

Guide to Best Practices for Standing Faculty Searches

in the School of Arts and Sciences
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I. Introduction and Purpose

The School of Arts and Sciences is committed to recruiting faculty members at the forefront of their respective fields through realizing our core values of excellence and inclusion. Each search provides a chance to attract the broadest talent pool, as well as a strategic opportunity to reshape the faculty.

The *Guide to Best Practices for Standing Faculty Searches in the School of Arts and Sciences* provides assistance and suggestions to guide faculty in conducting equitable searches. It presents ideas for attracting a distinguished and diverse candidate pool and successfully recruiting candidates. This guide does not replace existing University policies and procedures or departmental bylaws, but rather serves as a framework and supplemental resource. It provides an overview for faculty new to search committees and a reference for those who have conducted many searches. Although this guide makes frequent reference to “historically underrepresented faculty,” it is important to note that the School affirms a very broad definition of diversity, including gender expression and sexual orientation, disability status, veteran status, and members of other underrepresented groups. Bear in mind that there is no single definition of diversity. It is important that each department engage in discussions about what it means to diversify its particular discipline, as different fields may have very different needs.

I.A Overview of the SAS and University Standing Faculty Appointment Processes

The University requires a national search for Standing and Research Faculty positions. All searches must be conducted according to University Affirmative Action Guidelines¹.

In the School of Arts and Sciences, all new appointments to the Standing Faculty and to the Research Faculty other than the exceptional Target of Opportunity cases require a formal search. The Department Chair must obtain prior approval from the Dean before a search is undertaken. Typically, the process of hiring new faculty members begins with discussions in department faculty meetings to identify the long-term and immediate hiring needs of the department. In setting its hiring priorities, the department should consider not only its immediate needs, but also the evolving shape of the discipline, and the potential contributions of the proposed recruitment to the School and the University more generally. The hiring request should make the case in these terms, and, ultimately, recommendations to hire a particular candidate should also elaborate the longer term and broad-scale importance of the recruitment. The Department brings its recommendations to the Dean in the form of a written hiring request within the annual department report submitted at the end of May.

¹ <https://provost.upenn.edu/affirmative-action-guidelines>

I.B Ethics and Confidentiality in the Search Process

A critical aspect of the search process is ensuring confidentiality of applicants. Breaches involving personal or professional information can ruin faculty careers. Search chairs should establish clear guidelines at the outset:

- All discussions and deliberations among search committee members are confidential.
- It is inappropriate to engage in any off-the-record reference checks of candidates. For instance, a committee member may be tempted to discuss a candidate with someone who is not on the candidate's list of references. However, discussing confidential information with those who have no reason to know takes the statements of such "unofficial referees" outside the protections of qualified privilege². Never broaden your outreach before obtaining the candidate's permission first.
- Specific candidates and applicant materials should not be discussed outside of the search committee confidential meetings or other internal committee proceedings such as email communications. Committee members should be mindful about their written communication concerning a candidate: all electronic communications form part of the official record of the search, and are hence "discoverable" by law³. Because cyber security is a concern, the University provides the secure platform Interfolio. Please refer to [User's Guide to Interfolio Faculty Search for Search Committees](#) for more information on how to use Interfolio.
- If application materials are downloaded from Interfolio, they should be kept secure and accessible only to individuals who are involved in some level of the administrative, evaluative, or decision-making phases of the search. These individuals should be informed of the expectation that they not share the application materials with others. The University requires that records related to the recruitment and selection process be retained for three years from the date the position is filled⁴, following which these

² Qualified privilege refers to an exchange of information between employers who have a common interest in hiring qualified applicants regarding the previous work history of an employee. The employer providing the information is protected from suits for defamation if the statements regarding an applicant's previous work history are made in good faith to persons having a legitimate need to know.

³ see [User's Guide to Interfolio Faculty Search for Search Committees](#) for information on reviewing and annotating application materials.

⁴ University policy requires that records related to the recruitment and selection process be retained for three years from the date the position is filled. The requirement is met by the Interfolio system, through which the following documents are to be retained:

- i. Job description
- ii. Position posting and copies of any additional advertisements placed for the position.
- iii. Applications, resumes, and any cover letters received from applicants.
- iv. Names of the members of the search committee and search chair.
- v. Names of candidates selected for interviews, notes taken regarding interviews (including 3-5 questions asked of all interviewees, and their responses), rating or evaluation sheets and any writing samples provided or tests administered.
- vi. A short evaluation of the candidates interviewed: something that summarizes the general strengths and weaknesses of each person interviewed, and clearly states why the final candidate was chosen over the others. (in the event an offer is

materials should be securely destroyed.

II. Search Participants Responsibilities & Expectations⁵

II.A Department Chair Responsibilities

The Department Chair is responsible for oversight of the search as outlined [Section II.D of the SAS Policies and Procedures for Appointments and Promotions](#)⁶. If a search is approved, the Department Chair constitutes a search committee following departmental practice and with the approval of an Associate Dean (see below in section **II.B.1, Committee Composition**, below), ensures that the job announcement is prepared and disseminated appropriately, informs the search committee of departmental and School guidelines and deadlines, attends the first search committee meeting, oversees the decision process in identifying candidates for interview, and assists with arrangements for candidate visits. The Chair meets with each candidate (if possible) and arranges for meetings with the Associate Dean as appropriate. The Department Chair oversees the process through which the search committee's report and recommendations are discussed and the hiring decision is voted on by the faculty. The Chair is responsible for understanding the University's Equal Opportunity Compliance requirements for faculty searches (see Section **VII.A, Final Documentation**) and communicating these requirements to the search chair, who is in turn responsible for ensuring that all advertisements, recruiting efforts, and evaluations of interviewed candidates are properly documented⁷. The Chair also drafts the offer letter for review by the Associate Dean, and oversees dossier compilation and submission. If the hire also requires a tenure decision, the Chair manages the required processes (e.g., requesting external letters).

