

# HEO CHARGE SERIES

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## CHARGE TO SEARCH COMMITTEE – HEO SERIES

The Role of Search Committee is to search for the most qualified candidates through a process that is consistent with the University’s non-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programs.

CUNY provides all members of its community the opportunity to interact with highly qualified, respected colleagues from the widest possible range of backgrounds. This includes having women, people of color, veterans, and people with disabilities as members of the faculty and staff. CUNY’s Affirmative Action program calls for broad outreach and proactive recruitment campaigns to attract members of protected groups and provide equal employment opportunity for all candidates. Extensive background on CUNY’s efforts is available on the “Diversity and Recruitment” web

pages: <http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ohrm/diversity.html>

*Search Committee members generally do not make a hiring decision, negotiate salary or employment terms, or conduct detailed background investigations. The Search Committee’s participation usually ends with the identification of finalists.*

The Office of Diversity, Compliance and Equity Initiatives (ODCEI), provides guidance to the Search Committee. Our objective is to ensure that searches are run in compliance with the policies established by CUNY Search Guidelines. We charge the Search Committee similar to the way that a judge charges the jury – to remind the Search Committee members to engage in a fair search process and to minimize unconscious bias. *See Appendix attachment, “Reviewing Applicants, Research on Bias and Assumptions.”*

A Chief Diversity Officer Representative (CDO Rep), trained by the ODCEI, sits on each of the search committees to ensure that the search is in compliance.

The Hiring Manager participates in the Charge Meeting and explains the duties of the position in further detail. The Hiring Manager is not a member of the search committee.

## THE CHARGE MEETING

### I. PREPARING FOR A CHARGE MEETING

Search Committee members should prepare by reviewing the position announcement, noting questions they may have about the search and/or the announcement, and perhaps most importantly, bringing their calendars and being prepared to discuss scheduling of Search Committee meetings. They should also be sure they are able to sign on to CUNYfirst and, at a minimum, navigate through the Employee Self Service screens. A “Search Process Flowchart” is attached in the Appendix and provides an overview of the process.

### II. SEARCH COMMITTEE DELIBERATIONS MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL

It is important to treat all Search Committee deliberations confidential, as well as all related information, whether verbal or written. It is important not to give the impression of unfairness by sharing information that might help any particular candidate.

#### **Confidentiality Guidelines**

\*Information about applicants remains confidential, except during official public and/or external screening activities (e.g., reference checks, employment verification, and job talks given by faculty candidates).

\*Search Committee members do not contact or speak with applicants unless doing so on behalf of the entire Committee and with the permission of the Search Chair. If contacted outside of the official process, Search Committee members should refer candidates to Human Resources.

\*Search Committee members (and others involved with the search) do not discuss screening or interview results, the nature of deliberations, and impressions of individual candidates outside of the Committee.

\*The search process will be stressful for many candidates. Hearing information about the search, such as the identities of the applicants, can unnecessarily add to that stress.

### **III. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST MUST BE RAISED**

Search Committee members should raise all conflicts of interest issues with the CDO. Issues can arise if a member's own staff or colleague is one of the candidates. That issue should be raised with the CDO.

Family members of candidates cannot participate in decisions regarding their applications under CUNY's anti-nepotism policies.

## **REVIEW OF RESUMES**

The Search Committee is not allowed to review resumes prior to the published closing or review date to ensure no unfair advantage is given to candidates who applied earlier.

### **I. ONLY THOSE RESUMES THAT MEET MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS CAN BE REVIEWED**

WHAT ARE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS? CUNYfirst postings ask for "minimum qualifications" and "preferred qualifications." For an applicant's resume to be reviewed, that applicant must possess the "minimum qualifications." The issue of whether a candidate has "relevant work experience" is not always straightforward and the Search Chair should discuss those cases with the Search Committee. (CUNY gives 3 years credit for a Ph.D. and 2 years for M.A.).

### **II. WHO WILL SCREEN WHETHER MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS ARE MET: INITIAL SCREENING**

If there are a large number of applications, the Search Chair should consult with the Search Committee, including the CDO Representative, to determine whether all search committee members should review all of the applications. Often, a large number of applications can be screened out by a subset of the Committee because the candidates do not have "minimum qualifications". If a decision is made that the Chair will screen out candidates who do not have "minimum qualifications," all Search Committee members must still have access to the entire applicant pool.

### **III. THE SEARCH COMMITTEE MUST KEEP A LIST OF APPLICANTS**

Search Committees must keep a running list of the individuals who do not meet the "minimum qualifications" of the job as described in the CUNYfirst Job Vacancy Notice (Job description) on an Excel spreadsheet.

A list of the names of the unqualified applicants should be sent to [Joseph.Marte@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Joseph.Marte@baruch.cuny.edu) and [Elma.Cruz@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Elma.Cruz@baruch.cuny.edu) in HR so that HR can authorize rejection letters to those who do not meet minimum qualifications via CUNYfirst. At this early stage, you should only reject candidates who do not meet minimum qualifications.

