



# CUNY Search Committee Guide

## Resources for conducting a successful search

Version 1.2 August 2013

Office of Recruitment and Diversity



**The purpose of this Guide is to help Search Committees:**

- ✓ Attract a broad range of qualified applicants
- ✓ Identify the most highly qualified candidate(s)
- ✓ Complete searches efficiently and effectively
- ✓ Provide fair and equitable treatment in search and selection.

There are several reasons why conducting effective searches is a CUNY priority.

**Recruiting and selecting employees is critical.** The skills, expertise, and dedication of our faculty and staff are key to CUNY's success and there are negative consequences if a newly-selected colleague is a poor fit, lacks necessary qualifications, or resigns early in his/her employment.

**Recruiting is resource-intensive.** Over the course of a year, CUNY conducts hundreds of searches for faculty, executives, administrators, and support staff. Vacancies can be advertised widely, sometimes at substantial cost. Search Committees are composed of professionals for whom recruiting is only one of many commitments.

**CUNY's reputation is impacted by candidates' experiences.** Today's media allow for broad distribution of our job postings; they also enable candidates to share their observations, positive or negative, with others. Additionally, highly-qualified candidates may base the decision to take a job with CUNY partially on their experience during the search process.

**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.

**An effective Search Committee is the most critical element in successful hiring.** One of the benefits of the committee process is the input from a diverse group. The decisions of a group representing different experiences, backgrounds, and attitudes can make more effective decisions that are less influenced by unconscious or unverified assumptions. The Search Committee process lends credibility to hiring decisions and helps assure a smooth transition for the new colleague.

This general guide has been developed to provide tools which enable search committees to do an effective job. The Chief Diversity Officer is responsible for determining search practices on each campus. Search Committees should rely on the Chief Diversity Officer as the primary source of information on how their specific searches should be conducted and should refer any questions to him or her.

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The Office of Recruitment and Diversity (ORD) in the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) has prepared this guide. Questions about search procedures at your campus should be directed to the Chief Diversity Officer.

## **Search Process Checklists**

Each search has unique challenges and not every search will follow exactly the same path. However, it is useful to understand typical roles and activities performed by many Search Committees.

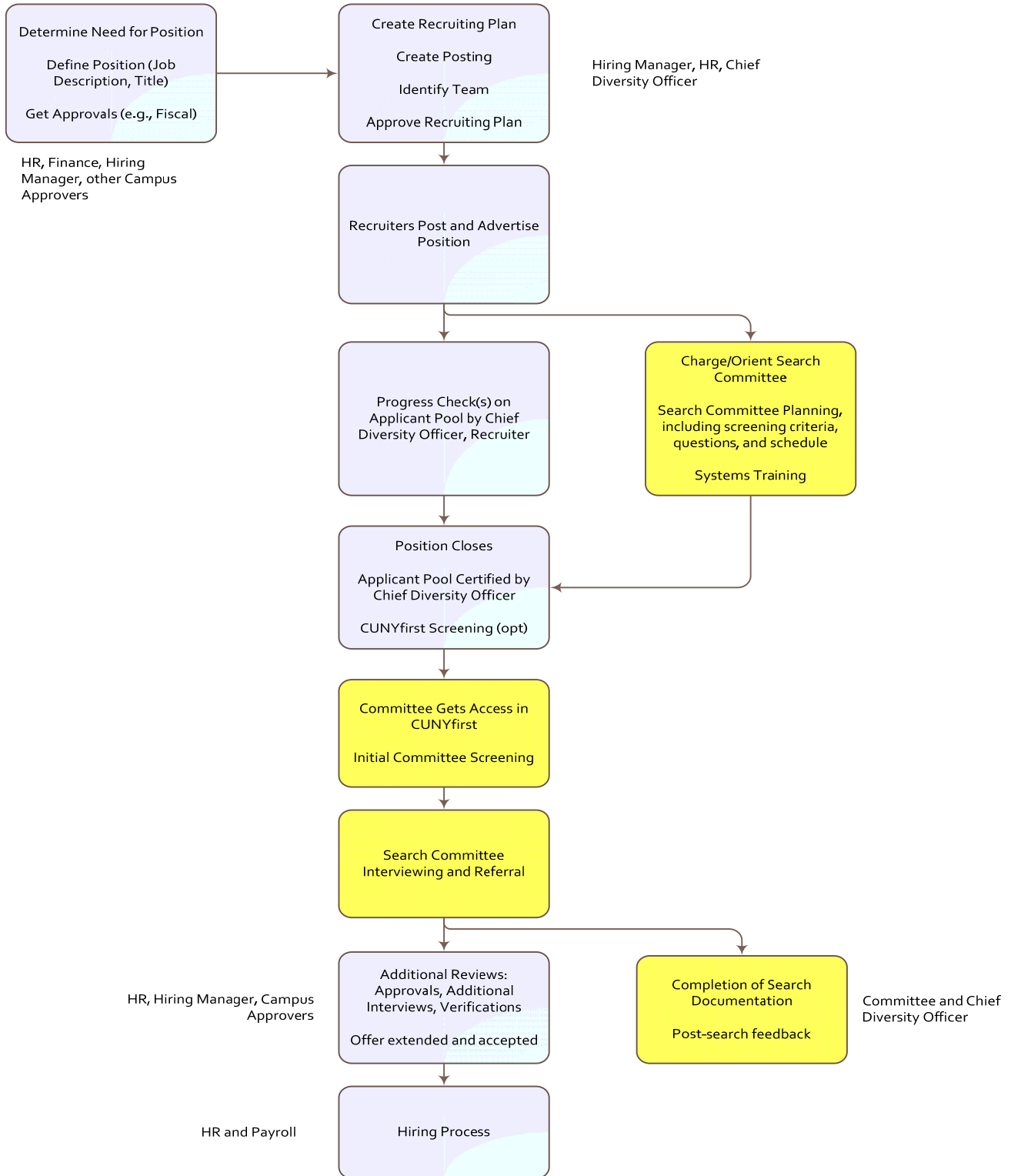
- ✓ **Roles and Responsibilities**
- ✓ **Search Process Flowchart**
- ✓ **Characteristics of a Successful Search**

## Roles and Responsibilities in the Search Process

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Search Committee</u>	<u>Hiring Manager</u>	<u>Support Roles (see note)</u>
Key Concepts	Understand guiding policies and practices	♦	♦	♦
Planning	Define Position Develop Recruiting Plan Obtain Approvals Post Job and Advertisements Collect Applications Select Search Committee Charge Search Committee Search Committee Planning	♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
Screening	Review and certify candidate pool Initial Screening Select Highly-Qualified Candidates	♦ ♦		♦
Interviewing and Selecting	Interview Candidates Select Finalists Additional Interviews Final Selection Obtain Approvals Employment Application / Verification	♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦
Concluding the Search	Make Job Offer "Sell" Candidate Hiring/Onboarding Evaluate Success	♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Note: support roles include Chief Diversity Officer, Human Resources, Department support staff, and others

