

California State University, East Bay
Office of Academic Affairs

Tenure-Track Search Process Guidelines
2020 – 2021

Before the Search Convenes:

Diversity Best Practice: All departments convening a search should have proactive hiring pipelines established to reach diverse candidates. This requires intentional relationships with doctoral institutions beyond just an email invite to apply.

Stage One: Elect The Committee

- **Elect a Search Committee of Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty, during the Spring Semester** (CBA 12.22.a. "Each department or equivalent unit shall elect a peer review committee of tenured employees for the purpose of reviewing and recommending individuals for probationary appointments. At the discretion of the President and upon request of the department these peer review committees may also include probationary employees.")
- **Submit the results of the election/committee member names to the College Dean's office. The College Dean will submit the names to the Provost's Office, and must include the following information:**
 - Name of the search committee chair
 - Name of the search committee members
 - Name of the department administrative assistant

IMPORTANT: this information is needed to set-up the position and access for search committee members in Interfolio

- **Dept. Chair convene committee and schedule future meetings**

Diversity Best Practice: if possible include individuals from underrepresented groups on your search committee; provide a good gender balance.

Diversity Best Practice: Search committee members should partner with Human Resources to receive up-to-date training on legal hiring practices. Search committee members should be familiar with the issues of non-discrimination, implicit bias, and understand why equity, diversity and inclusion are important at East Bay.

Diversity Best Practice: if possible include a search committee member who has done research, community service or taught classes that emphasize equity, diversity and inclusion.

Diversity Best Practice: all search committee members should take the CSU online search training modules available in CSULearn under "Searches and Recruitments"

Stage Two: Required Orientation – due to the current shelter-in-place order for Alameda County, in-person tenure-track search committee orientations will be done by video.

- Tenure-Track Search Committee Orientation by video - hosted by the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA).
- Training/orientation session on Interfolio by video

Stage Three: Develop the Position Announcement and Faculty Recruitment Plan

Once the position is set-up in Interfolio, the Position Announcement Template is pre-loaded to fit the university's template, please edit each section's information to conform your search/Department's requirements, as necessary.

For a sample of what the position announcement will look like, see:

<http://www.csueastbay.edu/aaa/files/docs/policies-and-procedures/patemplate.doc>

Position Announcement – Prepare the information for a position announcement using the template for FULL-TIME TENURE-TRACK

Carefully choose the required qualifications and criteria for selection:

- Flexible vs. rigid requirements advisable (preferred vs. required, should vs. must). The requirements listed as “must have” will be applied to every applicant.
- Prioritize selection criteria (assign relative value) and enter them into Interfolio under “Evaluation Settings, Criteria.” Make sure the priorities are apparent in the position description.

Note: Broad rather than highly specialized announcements usually attract more diverse candidates.

Requiring a Diversity Statement is highly recommended.

Enter the details of the position announcement in the respective sections in Interfolio:

- Position Description
- Qualifications
- Application Instructions
- Required Documents – please select the correct document type and number required (should match what is listed in the “Application Instructions” section).

Required Documents normally include (but will depend on Department-specific requirements):

1. Cover letter that addresses requirements in the Position Announcement
2. Curriculum Vitae (CV)
3. Diversity Statement
4. Teaching Statement
5. Published materials
6. Three Confidential Letters of Recommendation

Three (3) confidential letters of recommendation are required for each applicant that is invited for on-campus interviews. Each search committee/ Department can decide when applicants are required to submit the letters (as long as they are in prior to any on-campus interviews). However, it is most efficient to require it with the initial application because applicants are familiar with this requirement, and it is harder to follow-up with obtaining the letters at a later date. Note that later in the search process (telephone interviews), one of your scoring criteria for ALL candidates who receive a telephone interview **MUST be a scoring of these letters.**

7. References –

A list of three (3) professional contacts that are familiar with the applicants work and education. The reference list should include the name, telephone number, and how the reference knows the applicant. Note that later in the search process these references will be needed for the verbal reference check.

