The Search Process

A. Confidentiality in all aspects:
   o Communications regarding search
     1. All conversations regarding applicants should take place during search
        committee meetings. Committee members should not discuss details of
        the search with individuals outside of the search committee.
   o Search files and documents should only be kept on Interview Exchange. Printing
     is NOT permitted. Access to Interview Exchange is limited to committee
     members only. Any support staff with access must be briefed and adhere to the
     same standards of confidentiality
     o Please utilize Interview Exchange for all committee correspondence
       regarding applicants.
   o You must agree to the WIU Search Committee Code of Ethics before continuing
     on into the system.

B. Position Advertisement
   o The committee likely attached a draft to the Request to Fill submitted to fill the
     position.
     1. Required and Preferred Qualifications
        ▪ The committee must be very clear in this section of the position
          announcement, as it is the basis of evaluation throughout the
          search process. Required qualifications include the essential
          requirements to perform the essential functions of the job.
          Preferred qualifications should detail the specific qualifications
          that the ideal candidate possesses. By outlining detailed, yet
          general, required qualifications and more specific preferred
          qualifications, the committee is able to garner a diverse and
          significant applicant pool while effectively evaluating candidates.
          • Example: The position announcement requests a bachelor’s
            degree without any specificity. This is not written clear
            enough for those committees looking for particular degrees
            because they cannot be selective in the initial evaluation. At
            the initial evaluation, anyone with a bachelor’s degree,
            whether it be in electrical engineering or underwater basket
            weaving, is going to move forward to the next phase.
            However, if the committee requested “A bachelor’s degree
            in one of the following fields, [specify],” they could be
            more delineating in their evaluation at the very beginning
            stages. If the committee wanted to be more open, they
            could even add, “or related field.” Then the committee
works with EOA to define those fields are at the outset, so that screening is transparent and objective.

- **Subjective requirements**
  - Those requirements that require a personal judgment to determine what the committee will accept are acceptable appropriate; however, the committee must define/articulate the standard they will apply equally to all applicants before evaluation by including it in their initial evaluation rubric or in an Interview Exchange note in the job listing.

- **Degree Requirement Presumption**
  - The presumption is that applicant has the required degree at the time of application unless otherwise stated on the position announcement.
    - Example: “M.A. required” means that a master’s degree is required at the time of application. The committee must specify any variation. For example, “M.A. required at the time of appointment.”

C. Recruiting:

- EOA advertises in the following:
  1. WIU Website
  4. The Chronicle (for faculty positions)
     - Short version of position announcement is required with the link to the full position announcement and our equal opportunity policy statement.
     - Typically 79 to 120 words
  5. Illinois Job Link

- Search Committee develops an advertising plan which targets diversity. Please submit to the EOA officer facilitating your search.
  1. The plan needs to target diverse pools of applicants. To help you in the process, we will also be placing ads in Asians in Higher Ed, Blacks in Higher Ed, Hispanics in Higher Ed, Disabled in Higher Ed, LGBT in Higher Ed, Native Americans in Higher Ed, Veterans in Higher Ed, and Women and Higher Ed.

D. Applicant Materials

- Confidentiality
  - EO data will be automatically collected through Interview Exchange
  - Acknowledgement of receipt of application will also be sent to each applicant through the system.
1. However, if the applicant is missing an item, the designated committee chair or administrative aid will need to follow up with the applicant, indicating what they are missing to complete their application.

2. If the applicant still does not complete their application, this can be a reason for non-selection.

E. Applicant Screening
   o Screening should begin no sooner than 30 days after the posting of the position announcement.
   1. Committee members may review the applications and even make private notes; however, the committee cannot contact applicants or filter out applications until the official screening date.

   o All screening rubrics and tools must be approved through EOA before use. The approved version will be posted in the Notes section of Interview Exchange.

   o Screenings—after the initial screening phase, the order of phases chosen by the committee is their choice. There are important points to remember about any phase the committee chooses to employ:

      1. Initial Screening Phase: Resume/CV also known as “paper screening”
         ▪ Applicants are screened ONLY against the required and preferred qualifications listed in the position announcement, not each other.
         ▪ “Preferred” or “Prestigious” universities are weighed the same as all other accredited universities
            • Once you start interviewing and speaking with applicants, you can better discern the applicants’ preparation and skills.
         ▪ Remember that the screening rubric should match the advertisement requirements

      2. Telephone Conference/Campus Visit Interview Questions
         ▪ Interview questions must be approved by EOA before use
         ▪ Positively and Professionally worded
         ▪ Questions must be related to the applicable knowledge, skills, and abilities
         ▪ Present questions in a way that avoids soliciting unwanted personal information.
         ▪ Core interview questions
            • Core set of interview questions must be administered equally to every applicant.
            • Yes/no questions rarely get you the information you are seeking.
• Core set of questions cannot be altered once the screening phase has begun.
  o Any additional questions must be added in the following phase. The EOA administrator also needs a copy of the amended list of questions to approve before use.