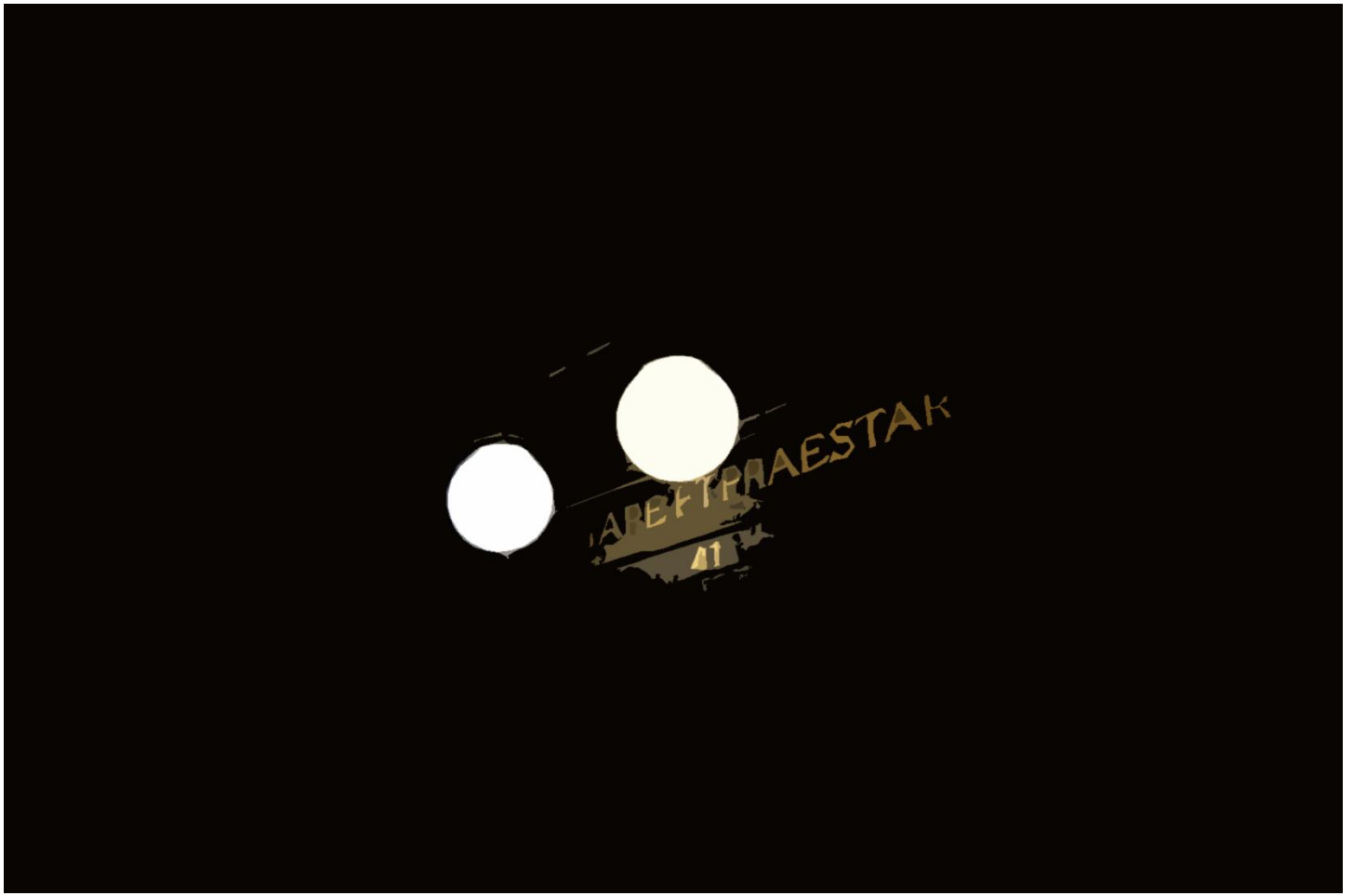
# Search Process Flowchart



## **Characteristics of a Successful Search**

- ✓ The Search Committee is committed to its mission.
- ✓ The search is carefully planned and proceeds according to plan.
- ✓ Postings, advertisements, and communications project an accurate and positive view of the position.
- ✓ Communications with candidates are courteous, truthful, responsive, and fair; and candidates receive sufficient information to make informed decisions.
- ✓ The Hiring Manager/Department Chair serves as a resource to the Search Committee and recruiting personnel.
- ✓ The search generates a diverse pool of highly-qualified, motivated candidates.
- ✓ Screening criteria, interview questions, and rating tools are carefully prepared to reflect the position and reduce potential for bias.
- ✓ The search results in identifying a successful candidate who receives and accepts an offer of employment.
- ✓ Administrators meet requirements for documentation, records retention, approvals, and internal controls.





## Chapter 1 – Guiding Principles

Roles and Responsibilities

Timing

Confidentiality

Encouraging Diversity and  
Combatting Bias

## **Roles and Responsibilities in the Search Process**

### **Search Committee**

The Search Committee is a group of faculty and/or professionals convened for the sole purpose of identifying the most qualified candidate(s) to fill a vacant position, with the guidance of the Chief Diversity Officer.

Search Committees consist of individuals who have enough knowledge and skill to effectively evaluate candidates. Members may also be potential colleagues, internal customers, or knowledgeable experts in a field or discipline.

#### **Search Committee Members' Responsibilities**

- ✓ Screen applications using agreed-upon screening criteria
- ✓ Select individuals to interview and conduct interviews
- ✓ Select finalists and possibly conduct additional finalist interviews
- ✓ Pass hiring recommendations to the Hiring Manager, P&B Committee, and/or Provost
- ✓ Meet expectations for compliance and fairness, particularly by managing potential unconscious or implicit bias to ensure equity in decision-making
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality
- ✓ Assist with recruiting by proactively utilizing personal and department networks to identify potential candidates.

Search Committee members may also assist with recruiting by proactively utilizing personal and department networks to identify potential candidates. While not all searches require extraordinary levels of outreach, nonetheless "Search" is an active process and may be an ongoing activity, particularly in academic departments. It can include activities such as placing advertisements, cultivating contacts with other institutions, attending conferences, maintaining contact with potential

future candidates and networking with colleagues in order to net the broadest possible pool of job applicants.

Often, a major factor candidates consider in whether to take a position is the quality of communications along the way. Search Committee members represent their College or Unit, and as such should act professionally. They should treat candidates with respect and provide accurate information and project a positive, welcoming attitude.

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.

## Search Committee Chair

A Search Committee Chair coordinates overall efforts and manages communications among Search Committee members as well as between members and other units (including the Chief Diversity Officer and Human Resources).

### **Roles of the Search Chair**

#### Manage a proactive, timely, fair and legally compliant search

- ✓ Work with the committee to establish ground rules
- ✓ Promote and practice compliance with applicable laws and policies
- ✓ Maintain consistency/fairness
- ✓ Maintain confidentiality
- ✓ Promote a collegial atmosphere

#### Lead the Committee in all phases of its work

- ✓ May consult on recruiting plans
- ✓ Develop screening and evaluation criteria
- ✓ Conduct a proactive and equitable search
- ✓ Manage the scheduling of meetings and interviews
- ✓ Present finalists to the Department/Hiring Manager

#### Maintain positive interaction with candidates

- ✓ Make sure the Committee treats all candidates with respect and equity
- ✓ Ensure candidates receive accurate communications
- ✓ Ensure candidates feel welcomed
- ✓ Maintain communication with candidates, keeping them informed of process and timelines
- ✓ Assure unsuccessful applicants are notified of non-selection on a timely basis

#### Conduct post-search review

- ✓ After the search has concluded, evaluate the process
- ✓ Document the search committee's activities and ideas for improvement

The Chair may be assisted by an Administrator who sets meeting times and logistics, organizes materials, schedules interviews, and maintains contact with candidates. (In our CUNYfirst system, this person is called the "Interested Party").

## Other Roles

Successful recruiting and hiring only happens through the contributions of many parties on campus, as illustrated in the charts on the following two pages.

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Roles</u>
<b>Senior Executive</b>	The senior executive at each unit (e.g., College President, Dean or Vice Chancellor) approves personnel decisions, subject to action by the Board of Trustees; leads high-level decisions on staffing and resources, but may delegate certain responsibilities to Provosts, Academic Deans, and Senior Administrators; and is also accountable for creating an inclusive environment which fosters an appreciation of diversity among faculty and staff.
<b>Provost</b>	The Office of the Provost often coordinates the overall faculty recruiting efforts for the college, including monitoring search practices and identifying long-term and short-term staffing needs. The Provost's office may also coordinate advertising and developing job offers for faculty candidates.
<b>Appointment Committee(s)</b>	At the campus level, various committees review proposals to create new positions and hire selected candidates. Examples are the HEO Screening Committee and Department P&B Committee.
<b>Finance / Budget</b>	Finance and/or Budget determines and/or confirms availability of funding for new or vacant positions and thus plays a part in approving job postings.
<b>Chief Diversity Officer and Staff</b>	The Chief Diversity Officer monitors searches to assure compliance and promote effective searches, particularly in identifying diverse candidate pools. The Chief Diversity Officer "charges" Search Committees and Hiring Managers and helps plan the search (e.g., identifying advertising outlets); coordinates diversity-related planning and programs at the Campus level; reports to management on progress in meeting College diversity-related goals; and provides data on compliance issues to governmental bodies.
<b>Human Resources Director and/or Recruiting Coordinator</b>	The Director of Human Resources is responsible for many of the administrative aspects of the search. Generally a staff member (referred to as the Recruiting Coordinator) is assigned to each search. This person may coordinate search operations, work with Hiring Managers and Department Chairs to define positions, create job postings, coordinate screening activities and employment offers for administrative staff and perform onboarding activities for new employees.
<b>University Support Roles</b>	The Central Office supports recruiting by helping to establish and communicate policies, coordinate sharing of information across campuses, and assisting with exceptional situations.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities in the Search Process

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Search Committee</u>	<u>Hiring Manager</u>	<u>Other Participants</u>
Key Concepts	Understand guiding policies and practices	♦	♦	♦
Planning	Define Position Develop Recruiting Plan Obtain Approvals Post Job and Advertisements Collect Applications Select Search Committee Charge Search Committee Search Committee Planning	♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦
Screening	Review and certify candidate pool Initial Screening Select Highly-Qualified Candidates	♦ ♦		♦
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Concluding the Search	Make Job Offer "Sell" Candidate Hiring/Onboarding Evaluate Success	♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦	♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

## **Timing**

There are competing pressures on a Search Committee. Attracting a large and diverse pool of highly-qualified applicants is an important goal, but with more candidates comes a greater time commitment for screening and selection. At the same time delays in hiring have an operational impact.

For Faculty searches, there is the reality of the academic hiring season. Many institutions post faculty vacancies in late August, conduct searches in the fall, and may have commitments from selected candidates by the start of the New Year. If there are delays, candidates may be in discussions with multiple institutions, and the best candidates may drop out of a prolonged search upon receiving an offer from another institution or employer.

Search Committee members will access candidate information once the job posting has reached its closing date or other review date, and the Chief Diversity Officer has agreed that screening can begin. This is described in more detail in the next chapter.

### **General Timing Guidelines**

- ✓ Initial screening: 1 – 2 weeks from the Review Date/Closing Date
- ✓ Interviewing/administrative searches: 2 – 4 weeks.
- ✓ Interviewing/faculty searches: ideally concluded by late April.

Search Committee members should establish a target schedule, with specific dates and times, at their first meeting. The schedule should take into account the needs of the Hiring Department.

Members should commit to attending all meetings and interviews, barring serious emergencies, in order to meet the target schedule and they should periodically assess whether or not they are “on track.”

## **Confidentiality**

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 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.



## Encouraging Diversity and Combatting Bias

### **Diversity in the Context of the Search Process**

“The diversity of a university’s faculty, staff, and students influences its strength, productivity, and intellectual personality. Diversity of experience, age, physical ability, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and many other attributes contributes to the richness of the environment for teaching and research. We also need diversity in discipline, intellectual outlook, cognitive style, and personality to offer students the breadth of ideas that constitute a dynamic intellectual community.

