Anschutz

Search Committee Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

SEARCH COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITY

The search committee's primary responsibility is to use its collective wisdom to translate the charge of the hiring authority into a search strategy. This begins with carefully reviewing the job advertisement, coming to a shared understanding of the listed qualifications and needs of the department, then actively making contacts, tracking down prospective applicants and populating the applicant pool through their individual efforts during the duration of the search.

SEARCH COMMITTEE TRAINING

Q: Are all members of the search committee required to complete search committee training?

A: Yes. The training is available through Percipio, which is accessible via the CU Employee portal. The title of the training is "Search Committee Training". Also, experienced search committee members should share what they've learned, best practices, department-specific processes, and tips/tricks with less-experienced members.

Q: If we have a search committee member who does not have an employee ID, how does that person access the training?

A: The department can set the person up as a Person of Interest (POI) in PeopleSoft HRMS. Once a POI employee ID is obtained, the person can access the training and self-enroll in the course in Percipio. Step-by-step instructions for adding a POI are included on the Payroll & Benefits website at the following link: https://www.cu.edu/doc/hcmsbs-poi-adding-person-interestpdf-9.

MAKEUP OF SEARCH COMMITTEE

Q: Can the hiring authority or hiring manager serve as a member of the search committee?

A: It is not best practice but is allowed. The best practice is for the hiring authority and supervisor to select a committee responsible for establishing a diverse and qualified applicant pool and for forwarding the most qualified candidates as finalists. When hiring authorities and hiring managers serve directly as search committee members, they are more vulnerable to potential claims of bias and discrimination.

Q: Is there a required number of search committee members?

A: No, there is not a required number of committee members, but generally a committee is made up of 3-6 members. The best practice for smaller applicant pools (and entry-to-low level positions) is having no more than 3 or 4 committee members. The best practice for larger applicant pools (and mid-to-high level positions) is having no more than 5 or 6 committee members. The larger the committee, the harder it will be to coordinate schedules, which may lengthen the overall process.

Q: Is there a required makeup of search committee members?

A: No, there is not a required makeup, but generally committees should have various individuals with different perspectives who have knowledge of the position and department's needs. The best practice is to include individuals in the same/similar positions, on the same team, doing directly related work, as well as individuals in different positions, on other teams, doing indirectly related work.

Q: Is it appropriate to share the names of the search committee members with applicants if they request the information?

A: Yes, if the applicant asks for the information, it is fine to share the information, and it demonstrates that the applicant is engaged in the process.

CHARGE OR KICKOFF MEETING

Q: When should a charge meeting occur?

A: This meeting should take place before the position is advertised so the committee can provide feedback on the job advertisement and screening criteria.

Q: Does the hiring authority or hiring manager have to charge the search committee prior to the job advertisement being posted?

A: Yes, the hiring authority should outline the expectations of the search process, including timeline, ranking preference, budget, outreach expectations, etc., to the committee prior to the advertisement being finalized and posted. The best practice is to do this during the search committee's initial meeting. The charge can be shared via e-mail if a meeting is not possible.

DETERMINING TIMEFRAME FOR REVIEWING APPLICATIONS

Q: Is there a required or recommended timeframe for each search?

A: Yes, there is a required minimum posting period of 5 days, but other options as well. Usually, external postings are up for 2 or 3 weeks initially and can be extended if the applicant pool is not strong enough to move forward with interviews. It is best practice to review applications throughout the posting period and to move into interviews within 1 week of the posting deadline or full consideration date.

Q: When can the search committee stop reviewing applicants in the pool?

A: The committee can stop reviewing applicants once the full consideration date or posting deadline has passed, and the pool is strong enough to move into interviews.

Q: Can the posting be taken down before the full consideration date or deadline if we are receiving a lot of applications?

A: No, postings should not be taken down early. Once a deadline or full consideration date has been posted, that date should be honored. Applicants may have seen the original date and are working to gather their materials before then.

Q: Can the posting come down once a set number of applications has been received, for example 50 applications?

A: No, postings should not come down when a set number of applications are received. Doing so rewards only quick applicants, not necessarily the most qualified.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS - BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS & SUBSTITUTIONS

Q: Should behavioral characteristics critical to the position be included in the minimum qualification section of the job ad?

A: No, behavioral characteristics should not be included in the minimum qualifications since they can be difficult to screen for using only application materials. These types of characteristics are easier to assess during interviews with targeted questions. Instead, behavioral characteristics should be included in the Competencies section with other knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Q: Can we or should we include a substitution for required education or experience in the minimum qualifications (i.e., experience sub for a bachelor's degree)?

