Search Committee Training Outline

Welcome to the University of Missouri System's Search Committee Training

Thank you for your time! Your participation on search committees is essential to ensuring we build a community that reflects the varied perspectives needed to drive innovation and excellence in our educational, academic, research and outreach endeavors.

Topics we will cover in this training:

University System Values Commitment

I. **Stages of a Search and Internal Roles and Responsibilities**

1) Position Preparation
    - Role of the Committee
    - Develop Key Priorities and Attributes to Create the Position Announcement
    - Recruitment Plan: The Importance of Scouting and Proactive Candidate Recruitment
2) Candidate Screening and Selection
    - Importance of Confidentiality
    - Recognizing and Minimizing Implicit Bias in the Selection Process
        - Definition of Bias
        - Examples of common Types of Bias during the Selection Process
        - How to recognize Bias
        - The Importance of Rubrics to minimize Bias
    - Get ready for Interviewing / Interview questions
    - Create a great candidate experience
        - Candidate Communication
        - Visits
    - Making a Recommendation to the Hiring Manager
3) Candidate Vetting and Offer
4) Hiring

University System Values Commitment

“We value the uniqueness of every individual and strive to ensure each person’s success. Contributions from individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives promote intellectual pluralism and enable us to achieve the excellence that we seek in learning, research and engagement. This commitment makes our university a better place to work, learn and innovate.”

II. Stages of the Search Process and Internal Roles and Responsibilities

There are four stages of the process, **formally** beginning with preparing and publishing the position opening; however, recruitment can be considered an ongoing activity where we must be working to build important relationships with colleagues within your field. Success in each recruitment is influenced by the ongoing efforts to build awareness of the university and is an opportunity to further enhance the reputation of the university.

A. Position Preparation
B. Candidate Screening and Selection
C. Offer
D. Hiring

Internal Roles and Responsibilities:

A. Hiring Authority
   For faculty searches the hiring authority is typically the unit dean. For administrative searches the hiring authority is typically the unit dean or a senior administrative officer. It is their responsibility to set expectations with the committee and share what the primary characteristics, strength and traits of a new hire should be. The hiring authority also decides if a formal offer is extended to a selectant.
B. Search Committee
   The search committee is a representative body for the unit that is being hired into (and potentially adjacent units) and serves at the discretion and pleasure of the hiring authority. It is their role to help attract, identify, screen, interview and recommend candidates that meet the characteristics, strength and traits defined by the hiring authority.
C. Chair(s) of the Seach Committee
   The chair(s) of a search committee lead(s) all efforts of the search committee and typically covers all communications with candidates. They also update the hiring authority on a regular basis and have a key role in ensuring timelines as well as position priorities are met. Oftentimes they also cover parts of the negotiations and/or vetting process on behalf of the hiring authority.

A) Position Preparation

While the hiring decision is most often made by a person in a specific role (aka Hiring Authority), the approach to recruitment and hiring is commonly a collaborative effort.

1. **Role of the Committee during this stage:**

Committees are often tasked with crafting or reviewing a draft of the position description, developing a recruitment plan, and actively networking/searching for qualified candidates and encouraging them to apply. The use of a committee in the search process provides the opportunity to include a variety of values and perspectives, thereby enriching the decision-making process.

2. **Tips / Consider the following when composing a search committee:**

- Include individuals who will provide a range of different perspectives and expertise BUT do not overburden members of specific groups or create an imbalance in perspectives.
- Balance committee composition with seniority and length of service recognizing that less experienced colleagues have much to offer while respecting the unique challenges those colleagues face. Be mindful of their need to balance service commitments with other activities.
- The hiring authority should clarify the expected deliverables at the outset of the search process.

3. **Develop Key Priorities and Attributes to Create the Position Announcement**:

- One very important task for the selection committee is to create or refine the position announcement.
- The announcement is an important tool in hiring, one that provides the blueprint for attracting and selecting candidates to the role.
- It is important to be accurate, precise, and appealing about the position you are seeking to fill. Identify tangible minimum qualifications as well as other factors the candidate will be evaluated by to determine the finalist pool.
- For faculty searches the job description should address the disciplinary expertise the unit is looking for, including research areas the department seeks to grow as well as specific courses that need to be taught.

