

FACULTY SEARCH COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

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Guidance for the Conduct of Faculty Searches

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Preamble

The Okinawa Institute of Science and technology Graduate University (OIST) is a new Graduate University that is expanding rapidly – the size of the University is likely to double in the next few years, which means recruiting new Faculty at the rate of 7-10 per year. The searches for new Faculty are conducted by Search Committees at OIST (see section 0 below). Given the current size of the Faculty, and the need for a Search Committee to have at least three members, this implies that around half of the Faculty (or more) will be involved in searches at over a two year period (some searches will nearly overlap). Thus the process must be as efficient as possible if the load on faculty members is to be reasonable. However, the demands that OIST recruits from among the top few percent of potential candidates means that the process must be rigorous. The procedure outlined below sets some aggressive deadlines for action. Service on a Search Committee is an essential duty of the Faculty, and the demands of the search are among the highest priorities at OIST.

The general principles are described in the Faculty Handbook sections 3.2.4.1 to 3.2.4.3(a)-(e) (see Appendix 1).

There are broadly two types of searches – an Open Call (the more common type) and a Target of Opportunity. The difference between these is the process for identifying candidates to be considered – in the former case, these are selected from those who apply and those who have been suggested as potential candidates whereas in the latter case there either is a single candidate to be considered or suitable candidates are approached. The target for the time between the formation of the Search Committee and making an offer is **8 months** for an Open Call and **4-6 months** for a Target of Opportunity.

1. Before the Search or target of Opportunity Committee is formed

1.1. Open Call

Before creating a Search Committee for an Open Call, the following decisions will have been taken:

1.1.1. The field of research in which candidates will be sought;

The field should be broad enough that it will be attractive to a significant number of outstanding candidates but not so broad as to give little clue about the research directions that OIST wishes to pursue (i.e. “Chemistry” is probably too broad, “Bis(carbene)pyridine complexes of Cr(III)” is probably too specific).

1.1.2. The number of positions available.

This could be either a fixed number (usually one, sometime more) or an *upper* or *lower* limit. In general, the more positions that are advertised, the more likely it will be that good candidates will apply; the chances of appointment may seem greater.

1.1.3. The level of appointment (Assistant, Associate or Full Professor).

OIST needs to develop a broadly based and balanced Faculty, which means recruiting at all levels – Assistant, Associate and Full Professors. This is slightly different to the process in more traditional universities, where the Departmental structure often needs to recruit new junior Faculty to support or continue a research line; senior Faculty are recruited usually to start a new research activity or to take over leadership of an existing research activity. At OIST, however, each new recruit represents the creation of a new research unit. There will usually be a presumption about a preferred level of appointment or, if more than one position is advertised, a distribution of preferred levels of appointment. However, this should be treated as guidance – the actual level of the appointment will depend upon the quality and

experience of the candidates. The University is committed to the central importance of junior faculty and wishes to keep the level of the untenured faculty at about a third.

Note that it is in general easier to argue that a particular candidate is too well qualified for, say, an Assistant Professor position and should therefore be offered an Associate Professor position than the other way round. However, it is not good practice to advertise an Assistant Professor position and hope that there will be applicants who would merit a full Professor appointment – in general, such people will not apply for junior positions; if we need a full Professor to establish a new line of research or complement an existing line, we need to advertise accordingly.

It is quite common in some circumstances to write something like “We are looking for an Assistant Professor in X, but an Associate Professorship might be offered to suitably qualified candidates” or “We are looking for a tenured Associate Professor in X, but a full professorship might be offered to suitably qualified candidates”. This may attract a slightly better quality of applicant, but it leads to a systematic shift upwards of the distribution compared with that desired, that is, it leads to too few junior faculty members.

1.1.4. Tenure

Assistant Professor positions are always untenured, but at OIST we offer a tenure-track system, that is, during the initial period of the appointment, there will be a review to establish whether or not tenure will be granted, with promotion to Associate Professor; Full Professor Positions are usually with tenure. Associate Professor Positions are also usually with tenure, but may on occasion be offered without tenure, for example, where the candidate has been interviewed for an Assistant Professorship but is judged over-qualified for the post.

1.1.5. The Job Advertisement

There are two related Job Advertisements.

1.1.5.1 The external newspaper/journal advertisements

This will be prepared by the President, Provost and Dean for Faculty Affairs following the advice from the Board of Governors – see Appendix 2. Note that it is very important that there be one bullet point for each vacancy, and that there is a reference number attached to each vacancy. This is necessary because we need to know to which vacancy, and at which level, the applicant is applying. We expect applicants to specify with the reference number the position to which they are applying. On some occasions, it might be necessary to have a single external advertisement for a position or positions in a single field, where for example, OIST wishes to start a new field of research. In this case, the advertisement will need to carry more information about the position(s) than the combined advertisement would. This decision will be taken by the President in consultation with the Provost and the Dean for Faculty Affairs.

