

College of Social Work

Staff Interview Guidelines

Appointing Committee Members:

Appointment will be done by the individual who has initiated the position request as soon as the position is live/has been posted

- Committee comprised of three members:
 - One administrator
 - Can either be the direct position supervisor **OR** an administrator from a different unit within the college
 - Position's direct supervisor/manager
 - If the position supervisor/manager is also an administrator, they can count for both seats on the committee **the number of peers will be dependent on this, too**
 - Peer Interviewer(s)
 - Ideally, someone who is in a direct service or coordination role and works with (although not necessarily IN) the open position's department
 - If the committee administrator is also the direct supervisor for the position, then **TWO** peers will be required for the interview

Preparing for Interviews:

- As soon as the committee has been appointed, members should be communicated to the HR Manager so that position posting and MJRs may be shared with the committee, and they may begin familiarizing themselves with the role's core responsibilities. **Postings for regular permanent positions are typically up for about 2 weeks unless otherwise specified**
- If the supervisor would like to have behavior based interview guidelines (BBIG) tailored for the position, they should request them at the time the position request is initiated.
- For positions posted on or after 11/3/25, applicant referrals will be viewable before the position's closing date. Guest user login credentials will be sent to the supervisor or committee head once the position is posted so they may view applicants in real time. If applicable, BBIG will be sent to the supervisor once generated (up to 3 business days from the position posting date).
 - At this point, committee members will review applicants individually and pick their top three or four candidates to share with their committee peers

First Committee Meeting:

- After individually selecting their top 3-4 candidates, the committee will have their first meeting to cross reference their selections and discuss why they deem their picks to be a good fit for the position.
- The end goal of this meeting is to wrap up with a consensus on who will make it to the screening stage. Usually, no more than 2-3 candidates are selected at this point for the screening round but there may be exceptions if the committee's reasoning was too close to call on several candidates or if the viable candidate pool was large enough.

Screenings:

- With the help of senior leadership (e.g., the administrator or manager/supervisor serving on the committee), no more than five questions should be agreed upon for the screening round. **Reminder that at this point the HR Team would have distributed BBIG, if requested, to the committee which will help in putting together those questions**. The final draft of screening questions will be comprised by the committee collaboratively.
- All candidates must be asked the same questions, and additional questions may be asked if the candidate's answer triggers a follow-up; otherwise, it is recommended that the committee stick to the script of agreed upon questions.
 - Taking good notes on candidate answers will help the committee arrive at a determination for who should move on to the next round; thus, why it is important to stick to the agreed upon questionnaire
- Screenings can be done virtually (Zoom/Teams) or by phone. It is not necessary to bring the candidate in (unless the nature of the role demands an in-person screening assessment).
- Screenings should be conducted by all committee members (which is why scheduling a zoom or phone call with the candidate for this stage is helpful/less demanding of time so that all committee members may participate). **The administrator on the committee may request the college's HR administrative assistant personnel to reach out to candidates and **schedule** the screenings and subsequent interviews based on the committee members' availability to save some time; however, both screenings and interviews will be conducted directly by the committee members**

Second Committee Meeting:

- As soon as screenings have concluded, the committee will meet to cross reference candidate answers and narrow down the pool for final interviews (if applicable).
- Drafting interview questions--
 - Committee members will use the BBIG (when applicable), the position posting, and MJRs to collaboratively come up with a set of interview questions.
 - Questions will need to be relevant to the position duties, candidate experience (discussed in the application, CV, or perhaps during screening), personality assessment (as it pertains to the role) and should be the same for all candidates being interviewed.

Note that, same as with screening, candidate answers may present an opportunity for follow-up questions or a slight variation to the outlined “script”

- Once a consensus has been reached on who will make it to the next round, interviews must be scheduled. **Again, the administrator may delegate scheduling of the interviews to the college’s HR administrative assistant personnel**

Interviews:

- Interviews should be done in person when possible. Exceptions may be made for a candidate that is travelling, unable to come in person (be it due to temporary illness or an accommodation/mobility need that the candidate has requested), etc.
 - It is also understandable that one or more appointed members of the committee may be unable to attend the interviews in person for similar reasons. If two out of the three committee members can attend in person, the third member should join virtually.
- Committee members must honor the timeline of the interviews (being punctual, not rescheduling due to their own need, etc.). Exceptions to this should be minimal and have a strong excuse.
- Committee members should take notes of candidate answers during the interview (*these will need to be turned in to the CoSW HR Team at the end of the process*).
- While addressing candidate questions on the position specs, benefits, salary, etc., if the interviewers are unsure of what to answer, make note of the question and follow up with the HR Manager post interview for guidance. It is acceptable to tell the candidate you will follow up with an answer and preferable to erroneously answering a question.