Other suggestions to consider when crafting the position announcement:

- Consider leaving the posting open until filled and give primary consideration to colleagues who apply by a certain date, rather than posting with a firm application deadline.
- If visa-sponsorship will be available for this role, consult with your HR or recruitment colleague(s) to ensure the posting meets all legal requirements.
- It is often recommended to list desirable traits, rather than required qualifications only. However, be mindful of drafting a position description that could be overly constraining or causes potential candidates to self-select out of the search.

- If a salary range is identified, the newly hired colleague's actual salary should fall within that range.
- All administrative and staff positions are classified. Minimum requirements for each position are derived from UM System job codes.
- All academic roles are unclassified and minimum qualifications need to be set at a level to reflect basic qualifications (e.g., education level, training, years of experience) that must be met for continued candidate consideration.
- Note that an assistant professor level position cannot be filled as an associate or full professor level position (or vice-versa). If you would like to preserve flexibility for what rank to hire into, consider posting academic positions as open rank (presuming appropriate campus approvals to do so).
- Consider adding verbiage to the posting that references will be requested for finalists and transcripts may need to be provided once an offer is extended.

B) Job Announcement

As the job announcement is crafted, it is important to include information that presents the unit's competitiveness, uniqueness, evidence of competencies, research programs, outreach to community, and departmental culture.

Tips

- Outline special opportunities with specific groups or settings within the department, college, university, and community at large (e.g., inner-city communities, special library collections, industrial plants, research reactors, etc.)
- Describe professional development opportunities such as mentoring, intercampus collaborations, internal grant funding, and global learning and research opportunities.
- Consider a wide range of perceptions of attractiveness when incorporating information about your location. Be specific about any competitive advantages (e.g., schools, hospitals, parks, cultural amenities, outdoor recreation, and other nearby attractions).
- This is a good chance to appeal to the mission of the university, its values, and how those are demonstrated in this unit and role. Use language consistent with the stated university mission, values, etc.

4. Recruitment Plan: The Importance of Scouting and <u>Proactive</u> Candidate Recruitment

Recruiting is more than just advertising in a journal or listserv and waiting for interested persons to apply. Recruiting great candidates should be considered an ongoing activity and start long before you have a job vacancy to fill. You should be seeking to make positive impressions to potential candidates for your department as you go to conferences, participate in sponsored events, or serve on professional association committees. When your department has a specific position to fill, it is easier and more effective to engage people with whom you already have an established relationship and try to attract them to the specific openings at that time.

Tips for Scouting and Proactive Recruitment

Scouting:

- **Consider recruiting an ongoing activity:** Rather than treating recruitment as a rare and special occasion, develop the habit of regularly 'scouting' for potential talent who would advance your unit's mission.
- **Focus on reputation and relationship building:** Build a relationship with potential future applicants so the unit is well positioned to attract top talent when there is an opening.
- **Establish and communicate a long-term plan:** Ensure long-term hiring plans for the unit are regularly updated and broadly discussed with the whole unit to create awareness of current and anticipated needs.
- **All members of the unit/department are recruiters:** Encourage all members of the unit to use conferences as well as lectures and seminars at other institutions to highlight their home unit serving as ambassadors to those that might consider joining you.
- **Be strategic about who you invite:** Consider hosting targeted events and inviting potential future applicants to lecture and seminar series. Think openly about building 'pipelines' of prospective candidates (e.g. graduate students for post-docs/junior faculty and individuals with certain experiences that will complement or expand the unit's current faculty).
- **Advance your local scouting opportunities:** Broaden your local scouting scope by engaging with graduate students from adjacent units.