1.1.5.2 The internal and external website advertisements

An example of the website version of the advertisement is given in Appendix 3. This will be used on the OIST career webpage (<https://groups.oist.jp/facultypositions>) and external jobs websites such as <https://academicjobsonline.org/ajo> or <http://www.universityjobs.com/jobs/faculty.html>. This should contain as much detailed information about the position as possible so that we receive applications primarily from those who are qualified for and interested in the job. If there are two different positions and a candidate wishes to apply for both positions (i.e. they enter both reference numbers), then they may at a preliminary stage be either assigned on the basis of the application to one or the other (preferred) or considered for both, although this practice is discouraged.

1.2. Target of Opportunity

The target of Opportunity (ToO) approach is only be used to make tenured appointments. The process involves pro-actively identifying a candidate, and bypassing the initial search procedure of advertisement and filtering, which are normally aimed at identifying, and then sifting out, the legitimate candidates from those that are uninteresting. However, in order to bypass this process and be sure that bias does not enter the hiring process, a target of opportunity candidate must appear on paper to be very strongly appointable. OIST must be certain that a candidate selected for the ToO process would, with 100% certainty, have emerged as a legitimate candidate, if not the leading candidate, through the search process. In other words, ToO candidates are those who have already established themselves as world-leading in their field of study and that this can be assessed based solely on their CV and accomplishments. ToO candidates are almost always in secure, tenured positions at the best worldwide institutions.

Candidates for ToO appointment can be identified in many ways. An OIST faculty member, Board member or external colleague could identify such a candidate(s). Candidates can self-identify. The University administration, knowing it wishes to seed a new area, may well use its academic network to seek such candidates. Sometimes, such candidates emerge in the process of a regular search.

The credentials for candidates for the ToO process are reviewed by the Dean of Faculty Affairs, and if his/her review is positive, the Dean must then convince the Provost that the ToO case is sufficiently strong. If the Provost concurs, then the Dean sets up a Committee to consider the case in accordance with the same appointment standards used in regular tenure reaches.. The Committee must follow all process and procedures that a search committee would follow for candidates selected for an interview. Because there is no need to advertise and select candidates for interview, the timescale for the search committee for a target of opportunity is at least two months shorter than for an open call. While rare, it is possible to consider a “cluster hire” where an entire research group from a single institution (or a significant part of it) is transferred to OIST. The procedures for a “cluster hire” are closest to that of a ToO, in that a pro-active determination to target has been made. However, it is more complex because it inherently involves external advice, involves vetting more than a single individual, likely involves very high-level negotiations with another institution etc. It is not possible to write down exactly how such a hire would be accomplished, save to say that standards for appointment will be protected. Formation, naming and operation of the Search and ToO Committees

1.3. Appointment of the Search/ToO Committees

A Search Committee or ToO Committee will be appointed by the Dean for Faculty Affairs after consultation, and the Faculty Assembly will be informed at its next meeting of the membership. A Search or ToO Committee will consist of 3-5 members and be chaired by a senior member of the Faculty; exceptionally, and where there is no existing relevant expertise within the Faculty, the Committee may contain external members.

The name of a Search/ToO Committee will be “The Search/ToO Committee for *name of research field-year*” (e.g. The Search Committee for Physiology 2014, or The ToO Committee for Physiology), independent of the number of positions to be filled.

The Search Committee or Target of opportunity Committee must meet within one week of being formed.

The task of the Search Committee is to search for suitable candidates (either from those who respond to advertisement, through personal contacts or through recommendations from others) who have the right competences, motivation and profile to meet OIST’s needs. The information that will be evaluated will consist of the letters from referees, the CV, the

interviews and visit, and any other information that will help resolve any issues that have been identified. The task is described in more detail below.

As noted in the Faculty Handbook (section 3.1.1.3 (b) “[the] entire appointment [...] proceedings require discussion of specific individuals, and the opinions of others regarding those individuals. This and other relevant information must be held in strict confidence by all participants. The University commits to extensive measures to protect the privacy of the candidates by preserving the confidentiality of the information it receives regarding the candidates.” This means that the candidates should not be discussed outside the Committee, except with the President, Provost or Dean for Faculty Affairs. Of course, when a candidate is invited for interview, the identity becomes known within OIST, and the input from the faculty members who attended the seminar or met the candidate is important; however, in receiving the feedback, the Committee should avoid discussing the merits of the candidate, the opinions of others or making comparison with other candidates under review.

