



SEARCH & SCREEN GUIDE

FOR

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This resource is designed to provide the University community with the tools necessary to conduct compliant and successful recruitment searches. As a hiring manager and/or search committee, it is important that you are familiar with relevant policies and procedures that are in place to ensure equal and open access employment opportunities to our candidates.

For positions which require a formal search and screen process, this guide should be used in conjunction with the Search & Screen Handbook located on the Equal Opportunity Programs website.

This handbook is one component of the University's efforts to provide equal employment opportunity to all and to prevent discrimination against any group of individuals due to race, religion, sex, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, age and/or marital status. This guide is also designed to provide hiring officials and/or search committees with a resource for how the process should be conducted in accordance with the University's Affirmative Action Plan.

Should you have questions regarding your search process or recruitment process, please contact the Division of Human Resources-Recruitment Services.

COMMENCING WITH THE SEARCH

Organizing for Selection Tasks

The search process is possibly the single-most important task of the search and screen committee. Recruitment of a strong and diverse applicant pool provides viable options for the committee's selection. By contrast, a weak applicant pool may require re-advertising of a position, which can be costly both in advertising and time lost prior to filling the position.

The search and screen committee should hold its first meeting prior to the posting and advertising of the position. This ensures the members will have input in both the placement of advertisements for a position and be notified of any affirmative action goals impacting the vacant position. In addition to the committee members, the hiring official and a member of Human Resources should be present. During this meeting, the committee chair will be elected if the hiring official or appointing official has not already named one and the hiring official will give the charge for recruitment.

The role of the **Hiring Official** in the search and screen process will be the following:

- Provide the committee with its charge.
- Review position description with the committee and respond to any questions.
- Provide the committee with a description of the required and preferred job-related knowledge, experience and skills; inform the committee about budget availability for both the recruitment process and inviting candidates for interview (non-local candidates).
- Clarify to the committee who will provide administrative support and any required related information.
- Clarify the manner in which they prefer the committee to make recommendations.
- Provide the date in which they would like to receive recommendations for finalists in search process.

The role of the **Search Committee** will be the following:

- Develop a recruitment timeline, which will include posting periods, meeting dates and times, interview schedules, and deadline dates for finalist selections and recommendations.
- Develop and/or review verbiage for position advertisements.
- Select and interview qualified candidates.
- Make finalist selections and communicate recommendations to hiring official.

The role of **Human Resources** in the search and screen process will be the following:

- Review with the committee the definition of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, and the implications for the committee's work (advertising, interview questions, record keeping, etc.).
- Discuss underutilization (if applicable) of minority group members and/or women in the unit for which the search is being conducted and its implications and inform committee of any requirements of federal and state laws regarding affirmative action and equal opportunity for minority group members, women and persons with disabilities.
- Review committee's responsibility to treat all applicants fairly and equitably regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or veteran status.
- Inform the committee of the support HR will provide throughout the search and screen process, including identification of appropriate advertising sources, initial screening of the applicant pools, certification of the pools, and management of the applicant tracking system

Developing a Recruitment Strategy

In conjunction with the search committee, the Recruitment Consultant will finalize the scope of the search (local, regional, or national) and develop a recruitment strategy, considering factors such as type of position, current labor market conditions, and specialized requirements.

The Recruitment Strategy will consist of the following:

- A list of recommended advertising sources, cost, and placement deadlines, based on type of position and/or discipline
- Timeline for recruitment activities:
 - Posting periods
 - Meeting dates & times
 - Interview scheduling
 - Hiring of candidate
- Recruitment budget

Based on the applicable underutilization and diversity of initial candidate pools, the search committee and/or hiring official may be required to place additional advertisement of position.

PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS IN THE SEARCH PROCESS

The Sunshine Law

The committee may also decide to include information notifying applicants that Florida's "Sunshine Law" requires that all applications are subject to Florida's Public Documents Law. That law states that a search and screen committee meeting at a state university is a "public meeting" and that all deliberations and votes must be made at the committee meetings. Notice of these meetings should be given in advance and may consist of posting the meeting notices in appropriate places in the University.

The Public Documents Law

Under Florida Law, all documents of the search and screen process, including letters of application, resumes, letters of reference, search committee minutes, etc., are subject to the State of Florida Public Documents Law at all points in the process.