A vast and growing body of research provides evidence that a diverse Student body, faculty, and staff benefits our joint missions of teaching and research by increasing creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. Yet diversity of faculty, staff, and students also brings challenges. Increasing diversity can lead to less cohesiveness, less effective communication, increased anxiety, and greater discomfort for many members of a community.

Learning to respect and appreciate each other’s cultural and stylistic differences and becoming aware of unconscious assumptions and behaviors that may influence our interactions will enable us to minimize the challenges and derive maximum benefits from diversity.”

From *Benefits and Challenges of Diversity in Academic Settings* (copyright 2010 by The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin system and reprinted with permission from the Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Recruiting takes place in an overall context of institutional goals related to diversity in our workforce. This is evidenced not only in CUNY policy but in the ongoing work of the University and Campus leadership to promote diversity and communicate its importance.

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>

The University of Wisconsin system has produced two excellent resources which we recommend be reviewed by Search Committee members.

Benefits and Challenges of Diversity in Academic Settings (2010) summarizes research findings on the impacts of diversity:

[http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/Benefits\\_Challenges.pdf](http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/Benefits_Challenges.pdf)

Reviewing Applicants-Research on Bias and Assumptions (2012) provides guidance on avoiding unconscious bias in search and selection procedures:

[http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure\\_3rdEd.pdf](http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure_3rdEd.pdf)

### Considering Diversity

- ✓ Faculty and staff diversity has a positive impact on student success. *From Benefits and Challenges of Diversity in Academic Settings:*

“Research shows that diverse working groups are more productive, creative, and innovative than homogeneous groups, and suggests that developing a diverse faculty will enhance teaching and research (Herring, 2009; Chang et al., 2003; ACE and AAUP, 2000)”
- ✓ All individuals have unconscious biases that can impact what they see as a “good fit” for a given position or work environment. Committee members should seek to understand attitudes that might impact a selection process, even unintentionally. It is also important to structure the search process to minimize the impact of such bias.
- ✓ In addition to individual biases, structural biases might exist in a given profession or discipline. Committee members might consider what those issues may be and how their impact can be lessened.
- ✓ Individual candidates might have concerns related to feeling welcomed in a Department, College, or University in general. We address some of these concerns through expressing our strong commitment to diversity, and to broad outreach to identify a diverse pool of candidates. We expect this commitment to extend to the actions of the Search Committee.

The University also operates within a framework of federal, state, and city laws and regulations regarding equal employment opportunity (EEO) and affirmative action and strives to maintain strict adherence to these regulations in its searches. Your Chief Diversity Officer can provide further guidance.

## **Diversity in the Context of Law**

### **Federal Laws that Incorporate EEO Components**

- ✓ Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1991
- ✓ Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972,
- ✓ The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)
- ✓ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- ✓ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974
- ✓ The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
- ✓ The Equal Pay Act (1963)
- ✓ The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

### **Affirmative Action Laws Governing CUNY**

- ✓ Executive Order 11246, as amended
- ✓ Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ✓ Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974.

Recruiting activities are also supported by University-wide policies, particularly related to the University's non-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programs. The Chief Diversity Officer is responsible for communicating policies and assuring compliance. Policies are provided on the CUNY web site.

### **Relevant CUNY Policies**

- ✓ Affirmative Action
- ✓ Policy on Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination and Against Sexual Harassment
- ✓ Conflict of Interest Policy – guidelines for hiring and supervision of relatives and other activities reflecting a potential conflict of interest
- ✓ Policy on Hiring Public Retirees
- ✓ Records Retention Policy – guidelines for maintaining records, including search records.
- ✓ Position requirements are codified in policies such as the CUNY Bylaws, Civil Service specifications, and related documents.



## Chapter 2 - Planning

Charge by the Chief Diversity  
Officer

While The Posting Is Open

## Charge by Chief Diversity Officer

This section describes some of the goals and outcomes of the initial meeting of the Search Committee.

### **Charge by the Chief Diversity Officer: Key Activities**

- ✓ Overview
- ✓ Setting Ground Rules
- ✓ Understanding Position Requirements
- ✓ Reviewing Recruiting Plan
- ✓ Establishing Screening Criteria
- ✓ Setting Schedules
- ✓ Other tasks as suggested by the Chief Diversity Officer, such as CUNYfirst training

### Overview

Traditionally the definition of the word “charge” is “a judge’s instructions to a jury before it begins deciding a verdict”.

In the context of searches at CUNY, a “charge” has a much more encompassing meaning. It is the term we use for the notification of and instructions to the Search Committee about its goals and obligations. Some of the items covered address compliance, particularly compliance with Equal Employment Opportunity regulations and related CUNY guidelines. The Chief Diversity Officer leads what is called a “Charge Meeting” and this is often seen as the official “kick-off” for the Committee.

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 Committee events. They should also be sure they are able to sign on to CUNYfirst and at a minimum navigate through the Employee Self Service screens.

For administrative searches, the Hiring Manager may participate; or if not, there should be a later meeting to discuss the Hiring Manager’s needs.

At this meeting, or at another time, members will have the opportunity to receive an orientation on using the CUNYfirst system to perform some recruiting tasks.

## Setting Ground Rules

The Search Committee Chair should lead a discussion covering roles, responsibilities, and expectations.

### **Discussion Points for Search Committees**

- ✓ What are the goals and desired outcomes?
- ✓ What are the rules of discussion; how will disagreements be handled?
- ✓ What is the time frame for completing the search?
- ✓ Scheduling and attendance issues
  - Handling emergency Committee member absences
  - Issues related to Committee members in different locations
  - Scheduling priorities
  - Use of CUNYfirst to review resumes and check interview schedules
- ✓ What forms and documentation are needed?
- ✓ Approximately how many people should be interviewed, and how many finalists identified?
- ✓ Discussion of confidentiality and handling potential conflicts of interest.

## Understanding Position Requirements

Earlier in the process, there will have been an effort to define the requirements of the position. Search Committee members should review the job posting, job description, and/or any other documentation to be well-informed when deciding on selection questions and criteria.

The Hiring Manager or Department Chair should explain duties and preferred qualifications in more detail, providing guidance as to those which are most critical. Search Committee members may ask clarifying questions.

### **Contents of a Typical Job Posting**

- ✓ Information identifying the position and location, including job title
- ✓ Job Summary (usually a section with standard job duties and a section with campus-specific information)
- ✓ Minimum qualifications and preferred requirements
- ✓ Application information, including any materials requested
- ✓ A general statement of employee benefits and compensation
- ✓ An Equal Employment Opportunity statement.

## Reviewing Recruiting Plan

Earlier in the process, the Chief Diversity Officer, Hiring Manager, and Recruiting Coordinator(s) have contributed to preparing a Recruiting Plan. Committee members may read the Recruiting Plan, or receive a briefing from the Chief Diversity Officer.

### **Contents of A Typical Recruiting Plan**

- ✓ Basic information such as Department, Hiring Manager, Title/Level, and Salary Range
- ✓ Job posting for the position (this may be edited for various advertising outlets)
- ✓ A Position Description with additional detail on duties and qualifications. If available, this is particularly helpful to the Search Committee in defining screening criteria
- ✓ Search Committee member listing
- ✓ Advertising and Outreach plans
- ✓ Projected Time Line
- ✓ Approvals and Authorizations.



## Establishing Screening Criteria

By establishing screening criteria prior to reviewing applications, the Search Committee reduces the potential for bias. The Search Committee should define and document:

- ✓ Criteria to be used in evaluating applications and the evaluation methods
- ✓ Proposed interview questions.
  - If there will be more than one round of interviews, such as a phone screen followed by a meeting with the Committee, there may be more than one set of questions.

*Guidelines for screening are described in Part 3 (Screening); designing interview questions is discussed in Part 4 (Interviewing and Selecting).*

