Faculty Recruitment and Hiring Toolkit

Revised 6/9/17

Office of the Provost
Provost Approval of Faculty Positions:
- Revised position request process
- Specified process for resignation, mid-year hires, and failed searches
- “Permission to Post” form is no longer used

Section 1. – Preparing for the search.
Revision: change to AA/EEO training information

Section 2. – Faculty Recruitment Process
Revision: Numerous edits to sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3
Revision 1-19-17: Jobs are no longer automatically posted in The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Section 4. – Narrowing the Pool – Review of Applications
Revisions:
- Revision 6-9-17 – Reference checks should be conducted AFTER telephone interviews
- Reference Checks are SUGGESTED to be conducted prior to telephone interviews, but not required
- Information for the telephone interview invitation that informs candidates that “official transcripts will be requested from candidates invited for a campus interview.” (This should help expedite the process for hiring and paperwork processing.)

Section 5. – Campus Interviews and Reference Checks
Revisions: Finalist review and approval
- Correction – an email is NOT automatically sent to applicants marked as “non-selected” in PeopleAdmin. This only occurs after the position has been filled and closed.

Section 6. – Faculty Recruitment Process
Revision: Clarification on Permission to Hire Package:
- REVISED Letter of Acceptance
  - Removal of “Enclosures” for offer letters
  - Instructions for filling out and returning Background, Authorization to Release Information Form and Vehicle Use Agreement)

- REVISED: Clarification on Verification of Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Instructors of Record
  - A “Verification of Academic Credentials” form is no longer sent to the candidate. The new process utilizes the “Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Instructors of Record Form” which is completed by the head of a department/school, signed by the college credentialing officer and then submitted for review according to the instructions on the form.

USM Verification of Faculty Credentials
Revision: Updated Form
This document was developed to clearly articulate faculty hiring goals for search committees and to streamline and formalize our faculty recruitment and hiring process. Information sources include The University of Southern Mississippi Faculty Handbook, existing Human Resources policies and documents, and the current Faculty Hiring Guide.

This Faculty Recruitment and Hiring Toolkit includes the following items:

- State the importance of using best practices in a timely manner to recruit and select outstanding faculty
- Request and Approval Process to fill faculty positions
- Guidelines and expectations for search committees
- Procedures for screening applicants and verifying credentials
- Interview process guidelines for telephone and on-campus interviews
- A step by step faculty recruitment and hiring process guide covering necessary forms, required information for letters of offer and acceptance and hiring package contents
- Sample Resources
  - Job Advertisement Template
  - Letters and emails
  - Interview guidelines, suggested questions, telephone interview scripts
  - Applicant resume review document
  - Interview evaluation documents

Suggestions for improving our faculty hiring processes should be sent to the Office of the Provost via allison.gillespie@usm.edu.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REVISIONS AS OF 6-8-17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOSOPHY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVOST APPROVAL OF FACULTY POSITIONS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL TO CONDUCT THE SEARCH AND INITIATION OF THE SEARCH</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIAL HIRING SITUATIONS AND RESIGNATIONS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 1. PREPARING FOR THE SEARCH</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment and Duties of the Search Committee Chair and Search Members</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duties for Search Committee Chairs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 2. FACULTY RECRUITMENT PROCESS</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing and Broadening the Applicant Pool</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with a Small Applicant Pool</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 3. CONDUCTING THE SEARCH</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Started: Expectations of the Search Committee</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to Applications</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 4. NARROWING THE POOL - REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Committee Member Review of Applications</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Committee Application Screening</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Checks and Verification of Academic Qualifications</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Interviews</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 5. CAMPUS INTERVIEWS AND EVALUATION</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalist review and approval</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Search Guidelines for Campus Interviews</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation for On-Campus Interviews</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Reference Checks after the Interview</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and Selection of the Candidate</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 6. HIRING FACULTY PROCESS</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Tenure-Track Positions and Promotable Non Tenure-Track Positions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Visiting Faculty* and Artist-In-Residence and Professor of Practice</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Hiring Adjunct Faculty/Part Time Faculty</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Faculty to Teach for Study Abroad Programs</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Verification of Foreign Transcripts</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 7. NEW HIRE PROCESS</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close the Search in People Admin:</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 8. CLOSING THE SEARCH</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Questions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX AND SAMPLES</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Philosophy

Recruiting faculty is one of the most critical activities performed at a university. By recruiting outstanding and diverse new faculty, we will become a better university to serve our students, create and disseminate knowledge, contribute to the culture of the State of Mississippi and provide valuable service to the citizens of Mississippi, the United States and the international community.

Our recruiting efforts must go beyond the job postings and hiring and be a continuous process of building relationships and networks with our colleagues and other institutions. Our recruitment process should reflect our values and mission to cultivate intellectual development and creativity through the generation, dissemination, application and preservation of knowledge. This can only be done through a faculty that is engaged in cutting edge research, committed to excellence in teaching and value service to the university community.

The University of Southern Mississippi is committed to building a more diverse faculty through intentional efforts to recruit outstanding qualified applicants that are international or from typically underrepresented groups. Our Nondiscrimination Policy and other information can be found on the AA/EEO website.

The USM faculty recruitment process should be guided by the following:

- The search process will start as early as possible to ensure a better and more diverse pool of applicants
- Open positions will be advertised widely
- Communication will be timely and personal with all applicants throughout the entire process
- Application review, evaluation and interview processes will be highly structured to ensure a consistent message and level of professionalism and integrity
- Candidates who are invited to campus will have a well-planned itinerary and will be treated as our guests

Objective

The objective of this guide is to provide a thorough explanation of our faculty recruitment and hiring process. While every effort has been made to be as detailed as possible, the USM Faculty Handbook, college, school and departmental documents are the ultimate guiding documents.

The recruitment of new faculty is a complex process with multiple objectives. The faculty hired through this process should be:

- The best qualified faculty for the position defined and advertised;
• Instructors who will excel in the classroom and will achieve success with USM students;
• Scholars who are committed to a life-long program of discovery and sharing of knowledge;
• Committed to the full range of faculty responsibilities including research and service.

