



# RECRUITING ACADEMICS TO THE UNIVERSITY

Office of the Provost

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This document describes required steps for conducting searches. Search committee members should familiarize themselves with this information, which is intended both to help units attract large and diverse applicant pools for every open academic position at the University, and to allow department chairs, deans, directors and the provost to monitor the search and screening processes that preceded a recommendation to make an academic appointment. As a federal contractor, the University is obligated to monitor and evaluate our hiring and other employment processes for compliance with the law and University policies. President Zimmer has challenged the University to build a scholarly community comprising a mix of individuals who through their own diverse experiences, backgrounds, and viewpoints contribute to our intellectual culture. The policies and expectations of the Provost's Office are compliant with our legal obligations (refer to the list on page ten) and support search processes that will attract diverse pools of applicants.

The Provost's Office expects that the documentation of a search for a pool of applicants and of the screening of those applicants will show that the steps outlined below have been followed. However, this document is not intended to be a guide to "best practices" for searching for and screening a diverse and talented pool of applicants and recruiting the candidates we want to hire.

Attracting and recruiting outstanding academics, particularly from underrepresented groups and groups designated as protected classes under government laws and regulations, requires effort beyond advertising in customary venues to develop the applicant pool for every open position. For Affirmative Action purposes, underrepresented group designations include women, African American or Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, and American Indian or Alaska Native, those whom identify with multiple races, as well as individuals with disabilities and covered veterans.

## **University expectations for developing applicant pools**

### **1. Think broadly about department/school/institute hiring priorities**

The more narrowly defined the field of interest, the more limited and homogeneous the pool of applicants is likely to be. Departments, institutes, and schools are expected to search in the broadest subfield areas possible to increase the diversity and competitiveness of their applicant pools.

### **2. Seek potential applicants routinely and actively**

Thoughtful, targeted, and continuing outreach beyond advertising is essential to our efforts to recruit the most talented academics to the University. Search committees and department representatives should use every opportunity to communicate the unique teaching and research opportunities available at the University – whether or not a search is underway – and to encourage interest in specific open positions. Broad outreach efforts should be supplemented by personal communications to promising students who might consider an academic career. It is completely appropriate to identify and keep in touch with individuals who, when a position opens, will be encouraged to apply and compete for it. As search committee members contact colleagues about open positions or plans for open positions, they should make specific inquiries about promising candidates from diverse backgrounds. It is crucial to document these activities, because the University is required by the federal government to show that those involved in hiring make good-faith efforts to assure that applicant pools are diverse in all dimensions.

All involved in the search process must understand certain basic principles. Outreach may include extra efforts to attract women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans, but outreach must not exclude any group, and screening must not prefer anyone based on membership in a group. It is just as wrong and unlawful to “search for a woman” as it is to “search for a White male.” It is helpful to think in terms of being as inclusive as possible.

## University requirements for searching and screening

### 3. Write position descriptions to include appropriate required and preferred qualifications

A well-crafted position description not only helps attract the broadest applicant pool, but also avoids process problems down the road that could needlessly delay the review of a case or, in exceptional circumstances, require redoing a search. *Position descriptions for academic appointments should never be tailored to fit a candidate who has already been identified.*

“Basic qualifications” are those without which a person cannot do the job. Examples include: terminal degree in a field or subfield, years of prior experience in a similar position, licensure, record of publication in peer-reviewed journals, or a record of funding. A job seeker does not become an “applicant” (or a member of the applicant pool) unless he or she has the basic qualifications for the position, has applied for an open position on the Academic Career Opportunities website (or any platform a unit has been authorized to use), and submitted all required materials by the deadline.

For these and other reasons, qualifications must be drafted with care, combining what is required with “preferred qualifications” in a way that promotes the unit’s and the University’s goals. It is important to understand that search committees may not legally consider anyone who lacks the stated basic qualifications, regardless of the jobseeker’s promise. If a position description states that a “PhD is required” in order to apply, any jobseeker who does not hold that specific degree at the time of application may not be considered or hired. Requiring just a “a doctoral degree” obligates the committee to consider individuals with a JD or MD. Since requiring candidates to hold a PhD degree to apply will exclude all job seekers who do not have a PhD degree in hand, many units stipulate that “having the PhD in hand by the start date” is a condition for beginning the appointment. (Note that a new Assistant Professor must have either the diploma or an official letter attesting to the fact that all requirements for the degree have been completed.) Likewise, identifying specific subfields of interest as a required qualification means that all jobseekers who do not specialize in one of those subfields will not

be allowed to proceed through the applicant system. By contrast, identifying a subfield as “preferred” will expand the applicant pool. When appropriate, specifying as “preferred” those subfields in which there is high interest among members of protected classes can be effective in diversifying the pool.

