

Guide to Effective Searches



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A Guide to Effective Searches

The Ohio State University embarks carries forward its mission to deliver quality teaching, research and service. One way we advance our mission is through search efforts. In every search effort our commitment is to diversity, quality and excellence in order to fulfill the institutional mission. The goal of a search committee is to recruit the most diverse applicant pool and select the best candidate to become a member of the university community. A Guide to Effective Searches was developed as a resource to assist search committees through the recruitment and selection process.

The guide facilitates the recruitment efforts of the search committee by providing information on advertisement, hiring search firms and many other resources to assist in the expansion of the candidate pool. The guide enhances the selection process and ensures that it is legally sound by offering specific materials about the process of evaluating, interviewing, reference checking and extending offers to candidates. In addition, the guide offers information to search committees concerning affirmative action strategies that heighten the opportunities to recognize, learn and value the contributions and experiences of all.

The role of search committees is vital to the attainment of excellence through diversity. No other committee at the university level has a greater ability to make a profound and substantive institutional impact. Help us attain diversity by hiring the "best" candidate while strategically diversifying the university community.

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Initial Considerations

Organizing the Committee

- Review the charge to the search committee.
- Select the Affirmative Action Advocate.
- Identify tasks to be completed by the search committee chair.
- Identify tasks to be completed by Affirmative Action Advocate.
- Plan search committee meeting schedule.
- Review committee expectations regarding confidentiality and attendance at meetings.
- Identify an individual to handle notes, correspondence, travel arrangements, and itinerary for candidates who visit the campus.
- Develop budget, including travel expenses for committee/candidates (and obtain approval for use of search firm if the committee wishes to engage a search firm).

Organizing the Search

- Develop timeline for search, including application deadline, interview schedule, and target dates for submitting recommendations.
- Determine materials to be submitted by applicants:
 - Cover letter expressing interest and describing qualifications
 - Resume or curriculum vitae
 - Letters of recommendation (number required)
 - List of references
 - Transcripts
 - Statement of philosophy/ goals
 - Other
- Determine where records will be kept. Search process records must be maintained for three years.
- Address all Affirmative Action issues.

Affirmative Action Issues

The Committee Chair and Affirmative Action Advocate should determine who will be responsible for these tasks:

- Schedule meeting between the Affirmative Action Advocate and Office of Human Resources regarding affirmative action issues.
- Review current departmental affirmative action profile and hiring goals. This information is obtained through the dean's or vice president's office.
- Check with Office of Human Resources, Information and Technology Services (HRITS) for availability estimates for your position.
- Send all applicants who do not apply through Office of Human Resources the Ohio State Equal Employment Identification Form.
- Identify strategies to ensure widest possible pool of applicants.
- Discuss potential biases and ways to ensure their elimination from the search process.
- Contact Office of Human Resources Information and Technology Services (HRITS) for an "Applicant Flow Report," to review the composition of the applicant pool (race, gender, disability, veterans).

The Search Process

Position Description

- Develop, update, or review position description.
- Identify essential and marginal functions of position.
- Identify required and desired qualifications, corresponding with essential job functions.
- Ensure position description shows no bias with age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.
- Consider position description as a tool that can expand the applicant pool by eliminating unnecessary qualifications. If a qualification is desired rather than required, indicate this in the position description.
- Submit final position description for approval to the department/college office for faculty positions. If the position is unclassified, also forward the position description to the Office of Human Resources, Organization and Human Resource Consulting (OHRC).

Advertising the Position

- Identify person/office to whom applications/nominations will be submitted.
- Submit position data and position description information via the Human Resource System (HR System). Upon position approval, create a job requisition in HR System to advertise the position on the University Jobs Web Site or Medical Center Web Site.
- Determine market for position, develop advertisement, including official affirmative action statement and application/nomination procedures. The Office of Human Resources, OHRC, is available to assist with advertisements.
- Obtain a statement of prior approval from an appointing authority if using a search firm.
- Identify appropriate national/local publications and/or advertisement forums. Consider the Faculty and Administrator List via University Mail Services.
- Identify publications that serve women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans.
- Identify individuals, institutions, and agencies to receive position announcement.
- Submit position announcement to publications and other advertising sources.