Final Committee Meeting (*this can be scheduled for a later time once all interviews have concluded OR may be done immediately following each candidate interview*):

- All committee members will discuss their concluding observations on each candidate with the position supervisor. Note that this will be done as a group, not individually.
- Discussions should center around the candidate’s behavior, interview answers, goodness of fit for the position, relevant highlights of the candidate’s current/past experience, etc.
- Whether these debriefs take place right after each interview or once all interviews have concluded, the goal is to present the position supervisor with the committee’s observations and candidate recommendation for the position.
- The supervisor will take the counsel from the committee and present their final pick to their department head or the Dean (*only if they are direct reports*).
 - The position supervisor will use the information gathered from the committee, their personal observations, and notes taken during the screening and interview process to present their recommendation.
 - The supervisor will also be responsible for collecting all recorded materials from the committee and turning it in to the HR Team.
 - The department head will approve the candidate and hiring proposal submission but ***final approval to make a salary offer will need to be vetted by the Dean prior to moving forward.***

Next Steps (must be conducted after the position’s closing date to ensure all applicants are reviewed and considered):

- Post discussion and approval from leadership to move forward with the recommended candidate, the department director, position supervisor, or Dean will:
 - present the HR Team with a salary recommendation so CoSW HR can submit a hiring proposal with UKHR Employment
 - Conduct reference checks—
 - Which may be done by the position supervisor directly or be delegated to CoSW HR Administrative personnel (e.g., Admin HR support person).
**Note: HR Team will provide HR Admin Support with a general list of reference questions. If the supervisor wishes to include any specific or additional questions, they will need to communicate this to the HR Team prior to the checks taking place.*
- If all reference checks clear, the hiring process may move forward with the HR Team’s guidance. If any causes for concern arise during the reference checks, the HR Manager will follow up with the supervisor and/or leadership on next steps.
- ***Only CoSW HR is permitted to make verbal offers to candidates unless there is written permission from the Dean allowing the supervisor/administrator to make the verbal offer directly to the candidate.***

Modifications/Exceptions to Appointing Committee Staff:

At times, issues that arise at some point in the process will call for changes to committee members. Examples of such changes may include but are not limited to:

- **Conflicts of interest:**
 - **Nepotism:** If one of the committee members (regardless of it being the administrator, position supervisor, or peer(s)) has a personal (non-working/professional) relationship with one of the applicants; they must let the HR Administrator know immediately and recuse themselves from that committee. The committee member could potentially find out about the conflict of interest at the applicant referral stage or earlier (e.g., the candidate lets them know ahead of time that they are planning on applying for the position).
 - **Position Bias:** Often, we will have internal candidates apply for jobs within our college. They may apply for positions within their unit/department or outside of it. The possibility of having an applicant who is also a current direct report to the open position supervisor may occur. Unless disclosed ahead of time, by the applicant referral stage it will become evident if a current employee is applying for a position under the same supervisor. At this point, the supervisor will need to inform the HR Administrator and recuse themselves from the interview/candidate selection process so that a substitute may be appointed.

- **Other:** There may be times when other conflicts of interest arise. If/when an appointed committee member feels they may have strong bias in their participation of a certain candidate or position, they should communicate it to the HR Administrator immediately. Upon review of the reason for recusing themselves, the HR Administrator will work with senior leadership so that a suitable replacement may be appointed in time. *Note that removing a member from a committee for valid reasons does not exempt them from being appointed to a different committee in the future.*
 - All types of conflicts of interest will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The HR Administrator will work with the department's senior leadership, or the Dean, to ensure a suitable replacement is found for the committee member(s) who had to recuse themselves from a particular cohort.
 - When in doubt as to what may constitute as a conflict of interest, please consult the HR Administrator

Availability & Participation of Selected Committee Members:

The primary purpose of appointing interview committees is to allow college-level participation in the hiring process that reflects equity and helps limit biases. Nevertheless, there will be times during which there is a limited number of staff to choose from for committees (reasons can vary from time off, to work travel, to other job obligations.). If/when this occurs, the HR Administrator will work with senior leadership to best replace the recused or unavailable staff selections.

It is important that once a committee has been appointed, its members strive to stick to the timelines proposed. The hiring process from application through initial onboarding, takes some time due to the university's hiring policies and processes; therefore, it is imperative that committee meetings and screenings/interviews are conducted in a timely manner. Moreover, position candidates will not receive any additional communication until the position process has been fully completed and a final candidate has been selected.

For additional guidance, please reach out to CoSW's HR Team: Diana Perez La Rotta, Markie O'Bryan, or Angie Chaparro