

University of California

Interview Committee Guide

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Introduction

This document provides an overview for hiring managers and interview committee members on best practices for conducting effective and legally compliant committee interviews. The composition of the committee should serve to advance the university's commitment to the principles of diversity and equal employment opportunity. In addition, the hiring manager must ensure that committee members have no potential conflict of interest with serving on the interview committee.

Role of the Hiring Manager

The hiring manager plays an essential role in the interviewing process. The hiring manager will work closely with their Human Resources Representative to select the interview committee members. The hiring manager is responsible for appointing a chair of the committee who will work closely with the committee throughout the interview process. It is recommended that the hiring manager should not serve on the interview committee in order to ensure an unbiased screening process; however, hiring managers may choose to participate if desired. The hiring manager will also provide a charge to the committee, outlining specific requirements during the interview process. A typical charge will usually include the following points:

- The key background and competencies necessary for the successful candidate.
- Target dates for completing each stage of the interview process and the schedule of reporting.
- The suggested number of candidates to be recommended as finalists.
- The understanding that the committee does not select the hire, selection of the successful candidate is ultimately the hiring manager's decision.
- Budget considerations regarding salary, travel for in-person interviews.

Once the committee completes their work and recommends the candidates, the hiring manager completes the process by interviewing each final candidate, checking references, and making the hiring decision. The Human Resource Representative is available to assist with this stage; provide guidance on interviewing, reference checking, salary setting and negotiation, and preparation of the offer letter.

The hiring department or interview committee chair may include an administrative support individual as a non-voting member of the committee to assist with any administrative responsibilities.

Role of the Chair of the Committee

For consistency and efficiency, the committee chair should handle all inquiries regarding the interviews including any applicant or potential applicant's written or verbal request for information about the search process or timelines. The committee chair is encouraged to work with the HR Representative for assistance if needed.

The primary responsibilities of the chair shall be to ensure that the best qualified candidates are considered and to:

- Ensure development of interview questions, rating guides and other materials for the committee to use as part of their decision-making.
- Guide the committee in developing and conducting the interviews.
- Oversee the professional and timely operation of the committee.

- Ensure active participation by all committee members.
- Guarantee an opportunity for all qualified candidates to receive committee consideration.
- Work with the HR Representative to ensure that effective recruitment mechanisms are utilized and that the committee is provided information relevant to recruitment of underrepresented groups.
- Ensure that complete records of meetings and action are maintained.
- Maintain confidentiality of committee deliberations, communications with and identity of candidates.
- Ensure that financial expenditures generated by the committee are approved prior to their obligation.
- Report to the supervisor, hiring authority or HR Representative the deliberations of the committee, divisions of opinion, and information compiled about the candidates. The chair should immediately report any difficulties which threaten the committee's successful operation.
- Make arrangements for a meeting between the supervisor or hiring manager and the interview committee at the conclusion of the committee interviews.
- Compile the committee final report summarizing the process for submission to the hiring manager and HR Representative.

Charge of the Committee

The charge of an interview committee is to assist the hiring manager by interviewing qualified candidates and presenting the top finalists to the hiring manager. The finalists will move forward for more interviews with the hiring manager and others as appropriate.

The hiring manager may also ask the interview committee to assist with the development of the job description as well as the interview questions.

Role of the Committee

The committee is responsible for interviewing candidates, assessing their qualifications and determining which candidates should be moved forward to the hiring manager for further consideration. It is recommended that a Human Resources Representative serves as a member of each committee to assist the chair and provide consultation and advice on the overall process and best practice outcomes.

The committee must also be aware of the University's commitment to diversity and ensure equality and inclusion within the interview process.

Interview Committee Size

It is recommended that committees are between 3 to 10 participants, depending upon the position under recruitment. Larger committees become difficult to organize and can be daunting to candidates.

Confidentiality

Protecting candidate confidentiality is one of the committee's most important responsibilities throughout the search process. Other University employees outside of the committee are also expected to honor these confidentiality guidelines. The following confidentiality guidelines should be followed.

- Do not disclose the names of the applicants/candidates.
- All discussions among committee members are confidential.
- Do not discuss the interview process, results or deliberations outside of the committee.
- Keep candidate information in a confidential file that can be locked.

- Committee members are not to contact anyone they may know to get an informal reference about a candidate.
- Confidentiality breaches should be disclosed to the committee chair or Human Resources Representative immediately.

Conducting the Interview

At time of interview, the Interview Committee makes up the Interview Panel. At the beginning of the interview, each panel member should introduce themselves to the candidate. The chair should describe the format of the interview to help make the candidate comfortable. The interview should be a conversation with each committee member asking previously developed questions. Behavior-based questions are recommended allowing the candidate to do most of the talking and describe his/her behavior in a particular situation. An example of a behavior-based question is: "please tell us a time when you made a mistake at work". Past performance is a predictor to future performance and allows one to assess how they will handle similar situations in the future.

Questions that cannot be asked

There are a number of questions that cannot be asked during an interview. These questions generally relate to a candidate's race, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability, gender and national origin.

Presentations

The interview committee may ask that the candidate make a presentation. Typically this would only be requested for a position that requires public speaking or at a management level where presentations are required for the position. If a presentation is part of the process for candidates, it must be administered to all candidates as part of their interview and applied consistently. The committee should also ensure that the circumstances surrounding the presentations are as similar as possible to ensure that candidates are treated equitably.

Virtual Interviews

Virtual or web-based interviews have become more common-place in order to save travel expenses and time. Hiring managers may choose to ask the committee to interview candidates virtually for these reasons. When conducting virtual interviews, committees must follow the same guidelines and processes that are required for onsite interviews. It is permissible to interview some candidates on-site and some virtually if necessary. The rationale for this may be that one or more candidates cannot travel to the location and/or the hiring manager may not have funding to pay for travel and lodging expenses. Tips to keep in mind when conducting virtual interviews are:

- Virtual interviews are ideal for senior-level professional or managerial positions, especially for candidates that are outside of the region or outside of California.
- Notify the candidates in advance that you would like to interview them online; make sure that is acceptable to them.
- Prior to the interviews, formulate questions that will be asked of the candidates so everything runs smoothly.
- Inform the candidates of the approximate length of the interview.
- Allow time for the candidates to ask questions.
- Follow all appropriate policies, procedures and affirmative action/EEO guidelines during your interviews.

Recommending Finalists to the Hiring Manager

The final recommendation(s) are made only after all qualified candidates have been interviewed. The recommendation is based on the initial direction provided by the hiring manager. Recommendations must be kept confidential. As stated previously, it is the hiring manager or Human Resource Representative's role to check references after obtaining approval from the final candidates to do so.

Once the recommendations have been made, the committee has fulfilled their obligations.

Records Retention

Interview notes, rating guides and any materials from the interviews should be given to the Human Resources representative for storage with the recruitment materials for a total of three years.

For more information about the University's full interview and selection process, please review the Hiring for Success at UC training located on your local Learning Management Site.