

The Search Committee – Selection, Purpose, and Charge

OVERVIEW

Keck Graduate Institute (KGI) is committed to employing, in its best judgment, the best-qualified candidates for approved Institute positions while engaging in recruitment and selection practices that are in compliance with all applicable employment laws.

Search committees play a vital role in recruiting, evaluating, and recommending the most qualified candidates for employment by the Institute. Search committee members are often the first Institute employees that a candidate will meet. Each member has an opportunity to represent the Institute as a diverse and welcoming community while carrying out the search in accordance with Institute guidelines.

COMPOSITION OF SEARCH COMMITTEE

The HR director or hiring manager may appoint either the search committee chair who is charged with selecting the committee members or both the chair and the remaining members of the committee. The structure of search committees will vary among departments depending upon the position to be filled. The composition of a search committee is key to a broad and inclusive search and the committee should:

- Include individuals with different backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise.
- Include individuals with knowledge of the substantive area and the technical expertise to effectively evaluate candidates' qualifications.
- Represent a diverse cross-section of the Institute's population, including members with a demonstrated commitment to diversity.
- Include appropriate stakeholders such as peers of the new hire, supervisors, and those with similar positions.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

A search committee member cannot serve on a search committee when he/she is also an applicant for the position. In the event that a search committee member is well acquainted with or has a conflict of interest regarding an applicant, the member must:

- Notify HR or the search chair of the nature of the relationship; and
- Recuse him/herself from the entire committee if unable to perform an objective and equitable review of all candidates; or
- Recuse him/herself from the evaluation and interview of only the known applicant, with the agreement of HR and the chair.

Any questions regarding specific conflict situations should be directed to the HR director for further guidance.

Effective Date: January 1, 2019
Administrator: Human Resources
Approval Authority: Cabinet

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The search committee is responsible for writing the job description and qualifications (in partnership with HR), recruiting for the position, evaluating applicants, participating in the interview process, and recommending finalists. Members should be available to participate fully and consistently in the entire process and to perform duties as assigned by the search chair.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of the search committee need to maintain a strict level of confidentiality to protect the privacy of the candidates and to preserve the integrity of the search process. It is each committee member's responsibility not to discuss any details of the search with non-committee members. All public comments should be made exclusively by the search chair, in consultation with the HR Director and the Vice President, Institutional Development.

Written and electronic documentation pertaining to any given search may be subject to public record requests (Freedom of Information Act – FOIA) by candidates or other individuals. Requests may encompass committee member notes and e-mails. It is important to be mindful of the possibility of FOIA requests during the search process. Inquiries related to FOIA by candidates or committee members should be directed to the HR director.

RECRUITMENT

Search committees are responsible for fulfilling the Institute's requirement to demonstrate "good faith efforts" to diversify the applicant pool by proactively and aggressively recruiting for all open positions. Keck Graduate Institute is an equal opportunity employer and therefore provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

Recruitment should include strategies for attracting a diverse and qualified pool of applicants. All search committee members should be actively engaged in executing a recruitment plan, including utilizing professional contacts, engaging in formal and informal networking, utilizing non-traditional advertising such as listservs and online publications, discussing the position among members of relevant membership in professional organizations, and attending conferences.

All recruitment efforts need to be documented and provided to the search administrator or chair and HR.

APPLICANT EVALUATION

Search committee members may only use the minimum and preferred qualifications (as outlined on the job description) for the position in evaluating application materials. Members should discuss and agree on the criteria to be used in evaluating each qualification prior to reviewing application materials. All applicants must be objectively screened against the same criteria. For example; similar interview questions and standards.

While there is no standard screening method, a search matrix can be a useful tool in objectively assessing applicants' qualifications. Matrices can be as simple or complex as the committee members deem necessary to effectively evaluate the applicants.

There is no rule regarding the number of candidates a search committee must interview ("A" candidates). Only candidates meeting or exceeding minimum qualifications should be ranked.

Once interviews are conducted, HR will send an assessment survey to the committee members to provide feedback. The assessment provides an organized method of reviewing and rating the candidates.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND ASSUMPTION IN CANDIDATE EVALUATION

The evaluation of applicants should be objective and equitable, based solely on the qualifications in the job description/advertisement and the quality of the application materials. Research in this area has demonstrated that every person brings a lifetime of experience and cultural history that shapes their perspectives as related to candidate selection.

Good practices to counterbalance the effects of inherent bias include:

- Learning about research on biases and assumptions and striving to minimize their influence on the evaluation of candidates.
- Developing criteria for evaluating candidates and applying them consistently to all applicants.
- Spending sufficient time evaluating each applicant.
- Evaluating each candidate's entire application and not depending too heavily on only one element, such as the prestige of the degree-granting institution or post-doctoral program or the letters of recommendation.
- Explaining the decision for rejecting or retaining a candidate based on evidence in the candidate's file as related to the qualifications.
- Periodically evaluating the committee's decisions to consider whether qualified women and underrepresented groups are included and whether evaluation biases and assumptions are influencing decisions.

COMMITTEE OR PANEL INTERVIEWS

Typically, individuals on the committee or panel plan their questions based on interest or subject area and then divide them so each can interview the candidate. A structured committee or panel interview gives everyone who will have significant interactions with the new employee an opportunity to meet and interact with the candidate at the same time, helping make certain that the group makes the best possible selection.

MAKING AN OFFER

- The hiring manager and the HR department will collaborate to develop an appropriate offer of employment (including compensation) for the selected candidate.
- The HR department or hiring manager will extend the verbal offer of employment to the candidate selected.
- The HR department will prepare a written offer of employment for the candidate.
- Upon receipt of an employment offer letter signed by the candidate, the HR department will conduct a background check including reference checks. Once the background check is successfully completed, the position requisition will be closed.

RESPONSIBILITY

The HR department is responsible for the overall management of the recruitment and selection processes, including employment-related agency relationships, contract negotiations and maintenance, and the processing of new requisitions, offers, and employees.