Affirmative Action Statements for Advertisements

As an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer, all advertisements and announcements for university positions must be in compliance with the university affirmative action program and with state and federal regulations.

These tag lines are approved for use in all recruitment advertisements and announcements:

- A. Required Tagline for Job Postings: "EEO/AA employer"
- B. Recommended (Optional) Tagline for Job Postings: "To build a diverse workforce Ohio State encourages applications from individuals with disabilities, minorities, veterans, and women. EEO/AA employer."

The Office of Human Resources, Organization and Human Resource Consulting (OHRC), can assist with recruitment advertisements and recruitment services.

Expanding the Pool of Candidates

- Contact minority/protected group caucuses of professional organizations.
- Talk with faculty or staff who are members of protected groups for help in identifying applicants or ask if they have colleagues who can assist in the search.
- Contact colleagues across the country to identify potential applicants.
- Personally encourage internal and external applicants to apply.
- Identify other strategies to ensure widest pool of applicants.

Selection Criteria

- Determine, prioritize, and document search criteria based on position duties.
- Make criteria as objective as possible and consistent with essential job functions.
- Screen for criteria and omit any information that would potentially exclude individuals on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Communication with Candidates

- Keep in mind that the way you interact with each candidate conveys a message about the Ohio State community.
- Send an invitation to apply to all nominated persons.
- Ensure that all persons communicating information about the search have accurate knowledge regarding the search process, including legal guidelines for questioning candidates and references.
- Keep all applicants informed in a courteous and timely manner about the progress of the search. Inform applicants as soon as they are (definitely) eliminated, rather than waiting until the end of the search. If there is any doubt about appropriateness of eliminating and contacting selected candidates, consult with the Offices of Academic Affairs and Human Resources. It is important that efforts be made to ensure the remaining pool is diverse (age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status).
- Notify candidates before proceeding to conduct reference checks.
- Send information provided by the Chamber of Commerce or local realtors on the City of Columbus to the candidates you have selected to interview.
- Be prepared to answer questions about assistance for partners/spouses desiring employment.

Selection of Interviewees

- Develop mechanism for screening applications, including record keeping to indicate why an applicant was screened out.
- Review materials submitted by applicants; identify those who do and do not meet minimum qualifications.
- Rate materials based upon established selection criteria, e.g., develop a matrix.
- Determine persons to be interviewed.
- Critically review the selected group to ensure a diverse pool of interviewees, i.e., consider candidates with non-traditional training and experience.
- If there is not appropriate representation of protected groups, consider methods to identify additional qualified candidates.

Interviewing

This section of the search checklist should be completed in exact order before applications are received and reviewed, to eliminate bias toward any specific applicant.

- Identify all persons and groups to be involved in the interview process.
- Review interview process with all interviewers, including:
 - Relevant information about the position: position description, essential functions of the job, necessary areas of inquiry;
 - Responsibility for interview facilitation;
 - Responsibility to emphasize positive aspects of The Ohio State University (as candidates are interviewed, they are assessing Ohio State);
 - Interview format and schedule;
 - Importance of consistency of questions for all candidates;
 - Confidentiality expectations;
 - Guidelines for Asking Questions During Search Processes;
 - Rating sheets and timeline
- Carefully design interview process and campus visit to eliminate bias toward any candidate.
- Develop interview format to include:
 - Welcome;
 - Questions to be asked of the candidate;
 - Questions from the candidate to the committee;
 - Current status of the search process;
 - Closing.
- Develop questions that relate to the position based upon job description.
- Ensure that the interview formalities are not biased.
- Develop interview rating sheet and distribute to all interviewers.
- Consider having each candidate perform relevant job skills during the interview (such as teach a class, make a presentation).
- Schedule and reserve meeting spaces for interviews, and communicate to interviewers.
- Confirm interviews and campus visits with letters, including an information packet with the following: position, department, an Ohio State campus map, a Columbus map, and roster of the interviewing committee.
- Provide transportation to and from airport and hotel and an individual to escort the candidate to and from interviews.
- Conduct interviews.
- Collect and synthesize rating sheets for each candidate from all interviewers.

