



**Counselor Recruitment
Procedures and Guidelines**

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Counselor Faculty Search Procedures and Guidelines

I. Introduction

The Sonoma State University Counselor recruitment process is designed to encourage recruitment of a broad and diverse pool of applicants. It also ensures that the hiring process is conducted with equal consideration, access and exposure for all potential candidates.

II. The Search Committee

A. Confidentiality

1. The deliberators of the search committee, including consultants, as well as application materials should be treated with strict adherence to confidentiality. No discussions should take place with other SSU faculty members or other persons not directly participating in the search process. If confidentiality is not maintained both during and after the recruitment process, it can lead to cancellation of the search and/or a complaint being filed by a candidate. It can also have a chilling effect on applications for future positions in the department and the University.

B. Membership

1. A Search Committee is elected by the department and should include at least three members.
2. Only members of a search committee may vote. Consultants do not vote.
3. A Search Committee selects a chair from its membership. The chair selected should have some recent experience with the recruitment process.
4. Committee members should participate in all committee meetings and must participate in all interviews. Occasional emergency arrangements may be approved (please consult with Faculty Affairs in advance). Failure of committee members to participate in all deliberations may result in a cancellation of the search process.

C. Initial Meetings

1. The Director may meet with the search committee soon after the search is approved by the Provost and the committee is established. The Director will give the committee its formal charge, and discuss with the committee qualifications for the position, both required and recommended, along with any programmatic or diversity goals which have been established for the position.
2. The search committee attends and informational meeting with Faculty Affairs to discuss search strategies and diversity goals with the AVP. At least one member of the committee must attend the meeting. This meeting must be held before the Cover Sheet for Position Opportunity Announcement (POA) packet is approved. The Administrative Coordinator is encouraged to attend the meeting. Please call Faculty Affairs at x42912.

III. Building Diversity

Sonoma State Diversity Statement

We at Sonoma State University strive to create a campus climate in which the will to build trust among people - and groups of people - is widely shared, and opportunities for enhancing diversity and a sense of community are encouraged and supported. We stand committed to fostering and sustaining a pluralistic, inclusive environment that empowers all members of the campus community to achieve their highest potential without fear of prejudice or discrimination.

We strive to build an exemplary educational community characterized by: an intellectual environment that is both challenging and nurturing, encouragement and support for curriculum and pedagogy dedicated to diversity issues, commitment to social justice and equality, respect for human diversity, and a genuine appreciation of how the many differences among us enrich a liberal arts and sciences university.

We encourage every member of our university community to embrace the underlying values of this vision, and to demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting, retaining, and attracting students, faculty, and staff who reflect the diversity of our larger society.

IV. Position Opportunity Announcement, Recruitment Strategy, Advertising, Endorsement Packet

A. Position Opportunity Announcement (POA)

1. The development of the Lecturer Professional Qualifications and Duties of the Position Form is the first step. The qualifications in the announcement set the criteria against which all applicants will be judged. A good announcement is specific enough to attract good applicants and flexible enough to enable you to select among a variety of qualified applicants. You will be asked to identify both required and desired qualifications.
2. The POA must be posted for a minimum of 30 days before you can gain access to the pool.
3. Faculty Affairs will continue to collect applications past the application deadline because the position will be open until filled. Should your POA not attract a sufficiently qualified pool, then Faculty Affairs will release any applications that have been submitted after the first review.

B. Recruitment Strategy and Advertising the Position

1. A one page recruitment strategy is required.
2. Advertising the position is a major component of a good recruitment strategy. The principal goal is to ensure qualified applicants from diverse sources know about the position and are encouraged to apply. No effort should be spared in developing a large, and extremely diverse, pool of candidates. Consider those publications, list serves and web sites that will broaden the applicant pool.

3. All advertising requests must be submitted with the endorsement packet and must be consistent with the final version of the POA and with university policy. All ad copy has to be approved via an Advertising Request Form and signed by the Director and by the Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs. The department will be notified electronically if any changes are required.
4. Faculty Affairs posts the position announcement to the SSU Job Opportunities web page, CSU Career Opportunities, CalJobs and Higher Ed Jobs.

Other advertising is placed and paid for by the department. The department places all ads/notices in national association newsletters or periodicals after the POA has been approved by Faculty Affairs.

