

Part 3: Outreach

How can the search committee attract a highly qualified and diverse pool of applicants? Which outreach practices are allowable under current federal and state laws and university policies?

As already noted, the committee should discuss and plan each step of the search process. In terms of outreach to potential applicants, the committee should consider:

- What kind of **language** in the job ad will encourage applications from individuals who are committed to diversity-related work and whose records of research, teaching, service, and/or outreach reflect a commitment to inclusion and equity?
- Which **venues** will be most productive for advertising to a broad range of potential applicants?
- How might members of the committee and the unit as a whole engage their **professional networks** to encourage applications from individuals from historically underrepresented, marginalized, or disadvantaged backgrounds?

3.1 Legal and Policy Aspects of Outreach

Committees sometimes worry about the legal and policy aspects of recruiting applicants from underrepresented backgrounds, perhaps especially applicants who identify as U.S. racial or ethnic minorities. Understanding the laws and policies that govern outreach and selection in hiring is essential to formulating an appropriate and effective plan.

Affirmative Action

Laws and practices related to affirmative action continue to evolve through initiatives and court decisions, and these changes have direct implications for faculty hiring. The University of Washington adheres to policies and practices of nondiscrimination that promote equal employment opportunity and are consistent with state and federal laws.

The UW **Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA)** offers this succinct definition for affirmative action:

“Affirmative action is a program required of federal contractors to ensure equal employment opportunity. It requires a good faith effort to achieve and maintain a workforce in which minorities and women are represented at a level proportionate with their availability in the labor pool from which the employer can reasonably be expected to recruit. Affirmative action also includes good faith efforts towards covered veterans and individuals with disabilities.”

A link to the EOAA website, which includes Frequently Asked Questions, is available in the Toolkit.

It is important to note that **affirmative action is distinct from nondiscrimination**. Affirmative action refers to policies and practices specific to the **outreach phase** of the appointment process. The specific goal of affirmative action is to **enrich applicant pools** so that they are inclusive of all groups, including those that have been historically underrepresented, marginalized, or disadvantaged in specific academic disciplines or in higher education as a whole.

Initiative 200

Initiative 200 (I-200) is a Washington State law enacted in 1998 that became effective in 1999. Although I-200 has been in effect for two decades, it continues to cause some confusion about what is and is not allowable during the outreach phase of faculty hiring. The full text of I-200 appears in the Toolkit. The key provision states:

“The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting.”

Under I-200, discrimination and preferential treatment are not allowed during the **selection phase** of hiring. However, **outreach efforts to broaden pools of qualified applicants** are allowed under I-200 and are encouraged by the University of Washington.

Diverse Applicant Pool Data

As a federal contractor, the university must request information about the race/ethnicity, sex, age, disability, and veteran’s status of all applicants to UW recruitments. Therefore, UW has configured Interfolio to automatically include an **Affirmative Action Information Request (AAIR)** as part of the application process. On most questions, however, applicants have the option to decline to provide specific data.

Changes to the UW Faculty Code

Over the past decade, the UW Faculty Code has been updated to better reflect the university’s commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion. **Faculty work that enriches diversity and equity in research, teaching, and service is now explicitly acknowledged as criteria to be recognized in faculty appointment and promotion decisions.**

For the hiring process, these changes mean that units should include **explicit language** about diversity- and equity-related research, teaching, and service in job ads. **And units are now required to ask applicants for explicit statements** about their prior involvement in or planned contributions to various kinds of diversity and equity work.

Chapter 24, Section 24-32 of the Faculty Code, “Scholarly and Professional Qualifications of Faculty Members,” states:

“All candidates for initial faculty appointment to the ranks and/or titles listed in Chapter 21, Section 21-32.A shall submit a statement of past and planned contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Academic units and search committees shall consider a candidate's statement as part of a comprehensive evaluation of scholarship and research, teaching, and service. In accord with the University's expressed commitment to excellence and equity, any contributions in scholarship and research, teaching, and service that address diversity and equal opportunity shall be included and considered among the professional and scholarly qualifications for appointment and promotion outlined below.”

Sample prompts for requesting DEI statements and tips for evaluating DEI statements are available in the Toolkit.

3.2 Writing and Posting the Job Advertisement

With the above information in mind, the committee is now ready to write the job ad. **Ideally, the committee should draft its evaluation criteria before or at the same time as it drafts the ad** to ensure close alignment. (See Part 4: Assessment.)

Interfolio divides posted job ads into **three major sections**: Position Description, Qualifications, and Instructions. It is thus useful to conceive the ad as **the sum of several discrete but related parts**.