This means that all records are subject to review by any member of the public (including applicants) upon written request, and that requests for copies must be honored. The requestor may be asked to pay for duplicating costs.

The Committee as Representatives of the University

The search and screen committee may be the main contact with applicants in the recruitment process therefore it places the committee in a unique position to enhance the reputation and image of the University. While the committee evaluates each applicant, the applicant is also evaluating the committee, the departments they represent, and the institution. The impression that an applicant receives of the University will influence not only the applicant, but colleagues with whom the applicant works with for years to come. Therefore the committee should understand the significance of their impact throughout the search process and conduct themselves accordingly.

THE SEARCH PROCESS

Position Posting & Advertising

Once the search committee has conducted its introductory meeting and finalized the recruitment strategy, Recruitment Services will post the position on the University's career web site **JOBSLink** (www.fiujobs.org). After the position has been posted, an email notification will be sent to the chair of the committee and members confirming posting of position on web site, providing guest user access and log-in instructions, and additional recruitment tools and resources to support a successful search effort.

The placement of all advertisements will be facilitated by Recruitment Services. All advertisements **should** include:

- An overview of position requirements
- Reporting structure
- Required/desired qualifications
- Application deadlines
- Instructions on how to apply

All advertisements must include the following statement:

"FIU is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access/Affirmative Action Employer"

Pool Certification

The purpose of the review is to identify whether the applicant pool reflects representation of minorities and women at a level exceeding the availability data in the university's Affirmative Action Plan. Both the applicant and interview pools must be certified by Equal Opportunity Programs during the recruitment process. Applicant pools that include that representation will be routinely certified. Applicant pools that do not include that representation may be extended for additional recruitment of those individuals. The applicant pools must be certified prior to the hiring manager/committee's discussion of candidates.

Screening Candidates

With FIU's growing reputation as a top research educator and an employer of choice, it is not uncommon to receive large numbers of applications for every job posting. The selection process is the opportunity to identify the most qualified candidates and also present the benefits of becoming a member of the FIU family to interested candidates. When we are successful in this process, we gain potentially outstanding colleagues; even when we are not able to gain a good candidate, our goal is to leave a great impression of the university.

It is important that each applicant's candidacy be measured fully and carefully against the requirements of the position and against the university's mission. The application/resume provides the hiring official/search committee with a comprehensive overview of the candidate's knowledge, work experiences, and educational qualifications. When reviewing resumes, the hiring manager/search committee should:

Ask critical questions

- Is there a consistent and stable employment history?
- Are there gaps in employment dates, frequent job-hopping?
- Are there inconsistencies in education or experience?

Look for a career path

When reviewing the resume, look for signs of the applicant's career path. Promotion and advancement may represent a good focus and stability. For candidates starting out in their careers, look for extracurricular activities and the verbiage used to describe their experience and relevance to position.

Observe overall presentation of resume

For each resume, look for overall neatness, lack of typos, and consistent formatting. This can show attention to detail and a certain level of professionalism, traits that you want your employees to possess. Remember to take note of the trends and timing in work, educational and volunteer experiences of your applicants. There should be consistency in their resume.

Look for Accomplishments

Most resumes list job duties and/or responsibilities instead of actual achievements. Resumes that emphasize specific accomplishments can show that the person is an achiever and understands how day-to-day tasks affect the bottom line.

Example: Responsibility: "Prepared budgets and project plans."

Accomplishment: "Increased company sales by 50%"

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Reasonable Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

Under Title I (employment) regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the University cannot refuse to hire qualified persons with disabilities simply on the basis of the disability.

An applicant who meets the definition of a person with a disability (Appendices...) must be provided reasonable accommodation in the application process. Accommodations must be requested by the applicant. The hiring official/search committee should not assume that an applicant who appears to have a disability will require accommodation if not requested.

If an applicant requests an accommodation, the hiring official/committee should contact the Director of Equal Opportunity Programs.

