



# RECRUITING & HIRING EMPLOYEES

*A Guide for Hiring Officials*

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UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT



The University of Vermont

# UVM's HIRING MISSION

As a diverse and inclusive community, UVM has a compelling interest in affirmative recruitment, hiring, and retention of talented individuals. Our faculty and staff are indispensable to achieving our goals. The recruitment and hiring process should be thoughtful and purposeful.

University recruitment and hiring processes prioritize inclusive excellence which begins by ensuring our processes are fair and welcoming to all applicants. As representatives of UVM, it is our responsibility to share a culture of inclusivity, equity, and grow diversity now and into the future for the benefit of humankind.

The guidelines included throughout these pages offer hiring officials and teams information and tips to help ensure recruitment efforts and hiring practices are consistent with our core values and all State and Federal labor laws. As always, best practices for affirmative recruiting and hiring include working with your respective College or Division.

Human Resources continues to serve as an excellent resource for those engaged in recruitment and hiring efforts. For more information, visit our website at [www.uvm.edu/human-resources](http://www.uvm.edu/human-resources). To connect with an HR professional directly, email [HRInfo@uvm.edu](mailto:HRInfo@uvm.edu).



The University of Vermont

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Understanding the goal of a recruitment	3
STEP 1 Organize the Search Committee	5-6
STEP 2 Create the Posting Language	7
STEP 3 Advertising and Outreach	8
STEP 4 Develop Evaluation Materials	9
Interview Questions	10
Behavior-Based Questions	11
Legal and Illegal Questions	12
STEP 5 Evaluate the Candidates	13
Best Practices for Initial Evaluation of Candidates	14
Understanding Implicit Bias	15
Telephone Interviews	16
On-Campus Interviews	17-18
Reference Checks	19
Waiver Hires	20
Helpful Resources and Links	21
Our Common Ground	22

Please note: This document is a guide for hiring officials to use throughout the recruitment process. For the most up-to-date information regarding policies and best practices for recruitment and hiring, visit the HR website at [www.uvm.edu/human-resources](http://www.uvm.edu/human-resources).

## **UNDERSTANDING THE GOAL OF RECRUITMENT**

Competitive searches are the best way to find the most qualified candidate(s) for your position. The following steps will help you navigate the process.

### **Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (AA/EO)**

#### **Affirmative Action (AA)**

Affirmative action requires employers who receive money from and/or conduct business with the federal government at a significant level to have an affirmative action plan. An affirmative action plan is a tool to help employers measure whether who they are recruiting and hiring matches the demographics of who is available to hire based on several categories: race/ethnicity, gender, disability, and protected veteran status.

#### **Equal Opportunity (EO)**

An employer who agrees not to discriminate against employees or job candidates because of their membership in particular legally protected categories can be defined and classified as an Equal Opportunity (EO) Employer.

While UVM is proud to be an AA/EO employer, these attributes only reflect what we are “required” to do. UVM believes that diversity, and preparing our students for an increasingly multicultural world, are strategic priorities and we are committed to taking additional steps beyond AA/EO requirements to attract and retain a diverse and culturally competent workforce. The goal of affirmative recruiting is to hire the most appropriately qualified person for the position through a recruitment process which values diversity, cultural competency, and commitment to diversity and is fair, welcoming, supportive, and consistent.

# TIP 1

## *Is your applicant pool diverse enough?*

Run a diversity report to see if the goal of having a diverse applicant pool is being met and if your hiring process is causing too many diverse candidates to be eliminated from consideration.



## ORGANIZE THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

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**Start the process as soon as possible!** Consult your unit's diversity action plan. For faculty recruitments, refer to the guidelines and instructions provided by the Office of the Provost (see link on page 21).

**Consider diversity and cultural competency when selecting search committee members.** (Please see the [guidelines for Tenure Track recruitments](#) – link on page 21). Must 'haves' when in your selected search committee:

- Members have different perspectives evaluating candidates.
- They have a diverse personal and professional network when doing outreach.
- They demonstrate to candidates that we value diversity at UVM.

