

Barrier-free Hiring

Workshop on fair and equitable selection

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Agenda

1. Introductory work & check in
2. What and why of barrier-free hiring
3. Unconscious bias
4. Scenarios on different stages of the search
5. Reflections & follow-up work

Process

- Interactive: questions, ideas and concerns
- Please move about, come & go as needed
- Concepts need to be applied and further developed within search committee
- Safety and accommodations

Guidelines for participation

- No judgment
- Confidentiality
- Listen with respect and to learn
- Anything else to add?

Goals for the Workshop

- Discuss what barrier-free hiring means and why UVic emphasizes it
- Understand how to prepare, how bias affects decisions and how to use criteria
- Identify tips and approaches for a barrier-free process

What are your learning goals or questions?

Check-in

- Name
- Pronouns or how you identify if you'd like
- One question or idea you hope to learn



What we are talking about when we talk about barrier-free hiring

- **What is barrier-free hiring?**
- **What are the benefits? The alternatives?**
- **What are the key elements?**

Attend to four key elements to support effective, fair hiring:

Preparation

Bias

Criteria

Processes

Preparation

- What does a good committee look like?
- What do they do?
- How do you prepare?

What does a good search committee look like?

Representation
from
underrepresented
groups

Diverse and
meaningful gender
representation

Equity & diversity
champion as
member

All members
committed to
equity, diversity
and inclusion

All members open
to learning and
questioning their
assumptions

All members
committed to
following university
processes

Activity: What does a good search committee do?

The time at the start of a search is vital. Working effectively at this stage lays a foundation for a barrier-free hiring process.

In small groups: Generate a list of ways that individuals and this committee could prepare well for the upcoming search process (see table in Participant Workbook)

In the whole group: Share your top 3 ideas for individuals and for the committee

Good group preparation can remove barriers in a search.

Establish
guidelines and
expectations for
participation

Institute methods
to encourage
everyone to
participate

Decide how
decisions will be
made

Learn about COI

Consult with EQHR
and FR

Other?

Good individual preparation is also essential:

Make time in your
schedule for the
work

Review the
preparatory
materials and ask
questions

Participate in pre-
readings and
training

Identify any
personal COI

Consider the job
requirements and
identify key criteria

Other?

Activity: What does a search committee need to know about?

In small groups: Generate a list of learning topics.

Education is the foundation for a good search. This includes learning about:

Institution's priorities for equity and hiring, including preferential & limited hiring

Conflict of interest & apprehension of bias

Confidentiality and protecting privacy & personal info of candidates

Human rights law & accommodation

Negative impacts of unconscious bias on career paths and hiring

Methods for fair assessment of candidates

Bias

- Unconscious bias is everywhere and has significant impacts.
- What is unconscious bias?
- How does it affect our evaluations and decisions?
- What are ways to reduce the impact of unconscious bias?

Activity: We need to create an inclusive definition of “fit”

“Good fit” means many things:

- Valued abilities like working well with others, engaging in complementary research, collaborating
- Problematic expectations like similarity in culture, personality, gender, etc.

“Bad fit” also means many things:

- Belief that the person won’t fit in with the working culture and values of the unit
- Evidence that the person may engage in bullying or other problematic behaviour
- Some aspects of fit are essential for success, and some are discriminatory.
- “Fit” needs to relate to and be part of the other job criteria.
- Build an inclusive culture to help you recognize "good fit" in a wide diversity of candidates.

Individually: Write an inclusive definition of fit.

Group: Discuss definitions. Explore how broadly you can define "good fit" to include diverse cultures, personalities and communication styles, and skills in working together.

Criteria

- What are good criteria?
- How do we create them?
- How do we use them?

Good criteria lead to stronger selection processes

Why criteria matter

- Create unity of vision and focus for committee

What are good criteria?

- Define the best candidate, broadly and deeply, including equity, diversity and inclusion knowledge and skills
- Reflect core (vs. peripheral) responsibilities and skills (vs. qualifications)
- Fleshed out: description, evidence, weight
- Open to a diversity of persons; unbiased
- Are developed and understood by everyone in the committee

How to use criteria

- Basis for job ad, interview questions, and decisions

Activity: Develop criteria

Small groups:

- Flesh out one criterion (for example, research excellence or leadership skills) to include description and evidence
- Keep asking questions to dig deeper into the “why” and “what”

Big group:

- Share what you noticed while doing this work.

Processes

- What are good processes?
- How do we use them?
- What processes enable fair review of applications?

Activity: Processes and tips

Small groups:

- List key processes that support barrier-free committee work

Good processes keep bias in check. For example, your committee can

Build a diverse pool of candidates

Finalize criteria at start of process & use consistently

Keep focus on evidence, not speculation or assumptions

Ensure each member has equal opportunities to speak

Document decisions in relation to criteria

Review and challenge final hiring decision with respect to EDI

Tips for fairly considering applications

Fairly consider
impact of leaves on
research output
(e.g., slowdown)

Don't undervalue
non-traditional
scholarship

Ensure that
accommodation
needs and “fit” don't
affect assessments

Compare across
candidates to ensure
equivalent
assessments

Take time to review
and discuss

Look at all the
materials, not just
select items and
refer to notes

Reflections

- What can the committee do to remove barriers and unconscious bias in the search process?
- What have you learned?
- What is still left to do?
- What actions will you take to create a barrier-free search?

Learning support resources

- Guidelines from the Privacy Office
- Faculty & Librarians Collective Agreement Sec. 6 (Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination), Sec. 61 (Conflict of Interest and Apprehension of Bias), and Sec. 62 (Discrimination and Harassment Policies and Procedures)
- BC Human Rights code
- EQHR Hiring Resources page. Additional resources: accommodation, universal design, unconscious bias and more
- *Guide for Faculty and Librarian Recruitment--VPAC*
- UVic page on preferential and limited hiring (in development)

Follow-up Work for Search Committee

- Review *Guide to Faculty & Librarian Recruitment*
- Sign confidentiality and other papers
- Decide which guideline(s) you believe are most critical for a fair and successful search. Print a copy for each member.
- Discuss how biases may affect search and decisions
- Review materials on human rights, confidentiality and accommodation
- Develop criteria as a group, then use to draft job ad and interview questions/process. Include “fit” in the criteria
- Review the job ad to ensure it is unbiased
- Develop strong outreach strategy to build a diverse pool

Check-out: Biggest learning

Preparation

Bias

Criteria

Processes



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