C. Endorsement Packet

1. Once you have developed your draft POA and recruitment strategy, the Endorsement Packet should be signed by the Director. Copies of all forms are available on the web at: <http://web.sonoma.edu/aa/fa/all-faculty/forms.html>
2. The Endorsement Packet includes:
 - Cover Sheet for Position Opportunity Announcement (POA) Form
 - Professional Qualifications and Duties of the Position Form
 - One page recruitment and advertising strategy
 - Advertising Request form and ad copy (optional)
 - Interview questions and criteria

D. Applicant Information and Acknowledgement

1. Applicants will apply online using our SSU E-Recruit System. The applicants must submit all materials themselves. The materials they submit include:
 - a. Cover Letter
 - b. Curriculum Vitae
 - c. Additional Attachments
2. **Letters of Recommendation are not submitted with the application.** They are requested directly by the committee after selection of the finalists. Should a particular search feel the need to receive letters of recommendation for semi-finalists after a first screening, they should get the approval of the Dean. The committee will be responsible for requesting those from the semi-finalists.
3. A confirmation email is sent to all applicants once the online application is submitted. Applicants are directed to email questions about the search itself to the Committee Chair.

V. Developing the Candidate Review Process

- A. The committee's proposed questions and criteria were submitted with the POA. Before reviewing applications, the committee should agree upon the relationship between questions and criteria.

- B. The search committee reviews the criteria to be used in screening/interviewing. You will find that much of the task of developing screening criteria was done during the drafting of the Professional Qualifications and Duties of the Position form. You may not add criteria not clearly stated in the POA.
- C. The weight given to the various qualifications, which translate into criteria, may vary. You may determine that one or more of the recommended qualifications are of greater value than others and weight them accordingly. At this point in the process, it may be helpful for the search committee to discuss what kinds of evidence each member considers appropriate to each criterion.

VI. Review Applications and Screening Applicants

A. Review Applications

1. Members of the search committee should review all applications as soon as applicant materials are available on the secure website. The materials will be available within 2 business days after the deadline. Faculty Affairs will send notice of availability and link to secure site where applicant files can be reviewed by all committee members.
2. The committee should determine which applicants should be invited to interview, which are alternates (if any), which are considered but not competitive, and which do not meet the minimum qualifications for the position(s) as announced.
3. An initial screen may be done automatically based on the minimum qualifications you identify on the Professional Qualifications and Duties of the Position form. Depending on the number of applicants the committee can choose to review all applicants or just those that meet the minimum qualifications.

B. Screening applicants

1. The only evidence that can be evaluated is that which was requested of all candidates. This includes the application, vita, cover letter, interview and any other materials requested of all candidates by the committee.
2. When screening applications, you are seeking evidence of the candidate's ability to perform the position as announced. If you are in doubt about specific qualifications due to incomplete information in the application materials, and the candidate appears to be a competitive one, call the candidate and request clarification. If there are candidates applying whom you know personally or who have previously taught for the department, attempt to limit your questions to their application materials.
3. Since search committees are expected to recommend up to three candidates for each opening, it is usual to select five candidates to be interviewed. Should any candidate decline the invitation to interview, an appropriate alternate, if any, should be selected.
4. Rating sheets based on your established criteria and questions can be used to evaluate and compare candidates for interview selection and can assist the search committee in making objective decisions.

VII. Submit the Approval to Interview form and Interview

A. Submit Approval to Interview form

1. The Approval to Interview form should be submitted to Faculty Affairs at least a week prior to the date you wish to begin interviewing.
2. Within two business days after the Approval to Interview form has been forwarded to Faculty Affairs, the committee will be notified if there are any issues or if the form has been approved. **No interviews can be scheduled until after receiving notification of approval from Faculty Affairs.**
3. References are then contacted. Committee members should handle any negative information very carefully and use it only if it is confirmed by two or more references. It is wise for at least two committee members to divide up the reference calls for each candidate.
4. The purpose of the reference check is threefold: to verify prior employment, to confirm the committee's preliminary assessment of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, and to obtain an employment recommendation.
5. There is a trend in the business community not to provide any information other than a confirmation of the dates of employment. However, the University can be subject to a "negligent search" lawsuit based on the failure to conduct a sufficient background check prior to an offer of employment. Therefore, every effort should be made to verify a finalist's qualifications prior to recommending him/her for interview or hire.

B. Interview Schedules

1. Departments are strongly encouraged to have open meetings for each candidate interviewed and where feasible to have the candidate make a classroom presentation and/or give a sample lecture.
2. In determining which candidates to invite to interview, the search committee should include only those candidates whom it deems to be qualified and competitive. "Courtesy" interviews for those who are known to members of the committee, but who are not competitive, should be avoided as they can and often do create serious problems later in the search process. This includes all candidates who are serving or have served in temporary positions at SSU

C. Interviews

1. Prior to the interview day, you may wish to send the candidate a packet of information about your department and the University. A final interview schedule should be included. In addition, you may also want to ensure opportunities for candidates to receive a tour of the campus and the community, as well as to speak to someone regarding housing, schools, etc.
2. The candidates should all receive the following information from the department: when the candidate can expect to hear the result of the interview process, when/if the candidate can expect to receive a travel reimbursement. Let interviewees know that the University's policy is not to

send letters to those interviewed until after a finalist has signed a letter of acceptance or the search has been cancelled.