II.B Search Committee

II.B.1 Committee Composition

Research shows that committees of people with different backgrounds make better decisions. When assembling the group, be mindful of how professional, mentoring, or personal relationships within the search committee can affect the power dynamics. The Department Chair should create a diverse search committee, including, where possible, individuals from groups that are historically underrepresented in the field. At the same time, be aware that faculty from these groups often have greater administrative and mentoring commitments. They should represent different perspectives, career stages, and areas of expertise, as well as a deep understanding of department priorities and the School's mission.

declined, please note that for the relevant candidate and indicate whether another candidate in the pool was offered the position, or if the position was reposted or withdrawn), and notes from reference checks.

⁵ Note that the terms used for various roles in this document differ from those used in the University's job search system, Interfolio. For example, search committee members are known as "evaluators" and search chairs are known as "committee managers" in Interfolio.

⁶ <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/academics/resources-faculty/sas-policies-and-procedures-appointments-and-promotions>

⁷ As documented on pp. 3-4 of the [Guide to End of Search Procedures for Administrators](#).

An Associate Dean must approve the committee composition.

- **CONSIDER:** *Where appropriate, consider inviting faculty from other departments to serve on tenure-level search committees. This can be a great strategy for engaging with colleagues outside your department over important topics of common interest.*

Many departments also include a non-voting graduate student representative in the committee's review of the applicants to ensure that feedback from the graduate student body is taken into consideration. Tasks of a graduate student representative may include organizing meetings with the candidate, soliciting feedback from the graduate student body as a whole, and reporting back at the final search committee meeting. Graduate students are not, however, committee members, and are not allowed access to reference letters.

II.B.2 Committee Chair

The Search Committee Chair works closely with the Department Chair to guide the committee to select a candidate using comprehensive, fair, and consistently applied criteria. Their role is to:

- Set the expectations regarding confidentiality and participation (see Section **I.B**, *Ethics and Confidentiality*, and **II.B.3**, *Committee Members*).
- Establish criteria for candidate assessment (see Section **III.E.**, *First Assessment of Candidates*) and encourage an open airing of ideas and opinions by all committee members on the topic of inclusive excellence.
- Keep meetings productive.
 - To avoid time pressure and allow the committee to discuss issues in the search, roles, responsibilities, and ground rules or guidelines. The first meeting (not including the kick-off meeting with deans -- see Section **III.A.**) should be held at least one month prior to the application review start date indicated in the job ad.
 - Offer a clear agenda for each meeting and encourage all committee members to contribute to the conversation.
 - Establish assignments to be done before the next meeting. When sending out the email reminder of the next meeting, include the items to be done and ask the committee to let you know in advance if they've run into problems.
- Pay attention to group dynamics and intervene when necessary. Inequities among committee members can silence some members while allowing for others to control too much of the search process. Without intending to, senior faculty may intimidate untenured faculty on the committee. Untenured faculty may feel uncomfortable disagreeing with their senior colleagues who will be evaluating them for promotion in the future..
- Understand the Equal Opportunity Compliance requirements for faculty searches, and, together with the Department Administrator, ensure that all advertisements,

recruiting efforts, and evaluations of interviewed candidates are properly documented (see Section **VII.A**, Final Documentation.)

II.B.3 Committee Members

All committee members share responsibility for everyone's full engagement in the search. It is important that each member commit to participating fully in every stage of the search process in order to ensure a fair and equitable process. It is helpful when other committee members draw colleagues into the discussion since it is the committee, not a single individual, which is making all decisions.

II.B.4 Diversity Search Liaison

Each search committee must designate one member as a Diversity Search Liaison (DSL) who is responsible for working with the DSA (see Section **II.D.** below). Committees are encouraged *not* to choose the sole person of color or woman member on the committee for this role, as serving as the DSL is an opportunity for another faculty member to learn about implicit bias and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging goals and resources.

Once selected, the DSL is tasked with:

- Taking a second look at any applicant that is historically underrepresented in your field. The DSL should work closely with the DSA on this task. The DSA can provide individual-level, self-reporting data on gender and URM status of applicants. This information is *ONLY* to the Diversity Search Liaison and the Department Chair, while aggregate-level data is available to the rest of the search committee.
- Reporting back to the committee with details about those applicants who should be given a second look.
- Standardizing the interview process to reduce bias, and, when necessary, educating their committee/faculty about the need to do so (see Sections **V** and **VII.A** for information about a federal requirement to document a list of common questions, and Appendix 4).

The DSL should continually work with the DSA at various stages of the search regarding the recruitment strategy, the construction of the long list, and the campus interview process to ensure all stages of the search are conducted in an equitable manner.

II.C Department Administrator

The Department Administrator works with the Department Chair, Search Committee Chair, committee, and staff in the Dean's Office over the course of the search. For instance, the Department Administrator works closely with the Search Committee Chair to ensure that all job advertisements, recruiting efforts, and evaluations of interviewed candidates are properly vetted and documented. For Equal Opportunity Compliance (see Section **VII.A**, Final Documentation.), other tasks include posting the final version of the job ad in the approved publication venues, ensuring that the search committee members have access to applications in the system, requesting letters of recommendation for Assistant Professor searches, moving applicants through the system at the appropriate time, arranging video interviews and campus visits, assisting the Department Chair with compilation of consultant lists for tenured searches and collecting the Equal Opportunity Compliance materials and preparing the

appointment dossier for the selected candidate at the conclusion of the search.

The Department Administrator is also responsible for keeping complete records, including all job advertisements, lists of nominators and nominees, candidate documents, rating sheets, long and short lists, and interview notes (see Section **I.B**, *Ethics and Confidentiality*, footnote 3). The documentation must demonstrate that the department has made good faith outreach efforts towards female and minority candidates.

