

As the University of Florida demonstrates its value of diverse perspectives and research experiences, attracting and retaining top talent from underrepresented groups continues to remain a priority. Due to challenges associated with recruiting top talent among underrepresented groups, it is paramount that selection and hiring processes include strategies and best practices that connect with, market to, and recruit diverse talent.

Although selection and/or hiring decisions cannot be based on a protected class, this tool has been developed to walk you through best practices found at every stage of the recruitment, selection, and hiring process and to provide you with strategies and resources that support inclusive hiring.

PREPARING FOR THE PROCESS

Before beginning the recruitment, selection, and hiring process, it is important to be aware of the demographics of the workforce within your span of control and any diversity issues that might be specific or unique to your area.

It is equally important to ensure that a welcoming and inclusive culture exists within the college/unit to sustain long term recruiting. You cannot measure the progress of diversity and inclusion efforts without considering how your culture either nurtures your diverse employees or limits them.

UTILIZING AN EQUITY ADVISOR

To continue engaging in inclusive hiring practices, it is recommended that a neutral party be assigned as part of the search process as an equity advisor. The role of this individual is to assist the search committee in ensuring that equity and, most importantly, inclusive practices are used in all aspects of the recruitment process. The responsibilities of the equity advisor may include but not be limited to:

- Assisting the hiring authority in the selection process of the search committee and its chair.
- Providing advice as needed to ensure the search ad is posted in multiple venues that attract a diverse pool of applicants.
- Providing advice as needed to the chair/dean and to the search committee to ensure that contributions to diversity are being considered and that proactive search practices are used for recruiting and selecting new faculty.
- Discuss research on selection bias with the search committee.
- Review the diversity of the availability pool and the applicant pool. If the diversity of the applicant pool does not reasonably reflect the diversity of the availability pool, suggest proactive measures to enhance the diversity of the applicant pool.
- Review the short list of candidates selected for interviews. If this group is not diverse, review the files of other applicants (particularly those under serious consideration) to determine if candidates of equivalent quality have been overlooked.

MITIGATING HIDDEN BIAS

In the hiring process, hidden bias has the potential to influence your opinion about candidates in the applicant pool more than you think. It may even lead to limiting the diversity found in the workforce. The first thing we can do to mitigate bias and increase inclusion in the selection and hiring process is to recognize some of the most common biases or preferences associated with hiring.

BIASES	DEFINITION	STRATEGY
Leniency Bias	The tendency to give people the benefit of the doubt, or to be an “easy” rater. Occurs when a rater is reluctant to unfavorably rate a candidate because they are being kind, which results in ratings that are not true representations of the candidate’s performance.	Establish <i>anchor answers</i> (information that the candidate should provide to show evidence of competencies and/or qualifications) and ensure that each rater evaluates candidate responses based on the alignment of that response with those anchors.
Central Tendency Bias	Occurs when a rater tends to rate all performances at the middle of the scale and is reluctant to rate a performance as either superior or unacceptable. This is the desire to “play it safe” or avoid giving extreme ratings; the rate may be under the assumption that “nobody can be that good or bad.” It is very important to make distinctions among candidates and to make full use of the rating scale.	Make sure that all interview questions are clear and concise. Utilize anchor answers. If suitable, consider using a scale that eliminates a middle option so that the panelist must make a choice.
Severity Bias	Occurs when a rater is unwilling to issue a favorable rating to a deserving candidate and instead assigns a much lower rating on average. This can suggest either an unusually harsh standard or a failure to appropriately observe the behaviors demonstrated by the candidate.	Ensure that probing questions are utilized in the absence of key information needed to fairly assess the candidate.
Contrast Bias	Comparing candidate’s performance against another candidate instead of evaluating the candidate’s performance based on competencies. It has been found that if a rater evaluates a candidate who is just average after evaluating a series of unfavorable candidates one after another, the average candidate tends to be evaluated more favorably even though that does	Before you begin the interview process, determine what skills and/or competencies are needed. Utilize that information to develop your rubric and evaluate each candidate individually utilizing that tool.