## Setting Schedules

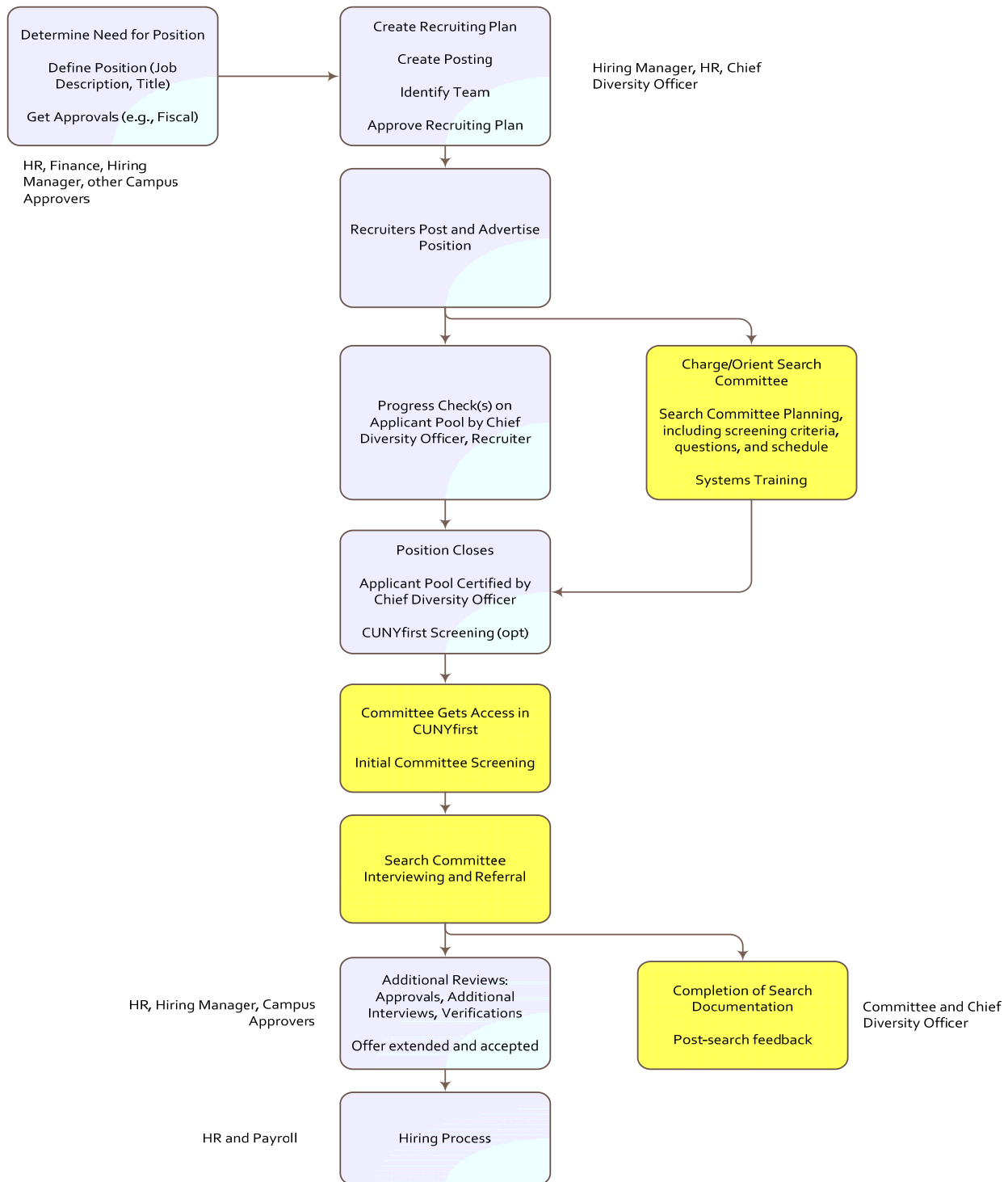
The charts on the next pages illustrate

- ✓ A Search Process Flowchart
- ✓ Key Activities (Scheduling Planning Tool).

The Chief Diversity Officer may provide examples that are customized to your College, Department, or particular search.

The sooner the Committee is able to schedule key dates, the better able they will be able to accommodate the schedules of committee members and reserve resources, such as meeting rooms. Search Committee members should bring their calendars to the initial meetings and be prepared, at a minimum, to schedule dates for the initial screening(s) and potential interview dates.

# Search Process Flowchart



## Scheduling Planning Tool

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Participants</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>
Post Vacancy	Recruiter(s)		
Charge/Orient Search Committee	Chief Diversity Officer, Committee		
Progress Check on Applicant Pool	Chief Diversity Officer		
Posting Closes	NA		
Approval/certification of Applicant Pool	Chief Diversity Officer		
Applications made available to Committee	Chief Diversity Officer and/or Recruiters		
Committee Review of Applications	Committee		
Committee meets to discuss initial screening	Committee		
Schedule interviews	Committee, Interested Party		
Conduct interviews	Committee		
Campus Visits (Faculty)	Committee, Department, College Community		
Committee meets to discuss interviews and select finalists	Committee		
Committee refers candidate(s) to next step of the process	Committee, Chief Diversity Officer, Hiring Manager		
Committee completes documentation	Committee, Chief Diversity Officer		
Post-search debriefing	Committee, Chief Diversity Officer		

## While the Posting is Open

According to candidate surveys, the primary sources of information about CUNY's job openings are CUNYfirst's job posting section and College web sites. Another valuable source is information from a current CUNY employee.

Job postings stay open and accept applications for an agreed-upon period of time based on the type of position and the likelihood of difficulty in attracting a large and diverse applicant pool.

Candidates apply to our job postings on-line via CUNYfirst and provide at a minimum a CV/resume and cover letter. After applying, they receive an email acknowledgement, and they are able to view the status of their application on-line. If candidates have difficulty in completing their application, or if they have questions about the status of a search, they are instructed to contact Human Resources for assistance. They also have access to detailed instructions on the CUNY web site ([www.cuny.edu/employment](http://www.cuny.edu/employment)).

Search Committee members, Hiring Managers, and department colleagues can email a link to the Job Postings from CUNYfirst to others who may be interested and attach a brief note to the email. See the box called, "Email to Friend" appearing at the top and bottom of each job posting. You may also inform candidates that they can set up "Job Agents" to be notified of appropriate positions as they become available on CUNYfirst.

In the case of faculty searches, candidates may be requested to send additional materials to another location, such as a Department office. Instructions must be on the job posting. These materials should be held confidentiality until screening begins.

## Review Dates

Job Postings are available to candidates on CUNYfirst for the number of days agreed upon with the Chief Diversity Officer. The Posting either has a firm Closing Date, or is labeled, "Open until filled, with resume review beginning on (Review Date)".

Candidates' materials cannot be reviewed prior to the published Closing Date or Review Date because:

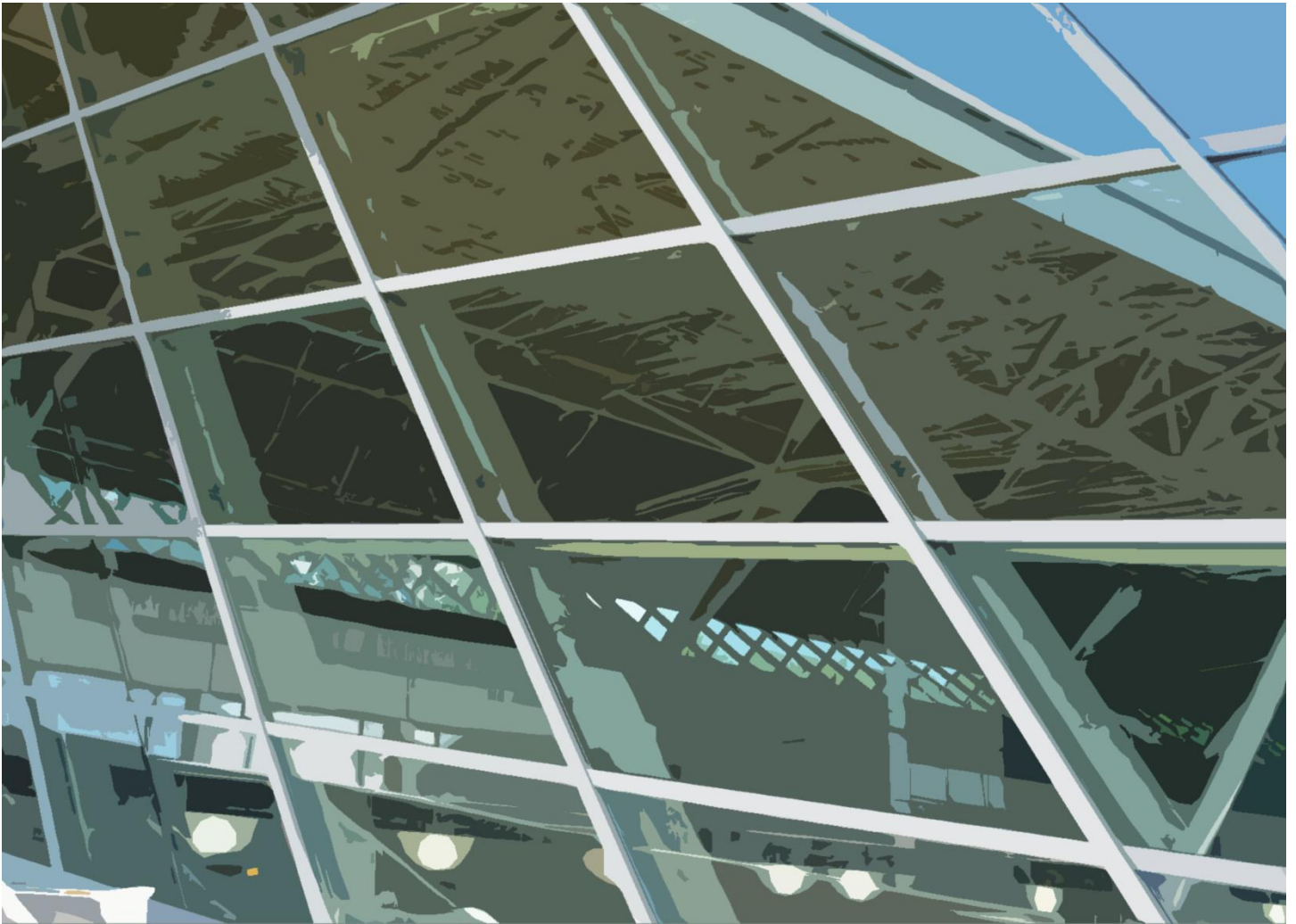
- ✓ Candidates may wait until the Closing Date to apply. Some highly-qualified candidates submit their applications late in the opening period because they have taken the time to prepare a thoughtful response.
- ✓ Early review of resumes means that the Committee might be starting a review before it is determined there is a sufficiently diverse candidate pool, which could cause issues in completing the search.

- ✓ It is possible that a Search Committee might be impressed with a CV/resume received early in the process, to the extent that they do not give later applications an adequate review.

The Chief Diversity Officer reviews the number of applications and the composition of the applicant pool and advises on when and how screening is performed. The Chief Diversity Officer may extend the closing date and/or do additional advertising if needed. Members of the Search Committee will be notified if there will be an impact on their schedules.

