



Professional Hiring Handbook



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Introduction

The search and hiring process can be a very labor intensive and time-consuming task for the search committee and administrative offices, but it is also one of the most rewarding. The staff members who serve on the search committee will collaborate, share their experiences and expertise to select a candidate who will ultimately meet the needs of the department, the university, and most importantly – students. Your willingness to work together and participate in this process is essential to the success of the search. This handbook serves as a guide to ensure consistency throughout the hiring process across departments.

As a university, we strive to recruit the most qualified candidates. Keep in mind that the search process has broader implications as well. An applicant's impression of Fitchburg State is based solely on the courtesy, timeliness, and professionalism of our communication as agents for the university. Furthermore, the ways in which searches are conducted reflect our individual, departmental, and institutional values.

The search and hiring process is taken very seriously and we demonstrate a strong commitment to affirmative action and equal opportunity throughout the process. Fitchburg State is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all regardless of age, ancestry, color, creed, cultural background, genetic information, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, National Guard or reserve status, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The search committee is charged with identifying a diverse pool of qualified candidates who will bring the skills, life experiences, and perspectives that can add to the quality and richness of our academic community.

Fitchburg State University Mission

Fitchburg State University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning and blends liberal arts and sciences and professional programs within a small university environment. Our comprehensive public university prepares students to lead, serve, and succeed by fostering lifelong learning and civic and global responsibility. A Fitchburg State education extends beyond our classrooms to include residential, professional, and co-curricular opportunities. As a community resource, we provide leadership and support for the economic, environmental, social, and cultural needs of North Central Massachusetts and the Commonwealth.

Affirmative Action Policy Statement

Fitchburg State University is committed to a policy of affirmative action, equal opportunity, non-discrimination and diversity. The university does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, veteran status, marital status, or national origin in its educational programs, activities, admissions, or employment policies. Additionally, the university is committed to providing a working and learning environment for our students, employees and other members of the university community, which values the diverse backgrounds of all people.

Affirmative Action Commitment in the Search Process

It is the responsibility of the university's affirmative action officer to review the search committee members to confirm that the members represent a diverse panel. Search committees should reflect the diversity of the university and ensure that unbiased and nondiscriminatory interviews take place. In addition, the affirmative action officer may serve on any search committee in which an underutilization of protected class members exists. Committee selection may be subject to change if it is not representative of the diversity within the department.

Full-Time Position Vacancies/Department Manager Responsibilities

The cabinet level manager will work with the president to advertise and fill positions. Once the review has been completed, the hiring manager will share the draft job description with Human Resources. Once approved the hiring manager will enter the information into the Forms Module in Interview Exchange.

Please see **Appendix A** for the job description. Also identify a search committee (composition must consist of three to five members and be diverse). Submit search committee membership to Human Resources. **See Appendix B for the Department Manager checklist.**

Advertising and Affirmative Action Outreach

All professional positions are automatically advertised on the Fitchburg State jobsite, NEHERC, higheredjobs.com, North Central Chamber of Commerce, and Central Mass Career Center. Postings need to include a specified closing date or review date. All advertisements include the university's Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer Statement. The university will also select diversity publications for advertising to assist in our efforts to recruit diverse candidates.

Departmental Advertising Responsibilities – The department manager may select additional advertising venues specific to the position. HR can assist in advertising. The department pays the cost associated with advertisement, and funds should be transferred to the HR budget. The HR P-Card will be used to expedite the payment process, when feasible.

We encourage departments to share vacancy announcements with colleagues and networks outside the university community to increase the candidate pool. The additional advertisement may consist of the following:

- Associations
- Professional Networks
- Special Interest Groups
- Publications
- Other

Search Committee Chairperson

The search committee chair is responsible for the overall recruitment process for the position, which includes being the primary liaison to human resources and committee members. The chair is also responsible for providing direction to the committee in preparation for the search process.

In addition to screening applications, interviewing candidates, and selecting three finalists, the chair is also responsible for updating applicant statuses on the jobsite, reviewing/compiling interview questions, coordinating Google Meet and campus interviews, scheduling rooms for interviews, assisting with candidate travel accommodations and procurement paperwork, conducting reference verifications, gathering outstanding candidate information, and organizing search materials. The department administrative assistant may assist the chair with administrative details.

Applicants are able to track their status using Interview Exchange. It is important that the status be updated as decisions are made about each applicant (this includes applicants that withdraw, do not meet minimum qualifications, selected for interview, etc.). The search committee chair is responsible for updating the applicant statuses throughout the hiring process. This must be completed for all candidates that are selected for google meets and campus interviewed only. Additionally, at the conclusion of the search the chair will work with HR to

close the search. We encourage the chair to notify by phone the finalists that were selected for on campus interviews, but were not the candidate selected for the said position once the search has concluded. **Please see *Appendix C* for the search committee chair checklist.**

Search Committee Members

Search committees need to be composed of three to five individuals who will bring a variety of perspectives and have sensitivity to equity and diversity issues. When possible, women and minorities from within the department should be represented on all search committees. In addition, the Affirmative Action Officer may serve on search committees in which an underutilization of protected class members exists. Search committee members are responsible for participating in screening candidates for interview, the interview process, selecting three finalists, and complying with equal opportunity and affirmative action requirements.

