

**Bias Mitigation Practices for Application Review**

Bias occurs when the brain starts taking shortcuts. We need to ensure we are using best practices, staying consistent, and maintaining structure during the hiring process to help eliminate biases. Below are some examples of how to do this during the application review process.

* **Use a rubric to make consistent and equitable assessments around criteria.** Using a rubric provides an efficient, structured, and objective decision-making process. All members of the search committee should be knowledgeable of how the criteria is defined on the rubric.
* **Take breaks between applications and review with minimal distractions**. When reviewing applications back-to-back, our brains begin to get tired, and we scan through information. By giving yourself time to refresh, you can review and process the material more thoroughly. You have time to think about alternative backgrounds and appreciate the range of different experiences the applicant can bring to the job.
* **Take names and photos out of the equation.** Implicit biases can surface when you see names and photos. As a best practice, do not consider this information when reviewing applications. Evaluate candidates solely on their qualifications and skills, rather than on their social identity or appearance. This also includes graduation dates, addresses, colleges, and hobbies; all of which can hint to specifics about a candidate's race, gender identity, age, religion, or socioeconomic background.
* **Compare the applicant to the job criteria, not applicants to applicants.** Contrast effect bias occurs when you compare an individual with another individual and make judgements based on those comparisons. It is important to remember that two candidates can both meet the criteria for the job and have differences. Yet both would be considered qualified, and both should move forward in the hiring process.
* **Do not make assumptions about employment gaps or professional advancement.** This information should not skew the applicant’s results. This process is about the candidate and their ability to fulfill the expectations of the job. If an applicant seems over-qualified do not rule them out. It was their choice to apply for the position and we shouldn’t make speculations.