Proactive Recruitment:

- **Define your ideal candidate profile and craft a clear message:** Clearly identify the skills required as well as the experiences sought and tailor your messages to attract potential candidates who match the profile.
- **Utilize various channels (nominations, networking, etc.) and follow up consistently:** Ensure all members of the unit are aware of the search and invite them to nominate people from their network and colleges they have 'scouted'. Exhaust all options to identify or 'source' candidates through multiple channels, maintain regular follow-ups, and adapt your approach for an effective outreach strategy. Often these targeted candidates are doing similar work at comparable or aspirational peer organizations and/or universities. Think first about who does this work well and target those individuals and others like them.
- **Engage in meaningful conversations and build a brand:** Engage in thoughtful two-way communication (illustrating your group's values, culture, and

personality) to build trust and interest with potential candidates. Consider unit leadership or the chair(s) of the committee personally contacting qualified prospects. You may include an invitation to the chair(s) of the committee to have a conversation with the potential applicant to encourage them to apply.

- **Be equitable in outreach and discussions with candidates:** Have a consistent approach with all candidates to ensure there is equity among those interested in being considered. Track centrally who is being engaged and how, and any outcomes so there is a record of activity.

Be realistic and deliberate with all Scouting and Active Recruitment efforts: Scouting activities as well as Active Recruitment will likely help achieve strong candidate pools but are not a guarantee for an actual hire. Therefore, unit members should be careful to build realistic expectations with prospects and NOT overpromise and/or guarantee an interview or job offer.

As part of your overall recruitment strategy, it is important to outline specific plans to generate a pool of well-qualified individuals. Start by asking:

- What are the needs of the unit?
- What disciplinary expertise is the unit looking for? What research areas does the unit seek to grow? What specific courses need to be taught?
- What are the primary characteristics, strengths and traits the hiring authority is looking for?
- What does it take to succeed in this position, and where do we find people with the skillset needed to be successful? How do we ensure that all qualified candidates hear about and are motivated to apply for our open position?
- How do we promote awareness among individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives and attract them to apply?

Early in the search process, search committees should have a focused discussion and outline together their recruitment plan for the search. Further details and resources can be found in the Recruitment Toolkit.

2: Candidate Screening and Selection

Role of the Committee during this stage:

Aside from recruiting, the search committee also plays a major role in candidate screening. In this section we will address some tools and strategies to help support objectivity as you make these important decisions and/or recommendations.

Importance of Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is a critical aspect of any search process.

Here are the key points to consider:

- Strict confidentiality about the candidate pool and committee deliberations and discussions.
- This process must be a safe place for our candidates' as well as committee members' viewpoints.
- We can and should be transparent about our stage in the process with those outside the committee but hold in confidence the numbers and identities of candidates until the appropriate time to share.
- It is important to note that this confidentiality **does** extend <u>beyond</u> the hiring decision.

Once the deadline for applications has ended, the committee should screen all applications in a timely and organized manner. During the review process, **it is important, and a best practice, to utilize a consistent approach to evaluate application materials based on the criteria outlined for the position.**
We want to **test the candidates' illustrated experiences against the desired criteria stated in the job announcement**.

Tips: Evidence to use to assess candidates during the different stages of the search:

Focus on:
- Evidence that candidates meet your *minimum qualifications.* - This information can be gleaned from their application materials.
- *Potential of the candidate* to conduct duties and activities associated with the position. - This should be assessed at each stage of the selection process (demonstrated through previous experiences listed in the application materials, responses to interview questions, and demonstrations or work samples, if applicable).
- Role-specific traits such as leadership characteristics, technical skills, or a research program that complements departmental goals. - This should be assessed at each stage of the selection process (demonstrated through previous experiences listed in the application materials, responses to interview questions, and demonstrations or work samples, if applicable).
- Evidence of alignment with the university's values commitment to ensure intellectual pluralism. - The committee can look for evidence of this alignment in the candidate's cover letter and other written statements included in their application materials. Questions asked during the interview should also provide an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their understanding of and alignment with UM System values.

Examples of interview questions for a wide variety of skills and characteristics can be found in the Recruitment Toolkit. Please find the link to the Recruitment Toolkit at the end of this training.

Recognizing and Minimizing Implicit Bias in the Selection Process

In candidate selection, biases can impact the process by causing committees and hiring managers to assess candidates based on non-job-related factors such as age, gender, race, appearance, or personal connections, rather than focusing solely on their qualifications and abilities.