1.4. Conflicts of Interest

During the initial stages, there might be internal candidates for the position, or candidates who have received letters of support from OIST faculty members. It is important that these candidates are reviewed in exactly the same way as external candidates or those whose supporters come from outside OIST. This is best achieved by reviewing the CV and the letters as objectively as possible (how good are the nominated papers, have they already had an impact in the field, what is the balance of the supporters, have they all been collaborators or from the same institute, or do they show that the candidate has made an impact on the wider scientific community).

A potential conflict of interest arises where a member of the Search or ToO Committee knows well one of the candidates – perhaps having written a letter of support or be the present or former head of a research unit for whom the candidate works or worked. In this case, the Chair should discuss the issue with the Dean for Faculty Affairs or, if it is the Chair who has the potential conflict, another member of the Committee should discuss the issue with the Dean.

2. Operation of the Search Committee

1. Because of the volume of recruitment over the next decade or so, we need to become efficient at the search process, and this means accumulating experience of how successful searches are conducted and then build upon that experience. The Faculty Affairs Office will therefore provide logistical support for the Search Committees (arranging meetings, taking minutes, liaising with HR, organising visits and collating the recommendations). This will also ensure respect for confidentiality.
2. Within one week of formation, the Search Committee should:
 - 2.1 Review and confirm the draft advertisement (Open Call) or job description (Target of Opportunity);
 - 2.2 Review and take note of the experience of previous searches, especially in this or a related field;
 - 2.3 Commit to evaluative consistency and fairness;
 - 2.4 Define the material that should be requested of the applicants, and consider what further information might be requested of candidates invited for interview;
 - 2.5 Establish a first set of criteria for selecting candidates (see below for more details);
 - 2.6 Define the requirements for confidentiality, retention of documents and record keeping;
 - 2.7 Agree on voting procedures.

3. Within one week, set a closing date that is reasonably short (six weeks to two months typically) to give suitably qualified candidates time to reflect upon the opportunity and to assemble an appropriate dossier (including suitable self-identified referees), and equally importantly to allow time for the Search Committee to consult externally and internally to identify suitable candidates who might be approached and invited to apply. *It is very important that the Search Committee actively look for suitable candidates, especially in the first month after the formation of the Search Committee.*
4. At submission, candidates should be asked to provide the contact details (including an email address) of 3-5 referees, who will be contacted automatically by email to submit a letter of reference through an online portal.
5. A draft timeline for the search is given below –. The actual timeline (deadlines, dates of meetings) should be decided at the first meeting of the Search Committee. These can, of course, change as the Search progresses, but these changes need to be discussed and agreed so that progress can be tracked. Slippage by up to two weeks would not normally require a detailed explanation, but slippage of more than one month would need to be explained and remedial action taken to regain time.

Time (weeks)	Action	Comment
1	First meeting of the Search Committee	<p>Agree on advertisement or job description</p> <p>Identify appropriate external online job search engines (e.g. http://www.jobs.ac.uk/categories/chemistry or http://chemistryjobs.acs.org/jobs).</p> <p>Fix the time line (set deadlines, dates of meetings)</p> <p>Allocate responsibilities to members of the Committee</p> <p>[Diversity monitoring¹, contact person², reviewer³ ...]</p>
2-9	Weeks 2 to deadline for applications (the deadline for applications should be typically four to six weeks after the advertisement appears)	<p>This is a period of about 2 months, during which</p> <p>a) The applications should be briefly reviewed as they come in, perhaps once each fortnight, to see whether the right target audience has been reached; once there are at least three letters of reference, it is possible to begin checking the quality of the candidates applying. The applications need to be acknowledged.</p> <p>b) Enquiries should be made, through contacts, about suitable candidates who might be looking for a position or considering a career move, and perhaps approaching them directly or via an intermediary with a pointer to the job</p>

¹ It is important that we actively seek a balance of gender and ethnicity while maintaining standards.

² It is important that candidates receive broadly the same information if they request it; this will normally be the Chair of the Search Committee.

³ It may be useful to nominate someone to prepare a summary of the applications to filter out those that are non-compliant. Of course, the full committee must review all applications, but the task will be more efficient if there is some preparation for the meeting that does this.

