Application Review Process & Tips

First Round Screening

Many search chairs, hoping to save their committee members time, do a basic level screening first to narrow the pool to a certain number or to candidates who meet an established threshold score on the rubric. Chairs could choose to review on a rolling basis in batches (perhaps once a week) so they are able to communicate with candidates of interest in a timely manner.

Optional Intermediate Step

Before sending candidates to committee, some chairs email remaining candidates to further inform them of the role (position description, salary, benefits, cost of living, etc.) and to request answers to 1-3 supplementary questions by a certain date/time if they want to move forward. The benefit of this step is that candidates can opt out if the salary is not acceptable and the committee can further assess the candidate through their supplementary answers. The downside is it extends the process by about a week.

Google Drive for Committee

Chairs should create a Shared Drive in Google that includes the position description, scoring rubric, scoring spreadsheet, and candidate materials. Unfortunately, candidate materials are not easily exported from the workbench so chairs need to copy and paste the resume and cover letter for each candidate into a google doc labeled with the candidate’s name.

Redacting

Some believe that redacting pieces of information such as name and address can help reduce implicit bias. Others believe that so many pieces of information within the documents could potentially create implicit bias or favoritism that redacting isn’t particularly helpful. If a chair decides to redact, they need to create a confidential system for labeling materials so they can be matched back up to candidate names later in the process.

Rubrics

An effective way to reduce implicit bias is to use carefully crafted review rubrics to evaluate each candidate. The rubric should be based on the required competencies and qualifications listed. The rubric should only include items that could reasonably be identified in a resume or cover letter. For example, “has experience working with transfer students” is more tangible than “is empathic”. A rubric containing 5-10 items ranked on a 5 point scale is sufficient.

Scoring Spreadsheet

Search chairs should create a spreadsheet where each committee member enters their scores for each candidate prior to meeting as a team about the candidates. The chair can then sum the total scores for each candidate to have a starting point when the committee convenes.

Next Step

There is no magic number in terms of how many candidates to move forward to a screening interview. Generally committees do phone or Zoom interviews with 6 to 10 candidates.