

Roadmap to successful and diverse faculty hires in Geosciences

The Department of Geosciences prioritize excellence in research through discovery, scholarship and impact in the field. Our department is one of the top programs in the country. We are committed to provide high quality experiential education to our students. The Department of Geosciences prides itself on recruiting talented scientists and educators who help foster a departmental culture of scientific excellence, educational innovation, inclusivity, and collegiality. Through our faculty search process, we seek to identify individuals that exemplify these traits. We recognize that scholarship is greatly enhanced by diversity and we are committed to fostering an [inclusive departmental culture](#) to recruit, retain and promote underrepresented groups in STEM. In addition to identifying the best candidate for the position, an ideal search process is transparent, equitable, well-documented, and maintains confidentiality, collegiality, and objectivity throughout.

The following guide provides a roadmap for designing a faculty search with these goals in mind. These recommendations follow the University of Arizona Human Resources [Guide To Successful Searches](#) and the Office of Institutional Equity [Tips for Recruiting a Diverse Faculty](#).

Step 1: Propose the Search. Before the official search process begins, there should be a consensus amongst the faculty that the proposed search meets outstanding Departmental needs or otherwise expands the Department's scientific and educational mission. An open discussion will take place to discuss the proposed search, particularly the needs and the scope of the position.

Step 2: Form the Committee. The Department Head is responsible for selecting the search committee and appointing a Chair. The search committee composition should represent the variety of disciplinary expertise, career stage, and diversity of faculty present in the department. Each member of the search committee is expected to read the University's [Guide To Successful Searches](#) before beginning the search process.

Step 3: Schedule a training session with the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Office or the appropriate entity on campus. The Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Office has assumed responsibility for recruitment training. This is the link to the Recruitment Workshop enrollment form: <https://facultyaffairs.arizona.edu/content/recruitment-workshops>.

Other online resources could also be used in the eventuality that in person or U of A training is not available within the time frame required by the search timeline. These online resources can be identified by the chair of the committee in consultation with the committee.

*All members of the committee should take DEI or recruitment training unless they have already taken relevant training in the last 2 year.

Step 4: Be prepared to document everything. Per [University policy](#), all members of the search committee must retain all search-related documents (search committee notes, evaluation matrices, email correspondence, copies of advertisements and publications, copies of correspondence, email and letters sent to candidates etc.). At the conclusion of the search, the chair of the committee is responsible for collecting this documentation and forwarding it to the

Department Head in the Department. This search file must be retained for three years, at which point it may be destroyed in a confidential manner.

Step 5: Define metrics for evaluation. All faculty searches must include a research, teaching, and diversity statement. In addition, there should be an open discussion of any further specifics of the position (e.g., programmatic or teaching needs) at a faculty meeting. Based on this discussion, the search committee will compose a draft of the job advertisement that reflects all of the metrics for evaluation, including minimum and preferred requirements. The search committee should analyze whether the qualifications are inclusive as opposed to exclusionary, and modify to include non-traditional perspectives, where appropriate (per [OIE recommendations](#)). The draft will then be presented back to the faculty who will vote on its approval.

Step 6: Advertise the position. Wide advertisement ensures that we attract a broad pool of well-qualified candidates. The job ad should be posted and highlighted on the Departmental website, as well as submitted to academic job listservs. Faculty and search committee members are encouraged to identify potential candidates and write to them or discuss the position with them at meetings, and to encourage them to apply for the position. This is particularly important for [increasing the diversity of the applicant pool](#). However, keep in mind that once the search has begun, promising candidates should not be invited to visit the Department outside of the official search process. More useful tips on how to broaden the applicant pool may be found [here](#).

Step 7: Narrow the pool. Once the review process begins the committee should review the applications to identify qualified candidates. All committee members must participate in this process, and all members must read each application. An evaluation rubric, which rates each candidate based on the metrics defined in the job ad, is one effective way to ensure that the initial screening process is fair and well-documented ([see examples from UW toolkit, part 4](#); UC Berkeley [example rubric](#) & [DEI evaluation criteria](#); please see additional information at the end of this document). It is essential that the committee document through the evaluation rubric why a candidate is screened out in case any part of the decision process is questioned.

During this vetting process, committee members need to continually examine whether their judgments on a person's character, experience, or publications are being affected by subjective factors, stereotypes, or other assumptions. Do not make assumptions about candidates based on their race, gender, sex, willingness to move, background, family, etc. For more guidelines concerning candidate evaluation, [see this guide from the OIE](#).