Definition of Bias:

- Bias refers to the tendency of individuals, intentionally or unintentionally, to favor certain characteristics or traits of a candidate leading to unfair judgments or decisions (whether intentional or not)
- Biases can lead to the exclusion of highly qualified candidates who may bring valuable perspectives and skills to the organization.

Examples of common Types of Bias during the Selection Process

- **Similarity Bias**- Tendency to connect with others who share your interests, experiences, and background.
- **Confirmation Bias**- Searching for, interpreting, favoring, and recalling information in a way that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values
- **Contrast Bias** – Comparing candidates to each other and exaggerating the performance of one in contrast to the other
- **Superficial Bias** – Evaluating candidates by position-irrelevant factors like appearance, perceived friendliness, etc.
- **Halo Effect Bias -** Cognitive bias in which our evaluation of a person is disproportionately shaped by one impressive characteristic, such as attending an elite school.

How to recognize Bias?

- **Listen actively and reflect:** Pay close attention to the language and comments made during discussions, including your own, and be mindful of any stereotypes, assumptions, or judgments based on personal characteristics that may surface.
- **Question decision-making:** If certain candidates are consistently favored or disfavored without clear job-related reasons, it could indicate bias. Encourage open dialogue to challenge assumptions and ensure decisions are based on objective criteria. This reinforces the need for confidentiality among the committee members and respectful dialogue in deliberations.
- **Seek diverse perspectives**: Engage a diverse group of team members in the hiring discussions to bring different perspectives and experiences, which can help identify and mitigate biases that might otherwise go unnoticed.

The Importance of Rubrics to Minimize Bias

- **Rubrics can add structure and fairness to the review process** by ensuring that all reviewers begin the process with the same understanding of what qualifications are needed to be successful in the role. These parameters are to be established before candidate materials are reviewed.

- **Rubric criteria should be linked directly to and based strictly on the position announcement,** and it is advisable that the search committee dedicate some time to the creation and discussion of the rubric early in the search process and particularly before candidate evaluations have begun. Rubric criteria are to include minimum qualifications as well as other characteristics described in the position announcement. They must be legally permissible and should be developed with an eye toward avoiding bias and promoting the university's commitment to intellectual pluralism.
- **At the conclusion of the search, we must be able to state with confidence why certain candidates were recommended** and that they are the best qualified based on the written position requirements.

Take Away about Bias

As an individual and a committee, it is important to recognize and avoid the impact of both positive and negative stereotypes and bias. Stereotypes and bias could prevent selecting the best qualified candidates. Build a culture that encourages others to note any potential instances of implicit bias.

Get ready for Interviewing / Develop Interview Questions

Utilizing the agreed upon rubric criteria, develop 5 – 10 questions focused on the key attributes of the role to gain additional information from each applicant. The questions need to be focused on the experience of the candidate by asking for specific examples of behaviors and experiences.

Tips: Structured Interview Format:

- A structured interview format ensures a consistent approach across candidates and gives the search committee the opportunity to link interview questions directly with job criteria and the evaluation rubric.
- As a committee, discuss and design 5-10 questions focused on the key attributes of the role before the interview and identify the methodology of who will ask which question and when.
- Ensure that each candidate is allotted an equal amount of time for the interview and that they are all provided with an opportunity to answer all the questions within that allotted time. For this reason, it may be helpful to refrain from asking follow-up or clarifying questions until all questions are answered, then use the remaining time to ask additional questions and provide the candidate with an opportunity to ask questions of the committee.

What questions to avoid

- **IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE** to ask about or discuss protected status, even if/when applicants volunteer information: sexual orientation, marital/familial status, religion, gender identity/expression, national origin/ethnicity/culture, veteran status, race, or disability status.

- If this information is volunteered by the applicant:
    - First approach the situation by thanking them for their input without further comment.
    - If a candidate repeatedly addresses information about their protected status, redirect the discussion. For example:
        - Thank you for sharing about your identity as _______. We cannot consider that status itself in hiring decisions, but we are interested in what your experiences say about you as an individual and your qualifications. What would you like us to take away from your experiences as an individual and how they make you a good candidate for this position?
    - If they have a question related to protected status,
        - Offer general information about the emphasis of the University values commitment in all areas.
        - Offer to engage with the right personnel (HR and/or General Counsel's office) to find answers to specific questions they may have in relation to the topic.

