



HRSM Search Committee Guide for Faculty Searches

1. Form a Search Committee

- Majority of the search committee should be comprised of faculty members from the department/school.
- All search committee members complete the required university [search committee trainings](#).
- Search committee elects an Excellence Advocate (description/duties may be found at the link above).
- Search members, chair, and Excellence Advocate will be noted in the system by HR staff.

2. Position Search Approval

- Associate Dean, Department Chair/School Director, and HRSM HR Director (hereafter "*HR Director*") will draft the position description/advertisement
- Search committee chair (hereafter "*search chair*") and search committee should review and suggest any improvements.
- *HR Director* seeks approval for filling the position from the Provost Office by submitting an Academic Position Request (APR) form.
 - Chair/Director, Dean, and Provost signs APR.
 - Academic Position Requests (APR) shall include a proposed salary range. The proposed salary range should not exceed the maximum for the department by faculty rank. Staff of the Office of the Provost will confirm on the APR the current departmental salary range for the proposed rank.
 - NOTE: Position may not be advanced until the *HR Director* and the Dean have all approved the position advertisement and received approved APR from the Provost Office.
- Position is advertised.

3. Post Position

- *HR Director* will post job on USC Jobs. Email confirmation will be sent to the *search chair*.
- Searches for new and replacement tenure-track faculty members must be advertised no less than **45 calendar days** on the USC Employment page as well as in one or more written and/or electronic national publications.
 - NOTE: For global search, the advertisement must be posted for a minimum of 30 days but this will be fulfilled by the minimal posting requirement.
- Applicants are **required** to apply online via the USC jobs website. As applications are received, they become immediately available to the search committee via the USC applicant portal.

- Chair/director will handle main distribution; departmental administrative assistant, chair/directors, and/or search chairs will disseminate job advertisement to academic discipline outlets (listservs, job boards, etc.) to attract a diverse group of applicants.
- Positions offered to non-U.S. citizens must have been advertised in a written or online national publication. Additional forms may be required.

4. Search Committee Guidance

- *Search chair* should distribute appropriate guidance to all committee members
 - See the HRSM digital drive under “Search Committees”.
- *HR Director* and Associate Dean will meet with *the search chair* to review policies and procedures.
- Applications should be accumulating during this time.

5. Search Committee Meeting

- After the published date for the official review, the *search chair* will schedule a meeting to screen the application pool. The meeting is open, unless otherwise requested by a search committee member to be conducted as an executive session.
 - Information on the meeting location and time should be posted 48 hours prior
 - Posting may be a printed sign by the location of the meeting or electronic on the HRSM calendar
 - Departmental administrator can help facilitate the signage.
- During this applicant pool screening meeting, each applicant should be reviewed and evaluated.
- After the meeting, the *search chair* should notify the *HR Director*:
 - If any applicant is a veteran, inform the HR Director immediately. HR Director will seek appropriate documentation (i.e. DD214) for support in determining the applicant’s eligibility for veteran preference.
 - If there are any international applicants.
 - All international applicants must be issued the standard communication from USC HR Service Team.
- Excellence Advocate requests for EEO data from *HR Director* and initiates a discussion with the search committee concerning the broad representation of the applicant pool.
- Committee will identify the candidates that should advance to the first-round interviews [skype, zoom, teams, or phone], and potential interview questions should be selected (*see Appendix 1 for suggestions*).
- Interviews may NOT proceed if all search committee members have not completed the required search committee training noted in #1 above.



6. Applicant Interviews

Round 1 (Virtual – typically 5-6 candidates; dependent on the strength of the pool)

- Applicants advancing to the first round of interviews should be contacted by the *search chair* and the interviews should be scheduled. The first round of interviews can be conducted through Zoom/Teams or another appropriate online portal.
- Committee should complete interviews as a group and evaluate each candidate.
- Finalists for on-campus (round 2) interviews should be identified.

Round 2 (On-campus – typically 3 candidates)

- Once potential finalists are identified, the search chair must meet with Associate Dean of Faculty and Staff Affairs and *HR Director* to review committee's deliberations and recommendations.
 - Search Chair will utilize the Viable Optional Outreach template as a guide.
- Finalists must be approved by the Dean before invitations are issued for campus visits.
 - Search committee chair must also conduct at least 2 reference calls for each candidate being invited for an on-campus interview (see Appendix 2 for example questions).
- **NOTE:** Applicant cannot be interviewed on-campus unless their application is complete – including all letters of recommendation and official transcript.
 - **Degrees received from institutions outside of the United States will need to be evaluated by an approved evaluator – [Foreign Credentials Evaluator](#).**
- *The search chair* must obtain reference letters and an official transcript from each finalist.
 - Each reference letter should be (1) on letterhead, (2) have physical signatures (not typed), and (3) blue ink. It is fine to have the letters scanned and sent electronically.
 - Official transcript must be provided to HRSM HR directly from the applicant's institution.
- *Search chair* must forward the letters to the *HR Director*.
 - Without these letters of reference, interviews cannot be held.