II.D SAS Diversity Search Advisor

There are three School-level Diversity Search Advisors (DSAs) in SAS, one each for the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The appointment of school-level DSAs is required by the University. The key objectives of the role are to expand the candidate pool and ensure that all candidates receive fair consideration. The DSA aids in the search process, providing guidance on:

- the constitution and work of the search committee;
- where the ad is posted and how it is shared through networks - recruitment strategy the list of institutions to be contacted directly about the position, and the wording of the message(s) to them (the DSAs will be looking for geographic and institutional diversity, for instance);
- the “long list” of first-round interviews;
- the short list of those invited for a campus interview; and
- Equal Opportunity Compliance.

Both the DSA and the Associate Dean must approve the long and short lists.

II.E Associate Dean

The role of the Associate Dean is to oversee faculty searches and ensure that they are conducted in an equitable manner in accordance with School and University guidelines. The Associate Dean approves the search committee membership and works with the DSA to approve the ad text and list of publication venues, the short list of candidates, and the final candidates to whom an offer will be made. When possible /they meet with the top candidates for senior searches, and work with the Department Chair to craft an offer to the final candidate.

III. Building the Candidate Pool: Advertising and Outreach

Building a broad candidate pool requires a variety of strategies and forms of outreach.

III.A. Search Committee Kick-off Meeting with Deans

The School requires that newly-formed search committees meet as a group with their associate dean, Diversity Search Advisor (DSA), Faculty Affairs deputy director, and Vice Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion **before** the ad is posted to discuss your department’s goals and best practices for leading equitable and inclusive searches.

III.B. Faculty Job Advertisements

Search Advertisement Templates: The Dean's office has template language that departments are asked to use in crafting faculty search advertisements. There are separate templates for assistant professor searches, tenured professor searches, and mixed-rank searches. Department Administrators may access the templates at the Resources for Administrators page: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/academics/resources-faculty/resources-for-administrators>

The Position Description: Ad text is drafted in the department and reviewed by Faculty Affairs staff in the Dean's Office, the Diversity Search Advisor (DSA), and the Associate Dean. Even with the guidance of the School templates, it remains important to develop a clear position description that includes essential qualifications and experience but does not make it so specific that it inadvertently deters highly qualified applicants.

- The position description should be as broad as possible, while noting the desired area(s) of scholarship, experience, and disciplinary background. In identifying areas, distinguish between teaching needs and research needs to enhance your ability to attract candidates, particularly highly qualified women and persons from communities that are historically underrepresented in the field, who may come from different backgrounds but who nevertheless are fully qualified.
- Think carefully about the qualifications you list. What is required and what is simply preferred? Detailed descriptions may deter otherwise qualified candidates. The search committee should consider only those candidates who meet all "required" qualifications.
- Careful consideration should be given to the materials applicants are asked to provide; specific enough to be clear and consistent across all applications, but not so precise that they inhibit applicants from applying.
- Make the advertisement welcoming to candidates with a wide-range of backgrounds. Barriers to entry, both perceived and real, may deter some of the best candidates from applying. Avoid superlatives such as "exceptional" or "distinguished," which may deter very qualified individuals from applying (because they assume—incorrectly—that they must have already achieved great acclaim). Instead use language that encourages all candidates with strong records and promise to apply.
- Some departments may want to ask applicants to provide a statement that details their approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Departments that request these statements seek to ensure that faculty hires are capable and committed to teaching and interacting with its diverse student populations. If a DEI statement is requested or required in a job posting it must be considered within the entire context of the candidate's application. If you would like to request such a statement, please contact your Associate Dean and the Dean's office will provide further guidance.
- In addition to information about the particular position, ad text should include expectations regarding undergraduate and graduate teaching, a list of materials to be submitted with the application, and, for Assistant Professor positions, contact information

for reference letter writers (see Appendix 1, *Faculty Job Ad Checklist*).

A national search is required for positions in the Standing and Research Faculty categories⁸. National search posting requirements include placing an ad in at least two locations likely to reach a national audience. An ad on Penn's faculty recruitment web site does not count as one of the ads. In addition, efforts to attract candidates that contribute to diversity among the faculty should be demonstrated and documented. The required duration of the posting is at least 30 days⁹.

The Department Administrator should send the following to the Deputy Director in SAS Faculty Affairs for their division¹⁰:

- The ad text (See above, and also Appendix 1, *Faculty Job Ad Checklist*).
- The name of the search committee chair.
- The names of the search committee members. Please identify which member will serve as the Diversity Search Liaison.
- The names of journals, publications, websites, organizations where the ad will be posted.
 - Please see Appendix 2 for a list of outlets and contacts for targeting diverse applicants, many of whom offer Penn a reduced rate for posting, recommended by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty.
- Information about any additional outreach, such as a list of departments to be contacted and the wording of the outreach.

The Deputy Director of Faculty Affairs will edit the ad text and send it to the DSA and the Associate Dean for review before returning the approved ad text to the Department Administrator for posting in Interfolio and other venues. It is critical that the Departments wait for the final version from the Deputy Director *before* they advertise.

III.C. Active Recruiting

Getting the word out about the position is a crucial opportunity to expand the applicant pool. This is done through:

- Personal outreach: Reaching potential candidates and encouraging them to apply requires proactive outreach. As appropriate based on the rank of the open position¹¹, the Search Committee Chair, committee members, and the Department Chair should

⁸ Though the requirement is only at the national level, many searches are now international.

