

Best Practices for Adjunct Faculty Hiring and Evaluation: A Guide for Departments at Boise State

Adjunct Faculty occupy temporary, part-time positions in which an individual is hired to teach a specified course or courses for one academic term. The timeline for hiring Adjunct faculty is occasionally very short, and Adjuncts are officially separated from the University at the end of each semester. Basic fair hiring principles, though, remain the same as those used for full-time faculty hires.

For guidance, departments developing policies and procedures—and individuals charged with responsibility for hiring Adjuncts—should review the practices outlined on the University’s Human Resources web page: <http://hrs.boisestate.edu/managers/hire-adjunct-faculty/> . In particular, all members of any hiring committee are required to read the material on conducting a lawful interview. It is the responsibility of the search committee chair to ensure the completion of this task before any screening activities take place.

Recruitment

Many departments do not actively recruit Adjunct faculty, as the number of qualified individuals interested in teaching outnumbers available positions. For other departments where there is a need for Adjunct faculty in specialized courses and the number of qualified individuals is low, proactive strategies for recruitment are necessary. All departments should be careful to establish transparent policies and procedures.

Some departments maintain a pool of applications, to which they return when a position becomes available. Applications in the pool remain “active” for a set period of time. If such a pool is maintained and a position becomes available, it is important that every individual in the pool be considered for the open position. The English department maintains such a pool, which is described on the department web page: <http://english.boisestate.edu/faculty-positions/adjunct-opportunities/>.

Advertisements (in local newspapers, on web pages, or elsewhere) for open Adjunct positions should, at a minimum, include the following:

- *Equal Employment Opportunity text that states “Boise State University is an EEO/AA Employer, Veterans Preference”
- *courses/area for which adjunct faculty are sought
- *minimum qualifications necessary to successfully teach the course (e.g., degree type, work experience, teaching experience, etc.)
- *term of the teaching assignment (e.g., fall, spring, summer)
- *expectations of adjunct faculty
- *application procedures
- *compensation

Selection/Hiring

Every department should have a policy and procedures for the selection/hiring of Adjunct faculty. Those procedures should be approved by the Office of Human Resource Services. Hiring policies do not need to be complex; rather, they should be created in an effort to make the hiring process as objective as possible, to ensure that Adjunct faculty are hired on the basis of qualifications best suited for the class(es) to be taught, and to provide documentation to support the validity of the decision, if challenged.

As a general rule, department hiring procedures should allow for varying perspectives by involving more than one individual in selecting the best candidate. Candidates with successful teaching experience at Boise State may be given some preference in hiring, but there are no employment guarantees.

Some departments have created policies with the following elements:

- *minimum degree/experience
- *a hiring committee that reviews materials submitted by the applicant and makes hiring recommendations to the chair
- *a formal interview process prior to selection (Information on conducting a lawful employment interview may be found at <http://labor.idaho.gov/lawintvw3.htm> , and all individuals involved in an interview should review that information.)
- *a mock teaching experience prior to selection
- *review of prior teaching and evaluation data

Last Minute Hiring

Occasionally departments need to hire Adjuncts on very short notice. When such situations arise departments should follow their regular procedures as closely as possible and should consult with Human Resource Services.

Evaluation of Adjunct Faculty

Formative and summative feedback (feedback both for the purpose of teaching improvement and for making personnel decisions) is important for the success of Adjunct faculty. Departments should have a policy outlining a process of systematic feedback to and evaluation of Adjunct faculty. Evaluation policies do not need to be complex and time consuming.

Student Evaluations: Departments develop student evaluation forms that meet the needs of their programs. BSU Policy 4300 requires that all faculty, including Adjuncts, be evaluated by students in their classes at least once each year.

Additional Evaluation: BSU Policy 4290 provides that Adjuncts be evaluated at the discretion of the department chair and encourages departments to develop procedures for Adjunct evaluation. It is particularly important that Adjuncts teaching at Boise State for the first time be provided with systematic feedback aimed at enhancing performance. All evaluations should be preserved in the Adjunct faculty member's department file.

Some departments have created policies with some or all of the following elements:

- *formal, written evaluation (by the department chair or designee) of each class taught, based on student evaluations, course materials, and/or classroom observations

- *classroom visits by department colleagues or affiliates of the Center for

Teaching and Learning

- *a brief, face-to-face meeting with the department chair or designee at the end of each semester

- *a written Performance Improvement Plan developed in consultation with the department chair or designee, and perhaps involving the Center for Teaching and Learning

Separation of Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty are hired on Letters of Appointment that cover only one semester. All Adjunct faculty are officially separated at the end of each semester. Department personnel should clearly convey this procedure to new Adjuncts and are cautioned not to promise Adjuncts employment beyond the term for which they have been hired.

Notice of Ending Appointment

Because each adjunct appointment ends automatically at the close of each semester, no notice is needed to end the appointment of adjunct faculty. So there is no need to notify the adjunct faculty member that they will not receive another appointment. However, as a courtesy, a department may choose to provide an adjunct faculty member information about lack of future employment. If you do so, you should provide as much lead time as possible and the reasons for your decision when notifying adjunct faculty that they will not be offered a teaching contract for the following or future semesters. Reasons might include low enrollment or lack of demand for the course, a change in staffing from part-time to full-time faculty, or performance issues.

Should a situation arise when a Chair and Dean determine that a mid-term dismissal for adequate cause is indicated, contact Human Resource Services and the General Counsel's Office in advance of taking any action.

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