

SEARCH COMMITTEE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General Questions about the Search Committee

1. Can someone serve on a search committee who has not completed the search committee training?

No. The training must be completed before serving on the committee.

2. How frequently do search committee members have to go through training?

Training should be completed at least every 2 years.

3. What is the purpose of the search committee?

The search committee is the liaison between the university and a potential faculty applicant. The search committee has several roles including: recruiting applicants for a position; reviewing applications; conducting preliminary interviews and overseeing on-campus interviews; and ultimately recommending a candidate for the position to the department Chair or school Director.

4. Does UTRGV have a recruitment and faculty search manual? Where can I find it?

Yes. The Faculty Recruitment Manual can be found on the Provost's website. It contains details about the search process, UTRGV policies and best practices for a successful search.

Questions about Faculty Recruitment, Applicant Reviews and Interviewing

1. What is meant by faculty recruitment?

Faculty recruitment is the **active process** of finding people to apply for your open faculty position. It involves advertising the position in multiple venues, recruiting at conferences, reaching out to colleagues at other institutions, contacting organizations and programs that award degrees in the discipline you are searching, direct mailing, and other activities.

2. Where can we advertise an open faculty position?

UTRGV has annual contracts with the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *InsideHigherEdJobs.com*. These venues allow for unlimited advertising throughout the year. In addition, search committees should advertise on websites or in journals that are specific for the discipline, target diverse groups of applicants, and also advertise locally when appropriate.

3. I am serving on my department's search committee and discover that an applicant for a job is someone that I have co-authored a book. Despite this, I am certain I can be objective in my evaluation of her and want to remain on the committee. If I know I can be objective, there isn't a conflict of interest, right?

There are many types of conflict of interest; the UTRGV Faculty Search manual provides several examples. This scenario is a conflict of interest and it is unfair to other applicants. Whether the committee member believes he/she can be objective is not the point; they may be unconsciously (implicitly) biased toward the co-author applicant. Moreover, others may perceive that the applicant has an unfair advantage because she knows someone on the committee. The committee member should recuse himself or herself from this search.

4. What is implicit bias? Why is it important in the search process?

Implicit bias refers to the assumptions that we make about other people based on our own life experiences and histories. It is important to note that these assumptions are *involuntary and unconscious*, and that everyone does this. In the search process, implicit bias can prejudice us either for or against other people, especially when reviewing materials for applicants. The search committee training provides tips on how to reduce implicit bias in the search process and there are many online sources that can help, too.

5. What is meant by pool diversity? Does it mean that we have to have a certain "quota" of female or minority applicants?

There are many types of diversity. Most commonly, we think of gender and racial diversity but diversity can also include persons with disabilities, protected veterans, applicants who have changed careers, and other groups. UTRGV does not required quotas with regards to applicant pool diversity; however, your pool should be as inclusive as possible to better reflect the diversity of American society, the diversity of Texas, and the national diversity within your discipline.

6. What is "pool certification"?

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity (VPFAD) conduct faculty pool certification. This is a review of the pool of applicants for a position and takes place after the closing date of the recruitment period and before the review of applicants. The 2 offices examine the pool of applicants to determine if it reflects national diversity within a discipline and is also sufficiently large enough that the committee has a strong number of applicants from which to choose. If the OIE and VPFAD are satisfied that the pool meets these criteria, they will certify the pool and the search process may move forward. However, if OIE or VPFAD are not satisfied with either the size or diversity of the applicant pool, they may reject the pool and ask the search committee to conduct more recruitment before the process may move forward.

7. Can phone or Skype interviews be conducted before the applicant pool is certified?
No. The applicant pool must be certified by the OIE and VPFAD before any interviews can be conducted. This includes phone, video, or in-person interviews.

8. My colleagues and I are taking a candidate to dinner. Since we are off-campus, is it Ok for us to ask them questions about their personal life?

No. Whether on campus or off, you are representing the university in the search process; all activities are considered part of the interview. State and federal laws state that you CANNOT ask questions about race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, children/pregnancy, or ancestry during any part of the interview.

9. Can applicants be invited to campus before their criminal background check (CBC) is completed?

No. The CBC must be completed and passed before someone is invited to campus for an on-site interview.

Questions about the Equity and Diversity Advocate (EDA)

1. What is the Equity and Diversity Advocate (EDA)?

The EDA is a non-voting member of the search committee who is appointed by the Dean or his/her representative. The EDA's role on the committee is to ensure that the search committee treats all applicants in a fair and just manner; to ensure that university policies, state laws and federal laws are adhered to by the committee; to encourage the committee to actively recruit a large and diverse pool of applicants for the position; and other responsibilities.

2. Does the Equity and Diversity Advocate (EDA) need to be present at all meetings?

The EDA should be present at all meetings, especially those in which faculty applications or applicants are discussed. The EDA should be copied on emails or other correspondences pertaining to the faculty search. The EDA should be present when interviews are conducted (e.g., phone, Skype, in person) between applicants and the committee.

3. What if the EDA cannot be present or the college has difficulty assigning an EDA to our committee?

When the EDA is not available, the Search Committee should contact their respective college Dean and request an alternate EDA for the committee. If no EDA is still available, the Search Committee Chair may assume the responsibilities of the EDA and should disclose this in the meeting's notes or minutes.

4. Can the EDA vote on which candidate they think is best?

No, the EDA is a non-voting member of the committee.

Questions about the People Admin system

1. I am confused about People Admin. Who has access? What are the common roles and titles?

People Admin allow different levels of access depending on the role a person has on the search committee or within search process. The typical roles are:

- a) Search Committee Member – a voting member of the search committee.
- b) Search Committee Chair – a voting member of the search committee who leads the committee in its activities. The Search Committee Chair works with the Assistant Dean to move the search forward in the People Admin system.
- c) Hiring Official – This is the Department Chair or School Director. He or she approves the short list of applicants and moves them in People Admin to the Dean's level for review. The Hiring Official receives the recommendation of the search committee on the best candidate to hire and forwards their recommendation to the Dean.
- d) Dean - He or she approves the short list of applicants and moves them in People Admin to the Provost's level for review. The Dean extends offers of employment to tenure-track candidates and negotiates with candidates with regards to salary and start up packages.
- e) OIE/VPFAD – Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and the Office of the Vice for Provost for Faculty Affairs and Diversity (VPFAD). These 2 offices review and approve all faculty ads, search committee memberships, and certify the applicant pool.
- f) ASO – Assistant Dean for the College. Assists the Search Committee Chair by uploading documents and other forms to People Admin; moving applicants in the workflow; and other duties.
- g) Provost – approves the short list for on-campus interviews; reviews and approves hiring proposals for faculty candidate offers. The Provost also extends offers of employment to tenured candidates; and may negotiate with candidates with regards to salary and start up packages.

2. Can search committees get training on how to use People Admin?

Yes. Training is available from the Assistant Dean.