The University of Wyoming
Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Search Process & Matrix FAQs

Updated 7/18/17

Search Process FAQs

In an effort to streamline the search process, some steps have been modified. These modifications increase the accountability of the Search Committee in conducting fair and equitable searches consistent with UW Regulation 1-3, Equal Employment Opportunity/Diversity Program.

What are the responsibilities of the Search Chair as related to equal employment opportunity?
The Search Chair is responsible for conducting the search in a fair and equitable manner, and ensuring that all committee members review applicants and their materials accordingly. This includes confirming that each member of the committee completes the mandatory OFCCP training before reviewing any vitae/resumes or other application materials submitted by job applicants. This training is available through Human Resources in-person or online (http://www.uwyo.edu/hr/employee-relations/professional-development/index.html). If completing the training online, Chrome is the recommended browser.

The Chair of the committee is also expected to maintain records demonstrating the objective evaluation of applicants based on the published job ad for no less than three years.

Why are minimum qualifications required?
An essential part of the job ad begins with clearly identifying the minimum qualifications. Minimum qualifications identify the most basic experience, education, and skills applicants need in order to be considered for the position as advertised. These should be basic, few in number and can be answered with a "yes" or "no" response when completing the matrix. There are no point values assigned to these criteria. Applicants who do not meet all of the minimums are to be removed from further consideration.

Examples of minimum qualifications:

Ph.D. in desired discipline or combination of disciplines
3 years experience teaching undergraduates
1 year experience advising graduate students

What about more specific requirements that reflect a range of skills, education, and demonstrated abilities?
This is done by identifying preferred qualifications for the job such as specific types of skills, demonstrated abilities, education, and length of experience. The search committee can then evaluate the candidates based on the degree to which they meet each of the preferred qualifications. Scores are required but comments are optional. If used, comments should be objective. The committee can then identify which candidates will be selected for a first interview.

Examples of preferred qualifications:

5 years teaching experience, combined graduate and undergraduate
2-5 years advising graduate students
2-3 years leading study abroad experiences
1-2 years recruiting students

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Are preferred qualifications required?
Preferred criteria are not required. However, if the job ad lists only minimum criteria, departments will likely need to conduct initial interviews with all candidates who meet those criteria. It may be necessary to conduct several rounds of initial interviews in searches that are “open until filled.” Depending on the number of candidates, this may extend the timeframe for a search. All applicants must be accounted for in some way (for more information, please review the Matrix FAQ). Once established and advertised, all criteria must remain the same throughout the search process, from submission of the Search Plan through submission of the Search Results. Candidates to be interviewed are identified on the Applicant Pool Summary.

Is a second interview required?
No, a second interview is not required. If a committee chooses to conduct a second round of interviews with candidates following the initial interview, EPO will not require another Applicant Pool Summary. Committees must still obtain approvals to interview from the departmental or college supervisory chain according to departmental policy. For all interviews, however, search committees must maintain documentation reflecting how candidates were evaluated relative to the criteria. The Search Results Form is still required to identify the candidates who are acceptable for hire in the order of preference.

What tool should be used to document the evaluation of the candidates?
Search committees use a matrix for this purpose. (To find out more about how to use matrices please view the Matrix FAQ.) Completing the Search Results Form will identify the candidates acceptable for hire in order of preference. Scores and comments are required to clarify the reasons for the preference and why other candidates are not acceptable.

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Matrix FAQs

Why is a matrix required?
The matrix documents the process used by the search committee to review and evaluate job applicants based on objective criteria as published in the job ad. Think of it like a gradebook with the applicants as students. The ad is like a syllabus, telling applicants what the department is looking for, what to submit in order to be "graded," and the minimum criteria upon which they will be "graded." The criteria are like assignments, which are combined in an overall grade.

Are departments required to use the sample matrix provided by EPO?
No, the sample matrix is merely provided as a resource. Departments are welcome to modify the sample matrix or create their own as long as the basic elements are present. The matrix must also be readable; please don't use very small fonts or create a matrix so large it stretches across several pages when printed.

What must be included on the matrix?
To continue the gradebook analogy, it must include information necessary for documenting how a final grade was determined for every student or, in this case, applicant:

- Full names of all candidates
- Please use specific criteria (as published in the job ad) as labels rather than using generic terms like "Criteria 1"
- For each candidate, identify whether they meet each of the minimum requirements; use "Y" (yes) or "N" (no)
- If preferred criteria are being considered, include numeric scores for candidates who meet all minimums
- A total score for each candidate who submitted a complete application and met the preferred qualifications
- Please submit a <u>single</u> matrix with total scores. If comments are used, they should be summarized. Individual scores and comments from each search committee member should not be included.

What scale should be used for the numeric scores?
There are no specific rules about this, but keeping things simple is usually best. Departments are free to use whichever scale best suits their needs, but should include a legend on the matrix to clarify what scores mean. Many search committees use a 10-point scale because it's familiar and easy to understand. Other searches use a 3-point scale: 3 means good experience, 2 means some experience, and 1 means little or no experience. No matter what scale is used, it's best to define the matrix and legend before beginning the review of applicants. This sets expectations and can help the committee rate applicants consistently. In other words, set up the rubric before starting to grade.

Can criteria for preferred qualifications be weighted?
Yes. The best way to do this is to assign more points for higher priority criteria. Multiplying by a weighted factor or similar approaches can be confusing. Just like in grading, making one "assignment"/criterion worth more points is the simplest method. Remember that only those

candidates who meet all the minimum qualifications should be scored. It doesn't matter how many preferred qualifications someone meets if they don't meet the minimum qualifications stated in the job ad.

What should the comments include?
Comments are not required prior to submitting the Search Results form, but if they are provided, they should explain the scores. Be specific; rather than saying "incomplete packet," state what was missing. Usually, a sentence or two is sufficient. EPO may ask a committee for comments in other circumstances in order to best document how decisions were made.

What should be avoided in the comments?
Avoid editorial or personal comments. These are not objective criteria and should not be considered when assessing candidates. Instead, focus on previous experience and qualifications or what the candidates said or did that made them acceptable or unacceptable.

What if an applicant doesn't submit all materials required in the job ad?
Incomplete applications are not evaluated even if the candidate meets all the qualifications.

What if an applicant withdraws from the search or doesn't respond to attempts to reach him/her?

This can happen at any point during a search. This should be documented on the matrix, indicating the date and method of withdrawal (e.g. "withdrew by email on January 5, 2015"). The email (or documentation of a phone call) should be maintained along with all other search records. Use similar comments for applicants who don't respond to attempts for contact (e.g. did not respond to phone calls and emails between January 5 and January 10). Committees should make more than one attempt at contact and should provide a reasonable amount of time for candidates to respond, taking into consideration holidays, weekends, or other mitigating circumstances. Committees need not evaluate applicants after they withdraw or fail to respond.