

The University of Michigan-Flint

Search Advisory Committee Guidelines for Faculty Positions



**Flint - Human Resources
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Introduction

At the University of Michigan-Flint, we define quality faculty performance by the standard of service we provide to the campus community. For this reason, recruiting, hiring and retaining our outstanding workforce is one of our administrators' most important functions. We have developed this handbook to guide our administrators through the process of conducting careful and thorough searches; and to ensure our hiring practices align with the mission and vision of the campus.

Employment searches should always be designed to attract qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds. We must also take into account federal and state nondiscrimination laws and federal affirmative action regulations. These laws and regulations require the university to conduct fair and equitable candidate searches. This handbook is designed to elicit the most diverse pool of qualified candidates by providing assessment tools that meet these standards and maintain compliance with the university's non-discrimination policy.

The following processes and procedures are meant for university administrators only, and are not intended to convey or otherwise imply any rights to job applicants.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Our campus operations are strengthened by the diversity of our employees, and diversity is an integral component of a workforce that can anticipate and effectively respond to the incredible variety of needs of our organization and its faculty, staff and students. The University of Michigan Standard Practice Guide 201.35, *Non-Discrimination*, states:

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admission.

Questions related to this policy at the Flint campus can be directed to the Flint Office of Institutional Equity and Title IX, UM-Flint, 213 UPAV, 810-237-6517.

UM-Flint Mission Statement

The University of Michigan-Flint is a comprehensive urban university of diverse learners and scholars committed to advancing our local and global communities. In the University of Michigan tradition, we value excellence in teaching, learning, and scholarship; student centeredness; and engaged citizenship. Through personal attention and dedicated faculty and staff, our students become leaders and best in their fields, professions and communities.

UM-Flint Vision Statement

Engaging Minds, Preparing Leaders through Academic Excellence, Student Centeredness, and Engaged Citizenship.

UM ADVANCE Program

The University of Michigan-Flint collaborates with many resources across the University of Michigan system. This includes references and guidance from groups such as the [UM-ADVANCE](#) Program, including STRIDE resources. In addition, our leadership is committed to trying to attract and retain great faculty. Please review the [Provost](#) website and [HR's website](#) for information regarding updates related to these programs in the future.

Composition of the Search Advisory Committee

At the Flint Campus, it is recommended that every posting use a search advisory committee. Best practices indicate that a search advisory committee should be between three and seven members, with a designated chairperson. To determine the best composition for each search advisory committee for a faculty position, the chair or hiring supervisor should collaborate with the respective Dean and Human Resources (HR). Search advisory committees should be diverse, include members who have different perspectives and expertise, and show a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Search committees should include women and underrepresented minorities whenever possible.

Search Advisory Committee Charge

Clear communication is key to an effective review of the applicant pool. The Dean or Associate Dean will clearly indicate the search advisory committee's duties and objectives. The designated chair, in collaboration with the Dean or Associate Dean, must ensure each member of the search advisory committee has a thorough understanding of:

- The position requirements and how those requirements translate to selection criteria. (see "[Selection Criteria](#)" section below).
- The present and future needs of the department and how the position will fit into those needs.
- A timeline for review of applicant materials, meetings, interviews and the selected candidate's desired start date. While timing is subject to change based on availability of the search advisory committee and the selected candidate, a basic outline is recommended.
- The search advisory committee members should be available to interview all candidates to ensure consistency and an equitable interview experience for each candidate.
- How the Dean/Associate Dean wants to receive summary information regarding the finalists.
- The confidential nature of all search advisory committee conversations and documents.

- The file retention period of all documents involved in the posting-to-hire process, including interview notes. (see "[File Retention](#)" section below).

Throughout the hiring process, the Dean or Associate Dean will work with the search advisory committee and the HR representative to ensure proper processes are followed.

Selection Criteria

Dean/Associate Deans must partner with HR to create selection criteria for all positions prior to position posting. Please see the appropriate HR hiring process steps at www.umflint.edu/hr/posting-processes for additional information. It is critical the department consider what skill-set best fits the department's needs. The department may be best-served by filling the position with a candidate who has the same skill set as the staff member who left, or the department may need to (or will need to within the next few years) acquire additional areas of expertise or increase skills in certain areas. Merging this thought process with the required qualifications is what guides development of the selection criteria.

The search advisory committee should use the selection criteria to determine which applicants best meet the qualifications for the position. Selection criteria should be:

- Established before a position is advertised or posted and is clearly defined.
- Reflective of the job duties and align with the department's needs.
- Easy to use when evaluating candidates.
- Understandable and defensible.