A: Yes, substitution statements should be used in the minimum qualifications section, and there are options listed in the job description/job advertisement template. Whenever substitution language is used, all committee members should share a clear understanding of how to apply it and which types of education or experience should count.

SCREENING TOOLS

Q: Is the search committee required to use a scoring matrix to determine if applicants meet minimum qualifications/preferred qualifications?

A: A matrix can be used, but it is not mandatory, although it can be very helpful to department HR staff who will need to update applicants' statuses in CU Careers. Search committee members should review applicant materials prior to the meeting at which a decision will be made on who will be invited to interview. The goal is for the committee to discuss candidates and whether they fit the 'yes,' 'maybe,' and 'no' categories for being invited to interview, based on how they compare to the minimum and preferred qualifications. If a matrix is used individually by each committee member, they do not need to be turned in. Any assessment notes should be deleted/shredded after the search is complete.

Q: Can we use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to screen applications?

A: No, at this time it is not recommended that AI tools be used to screen applications or make hiring decisions. Currently, many AI tools available for screening are not vetted for accuracy or bias. Also, the state of Colorado recently passed legislation that will take effect on January 1, 2027, and will strictly regulate these practices, possibly requiring advance notice to applicants. If your college/school/department is interested in exploring the use of specific AI tools in recruiting, please contact your Talent Acquisition Consultant in Central HR for further discussion.

SCREENING FOR MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Q: Can the committee consider an applicant who has not demonstrated that they meet all of the minimum qualifications listed in the job advertisement?

A: No, the committee cannot consider or interview anyone who does not meet all the minimum qualifications. It is important to consider this when creating the job advertisement and to determine whether any minimum qualifications could be moved to preferred qualifications so that good candidates do not self-select out.

Q: Can you exclude an applicant that appears to be over-qualified?

A: If the candidate meets minimum qualifications, you should screen them against preferred qualifications and determine from there if they should be invited for an interview. Generally, "over-qualified" is not in and of itself a disqualifying reason, and it is important not to make assumptions about candidates' wants and needs.

Q: What do we do if we cannot confirm if an applicant meets the minimum qualifications or not?

A: When an applicant's qualifications cannot be confirmed on submitted materials, it is best practice to reach out to the applicant via e-mail to ask for additional information or an updated resume/cover letter. This practice should be done for all applicants in similar situations.

Q: Do we have to interview everyone that meets the minimum qualifications?

A: No. It is best practice to use the preferred qualifications to further narrow the field and help determine a reasonable number of applicants to invite to interviews.

Q: Do we have to interview all internal applicants?

A: No. Internal applicants are not guaranteed an interview and must be at least minimally qualified to be considered.

NOTIFYING NOT SELECTED APPLICANTS/CANDIDATES

Q: When should 'not selected' notifications be sent?

A: As soon as administratively possible during each phase, after it is confirmed the individual(s) are no longer in consideration. Do not wait until the end of the search to notify candidates/applicants who were not selected. Your department HR staff will assist with sending notifications and updating applicants' statuses in CU Careers.

SALARY RANGE

Q: Does the salary range have to be included in the job advertisement?

A: Yes, the Colorado Equal Pay for Equal Work Act requires listing a salary range. In addition to state compliance, including a range gives potential applicants realistic expectations regarding the starting salary. The standard posted salary range is the minimum up to the 50^{th} percentile of the established range for the position classification. However, the department's budget should be taken into consideration, and the posting maximum should be adjusted if the budget max is below the 50^{th} percentile.

Q: Should the salary range and candidate expectations be discussed during interviews?

A: Yes, salary expectations should be discussed early and often to ensure candidates' needs meet our expectations and there are no unwelcome surprises later. The posting range should be shared, along with an explanation that final offers will be based on candidates' qualifications, as well as our internal budget and equity concerns.

Q: Can we ask what a candidate's current salary is, or their salary history?

A: No, current salary and salary history should not be asked of any candidate. As of January 1, 2021, it is illegal in Colorado to base offers on a candidate's current or past salary. Instead, we can share our range and ask candidates if a starting salary in that range is acceptable, or if they have other salary needs/expectations.

INTERVIEWS WITH SEARCH COMMITTEE

Q: Does the search committee have to conduct interviews to determine who will be invited to interview with the hiring authority?

A: Yes. The interviews can be in person, over the phone, or via teleconference (Zoom, Teams, etc.).