Adherence to hiring procedures is vital to ensure equitable treatment of applicants and the hiring of the best qualified candidate. The primary purpose of this toolkit is to provide step-by-step procedures that will assist in conducting effective and timely searches, ensuring equitable treatment, and promoting employee diversity. Questions should be directed to the Assistant to the Provost for Academic Affairs. When in doubt, please ask.

Note: This toolkit is based on the University of Hawai‘i Hilo model and contains material and forms drawn from that resource.

Introduction

Please refer to the following information when processing paperwork regarding advertising, interviewing, and hiring tenure track faculty, instructors, visiting faculty, and all non-tenure track research, clinical, artist-in-residence, professor of practice, and adjunct faculty. These hiring processes can be located at on the Office of the Provost Website click here.

The “Permission to Hire Faculty” forms (full-time) and Personnel Data Sheet forms (PDS – for adjuncts and/or part-time faculty) are available on the Office of the Provost web site as PDF files – click here. Personnel Action Forms (PAF) are available from the Human Resources Department.

Typically, the designated administrative assistant/or budget for each dean will be the contact person between the dean’s office and the Budget and Personnel Coordinator in the Office of the Provost. Unless otherwise specified, “dean” refers to the college academic dean. Questions about this process from the respective academic departments should be addressed to the dean’s administrative assistant. If at any time during the process of this paperwork, a requested item is not readily available, insert a plain sheet of paper in its place with a statement of explanation. Do not delay the process while you wait on something that has been requested. (Example: Official transcripts may have been requested but not yet received.)

Personnel paperwork from all campuses and locations follow these same procedures.

All paperwork regarding faculty must be submitted to the Office of the Provost.
Provost Approval of Faculty Positions

Approval to Conduct the Search and Initiation of the Search

Deans will submit hiring requests via the process established by the Office of the Provost. All searches must be discussed with, and approved by, the Provost.

Special Hiring Situations and Resignations

Resignations:

When a faculty member resigns, the resignation MUST be in writing and in addition to submitting the paperwork to HR, a copy must also be sent to the Office of the Provost.

Failed Searches

If a search is approved to be declared failed or closed by the provost, and the position will be filled by a “visiting” faculty member, revise and resubmit the hiring package indicating the change and providing a clear explanation of the change.

In the event of a mid-year vacancy that must be filled immediately, the dean should meet with the Provost as soon as possible

Midyear Vacancies

If it becomes necessary to fill a position mid-year, the dean should discuss with the provost for approval.

In all faculty hires, visiting and regular, please pay particular attention to the “Faculty Handbook” Sections 3.8.3 and 3.8.4:

3.8.3 Nepotism Policy. The Board of Trustees mandates that no administrative unit of the University may employ a person in any capacity who is related by blood or marriage within the third degree to any other administrative staff member, faculty member, instructional staff member, clerical staff member, or student employed by the same unit if either one of the two related employees will have direct supervision of any matter relating to the other’s progress, performance, assignment, compensation, tenure, promotion, termination of employment, or welfare. Relationships within the third degree include great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, spouses, great-grandchildren, grandchildren, children, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, nephews, and nieces. Also included are step relatives within the third degree.

This policy does not apply to individuals employed prior to the time a relative within the third degree became the supervisor of the administrative unit. In such cases, if approved by the Board, the next highest administrative officer must decide performance, welfare, assignment, compensation, tenure, promotion, or termination of employment of the subordinate employee.
In accordance with the spirit of Board policy, the University’s nepotism policy applies the word "nepotism" to those employees engaged in a conjugal relationship but without benefit of marriage and to relatives within the third degree of those employees, requiring the recusal of all parties so related in institutional proceedings involving hiring and personnel recommendations.

### 3.8.4 Employment of Persons with University Terminal Degrees.

As a comprehensive university with extensive national and international ties, the University seeks to broaden the intellectual perspective of its students and to promote the public interest by employing and retaining a cosmopolitan, culturally diverse faculty. In this endeavor, the University follows a general rule of not employing persons who have earned their terminal degrees from the University in the full-time instructional ranks of Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor. Exceptions to this policy require the approval of the President.

Exceptions to this policy will be rare. Before any candidate with a terminal degree from USM can be considered in any part of the search process, including campus interviews, the dean should provide a written explanation describing in detail why an exception to this policy is to be requested. The explanation should include a list of all candidates under consideration with a synopsis of their ability to meet the expectations of the faculty position in addition to the steps taken to assure a broad pool of candidates for selection.

### Section 1. Preparing for the Search

**Appointment and Duties of the Search Committee Chair and Search Committee Members**

Search committee chairs and committee members are appointed by the department chair (or dean), with the approval of the dean. A sample appointment letter is in the Appendix. Ordinarily, the search committee chair is a senior member of the hiring division who is experienced in conducting searches. The chair should be appointed before the job ad is posted so that the chair can be designated as the contact person for applicant inquiries. The chair alone should serve as the contact point for a search. Note that unless otherwise specified, “chair” refers to the chair of the search committee.

The search committee should be determined in accordance with the Faculty Handbook, Section 3.9. In searches for a Gulf Park faculty position, if possible, a member of the Gulf Park faculty should serve on the committee.

The committee chair and the EEO/AA Officer are responsible for informing committee members of their role, responsibilities, obligations and liabilities. Committee chairs, members and departmental chairs should attend the annual search committee training held each fall by the Office of the Provost and Human Resources. PowerPoint versions of the training are available on the Office of the Provost Website.

The committee chair is responsible for scheduling committee meetings, communicating with candidates, scheduling interviews, and coordinating the activities of the committee.
The search committee coordinates the review process of applications, the interviewing of candidates, and the recommendation of candidates to the department.

Each Committee member is expected to attend all committee meetings, carefully review all applications, assist with credential and reference checks, participate in the interview process and adhere to the confidentiality agreement.

