Constructing Clear Candidate Evaluation Criteria and
Using Rubrics in Candidate Evaluation

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 and entering the criteria into a rubric that is applied to each candidate. This brief summarizes best practices for developing criteria and using a rubric.

CONSTRUCTING CLEAR CRITERIA

When candidate evaluation criteria are not well defined, committee members may unconsciously favor candidates who are like themselves or others in the department.[2] The strongest evaluation criteria will:

- Be created before candidate evaluation begins.
- Be simple, with 4-8 main criterion
- Include context and examples for the kinds of evidence that committees should use to evaluate candidates within that domain.
- Take into account the multiple roles (research, service, teaching, mentoring, etc.) of faculty.
- Be specific, discussed, and well understood by all members of the committee.
- Consider aspects of quantity and quality.
- Be applied the same way to each candidate.
- Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion in teaching, scholarship, and/or service.

USING A RUBRIC

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] Effective rubrics will:

- Include a simple score strategy (e.g., 1-3; 1-5)
- Prompt evaluators to provide quantitative and qualitative scores.
- Nudge evaluators to review all application materials.

How search committee uses the rubric and the information it contains is equally important. Search committees can best leverage rubrics when they:

- Use scoring as a basis for discussion, not the only way to determine which candidates advance.
- Set aside time to review candidate materials.
- Discuss scoring inconsistencies between raters.
- Resist the temptation of relative re-scoring.
- Assess the diversity of the candidate pool before and after the rubric is applied to see if criteria may be biased in some way.

Candidate Evaluation Rubric

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): _____
- ☐ Attended the applicant's job talk: _____

Please rate the applicant on each of the following:	Excellent - 5	Good - 4	Neutral - 3	Fair - 2	Poor - 1	unable to judge	Comments that explain your score:
					Total Score		/25

What strengths does this candidate offer?

What concerns does this candidate present?

This template adapted from University of Michigan and University of Wisconsin

ADVANCE PROGRAM
FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Candidate Evaluation Rubric

Applicant's name: Pamela Beasley

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):

    Beasley, P. (2020). Office Olympics. *The Journal of Paper & Products, 63*(1), 344-368.

    Hudson, S., Beasley, P., Kapoor, K., & Vance, P. (2019). Teapots in the breakroom. *Review of Scranton, 71*(3), 771-785.

    Beasley, P., (Host) (2021-Present). *Small things matter* [audio podcast]. WYY Scranton.

- ☒ Attended the applicant's job talk: November 3, 2021

Please rate the applicant on each of the following:	Excellent - 5	Good - 4	Neutral - 3	Fair - 2	Poor - 1	unable to judge	Comments that explain your score:
Evidence of/potential for scholarly impact		X					Pam's scholarship focuses on the emerging area of X in our field and her work has been influential in policy space. Her podcast additionally reaches approximately 200 individuals weekly.
Evidence of/potential for teaching/mentoring undergraduate and graduate students	X						Evidence from peer evaluations and teaching portfolio is excellent, she has received high marks; She also received high marks from the graduate students with whom she interacted.
Evidence of/potential for attracting outside funding			X				She has had some small grants from her previous institution which are promising, but nothing in her application materials indicate any experience with larger agencies.
Evidence of/potential to complement and contribute to department's course offerings		X					Pam's research and teaching experiences mirror some of the current faculty but she spoke in interview about other courses she could teach that would meet our department needs.
Demonstrated ability/potential to contribute to the diversity mission of the department/university		X					Pam has significant experience with doing community outreach in local schools and her teaching evaluations show that students from underrepresented groups perform well in her courses. She has also demonstrated experience with inclusive teaching.
				TOTAL SCORE			20/25

What strengths does this candidate offer?

Pam is an excellent teacher with a record of mentoring and advising students from underrepresented groups and inclusive pedagogy. Her research focuses on an emerging, and very promising, area of our field and her use of alternative forms of scholarship such as podcast is very impressive.

What concerns does this candidate present?

Although Pam has some experience with smaller grants, she did not indicate much experience with generating funding on a larger scale. She has only first authored one peer-reviewed publication (though there do seem to be several in the pipeline).

This template adapted from University of Michigan and University of Wisconsin

[1] Uhlmann, E. L., & Cohen, G. L. (2005). Constructed criteria redefining merit to justify discrimination. *Psychological Science*, *16*(6), 474-480.
Bertrand, M., & Mullainathan, S. (2003). *Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination* (No. w9873). National Bureau of Economic Research.
Moss-Racusin, C. A., Dovidio, J. F., Brescoll, V. L., Graham, M. J., & Handelsman, J. (2012). Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *109*(41), 16474-16479.
Steinpreis, R. E., Anders, K.A. & Ritzke, D. (1999) The impact of gender on the review of the curricula vitae of job applicants and tenure candidates: A national empirical study. *Sex Roles, 41*(7/8), 509-527.

[2] Fine, E., & Handelsman, J. (2012). *Searching for excellence and diversity: A guide for search committees.* Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute.
Posselt, J., Hernandez, T. E., Villarreal, C. D., Rodgers, A. J., & Irwin, L. N. (2020). Evaluation and decision making in higher education: Toward equitable repertoires of faculty practice. *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research: Volume 35*, 1-63.
White-Lewis, D.K., Culpepper, D., O'Meara K., Templeton, L., & Anderson, J. (under review). Do rubrics actually make faculty hiring more equitable?

[3] Dovidio, J. F. (2001). On the nature of contemporary prejudice: The third wave. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*(4), 829-849.
Fine, E., & Handelsman, J. (2012). *Searching for excellence and diversity: A guide for search committees.* Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute.
Isaac, C., Lee, B., & Carnes, M. (2009). Interventions that affect gender bias in hiring: a systematic review. *Academic Medicine: Journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges, 84*(10), 1440-1446.