

Frequently Asked Questions

1. The committee knows that there are certain questions that are forbidden to ask such as personal issues or questions related to children. When they take a candidate out to dinner, if the candidate brings up children and/or other personal issues, what do they do? Can they discuss this or do they have to avoid the subject?

You can say, "Thank you for sharing that information. However, personal information like that will not be considered in determining who is selected for the position".

2. If a member of the committee knows someone who is an acquaintance or former co-worker of the candidate, however this person is not listed on the candidate's resume as a reference, can they ask the candidate questions about issues or information they have obtained from this acquaintance or former co-worker?

If the applicant has signed the "Background Check Authorization Form", then the search committee can make official contacts with references provided, former supervisors and others in a position to have official information such as Human Resources. Other contacts with peers and coworkers should be limited to questions, which would be relevant to them such as ability to get along with coworkers. They would not be in a position to have knowledge of the employee's performance evaluations.

3. In a situation where the committee has a candidate that they are more interested in than the others, they will sometimes take the candidate to dinner, provide coffee and spend more time with candidate outside of the official interview. Can these extra things cause problems or is it just the interview that they have to make sure they spend the same amount of time on?

Search committees should treat each candidate brought on campus to interview equally unless at some point in the interview process, the candidate says, "this job is not for me" or something to that effect where the candidate is in effect withdrawing from the pool.

4. For a Department Head Search there will be times when they have a session where other faculty members outside the search committee and/or department are invited to come and sit in on the question and answer time. If everyone within the search committee and department has made sure they followed the rules and watched the "Effective & Legal Interviewing" video, but one person from another department asks an inappropriate question can they be penalized? What would happen? How can we prevent this from happening?

The university is responsible for making sure that interviews are conducted within the scope of the law. All persons participating in the interview process should be properly trained to avoid lawsuits. We should make sure all participants are properly trained so we do not put them in a position of asking the wrong questions because they do not know any better.

5. It has been stressed in this Legal Aspect of Hiring Class that we must treat all candidates equally. The search committee takes the candidates out to dinner; however, one of the candidates is currently employed with Southeastern and cannot be reimbursed for expenses. Since the currently employed candidate cannot be reimbursed for expenses, do they not take him/her to dinner? How does the search committee handle this?

You should treat all candidates equally; therefore you should take the currently employed candidate to dinner if you take the other two candidates to dinner. Since the university cannot reimburse currently employed candidates for expenses, the search chair should ask the department head about reimbursement of this expense from the department's Development Foundation account or have the candidate pay for their own meal.

6. Can the policy be changed to allow internal candidates to be reimbursed for meals instead of having to take it out of the department's Development Foundation account or their own pocket?

This is a state travel regulation. It is not Southeastern's policy. State travel regulations do not provide for current employees to be reimbursed for meals unless they are traveling out of town during certain time periods; therefore we cannot change this policy.

7. If the position we are advertising requires a Ph.D. and we have several applicants with ABD but will have the Ph.D. before they begin working, can we consider them for the position?

Human Resources recommends that you do not interview those candidates since they do not meet the minimum qualifications at the time of the closing date. Only qualified applicants can be interviewed for the job being advertised. However, if the ad was worded so that the applicants must complete all PhD requirements by a certain date prior to the appointment date (for example 8/1/08), you could consider them.

8. Can you advise us on the best way to narrow down the applicant pool to the final three candidates when we receive a large number of applicants?

First exclude all applicants who have incomplete application packages. These people did not follow the instructions listed in the ad on what to include. Second, review their education and experience. Only keep those who have the education, skills and experience in the specific area related to the job. If you still have a large number of applications you may want to conduct telephone interviews of the remaining applicants to narrow the pool down even further. You can also conduct telephone reference checks to narrow down the applicant pool to the final group to be considered.

9. When is it okay to let the candidate know the salary range?

The candidates can be given the salary range at any point in the process. Human Resources receives calls from prospective applicants wanting to know the salary range before they even apply. However, the applicants should be told that the actual salary will be negotiated.

10. Do we have to attend the Legal Aspects of Hiring Training every time we are on a search committee?

Everyone who is selected to serve on a search committee must have participated in a Legal Aspects of Hiring course within the last five years. This is to ensure that you are aware of all updated laws and policies that affect the recruiting process.

Please forward any questions that were not addressed above to Paulette Smith at psmith@selu.edu.