

Conducting Candidate Interviews during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Conducting Safe On-Site Interviews amid COVID-19

As a general rule, search committee meetings and candidate interviews will be conducted virtually and not in person during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Once a candidate pool has been screened through online discussions and other preliminary evaluation methods to only those who are highly qualified, the search committee and final candidates may choose to complete the hiring process virtually without a visit.

In some instances, it still may be necessary to invite final candidates to an on-site interview. It is recommended that no more than two finalists should be brought to campus. The following guidelines have been adopted to help ensure the safety of the candidate(s) and interviewer(s):

Set Clear Expectations for Search Committees and Candidates

Be sure to set clear expectations and provide specific preparation for day-of-interview instructions for candidates (and interviewers) before the on-site interview. These instructions should include:

- Candidates coming to campus should be asked to complete a COVID-19 test with a negative result within one week of traveling to campus.
- Travel should be limited to driving where feasible. Air travel should only be used as a last resort. If air travel is used, then the candidates will be requested to rent a car to drive from the airport and campus and return.
- Identify and give directions to a parking lot identified specifically for visitors to use when on campus.
- On-campus interviews should maximize virtual technology for group meetings when feasible. If in-person interviews are required, then consider outdoor venues, where feasible, as a safer option. Any indoor in-person group interviews should be conducted in a setting limited to 10 people with social distancing at least six feet apart. All participants should wear cloth masks.
- If necessary, the candidate and hiring manager/search committee chair only may share a meal.
- Personal tours of facilities will be limited to the hiring manager/search committee chair, and current Healthy at Work guidelines should be followed at all times (e.g., do not shake hands, remain six feet apart, etc.).
- Frequent handwashing should be followed, and hand sanitizer should be readily available. Explain that in order to maintain social distancing, everyone should avoid shaking hands even though it breaks with normal protocol.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, desks, phones, keyboards, etc.
- If possible, identify a specific entrance limiting unneeded travel in buildings.

- Attention must be given to any Kentucky or other local travel bans where the candidate resides.

Health Screen Prior to the Interview

On the day of the scheduled interview, Berea College interviewers will conduct their normal daily health check prior to coming to work. The primary on-campus contact for the candidate will telephone the candidate and ask the candidate to answer the following questions:

- Have you come into close contact (within six feet) with someone known to have had a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days?
- Are you experiencing any of the [COVID-19 symptoms](#) identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention?
- If the candidate answers affirmatively to any of the above, then the interview should only be done virtually.

These practices will be effective July 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, and they may be extended until the public health emergency ends.

For questions about staff interviews, contact Steve Lawson at lawsonst@berea.edu; for questions about faculty interviews, contact Matt Saderholm at saderholmm@berea.edu.