

Developing Inclusive Job Criteria



Human Resources and Hiring Managers are in a position to influence change in recruitment practices. This resource is meant to help develop and prioritize job criteria with an awareness of being more equitable and inclusive.

This document will walk you through:

- Reframing Criteria
- Identifying and Prioritizing Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs)
- Writing Qualifications

Criteria

Developing job criteria is at the center of and is critical to the recruitment process. It lays the foundation for a successful and equitable search.

“Criteria” is an all-encompassing term for knowledge, skills, abilities, and qualifications. The criteria will be used throughout the recruitment lifecycle in selecting Search and Screen (S&S) committee members, developing rubrics for screening, developing interview questions, and building talent pools.

Reframing Criteria: Historically, our recruitment practices on campus have often centered criteria around education requirements and minimum years of experience. However, using degree expectations and years of experience as the foundations for selection can create inequities.

How do these create inequities?

- Some individuals do not have access or means to education but may have the skills for the job
- As a higher education organization, we may place value on higher-level degrees when it may not be required or necessary to perform the job
- Some individuals who have fewer years of experience may have the same or higher level of skills and proficiency as someone who has been doing the work longer. Years of experience alone should not be used as an indication of greater performance or knowledge, skills, or abilities.

Moving forward, we are looking to reframe how we think about criteria, and focus on the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform the job. This reframing can help mitigate bias during the application review phase and increase the diversity in applicant pools.

When developing criteria for a position, consider the following questions:

- What is absolutely necessary for a person to be successful in this role, the first day on the job?
- What do the minimum requirements for the job look like in practice?
- What knowledge, skills, abilities may be necessary for the position but could be learned over time on the job?

Many positions require a certain degree, however, many discover that degree requirements create barriers for talented and qualified applicants to advance in recruitment processes. If you choose to include a degree or years of experience requirement, be sure to review the [best practices document](#) on how to select appropriate education for a position. Also, consider:



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- What knowledge, skills, and abilities do we expect someone who has this degree or years of experience to have?
 - Is it crucial that they exist on day one?
 - Can they be learned on the job?

How to identify your Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs):

Your Standard Job Description will document the core purpose and responsibilities of each job.

Review the core job responsibilities and identify what knowledge, skills, and abilities are required for each responsibility. You can start broadly and prioritize later.

- Knowledge – Understanding of concepts
- Skills – Capabilities and proficiencies
- Abilities – Traits, talents or developed proficiencies a person brings to a task or situation

KSAs may be a combination of technical and relational skills.

- Technical skills – also known as “hard skills.” These are learned abilities acquired through practice and/or education.
 - Examples: software program knowledge, proficiency in a language, programming languages
- Relational skills – also known as “soft skills.” These are personal habits or traits that shape how one works on their own or with others.
 - Examples: communication, problem-solving, empathy

When writing KSAs, consider how the KSAs promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. For instance, often we see this requirement for a job:

- Candidate must demonstrate a commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

What does that look like? How would one assess this consistently and equitably across candidates?

Instead, consider the job duties and how DEI might show up as a knowledge, skill, or ability for that particular job. For instance, as a trainer a KSA might be:

- Engages key stakeholders and seeks multiple perspectives in the development of training material.
- Considers equity and access when developing materials and facilitating learning to ensure participants have equitable access to the learning environment.
- Demonstrates knowledge of assessing and addressing diverse audience needs and gaps, tailoring learning content and delivery accordingly.

O*Net OnLine

You can use [O*Net OnLine](https://onlinetoolkit.com/) to search job titles, descriptions, and sample KSAs that can help you develop your KSAs.