D. Discussion

1. While an approved set of interview questions is part of the search process, committees should exercise reasonable flexibility in follow-up questions that clarify responses to the approved questions. For example, comments such as “Well, you seem to have answered the next question already...we were going to ask you...is there anything you’d like to add...”. Applicants should always be given time at the conclusion of the interview to provide any other information they wish in support of their candidacy and to ask any questions they have regarding the position and the selection process.
2. Remember that candidates are to be evaluated on job-related factors only. Many candidates are nervous during the interview and it is the committee’s responsibility to work through apprehension and assess the candidate’s qualifications for the position. Even if it becomes clear rapidly that the candidate is not competitive, continue courteously throughout the interview and the whole day.
3. You learn most about the candidates when they are talking. Spend a minimum of time discussing the position in the formal interview and a maximum of time exploring the candidate’s qualifications.
4. Interviews are stressful situations for the candidate and the committee. Ensure that the candidates are comfortable and able to express their qualifications.
5. It is essential that both the committee and the candidate are able to make the correct match of job versus interests and qualifications. Make sure that the interview allows the committee to assess the candidate’s ability to perform according to the required and recommended job criteria and that the candidate understands both the position and its significance to the University.
6. Potential Pitfalls: The candidate may not be asked questions in a number of key areas such as marital status or child care arrangements. This prohibition includes informal questions outside the interview.
7. A few topics are best reserved for the Director to discuss with a candidate, most importantly, prospective salary and citizenship status. All aspects of the offer are between the candidate and the Director.

VIII. Review Finalists, Telephone Offer of Employment and Offer Letter

A. Review Finalists

1. Once the search committee has selected the candidate(s) it wishes to recommend to the Director, it should review its findings with them in a formal meeting. It is then the responsibility of the Director to recommend a finalist to the Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs.

2. Discussion

- a. It is not uncommon for the members of the search committee to disagree initially on the ranking of all candidates or about particular characteristics or qualifications of different candidates. The meeting with the Director should permit all committee members to discuss their perspectives on the candidates recommended. The goal is to achieve a thorough review from diverse perspectives. Carefully considering the essential and desirable criteria should assist in the committee's deliberations.
- b. Always use your criteria outlined in the POA in your discussions. Do not stray into criteria not listed or approved.

B. Telephone Offer of Employment

1. After verbal consultation with the AVP for Faculty Affairs and confirmation has been received regarding the offer, the Director calls the finalist and makes a preliminary offer of employment. Any changes beyond the previously agreed terms should be discussed with and approved by the Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs.

C. Offer Letter

1. Upon receipt of a verbal commitment from the candidate, the committee chair will submit the Final Recruitment Report with all required signatures to Faculty Affairs for approval.
2. Once the terms of the offer have been approved by all appropriate parties (including the candidate being recommended), Faculty Affairs, with all of the terms and conditions of employment, will produce the appointment letter to the candidate.
3. The form should indicate whether the candidate being recommended has already completed the terminal degree. If the position requires the doctorate and the candidate is A.B.D., the form should include the expected completion date of the doctorate.
4. Faculty Affairs will notify the committee chair and Director when the finalist signs and returns the contract letter.
5. Difficulties may arise and the recruitment process may be delayed or terminated at any stage prior to the formal offer of employment. Thus it is essential that confidentiality be maintained throughout the process.

IX. Final Recruitment Report

A. Functions of Final Recruitment Report

1. The Final Recruitment Report is the formal record of the outcome of the search. It is an official document and is used in a complaint process, legal subpoenas, and CSU reports.
2. At the conclusion of the recruitment, all committee notes must be shredded.
3. The Final Recruitment Report packet contains the singular search justification documentation. It should, when viewed as a whole, make clear to any reader the reasons for the selection of the

finalist, the reason for the ranking of the number two candidate (if any), and the non-selection of all others who were interviewed. All candidates listed on the Approval to Interview form to be interviewed must be included on the Final Recruitment Report. If the search was cancelled, the reason(s) must be stated on this form.

