

Candidates in Faculty Searches with Berkeley Training

After consultation with the Senate's Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations, we are writing to provide you with guidelines for considering candidates in faculty searches who hold recent Berkeley PhDs or postdoctoral fellowships. These guidelines respond to questions that search committees and department chairs have frequently asked.

When we hire our own recent PhDs or postdoctoral fellows, we need to be mindful of several possible risks, including these:

- We may appear to compromise the fairness and equity of the search process. For example, other candidates, upon hearing that Berkeley made an offer to one of its own, may conclude that the selected candidate had an unfair advantage.
- Making comparative assessments of such candidates may impose a special burden on those who have worked hard to provide them with strong mentoring and support.
- The interplay of differing points of view within a department may be especially complex when the candidate is a recent PhD or postdoctoral fellow.

At the same time, we should not discourage or prevent any group of candidates from applying for faculty positions at Berkeley, including those who hold recent Berkeley PhDs or who are Berkeley postdoctoral fellows. Nor, of course, should we set the bar higher for one group of candidates than for others. Our processes must treat all potential and actual candidates fairly.

The guidelines below are intended to assist departments in minimizing potential risks while preserving fair processes. Fewer special risks would attend hiring holders of Berkeley PhDs or postdoctoral fellowships if their careers as teachers and independent researchers had already been well established in a faculty position at a peer institution. The risks may be greater, however, when the PhD or fellowship has been awarded within the last five years or when the candidate has not held an intervening faculty position elsewhere.

The guidelines below represent an ideal process in the service of the goals above, and should be followed in most cases. Sometimes there may be appropriate reasons for a different process. The Office for Faculty Equity and Welfare is available to consult on appropriate modifications consistent with the goals of conducting a process that is fair to all applicants, and approve any such modifications as part of the Search Plan or as situations arise during the process.

1. **Search committee membership:** The candidate's formal advisor, or other faculty members who have worked closely with the candidate, should not serve on the search committee for the

period during which the candidate is under consideration. Information on likely candidates should be taken into account when establishing the membership of the search committee. In smaller departments, where search committee constitution is always more challenging, departments can exercise the option of inviting appropriate faculty from outside of the department to serve on the search committee.

2. **Departmental discussions:** The candidate's formal advisor, or other faculty members who have worked closely with the candidate, should not attend departmental discussions or participate in votes concerning the search for the period of time during which the candidate is under consideration. They should also make an effort to minimize inequities by refraining from informal conversations that promote their advisee or collaborator, or make favorable comparisons at the expense of other candidates.

3. Campus policies require at least three external letters for appointment at the Assistant Professor level. External letters are letters that are written by referees who are not Berkeley faculty or members of its affiliated laboratories and institutes. This requirement applies to all candidates recommended for appointment, including those who are recent Berkeley PhDs or postdoctoral fellows. After deciding upon the candidate or candidates being recommended for appointment, the unit should solicit additional letters as needed. Any letters from Berkeley affiliates provided in the original application dossier should, of course, also be included with the appointment case.

4. Search Reports and cases for appointment should include a statement describing the unit's implementation of these guidelines when they are relevant.

For candidates whose Berkeley PhD or fellowship was awarded more than five years earlier than their application for a position, adherence to these guidelines is recommended though not required.