Create a Great Candidate Experience

Recruitment activities can easily be seen as opportunities to market the university as a great place to work. Each recruitment is another chance to leave a good impression with individuals so be intentional about creating a positive experience through consideration of their needs and interests as well as being equitable each interested person.

Candidate Communication

Throughout the search, particularly when it comes to interviews, committees begin to engage in additional communication with candidates – including those who are selected for further consideration and those who are not. Consider the following best practices in candidate communication:

- When inviting candidates to interview, provide information about whom they will meet, the format of the interview, length of the interview, where to meet, and any other pertinent details (e.g., "We'd like you to specifically speak to XYZ skills/experiences…")
- When extending an invite to a candidate, ensure to inquire if the candidate is under consideration by any other UM System campus, relative to CRR 320.100 Faculty Recruitment Conflict Guideline.
- If there are candidates who do not meet the minimum qualifications for the search, it is acceptable to notify them at this stage that they will not be considered further in the process.

- If there are candidates that surpass the minimum qualifications but will no longer be considered as part of the candidate pool, it is acceptable to notify them at this stage that they are no longer being considered.
- When communicating regrets to a candidate, be concise and express your appreciation for their time and interest in the position. Do NOT focus on the candidate's shortcomings, rather share that the selected/recommended candidate more closely met the criteria the committee was looking for.
- When communicating regrets to a candidate, phone calls are strongly recommended if the candidate might be considered for another position in the future.

Virtual Interviews

- If you interview candidates utilizing technology like ZOOM or Teams keep the candidate experience in mind and create a welcoming atmosphere.

Tips for interviews with a focus on virtual interviews:

Choreography

- Choose a meeting host/interview facilitator (usually the committee chair) to host the virtual meeting. The host should establish a 'virtual waiting room' and control who comes in and out of the 'virtual waiting room'. This will allow the committee time to discuss any last-minute logistics before the candidate is admitted to the virtual interview room.
- Ideally interview questions are assigned ahead of time by the host, but they may also be assigned immediately prior to admitting the candidate to the meeting.
- The meeting host should communicate to the committee and candidate a clear, well-defined process for starting and ending the interview, including handling candidate questions.
- The meeting host will walk the candidate through the interview, manage the Q&A, facilitate question progression, and manage follow up questions from the committee.
- As the interview begins, each member of the committee should introduce themselves. If several committee members are together in a room, raise your hand when talking so the candidate can see who you are (your image will be quite small from their perspective).
- There will be greater gaps between questions and answers in virtual interviews due to sound and video delay. Confirm the candidate has heard your question, then give them time to answer.
- For longer or multi-part questions, it might be helpful to post the questions in the chat for candidates to read as it is asked.
- Most committee members have experience with video technology for in-person conversations. Use your collective experience to determine the best methods for handling follow-up questions. Solutions vary depending upon the platform.

Create the right environment for a great candidate experience

- Set up your computer equipment in a quiet location for the interview.

- Mute your phone.
- Reduce noise distraction (e.g., music, TV, pets, traffic)
- Turn off your Outlook and other communication applications.
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Video

- If the room's background is in view, tidy up as needed and keep it looking presentable or use an appropriate virtual background.
- Make sure the lighting source is sufficient for the time of the interview.
- Use indirect light in front of your face (not coming from behind you)
- Keep your video on throughout the whole interview and the committee debrief.
- Test the quality of your camera; if the quality is poor, consider borrowing an alternate one or using a different workstation with a better camera for the interview.
- Take note of how your face appears on your monitor. Look into the direction of the camera.

Audio

- If possible, use an external microphone to improve the audio quality and to avoid picking up unwanted sounds or echo from the speakers.
- Consider using a headset rather than the speakers as often the sound quality is better, and any echo/feedback will be eliminated.
- Test the audio levels by speaking into the microphone just as you will during the interview.
- Pay attention to your vocal volume and clarity.
- Keep your audio on mute throughout the interview until it is time for you to ask a question.

