

Administrative Search and Screen Handbook



Introduction

This resource offers tools to help search committees and hiring officials conduct compliant, successful administrative searches. A formal search and screen process should be conducted for full time positions at the Vice President level or above reporting to the President or Provost and are not support roles. 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 fairness and open access to employment opportunities for applicants.

For faculty positions, which require a formal search and screen process, use the Faculty Search and Screen Handbook.

The inclusion of minorities and women in the recruitment and selection process increases the likelihood of broad representation in the candidates selected for interview and employment. It is for this purpose that search and screen committees, which include minorities and women in their membership, are used in the recruitment and selection process. The search and screen committee helps the University ensure that it is complying with Federal and State equal employment opportunity laws and regulations, State University System regulations. 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 document is subject to updates and revisions without prior notice. When such changes are made, the revised version of the handbook will be posted on the DHR website.

Should you have questions regarding the search and screen process, please contact the Division of Human Resources-Talent Acquisition and Management (staffing@fiu.edu or 305-348-2500)

Laws, Regulations, and Policies

As a state university, Florida International University is committed to the principles of affirmative action and equal opportunity in education and employment. We take seriously our responsibility to provide leadership in ensuring that equal employment opportunity is the norm rather than an aspiration. These procedures help to further the mission of the University and to ensure the University's compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to:

- Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended
- Executive Order 14173
- Equal Pay Act of 1963
- Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008
- Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986
- Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992
- Pregnancy Discrimination Act
- Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended

Non-Discrimination Policy & Discrimination Complaint Procedures:

<http://regulations.fiu.edu/regulation>

The Search and Screen Committee

A search is the process of filling a job or position vacancy through a public announcement and recruitment followed by consideration of all qualified applicants.

Recruitment of a strong applicant pool provides choices 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 funds and time lost. Remember, the objective is to attract and select highly talented employees who would be a good fit for the department and University.

The Search and Screen Committee often is the only contact many applicants and candidates will have with the University. Therefore, the Search and Screen Committee is provided with an excellent opportunity to enhance the reputation of Florida International University. Always remember that while a Search and Screen Committee is evaluating a candidate, the candidate is also evaluating the Search and Screen Committee, the department or unit it represents, and the University.

The Search and Screen Committee is appointed to assist the hiring official with the search process by screening the applicant pool and recommending potential candidates for hire. The Committee plays a critical role in identifying the right person who can embrace the mission and values of FIU.

Note: The hiring official is not a member of the Search and Screen committee. The committee serves as an advisory body to the hiring official and makes recommendations after screening and considering all qualified candidates.

Forming the Search and Screen Committee

The committee should be appointed by the hiring official when it is determined that a position is to be filled. The hiring official should seek to ensure that relevant stakeholders from within the department should be represented on all Search and Screen Committees to offer different perspectives and ideas that may enhance efforts to recruit and evaluate candidates. Every member of the Search and Screen Committee should thoroughly understand the requirements of the position to be filled, the needs of the department, University policies regarding employment, and the mission of the University.

- Generally, a search and screen committee will include three or more members, although the size of the committee may vary depending on the scope of the search.

- At no time should a member of the committee be a candidate for the position, be related to a candidate for the position, or have any other conflict of interest in the work of the committee.
- Neither the hiring official nor the immediate supervisor of the position to be filled will serve as a member of the committee. He or she should not attempt to directly or indirectly influence the Committee

Developing a Recruitment Strategy

During the initial committee meeting, in conjunction with the hiring manager, the Talent Acquisition and Management team 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 review of the search and screen committee members
- 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

Roles and Responsibilities

Hiring Official

The hiring official appoints and determines the composition of the search and screen committee. Additional responsibilities of the hiring official may include the following:

- 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 applicants for interview;
- Provide a timeline by which they would prefer the committee's recommendations;
- Clarify, to the chair of the committee, who will provide the clerical support to the committee, and related information;
- Clarify the manner in which the committee will make its recommendations, i.e. how many candidates would he/she prefer to have recommended, how

interviews will be conducted, will the committee or the administrator be responsible for checking references, and other related issues.

Search Committee Chair

The Committee Chair is appointed to manage the Committee's tasks and make sure they are performed in accordance with the Guidelines. These tasks may include, but are not limited to, coordinating with Human Resources, posting meeting notices, compliance with Sunshine laws, reference checks, arranging for interviews and associated travel (if applicable).

Note: The Chairperson of the Committee is responsible for ensuring that all records regarding the search are properly retained. Such records are maintained by Human Resources for seven (7) years.