Committee members are responsible for ensuring that all applicants are treated fairly and equitably in accordance with equal opportunity/affirmative action requirements.

Search committee proceedings are strictly confidential. The discussions, ratings, and even the names and institutional affiliations of applicants and references are confidential, unless specified below. All members of the search committee must sign a confidentiality agreement which will be retained by the search committee chair in the search file. Once a candidate agrees to a campus interview, it is understood that their candidacy and official application materials may be shared (cover letter and CV).

Concerns and questions regarding this process should be directed to the Office of the Provost or the AA/EEO officer.

**Duties for Search Committee Chairs:**

1. Maintain contact with the administrative assistant for the dean. As applications are received, check for completeness and send an acknowledgment letter under your name. Note any required items which are missing.

2. When possible, include the AA/EEO Officer in your first search committee meeting to provide an AA/EEO briefing. A PowerPoint presentation will also be available for training if you aren’t able to schedule a visit to the committee meeting.

3. Understand your charge and what the decision maker wants from the committee, e.g. a list of the top three candidates in rank order or alphabetical order; list of top 3 candidates including strengths and weaknesses, etc.

4. Also at your first committee meeting, have all committee members sign the confidentiality agreement and keep it in your search file.

5. Regardless of the number of applicants, be sure all committee members independently assess the Minimum and Desirable qualifications of all the applicants in order to determine who makes the first cut.

6. Send a thank you letter to applicants who do not make the first cut.

7. Develop questions to ask references. Sample questions may be found on the Office of the Provost website.
Section 2. Faculty Recruitment Process:

Once a position has been discussed with and approved by the Provost, a job posting is done in PeopleAdmin.

The department chair or designee is responsible for writing and posting faculty positions in PeopleAdmin. Positions may only be posted with one rank – assistant professor, associate professor, professor – Assistant/Associate postings will not be approved. The chair will consult with the dean and others as necessary to determine the Minimum Qualifications (MQs) and Desirable Qualifications (DQs) for the position. Accurately determining Minimum Qualifications and Desirable Qualifications is critical because once the job ad is posted, these qualifications cannot be altered and all Search Committee decisions must be based on them.

1. ____Create Job Posting in People Admin. (done by Department)

The Job Posting which is done in PeopleAdmin is done by the chair or dean’s office. Once the Job Posting in PeopleAdmin is submitted by the department, the following process occurs automatically:

- Job posting created in PeopleAdmin. Note that this language will also be used to create the Job Advertisement for “higheredjobs.com” so it should contain all information that should be in the online publication advertisements.
- AA/EEO Officer, Human Resources and University Communications are automatically notified to review the job posting within PeopleAdmin to check for consistency and compliance with regulations.

If the department wishes to advertise the position in additional publications or listservs, they must use the language in the approved online PeopleAdmin advertisement. Using a shortened version of the approved job advertisement is acceptable.

The following is an example of the information that should be provided in the job posting template in PeopleAdmin. Note: there are additional items that will be needed for the PeopleAdmin posting.
PEOPLEADMIN JOB POSTING INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posting Number:</th>
<th>Automatically generated when department creates the posting</th>
</tr>
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</table>

**POSITION INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Title of the position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rank at which hiring is to be done (position postings should only reflect one rank – not Assistant/Associate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grant Funded?</th>
<th>Source of funding <em>when applicable</em> (general funds, federal grant funds and agency, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Type</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
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</table>

**POSTING TEXT** – note this information should be the same as the language in the job advertisement.

**Job Summary:**

This must include the language “The University of Southern Mississippi invites applicants for a (length of position_________) as an (position title and statement of tenure/non-tenure and faculty position) in the (department/school and college) to begin in (starting date).

*The University of Southern Mississippi invites applicants for a full-time, nine-month, tenure-track faculty position as an Assistant Professor of Biology in the Department of Biological Sciences in the College of Science and Technology to begin in Fall 2015.*

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- Teaching responsibilities
- Research expectations
- Service commitment

**Minimum Qualifications**

- Degree(s) required
- Acceptable fields of study
- Special qualifications for this position

**Preferred qualifications**

- Areas of study or abilities that are sought but not required
### University Information - Required

About The University of Southern Mississippi

Founded in 1910, The University of Southern Mississippi is a comprehensive doctoral and research-driven university with a proud history and an eye on the future. As one of only 34 institutions in the nation accredited in art, dance, music and theatre, we are a haven for creativity and artistic expression. A dual-campus university, Southern Miss serves students on campuses in Hattiesburg and Long Beach, in addition to five teaching and research sites in Mississippi. We are among U.S. News & World Report’s most popular universities and recognized by The Princeton Review for our commitment to sustainability. Our Center for Undergraduate Research affords our students meaningful research opportunities, and as a proven leader in innovation, we conduct transformative research that translates into real-world solutions. In the classroom or lab, on the playing field, or in the performance hall, we strive to have a positive impact not only on our students, but also the world around us. Further information is found at www.usm.edu.

### AA/EEO Statement - Required:

As an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity employer/Americans with Disabilities Act institution, The University of Southern Mississippi encourages minorities, women, veterans, and persons with disabilities to apply.

(You may also include departmental information in this section.)

### APPLICATION PROCEDURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optional Applicant Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Applicant Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Instructions to Applicants: (this is for any items that are not included Applicant Documents Section or other information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any documents or information not requested in applicant documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If no closing date is specified, include the following statement: Applications must be complete by _____, to ensure full consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All information should be electronically submitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Name of search committee chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If more than 3 references are requested, that information should be specified here</td>
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<tr>
<td>• If you are not requesting official transcripts as part of the application documents, you may request unofficial transcripts and indicate that official transcripts may be requested (official transcripts should be requested prior to a campus interview)</td>
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</tbody>
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2. **Job Advertisement**

The PeopleAdmin job advertisement is used for posting ads in online publications, in addition to the automatic posting.