### **Discuss confidentiality.**

- Respect the privacy of the candidates and the integrity of the process.
- Search committee members should feel free to bring up anything for discussion during the recruitment process – all discussion stays in the room.

### **Review the charge to the committee and make sure it is clear about:**

- The duties of the position.
- The required experience, education, skills, and abilities a successful candidate must have.
- Guidance from the hiring official about the priorities for the position.
  - Best practice is for the search committee to provide the hiring official with an unranked list of the 3-5 most qualified candidates along with a summary of each candidate's strengths and challenges.
- The desired timeline for the search process.

**Talk about and identify the importance of diversity.**

- What are the benefits of a more diverse workforce? (And therefore the benefits of a diverse applicant pool and/or hire).
- How can search committee members help to ensure an appropriately diverse applicant pool? (e.g., professional networking, recruiting at conferences, etc.).

**Create a timeline for the recruitment.**

- When will you stop accepting applications?
- When will you conduct an initial review of candidates?
- When, if applicable, will you conduct a first round of interviews?
- When will you conduct on-campus interviews?

**Book time on the committee members' calendars as far in advance as possible.**

**Assign committee members, as appropriate, to the following tasks:**

- Schedule the meetings.
- Serve as the primary point of contact for candidates.
- Develop evaluation materials.
- Develop phone and campus interview questions.
- Conduct reference checks.

**CREATE THE POSTING LANGUAGE**

- Language about required and preferred qualifications should be as inclusive as possible.
- Use an advertising/posting title that is more descriptive than the classification title.
- Speak to the duties, experience, education, and skills required to be successful in the position.
- Encourage or require candidates to provide information about how they would contribute to the diversity of the institution in their cover letter.
- Try not to have too many preferred or desired qualifications, and allow consideration of equivalent combinations of education and experience, if applicable.
- Be clear about materials you require the applicant to submit.

## TIP 2

### *Use Required Language in Job Postings*

The University of Vermont is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any category legally protected by federal or state law.



## ADVERTISING AND OUTREACH

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- Use the knowledge and expertise of the search committee members to determine where to advertise.
- Target diverse populations with your advertising.
- Bold and creative outreach by committee members is critical. Examples:
  - Emailing listservs.
  - Bringing copies of the postings to professional conferences.
  - Contacting members of your personal and professional networks.
  - Cultivate networks ALL YEAR, not just when you are part of a recruitment.
  - Hold committee members accountable to do their own outreach.
  - Contact the [Graystone Group](#) for additional advertising ideas. More information about this, and other resources, can be found under [Recruiting Resources](#) on the HRS website and on page 21 of this guide.

## DEVELOP EVALUATION MATERIALS

Create a rubric for each step of evaluation (initial screening, round one interview, round two interview, etc.) and discuss it with the committee.

- Each row on the rubric should be directly related to the duties of the job or the experience/education/skills/abilities needed to be successful in the job.
- Include a row that addresses diversity and cultural competency.

SAMPLE RUBRIC				
SKILL/QUALITY	RATING AND COMMENTS: Please circle the appropriate rating and provide your comments for each SKILL/QUALITY.			
Verbal and written communication	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Outstanding
Scheduling experience	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Outstanding
Demonstrated ability to work in a team	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Outstanding
Office Software Knowledge	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Outstanding
Commitment to Diversity and fostering a multicultural environment	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Outstanding
Budget Knowledge	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Outstanding
Writing & Editing	Weak	Adequate	Strong	Outstanding

Create a list of interview questions.

- Use the same “core” group of questions for each candidate.
- It is okay to ask follow-up questions and/or additional questions that are specific to a candidate’s individual skills and experience.
- Questions must be directly related to the experience, education, skills, and abilities needed to be successful in the position.
- Ask appropriate diversity-related questions ([see page 10](#)).
- Consider using some behavior-based interview questions ([see page 11](#)).
- Stay away from personal questions, especially questions that elicit information about an individual’s identity ([see page 12](#)).
- Create a list of questions to give to other stakeholders (outside of the search committee) who will be part of the interview process.

