WKU Faculty Hiring Protocols & Training Document (9-29-2025)

Faculty and staff hiring at WKU is governed by [Human Resources Policy 4.2205: Recruitment and Employment of Faculty and Staff](). This document is a more specific elaboration of how faculty searches should be managed in practice. Hiring Officials should consult with the Dean about any college hiring protocols. All regular faculty searches should follow these protocols. If a department/college has a need to deviate, they should contact HR for advice beforehand.

Roles

Hiring Official (Department Chair/Director)

- Hiring Authority/Decision Maker
- Separate from Search & Screen Committee
- Confers with Dean before making offer

Search and Screen Committee Chair (SSC Chair)

- Liaison between Hiring Official and Search Committee members
- Responsible for presenting committee's analysis of strengths/weaknesses to Hiring Official
- Communicates with Candidates
- Should be able to facilitate discussion, build consensus among members, and solicit constructive feedback from all constituents
- Does not provide 'order ranking' of candidates to Hiring Official
- With assistance from the Department Chair, handles search logistics, including the campus visit

Search and Screen Committee Member (SSC Member)

- Reviews application materials against predetermined criteria
- Does not provide order ranking of candidates to Hiring Official
- Assists the Search Chair with search logistics

Dean

- Receives financial approval from Provost for search
- Appoints successful candidate and negotiates/determines all financial terms
- Approves the final job advertisement
- Consults with Hiring Official about strengths and weaknesses and reference checks before Hiring Official submits intent to hire form

Best Practices & General Expectations

- Department Chair, SSC Chair, and SSC should review Human Resources Policy 4.2205 prior to search, with special attention to confidentiality and conflicts of interest issues described in III.3.d-e. All individuals – including SSC members as well as other departmental faculty, staff, and students – who engage in evaluation of applicants are

expected to act in a manner that protects the integrity of the search process, ensures fair and equitable treatment of applicants, and keeps confidential all information received during and after the search process is complete.

- The interview experiences for each candidate should be as similar as possible. For example, all members of the SSC should be present for the virtual screenings; if candidates do a teaching presentation, it should be for the same class. Certainly, this similarity isn't possible for all phases of the search; research presentations will have different audiences, meals may need different participants, etc.
- SSC should clarify boundaries with non-committee members prior to the interview process.
- Non-committee feedback on interviewed candidates should only be sent to the SSC Chair; the SSC should filter out any irrelevant, inappropriate feedback. As stated in the Policy 4.2205, at no time should any participants rank candidates (or vote on their acceptability).
- Participation of faculty and other relevant constituents (i.e., staff, students) is a vital part of recruiting strong candidates. All faculty should be invited to research presentations and teaching presentations (when schedules allow). After each campus visit, soliciting written feedback from the faculty and other constituents ensures that they have a voice in evaluating candidates' strengths and weaknesses. WKU does not allow committee of the whole or oral in-person discussions about the candidates with the entire unit faculty.
- If a department needs to create videos of the teaching and/or research presentations for finalists, all candidates must be asked for written approval when they are invited to the campus interview. If a candidate declines, that record should be preserved by the SSC Chair. All videos must be stored securely and not made available to the public. Every effort should be made for SSC members to experience all finalists in person, but in rare cases where that is not possible, SSC members should experience each activity for each candidate in the same medium. Candidates should not be videoed as part of the virtual screenings. The Hiring Official is responsible for storing the video for one year after the search concludes and then deleting it.

Before the Search

- The Department Chair identifies need and obtains approval from appropriate leadership (typically the Dean).
  - o The Department Chair appoints Search Chair and Search and Screen Committee (SSC) with a minimum of three members.
  - o SSC members should create an evaluation tool for candidate review process.
  - o SSC members do not rank or recommend candidates to the Hiring Official.
- The Department Chair in consultation with the SSC members creates the draft job advertisement (SSC members/Hiring Official). The Dean should approve the final ad before it is submitted to Interview Exchange.
  - o Determine duties/responsibilities.
  - o Determine minimum requirements – candidates must meet **all** minimum requirements advertised to be considered qualified.
  - o Contact General Counsel for positions that have a reasonable likelihood to include foreign national candidates because hiring international faculty requires additional steps that will more likely facilitate a successful hire if completed as soon as possible.