Search and Hire Process Training

All members of the committee shall be trained on the search and hire process prior to reviewing candidate materials, to ensure proper guidelines are followed. The Office of Human Resources will schedule training dates for all search committees. If members cannot attend the scheduled training, contact Human Resources at x3172 to schedule a training time.

Access to the Jobsite

Search committee members will receive access to the jobsite once they have completed the in person search training biannually and the online training module. A default login and temporary password from Interview Exchange will be sent to the fitchburgstate.edu email address for each committee member to finalize their accounts. Once an account has been established, it will be used for future searches. Log in at <https://www.interviewexchange.com/login.jsp>

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of the utmost importance. The candidate's information, including the status of their application, must remain confidential throughout the process and thereafter. Search committee members may not contact the candidate individually or discuss the qualifications of a candidate outside of the search committee. Candidates have a right to expect privacy during the initial stages of the interview process. Confidentiality must be maintained until the candidate is invited to campus and accepts the invitation.

Conflict of Interest

No member of the bargaining unit shall serve on a search committee or otherwise participate in any way in the hiring of a member of the bargaining unit if to do so would constitute a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. No unit member, for example, shall serve on a search committee if their spouse or domestic partner is a candidate for the position.

Search Materials and Documentation

All materials relating to the search should be maintained electronically. The Office of Human Resources has created templates that may be used and/or altered by the committee to assist with maintaining the search process. Materials should be organized in a manner that allows for easy access to the details of the search, and the final outcome. The committee should identify a clerk for the committee. The role of the clerk is to document the search process e.g. meeting dates, criteria review, interview questions, Google Meet sessions, etc. This will assist in preserving the search process in case there are any legal challenges. Search information is maintained for three

years after the search has been completed. The search documents should be sent electronically to Human Resources at humanresources@fitchburgstate.edu. *See Appendix D for a sample.*

******The search committee must ensure that a consistent rationale is provided for each decision, reflecting the candidate's ability or inability to meet the standard qualifications of the position. Please be certain that when documenting the decisions for non-selection, the reasoning is consistent.

Application and Screening Process

All applicants must apply online at [Jobs at Fitchburg State](#) to be eligible for employment. If the committee directly receives a resume, it should be forwarded to Human Resources. Search committee members will utilize the jobsite to review candidates.

The committee will meet to address qualifications beyond the minimum that the candidates should possess to be successful in the role. Screening applicants is significant work, so a rating sheet helps in screening applicant material (**see Appendix E**). Information known about a candidate on a personal level, outside of the application materials submitted by the candidate, may not be used in the evaluation of the candidate. Search committee members are cautioned to limit their evaluation of the candidate to the material submitted, and ultimately, the information gained in the interview, viewed against the required/preferred qualifications. Some helpful hints for a better applicant screening experience are below.

- Review the job announcement for the position you are attempting to fill.
- Note minimum requirements needed and refer to them often as you review candidate materials.
- Do not conduct an internet search seeking information about any applicant. The only materials and information considered in evaluating a candidate should be that submitted or disclosed by the applicant in the interview process.
- As each applicant is reviewed, identify the reason(s) why the applicant has not been advanced. These reasons must be articulated and defensible. Human Resources can help Search Committees understand what qualifies as legally defensible.
- If an applicant does not meet the minimum qualifications, do not consider the applicant.
- Discuss any red flags or areas of concerns with Human Resources prior to interviewing.
- Review material to see if it is personalized to Fitchburg State.
- Review for typos and incorrect grammar.
- Ignore the applicant's name, address, and personal information to limit subconscious biases.
- Check work experience for applicability to the available position, length of time in each position, promotions or awards received, and the reason for leaving each position.
- Note gaps in employment but do not assume they were caused by negative reasons.
- Check educational background for qualifications necessary for successful job performance.
- Note special skills.
- Note any pertinent questions that arise when reviewing candidate materials on a separate piece of paper. (Never write on a material.) Discuss these questions with the search committee. This may provide assistance with forming interview questions.
- Divide the candidates into three folders – YES for those that closely match job requirements and for which a Google Meeting screen is appropriate, MAYBE for those who meet some requirements and may be considered secondarily, and NO for those who do not meet the requirements at all.
- If necessary, screen the top group again to narrow down the candidates even further. On average, about 6 – 8 candidates per open position should be sufficient for first round interviews.

- Notify HR (humanresources@fitchburgstate.edu) and hiring manager the top 6-8 candidate's names in the "yes" folder for review prior to scheduling the first round interviews.
- HR will review the diversity of the candidate pool and share information with the search committee chair on the makeup of the pool and whether it reflects diversity.
- Once the committee has screened the 6-8 candidates, the group will identify their top 3 candidates for campus interviews.

Human Resources can assist in the decision-making process, identifying critical stages in the recruitment process where the university can demonstrate its commitment to affirmative action/diversity, and answer any questions that you may have pertaining to the search. As a reminder, questions relating to immigration and naturalization should be brought directly to Human Resources.

Google Meet First Round Interview

A Google Meet interview is required before candidates can be invited to campus for onsite interviews. The first round of interviews should be conducted with 6 – 8 candidates, all of whom should be deemed serious candidates. Prior to setting up Google Meet interviews Human Resources will review the diversity of the pool. Move candidates to Google Meet interview folder in Interview Exchange and notify HR to review the pool.