		advertisement.
8-10	Within 2 weeks of the deadline being passed	<p>At least three letters of reference are needed to be able to judge the quality of a candidate. All of the complete applications need to be considered and assigned to one of three categories – should be considered for interview, should not be considered for interview, and the rest. This is discussed below.</p> <p>Reading the letters of support is an important and delicate activity. Some letter writers are always very enthusiastic while others are very sparing in their remarks. Some letters are very short and to the point, making straightforward bold statements without much analysis, while other letters analyze the candidate's research record in considerable detail. The key points are likely to be (a) how well does the writer know the candidate and the candidate's work (b) in what capacity does the writer know the candidate, and for how long has the writer known the candidate (c) is the opinion clear, and is it possible to judge the level of confidence in the opinion and (d) what is the evidence that supports the opinion. Some writers might give a comparison ("Y is as good as X was at the same stage of his/her career" or "[one of] the best students that I have had" or "easily among the top 10% of students") If there are doubts, a citation analysis of either the writer or the candidate might be informative ... the absolute numbers are very subject-dependent and must be used with care, but the numbers relative to someone known in the field are likely to be meaningful.</p>
11-13	Within 4 weeks of the deadline being passed	Short listing of candidates to be invited for interview should be complete. As a guide, typically 3 to 5 candidates per position should be selected for interview; where there are two related positions the total number should not normally exceed 8, and for three positions, it should not normally exceed 12.
By now, about 3 months from the formation of the Search Committee should have elapsed, that is, usually by the end of November for a Committee formed in September		
14-16		The visit and interview process should be defined carefully – this is discussed below.
17-25	Within 3 months of shortlisting	All short-listed candidates should have been invited to interview by the Committee and by other members of the Faculty.. In general, it is better to allocate one week for each candidate, so that for 5 candidates, this will take 5 or 6 weeks. Given that it will take at least 2 or 3 weeks before the first candidate can come, the whole process should take no more than 2 months. Where more than one position is being filled, it may be necessary to find a way of interviewing two candidates per week if the

		<p>process is not to be extended too long, but this will involve careful planning to avoid clashes and embarrassments. It may be better to allocate separate months to the separate positions. If 3 or more positions are being filled, no more than 4 candidates for each position should normally be interviewed. The interview process may extend into a 3rd month. For a single position and a search starting in September, this means that the interviews are held in January.</p>
22-26	<p>Within one week of the last interview (or where there are several positions, within one week of the last interview for each position)</p>	<p>The Search Committee should meet and assess the interviews and other input. The Committee should first divide the candidates into those above the threshold for appointment and those below the threshold. This is necessary because seeking letters is time-consuming for us and for those approached, and we need to be sure that there is a good chance that the letters will be supportive. Then the candidates above the threshold should be ranked. If there are two or three candidates who look to be more-or-less equally good, then letters should be sought on all of them. A deadline should be set for responses to letters, typically 3 weeks. It is probably a good idea to approach at least 50% more people for letters than are required, to take into account that not all will respond, or be able to comment. Without this, a single refusal will add at least two weeks to the process. At least 8 letters are required for a tenured position (Professor or Associate Professor) and at least 3 letters for an untenured (Assistant Professor) position.</p> <p>Once a referee letter is requested, the action becomes part of the official record. The absence of a response or a refusal to write is a possible red flag: therefore such instances must be understood and recorded. Given the possible implications of refusal or obfuscation to write a letter, great care must be taken in selecting the referees to avoid obviously inappropriate choices, such as referee-candidates who cannot reasonably be expected to give an informed opinion.</p> <p>The referees should not be co-authors, mentors or close working colleagues of the candidate. Exceptionally, and where this is declared, the field might be so constrained that this requirement has to be abated, in which case the number of letters required might need to be increased to 10</p> <p>Sample letters for the President are given in Appendices 4-6.</p>
25-28	<p>Within 3.5 months of shortlisting</p>	<p>Letters should have been received, and there needs to be a long meeting to assess the information and to rank the candidates again using the additional</p>

		information. After the Search Committee has reached a conclusion, the letters received for the chosen candidates(s) should be made available in a private room for faculty members to consult and give real-time feedback to the Committee. After this, the Committee will finalize its recommendation.
28-32	Within 4 months of shortlisting (i.e. within 8 months of the Search Committee being formed, i.e. at the end of March if the Committee was formed in April)	A file with a recommendation should be sent by the Chair of the Search Committee to the President. The file should also include a diversity report listing the numbers of candidates at the different stages of the process and explaining why promising women and other minority candidates did not make the short list. It will usually happen that there are more excellently qualified candidates identified by the Search Committee than there are positions advertised. The report to the President should include a summary of the candidates who were judged, after interview, to be above threshold but not selected.
	Gender and Diversity	See the comments above regarding the diversity report.
After the (last) candidate has accepted the offer, the Chair of the Search Committee should write a report to the President on the process, identifying any procedures that worked well and any that did not work so well.		

6. The selection criteria are important, and should be applied consistently and fairly. These criteria may include any of the following:
 - 6.1 Basic qualifications (usually a Ph.D. or equivalent, but how to specify the level of experience?)
 - 6.2 Specific attributes (scientific, technical, communication...)
 - 6.3 Research productivity, and creativity
 - 6.4 Record of success in winning grants
 - 6.5 Proven leadership or leadership potential
 - 6.6 Evidence of esteem (awards and prizes, e.g. Rhodes Scholarship ...)
 - 6.7 Participation in the research community (organising conferences and workshops, peer review, editing journals)
 - 6.8 Proven ability to teach and supervise graduate students
 - 6.9 Proven ability to mentor postdocs
 - 6.10 Communication skills.