7. Campus Visits

- *Search chair* will extend invitations for a campus visit to each of the approved finalists and communicate the process, expectations, and topics for various presentations.
- *Search chair* will ensure the candidate is scheduled to meet with the Associate Dean for Faculty and Staff Affairs and the Dean during the campus visit.
- Administrative assistants will work with Dean's Office administration to coordinate the itinerary, travel arrangements, and details (see Appendix 3).



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- Administrative assistants will assist with the development and distribution of itineraries including assisting the *search chair* in securing faculty/staff/students to attend meals, teaching/research presentations, etc.



- International candidates MUST be provided the opportunity to meet with the Office of International Student and Scholar Support (OISSS) if they so desire to review the sponsorship process
- *Search chair* should ensure the candidate has a copy of the itinerary.
- *Search chair* should ensure any faculty/staff/students who are attending meals understand when they are assigned, and the time/place of the meals.
- During campus visits, the *search chair* will drive the candidate's experience and itinerary, overseeing and facilitating a positive impression.

8. Post Campus Visits

- Following the campus visits, the *search chair* should email each finalist to thank them for their interest and describe the timeline/process for the decision.
- The search chair is responsible for obtaining feedback from faculty/staff/students for each candidate and provide summary results to the committee members (*see Appendix 4 for examples* and Qualtrics survey shell is available from Associate Dean).
- The *search chair* should schedule a meeting with the search committee to meet and discuss finalists, including the feedback data. The *search chair* should summarize the cumulative data and experiences with each finalist. The Associate Dean may participate in this meeting.
- The *search chair* should produce a summary of each finalist's job-relevant strengths, weaknesses, and lingering questions and send it to Associate Dean/HR Director.
 - *The applicants should NOT be ranked in any particular order.*

9. Job Offer



- If the proposed offer of employment may be to a non-U.S. citizen, the *search chair* must inform the HR Director so that the OISSS is contacted **prior** to extending a verbal or written offer to ensure adherence to all federal and state regulations regarding the hiring of non-U.S. citizens.



- If tenure is to be a part of the offer, the department/school Tenure & Promotion committee must meet, evaluate the portfolio, and vote. Approval must also be obtained from the Office of the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees.



- NOTE: New regulations on job offers per Office of Provost (03Sept2024)
- If during the negotiations with the candidate, the salary proposal falls outside the approved range on the APR, the dean shall contact the Office of the Provost to discuss it BEFORE a revised offer is made to the candidate. If the proposed salary and/or appointment level it out of the ordinary, the provost will also discuss with the president before final approval is given to the hiring department.



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- All new letters of offer must go through the provost portal for review before submission to the candidate. Provost staff will ensure all required template language is included. The college must demonstrate the financial resources for the total compensation package (salary, benefits, relocation, etc.) and any start-up funds.
- In consultation with the Dean, the chair/director will execute the job offer and negotiations.
- Documents needed for Hiring Proposal
 - From chair/director
 - Signed Offer Letter
 - Signed Moving Agreement
 - From *search chair*
 - Completed Attestation of Hiring Form [attestation_pa.pdf](#)
 - Three (3) Letters of Recommendation
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After the Hire and Onboarding

- The chair/director of the new faculty employee should:
 - assign office number;
 - notify Administrative Assistant to order name plate, name badge, assist with first 3 days of parking needs, and update directory;
 - notify IT to set up office essentials (e.g., technology, telephone, keys, etc.); and
 - notify MarCom Team to update contact information on HRSM's web directory
- The *search chair* will submit all original search materials (e.g. email, rubrics, interview notes, etc.) to the HR Director for compliance with record retention policies.
- HRSM HR will:
 - send I-9 Section 1 verification email to the new employee; and
 - send a welcome email to the new employee with information pertaining to the new employee's HR needs on the first day of work.

NOTE: Search Committees are considered a **legal body** of the university and **must comply fully with the Freedom of Information Act, including required public notice and access**. When discussing potential candidates for positions, if the committee desires to protect the confidentiality of its deliberations, a member of the committee may request of the chair that the committee meet in executive session. Remember, no notes (which can be subpoenaed) should be taken in executive session to protect the confidentiality of its deliberations.



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Steps in Faculty Search

Title of position to be filled:

Department:

Intended Date of Hire:

Search Committee Chair:

Search Committee Members:

-
-
-
-

The search committee will meet and make candidate recommendations to the Dean. All procedures will be followed according to the guidelines of the *Steps in Faculty Searches*.