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	not coincide with his/her performance.	
Similar-to-me Bias/Affinity Bias	Tendency of individuals to rate candidates who resemble themselves higher than they rate others. Occurs when a candidate is judged more favorably because he/she exhibits behaviors which have much in common with the rater which elicits feelings of comfort and compatibility. It may be tempting to award high ratings even when the exhibited behaviors may not justify it. It is important to judge the candidates on the identified job-related desired behaviors.	Prior to conducting your interviews, establish specific job-related criteria to be used by all committee members for the purpose of evaluating all candidates. Reduce the small talk. It's normal to start with "How are you?" or "I hope your drive in was okay," but that can quickly turn to questions that exacerbate bias.
Anchoring Bias	Sometimes called <i>expectation anchor bias</i> , occurs when we have information that we become rigidly attached to that has nothing to do with the candidate or qualifications, such as a precedent set by the previous person to hold the position.	Use the tools created to evaluate candidates (selection criteria, rubric, etc.); you'll have a quantifiable answer as to the best candidate.
First Impression Effect	Tendency of an assessor to make an initial positive or negative judgment of a candidate and allow the first impression to distort later information, leading to discrepancies with evaluation of the overall performance.	Hold a consensus meeting in which the panel members discuss openly, as a group, their individual evaluations of the candidates based on the established job-related criteria.
Beauty Bias	Tendency for people to assume that people who are more physically attractive are also superior performers. They may not be necessarily more qualified for a job.	Having a structured screening process for evaluating candidates before in-person interviews will help to mitigate this kind of bias. Also, including a diverse panel.
Horn/Halo Effect	A "halo" effect bestows positive attributes to a person, unlike the "horns" that are perceived negative attributes that cause you to jump to negative (and equally inaccurate) conclusions about a person.	Make sure at least 2-3 different aspects of behavior are addressed to get a holistic view so that one awesome or awful trait or skill doesn't overshadow everything else.

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Confirmation Bias	The tendency to look for information that confirms a belief you already have and to subconsciously filter out all evidence to the contrary. This leads us to create flawed patterns in our thinking and can create bias in hiring.	In the interview process, using specific interview questions to gauge <i>specific skills and traits</i> of a candidate will help reduce confirmation bias, since it forces the interviewer to evaluate the candidate on questions that are <i>predetermined</i> and <i>directly related to the position</i> .
Attribution Bias	Attribution bias is a phenomenon in which you try to make sense of or judge a person's behavior based on prior observations and interactions you've had with that individual that make up your perception of them.	Rather than assume, ask clarifying or probing questions. Don't forget that candidates are often nervous and may misspeak or stumble. Give them a chance to share their full story with you before you evaluate.
Gender Bias	Gender bias is the tendency to prefer one gender over another gender.	Consider having your HR team redact aspects of a candidate that may reveal their assumed gender. Also, make sure to compare candidates based on skill and merit rather than traits that can cloud your judgement of them.
Stereotyping	Tendency to place a candidate into a stereotyped group, and then generalize their performance as typical of that group and ignore the individual's differences.	Ensure that your job description is built on the actual skills and experience required. Be clear about required knowledge, skills, and abilities in your job ads. Develop and apply key selection criteria to create a shortlist of candidates. To make sure you are being fair and equitable, develop a set of behavioral and competency-based interview questions based on the job description and selection criteria.

To determine if you may have an implicit attitude that you may not be aware of, consider taking the Implicit Association Test (IAT). [The Implicit Association Test \(IAT\)](#) is a psychological assessment designed to measure "implicit attitudes." These are the underlying by-products of past experience that influence how we feel about something.

CREATING INCLUSIVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Utilize Inclusive Statements to emphasize the University/College/Unit's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Below are [Statements](#) that demonstrate a commitment to building an inclusive culture and climate. When utilizing inclusive statements, it's important that the statement aligns with your commitment to diversity and be authentic.

- *In support of being a preeminent University, we are committed to developing strategies that attract the best and brightest from all backgrounds.*
- *The University of Florida is committed to creating a thoughtful, equitable, and inclusive culture that provides space for innovation and creativity. We support that commitment by offering a fulfilling work experience that allows for collaboration, growth, and development as well as shared perspectives.*
- *We recognize the value of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access and acknowledge the benefits they add to our workforce as we drive creative and innovative solutions that connect us all.*
- *We are committed to creating an inclusive environment and are proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We attribute our success to a workforce that embraces the contributions of people of all backgrounds and ability levels.*
- *Our faculty, staff, and students make up a community of all social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. The richness of that diversity contributes to our innovation and shared success. Join a culture that fosters an environment of inclusion, awareness, and engagement.*

You may also opt to couple the above with the University's general Equal Opportunity language.

The University of Florida is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The University is committed to nondiscrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status in all aspects of employment including recruitment, hiring, promotions, transfers, discipline, terminations, wage and salary administration, benefits, and training.

