UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Constructing Clear Candidate Evaluation Criteria

Research on hiring indicates bias is common while reviewers evaluate preliminary candidate applications, during interviews, and make final hiring decisions.[1] Search committees can reduce bias by developing consensus around the criteria by which they will evaluate candidates. This practice ensures that candidates are not unnecessarily screened out during the initial evaluation process or after interviews have been completed. In contrast, when job criteria are not well defined, committee members may unconsciously favor candidates who are similar to themselves or others in the department.[2]

Work on implicit bias shows that adding concrete templates, checklists, or specific criteria to the evaluation of each candidate facilitates fair assessment and reduces bias.[3] The strongest evaluation criteria will:

- Be specific and well understood by all members of the committee
- Be simple, with 4-8 main criteria
- Allow for consistency in application, with reviewers discussing what evidence is needed to meet the criteria
- Take into account the multiple roles (research, service, teaching, mentoring, etc.) of faculty
- Be applied the same way to each candidate

Examples of possible criteria:

- Evidence of/potential for research productivity
- Evidence of/potential for attracting outside funding
- Evidence of/potential for scholarly impact
- Evidence of/potential for teaching/mentoring undergraduate and graduate students
- Evidence of/potential to complement and contribute to department's course offerings
- Demonstrated ability/potential to contribute to the diversity mission of the department/university
- Evidence of/potential for interdisciplinary work

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[1] Uhlmann, E. L., & Cohen, G. L. (2005). Constructed criteria redefining merit to justify discrimination. *Psychological Science*, *16*(6), 474-480

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[2] Heilman, M. E. (2001). Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(4), 657-674.

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[3] Dovidio, J. F. (2001). On the nature of contemporary prejudice: The third wave. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(4), 829-849.

Applicant Evaluation Tool

(Adapted from the University of Michigan ADVANCE)

The following offers a method for department faculty to provide evaluations of job applicants. It is meant to be a template for departments that they can modify as necessary for their own uses. We suggest language that can be used for either junior faculty ("potential for") or senior faculty ("evidence of")

Applicant's name:

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply):

- ☐ Read applicant's CV
- ☐ Read applicant's statements (re research, teaching, etc.)
- ☐ Read applicant's letters of recommendation
- ☐ Read applicant's scholarship (indicate what): _____

Please rate the applicant on each of the following [INSERT CRITERIA]:

	excellent	good	neutral	fair	poor	unable to judge

Other comments?