

Guidelines for Recruitment Screening Committees

- I. How to serve as a screening committee member
 - a. Screening committee meetings
- II. How to reading and evaluating applications
 - a. How to use the applicant matrix
- III. How to conduct an interview; do's & don't for interviews; interview questions
 - a. Intercultural interviewing; Telephone interviews
 - b. Post interview committee meeting
- IV. How to conduct reference checks
- V. How to recommend a candidate for hire



Thank you for agreeing to serve on as a Screening Committee member. We know that you will take your role as a Screening Committee member seriously and that you have made a commitment to serve through all phases of the hiring process. **If you develop a conflict and cannot serve throughout the entire process, please notify the Chair of the Screening Committee immediately.** By doing so, a replacement appointee will have enough time to read all files, discuss the candidates prior to interview, and develop the same working knowledge other members have.

SCREENING COMMITTEES

The Screening Committee is critical to the recruitment process. Although no policy dictates who may serve on search committees, careful thought goes into determining committee membership to ensure that it reflects the interests of all college constituencies. Questions that **committee chairs might ask** prior to appointing screening committees include:

- Does the committee reflect diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnic background, etc.?
- Does the committee include members from various college constituencies, e.g., tenured and non-tenured faculty, administrative personnel, and classified staff?
- Are there members on the committee who are knowledgeable about the duties and responsibilities of the position being filled?
- Are there new faces on the committee?

If the screening committee is unclear about its role in the hiring process, the chair should invite employees from Human Resources and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Office to talk to the committee.

SCREENING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Note: Refer to the Committee Chair checklist available for faculty and non-faculty recruitments for more detail on each step in the process.

The Screening Committee Chairperson will be responsible for **scheduling a PRE-SCREENING MEETING** BEFORE the committee begins to review applications. (remember to reserve a media room to view the posting a get technical training from HR):

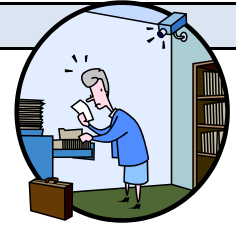
1. Receive committee and software training from **Human Resources**. Please make sure HR is invited to your meeting and allowed 30 minutes on the agenda.
2. **Determine interview dates and times**. It is the committee's responsibility to determine when they are available to conduct interviews and communicate the schedule and agenda (if applicable) to HR. Ensure that all of you make the commitment to those dates and times. Once candidates make travel arrangements, it is next to impossible for them to be altered.

Schedule a POST SCREENING MEETING for AFTER applicants have been reviewed (remember to reserve a media room to view files):

3. **Select the finalists** – The committee will discuss and determine who should be interviewed based on the review of applications. If the recruitment is for a classified position, any internal applicants that meet minimum qualifications must be interviewed. Also, any eligible veterans that meet minimum qualifications for any recruitment must be interviewed. HR will identify these individuals for you on the final applicant matrix.
4. **Select possible alternates** – The committee should also consider those that might be considered should an interviewee drop out or the committee wants to continue to interview after the initial round of interviews.
5. Based on the number of candidates, determine whether a **telephone interview** is appropriate before on-site interviews are conducted.
6. Decide on the preferred **location (room)** for the interview (and presentation if applicable.)
7. Determine the **questions** to be asked of each candidate. A database of interview questions is available on the COCC web site. Contact HR for assistance. Please include diversity questions. Determine **who** will ask each question.

The committee chair should work with HR to update the online recruitment system at various steps in the process.

READING & EVALUATING APPLICATIONS



- Take the time to become familiar with the job description.
- Look for required qualifications and preferences as stated in the job description and repeated on the applicant matrix.
- Look for, and make note of, special qualities or skills that would add dimension to the position. Place that note in the “comment” section of your matrix.
- When reviewing a candidate’s work history, look for longevity or lack thereof.
- Remember that our application requests that the applicant list only jobs held for the last ten years OR the last six RELEVANT employers. If the applicant lists consecutive jobs, make note of any inconsistencies or gaps in information. (If the person is a finalist, you will want to ask the person to fill in these gaps.)
- Look for Academic Relevance (for academic positions)
- Look for Current Experience (for all positions)
- Make note of the completeness of the application file. Items which constitute a complete application file are listed on each job posting. If you discover missing items, please notify Human Resources.
- Look at how the application is filled out. Have directions been followed? Is the application thorough? Is it grammatically correct?