The search committee chairperson is responsible for preparing the format of the interview. This preparation includes, organizing the interview questions, determining the interview schedule, distributing relevant handouts, establishing an interview timeframe, and introducing the committee to the candidate. All members of the search committee must be present at all interviews for consistency. The search committee chairperson should ensure that everyone is available when creating the interview schedule. The department manager remains separate from the search committee, but may participate in the interviewing of candidates.

These interviews should be structured with a list of interview questions to be asked of all the candidates. Follow up questions are acceptable. One of the key steps to a successful search is maintaining consistency throughout the process. Additionally, it is recommended that all search committees use a rating system when evaluating candidate's responses to the questions. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has strict guidelines for what questions are considered discriminatory. **Review Appendix F Conducting the Interview.** *Note: During Google Meet screening briefly describe the position, salary range, and ask if the candidate remains interested in still being considered for the position.*

Selection of Finalists

After the first round of interviews, the search committee chairperson will forward the three finalist's names to the Office of Human Resources and the department manager of the area. Once the department manager reviews the three finalists, interviews may be scheduled. No more than three finalists may be invited to campus. A search that produces less than three candidates will be reviewed by the department manager and Human Resources, to determine if the search should be continued, canceled, or if a new search is required.

Campus Interviews - See Appendix H

The search committee chairperson is responsible for scheduling the interview appointments with the search committee, department manager, department members, human resources and a tour of campus. Depending on the position, the university may wish to host an open forum or a smaller forum with specific community leaders and peers relevant to the role. The candidate's application materials may be shared with interviewers participating in

the interview process prior to the candidate's interview day. Remember to redact the candidate's personal information.

Admissions will provide campus tours to candidates interviewing. Contact the main office at ext. 3144 for an appointment. The tour will provide the candidate an opportunity to see the campus through a student's perspective.

Once available dates and times have been established, the search committee chairperson should contact each finalist and invite them to campus. Upon acceptance of the invitation, the chairperson should finalize the schedule for the day with all parties, including a tour of campus. An agenda should be provided to the candidate with all relevant information. ***This link provides the candidates with some helpful information*** **Professional Candidate Information.**

Parking Permits

The search committee chairperson should contact Parking Services to obtain a visitor parking permit for the finalists that are driving to campus. These permits are required of any guest parking a vehicle on campus. The chairperson may obtain the permit in advance of the interview by calling 978-665-3219, visiting the web page at [Parking Services](#) or email parkingservices@fitchburgstate.edu. It is recommended that a designee of the committee greet the finalist at a designated visitor parking area with the parking permit or provide the pass electronically prior to their arrival.

Candidate Travel Reimbursement

The department manager will provide the budgetary line to the chairperson regarding travel arrangements and expenses for the candidates. The chair is responsible for gathering all pertinent expense information and documents necessary for reimbursement to be made to the candidate. If chairs have any questions concerning what are applicable expenses and/or related questions, contact the Office of Financial Services.

Candidates are responsible for their own travel arrangements and expenses. Since the cost of airfare and other travel expenses may be considerably less thirty days in advance and at a minimum of fourteen days' in advance, committees should do their best to provide the candidates with as much advance notice of the interview date(s) as possible. Local hotel information, including information, is available by viewing [New to Fitchburg](#).

Following the campus interview, the candidate should submit a W-9 and all itemized receipts, to the search committee chair. For convenience, receipts may be scanned and sent electronically. The search committee chair is responsible for completing the Trust Fund Payment Voucher and submitting the reimbursement documentation to Financial Services in a timely fashion.

The departmental assistant will help in the preparation of reimbursement paperwork. The FOAPAL is: T65-xxxx-J98-RECR-D01. The "xxxx" is the department's organization code. The Trust Fund Payment Voucher may be found at [Financial Services](#). **All forms must be submitted prior to June 30th of the academic year to receive reimbursement.**

Candidates

- Mileage reimbursement as of 2025 is \$0.70 per mile for personal vehicle mileage. (May be subject to change.)
- Mileage reimbursement does not require odometer readings. Mileage from the candidate's home address to Fitchburg State and return are determined through MapQuest.

- Travel related expenses will be reimbursed for air, train, car rental, meals. Hospitality and meal taxes are reimbursable; however, state sales tax in Massachusetts is non-reimbursable.
- Sales tax incurred for necessary expenses while traveling out of state is reimbursable. (May be subject to change.)

Candidate Lunch Passes

Each department should utilize the lunch pass template; **(see Appendix K)** to create electronic lunch passes for the candidate/s and the members of the committee that will participate in lunch. The departmental assistant should print the number of passes for the committee members attending lunch with the candidate and note the FOAPAL to be billed.

If the search committee brings a candidate to dinner as part of the interview process, per university and Commonwealth guidelines, no alcohol expenses can be reimbursed. The university encourages committee members to refrain from partaking in libations during the interview process to minimize any potential violations. A scanned copy of the dinner receipt with a prepared Trust Fund Payment Voucher with the dates, candidates name and faculty member attendees should be submitted to Financial Services in a timely fashion. The forms can be found at [Financial Services](#).