The selection criteria needs to ensure consistency of evaluations, interviews, and reference checks by developing standard forms and standard questions for these activities.

Ensure that documentation provides rationales for search advisory committee decisions and recommendations. This can be as extensive as notes to the candidate files, or as brief as a line in committee notes (e.g., "The committee decided to limit interviews to those candidates having more than ten years of teaching experience"). Notes should indicate specific job-related reasons for selection or non-selection.

It is important to understand that selection criteria cannot include factors such as race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight or veteran status.

In summary, relevant and valid selection criteria are developed and adhered to so that all candidates are assessed on the same basis.

Reviewing Applicants

The search advisory committee must have access to review application materials provided by all applicants. Upon request of the Dean/Associate Dean or search advisory committee, HR

may conduct an initial screening of the applicants to identify those who do not meet the required minimum qualifications. The search advisory committee will then receive a list of candidates who meet the required qualifications and those who do not. In all cases, the search advisory committee will have access to view all materials in both lists.

When reviewing applications, keep the following pointers in mind:

- Use the same criteria, applied in the same way, for all applicants.
- Do not discount applicants who do not live in the area or who have a long commute. The applicant should decide whether a move or lengthy commute is acceptable to them.
- Sometimes there are so many applicants who appear promising that it is difficult to decide who to select for further consideration. In such an instance, the search advisory committee may wish to ask the promising applicants to submit additional information before reaching a decision. This is acceptable, provided each candidate is given the same opportunity to provide information. In addition, information submitted by the applicants must be maintained as part of the search record. It is also acceptable to use a screening process like telephone or Skype interviews to reduce the size of the interview pool. HR should be consulted regarding additional pre-interview screening for consistency and compliance with university standard practices.

Once the search advisory committee has selected the applicants they wish to interview, the list is sent through their School or College process to submit to HR for approval (see the Posting-to-Hire process at www.umflint.edu/hr/posting-process). The Assistant HR Director will:

- Review each of the applicant's credentials and determine if they meet the required qualifications. If any of the applicants appear not to meet the required qualifications or there appear to be others in the applicant pool with stronger required qualifications, the Asst HR Director will discuss these concerns with the search advisory committee chair or Dean's Office representative.
- The search advisory committee does not have access to demographic information of the applicants. Compare the diversity of the interview pool with the diversity of the qualified applicant pool. If there is a disparity in either case, HR can, if needed, follow up with the committee about its evaluation and selection criteria. Should the posting not draw a diverse pool of candidates, HR may recommend extending or reposting the position on more diverse websites to obtain additional applicants.
- Once the Assistant HR Director agrees with the interview pool, they will provide approval to conduct interviews.

Developing Interview Questions and Interviewing Candidates

Best practice indicates that candidates should be interviewed in person. However, in order to ensure a manageable number of in-person interviews, telephone or skype interviews may be conducted first. Ultimately, final interviews should be conducted in person unless

circumstances do not allow this. Whether candidates are interviewed by telephone, teleconferencing, in person or both, all candidates should be asked the same questions to allow for comparison, to ensure that job-related information is obtained, and to ensure that each candidate is treated equally and provided the same opportunity.

Search advisory committees need to develop a list of interview questions based on the department, school or college discipline and expected faculty obligations. If requested, HR can assist with developing interview questions. Consider the following when developing the interview questions:

- Be mindful of how many questions are being asked in the timeframe given for the interview. Allow sufficient time for the candidate to respond. Remember, you want the candidate to do most of the talking, not the search advisory committee.
- Relate questions to the faculty obligations.
- While the same questions should be asked of all interviewees, an interviewer can and should ask relevant follow up questions. These follow up questions will vary somewhat from candidate to candidate.
- There are some questions which are unlawful and should not be asked under any circumstances. Please see the guide in Appendix A.

The search advisory committee must focus on qualifications, expertise, and demonstrated behaviors as a whole in order to determine which candidate is best-suited for the position. The search advisory committee must substantiate why a candidate is not selected with objective criteria.

Questions about permissible interview questions should be directed to HR.

Interview Bias

We need to consider the experience and needs of our diverse student population. Below are just a few of the many biases we are subjected to while interviewing. Be self-aware of the judgments you place onto others and be sure to consider whether you are using evidence to arrive at your evaluations/ratings. It is recommended that all members of a search advisory committee attend unconscious bias training at the university. Common examples of bias:

Stereotyping Bias – Forming an opinion of someone based on gender, religion, race, appearance, or any other type of characteristic.

