Interrupting Bias in the Academic Search Process

• Before the Search
  o Form a diverse search committee; consider an equity advocate
  o Develop a formal charge with details about the role, deadline for search, etc.
  o Decide on voting procedure (unanimous or majority? open or confidential?) and review process (rubrics, meeting norms, etc.)

• Sourcing Candidates
  o Review minimum requirements and decide which are genuinely required
  o Review the job description for gendered or non-inclusive language
  o Use the 2nd person to describe responsibilities: “You will be…” rather than “He/She will be…”
  o Ensure your job advertisement and the department website includes text and images that promote an inclusive environment
  o Develop lists of nominees (potential candidates) and nominators (potential sources for candidates). The larger and more diverse you make these lists, the better.
  o Expand posting locations to include minority-focused professional networks and publications (NSBE—National Society of Black Engineers, SHPE—Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, SWE—Society of Women Engineers)
  o Review the Ph.D. distribution in your field compared to your pool of applicants

• Reviewing Applications
  o Establish a list of criteria and their weights beforehand
  o Develop a standard rubric for review of applications
  o Have at least two people read each application, if possible

• Interviewing Candidates
  o Develop a standard list of questions for all candidates
    ▪ Include space for interviewers to take verbatim notes
    ▪ Avoid illegal and personal questions about identity/family/etc.
    ▪ Use an applicant tracking system to gather information
  o Put together a standard packet of information for all candidates
  o Ensure a standard itinerary for all candidates on campus
  o Monitor interruptions in the job talk

• Committee Discussions
  o Avoid premature ranking of candidates; review each candidate systematically
  o Require evidence and specifics in discussions about candidates
  o Consider a majority and confidential voting process
  o Consider proposing an unranked list of candidates to the chair/dean
# Illegal Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Permitted</th>
<th>Not Permitted</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>Accurately describe the job then ask the candidate if they can perform all of the functions.</td>
<td>Do you have a disability? Have you ever filed a worker’s compensation claim? Have you ever suffered a workplace injury?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Status</td>
<td>Do you have any commitments that might prevent you from working the assigned shifts?</td>
<td>Are you married? Are you single? Do you have any children?</td>
<td>Ask all candidates about outside commitments, not just women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Status</td>
<td>Do you own a car? (only if a requirement of the job)</td>
<td>Do you own your own home?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Are you married? Are you single? Do you have any children?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>How long do you plan on staying with us? Do you have any leave planned?</td>
<td>Are you pregnant? Are you trying to have a family?</td>
<td>Even if a candidate is obviously pregnant, it is not acceptable to ask any questions about this subject. You can still describe the job and then ask if they can perform all functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or Ethnicity</td>
<td>Almost always not acceptable unless it is a bona fide occupational qualification.</td>
<td>All questions about color and race.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion or Creed</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>What denomination are you? Who is your pastor?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex, Orientation, or Gender Identity</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Sample Academic Interview Questions

About their research
- What research influences have you been exposed to? Who has influenced you the most?
- What do you consider to be your best paper/work and why? What did it change about the way people approach the field?

General research questions
- What are your professional goals in the next five, and ten years and how does this job fit with them?
- What would you do on the first day of the job?
- What are the big issues in your research area?
- How would you bridge the gap from your research to research users?
- The university is keen to serve the wider community and economy. Does your planned research have any potential in these areas?

About them and their capabilities
- How do you balance your time? If several challenges came up at the same time (grant deadline, pastoral care for a student, teaching commitments), how would you prioritize?
- If you were starting your project again today, what would you do differently?
- Describe a research problem you have faced. What did you learn?
- What has been the most productive period in your research career and why?

About your ability to gain funding
- Where will you apply for grants? If your funding applications are unsuccessful, what alternatives do you have in mind? (looking for knowledge of the funding infrastructure)
- How would you convince a funding body that they should fund your research rather than one of the other hundreds of proposals they receive?

About their proposed research
- What will you focus on and what gives you a competitive edge in this area?
- What is the overall importance of this project? How do you see this work impacting the field?
- What will you do if your hypothesis is proved wrong? Can you see any of your research proposal failing?
- If we gave you unlimited resources, what would you do with them?
- What resources will you need?

About their role as supervisor/teacher
- Describe your teaching experience. How do you feel about teaching? What is your teaching philosophy?
- What advice would you give to a new researcher about supervising undergraduate or masters students?
- How would you go about motivating a researcher who is going through a low point?
- How would you deal with any conflict/disagreement within the research group? Do you have an example of when you have had to deal with a disagreement?

About ‘fit’ with the department
- What will you bring to the institution?
- We are keen to develop collaborations between departments. What opportunities for multi-disciplinary work does your research offer?
- What committee work have you done and what challenges has it presented?
- In what ways, other than research and teaching could you contribute to this department?
Sample Applicant Evaluation Tool

The following offers a method for department faculty to provide evaluations of job candidates. It is meant to be a template for departments that they can modify as necessary for their own uses. The proposed questions are designed for junior faculty candidates; however, alternate language is suggested in parentheses for senior faculty candidates.

Candidate’s Name: ____________________________________________

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply):

- [ ] Read applicant’s CV
- [ ] Read applicant’s statements (research, teaching, etc.)
- [ ] Read applicant’s letters of recommendation
- [ ] Read applicant’s scholarship (indicate what): ______________________

Please rate the applicant on each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence of research productivity</th>
<th>excellent</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>fair</th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>unable to judge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of publications (Note any high-impact journals here)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential for scholarly impact / tenurability</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of grants/funding awards procured (list any notables)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of strong background in [relevant fields]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of [particular] perspective on [particular area]</td>
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<td>Evidence of teaching experience and interest (including grad mentorship)</td>
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<td>Potential to teach courses in core curriculum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential to teach the core curriculum on [particular area] (or create new courses)</td>
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Other comments?

For more information or additional copies of this resource, please contact the ADVANCE Program at (734) 647-9359 or advanceprogram@umich.edu, or visit the ADVANCE Program’s Web site at http://sitemaker.umich.edu/advance.
Sample Candidate Evaluation Sheet

The following offers a method for department faculty to provide evaluations of job candidates. It is meant to be a template for departments that they can modify as necessary for their own uses. The proposed questions are designed for junior faculty candidates; however, alternate language is suggested in parenthesis for senior faculty candidates.

Candidate’s Name: ____________________________________________________________

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply):

☐ Read applicant’s CV                        ☐ Attend Job Talk
☐ Read applicant’s statements (research, teaching, etc.)  ☐ Met with candidate
☐ Read applicant’s letters of recommendation ☐ Attended meal with candidate
☐ Read applicant’s scholarship (indicate what): ☐ Other:

Please comment on the candidate’s scholarship as reflected in the job talk:

Please comment on the candidate’s teaching ability as reflected in the job talk:

Please rate the candidate on each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential for (evidence of) scholarly impact</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential for (evidence of) research productivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of publications (Note any high-impact journals here)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential for (evidence of) research funding</td>
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<td>Number of grants/funding awards procured (list any notables)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential for (evidence of) collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fit with department’s priorities</td>
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<td>Ability to make positive contribution to department’s climate</td>
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<td>Potential (demonstrated ability) to attract and supervise diverse graduate</td>
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<td>Potential (demonstrated ability) to teach and supervise diverse undergraduates</td>
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<td>Potential (demonstrated ability) to be a conscientious university community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential (demonstrated ability) to mentor diverse students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other comments?

Office of the Provost - Institutional Equity & Diversity - Princeton University