Search Committee Members

The responsibility of the Committee is to establish specific criteria and guidelines for conducting the search. Additional responsibilities of the search and screen committee may include the following:

- Develop a recruitment strategy which includes efforts above and beyond traditional advertising;
- Develop or review draft language for the position advertisements
- Select specific newspapers, journals and other media for the placement of the advertisement(s).
- Develop a time line which will include the date(s) of advertisements, meeting dates when the committee will review and select candidates for interview (if applicable), and the date committee recommendations will be presented to the hiring official;
- Seek and locates qualified individuals who are interested in applying for the position under consideration, utilizing the University and other sources
- Receive, review, and evaluate applications from candidates for the advertised position under consideration;
- Develop a list of core interview questions to ask candidates that are specifically related to the essential duties of the position
- Interview qualified individuals who applied for the position under consideration
- Participate in formal interviews, seminars and class demonstrations and formal interviews
- Recommend candidate(s) to the hiring official
- University Search and Screen Training is designed to help committee members understand their role, the applicable federal and state laws that impact the hiring process at FIU, and best practices for searching, including interviews Do's and Don'ts. This course is available virtually and asynchronously through develop.fiu.edu

Division of Human Resources

During the search and screen process, the Talent Acquisition and Management team are responsible for advancing, upholding, reaffirming, and monitoring policies and procedures that ensure the University complies with all applicable federal, state, local, and internal mandates.

Responsibilities include the following:

- Review the composition of the Search and Screen Committee.
- Review the requirement that the committee ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and equitably, regardless of race, national origin, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or veteran status.
- Review the type of assistance the office can provide to the committee, i.e. help in identifying recruitment sources to increase the possibility of identifying minority and/or female job applicants
- 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, and management of the applicant tracking.

Additional Human Resources support will be provided in the following areas:

- 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;
- Extending the official offer letter to final candidate(s);
- Completing on-boarding process in conjunction with hiring department.

Sunshine Law

Conducting a Search and Screen Meeting Under Sunshine Law

Search Committees are subject to the Sunshine Law because of their function in eliminating applicants from consideration and in making recommendations to Hiring Officials. Consequently, their meetings are considered public meetings under Florida law, and must adhere to the following requirements:

1. **Open to the Public.** Members of the public may be present any time two or more members of the Committee are present to address the business of the Search Committee. Because the meetings are open to the public, the meeting location must be accessible and be able to accommodate the anticipated interest. While the meetings are open to the public, it is not required that members of the public be allowed to participate.
2. **Reasonable Notice.** Posting the meetings on the departmental or Division of Human Resources website and a public location will meet the notice requirement. Additionally, the posting of the notice should allow a reasonable amount of advance time for the public to attend. Documentation of all notices must be maintained by the Search Committee Chair.
3. **Reasonable Accommodation.** An applicant or employee who meets this definition of disability must be provided reasonable accommodation in the application and employment process. Accommodations must be requested by the applicant or employee; a search committee should not assume that an applicant who appears to have a disability will require accommodation if it is not requested.
4. **Minutes.** Minutes must be taken at public meetings. These minutes do not have to be extensive but must at least include the names of Search Committee members present, visitors present, and any actions taken by the Committee.
5. **Public Records.** All documents related to the Search are considered public record. All minutes, agendas, sign-in sheets and/or all other related documents must be submitted to the Dean at the conclusion of the Search. These records will be maintained for a period of 4 years.

Note: When two or more committee members discuss candidates via phone, email or in person; it is considered an official meeting. All discussions about candidates must be conducted within a publicly noticed meeting.

Section 286.11, Florida Statute

All meetings of any board or commission of any state agency or authority at which official acts are to be taken, are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times, and no formal action shall be considered binding except as taken or made at such meeting.

Florida law holds that a search and screen committee at a state university is a "public meeting" and that the committee can meet and vote by phone as long as phone lines are provided for the public to call-in. Notice of the committee's search and screen meetings should be given seven (7) days in advance and the public invited to attend and observe. Notice may consist of posting the committee meeting notice in appropriate places in the university. The statute does not turn a meeting into a "hearing," and persons in attendance do not have the right to comment unless the committee deems it in the best interest of the process. An official record of the meeting must be kept. This may be done by tape recording. Minutes must be written based upon the tapes, or upon notes from the meeting, and should list any decisions made by the committee.

Advertising and Recruitment

Job Posting Process

The Electronic Position Request Form (ePRF) is the on-line front-end request system to be used by departments to initiate position actions, including the creation of new positions and any updates to existing positions.

The job posting process is as follows:

- 1) When it is determined that a position is needed, an ePRF is initiated by an individual with ePRF Originator role within a department. This electronic request is routed through the department manager, the business unit head or designee, and Human Resources for approval.
- 2) A joint consultation with Compensation and Talent Acquisition will be conducted prior to the approval of the ePRF with the Hiring Official. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that the salary, requirements, and duties align with the position intended by the hiring manager and FIU's standards.
- 3) Talent Acquisition and Management will receive an automatic notification indicating that a Job Opening ID should be created and posted, once it is approved by Compensation.
- 4) The recruiter will review the advertisement and recruitment plan with the Hiring Official and post the position on the FIU Careers website.

Drafting a Position Announcement

A carefully drafted advertisement is critical for a broad and comprehensive search.

