HIRING GUIDELINES

2. Review Application Materials

- Applications received after the deadline date is a late application. It is at your discretion whether you want to accept late applications. We suggest if you accept one late application, you accept all late applications. Accordingly, you will need to re-open the competition by extending the posting’s closing date.
- It is important that you become familiar with the Collective Agreements and University Policy provisions regarding selection prior to filling your vacancy. Review the selection provisions that apply to your vacancy’s employee group (i.e. AESES, AESES/Security, Unifor, CUPE (Eng), and EMAPS). If there is an asterisk (*) beside an employee’s name, please contact your HR Consultant for more information. Priority placement status issues may affect your recruitment process.
- Print a copy of your posting from UM Careers. Screen the applications based on the job criteria identified as qualifications on your posting. Compare each application with the posted qualifications to objectively evaluate each candidate’s suitability for the position. Because an internal candidate has the right to ask why an interview was not granted, it is important that you keep notes.
- Consider using the Screening Worksheet included in the Manager’s Toolkit that lists the names of the candidates along the side and the required education, experience, knowledge and skills across the top. This exercise will help you:
  - Identify the candidates with the best match of technical knowledge and skills;
  - Determine the candidates you should interview (and test, if applicable).
- Document your decision to ensure you can properly justify your hiring decision, if called upon to do so.
Before conducting any interviews

• Create a written set of interview questions based directly on the essential functions of the job using the Interview Template. By asking all candidates the same core set of thoughtful, job-related questions, you accomplish several things, including:
  o You give each candidate a chance to succeed;
  o You receive consistent and comparable information on all candidates;
  o You reduce your risk if your hiring decision is challenged.

Write questions that are behavior based

• In addition to designing questions that reflect the essential functions of the job, design open-ended questions in a way that will elicit detailed responses and not ‘prepared’ answers. Avoid closed questions that get you only a yes or no answer. For example, rather than asking “Does your supervisory experience include conducting performance evaluations?” ask “Tell us of your understanding of performance management, and your experience conducting performance evaluations.”
• Behavioral and/or situational questions require the individual to describe how they have handled specific situations in the past – situations that are comparable to those they would face in your vacancy. Think about circumstances that actually occur on the job, and develop questions around those situations. If, for example, the position requires strong customer service skills, a question to the candidates might be: “Describe a specific incident when an irate customer confronted you, and tell me in detail how you handled the situation.”

Write questions that are job-related and non-discriminatory

• Ask only questions that are necessary to decide a candidate’s competence and qualifications for the job. Avoid questions that are not directly related to the essential functions of the position. You do not want to unfairly screen out special groups of persons, as identified by the Human Rights Code.
• For further information and resources on the applicable provisions of the Human Rights Code, contact your HR Consultant.

Structure interview questions according to criteria and assign a rating scale

• Rating scales (numeric and narrative) are used to measure the degree to which an applicant meets the selection criteria. Numerical scales award one mark for each point the applicant mentions in answer to the interview questions, up to a maximum score. Narrative scales
assess answers in narrative terms (excellent/good/fair/poor). Narrative/numerical scales use a combination of narrative description and marks (example: excellent – up to 15 points; good – up to 10 points, etc.).

- You may want to group your questions into the ‘competencies’ required for the job. Competencies may be, for example, technical expertise, accounting/bookkeeping abilities, customer services skills and management/supervisory strengths. You would develop a series of questions for each competency. The competencies may substantially differ in importance for the job, so the more important themes should get more weight than the less important ones.
  - For example, questions related to technical competence could have a weight of 15. If the candidate were to score 4 (excellent) on a question under this theme, his/her cumulative total would be 4 x 15 = 60.
  - Perhaps questions related to accounting/bookkeeping would have a weight of 25, a greater weight because accounting/bookkeeping expertise is more critical to the job. If the candidate’s score on a question under this theme were 4 (excellent), his/her cumulative total would be 4 x 25 = 100.

- Whatever method you choose, each member of the selection committee should participate in evaluating the candidate’s answers. Following each interview, the committee should discuss the candidate’s answers to the questions and reach agreement for a final evaluation.

4. Interview Candidates

Establish an interview panel

- We recommend a committee approach to interviewing. In addition to the person who will be the immediate supervisor for the position, consider involving relevant others in the interview process. This tends to provide for greater objectivity in the process. A committee approach can bring a wealth of perspective that the one-person interview process will not have. Another advantage is that those involved in the decision may have more of a personal stake in helping the new employee succeed as a member of the team. Make sure all interviewers follow the interview guidelines – asking all candidates the same prepared job-related questions. The size of your committee should be suitable for the position. A selection committee consisting of three to four members is generally appropriate for many non-academic positions on campus.
- Wherever possible, interview panel members should attend “Recruitment, Selection, Diversity & Onboarding” training through Learning and Organizational Development.
• When selecting panel members, strive for diversity, including women and members of underrepresented groups. **Will skills measurements be useful?**

• When evaluating an individual’s ability to perform certain technical or physical skills, you may want the individual to do a task simulation or to demonstrate how they would carry out certain duties. There can be risk in doing this if the ‘test’ has not been formally validated, so please follow these guidelines:
  
  o In general, any skills being accessed or demonstrated should be clearly connected to one of the posted qualifications of the vacancy.
  
  o The exercise must be a fair representation of duties required on the job. You must administer the same instructions and test to ALL candidates interviewed. As well, you must have an objective means of scoring or evaluating the test. Candidates should be given advanced notice if the interview includes some form of ‘testing.’
  
  o Applicants need to be given advance notice of any skills assessment exercises, so they can reasonably prepare.