Internet connection and computer operation

- Test the speed of your internet connection.
- Make any adjustments that will optimize its performance. Consider closing unnecessary applications that may compromise bandwidth.
- Be prepared to address unexpected interruptions with professionalism.

Professional Behavior

- Remember, we are trying to recruit the candidate, so how you present yourself tells the candidate a great deal about the institution.
- Dress professionally as if you were there in person.
- Remember that you may be visible and/or audible prior to and following, the formal start and end of your meeting.
- Body language is important, particularly eye contact; do your best to replicate that via the technology (i.e. look at the camera, not the screen when possible).
- Create quick access for yourself to important documents so you don't have to leave the camera view and create a distraction.

- Keep a muted phone accessible with the scheduled teleconference number as a backup should there be issues connecting from either end.

Emergencies

- If the technology fails, the meeting host should be prepared to get the candidate reconnected to the meeting as soon as feasible. Please do not leave the meeting as it may take several minutes to engage audio and video to resume the interview discussion.

Recording of Interviews

- The permission to record an interview should be granted by each candidate and is generally voluntary.
- If you intend to record interviews, maintain the candidate's written permission on file.
- If the candidate does NOT give permission to record, do not record the interview.
- If permission is granted, make sure to store the recoding in a tool that is provided by the University (e.g., Teams, OneDrive) and only allow access to the recoding behind a Single Sign On (SSO). Make sure the recording is NOT downloadable.
- Recordings may be used and accessed by those persons, including employees and contractors of University, directly or indirectly participating in the evaluation of the candidacy.
- Once those involved in the evaluation process had the opportunity to access the recording, the recording should be deleted.

Campus Visit

- If on-campus interviews are part of your search, approach the visit with an enthusiastic attitude. Highlight the unique advantages of the University and its location (for example: people, traditions, restaurants, and events).
- Tailor the visit schedule to include activities or meetings that appeal to the candidate's specific interests and could serve as possible selling points (for example: visit centers or initiatives on campus, and meetings with community organizations of interest to the candidate).
- Provide finalists a detailed itinerary as far in advance as possible.
- To allow for an equitable process ensure the interview modality is consistent for all candidates and design all itineraries similarly, including those of internal candidates.
- Make sure to communicate with candidates about accommodation and/or dietary restrictions.
- Include in your communications the statement: "If you anticipate needing accommodations during the interview, please let us know."
- Be sure that individuals involved in planning and executing the campus visits are aware of university policies and procedures. The Dean's office, the Provost's office, or the Office of Human Resources and their recruitment personnel are the best resources for such information and are happy to assist.
- Job talks are an important part of campus visits for faculty as well as administrative searches. The job talk allows for candidates to showcase their experience and provides

internal constituents with the opportunity to assess the candidates' skills. Make arrangements ahead of time to ensure a smooth process and a great, distraction-free experience.

- Select a time that works for most constituents to ensure good attendance.
- Reserve a location that accommodates the number of colleagues you are expecting.
- Familiarize yourself with the technology in the room and be prepared to assist candidates. Connect with IT ahead of time if you need assistance.
- Build in buffer time to allow for smooth transitioning before and after the talk and grant the candidate time to prepare before the talk.
- Keep modalities for the job talk consistent across all candidates. Use the same prompt for all candidates. Allot the same amount of time to all candidates for their talk as well as a potential Q&A following the talk. Make sure to stay on time.
- Communicate to the candidate how the job talk will be structured and what to expect, including allotted time, technology in the room and expected audience. Consider having a phone conversation with the candidates to ensure they feel prepared.
- Advertise the job talk across your unit and invite other constituents, as appropriate to the role well ahead of time. Consider sending a reminder a day before the talk.
- If the job talk should be live streamed or recorded permission should be granted by each candidate and is generally voluntary. Follow the same recommendations as outlined above in the section 'Recording of Interviews'.

