# **Interviewing**

The interview process should not begin until the announced application deadline or review date has passed and screening is complete. Once the applicants have been screened and the top candidates are identified, the search committee mayinvite candidates to campus for interviews. When setting up interviews, be sure to check for any candidate accommodation requirements. Phone and/or videoconferencing (Skype) interviews may also be used to narrow the list of top candidates.

While optional, telephone or Skype Interviews allow you to determine if the candidate's qualifications, experience, workplace preferences, and salary needs are congruent with the position before inviting the candidate to campus. These types of screening interviews are particularly helpful during a search where a majority of the semi-finalists are at some distance from Radford University.

If there are internal candidates to your position, treat them as you would any other candidate. They should complete the process via the steps the committee has deemed pertinent to vetting the best candidates. This includes preliminary, on campus and post-interview processes.

### **When planning a phone or video streaming interview, consider the following:**

* Schedule the call for no more than 30 minutes.
* Review the candidate’s application again just prior to the call.
* Ensure all candidates are asked the same set of questions (these should have been created by the Search Committee before the scheduling of interviews.)

### **When conducting the telephone or video interview:**

* Choose a location with as much privacy and as little likelihood of disruption as possible.
* Have a plan as to who will ask which question, or in what order around the room you will go. This will assist to lessen awkward silences or confusion.
* Ensure everyone is situated to best be heard and to best hear the candidate.
* Ensure everyone is prepared to take notes. These notes should be brief references to the candidate's answers to the questions and will make assessing the candidate later much easier and more accurate.
* Once the candidate is called and greeted, introduce the committee to the candidate.
* Explain how the interview will be conducted.
* Provide a brief job and university preview to the candidate.
* At the end of the call, explain the next steps in the process and give a timeline if you have it.
* Thank the candidate for his or her time.
* **Ensure the phone call/video stream is disconnected before beginning a conversation among the committee**.
* Have each committee member fill out a candidate evaluation for the interview.

### **When planning an on-campus interview:**

* Plan ahead so that you can stay organized and well-prepared.
* Decide who will be involved in the interview process and ensure calendar requests are made. Comprise your itinerary.
* Convene the Search Committee to establish interview questions.
* It is recommended to bring three (3) to five (5) candidates to campus to be interviewed. If this is not possible for your search, move forward with your top candidates. You do not have to fail a search because you cannot meet the three-candidate minimum standard.

### **Conducting a campus interview:**

* If the candidate is flying in, have a plan of transport to and from the airport. Determine who will make travel arrangements.
* If the candidate is coming in the evening before, decide who will take the candidate out that evening for dinner. Ensure conversations during these pre-interview periods remain professional and attempt to avoid gathering too much personal information about a candidate. Such information could unintentionally create bias against the candidate.
* On interview day, ensure the candidate feels welcome. Be friendly and generous. Explain the process and schedule thoroughly so the candidate knows what to expect.
* When interviewing with the Search Committee, ensure the same set of questions are asked of each candidate. If an answer requires clarification, it is ok to seek out more information through follow up questions, even if these follow up questions were not asked of other candidates. Ensure follow up questions relate to gaining more information in an effort to fully answer the original question.
* Ask Open-ended Questions**.** Open-ended questions are ones that encourage the candidate to provide in-depth explanations. The phrase, "To what extent …" can make any question open-ended. Similarly, "How did you feel about that situation?" or "Tell me about a time when you ..." helps get an objective response.
* Tolerate Silence**.** After asking a challenging or thought-provoking question, the search committee should remain quiet for at least 10 seconds while the candidate thinks of an answer. Rephrasing the question too early or too often can interfere with the candidate's ability to formulate his or her response.
* Control the Interview. There should be a pre-planned set of questions which should all get answered during the interview. A candidate who goes on a tangent, threatening the interview timetable, should be politely interrupted.
* Don't be afraid to sum up what the candidate said in an answer to gain clarity, if needed.
* Ensure the candidate completes a background check authorization form. These should be walked over to the Human Resources office either as part of the interview or immediately following the interview. Due to the sensitive nature of the information included on the form, please do not inter-office mail the form.
* Explain the next steps in the process and offer a general timeline if possible.
* Once the interview is over, ensure a candidate evaluation is completed by all interviewing groups.

### **Interview Courtesies**

Showing good manners and projecting a positive image go a long way in successful recruiting. Each aspect of the recruiting process must be handled as a public relations process. Every candidate who is invited to campus should be given the best treatment available -not luxury hotels, gourmet meals, and first-class travel, but a friendly, professional, welcoming attitude. Here are some suggestions:

* Ask candidate for are any accommodation requests prior to scheduling agenda.
* Arrange travel and accommodation plans with the candidate.
* Discuss travel reimbursement with the candidate. Contact Accounting Services at 831-7619 for travel policies.
* Prepare an itinerary for the candidate. All persons to be met by the candidate should know where, when, and why. The candidate should be given a copy of the interview schedule in advance.
* Send the candidate appropriate information about Radford University and the New River Valley. Information about benefits is available from Human Resources and information about the university is available from University Relations and Admissions Offices. Real estate agencies and the Chamber of Commerce can provide valuable information about the New River Valley. In addition, be responsive to the candidate's request for follow-up information.

### **Post Interview**

* Once all finalist interviews have been completed, the Search Committee should meet to review evaluations from other interviewing groups and/or any audience evaluation sheets gathered at presentations. Once all search materials are reviewed and interviews discussed, the Search Committee should put forward their recommendation.
* The Search Chair will take this recommendation to either the Department Head or Hiring Manager. The Hiring Manager is welcome to contact the candidate for a brief conversation. The Hiring Manager will also decide who will check the finalist's references. Only the references of the finalist need to be checked unless there are two closely matched candidates. If this occurs, the reference check may be the deciding factor as to which candidate is selected. The Hiring Manager may elect to do this him/herself or ask the Search Chair to conduct these checks. Like candidates, all references should be asked the same set of questions.
* The finalist will then need to be moved in PeopleAdmin to the "Recommend to Hire" stage and a hiring proposal will need to be submitted through the approval process. This needs to be done by whomever led the search, either the Search Chair or the Hiring Manager acting as the Search Chair.
* This move will trigger the Human Resources office to conduct a background check. In order for this to be completed, the background check consent forms must also be in the Human Resources office.
  + Background checks are also conducted for any internal employee who moves to another position and has not had a check conducted.
* Background checks typically take 2-3 business days. Once the results are received, you will receive communication from Human Resources with the results. If the results are positive, you will be welcome to make a verbal offer.
  + For staff and A/P faculty positions, if the offer is accepted, you will inform Human Resources, along with the confirmed start date and agreed upon salary. An offer letter will then be generated by the Human Resources office.
  + For faculty positions, if the offer is accepted, a letter will be generated by the Provost Office.
* If the offer is declined, you will also inform Human Resources of this decision. You will then select another candidate from the finalists, move him/her forward in PeopleAdmin to "Recommend to Hire", and make the offer. If no other candidate is recommended, or if no other candidate accepts the offer, the search has failed and will need to be started again.