

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Search Committee Chair Guidelines

The search committee chair serves as the leader of the search committee, coordinating the committee and facilitating the relationship between the committee and the hiring manager for the search. The search committee chair should facilitate committee meetings and must have completed [DiversityEdu](#) before they have access to review applications in Cornerstone.

The chair has an important responsibility and must ensure that everything that must happen throughout the search process, does happen, whether they perform the function or delegate to others. The committee chair can call upon the hiring manager, search coordinator, EEO Officer, OAE, or other ex-officio members to assist them in completing the duties of the position. The chair should hold a position at the same level as or a higher level than the vacant position.

The list provided below includes some of the typical responsibilities of the search chair.

Getting Started

- Complete the [Search Committee Chair](#) training.
- Meet with the hiring manager to develop a search plan.

Committee Guidance

- Confirm that all committee members have completed the [DiversityEdu](#) online program (required every three years). If the search committee member is external to the University of Illinois, they will not complete DiversityEdu. Search committee members who need to complete the program will receive an email with instructions, but it is recommended all search committee members complete the program as soon as they are assigned the role.
- The hiring manager should attend the first meeting to provide the committee charge. The search chair will review the charge with the committee at subsequent meetings, as needed.
- Develop timelines at the first search committee meeting, including plans for screening dates, future meetings, and interview schedule.
- Review expectations of confidentiality and attendance. All committee members, including the diversity advocate, are expected to attend all search committee meetings.

Job Description and Position Announcement

- Discuss the following with the hiring manager:
 - Using gender-neutral titles, checking pronouns and avoiding use of gender-charged words and superlatives (use [Gender Decoder Tool](#)).
 - Limiting the number of minimum requirements to broaden the pool of qualified applicants.
 - Posting duration is a reasonable amount of time to recruit a diverse pool of applicants.
 - Deciding what types of materials applicants will be required to submit that are job related (i.e., cover letter, resume/CV, teaching philosophy, diversity statement, etc.).
- Review position announcement with the hiring manager and all members of the search committee, as well as other stakeholders, as appropriate.

Diversity of the Applicant Pool: Recruiting, Advertising, & Networking

- In collaboration with diversity advocate, develop a recruitment strategy to ensure a diverse and talented pool of applicants. Good faith efforts (GFEs) should include outreach sources to attract underrepresented groups (women, minorities, veterans, individuals with disabilities).
 - Identify publications, websites, listservs, institutions, personal/direct contacts, professional social media groups, etc.
 - All search committee members should actively participate in networking, seeking out and recruiting qualified, diverse candidates.
 - Remind search committee members to save a copy of any postings/emails or notes regarding GFEs and provide information to the search coordinator.
- Before the search closes, review diversity of the applicant pool report (which can be requested by the department HR employee) and inform hiring manager and/or search coordinator of the characteristics of the pool if it is not sufficiently large or diverse. The announcement can be extended before the close date, to conduct additional outreach, if needed.

Reviewing Applications and Selecting Finalists

- Prior to the review of any application materials, determine a plan to screen and evaluate candidates in a fair and equitable manner, as well as how screening decisions will be documented.
 - Agree upon ground rules for evaluating candidates, including how you will vote.
 - Agree on job-related evaluation criteria and develop a written outline that will be used by all committee members (i.e., checklist, rating form, spreadsheet, etc.)
 - Agree on rules of discussion and how to handle disagreement.
 - Avoid comments (either orally or in notes) that are not job related.
 - If bias is noticed, speak out and redirect the conversation.
 - Be aware of the possibility of your own implicit bias.
 - Agree on a method for determining who will be invited to interview.
 - Consider alternatives to rank ordering, such as summaries of each semi-finalist.
- All applicants will need to be assigned a [status/disposition code in Cornerstone](#).

Interviews Process

- Identify stakeholder groups you wish candidates to meet who are not on the search committee.
- Design a plan for the interview process and campus visits that provides similar opportunities for each finalist and follows interview procedures which treat all applicants equitably and consistently.
- Develop specific job-related questions to ask during interviews. All candidates should be asked the same core set of questions, allowing for individualized follow-up questions as needed.
 - For topics to avoid please see: [pre-employment inquiries – topics to avoid](#).
 - Consider including a [diversity related interview question](#).
- Create an interview rating sheet. Provide this to each interviewer before the interview and explain the importance of completing it based on job-related criteria.
- Ensure that someone has scheduled online meetings and/or room reservations.

Checking References

- Use the [reference checking guidelines](#).
- Provide reference check notes to the search coordinator and/or hiring manager. The notes should include the name and title of person(s) contacted, the date they were contacted, if they are a personal or professional reference, and summary of their responses/feedback.

Completing the search

- Search chair and search committee meets with hiring manager to give feedback.
- Complete search paperwork and obtain required approvals before making the offer.
- Ensure offer letter is prepared for finalist (in coordination with hiring manager).
- Keep all non-selected applicants informed on the progress of the search.

Resources

- [Search Process Toolkit](#)
- [Job Aids](#)