#### **4. Determine what application materials will be required**

The position description must state in detail what materials an individual needs to submit in order to apply, and how the materials can be submitted. In every instance the instructions must indicate that a CV is to be uploaded into the Academic Career Opportunities website. If a cover letter is asked for, it, too, must be uploaded. Materials submitted online can be made available to all search committee members (and other designated representatives) electronically through the secure Academic Career Opportunities website. Departments, institutes and /schools may require that other materials be submitted by email, by post, by uploading, or any combination.

#### **5. Encourage timely application without triggering a compliance issue**

Although the posting date does not need to include the date on which review or screening will begin, in fact this date must be at least thirty (30) days after the first public advertisement has appeared, or for searches that do not require a public advertisement (see Section 9, below), thirty (30) days after the posting has been activated on the Academic Career Opportunities website. This thirty-day rule does not preclude determining that some jobseekers do not possess a stated requirement, such as a PhD in political science, and therefore do not qualify as applicants at all. But it does preclude screening and comparing qualified applicants: homing in on the early applicants can improperly disadvantage those who apply toward the end of the thirty-day moratorium that *must* be observed on screening and comparing qualified applicants. Postings must *not* state that review or screening will begin “immediately.”

Keep in mind that every applicant must be fully considered. Therefore, do *not* make statements such as, “To receive full consideration, apply by \_\_\_\_.”

## 6. Understand and adhere to deadlines

*Deadlines for jobseekers.* For jobseekers, a “deadline” is either 1) an explicitly stated date in the position description, or 2) the “Posting to be removed from Web” date, which is a date not visible to jobseekers. If the position description states a deadline explicitly, it must be the same as the “Posting to be removed from the Web” date in the ACO system. Although postings are not required to state any of the deadlines set forth below, search committees should be familiar with the policies that control the timing of phases of the process and should thoughtfully consider how best to communicate with jobseekers.

- a. A jobseeker using the Academic Career Opportunities website (or any platform a unit has been authorized to use) does not become an “applicant” (or a member of the applicant pool) unless and until the jobseeker has submitted all required application materials by the deadline. Jobseekers from whom all requested materials (including reference letters if they are requested in order to apply) have not been received by the deadline are not bona fide applicants and *must not* be considered for positions. However, as part of legitimate outreach, search committees (or their designated representatives) may contact jobseekers whose applications are not complete and encourage them to complete their applications *prior to the deadline* as long as this is done consistently with all jobseekers with incomplete applications.
- b. Search committees *must* plan at the outset whether to announce a deadline for jobseekers to complete their applications, or to allow the applicant pool to grow after the screening process begins. It is permissible not to state a deadline, but units then incur an obligation to *track and consider* all applicants. Using such language as the “Screening of applications will continue until the position is filled or the search is closed” makes it possible for a unit to close the search (removing the posting from the Web) when a candidate is selected and a set of back-up candidates is identified.

*Deadlines for units.* For units, there is a deadline after which they may not bring forward candidates from an applicant pool. These deadlines are intended to assure that the pool of



candidates is refreshed as candidates enter the market each year. Units should be mindful of these deadlines, and plan accordingly.

- a. For faculty positions, recommendations to the provost *must* be received within two (2) years from the initial date of the posting.
- b. For all other academic job groups, recommendations to the provost *must* be received within one (1) year from the initial date of the posting.

Units wishing to continue to search for or screen applicants for a position after this deadline must create a new posting, and begin again to search for qualified applicants.

## **7. Establish clear screening criteria**

The specific criteria used to screen applicants must be stated in the “search narrative,” described in more detail in Section 13. An evidence-based screening process depends on forming an early consensus on the specific criteria that will govern the search committee’s screening. For instance: What are the qualities committee members will be looking for in an applicant’s research? What are the expectations with respect to publication? What evidence of teaching excellence will the committee be looking for? Are there particular markers of quality that will move an applicant to the short list? Some search committees adopt a grid for use in reviewing applicants. A grid lists the agreed-upon criteria that have been established in advance of the screening and allows search committee members to consider the strength that each applicant brings to each criterion. However, any disciplined, evidence-based approach to evaluation can help search committees avoid implicit biases by keeping in view the different strengths that applicants inevitably will have, which may be overlooked if applicants are initially evaluated relying on impressions of their relative global merit.

## **8. Create a posting**

All academic positions must be posted on the Academic Career Opportunities website (or an alternative platform that a unit has been authorized to use) and *only* those jobseekers who complete an on-line application by the deadline may be considered applicants for a position. The ACO posting is the official announcement describing the position, qualifications, and

procedures for applying.

