SEARCH AND APPOINTMENT GUIDELINES FOR

TENURE-LINE FACULTY Searches

See also AC13 Procedure for Hiring Full-Time Faculty (formerly HR13) <https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ac13>

# PURPOSE

These guidelines are designed to assist EMS departments that are recruiting tenure-line faculty. Our desire is to have collegial, open searches that aggressively identify and seek a diversity of excellent candidates to appoint outstanding new faculty. Thus, searches are a vital part of maintaining the College’s excellence.

# Overview of THE SEARCH process

Chronological Listing of Primary Tasks

1. Gain approval from the Dean to conduct the search
2. Submit request in Hiring Exception Request (HER) System to gain approval from Provost to conduct the search
3. Finalize committee membership and provide to Dean’s Office
4. Department Head charges the committee for the search
5. If there are unique aspects about this search, please consult with EMS HR before proceeding
6. Committee meets with Associate Dean for Educational Equity about DEI and reviews materials provided by EMS HR on best practices, bias, confidentiality, etc.
7. Committee chair and committee members should view the AAO Faculty Search Briefing
8. Committee creates a job advertisement
9. Job advertisement sent to Dean’s Office for EMS HR and Dean’s review and comments
10. Committee recommends where job ad should be posted, works with EMS HR to submit to the central HR Recruiter who works to make this happen
11. Committee circulates the Workday job ad to department faculty and colleagues across the field
12. Committee works to create a pool of diverse candidates
13. Job applicants are reviewed after initial application deadline
14. Committee is encouraged to use a holistic approach to reviewing candidates and be attentive to unconscious biases
15. Committee is encouraged to use a rubric for evaluation, which includes criteria related to DEI
16. Semi-finalists (5-8 candidates) are provided to Dean for review. Dean confirms candidate pool is diverse with EMS HR
17. Zoom interviews if needed (prepared questions), reduce list of candidates to 3 or 4
18. Provide final short list of candidates to Dean
19. Get approval for in-person interviews from Dean
20. Organize in-person interviews, including meetings with committee, faculty, and any other required groups. Committee interviews have identical prepared questions to be fair and consistent to all candidates
21. After all candidates are interviewed, faculty meets to discuss the candidates
22. Department Head provides faculty input on rank order of candidates to the search committee
23. Department Head provides final prioritized list of candidates provided by the search committee to Dean
24. Dean authorizes department head to start negotiations with top candidate
25. If the search fails, it is the Search Committee Chair’s responsibility to inform the semi-finalists and finalists as soon as possible that the search has failed, and they are no longer under consideration. If the search is to be readvertised, inform semi-finalists and finalists of this and that they are welcome to reapply, if applicable. Please coordinate with EMS HR on the appropriate language to use in these notifications.

# INITIATION OF THE SEARCH

The search process begins when the department head requests permission from the dean to search and once given, submits a request in the HER system. If approved by the dean, they will authorize a search in a particular field or fields and at a specific rank, or as an open search. The job ad is then reviewed by the HR Consultant who works with the Dean for final approval. After approval, the HR Consultant works with the department to submit the job requisition in Workday. Talent Acquisition posts the ad on Penn State’s Career Page and submits the request for external advertising sites. The final advertisement is sent to the department for approval.

# JOB DESCRIPTION

The search committee, in consultation with the department head, normally prepares the job description. Recruiting guidelines are available at <https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/welcome/recruitment-searches/>. Advertising in national venues is required for all standing (permanent) appointments. The ad should clearly indicate the nature of the duties to be performed (and for every rank listed if it is an open rank search) and the background of education and experience sought. Ordinarily, it will list a set of minimum essential qualifications and expectations of the position. If considering faculty members who require visa sponsorship, work closely with EMS HR and Global on required items in job posting. Note that the position description should indicate the expectations of the position in relation to DEI (e.g., research which includes studying disparate impacts on underrepresented communities, research which includes partnering with HBCU institutions, teaching experience that includes fostering the success of diverse students, etc.). The position description should also discuss expectations for the position in supporting and fostering department and EMS DEI priorities (i.e., fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community). And, it should be noted that additional standard language, including DEI language, “The Pennsylvania State University’s College of Earth and Mineral Sciences takes an active role in building a talented, inclusive, and culturally competent workforce. We understand that our shared future is guided by basic principles of fairness, mutual respect, and commitment to each other. Applicants should provide evidence, either woven through their application or as a separate diversity statement, of a commitment to fostering diversity, equity, inclusive excellence, belonging, and engagement, which creates an inclusive environment in their workplace.” Additionally, a statement along the lines of “Please note: applicant materials may be shared beyond the search committee.”