Reference Checks

When you invite candidates to campus, request a list of references from the candidate. This list should include the names of former supervisors, and co-workers, not friends. Let the candidate know that after the on-campus interview you will be contacting their references. The search committee chair, or designee, is responsible for contacting references by telephone and documenting the discussion. Of the three, one of them needs to be an immediate supervisor or person that has some professional oversight of the candidate. See Appendix K.

Reference checking is essential to verify a candidate's background. Combined with proper interviewing techniques, reference checking should give you added assurance that the intuitive sense that you have about a candidate's abilities to successfully perform in the position is well founded. Checking a candidate's references should involve a factual investigation of education and employment.

References, based on a former employer's past perceptions of the candidate's performance, can be used to predict how this candidate may perform. With that said, finding people who are actually willing to take time to thoughtfully answer questions based on their own experiences with the candidate is not always easy. Many employers advise managers to limit their comments that are subjective in nature. Try anyway! Sometimes what is not said is enough said!

Finalist Recommendation Process

Once the reference checks are complete, the search committee should identify the strengths and limitations of each candidate in writing and forward to the department manager. The department manager will make a recommendation regarding the three finalists in writing to area VP/Cabinet member and Human Resources. The VP/Cabinet member will make a recommendation to Human Resources along with a hiring salary. Human Resources will review the recommendation with the President to determine the final candidate.

Offer of Employment

The department manager will make an offer of employment to the top finalist, with the president's final approval to do so, and determine a start date (ideally, the start date is on a Monday and at least 10 business days from the offer date). The salary offered should be within the pre-approved range. Once the finalist has accepted, the department manager should notify human resources. If the finalist declines the position or counteroffers outside of the pre-approved salary range, the department manager should speak with Human Resources.

Background Screening

Once the contingent offer of employment has been provided, the Office of Human Resources will complete a background screening and CORI/SORI (Criminal Offender Record Information/Sex Offender Registry Information) on the finalist. The offer of employment is contingent on the successful completion of the background screening and CORI/SORI. These screenings are another method to secure additional information related to the candidate. The department manager will notify the candidate that they will receive a generated email from the vendor, HireImage, at the time of the offer. This email will be sent to their personal email account for completion. It is imperative that the candidate complete this request in a timely manner. The Office of Human Resources will notify the department manager once the screening is completed.

Hiring Procedures and Paperwork

To complete the search, the search committee chair will select the final candidate as hired and notify Human Resources to initiate the onboarding process within the Interview Exchange platform. This action sends an email to the finalist's personal email address. The email will contain instructions to complete onboarding forms. Completion of these forms are essential to starting the onboarding process.

Submission of Search Materials

The search committee must submit both Google Meet and campus interview questions, committee notes, reference checks, and any other applicable documents used in the interview process to the Office of Human Resources in electronic format to humanresources@fitchburgstate.edu. This information is stored for three years electronically in the case there are any legal actions. Human Resources will work with the search committee chairperson to close out the search and send final notification to the unsuccessful candidates. The search chair contacts the finalists that were not hired to update them on the status of their candidacy.

Onboarding

It is important to maintain ongoing communication with the newest colleague in your department. New staff members should feel welcomed and have resources within the university prior to their arrival. The department manager should prepare to assist the new employee during their transition:

- Identify a member(s) of the department to be a key contact for the new employee during their transition.
- Work with the department assistant and new staff member to arrange their office, order supplies and any other miscellaneous items they might need prior to their arrival.
- Work with Capital Planning and Maintenance for assistance with office location, furniture, etc.
- Complete the [New Employee Data Form](#) as part of the hiring process.
- Verify technology needs of the new hire and work with the Technology Department.

If the new employee is relocating to the area, they may be interested in working with *Home Plus Benefits*. This program offers a complimentary real estate benefits and savings program to assist Fitchburg State employees with

their real estate transactions, including buying and selling. The program also offers discounts on various moving expenses. Department managers and search committee members can suggest visiting the web site at [Home Plus](#).

New Employee Orientation

The Office of Human Resources will contact the new staff member in advance of their start date. An individual orientation will be scheduled, which will include topics such as payroll, policies, and benefits. In addition, new employees will be taken to the OneCard Office to get their campus ID. The Technology Department will contact the new employee directly about picking up their laptop or meeting them in their office if it is a desktop on the employees first day.

In the event that any additional needs or questions arise, contact the Office of Human Resources for assistance.

Appendices A-K

- A. Job Description Template
- B. Department Manager Checklist
- C. Search Committee Chair Checklist
- D. Search Committee Meeting Notes
- E. Sample Rating Chart
- F. Conducting the Interview
- G. Sample Campus Interview Schedule
- H. Campus Visit Guidelines
- I. Travel and Reimbursement Guidelines
- J. Reference Check Form
- K. Recommendation to Hire Template

Appendix A
Job Description Template
 FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

APA Job Description

Incumbent:	Official Title:	Functional Title:
Supervisor:	Department:	Union: APA
Position #:	CUPA Code:	IPEDS:
FLSA Status:	Contract:	Date:

SUPERVISION EXERCISED:

GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES:

DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

1.

Add as the last duty

Performs other duties as assigned by the supervisor.

QUALIFICATIONS:

1.

Add these two statements at the end of the qualifications

Satisfactorily pass a check conducted by the Criminal History Systems Board (CORI check).

Ability to perform above duties with or without reasonable accommodation.