Decide whether the screening/review and rating of applications by Search Committee members will be by “Blind Review” (evaluators cannot see each other’s scores/rankings) – select appropriate setting in Interfolio.

Diversity Best Practice: Be as broad as you can with your qualifications, so that you attract a solid pool of candidates. The intent is to welcome applicants in, rather than exclude them.

Diversity Best Practice: The California Gender Recognition Act encourages the use of gender neutral and inclusive language. Use language that is welcoming and collaborative wherever possible; What do you like about working at East Bay? Can that quality be worked into your ad?

Prepare a Faculty Recruitment Plan (FRP) - which includes a recruitment timeline, the application screening criteria, etc.

See: <http://www.csueastbay.edu/oaa/files/docs/policies-and-procedures/frppt.pdf>

Proposed telephone interview questions and ratings protocol must be included in the FRP

Review Faculty & Student Composition Data (accessible from Institutional Research) https://data.csueastbay.edu/#/apr/program_data/program_enrollment and https://data.csueastbay.edu/#/apr/program_data/faculty_diversity

Complete the Faculty Recruitment Plan (FRP), including proposed telephone interview questions, and upload it into Interfolio for the position announcement under “Internal Notes” as an attachment. **Please upload the file in PDF format** and title the document appropriately, as other documents will be uploaded in this section throughout the process.

Diversity Best Practice: Academic Affairs places ads for all positions in the Chronicle of Higher Education online on a continual basis. For some positions, ads will be placed in Hispanics in Higher Education, The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, and Higher Ed Jobs; all other ads are the responsibility of Departments/Colleges and should be thoughtfully targeted to associations or publications that will reach the most diverse pools relevant to your department’s discipline.

Diversity Best Practice: If an ad is sent to institutions designated as Hispanic Servicing, or Historical Black or universities that have programs where underrepresented individuals are graduate candidates, it is more effective to have established relationships with key stakeholders within the institution. This requires intentional outreach prior to the position announcement. Use your own networks and professional associations; be proactive in recruiting.

Diversity Best Practice: All department colleagues should let people know at conferences and other gatherings that we have openings and are empowered to encourage candidates to apply; use personal networks.

Stage Four: Submit the Position Announcement for the Required Approvals in Interfolio
Approval is signified by the changing of the position’s status throughout the process to the next level of review and approval. It is also important that you email the next level to let them know the position requires their review and approval.

Please refer to the “Interfolio Position Statuses for a Tenure Track Faculty Search” (see **APPENDIX A**, attached at the end of this document).

The beginning status for the position is: **“Generate Position Announcement Template and Submit the Faculty Recruitment Plan, Application Screening Criteria and Proposed Telephone Interview Questions [Dept. or College Admin].”**

Once the position announcement and FRP are ready for review and approval, change the position status in Interfolio to: **Chair Review of Position, FRP, and Criteria [Dept. Chair]**

This position status signifies the position announcement and FRP are awaiting review and approval by the Department Chair.

Email the Department Chair and (cc the admin) to let them know the position announcement and FRP are ready for their review and approval.

Approval is signified by the changing of the position's status to the next level of review and approval.

Department Chair – to approve the position announcement and FRP after review, change the position status to:

Dean's Office Approval Position, FRP, and Criteria [College Dean]

This position status signifies the position announcement is awaiting review and approval by the Dean's Office.

Email the Dean's when the position announcement is ready for Dean's office review and approval.

Approval is signified by the changing of the position's status.

College Dean – to approve the position announcement and Faculty Recruitment Plan after review, change the position status to:

Provost's office Approval Position, FRP, and Criteria [Karen or Linda]

This position status signifies the position announcement is awaiting review and approval by the Provost's Office.

Email Karen Ling and copy Linda Dobb when the position announcement is ready for Provost's Office review and approval.

Provost's Office – after review and approval by the Provost's office, the OAA position number and PeopleSoft (PS) number will be assigned and the position announcement will be published in Interfolio for applicants to submit applications. The search committee, department chair, and dean will receive an email notification that the position has been approved and published.

