

Faculty Searches during COVID Best Practices

2/3/21

General Guidelines

- If an exception to conduct a search is granted, academic units should use Zoom or other virtual tools for interviews whenever possible to prioritize the health of candidates and interview participants and their families.
- Interviews should be as consistent as possible for each candidate and ensure that evaluation of all applicants is based on the extent to which applicants meet the criteria for the position.

Guidelines for Virtual Interviews

General Guidelines

- Remind candidates and committee members to treat the interview as though it were “in person”
- Appoint a moderator for group meetings; name them as alternate host in Zoom
- Use a waiting room for the candidate or use a different Zoom link for each candidate to ensure candidates do not inadvertently “Zoom bomb” one another
- Consider turning off the chat function; candidates can see the chat (this is particularly important if using one Zoom link for all interviews)
- Interviews may not be recorded
- Provide ample breaks for search committee members and candidates

Additional Considerations for “Airport”/Search Committee Screening

- Offer to conduct a Zoom test with each of the candidates prior to the interview; have a phone connection available
- Have a pre-meeting with the search committee to go over logistics and protocol
- Identify a way to conduct polls via Zoom or some other format

Additional Considerations for Virtual Small Group Interviews

- Give the moderator instructions about their role
- Consider keeping interview size to no more than 8-10 participants when possible so that the candidate can see the faces of the interviewers

Virtual Town Hall/Large Interview Session Considerations

- Ensure the candidates can share their screen if they have a PowerPoint; ask for any PowerPoint in advance as a back-up
- Consider the format you want – Zoom meeting vs. Zoom webinar (in a Zoom webinar, the participants do not see each other)
- Appoint a moderator to introduce the candidate, monitor the chat if applicable, and manage Q&A
- Options for questions:
 - “Raise hand” feature
 - Moderator reviews the chat function and asks questions
 - Questions sent to moderator’s email
- Consider having technical support available

If the unit appointing authority (see [AC13](#) for definition) permits the recordings of public research presentations, the guidelines at the end of this document must be followed. Public research talks may only be recorded if all finalists agree to be recorded.

Before a Campus Visit/On-Site Interview Can Be Scheduled...

- First round virtual interview must have been conducted and positive
- Consider only bringing candidates to campus who have a strong likelihood of offer or have accepted an offer
 - Carefully consider whether it is necessary to see someone in person to make an offer for a position
 - If not brought to campus, give them an opportunity to visit prior to making a decision
 - If multiple finalists, all should participate in the same format (either in person or virtual)
- Assess the availability of meeting space given physical distancing guidelines
- If the previous criteria are met, speak to the candidate to determine if candidate...
 - has had COVID symptoms
 - is waiting for a test result
 - has had exposure or has been identified as a close contact by a contact tracing process
 - lives in or has traveled to one of the states [identified by DOH](#) from which travelers should quarantine
- If the candidate will be delivering a presentation of some type to a larger audience (e.g., department/college/campus) as part of the interview (e.g., a research talk, a teaching presentation, or a town hall), such presentations may only be recorded if the unit appointing authority permits them. Presentations may only be recorded if all candidates giving a presentation agree to be recorded. The guidelines at the end of this document must be followed.
- Interview sessions may never be recorded.
- If appropriate, proceed with scheduling onsite visit. If candidate cannot travel due to health and safety considerations, interview may continue virtually or rescheduled for a later date.
 - Reminder: Be sure to ask the candidate if any accommodations are needed for the visit

Visit Guidelines

Travel Considerations

- Candidate must follow [University-Affiliated Travel guidelines](#)
 - Review [PA Department of Health](#) guidance
 - Practice social distancing and hygiene recommendations before and during travel
 - Obtain masks and hand sanitizer
- On-campus interviews with international candidates should be held virtually with campus visits postponed until Penn State permits international travel.
 - International travel requires approval from Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
- Candidates must sign a “COVID Acknowledgment for Individual Interview Candidates” (available upon request from the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs or from Risk Management)