**Set aside an appropriate amount of time for the interview**

• Thorough interviews that include behavior-based questions will take an hour or more. Senior level management positions will require much more time. Candidates should know in advance the time you have allotted for the interview. This will help them schedule their time and prepare responses. Other details, such as interview location and parking availability should be discussed with the candidate at the time of the initial contact.

• Ensure all aspects of the selection process are accessible. When inviting candidates for the interview, state that the University will respect and consider any accommodation needs of the candidate.

• It is recommended that you build in time between interviews for the committee to debrief and discuss the results of the interview. Generally speaking, 15 minutes should be sufficient. This will allow you to evaluate the candidate’s responses while the information is still fresh.

**Decide your interview protocol**

• You will want one member of the committee to greet the candidate, introduce them to the members of the committee and explain the interview format. Let the candidate know you will be taking notes, and that you will invite any questions they may have at the end of the interview. You may want to have the members of the committee taking turns asking the questions and writing down the responses to the questions. Another method is for one member to ask all the questions with the other members taking detailed notes and stepping in when the committee requires further clarification. All committee members must attend all interviews.
• Whichever way you decide to structure the interview, it is important that you maintain the same pattern for each interview and, of course, use the same set of prepared questions. Ensure there are no interruptions during the interviews – no telephone calls or delays in the start time.
• Be sure to account for differences in communication and presentation styles by employing a variety of selection activities; a presentation or some type of work sample/work simulation exercise would complement the standard interview process.
• Ensure panel members are aware that accommodation needs and career breaks related to reasons protected under Human Rights Legislation (such as medical leaves or family-related breaks in employment) will not negatively impact the assessment of the candidate.

Take comprehensive notes during the interview

• You will use your notes later when recording for each candidate why you did – or did not – select a candidate. Notes are important documentation that you conducted a defensible interview, and that your decision to hire a particular candidate was based on job-related criteria. As you take notes, be sensitive to the applicant. Try to make frequent eye contact. Interview notes should be retained by the hiring manager for a minimum of 12 months.

Rank your candidates

• Ranking your candidates from highest to lowest will help identify those that best meet the selection criteria. All assessment data are combined to reach a final decision. Identify a first candidate and one or two alternates in case the first candidate declines. Where you have two best qualified candidates who are relatively equal in their qualifications, then the candidate with seniority (or with greater seniority than the other) should be given preference for the vacancy. If seniority is not an issue, and where practicable, HR suggests you select the candidate who may be a member of an under-represented group, i.e. designated groups as identified under the Employment Equity Act (women, racialized persons/persons of colour, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and persons of all sexual orientations and genders). Men may also be included as an ‘under-represented group’ in those positions in which men are in the minority.

5. Conduct Reference Checks

• The Reference Check Questionnaire should be used as guideline to conduct reference checks. It is critical that you verify all information provided by an applicant – from their resume, screening questionnaire (if applicable) and answers to the interview questions.
• Prepare a justification report documenting your selection process using the Justification of Selection. Forward an electronic copy in Word to your HR Consultant for review. All support/managerial hiring decisions should be supported by such a document (even if the successful candidate is the most senior internal candidate). The report should include:
  o The successful applicant’s name and a potential start date;
  o An overview of the hiring process: committee members, number of candidates who applied (internal and external) and those selected for interview;
  o The criteria upon which the selection was based (requirements, preferred qualifications, assets, work simulation, references, etc.);
  o The actual hiring process: committee discussions following each interview, any work simulation rankings, reference information and the final ranking;
  o Include information about the successful candidate’s qualifications as they relate to the posted qualifications. Include an explanation regarding each internal candidate who was not selected. Remember, use the selection criteria you established in the posting to make comparisons.

• It is common for applicants (particularly internal applicants) to call Human Resources and ask why they were not successful. It is the information in your report that helps us answer these questions. This information may at some point be made available to the applicable union/association if questions arise.

• Your HR Consultant will review your report. You will be contacted to discuss an appropriate starting salary and start date for the new employee. Following this the job offer is extended and, if accepted, Human Resources will send a formal offer letter to the successful candidate confirming the details of the appointment through UM Careers.

• Keep a copy of your report, all your interview notes, etc. These will be important if your decision is challenged.

• Once your job offer has been accepted by the successful candidate, you will want to refer to the Onboarding Checklist.

• Be cautious in using a candidate’s “fit” as the sole basis for screening them out of the competition. Employment and Social Development Canada allows employers to consider “fit” when evaluating candidates, but this rationale should be used carefully and only when grounds are objective and reasonable.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact your HR Consultant.
CONTACT US

The Human Resources consultants can be contacted with any of your questions regarding the recruitment, hiring and onboarding of staff. The consultants are trained, certified professionals who can help you hire the best qualified person for your department.

Each HR Consultant supports a client group; to find out who is your HR Consultant, visit the Human Resources website.