- Determine required application materials – once advertised, these are **required** documents and must be submitted to be considered a qualified candidate.
- Finalize the job description and submit a Request to Fill- Faculty requisition through Interview Exchange for approval.
- Consider posting job description on online recruiting sources, networking groups, social media outlets, etc.
- The Department Chair should audit/update department website and social media
  - Review/update department website for most up-to-date information.
  - Ensure your website presents your programs in the best possible light to maximize candidate interest.

During the Search

Creating the Pool of Candidates

- HR posts advertisement on the Careers website once requisition is fully approved.
- HR will then send the posting link to the initiator of the requisition and add the SSC members/Hiring Official to the Job.
- HR will offer Interview Exchange training to new Search Chairs.
- HR will provide quotes for recruiting sources listed on the Request to Fill-Faculty requisition.
- All members of the SSC should participate in recruiting candidates for the position based on their recruitment plan.

Reviewing and Narrowing the Pool

- The SSC uses the evaluation tool or process decided upon Before the Search to determine who they would like to virtually screen (Zoom, Teams, Phone, etc.) to determine semi-finalists. For example, they might use a rubric or a holistic review based on the job requirements.
- Then the committee meets to narrow the pool (typically 8-12 semi-finalists).
- Once the SSC determines semi-finalists, the SSC Chair will move applicants into an appropriate Interview Exchange folder (yes, no, maybe, Virtual Screening). The SSC Chair must assign a Reason for Rejection from drop-down menu to applicants who will not be invited for an interview. These are the **NO c**andidates.

Virtual Screening

- The SSC Chair organizes the virtual screenings based on all SSC member and candidate availability.
- Before the virtual screenings begin, the SSC develops consistent questions they will ask each semi-finalist. The questions should be asked consistently, but SSC members may have follow-up questions that arise based on candidate responses.
- After all virtual interviews are complete, the SSC determines who will be invited for a campus interview. The SSC Chair, the Hiring Official, and Dean will determine the appropriate number of finalists to bring to campus. The proposed campus interviewees are moved to the **INTERVIEW** folder. The SSC Chair will notify HR through Review Notes in Interview Exchange.

- HR will review the pool and move qualified candidates into the **HR REVIEWED** folder. HR will notify the SSC Chair via Review Notes that interviews can be scheduled. While virtual /zoom interviews DO NOT require HR review, SSC must receive HR approval before scheduling and conducting official on-campus interviews.

The Campus Interview

- SSC chairs should organize a consistent agenda/schedule for each candidate. Typically, candidates do a teaching presentation and/or a research presentation and interview with various constituents. The Hiring Official and Dean will each interview candidates separately. The SSC should solicit specific feedback based on the job requirements from all who participated in the interview process using the Academic Affairs/HR Feeback form or other standardized form developed by the department to record feedback on the candidates. If a department chooses to create their own feedback form, it should be reviewed by HR prior to campus interviews. Forms should be collected by the SSC Chair.
- After campus interviews have been conducted, the SSC should review feedback they received and develop their initial list of strengths and weaknesses for each candidate.
- The SSC members will check references (reference checking could occur before campus interviews, after campus interviews, or before the offer). The SSC should make sure the candidate knows when reference checking will begin. The SSC should make sure that one of the references is the candidate's current direct supervisor unless the candidate provides an explanation for not including the supervisor; in this case, the candidate must provide an acceptable alternative at their current or most recent employer. They should ask for permission from the candidate to talk with people not on the reference list and make sure they talk to some references who are not listed.
- The SSC members will discuss all of the feedback they have gathered and generate their own list of strengths and weaknesses (as related to job criteria). The SSC Chair will document them in each candidate's profile in Interview Exchange.
- The SSC Chair will notify the Department Chair/Hiring Official that strengths and weaknesses have been added for their review and provide a summary of reference check findings to the Hiring Official.
- The Department Chair will solicit feedback from the Dean before making the hiring decision. While the Department Chair is the Hiring Official, the Dean appoints the faculty member, produces the letter of appointment, and discusses, determines, and negotiates all financial terms of the appointment (i.e., salary, start-up packages, moving expenses, travel money, etc.). The Department Chair should be clear with candidates that the Dean is responsible for these matters.
- The Department Chair submits the hiring proposal into Interview Exchange for approval.
- Once fully approved, the Dean may make the offer or delegate the Hiring Official to do so.

After the Search

- If/When offer is accepted, SSC Chair/Hiring Official moves candidate into the HIRED folder.
- SSC chair reviews folders to ensure a Reason for Rejection has been assigned to all remaining candidates.
- Department submits background check request and EPAF.
- SSC Chair sends regrets message to applicant pool.