The position status will show: **“Position Open for Accepting Applications”**

Stage Five: Screening Applications in Interfolio

Change the position status to: **Screening 1 - Committee Members Review and Rank all Applications [Search Committee]**

Interfolio automatically sends acknowledgements to all applicants recognizing receipt of their completed application

Review each application using approved screening criteria, loaded in Interfolio, assigning the appropriate rating per criteria

Required: the following information from the rating/scoring process must be available, either within Interfolio (using the stars and criteria) **or as a separate attachment** (this method is highly recommended), titled appropriately and uploaded into Interfolio under “Internal Notes:”

- a. Scoring by criteria for each applicant
- b. Scoring by each evaluator
- c. A summary or total of all scoring per applicant
- d. Any comments about the applicants by the search committee members

It is **highly recommended** to use external documents for scoring, rather than using the star system within Interfolio, as the star scoring system is very limited. Scoring should be done in an external spreadsheet, and then uploaded into Interfolio as a PDF document. Please title accordingly for ease of reference. (In Interfolio, upload under “Internal Notes,” “Edit,” “Add File”). See **APPENDIX C** for a sample template.

Diversity Best Practice: Be sure that your grid scores each applicant on the potential they show for being able to work with a diverse student population—look for research, mentoring, teaching or other experience they have in this area. See APPENDIX B, Evaluating a Diversity Statement.

Diversity Best Practice: Think back on your past searches; list the attributes that you know would make a candidate successful in the position and in the department. Score the candidate strictly based upon those attributes.

Diversity Best Practice: The Office of Academic Affairs should check that you have done advertisements in the places indicated in your Recruitment Plan.

If scoring using the Interfolio star system: upload the initial screening criteria (from the FRP) in Interfolio under “Evaluation Settings, Criteria.”

Make sure to designate them appropriately, for example:

Initial Screening Question #1, ...

Initial Screening Question #2, ...

Use the “comments,” “notes,” or “tags” in applicant files in Interfolio as needed

Stage Six: Obtain Approval to Conduct Telephone Interviews

Approval is signified by the changing of the position's status.

Designate the applicants selected for telephone interviews by changing an Applicant's status to "Telephone Interview" in Interfolio under a particular applicant's name/file.

Change Position Status to: **Screening 2 - Committee Members Recommend 3-10 for Telephone Interviews [Committee Chair]**

Change the position status in Interfolio to: **Screening 3 - Chair Review for Telephone Interviews [Dept. Chair]** and email the Department Chair and (cc the Admin) to let them know the proposed list of telephone interviewees is ready for their review and approval. This position status signifies the list of selectees for telephone interviews is awaiting review and approval by the Department Chair.

Department Chair – after reviewing the screening/ranking the proposed applicants designated for telephone interviews, to approve the list of applicants selected for telephone interviews:

Change the position status to: **Screening 4 - Dean Review for Telephone Interviews [College Dean]**

This position status signifies the proposed list of applicants selected for telephone interviews is awaiting review and approval by the Dean.

Email the Dean (cc the Admin) to let them know the proposed list of applicants selected for telephone interviews is ready for their review and approval.

For a dissenting opinion, please send an email to Karen Ling
(Karen.Ling@csueastbay.edu)

College Dean –after reviewing the screening/ranking of the proposed applicants designated for telephone interviews, to approve the list of applicants selected for telephone interviews:

Change the position status to: **Conduct Telephone Interviews [Search Committee]**

For a dissenting opinion, please send an email to Karen Ling
(Karen.Ling@csueastbay.edu)

After Dean's approval for telephone interviews, search committee can conduct telephone interviews.

Stage Seven: Conduct Telephone Interviews Using Approved Questions

Conduct telephone interviews with the approved telephone interview questions and ratings protocol – load scoring/ranking sheets into Interfolio in the “Internal Notes” section.

If scoring using the Interfolio star system: upload the telephone interview questions (from the FRP) in Interfolio under “Evaluation Settings, Criteria.”

Make sure to designate them appropriately, for example:

Phone Interview Question #1, ...

Phone Interview Question #2, ...