Placing timely and accurate job ads is essential for attracting applicants. For a search to be considered acceptable, the faculty position must be advertised widely. If possible, best practices for a successful search include a print advertisement in at least one widely-circulated publication, at the department’s expense.

Usually, unless hiring requirements change for a particular academic year, all USM faculty jobs are automatically advertised, at no cost to the hiring department, on HigherEdJobs.com for at least 2 months. This process happens automatically with the Department of Human Resources once the job advertisement is approved. Note that jobs are posted on HigherEdJobs.com until they are closed/removed from the web on the jobs.usm.edu website.

The job advertisement used in posting ads to online publications contains the same information from the approved posting in PeopleAdmin.

3. **Additional Job Advertisement** (done by Department)

The dean should also consult with the search committee chair, Search Committee members, and other appropriate faculty to identify additional professional publications and websites where the ad should be placed.
Should a department determine a position should also be advertised with other vendors, the department should work with purchasing to create a separate purchase order for each vendor (when necessary) where an advertisement will be placed. (Purchase requisitions are not necessary when there is no cost required to publish an advertisement; however, the ad/language must be from the approved Job Advertisement). When necessary, a shorter version of the approved job posting from PeopleAdmin may be used.

Enhancing and Broadening the Applicant Pool
Personal networking is especially important for recruiting women and minority candidates. Search Committee members are strongly encouraged to contact people they know, such as directors of graduate programs and heads of associations of minority scholars within the discipline and inform them about the search.

The Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity may decide to place ads in publications which target minority candidates such as the Minority and Women Doctoral Directory, Center for Institutional Cooperation and National Minority Faculty Identification. There are other resources available on the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity website – http://www.usm.edu/aa-eeo

Dealing with a Small Applicant Pool
In the event that an applicant pool appears to be too small, the dean and search committee should consult with the AA/EEO and the Provost to determine if they should re-advertise and extend the search, close the search, or proceed with the available candidates.

Section 3. Conducting the Search

Getting Started: Expectations of the Search Committee
Prior to scheduling ANY (including phone interviews) interviews or checking references, the chair will contact the AA/EEO office to arrange for search committee training regarding legal and ethical parameters of conducting a search. All members of the search committee, including chairs are required to attend this training. It is recommended that this training be done, when possible, before the review of applications.

Once the job is posted, it is recommended the search committee chair calls the first meeting, at which the committee members and chair will:

- Sign the confidentiality agreement (signed copies will be kept as part of the hiring package)
- Set a specific timeline including all meetings, telephone and campus interview dates, final committee deliberation, departmental faculty meeting for presentation of candidate (where applicable), offer of position and required date of acceptance
- Discuss application review process for guest access to PeopleAdmin, application review resources and process for determining candidates for telephone interviews
- Determine the following terms
Standards for inclusion and exclusion of applicants based on the completeness of their files
Interpretations for minimum and desirable qualifications
Forms to be used by the committee members in making evaluations. Sample forms are available from the Office of the Provost
A plan for screening and then evaluating applicants
An evaluation system that will result in clear statements of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates

The committee should also develop a plan for interviewing candidates. This plan should have:

- Dates for various stages of the interviewing process (resume review, phone interview and campus interview)
- The search committee will meet soon after the position priority deadline (the day after is recommended, and this will have already been determined on the agreed upon timeline) the search closes to discuss candidates and determine the shortlist for telephone interviews
- A consistent set of telephone interview questions to be applied to candidates who make it through the second screening (see below). Samples of interview questions and other hiring resources are available from the Office of the Provost
- Dates for phone interviews
- You may wish to have the EEO/AA officer must review the questions prior to conducting interviews
- Questions to ask references and a schedule for checking references
- Dates for an on-campus interview schedule for the top 3 or 4 candidates including local and on-campus candidates

Responding to Applications
Applicants will be directed to submit electronic application materials via the USM employment website, https://jobs.usm.edu, and to direct questions to the chair of the search committee or other appropriate person. When a completed application is submitted, an automatic e-mail is generated by PeopleAdmin and sent to the applicant indicating that their application documents have been received and their application is under review.

In addition, a personalized letter or e-mail to each applicant will be prepared and sent by the search committee chair confirming receipt of the application and stating that applicants may be requested to provide official transcripts later in the process (unless official transcripts were initially requested).
Section 4. Narrowing the Pool - Review of Applications

Individual Committee Member Review of Applications

Before any candidate with a terminal degree from USM can be considered in any part of the search process, including campus interviews, the dean should send to the Provost a written explanation describing in detail why an exception to this policy is to be requested. The explanation should include a list of all candidates under consideration with a synopsis of their ability to meet the expectations of the faculty position in addition to the steps taken to assure a broad pool of candidates for selection. This is accordance with Section 3.8.4 of the Faculty Handbook.

All committee members will have Guest Access to review the applications in PeopleAdmin. The initial screening of the applicant pool is designed to eliminate applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications and, in the event of a very large candidate pool, reduce to a workable size the number of applicants who will be given serious consideration. The committee members’ first screening of the applications should be completed prior to the search committee meeting to be held as soon as possible after the closing. Each committee member is expected to carefully review all applications to determine if the candidates meet the minimum requirements.

A letter will be sent by the search committee chair to applicants who did not meet the Minimum Qualifications. The chair will prepare and send the letters. A sample letter is in the Appendix.

Full Committee Application Screening

Applicants meeting the minimum qualifications must be evaluated further. Prior to this meeting, each member of the search committee should have completed a qualifications rating form on each applicant evaluating his/her Minimum Qualifications and Desirable Qualifications. Applicants must be evaluated solely on the basis of the stated Minimum Qualifications and Desirable Qualifications for the position. The Committee then uses these rating forms as the basis for their deliberations to identify the top applicants.

Reference Checks and Verification of Academic Qualifications

When possible, reference checks are conducted by members of the search committee after the pool has been narrowed and telephone interviews have been completed. When possible, and initial review of faculty qualifications of all candidates to be interviewed by telephone should be completed prior to the candidate's telephone interview. If official transcripts have not already been received, note that they should be requested prior to inviting a candidate to campus.

