Creighton
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Provost

CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY GUIDE FOR
Faculty Search Committees
2023-2024

Creighton University Guide for Faculty Search Committees

Table of Contents

Introduction

The foundation of any search process is that schools and colleges will hire outstanding candidates who will demonstrate a consistent pattern of excellence in scholarship and/or creative activity, teaching and advising/mentoring, service, and possibly clinical practice over the course of their career at the university. The purpose of this guidebook is to provide a general overview of best practices for recruiting and hiring full-time faculty with an emphasis on mission and inclusive excellence at Creighton University, including:

- identifying responsibilities and understanding fundamental definitions pertaining to inclusive excellence, hiring for mission, and the search process
- creating an inclusive job announcement and recruiting diverse applicants
- information to equitably and consistently assess candidates' qualifications based on application materials
- conducting a thorough, equitable, mission-driven, and successful search
- unbiased decision-making processes to support the search committee during the final stages

This guidebook was compiled in collaboration with Human Resources, the Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, and Mission & Ministry to provide overarching guidance to Creighton University's Schools and Colleges for faculty searches. These best practices include many ideas gathered from other institutions of higher education, including the University of Washington, Loyola Marymount University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Harvard University, Florida International University, and the University of Colorado.

Each School or College at Creighton University should plan to adapt these best practices to their specific needs, and those units should consult further with the Office of the Provost, Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, the Office of Mission & Ministry, or Human Resources as needed to assist in developing additional conventions and tools relevant to their disciplines in relation to equity, diversity, and inclusion; Jesuit, Catholic mission and identity; as well as the basic steps and functions of a faculty search.

The Office of the Provost will conduct an annual assessment of these guidelines and their usage to help inform appropriate revisions.

Key Concepts

Equal Opportunity

Creighton University is committed to providing equal employment opportunity based on qualifications and merit without unlawful regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Employment policies and practices are in place in such areas as recruitment, hiring, promotion, transfer, reassignment,

training, benefits, and separations that are in full compliance with Equal Opportunity laws and regulations.

Affirmative Action

The University complies with state and federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) laws. As a university committed to research, we pursue research grants, which often include federal funding. This requires Creighton to develop and implement affirmative action plans. The Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) enforces EEO laws related to our status as a federal contractor. The OFCCP can audit our Affirmative Action Plans and employment practices.

An Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) describes an organization's programs, policies, and practices designed to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunities in all employment decisions and practices. The annual AAP provides a yearly analysis of representation of Minorities and Females; Veterans; and Individuals with Disabilities. Please direct any specific questions regarding Creighton's AAP to the Affirmative Action Officer or consult with Human Resources.

Internal review and reporting systems are continuing to be developed to monitor action patterns and evaluate the results of affirmative action efforts. Collectively the data provide a reliable means for assessing where past efforts have been successful in achieving overall objectives and where additional effort is still needed.

Additionally, the University conducts regular self-evaluation, including detailed records regarding applicants, employees, employment actions, and programmatic activities. This is essential to the effectiveness of the University's overall affirmative action program.

Hiring for Mission and Maintaining a Vibrant Jesuit Identity

Fundamentally, hiring for mission is accomplished by attracting candidates who are not only highly qualified in their disciplines, but who also understand, embrace, and are drawn to enhance Creighton University's Jesuit, Catholic mission and values in teaching, research, and service. Hiring for mission is also a commitment by Human Resources to provide tools to assist search committees in composing inclusive position announcements, seeking referrals, and expansive recruitment efforts.

It is important to consider whether, how, and to what extent each search invites candidates to articulate the contribution they can make to advancing CU's mission and to maintaining the rich dialogue between faith and culture that characterizes the Catholic intellectual and imaginative traditions. All faculty candidates, regardless of personal faith commitments or disciplinary expertise, should be encouraged by the language of the job description to describe their interest in and potential for encouraging learning, educating whole persons, and/or faith through the promotion of justice in keeping with the assumption that all members of the

Creighton community have a role to play in supporting the mission. It is also important to include language in the job description that describes the concept of inclusive excellence which includes diversity, inclusion, and equity-mindedness, the value placed on applicants who can share and teach differing points of view, who have experience working with students from diverse backgrounds, and that signal CU as an institution where people from underrepresented communities can thrive.

Pre-Search

Searches for full-time faculty are approved by the Provost in consultation with the appropriate Dean of the School or College. Department chairs and program directors should work with their dean or dean's designee to prepare a [New Faculty Hiring Request](#) form, which the Dean first approves and then submits to the Provost. Once a faculty search is formally approved by the Provost, the School or College can begin forming a Search Committee, building a recruitment plan, and crafting a comprehensive job announcement to ensure the pursuit of highly qualified candidates.

Search Committee Goal

Effective search committees proactively seek and attract the best candidates for the position that also reflect Creighton's mission-driven commitment to excellence and diversity. The Search Committee is also dedicated to achieving academic excellence and mission fidelity through equal opportunity. A quality recruitment and selection process should begin with the identification of the best possible candidates, proceed with a careful selection process, and provide the hiring authority (generally, the dean) the most qualified candidate(s).

Forming a Search Committee

The search committee should include faculty from diverse backgrounds who may have helpful and divergent ideas in order to enhance efforts to recruit and evaluate candidates. A best practice for an inclusive search process is to start by diversifying the search committee to include representation of multiple identities and subject matter expertise. After consultation with the department chair and/or program director, the school or college dean should provide final approval of the search committee composition, including appointing the search committee chair (not necessarily the department chair or program director). Consider the following when populating the search committee:

- Individuals who understand the requirements of the position
- Faculty from other departments, especially if they have expertise or perspective that would be helpful – Creighton faculty from related departments can bring fresh viewpoints and provide a vehicle for engaging colleagues across campus over substantive topics of common interest
- A mix of tenure-track and non tenure-track faculty, staff, and students, as well as a colleagues with a variety of time spent in academia, as unit-level bylaws allow
- Race, ethnicity, and gender diversity with attention to sub-discipline(s)
- Individuals with an understanding of Creighton's Jesuit, Catholic mission as expressed through, but not limited to, the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm, Ignatian spirituality, commitment to care for whole persons, the Catholic Intellectual and Social Traditions, and mission-aligned commitments to a faith that does justice

Committee Size

The size of a search committee may vary depending on the scope and level of the position being hired; various schools, colleges, and disciplines might also have best practices regarding committee size. Typically it is preferable to have a committee with an odd number of 5 or 7 for effective group dynamics and efficiency. It is generally preferable to avoid having a committee that involves the entire faculty of a department, unless the department is very small.

