

**Guidelines Prepared for Hiring Sub-Committees in the Division of Social Science
(including “Conflict of Interest” Guidelines and Principles)**

**Prepared by M-L Craven on behalf of Executive Committee
Approved by Social Science Council, Dec. 4, 2003**

Documents to be consulted by the Chairs prior to the beginning of the search:

Article 12 in current YUFA Collective Agreement
Academic Appointment Process at <http://vpacademic.yorku.ca/handbook/pdf/search.pdf>
Division’s AAE Procedures (approved Sept. 2000; amended Nov. 2003) – Appendix A

1. The Ad

Wording in the ad must be approved by the program, Divisional Council and then the Dean. The earlier the ad can be approved the better in terms of getting access to the best candidates.

The ad must be placed as required by the C.A. and the AAE document. The Academic Appointment Process (from the V-P Academic’s office) notes that “Advertising is only one element in the search process. A proactive search will also attempt to seek out other candidates by a variety of personal contacts.”

The Chair’s Assistant has a list of publications/listservs used in other hirings; as well, we can now include shorter versions of the ad directing the applicants to the university’s web site for more information on affirmative action, etc. It is important that the ads be sent to the Dean’s office for inclusion on the University’s Academic Positions’ web site and to the Social Science webmaster for inclusion on our pages. (Samples of previous ads – Appendix C)

2. Hiring Sub-Committee Membership

The Executive Committee appoints the Hiring Sub-Committees. One of the Executive Committee members (or a seconded Division member outside of the hiring program) is a voting member; the Chair of the Division attends all hiring meetings in an ex officio role, as does the AAE Rep. As outlined in the Division’s AAE procedures (see Appendix A), the Rep has a reporting role to the Executive Committee and to the Dean.

Normally the Coordinator of the Hiring Program is the Chair of the Hiring Sub-Committee and he/she has input into the constitution of the committee. There are now an odd number of voting members on committees: since the AAE Rep and the Chair of the Division don’t vote, there are usually 3, 5 or 7 voting members.

3. “Conflict of Interest” Guidelines and Principles Pertaining to Hiring

3.1. Guidelines involving the following cases:

- a) A member of the Hiring Sub-Committee has a pecuniary interest in a candidate. Resolution: recuse.
- b) A member of the Hiring Sub-Committee has a close personal relationship with the candidate, or has served for any time as an academic advisor or supervisor of a candidate's M.A. or Ph.D. committee. Resolution: recuse.
- c) A member of the Hiring Sub-Committee has provided a letter of reference for a candidate for the position in question. Resolution: recuse.

Guidelines b) and c) normally prevail unless it is the Hiring Sub-Committee's view that there is compelling justification for the member not to recuse himself/herself. This reason must be fully documented and, before the Subcommittee can proceed, it must be reviewed by the Executive Committee.

3.2. Principles:

1. There must be a published document codifying the Division's expectations of its members' standards of behaviour, and these guidelines must be made available to all members of the Hiring Sub-Committees.
2. All those serving on a Hiring Sub-Committee must make full disclosure of any potential conflict of interest at the beginning of the Hiring Sub-Committee's deliberations. A "test" for deciding if there is a conflict is to ask: "Would a reasonable person observing the situation from the outside, who is apprised of the details, think that your judgment would be filtered through the relationship in question?" If the conflict can't be eliminated, then the person should recuse himself/herself from the situation.
3. A person should have one opportunity to give input into deliberations; it would follow from this principle then that normally if he/she writes a letter for a candidate (for the search under consideration) he/she should not be on the Hiring Sub-Committee.
4. It is recognized that it is often extremely difficult to gather a Hiring Sub-Committee that has not had any contact with any of the applicants. Hiring Sub-Committee members might know applicants because the applicant has worked with the committee member as a teaching assistant or research assistant, or because the committee member was part of the applicant's Ph.D. or M.A. examining committee. In some cases, fields of scholarship in Canada are so small that it is impossible not to know at least one or more of the applicants. But Hiring Sub-Committees do not have to be so highly specialized that we are unable to eliminate members who might have a conflict of interest (as outlined above). In an interdisciplinary unit like the Division, colleagues not in a specific field may often be able to assess effectively applicants' qualifications.
5. When a member of the Hiring Sub-Committee declares a potential conflict of interest and has declared his/her own position on the conflict, the member is excused from the ensuing discussion of the conflict, and a decision is made by the rest of the committee.
6. When a conflict of interest is resolved, the Hiring Sub-Committee will "provide a rationale and/or explanation of how the committee resolved that there was no conflict or what steps they took to address and ensure that the potential conflict of interest was mitigated" (quoted from <http://vpacademic.yorku.ca/handbook/pdf/search.pdf>). The resolution of the conflict is always reviewed by the Executive Committee, and when the Executive has assessed the determination of the Hiring Sub-Committee and the search continues, a detailed account of the resolution of the conflict of interest is included in both the memo sent to the Dean asking him to approve the short-list and in the document sent to the Vice-President (Academic) for final approval of the hiring decision.