- Draft the position announcement as broadly as possible to attract the largest available pool of potential applicants.
- Advertise in venues such as professional organizations or focused conferences.
- Include language that expresses an interest in candidates who will advance FIU's values

The placement of all advertisements will be facilitated by Talent Acquisition and Management. All advertisements **should** include:

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

FIU Advertisement Template

Ads placed in professional journals where there are typically no introductory comments on the university or use of logos can provide just the position description. Ads placed in the Chronicle of Higher Education or other venues in which a description of the university is often provided must use the following the FIU boilerplate language and current FIU logo. Please consult the FIU brand guide for current information regarding promotional and advertising materials.

Brand Style Guide: <https://brand.fiu.edu/index.html>

Boilerplate: <https://brand.fiu.edu/editorial-styles/boilerplate/>

Logo <https://brand.fiu.edu/downloads/index.html#logos>

BODY OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

Qualified candidates are encouraged to apply to Job Opening ID (insert Job Opening Id number) at careers.fiu.edu and attach (insert requirements such as a cover letter, curriculum vitae, listing of three references, statement of teaching philosophy, etc.). To receive full consideration, applications and required materials should be received by a specific review date. Review will continue until the position is filled.

Developing an Outreach Plan

Define and develop a plan for outreach and advertising. Consider the following:

1. Adopt advertising strategy that includes announcements to a broad audience by utilizing the following resources:
 - National journals
 - Departments at other universities
 - Professional associations (including committees within these associations)
 - Listservs
 - Websites
2. Create opportunities to recruit applicants, including veterans and persons with disabilities e.g. attend conferences for recruiting purposes. Cultivate excellent future candidates, both for current and future searches.
3. Market the department and the campus — showcase FIU as an "employer of choice" offering academic excellence.
4. Ensure that all candidates and those invited for interviews are treated fairly and with respect. Remember, the way candidates are treated at FIU is an important factor in attracting future applicants.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the committee's outreach and search efforts. Sharing the evaluation with your department and other search committees will help them do a better job.

The Selection Process

Resume Review

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%"

Interview Preparation

It is important that there is consistency during all phases of the interview process, including participation by members of the Search and Screen Committee (a quorum of all committee members must exist to conduct interviews).

Prior to holding the interview, the committee should plan/make decisions on the following:

- Develop specific core job-related questions that will be asked of all interviewees
- Discuss the flow of the discussion and questioning
- Determine if the candidate will be asked to give a presentation
- Decide if the committee will discuss each candidate immediately following the conclusion of the interview, or if discussions will be held when the last interview is completed
- Identify who, in addition to the committee members and hiring official, will interview the candidate
- Discuss if there is specific information that the committee seeks from specific audiences (e.g. direct reports or peers) Select who will be the contact person for the candidate and who will provide the candidates with an interview schedule prior to arrival on campus
- Candidates should be informed of who, by name and position, will interview them and whether a presentation is expected

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/Video Conference Interviews

Telephone/video conference interviews can be an effective way to learn more about applicants before inviting them to campus for in-depth interviews. The telephone/video conference 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 confirmations 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 is 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 do not prejudge the candidate.
- Try to avoid writing profusely; jot down brief comments. Also, give some eye contact to the candidate even when taking notes.
- Avoid writing 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.

Important

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

Reasonable Accommodation

Under the 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 a disability simply on the basis of the disability. Under the law, an individual with a disability is a person who has:

- A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- A record of such an impairment; and or
- Regarded as having such an impairment

An applicant or employee who meets this definition of disability must be provided reasonable accommodation throughout the application process. Accommodations must be requested by the applicant or employee.

If an applicant requests an accommodation in the application process, the committee chair should contact The Office of Civil Rights. The applicant should have input into the type of accommodation provided, but the University has the ultimate decision in the specifics of how the applicant will be accommodated.

Note: A search committee should not assume that an applicant who appears to have a disability will require an accommodation if it is not requested. Even though an applicant discloses the need for an accommodation, before an offer of employment, an employer still may not inquire as to:

- The nature of a disability;
- The severity of a disability;
- The condition causing the disability;
- Any prognosis or expectation regarding the condition or disability; or
- Whether the individual will need treatment or leave because of the disability

Selecting Finalist and 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.

Hiring and Onboarding

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.

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.

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. Prior to the formal offer, a conditional employment offer shall be extended by the Division of Human Resources, specifying the terms of the offer and obtaining authorization to initiate the background checks required by the position. Once the conditional offer has been accepted, all background checks successfully completed, and a starting salary established, the formal employment offer will be generated.

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

- Convey their pleasure and honor in extending the employment offer
- Help the candidate get excited about the role, team/work environment, and FIU.
- State salary offer and a review of available benefits as an FIU employee

Onboarding

Onboarding describes the orientation of new employees into their new work environment. It welcomes them to Florida International University and encourages them to become fully engaged, productive members of the institution. Keeping in mind that

one does not 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 such as New Hire Sign On and I-9.

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 request.