  ▪ Permissible variance
    • Clarifying and probing questions specific to the interviewing applicant are permitted, but they must follow the call of the original question.
  
  ▪ Internal Candidates
    • Must be treated the same as external candidates
    • Same itinerary
    • Same interview questions
    • Must be interviewed first in case of campus interview

NOTE: Please ask if you have any questions regarding the drafting of committee interview questions. Guidance is also available on the FAQ section of our website.

3. Campus Visit
  ▪ You must continue to screen until your first campus visit is scheduled. If there are applicants with comparable qualifications to those making the cut, you must fast track them through. The goal is always to have the most qualified pool of applicants from which to choose
  
  ▪ Same interview rules apply
    • Positively and professionally worded
    • Core interview questions must be used consistently for each applicant
    • Solicitation of personal information is prohibited
  
  ▪ Social aspect of interview (luncheon, dinner, etc.)
    • Treated the same as an official interview
    • Avoid questions which may solicit personal information
    • Any questions from the applicant which are of a personal nature can be answered generally, and not followed up with personal questions of your own. Redirect the conversation to more professional matters

4. References
  ▪ Before any reference checks are made, submit the list of questions to the EOA through Interview Exchange
Must use the list of references provided by the applicant through the system
  • If the references are insufficient, ask the applicant to provide others
  • If you would like to speak with a reference not on the applicant’s list, you must ask permission
    o If the applicant says yes, the committee may contact whoever they like
    o If the applicant says no, the committee chair may ask why. If the committee feels that the reason is not legitimate, after discussion with EOA, this can be a reason for non-selection

Information received through external sources
  • Any negative information received from any off list checking (Google, word of mouth, etc.), must be verified by official sources (newspaper, public record, university webpage or source) before it can be used as a reason for non-selection

The committee should develop a set of questions to be asked to each of the candidate’s references
At least two people must be available at all times for reference checks

F. Monitor Spreadsheet - now done through Interview Exchange
  o All reasons for non-selection must be entered into Interview Exchange
  o Applicants that have been screened out of any phase must have a reason for non-selection notated in the system
    1. Please provide reasonable, legitimate, job-related reasons for non-selection
      ▪ “Not a good fit” is not acceptable
  o Updated applicant folders must be completed and reviewed by EOA at the completion of each phase, prior to the beginning of a new phase

G. Final Considerations: Candidate Ranking (Can be used at any phase)
  o Think of your final candidates in terms of tiers.
    1. Tier 1—Sought After Candidates
      ▪ Ranking of “Tier 1” candidates is NOT recommended
      ▪ Strength/Weakness rubric recommended. Provides more context than ranking. Also provides more reasoning for non-selection
    2. Tier 2—Meet the Requirements
- Numerical ranking is highly recommended
- Tier 2 candidates must have a reason for non-selection entered into their Interview Exchange profiles
- The committee may always come back to this tier, if needed

H. Recommending a Candidate
   - Update applicant folders with reasons for all candidates not chosen
     1. This step must occur before an offer is made
   - Fill out the Extend Offer of Employment form through the Requisitions tab in Interview Exchange
   - Once all the required approvals are gathered and the Request has been approved, the department hiring manager can extend the offer of employment

I. Make an Offer
   - If applicant accepts—Offer letter is sent directly to Academic Personnel and, once approved, it can be sent to the applicant.
   - applicant completes personal data sheet to be sent to Academic Personnel
   - If applicant declines—notify EOA; repeat steps outlined in part H

J. Retention
   - Electronic files, including applicant media files sent to departments in the course of a search, must be retained for three years.
   - All documents used in the assessment of candidates specific to any search must be destroyed at the conclusion of that search. The committee chair is responsible for the collection and disposal of these documents.
   - The official record of all searches is retained by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access.