At the end of this process, the committee members should arrive at a short list of candidates to interview; typically this consists of 4-5 individuals. The short list should comprise applicants who exemplify the agreed-upon metrics of evaluation, including research, teaching, service, and commitment to diversity and inclusion. Once again, documenting this decision-making process is critical to ensure transparency and protect against liability.

****An important note about confidentiality**** Confidentiality is the foundation of a trustworthy search process and its importance cannot be overestimated. Per [University guidelines](#), names of the candidates must remain confidential until they are a finalist and have confirmed their intention

to continue with the interview process. All members of the department need to commit to not sharing and discussing information about the candidates outside of the hiring faculty body. A breach of confidentiality threatens the success of a search and jeopardizes the credibility of our department.

Step 8: Present the short list to the faculty. Search committees must provide a summary of the applicants selected for interviews at a faculty meeting, prior to the invitation to interview. Apart from the strengths and merits behind each applicant, the search committee ought to provide a summary of their rationale behind why each of these candidates were shortlisted. This provides an opportunity for the broader faculty to ask questions and provide input, where appropriate. The faculty will vote to approve the short list before proceeding.

Step 9: Conduct interviews. Before interviews begin, the committee should put together a set of standard questions to ask of each applicant and distribute these amongst the committee. This not only ensures fairness but provides a consistent baseline for evaluating each candidate. The questions should cover the range of the agreed-upon metrics of evaluation.

For on-site interviews, assign a faculty host to each candidate. The host should greet the candidate at their hotel and arrange for meals with students and faculty. Check to see if the candidate has any disability-related accommodations (lodging and meetings at locations with elevators) or dietary preferences (allergies, vegetarian, vegan, etc.). Provide them with an itinerary for their visit.

Remember that during their visit, there is some information that, by law, cannot be considered in making a hiring decision. The candidate may volunteer information about themselves, such as whether they have a spouse or children. Do not acknowledge or make note of this information. Likewise, do not ask questions such as, “Do you have children?”, “What does your spouse do?”, or “Were you born in the US?”, even during casual events like lunch and dinner. All of these questions could be viewed as discriminatory, or as an attempt to discover protected personal information. Asking such questions compromises the integrity of the search. Human resources provides a [comprehensive list of questions to avoid](#); the search chair should circulate this list to the entire faculty and the students involved in the interview process before the interviews begin to ensure such questions are avoided across all interviews.

****An important note about communication**** The search committee chair should take care to ensure that applicants receive equitable communication about the status of their candidacy. For example, after a long or short list has been compiled, inform the rest of the applicants that their applications will not be considered further. After the interviews and faculty ranking, if a candidate is not advanced to the next stage, consider giving them a phone call (as opposed to an email) to thank them for their time and effort.

Search committee members should refrain from contacting individual candidates outside of the context of the official interview process once the interview process has begun (i.e., beyond any official phone interviews, arranging their visit, following up to say thanks) unless there are special circumstances that should be discussed with the rest of the committee.

Step 10: Final ranking and discussion. Following the interview process, the search committee should meet to establish a final ranking for recommendation to the greater faculty. Anonymous search committee votes on the final candidates must be tallied and recorded. The search committee will then bring their recommendation to a faculty meeting for discussion. All summary information compiled by the search (including pros and cons, committee recommendations, evaluation of candidates, etc.) must be presented to the rest of the faculty at this time. If the search committee's evaluation of candidates changes for any reason, these changes should be documented and communicated to the faculty prior to this open discussion. Multiple faculty meetings may be necessary to ensure that all of the shortlisted candidates are discussed.

Step 11: Final vote and hiring decision. Once the open discussion has concluded, there will be a private vote of whether to proceed with hiring the top candidate. As noted in our department [by-laws](#), a majority vote is required for a positive recommendation to the Department Head to go forward with negotiating a new hire offer with the successful candidate. The Department Head is the hiring authority, and the final decision is made by the Department Head.

Below we provide guidance and resources on how to increase diversity of the pool of candidates and on how to evaluate diversity statements:

--Search committees should demonstrate that the initial applicant pool is diverse (relative to our field). For example, if an ad closes Jan 5th, and the applicants are all white and 10% women, then that search should be reopened in order to broaden applicant pool. If a subfield is very small the committee can at least demonstrate their efforts to recruit a diverse applicant pool.

--DEI statements should be evaluated/rated first and blind, without knowing the identifying information about the specific candidate.

--example of a rubric to evaluate candidates can be found here:
https://ofew.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/candidate_evaluation_tool_for_faculty_searches.pdf
https://ofew.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/rubric_to_assess_candidate_contributions_to_diversity_equity_and_inclusion.pdf

We advise using a similar rubric to evaluate DEI statements. Committees can still assign whatever weighting they like to categories.