HOW TO USE THE MATRIX

- The matrix is a tool used to determine that a candidate fulfills certain requirements and has other desired qualifications (preferences). The applications that you will be reviewing were screened by the Office of Human Resources to ensure that the individuals applying meet the minimum qualifications, as outlined by the vacancy notice.
- The matrix was prepared for your convenience in reviewing the applications and accompanying materials.
- Examine each candidate’s material carefully based on the criteria across the top of the matrix.

CAUTION:

- Be careful not to reference or consider anything which is not job-related, i.e., age, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or veteran status.
- You must **return the applicant matrix to the Human Resources at the close of the recruitment.** The matrix may become a legal document showing that you have been given the opportunity to review each application file and to show that, should discrimination claims arise, each candidate was considered under the same criteria.

THE INTERVIEW

- Know and understand the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Allot an appropriate amount of time (typically 60 minutes)
- Compose questions that are truly “job-related” and will expose the personality and abilities of the applicant.
- Ask the same questions of all candidates so you can compare answers. This will assure equal treatment and fairness to each candidate and make it easier to compare candidates.
- Get a very clear idea of each finalist’s background. Make notes on any apparent inconsistencies or gaps in information and ask the candidate to fill you in and expand on areas that are unclear.

Sample Interview Format . . .

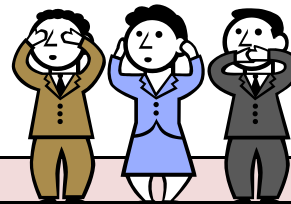
- Introduction of the candidate to the committee members is normally done by the Screening Committee Chair.
- Explanation of how the interview will be conducted.
- Describe the position and its requirements.
- Candidate Questioning
 - Work History (Present to past)
 - Education and Training
 - Candidate Goals/Expectations
- Conduct a question/answer period where the candidate can gather information.
- Close the interview. Express appreciation to the candidate for sharing of time and ideas with the committee. Outline what the candidate can expect regarding timeline for decision-making.



REMEMBER THE 80/20 GUIDELINE: 80% Candidate Talk - 20% Committee Talk

- **Screening Committees should formulate their own questions; the following samples are only suggestions.** Develop and use interview questions that allow culturally different candidates to demonstrate their competencies and transferable skills.
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Describe a work-based, conflict situation in which you were involved and how you personally and professionally handled the situation.
- How would your previous supervisor describe you if we were to call him/her today?
- What kinds of events on the job cause you the most satisfaction?
- What kinds of events on the job cause you the most frustration?
- Give the candidate an example of a situation/problem that does/could occur in the position. Ask the candidate to respond – “How would you react or handle this situation?”

- Name your three strongest attributes which you would bring to this position.
- There are three aspects of any job—the routine, the assigned and the creative. Describe some of the creative aspects you would bring to this position.
- How do you deal with change?
- Tell us about the extent of your computer/software experience.
- What have you done within the last five years to stay current with the ever-changing computer software industry?
- In what professional improvement activities have you participated recently.
- How are the responsibilities of any of your previous positions similar to our position?
- Are there any questions you have of us?



INQUIRIES YOU SHOULD NOT MAKE

- Do not ask questions about conviction records, marital status, family life, race, religion, age, or national origin.
- Questions that cannot be asked equally of BOTH SEXES must be avoided.
- If you believe the candidate may have a disability, please ask the Human Resources Offices for help with interview questions.

Certain kinds of questions should be avoided:

- Those producing “yes” or “no” answers.
- Leading questions – Answer is obvious – “You like to talk to people, don’t you?” Answer, “Of course”
- Obvious questions – Answer is available from the application.
- Questions which are not job related. Don’t use “chit-chat” to fill in awkward spaces.