⁹ Affirmative Action Guidelines, Office of the Provost: <https://faculty.upenn.edu/diversity/affirmative-action/>

¹⁰ Department in the humanities should contact Janel Baseline, (janelm@sas.upenn.edu); those in the natural sciences should contact Jody Chavez (jchavez@sas.upenn.edu), and those in the social sciences should contact Cathy Von Elm (cvonelm@sas.upenn.edu).

¹¹ Direct outreach is generally considered to be necessary (and expected) for senior positions. Although there may be a degree of discomfort with this kind of outreach directly to candidates for assistant professor positions—concerns about giving the impression that the candidate has an inside track, will get an interview, etc. – direct outreach can also be very effective in recruiting highly qualified candidates for junior positions, particularly applicants from underrepresented groups.

engage in, and document, proactive outreach to encourage as many candidates to apply as possible, using phone calls, professional networks, national meetings, etc., to identify applicants for the position. Exceptional candidates will often need to be invited to apply by a member of the search committee. Consult with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, who are often well-positioned to help you reach highly qualified female and minority candidates. Recent graduates from your department or related programs are often good sources of information about promising candidates, as are individuals who have declined an invitation to apply for the position. Reviewing journal editorial boards and award winners in relevant professional societies can help identify rising stars. As applications come in, committee members should informally assess who might be missing and follow up with exceptional nominees. Avoid making assumptions about candidates' movability, as circumstances change along with people's responses.

- Advertising in the discipline's regular collection of professional outlets for faculty job advertisements, and also those targeting applicants from underrepresented groups (for a list of additional advertising venues, see Appendix 2).
- Contacting other universities, schools, and departments about the position. The letter should encourage colleagues at other colleges and universities to submit the names of women and minority potential candidates. Prior to sending, the DSA will review and approve *both* the list and the letter used to make these contacts.
 - *TIP: Often, the DSA will be looking to make sure the list reaches beyond the schools from which Penn traditionally draws hires: Ivies, Oxbridge, etc., and to make sure that it reaches all areas of the country (the South is often underrepresented). Departments are asked to make sure that they are contacting ALL doctoral programs in their field, even if they do not have direct experience of faculty and students from said programs. Professional organizations are a good source to find the full list of programs. Internal lists should be reviewed regularly for accuracy and currency.*

III.D. Maintaining Inclusive Excellence Throughout the Search Process

To minimize bias and ensure an equitable search, consider incorporating the following evidence-based strategies:

- *Educate committee members on latent and implicit bias.* At an early stage in the search, it may be useful for the committee to discuss explicitly what the latent biases of the committee / department / program might be, and then find ways to counteract these tendencies. Research has shown that when decision-makers learn about hiring biases they are more likely to evaluate candidates fairly. The Office of the Provost requires that all faculty involved in searches should be educated on latent bias. The requirement may be fulfilled either through attending (a) a Provost-sponsored training or (b) presentations made by the DSA. The Provost-sponsored training is strongly recommended. The Office of

the Vice Provost for Faculty Bias workshop has the list of current trainings available and additional resources. These are open to all interested faculty members, specifically faculty search committee members and new Diversity Search Advisors, <https://faculty.upenn.edu/diversity/faculty-bias-training/>. The offerings include an asynchronous bias training course through Canvas.

- Departments may also be interested in additional trainings. For more information, contact the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty: provost-fac@upenn.edu. Sessions are normally held 2-3 times annually in the fall (see Section **VIII: Tools & Resources**).
- *Establish evaluation criteria.* Deciding in advance of reviewing applications which criteria will be used (see Section **III.E, Topics to Cover at Beginning of Candidate Assessment**) and how they will be weighted.
- *Articulate qualifications.* Discuss how "the best" is defined (the best scholar, the best department, the best publication venues, the best colleague, the best teacher, etc.) and ask whether the definition(s) create barriers to the viability of potentially desirable candidates. Reflect actively on how the tendency of departments to reproduce themselves rather than expand their diversity might manifest itself in the present context.
- *Spend sufficient time reviewing applications.* To decrease the likelihood of arriving at biased judgments of applicants, search committee members should allow adequate time to evaluate applications and ensure that equivalent information is available about all candidates. The Interfolio system allows committee members to tag and rate applications, which may be helpful, but these should be treated with caution. Committees should agree on how they will be used, if at all, prior to reviewing applications. Also, tags can be seen by anyone with access to applications¹². The Diversity Search Liaison should make sure that if there is uncertainty about candidate from an underrepresented group (e.g., a missing document) further information is sought out so that ambiguity is reduced and all candidates are compared with complete dossiers.

III.E. First Assessment of Candidates

At the first search committee meeting where members assess candidates, the search chair should lead a discussion of ground rules including:

- *Criteria.* Discuss how criteria listed in the job ad will be weighed and valued. Without explicit criteria established from the outset, evaluators tend to "back into" criteria that support their favored applicants. Defining broad yet clear criteria around the following qualifications will be helpful:
 - Scholarly impact
 - Research productivity and funding

¹² For more information, see page 3 of the [User's Guide to Interfolio Faculty Search for Search Committees](#).

- Ability to teach and mentor graduate and undergraduate students
- Ability to attract, work with, and teach students with a range of backgrounds
- Commitment to collaboration with colleagues
- Relationship to department priorities

In each category, consider both past accomplishments and future trajectory. Discuss how to weigh the various criteria. Discuss adhering to the established criteria as much as possible to ensure an equitable review across candidates (see Section **III.D**, *Maintaining Inclusive Excellence Throughout the Search Process*).

Committee members should not use information gained from social media on candidates, and such searches must be judicious and job-related. For example, candidates' online presence might help assess how active they are in their disciplines. Please contact your associate dean if you have questions. (See Appendix 3: *Guide to Legally Permissible Interview Questions*). And remember that information found through online searches is not always accurate.