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are many questions you will want to ask applicants to assess whether they are the most qualified candidate for the job. In addition to experience, be mindful to include questions about diversity.

The following examples provide some suggested questions, as well as language to avoid. Remember, search committee members should never ask a candidate to disclose their individual identity.

### SAMPLE DIVERSITY QUESTIONS

- How has your experience and background prepared you to be effective in an environment that values inclusive excellence?
- What do you see as the most challenging aspect of a diverse working environment? What steps have you taken in your professional experience to meet this challenge?
- Tell me about a time you had to alter your work style to meet a diversity need or challenge.
- What efforts have you made, or been involved with, to foster multicultural competency?
- What kind of leadership efforts would you make to ensure a commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence?
- What strategies have you used to integrate multicultural competency into day-to-day work? What were the positives and negatives?
- The University has a strong commitment to a diverse and inclusive campus. Can you tell us what that means to you and how you would contribute to that goal?

## BEHAVIOR-BASED QUESTIONS

(relevant to the position)

Behavior-based interview questions consider past performance as the best predictor of future performance. They ask candidates to cite specific examples from their previous work to answer questions about how they would perform in the position they are being considered for. Examples:

- Tell me about a time when you accomplished something significant that would not have happened if you had not been there to make it happen.
- Give me an example of a situation where you had to overcome major obstacles to achieve your objectives.
- Tell me about a time when you had to analyze facts quickly, define key issues, and respond immediately to a critical situation.
- If you had to do that activity over again, how would you do it differently?
- Tell me about a time when you successfully presented a proposal to a person in a position of authority.
- Tell me about a time when you had a strong difference of opinion with a coworker. How did you manage the situation?
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Describe for me a time when you had to delegate a task or project to an employee with an already full workload. How did you do it?
- Tell me about one or two customer-service related programs you created or oversaw that you are particularly proud of.

Please visit the UVM Human Resources website ([www.uvm.edu/human-resources](http://www.uvm.edu/human-resources)) for **Recruitment and Interview Resources** including an extensive list of sample behavior-based questions.

## QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD NOT ASK

Certainly, the search committee has an interest in getting to know as much information about a candidate's ability to successfully perform the job as possible. It is not uncommon for candidates to voluntarily divulge a range of personal details about themselves when talking with search committee members or other participants in the interview process. However, it is important that everyone participating in the interview process avoid asking the candidates personal questions, especially questions that could elicit information about their membership in a legally protected category.

### Examples of questions you should NOT ask:

- How many children do you have?
- How old are you?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- What is your maiden name?

A more comprehensive list of questions to avoid, and why, is available on the Human Resources [website](#) and is entitled, *What You Can Ask and What You Can't – Legal/Illegal Interview Questions*.

### EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2018:

As of July 1, 2018, it is illegal to ask candidates for their salary history. We can still ask if they have a minimum salary requirement or, if negotiating, what they think a fair salary would be.

## EVALUATE THE CANDIDATES

The following considerations apply to all steps of candidate evaluation:

- At least two committee members should review each candidate (preferably all committee members review every candidate when possible).
- Use a rubric to help the evaluation focus only on the most important qualities of the candidates (including diversity and cultural competency).
- Determine whether you can consider equivalent combinations of education and experience, and define what that might look like ahead of time.
- Consider transferable skills.
- Do not remove candidates from consideration because they live far away.
- Use the rubric to minimize the impact of implicit bias.
- Use the rubric to sort your candidates into three groups, typically:
  - A small number who are clearly the least qualified.
  - A small number who are clearly the most qualified.
  - A larger number who require additional discussion.
- Discuss candidates and decide who will move forward in the recruitment process.

Please note that **diversity and cultural competency** should be one factor among all of the important qualities of your candidates. It should never be the only reason that someone moves forward in your recruitment process.

Retain search committee materials that are not stored in the applicant tracking system for three years (e.g. evaluation materials summaries, rubrics, etc).

