

# Effective Practices for Conducting Interviews

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# Workshop & Webinar Sequence

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## Preparing for Next Year's Hiring (April 2024)

- > Forming and informing search committees
- > Drafting job ads and rubrics
- > Planning for outreach

## Effective Practices for Assessing Faculty Application Materials (October 2024)

## Effective Practices for Interviewing (November 2024)

- <https://www.washington.edu/diversity/faculty-advancement/webinars/> (OFA)
- <https://advance.washington.edu/resources/?text=webinar&op=Search> (ADVANCE)



# Today's topics

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- > Preliminary interviews
- > Final interviews and campus visit
  
- > Questions and discussion



# Preliminary Interviews

# Creating the “Long” Short List for Preliminary Interviews

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- > Select 8-12 candidates for the “long” short list
  - use preliminary interviews to take low-stakes risks on interesting candidates
- > Before the preliminary interview, do you need or want additional information?
  - additional sample of research or scholarship
  - sample syllabi or lesson plans
  - expanded teaching philosophy
  - sample student or peer teaching evaluations
  - other



# Best Practices for Preliminary Interviews

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- > Conduct all interviews in the same format
- > Conduct all interviews under similar conditions
- > Have the same committee members present
- > Ask the same set of standard questions, in the same order
- > Ask questions about diversity, equity, and inclusion of every candidate
  
- > Make sure all interview questions comply with federal and state hiring laws
  - Fair and unfair inquiries: <https://hr.uw.edu/eoaa/pre-employment-inquiries/>



# Thinking about Preliminary Interview Questions

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- > What does the hiring committee not know that it wants or needs to know to select finalists?
- > Do you want candidates to be able to prepare for questions, or do you want to see how they think “on their feet”?
- > How much time and attention does the hiring committee want to devote to DEI issues?



# Preliminary Interviews with Internal or Other Known Candidates

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Three key questions to address:

- > How can you maintain fairness?
- > How can you maintain the perception of fairness?
- > How have you addressed any potential COI, bias, or perception of bias?
  - How close is too close?
  - Do you need to adjust your interview structure?





# Final Interviews and Campus Visits

# Final Interviews / Campus Visits

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- > Unit's final **assessment** activities
  - What information does the committee need to make its final evaluations and recommendations?
  - Assessment activities should be uniform across candidates.
- > Beginning of candidates' **recruitment** activities
  - What do candidates need to know to make their selections?
  - Recruitment activities should be uniform in most respects, but they can also be tailored to specific candidates' needs or desires.
- > Candidates should be aware of which is which



# Developing a comprehensive plan for final interviews

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- > What is essential? What might be left behind?

## Pacing of interviews, presentations, and meetings

- > Inquisition-style/conversational interviewing vs. focused group conversation
- > The importance of scheduling real breaks
- > The importance of scheduling transit time (including within a building)

## Casual events

- > What do you want to accomplish?
- > Consider pressure on candidates' schedules



# Making what is implicit in your process explicit (assessment)

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Articulating strategies for

- > helping candidates present their best selves
  - clear expectations for performance
  - reasonable demands on time
  
- > helping our colleagues present their best selves
  - clear expectations for engagement
  - clear criteria for assessment



# Making what is implicit in your process explicit (recruitment)

Querying candidates before the final interview and campus visit

- > How would the candidate like to be introduced?
- > What accommodations and dietary requirements do they need?
- > What would they like to see or know?
- > With whom would they like to meet?
- > What questions do they have about the visit and process?



# Best Practices for Final Interviews / Campus visits

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- > Itineraries should be as similar as possible
- > Itineraries should clearly distinguish **assessment** activities from **recruitment** activities
- > Try to provide venues for finalists to ask questions they might not feel comfortable asking the search committee or hiring authority
- > Certain categories of questions are always off limits
  - Fair and unfair inquiries: <https://hr.uw.edu/eoaa/pre-employment-inquiries/>
- > Everyone who will interact with finalists needs to be informed about the process — and the criteria for assessment



# Distinguishing Unit's and Candidate's Needs

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## Unit's assessment needs:

- > Research presentation
- > Teaching demonstration
- > Meeting with search committee
- > Meeting with department chair
- > Meeting with dean
- > Meeting with colleagues
- > Meeting with graduate students

## Candidate's recruitment needs:

- > Tour of campus
- > Tour of research facility or lab
- > Meeting with potential peers
- > Information about diversity-related efforts and opportunities
- > Information about unit climate
- > Information about UW, Seattle, etc.

# Prioritize elements based on decision making needs

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- > Meetings with leadership (chair or director, dean, etc.)
- > Meetings with faculty (clarity of purpose)
  - 1:1 vs. group meetings
  - Structured vs. unstructured meeting topics
  - Meetings with specific committees (e.g., unit's Diversity Committee)
- > Meetings with graduate students





# The “all important” job talk

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Think through appropriate—and *useful*—length and format

- > What are you trying to learn about the candidate?
- > What are you trying to signal about the hiring unit?

Strategies for facilitating effective Q & A

- > Settings norms and expectations for engagement
- > Pre-screened questions
- > Questions in real time: moderator



# Consider the potential “gray” areas of campus visits

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- > Meals on or near campus (e.g., candidate lunches)
  - > Meals off campus (e.g., candidate dinners)
  - > Social gatherings (e.g., candidate coffees or receptions)
  - > Transit to and from official events
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- > Do candidates know when they are being evaluated?
  - > Do colleagues know when they are expected to evaluate?



# Final Interviews / Campus Visits with Internal or Other Known Candidates

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Similar issues can arise as in the preliminary interviews:

- > fairness
- > perception of fairness
- > COI, bias, perception of bias

How do you maintain the integrity of the interview process for *all* participants?

How do you create the best possible scenario for the hiring unit *and* for your potential new colleague?



# Advice from successful faculty candidates

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Imagine the experience from the candidate's perspective.

- > Reduce the number of meetings
  - avoid making candidates repeat themselves over and over
- > Reduce the length of meetings
  - how much time is necessary?
- > Schedule real breaks
  - at least 30 minutes, preferably an hour or more
- > Casual events and social opportunities are important



# Key Takeaways

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- > Articulate what *must* be the same, and what *can* be different
- > Clarify what is and what is not being evaluated
  - Differentiate between assessment and recruitment activities
  - Communicate this clearly with your unit and the candidates
- > Anticipate potential complications with internal and other known candidates



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