On-Campus Visit Considerations

- Appointing authority is accountable to ensure that candidate and all attendees follow Penn State’s health and safety guidelines
 - Ensure physical distancing of at least 6 feet between all attendees at all times.
 - All participants must wear masks. Consider having extra masks on hand.
 - Avoid handshakes and other forms of physical contact.
- Encourage attendees to complete the Symptom Tracker on Penn State Go. Check with HRSP to determine if attendees need to complete the Return to Work process.
- Allow/encourage others to participate virtually if they prefer.
- Non-employees who attend any meetings/events must be approved by unit executive per [visitor guidelines](#).
- If a realtor conducts a tour, ensure they’re familiar with Penn State’s health and safety guidance. Work with the realtor to determine if virtual tours are a possibility.
- If a meal is included, it should be served in individual portions; avoid open food options.
 - Consider allowing the candidate to dine alone.
 - No offsite dinners unless approved by the dean/chancellor.
- The interview process should be for candidate only and would not include other family members unless approved by the appointing authority.
- Inform candidate that in the event they experience COVID symptoms or test positive within 14 days following the onsite visit, the expectation is that the unit would be notified and similarly, we will inform them if someone they met with tests positive for COVID.

Recording Candidate Presentations for Virtual and On-Campus Visits

- Interviews should never be recorded. Only candidate presentations (via Zoom or in person) such as job talks or town halls may be recorded.
- **The appointing authority determines whether any recordings may take place in the unit and is responsible for ensuring the guidelines below are followed;** there is no expectation that candidate presentations “should” be required.
- If there are likely to be issues with confidential research that may give rise to data security or export control issues, then the presentation should not be recorded.
- If the appointing authority permits the recording of candidate presentations and a search committee desires that candidate presentations be recorded, then before any candidate presentations take place, the search committee chair must ascertain from each candidate whether they agree to have the presentation recorded. This agreement should be documented. **Candidate presentations can be recorded only if all candidates agree.** No information about whether the public research presentation/town hall will be recorded should be shared until all candidates have confirmed their willingness to have their presentation recorded, as the identity of any candidate who does not wish to be recorded must be kept confidential.
 - Any video or audio recordings of candidates, whether hired or not, that are created as part of a search process must be retained as part of the search committee files consistent with the Department of Labor regulations via [20 CFR Ch. V § 656.10.f](#) and held by the Unit HR Office. Recordings are to be retained for 3 years when the candidate hired does not require visa sponsorship and 5 years when the candidate hired requires visa sponsorship. Please contact the Office of Records Management or Office of Global Programs about these requirements.
- Recordings retained must be stored in Kaltura (see below).
 - All Zoom recordings are automatically uploaded into Kaltura. Click [here](#) for information about how to access a Zoom recording in Kaltura. See “Kaltura Settings” below to enable appropriate access and use.
 - The search committee chair or their designee may share the link to the recording in Kaltura with those involved with the search for a short period of time (e.g., one or two weeks) during the search period. Information about how to share a link to a recording in Kaltura is available [here](#).
 - When access to the unit recording ends, the head of the search committee or their designee is responsible for removing access and transferring ownership of the recording within Kaltura to the unit HR office. Information about how to change the owner of a recording in Kaltura is available [here](#).
 - After that time, access will be restricted to the unit HR office, which will be responsible for retention and deletion.

Kaltura Settings:

- Kaltura can be accessed at <https://cmm.psu.edu/kaltura/> and training resources are available at <https://itld.psu.edu/learning-path/kaltura-learning-path-mediaspace-users>.
- Kaltura automatically retains recordings for 3 years and provides a notification to users of that. If further retention is required due to litigation holds or the 5-year period above, the recordings can be easily downloaded. Recordings can also be easily deleted in Kaltura if they are no longer needed.

- Recordings must be set to “Private” under the publishing “Publish” settings so only the media owner and media collaborators (aka those it is shared with) can view it. Collaborators can be added and owners can be edited under the Kaltura “Collaboration” setting.

Suggested talking points for discussions with candidates about recording a talk/presentation:

- Do not inform the candidate that all candidates must agree to be recorded in order for any talk to be recorded, as this might pressure the candidate to agree to be recorded.
- Let the candidate know why it would be helpful for the unit to be able to record the talk.
- Let the candidate know that if there may be issues with confidential research that may give rise to data security or export control issues, then the presentation should not be recorded.
- Inform the candidate that any video or audio recordings of candidates, whether hired or not, that are created as part of a search process must be retained as part of the search committee files consistent with the Department of Labor regulations via 20 CFR Ch. V § 656.10.f and held by the Unit HR Office. Recordings are to be retained for 3 years when the candidate hired does not require visa sponsorship and 5 years when the candidate hired requires visa sponsorship. The recordings will be stored securely in Kaltura for viewing by those involved with the search only; once the search concludes, only the unit HR office will have access until such time as the recording is deleted.