#### **IV. METHOD BY WHICH APPLICANTS WHO PASS THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS WILL BE SCREENED**

**Screening Criteria for the Qualified Pool:** *The Search Committee establishes screening criteria, consistent with the job posting, prior to reviewing applications. A “Sample Candidate Evaluation Tool” is attached as part of the Appendix.* Some important caveats:

- Do not add qualifications after the job has been posted.
- Be mindful the screening system does not inadvertently screen out well-qualified applicants including those from minority-serving institutions or applicants with non-traditional career paths.

### **THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

#### **I. HOW TO IDENTIFY CANDIDATES FOR INTERVIEWS**

The Search Committee should identify qualified candidates based on the selection criteria stated in the job posting and the hiring manager's feedback at the charge meeting. There is no generally set number of candidates the Search Committee should interview.

#### **II. THE SEARCH COMMITTEE MUST GET APPROVAL FROM THE CDO BEFORE INVITING CANDIDATES FOR INTERVIEW**

The Search Committee must send a list of the candidates to the CDO's office for approval: [Diversity@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Diversity@baruch.cuny.edu). In the same email, committees should also include the list of candidates who do not meet the minimum qualifications. The Office will review the list and authorize approval (or disapproval) within 2-3 business days.

#### **III. GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS**

**\*See attached handout “Plan and Conduct Interviews” in the Appendix.**

- A. Drafting interview questions: The Search Committee drafts questions to be asked at interviews. Identical evaluation criteria should be applied to all candidates. The interview questions should be consistent with the job criteria/job posting and input from the Hiring Manager. A standardized set of questions should be asked of each candidate. Follow up questions are allowed.
- B. ALL SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS MUST BE PRESENT AT ALL INTERVIEWS.
- C. Materials Not Requested in the Job Posting: Candidates should be notified if they are expected to bring additional materials to the interview (*e.g.*, writing samples). If presented by an interviewee with materials that were not requested, the Committee must choose whether to (a) disregard them or (b) consider them, in which case those same materials must be requested from all interviewees, including those who may already have been interviewed.
- D. CUNY Application: The CUNY Application, Part One, should be sent to candidates before the interviews. A copy is included in the Appendix and can be accessed through HR.

The Search Committee Chair must collect and review the applications immediately before the interview to ensure all signatures and relevant information (e.g. correct employment dates, references, etc.) are complete. The Search Chair must sign page five of the Application, acknowledging the fact that s/he has received and reviewed it. Note: Please ensure that candidates complete the CUNY application in its entirety. All relevant work experience must be completed on the application, with month and year, start and end dates, and a brief description of duties for each position. Relevant information on the resume but not on the application will not be considered by HR. This ensures the proper evaluation of the candidates' experience against the required years of experience for the HEO series classification of the position. If additional space is needed, candidates can use Page 6 of the application and sign/initial the page, or add an extra page using a Microsoft Word document. ***Part One must be forwarded to the Hiring Manager along with the rest of the submissions if that candidate is selected as a finalist.***

#### E. Interview questions

- Focus on the candidate's ability to perform the job's essential functions; avoid assumptions on perceived race, ethnic background, religion, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc.
- Control the interview. Do not accept incomplete answers. Return to questions evaded or sidetracked by the applicant.
- Do not ask questions which could be viewed as discriminatory or which are unrelated to the job. *See additional information on Questions in the Interview Process, pp.4-6 attached in the Appendix.*
- Ask both general and specific questions about the candidate's qualifications, skills, and abilities. The best predictor of future performance is past performance. Include questions about: candidate's actual job duties, how skills were acquired, areas of responsibility, how the candidate feels about specific aspects of previous jobs.

#### F. Interview Errors to Avoid

- Resist the urge to hire candidates just like yourselves. This is a human tendency that should be acknowledged and resisted.
- Avoid a "halo" effect. This is when an interviewer allows one or two positive traits of a candidate to affect his/her judgment in other areas. It can also apply to negative traits or characteristics.
- Occasionally, applicants may volunteer non-job related information relating to religion, sex, marital status, national origin, age, etc. during an interview, which can be used to discriminate. An example is an applicant who talks about being divorced or about his/her children and childcare arrangements. Even though you did not ask for the information, you can still be charged with discrimination if a question arises subsequently about how this information was used. Should an applicant volunteer non-job related information:
  - Do not write the information down

- Do not ask follow-up questions or make statements to continue in the area of discussion
- Return the discussion to job related issues
- Do not consider the non-job related information in decisions about the applicant's candidacy.
- Be careful not to overrate compatibility with other department staff/faculty because it can work against diversity. Be wary of making assumptions about the candidate like:
  - This person won't be happy here
  - This person won't understand our students, our employees, our internal customers, etc.
  - This person won't stay if we hire them.

- Language

Avoid referring to candidates as “affirmative action candidates and/or hires”; it is highly offensive.

- Social Media – Avoid it

Problems with using Social Media as a selection tool include:

- Search Committee members can find information that could be used in a claim of employment discrimination (such as race, religion, disability status, or sexual orientation)
- Information can be incorrect, and mistaken identities are possible
- The absence of problematic on-line material does not mean there are no potential issues with the candidate. Increasingly, individuals have the ability to manage their on-line presence through simple techniques such as creating alternate identities and paying third parties to monitor and manage their on-line information.