The Campus Visit

- Provide opportunities for candidates to request meetings with particular individuals or university groups or local community.
- Ensure candidates are given equal opportunities to meet and interact with campus colleagues. Plan schedules that are similar in format to ensure an equitable basis for evaluation.
- Identify opportunities and organizations that could provide community and university resources for candidates.

Reference Check

- Determine stage of search process at which references will be checked.
- Confirm with candidates that references will be checked.
- Develop questions to be asked of references.
- Develop procedures if references are not available or cannot be reached.
- Identify individuals to conduct reference checks.
- Identify approximate time frame of reference check (e.g., 20-30 minutes), to ensure equity and consistency of reference checks.
- Review Guidelines for Asking Questions During Search Processes with individuals who are checking references.
- Request letters of recommendation.

Evaluating the Candidates

- If there is not appropriate representation of protected groups, consider methods to identify additional qualified candidates or re-open the process.
- Collect and review documentation from interviews, reference checks, and written materials relating the material to established criteria.
- Evaluate candidates' education and experience in relation to the requirements of the job.

Presenting the Pool of Candidates

- Recommend finalists, including specific information regarding each candidate. When considering candidates who are comparably qualified, strongly regard affirmative action and diversity goals.
- Provide criteria used to evaluate and select finalists.
- Rank order finalists if asked to do so.
- Ensure that all committee opinions are expressed to the individual making the hiring decision.
- If a foreign national is among the final candidates, contact the Office of International Affairs for assistance to determine whether appropriate work authorization can be obtained.

Making the Offer (done by appropriate University administrator)

- Share proposed letter of offer with Dean/VP office.
- Negotiate compensation package within university guidelines.
- Send letter of offer reflecting the guidelines established by the Office of Academic Affairs and/or the Office of Human Resources.
- Secure a letter from the selected candidate indicating acceptance of the position.
- Notify non-selected candidates after the successful candidate has accepted the position.

Documenting the Search

- Create and maintain a file for each applicant. Include tracking form, correspondence, materials submitted, and documentation that pertains to the candidate.
- Design form to track candidates at each step of the search process.
- Provide a locked location for files to ensure confidentiality throughout the search process.
- Keep summary of Search Committee meetings.
- Develop form letters for each stage of the search process.
- Send initial acknowledgement letters and Equal Employment Identification Forms to all applicants.
- Send rejection letters to applicants who do not meet minimum criteria, and others who will not be considered.
- Place all applicant files in order for storage, including all materials submitted.
- Ensure that documentation provides rationale for Search Committee decisions and recommendations.
- Complete appropriate section of the Promotion/Transfer Request form for internal candidates (provided by Office of Human Resources) citing specific, job-related reasons for non-selection, after final candidate has accepted the position. For self-identified veterans, include a comparison with person selected.
- Maintain records of the search process for three years.

Sample Questions for Reference

Questions should relate to the duties of the specific position and the questions that follow are intended to be illustrative only.

- Describe the candidate's interpersonal communication style. Give specific examples. Is this information documented in past evaluations? Other written documents?
- Describe the candidate's communication style when under stress/in conflict. Give specific examples.
- Discuss the candidate's ability to build relationships with colleagues/peers/supervisor/supervisees. Give specific examples. Is this information documented in evaluations? Other written documents?
- Describe the candidate's supervisory style. What are specific strengths? What are areas that need improvement? Have these been communicated to the candidate?
- What is the candidate's experience with diverse populations? (Define diversity as we mean it: age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, etc.)
- What is the candidate's comfort level interacting with those from diverse populations? How do you know?
- In what ways has the candidate demonstrated a commitment to affirmative action and/or diversity (i.e., specific programs, interactions with students/staff groups, training for staff, etc.)?
- Describe the candidate's ability to perform during a crisis/emergency.
- In what areas does this candidate excel?
- In what areas does this candidate need improvement? Please be specific. Has this information been provided to the candidate?
- Would you recommend this candidate to work at Ohio State? Why or why not?
- Any other information you would like to provide?

The Role of the Affirmative Action Advocate

All members of a search committee are advocates for affirmative action. In addition, each committee must designate a member to act in the role of affirmative action advocate. In order to add value and ensure that all affirmative action issues are addressed, the roles and responsibilities of the advocate are outlined below.