Review/approvals cannot proceed without the committee’s scores/rankings on each criteria and any notes/comments on the applicants’ qualifications.

One of your scoring criteria for ALL candidates who receive a telephone interview **MUST be a scoring of their written references.**

See **APPENDIX D** for A Guide to Interview Questions.

Diversity Best Practice: All telephone interviews must include a question that looks for the candidate’s potential to teach and relate to a diverse student body. Think out of the box: what minority heroes/role models in your discipline have made an impression on you; how might you handle a difficult conversation about race, gender or sex in your classroom; how do you try to insure that your teaching is reaching all students

Diversity Best Practice: All candidates should have a response to a diversity statement prompt that illustrates their approach to culturally competent pedagogy.

Diversity Best Practice: You may use zoom or skype for your phone interviews ONLY IF all candidates agree to this.

Diversity Best Practice: Be warm and welcoming on the phone; don’t rush; candidates will be trying to make an impression on you but you will also be making an impression on them

Diversity Best Practice: If your first contact with a candidate is at a conference interview conduct a telephone interview follow-up to ensure all information and questions are answered.

Stage Eight: Obtain Approval for On-Campus Interviews – Search Committee

Approval is signified by the changing of the position’s status.

After all approved telephone interviews and scoring/ranking of candidates have been conducted and the scores/rankings/comments have been uploaded to Interfolio, the Search Committee Chair should change the position status to:
Recommendation for On-Campus Interviews [Committee Chair]

For each applicant selected for on-campus interviews, change the Applicant's status to "On Campus Interview" in Interfolio under a particular applicant's name/file.

In Interfolio, upload the following documents under "Internal Notes," "Edit," "Add File:"

1. Summary of the locations from which the applicants will be traveling and estimated travel and lodging costs (one document/file titled: **"Travel Costs for On Campus Interviews"**)
2. Proposed on-campus interview questions (titled: **"Proposed On-Campus Interview Questions"**)
3. Proposed on-campus Rating Protocol (titled: **"Proposed On-Campus Rating Protocol"**)
4. Proposed on-campus interview schedule (titled: **"Proposed On-Campus Interview Schedule"**)
5. Ratings for the Telephone Interviews (by criteria, evaluator, and summary), if not directly scored in Interfolio, (titled: **"Telephone Scores"**)

After all applicants selected for on-campus interviews have been designated and the required documents uploaded:

Change the position status in Interfolio to: **Chair Review for On-Campus Interviews [Dept. Chair]**

This position status signifies the proposed list of candidates for on-campus interviews and required documents are awaiting review and approval by the Department Chair.

Email the Department Chair and (cc the Admin) to let them know the proposed list of candidates for on-campus interviews and required documents are ready for their review and approval.

Department Chair – review the proposed list of applicants selected for on-campus interviews and uploaded documents. To approve:

Change the position status to: **Dean Review for On-Campus Interviews [College Dean]**

This position status signifies the proposed list of candidates for on-campus interviews and required documents are awaiting review and approval by the Dean.

Email the Dean and (cc the Admin) to let them know the proposed list of candidates for on-campus interviews and required documents are ready for their review and approval.

For a dissenting opinion, please send an email to Karen Ling
(Karen.Ling@csueastbay.edu)

College Dean – review the proposed list of applicants selected for on-campus interviews and uploaded documents. To approve,

Change the position status to: **Provost's Office Review for On-Campus Interviews [Karen or Linda]**

Email the Provost's office (Linda and Karen) to let them know the proposed list of candidates for on-campus interviews and required documents are ready for review and approval.

For a dissenting opinion, please send an email to Karen Ling
(Karen.Ling@csueastbay.edu)

Provost's Office Review and Approval – after approval by the Provost's office, notification will be sent to the Search Committee, and the position status will be changed to: **Conduct On-Campus Interviews [Search Committee]**

Search Committee can now conduct the On-Campus Interviews. See **APPENDIX D** for A Guide to Interview Questions.

Candidates should be advised that one verbal reference check will be conducted prior to any offer being made.