- *Consensus or Votes.* The committee should decide how decisions will be made, either by consensus or by voting. If the latter, then the committee should also decide if absentee votes will be allowed, if the votes will be open or confidential, and what the voting procedure will be (including how the votes will be aggregated). If the committee chooses to work by consensus, discuss what will happen if consensus cannot be reached.
- *Confidentiality.* *Deliberations about candidates are confidential and should only be discussed with others on the search committee.* All search committee members must be sure that they can confidentially share their views with colleagues. Don't write anything in an email that you wouldn't want attributed to you on the front page of a major newspaper or trending on social media. Deliberations about candidates should be done in person or via a secure platform such as Canvas.
- *Recordkeeping.* The Department Administrator must keep complete records, including all job advertisements, lists of nominators and nominees, candidate documents, rating sheets, long and short lists, and interview notes (see Section **I.B**, *Ethics and Confidentiality*, footnote 3). The documentation must demonstrate that your department has made good faith outreach efforts towards female and minority candidates.

The DSA, who serves in an advisory role, should attend the first search committee meeting to review and discuss outreach strategies to diversify the applicant pool and explain the DSA goals, the committee's required tasks regarding search procedures and Equal Opportunity Compliance, and outline the resources available to the committee.

IV. Long and Short lists of Final Candidates

IV.A Developing Long and Short Lists

Identifying the "Long List" of Candidates

The process for developing the “long list” of candidates is critical. It is an especially important moment to consider diversity and inclusion, and to discuss again the criteria of evaluation. Adding one or more candidates from underrepresented minorities or who in other ways diversify the pool is a low-cost decision at this stage: an additional interview or application does not add substantially to the work of the search committee, yet may yield a possibly overlooked but excellent candidate for a campus visit. The DSA and Associate Dean will look for applicants from underrepresented groups on the list, and engage in a conversation with the search chair about the qualifications and promise of candidates who have identities that are underrepresented in the department. As candidates advance in the search process, the search chair, the Diversity Search Liaison, and the DSA should continually monitor the diversity of candidates as the search progresses at every stage to see if the diversity of the original applicant pool is reflected proportionally at later stages of the search¹³. If it is not, then consider if there are candidates who hold historically underrepresented identities who have been overlooked in earlier stages of the process that should be advanced.

- Pause and have a second meeting before moving to the “short list” so that all committee members can read—and re-read—all long-listed candidates’ application dossiers.

Assessment of “Long List” Candidates

Search committees use the “long list” of candidates in different ways. Many departments interview those candidates at professional meetings or via video conference; others may ask candidates only for additional materials. Whichever procedure the search committee adopts, all candidates on the long list should be treated in a comparable way, e.g., similar questions asked, in the same amount of time.

Identifying the “Short List” of Candidates to be Interviewed

Schedule a distinct committee meeting (i.e., separate from the meeting to select the “long list”) to select the “short list” of candidates to come to campus for a visit.

- To ensure a thorough and objective review, the chair should restate the criteria for evaluating candidates, reminding committee members to apply previously agreed to standards in choosing people.
- Review and read the complete dossiers. Begin with reviewing the criteria for which you are hiring before reviewing dossiers. Consider which are the most important qualities for which you are hiring. Consider both accomplishments and potential, given the resources/institutional types candidates have attended¹⁴.

¹³ The DSA can provide aggregate data on gender and URM status of applicants to the entire search committee, but can provide individual-level, self-reporting data ONLY to the Diversity Search Liaison and the Department Chair (not the Search Committee Chair).

¹⁴ See <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2022/09/23/new-study-finds-80-faculty-trained-20-institutions>

- Some departments have engaged in a process by which identities of candidates (institutions they have attended, names of mentors, etc.) have been withheld on applications. If you are interested in engaging in such a process, please speak to your Associate Dean and Faculty Affairs about how to manage this process.
- The chair should attend to all applicants from underrepresented groups on the long list. Once again ask if implicit bias is impacting the decisions being made.

IV.B DSA and Associate Dean Approval

Both the long and short lists of candidates must be approved by the DSA and the Associate Dean before any candidates are invited to interview. If the committee is unable to find any competitive candidates from underrepresented groups, the search chair must provide an explanation in writing to the DSA and the Associate Dean of what steps were taken to identify such candidates and why the committee was unsuccessful.

V. Candidate Interviews

V.A Developing a Well-rounded Campus Visit

Once the candidate short list has been approved by the Associate Dean and the DSA, the search committee invites the candidate to interview. Interviews can be in person or virtual. Regardless of format, the interview process should be comparable for all applicants. To maintain consistency, use a standard set of questions in group interviews for all candidates and a standard method of collecting information from individual interviews. Because responses will be varied, follow up questions can differ between candidates. Please ask your associate dean if you have questions about this process.

Well in advance of the interview stage, the department chair or search committee chair should communicate clearly with each candidate how the interview will be structured.

Communicate the department's expectation for the length and content of the main job talk, the format of a job talk (if applicable), and the topics that will be covered in the meeting with the department chair. If the interview will be virtual, ensure that candidate is aware of the technologies they need (BlueJeans, Skype, Zoom, etc.). Ask your department's Local Support Provider (LSP) for assistance if needed in arranging either virtual interviews or campus interviews that are also hybrid so that department members who are away can attend remotely. Share the search chair's phone number to facilitate the logistics and/or if the technology fails and they need to be put on speaker phone.

Share the schedule in advance, and make sure the candidate knows what each activity entails and who they will be meeting with (students, faculty, staff, deans, colleagues from other departments, etc.) as well as locations of meetings. If candidates will be expected to travel long distances between the hotel, the department's building, and lunch, for example, let candidates know so they can plan to wear appropriate footwear. Be sure to ask candidates if they need any accommodations; this could include dietary, physical accommodations (e.g., sole use of elevators, periodic breaks to take medication, use of a lactation room, etc.). It is not appropriate to probe into the details of why the accommodation is needed, but it is

appropriate to ask questions that will help you meet the candidates' needs. When planning the interview day, keep these accommodations in mind and remember that these interview days are exhausting. Appropriate scheduling can help candidates be their best selves. For example, be sure to schedule in the appropriate travel time from one location to another, time to use the restroom, time for candidates to eat, as well as some down time for candidates to take a break, meet their personal needs, or relax on their own.

