REFERENCE GUIDE FOR SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

This Reference Guide for Search Committee Members is intended to provide additional assistance throughout the faculty screening and hiring process. We have included a quick overview of the review process and several tips on screening and conducting interviews along with helpful resources.

It is very important for search committee members to review this entire Full-Time Faculty Recruitment Guide (particularly the SCREENING APPLICANTS section) so they familiarize themselves with the recruitment and hiring process. Efforts should also be made to attend the Faculty Recruitment sessions when they are made available to discuss recent potential changes and share knowledge of past experience with new committee members.

Some of the information contained in this reference guide was contributed by the College of Basic and Applied Sciences and other information was adapted from "Search Committees: A Tool Kit for Human Resource Professionals, Administrators."

Committee members will not be able to review applicants prior to the Review Date established for the posting. The email provides a link to access the applicants/materials as well as a link to the Selection Criteria Form each committee member will use to perform their individual reviews. PLEASE REFER TO THE "Using the System" guide for step-by-step instructions for reviewing applicants. The Search Committee Chair will be the only committee member to enter information into the PageUp hiring system.

No contact with an applicant may occur until approved by IE&C in the pool as a "candidate for the position."

If a search committee member has questions about using the hiring system, please contact Academic Affairs at 898-5128 for assistance. **HIRING SITE LINK:** mtsu.dc4.pageuppeople.com

Search Committee Steps in Review

1. Decide on criteria to be used during review of applicants which must adhere to posting;
2. Determine the best timeline for completion adhering to Provost's Optimal Recruitment Timeline for tenure-track postings;
3. Using Excel form, individually review applicants eliminating any who failed to successfully apply;
4. Compare top applicants to define a reasonably sized, high-potential interview pool;
5. Provide collective criteria critique (including strengths/limitations) for pool only – DO NOT RANK;
6. Committee chair enters criteria into the online hiring system and notifies department chair
7. After pool has been routed and received IE&C review/approval, confirm approved candidates;
8. Letters of Recommendation (automatically solicited through the system) must be returned via the unique link assigned and provided to each recommender when solicited;
9. Large pool – when using tiered approach, after pool approval by E&C, initiate contact to schedule initial phone/video interviews, once short-list is determined (typically 2-3 approved candidate finalists) – department should notify Faculty Recruitment Specialist to initiate information email to candidates regarding transcripts;
10. Department Chair submits salary recommendation for short-listed finalists;
11. On-campus interviews are required for tenure-track finalists but **not** required for other faculty position types which can be conducted via telephone/video.
    (Currently, as of Fall 2022: Tenure-track candidates may choose to participate in final video interviews rather than on-campus interviews. If one candidate chooses a video interview rather than an on-campus interview, all finalist candidates must be offered the same option. Be sure to include your typical on-campus interview participants (e.g. Department Chair, Dean) also during these final video interviews.)
12. Check references **(Letters of Recommendation are not considered reference checks.)**
13. Department Chair and/or Dean will determine finalist to be recommended.

Search committee members, the hiring Department Chair/Dean **may not** provide letters of recommendation for a candidate within the search. Letters may also not come from general dossier (i.e. Interfolio).

It is important to check references to limit employer liability, verify information, and reduce cost of rehiring/retraining. Checks will produce authenticity of information as it relates to such areas as work history or credential problems.

TIPS – Before the Interviews:

- Book an appropriate location.
- Review the job description.
- Draft and agree upon the interview questions to be asked. (**MUST** be the same for **ALL** interviewees.)
- Review the candidate's resume/application.
- Agree on the format of the interview.
- Ensure that you know and can identify the indicators of the candidate's ability to perform the job

TIPS - Telephone Interviews:

Planning and Arranging the Interview

- Schedule a call of no more than 30 minutes with interviewee and interviewers.
- Review interviewee's application materials.
- Determine the order in which the interviewers will ask the prepared questions.
- Test speaker-phone and teleconferencing equipment and procedures. (Audio records of interviews is helpful IN CASE a committee member cannot attend.)