Q: Is it necessary to ask applicants the same questions?

A: It is important to ask the same initial questions so that each candidate has the same opportunity to respond to the questions established that will help the committee determine who will be moved forward in the process. It is fine to ask additional, follow-up questions.

Q: Can the search committee ask a follow-up question that is outside of the initial interview questions?

A: Yes, if in the interview the candidate does not address or fully answer a question, a search committee member may ask a follow-up question to clarify the initial question. This provides an opportunity for the committee to accurately assess the candidate's experience if they didn't fully answer the initial interview question. The follow-up question should be related to the initial interview question and job-related.

Q: When should the search committee discuss if the applicant will be moved forward in the process?

A: When scheduling interviews, the committee can allow time between applicants for discussion and schedule time to discuss following all of the interviews. Committee members should be prepared to discuss strengths/weaknesses of each candidate and recommend top candidates for the next round of interviews.

METHOD OF INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

Q: If the committee has three candidates from out of state, one in state, and one internal applicant can the interviews for the out of state candidates be conducted over the phone and in person for the other two applicants?

A: The best practice is to conduct all interviews in the same manner (even if the internal candidate's office is right down the hall from where the interviews will be conducted). If an alternative approach is taken, it is best for the applicant to request it to avoid claims of discrimination and bias.

SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO CAN'T MAKE ALL MEETINGS/INTERVIEWS

Q: If members of the search committee can't make all of the meetings or interviews, can they evaluate the candidates they missed?

A: No, they should provide input only for those who they have personally interviewed.

Q: If members of the search committee can't make all of the interviews, can the interviews be recorded (audio and/or video) for them to view later?

A: No, interviews should not be recorded in any format. This raises a number of legal concerns regarding how the recordings will be used, the format and retention period, notification and sign-off from applicants/candidates, etc.

FEEDBACK FROM SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Search Committee Notes

Q: Are the notes that search committee members take during the search process available to the hiring authority?

A: Search committee members may share their verbal or written information and assessments. Some hiring authorities request a candidate summary with strengths and weaknesses that may include some form of the search committee notes, if not the actual notes. The search committee cannot, however, be required to take personal notes or make them legible or comprehensible to someone else. Ultimately, destroy all versions of the notes as soon as possible after the search is completed, since the applicant review matrix or search summary provides the documented record of how the search occurred.

Q: Can a member of the search committee who has first-hand knowledge regarding the performance of an applicant share the information with the committee?

A: Yes, the search committee member should share the information with the committee. If unsolicited feedback is received from sources outside the committee, consider who is providing it and their possible motives. It should be firsthand knowledge rather than hearsay.

SPOUSAL HIRE

Q: Can the search committee commit to hiring the spouse of a finalist?

A: No. However, the search committee should refer them to the CU Careers site to explore opportunities. They can also refer them to specific job openings to apply for and be considered.

FAMILY AND FRIEND HIRES

Q: Can the search committee commit to hiring other family members or friends of a finalist?

A: No, this would be considered a conflict of interest. The search committee can refer them to review current job openings on the CU Careers site. The individual would need to apply in order to be considered for a role. If the individual is a family/friend of a search committee member, they should refrain from providing feedback on the candidate to avoid a conflict of interest.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKS

Q: Should a search committee member(s) conduct social media checks on candidates?

A: No. Search committee members must avoid social media checks during active searches because they introduce illegal bias, rely on out-of-context data, and compromise the fairness of a standardized evaluation process. If the search committee has concerns, they should work with their HR business partner for further guidance.

REFERENCE CHECKS

Q: Is it necessary to check references for internal candidates?

A: Yes, references should always be checked prior to making an offer, even for current CU employees who may be promoted or transferred into a new position. The only time reference checking would not be necessary is when the hiring manager for the vacant position is also the candidate's current supervisor.

Q: Should you notify a candidate prior to checking references?

A: Yes, this is good candidate care practice in the reference checking process. It lets the candidate know that you are interested in moving forward with them. Also, it gives the candidate an opportunity to notify their references, so the references can finalize quicker.

Q: Is it appropriate for search committee members to contact colleagues at the employer of the applicant to check them out?

A: No, you must ask the applicant if it is okay to check listed references as well as off-list references (including colleagues). References are checked at the finalist stage, after final round interviews.

Q: Should the search committee or the hiring authority conduct the reference checks?

A: It can be completed by either party, but references are generally completed by the hiring manager or hiring authority. Additionally, Central HR provides an online reference-checking service called Crosschq that collects reference information through an online survey.