Interviewing Candidates

Conducting effective interviews is essential for selecting the right candidate for the job. Managers should have a complete understanding of the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to successfully perform the job and be thoroughly familiar with the applicant(s) being interviewed. The interview should be a well-planned process that makes the candidate feel comfortable and will encourage a productive dialogue about the candidate's work experience, skills set, and character. The following is the interview path that is recommended for administrative searches at the University:

■ Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews can be an effective way to learn more about applicants before inviting them to campus for in-depth interviews. The telephone interview is used to provide an overview of the position, outline expectations, inquire about application materials, answer candidate's questions about the position, and to verify that the candidate is seriously interested in the position. This interview process should be used as a tool for additional screening to determine whether or not it is worth scheduling the candidate for a face-to-face interview. This type of interview typically lasts about 30-45 minutes.

■ On-Campus Interviews

The purpose of the face-to-face interview is to further narrow your initial group of applicants by learning as much about them as you can in a relatively limited amount of time. Generally, no more than three to five candidates are brought to campus for regular, full-time exempt positions, although, there are situations when it may be necessary to interview more applicants to find the right individual for the position.

In preparation for the on-campus interview the following should be done:

- Development of an Interview Template
- Send email confirmation to candidates including date, time, building and room location, directions to University Campus, copy of position description, and contact name and phone number.

Outlined below are key steps to conducting a successful interview:

■ **Create Rapport**

- Use a private area that's comfortable and conducive to a good interview.
- Set the stage for good candid communication. A relaxed atmosphere allows the conversation to take on a natural feeling and flow.
- Make the applicant feel welcome and at-ease by having a brief moment of introductions and non-job related conversation.
- Give the candidate your undivided attention; be warm and courteous.
- Take necessary precautions to eliminate or minimize disruptions by turning off electronic communication devices and not taking phone calls.

■ **Set the Stage**

- Explain the sequence of recruitment and interview process. By doing so, the applicant knows what to expect and it shows that you are organized and in control of the interview process.
- Inform the applicant that you will be taking notes and may occasionally look down to write a comment.
- Ask candidate if they need additional assistance to make him/her feel relaxed.

■ **Inform applicant about Florida International University and the position**

- The search chair should facilitate discussion and be sure the committee members are well prepared for the interview.
- Keep in mind that candidates are assessing Florida International University (FIU) and the interview experience just as you are evaluating them. Therefore, we must provide information on the benefits to becoming a member of the FIU family.
- The committee should state clear expectations for incumbent, by describing core responsibilities of the position, reporting structure, and working environment/conditions that affect the position.
- Discuss salary requirements or hiring range for the position with candidates at end of interview to ensure that the candidate will be willing to accept responsibilities if offered the position within the target range. Get a sense of whether or not you should continue to pursue prior to extending invitations for interviews. Hiring range information is typically listed on the vacancy announcement. Please note that the successful candidate will be offered a salary within the hiring range. Decisions about starting salaries will be made based on the extent and relevance of the candidate's education and experience, on internal equity and market considerations.

■ Collecting Information

- This is the time for you to ask probing questions, reflect, summarize and evaluate what was said.
- Avoid asking close-ended questions. The objective is to ascertain specific and detailed information about the candidate.
- Ask behavioral type questions – See attached sample behavioral questions
- Listen closely to the applicant. The candidate should do most of the talking. Maintain eye contact.
- BE SILENT - don't rush the applicant to respond. Slow responses do not mean that the candidate is less qualified than those who respond quickly.
- Observe the applicant's body language. Body language will reveal much about his/her enthusiasm, boredom, disagreement, disinterest, awareness, knowledge, skills, abilities, etc.
- Avoid asking leading questions - this encourages the applicant to slant answers to your satisfaction.
- Keep an open mind and try not to prejudge the candidate.
- Try to avoid writing profusely; jot down brief comments. Also, give some eye contact to the candidate even when taking notes.
- DO NOT write comments or observations on the applicant's employment application, cover letter, resume, etc. Use a separate note pad to record observations.

■ Closing the Interview

- Permit the applicant to ask last minute questions or provide additional comments relevant to his or her professional or personal experiences and qualifications.
- Provide the candidate with a general timeline for making a selection decision (interview period, deadline for final recommendations/decision). Tell the candidate who will be communicating the decision and when. In the event of a delay in the employment decision, HR will inform the candidate.
- Thank the applicant for the interview, their interest in the position, and the possibility of becoming a part of the university's workforce.
- Do not make any promises or inferences of a job offer.
- At the conclusion of the interview, committee members should shake candidate's hand and provide him/her with a business card.