When preparing the agenda, ensure that there are different ways in which candidates may interact with faculty and students. Consider providing candidates with opportunities to reveal their strengths through less formal events, such as question and answer sessions and "job talks," in addition to the traditional research presentation. Candidates may appreciate opportunities to interact with students with limited faculty involvement. Candidates should be given clear and full explanations about any "job talks."

The committee must decide on a list of questions to be asked of each candidate in the formal job interview. Doing so allows the committee to collect comparable information from all candidates. (See Section VII for information about a federal requirement to document a list of common questions.) Appendix 3 offers a guide to legally permissible interview questions regarding protected classes, and Appendix 4 provides some sample interview questions.

V.B Interview Preparation

All candidates wish to be evaluated for academic positions on the basis of their scholarly credentials. It is important that contacts with all candidates focus on their skills and credentials as stated in the job advertisement.

During the interview, candidates should be allowed to do most of the talking so that sufficient information can be gathered about each applicant.

All settings where you have contact with candidates are considered part of the interview, including informal gatherings with graduate students or other members of the Penn community. Everyone who will have contact with candidates should understand which topics are appropriate for questioning and discussion (See Appendix 3: *Guide to Legally Permissible Interview Questions*). Everyone who meets with a candidate should receive an evaluation to complete (See Appendix 5: *Sample Post Campus Visit Surveys*). Search committees can define their own criteria, or the appendix offers a sample survey.

VI. Selecting the Candidate and Making the Offer

Once all candidates have been thoroughly evaluated using the established criteria (see Section III.E, *First Assessment of Candidates*), the search committee should prepare its recommendations. In selecting the final candidate, departments are strongly encouraged to take as wide as possible a view of the suitable qualifications for a chosen candidate.

Philadelphia has enacted a Wage Equity Ordinance as September 1, 2020. As an effort to bridge the pay equity gap, the ordinance prohibits employers in Philadelphia from asking job applicant for salary history. Applicants may choose to disclose their wage history voluntarily, but an employer cannot use that information in setting initial wages. Philadelphia employers may not retaliate against applicants who refuse to disclose their wage history in accordance with the Ordinance¹⁵.

Upon identification of the chosen candidate and a departmental vote on the search committee's recommendation, the Department Chair will inform the DSA and Associate Dean, and request approval of the candidate. An offer may only be made upon authorization of the Associate Dean. For offer letter guidelines, the Department Chair should consult the template *SAS Guidelines for Standing Faculty Offer Letters*¹⁶.

During the recruiting stage, the Associate Dean can advise on a number of resources to help departments attract candidates, including information about support for dual career couples, relocation assistance, child care, and so on.

VII. After the Search

VII.A Final Documentation

It is important to make notify candidates that were not selected for the position in a timely fashion. Faculty Affairs staff will contact the Department Administrator when it is time to close the ad and move applicants through the job search system.

Equal Opportunity Compliance: Once the final candidate has accepted the offer, and their dossier has been approved by the Personnel Committee, documentation of Equal Opportunity Compliance (EOC) must be submitted¹⁷.

To help ensure that the EOC process goes smoothly at the end of the search, the Search Committee Chair and the Department Administrator should communicate early in the process about the need to document all advertisement and recruiting efforts. Online postings of the ad, for instance, must be printed while they are still live, because the posts will no longer be available at the end of the year when it is time to complete the EOC process. Search committees are also advised to keep copies of the contacts to which the department chair or search committee chair has sent letters about the position—they will also be asked to submit this information later. It is also helpful if committees include notes for any rationale for contacting particular recipients for diversity reasons.

¹⁵ <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/philadelphia-s-salary-history-ban-will-61955/>

¹⁶ Available on the [Resources for Department Chairs](#) website (Pennkey-protected).

¹⁷ Please refer to the [Guide to End of Search Procedures for Administrators](#).

Evaluation of Interviewed Candidates: A Penn reconciliation agreement with the Department of Labor stipulates that, among other requirements, a document summarizing the evaluation of interviewed candidates be submitted as part of the EOC information and kept on record for a period of three years. This requirement applies to all hiring of standing and non-standing faculty where there was an open search.

This document may be written by the search committee chair or the department chair. It does not need to be lengthy or highly detailed, but it must include the following information:

1. A list of questions asked of all candidates in the interviews. This can be as little as 3-5 broad questions, such as “What is the trajectory of your research?” or “What is your teaching philosophy?”
2. A short evaluation of the candidates interviewed: something that summarizes the general strengths and weaknesses of each person interviewed, and clearly states why the final candidate was chosen over the others.

VII.B. Evaluating the Search

Consider conducting a post-search debrief to review the search process, including a discussion of candidates who turned down offers and what might have been done to make their recruitment successful.

The following questions can help guide the committee’s evaluation of the search. This list is not exhaustive; the committee should include any other questions it considers are pertinent to evaluating the search.

- What parts of the search process worked well?
- What parts didn’t work well? How could they be improved?
- How diverse was the applicant pool? Please describe racial and gender demographics
- Could the job description have been constructed in a way that would have brought in a broader pool of candidates?
- Could the department have created a specific recruitment strategy?
- Were any promising candidates discovered during this search? If so, it is helpful to keep these individuals on file for future searches. We recommend creating a spreadsheet that can be passed on from one department chair to another.
- Did any candidates, refuse an offer? If so, why? Are there any trends over time in terms of refusal of people from specific demographic groups (e.g. people at a certain rank, from a specific institution, international candidates, people of color, women, etc.)? Consider interviewing these candidates and asking them their reasons for refusal. Interviews with members of this shortlist can yield valuable feedback.
- What processes or steps can be taken to ensure a smoother and more equitable search process in the future?