Position Description:

- Describe the **specific position**. Use inclusive language that will appeal to a broad range of potential applicants. Map the position onto the unit's commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- It is useful to describe the **unit**. This can be done in expansive terms that include how the unit values diversity and diversity-related work on multiple levels—e.g., in the curriculum, in pedagogy, in outreach to students and/or communities, in research.
- It can be useful to also describe the **university**. Here is an opportunity to introduce potential applicants to UW's broader commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Depending on the position, it can be especially helpful to describe potential **allies across the university**. This might include interdisciplinary research centers, outreach programs, and so forth. It might also include **related searches in other units**—i.e., how this position is part of an unofficial cluster hire.

Qualifications:

- State the **minimum qualifications** for the position (e.g., required years of relevant experience, demonstrated expertise in particular kinds of research or pedagogy,

demonstrated commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, etc.). A bulleted list, rather than a sentence or paragraph, can work well.

- Depending on the nature of the position, the ad may need to include an explicit statement of the **minimum degree required** (e.g., “Ph.D. or foreign equivalent”).
- The ad may also need to include an explicit statement indicating that “All University of Washington faculty engage in teaching, research, and service.” If in doubt, **check with the unit’s Academic HR specialist**.
- **Note that it is best not to include lists of “preferred” experiences, qualities, or areas of expertise that are not actual minimum requirements for the position.** Such preferences or options should be outlined in the Position Description rather than in the Qualifications.

Instructions:

- Describe the **materials** you want applicants to submit for review—and make sure these align with your assessment criteria. Depending on the specific field or subfield, as well as the academic rank of the position, typical materials include: a letter of interest; a full cv; a dissertation or thesis abstract; a sample of scholarship or creative activity; a statement of teaching philosophy and/or evidence of teaching effectiveness (e.g., a specified number of student or peer evaluations); a specified number of letters of recommendation or a specified number of names and contact information for potential references.
- As already noted, committees are now required to request **an explicit statement that describes the applicant’s experiences with and commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion**, often called a “diversity statement” or “DEI statement.” The DEI statement is a relatively new genre—both for the applicants who need to write them and for the hiring committees who need to assess them. Since conventions for the genre are still evolving, it is helpful to **provide a concise prompt** that asks for the kinds of information the committee wants and that offers **clear parameters** for the writer (e.g., a word or page limit).
- For positions that are primarily **administrative**, such as a unit leader or college dean, it may be appropriate for committees to request a statement of administrative experience and/or a vision statement for the specific role.
- List a **priority deadline**—the date when you will begin to read and assess applications. This date should be at least 30 days after initial posting.

A range of sample job advertisements and prompts for DEI statements are available in the Toolkit. A link to the *Academic Personnel Advertisement Guide* on the Office of Academic Personnel website is also available in the Toolkit.

Required Language

In addition to the above components, two University of Washington statements will be appended to all job advertisements posted through Interfolio. First, an **Equal Employment Opportunity** statement:

“University of Washington is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, gender identity or expression, age, disability, or protected veteran status.”

And second, a statement of the University’s **Commitment to Diversity**:

“The University of Washington is committed to building diversity among its faculty, librarian, staff, and student communities, and articulates that commitment in the UW Diversity Blueprint. Additionally, the University’s Faculty Code recognizes faculty efforts in research, teaching, and/or service that address diversity and equal opportunity as important contributions to a faculty member’s academic profile and responsibilities.”

Posting the Job Advertisement

Circulating ads in traditional scholarly publications remains useful but can result in a relatively homogenous pool of applicants. To enlarge the applicant pool, post ads in a variety of publications and on the listservs, websites, or social media accounts of relevant professional organizations. This should not only help enlarge the potential pool of applicants, but also help convey the unit’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. **It is useful to maintain a comprehensive record of where ads have been posted.**

Note: Depending on the nature of the faculty or administrative position, the unit may be required to post its ad in a print publication with an international audience, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. **A review by the unit’s Academic HR specialist is required before any posting.**

3.3 Active Recruitment and Networking

Once the ad is posted, preliminary “scouting” should become active recruitment and “networking.”

Members of the search committee, along with other members of the unit, should personally contact colleagues at UW and other institutions to seek nominations of potential applicants. Consider using the following means of **active recruitment**:

- Send announcements and request nominations from departments at institutions that serve large numbers of Latina/o, African American, Native American, and other historically underrepresented populations. Your **campus allies** will be able to help you locate such institutions.

- Send announcements to diversity-related sections of **regional, national, or international organizations** within the discipline.
- Take advantage of **social media** (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) to attract a broader pool of applicants.
- Consider **inviting applications** from early career colleagues who may be currently under-placed at other institutions.
- Ask current faculty, graduate students, post-docs, and alumni to help market open positions by **taking copies of job ads to academic conferences and meetings** they attend, as well as to the **other institutions** they visit to give lectures or seminars.
- Ask all members of the unit to **contact their colleagues** at other institutions to inquire about promising graduate students, post-docs, or early career faculty from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Have unit leadership **personally contact qualified nominated applicants**, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds. These communications can include the **offer to have the search committee chair speak with potential applicants on the phone or over Zoom**.