Conducting the Interview

- Introduce the individuals participating in the interview and describe how the interview will be conducted.
- Make the interviewee aware if you are recording the session (recording is preferred).
- Ask questions pertaining to the vitae (i.e., questions about gaps in employment, special training, or a change of professions).
- Ask why the person is interested in leaving his or her current position.
- Ask one or two technical questions about the job.
- Ask one or two questions that will help you determine the interviewee's compliment to your department and the campus community (i.e, "what is your philosophy of ___?").
- Ask follow-up questions as appropriate.
- Ask the interviewee if he or she has any questions.
- Explain to the interviewee the next step in the selection process.
- Thank candidate for his or her time.

TIPS - On-Campus Interviews (required for tenure-track positions ONLY):

Interview Preparation Checklist

- Hiring department or college sends Welcome Package to interviewees.
- Confirm travel and lodging arrangements.
    - **Candidates must make their own airline reservations** and purchase their airline tickets. Reimbursement will be made after the travel has been completed. MTSU does not pay for airline tickets in advance. If a cancellation or reimbursement is required, the airlines will only make those to the person named on the ticket.
- The Department Chair or designee should make hotel reservations for each candidate. It is ideal to limit lodging for faculty candidate interviews to one night unless it is absolutely impossible to do so. Lodging expenses should be directly billed to the department (will be paid from the college recruitment account.) Make sure the hotel provides the in-state rate or lower.
- Arrange transportation from airport or other location.
    - Search committee members should be responsible for picking up candidates from the airport, hotel, getting them back to the hotel, airport, etc.
    - Caution should be used during the travel time to/from airport being sure not to venture into areas of conversation considered inappropriate for an interview.
- Arrange tour of local community (if appropriate).
- Arrange campus tour.
    - Search committee members should escort candidates around campus to interview sessions.
- Arrange interview by search committee that should include Department Chair and Dean.
- Arrange meeting with Vice Provost for Research Services.
- Include Provost in on-campus interview for upper level administrative faculty positions (Dean, Chair)
- Schedule candidate's presentation. (Internal candidates **may not attend** presentations by other candidates.)
- Schedule meals and breaks as appropriate.
    - Search committee members should take candidates for meals.

Note: Search committee members may be reimbursed for travel expenses to transport a candidate to and from the airport by completing a Claim for Travel Expenses form. The faculty member who pays for a candidate's meal and the meal of any other faculty member in attendance **(limited to 2 additional)** may be reimbursed for those meals by completing an Authorization for Purchase of Meals form. Receipts are required for guest meals reimbursement. Alcohol is **not** reimbursable.

TIPS - Good Interview Questions to Consider for Faculty:

- Describe your teaching style.
- Describe your teaching philosophy.
- What technology applications have you utilized in the classroom?
- How do you engage students, particularly in a course for non-majors?
- Share your ideas about professional development.
- What changes have you brought to the teaching of- ?
- How would you go about being an advocate and resource for the use of technology in the teaching and learning process?
- What courses have you created or proposed in the past five years?
- What do you think are the most important attributes of a good instructor?
- Where would this position fit into your career development goals?

- How do you define good teaching?
- What do you think are your greatest strengths as an instructor? In which areas do you think you can use some further development?
- How do you think your teaching style can serve our student population?
- In what professional development activities have you been involved over the past few years?
- What pedagogical changes do you see on the horizon in your discipline?
- How would your background and experiences strengthen this academic department?
- How do you adjust your style to the less motivated or under-prepared student?
- What are your current research interests? Have you involved your students in your research?
- What are the most recent book and article that you've read?

TIPS - Interview Questions to AVOID

- Where were you born?
- What is your birth date?
- How old are you?
- Do you have a disability?
- Are you married?
- What is your spouse's name?
- What is your maiden name?
- Do you have any children?
- Do you have child care arrangements?
- What is your race or ethnic origin?
- Which church do you attend?
- What is your religion?

Acceptable Alternative Questions ***(only if there is a bona fide, job-specific reason. If you ask one candidate, you must ask all candidates)***

- Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the job's attendance or travel requirements?
- Are you able to work in the United States on an unrestricted basis?
- Are you able to perform the duties on the job description with or without reasonable accommodations?
- If hired, can you provide proof that you are at least 18 years of age?
- Do you have any conflicts that would prevent you from working the schedule discussed?
- What languages do you speak or write fluently?
- Have you worked under any other professional name or nickname?
- Do you have any relatives currently working for this institution?
- Would you have any problem working overtime, if required?
- Would anything prohibit you from making a long-term commitment to the position and the institution?