Who should be in this role?

It is highly recommended that your Affirmative Action Advocate be a tenured faculty person and/or an individual with extensive experience on search committees and one who has shown commitment to affirmative action. Consider non-minority as well as minority individuals for this role.

Responsibilities of the Affirmative Action Advocate

1. Evaluate the search process on a continuing basis, keeping in mind the goals and principles of affirmative action and diversity as defined by the university in its mission statement.
2. Lead discussions with committee in identifying benefits of diversity and in developing a diverse pool that could lead to hiring a member of an underrepresented group for the department or administrative unit.
3. Assist the committee in self-scrutiny about its own potential biases.
4. Provide committee with department profile and hiring goals. Contact specific college and/or department designee for more information.
5. Bring process gaps to the attention of the search committee and/or the Chairperson for immediate action. Process gaps may include the following:
 - Bias, prejudice or stereotyping in verbal or written communications, such as meetings, written correspondence, and interview questions;
 - Inadequate representation of underutilized groups in pool of candidates;
 - Bias, prejudice or stereotyping of candidates during evaluation period; and/or
 - Giving little or no weight to the affirmative action goals of the university as a factor in the hiring process.
6. Review all search committee activities to ensure that differences are cultivated and respected and that fairness is the norm. These activities include:
 - Developing job descriptions and minimum qualifications to cast the widest possible net;
 - Utilizing multiple and creative recruitment methods;
 - Using criteria for evaluation that do not preclude persons with non-traditional career patterns or equivalent education and experience;
 - Conducting interviews that are consistent and legal for all applicants;
 - Facilitating campus visits that provide similar opportunities for each candidate;
 - Developing a final slate of candidates that, whenever possible, gives the hiring official the opportunity to select from a diverse pool.

Legal Issues and the Search Process

These are guidelines only and are not meant to constitute legal advice, which can only be rendered when related to specific factual situations.

- Be knowledgeable about affirmative action requirements associated with minorities, women, veterans, and persons with disabilities. Understand how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) affects the search and selection process.
- Ensure that all portions of the application and interview process are accessible to persons with disabilities, and that the committee is prepared to address the issue of accommodations should that be necessary.
- Job-related criteria for the advertised position should be developed at the outset of the search and approved by the appropriate administrative official.
- Committees should use forms to record job-related reasons to advance candidates through the search process and to provide rationale in the event of a charge of discrimination. Comments on forms should directly address the candidate being evaluated and not compare strengths and weaknesses relative to other candidates (unless the candidate is a veteran). Inappropriate or judgmental comments about a candidate's appearance, personality etc. should not be included.
- If using a search firm, decide at outset the role of the firm and be specific about expectations. For example:
 - Will they assist the committee contact nominees who might not normally be reached through the application process? Will they provide background reports and reference reports as requested? All persons on the search committee should actively participate in the screening process to avoid having any one person eliminate a candidate.
- Only candidates meeting minimum advertised qualifications should be invited for campus interviews.
- Interview questions designed to provide fair and objective evaluation of each candidate should be developed in advance of committee interviews with candidates. A set of identical questions should be asked of all candidates.
- Contacts with candidates or any other individuals concerning any aspect of the search should be made by the appropriate administrative official or search committee designee.
- Telephone contacts with candidates should be limited to standard questions agreed upon in advance. Notes of responses should be made for subsequent committee use.
- Relative weights of criteria should be developed and assigned prior to the review of any application. Fluctuation in the application of weighted criteria may lead to allegations of manipulation and may indeed indicate manipulation to select a particular candidate.
- Avoid gratuitous comments made to the candidates that might indicate bias or be viewed as a discriminatory statement (such as, "we're looking for young blood").
- Only job-related reasons can be used to advance candidates. Objective criteria are less susceptible to legal challenge; however, the higher the level of position, the more acceptable the use of subjective criteria becomes. The subjective criteria still must be related to the position in question (e.g., leadership ability for a dean's position).
- As a public institution, documents generated by the search committee are considered public records subject to disclosure. Likewise, if a discrimination action is filed, investigating agencies will have access to search committee records.