## INITIAL EVALUATION OF THE CANDIDATES

- Create a rubric using the best practices listed on page 9 of this guide.
- Discuss the rubric with the search committee so that everyone understands what to look for in each category.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to review each candidate's materials.
- Score each candidate on the rubric and give comments to support each score. At least two people should score each candidate.
  - *Preferably, the whole committee is able to review each candidate.*
  - *Consider transferable skills and equivalent combinations of education and experience, when possible.*
- Reduce the potential impact of implicit bias (see page 15 for details).
- Compile the scores and sort your candidates.
- Have a discussion with the committee to determine which candidates will move on to the next step in your recruitment process.

## UNDERSTANDING IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. In other words, our accumulated life experience affects our decision-making without us knowing it.

### Examples of implicit bias:

- Applicants with white sounding names are 50% more likely to receive a response from employers. (source<sup>1</sup>)
- Female candidates are less likely to be perceived as having leadership skills than male candidates with identical CVs. (source<sup>2</sup>)

We should actively try to combat implicit bias when reviewing candidates at every stage of the recruitment process. The best way to do this involves two basic steps:

- Understand and acknowledge that we all have implicit bias, even though we may not always be aware of it.
- **Slow down** when evaluating your candidates. If you are rushed, you allow your unconscious to take over and thus your biases have a greater impact. Every time you give a score, consciously identify to yourself why you believe the candidate deserves that score.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nber.org/papers/w9873.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cos.gatech.edu/facultyres/Diversity\\_Studies/Steinpreis\\_Impact\\_of\\_gender\\_on\\_review.pdf](http://www.cos.gatech.edu/facultyres/Diversity_Studies/Steinpreis_Impact_of_gender_on_review.pdf)



## TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

- Develop an introductory script that will be used for each candidate when they meet with the search committee and other participants in the search process.
- Use best practices for interview questions outlined earlier in this guide.
- Re-read application materials before the interview.
- Introduce everyone on the call and lay out the structure of the interview to the candidate (how much time they will have, how many questions will be asked, etc).
- Reintroduce yourself if you are a new speaker.
- Leave time for the candidate to ask questions.
- End the interview by giving the candidate a timeline of when they will hear back from you (and make sure to follow up within that period of time, even if it is only to give them a new timeline).
- Grade and discuss the candidate immediately after the interview ends. Do not immediately go into another interview.
- Be aware of implicit bias and use a rubric.

**How you treat candidates who are not hired is just as important as how you treat your top candidate. Be mindful of the rejection emails that are sent automatically by the system and give personal communications where appropriate.**

## **ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS:**

- Use best practices for interview questions listed earlier in this guide.
- When setting up the on-campus visit, ask if there is a particular group of people that the candidate would like to meet with outside of the interview process.
  - Remember, the candidate is judging us just as much as we are judging them.
  - This should be offered to all candidates, but the purpose is to give diverse candidates the opportunity to meet with people who might help them learn about life on campus for their identity group.
- Consider creating an informational packet about the Burlington area to give to each candidate.
- Consider creating an informational packet about UVM's diversity initiatives, such as your unit's diversity plan and the framework for inclusive excellence.
- If taking candidates out to a meal, every candidate should be taken to a restaurant of similar quality.
- If putting candidates up in a hotel, every candidate should be offered a hotel room of similar quality, even if they live locally.
- Give the candidate a schedule for their interview.
  - Make sure to schedule rest breaks into the day.
  - Consider assigning them a "host" to walk them from place to place.
- Be aware of implicit bias and use a rubric.

- If the candidate is meeting with stakeholders apart from the search committee:
  - Give the stakeholders questions to ask or review the questions they plan on asking.
  - Give the stakeholders a rubric to use to help limit implicit bias and to get structured feedback.
  - Consider asking stakeholders for feedback by using a very simple [Lime Survey](#) (see page 21 for a link). Electronic surveys are more likely to yield a response than a paper form, especially if they are short and easy to complete.
- AVOID ASKING ANY PERSONAL QUESTIONS.
  - It is okay to answer any questions candidates may have or to point them to resources to answer those questions, but do not ask any questions that could elicit information about legally protected identities.

