Employer Hiring Guidelines: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Introduction

This document outlines Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) hiring guidelines for:

Job Postings

This section outlines what information should be included and excluded from a job posting, and how job postings should be disseminated.

Hiring Committees

This section details how hiring committees should be formed and what actions hiring committee members should engage in.

Application Review

This section covers what criteria should guide the application review process and how individual applications should be evaluated.

Job Interviews

This section presents what accommodations should be offered and what practices should inform the interview process.

Hiring Decisions

This section summarizes how hiring decisions should be finalized and what mechanisms should be used to track these decisions.

This document was co-created by TESL Ontario's DEI committee. This is a living document, responsive to feedback and committed to updating. It is not intended to serve as a comprehensive guide to DEI hiring guidelines, and should be used in conjunction with other resources. If you have questions or comments about this document, please contact 1-800-327-4827 or use the following form: https://teslontario.org/contact/.

Job Postings

- Consider the core components of the job. Divide your posting into the main areas a strong candidate needs to possess, like skills or competencies. Know your must-haves.

- Focus on competency and avoid personal characteristics. This helps keep the focus on the role and what the successful candidate can bring. Be results oriented.

- Check for bias. Choose gender neutral and plain language. Consider alternative expertise or experience. Beware of language proficiency bias.

- Be transparent about salary, policies, benefits, and work modality. This clarifies expectations and promotes equity for all parties.

- Consider a DEI and EEO statement. Include a statement in the posting that outlines your organization's commitment to DEI and fair hiring practices, what that means, and evidence to support this.

- Update your job postings regularly. This will ensure better alignment with changing needs and promote transparency for candidates.

- Seek feedback and collaboration. Compare your postings to similar roles and ask for recommendations from other internal or external parties. Provide a feedback survey to applicants to rate their experience with the process.

- Make applications accessible and easy to submit. Consider multiple ways of submitting an application and the limited hardware of some applicants. Seek out multiple channels to advertise postings.

Hiring Committee

- Reflect diversity in multiple forms. The people making hiring decisions should represent a diversity of genders, sexual orientations, races, skin colours, ages, professional experiences, educational backgrounds, and more. A diverse hiring committee can allow for multiple understandings of a job candidate.

- Complete training on implicit bias. While there is no one-size-fits-all training course, hiring committee members should engage with educational resources on identifying implicit bias in hiring, recruitment, and retention practices. This will allow the committee to create a shared understanding of DEI and be better informed when interacting with candidates throughout the hiring process. This process may include cultural sensitivity training for interviewers to ensure respectful and inclusive interactions.

- Openly discuss DEI hiring principles. All hiring committee members should be aware of and work to explicitly determine what DEI principles or guidelines inform each part of their work. This will ensure a more transparent and accountable hiring process.

- Assess candidate experience through an asset-based lens. Hiring committee discussions should begin with a review of candidate strengths. Perceived deficiencies should be considered in relation to experiences of oppression and discrimination. Lived experiences should be valued along with professional and educational credentials.

- Commit to ongoing accountability. Members of the hiring committee should hold themselves and each other accountable to enacting DEI principles. Bias-reducing mechanisms such as evaluation forms should be followed, and members should identify and report on any bias in final deciding criteria. Hiring committees should also liaise, where possible, with the organization's DEI representatives regarding hiring decisions and reasons.

Application Review

- Develop a written review criteria in advance and refer to the criteria at every stage of the review. It is recommended to use an assessment rubric to maintain balance, consistency, and fairness. This will also minimize subjectivity and increase opportunity for a more thoughtful and objective approach to screening.

- Ensure that career interruptions due to leave, illness, other responsibilities, or societal disruptions (e.g., pandemic, war, political unrest, environmental disaster, etc.) do not negatively impact the assessment of a candidate's professional knowledge and skills. Applicants should know these will not be taken into consideration during their application review process.

- Assess whether the pool of applicants is sufficiently diverse – suggested grouping can be based on the makeup of Canada's population. If the pool of applicants is not large or diverse enough, consider extending the application deadline, or review the job posting more critically for potential barriers before reposting it.

- Provide "rejected" candidates the courtesy and respect of swift responses and feedback, if requested

- Keep in mind that the best-qualified candidates may not have the most years of experience, professional certifications or upskilling opportunities. For example, applicants who were not able to financially support themselves or dependents may not have as many academic credentials or publications, but the substance and quality of that applicant's work may render them best qualified.

- Keep in mind that applicants from underrepresented groups may receive education or publications in lesser known areas, but this should be recognized and equally valued.

- Where feasible, employ an anonymous review process by removing names and other identifying information to reduce bias.

Job Interviews

- Offer variety. Candidates may have preferences or constraints during certain types of interview formats. Consider offering in-person, video, online call, or phone interview options. Help candidates showcase their skills via portfolio submissions and demonstrations.

- Clear is kind. Provide clear instructions in writing and provide information for a contact person if there are pre-interview questions. Consider sharing the interview format, questions, and scoring criteria ahead of time. If you are expecting answers in a particular format, clarify this before and at the beginning of the interview. Be consistent and transparent.

- A friendly start. Provide opportunity for small talk and unmarked questions before starting the interview. Help the candidate feel safe and provide a chance for questions. Allot time for the interview accordingly.

- Keep it simple. Make sure your interview questions are selected purposefully. Have others check for clarity and understandability. Ask shorter, more direct questions instead of long, indirect questions with multiple parts.

- Sharing is caring. During the interview, show the interview questions. Allow the candidate time to hear and read the question, then to prepare or clarify.

- Be mindful of pace and reactions. Speak at a moderate rate and slow down if the candidate asks so. Consider the tone of your voice and the non-verbal communication you may exhibit while listening to their answers.

- Be prepared. As an interviewer, be prepared to answer questions on values, team culture, benefits, work modality, diversity initiatives, and role clarification. Candidates should be encouraged to ask questions at all stages of the process. Consider making real-time accommodations during interviews, such as providing extra time or alternative question formats

- Communicate. Follow up with unsuccessful applicants and those who did not get an interview in a timely manner.

Hiring Decisions

- Have written reports on record that tracks the hiring process, including the decisions that led to the selection of the successful candidate. It should provide the rationale of why members of underrepresented groups were unsuccessful as well as addressing the unconscious biases that may exist and ensuring it does not affect the decision-making process.

- Avoid using subjective criteria as these can reflect the personal biases of the hiring team. For example, the fact that a candidate is introverted or extroverted should not be considered when assessing their suitability for the position.

- Consistent reminders to the hiring team that the need for accommodation cannot be used as a negative point against a candidate in the assessment process.

- Avoid allowing the final decision to be affected by career interruptions, such as those required for parental, family or medical leave, or other responsibilities.

- Avoid prematurely labeling any candidate as the "most promising" until all candidates are interviewed. Debrief as a hiring team to compare notes and identify strengths and weaknesses for all candidates. Focus on each candidate's track record of achievements and qualifications to meet the requirements of the position as they have been ranked in the assessment rubric.

- Consider what comes after the hiring process. It is recommended to have an onboarding plan once the initial offer and approval is received in order to facilitate inclusive onboarding. Consult with the necessary stakeholders in order to ensure that the new hire's start is successful. Based on the individual candidate's strengths, weaknesses, and necessary accommodations, the hiring team should develop a specific onboarding plan. This includes health and safety training and other related HR training, departmental introductions and training timeline, etc.