Employee's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Department Manager Checklist

- ☐ Prepare a job description.
- ☐ Request to fill a position submit a requisition through [Hirezon/Interview Exchange](#)
- ☐ The completed job description is submitted as part of the requisition process
- ☐ Email humanresources@fitchburgstate.edu with the name of the search committee members and identify the chair. All committee members are required to participate in the Search & Hiring Process Training biannually and complete the online training modules (Conducting a Job Interview and Implicit and Microaggression Awareness).
- ☐ Advertisement – identify web-based advertising specific to the position, publications and professional organizations to Human Resources (if the web advertisement requires a membership/password to access the site, please include this information).
- ☐ Visit university job site to review applicants

Once the finalist has accepted the position, create a smooth onboarding process.

- ☐ Identify a member(s) of the department to be a key contact for the new employee during their transition.
- ☐ Work with the department assistant and new staff member to arrange their office, order supplies and any other miscellaneous items they might need prior to their arrival.
- ☐ Work with the Office of Capital Planning and Maintenance for assistance with office location, furniture, etc.
- ☐ Verify technology needs of the new hire.
- ☐ Complete the [New Employee Data Form](#).
- ☐ Review the Onboarding Guide
 - ☐ Pre-Arrival Checklist
 - ☐ Topics for Week One
 - ☐ Topics for First Month
 - ☐ Monthly Check-Ins
 - ☐ Sample Training Schedule
 - ☐ Sample Schedule (first day, but could highlight other other meetings, etc.)

Appendix C

Search Committee Chair Checklist

- ☐ Establish a committee meeting to begin the recruitment process. The first meeting should be used to establish dates and times for committee meetings, rooms to meet or google meet, and establish a timeline for review of candidates, 1st round interviews, on campus interviews, etc.
 - ☐ Verify that all committee members are trained on search and hiring process prior to review of candidate materials. HR could provide search training at the first committee meeting if that is helpful.
 - ☐ Direct committee members to create a login for the jobsite.
 - ☐ Review the minimum qualifications and as a committee establish criteria beyond the minimum requirement to assist with bringing forward your ideal candidates; this must be done prior to reviewing candidate materials, as this will allow for all members of the committee to evaluate candidates similarly.
 - ☐ Establish a timeline for review of applications.
- ☐ Prior to establishing preliminary interviews with 6-8 candidates, notify Human Resources (humanresources@fitchburgstate.edu) that the candidates selected for the Google Meet/Zoom interviews are in the “yes” folder. Once you hear back from the HR & department manager, you may schedule the Google Meet interviews.
- ☐ Establish questions for Google Meet interviews.
- ☐ Coordinate the Google Meet interview with candidates. Provide date, time of the interview, and secure a phone number from the candidate in case there are technical issues.
- ☐ All search committee members must be present for interviews.
- ☐ Identify three finalists for on-campus interviews, in collaboration with the committee. Move the finalists to the campus interviewed folder and leave the other candidates in the Google/Phone folder.
- ☐ Notify the department manager and HR who the committee would like to invite for campus interviews.
- ☐ Once finalists are reviewed and approved, scheduling on-campus interviews may occur:
 - ☐ Verify availability of the department head, Vice President, HR, staff participating in interview, & the committee.
 - ☐ Confirm interview schedule.
 - ☐ Contact the candidate to schedule the interview and ask for a list of references. Confirm and provide an agenda with whom they will be meeting prior to their interview via email. References will be checked for all finalists after the campus visit. At least one supervisor needs to be included.
 - ☐ Schedule rooms and technology needs if any for on-campus interviews (make certain rooms accessible for all candidates).
 - ☐ Schedule to meet with the committee to determine appropriate questions, handouts, tours, food arrangements for on-campus interviews.
 - ☐ Search committee chair will coordinate the arrival and departure of candidates to the university or assign a designee. Escort candidates from place to place and make certain that all escorts introduce the candidate to the groups they are interviewing.
 - ☐ Verify that all pertinent candidate information materials are collected (contact information for references).

Once on campus interviews conclude:

- ☐ Conduct reference checks (former supervisors, and co-workers, not friends) – Sample Appendix J
- ☐ Collect travel receipts and coordinate travel reimbursement with candidates if applicable.
- ☐ Update applicants’ status in the Fitchburg State jobsite.

- ☐ Convene committee to determine the strengths and limitations of finalists and include the reference information in writing. The hiring manager makes the final hiring recommendation. Sample Hiring Documentation template Appendix K.
- ☐ Submit strengths and limitations of the finalist in writing in no ranking order and references to the department hiring manager.
- ☐ Submit the following to HR
 - Search summary
 - Rubric (rating sheet)
 - 3 references for each finalist
 - Hiring Recommendation memo
 - Search questions (Google Meet & on-campus) & overview of the responses to the questions from each candidate.
 - Any evaluation tool used to collect feedback

Appendix D
Search Committee Meeting Notes

Meeting Date	Clerk	Members Present	Notes	Action Items

Appendix E
Sample Rating Chart

Name of Candidates	CV Received	Letter Received	References Included	Education	Years Exp	Specific Qualifications	Total

Notes on Rubric:

Minimum Qualifications: Candidates must meet all minimum qualifications to be considered for the position. (Establish additional preferred qualifications to assist in the interview process. The minimum qualifications will not provide enough in-depth experience about the candidates.)

