

The Role of a Search Committee Equity Coordinator

An “equity coordinator” is typically an individual who has volunteered themselves to take on the responsibility of:

- Understanding how bias may operate in recruitment and selection processes;
- Learning the University’s policies and procedures for recruitment and selection; and
- Learning to facilitate processes of job candidate evaluation that rely on objective and demonstrable criteria, determined in advance of the selection process.

Equity Coordinators can be individuals participating on a specific search committee or individuals who have volunteered to serve as an advisor to hiring managers or committees for an entire school/unit/department.

Note: The School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Nursing have faculty members appointed to serve in this capacity for faculty searches.

Key Educational Resources

Internal

- **UVA Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights** – Provides a recruitment and hiring guide, information on labor market availability, consultation on search planning and processes, and tools for documenting the search. Additional information is available for considerations unique to the veteran and disability communities. (<http://eocr.virginia.edu/recruitment-and-hiring>)
- **UHR Center for Leadership Excellence** – Provides a variety of learning opportunities to build skills in facilitating difficult or critical conversations, cultural fluency, emotional intelligence, and a variety of other topics. (<https://leadershipexcellence.virginia.edu/>)
- **The Executive Vice President and Provost: Faculty Development** – Provides in-person development opportunities at the outset of each academic year and at other intervals, in support of faculty searches. (<http://provost.virginia.edu/faculty-development>)
- **UVA Policy Directory** – Provides access to relevant policies and procedures. (www.uvapolicy.virginia.edu)
- **UHR Manager Toolkit** – Provides information on process steps and considerations at each phase of a staff process. Also includes a guide on behavioral interviewing. (www.hr.virginia.edu)

External

- **re:Work Unbiasing** – Google has published development materials that are reviewed with hiring managers at their organization which includes guides and tools. (<https://rework.withgoogle.com/subjects/unbiasing>)
- **Project Implicit** – Provides an opportunity to participate in research studies which help raise awareness about individual bias. (www.projectimplicit.com)
- **Kirwan Institute** – Provides links to articles and research related to implicit bias and annually publishes a “State of the Science Review”. (<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/researchandstrategicinitiatives/#implicitbias>)
- **Professional or Academic Associations** – Many discipline and profession specific associations will provide statements on the importance of equity and inclusion or on ethical standards relevant to recruitment and hiring. Examples are the American Association of University Professors and the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences “[Ethics of Faculty Recruitment and Appointment](#)” and the National Association of Colleges and Employers ([focus on student hiring](#)). These may be of interest for general reference and establishing a context more easily

relatable to committee members but are not a substitute for University policies and procedures. Equity Coordinators should review association information to help frame the issues.

- **College and University Professional Association for Human Resources** – Provides learning opportunities around several critical processes in recruitment and selection. (www.cupahr.org)

Goals of an Equity Coordinator

Conformity – While each search process will be different on the basis of the position, individuals involved, and specific School/Unit strategies and priorities – a key goal is to have the process conform to University policies and procedures, ethical standards, and federal and state law. This means that an Equity Coordinator will need to familiarize themselves with such considerations.

Clarity – In order for the recruitment and selection process to be successful, the Equity Coordinator will need to help the committee or hiring official ensure that there is clarity on multiple points. This includes clarity on the functions of the position, how candidates will be evaluated, what will be communicated about the position to candidates, and many other aspects of the process. Clarity comes from thoughtfulness, intentionality, transparency, and planning.

Consistency – A key to equity in any process or practice is consistency. When objective screening criteria are created they must be consistently used for all candidates. If one candidate is given important information about the position, efforts should be made to ensure that other competitive candidates have access to that information. Interview participation and lines of inquiry should be as consistent as possible. Communications with applicants and candidates should be consistent.

Opportunity – The overarching goal for any recruitment and selection process is that all candidates are given an equal opportunity to compete on the basis of their specific knowledge, skills, experience, professional behaviors, and abilities that make them the best qualified individual to fill a specific position.

Critical Process Points:

There are a series of points in any selection process where key decisions are made, or that provide the search committee with critical information necessary to effectively evaluate the merits of individual candidates for a specific position. The process of defining the functions of the position is foundational to all other aspects of the process. The position is the key reference point as hiring officials and search committee members should consistently ground deliberative processes in what it takes to successfully perform the functions of the position. At each of the critical points below, the Equity Coordinator should help the hiring official and/or the search committee stay focused on meeting the goals of conformity, clarity, consistency, and opportunity. Building effective facilitation skills should be a key focus for the Equity Coordinator.

- Position Definition and Establishment of Evaluation Criteria
- Candidate Recruitment
- Candidate Evaluation
- Candidate Interviews
- Candidate Negotiations
- Search Documentation

Contact employmentequity@virginia.edu to learn more or for a consultative meeting to establishing a base of Equity Coordinators in your area.