

Psychology Department Faculty Search Guidelines

Department search committees will normally consist of 4 faculty members: 3 from within the department and 1 from outside as required by the dean. The three from within the department should normally include no more than 2 people from within the same area (social, cognitive, or developmental).

“Faculty” in this document refers to full voting members of the university faculty; visiting, adjunct, or other temporary faculty will not normally serve on searches or vote on hiring.

The search committee’s goal should be to provide a “long short list” of approximately 10 folders for department consideration.

- In evaluating candidates, search committee members should take into account that all hires have multiple levels of impact. A given candidate’s potential contributions to a specialty area within the department, to the department outside of their immediate area of specialization, and to interdisciplinary (cross-departmental) programs and initiatives are all relevant considerations. In addition, a variety of dimensions including undergraduate instruction potential, graduate program contribution, research specialty, fundability, diversity, etc. are relevant. Consideration should be given to all dimensions specified on the separate evaluation sheet, although it is understood that candidates will have different profiles of strengths and weaknesses. (In some cases, the department may decide in advance that strength on a particular dimension is essential for a given hire and is a “deal-breaker.”)
- Other members of the department may review folders before the search committee makes its decisions and provide input to the committee if they wish.
- The search committee will include the folder of all candidates whom at least 2 committee members see as potentially desirable and hireable, taking into account any input provided by other faculty.
- Minority candidates should be evaluated with extra care to determine if they may be viable candidates (e.g., despite atypical elements of background or trajectory); however, they should only be placed in the final set if they show the potential to meet the same standards of excellence as the other candidates in the set.

All department members, plus the external search committee member, will then (re-)review the folders of the “long short list” candidates, giving consideration to all the dimensions on the evaluation sheet, and rate them or otherwise make indications to themselves of their views on each one. (As above - in some cases, the department may decide in advance that strength on a particular dimension is a deal-breaker for a given hire.)

- The department will meet and will first discuss the candidates, reviewing their strengths and weaknesses on the dimensions listed on the evaluation sheet, without sharing individual numerical ratings or rank orderings of candidates.
- Each faculty member will then indicate by checkmark his or her top three or four choices for interviews, taking into account in this selection the general discussion

that has taken place. (The number of checkmarks allotted may be adjusted to take into account the size of the long short list.)

The 3 or 4 candidates who garner the most checkmarks will normally be selected for interviews. However, further discussion can take place before the final selection is made if there is not a clear consensus. Success at promoting or demoting a candidate from invitation to interview is by persuasion only; no faculty member (neither chair nor search committee member, nor anyone else) has veto power against a candidate that a majority of faculty wish to interview.

Then, a long and arduous yet exciting interview process takes place...

After interviews are completed, the department (and external search member) meets to discuss the candidates and selects one to whom to make the first offer as follows:

- The graduate and undergraduate student input is reported via the search head. The dean's input is provided via the chair.
- Opinions of all faculty (including external search member) are then stated, with search committee members speaking first. A straw vote is taken to determine if there is a clear consensus on the top candidate. If so, a formal vote is taken to affirm that the department wishes to make an offer to this candidate. If not, discussion continues, and additional information (e.g., rereading folders, talking to letter writers, reading more samples of scholarship) may be sought before further discussion and voting takes place.
- In each vote, all faculty (and the external search committee member) have an equal vote. However, given that members of the search committee are those (or, are among those) who have the greatest expertise in the search area and whose lives will be most affected by the hire, department members should give extra weight to their input and opinions in formulating their own position.
- Likewise, the input of other members of the department who are not on the search committee but whose areas are close to the area of the search should be given extra consideration by other department members when formulating their own position.
- The chair's opinion also does not by itself determine the outcome of a hiring decision. If a chair is not initially convinced of the merits of a candidate, other department members should feel free to attempt to enlighten the chair. However, the chair's view should also be given extra consideration by department members in formulating their own position because the chair may have important perspectives that differ from those of other department members.
- The chair's opinion does carry more weight in a hiring decision in one sense, which is that the provost and dean charge chairs with ensuring that the right faculty are hired. Chairs must only advocate a hire to the dean and provost when they feel convinced that the candidate is of appropriate quality and will contribute in an appropriate way to the department's/college's/university's future. Thus, if the chair's initial opinion of a candidate is not favorable and other department members hold different opinions, other department members must make the case for the candidate. The chair has an obligation to listen with an open mind and to consider altering his or her view. However, if a chair still has serious reservations about a candidate after taking into

- account all input, he or she has an obligation to express those reservations to the dean and provost along with presenting the majority opinion.
- A unanimous vote in favor of a candidate is not required in order to proceed with a recommendation to make an offer. However,
 - About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the faculty voting should be in favor. (The word “about” is required because the number of voting faculty will not always be evenly divisible by 4. The phrase “of voting faculty” is required because some members of the faculty may not vote in a given search for any of a variety of reasons.)
 - If the search committee and other faculty closest to the area in question are agreed in having serious reservations about the suitability of a candidate, the department should not proceed with a recommendation to hire regardless of overall vote totals.
 - If there is about a 75% department vote in favor but a diversity of opinion among the above (ill-defined) set of people, generally the majority opinion of the group will dominate the department decision of whether the reservations should end consideration of the candidate. However, because of the ill-defined nature of the group and endless variations in the nature of the reservations that can arise and in the potential positive and negative impacts of the hire on individual faculty and on the department, such cases can only be completely decided by considering the merits of the particular case.
 - As noted above, the chair must be in agreement that the candidate is appropriate in order for a strong recommendation in favor to be put forward.
 - Thus, a strong recommendation to hire will be made to the dean and provost when all of the following conditions are met: (a) about 75% of the department is in favor; (b) most (or all) of the faculty on the search committee and otherwise close to the area under consideration are in favor; (c) the chair is satisfied that the proposed candidate is of appropriate quality and will contribute to the future of the department/college/university in an appropriate way.
 - If conditions (a) and (b) are met but (c) is not, if the department desires, the chair will be willing to present the majority department sentiment and rationale in as unbiased a manner as possible, as well as his or her reservations, to the dean and provost.

If the first offer is not accepted, the department will reconvene to consider the remaining candidates following the above procedures. The candidate that came in second in the voting that resulted in the first offer does not automatically receive the second offer.

A gratuitous observation: Some diversity of opinion is inevitable and healthy in searches. The power of persuasion comes from taking positions that are open-minded, respectful of other's perspectives, consider multiple dimensions and levels of impact of candidates, and are articulated in a calm and reasoned manner even in the face of diversity of opinion.

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