Using an External Search Firm

- Obtain a statement of prior approval from an appointing authority (Dean, Vice President, Department Chair, Vice Provost) to begin the search for a firm.
- Contact University Purchasing for guidelines to begin the bid process from external companies who are registered with purchasing. In selecting a search firm, consider the following criteria:
 - Evidence of past experience in professional recruiting relevant to this position;
 - Evidence of past search experience with major land grant research universities;
 - Evidence of extensive national search capabilities;
 - Evidence of candidate pools reflecting commitment to affirmative action. Specifically, a demonstrated record of obtaining qualified women and minority applicants who evolve as successful candidates appointed to the position;
 - A list of academic institutions that have retained the firm within the past 24 months, including a description of the position and the result of the search;
 - An overview of the background and qualifications of those who will be involved in this project, including the team leader;
 - A statement of the number and type of ongoing searches the team is involved with and a description of the current status of these searches;
 - A statement of the firm's professional fee arrangements.
- Submit a job description to University Purchasing for the position vacancy.
- Expect payment to the external search firm to be approximately one-third the first year's compensation for the selected candidate. This includes annual salary plus any sign-on bonus.
- When the external search firms have submitted their bids, purchasing will send the proposals to the hiring department.
- It is recommended that the hiring department's search committee invite prospective firms to show presentations.
- When a decision has been reached by the hiring department, a written justification of the choice of external search firm must be submitted to purchasing for approval.

Resources

Strategies for Expanding the Pool of Candidates

Creating a broad and diverse pool of candidates is an important part of the search process. The task of the search committee is to publicize the position to bring it to the attention of all protected groups and to actively identify and recruit qualified candidates from members of these groups.

The following activities are recommended for use in specific searches and as strategies for expanding the network of protected group members.

The informal, "word-of-mouth" approach to recruitment, in addition to advertising, is one of the most successful ways to identify candidates. Making direct contact with academic departments, administrative units, professional organizations, and colleagues, is an effective method of expanding your search.

Personal Contacts

- Contact protected group members who have received significant grants or professional recognition and ask for the names of promising women and minority scholars or administrators.
- Use a personal approach. Outstanding potential candidates often do not apply for advertised positions; they must be contacted by a member of the search committee.
- If an individual declines a nomination or does not respond to your letter of inquiry, then consider contacting him or her to discuss the reason for declining.
- Target specific protected group members whose work or contributions you admire. Post position descriptions that reflect many areas of their skills. Ask individuals for names of students they have mentored.

Professional Associations and Conferences

- Encourage faculty and administrators attending professional conferences or visiting other universities to combine their visits with recruitment efforts for present and future positions. They can solicit curricula vitae and resumes from promising candidates.
- Keep national higher education associations informed of present and possible future positions. A number of these associations have special interest groups or minority caucuses with strong networks.
- Maintain membership and actively participate in minority caucuses in professional association(s).
- Maintain ongoing communication with caucuses comprised of protected groups.
- Request the names of potential candidates from caucuses comprised of protected groups in relevant professional and academic associations.
- Consider lobbying professional organization(s) to develop a national recruitment strategy for members of protected groups.

Publications and Search Assistance

- Use the Directory of Minority Ph.D. and M.F.A. Candidates and Recipients, published by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) to contact, network, and reference minority candidates and graduates from institutions who are affiliated with the CIC.
- Maintain contact with professional organizations, associations, and agencies that have job referral services.

- Publish discussions of affirmative action issues in newsletters or brochures that are sent to constituent groups and alumni/alumnae, informing them of the department's commitment to affirmative action and enlisting their assistance.
- Use journals to advertise position vacancies that have wide readership of protected groups.
- Use search firms with proven records of success in locating protected group members in higher education.

Other Institutions

- Collaborate on research or publications with protected group members at other institutions.
- Establish a working relationship with similar departments or administrative units at institutions with substantial numbers of protected group members. Some possibilities are: sharing research facilities and exchanging faculty and administrators, teaching for a quarter,
- delivering a paper, or making informal visits to discuss job openings with faculty, staff, and students.
- Contact colleagues at other colleges and universities about new professionals who are members of protected groups.
- Contact alumni/alumnae publications at universities where protected group members are well represented and share announcements of available positions.
- Contact affirmative action offices at other universities. Some maintain lists of women and minorities at their institutions who are looking for employment.