Scoring should be done on a spreadsheet and uploaded into "Internal Notes." See **APPENDIX C** for a sample template.

Stage Nine: Submit Final Recommendation for Tenure-Track Hire

Change the position status to: **Final Recommendation [Search Chair]**

VERBAL Reference Check – Before proceeding with an informal offer request, a reference check must be conducted by Department Chair, Associate Dean, or Dean; they must speak to **at least one** of the **current** references: a professor, supervisor, or department chair at the candidate's current place of employments.

Reference Check questions should be located in the Faculty Recruitment Plan

Reference Check results should be uploaded into Interfolio as an attached file

Assuming the verbal reference check is positive, submit a memo to the Department Chair from Search Committee Chair making a recommendation. All members of the Search Committee must sign recommendation. Address strengths/weaknesses of each candidate and sources of evidence used. Change the position status to: **Chair Review of Final Recommendation [Dept. Chair]**

Memo to Dean from Department Chair concurring or dissenting with Search Committee recommendation. Department Chair must include a recommended years' credit toward tenure, if applicable, moving/relocation funds if applicable, and start-up costs. Change the position status to: **Dean Review of Final Recommendation [College Dean]**

Memorandum to Provost from College Dean with the hiring recommendation, which must include a recommended salary range and a request for years' credit toward tenure, if applicable; moving/relocation expenses, if applicable; release time, if applicable; and start-up funds. Include the memorandums from the search committee with explanation of the finalist's qualifications, and the rationale/justification for the chosen candidate (experience, etc.). Change the position status to: **Provost's Office - Final Recommendation (Karen or Linda)**

Stage Ten: Informal Offer, Background Check, Formal Offer, and Acknowledgement

- (1) After Provost's Office approval, College Dean to make conditional offer to the selected candidate within the approved parameters.
- (2) After acceptance of the informal offer, forward the name and email address of the selected candidate to Karen Ling (Karen.Ling@csueastbay.edu) to order the required background check.
- (3) Include copies of the candidate's CV and the three confidential letters of recommendation.
- (4) Department Chair New Faculty Review Checklist – must be signed by the department chair and included (see: <http://www.csueastbay.edu/oaa/policies-and-procedures/new-faculty-chair-checklist.pdf>)
- (5) Once the background check is completed and clears, the formal offer letter and summary of benefits will be sent to the candidate.
- (6) After formal acceptance is received, the College will be notified, and should coordinate with the Department about any messages they wish to send to the applicants. The search will then be closed in Interfolio.

End Notes

Cal State East Bay gratefully acknowledges the work of Sacramento State's Office of Faculty Advancement whose "Faculty Recruitment Guide," helped shape some of this document.

CSU Records Retention Requirements for **Recruitment Records**: (HR Technical Letter, Oct 13, 2004): *Typical documents*: Applications, resumes, reference checks, writing samples, advertising records, rating sheets, etc. *Minimum Retention Period*: Three years after close of recruitment.

All documents will be retained in the Provost's Office.

APPENDIX A

Interfolio Position Statuses for Tenure-Track Faculty Search

1.	Generate Position Announcement Template and Submit the Faculty Recruitment Plan, Application Screening Criteria and Proposed Telephone Interview Questions [Dept. or College Admin]
2.	Chair Review of Position, FRP, and Criteria [Dept. Chair]
3.	Dean Review of Position, FRP, and Criteria [Dean]
4.	Provost's Office Review of Position, FRP, and Criteria [Karen or Linda]
5.	Position Open for Accepting Applications
6.	Screening 1 - Committee Members Review and Rank all Applications [Search Committee]
7.	Screening 2 - Committee Members Recommend 3-10 for Telephone Interviews [Committee Chair]
8.	Screening 3 - Chair Review for Telephone Interviews [Dept. Chair]
9.	Screening 4 - Dean Review for Telephone Interviews [College Dean]
10.	Conduct Telephone Interviews [Committee Chair]
11.	Recommendation for On-Campus Interviews [Committee Chair]
12.	Chair Review for On-Campus Interviews [Dept. Chair]
13.	Dean Review for On-Campus Interviews [College Dean]
14.	Provost's Office Review for On-Campus Interviews [Karen or Linda]
15.	Conduct On-Campus Interviews [Search Committee]
16.	Final Recommendation [Search Chair]
17.	Chair Review of Final Recommendation [Dept. Chair]
18.	Dean Review of Final Recommendation and Conditional Offer [College Dean]
19.	Provost's Office - Final Recommendation [Karen or Linda]
20.	Position Offer / After Acceptance / Position Close