Once the search committee has considered these questions and documented its analysis of the search process, its findings may be shared with the Department

Chair and the Associate Dean if desired, and used to update this document and inform future searches.

VIII. Tools and Resources

- The Division of Faculty Affairs in the SAS Dean's Office is a core resource for search committees. A Deputy Director from that office serves as a point person for your department on faculty personnel matters, and the office has a wealth of written guidance available.
- The Office of the Vice-Provost for Faculty is another important resource, offering the following services:
 - Search Committee best practices
 - In-person and asynchronous Latent Bias training. For more information, and to register, see the Provost's Office website <https://faculty.upenn.edu/diversity/faculty-bias-training/>
- Interfolio EOC Reports containing gender and ethnic data about the candidate pool are available to the DSA. The DSA can provide aggregate data on gender and URM status of applicants to the entire search committee, but it can provide individual-level, self-reporting data ONLY to the Diversity Search Liaison and the Department Chair (not the search chair).

Appendix 1: Checklist for Advertising Standing Faculty Jobs

Search Advertisement Templates: The Dean's office has template language that departments are asked to use in crafting faculty search advertisements. There are separate templates for assistant professor searches, tenured professor searches, and mixed-rank searches. Department Administrators may access the templates at the Resources for Administrators page:

<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/academics/resources-faculty/resources-for-administrators>

- Review description to ensure ad is not too narrow and is not written to fit a particular candidate or a limited pool of candidates.
 - This is extremely important, because candidates that are historically underrepresented in the field are occasionally left out of the running because their work does not fit a narrowly construed definition of the area of expertise desired by the department. For example, descriptions that match former colleagues that a department hopes to replace.
- Are the duties and responsibilities of the position, including undergraduate and graduate teaching, clearly defined so that applicants would understand what the job entails?
- Are the qualification requirements of the position clearly described?
- Departments can now choose whether to solicit letters of reference from all applicants, or from a smaller selection (such as the long list of candidates). Does the ad include the appropriate instructions for applicants regarding letters of reference?
- Does the ad include the hiring timeline? (Please do not state a hard deadline)?
 - Suggested wording "Review of applications will begin in November, 2022 and continue until the position is filled. The expected start date is July 1, 2023."
- Does the ad contain the following paragraph affirming the School of Arts and Sciences' commitment to diversity – please use verbatim:

The School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania is committed to cultivating and sustaining a community of students, scholars, researchers, and staff that reflects the diversity of our world. We nurture working and learning environments that are affirming, equitable, and inclusive. As a community, we are committed to thoughtful discussions and dynamic interactions as we strive for an environment where everyone is supported and valued. Please see our School's Inclusion and Antiracism Initiatives to learn more about our active priorities: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/office-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/news/2020-inclusion-and-anti-racism-initiatives>.

Appendix 2: Advertising Venues to Recruit Candidates

Contact Julie Orts

Senior Business Systems Analyst

Office of the Provost – Administrative

Affairs

Email: julp@upenn.edu

Recruitment Advertising

Hello University of Pennsylvania Hiring Managers and Faculty Search Administrators

After another year of job ad posting and data collection, UPenn leadership and JobElephant are pleased to announce some changes to the bulk advertising options previously in place. These adjustments are based on the analytics (tracking data) from the thousands of job ads placed for UPenn over the past year. Publications that showed less than favorable tracking are being replaced. The new options that should provide improved tracking results, as well as a cost saving to the University. These new additions will be in place for one year when the data will be evaluated to determine if renewal is warranted.

Effective immediately, any position posted through Workday or Interfolio will automatically be listed on the following sites:

[Academic Careers*](#)

[Asians in Higher Ed*](#)

[Blacks in Higher Ed*](#)

[The Chronicle of Higher Education*](#)

[Disabled in Higher Ed*](#)

[Diverse Jobs](#)

[Higher Ed Jobs](#)

[Hispanics in Higher Ed](#)

[Inside Higher Ed Jobs](#)

[LGBT in Higher Ed*](#)

[Native Americans in Higher Ed*](#)

[The HBCU Career Center](#)

[Veterans in Higher Ed*](#)

[Women and Higher Ed](#)

*New for this academic year

How to request additional publications to your job posting campaign:

1) Send JobElephant andy@jobelephant.com an email including a link to the Workday job page (staff positions) or Interfolio landing page (faculty positions) and the list of publications you would like to advertise the job opening. If you are unsure about where to advertise or need more ideas, just let us know and we can make recommendations. Learn more about our recommendation engine [Horton](#) here.

2) We will reply the same day with a prepared ad proof along with our quote sheet with prices, run times and any additional information pertinent to the request. We never price any publication above the price you currently receive.

Upon your emailed approval, we will submit all the ads to the publication vendors within hours for processing.

We will email an invoice to you unless you specify a different billing contact. Every person will automatically receive a login and password to access our cPortal to access tear sheets (proof of publication) online.

Account Manager

The account manager for The University of Pennsylvania is Andy Boom;
andy@jobelephant.com

JobElephant headquarters are located in San Diego, CA. With office hours of M-F 6:00am - 6:00pm PST.

recruitment Advertising.
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Appendix 3: Guide to Legally Permissible Interview Questions Regarding Protected Classes¹

It is essential for all members of a search committee to be aware of these guidelines regarding posing questions about a candidate that are potentially legally protected from employment discrimination. This information about an applicant should never be discussed with regard to their candidacy for a position.