All postings for new academic positions *must* be approved by the respective dean's or director's office before the position is activated on the system and a search commences. It is the dean's or director's responsibility to review the prepared posting to ensure that it complies with our compliance obligations.

Remember, if a deadline is part of the posting, the deadline for individuals to complete all the steps to apply must be *at least* thirty (30) days after the first public advertisement has appeared or, for searches that do not require a public advertisement, thirty (30) days after the posting has been activated on the Academic Career Opportunities website.

#### **9. Publicize the position: “outreach”**

After the posting is approved and activated on the system, the position must be advertised in appropriate venues outside the University to generate the broadest applicant pool and to meet our obligations as an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Appropriate advertising venues are, at minimum, those commonly recognized in the field of study and that are likely to reach potential candidates at the appropriate level of seniority for the position. The text of the position description in the advertising must be *identical* with the text of the position description in the posting, including specific instructions for applying through the Academic Career Opportunities website (or any platform a unit has been authorized to use). In the professional schools, where one advertisement may be used to announce open positions in different disciplines, the advertisement must include links to separate postings for each of these disciplines so that jobseekers can select their field of expertise when applying.

Although a posting is required for every academic opening, advertising is not required for positions that are not “regular” jobs. To be “regular,” the job must be at 50 percent effort or more, and for a term of at least twelve (12) months.



Openings may also be publicized on departmental/school/institute sites and the like, in which case they must direct people to make application and provide required materials through the Academic Career Opportunities website (or any platform a unit has been authorized to use). Unit channels cannot substitute for the public posting and advertising process.

In addition to advertisements, announcements, and other efforts to publicize the position in appropriate professional association newsletters or journals, search committees should advertise or promote the position to organizations dedicated to advancing the interests of women, underrepresented minorities, individuals with disabilities, and protected veterans in academia generally or in specific fields, including websites of various professional organizations for women and underrepresented minorities.

#### **10. Review advertisements for accuracy**

All advertising must also include the mandatory non-discrimination, Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity, and request for accommodation instructions statements currently in force. These must be identical to those in the ACO posting. Be certain the publisher has included them.

#### **11. Evaluate applicants and monitor the screening process**

The screening process must evaluate each applicant in an objective fashion, using the specific selection *criteria* developed in advance of the actual winnowing of the applicant pool by the search committee to evaluate the evidence that candidates were asked to submit. To ensure that the particular strengths of each applicant are accurately considered and that the strongest candidates are advanced and proposed for appointment, search committee members should refer consistently to the selection criteria.

Effective screening practices lead to a gradual winnowing of the applicant pool, typically to a short list, then to interviewees, and finally to one or more selected candidates. These decisions

to advance an applicant or to remove an applicant from further consideration must be recorded in the applicant tracking system: short list, interviewed, selected, not selected.

## **12. Interview best qualified candidates**

Search committees are expected to interview a number of applicants as part of the screening process. Interviews may be conducted by telephone or video conferencing, via email, or face-to-face, but search committees should strive to apply interview practices consistently to all candidates at the same stages of the screening process unless an individual candidate's personal circumstances require otherwise.

Care must be taken in all interviews to avoid even the appearance of improper bias for or against any candidate; a guide to interviewing practices is available [here](#).

## **13. Write a “search narrative”**

A “search narrative” is *required* with every recommendation. The narrative should give an account of the outreach, pool acquisition, screening, and selection phases of the process. It should explain why the selected applicant was thought to be, with respect to the criteria, the best candidate to bring forward, as compared to the other candidates in the final group, whether that be a short-listed group, or a group that made campus visits. The narrative is expected to lay out the considerations that were salient for the faculty as they compared the candidates in the final group. It must be submitted on the form provided by the Provost's Office. There are no limitations on the length.

Everyone involved in the search process must understand that although extra efforts to attract, for example, underrepresented minority candidates to the pool of applicants are entirely appropriate and encouraged, once the screening process begins, committees must not consider sex, race, ethnicity, membership in a protected class or any other attributes irrelevant to participation in the work of the University.

#### **14. Maintain records during and after the recruitment and hiring process**

Records of all searches (whether the position is filled or not) must be retained by the unit for three (3) years from the date of the last action taken. Such records include copies of all advertisements, all materials sent to and received from individuals who qualify as applicants as well as from all jobseekers who request to be considered for the position but were found not to meet minimum qualifications, any reference letters received, and all documentation of the deliberations of the search committee and the unit, including interview notes and any evaluation records.

At three (3) years, all documents related to the search, in all media, should be destroyed.

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These guidelines help to ensure the University's compliance with:

- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended
- Executive Order 11246, as amended
- Equal Pay Act of 1963
- Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008
- Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
- Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978
- Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended