



Guidance for Faculty Search Committees

This guide was created in September 2015 by the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance, led by then Director, Anastasia Coleman, with the assistance of faculty and staff. It has been revised by the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer, and will continue to undergo further review and revision in the coming academic year.

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I. Introduction

Departmental faculty members, and the search committees on which they serve, are charged with recruiting, identifying and selecting outstanding and diverse faculty to become part of the Fordham University community. Just as important, faculty on search committees serve as exemplars to potential candidates of all that is best about our institution. Indeed, a successful search is one that leaves all prospective candidates holding Fordham in higher regard than they did before the contact was initiated, and increases the likelihood that the person to whom an offer is extended will accept.

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that the University maintains a uniform and non-discriminatory process, and that all applicants are treated with fairness, dignity, and consistency. It is also intended to highlight that excellence and diversity are goals that may be pursued simultaneously.

This guidance has been developed to guide the search process for all new faculty hires throughout the University. It does not replace in any way the University Statutes that empower the faculty to hire faculty.

II. University Affirmative Action Statement

Fordham is committed to the recruitment, retention, and promotion of the finest faculty by creating a community that seeks, welcomes, and actively affirms diversity. Fordham provides for the enhanced effort to recruit, employ and promote members of historically underrepresented groups, which in this case refers to women, people of color, veterans, and people with disabilities. Rafael Zapata, Special Assistant to the President for Diversity, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) can work closely with faculty, deans, and search committee members to assist to develop effective strategies for the identification, recruitment and hiring of members of historically underrepresented groups.

III. Initial Steps

(i) Choosing a Committee

When a department forms a search committee for a new faculty hire, several factors should be taken into consideration. Search committees should:

- Consist of a Chair and at least three other faculty members (as required by the Statutes)
- If possible, it is suggested to have an odd number of members to avoid stalemates
- If the position is for an interdisciplinary program, be sure to include a member of the program(s) on the committee
- Include members with different perspectives and expertise
- Include women and underrepresented minorities wherever possible
- Determine that each member of the committee has sufficient time to devote to search committee duties

(ii) Role of Search Committee Members

Chair:

- Organizes the search process from beginning to end according to the guidelines set forth in this document as well as any additional guidelines provided by the respective departments and deans
- Explains to the other committee members their roles and responsibilities.
- Presents, organizes, and distributes job description and position requirements as outlined in the line authorization with any unique circumstance or criteria for consideration by the committee
- Serves as the committee's liaison with the dean and/or department head
- Outlines the importance of: inclusion, fairness and consistency; the advisory role of the committee; and the need for the discussions and decisions of the committee to remain confidential
- Ensures that all Equal Employment Opportunity hiring documents pertaining to the race, ethnicity and sex of interviewed candidates are completed
- Serves as a voting member of the search committee

All Search Committee Members:

- Provide valuable input into all aspects of the search process, which includes but is not limited to taking part in the criteria review, candidate review, interview process, selection recommendation process, etc.
- Adhere to all aspects of the University's policies as well as all federal, state, and local laws and regulations as pertains to employment
- Serve as voting members of the search committee

(iii) The Importance of Diversity

Part of any successful search for new faculty members is making a measured effort to include diversity in the process. Diversity and excellence are fully compatible goals and can be pursued simultaneously. *In addition to the duties outlined above, all search committee members are responsible for ensuring that:*

- Equal employment opportunities and affirmative action guidelines are followed in all aspects of the search process
- The guidance set forth in this document is followed to maintain a consistent and non-discriminatory search process
- All applicants are treated with fairness, equity, and consistency
- A consistent interview plan is created that will help achieve fairness throughout the search process
- All interview questions are standardized (or consistent) for all candidates; this is solely to ensure that the questions posed to each candidate are fair and do not favor one person or another (for a list of permissible and prohibited interview questions, please see the appendix to this document).

For more information and assistance on how a search can be optimized to enhance the quality and diversity of the applicant pool, please contact the Chief Diversity Officer, Rafael Zapata.

(iv) Organizational Meeting

Once the committee has been formed and the Chair has informed the other members of their responsibilities, initial committee discussions should include:

- Reviewing the job description as outlined by the line authorization from the dean;

- Instituting a realistic timeline for recruiting applicants and interviewing candidates, working backwards from a target completion date;
- Developing a ranking/rating scale for candidate applications, including required qualifications and preferred selection criteria;
- Determining how the committee will communicate with its members, the campus community, and with the candidates;
- Establishing a system for managing records, including nominations, applications, communication with candidates, affirmative action forms, and search committee notes. If not already required by the Dean, the use of Interfolio is highly recommended.

IV. The Search Process

(i) Defining the Scope of the Open Position:

- Define the position in the widest possible terms consistent with the department's needs and the search authorization from the Provost, making sure the position description does not needlessly limit the pool of applicants;
- Obtain consensus among the search committee members on specific requirements of the position;
- Ensure that hiring criteria are directly related to the objective requirements of the position, clearly understood, and accepted by all members of the committee.

Other considerations to keep in mind:

- Consider as important selection criteria for all candidates (regardless of their own demographic characteristics) their ability to add intellectual and curricular diversity to the department; and
- The ability to support the academic success of diverse students of social, cultural, and economic backgrounds, and students with disabilities;
- Consider how the department will support the new faculty members, both in their transition as a new hire, and their medium- and longer-term trajectories as teacher-scholars within the department;
- Narrowly focused searches should be justified in the search committee report.

(ii) Advertising and Outreach

The Chair of the Committee should check with their respective dean to determine if applications will be accepted via on-line software applications, e-mail, or both.

It is suggested that candidates may self-identify their race/ethnicity, and that their responses will not be linked to their application.

- Advertise the position for at least thirty days before the application deadline;
- Ensure the advertisement includes the following language that has been approved by the University: “*Fordham is an independent, Catholic University in the Jesuit tradition committed to excellence through diversity. Fordham is an equal opportunity employer, and we especially encourage women, people of color, veterans and people with disabilities to apply*”;
- Make use of electronic job-posting services, especially those targeted at diverse groups such as minority or women’s caucuses or professional networks in the desired discipline;
- Contact colleagues at other institutions to seek nominations of students nearing graduation or others interested in moving laterally;
- Place announcements in websites, listservs, journals, and publications aimed specifically at underrepresented minorities and women; there are many listservs that do not charge fees for advertising positions. Ensure that they are reviewed and approved by the dean prior to posting;
- Consider having committee members or faculty within the department attend meetings and presentations at national conferences to develop a more diverse list of potential future candidates. The Chief Diversity Officer may be able to provide additional resources for this purpose;
- Record keeping for Advertisements: Keep track of where advertisements are placed, how long the advertisements run, and which listservs were used. Keep copies of the information provided to listservs and any copies of advertisements.

(iii) **Initial Review of Applicants**

All committee members are involved in the review process. Before beginning a review of applications, the committee should establish criteria for the evaluation of candidate files/portfolios. These criteria could include, for example,

- Education
- Relevant Experience (research, teaching, etc.)
- References
- Publications and work in progress
- Professional Job-Related Associations/Memberships

- Skills, Knowledge, Experience and Abilities
- Understanding and articulation of Jesuit-Catholic mission
- Online Presence, including profiles on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, etc. (please see below about using social media to review applicants)
- Special Factors

The Chair of the committee should communicate with each applicant after receiving their application, thanking them for their interest in the position and outlining the process and timeline for the search. This may be done with an automated e-mail response if using an online software application.

Do not write on any materials presented by the applicants including, but not limited to, vitae/résumés/applications, cover letters, transcripts, publications, etc. (Alternatively, please maintain one clean copy of this material for each candidate).

The search committee will review applicant credentials and identify candidates meriting further consideration. Telephone or Skype interviews may be necessary to further cull the pool of applicants. (Importantly, all interviews must be done in the same manner: all by telephone or all by Skype.) If this is the case, all those conducting telephone or Skype interviews should share their interview questions ahead of time to ensure fairness to all candidates. Please also see the appendix for a list of permissible and prohibited interview questions.

Only job-related questions which allow the interviewer to assess a candidate's ability to do the job should be asked. If a question is not job-related, it should not be asked. A candidate may volunteer information that an interviewer is not legally allowed to ask. However, only information pertaining to the candidate's ability to perform the job requirements should be considered in their selection.

The committee may also decide to make reference calls to determine a final short list of candidates. Applicants must be advised in advance that such calls may be made.

The list of applicants, together with their application materials, should remain confidential while a short list of candidates is chosen for on-campus interviews. Alternatively, the committee may also decide to develop a long list of candidates

from the pool and allow the department as a whole to develop the short list for campus interviews. Whichever process is used, all candidates must be reviewed using the same criteria and accorded comparable treatment in the screening and interview processes.

Using Social Media to Investigate Applicants

It is currently legal to review a candidate's on-line "public" presence. This should only be done if the committee agrees that it should form part of the process and at which stage it will be conducted. Fordham does not recommend social media investigations be conducted as part of the hiring process as there are risks to conducting this type of inquiry. "Public presence" means any information obtainable from the internet that a common person would be able to find about another person. *It is not permissible to obtain information through privileged access (e.g. friending a candidate on Facebook in order to gain access to their page or asking others with LinkedIn access to view a candidate's page and provide information on it).* Committee members should be cautious in conducting even legal "public presence" and evaluating results learned from social media. Candidates with common surnames may be misidentified or misattributed in online sources.

If the committee decides to conduct this type of investigation of applicants, it is a best practice to dedicate one person to conduct any such reviews of on-line presence because it is quite easy to come across "protected information" which then has some risks to this information ever being introduced to the decision-making process. Generally speaking, "protected information" is information that should not have a bearing or be considered during the decision-making process. For instance, a candidate may have a public Twitter or Facebook account that shows that the person is attempting to conceive a child (or) shares political views and activities (or) reveals a sexual orientation (or) that the person has a disability (or) other information that is considered protected information. If "protected information" is revealed, the person conducting any social media investigation, may not share this information with other people reviewing the candidate's credentials and the information cannot not be considered in the evaluation process. If there are questions about any information learned during a social media review of a candidate and whether that information should be shared and/or considered by the search committee, please contact the Chief Diversity Officer.

If social media reveals blatant discriminatory comments or that the candidate lied on their application, this information should be brought to the Chair of the committee *and* the Chief Diversity Officer to discuss if this information should be shared and considered with the other evaluators.

(iv) **Campus Interview**

Once a short list of candidates has been formulated and appropriate authorization has been given to conduct campus interviews, the Chair of the committee should promptly inform those not included on the short list (or long list) of the committee's decision.

After consultation with the search committee, the Chair will reach out to the remaining candidates to schedule a campus visit and interview. The Chair or their designee will coordinate the logistics and formulate the itinerary in conjunction with the appropriate school dean.

All tenured and tenure-track faculty members should be given the opportunity to review the candidates' credentials once the candidates have been invited for a campus interview. If a tenured or tenure-track faculty member decides to review one candidate's credentials, they should review them all in order to give a fair and balanced opinion to the search committee.

Upon arrival on campus, the Chair of the committee will meet with the candidate and outline the day's events. In addition to meeting with the search committee, a schedule of events for the candidate might include:

- Meeting with members of the department faculty
- Meeting with the dean(s)
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with the Chief Diversity Officer
- Teaching of sample class
- Tour of the campus
- Hosted meal
- Seminar/presentation to be delivered by the candidate

Good Practices to Follow During a Campus Visit:

- Create a good rapport with the candidate (muting cell phones, maintaining eye-contact, beginning interviews on time, and keeping on schedule as much as possible);
- Give a brief history of the University, its mission and goals, as well as describing the department or academic center;
- Arrange the visit carefully to give the best impression of Fordham as possible;
- Provide the candidate with any necessary literature about the University and the department;
- Arrange to have a department member, ideally someone from the search committee, transport the candidate from one meeting or campus to the next;
- Be sure to offer information and access to faculty who might offer opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration;
- Make it clear that the committee is interested in the candidate's scholarship, teaching, and job-related skills and *not* their race, sex, gender, age, sexual orientation, etc. Overt or subtle suggestions that the committee is eager to hire women, people of color, or members of other underrepresented groups can be experienced as objectifying, debasing, and evidence of a department that does not understand members of their group;
- Be sure that all faculty members who will be interviewing the candidate have reviewed the list of permissible and prohibited interview questions;
- The department should avoid one-on-one interviews with faculty members if possible to reduce risk in the hiring process. Ideally, there should always be at least two or more faculty members together during meetings and meals;
- For a list of approved and prohibited questions to ask during an interview, please see the end of this document.

Collection of Information to Complete the Record of Hiring Report

During the interview stage, one member of the search committee should be designated to collect and compile the information needed to complete the Record of Hiring Report which is completed by the Department Chair once the position is filled. The Record of Hiring Report is found here:

http://legacy.fordham.edu/images/campus_resources/admin_offices/hr/hris/new_record_of_hiring.9.17.13.pdf

The form, along with a copy of the job description, must then be sent to the Provost for signature, who will then send it to the Office of Human Resources Management and Chief Diversity Officer.

Final Stages

(i) Post-Interview

After the candidate has been interviewed, the committee will solicit remarks from those who met with the candidate to be used in the final evaluation process. The committee members will complete their own evaluation form after meeting the candidate.

If reference checks are deemed necessary, the Chair will conduct them at this stage. *Permission must be secured from the individual candidates before reference calls may be made.*

(ii) Selection

Once all campus interviews have been completed, the committee will meet to discuss and rank candidates. All candidates should be evaluated equally. Detailed notes should be kept on the discussion of each of the candidates as they may be reviewed in order to demonstrate that all equal opportunity procedures outlined in this guidance have been observed.

The Chair, after consultation with and on behalf of the committee and the faculty, will make recommendations to the dean. The Chair should remind the committee at this time of its advisory role in the selection process and that the final recommendation of the candidate will ultimately be made by the dean.

Upon making a recommendation, the dean will authorize and monitor the negotiations with the candidate. It should be made clear to the candidate during this process that final approval for an offer with terms rests with the President acting through the Provost. The candidate should also be informed that a background check will be required prior to an official offer of employment.

Once the position has been accepted by the candidate, the Chair will inform unsuccessful candidates that the position has been filled. Best practice is to do this informally first, either by email or a phone call, and then follow up with a formal letter.

(iii) Search Evaluation

After an offer has been extended and accepted, the Chair should conduct a review of the search process. This can be done by soliciting e-mail feedback from committee members or an in-person meeting. Questions could include:

- Was the applicant pool large, qualified, and diverse enough?
- Could the job description have been constructed in a way that would have brought in a broader pool of candidates?
- Could the department have recruited more actively? If so, how?
- Were there criteria for this position that were consistently not met by women or minority candidates?

The full search report should be sent to 1) the Office of the Provost, 2) the Office of Human Resources, and 3) the Chief Diversity Officer. The file should be kept for a minimum of one year to demonstrate all equal employment opportunity procedures have been observed. A copy of the Record of Hiring Report should be included in this full report.

APPENDIX: GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This guide should be consulted when creating interview questions for the candidates, both on the phone and in-person. **Only** those questions which will allow the interviewer to better estimate the candidate's ability to perform the job should be asked. Please remember that each candidate should be asked identical questions, and that the questions should be delivered in the same manner.

There are some topics that, for legal reasons, are best avoided in interviews. These include, but are not limited to: age, sex, marital/family status, religion, creed, previous arrest records, race/color, national origin, child care arrangement, height/weight, military discharge, veteran status, pregnancy, disabilities, sexual orientation, and political affiliation. Should the candidate volunteer any of the above information, that is fine, but their responses should not affect whether he or she is selected for the position.

The following is a helpful, but by no means exhaustive, list of approved and prohibited pre-employment inquiries.

❖ Name

○ Prohibited

- Inquiries about the applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, or marital status
- Inquiry into previous name of applicant where it has been changed by court order or otherwise
- "Do you prefer Miss, Ms., or Mrs.?"

❖ Marital and Family Status

○ Prohibited

- Any inquiry indicating whether an applicant is married, single, divorced, engaged, etc. ("Are you married?" "Do you intend to get married soon?")
- Number and age of children ("How many people live in your household?")
- Information on child care arrangements ("Are you a single parent?")
- Any questions concerning pregnancy

- *Permissible:*
 - Whether applicant can meet specific work schedules

❖ **Age**

- *Prohibited:*
 - Inquiry regard applicant age or date of birth
 - Inquiry regarding applicant producing proof of age in the form of a birth certificate or baptismal record
 - “When did you graduate high school/college?”

❖ **Disabilities**

- *Permissible*
 - According to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act of 1990, applicants can be asked whether they are able to perform the essential job functions with or without reasonable accommodation
 - All applicants can be asked, “Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodation?”
- *Prohibited*
 - the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 forbids asking applicants about the nature and severity of their disabilities
 - “Do you have any disabilities?”
 - “Do you have a bad back/eyes/hearing?”

❖ **Sex/Gender**

- *Prohibited*
 - Any inquiry asking for or that would indicate the applicant’s sex
 - Information requested from a female, but not a male (and vice-versa)
 - Inquiry concerning height/weight

❖ **Race or Color**

- *Prohibited*
 - Inquiry about the applicant’s race
 - Inquiry about the applicant’s skin, eyes, hair, or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color

❖ **Birthplace, National Origin, Address or Duration of Residence**

○ *Permissible*

- Applicant's address for mailing purposes
- Whether applicant is eligible to work in the U.S.
- Whether applicant requires sponsorship

○ *Prohibited*

- Birthplace of applicant
- Any specific inquiry into foreign address that would indicate national origin
- Names or relationship of persons with whom applicant resides
- "Of what country are you/is your spouse a citizen?"
- "What language do you speak at home?"
- "What is your nationality?"
- "Where did you get the accent?"

❖ **Religion**

○ *Prohibited*

- Any inquiry to indicate or identify religious denomination or customs
- No question regarding religion should be posed to any candidate

❖ **Military**

○ *Permissible*

- Type of education and experiences in service as it relates to the position

○ *Prohibited*

- Type of discharge

❖ **Photograph**

○ *Permissible*

- Indicate that a photo may be required after hiring as identification

○ *Prohibited*

- Requirement or request that applicant affix a photo to his or her application
- Requirement of photo after interview but before hiring

❖ **Conviction, Arrest, and Court Record**

- *Prohibited*
 - Any inquiry relating to arrests or convictions
- *Permissible*
 - Let the person know that there is a background check

❖ **Relatives/Emergency Contact**

- *Permissible*
 - Name and address of **persons** to be notified in case of emergency
 - Name and address of **relatives** to be notified in case of emergency

❖ **Organizations**

- *Permissible*
 - Inquiry regarding candidate's professional or job-related organizations
- *Prohibited*
 - "List all organizations, clubs, societies, and lodges to which you belong" (this could be used to identify a candidate's religion, race, color, or ancestry through a particular membership).

❖ **References**

- *Permissible*
 - Names of persons willing to provide professional references for applicant
- *Prohibited*
 - Require or request a reference from applicant's pastor or other clergy

You did not ask . . . but the Candidate Volunteered Information listed above as “Prohibited”:

- A candidate may ask questions to seek information to determine whether they feel like this University is a good fit for them. If the candidate reveals information that would indicate information about themselves or their family or intimate partner that would tend to show that information in the “Prohibited” categories above, please do not spend too much time on that particular topic. For instance, a person may ask a question such as: How is the healthcare coverage for this specific medical condition? (or) I practice a specific religion, is there a religious service provided on campus for this particular religion? (or) any other information that the candidate may seek information that may reveal information that should not be considered in the decision-making process. Please be responsive, but it need not be a topic that you unnecessarily discuss at length. If you have questions, feel free to contact the Chief Diversity Officer.