Search Committee Chair Signature:

Name

Date



Best Practices in Confidentiality

1. Always do your best to protect candidate data. Do not leave hard or electronic copies of candidate materials (applications letter of interest/cv etc.) in places where others could encounter them. Do not use public computers when evaluating sensitive data. Do not keep candidate data on drives that could be found or seen by others (electronic or hard drives).
2. When making calendar appointments involving candidates, please be vague, nondescript, and mindful of confidentiality.
3. In all cases, avoid discussing confidential matters concerning the search process, candidates, or nominees in places you might be overheard, such as hallways, restrooms, or elevators. Be discrete when emailing matters related to the search.
4. It is the duty of the search committee chair to serve as the spokesperson for the committee and to advise the committee of what can be publicly shared. It is never appropriate to share statements about the exact number of candidates, how candidates were selected/rejected, or committee deliberations.
5. If members of the search committee are contacted by interested applicants, please respond to them by thanking them for their inquiry and forwarding their message along to the search chair to standardize communication.
6. When asked a question that is beyond the range of what you can answer, you must take extra care to ensure the integrity of the process. This especially applies to inquiries about the status of internal candidates. Consider the following phrases: "I cannot acknowledge whether there are or are not internal candidates, as they are due the same degree of confidentiality as external candidates." Or "I am not at liberty to discuss that matter with you, I'm sorry."
7. Always remember that all discussions by search committee members throughout the process are confidential, not only during the search process but also in perpetuity.



Appendix 1: Example Questions for First Round (virtual) Interviews

All applicants should be asked the exact same questions.

- What attracted you to the University of South Carolina and this position?
 - What excites you about the Columbia, SC area? Or do you know much about this area?
- Discuss your research interests, a few projects in your pipeline, and your goals for them.
 - Discuss any grant writing experience.
- Discuss the way you execute research. That is, how you identify questions that you explore, then how you explore them in general, and how you turn that into a research product.
- Describe your teaching style – specific teaching strategies. Follow-up with questions about specific courses.
 - Specifically related to teaching in the classroom, what one thing would you change about students if you could so that you would be more effective?
 - Given that challenge, what types of things are you doing to mitigate the adverse impact in the classroom?
 - Describe how you integrate technology into your teaching (ask about online teaching).
- What would you describe as your strengths as a faculty member? Areas to improve?
- What do you think you do differently that sets you apart compared to your colleagues / classmates?
- What has been the most significant academic challenge that you have faced thus far? How did you handle that challenge?
- You have undoubtedly taken many courses (and you have even taught a few at this point) so “What is “good teaching in your opinion”?
- “What do you believe makes impactful research in your opinion”?
- What questions do you have for the committee?

Notes:

*Suggest committee aims for 5 questions

*Suggest committee aims for questions that introduce data beyond what is shown in the CV



Appendix 2: Example Questions for Reference Calls

- In what capacity and for what length of time are you acquainted with the candidate?
- What is your opinion of the candidate as a researcher?
 - ...as a teacher (both undergraduate and graduate)?
 - How would this candidate fit here at USC if hired?
- Please comment on the candidate's ability to work collaboratively. To be collegial?
- What does the candidate do well? What could the candidate do better?
- Does it surprise you that we are calling about this particular candidate, knowing that he/she has made the "short list"? Why or why not?
- If we had a group of the candidate's critics in one room, what common themes would emerge?
- Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding the candidate that was not addressed previously?

Appendix 3: Suggestions for On-Campus Itinerary

- Schedule meeting with search committee and department chair early during day 1, so he/she can follow up on questions throughout the remaining stay
- Incorporate 30-minute breaks into schedule to give candidate down-time
- Incorporate a break before research presentation, and/or teaching presentation
- Schedule departmental drop in to meet candidate; admin coordinates refreshments
- Schedule campus tour with HRSM Ambassadors
- Schedule McCutchen House for Lunch
- Schedule meetings with Associate Dean just prior to meeting with Dean on day 2
- For international candidates, schedule meeting with OISSS
- Limit faculty to one meal with candidate, if possible
- Schedule exit interview with chair/director as last meeting



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Appendix 4: Sample Evaluation Form for Teaching Presentation
(Patterned after the course evals used on Columbia campus)

CANDIDATE NAME: _____

strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

1) Candidate communicated clearly.	1	2	3	4	5
2) Candidate demonstrated enthusiasm for the content	1	2	3	4	5
3) Candidate is knowledgeable in the content.	1	2	3	4	5
4) Candidate is well prepared for class.	1	2	3	4	5
5) Candidate's presentation was very organized.	1	2	3	4	5
6) Candidate interacted respectfully with students	1	2	3	4	5
7) I would want to take a class from this candidate.	1	2	3	4	5
8) I believe this candidate is an excellent teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

Comments on the candidate's teaching