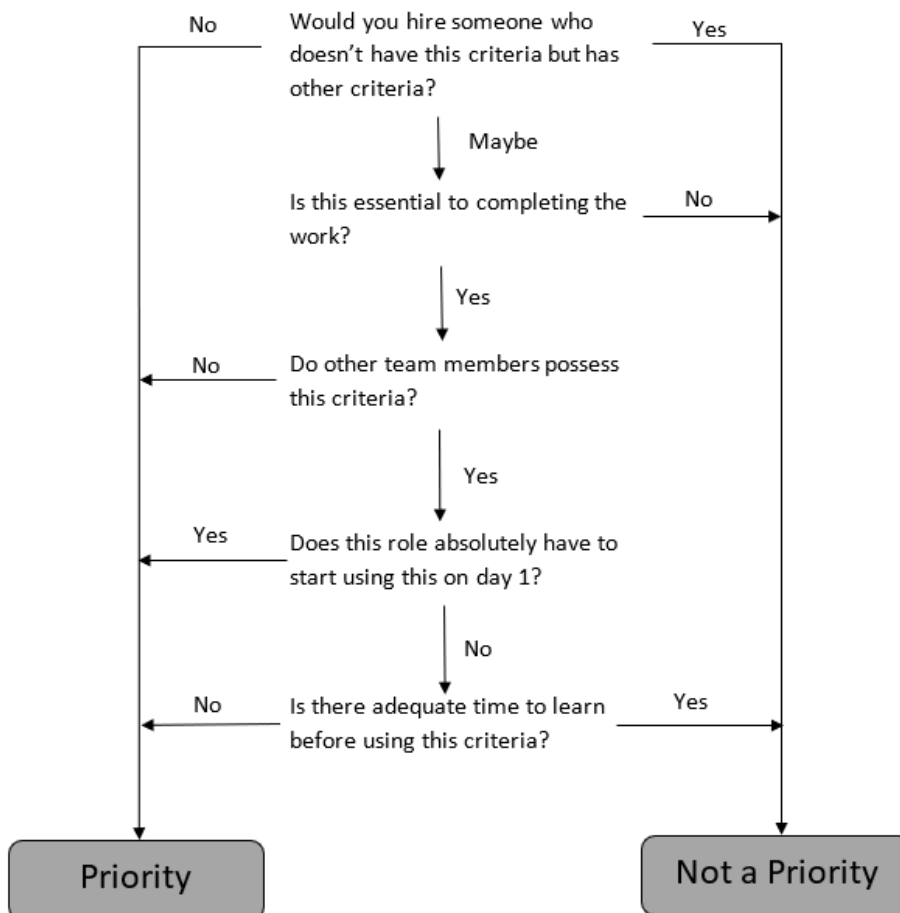
Prioritization

Long lists of criteria tend to be exclusive and create barriers to potential applicants. Prioritize KSAs by determining which KSAs are *non-negotiable* for your recruitment, and focus on those items.

- Review your technical knowledge and relational skills requirements and determine if they are truly requirements. Consider:
 - Is this KSA essential in fulfilling the core job responsibilities?
 - Is this KSA something an applicant must have before starting the job or is it something they can learn?

This tool can help prioritize your KSAs:

Prioritizing Criteria: Decision Tree





Writing Qualifications for a Job Posting

Now that you have identified and prioritized the KSAs needed for someone to perform your work responsibilities, you will want to articulate those as qualifications for the job in the “Qualifications” section of JEMS PVL. Think of qualifications as what the applicant has to demonstrate in their application materials to be considered for this job.

The first step is to make sure that the KSA is clearly defined to be *specific to your job*. For example, you may notice that O*Net offers definitions for knowledge, skills, and abilities, but some may be broad and you may have to make the definition more specific to your job.

Example

A common KSA is “communication,” and can be interpreted in many different ways.

- Will the employee need to lead or facilitate engaging presentations?
- Will the employee need to provide effective feedback on performance?
- Will the employee need to mitigate disputes and navigate conflict in the workplace?
- Will the employee need to explain or educate others on complex processes?

All of these communication skills are very different. What does “communication” mean for *your* job and how can you write it as a qualification? Instead of saying “ability to communicate effectively” as a qualification, here are some examples of more specific qualifications for “communication”:

- Demonstrated ability to facilitate large group (20 or more) presentations.
- Demonstrated success of providing feedback to supervisees that has shown positive outcomes to those supervisees.
- Successful experience with resolving disputes across cross-functional teams.

Clearly articulating qualifications in your job posting increases access for applicants by being transparent on what you are seeking in an applicant.

Including multiple voices:

In order to ensure more inclusive criteria, you should actively involve diverse stakeholders, including the S&S Committee, in the creation of your criteria and throughout the recruitment process.

Clear criteria ensures the S&S committee can evaluate and screen for the experiences and qualifications you are seeking. The clearer the criteria, the greater the chance that a larger pool of applicants will be successful in the recruitment process.