APPENDIX B

Evaluating a Diversity Statement

The purpose of using a diversity statement in the faculty search process is to allow candidates to identify professional skills, experience, and/or willingness to engage in activities that advance our campus's equity, diversity, and inclusion goals. Such statements or criterion should include past efforts, if applicable, and future plans.

In evaluating diversity statements and/or diversity criterion, search committees should be looking for statements that indicate:

- Demonstrated experience with or stated willingness to:
 - o develop and incorporate effective teaching strategies for a diverse group of learners;
 - o create an equitable and inclusive learning environment to support all student success; and/or
 - o apply teaching techniques that meet the needs of students from groups that are underrepresented in the field of instruction;

- Evidence of assisting the professional advancement of individuals in underrepresented groups in the candidate's field; and/or

- Prior experience in or stated interest in recruitment, retention, and mentoring of scholars and students for the purpose of increasing diversity and equal opportunity.

Diversity statements should be considered as part of the overall or comprehensive review process.

SAMPLE RUBRIC FOR EVALUATING DIVERSITY STATEMENTS

	1	2	3	4
Effective teaching strategies for a diverse group of learners	Teaching strategies are vague AND generalized	Teaching strategies are vague OR generalized	Teaching strategies are specific OR inclusive	Teaching strategies are specific AND inclusive
Create an equitable and inclusive learning environment to support all student success	Pedagogy fails to incorporate contemporary approaches AND serves only a small group of learners	Pedagogy fails to incorporate contemporary approaches OR serves only a small group of learners	Pedagogy incorporates contemporary approaches OR serves a diverse group of learners	Pedagogy incorporates contemporary approaches AND serves a diverse group of learners
Apply teaching techniques that meet the needs of students from groups that are underrepresented in the field of instruction	Teaching techniques are vague AND not inclusive	Teaching techniques are vague OR not inclusive	Teaching techniques are specific OR inclusive	Teaching techniques are specific AND inclusive
Evidence of assisting the professional advancement of individuals in underrepresented groups in the candidate's field	Evidence is vague AND generalized	Evidence is vague OR generalized	Evidence is specific OR inclusive	Evidence is specific AND inclusive
Recruitment, retention, and mentoring of scholars and students for the purpose of increasing diversity and equal opportunity	Efforts are vague AND do not demonstrate an increase	Efforts are vague OR do not demonstrate an increase	Efforts are specific OR demonstrate an increase	Efforts are specific AND demonstrate an increase

APPENDIX D
SENSITIVE TOPICS:
WHAT NOT TO ASK, or IF YOU MUST—HOW TO ASK IT

Nationality

Certainly, you want to be sure that a candidate can legally work for you, but it's important to be careful how you ask. These questions address citizenship, language and other touchy subjects.

1. **What you can't ask:** Are you a U.S. citizen?

Although this seems like the simplest and most direct way to find out if an interviewee is legally able to work for your company, it's hands-off. Rather than inquiring about citizenship, question whether or not the candidate is authorized for work.

What to ask instead: Are you authorized to work in the U.S.?

2. **What you can't ask:** What is your native tongue?

Finding out about a candidate's native language may seem like a good way to find out about their fluency, but you may offend applicants that are sensitive to common assumptions about their language. Additionally, as an employer, it's not your concern how the applicant attained fluency in a language — just that they are fluent.

What to ask instead: What languages do you read, speak or write fluently?

3. **What you can't ask:** How long have you lived here?