Making a Recommendation to the Hiring Authority:

- **Examine Your Reasoning**
  Expect each search committee member to justify their advocacy for accepting or rejecting an applicant.
- **Consult Your Criteria**
  Ensure that all committee members base their justification on criteria established for the position and evidence within the applicant's record.
- **Admit and Challenge Your Biases**
  Do not permit discussion of protected status in committee deliberations. Be open to discussing concerns with your fellow committee members.
- **Avoid Ranking and Instead Establish Viability**
  While it is natural to compare candidates and rank them in order of preference, know that often the person making the hiring decision may encounter challenges in successfully hiring some candidates. Rather, identify those of the interviewed candidates that appear viable (i.e. qualified and likely capable of being successful).
- **Live the University's Value Commitment**
  The committee should discuss alignment with our institutional values, especially when considering otherwise comparable applicants.

The committee concludes their work with making a recommendation to the hiring authority.

3: Candidate Vetting and Offer
Once the committee presents recommendations to the hiring authority, the hiring process moves to the vetting and offer stage. At this stage of the search the chair(s) of the committee might be asked to assist with vetting and other duties, but mainly this part is covered by the hiring authority. Search committee members should only engage in this process, if explicitly invited to lead those efforts by the hiring authority.

Candidate Vetting Processes:
While the recruitment, screening and interview process is quite thorough, it is imperative that candidate vetting be completed. This is often accomplished through reference checking as it is important that we seek third party validation of what we believe to be the preferred candidate(s) capabilities and experiences that make them desirable to join our university.

Benefits of a strong vetting process:

- You can ensure your applicant is truthful and honest about their qualifications
- You can ensure your applicant's values align with the institutional values
- You can ensure your applicant can handle the workload that comes with the job

For these reasons reference checks, background checks and educational verifications are required for most openings within the University System. Please check with your HR-Partner or Recruitment professional, if you are unsure which vetting process is appropriate for the role you are recruiting for.

Reference Checks:

- Reference checks should be conducted consistently~~.~~
- Collecting references is a two-way communication between the potential hiring authority (or their designee) and a colleague willing to serve as a reference.
- References may be collected by phone, in written form, or use of a reference tool(s).
- Your unit might be interested in collecting reference letters to allow for a better assessment, but those letters are NOT a substitute for reference checks.
  - If reference letters are part of your process, they should be verified, and this might lead to the opportunity to learn about additional accomplishments.
- Openings within the University System generally require that a minimum of 2-3 references be collected and documented. At least one of them should be a current or past supervisor to be confident in the hiring decision yielding positive results for the university.

On-list references

- Applicants for an opening within the University are required to submit a list of references. Those names are referred to as 'on-list' references.

- Candidates gave consent to reach out to those colleagues upon application, but it is recommended you inform them when the referencing process is about to begin. This provides them the opportunity to inform listed colleagues ahead of time.

Referencing tools

- Referencing tools help verification of skills and check references in an automated way. They have fast turnaround times, help reduce bias and are more likely to result in candid evaluation and honest feedback since they allow for anonymous responses.
- If you are interested in using referencing tools, please reach out to your HR representative or Recruitment colleague for details. They are happy to walk you and the candidate through this step.
- You will receive a reference report (including ratings and responses to various job relevant questions) after a couple of days.

Tips for on-list references over the phone

- Reach out to on-list references to schedule a good time for a reference call. This will allow for them to prepare for the call.
- Prepare 3-6 questions that align with the position profile and pose them to the colleague who agreed to serve as a reference. If you are referencing multiple finalists, ask the same questions.
- Ask the colleague, who is serving as a reference, if they would like to share any additional information that we, as a potential future employer, should be aware of.
- Take notes during the call for documentation purposes.

Tips for written references

- Approach on-list references with a formal email request to obtain a written reference and give them enough time to respond to your request.
- To ensure the written reference allows for a two-way communication write up 3-6 questions that align with the position profile and invite the individual to respond to them. If you are referencing multiple finalists, ask the same questions. This will help minimize bias.
- Consider inviting the colleague who is serving as a reference to share additional topics that we, as a potential future employer, should be aware of.
- Save responses for documentation purposes.