Inclusive Job Requirements:

- *Consider identifying a demonstrated commitment to valuing diversity and contributing to an inclusive working and learning environment as an essential function of the role.*
- *Utilize equivalency statements when substitutes for certain requirements are possible, such as, "an equivalent combination of education/experience may substitute for a Master's degree."*
- *Only list "must-haves" in your requirements and include "nice-to-haves" in your candidate profile.*

Gender Neutral Considerations:

- *Use gender-neutral pronouns and statements*
- *Consider using the [Gender Decoder](#) to support the identification of subtle gender-coded phrases.*
- *Limit job requirements to "must-haves" to trim your list down. Statistics provided by Hewlett Packard's Internal Report state that men apply for jobs when they meet only 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% of them.*
- *Avoid insider language, industry jargon, acronyms, and company-speak when possible.*
- *Highlight UF's family-friendly benefits and leave programs.*

Structure of Announcements:

- I: Opening Statement highlighting University, College/Unit, DE&I Commitment
- II: About College/Unit
- III: The Opportunity – Highlight information regarding the job that would appeal to you candidates.
- IV: Must-Haves – Requirements (The successful candidate should possess the following skills and qualifications)
- V: The University of Florida (Share leading facts about the University and why it's great to be a part of the Gator Nation)
- VI: Application Instructions
- VII: Our Commitment (State the college/unit's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion followed by the University's equal opportunity statement)

Selecting Search Committees or Interview Panels

When anticipating vacancies, each college and/or unit should have an established plan for educating and equipping individuals who serve on selection committees or interview panels prior to the start of the process. This plan should consist of resources and/or training that cover topics that include, but are not limited to:

- Managing Hidden Biases that Affect the Hiring Process – UF_GET250_ILT
- Interviewing and Hiring – UF_SCS040_ILT
- Faculty Search Tutorial - PVO800

Many of these resources for Faculty Search Committees may be found in the [Human Resources Toolkits](#).

The inherent diversity (e.g., demographic differences like race, gender, age) of search committees and interview panels should reflect the richness of the culture and workforce desired. This effort demonstrates commitment to:

- Decreasing unconscious bias in the recruitment, selection, and hiring process
- Confirming a culture of diversity and inclusivity for the candidates in the process, and
- Creating a workforce that's equipped to address the needs of the multicultural populations served.

Candidate Evaluation Tools

The interview process should be structured and designed in a way that allows for checks and balances. It is first recommended that you develop selection criteria before reviewing your applications/resumes.

- Objective selection criteria are used to determine the best-qualified candidate from among all applicants who have met the minimum qualifications.
- Candidates faring most favorably should be considered for an interview.
- Selection criteria go beyond minimum qualifications and may consider quantity, quality, and relevancy of education, experience, knowledge, and other job-related skills that cater to the success of an applicant in that job. Selection criteria also include qualifications that may be unique to the job and the department rather than the more general minimum qualifications. When applicants are compared to each other and selection criteria are applied, the best-qualified candidate can be selected.
- Cultural Competence should be considered as a criterion for all recruitments and supported by questions that assist with inclusive hiring.

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- Criteria may be assigned a weight based on its importance in the overall selection process. Criteria and weights should be determined prior to reviewing application documents and should be shared, along with expectations, to the search committee or interview panel.
- The search committee or interview panel should be provided with access to the applications and/or resumes prior to the selection process and should be active participants in the evaluation of applicants. The criteria should be objective, and an established evaluation mechanism (rubric) is encouraged (**see sample below for an example of an evaluation mechanism**).

	Behavioral Interview Question(s) Behavioral Based Interview Toolkit Hiring Department Interview Guide	Anchor Answer <i>Information that the candidate should provide to show evidence of competencies and/or qualifications in this area.</i>	Rating Unacceptable – No Key Points Marginal – Very few key points Acceptable – Most of the key points Good – All key points Superior – Exceeds Key Points
Advancing DE&I	<i>Please give an example of how you contribute to a work environment where differences are valued, encouraged and supported. What is your role in creating that environment and what have been some of the outcomes of your individual contribution?</i>	<i>Leads change/initiatives related to DE&I; provides examples of DE&I with outcomes and impacts; track record of activities that advance DE&I; involved in groups, program planning, other efforts</i>	
Active Learning			
Collaboration & Communication			
Creativity & Innovation			
Compliance			

Notate reasons for applicants who do not move forward for further consideration. As a committee, select your first-round candidates.