Provide each candidate a number between 0-5, five being the most qualified.

- 0 = not reflected in CV or letter, 1= mentioned but no additional information; 3= has significant experience

Appendix F

Conducting the Interview

Interviews are scheduled and conducted by the search committee or, in the case of a classified position for which no search committee is required, the appropriate supervisor/administrator.

Interviewers and search committees have critical responsibilities.

1. To review and recommend candidates based on job-related qualifications.
2. To comply with legal requirements in the hiring process; and
3. To follow the university's affirmative action policy and processes.

The following are some basic guidelines with regard to fulfilling the above responsibilities. Although not every question is answered about which screening/interviewing techniques are lawful, the guide is to serve as a resource tool. Interviewers and search committee chairpersons should consult with human resources for specific guidance when needed.

At the beginning and during interview:

1. Establish rapport. The interview setting should be conducive to good communication. A warm greeting and "small talk" serve to relax both the interviewers and candidates and establish mutual confidence. However, be careful not to ask any questions that may later be viewed by the interviewee as discriminatory (marital status, family, etc.)
2. Gather predictive information. The keys to controlling the interview are careful, active listening combined with good use of questions. Through a variety of questions and comments, the interviewer may encourage things that may be important. **Listen to what is said and what is not said** in response to your questions – do not assume an answer. Ask finalists to support their statements by giving examples.
3. When the search committee interviews, it is advisable to meet immediately following each interview for a feedback session. Also suggested is the use of a rating/comment form for committee members to note candidate responses to questions during an interview. Do not rely on memory. Remember, however, that note taking during an interview may make the interviewee uncomfortable.
4. The use of words and phrases such as "why," "how," and "describe," or "tell me about" will yield more complete answers than leading questions or those that require only a "yes" or "no" answer.
5. The purpose of the interview is to obtain a clear and balanced picture of the finalist's qualifications for the job without indicating the responses you hope to hear. Avoid leading questions such as "do you agree" or "you must have liked..." as they may influence the interviewee's response. Remain objective.
6. Be watchful of your own non-verbal communication as well as that of the candidate. Be cognizant, however, of cultural diversity and remain objective. Keep focused on what you are hearing – do not appear preoccupied.
7. Maintain control of the interview. Time should be a consideration but never rush an interview.
8. Describe the position, the duties, level of authority/supervision and support systems available, and describe the university as well. Inform the interviewee at the beginning of the interview that an opportunity will be provided during the latter part of the interview for the interviewee to ask questions. Respond to the questions raised. An interview is a two-way process. Provide sufficient facts, both favorable and unfavorable about the position and the institution in a straightforward manner so the candidate can make an intelligent decision on the acceptability of the position.
9. Thanking the interviewee for their time and outlining what will happen next is an honest and comfortable way to end the interview. Give the finalist an appropriate date by which you expect to take any follow up action or make any decisions.

10. References should be contacted. Listen carefully to what is said and how the reference responds to your inquiries. Listen for hesitations, silences.

Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

General

Federal and/or state laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, veteran status, marital status, or national origin.

A cardinal rule when interviewing is to avoid asking questions of candidates if the answers could not properly be considered in making the hiring decision. Even if the candidate brings up or makes a comment related to an area that is unlawful, do not pursue it. Stay with questions that have to do with the candidate's education, training, work history and job-related skills.

Discriminatory behavior is improper, even when it is not intended. The use of certain questions would not necessarily show that you mean to discriminate but such questions can be used, and have been used in a discriminatory way. Therefore, the following subjects should be avoided because they may show gender-based discrimination.

- Marital status or non-marital arrangements;
- Spouse's employment;
- How spouse feels about candidate's working or traveling;
- Child care arrangements

You may cite the hours required of the job and ask whether the candidate will have difficulty meeting them (ask of both sexes, however). You may also ask about the candidate's availability for weekend or evening work **if** the job requires. If the candidate indicates a need for religious observance, this fact cannot be used in the hiring decision unless "reasonable accommodation" for the religious observance would be an "undue hardship" for the university. Specific guidance is available through the Office of Human Resources and Affirmative Action.

Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits **all** questions about a candidate's disability at the pre-offer stage of interview. It is **unacceptable** to ask an interviewee whether they are disabled or about the nature of a disability even if it is an obvious disability. You may however ask a disabled candidate questions about their **ability** to perform job-related functions. If the disability is obvious and the interviewee does not wish to address/discuss the disability or does not request reasonable accommodations yet indicates that they are able to perform the major functions of the job, it is unlawful to disqualify the candidate – you cannot discriminate on the basis of the person's disability.

If you are not certain an interviewee is a person with a disability, you may ask if they know of any reason why they would not be able to perform the essential functions of the job they are seeking. If the answer is yes and reasons are stated there should be follow up questions regarding possible accommodations that would assist the candidate in performing the major functions of the job.

After a job offer has been made, you can ask about disabilities and conduct medical examinations and the offer can be conditioned on the applicant's answers to the questions and the results of an examination.

Note: The EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Council) takes the position that if the employer reasonably believes an applicant will need accommodation to perform the job, the employer can ask limited questions about the accommodation at the pre-offer stage. However, the employer is still prohibited from asking about the disability itself (excerpted from CUPA, Legal Watch, January 1996).