■ Show them out.

Escort all applicants to the exit. Thank them for their time.

Caveat:

Be careful not to make inferences of a job offer or promises of any kind. Actions of this nature can lead to university liabilities.

SELECTING FINALISTS & MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

After the interview process has been completed and discussed, an agreement should be reached regarding the finalist selection and recommendation. The committee may want to consider the following when making selection decisions:

Potential: CAN the applicant do the job? You should feel confident that the applicant possesses the experience, skills, knowledge and abilities needed to perform the essential duties of the job.

Motivation: WILL the applicant do the job? You want to hire someone who truly wants to do this job and for good reasons. Having the skills to do the job is not enough. Ask yourself: does the job fit in with the applicant's career goals? Does it offer challenges that would interest them?

Fit: Does the applicant possess the other key characteristics and work behaviors to make him/her the best FIT for the job in relation to judgment, personality, attitude and interpersonal skills? These factors usually "tip the scale" when comparing applicants who otherwise may be equally qualified.

It is recommended that the committee chair prepare a memorandum to the hiring official with the finalist recommendations and the rationale upon which the committee based its decision. The finalists' applications, resumes and reference check documentation should be attached to the memorandum. The committee's recommendations should be strongly considered by the hiring official.

The Reference Checking Process

Hiring decisions should not be made without making an effort to check references. Making hiring decisions without complete information on candidates could lead to costly mistakes and may subject an employer to liability for its hiring decision. Reference checking should simply be regarded as a component of the interviewing process.

When finalist selections are made, the Division of Human Resources should be notified so that they can begin the referencing and background check process, if applicable. Should the hiring official or the committee wish to conduct references, a [Reference Check Template Form](#) is available in the Forms Library on the Division of Human Resources website: www.fiu.edu/hr/formslibrary.

Notification to Applicants

It is a good business practice to promptly notify the other candidates who were not selected for the position, after it has been accepted by the final candidate. It sends a message to applicants that FIU is professional and respectful in how we conduct business and appreciate that candidates have taken the time to apply to FIU.

Although a telephone call is appropriate, it is recommended that notification be sent by mail informing applicants of your selection decision. A verbal conversation may prompt applicants to ask for reasons why he/she was not chosen.

Notification Letter Templates can be found on the Forms Library on the HR website (www.fiu.edu/hr).

MAKING AN EMPLOYMENT OFFER

It is the policy of the University that no employment offer shall be extended until the appropriate pre-employment processes have taken place and the final candidate is approved by the Division of Human Resources. Once a starting salary range is established, the formal letter of offer will be generated in preparation to make the employment offer.

In the conversation to the final candidate, the Division of Human Resources will:

- Convey their pleasure and honor in extending the employment offer
- Sell the position, work team/environment and FIU in general
- State salary offer and a review of available benefits as an FIU employee

THE “ON-BOARDING” EXPERIENCE

The “on-boarding” experience describes the orientation of new employees into the world of the “blue and gold”. It welcomes them to Florida International University and encourages them to become fully engaged, productive members of the institution. Keeping in mind that you never get a second chance to make a first impression, it is essential that new employees feel welcomed, valued, and prepared for what lies ahead during their careers.

The following should be done in preparation for your new employee’s arrival:

HR

- Register employee for New Employee Experience
- Meet with new employee to finalize pre-employment paperwork

Hiring Official

- Send email introducing new team member to staff
- Assign member of team to assist new employee during transition
- Assemble/prepare any required desk supplies, directories, manuals and any other helpful resources.
- Prepare forms for telephone and email set-ups, business cards and key requests.

HUMAN RESOURCES SUPPORT

The Division of Human Resources will provide support during the search and screen process by providing the following services:

- Advising the committee regarding recruitment-related laws, guidelines, policies, and resources, including those with a focus on people of color and women;
- Consulting regarding the selection process--search committee use, file review, telephone and on-campus interviews, reference checks, job offers, etc;
- Scheduling of interviews;
- Pre-screening of candidates for “fact-finding” purposes;
- Sending notification to applicants not selected at conclusion of search;
- Conducting referencing and background checks for final candidates;
- Completing on-boarding process in conjunction with hiring department.