DEVELOPING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When conducting interviews, you are encouraged to utilize [behavioral-based questions](#) in support of competencies identified in your rubric. With this style of questioning, candidates are asked how they handled past situations, giving you a sense of how they will think and/or perform in the future.

When posing your question, ensure that you follow up utilizing the SBO model. This module prompts follow-up that asks for the specific **SITUATION, BEHAVIOR, and OUTCOME**.

Below is an example of what good behavioral interview questions that use the SBO model might look like.

“Sometimes policy and procedure changes are made that require a change in your practice. Share with us a time when you might have faced such changes. (Situation). How did you respond? (Behavior). And what was the **outcome?**”

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Ensure that questions are structured to provide responses that predict real-life outcomes. This is an important part of the standard against which we can evaluate true performance.

Get the full story: (1) What led up to the situation? (2) Who said or did what to whom? (3) What did you say or do next? (4) What were you thinking and feeling? and (5) What was the outcome or result of the event?

Establish Anchor answers for each question – Anchor answers identify information that the candidate should provide to show evidence of competencies and/or qualifications in the specific area.

Example:

Coaching and Mentoring:

- Give an example of a time when diversities of thought, conflicting personalities, or work ethics challenged the success of a team you led. Tell us what strategies you've used to address those challenges, and share the results or outcomes of implementing those strategies.

Anchor answer: Coaches one or several individuals or teams on a specific competency or subject area.

Coaching and or mentoring includes both top performers and problem performers and demonstrates consistent monitoring of individuals and/or team progress through feedback sessions.

UNACCEPTABLE	MARGINAL	ACCEPTABLE	GOOD	SUPERIOR
No Key Points	Very Few Key Points	Most of the Key Points	All Key Points	Exceeds

By law, you are not allowed to make hiring decisions based on anything other than bona fide occupational qualifications (BFOQs). You cannot discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. Therefore, if it is not job-related, do not ask it. Also, remember that the interview process includes time spent over dinner and in informal settings. The above applies to those environments as well.

MANAGING YOUR CANDIDATE POOL IN THE APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEM (ATS)

[Interfolio](#) is the current system used for faculty hiring. This technology is a committee-friendly engine for conducting academic professional reviews online. Although this system can be used for tracking EEO data, its reporting and analytical options are limited.

When EEOC surveys are embedded in the online application process for faculty applicants, the data can be disaggregated by gender as well as racial and ethnic background while keeping candidates' personal information protected. This disaggregated approach to reporting can be used at the beginning of the next search cycle to give search committee members a report showing which channels were most effective in generating candidate applications from underrepresented groups.

In order to ensure accurate reporting, disposition codes must be appropriately assigned to the candidates in the pool when the hire is made. Disposition codes are short, pre-defined explanations of why an applicant did not make it to the next step of the hiring process. Please refer to ["Using Disposition Codes"](#) for faculty hires.

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The ATS for TEAMS hires is [PageUp](#). The [“How Do I Finalize My Recruitment Process?”](#) document may be referred to when managing disposition codes for those processes.

REPORTING ON DIVERSITY IN THE CANDIDATE POOL

You may run EEO reports per Job Requisition to see the outcomes of the diversity found in the applicant pool. This information will assist you in evaluating the effectiveness of your recruitment strategy and determining if future adjustments are need.

For instruction on running an EEO Reports for TEAMS positions, [CLICK HERE](#).

For EEO Reports using Interfolio for Faculty positions, [CLICK HERE](#).

REPORTING ON WHERE DIVERSE CANDIDATES LEARNED ABOUT THE POSITION

Almost every college/unit invests in advertising to bring job postings to the attention of candidates from underrepresented groups. However, in most cases, departments use the same advertising strategy year after year without any indication of whether spending generates applications or impacts pool diversity.

Partner with your Talent Acquisition Specialist or Talent Consult to consider the following three options when tracking source data.

- Examine what specific website, job board, or advertisement the user clicked to view the web page where the job description is located. Most job boards will provide this level of reporting.
- Consider the immediate digital path to application—or how the candidates who applied for the position entered the ATS—as well as applicants’ answers to the question, “How did you first learn of this position?”
- When EEOC surveys are embedded in the online application process, you can disaggregate this data by gender as well as racial and ethnic background while keeping candidates’ personal information protected. Then, at the beginning of the next search cycle, you can give each search committee a report showing which channels have been most effective in generating applications from candidates from underrepresented groups.

For instruction on running a Source Report for TEAMS positions, [CLICK HERE](#).

For Source Reports using Interfolio for Faculty positions, [CLICK HERE](#).