National Origin

It is acceptable to inquire into a candidate's ability to read, write or speak a foreign language where the position requires those skills. However, it is inadvisable to ask the candidate how they acquired these skills if it would disclose national origin or descent.

It is **legal** to ask if a candidate is a U.S. citizen; however, it is **illegal** to require (with very few exceptions) that they be U.S. citizens to be hired. It is also legal to ask an alien if they are authorized to work in the U.S. However, you may not ask the candidate to show you specific documents (i.e. green card) to verify work authorization. The candidate, if offered the job, is to present to the employer any combination of [legally acceptable documents](#) of their choice to establish work authorization within three days of their date of hire.

Organizations and Memberships

Inquiries about professional memberships related to the job are acceptable (i.e. Chemical Engineering Society). Questions about organizations whose name or character indicate the member's economic or social class, race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or national origin should be avoided – country clubs, social clubs, religious clubs, fraternal orders, etc. are not acceptable.

Never inquire about activities in political or civil rights organizations or ask the applicant whether they are involved in discrimination complaints or lawsuits.

It is also inadvisable to ask any questions designed to disclose age, arrest records, credit/financial status, home/car ownership, type of military discharge, political affiliation, sexual orientation or religious beliefs.

The Office of Human Resources and Affirmative Action has resources to assist search committees/administrators to conduct effective interviews and to clarify the legal points in the interview process.

What is implicit Bias? Implicit bias occurs when individuals make judgments about people based on gender, race or other prohibited factors without even realizing they're doing it.

Our responsibility

Community Values and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion

Diverse, equitable and inclusive teams have tangible benefits

Legal Compliance obligations

Five Common Biases

Affinity Bias – the tendency to connect or resonate with candidates who share similar backgrounds, experiences and interests.

Anchor Bias – The tendency to focus on the first piece of information about a candidate, or the first candidate in the pool, and using that as the baseline for other decisions about that individual candidate or other candidate or other candidates in the pool.

Elitist Bias – Judgment about a candidate based on where they have worked, lived or earned their educational degrees.

Confirmation Bias – Once we have made a decision, we tend to seek evidence that confirms it and ignore evidence that refutes it.

Halo Effect – When a characteristic, typically positive, about a person is used to make an overall judgment about that person.

Standardize the Interview: In non-standardized interviews, there may be a set of questions guiding the conversation but there is little consistency across the experience for candidates. Often this is where unconscious

bias can manifest itself and candidates don't have the same opportunity to effectively tell their story and showcase their fit for a role. In a standardized interview, each candidate is asked the same questions in the same order.

This type of interview process helps to reduce unconscious bias by "focusing on the factors that have a direct impact on performance.

Discuss first impressions of candidates immediately

Standard Thoughtful interview questions and schedules.

Weighted candidate assessment rubric/assessment tool

Include successfully supporting and advancing diversity as an evaluation criterion.

Design a decision-making environment that can mitigate-bias - the role of the search advocate

****Search committees are trained every two years and complete the online training modules for Conducting Job Interviews and Implicit Bias and Microaggression Awareness.**

Appendix G
Sample Campus Interview Schedule

Date of Interview	Time	Location
Search Committee		
Department Manager		
Department if applicable		
Lunch		
Vice President or designee		
Meeting w/ Human Resources		
Tour		

Appendix H

Campus Visit Guidelines

- Assign a member of the committee to serve as the host for each candidate.
- Arrange a meeting place and time to greet the candidate to campus. You may wish to meet them outside if driving, as the university is expansive.
- The candidate should have an escort at all times.
- If some “free time” is scheduled, be sure to arrange a space for the candidate.
- Maintain equity in the interview process, all candidates should receive the same time with the committee - no more, no less. If there is an internal candidate, they should be provided the same interview experience as the external candidates.
- Conduct interviews with appropriate members of the university.
- Refer all benefit and retirement questions to the Office of Human Resources and Payroll Services:
<https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/resources/faculty-staff/human-resources-payroll-services>
- Provide information to the candidate about the university, and allow for enough time for the candidate to ask questions.
- Contact the Admissions office to schedule a tour of campus from the student perspective as part of the candidate’s day on campus.
- Remember to ask candidates if they need any accommodations.
- Ask the candidate their preferred pronouns, so you can share with the search committee to be more inclusive and inviting.

Appendix I

Travel Reimbursement Information

We appreciate your interest in employment with Fitchburg State University, and welcome you to our campus. We encourage all candidates traveling to the institution to use the most economical choice for transportation, car rental and lodging options.

To assist you with your arrangements we are providing the following information. Please note that rates are subject to change.

Booking through one of the online search engines may provide some very economical package options.

Overnight Candidates

Mode of travel:

- Airline
- Train
- Bus
- Personal vehicle

Car Rental - please note the University is only allowed to pay the cost of the daily car rental fee for the period of time that the candidate is here for an interview. *(If a candidate chooses to accept the insurance and liability waivers etc. that the car rental agencies offer, those expenses will be the responsibility of the candidate.)*

Hotel lodging: Candidates can reserve a room at one of the following for a one night stay to receive the university discounted rates.

Double Tree by Hilton - Leominster, MA - Fitchburg State University has a special corporate rate with the Double Tree by Hilton (99 Erdman Way Leominster, MA 01453).