In Your Department

- Designate a faculty member and/or committee to work with the department chair in focusing on affirmative action efforts.
- Invite protected group members to participate in an on-campus seminar as a special guest of your department.
- Invite scholars and administrators who are protected group members from other institutions to participate in symposia, visiting professorships, seminars, and workshops. A one-year visiting professorship to replace a faculty member who is on leave will help meet your instructional responsibilities and strengthen the link between Ohio State and a similar department at another institution.
- Conduct departmental curriculum reviews to enhance minority perspectives that are missing and/or are important to the growth of students and faculty.
- Establish postdoctoral programs for protected group members to provide experience and professional growth.
- Consider hiring recent protected group member graduates from your department or from departments related to your administrative area. For faculty, this begins with recruiting protected group member doctoral students and retaining them in Ohio State's graduate programs.
- Create a resource pool of protected group member candidates from this and previous searches. Continually update your database with new names provided by women, minorities, students, and alumni/alumnae from Ohio State and other institutions.

With Other Departments

- Consider joint appointments with related departments.
- Review availability data provided by the Office of Human Resources/Affirmative Action.
- Work with the Office of Minority Affairs to contact, network, and reference minority graduates from Prospective Minority Graduates, a list of Ohio State minority graduates.

Expanding Your Contacts

- Talk with students about their studies of work by members of protected groups in the field, whose work they admire.
- Request names of potential candidates from anyone with firsthand knowledge of women and minority candidates at Ohio State as well as from institutions with strong programs in your discipline or administrative area.
- Maintain close contact with protected group member graduates of Ohio State and encourage them to recommend the university for graduate training, faculty positions, and administrative opportunities.
- Consider protected group members who have held part-time or temporary positions in your department or administrative unit.
- Maintain current listings of protected group member alumni/alumnae and their professional involvement.

Short- and Long-Term Methods for Expanding the Applicant Pool

Expanding the pool of candidates-SHORT term

- Directory of Minority Ph.D. & MFA candidates & recipients (CIC)
- Journals with wide minority readership
- Call colleagues across the country for names/nominations
- Call minority scholars to identify their mentored students
- Consider minority graduates of your own program
- Affirmative Action Register
- Black Issues in Higher Education
- Historically Black Four-year Colleges/Universities
- Alumni publications of colleges with high representation of underrepresented populations

Expanding the pool of candidates- LONG term

- Professional associations & conferences Attend minority caucus meetings
- Combine travel to conferences with visits to schools with high minority enrollments
- Join and be active in minority caucuses
- Commit to Affirmative Action and diversity in newsletters
- Research with faculty from minority institutions
- Develop working relationship with faculty from minority colleges
- Invite minority scholars to participate in symposia and visiting professorships
- Maintain vitae file of minority candidates from all searches and recruitment efforts
- Increase recruitment and retention of graduates and undergraduates
- Create an endowed chair for a scholar with research about women and minority studies

Guidelines for Asking Questions During Search Processes

Questions of the nature indicated below which are not job related, are inappropriate and illegal during all phases of the search process, including formal interviews, informal interactions between candidates and search representatives, and reference checks.

- Questions posed of one gender and not of the other.
- Questions about race, color, place of birth, national and family origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, or ancestry. However, you may ask about membership in job-related organizations or activities even if that also indicates or implies a person's protected group status.
- Questions about past, present, or future marital status, pregnancy, plans for a family, or child care issues. You may ask if the applicant has any commitments that would preclude the applicant from satisfying job schedules or performing job-related travel. If such questions are asked, they must be asked of both sexes.
- Questions about weight and height, unless this information is job-related.
- Questions about the candidate's state of health.
- Questions about disabilities, and the time needed for treatment of the disabilities, unless this information is necessary to determine the candidate's ability to perform an essential job function without significant hazard.
- Questions about a foreign address that would indicate national origin. You may ask about the location and length of time of a candidate's current residence.
- Questions about a candidate's native-born or naturalized status. You may ask if the candidate is eligible to work in the U.S. if the question is asked of all candidates. Contact the Office of International Education for assistance in obtaining appropriate work authorization.
- Questions about a candidate's native tongue or how foreign language ability has been acquired. You may ask about foreign language skills if the position requires such ability.
- Questions about a candidate's willingness to work on religious holidays. You may ask about willingness to work a required schedule.
- Questions about whether a candidate has filed or threatened to file discrimination charges.
- Questions about military service and/or the candidate's type of discharge should not be asked. You may ask questions concerning service in the U.S. armed forces only if such service is a qualification for the position being sought.
- Questions that would reveal arrests without convictions. You may ask about convictions (but not arrests) for crimes that relate to the candidate's qualifications for a position.
- Questions about a candidate's credit rating or financial standing.
- Questions about a candidate's workers' compensation history.
- Questions about the date a candidate graduated from school. You may ask number of years attended and degree(s) obtained.
- Questions about any relative of a candidate that would be unlawful if asked of the candidate.