Familiarity with local culture may be important to the position, but it's important not to ask about a candidate's residency in the country or region directly. Rather, ask about their current situation, and they may volunteer information about their past along the way.

What to ask instead: What is your current address and phone number? Do you have any alternative locations where you can be reached?

Religion

Religion is a subject that should be treaded upon lightly at the office, and even more so in interviews. Protect yourself from overstepping the boundaries but still get the information you need with these questions.

1. **What you can't ask:** What religion do you practice?

You may want to know about religious practices to find out about weekend work schedules, but it's imperative that you refrain from asking directly about a candidate's beliefs. Instead, just ask directly when they're able to work, and there will be no confusion.

What to ask instead: What days are you available to work?

2. **What you can't ask:** Which religious holidays do you observe?

Again, scheduling is important, but don't risk stepping on toes to find out what you need to know. Simply confirm that your interviewee can work when you need them to.

What to ask instead: Are you able to work with our required schedule?

3. **What you can't ask:** Do you belong to a club or social organization?

This question is too revealing of political and religious affiliations and candidates are not required to share such information with potential employers. Additionally, this questions has little to no relation to a candidate's ability to do a job. For this question, it's important that the wording focuses on work.

What to ask instead: Are you a member of a professional or trade group that is relevant to our industry?

Age

Maturity is essential for most positions, but it's important that you don't make assumptions about a candidate's maturity based on age. Alternately, you have to be careful about discrimination towards applicants nearing retirement. These questions will keep you in the clear.

1. **What you can't ask:** How old are you?

While it seems like a simple question, it's in fact quite loaded. Knowledge of an applicant's age can set you up for discrimination troubles down the road. To be safe, just ensure that the candidate is legally old enough to work for your firm.

What to ask instead: Are you over the age of 18?

2. **What you can't ask:** How much longer do you plan to work before you retire?

Again, asking this question opens up discrimination troubles. While you may not want to hire an older worker who will retire in a few years, you can't dismiss an applicant for this reason. Instead, see what the candidate's plans are for the future; they may plan to work for a number of years.

What to ask instead: What are your long-term career goals?

Marital and Family Status

These questions primarily concern women with children, but they're applicable to everyone. Ensure that you don't make assumptions, and avoid embarrassing candidates by using the following questions.

1. **What you can't ask:** Is this your maiden name?

This question, like many others, may seem innocent and simple, but it's off-limits. A woman's marital status isn't something that's required to be shared with employers. Instead, verify whether or not she's gained experience using any other names.

What to ask instead: Have you worked or earned a degree under another name?

2. **What you can't ask:** Do you have kids?

This one is for positions in which the candidate may work with children. The added experience of children at home may be a bonus for you, but it's not an employer's place to ask about this. Rather, inquire about the candidate's experience, and they may volunteer this information to you anyway.

Suggestion: Don't ask this question.

3. **What you can't ask:** Who is your closest relative to notify in case of an emergency?

Although not especially offensive, this question makes assumptions about the candidate's personal life. They may not be close to relatives and instead prefer to list a friend or caretaker.

What to ask instead: In case of emergency, who should we notify?

4. **What you can't ask:** What do your parents do for a living?

Asking a candidate about their parents can reveal a lot, but it's not directly related to their future performance in a position. However, if you are trying to find out if your candidate's family has traditionally worked in your industry, this question is a good way to find out.

What to ask instead: Tell me how you became interested in being a professor.

5. **What you can't ask:** If you or your partner get pregnant, will you continue to work, and will you come back after maternity/paternity leave?

Ultimately, you want to invest your time in a candidate that will stick around, but you can't ask a woman or a man to share such plans, or lack thereof, with you.

What to ask instead: What are your long-term career goals?

Gender

Once you've reached the interview stage, a candidate's gender is almost always clear. It is important, however, to ensure that you don't make assumptions about a person's gender or abilities based on this information.

1. **What you can't ask:** How do you feel about supervising men/women?

This question, although it may seem like a valid concern, is not acceptable. The candidate may not have any issues working with the opposite or same sex, and you'll seem crass for even bringing it up.