All of these should be assessed objectively with evidence to support the conclusions drawn.
7. The shortlisting process is important, and needs to be efficient. It is for each Committee to determine its own procedure, but the following procedure is quite useful and is fairly efficient. Note that each candidate is reviewed at least twice before being rejected for interview and candidates for interview are considered several times. There are several steps.
 - 7.1 Ask each member of the committee to classify the candidates as being either suitable to be considered for interview (I), not suitable to be interviewed (N) and neither obvious

accepts or rejects (B). The candidates in the first class should satisfy some rather strict criteria, so that their number is manageably small (say less than 20).

- 7.2 Compare the results: Where all members of the Committee agree on the ranking, assign to the appropriate class. Where there are differences, the Committee needs to study the application in Committee and assign an agreed classification.
- 7.3 Study the candidates in the first class (I) and confirm that all are well qualified for interview. Any that fail at this stage are demoted to the third class (B).
- 7.4 Study the candidates in the second class (N) and check that they are unlikely to be good enough for interview. If it is considered that they might be good enough, promote to the third class (B).
- 7.5 Choose one or two of the weaker of the candidates in the first class (I), and ask question of the candidates in the third class (B) “are they better than this (or these) candidate(s)?” If the answer is “yes” promote to the first category (I) and if “no” demote to the second category (N)
- 7.6 Finally, rank the candidates in the first category (I) 1..N and select the top 3-5 for interview.

The first step can be done individually and the results compiled by the Chair. In practice, the steps 7.2 to 7.4 should be relatively quick and can be done at a single meeting. It is then probably good to take a one day break to allow Committee members to study the candidates in the first (I) and third (B) categories, so that the difficult tasks in 7.5 and 7.6 can be completed efficiently.

The aim should be to complete the shortlisting within two weeks and within one week if possible.

Post deadline applications:

A decision needs to be taken about how strictly the deadline is applied. Since the application process is online, it is possible to close the process on the deadline, but it is probably better to leave the site open for a short period post-deadline for late applications – say one week. If the application is received before shortlisting, then it can be added to the search.

3. Operation of the Target of Opportunity (ToO) Committee

Because of the volume of recruitment over the next decade or so, we need to become efficient at the ToO process, and this means accumulating experience of how successful ToO processes are conducted and then build upon that experience. The Faculty Affairs Office will therefore provide logistical support for the ToO Committees (arranging meetings, taking minutes, liaising with HR, organising visits and collating the recommendations). This will also ensure respect for confidentiality.

1. Within one week of formation, the ToO Committee should:
 - 1.1 Review and take note of the experience of previous ToO searches
 - 1.2 Commit to evaluative consistency and fairness;
 - 1.3 Define the material that should be requested of the applicant, and consider what further information might be requested prior to the interview;
 - 1.4 Define the requirements for confidentiality, retention of documents and record keeping;
 - 1.5 Agree on voting procedures.
2. A draft timeline for the ToO is given below. The actual timeline (deadlines, dates of meetings) should be decided at the first meeting of the Committee.

Time (weeks)	Action	Comment
1	First meeting of the Committee	Fix the time line (set deadlines, dates of meetings) Allocate responsibilities to members of the Committee
2-9	Prepare the case	The visit and interview process should be defined carefully – this is discussed below. Referees need to be selected – at least 8 letters are needed. The referees should not be co-authors, mentors or close working colleagues of the candidate. Exceptionally, and where this is declared, the field might be so constrained that this requirement has to be abated, in which case the number of letters required might need to be increased to 10. A sample letter for the President is given in Appendix 6. After the letters should have been received the Committee should meet to assess the information and to rank the candidates again using the additional information. After the Committee has reached a conclusion, the letters received) should be made available in a private room for faculty members to consult and give real-time feedback to the Committee. After this, the Committee will finalize its recommendation. A file with a recommendation should be sent by the Chair of the Search Committee to the President, together with a report on the process followed.

The processes that follow are the same as those described below for a regular Search, aside from the fact that there is only a single candidate.

4. The Visit

It is important that the visit and interview schedule is properly defined and implemented, so that, insofar as it is possible, the different candidates have the same experience. This covers *all* aspects of the visit, from arrival to departure, including all meals (especially dinner). In planning the visit, also bear in mind that the candidate will need some time to reflect and prepare, and for “comfort breaks”. It would also be good to leave at least some time for the candidate to suggest what he or she might want.

