participated in the in-person interviews, and the hiring manager should be involved in this decision.
- Be aware of bias and redirect conversations when needed.
- Be able to explain every decision for removing or advancing a candidate by documenting the process.
- Justification for selection/non-selection must be job-related and based on specific qualifications, experience, references, and interviews.
- Avoid vague statements such as “not a good fit” or “best qualified.”
- Avoid comments (either orally or written) that are not job-related.

Reference Calls or Emails

- Should have a structured set of questions.
- Document a summary of all reference checks.
- The Hiring Manager should be prepared to document any issues uncovered through the process.

Reference Letters

- Reference letter writers may inadvertently describe candidates in stereotypically gendered ways.
 - Letters for men are an average of 16% longer, more likely to mention accomplishments, and more likely to use formal titles.
 - Letters for women are 2.5 times as likely to provide minimal assurance, 50% more likely to use “grindstone” adjectives, and 7 times more likely to mention personal life.
- If signs of bias are noticed, consider if other materials should be used to evaluate the candidate more fairly.