4. The Final Recruitment Report should not be hand written.

B. Format of Final Recruitment Report

1. The notes should be succinct statements (six to eight lines); however, a clear justification regarding each candidate is required. You do NOT have to come up with a statement for each criterion and you do not have to have a statement for the exact same subset of criteria for all the candidates. A sentence or a few phrases for the criteria that matter most will be fine. “Criteria that matter most” are those that distinguish this candidate from the others – both positively and negatively – and those that are crucial to the department. The form should present the facts upon which the employment decision was made. Whenever possible, mention statements made by the candidate in the interview which influenced the decision (e.g., “Candidate indicated that she has no experience with large lecture sections and did not feel that she would be effective”) in light of the stated criteria and in response to the approved questions.
 - a. Examples of possible statements for the notes in the form for candidates not selected:
 - Candidate presented outdated material and was unable to provide recent examples when students asked; or
 - No experience in directing internships or independent studies; candidate said he would need help in doing so during the first semester/year; or
 - Candidate was unable to answer questions concerning new courses she might wish to develop
 - b. Avoid Comparative Statements
 - The form will be reviewed as a group and the successful candidate’s relative merit will be evident if pertinent factual information is contained for each candidate (e.g., for Candidate A, “Had five years teaching experience in the field” and for Candidate B, “Had one year of teaching experience,” is better than indicating on Candidate B, “Had less experience than the individual selected”).
 - c. Avoid Subjective Statements
 - Decisions should be based on the approved criteria only and statements such as “The committee felt that he would not be able to work with the department” would be inappropriate. Rather, the note should indicate the objective basis for such a conclusion (e.g., “Candidate presented no evidence of ability or interest in committee work”).
 - Avoid ranking with statements of “Was ranked #3 on this criterion” or “weak”). A direct factual statement is preferable (e.g., “Knowledge in this area was not adequate – could not respond to this question”).
 - d. Avoid any reference to personal contact
 - The point is to consider evidence independent of personal contacts. Prior experience at SSU should not give the candidate special advantage. The notes may mention the number of years of working or teaching in the field and the quality of performance or the fact that the candidate has expertise in a particular field.

C. Confidentiality of Evidence

All information received during the recruitment process is considered to be “pre-employment” information, is confidential, and shall be maintained separately from an employee’s Personnel Action File. The confidentiality of “pre-employment” materials applies to applicants who are or who have been SSU employees, as well as to external applicants who may eventually be employed at SSU.

D. Submit Final Recruitment Report

1. Within ten (10) working days of the acceptance or rejection of an oral offer, the Final Recruitment Report packet should be submitted to the Director.
2. When Faculty Affairs reviews the Final Recruitment Report, it may contact the chair of the search committee to request that the form be revised or to clarify a statement in the reports.
3. The signatures on the Final Recruitment Report are assertions that the selection process has been reviewed and that it is consistent with the University’s recruitment policies and procedures and with academic standards. Once the recruitment has concluded, all of the formal electronic documentation regarding the selection process will be retained in Faculty Affairs for a minimum of five years.
4. Any materials not in an electronic format must be retained by the department for five years (i.e., copies of publications).

X. Final Emails

A. Faculty Affairs sends Regrets (Not Interviewed, Not Acceptable or Alternates not Interviewed)

1. Once the Approval to Interview form has been submitted, emails can be sent to those candidates who were not included on the Approval to Interview form.
2. The committee is encouraged to evaluate when these emails should be sent. In the event those candidates on the Approval to Interview form do not come to fruition, the committee may need to re-evaluate the pool.
3. If the committee deems that no candidate interviewed is acceptable and recommends cancellation of the search, or if the search is cancelled for any other reason, a email should be sent.
4. Those candidates that were alternates would not receive a disposition email until the Final Recruitment Report form has been submitted.
5. Discussion
 - Until such time as there is a signed acceptance of a letter of offer of employment, it is essential that contact with other non-recommended finalists not be initiated. If candidates who were interviewed and considered “acceptable” call to find out the status of the search,

you may choose to let them know the current status of the search (e.g., “An offer has been made and we are waiting to hear from the candidate”).

- Contact with the finalist should be limited to the Search Committee Chair or Director.

B. Send Regrets (Interviewed, Not Acceptable and/or Not Recommended)

1. At the time the finalist(s) returns the signed letter of offer, Faculty Affairs will send a email to the remaining candidates, informing them of the outcome of the search.
2. If any candidate who was interviewed requests information on the reason for their non-selection, the response given (by either the Search Committee Chair or Department Chair) should be succinct and should be based only on the information contained in the Interview Report. To avoid possible problems, the Director and Faculty Affairs should review all such emails before they are sent.

C. Late Emails

1. An email is sent to all applicants whose materials were submitted after the deadline and not considered for the search.

D. Search Cancelled

1. In the event a search is cancelled, each applicant is notified. The department determines who notifies the applicants on the Endorsement form.

Appendix

Recruitment Forms

These forms are available on the [Faculty Affairs website](#):

- Cover Sheet for Position Opportunity Announcement (POA) Form
- Professional Qualifications & Duties Position
- Advertising Request
- Approval to Interview Form
- Final Recruitment Report