What to ask instead: Tell me about your previous experience managing teams.

2. **What you can't ask:** What do you think of interoffice dating?

The practice of interoffice dating can be distracting, break up teams and cause a number of other problems in the workplace. But asking this question makes assumptions about the candidate's marital status and may even be interpreted as a come-on.

What to ask instead: Have you ever been disciplined for your behavior at work?

Health and Physical Abilities

Your employees' health and abilities may be essential to getting the job done, but it's important to avoid assumptions and discrimination. Stick to these questions in order to avoid embarrassment and legal troubles.

1. **What you can't ask:** Do you smoke or drink?

As an employer, you probably want to avoid someone who has a drinking problem or will take multiple smoke breaks throughout the day. It's even a concern for insurance. Instead of asking about this directly, find out if they've had trouble with health policies in the past.

Suggestion: Don't ask this type of question but you may state that we have a completely smoke-free campus.

2. **What you can't ask:** Do you take drugs?

This question is just a simple confusion of terms. Your interviewee may think you're asking about prescription drugs, which is off-limits.

Suggestion: Don't ask this type of question

What you can't ask: How tall are you?

In a labor environment, height may be essential to the job, but this question is too personal. As with many of these questions, it's best just to ask directly about the candidate's ability to do what's required of them.

Suggestion: don't ask this type of question.

3. **What you can't ask:** How much do you weigh?

This highly personal question is embarrassing for most and is not necessarily relevant to a candidate's ability to do even a physical-labor job. Avoid making assumptions, and ask about abilities directly.

What to ask instead: Are you able to lift boxes weighing up to 50 pounds? Only ask if necessary.

4. **What you can't ask:** How many sick days did you take last year?

No one wants a flaky employee, but even the most dedicated workers get sick every now and then. Take a look at missed days as a whole to measure the candidate's commitment.

What to say instead: As faculty, as receive a very limited number of sick days each year; attendance at class is, of course, a very important part of this job.

5. **What you can't ask:** Do you have any disabilities?

Disabilities, whether they're physical or mental, may affect a candidate's ability to do the job, but it's critical that you avoid asking about them. Rather, find out if the applicant can handle doing what's required.

What to ask instead: Are you able to perform the specific duties of this position?

6. **What you can't ask:** Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations?

Again, gauging commitment is important, but illness isn't something that most people can help. The answer here is to make sure that the candidate can perform the job while avoiding questions about his or her physical abilities.

Suggestion: Don't ask this type of question.

Miscellaneous

Avoid interviewing gaffes by sidestepping these questions about residence, legal troubles and military service.

1. **What you can't ask:** How far is your commute?

Although hiring employees who live close by may be convenient, you can't choose candidates based on their location. Find out about their availability instead.

What to ask instead: If scheduled for class, could you start work at 8 a.m.?

2. **What you can't ask:** Do you live nearby?

If your candidate lives outside the area, it may be necessary to have them move to your area. But again, you can't discriminate based on location. Rather, find out if the applicant is willing to move closer to the University.

What to ask instead: Are you willing to relocate?

3. **What you can't ask:** Have you ever been arrested?

In sensitive positions, like those that deal with money, you may want to find out about your candidate's legal fortitude. But ensure that you ask only directly about crimes that relate to your concern.

What you can say instead: All final candidates for positions at East Bay undergo a background check.

What you can't ask: Were you honorably discharged from the military?

A bad military record can be illuminating, but you can't ask about it. Instead, ask about the candidate's experience, and they may volunteer this information on their own.

What to ask instead: Tell me how your experience in the military might benefit our students.

What you can't ask: Are you a member of the National Guard or Reserves?

Losing an employee to military service can be disrupting, but it's critical that you don't discriminate based on assumptions of a candidate's upcoming military commitments. Find out what their plans are for the short term instead.

What to ask instead: Do you have any upcoming events that would require extensive time away from work?

Although we urge you to maintain a welcoming atmosphere for candidates both on the phone and in person NEVER BECOME SO INFORMAL as to ask inappropriate questions.