Factors that Bias Interviews

Being aware of the following biases and their definitions can help evaluators avoid making snap judgments or inappropriate decisions.

- **First impressions** - making decisions on this basis
- **Contrast effect** - comparing applicant to the candidate previously before them
- **Negative information** - weighing negative information higher than positive to screen out candidate
- **Halo/Horn effect** - allowing one strong point that interviewer values highly to overshadow all other information; when this works in the candidate's favor it is the halo effect; when it works in the opposite direction, it is called the horn effect
- **Similar to me effect** - rating those who are like the interviewer higher than those who are least like the interviewer
- **Cultural noise** - failing to distinguish between responses of candidate that are socially acceptable rather than factual; candidate will give responses that are politically correct but not revealing
- **Affect bias** - if the candidate appears to like the interviewer, then that interviewer rates the candidate higher
- **Physical characteristics** - the more attractive the candidate is, the higher the score

Ways to Eliminate Bias

- Set criteria in advance
- Identify questions in advance; tie questions to criteria
- Use the same interviewers during the process
- Ask the same questions of all candidates
- Develop a consistent interview agenda for all candidates, e.g., visiting areas of town, same opportunities for interactions
- Educate interviewers on position, process and questions
- Use standard rating sheets
- Conduct reference checks consistently, and complete by the same person

Examples of Assumptions that Bias Interviews

Regarding female candidates:

- Beliefs about child-rearing or family responsibilities
- Assume less time for research or professional activities

Regarding male candidates:

- Assume that child-rearing or family responsibilities are less demanding
- Assume more time for research or professional activities

Regarding African-American candidates:

- Assume will only be interested in research or professional activities exclusively related to African-Americans
- Assume that research about African-Americans is not as valid or pure as research about European-Americans
- Assume the candidate is an expert on, or can speak or represent, the experience and issues of all African-Americans

Regarding Asian-American female candidates:

- Assume she might not be assertive enough to be a manager

Regarding persons with a disability:

- Assume someone who uses a wheel chair or is blind would not be an effective teacher or researcher
- Assume someone who has an invisible disability is not disabled (e.g., heart condition, psychological condition)

How to Determine Appropriate Compensation For Unclassified Staff

Questions about guidelines for faculty compensation should be directed to the college office or the Office of Academic Affairs

During the search process, compensation is a critical recruitment tool that becomes the basis for final negotiations and hiring. Search committees should consider the following when determining total compensation prior to extending an offer:

Internal equity: Consider the proposed compensation package of this position compared to other similar positions within the unit or throughout the campus;

External equity: Consider the proposed compensation package of this position to similar positions in the local, regional, or national market. Market data may be obtained through the Office of Human Resources, Consulting Services;

Experience: Consider the unique special skills or abilities the candidate promises to utilize in the job. Compare these skills and abilities against others in similar positions within the unit or throughout the campus;

Competitive benefit package: Remember that total compensation includes direct pay, the value of paid leave and the cost of benefits provided by the University. Total compensation and benefit information may be obtained through the Office of Human Resources, Consulting Services;

Training and career development opportunities available: Consider and provide to candidate information on training and development options that are additional to the employee fee authorization program;

Relocation expense options: Consider the flexibility of offering relocation dollars or other relocation options (see [Policy 2.30, Relocation Expenses](#)); and

Work / life issues: Consider benefits that assist in balancing work with other important life issues: flexible work schedules, job search assistance for partners, on-site childcare center, etc.