Diversity and Mission Advocate

Some schools or colleges already have inclusive excellence and/or hiring for mission training as part of onboarding for all positions, which is strongly encouraged as a best practice as everyone involved in the search process is responsible for proceeding in a manner that is both grounded in and intentionally advances our distinctive mission and our commitment to inclusive excellence. This training is included in the list of Search Committee Responsibilities on page 9. In absence of such collective training, or perhaps in addition to it, while selecting committee membership consider appointing a search committee member who may serve as a diversity and mission advocate. This role will help to ensure that the search is consistent with best practices and keeps university, college/school, and department mission and Creighton's Jesuit, Catholic identity (a fundamental expression of which is CU's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion) front of mind. Choosing a committee member with skills that align with this task could be beneficial.

Search Committee Charge

The search committee's responsibility is to identify a slate of top candidates for the position in question. In charging the committee, the dean of the school or college, in consultation with the appropriate department chair and/or program director, associate and/or assistant dean, etc., should emphasize the following verbally and in writing:

- Clearly defined expectations, including timeline, budget considerations for the search process, vision for the position, and final recommendation details (format and process for submitting to hiring authority)
- The responsibility of identifying outstanding candidates, including women, underrepresented minorities, and members of other underrepresented groups in fields where they are the minority

Search Committee Roles

The committee should bear in mind all dimensions of their role(s) as described:

Chair of Search Committee

- Facilitates communication as the primary point of contact between the dean (the hiring authority), the search committee, and HR for matters relating to dispositioning
- Communicates timeline and expectations
- Organizes interview questions and procedures
- Leads discussions and interviews
- In the first meeting, in addition to details pertaining to the position and the hiring process, provides committee members with an opportunity to discuss concerns, responsibilities, and conditions for a successful search process
- Creates a space for free and confidential dialogue and actively draws junior colleagues (or non-tenure track faculty, staff, or students as relevant) into discussions, paying attention to creating an atmosphere absent of faculty hierarchy and power dynamics as not to inhibit open dialogue where all members' voices are valued
- Sets meeting dates in advance
- Offers a clear agenda for every meeting, reviews it with the committee, and makes best attempt to follow it
- Documents (or assigns a committee 'recorder' to document) all meeting activities
- Maintains a commitment to hiring for mission
- Is responsible for ensuring fair and consistent recruiting practices
- Ensures recruitment efforts can develop a diverse applicant pool
- Ensures compliance with applicable laws and policies
- Serves as the primary contact for communication with candidates throughout the recruitment process, and directs the activities of the Contact Person (see below)

Committee Members

- Maintain confidentiality of prospective candidates and of search committee deliberations
- Review all candidates fairly and equally relative to the specified qualifications and essential functions of the position
- Provide professional feedback
- Make selection recommendations

Contact Person (oftentimes an administrative assistant)

- Not an official member of the search committee
- Plays an impartial role and does not share irrelevant candidate information with the search committee
- Schedules meetings and interviews in consultation with the Chair of the Search Committee
- In consultation with Chair of Search Committee and/or department chair/program director, responds to and addresses candidates' questions and concerns in a timely manner
- Maintains candidates' confidentiality when fielding questions and concerns

- Knowledgeable about the department or unit and position
- Fields and addresses candidates' confidential questions or requests for needs during interview stages of the process (e.g. accommodations for diet, mobility, sight and/or hearing)

Search Committee Responsibilities

The search committee has a responsibility to manage a timely, fair, legal, and equitable search process to comply with relevant law and University regulations and policies as well as align with Creighton's mission. Best practice responsibilities include:

- Meet with the dean or associate dean who has search committee oversight (as a whole committee or via the search committee chair) to review and get approval for the search plan including recruiting activities, itineraries, and reasonable timeline. The timeline should be developed by working backwards from a target completion date to provide the hiring authority with qualified candidates. It should be recognized that some fields have specific job market periods, and the timeline should account for holidays, grading periods, and other times when committee members may have competing priorities.
- Commit to time and effort for the process
- Confirm meeting times that work for everyone and determine plan to record information if attendance at meetings is not possible
- Ensure equal employment opportunities for all candidates
- Utilize a consistent interview approach to help promote consistency and clarity regarding the assessment of candidates
- Commit to recruiting diverse and qualified candidates who are eager to learn about and contribute to Creighton's mission by developing an understanding of the traditions, values, and aspirations of contemporary Jesuit, Catholic higher education
- Complete a training on hiring for mission and inclusive excellence co-sponsored by sponsored by Creighton's Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, Office of Mission & Ministry, and Human Resources
- Evaluate candidates based on job-related criteria set in the position posting, using evaluation rubrics (see Appendices 4 and 5 for samples)
- Maintain confidentiality, professionalism, fairness, and consistency, including signing a confidentiality agreement as appropriate (see Appendix 6 for a Sample Confidentiality Agreement)

Other units on campus also have search committee responsibilities. These include:

Dean (the Hiring Authority)

- Endorses Chair of the Search Committee

- Ensures members of search committee participate in required training on hiring for mission and inclusive excellence co-sponsored by Creighton's Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, Office of Mission & Ministry, and Human Resources
- Monitors applicant pool for diversity and partner with Human Resources for updates as needed
- Partners with department chair in accountability for ensuring appropriate membership on search committee
- Documents process interactions
- Receives recommendations from search committee regarding qualified candidates
- Makes final selection and proceeds with offer and hiring processes

Department Chair

- Potentially serves as chair of search committee; if not, coordinate with dean to select best search committee chair
- Partners with dean in accountability for ensuring appropriate membership on search committee

Human Resources

- Provides updates to the deans and search committee regarding applicant pool demographics
- Posts job openings in the required/agreed upon posting sites
- Provides ongoing support throughout the recruiting and onboarding process, such as crafting effective job postings, interviewing techniques, and strategizing efforts on strengthening the applicant pool

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Provides information regarding the Affirmative Action Plan
- Provides updated contact list for HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), MSIs (Minority Serving Institutions), and HSIs (Hispanic Serving Institutions) on an annual basis (these lists are located on the Provost's intranet site for New Faculty Searches)

Active Recruitment

Active recruitment means continuously recruiting for future candidates by engaging others (graduate students, faculty at other institutions, etc.) and building relationships over time through conferences and professional networking opportunities. This technique is best practice for attracting diverse top talent. Search committee members can be in consistent, active contact with subject matter experts for potential candidates.

Recruitment Plan

The primary goal of the recruitment plan is to attract as many qualified candidates as possible, especially those who are drawn to Creighton's distinctive educational mission, while minimizing barriers to equal opportunity in the hiring process. As coordinated through Human Resources, best practices for a faculty recruitment and outreach plan include:

- Review unit's website to ensure it promotes an inclusive environment and the unit's intentional intersections with, contributions to, and amplification of Creighton's mission
- Develop a broad pool of applicants
  - Approach and encourage candidates to apply (reaching qualified candidates and inviting them to apply requires proactive outreach)
  - Encourage advertisement to colleagues, experts in their field, universities/colleges the unit has not reach out to previously (possibly tribal colleges, HBCUs, MSIs and HSIs)
  - Review journal editorial boards and early career award winners to identify rising stars, as well examine list of award winners in relevant professional societies
  - Read discipline-specific professional literature to identify scholars not yet well-known
  - Align planned attendance at annual professional meetings to include conference sessions and receptions that may attract diverse PhD and graduate students

Confidentiality and Disclosures

Confidentiality is a foundational best practice in faculty searches. Candidates should expect confidentiality from first communications through a mutually agreed upon announcement date for on-campus interviews. Unsuccessful candidates should expect confidentiality and discretion in perpetuity.

Best practices also include identifying at the outset who may have access to applicant information during all stages of the process. Many units now require some level of confidentiality agreement (see Appendix 6), and use of one is highly recommended.

Additionally, committee members are responsible for identifying potential conflicts of interest that would bias their assessment of the candidate(s). The committee will determine a plan for

that committee member's continued participation or recusal in the evaluation and interview stages.

Job Announcement

The job announcement is the primary, initial recruitment tool. The position description should clearly outline the expectations of the position. In addition, it should state the institution's commitment to academic excellence as well as mission and inclusive excellence to allow candidates to determine if the community is one where they can both work and live. Providing scope and detail helps candidates understand the position within the context of the department, college/school, and campus. Please see these Human Resources materials for templates and samples: Job Description Template, Job Ab/Job Posting Template, and EEO Statement for Job Postings. Best practices include developing a position description that:

- Applies to a broad applicant pool.
- Avoids a large number of *required* qualifications versus *preferred*
- Is deliberate and intentional regarding which application materials are requested at the initial stage
- Avoids requesting numerous supplemental materials (e.g. a full teaching dossier and/or philosophy, a writing sample, multiple letters of recommendation, additional statements on research, etc.) Additional items inhibits ease of applying which could result in a reduced applicant pool.
- Refrains from using the term "replacement" line or "replacement" position.
- Highlights the positive achievements of the department and University, and spotlights the attractions of the Omaha area.
- Uses language about excellence (such as "exceptional" or "distinguished") only in reference to scholarship, teaching records, and potential.
- Incorporates reference to Creighton's Jesuit, Catholic mission and identity.
- States commitment to diversity (at all unit levels).
- Uses inclusive and neutral language (see Appendix 7).
- Includes Creighton's EEO statement.

Authentic Representation

If photos and graphics are included in the job announcement, they should follow brand standards set by University Communications and Marketing (UCOM) and accurately represent the demographic makeup of the department and university. This also applies to links that connect an applicant with a department website. Ensure people in photos represent diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, ability, etc., without creating an inaccurate portrayal of diversity within the unit.

Consider a Combined Personal Statement on Mission and Inclusive Excellence

As the goal is to minimize the number of additional materials that applicants are required to provide at the outset of the process, and recognizing the sizeable intersections between Creighton's Jesuit, Catholic mission and identity and institutional commitments to foster equity, diversity, and inclusion, search committees may consider inviting candidates to reflect on the intersections of mission and EDI in their professional lives. Another option is to ask for this type of personal statement only of those advancing to the first-round of interviews or screenings.

Minimum Qualifications

Job postings should identify all *required* and all *preferred* qualifications. Required qualifications should be minimized in an effort to broaden the applicant pool. Requirements should not include qualitative features, but instead should be specific and easily determined.

Candidates may not be considered if they do not meet all minimum required qualifications as advertised; no substitutions for education or experience should be granted unless clearly advertised in the job posting.

Desired personality traits should not be considered as a minimum qualification.

Highlight Accreditation(s)

Best practice is to use the following statement to highlight the University's accreditation as well as discipline-specific accreditations: "The (name of the degree program in the school or college name) at Creighton University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission [as well as others, if applicable]."

Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are typically written by colleagues or peers selected by the candidate to present the candidate in the best light.

Unconscious bias (see Appendix 9) can occur during the review of letters of recommendation. To help mitigate this bias, one strategy is to wait to collect letters of recommendation of only the finalists rather than from all candidates in the pool. Not only is this a time saver for candidates, references, and the search committee, but it also allows the committee to focus on the candidate's qualifications and contributions and consider all factors.

Vetting the Job Ad

Share the draft job advertisement with a diverse group of faculty, graduate students, and/or others to determine if the ad is clear and inviting. Review peer institution advertisements classified as Diversity Champions to view their language via *Insight for Diversity*. The dean (or dean's delegate) must approve the final job posting; therefore be sure to allow approximately

one week to review, including time required for Human Resources to review and enter the position into the Applicant Tracking System (ATS).

Posting the Position

In consultation with the dean, the search committee chair should coordinate efforts with Human Resources in order to post the position(s):

- On traditional outlets via Human Resources, including the Creighton website and major job-posting sites (HigherEdJobs, Indeed, NE Workforce Development, etc.)
- On appropriate discipline-specific venues and forums
- On the National Registry of Diverse and Strategic Faculty and/or to affinity group networks or associations
- On suggested platforms and venues recommended by the Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion and by the Office of Mission & Ministry (e.g. AJCU, ACCU)

At a minimum, all faculty openings should be posted on the Creighton Human Resource Career website for five (5) days. Human Resources will review the job description and advertisement for the appropriate EEO tagline, and HR will post it on its online applicant tracking system and the HR Career website.

Initial Candidate Screening

Applicant/Candidate Screening

As the committee begins its screening process, the goal is to determine a reasonable number of candidates for preliminary interviews. There is no one perfect number; the group should have good dialogue and general agreement about those they are bringing forward for preliminary or first-round interviews. Avoid offering courtesy interviews to applicants who do not meet stated criteria or who may be internal applicants.

Developing and Utilizing a Screening Rubric

Utilizing a screening rubric promotes consistency and clarity regarding qualifications, assists in determining how qualifications will be measured, and identifies what constitutes a strong/top candidate to move forward in the process.

The rubric should be based on objective and measurable job-relevant criteria drawn from the position's job description. Information gathered from rubrics should be kept confidential to the search committee or any other relevant parties. See Appendix 4 for a sample screening rubric.

Applicant Review Exercise

In addition to defining the knowledge, skills, and abilities of desirable candidates via a screening rubric, it is also helpful to define terms and ideas related to the qualifications, such as *excellence, expertise, demonstrated experience, potential, successful record, outstanding scholar*, etc. Defining terms can help mitigate unconscious bias (See Appendix 9) by surfacing subjective interpretations and differences based on committee members' own lenses.

Conducting a calibration, or an Applicant Review Exercise, can help search committees practice their skills:

- Select one candidate from the pool
- Ask each committee member to review the application materials and evaluate the candidate using the established qualifications, definitions, and criteria (see Appendix 4 for a Sample Candidate Screening Tool).

The committee can then discuss the evaluation based on each member's evaluation of the candidate. This exercise can surface differences in how committee members interpret terms and qualifications and prepare them for issues that may arise as the review process continues.

Each committee member should ask themselves if they can provide a job-related reason for non-consideration when evaluating candidates.

Responsible Use of Google and Social Media Searches

- Refrain from checking social media to avoid information that may be related to an applicant being in a protected class (i.e., race, religion, age, health issues)
- Consider having only the search committee chair conduct the search so information obtained cannot be used inconsistently among members in hiring decisions
- Use information obtained through these types of searches with *caution* and *consistency*
- Keep a detailed account of what internet records and social media accounts were reviewed and what the criteria were for the review

Interviews – Preliminary and Final

Throughout the recruitment and selection process, professionalism and consistency are two key components:

Professionalism

Ensure the best possible total search process, including preliminary interviews, mid-process communication, and campus visits. Candidates remember campus visits for years to come, sharing their experiences and describing how they were treated. It is not uncommon for candidates to post descriptions of overall experiences, including impressions of job advertisements, all communications, preliminary interviews, and campus visits on blogs and social media. As a reminder, candidates are evaluating Creighton University and the specific unit as much as the search committee is evaluating them.

Consistency

Careful planning helps ensure that all candidates have a similar, high-quality experience at all stages, including communications, all interviews and campus visits. As noted above, developing evaluation criteria and rubrics will help to ensure consistency. It is important that there is consistency during all phases of the search process, including participation by members of the committee and any pre-screening.

Pre-Interview Preparation

All candidates should be treated similarly throughout the interview process. Prior to all types of interviews, the committee should plan/make decisions on the following:

Developing the Interview Process(es) and Format(s)

- Identify the interview stages and format; will there be a preliminary videoconference or phone interview?
- Plan the flow of discussion and questioning at the various stages for both initial and subsequent interviews.
- Determine if the candidate will be asked to give a presentation or colloquium or teach a class in their area of expertise for the on-campus interview.
- For each stage, decide if the committee will discuss each candidate immediately following the conclusion of that specific interview or if discussions will be held when the last interview is completed. At a minimum, best practice is that search committee members should individually fill out any relevant evaluation forms consistently during and/or immediately following each step of the process.

- Identify who, in addition to the committee members and hiring officials, will participate in the interview(s) with the candidate at each stage.
- Particularly for the campus interview, discuss if there is additional information that the committee seeks from specific audiences (e.g., student reactions to teaching style at a symposium, assessment of an applicant's research record).
- Select who will be the singular point of contact for the candidate (see Search Committee Roles above – usually a specified administrative assistant or the chair of the search committee), who will provide the candidates with information any initial interviews as well as more detailed schedule and itinerary prior to arrival on campus for the campus interview.
- If not requested with the initial application materials, determine if a combined personal statement on mission and inclusive excellence (reference on page 12) will be requested of on-campus final candidates.
- Candidates should be informed of who (by name and position) will interview them at the initial stage and for the campus visit (with a detailed list of each person or group they will meet) and whether a presentation is expected. Since detailed and specific job requirements often vary for faculty positions, as much information as possible should be provided (i.e., courses and course levels to be taught, other anticipated responsibilities such as curriculum or program development, advising, etc.).

Developing Preliminary and Final Interview Questions

Develop a core set of questions based upon the criteria established in the position description to be asked of all candidates (see this Interview Question Guide for further support).

- Ask questions related to the requirements of the job including competencies and behaviors that support the qualifications being evaluated.
- For preliminary interviews remember that the entire list of questions developed should be used for each candidate; thus make sure that the number of questions aligns with the time allocated for thorough responses.
- Make sure that all who interact with the candidate at any stage are instructed not to ask questions that are unrelated to the position, as these may be potentially discriminatory or unlawful (see Appendix 2 for examples). In general, avoid questions related to:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Disability status or medical conditions
  - Race, color, or ethnicity
  - National origin or citizenship
  - Religion
  - Sexual orientation
  - Family details and family planning, including marital status or pregnancy or lactation needs
  - Arrest history

- o Military service
- o Previous and/or current salary or economic status
- Note that social events (meals, receptions, etc.) can elicit discussion that may include some of the above discriminatory or unlawful items. Although it is important to make a candidate feel comfortable, avoid even casual conversations that touch on inappropriate topics or inquiries that are illegal in an interview context. Those kinds of conversations could be misinterpreted by the candidate. Even if the candidate willfully provides information related to the above, NO additional questions or probing is allowed. A search committee member should be present for all formal and informal interview sessions to interrupt or redirect should someone inadvertently reference a potentially discriminatory or unlawful line of questioning.
- For both preliminary and final interviews there should be time allotted to field questions from the candidate. Remember that they are interviewing us as much as we are interviewing them.

Developing and Utilizing an Interview Rubric

Similar to the screening phase, utilizing an evaluation rubric promotes consistency and clarity regarding qualifications, assists in determining how qualifications will be measured, and identifies what constitutes a strong/top candidate.

The rubric should be based on objective and measurable job-relevant criteria drawn from the position's job description. Information gathered from rubrics should be kept confidential to the search committee or any other relevant parties. See Appendix 5 for a sample rubric.

Preliminary Interviews

In many fields it is standard practice to conduct preliminary (sometimes referred to as first-round) interviews with a longer short list—perhaps 8 to 10, or as many as 15 candidates—before determining which small number to schedule for final interviews. Preliminary interviews are an efficient way for committees to consider a range of interesting candidates. To help make preliminary interviews consistent, fair, and effective:

- Avoid offering courtesy interviews to applicants who do not meet stated criteria, including internal applicants
- Conduct all preliminary interviews in the same format and under similar conditions (whether in person, over the phone, or on videoconference), including preliminary interviews with internal candidates
- Have the same committee members present for all preliminary interviews and ask the same set of standard questions in the same order
- Ask the same questions about mission and inclusive excellence of every candidate

It is important to be certain that all preliminary interview questions comply with federal and state hiring laws and university policies.

Final Interviews

It is best to have only a few candidates on the final interview list, so that focused and meaningful comparisons of candidates with the job description can occur. Once the final candidate list has been created, each school or college might have differing procedures, but they all typically require dean's approval to invite candidates to campus.

Bear in mind that this is a mutual discernment process. While final interview activities allow candidates to showcase their professional qualities, they are also opportunities for the unit to make finalists feel welcomed and to help finalists imagine themselves as part of a new community.

In addition to the traditional items on an itinerary including discussions about the job, research seminar, and/or teaching demonstration; meetings with the chair and/or program director, other unit leaders, and students; meals or other casual events with colleagues; a meeting with the appropriate dean; and a tour of the campus, final interviews should entail:

- Providing finalists with a detailed itinerary, as far in advance as possible. Again, to ensure equitable treatment, all itineraries should be similar, including those for internal candidates.
- Creation of a bio for each candidate that they approve so that they are consistently introduced at each event.
- Introducing finalists to relevant faculty, staff, students, and administrators within and outside the unit with whom they might share research, teaching, service, and/or outreach interests. How can the unit help finalists imagine local professional networks?
- Asking finalists if they would like to visit relevant research centers, facilities, or other campus resources for professional development, and/or to meet with specific individuals. It is best to create list of resources finalists can review before the final interview.
- Time permitting, asking finalists if they would like to meet with relevant community partners and resources.
- Providing venues for finalists to ask questions they might not feel comfortable asking members of the hiring unit or search committee (questions regarding partner accommodations, family or medical leave, disability accommodations, resources for childcare or elder care, units on campus or campus climate for people from marginalized communities). The meeting with the Dean can be an opportunity for these kinds of questions if it is clear they can be asked in confidence.
- Maintaining clear and open communication with finalists. It is important to be honest about expectations for teaching, research, and service, as well as about issues of funding, space, or other resources.

Interviews and Internal Candidates

Because consistency is so critical to a fair and equitable search process, here are some best practices reiterated and reenforced when dealing with internal candidates:

- Ensure that the itineraries for interviews, whether on-campus or virtual, are as similar as possible to external candidates
- Inform internal candidates about all aspects of the final interview process, and be intentional about maintaining fairness, collegiality, and confidentiality
- Encourage internal candidates not to attend public events involving the other finalists, such as job talks or open meetings
- Consider interviewing internal candidates first to avoid any potential perception that internal candidates have an advantage from having seen firsthand or gathered information about the other candidates' final interviews
- Avoid relying on prior information about the candidate. Rather, focus on the materials and information the candidate provides during the search process.
- Offer the same accommodations as external candidates, including lodging, meals (at restaurants of the same caliber), tours, etc. Candidates may decline, but the same experience must be offered.

Reference Checks

Depending on the school or college, reference checks and/or letters of recommendation may be asked for at various stages and might be used even in the pre-interview(s) screening process.

In some searches, the search committee chair may call or email references provided by the candidate. It is considerate to inform the candidate before references are contacted, especially when contacting the candidate's current advisor or manager.

- Conduct reference checks consistently, with the same questions, and by the same person.
- Ask only questions that are relevant to the position.
- Focus on the candidate's work experience and avoid being influenced by extraneous non-position related factors.

Under no circumstances should the committee go "off list" or reach out to individuals who have not been identified by the candidate unless the candidate has given permission to the chair of the search committee. On these rare occasions, it is recommended that these reference checks be conducted at the very end stages of the process.

Additional Considerations for Utilizing Inclusive Practices at All Interview Stages

- Avoid scheduling interviews on religious holidays and holy days. The [InterFaith Calendar](#) created by the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago is a helpful resource in avoiding conflicts with significant holy days of the world's religions.
- Be hospitable, friendly, relational, and considerate of candidates' anxiety.
- Be open to a variety of cultural differences in body language and verbal and nonverbal communication (eye contact, use of pauses, etc.). There are many cultural cues that candidates use as a sign of respect that may differ from one's own understanding. Being mindful of this ahead of time will allow the committee to be open and focus on the interview responses.
- Allow candidates the opportunity to discuss and demonstrate what they can offer the department/program and the university. This practice gives candidates the chance to engage in dialogue and develop friendly rapport rather than constantly having to perform under pressure.
- Allow equal opportunities for candidates to ask their questions in the various interview stages.
- Allow for silence in the interview. This gives candidates time to formulate more robust responses and accommodates a variety of conversational styles.
- Have a committee discussion before starting the interview process regarding ideas and words such as "fit," "gut feeling," "I could see myself working with this person," etc. These terms/ideas need to be carefully examined to determine if they apply to job-related criteria before making decisions about candidates.
- Best practice for post-interview debriefing (at all stages) includes allowing each committee member to briefly express their assessment of the candidate's competencies relevant to the position description. In order to avoid conformity bias (i.e. 'groupthink'), all committee members should have this same opportunity prior to full or open group discussion. Varying the order in which committee members discuss their assessments can help ensure no single member's view exerts disproportionate influence.

Post-Search

Selection Process Steps and Dispositioning

Human Resources utilizes steps within the selection process and assigns status codes to each candidate at each step which allows Creighton to determine each candidate's outcome in the selection process. The dispositioning codes identify the success of each candidate, where each unsuccessful candidate was removed from the process, and what was the reason for the candidate failing to progress.

Disposition Codes/Rejection Reasons

Accurate dispositioning – the act of indicating where in the process an individual withdrew or is rejected, and by whom – is a requirement of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). The OFCCP looks for disparate impact on protected classes in the recruitment and selection process as well as applicant and employee data and compensation. As a federal contractor, Creighton University must comply with OFCCP regulations by accurately documenting and recording the search process.

There are two types of disposition code statuses currently in the Applicant Tracking System (ATS):
1. Not Selected codes, which describe why a search committee decided not to move forward with a candidate
2. Applicant Withdrew codes, which describe why a candidate chose to opt out or withdraw themselves from the application process

If possible, dispositioning should be an ongoing activity throughout the recruitment and hiring process, not only at the end. Recording activities in the ATS as the process unfolds during the review, interview, and hiring steps results in:

- Greater accuracy in dispositioning of applicants
- Less likelihood to have applicants without disposition codes
- The ability for the documentation to tell a full and accurate story

Please see these Candidate Disposition Email Templates for further support, and regular communication with HR regarding dispositioning is welcome.

Final Deliberations and Recommendation to Hiring Authority

After the final interviews have been completed and all feedback gathered from the relevant participants, the school/college should follow its established processes for determining its recommended candidate. The chair of the search committee, via the department chair or

program director, will present the recommendation to the dean (hiring authority) along with a brief summary of the process and the pros and cons of each of the finalists. The dean may request further clarification, reject the recommendation, or accept the recommendation.

Best practice is to avoid contact with any candidate by anyone involved in the search process once the recommendation is submitted until the dean has finished the offer process and the candidate has accepted.

Notification to Unsuccessful Candidates

Please consult with Human Resources to properly notify all candidates when the search is concluded. It is preferable to notify candidates throughout the process when they are no longer being considered, such as before preliminary interviews begin and before final interviews and campus visits. This prevents applicants from having to wait weeks or months to be notified. HR can work with the Chair of the Search Committee to coordinate the sending of messages and the ATS.

As a reminder when notifying candidates of their status, do not give specific reasons for not moving candidates forward. A positive example might be: *"We had a strong pool of qualified candidates which made the decision of who to select difficult. We decided to move forward with another candidate at this time."*

Post-Search Debrief

Conduct a post-search debrief to review possible areas of improvement for the search committee and provide these opportunities for improvement to the Dean. Also provide the dean a list of potential candidates who were not selected but may be a quality prospective candidate for future positions.

Record Retention

As an employer of federal contractors, Creighton University is required to maintain confidential records of each search. To ensure a primary repository for all final documentation, complete records of each search must be retained by Human Resources in the position posting file for a period of three (3) years, and the Chair of the Search Committee is responsible for collecting and forwarding all information to HR. These records must be accessible during a complaint investigation, compliance evaluation, or audit. Records to keep include:

- Copies of all advertisements, as well as a description of other recruitment methods used
- Lists of all applicants considered for the position, with their contact information and their materials
- Lists of all applicants who were interviewed or brought to campus, with all supporting documentation summaries

- Notes from search committee deliberations, including interview questions and any evaluation criteria or ranking lists
- Copies of all forms used in the recruitment and selection process
- Demographic data ascertained using the online ATS (collected by Human Resources)

Appendix 1: University Mission

Creighton is a Catholic and Jesuit comprehensive university committed to excellence in its selected undergraduate, graduate and professional programs.

As Catholic, Creighton is dedicated to the pursuit of truth in all its forms and is guided by the living tradition of the Catholic Church.

As Jesuit, Creighton participates in the tradition of the Society of Jesus, which provides an integrating vision of the world that arises out of a knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

As comprehensive, Creighton's education embraces several colleges and professional schools and is directed to the intellectual, social, spiritual, physical and recreational aspects of students' lives and to the promotion of justice.

Creighton exists for students and learning. Members of the Creighton community are challenged to reflect on transcendent values, including their relationship with God, in an atmosphere of freedom of inquiry, belief and religious worship. Service to others, the importance of family life, the inalienable worth of each individual and appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity are core values of Creighton.

Creighton faculty members conduct research to enhance teaching, to contribute to the betterment of society, and to discover new knowledge. Faculty and staff stimulate critical and creative thinking and provide ethical perspectives for dealing with an increasingly complex world.

Appendix 2: Examples of Interview Questions to Avoid

Subject(s)	Do Not Ask	Applicable Law
National Origin, Race, Color, Ethnicity, Religion	Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you born? What is your maiden name? What is your spouse's name? What is your parent's name? What church do you attend? What is your religion? What is your race or ethnic origin? What is your native language?	**Civil Right Act** **Title VII** (prohibits employment based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin) *You may ask about legal authorization to work in the specific position, if all applicants are asked.*
Age	What is your date of birth? How old are you? When did you graduate? *(In the academic setting, establishing degree attainment is a requirement for certain positions. In that context this question is allowable.)*	**Age Discrimination in Employment Act**
Disability	Do you have a disability? Have you ever been treated for an illness? Why are you in a wheelchair?	**Americans with Disabilities Act**
Marital/Family Status	Are you married? Do you have any children? What kind of childcare arrangements do you have?	**Civil Rights Act** **Title VII** **Pregnancy Discrimination Act**

Appendix 3: Sample Search Checklist

Position Approval

- ☐ Position approved by Provost

Search Committee

- ☐ Membership appointed/approved
- ☐ Charge communicated to Search Committee
- ☐ Reviewed roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Assigned diversity and mission advocate, if applicable
- ☐ Completed search committee training through Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Office of Mission & Ministry, and Human Resources
- ☐ Collected signed confidentiality agreements

ACTIVE RECRUITMENT

- ☐ Created a recruitment plan
- ☐ Composed job description/advertisement
- ☐ Vetted the job description/advertisement
- ☐ Job advertisement sent to HR for review of appropriate EEO tagline and accreditation statement, and posted on online applicant tracking system and HR career website
- ☐ Job advertisement posted on additional advertising sites that committee has selected, with confirmation communicated to HR

CANDIDATE SELECTION

Receiving & Handling Applications

- ☐ Applications received through applicant tracking system
- ☐ Any applications sent/received outside of application tracking system sent to HR to track and for record retention

Applicant/Candidate Screening

- ☐ Created a candidate screening tool/process
- ☐ Conducted a calibration, or Applicant Review Exercise
- ☐ Narrowed pool for first round (or preliminary) interviews

Pre-Interview Preparation

☐ Developed interview processes and formats
☐ Crafted interview questions
☐ Created interview rubric(s)

Preliminary (or First-Round) Interviews

☐ Preliminary interviews, if any, were conducted in appropriate settings and with consistency
☐ Notified candidates no longer in consideration and updated the applicant tracking system

Final Interviews

☐ Consistent itineraries for on-campus visits created and communicated
☐ Candidates asked to demonstrate job-related skills (teaching class(es), delivering research presentations, etc.)
☐ Feedback collected from all participants in the various candidate activities
☐ Used a candidate evaluation tool
☐ Checked references and letters of recommendation, if applicable
☐ Notified candidates no longer in consideration and updated the applicant tracking system

POST-SEARCH

Final Candidate Selection and Dispositioning

☐ Disposition candidates
☐ Final recommendations sent to dean or hiring authority

Debrief

☐ Held conversations to discuss improvements, areas that went well, etc.
☐ All records retained by HR

Appendix 4: Sample Candidate Screening Tool

Position: [Specify the position/title]

Initial Application Review:
- Review the candidate's cover letter, curriculum vitae (CV), and any other application materials.
- Assess educational background, teaching experience, research/scholarly work, and relevant professional activities.

Minimum Qualifications:
[List the minimum qualifications required for the position]
[Check off whether each applicant meets the minimum qualifications]

Rating/Scoring System:
- Assign a numerical score (e.g., 1-5) or use a rating scale for each chosen criterion.

Please rate the candidate on evidence of each of the following:	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Fair	Poor	Unable to Judge
Teaching Effectiveness						
Evaluates the candidate's teaching experience, student evaluations, teaching philosophy, and innovative teaching practices.						
Research/Scholarship						
Assesses the candidate's research productivity, publications, conference presentations, grants, and collaborations.						
Communication Skills						
Rates the candidate's oral and written communication skills, including their ability to present complex ideas effectively.						
Leadership Potential						
Considers the candidate's potential to contribute as a leader in academic, administrative, or professional roles.						
Mission and Inclusive Engagement						
Evaluates the candidate's commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the academic community.						

Shortlisting:
- Set a threshold score for shortlisting candidates for further consideration (e.g., total score above a certain value or meeting specific criteria).
- Identify top candidates based on their scores and advance them in the process.

Appendix 5: Sample Candidate Interview Evaluation Tool

Candidate's Name_____

(Check all that apply to your actions.)

☐ Read candidate's CV   ☐ Met with candidate in group setting
☐ Read/viewed candidate's scholarship ☐ Attended lunch or dinner with candidate
☐ Read candidate's letters of rec.   ☐ Attended candidate's teaching of class
☐ Attended candidate's job talk   ☐ Other:_____
☐ Met with candidate individually

Please comment on candidate's scholarship as reflected in job talk/research presentation:

Please comment on candidate's teaching ability as reflected in sample class:

Please rate the candidate on evidence of each of the following:	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Fair	Poor	Unable to Judge
Scholarly Impact						
Mission Focused						
Research Productivity						
Research Funding						
Collaboration						
Engagement with Diverse Groups						
Ranking in Department Priorities						
Ability to make positive contribution to department's climate						
Ability to attract and supervise graduate students						
Ability to teach and supervise undergraduates						
Ability to serve as conscientious university community member						

Appendix 6: Sample Confidentiality Agreement

As a member of the search committee, I recognize and respect the essential need for confidentiality and integrity in the conduct of this search. By my signature below, I pledge to adhere to the following:

1. I agree to protect the confidentiality of all deliberations, written materials, and other communications related to the work of the search committee. This includes information developed and received about prospects, candidates, and their employing institutions. I understand that this is necessary to attract the highest quality candidates, to avoid putting their current positions in jeopardy, and to protect the search process's integrity.