### Confidentiality

It bears repeating that search information, other than what is made public (such as closing date), should not be shared outside the Search Committee and those who assist (Human Resources, Chief Diversity Officer). This includes information on the identity of candidates, and whether or not internal candidates have applied.



## Chapter 3 - Screening

When the Posting Closes

Initial Screening Process

## **When the Posting Closes**

When the Closing Date or Review Date for a Job Posting is reached, the Chief Diversity Officer and/or Recruiting Coordinators unit prepare for screening candidates. They:

- ✓ Enter information on the Search Committee members into CUNYfirst; this will allow Search Committee members to view and download applicant information. Committee members receive an email to notify them they have been added to the CUNYfirst Search Team listing.
- ✓ Assess the size and composition of the applicant pool and confer with the Search Committee Chair and/or Hiring Manager.
- ✓ Remove advertisements from any on-line job boards, and check to be sure the posting is removed from CUNYfirst.
- ✓ For selected administration positions only, conduct an initial screen of minimum qualifications through the automated CUNYfirst screening tool. The screening is based on information provided by candidates when they apply and relate to basic educational and experience qualifications.

## **Initial Screening Process**

Once Search Committee members have access to applications on CUNYfirst, they can begin screening.

Before screening, Search Committee members should have agreed on which qualifications above and beyond the minimum qualifications will be evaluated, and what constitutes successfully passing the screen. The most common question is “what constitutes relevant work experience”? The Chief Diversity Officer can answer questions related to screening and refer you back to the Hiring Manager for clarification if needed.

All Search Committee screening activities must be documented in a manner prescribed by the Chief Diversity Officer. Most committees use a spreadsheet to rate candidates’ applications; a single log should be maintained on behalf of the entire Committee. See the sample at the end of this section.

## Applying Initial Screening Criteria

At a minimum the initial screen should address whether applicants:

- ✓ Indicate they have completed the required education
- ✓ Have the required years of experience (and their experience could be assumed to be related to the position where required)
- ✓ Have other required qualifications, (e.g., licenses, certifications)
- ✓ For Faculty positions, have a scholarship interest in an area relevant to the Department.
- ✓ Are responsive to what was requested on the job posting (for example, provided a resume and cover letter or equivalent information)

Search Committees may add one or more preferred qualifications mentioned in the job posting to the initial review. Examples may include teaching experience, knowledge of certain technologies, or subject matter expertise in critical topics. Any criteria must be applied to all applications and results must be documented.

### **Sample Criteria for Initial Screening of Applications/CVs**

- ✓ Candidate has minimum requirements (yes/no)
- ✓ Candidate has preferred qualifications (by qualification) (yes/no)
- ✓ Relevance of related work experience (highly relevant/relevant/marginal)
- ✓ Responsiveness (providing requested information, providing adequate detail, relating their qualifications to the position) - for example, a Cover Letter, References and/or Statement of Scholarship Interests
- ✓ Quality of submitted materials (e.g., absence of obvious editorial errors, length of response, candidate's understanding of the position) (acceptable/marginal/not acceptable).



## Decision-Making in the Initial Screening

The following chart summarizes common situations and recommended actions.

<u>Situation</u>	<u>Recommended Action</u>
<p>Is Candidate's application in CUNYfirst responsive to the job posted?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes all requested items</li> <li>• Is an application for your position, and not some other position (or no position in particular)</li> </ul>	<p><i>If No - Cannot consider further.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to applications without requested information from the candidate, other examples of unresponsive applications include solicitations unrelated to employment, applications for positions other than what was posted, or applications that are defamatory.</i></p> <p><i>If there are multiple applications from the same person, they should be consolidated and considered only once.</i></p>
<p>Did Candidate submit all additional requested materials outside of CUNYfirst?</p>	<p><i>Committee decision based on type of materials and whether a follow-up is appropriate (could materials have been sent to the Department and misplaced?)</i></p>
<p>Does Candidate have the minimum degree requirements for the position?</p>	<p><i>If No - Cannot consider further. Special considerations may apply for those faculty applicants whose Ph.D. degree is about to be awarded.</i></p>
<p>Does Candidate have the minimum certifications/licenses for the position?</p>	<p><i>If No - Cannot consider further.</i></p>
<p>Does Candidate have the minimum work experience?</p>	<p><i>If No - Cannot consider further.</i></p>
<p>Is work experience relevant to the position?</p>	<p><i>If relevant experience was required,</i></p> <p><i>If No - Cannot consider further.</i></p>
<p>Does Candidate meet the preferred qualifications?</p>	<p><i>If Yes – these should be the candidates considered for interviews.</i></p> <p><i>If there are insufficient candidates who meet preferred qualifications, consult with the Chief Diversity Officer.</i></p>

## Identifying Highly-Qualified Candidates

During the planning phase, the Search Committee identified an approximate number of candidates they could interview. There is no requirement that the Committee interview all qualified candidates (e.g., if there are fifteen candidates that meet all preferred qualifications, the Committee may decide upon a reasonable number to interview).

### **Issues to Consider in Identifying Candidates for Interviews**

#### Cover Letter and Resume: clarity and relevance

- ✓ Does the applicant relate their qualifications to aspects of the position?
- ✓ Are they clearly written, and proofread?
- ✓ Does applicant demonstrate he/she understands the position?

#### Relevance of Prior Experience

- ✓ Level of responsibility
- ✓ Role in organization
- ✓ Achievements
- ✓ Skills developed and demonstrated

#### Scope of Prior Experience

- ✓ Does the applicant's prior experience reflect a range of the job's duties, or only some aspects of the job?
- ✓ Does the applicant provide specific examples and achievements?

#### The content of additional requested materials

#### Additional considerations for faculty positions

- ✓ Sub-discipline(s)
- ✓ Research agenda and alignment with departmental activities
- ✓ Reference letters submitted with application
- ✓ Teaching and/or mentoring experience
- ✓ Flexibility to teach courses in more than one sub-discipline
- ✓ Familiarity with instructional technologies
- ✓ Experience working with students from diverse backgrounds.

The Committee documents its decisions including reasons any qualified applicant was not considered further.

The Search Committee Chair should encourage input from all members in discussing candidates' applications. Having one person dominate the discussions takes away from a key advantage to a Search Committee – input from people with diverse perspectives.

Keep in mind that there are no perfect candidates. It may be unreasonable to expect candidates to be a perfect fit with the position, and being overly restrictive limits the opportunity to consider well-qualified individuals and creates the potential for unintentional bias in the decision process.

If there appears to be a lack of qualified candidates, the Committee should confer with the Chief Diversity Officer about possibly re-posting the position or possibly adjusting selection criteria. This may involve consultation with the Hiring Manager/ Department Chair. For example, did the job ask for a combination of abilities or work experiences that would be difficult to find in a single individual?

### Candidate Communications

The selected candidates should be promptly contacted and scheduled for interviews. This may be done by email or telephone, although in most cases candidates will appreciate a personal contact by telephone. *Information on managing interview logistics is provided in the next chapter.*

Depending on the number of applications and their geographic dispersion, Search Committees may consider:

- ✓ Conducting initial telephone and/or video screenings using a prepared set of questions (if doing so, you must interview all candidates in the same manner).
- ✓ Creating a list of "high priority" interviews and a back-up list in case selected applicants withdraw from the search (this is particularly important if the search has been open for a long time, as candidates may have found other opportunities).

For applications whose candidacy is no longer being considered, it is important to close out the applications in CUNYfirst and to notify the candidates. This should be done in coordination with the Chief Diversity Officer and/or Recruiting Coordinators. Whoever handles this process will require training in order to limit the potential for error in contacting a large number of applicants.

## Chart – Sample Applicant Documentation

Your Chief Diversity Officer may provide a campus-specific form.

Basic applicant information should be downloaded as a spreadsheet from CUNYfirst. Ask for instructions if this is an unfamiliar process.

<b>Posting Title</b>		<b>CUNYfirst Job ID</b>	
<b>Closing Date</b>		<b>Total Applicants</b>	

Shaded items are provided by CUNYfirst

<b>Applicant Name</b>	<b>ID</b>	<b>Applicant Type</b>	<b>CUNYfirst Disposition</b>	<b>Last Updated</b>	<b>Evaluation Code</b>
		Ext	Applied	(Date)	
		Ext	Applied	(Date)	
		Ext	Applied	(Date)	

Applicant Name/ID as in CUNYfirst (First, Last)  
 Applicant Type Ext (External) or Int (Internal). Current Default is "Ext".  
 Disposition Status of Applicant in CUNYfirst. Initially disposition is "Applied".  
 Last Updated Date of last update of candidates' records

### Sample Evaluation Codes

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
Any Phase	NR	Non-responsive; did not respond to contacts
	NCF	Not considered further
	W/D	Withdrew/Declined (includes unexplained absence from interview)
Initial Screen	MIN	Meets minimum qualifications
	X	Does NOT meet minimum qualifications
	P	Meets preferred qualifications
Interview	INT	Selected to Interview
Finalist	FIN	Interviewed and Selected as Finalist



## **Chapter 4 - Interviewing and Selecting**

Plan and Conduct Interviews

Identify Finalists

## Plan and Conduct Interviews

### Interview Planning

The Search Chair or Interested Party (administrator) contacts selected candidates to schedule interviews within the desired time frame. Naturally, the interview schedule depends on the availability of Search Committee members. Barring emergencies, all members must attend all interviews.