The elements of the visit, assumed to last 3 days (breakfast on day one to dinner on day 3) are the following:

- 1) A member of the Search/ToO Committee should be nominated to act as the “host” for the candidate.
- 2) On arrival (i.e. before the first official “breakfast”) the candidate is likely to want to recover from the journey. This might be particularly important for candidates who have travelled overnight from Europe or the Americas. Previously, Faculty housing has been used, but as occupancy there increases it is more likely that one of the local hotels (e.g.

Kafuu) is used. Are they left to have dinner alone at the Kafuu, or does the host have dinner with them, and if so with what remit? It needs to be clear that this is not a key part of the interview process.

- 3) What are the arrangements for the first breakfast and transport to OIST? The host of the breakfast should meet the candidate and explain the visit programme, so that the candidate is well prepared for what follows.
- 4) The three days should be planned, using some or all of the following ingredients (the order presented here is not random):
 - a. A tour of OIST and its facilities. The visit should probably begin by some orientation tour of the central building and the laboratories, and have some of the special features of the campus (the villages, auditorium, tunnel and the CDC, as well as the glorious views) indicated. Candidates should be asked whether they would like to visit any particular laboratories, housing facilities or offsite facilities (like schools, housing etc).
 - b. A seminar (1 hour). It needs to be made clear in the invitation that a seminar is expected, and also what type of seminar – an advanced research seminar or a more general seminar suitable for a wider audience. There are strong arguments for either, and in the end it probably does not make much difference, but it is important that all candidates are given the same instruction. The more general seminar means that more faculty, researchers and particularly students at OIST can attend, and should be preferred in almost all circumstances. The candidate should be asked to provide a title, abstract and a brief (<10 line) biography at least two weeks before the visit. The seminar should normally take place on the morning of the second day.
 - c. There should be a formal interview with the Search/ToO Committee. Its timing needs to be fixed – usually in the early afternoon after the seminar but before meeting some faculty.
 - d. The candidate should meet a representative sample of the faculty, especially those who have expressed an interest in meeting the candidates. It should be made clear that it is important that the candidates for the same position meet the roughly the same group of faculty members, in order to avoid bias. Faculty must provide scores and written assessments.
 - e. Consideration should be given to involving at least one faculty member from a different discipline (i.e. a neuroscientist for some interviewed for a physics position) to emphasize the interdisciplinary approach.
 - f. How is teaching and leadership potential to be assessed? There is some information from the letters from referees. However, some Universities have students and postdocs meet with the candidates over lunch or have the candidate teach a class for the students and postdocs. If there is such a meeting or class, there must be written feedback from the participants.
 - g. In any case, there should always be an opportunity to meet some graduate students and postdocs.
 - h. Usually there should be a formal meeting with the President, and possibly the Provost and/or Deans; the President, Provost and Deans will probably attend the seminar and perhaps one of the breakfasts, lunches or dinners.
 - i. What are the lunch arrangements?
 - j. Who hosts the three dinners? Where are they held? Who else is present?
 - k. Should there be time for a cultural visit to Okinawa – Yomitan, Uruma and Onna? If so, who accompanies?

1. Farewell and departure; should there be a formal closeout, and if so, with whom?

5. The Interview

If there is to be a formal interview it needs to be properly “scripted” – all candidates need to experience effectively the same interview, and if the questions vary significantly from interview to interview, some candidates will be at a disadvantage or gain an unfair advantage. Of course, each candidate is different and so follow-up questions are likely to be different, and it is probably good to envisage one or two candidate-specific questions (e.g. “In your work on X, how did you achieve Y” for one candidate and “How does your work on X improve upon the classic experiments of Z” for another).

There are a few key things that need to be decided.

- a. How should the interview begin?

Usually, the Chair should welcome the candidate and introduce him or herself before asking the rest of the Panel to identify themselves, even if they have already met.

The Chair should then explain what the interview process is and how long it is expected to take.

- b. If the candidate has been asked to make a short presentation for a given duration (usually 5 or 10 minutes), this should be given next, and delivered without interruption. In the invitation letter, the timing and contents of the presentation should be made clear. (e.g. “You are asked to prepare a 10 minute presentation summarizing your two most significant scientific publications, an overview of your research plan if you were appointed, and your achievements in teaching and supervision”). It is useful for Committee members to note how well the candidate remained within the instructions, including the length of time taken ... the fact that a 10 minute talks lasts exactly 10 minutes, or is over in 5 minutes, or takes 35 minutes, contains a useful information – it is this information that is lost if the presentation is interrupted.
- c. The “standard” questions to be asked, the order in which they are asked, and by whom they are asked, should also be determined in advance and be followed for all interviews. The Chair should ensure that follow up questions are reasonable – an extended scientific discussion on some minor point may well be very interesting, but it is more important to cover the range of questions. If an unsatisfactory answer is given, that should be noted. Given that the situation is likely to be stressful, and the candidate may be being interviewed in his or her second or third language (English), it is good practice to start with one or two straightforward, open⁴ questions, in order to relax the candidate and enable them to get into a rhythm. Subsequent questions can be progressively more probing.
- d. It is important that the questions are asked in a disciplined manner. If possible, the Committee should always sit in the same order, and the questioning should continue (say) from left to right. Committee members should refrain from interrupting with questions; if there is an issue that they wish to raise, it should be done through the Chair. The Chair should intervene if it is clear that the candidate has misunderstood or misinterpreted the question, or is otherwise evidently stressed and uncomfortable, and to