Off-list references

- All on-list references should be conducted before you consider contacting off-list references.
- If the on-list references meet or exceed expectations, there is likely no need to collect off-list references.

- If you detect red flags or inconsistencies during your regular on-list references but still want to consider the candidate, you should collect off-list references.
- Off-list references are individuals not named as on-list references. Off-list references are to be identified by you/individuals closely involved in the recruitment process to serve as an additional source of information about the applicant prior to making a hiring recommendation or decision.
- Prior to completing off-list inquiries, inform the candidate you are going to contact off-list references.
- Just as with on-list references, these actions should be completed by a single person or small group of persons closely connected to the recruitment process itself (e.g., hiring authority, chair of search committee, and/or HR recruiter/consultant).
- Contact subject matter experts in the Provost Office or the office of Human Resources if you have further questions about off-list references, before taking actions.

Testing
Some roles within the University come with duties that require testing (e.g., physical abilities, drug testing, etc). Please engage your HR-Partner or Recruitment colleague to ensure all mandatory testing has been completed and requirements for certain roles are met.

Background Checks
Background Checks are a requirement for all employees within the University System and are administered by the Office of Human Resources.
Depending on role and responsibilities different forms of background checks will be conducted by a third-party vendor, and you will be informed if the candidate meets the requirements of the specific role.

Education Verification
Most academic roles within the University require specific educational verifications for accreditation as well as compliance purposes. Many educational verifications are collected as part of the mandatory background checks, others must be collected separately. Please reach out to your HR-Partner or Recruitment colleague to ensure all requirements for certain roles are met.

Offer Processes
The role of the committee is to make a candidate recommendation to the hiring authority. For some searches, committee members may drive aspects of the vetting process, but the formal offer process is the responsibility of the hiring authority.
The hiring authority (or their designee) negotiates, prepares, and extends the offer, after consideration of the committee’s recommendation and other stakeholder feedback.

- The hiring authority (or their designee) identifies the desired offer parameters during the negotiation process and seeks the necessary/appropriate approvals.

- All offer letters for faculty and administrative openings are to be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Provost, the Office of Human Resources and other applicable offices.
- Upon completion of the applicable approval process, the candidate can be extended the offer of employment codified in an offer letter.
- Templates for offer letters can be found in the recruitment toolkit. Please find the link to the recruitment toolkit at the end of this training.
- After selected candidate returns the signed offer letter and provides other necessary materials, the hiring administrator will initiate the pre-employment/hiring procedures.
- All other candidates should be notified of the outcome of the search.

This takes the process to Stage 4: Hiring.

4: Hiring

- Once the offer letter has been signed, the Office of Human Resources and the hiring department will work together to complete necessary paperwork and final documentation procedures to hire the person into the role and the job posting will be removed from the webpage, if it has not already been removed prior.
- Divisional approval triggers the onboarding communication to the finalist.
- Once the finalist completes all necessary pre-boarding steps the job opening will be closed.

Congratulations! You have a new colleague. Thanks for all your hard work!

Links:

Link to UM System job codes (applies to Executive level Administrators and staff only)
https://compsearch.umsystem.edu

Link to Contact Office of HR https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/hr/talent_acquisition

Link to Recruitment Toolkit https://mailmissouri.sharepoint.com/sites/OHRRecruitmentToolkit

Link to Recruitment Conflict Guidelines CRR:
https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/personnel/ch320/320.100_faculty_recruitment_conflict_guidelines

Link to Nepotism CRR:
https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/personnel/ch320/320.040_nepotism

Link to Moving Allowance Policy: https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/hrm/hr100/hr103

Link to Hiring and Retention Incentives Policy: https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/hrm/hr100/hr104

Link to Total Rewards: https://www.umsystem.edu/totalrewards

Link to HR Interviewing policy: https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/hrm/hr100/hr110

Link to HR Background checks and criminal Convictions policy:
https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/hrm/hr500/hr504

Link to Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity and Nondiscrimination policy:
https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/equal_employment_educational_opportunity/ch600/600.010-equal-employment-educational-opportunity-and-nondiscrimination