- ✓ One way to accelerate the process is to be flexible in setting interview times. Some candidates may have jobs without flexibility to get away in the middle of the day, and may appreciate early morning or late afternoon meetings.
- ✓ Interviews should be scheduled at least a week in advance. In the case of Faculty searches, there is usually a much longer lead time, particularly if travel is required.
- ✓ Candidates should be notified if they are expected to bring additional materials to the interview. This might include a writing sample or a completed Application for Employment. All candidates should be asked for the same materials.

Some candidates may withdraw from the search, and it's even possible that you will not be able to reach a candidate (or that they will not respond). Delays may mean that some candidates have taken other positions elsewhere. The Search Committee should be kept apprised of changes in status and may decide to select additional candidates for interviews.

It's important to remember that even the process of scheduling an interview is a kind of selection process, for both candidate and Search Committee. We should present CUNY in a positive light, and early conversations often influence candidates' decisions down the road. Candidates know that they are providing information about themselves even in simple acts such as scheduling interviews and returning telephone calls promptly.

Interview schedules are entered into CUNYfirst by the Search Chair or the Interested Party and can be viewed by Search Committee members. Candidates will receive a confirmation email from the CUNYfirst system when an interview is scheduled which can be customized with information such as the address and room number. If you contact candidates separately, they need to know the interview's location, time, and approximate length. Candidates need clear instructions for reaching the building, clearing security and contacting the appropriate person.

Telephone interviews may be conducted to narrow the pool of candidates who are qualified for on-campus interviews. Telephone interviews are especially helpful when there are a number of candidates from out of town and limited available travel funds. Some Colleges may also have the capability and interest in conducting video interviews. The use of these alternative methods should be discussed and decided upon during the Search Committee’s initial meetings.

## Developing Interview Questions

To maintain a fair, equitable and legally compliant search, it’s important that the same evaluation criteria be applied to all candidates as adding additional criteria for some candidates and not others is not equitable. While not being expected to follow a strict script, Committees should work from a basic set of interview questions which apply to all candidates.

To develop interview questions and evaluation criteria, the Committee should refer to the Position Description and input from the Hiring Manager during the Committee charge to better understand the position and the relative importance of various qualifications.

Questions must be directly related to the job duties and/or qualifications. Questions should be “open-ended” which means they should elicit detailed responses that give candidates the opportunity to offer examples and/or provide insight as to how they would approach challenges.

Depending on the position, the Committee should aim for approximately 6 – 10 evaluative questions for an initial interview. The chart below has examples of good questions that apply to most administrative or executive positions; some may also be helpful for Faculty positions.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Please describe your understanding of this position.	Evaluates whether the candidate has carefully reviewed the posting, and understands and can describe the duties and requirements of the position.
What attracted you to this position, and why do you think you are highly qualified?	Evaluates the candidate’s ability to translate their own experience to the needs of the position.
What techniques and criteria would you use in order to complete _____? <i>(insert an important job responsibility)</i>	Allows candidate to demonstrate their thought process in solving job-related issues.
From your experience, can you describe a past situation in which you completed _____? <i>(insert a major goal related to the duties of the job).</i>	Allows candidate to detail prior achievements related to the position.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
<p>..What steps did you take</p> <p>..What were the obstacles/challenges</p> <p>..What was the outcome</p> <p>..What could have been done better?</p>	
<p>How do you evaluate whether your efforts have been successful?</p>	<p>Demonstrates candidate’s thought process in evaluating and improving upon his/her own efforts.</p>
<p>Can you describe the training and experience you have had in _____? <i>(insert an area of expertise related to job)</i></p>	<p>Allows candidate to detail their areas of technical expertise.</p>
<p>What do you consider the most important trends in _____? <i>(insert an area of expertise)</i> How do you stay current in your field?</p>	<p>Demonstrates candidate’s overall understanding of subject area and their efforts to maintain current skills.</p>
<p>How would you describe your experience with using technology to conduct your work (teaching, managing, processing transactions, etc.)?</p>	<p>Allows candidate to discuss their capabilities in using technology appropriate to the position.</p>
<p>Can you give examples of situations that demonstrate your capabilities as a manager or supervisor?</p>	<p>For this question, it may make sense to describe some typical management scenarios.</p>
<p>Please describe your philosophy about _____ <i>(insert an aspect of job)</i> and describe how you applied those values.</p>	<p>Could cover teaching, managing, project management, customer service, strategic planning, advising and mentoring, research</p>
<p>Can you give examples of situations in which you provided advice or guidance to others about _____? <i>(insert an area of expertise)</i></p>	<p>Allows discussion of influencing and consulting skills.</p>
<p>Can you give examples of situations in which you collaborated effectively with individuals in different functions in your organization?</p>	<p>For this question, it may make sense to describe some typical scenarios relevant to the position.</p>
<p>Can you provide examples of situations in which you ...</p> <p>Taught or worked with a diverse student group?</p> <p>Worked with large groups of students and/or</p>	<p>Covers highly important aspects of working at CUNY.</p>



<u>Question</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
internal customers?  Worked in a decentralized environment?  What were your challenges and how did you succeed?	

### Questions in the Interview Process - "What you can ask and can't ask"

In framing and asking questions, there are some considerations to limit the potential for bias and to maintain compliance with employment regulations. A list of what you "can and can't ask" follows below.

If a candidate divulges information that could be interpreted as covering one of the topics on this list, we recommend you do not acknowledge the information, do not record it in your interview notes, and do not ask any follow up question related to it. The information cannot be used in any way in further consideration of the candidate.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>May Ask</u>	<u>May Not Ask</u>
<b>Name</b>	May ask candidate for their name.	Whether a person worked under a different name; questions that would divulge ancestry or marital status.
<b>Address</b>	May ask candidate for their preferred contact information, or ask if their contact information has changed since they initially applied.	How long have you lived in the United States? What foreign addresses have you had?
<b>Age</b>	Nothing	Applicant's age, date of birth, proof of age.
<b>Citizenship</b>	Should be covered through the Application for Employment only (asking whether an applicant is currently authorized to work in the United States).	Whether applicant, parents, or spouse are naturalized or native-born U.S. citizens; of what country applicant is a citizen.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>May Ask</u>	<u>May Not Ask</u>
<b>Visa Status</b>	Nothing	Type of visa or for only certain INS documents. May not reject applicants with valid work permits which expire at a future date.
<b>Birthplace</b>	Nothing	Any inquiry unto place of birth, or that of parents, spouse, grandparents, or other relatives.
<b>Sex</b>	Nothing	May not comment on person's sex unless it is a <u>bona fide</u> occupational qualification (BFOQ) which has been identified up-front. This is highly unlikely in an academic environment.
<b>Disabilities &amp; Physical Data</b>	Ability to perform essential functions of the job (with or without accommodation)	Questions about physical or mental limitations that is not job-related, including applicant's height, weight, or medical conditions.
<b>Marital Status</b>	Nothing	Whether applicant is married, single, divorced, engaged, widowed, or living with someone.
<b>Sexual Preference</b>	Nothing	Whether applicant is homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, or any other question pertaining to sexual tendencies or preferences.
<b>Lifestyle</b>	Nothing	Anything involving the applicant's natural and preferred way of living.
<b>Family</b>	Nothing	Any question concerning family size, family planning, intent to have children, child's age, childcare arrangements, spouse's employment, or spouse's income.
<b>Religion</b>	If work schedule requires weekend work, may ask if applicant is able to work on weekends	About religious denomination, affiliation, church, synagogue, religious holidays observed; or whether applicant regularly attends a house of worship.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>May Ask</u>	<u>May Not Ask</u>
<b>Pregnancy</b>	Nothing	About the applicant's plans for having children; about medical history concerning pregnancy and health related matters; about whether applicant is currently pregnant.
<b>Military Status</b>	About job-related experiences gained in the military.	About branch of service; type of discharge.
<b>Education</b>	About educational institutions attended; training; degrees	About religious or racial affiliations of school attended; the applicant's native language; educational experience that is not necessary to perform the job.
<b>Organizations</b>	About professional organizations	About other organizations including those that indicate race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, veteran status, political affiliation, or disability of applicant.
<b>Arrest History</b>	Nothing	About arrests, or time spent in jail. Arrests without convictions do not indicate guilt.
<b>Convictions</b>	Should be covered through the Application for Employment only	General questions about whether applicant has ever been convicted.
<b>Housing</b>	How applicant can be reached if there is no telephone at home	Whether applicant owns or rents an apartment or house.
<b>Financial Position</b>	Nothing	About credit ratings, garnishments, debts, to whom debts are owed.
<b>Status of Being Unemployed</b>	Nothing	About whether or not the applicant is currently unemployed.

## Interview Agenda

The interview is a dynamic process; therefore Committees are not required to follow a strict script. However, the Committee should follow the same agenda in each interview (and cover the same questions).