⁴ “Open” questions are those which can have a range of answers, e.g. “Can you describe in two or three minutes your most significant experimental result, and explain why it is important?”. “Closed” questions are those that can only be answered in one or two different ways, e.g. “Did you integrate the whole spectrum, or only across the visible spectrum” which can be answered either “across the whole spectrum” or “across the visible spectrum” – it clarifies the issue but does not reveal much more. Even worse closed questions are those that require only a “yes” or “no” answer – e.g. “Did you use a two-stage amplifier?”

ensure that the members of the Committee stick to the script. It is generally good practice for the Chair to ask the first and last question.

- e. At the end of the interview, the candidate should be asked whether there were any other points that he or she wished to raise and whether there are any questions to the Committee. Unless addressed to a specific member of the Committee, the answer should come from the Chair.
- f. Finally, the Chair should thank the candidate for the interview and show him or her out. It is important that there is someone waiting to take them for a coffee and comfort break before going on to the next activity – this might be a good time for the cultural visit.

After the interview, it is probably a good idea to give the members of the Committee a few minutes to think through the interview and make some notes, and then for the Chair to gather and record the first impressions. This is important because several weeks can elapse between the first and last interviews, and first impressions are likely to be only half remembered when the final discussion takes place.

5.1. Forbidden Questions and alternatives

In many Universities, there is a list of questions that should not, and in many cases legally cannot, be asked, including questions about gender-related, parental, religious, political or ethnic issues.

Topic	Forbidden Question	Alternative (if there is one). <i><u>If asked, it must be asked of all candidates</u></i>
Family Status	Are you married? What is your spouse's name? What is your maiden name? Do you have, or plan to have, children? Are you pregnant? What are your childcare arrangements?	Do you have any responsibilities that conflict with the job attendance or travel requirements?
Age	How old are you? When were you born? How long is it since you left school?	How much experience do you have in ...?
Ethnicity, Nationality & Citizenship	What is your nationality? Where were you born?	None
Religion	What is your religion? Which church/temple/synagogue... do you attend?	It may be legitimate to ask whether there are any restrictions on working time, e.g. at weekends, if there is a requirement (for example, to supervise experiments). However, this must be handled carefully and asked of all candidates in the same way.
Gender & sexual orientation	Do you consider yourself male or female?	There are <i>no</i> legitimate questions addressing either gender or sexual orientation.
Medical Condition and	Are you disabled? What is the nature or severity of your disability? What is your condition?	There are few legitimate questions. Where mobility is a requirement, it may be reason to ask of all candidates "Will you be able to perform the

Disability	Do you have a history of stress or mental health problems? Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations, or extended stays in hospital?	required functions, if necessary with reasonable accommodation?
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6. Final Thoughts

Being interviewed for any position is potentially stressful for the candidate. Some people are naturally ebullient and self-confident while others are quietly competent, even brilliant. The visit and the interview should take place in a calm and respectful atmosphere (the OIST Respectful Workplace Policy applies to the Visit and Interview). Questioning should be clear, concise and, insofar as it is possible, neutral. Of course, it is necessary to probe the depth of the candidate's knowledge, but this can be done quietly and respectfully. It is not good to argue with the candidate in the interview or seminar, even if you think that the statements or assertions are wrong, but it is legitimate to ask the candidate to explain or justify the assertion. If this explanation is incorrect or controversial, it is better to note it for use later than to try to correct; this will take time, and will undermine still further the candidate's confidence, which will already have been shaken if or when he or she realizes that there is a serious error.

For many candidates, being interviewed in English is likely to add to their discomfort. Committee members should be patient with such candidates, and try, insofar as it is possible, to separate difficulty with English from difficulty with the subject. Of course, OIST is an English language University and so a minimal fluency in English is a requirement. A flamboyant native English speaker may appear more dynamic and thus more brilliant than a quieter and more reserved candidate with poorer skills in English, but it is always necessary to look at the track record. One of the functions of the interview is to verify that the claims on the CV are genuinely those of the candidate and not "borrowed from a friend"; if they are genuine, the records on the CV can be used as the basis for a fair comparison.

Appendices

1. Extract from the Faculty Handbook

(Omitted sections [...] relate to promotions.)