2. I agree that I will not discuss or communicate in any manner any such confidential information with anyone other than members of the search committee or people expressly designated by the search committee chair to receive such confidential information. I understand that I may share nonconfidential information with constituents, only if that information has been deemed appropriate by the search committee chair.

3. I recognize that my obligation to maintain confidentiality as described above applies before and after the search committee completes its work.

4. I acknowledge that only the chair of the search committee is authorized to speak to the news media on behalf of the search committee.

5. I certify that I am not a candidate for the position.

6. I agree to disclose promptly to the chair of the search committee any real or potential conflict of interest, or appearance thereof, in a relationship between me and a prospect or candidate.

7. In my conduct on the search committee, I will abide by these general principles: I will adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct; I will guard against inaccuracies, carelessness, bias, and distortion made by either emphasis or omission of information; I will strive to treat issues impartially and handle controversial subjects dispassionately; and I will treat all members of the committee with civility and respect.

8. I pledge that I will not contact individuals for informal references or other information on candidates unless this is specifically requested by the search committee.

9. If requested, I will give accurate and complete reports on candidates to the chair of the search committee.

10. I will place the best interests of Creighton University ahead of all special and personal interests, and I will use common sense and good judgment in applying ethical principles to all search committee work.

11. I consider the letter and spirit of this statement to be a matter of personal responsibility.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

_____

Print Name

Appendix 7: Use of Neutral and Inclusive Language

Word choice can encourage or discourage candidates from applying. Dominant words and phrases can deter applicants, especially women and other underrepresented populations, who may have been raised to modulate their knowledge and skills, demonstrate humility, and view success through a familial and community-based lens rather than through a competitive lens. Neutral words and language that is both inclusive and inviting encourage a diverse range of applicants. Guidelines regarding the use of gender-neutral language include the following:

- Eliminate gender bias from job ads by eliminating words associated with gender stereotypes.
- Avoid dominant language and extreme modifiers that may be unappealing to some candidates. Examples of what to avoid include:

  Words: *world class, unparalleled, off the charts, high-powered, results-driven, action-oriented, dominant, go-getter, competitive environment, manages, directs, self-starter*

  Phrases: *"We are determined to be a **dominant leader** in this field and are seeking self-starters determined to **stand apart from the competition**."*

- Appeal to a wide range of diverse candidates by neutralizing language where possible.

  Examples of neutral language: *community, commitment or committed, team player, collaborative, supportive, understands, works with, creative problem solving, team-orientation, excellence, demonstrated success, dedicated, respected, thorough, attentive, inquisitiveness, follow-through, observant, insightful*

Appendix 8: Additional Training Guidelines and Support

1) [Human Resources Manager Training](#)

2) [Disposition Guide](#)

Appendix 9: Mitigating Unconscious Bias

Two key components help ensure the efficient and effective assessment of job applicants:

1. A clear and consistent evaluation rubric (the criteria by which committees and other decision-makers evaluate applicants' qualifications and potential), and
2. A clear and consistent evaluation plan (the process by which committees evaluate applicants, make selections at each stage of evaluation, and ultimately make recommendations to the hiring authority).

Moreover, in addition to ensuring efficiency and effectiveness, evaluation rubrics and evaluation plans assist in mitigating the impact of personal and collective biases.

Follow best practices to minimize the effects of specific manifestations of bias in the hiring process:

- **Early Bird Bias and/or Recency Bias**: Beware of over-valuing applications that arrive either early or late in the process, or of simply giving them more attention.

    o Best practice: Avoid reviewing any applications until the priority deadline and organize applications by some method other than order of arrival.

- **Moving Target Syndrome**: Beware of changing the requirements for the position as the search proceeds to exclude particular applicants, and beware of being distracted by interesting or impressive applicants whose qualifications fall outside the advertised position.

    o Best practice: Establish evaluation criteria while writing the job advertisement and commit to using the assessment rubrics at every stage of evaluation. It may be helpful to designate a point during the process to evaluate the usefulness of the assessment criteria and the consistency of their application. How well are the criteria and process working?

- **Known Quantity Bias**: Internal applicants (current students, recent graduates, post-docs, visiting scholars, instructors, etc.) can be both disadvantaged and advantaged during the hiring process.

- **Implicit Bias**: Everyone is affected by unconscious bias – the stereotypes and preconceptions about various social groups stored in our brains that can influence our behavior toward members of those groups, both positively and negatively, without our conscious knowledge.

One example is the tendency to feel more comfortable with those we perceive as like us (so-called *in-group favoritism*). In situations of evaluation, members of dominant groups are typically rated more highly than others, even when credentials are identical. This occurs regardless of the evaluators' genders or racial backgrounds. "Positive bias" often manifests as favoritism and giving some applicants both more attention and the benefit of the doubt. "Negative bias" often manifests not as overt hostility but rather as a kind of neglect – an absence of attention or lack of careful consideration.

It is therefore crucial to consider the potential impact that implicit bias may have on the evaluation process. Academia has its own set of factors that can trigger implicit bias. Academic or professional factors that can trigger implicit bias against particular applicants, whether or not they meet advertised selection criteria, include:

- Non-traditional career paths
- Non-traditional research interests or methodologies
- Degrees from institutions considered less historically prestigious
- Prior work experience at institutions considered less historically prestigious
- Appearance of "fit" for a unit's historical or current profile (gender, age, background, interests, commitments, etc.)