

Guidelines for Maintaining Records of Hiring, Search or Selection Processes

Protocol

These guidelines apply to records concerning hiring or hiring recommendations made by individual managers, selection panels, advisory selection committees, search committees or any other individual or group of people entrusted by the University to recommend, participate or make decisions with respect to hiring.

- 1) Records of a search or selection may include, but are not limited to position descriptions, recommendations for reappointment, nomination memos, application forms, committee membership lists, candidate lists, curricula vitae and resumes, career dossiers, appraisal criteria for selection, list of standard questions addressed to candidates or applicants, search or selection committee minutes, notes and reports, and related documentation and correspondence. The file should not include telephone messages, notices of meetings or draft letters and draft reports. The latter documents are typically transitory records and should be destroyed at the end of the search.
- 2) Search or selection records are considered confidential. In order to maintain their confidentiality these records should be:
 - i) stored in secure cabinets which are locked when not in use, not located in a public area, and, with limited access to staff;
 - ii) provided with a file/record cover when out of a secure cabinet;
 - iii) returned to a secure cabinet if the employee or committee member is called away while working on the record;
 - iv) restricted with access to staff and colleagues only on a “need to know” basis; and
 - v) stored, destroyed or transferred according to an approved records retention schedule.
- 3) Under the Alberta *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPP), a candidate or applicant in a search or competition may request access to the Committee’s records. In such a case, the applicant may be granted access to his or her personal information.

Personal information includes notes of the applicant’s interview. These include the notes taken by each member of the search committee or selection group. Each person’s notes become part of the file. When the search is completed and a formal summary of an interview or records of the search process is prepared, the individual notes may be destroyed as transitory records.

The applicant may be granted access to that part of the search committee’s minutes or selection group’s notes about the applicant.

References or notes of telephone references about the applicant provided in confidence are subject to section 19 of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. That section provides the University of Alberta with the discretion to refuse to disclose confidential evaluations that are used to determine suitability or eligibility for employment, the awarding on contracts or other benefits. This section also allows the University the discretion to refuse to disclose the identity of an evaluator in a confidential evaluation process, with the exception of the identity of the individual's supervisor or superior. Referees should be made aware of section 19

In certain circumstances, e.g. for references sought under the Faculty Agreement, a summary of the contents must be made available to the applicant if it can be prepared without identifying the referee, or, the referee can be asked to reconsider the release of the reference to the applicant.

Any information about other candidates would be the personal information of each individual candidate or applicant and would not be released to another applicant. The name of the successful candidate or applicant can be released because it relates to their position as an employee of the University.

- 4) The search or selection records should be kept in the office of an individual assigned the task of maintaining the records. At the end of the process, all materials from each of the committee members and the official summary of the notes for each of the candidates should be transferred to the primary file. All transitory records should be destroyed. The file must be kept for at least one year, or longer if specified by an authorized records retention schedule (section 35).
- 5) Notes of interviews should serve the following purposes:
 - i) as a reminder of the interview and information received; and
 - ii) to document information which might benefit the search process.

Notes should be:

- i) objective – avoid subjective comments (e.g. state observable, relevant, easily substantiated facts);
- ii) factual – avoid personal opinion and irrelevant information (e.g. note days absent rather than speculate on the cause for frequent absences);
- iii) individual – avoid combining personal information from various individuals about others into one report;
- iv) thoughtful – use common sense; and
- v) prepared with consideration of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Table: Guidelines for Maintaining Records of Hiring, Search or Selection Processes

Issue	Response
FOIPP Footer for Advertisements	The records arising from this competition will be managed in accordance with the provisions of the Alberta <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> (FOIPP).
Application Forms	<p>The forms used to collect personal information from an individual must include notification of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the purpose for which the information is collected, b) the specific legal authority for the collection, and c) the title, business address and business telephone number of an employee of the University of Alberta who can answer the individual's questions about the information collection (section 34(2)).
Confidential Evaluations	<p>19(1) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant personal information that is evaluative or opinion material compiled for the purpose of determining the applicant's suitability, eligibility or qualifications for employment or for the awarding on contracts or other benefits by a public body when the information is provided, explicitly or implicitly, in confidence.</p> <p>2) The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant personal information that identifies or could reasonably identify a participant in a formal employee evaluation process concerning the applicant when the information is provided, explicitly or implicitly, in confidence.</p> <p>3) For the purpose of subsection (2), "participant" includes a peer, subordinate or client of an applicant, but does not include the applicant's supervisor or superior.</p> <p>Suggested Notice to Evaluators: Letters of reference will be received by the University of Alberta in confidence. Except under limited and specific circumstances, letters of reference will be maintained in confidence by the University of Alberta.</p>
Information Retention	<p>If an individual's personal information is used by the University of Alberta to make a decision that directly affects the individual, the University must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) make every reasonable effort to ensure that the information is accurate and complete, and b) retain the personal information for at least one year after using it so that the individual has a reasonable opportunity to obtain access to it, or for any shorter period of time as agreed to in writing by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the individual, ii) the public body, and iii) if the body that approves the records and retention and disposition schedule for the public body is different from the public body, that body (section 35).