TIPS – DO's & DON'Ts

- **Limit closed questions** – they elicit a one-word, yes or no answer. Example: Did you do curriculum development?
- **Ask open questions** – they elicit expanded responses, allowing you to gauge their thought processes, values, etc. Example: Would you explain the process you employ when developing curriculum?

- **Avoid Leading Questions** – leading questions suggest an answer, the candidate will feel compelled to agree with you. Example: You do like working on teams, don't you?
- **Ask only questions that are bona fide occupational qualifications –** asking questions directly related to candidate's ability to do the job.
- **Stay away from questions that relate to protected classifications-** asking questions related to gender, race, nationality, age, disability, religion, etc. Example: You don't look old enough to have a PhD, how old are you?
- **If a candidate brings up classification, then it is okay –** if the candidate opens the door by asking about a particular area, then it is permissible for that topic to be discussed. Example: My husband is also a professor; do you offer spousal relocation services?

TIPS - Questions for Evaluating Presentations

- Was the presenter professional?
- Was the presenter well prepared?
- Was the learning objective clear?
- Did the presenter attempt to establish rapport with the audience?
- Did he or she demonstrate mastery of his or her subject?
- Did he or she present the subject matter in an effective manner (that is, with sufficient clarity, at the right pace, and so on)?
- Were his or her handouts or other learning aides useful?
- Did he or she use them effectively?
- Did he or she handle questions well?
- Did he or she engage the audience and hold its attention?
- Did the presentation start and end on time?
- Did you learn something worthwhile from the presentation?
- Did the presenter display oral proficiency in the English language?

TIPS - During the Interview

- Let the applicant do most of the talking.
- Keep the interview on track.
- Observe nonverbal behavior.
- Take notes – keeping in mind they **will** become a part of the search file. Use caution, notes you find helpful to identify a candidate could unintentionally indicate a bias for/against a candidate.
- Leave time for the candidate to ask questions.
- Notify the candidate we **must** check references both listed and unlisted.
- Describe the remainder of the search process and the time it will take.
    - Express appreciation for the candidate's interest in the position. Ask if the candidate has any questions for the committee.
- Thank candidate for his or her time.

TIPS - After the Interview

- Give the candidate a brief overview or written synopsis of benefits.
- Answer any questions related to salary (The salary recommendation should have been submitted to Academic Affairs and received back prior to the interview.)
- Evaluate the candidate.

- Document the interview.
- Secure signature on application.
- Search committee members should not have contact with a candidate after he/she leaves campus unless it is a common process being implemented for ALL interview candidates. If candidates contact search committee members, it is acceptable to answer questions. However, committee members **shall not** provide early notification of the recommended finalist to other candidates/applicants.

TIPS - Interviewing at Off-Campus Sites (Tenure-Track Faculty Recruitment)

The University supports efforts to recruit and employ faculty who are essential to the mission of academic quality. To be competitive, academic departments must continue to identify effective procedures that allow for timely interviews of applicants for faculty positions.

The following guidance applies to interviewing applicants at off-campus sites. The guidance applies only to candidates who are in a pool **already approved by IE&C** AND who have participated in a previous telephone interview.

Search committee members participating in interviews at off-campus sites:

- Shall reflect diversity of female and federally recognized ethnic minority representation.
- Shall consist of no fewer than 3 (three) members, and all members must be present at the time of each interview.
- Shall consist of at least one member whose area of concentration is the same or similar to the advertised position.

All information above must be provided

In addition to the above:

- The interview questions must be job related and consistent for all candidates.
- All candidates shall be invited to the off-site interviews (screenings). If the off- site interview is not possible for some candidates, they shall be given the opportunity to have an additional interview with the search committee.
- Interviews shall be conducted in neutral, non-threatening areas.
- Interviews **shall not** be conducted in hotel rooms of committee members or candidates.