When reviewing academic transcripts, attention should be paid to specific requirements for a particular position, e.g. candidate must have 18 graduate credit hours in a particular subject area. See USM Faculty Qualifications Form on the Office of the Provost website (usm.edu/provost). For credentials from universities outside the United States, please see Section 6.5 for more information.
Ideally, the committee should agree on no more than five to seven questions to ask each reference with the last one being open-ended. Reference checks be conducted after the telephone interview, unless the applicant specifically requests that their references not be contacted. Each committee member should provide a summary of their reference checks to the committee.

**Telephone Interviews**

Telephone interviews are a practical way to narrow the pool prior to in-person interviews. Ordinarily, there should be enough of the best qualified candidates interviewed by phone to result in a pool of 3 or 4 finalists and 3 alternates. If there are fewer than six qualified candidates, after consultation with their dean, the committee should telephone interview only those who are qualified.

Prior to the phone interviews, the committee must decide on the rating system it will use and develop a set of interview questions. The same set of questions must be asked of all candidates. Each committee member should be given a rating form for evaluating the candidates' responses. Care should be taken in crafting the questions to:

- cover all essential areas
- ask questions which result in meaningful and useful evaluation of a candidate's qualifications
- avoid redundancy
- avoid questions which are not job related

Prior to a telephone interview, the committee chair should send the applicant information about the membership of the search committee, the approximate time allotted for the interview, and the number, though not the nature, of questions that will be asked.

During the course of the telephone interview, particularly if the final question allows the candidate to ask for information, questions of a personal nature may arise. A candidate, for example, may have a spouse or domestic partner who would need to find employment in order for the candidate to accept the position.

The search committee cannot ask about marital status or partners and should not engage such discussions even if they have been initiated by the candidate. The committee can suggest to the candidate that it would be appropriate to discuss these issues with the dean and/or Department of Human Resources.

If transcripts were not requested as part of the application process (which is fine), or an transcript was not submitted, the following statement should be included in the phone-interview invitation e-mail or telephone invitation: “Official academic transcripts will be requested of candidates invited to campus for an interview.”
Section 5. Campus Interviews and Evaluation

Finalist review and approval
When the telephone interviews are complete, the committee will meet to evaluate the candidates. The search committee chair will discuss the committee’s findings with the dean and/or department chair and develop a plan for on-campus interviews.

The search committee chair or department chair will update PeopleAdmin with the applicant interview status and send an e-mail, which includes the PeopleAdmin-assigned search number, to the AA/EEO director indicating the potential finalists and alternate list is ready for review in PeopleAdmin. The AA/EEO director will review and send a recommendation e-mail, copying the search committee chair, to the appropriate dean once the review is completed.

The dean will indicate approval of the finalist pool in PeopleAdmin, and then send an approval e-mail to the search committee; only then may finalists be invited to campus by the chair of the search committee.

Prior to inviting potential finalists or alternates for the campus interview, the chair must have the USM faculty qualification review underway with the college credentialing officer. No candidate should be invited for a campus interview if they have not been reviewed and approved by the College Credentialing Officer.

Hiring of International Faculty
If a candidate will need visa services to work in the United States, the search committee chair should consult with the Administrator of the Office of International Student and Scholars Services (601-266-4841) to determine a candidate’s ability to work in the United States or can be provided the appropriate visa to work at USM. When possible, this should be done PRIOR to inviting the candidate to campus as a finalist. Finalists must either meet in person with the Office of International Student and Scholar services to review their immigration status and potential additional information needed, or communicate via email.

Marking Applicant Status in People Admin
Prior to inviting a finalist to campus, the department must indicate finalists, alternates, and those not selected for interviews in People Admin. The department must also select the reason(s) for non-selection. Note: Even though a candidate is marked as non-selected in PeopleAdmin, a notification is automatically sent to the applicant only AFTER the position is filled and the position is closed in PeopleAdmin. However, prior to closing the position in PeopleAdmin, chairs should send a personalized email or letter to applicants who are not selected and the committee wishes to release from the pool.

Faculty Search Guidelines for Campus Interviews
The goal of the on-campus interview is to not only show the candidates that we are interested in them but to recruit them to our campus. While a candidate may not be selected, they should leave campus feeling that USM is an outstanding university and a great place to work. It is also to assess the candidates’ teaching and research skills and
publication record, their community service and collegiality, and the likelihood that they will be successful at USM.

1. In the campus interview, we want to make the best impression possible as we are recruiting as well as selecting a candidate.

2. The campus interview schedule should include time with the search committee; meetings with students, faculty and University personnel; a seminar presentation; and hosted lunch and/or dinner. The dean should meet with the candidate even if it means the candidate or the dean flying to a secondary location.

3. The candidate should be provided a schedule before arrival. The schedule should have the date, time, location, and names of all involved in each meeting.

4. Best practices indicate that the candidate should be met at the airport by the search committee chair or a faculty member, unless other arrangements are agreed to ahead of time.

5. Meals with the candidate are part of the interview process. As such, a member of the search committee, and others as desired, should have breakfast, lunch, and dinner with the candidate.

6. The cost for all meal participants should be paid for by a host committee member. Alcoholic beverages should be charged separately. Meal and beverage receipts should be provided to the appropriate administrative assistant for reimbursement.

7. Someone should be designated to escort the candidate from one meeting to another.

8. Only if requested by the candidate, and if the schedule will allow, time should be scheduled with a local realtor to show typical housing to the candidate.

9. Allow the candidate 30 minutes or so preparation time before the presentation.

10. Remember this is our chance to show the candidate that we are interested in him/her.

**Invitation for On-Campus Interviews**
Invitations from the chair of the search committee to interview on campus should be followed up with an e-mail or letter as well as a package of information about the college and department, USM, Hattiesburg, Long Beach, etc., and other helpful information. A copy of the interview schedule, including names of those participating in the interviews, should be sent to the candidate prior to their arrival on campus.

