# The Inclusive Hiring & Retention Guide

Introduction

Northeastern University is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive community that invites diverse viewpoints. It's a community where individuals of all identities, backgrounds, and experiences can thrive, have a strong sense of belonging, and achieve academic, research, and professional success. As such, we are committed to establishing an Inclusive Hiring and Retention Guide to provide information and approaches to increase diversity in the candidate pools for employment opportunities.
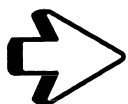
Definitions
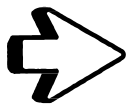
Diversity
Think of diversity as encompassing the full spectrum of identities and differences within our communities, collectively and as individuals.
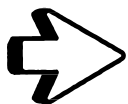
Equity
Equity is about ensuring fairness and justice by addressing the systemic barriers that different groups face.

Inclusive Hiring
Inclusive hiring is all about making sure everyone has a fair shot. It involves combating bias to ensure fairness and equitable opportunities during the application, interview, selection, and offer process. It is not a one-size-fits-all approach but a series of actions at the personal and organizational level aimed at fostering an environment where everyone can contribute and succeed.
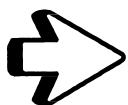
Belonging
Belonging refers to feeling accepted, valued, and included within a group or community. A sense of belonging fosters connection, engagement, and a deep commitment to the goals and values of the group or community.

Strategy

Evaluate Current Practices

When evaluating our current methods to identify what is working and what is not, consider the following:

- **Engage in process mapping** to determine gaps, success, and yield from postings, search firms, etc.
- **Explore how** NU can attract additional candidates from diverse backgrounds.
- **Analyze Workday capabilities**, limitations, and compatibility with other technology that may be useful in sourcing candidates.
- **Engage with HR partners and Managers** around inclusive hiring practices.

We want to ensure we are placing our best foot forward in our job postings. Being mindful of language in job postings that encourage applicants from all backgrounds to apply is important. Keep it simple and focus on what matters—qualifications and skills.

- ❖ **Job descriptions should** distinguish between the core competencies or basic qualifications needed for the job and skills or experiences that are not necessary but "preferred." Be mindful of what you need vs. what you can teach or train. Be open to using education and experience equivalencies as alternative options for candidates to meet qualifications and consider competencies, transferable skills, and equivalent experience when developing requirements.
- ❖ **Have key search committee members** and stakeholders participate in any writing, revising, or editing of the position description.
- ❖ **Use conversational language** that is easy to understand instead; avoid unnecessary jargon.
- ❖ **Consider what the composition** of your search committee signals to candidates about your commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace.
- ❖ **Communicate about** the availability of reasonable accommodations.

Highlight the university's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. You may wish to include a qualification for all positions making it clear that valuing diversity and contributing to an inclusive working and learning environment is a must for your team. Other steps involve the following:

1. Attracting and sourcing talent

Build relationships with organizations and networks focusing on diversity to expand the candidate pool.

- Think of partnerships with groups like the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA) (national), Amplify Latinx, The Partnership (national), and Boston While Black (local).
- Consider skilling up internal candidates or asking for referrals.
- Schedule meetings with search committee members to discuss, develop, and document recruitment or outreach strategies with diversity at the center.
- Consider The Partnership alumni cohorts as potential candidates.
- Engage University HR Talent Acquisition Team to assist with sourcing.
- Refer to affinity groups for potential candidates and during recruitment.

2. Screening applications and resumes/CVs

- You can try blind screening (removing names or anything that identifies the candidate).
- Every member on the committee should be reviewing the applications, not just the hiring manager.
- Promote a shared understanding of the scoring criteria to mitigate against confirmation and affinity bias.
- Engage HR and Talent Acquisition to assist with providing bias education to hiring managers.

3. Interviewing candidates

Pay particular attention to this process.

- Train interviewers on interview techniques and incorporate inclusive hiring principles. Rely on your HR and Talent Acquisition partners for guidance on interview techniques.
- Standardize your interview questions around core competencies for the job.
  - o Screen interview questions for exclusionary language.
  - o Ensure that interview questions are related to the criteria and core competencies you are rating for on the candidate assessment form.
  - o Ensure all search committee members understand and confirm how to identify "acceptable" or "quality" responses from candidates before engaging in the process.
- Prepare the candidate for success.
  - o Before the interview, provide communication about the interview process, time, and mode of communication (phone, video, etc.).
  - o Share information about the availabilty of reasonable accommodations during the interview process.
  - o For video interviews, provide video interview best practices in advance, including recommendations for lighting and audio. Some candidates may come from backgrounds where video calls are not the norm. Guidance can level the playing field.
  - o When conducting video interviews, note that candidates may not have the latest technology or could be sharing living spaces with limited private or quiet areas. These factors do not impact how well a candidate could do the job and

should not negatively influence your decision.
- o For in-person interviews, ensure the candidates have all the location information they need to arrive on time.
- o Ensure timely communication with candidates.

4. **Making the selection**
   - Evaluate candidates using the same objective criteria based on core competencies.
   - Create a system to minimize bias in all conversations about candidates.

5. **Onboarding**
   This begins the minute the offer is accepted. You have an opportunity to help our new colleagues feel like they belong from day one.
   - Create a welcome packet.
   - Managers should spend time with new hires on their first day.
   - Provide a mentor for the first month of the job.

Once complete, take some time to review the process to see what worked and what did not and make improvements for the next time around.
- ❖ **Did the hiring process** follow the strategic recruitment plan?
- ❖ **Were the candidates** diverse?
- ❖ **How can the department** increase access for candidates of all backgrounds in the future?

Attracting and keeping diverse talent starts with creating a culture where everyone feels like they belong. Let's commit to making that happen!

Inclusive Workplace Culture

Regular Communication of Commitment to DEIB

Consistently communicate the department's dedication to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) through various channels, including meetings, emails, newsletters, and intranet updates.

- Highlight policies, practices, and norms that align with DEIB values to demonstrate the organization's dedication to these principles.

Ongoing Dialogues and Learning

We want our teams to feel comfortable talking about DEIB topics. So, create an environment where open and ongoing dialogues are the norm.

- Encourage shared learning goals and provide opportunities for training, workshops, and discussions related to DEIB issues.

Decision-Making Alignment With DEIB Values

Every decision we make, whether related to hiring, promotion, policies, or projects, should be reviewed through a DEIB lens. That way, we keep bias in check and ensure we have the right people for the right jobs.

- Ensure that DEIB considerations are integrated into decision-making processes to mitigate bias and promote equity.

Regular Employee Check-Ins

Get to know how your teams are feeling. Conduct regular staff engagement surveys to assess engagement and belonging among employees.

- Use survey results to identify areas for improvement and implement action plans to address concerns related to DEIB and overall employee well-being. **Surveys must be reviewed and approved by the HR Business Partner before survey administration.**

Guide User Feedback

Feedback regarding tactics suggested in this guide, what works, what could be improved, should be provided to **taops@northeastern.edu.**

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