The complete approved ad from Talent Acquisition must be used for all position announcements (advertisements, list-servs, e-mails, etc.). All jobs must be posted for 30 days so that if an international candidate is selected we meet those requirements for sponsorship. Offers cannot be made until the 31st day.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENT HEADS

The department head normally appoints the search committee. The committee must have a minimum of five members. No fewer than half of the members on a search committee will be faculty members of the academic unit in which the new faculty member will be appointed, or those who hold joint appointments with the academic unit.

* 1. All search committees should represent a broad range of diversity within the members, which includes members of underrepresented groups.
  2. If such representation is unable to be obtained within the unit, committee members should be solicited from related units. When such diversity is not represented on a search committee, documentation explaining the lack of representation shall be included in the search record available for review.

Department heads play a key role in any search. They must stay in touch with the search committee chair and help in motivating departmental faculty to provide names of appropriate candidates. The head will lead the department discussion of candidates brought forward by the search committee and will then make a recommendation to the dean about who should be invited for a campus visit. The department head will discuss with the search committee chair the importance of DEI throughout the process and assist where needed. The department head will ensure that the search chair attends/reviews the AAO Faculty Search Briefing along with the committee members; shares and discusses the HR search information with the committee; and invites the Associate Dean for Educational Equity (or their delegate) to discuss inclusive search process; all prior to completing and posting the job description.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Search committee chairs are expected to take the lead in contacting potential candidates, keeping the department head informed about the progress of the search and communicating with other departmental faculty about the search.

The Associate Dean for Educational Equity must visit the first meeting to give a presentation on inclusive search practices. The Chair must ensure that each search committee member attends the University’s annual [Affirmative Action Search Committee Briefing](https://psu.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/2022+AAO+Faculty+Search+Committee+Briefing/1_abwdfomu) prior to developing the job description for the job posting. Check the website at <https://affirmativeaction.psu.edu/welcome/recruitment-searches/> for information about briefings.

The chair of the committee or department head appoints a staff person (typically, they are given the Manager Recruiting Support (MRS) role in Workday) in the unit to be responsible for the coordination of the advertising process and the search. Workday Recruiting must be used for all searches. The MRS or our Talent Acquisition Recruiter gives the chair and members of the search committee access to the search in Workday and monitors, verifies, acknowledges, and maintains materials submitted by applicants. At the direction of the department head or search committee chair, the MRS may also be responsible for scheduling search committee meetings and drafting correspondence regarding applicants for the chair's signature. At the department’s discretion, certain application materials may also be made available to other members of the faculty (and staff and/or postdoctoral scholars) for them to provide input to the search committee (please see breakout of recommended items below). These faculty members should be reminded that application materials are to be treated with confidentiality and discussed at the department level only. **Faculty members must not be in contact with applicants or colleagues of applicants.**

Use of Workday Recruiting is required to ensure that applicants receive the required disclosure statements at the appropriate time and that search materials are retained for the appropriate time per the Records Retention policy.

The chair of the search committee shall be responsible for the coordination of multiple reference checks of all semi-finalist candidates. In addition to contacting references provided by the applicant, other people who would have knowledge of the applicant's professional qualifications should be included. All questions asked and information gathered must be job-related.

After reference checks are completed and all information gained is shared with the committee, the semifinalists are evaluated, and a list of finalists is forwarded to the department head for approval.

# TASK OF SEARCH COMMITTEES

The task of search committees is to solicit applications from as wide a base as possible. It is especially important to seek strong candidates from underrepresented groups. In senior searches, and in recruiting members of underrepresented groups, the committee must actively identify and encourage potential applicants. It is not acceptable merely to advertise and wait for applications to arrive. Junior searches can rely more heavily on advertisements and applications, but it is still useful to make contacts to identify the top candidates.

An important part of identifying top candidates is to ask department faculty to think of and suggest names of candidates and contact colleagues and acquaintances to apply or seek nominations.

The search committee evaluates all applicants (with possible input from other members of the faculty at the department’s discretion as noted above), develops a list of semifinalists, and recommends them to the department head.