Candidates for Gulf Park faculty positions should both tour the campus and meet with others, as is appropriate. In addition, when possible, teaching demonstrations or research presentations for these positions should be presented on the Gulf Park campus.
The following is a list of activities that are normally engaged in during an on-campus interview. Those activities marked with an asterisk (*) should be part of every on-campus interview.

- Pickup from hotel (if not local candidate)*
- Greet candidate and escort him/her to the first meeting*
- Meals (see Faculty Search Guidelines for Campus Interviews above)*
- Give a research and/or teaching presentation – try to schedule earlier in the day (students may be invited)*
- Interviews with:
  - Dean*
  - Search committee*
  - General/Departmental faculty/students/community members* (ordinarily a coffee/tea hour)
  - Division Chair, if not a member of the search committee*
  - International Student and Scholar Services Administrator (if a foreign national)*
  - Provost (only for chair/director positions and faculty who will be hired at the rank of Professor)
- Campus tour*
- Tour of local area

Candidates may wish to visit schools, meet with a realtor, or otherwise engage in other specific activities during their visit. Please keep this in mind when creating the interview schedule.

A campus itinerary will be created for each candidate and distributed together with a copy of the candidate’s CV to all faculty of the hiring unit at least two days prior to the visit.

**Additional Reference Checks after the Interview**
Communities may wish to conduct additional reference checks (additional references not listed on the application) at this point. The committee chair should consult with the department chair, and then obtain general permission from the candidate (you do not have to specify who will be contacted). It is further recommended that two committee members be present when additional references are contacted. It is also suggested reviewing a candidate’s online presence. While items posted online are not considered official, they may provide insight or items that might require further follow up.

**Evaluation and Selection of the Candidate**
The chair of the search committee is responsible for distributing an on-campus interview evaluation form to all staff and faculty involved in the on campus interview of the candidate. These evaluation forms provide another method for evaluating the candidate before the search committee makes a recommendation to be presented to the department faculty.
The search committee should prepare a list of candidates in the format requested and stated in the charge to the committee. For example, a list of the top three candidates in rank order list to include the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. Please refer to the *Faculty Handbook, Section 3.9 – Department Hiring Procedures* for specific information. The recommendation is forwarded to the Provost by the dean’s office using the faculty “Permission to Hire” form.
Section 6. Hiring Faculty Process

The Permission to Hire Process varies slightly for each of the categories of: Tenure Track Faculty, non-tenure track clinical, and teaching faculty (Instructor, lecturer, senior lecturer, and teaching professor positions) and other non-tenure track positions. This includes Post-Doctoral Positions on E and G funds only. Note: there are additional requirements for international faculty to complete once they have been offered the position. Contact International Services for more information.

6.1 Tenure-Track Positions and Promotable Non Tenure-Track Positions

If an applicant is selected and an offer is to be made, the internal college process for compiling hiring documents should be followed. Typically, the Search Committee Chair will provide the dean’s administrative assistant with the necessary candidate documents who will assemble a packet of material (Hire Package) containing the following items.

1. Permission to Hire Form (please make sure to use the most updated version, located on Office of Provost website).
   - Place the HR Posting number (e.g. Posting Number 0001091 from People Admin) in the space provided.
   - If research start-up funds are requested, consult with the dean to obtain agreement on the amount and time period of the funds. The VPR should approve the research start-up funds by signature on the Permission to Hire form.
   - If approved salary is more than budgeted salary, describe source of additional funds under the Special Conditions/Justification section, and if approval has been given for the higher amount.

2. Immigration Status Memo
   - If applicable, attach the ISM memo completed by the Administrator of International Student and Scholar Services for the selected candidate.
3. **Draft Copy of the Offer Letter**

Use the OFFICIAL TEMPLATE for the offer letter located on the Office of the Provost website. This letter must be clearly stamped “DRAFT” and cannot be mailed to or shown to the candidate until the Provost and Budget Officer give final approval for hiring the candidate. **The FINAL offer letter must be signed by the dean.** The offer letter will need to include the following:

- Rank/Title of the position
- Assignment city location
- Salary (to include reference to any pending salary adjustments relative to ABD status or Ph.D. completion)
- Start Date
- 9 month or 12 month appointment
- Expectations of position including teaching load, research, and service
- **Tenure track:** If applicable, specific date of pre-tenure review (i.e., “Your pre-tenure review will occur during the 20xx-20xx academic year, and tenure review will occur during the 20xx-20xx academic year”). Please see the faculty handbook for specific information concerning these reviews.
- **Non-tenure track promotable positions** (teaching or clinical): the date eligible to apply for promotion
- If applicable: Credit towards tenure. Any credit towards tenure must be approved by Provost and President.
- If applicable: Credit towards promotion. Any credit towards tenure must be approved by Provost.
- If applicable: Amount of research start-up funds and moving expenses as well as any other miscellaneous special circumstances that are listed on the “Permission to Hire” form.
- Deadline date for acceptance of the terms
- Acceptance signature/date block on the bottom of the letter for the candidate to sign and return.
- Information regarding completion of HR forms (Background Check, Employee Data Form, Authorization to Release Information Form, Vehicle Use Agreement Form and I-9 notification)

4. **Academic Credentials Documents** *(provided by the department and reviewed by the college credentialing officer)*

- Copy of the candidate’s curriculum vita
- Copy of the candidate’s official transcripts
- Faculty Qualification form signed by College Credentialing Officer

If there has been a change in the funding source for this position, the dean must submit an updated spreadsheet to the Provost for review prior to approval.
5. **Completed Hire Package**

Completed package to Dean’s office for review and approval. The dean will send the completed “Permission to Hire Package” to the Office of the Provost, for review. If the offer is approved by the Provost, a copy of the “**Permission to Hire**” form and the approved draft offer letter will be sent to the respective dean’s office to prepare the offer. **The final written offer to the candidate may only be by the dean.**

Any update or notification to the department chair should come from the Office of the Dean of the college.