<u>Sample Interview Agenda</u>	
Greeting (In-person interviews)	<p>Someone should be on hand to welcome candidates, direct them to the appropriate waiting place, and make sure they are comfortable.</p> <p>If candidates will be waiting for a period of time, it's helpful to share materials such as samples of College or department publications, if not done already.</p> <p>The greeter can collect any additional requested materials to be forwarded to the Department Chair and/or Human Resources.</p>
Introductions	<p>Introduce the candidate to the committee members.</p> <p>If the interview is conducted by phone and/or video, reconfirm that the technology is working and that everyone can see and hear one another.</p>
Background Information	<p>Review basic information, such as position title and to whom it reports. Describe how interview questions will be delivered.</p> <p>"Welcome. As you know, today we are interviewing for the position of (title). This position reports to the (Hiring Manager) its official title is (Contract Title). We have about 45 minutes for today's interview. We will begin by asking you a set of prepared questions. Committee members may ask follow-up questions. To conclude, we will give you an opportunity to ask questions."</p>
Interview Questions	<p>Committee members should divide the responsibility for asking questions. Allow follow-up questions to clarify. A candidate may present materials they have brought to illustrate their qualifications, such as work samples.</p> <p>It is a good idea to begin the interview with a question that is not highly detailed or technical, to create a non-threatening environment in which it will be easier to ask more complicated questions later on.</p>
Discussion	<p>Allow 10-15 minutes for discussion, allowing the candidate to ask questions or present additional aspects of qualifications not covered by the interview questions.</p>
Wrap-Up	<p>Inform candidates on next steps, and thank them.</p> <p>"Thank you for visiting with us today. We appreciate your interest in this</p>

### Sample Interview Agenda

	position. The Committee will carefully consider your background and respond to you on whether we would like you to return for additional interviews. We expect that will happen within (time frame). Please let us know if you have further questions after today or if your situation changes in a way that affects your candidacy”.
Break Period (post-interview)	Try to allow a 15-minute break period between interviews for Committee members to complete any written notes, have a brief discussion of observations, and focus on the next interview.  Someone should assist the candidate in leaving the building, providing directions on transit, etc.

### Keys to a Successful Interview

- ✓ The Basics: The interview location should be comfortable and free of distractions; interviews should begin on schedule; and Search Committee members should be on time.
- ✓ Plan and Prepare: Search Committee members should review the interview questions, and decide on who should ask which questions before interviews begin. Prior to the interview, prepare copies of interview questions and any other documents needed.
- ✓ Limit Stressors: Intentionally creating stressful situations or exhibiting intimidating behavior, does not lead to greater insight about candidates, nor does it lead to the candidate’s having a positive impression.
- ✓ Listen Carefully and Adopt a Critical Mind-Set: Search Committee members should listen carefully to candidates’ answers and ask follow-up questions if anything is unclear. It is acceptable to ask, “do you have an example of that” or “I’m not sure I understand – can you provide more detail”?
- ✓ Maintain Control: Someone on the Committee should monitor the time and direct discussions to cover the basic interview questions in the available timeframe. Neither the candidate nor any Search Committee member should steer the discussion away from interview topics, or spend a disproportionate amount of time on any one question.

- ✓ Show Respect for the Candidate: Search Committee members are ambassadors for the Campus and Department. A candidate's decision to accept an employment offer may be influenced by his/her experiences during initial visits. Also, candidates may share their experiences with others and you may influence possible future candidates.
- ✓ Maintain Consistency: What applies to one candidate should apply to all candidates. While it is fine to ask additional questions in interviews, be sure to cover all planned questions with all candidates. Provide similar levels of detail on the process in all interviews.

For many candidates, appearing in front of a Committee for an interview is stressful. Even if not selected, candidates will appreciate our effort to create a positive impression, and the opportunity to present their qualifications as completely and fairly as possible.

Following the interview, candidates will sometimes send written or e-mail "thank you" notes to Search Committee members. In some cases, they will reinforce their interest and qualifications. This is common and can be taken as a sincere interest in the position; no response is necessary.

Candidates should be instructed to contact Human Resources with questions related to their candidacy, and outside of logistical matters, should not have detailed discussions with individual Search Committee members.

### Additional Issues for Faculty Searches

The initial interview may be combined with an overall campus visit over one or two days' time, or a more comprehensive visit may be scheduled for a smaller number of finalists at a later date.

A Campus visit may include:

- ✓ Campus tour
- ✓ Additional interviews with the Provost, Deans, or students
- ✓ Informal meetings, perhaps over meals
- ✓ Possibly, making campus resources available to the candidate (gym, library, campus events)
- ✓ The candidate giving a "job talk".

Since some candidates visit from out-of-town, they may expect assistance with travel arrangements and reimbursements. It's useful to provide forms and documents needed to collect data for the college to process reimbursement requests ahead of time so that there is no misunderstanding about what information is needed.

For a job talk, candidate should be advised on the format, duration, and range of topics in advance. This session is usually evaluated by those in attendance, who may be asked to provide a written evaluation (those evaluations must reflect the University's EEO and other guidelines).

### Additional Issues for Administrative Searches

It is common for finalists to return for additional interviews. They may meet with the Hiring Manager or other managers, and meetings may be scheduled with potential colleagues and subordinates. These interviews tend to be more in-depth and can be technical in nature. They also serve to show the candidate the day-to-day working environment and relationships they might have if they take the position. If possible, try to schedule all remaining interviews during a single visit.

## **Identify Finalists**

In its initial meetings, the Search Committee determined the criteria for identifying finalists, and approximately how many finalists it expected to identify. This is the Search Committee's most critical decision.

### **Search Committee Deliberations**

- ✓ The process should be consistent with decisions made in the planning phase on selection criteria
- ✓ Discussions should reflect a commitment to minimizing bias.
- ✓ All Search Committee members must participate fully in the discussion, and the candidacy of all of those interviewed should be discussed. All Search Committees should contribute by providing their observations of each candidate interviewed.
- ✓ This discussion should take place only after all interviews are completed, and should take place soon after the interviews.
- ✓ If any ranking or rating system is applied, it should be applied consistently to all candidates.
- ✓ If there is a need for additional information, the Search Committee Chair can designate a Committee member to contact a candidate with clarifying follow-up questions; however, entirely new questions should not be introduced unless there is agreement to follow up with all candidates interviewed. An example of a clarifying question might be to review the kinds of technologies with which the candidate is familiar or to verify specific details on a resume.
- ✓ Search Committee members should come to an agreement as a group.
- ✓ The Committee should document its finalist recommendations on the Applicant Flow Log.

In rare cases, the Search Committee could reach this point without being able to recommend any candidate, or a sufficient number of finalists. The Chief Diversity Officer should be consulted. One issue will be whether there are others in the candidate pool that the Committee would consider qualified and could interview. Another option might be to re-open the search.



## Other Verifications (including References)

The Committee, Chief Diversity Officer, and Hiring Manager will assess how references will be reviewed.

For Faculty searches, campuses have different ways of collecting references, either by asking that the candidate provide reference letters with their applications or by contacting references later on.

Search Committee members may be asked to participate in verifying academic and/or professional qualifications, such as publication history, grants and funding, honors and awards, and certifications.

We expect to find few issues, but it is prudent to check. Normally, degrees are verified by Human Resources through an automated system.

For administrative searches, Search Committee members, Human Resources personnel, or Hiring Managers may call references, depending on the type of position and decisions made earlier on. Applicants may have sent reference letters with their applications, but the Search Committee may request other information or follow up to confirm details. The Committee is not obligated to contact all references; a general guideline is that the Committee should contact three references.

A sample reference interview agenda is provided at the end of this section.

When requesting a written reference, it is advisable to send the position description along with whatever questions concerning the candidate's experience, qualifications, and accomplishments the Search Committee wishes the individual to cover.

## Social Media

The question comes up, "Should we review the candidate's postings on social media and other sources on the Internet"? As of this writing, practices on reviewing on-line identities are still evolving and a conservative approach is prudent.

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 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 on-line information.

As individuals increasingly portray their professional lives on-line, candidates may provide web links in support of their applications. Some employment experts promote the concept of “electronic portfolios”. It is generally not problematic to review public, career-related information including:

- ✓ Material on the College website of a candidate’s current employer or school
- ✓ Papers the candidate has posted on-line
- ✓ Academic or professional publications to which the candidate has contributed
- ✓ Videos of professional presentations or panel discussions
- ✓ Web sites covering the candidate’s research or courses taught.

The Search Committee can discuss whether it makes sense to do some limited checking of other issues with the Chief Diversity Officer. Reviews might be performed by a third party who keeps sensitive personal information out of reports provided back to the Search Committee.

Human Resources and their designees may perform more in-depth background checks on selected candidates as a result of the nature of certain sensitive positions, and will do so in accordance with relevant laws established to protect all parties involved. Checking of issues such as criminal or credit histories should not be undertaken by any Search Committee member under any circumstance.