Search committee chairs must remind finalists, who are candidates for associate or full professor, to visit the [Disclosure of Misconduct | Faculty Affairs (psu.edu)](https://vpfa.psu.edu/disclosure-of-misconduct/) website and complete the [Disclosure of Misconduct Form](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fna2.documents.adobe.com%2Fpublic%2FesignWidget%3Fwid%3DCBFCIBAA3AAABLblqZhARK83SF-gVNwUS9rJrE9pMmd9dKIWNC9go8SLfjn_L0GFqaf-32bSci1sKKlWUT_s*&data=04%7C01%7Cjmd158%40psu.edu%7Cb108b21532fd41394a1608d9b66a6888%7C7cf48d453ddb4389a9c1c115526eb52e%7C0%7C0%7C637741390397933145%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=%2BxuzEAB2aUhk8di16E1jAyfBb9FmuPdZRUK5Z0bhBi0%3D&reserved=0) as soon as possible after they are notified that they are a finalist (i.e., invited for an on-campus interview). *All finalists, regardless of whether they have an investigation to disclose, must complete the form.* If finalists have any questions about the process, they may be directed to Abby Diehl, assistant vice provost for faculty affairs, at [agc105@psu.edu](mailto:agc105@psu.edu).

# INTERVIEWS

Note that interviewers should be mindful of topics that should be avoided, as outlined in the materials from HR, AAO Briefing, and Associate Dean for Educational Equity.

Note that the Dean will review and approve both the long and short lists (these can be submitted at the same time) with an eye to equity and diversity and will ask the department head about efforts made to generate a diverse pool.

The dean will authorize campus visits of one or more candidates per position. If a department wants to invite more than three candidates, additional dean’s approval is required. The department head must provide the dean with a curricula vita for each potential finalist and the following information: the position for which the person is being considered and whether tenure is a possibility (if it is not obvious, i.e., as with a new Ph.D., on the one hand, or on the other hand, a distinguished senior scholar at a peer institution). No candidate should be invited to campus without the dean’s permission. Make certain that all potential interviewees have applied for the position in Workday.

At this stage of the search there is often a question about whether applicants who are NOT shortlisted can be notified that they are no longer under consideration. HR recommends that no candidate is contacted until an offer is accepted because we may have to go back to the pool for additional candidates at any time.

See SHARING OF APPLICANT MATERIALS below for EMS standards regarding the sharing of candidate materials.

Campus visits by the finalists are arranged by the department. The chair of the search committee generally will act as host; staff support from the department will arrange transportation, accommodation, and the itinerary. The itinerary shall include, at minimum, meetings with the search committee, the department head, the department faculty and staff, students, and the dean. Senior candidates should be scheduled to meet with the associate dean for research and graduate studies as well as the dean. All candidates for the same position should be offered the same experiences while on campus. That means that if one is invited to a dinner at someone’s home, they all should be, or if they are taken to a restaurant, they all should be taken to a restaurant. It doesn’t have to be the same restaurant, of course, but something similar. See the document ‘Best Practices for Scheduling Interviews with the Dean/s for Tenure-Line Faculty Searches’ for more information about scheduling interviews.

Meals: Meetings over meals with more than four people (three plus the candidate) in attendance will not be supported by University funds because of both cost and logistics—it is hard for a group of five or more to have a meaningful conversation. Any meal that is scheduled for more than four people must be approved in advance by the Financial Officer (FO). The cost of the meal must also be approved in advance by the FO if it is anticipated that the meal will cost more than $59 per person including alcoholic beverages (see below) and tip.

Alcoholic beverages: Faculty in departments without OGE funds must pay for their own alcoholic beverages at dinners with candidates. Departments with OGE funds should note that alcoholic beverages MAY be purchased but reimbursement will be limited to two alcoholic beverages and no more than $25 per person. There is no need to get a separate receipt for the alcohol.

Candidate spouses: All expenses for candidate spouses must be charged to OGE funds.

The search committee meets at the conclusion of all visits and prepares recommendations to the department head on each finalist.

The recommendations to the department head (which will be communicated to the dean) should NOT be ranked. Each candidate should be noted as not acceptable, acceptable, or exceptional, with a list of strengths and weaknesses for each.