## REFERENCE CHECKS

- Thorough reference checks (and other types of background checks, where appropriate) are a critical part of the search process, and should always be completed before hiring a candidate.
- Reference checks are a great source of information about your potential hire and are usually done near the end of the process, once top candidates have been identified.
- You can use the template on the HR website for conducting reference checks ([see the link on page 21](#)).
- You may ask for additional or different references than those provided by the candidate. The best references are, in order:
  - Current or recent supervisor.
  - Current or recent co-worker or colleague.
- It is not advisable to rely on personal references.
- When a candidate submits their application, they are authorizing us to contact their references if they are a finalist.
- It is a courtesy to notify the candidates before contacting their references.
- In appropriate situations, other checks and verifications may include:
  - Criminal/background checks.
  - Educational Verification.
  - Employment Verification.
  - Performance Reviews or Disciplinary Reports (internal UVM candidates only).
  - Professional License Verification.

## **WAIVER HIRES**

Under some circumstances, it may be appropriate to “waive” a competitive search. Human Resource Services may approve a waiver hire if:

- It is considered a promotion for a current employee.
- There is a compelling business need to have someone in the position temporarily until a competitive search can be completed.
- There is an opportunity to advance an affirmative action goal through the hiring of a qualified candidate.
- The candidate was a finalist in a recent competitive search for an identical or nearly identical position.
- The candidate is a prior UVM employee, and their position was eliminated within the last two years (e.g., due to reorganization or an end to restricted funds).

## HELPFUL RESOURCES & LINKS

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1. **Dual Career Hire Guidelines**  
<https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/UVM-Faculty-Affairs/DualCareerHiringGuidelines2015.pdf>
2. **Faculty Recruitment Guidelines from the Office of the Provost**  
<https://www.uvm.edu/provost/recruitment-new-and-continuing-appointments>
3. **Recruitment and Interview Resources (General)**  
<https://www.uvm.edu/hrs/recruiting-resources>
4. **Recruitment Guidelines: Non-Tenure Track Faculty**  
<https://www.uvm.edu/provost/recruitment-guidelines-non-tenure-track-faculty>
5. **Search Committee Composition Guidelines for Tenure Track Recruitments**  
<https://www.uvm.edu/provost/reappointment-promotion-and-tenure-rpt>
6. **Template for Conducting Reference Checks**  
[https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Employee-Wellness/reference\\_checks\\_web.pdf](https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Employee-Wellness/reference_checks_web.pdf)
7. **What You Can Ask and What You Can't – Legal/Illegal Interview Questions**  
[https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Human-Resource-Services-and-Operations/HRSDocs/Mangers\\_Corner/LegalorIllegalInterviewQuestions.pdf](https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Human-Resource-Services-and-Operations/HRSDocs/Mangers_Corner/LegalorIllegalInterviewQuestions.pdf)
8. **Working with Graystone Group**  
<http://www.graystoneadv.com/>

Visit our website at [www.uvm.edu/human-resources](http://www.uvm.edu/human-resources) for updated information.

## Our Common Ground

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*We aspire to be a community that values:*

**RESPECT.** We respect each other. We listen to each other, encourage each other and care about each other. We are strengthened by our diverse perspectives.

**INTEGRITY.** We value fairness, straightforward conduct, adherence to the facts, and sincerity. We acknowledge when things have not turned out the way we had hoped. As stewards of the University of Vermont, we are honest and ethical in all responsibilities entrusted to us.

**INNOVATION.** We want to be at the forefront of change and believe that the best way to lead is to learn from our successes and mistakes and continue to grow. We are forward-looking and break new ground in addressing important community and societal needs.

**OPENNESS.** We encourage the open exchange of information and ideas from all quarters of the community. We believe that through collaboration and participation, each of us has an important role in determining the direction and well-being of our community.

**JUSTICE.** As a just community, we unite against all forms of injustice, including, but not limited to, racism. We reject bigotry, oppression, degradation, and harassment, and we challenge injustice toward any member of our community.

**RESPONSIBILITY.** We are personally and collectively responsible for our words and deeds. We stand together to uphold our common ground.



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