To make a reservation, please call them directly at 978-534-9000 or reserve rooms online at Fitchburg State University discounted rate, which is now 10% off their best available rate

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/deeplink/?ctyhocn=ORHLEDT&corporateCode=0002854040>

(Do not book a room from any pre-paid booking sites, like Expedia, Kayak, AAA, Travelocity, etc., once you book a room with these types of sites Hilton cannot adjust the rate or refund money).

Howarth House/Bed & Breakfast – Fitchburg, MA - Located within walking distance of Fitchburg State University at 81 Ross Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420. During the week room costs are \$150-\$175 and the weekend costs are \$175-\$195; these prices include the discount that Fitchburg State University receives.

The owners are Ryan and Sarah Jordan. To reserve this special rate contact 978-342-2851.

www.howarthhouse.com

Non-Local Candidates/Overnight

- Every expense must have an original receipt in order to be reimbursed. The original receipt must indicate the balance has been paid.
- An itemized receipt is required for meal reimbursement.
- Candidates are reimbursed for travel, if there are extenuating charges for travel, the university will assess if additional funding is available and will notify the candidate.

Local Candidates/Non-overnight

- Personal vehicle mileage, train/bus fare are reimbursable expenses.
- Every expense must have an original receipt in order to be reimbursed.
- An itemized receipt is required for meal reimbursement.
- If travel requires additional funds please contact the search committee chair to communicate the difference required for travel, in the case of extenuating circumstances. The university will assess if additional funding are available and will notify the candidate.

General Information

- Mileage reimbursement is \$0.70 per mile, subject to change.
- Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

Process

Each candidate is responsible for their travel arrangements and expenses. Following the interview, reimbursement will be forwarded to the candidate after appropriate receipts and forms have been completed and submitted to the search committee chairperson.

When a candidate completes their travel, the candidate may submit a scanned copy of their receipts to the search committee chair. Please make certain that their name, mailing address (home address) and phone number is included with the expense reimbursement request. Attaching an itemized list of expense reimbursements with the original receipts is very helpful. A completed W-9 form shall also be included. A W-9 form is required in order to process candidate expense reimbursement.

Thank you for your review of this information. If you have any questions, please contact the search committee chair.

Lunch Pass

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

lunch voucher: Date _____
Name _____

Bill to: _____ Department
T65- -J56-RECR-D01

Appendix J

Reference Check Form

The form below is a guide and can be modified. Remember to give candidates advanced notice that you will be checking their references.

- Introduce yourself and state purpose of your call
- Confirm that it is a convenient time to talk
- Briefly describe the position the applicant has applied
- Confirm the relationship between the person giving the reference and the applicant
- Verify basic duties such as job title, duties, salary, dates of employment
- Ask questions related to the position and clarify any unclear or unanswered questions the committee may have about the candidate.
- Be consistent!

Reference Conducted by: _____ Date: _____

Candidate Name: _____ Position Applied for: _____

Reference Name: _____ Relationship to Candidate: _____

University/Company: _____

General Format of Reference Check:

- What was the nature and length of your relationship with the candidate?
- How would you describe the candidate's leadership skills?
- Why did they leave the position (if relevant)?
- Is the candidate more of an individual contributor or team-oriented person? Why do you think this?
- How do you think coworkers would describe the candidate?
- How did the candidate deal with conflict?
- What are the candidate's key accomplishments or impact on the organization?
- What is/are the candidate's strength(s)?
- In what area(s) can the candidate continue to improve?
- Did the candidate adhere to leave policies, were they responsible as it relates to attendance/tardiness (frequent absences, tardiness, etc.)? *(When speaking with a manager or something with direct supervision over candidate)*
- Is the candidate eligible for rehire at this time? *(If they left)*
- Is there anything that you think someone considering this person for a job should know?

Appendix K
Recommendation to Hire

Search Name
Search Committee:
Hiring Manager

Overview:
There were XXXX applications received by the. The co-chairs did the initial assessment of the applicants and narrowed the pool down to XXX applicants for the search committee to review. The search committee selected XXX candidates for Google interviews then invited three finalists to campus.

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES:

Candidate Name

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reference Summary (Include names and titles of references that were contacted):

-

Candidate Name

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reference Summary (Include names and titles of references that were contacted):

Candidate Name

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Reference Summary (Include names and titles of references that were contacted):

Hiring Recommendation:

As the hiring manager I recommend the hiring of XXX XXX.....

Salary Range Recommendation:

Based on XXX's experience I recommend a salary range between \$XXX-XXX. The salary range was advertised as XXX.

Key Contacts for the Search and Hiring Process

Ms. Kimberly Page, Executive Director of Personnel Services

kpage3@fitchburgstate.edu

978-665-3850

Ms. Mary Landi, Staff Associate for Personnel Services

klungren@fitchburgstate.edu

978-665-3172

Ms. Jossy Brack, Assistant Director of Human Resources

jbrack@fitchburgstate.edu

978-665-3440

Please direct all questions regarding Search & Hiring Policy to:

The Office of Human Resources and Payroll Services/Affirmative Action

Fitchburg State University

160 Pearl Street

Fitchburg, MA 01420

Phone 978-665-3172

Fax 978-665-3720

*This guide is subject to change at the discretion of the President
and/or the Office of Human Resources and Payroll Services/Affirmative Action.*