IF YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW THE ANSWER TO A QUESTION IN ORDER TO MAKE A BONAFIDE, JOB-RELATED DECISION ----- DON'T ASK!

INTERCULTURAL INTERVIEWING

- Culture affects how people communicate and how people interpret the communication of others.
- Nowhere is miscommunication likely to have such negative effects than in the recruitment and selection process, mainly because the entire process involved communication: applications, resumes, interviews, committee selections.
- It is important that we don't miss out hiring people with excellent skills because of OUR misunderstanding of cross cultural communication differences.
- It is the responsibility of all committee members to evaluate the selection process and ensure that it is conducted as bias-free as possible.
- Develop and use interview questions that allow culturally different candidates to demonstrate their competencies and transferable skills.
- Factors influencing effective communication are: Assumptions/suspensions, perceptions, communication style, and values/attitudes.
- Be alert to the cultural dimensions in every interview and differentiate between style and content in a candidate's performance.
- Surface and invalidate cultural biases, stereotypes and racist comments when the committee is assessing candidates' interview performances and competencies.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Telephone interviews have a number of advantages.



- A large pool of applicants can be narrowed to a more manageable number of top candidates.
- More individuals can be interviewed without the expense of bringing those individuals to campus.
- Provides more than one opportunity to query the candidates.
- More convenient for both the committee members and the candidates to come together for a one hour interview versus a full day on campus.
- Allows initial contact to determine whether there is continued interest by both parties.

If telephone interviews are conducted:

- Human Resources will be happy to arrange for a conference room with a speaker phone.
- Determine an appropriate number of candidates to contact.
- The Screening Committee Chairperson should introduce the panel individually over the telephone.
- The telephone interview can be conducted in much the same way as a personal interview with each member taking a turn to ask a question.
- Inform the interviewee that not all candidates who are selected for telephone interviews will be afforded the opportunity of an on-site interview.

- At the close of the telephone interview, give the applicant an idea of the timeline for making a decision as to a second personal interview.
- Provide the applicant with Human Resources' e-mail and telephone numbers for follow-up concerns about the process.
- Inform the Office of Human Resources of the results of the interviews – who will be invited on campus and who will no longer be considered.

POST INTERVIEW MEETING

1. Determine the applicant to be recommended for hired.
2. Coordinate reference checks. Each member of the committee can do one or two reference checks. No less than three reference checks are required. The reference check form is available online to assist with the process.

REFERENCE CHECKING

The Human Resources Office provides a reference check form for your convenience. It is also available from the COCC Home page under Employees / Forms / Recruitment Forms. The reference check must be used to assure consistency among candidates. Please consult with Human Resources if you intend to ask questions not on the reference check form.

- Check the COCC application under “current employer.” Make certain that the candidate has indicated that it is okay to contact a current employer. Remember to protect the candidate’s confidentiality.
- When deciding which past employer to contact, select the past position which best represents experience comparable to our position.
- Be sure to tell the employer contacted that (name of individual) is a finalist for (name of position) at COCC. Give your name and title and describe the nature of our position. This will generally build trust.
- Do not press for information if the employer specifically states that he/she cannot give this information. Go to another source.
- Reference checking is legal if it is related to work performance, behavior, and reasons for termination.
- Reference checks are useful to corroborate information given on an application form.
- A bonafide reference check should tell you about the candidate’s strengths and weaknesses; whether the individual is a self-starter, manages time well, is productive, dependable and whether or not the candidate is eligible for rehire.
- If the person giving the reference check volunteers information which you believe would be discriminatory, do not record those comments on the reference check form.

MAKING A RECOMMENDATION FOR HIRE – OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

1. Justify hiring the finalist. Before the employment offer is made, the Chair of the Committee must prepare a narrative justifying the hiring decision for the HR Director's review and may ask for input from committee members.
2. Complete the Hiring Proposal form online to have salary set and the hire approved BEFORE making an offer to the candidate.