Subjects That Can Be Discussed in An Interview:

Subject	What May Be Asked	What May NOT Be Asked
Name	Whether the applicant has worked for the University under another name. Whether any other information, such as a nickname or initials, is needed to check the candidate's work and educational record.	Maiden name of a married person. Inquiries about the name that would seek to elicit information about the candidate's ancestry or descent.
Age	Discussion should be kept to questions about the applicant's career stage.	Inquiry into the date of birth or age of an applicant.
Language	What languages do you read fluently? Write fluently? Speak fluently?	Inquiries into how applicant acquired the ability to read, write, or speak another language.
Experience	Inquiry into work experience. Inquiry into countries the applicant has visited. Inquiry into references.	Inquiry into organizations of which the applicant for employment is a member, the nature, name or character of which would likely disclose the applicant's protected class status.

Subjects That are **NOT** Appropriate for an Interview Setting:

Applicants are vetted for workplace eligibility prior to their first interview with the Committee. Search Committees should then avoid the following subjects in their interviews and interactions with candidates.

Subject	What May Be Asked	What May NOT Be Asked
Birthplace	No questions.	Birthplace of applicant. Birthplace of applicant's parents, spouse, partner, or other close relatives.

¹ Federally protected classes include, but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, religion, country of national origin, citizenship, sex, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status.

This guide was adapted from a document created by the University of Chicago.

Subjects That are NOT Appropriate for an Interview Setting (continued):

Subject	What May Be Asked	What May NOT Be Asked
Relatives	Names of applicant’s relatives already employed by the University.	Names, addresses, ages, number, or other information concerning applicant’s children or other relatives not employed by the University.
National	An employer may require an employee to produce documentation that evidences his or her identity and employment eligibility under federal immigration laws.	Inquiry into the applicant’s lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, parentage, or nationality; nationality of parents or spouse; applicant’s native language.
Citizenship	Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?	Inquiries about citizenship or whether the applicant intends to become a U.S. citizen.
Education	Inquiry into the academic, vocational, or professional education of an applicant for employment.	Questions about education designed to determine how old the applicant is.
Gender	No questions.	Inquiry into an applicant’s maiden name or any question that pertains to only one sex or gender identity.
Sexual Orientation	No questions.	Inquiry into applicant’s sexuality.
Religion	No questions, except in extremely rare circumstances where religious beliefs and practices could be a bona fide occupational qualification for a position, with the employer bearing a heavy burden to show that this is so.	Inquiry into an applicant’s religious denomination, denomination, affiliation, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed. Avoid any questions regarding organizations and/or affiliations that would identify religion.

Appendix 4: Sample Questions for a Search Committee Joint Interview (From Greg Guild, Professor Emeritus of Biology and former DSA for the Natural Sciences)

Greg Guild provides the following sample questions for a search committee to conduct a joint interview, a model that can help level the playing field. This joint interview idea was developed by three search committees in the Biology Department, operating sequentially over three years.

In Biology, all candidates were scheduled for an individual ~30 min. joint meeting with all members of the committee. At this committee meeting, the candidates were all asked the same set of questions that were decided on ahead of time.

- a. What attracted you to Penn and to the Biology Department?
- b. How do you see your research fitting into the Biology Department's current research portfolio?
- c. What kinds of interdisciplinary research do you anticipate incorporating into your research program and do you have specific example?
- d. What do you need to do to establish an independent lab and how will you establish intellectual independence? There were follow up questions that assessed whether the candidate had the technical knowledge to setup a lab and whether the candidate had explicit discussions with mentors about what they will do independently.
- e. What kind of funding context (e.g., NIH, NSF, specific programs) have you thought about to externally support your research?
- f. What kind of teaching experience have you had, what is your teaching philosophy, and have you explicitly thought about a course you might teach?
- g. What do you think is the most exciting development in your field?

At the committee meeting, candidates were also directly asked to discuss perceived weakness in their file (e.g., irregular productivity).

After interviewing the candidates as a committee, the committee met in private to discuss each candidate. Each member was first asked to give an enthusiasm score for the candidate (1 = best, 10 = worst). Then a general discussion followed about pros and cons. The candidates were scored again after the discussion and then tentatively ranked (in comparison to all the candidates seen so far). All the discussions and scores were recorded in a written document that was distributed to the committee for additional comments. This was very useful for final decisions and helped prevent loss of enthusiasm due to time elapsed from visit.

Appendix 5: Sample Post-Campus Visit Surveys

This is an example of a department which is experimenting with evaluation methods for search committees. Some search committees routinely poll all faculty who interact with visiting candidates by asking a standard set of questions. The questions remain constant for all candidates within a single search but evolve from search to search. These surveys must be confidential (Penn's Qualtrics functionality allows this). It is important to remind faculty members that the survey is part of the official record so that the language used in the comments should be appropriate.

- A. Please select all that applies for your interaction with the candidate:
- Read candidate's file (CV, research and teaching statement, letters)
 - Met with the candidate
 - Attended the job seminar
 - Attended the job interview
- B. For each question below indicate your **Score** (Excellent / Very Good / Good / Below average / Poor) and add **Comments** as needed.

Original question set:

- Potential for scholarly impact and productivity
- Potential for collaboration at Penn
- Fit with the Department's priorities
- Potential to be a conscientious community member
- Potential to attract and supervise graduate students
- Potential to teach and supervise undergraduate students
- Rate your overall enthusiasm for candidate

Revised question set:

- Rate the research portfolio of the candidate
- Rate the candidate as a scientist/scholar and potential colleague
- Rate your OVERALL ENTHUSIASM for the candidate using NIH scale (1 = perfect, 10 = never)

The Provost's office also provides this sample Candidate Evaluation Sheet:

<https://provost.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/users/user130/Candidate%20Evaluation%20Sheet.pdf>