Reviewing Applications

When making the final hiring decision, the search committee should use only job related criteria. Gathering, integrating and evaluating interview information includes identifying applicant’s specific knowledge, skills, and abilities, and judging them in the context of the job requirements. Interview evaluations, in conjunction with other information gathered during the selection process (e.g., reference checks, application responses, resume, and correspondence), should form the basis for the final decision.

The search committee should select the individual that best meets the identified job criteria. Consideration should also be given to composing a set of benchmark responses for each interview question with differentiated weights assigned to each response. This approach makes it easier for search committee members to score responses with greater reliability.

The Personnel Journal reports that in a survey of 150 executive of Fortune 100 firms, up to 33 percent of all resumes may be fraudulent or lacking in vital information. The Personnel Journal offers some tips to help you detect lies on resumes and during interviews: · Carefully note the order of the material given on the resume. What is given up-front is generally what the applicant wishes to emphasize. But what’s hidden below will be more revealing. ·

Concentrate on the most important points in the applicant’s resume. Diverting attention to too many insignificant details draws focus away from key areas. · Look for conflicting details or overlapping date. · Look for gaps in dates. It’s common for applicants who wish to cover something up to try to omit it. ·

Determining Which Applicants to Interview

The employment interview is one of the most important steps in selecting new classified employees. The interview usually is the final step in the selection process after the initial screening has been developed and administered. It is the only time before the selection decision that the selecting official or Search Committee has direct personal contact with job applicants. Therefore, it is important that the interview be conducted in a responsible and consistent manner.

Evaluating candidates for interview must be in accordance with the pre-determined selection criteria, considering only the information provided in the applications and avoiding any subjective assessment based on stereotyping or "gut feel". It is essential at this stage to ensure that illegal discriminatory choices are avoided by using objective selection criteria.
Sufficient records must be kept which explain how the shortlist was compiled. Unsuccessful internal applicants must be informed accordingly.

The Personnel Assistant and Recruiter screen applicants based on the minimum requirements listed in the Vacancy Announcement. All applications received by the posted closing date are sorted into three categories: (1) Meets Minimum Qualifications, (2) May Meet Minimum Qualifications, and (3) Does Not Meet Minimum Qualifications. All three groups are forwarded to the Search Committee/Hiring Manager unless more restrictive instructions are given.

A review of applicant training and experience can be used to develop a final list of candidates to be interviewed. If a training and experience standard is used to disqualify one or more classified applicants, all other applicants considered further must meet or exceed the established criteria. For example, if accounting experience were necessary for successful performance of job duties, applicants without accounting experience would not be interviewed. If this approach is used, however, all applicants selected for final interviews also must have accounting experience.

When the search committee chairperson decides the applicant pool is sufficiently large and diverse, the committee must first determine which applicants meet the qualifications for the position as indicated on the Vacancy Announcement. It is suggested that an initial screening be accomplished using the following format shown at Appendix E. The committee must then decide if it is feasible to interview all applicants. If not, the committee should develop a set of job-related, screening criteria with which to evaluate applications and/or resumes to rank the applications and determine which applicants will be interviewed. The selection criteria used in this and subsequent applicant screenings must be identical to the duties, responsibilities and qualifications contained in the job description. Regardless of the method used, the following tests must be met.

**Objectivity:** For a hiring decision to meet the test of objectivity, the criteria must be measurable in quantifiable terms as opposed to a subjective judgment.

**Job Relatedness:**
For a hiring decision to be job related, the criteria must have a direct relationship to the work to be performed.

**Consistent Application:**
For a hiring decision to be consistent, the criteria must be applied in the same manner to all applicants without regard to protected class status.

**Uniform Effect:**
For a hiring decision to be uniform, the criteria must have a uniform impact without regard to protected class status and should not have a disproportionate effect on a particular protected class.

After each application is screened, evaluated, and the applications are placed in rank order, a cut-off point is established which produces a priority list of applicants to interview.

Appendix E provides several examples for developing a “short list”. Options include a very structured ranking process and a less formal consensus method. Either approach is acceptable. However, the committee must keep clear and accurate notes on the process used.

If the department chooses to contact anyone from the list, the following two rules apply:

0. The department does not have to interview everyone on the list. Instead, they can interview down to a certain score and cut the list off at that point.

0. If the department chooses a cutoff point within the list to interview down to, they cannot make the cutoff point within a score, but must interview everyone with that score (i.e., if someone with a 90 is offered an interview, then everyone with a 90 and above must be contacted.

**Scoring** - There are two basic approaches to scoring applicants:

**Consensus**
Using this method, the search team discusses applicant responses to each competency. Search Committee members discuss their views on how the competencies should be scored and interpretations of their observations during the interview. This process leads to assigning scores the panel as a whole accepts.

**Individual**
Here, each panelist independently scores each applicant. The panel then averages the scores and assigns the result as the final scores.

Often these approaches could also be combined by first doing individual scoring by each committee member and then looking for consensus to arrive at group scores.

**Ranking the Candidates**
Ideally, candidates should be discussed and ranked by the Search Committee in order to determine which candidates should be referred to the selecting official for a final interview. For documentation purposes, notes should be taken during this discussion and the Search Committee Chair should put the ranking into writing at that time. There are two reasons for ranking