If the Permission to Hire is not approved, the package will be returned to the dean for revision and resubmission.

If the candidate declines or the offer is withdrawn, send an e-mail notice to Budget and Personnel Coordinator in the Office of the Provost.

See Office of the Provost website for OFFICIAL Offer Letter template.

6.2 **Visiting Faculty* and Artist-In-Residence and Professor of Practice.***

*For visiting faculty where there is an exchange instructor agreement with another institution, it is not required to post the position.

If an applicant is selected and an offer is to be made, the internal college process for compiling hiring documents should be followed. Typically, the Search Committee Chair will provide the dean’s administrative assistant with the necessary candidate documents who will assemble a packet of material (Hire Package) containing the following items.

1. **Permission to Hire Form** (located on Office of Provost website).

   If applicable, place the HR Posting number (e.g. Posting Number 0001091 from People Admin) in the space provided.

   Be sure all information is completed and note any special conditions appropriate for visiting faculty and non-promotable track faculty.

2. **Immigration Status Memo**

   If applicable, attach the ISM memo completed by ISSS administrator for the selected candidate.

3. **Draft Copy of the Offer Letter**

   Use the OFFICIAL TEMPLATE for the offer letter located on the Office of the Provost website. This letter must be clearly stamped “DRAFT” and cannot be mailed to or shown to the candidate until the Provost and Budget Officer give final approval to hire the candidate. **The offer letter must be signed by the dean.** The offer letter will need to include the following:
☐ Rank/Title
☐ Assignment city location
☐ Salary (to include reference to any pending salary adjustments relative to ABD status or Ph.D. completion)
☐ Start Date and dates of appointment
☐ 9 month or 12 month appointment
☐ Expectations of position including teaching, research, and service
☐ If applicable: Any miscellaneous special circumstances that are listed on the “Permission to Hire” form
☐ Deadline date for acceptance of the terms
☐ Acceptance signature/date block on the bottom of the letter for the candidate to sign and return
☐ Information regarding completion of HR forms (Background Check, Employee Data Form, Authorization to Release Information Form, Vehicle Use Agreement Form and I-9 notification.)

4. Academic Credentials Documents *(provided by the department and reviewed by the college credentialing officer)*
   - Copy of the candidate’s curriculum vita
   - Copy of the candidate’s official transcripts
   - Faculty Qualification form signed by College Credentialing Officer

If there has been a change in the funding source for this position, the dean must submit an updated spreadsheet to the Provost for review prior to approval.

5. Completed Hire Package
   Completed package to Dean’s office for review and approval. The dean will send the completed “Permission to Hire Package” to the Office of the Provost, for review. If the offer is approved by the Provost, a copy of the “Permission to Hire” form and the approved draft offer letter will be sent to the respective dean’s office to prepare the offer. The final written offer to the candidate may only be by the dean.

   Any update or notification to the department chair should come from the Office of the Dean of the college.

   If the Permission to Hire is not approved, the package will be returned to the dean for revision and resubmission.

   If the candidate declines or the offer is withdrawn, send an e-mail notice to Budget and Personnel Coordinator in the Office of the Provost.

See Office of the Provost website for OFFICIAL Offer Letter template.
6.3 Hiring Adjunct Faculty/Part Time Faculty

The Personnel Data Sheet (PDS) available on the Provost’s web page must be used to hire adjunct faculty. The required attachments are the curriculum vitae, official transcripts, and the Qualifications of Full-Time and Part-Time Instructors of Record form. Once the completed PDS package has been approved by the department chair and respective dean, the dean’s office is to forward the completed package to the Budget Office.

6.4 Faculty to Teach for Study Abroad Programs

Below are the procedures to hire a faculty member to teach in one of the credit abroad programs at Southern Miss.

1. Current USM Faculty (forms located on Office of Provost website).

   Submit a Personnel Action Form (PAF) when hiring a current Southern Miss faculty member to teach in a study abroad program. The hiring department and all Southern Miss faculty hired to teach on study abroad programs will need to ensure that the following documents are on file with Human Resources.

   - Official Transcripts
   - Curriculum Vita
   - Verification/evaluation of foreign credentials and copy of Faculty Qualification form signed by College Credentialing Officer

2. Adjunct Faculty (non-Southern Miss faculty)

   Submit a Personnel Data Sheet (PDS) when hiring an adjunct faculty member to teach in a study abroad program. Adjunct faculty who are hired to teach in study abroad programs will need to submit the following documents.

   - Personnel Data Sheet (PDS)
   - Official Transcripts – there must be official transcripts for all graduate degrees
   - Curriculum vita
   - Copy of Faculty Qualification form signed by College Credentialing Officer
   - Verification/evaluation of foreign credentials, if required
   - Immigration Documents, if required
   - Sealed envelope from new hire containing the HR forms - Background Check, Employee Data Form, Authorization to Release Information Form, Vehicle Use Agreement Form
Once the completed PAF or PDS package has been approved by the department chair and respective dean, the dean’s office is to forward the completed package to Human Resources.

6.5 Verification of Foreign Transcripts

All graduate transcripts of any faculty member who has a degree(s) from a foreign university **must** have the foreign transcript(s) evaluated by an independent third party. There are several companies who provide this service for a fee. The evaluation of the foreign transcript(s) must accompany the rest of the hiring documentation. Allow for at least four (4) weeks for the foreign transcript(s) to be evaluated and returned to the faculty member and/or university. It is up to the individual faculty member to bear the cost of obtaining the evaluation. A complete listing of companies who provide this service may be obtained from the Director of Human Resources.

Section 7. New Hire Processing

**Close the Search in People Admin:**
Once a candidate has accepted the offer, the department chair must change the status in People Admin of all applicants to: Not Interviewed/Not Hired, Interviewed/Not Hired or Interviewed/Hired.