Letters of Offer for Unclassified Staff

Guidelines for faculty letters of offer are available from the college office or the Office of Academic Affairs. It is recommended that the following information may be included in a letter of offer for unclassified staff:

1. Position title
2. Employing department
3. Terms of appointment:
 - full time regular
 - part time (%) regular
 - full time specials
 - part time (%) specials
4. Upon acceptance, the effective date of appointment
5. If a specials appointment, the term of duration of the appointment should be specified, e.g., January 1, 2004, through March 31, 2004.
6. Compensation is at the rate of \$XXXX per month, to be paid on the last working day of the month. If benefits (vacation, sick leave, etc.) information is offered, be sure data is consistent with university policy.
7. The following statement should be included in all letters of offer: The Ohio State University is required by federal law to verify the identity and work authorization of all new employees. Accordingly, this offer is contingent upon such verification.

Language in letters of offer may create a contract. Because of this, letters should not include the following:

1. References to permanent employment, termination for just cause, probationary periods, specific expectations of performance, or salary increases. A copy of the position description can be provided to the employee after acceptance of the position.
2. Specific causes for termination or dismissal.

While the majority of hires prove to be satisfactory, there are instances where the employer-employee relationship must be terminated. Therefore, the letter of offer should not bind the university to a long-term, extensive relationship.

University Resources for Search Committees

The Offices of Academic Affairs and Human Resources will be glad to provide additional assistance to Chairs, Affirmative Action Advocates and other members of search committees.

Resources include:

Office of Human Resources	614-292-4164
Organization and Human Resource Consulting (OHRC)	
<i>Recruitment, including advertising and posting positions</i>	614-292-9380
<i>Search planning and consultation</i>	614-292-2800
<i>Search committee training and education</i>	614-292-2800
Veterans Affairs	614-292-4164
<i>Affirmative action, consultation on veterans' issues</i>	
Medical Center Human Resources	614-293-4995
<i>Medical Center Employment</i>	
Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC)	217-333-8475
<i>Reference to minority candidates and graduates from CIC institutions</i>	
Legal Affairs	614-292-0582
<i>Legal issues and assistance with non U.S. hires</i>	
Multicultural Center	614-688-8449
<i>Services for American Indian, Asian American, African American, Hispanic, Gay, Women, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals</i>	
Office of Academic Affairs	614-292-5881
<i>Faculty issues</i>	
Office for Disability Services	614-292-3307
<i>Services for individuals with disabilities and Affirmative Action</i>	
Office of Minority Affairs	614-292-4355
<i>Affirmative Action</i>	
Office of International Affairs	614-292-4273
<i>Assistance with non U.S. hires and Affirmative Action</i>	
The Women's Place	614-292-3960
<i>Women's Issues and Affirmative Action</i>	
University Purchasing	614-688-8200
<i>Search firm bid process</i>	

Publications and Tools

Human Resources Policies <http://hr.osu.edu/policy/>

Office of Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Handbook
http://oaa.osu.edu/OAAP_PHandbook.php

Letter of Offer Templates <http://hr.osu.edu/hrpubs/offer/olmain.aspx>

Women and Minority Recruitment: A Resource Guide, edited by Silas W. Taylor, Jr., published by Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.

A comprehensive listing of organizations, journals, newspapers, and radio stations that represent women and minority interests.

Professional Women and Minorities, Betty M. Vetter and Eleanor L. Babco, published by the Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology, 1500 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 831, Washington, DC 20004.

Contains the names and addresses of publications and organizations that focus on women and minorities.

Professional Women's Groups, published by the American Association of University Women, 1111 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036 A comprehensive list of professional women's organizations.

Affirmative Action: A Comprehensive Recruitment Manual, Robert Calvert, Jr., published by Garrett Park Press, Garrett Park, MD 20766

Provides guidance for an affirmative action search and lists the names and addresses of newspapers, journals, magazines, newsletters, and organizations that represent the interests of women and minorities.

Minority and Women in the Health Fields, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS Publication No. [HRSA] HRS-DV 84-5).

Data on the status, progress, and representation of women and minorities in the health occupations and educational programs leading to careers in health fields.