## **IDENTIFYING FINALISTS**

### **I. SELECTION OF FINALISTS**

There are no set number of finalists who should be forwarded to the Hiring Manager. However, the CDO should be consulted if the Search Committee reaches a point without being able to recommend any candidate or if there is only one finalist. Note: When you forward the candidates to the Hiring Manager, you should not rank them; all forwarded candidates should be equally qualified for the position.

Candidates not selected for a second-round interview should be informed of his or her rejection by the Search Chair at the end of the search process. *A copy of the rejection letter that the Search Chair should send is included in the Appendix.* Please do not make any changes to the letter without consulting with the CDO.

The finalists interviewed by the Hiring Manager but rejected, should be sent a letter of rejection from the Hiring Manager using the same sample rejection letter included in the Appendix at the end of the search process.

## II. CUNY EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

When a verbal offer is made to a finalist, the hiring manager should email [Joseph.Marte@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Joseph.Marte@baruch.cuny.edu) and [Elma.Cruz@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Elma.Cruz@baruch.cuny.edu) so that HR can provide the candidate with Part II of the CUNY Employment Application, with instructions to return it directly to OHR at [employmentapplication@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:employmentapplication@baruch.cuny.edu). Any questions on this process should be directed to HR's Joseph Marte or Elma Cruz at (646) 660-6590. No one outside of OHR, Legal or CDO's Office should have access to Part II.

## REFERENCE CHECKS

Ideally, it is helpful for a Hiring Manager to have information on the candidate's strengths and development needs, which can be solicited in reference calls. In some cases, this task can be delegated to HR. *A Sample Reference Check Questionnaire is included in the Appendix.*

HR performs other standard verifications.

## PROCEDURES FOR CLOSING SEARCH

### I. NOTIFYING ALL APPLICANTS

Please ensure that you have contacted candidates who were not selected and have not yet been identified.

Ideally, candidates who did not pass the initial screen and were not selected for an interview will have already been contacted and thanked via email using one of the standard messages available in CUNYfirst. The Search Chair or the Department Head should send a letter to the candidate who were interviewed and did not receive an offer. A copy of a sample rejection letter is in the Appendix.

### II. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION CERTIFICATION

Before a formal offer can be made to the final candidate, an **Affirmative Action Certification Form** must be filled out by the ODCEI and sent to the Office of Human Resources. *A sample of the form is attached.* Our office would need the following from either the hiring manager or the search chair before we can fill out the form. Inquiries can be addressed to [Kendrell.Lawson@Baruch.Cuny.Edu](mailto:Kendrell.Lawson@Baruch.Cuny.Edu)

1. The names of all persons interviewed (including first round candidates)
2. The proposed salary
3. The name(s) of anyone who was offered the job but turned it down (including the reason for refusal).

### III. PSSC COMMITTEE APPROVAL

**Submit the following to Joseph Marte for PSSC Committee approval:**

1. Justification/nomination memo from hiring manager, AVP or VP describing the search and indicating why the candidate was selected for the position,
2. Who was on the Search Committee,
3. Proposed salary,
4. Proposed start date,
5. CUNY Employment application,

6. Current resume,
7. Cover letter, if submitted with resume,
8. Reference check questions and responses, and a
9. Copy of PVN (Position Vacancy Notice) for the position

Note: You can make a verbal offer, however it is contingent on the **approvals by the College and the University**. If the candidate is currently working, they must not give notice to leave their current employer prior to these approvals. To facilitate this, you must **establish a proposed start date at least four weeks out** since employees must give at least two full weeks of notice and the College needs at least two to three weeks to process the appointment.

**Recommendation:** The PSSC submits its recommendation to the President. If the President approves, the information is submitted to CUNY.

### **CLOSING THE SEARCH**

**Records Retention:** The Search Chair must create a search file, which **must be scanned** and sent to the CDO via email [Diversity@Baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Diversity@Baruch.cuny.edu). Pursuant to CUNY's document records retention policies, they will be kept by the CDO for a period of three years (plus the current year) after the search ends. The search file should include the following:

1. Initial Candidate screening matrix/checklist which includes,
    - \*Name of Candidate
    - \*Whether each met minimum qualifications
    - \*Whether each met preferred qualifications
    - \*Whether selected to interview
  2. List of Candidates to be interviewed,
  3. Interview Questions and Rating Sheets (one per Candidate)
  4. Copies of documentation/letters provided to Candidates (if not done through CUNYfirst), and
  6. Materials provided outside of CUNYfirst (CUNYfirst application Part 1, letters of recommendation/reference call notes).
- \*\*Note that CUNYfirst retains resumes and cover letters; if different copies were provided during the Interview, these should be kept and submitted; otherwise it is not necessary to provide another set. If meeting minutes were kept, copies of minutes.

✚ For future searches please go to our website for recruiting documents at:

<https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/president/affirmativeaction.html>