## Sample: Reference Check Questionnaire

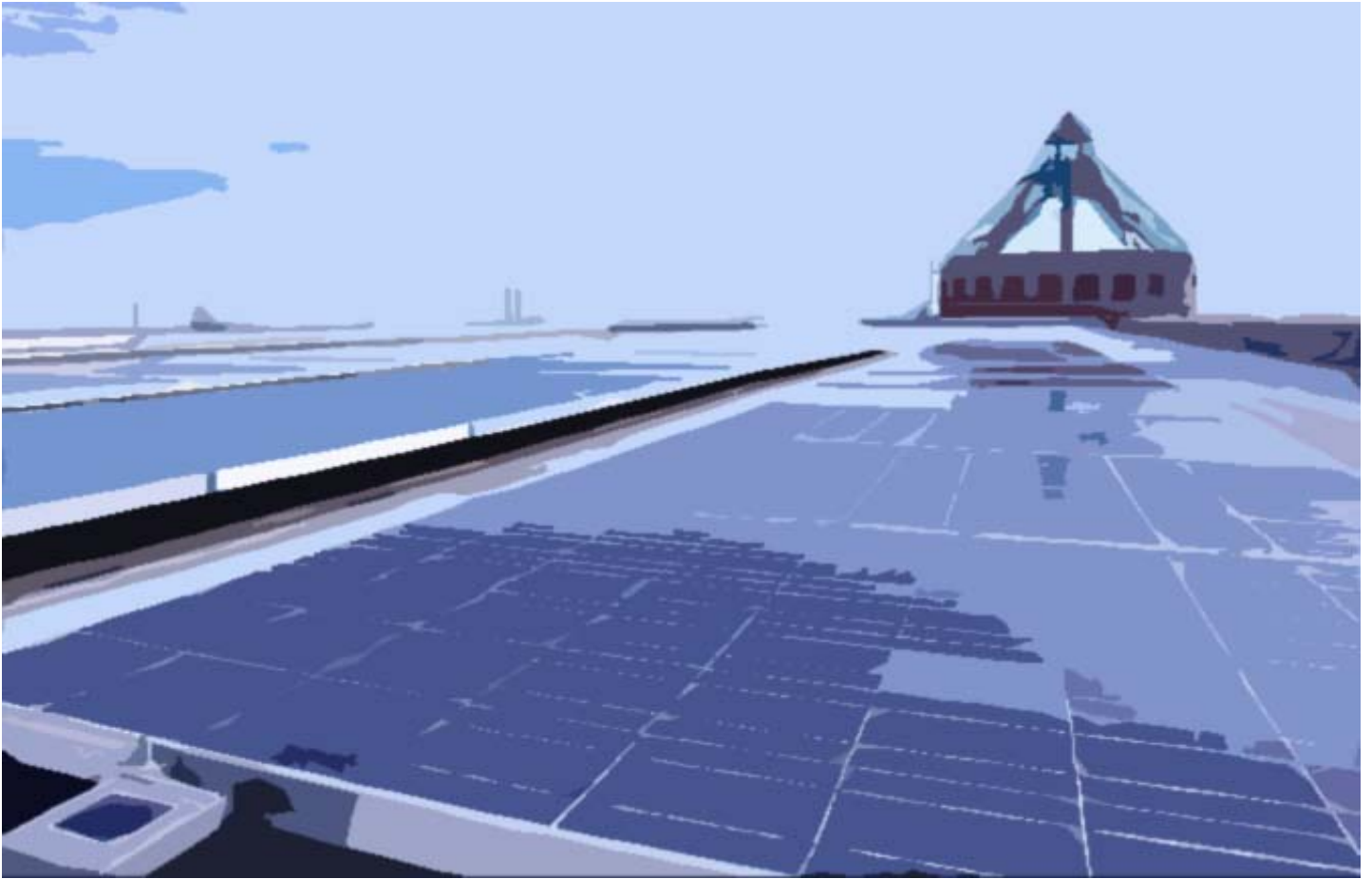
Title:

Candidate:

Reference:

Prepared By:

1. Verify relationship and time frames. How did reference know, or work with, the applicant? What was the applicant's title and approximate dates of employment?
2. Could you provide an overview of the applicant's job duties while working for/with you?
3. What was your opinion of the quality, timeliness, and appropriateness of the work performed?
4. What was your opinion of the applicant's basic working habits (punctuality, care with details, confidentiality, knowledge of technology, etc).
5. What was your opinion of the applicant's relationship skills in the workplace?
6. Is there anything you would recommend we consider in our decision-making related to this candidate?



## **Chapter 5 – Concluding the Search**

At the Conclusion of the Search

Making a Case for CUNY

Final Thoughts

## At the Conclusion of the Search

Although selection of one or more finalists marks the end of the Search Committee's official process, the recruiting process does not end. For most positions the preferred candidate(s) may have additional interviews. Also each College or Unit has an approval process for a final hire which may require participation from:

- ✓ The Chief Diversity Officer
- ✓ The P&B Committee / HEO Screening Committee / Appointments Committee
- ✓ The Provost
- ✓ Finance/Budget (to approval final salary offer)
- ✓ Vice President of Administration/Chief Operating Officer
- ✓ Human Resources
- ✓ The President or his/her designee.

An employment offer is made and details of the new position are worked out between all parties. During this time, Correspondence will include an Offer Letter, which is usually signed by the candidate and returned to Human Resources when accepted. Finally, Candidate and Hiring Manager agree on a start date. Human Resources will coordinate any additional screening or verifications, make appropriate systems entries, and prepare for what is called "onboarding".

Search Committee members, unless they are also Department Chairs, do not normally participate in negotiations with candidates.

## When the Search Fails

It's possible that in spite of much careful effort, the search does not conclude successfully. A selected candidate may not accept an offer of employment, or a Hiring Manager does not want to offer a position to any of the finalists. As a result, the Search Committee may be asked for a recommendation for additional finalists, which may require additional screening and interviewing. There may be a need to confirm the Committee clearly understands the requirements of the position, and as a result, screening questions might be refined.

The Search Committee, Hiring Manager, and Chief Diversity Officer may discuss whether the search should be reposted, and what aspects of the search process need to be revised in the next round to promote success (advertisements, job postings, job title and level being some of those aspects).

## Candidates who are Not Selected

The College must contact candidates who were not selected and have not yet been notified. How this is done depends on the circumstances, but in nearly all cases, candidates should receive written acknowledgement.

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.

For those who have been interviewed, you may take a more personal approach. Standard messages in CUNYfirst can be tailored to provide a personalized written communication. The Search Committee Chair and/or Hiring Manager may also telephone the candidate if appropriate (generally candidates whom the Committee met in person).

Anyone speaking to a candidate who has not been selected should not share the details of the deliberation resulting in the decision not to hire. The following messages are appropriate and recommended:

- ✓ The fact that they have not been selected. While this is a difficult message, it should be stated unambiguously.
- ✓ You may share the outcome of the search only in general terms, either that another candidate has accepted an offer or that the search has been cancelled, postponed, or revised.
- ✓ We appreciate the investment they have made in CUNY and in this position and sincerely thank them for their time. They may want to continue to consult CUNY's jobs sites for future vacancies.
- ✓ We wish them success in their future endeavors.

## **Making a Case for CUNY**

Search Committee members may be asked to communicate with candidates considering an offer of employment. Candidates may be deciding among several offers, and they may have unanswered questions.

One of the issues candidates may consider in deciding to take an offer is the quality of personal outreach to them – i.e., how they have been treated. Taking an interest in the candidate's decision process is one way of doing this. It can be as simple as a telephone call to ask, "As you consider our offer, is there anything I can answer for you to help you make a decision"? You could also put the candidate in contact with potential future colleagues who share an academic interest, or a future colleague who will assist the new employee in the first days of working at CUNY. If there is something you think may interest the candidate, tell them about it.

### **Advantages to a position at CUNY**

- ✓ Mentoring in candidate's field of research or profession
- ✓ Publication support
- ✓ CUNY benefits programs, particularly health insurance and retirement programs (these are superior to those of many employers)
- ✓ For some jobs, a predictable salary progression (pay schedules and steps)
- ✓ The advantages that come from working and living in New York City
- ✓ CUNY's campus resources – from the academic (libraries, centers, computing facilities and research collections) to the practical (gymnasium, parking, office space)
- ✓ Working in one of the world's most diverse educational institutions
- ✓ A positive working environment (you can provide details of the specific department or unit)
- ✓ The drive and dedication of CUNY's students.

The relocating candidate might appreciate being able to discuss issues such as neighborhoods, housing, commuting, and other issues involved with a move. While some may not raise the issue directly, candidates may have concerns about relocating, particularly with a spouse, partner, or family member. The challenges of “two career families” in academia are in the minds of many professionals today. You may wish to provide the following information regardless of whether the candidate has raised the issue.

- ✓ CUNY is a member of the Higher Education Recruiting Consortium (HERC) which pools job postings from a large number of higher education institutions in the New York area. The address is: [www.mnyscherc.org](http://www.mnyscherc.org). HERC has posted materials specifically concerning “two career families” in academia.
- ✓ Another resource is Corporate Counseling Associates which provides information related to general work/life and family issues – [www.cuny.edu/worklife](http://www.cuny.edu/worklife).

### Documentation and Evaluation

In order to conclude the Search Committee process, the Search Chair and Chief Diversity Officer assemble a final package of documentation. CUNYfirst stores the original candidate applications; these do not have to be printed out or sent in with search documentation.

#### **Common Search Documentation**

- ✓ Search Completion Form (provided by the Chief Diversity Officer)
- ✓ The Original Recruiting Plan
- ✓ Applicant Flow Log (and screening spreadsheets)
- ✓ Meeting minutes
- ✓ Written evaluations or interview notes
- ✓ Material(s) provided by the candidate outside of what was entered into CUNYfirst, such as a writing sample or updated resume.

It is helpful to conduct an evaluation of the search process, if only informally. Either the Search Chair or the Committee as a whole can brief the Chief Diversity Officer or provide written suggestions. You may use the list of best practices in the Introduction as a discussion guide.



## **Final Thoughts**

It's clear from the scope of the material in this manual that membership in a Search Committee is an important responsibility. While it can be time-consuming, and occasionally challenging, we hope you also find it to be rewarding.

Search Committee members have found there are personal and professional rewards to participating in a search.

### **Benefits to participating on a Search Committee**

- ✓ Opportunity to make new professional connections through working with other Search Committee members
- ✓ Learn something new about the profession, fields of study, and the concerns of today's job candidates
- ✓ Appreciate how critical an effective search process is to the success of their College or unit
- ✓ Conduct more effective searches in the future, and counsel others on effective search practices
- ✓ Better appreciate the value of diversity and inclusion and the importance of combatting bias, often unintended, in the search process.

Above all, you have contributed to the future of CUNY in a very impactful way. We hope you have benefitted from the process and we thank you for your efforts.