4. Processing the Applications and Short-listing the Candidates

Ideally before reviewing the files, the Chair calls the Hiring Sub-Committee together (along with the AAE rep) and they agree on rating criteria to be used when reading the files. In light of this "rating scheme" and cognizant of the procedures outlined in the AAE Document, the relevant articles in the YUFA C.A. pertaining to percentage of women and men full-time faculty members, and the relevant requirements in the CUPE bargaining unit, a short list is drawn up. As well, the committee agrees on a non-exhaustive set of questions to be asked to all candidates.

As a preliminary document, the names of candidates to be interviewed and brief summaries of their accomplishments along with their *c.v.s* is sent to the Dean for him to approve the short-list. (see Appendix D for a sample memo to the Dean.)

Once the Dean has approved the short-list, a letter is sent to the candidates informing them of the interview process, asking them if they have any special needs that need to be addressed during the visit (dietary, etc.), and including a copy of the Self-Identification Form (since candidates are permitted at any stage of the process to self-identify). (See Appendix E for the sample short-list letter to candidates and Appendix F for the self-identification form.) As well, a letter from the Chairperson of YUFA is either sent or handed to short-listed candidates informing them of their rights to consult with the union about salary negotiations (see Appendix G)

5. Interview Process

Once approval from the Dean has been received, and the dates of the candidates' interviews are set, the Chair should make every effort to publicize the talks in order to encourage members of the Division to attend the talks and give feedback to the Hiring Sub-Committee. Normally the candidates are invited to give a short talk on their research, and then after a break to present sample courses to the committee outlining their teaching philosophy, etc. Each candidate normally meets for a short interview with the Chair of the Division before the interviewing process.

The Hiring Sub-committee must be mindful of permissible questions to ask candidates based on the Ontario Human Rights Code (Appendix H). Evaluation forms (Appendix I) as well as *c.v.s.*, statements of teaching and research interests are xeroxed and made available for the members of the audience. There are funds available from the Dean's Office during the interview process for hospitality; queries should be addressed to the Admin. Assistant.

6. Evaluation of Interviewed Candidates

As soon after the last interview as possible, the members meet and the Chair leads the discussion to show how the application of the hiring criteria (see 4. above) leads to the evaluation of acceptable/non-acceptable candidates. Then within the acceptable group, the candidates need to be ranked with an explanation of the ranking—assuming there is more than one candidate who would be acceptable. Regulations pertaining to the evaluation of Canadian and non-Canadian candidates require that the Committee establish that all Canadian candidates are not suitable; then, and only then, can they undertake to evaluate the non-Canadian candidates.

Once agreement is reached, the Chair writes up a report (see Appendix J), as does the AAE Rep (see Appendix K), and these are forwarded on to the Executive who then present the recommendations to a full meeting of Council. (If hiring decisions are made when Council is not meeting, the Executive Committee has the authority to approve the hirings.)

The reports are then sent on to the Dean for his/her approval along with the Check-list (see Appendix L) required by the Associate Vice-President's (Academic) Office, with all documents indicated including signed copies of all recommended candidate('s)(s') letters of reference (if initially sent as email, referees need to be contacted to fax in a signed copies at the very least).

Appendices:

- Appendix A – AAE Report (amended Nov. 2003)
- Appendix B – Table of current percentage of male to female candidates
- Appendix C – Samples of Ads
- Appendix D – Sample memo to Dean re: short-list
- Appendix E – Sample Short-list letter to candidates
- Appendix F – Self-identification form
- Appendix G – Sample letter from YUFA re: salary negotiations
- Appendix H – Hiring Sub-Committee – Permissible Questions
- Appendix I – Hiring Sub-Committee Evaluation Forms
- Appendix J – Sample memo to Dean/Academic V-P justifying appt. choice
- Appendix K – Sample memo from AAE Rep re: hiring procedure
- Appendix L – Check-list (including letter from appropriate Graduate Program Director re: suitability of selected candidate to teach grad. courses.)