Women and underrepresented minority candidates are typically penalized disproportionately if reviewers do not allocate adequate time (15–20 minutes) to reviewing their CV's.

First Impression Bias – Making judgements about an interviewee based on their first impression being positive or negative.

“Similar to Me” Effect –Thinking highly of someone who has a similar mind set or personality to the interviewer. We often judge people based exclusively on our own experience. We tend to favor people who look like us or have other experiences like our own.

Negative Emphasis Bias –When the interviewer receives a small amount of negative information and uses it to base their entire hiring decision off of it. We tend to weigh negative information heavier than positive information.

Halo and Horn Effect –The Halo Effect is when the interviewer lets one positive fact about the candidate overshadow everything else they say or do. The Horn Effect is the opposite and allows a weak fact to influence everything else.

Cultural Noise –The interviewer’s ability to distinguish between a candidate’s socially acceptable answer rather than revealing their true opinion.

Contrast Effect—When a stronger candidate interviews after a weaker candidate, they may appear more qualified than they are because of the contrast between the two.

It is the responsibility of each search advisory committee member to conduct an equitable search and to be sure candidates are treated in the same manner.

Interview Notes and File Retention

The search advisory committee should take notes during the interviews. Notes can be helpful when reflecting on candidates and for use in discussion with other search advisory committee members. Notes should be factual in nature and concern only those areas the university is lawfully allowed to consider. Keep in mind that interview notes and search documents may be subject to scrutiny after the fact (e.g., during a federal audit, litigation or public records request) and the meaning of each word may be questioned.

Sarcastic comments, jokes, or information regarding the attributes of a candidate that are not job-related may create an unintended appearance of bias. It is appropriate to take notes that focus on required skills and relevant applicant responses. All interview notes and search documents, whether from phone interviews or on-campus interviews, should be maintained as part of the search record.

The Standard Practice Guide, section 201.22, Recruitment and Employment, provides guidance on records retention.

Notes should be attached to the job posting in eRecruit and Interfolio as outlined by HR in the posting-to-hire process (see the Posting-to-Hire process at www.umflint.edu/hr/posting-process). HR recommends the notes are attached as a Word document, and are a collective summary from the hiring manager and search advisory committee. Other documents, as specified by the SPG, should be maintained in the Dean’s office for the appropriate time outlined in the SPG. Search advisory committee members should submit all search related materials to the administrative designee in the Dean’s Office after a candidate has been hired.

Questions regarding record retention should be directed to HR at (810) 762-3150.

Resources

The University of Michigan-Flint Human Resources website, www.umflint.edu/hr/posting-processes contains several resource guides to aid administrative support staff, hiring managers and search advisory committees.

The University of Michigan-Flint Advance Program at <https://advance.umich.edu/stride/>

If you have any questions, please contact the Human Resources Office at (810) 762-3150.

Appendix A

Legal Interview Questions and Notes

SUBJECT	APPROPRIATE INQUIRIES	INAPPROPRIATE INQUIRIES
Age	None	Questions about age, date of birth, request for birth certificate.
Arrests/Convictions	May ask if any record of criminal convictions and/or offenses exist, if all applicants are asked.	Inquiries regarding arrest record.
Height and Weight	None	Inquiries about the applicant's height or weight.
Education	Inquiries about degree or equivalent experience.	None
Disability	May ask about applicant's ability to perform job-related functions.	Question (or series of questions) that is likely to solicit information about a disability.
Marital or Parental Status	Whether an applicant can meet work schedule or job requirements. Should be asked of all genders.	Any inquiry about marital status, children, pregnancy, or childcare plans.
National Origin	May ask if legally authorized to work in this specific position if all applicants are asked.	May not ask a person's birthplace; if the person is a U.S. citizen; questions about the person's lineage, ancestry, descent, or parentage; how the person acquired the ability to speak/read/learn a foreign language.
Personal Finances	None	Inquiries regarding credit record, owning a home, or garnishment record.
Photograph	None	Any inquiry for a photograph prior to hire.
Organizations	Inquiries about professional organizations related to the position.	Inquiries about personal or professional organizations suggesting race, sex, color, religion, creed, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, identity, gender expression, height, weight, disability or veteran status.
Race or Color	None	Comments about complexion or color of skin.
Religion	Describe the work schedule and ask whether applicant can work that schedule. Should be asked of all applicants.	Inquiries about religious preferences, affiliation, denominations, church, and religious holidays observed.
Sex	None	Inquiries regarding gender, gender expression or gender identity.
Sexual Orientation	None	Comments or questions about the applicant's sexual orientation.