These practices are valuable when testing the effectiveness of advertising positions on social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Those platforms allow you to direct advertisements to the audiences you desire to reach. More importantly, they allow you to get you ads in front of desirable potential candidates who are not actively on the job market.

INCLUSIVE RECRUITING:

When engaging in inclusive recruitment, you are encouraged to build a strategy that targets the underrepresented group within your college/unit. Casting the widest possible net to attract that segment of the workforce is the greatest opportunity you will have to diversify your applicant pool. Below are some strategies and/or sources you may consider when building your strategy; however, our Talent Acquisition and Onboarding team is available to support you with this task.

1. Because students consider the racial and ethnic diversity of a college campus when choosing a school, as a hiring authority you may wish to consider them when entertaining sourcing strategies for student programs and/or internships.
 - a. [Campus Ethnic Diversity National Universities](#)
2. Don't just stop with advertising on job boards, but target and build strategic partnerships by reaching out to key representatives within schools that serve predominantly underrepresented populations.
 - a. [Historically Black colleges and Universities](#)
3. Build and communicate your college/unit brand by highlighting projects, research, community engagement, and partnerships that support your culture of inclusiveness and prominently showcase them on your college's website, in print or electronic material or partner with UFHR to feature them on our [Artificial Intelligence dedicated job page](#).
4. Consider hosting a virtual open house events for potential job seekers, underrepresented groups or passive candidates who desire to learn more about your college/unit, projects and/or research.
5. Establish partnerships with [multicultural professional associations and student groups](#).

OTHER USEFUL STRATEGIES:

- Build relationships with colleges and organizations that seek to educate and promote diversity efforts.
- Reach into communities of underrepresented talent using volunteer opportunities, fellowships, mentorships, scholarships, and/or internships.
- Partner with your communications and marketing teams to use your social media pages to promote diversity and showcase current diversity programs or employee groups.
- Strive for equal representation of all groups in your marketing materials and online.
- Seek feedback from current diversity groups within your areas about how you can improve recruiting efforts.
- Focus retention efforts on creating an inclusive environment where diversity groups feel both valued and empowered.
- Increase the number of Black and Hispanic candidates applying to jobs by eliminating GPA minimums.
- Embrace high-touch recruiting. If prerecorded interviews are used as a method to screen candidates, use personal email messages when engaging candidates versus system templates. Consider an initial phone contact to introduce the candidate to the video interview process before the interview is scheduled.
- Partner with student chapters of professional organizations on campus to assist with recruiting diverse talent from a broader bench of schools.

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AI-SPECIFIC SOURCES:

Kdnuggets.com	60 day posting (Free)
analyticaltalent.datasciencecentral.com	30 day posting
IEEE Communities and Job Board	30 day posting and Technical Communities
AISnet.org (Association for Information System)	60 day posting
NSBE.org (National Society of Black Engineer)	30 day posting
aaai.org (Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence)	30 day posting
CRA.org (Computing Research Association)	30 day posting
AWIS.org (Association for Women in Science)	30 day posting
Computer.org	30 day posting
ACM.org (Association for Computing Machinery)	30 day posting
Jobs.blacksinhighered.org (American Association of Blacks in Higher Education)	30 day posting (non-member; \$199 for member)
BIG Academic Alliance Professorial Advancement Initiative	Network
Black in AI	AI Community
Inclusive Engineering Consortium	Electrical and Computer Engineering Community
100 Brilliant Women in AI Ethics	AI Community
Black Women in AI	30 day posting

HIGHER EDUCATION JOB BOARD NETWORK

- Network Members
- AABHE Career Center
- AACSB Career Connection
- AAMC CareerConnect
- Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs
- Alliance for Continuing Education in the Health Professions
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
- American College Health Association
- American Conference of Academic Deans
- Arizona Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
- Association for Continuing Higher Education Inc
- Association for Leadership Science in Nursing
- Association of Deans & Directors of University Colleges & Undergraduates Studies
- California Association of Colleges of Nursing
- CASE Career Central

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- CASFAA Career Center
- Higher Education Career Center by University Business
- INSIGHT Into Diversity
- National Association of Business Careers and Education
- National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education
- New York State Association for College Admission Counseling
- Southeastern Association of School Business Officials
- The Enrollment Management Association

To gain additional insight on inclusive hiring practices or identifying, attracting, and engaging talent, visit our [Strategic Talent Group's website](#) or contact Talent Acquisition and Onboarding at Talent@hr.ufl.edu.