A final **Personnel Action Package** will need to be assembled. Included documents are:

- [ ] Personnel Action Form (PAF)
- [ ] Copy of the approved “Permission to Hire” form
- [ ] Original offer letter with acceptance signature of the candidate and the date signed
- [ ] Any letters of recommendation
- [ ] Official Transcripts—there must be official transcripts for all graduate degrees
- [ ] Curriculum vita
- [ ] Faculty Qualification form signed by College Credentialing Officer
- [ ] Immigration Status Memo (where applicable)
- [ ] Sealed envelope from new hire containing the HR forms - Background Check, Employee Data Form, Authorization to Release Information Form, Vehicle Use Agreement Form, when applicable.

Once the completed PAF and package is received by the Office of the Provost, the Provost will review and approve. Once approved, the budget coordinator will forward the package of material to the Department of Human Resources.
All foreign nationals are subject to approval by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Additionally, all employees at the university must possess a United States social security number. Note that employees may not start to work without the background check.

For your reference, new employees will also need to complete, in person at HR, the I-9 form. Please instruct them to view the form on the HR web site prior to their arrival to campus as it contains information about required forms of identification.

**Section 8. Closing the Search**

Once a search has been completed successfully or cancelled due to lack of success, the search must be closed. The department or search committee chair should change the status of all applicants in PeopleAdmin as noted in Section 6. The search committee chair must write or e-mail all candidates who have applied and not already notified earlier (did not meet qualifications or were not selected for phone interview should have been notified at that point) that the search has been concluded. If the search was terminated without a hire (because the pool of minimally qualified candidates has been exhausted), the letter may indicate that the search was cancelled.

It is important that the search documentation can be located in the event that a complaint is filed by an applicant. All documentation for each candidate should be retained for a minimum of 3 years. Electronic files of application materials are maintained in, and can be accessed through, PeopleAdmin. All other documentation should be kept by the hiring department. Electronic records/copies of search documents are acceptable. This would include on the official evaluation documents (forms used by the committee for interviews and reference checks, evaluations from on-campus interviews)

The EEO/AA officer and the department chair will be informed via e-mail, by the committee chair, that the search is officially concluded when all candidates have been notified and the records are archived.
Frequently Asked Questions

_How should candidate inquiries about their status be handled?_
Prior to the selection of candidates(s) to interview, those meeting the minimum qualifications should be told that their applications are still under consideration. When the selection of candidates to be interviewed has been made, other candidates may be told that they were not included in the first group of candidates to be interviewed.

_What do we do if a candidate is qualified for a higher rank than advertised?_
The candidate should be considered only for the rank(s) in the position. At the discretion of the dean, the offer letter may include a statement about the date when the candidate could be considered for promotion.

_What happens to incomplete applications?_
Applications are not available for review until all required documents have been submitted electronically. Application materials are not returned to candidates.

_How do we treat internal candidates?_
Internal candidates cannot be involved in the search process and must be treated in the same manner as external candidates. Confidentiality in all matters must, _absolutely_, be maintained.

_Late applications_
Late applications may not be considered if received after a firm deadline. The applicant should be notified of this. (If a search committee, in consultation with the department chair and/or dean, decides to make an exception for an outstanding applicant, then all late applications must be considered.) Once the application deadline has passed, the online posting will be closed.

_What if there are no acceptable candidates?_
The search can be suspended or cancelled at the instruction of the dean; candidates will be informed by letter that the search has been cancelled. Alternatively, the search can be extended and the position re-advertised.

_What if a person sends his/her vita to the dean or the Chair asking if they think the person meets the Minimum Qualifications and should apply?_
Refer that person to the job ad website or attach the ad in an e-mail. Explain that all applicants must be assessed on the criteria stated in the ad, that you believe he/she is in the best position to determine if he/she meets the qualifications or not, and, he/she is certainly welcome and encouraged to apply after making that determination.
Faculty Search Guidelines for Campus Interviews

1. In the campus interview, we want to make the best impression possible as we are recruiting as well as selecting a candidate.

2. The campus interview schedule should include time with the search committee; meetings with students, faculty and University personnel; a seminar presentation; and hosted lunch and/or dinner. The dean should meet with the candidate even if it means the candidate or the dean flying to a secondary location.

3. The candidate should be provided a schedule before arrival. The schedule should have the date, time, location, and names of all involved in each meeting.

4. The candidate should be met at the airport by the search committee chair or a faculty member.

5. Meals with the candidate are part of the interview process. As such, a member of the search committee, and others as desired, should have breakfast, lunch, and dinner with the candidate.

6. The cost for all meal participants should be paid for by the hosting member of the committee for that meal. Alcoholic beverages should be charged separately. Meal and beverage receipts should be provided to the appropriate administrative assistant for reimbursement.

7. Someone should be designated to escort the candidate from one meeting to another.

8. Only if requested by the candidate, time should be scheduled with a local realtor to show typical housing to the candidate.

9. Allow the candidate 30 minutes or so preparation time before the presentation.

10. Remember this is our chance to show the candidate that we are interested in them.
APPENDIX AND SAMPLES

Refer to the Office of the Provost website for Official Offer letter templates as well as sample documents

Sample Job Advertisement

Sample Recruitment Plan Timelines

Sample Letters and E-mails

- Search Committee Confidentiality Agreement
- Search Committee Appointment Letter
- Sample Letter: Applicant Acknowledgment of Materials Letter
- Sample Letter: Interviewed, Not Hired
- Sample Letter: Not Interviewed, Not Hired
- Sample E-mail: Invitation to Phone Interview
- Sample E-mail: On Campus Interview Confirmation

Interview and Evaluation Documents

- Sample CV Review Questions
- Sample Reference Check Form
- Sample Phone Interview Script and Questions
- Sample On Campus Interview Schedule
- Sample On Campus Interview Questions
- Sample On Campus Interview Evaluation #1
- Sample On Campus Interview Evaluation #2 (Good for administrative faculty)
- Sample On Campus Interview Rubric

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