# MAKING THE OFFER

No offers may be extended without authorization from the dean. After all visits of candidates for a particular position are completed, the head should assess faculty opinion, consult with the search committee, and then make a judgment about which, if any, candidate should be offered a position. The head should then contact the dean through an email, phone call, or (in complicated cases) personal appointment. Have in mind the kind of offer you would like to make, i.e., possible salary range and reasons for it, and other parts of a startup package. Work with the Department Administrator and Business Administrator to develop the startup package using the startup sheet template.

If the dean authorizes an offer, it is a good idea to call the candidate, outline the offer, and obtain a reading on the candidate’s receptivity to the offer. Unless the candidate immediately declines over the phone, verbal offers should always be followed with a Letter of Understanding from the Department Head and then an official offer letter from the Dean. You should provide a draft of the LOU to the Business Administrator who will review it and clear the substantive aspects with the dean. Please note that the LOU letter MUST include ALL items and amounts that have been negotiated with the candidate. Once the draft LOU is approved, the head should prepare it, sign it, and send it to the dean’s office for the dean’s signature. Once signed the dean’s office will return it to the head ready to be sent to the candidate.

Sometimes negotiations are complex. The head needs to stay in touch with the candidate, impose reasonable deadlines for a decision, and work with both the candidate and dean to bring about a favorable response.

# FOLLOW UP

Once the candidate decides, the head should inform the dean. Then, the official offer letter will be prepared by the HR Consultant and sent to the candidate on the dean’s behalf. The Business Administrator will then notify the appropriate people. The MRS and the HR Consultant will follow up later in the semester when appointment details need to be taken care of. If an immediate tenure process is necessary, the Business Administrator will send instructions to the department head and ask them to begin assembling the immediate tenure dossier. After the acceptance of an offer by a candidate, the department head or search committee chair will notify all unsuccessful interviewed finalists and thank them for their interest in Penn State via phone, letter, or email. Unsuccessful finalists should be notified by phone rather than by letter or email. All remaining candidates will be sent a system generated message from Workday Recruiting once the hiring action is finalized in Workday. All candidates who make campus visits should have their travel expense vouchers processed promptly.

If the search fails, it is the Search Committee Chair’s responsibility to inform the semi-finalists and finalists as soon as possible that the search has failed, and they are no longer under consideration. If the search is to be readvertised, inform semi-finalists and finalists of this and that they are welcome to reapply, if applicable. Please coordinate with EMS HR on the appropriate language to use in these notifications.

The MRS finalizes the offer process in Workday by processing the applicants who were interviewed but not hired and the Affirmative Action reason. Talent Acquisition closes the position in Workday Recruiting. This automatically generates a ‘your application was unsuccessful’ letter to those applicants who were NOT interviewed. All applicant data and correspondence related to the search must be retained and sent to the recruiter for the appropriate records retention period.

# sharing of applicant materials

As with many tasks we perform in our college, faculty searches have certain confidentiality requirements that go beyond the normal day-to-day processes we have in place. To that end, and to ensure that our faculty position applicants are afforded the confidentiality they expect, EMS highly recommends we treat the following items in the manner described below. We should only be sharing the information of those we are bringing in for interviews:

CAN BE SHARED WIDELY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT

1. **Candidate CV** – most, if not all, candidates have this information posted to the world-wide-web, so there is very little expectation of confidentiality.
2. **Candidate Cover Letter** – candidates should know that their cover letter will be used in the selection process and therefore have little expectation of confidentiality. If there is any concern, the department should confirm with the candidate that they give permission for the cover letter to be shared. If the CV is shared, the cover letter should be shared as well.

CAN BE SHARED WITH THE SEARCH COMMITTEE AND OTHER SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED EMPLOYEES (i.e., Department Head, MRS, Associate Dean, and/or Dean as appropriate.)

1. **Application materials** – these are almost exclusively contained within the Workday system and only those with proper access can view them. At no point should these materials be downloaded and shared outside the Workday system.
2. **Letters of Reference** – these materials should only be shared with the search committee, department head, MRS, and others in the review chain. Letter writers, in some cases, may provide information that they don’t reasonably expect to be shared beyond this group. If there is a request to share these with a broader audience, the department must reach out via email to the letter writer and confirm, in writing via email, that they are content with sharing the letters more broadly.

# EXCEPTIONS

The preceding paragraphs are guidelines that should serve in the search, selection, recruitment, and appointment of tenure-line faculty members for the College of EMS at Penn State. Any changes or deviations from these suggested procedures should be discussed with the Dean or their representative as early as possible in the search process.