3.1.1.1 Strategies for Recruiting the Best Available Faculty

The University will recruit faculty through open competition and strict review with the highest academic and research standards, expressly including external evaluation. To attract world-class researchers, the University will need to provide an excellent research environment. An important consideration is internal funding. Funding is provided for each Research Unit based on a five-year approved budget plan, adjusted annually to conform to the actual budget and changes that may have occurred in the Unit. Faculty members also will be encouraged to seek external funding. To attract world-class researchers, the University will offer salaries, travel expenses, and other benefits that are competitive with top universities in other countries.

3.1.1.2 Age and Gender Distribution of the Research and Teaching Staff

The University's recruiting policies will aim for a balance in the age distribution of the University faculty. This will ensure that both new researchers and more established researchers will be represented among the faculty. The University is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to increasing the diversity of its faculty. The University welcomes nominations of and applications from women and members of minority groups, as well as others who would bring additional dimensions to the University's research, teaching and commercial development missions.

3.1.1.3 Appointment [...]

The University will use standard tiered ranks of appointment enabling smooth transfer of personnel between institutions and enhancing recruitment at appropriate levels to maintain world-best standards of faculty teaching and research. This will consist of a tenure-track system comprising Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors. Appointments may be made at any of these levels. Tenure carries with it a commitment of employment until retirement. However, it does not guarantee internal research support. Tenured faculty will compete along with their fellow tenured and non-tenured faculty colleagues for internal research funding on a 5-year cycle.

Assistant Professor is an untenured position. Assistant Professors are hired for a 7-year term with an evaluation by the end of year 5, after which they may be promoted as an Associate Professor, or their contract may be terminated at the end of the 7-year term. Outstanding Assistant Professors may be promoted sooner. In general promotion to Associate Professor is with tenure, but under exceptional circumstances (e.g. childbirth or illness) may be without tenure.

Initial appointment to Associate Professor in general is with tenure, but can be made without tenure. Associate Professor appointments will be reviewed for promotion to Professor during the 4th year of the initial 5-year appointment. Early review will be permitted in exceptional circumstances. An untenured Associate Professor may exceptionally be granted a second untenured 5-year appointment. A third appointment as untenured Associate Professor will not normally be offered. If promotion to tenure is not granted, subsequent review may be considered only if there is evidence of a significant advance in the Associate Professor's research achievements.

Normally the position of Professor denotes tenure, although there may be some situations where this is not the case, such as when the individual is beyond the retirement age or is appointed as Distinguished Professor.

a) Process of Determining Rank and Tenure Status at Appointment or by Promotion

Appointments [...] follow a rigorous process of evaluation, recommendation and review.

For an *appointment*, the evaluation and recommendation phase is carried out by a *Search Committee*.

[...]

These committees are made up of members of the Assembly. These are non-standing committees that are established independently for each individual action. In both search and evaluation, substantial input from external referees is required and the external referee input carries the most weight with regard to the final evaluation. The recommendation of the *Search Committee* [...] will be reviewed by the President, and a final decision made by the Board of Governors.

b) Confidentiality of Appointment [...] Proceedings

The entire appointment [...] proceedings require discussion of specific individuals, and the opinions of others regarding those individuals. This and other relevant information must be held in strict confidence by all participants. The University commits to extensive measures to protect the privacy of the candidates by preserving the confidentiality of the information it receives regarding the candidates.

c) New Appointments: Structure and Membership of the Search Committee

The Search Committee is responsible for gathering data on scholarship, teaching, and other relevant matters. The Search Committee will comprise three to five members of the Assembly with a senior faculty member serving as chair. Search Committees may include external members, but the Chair should be from the Assembly.

A member of the Search Committee will be assigned the responsibility of insuring that the diversity standards for the search are met [[link: 1.3.2](#)].

d) Criteria for Appointment

Both scholarship and teaching are important prerequisites for faculty appointments because the University is dedicated to excellence in both. The purpose of the appointment evaluation of the candidate is to appraise, on the basis of the record to date, the standing and potential in the relevant scholarly discipline, broadly defined, and the quality of teaching and mentoring.

All applications will require three letters from referees of the candidate's choice. For candidates considered for interviews and possible appointment, the Search Committee will solicit additional external reference letters. Letters from external referees are essential for an objective process and, in general, carry more weight than internal letters. At least 4 letters from external referees are required for appointment at the non-tenured level. At least 8 letters from external referees are required for tenure appointments. The majority of the external referees should neither be close collaborators of the candidate nor have served as mentors of the candidate. When soliciting the opinion of internal or external referees, the Search Committee should use the sample letters of request [[link to sample letters](#)] that are available from the Office of the Dean of Faculty Affairs.

The first criterion for an appointment is that the individual's scholarship and research ranks among the top 5-10 percent in their world-wide cohort at his or her level of professional development for the proposed appointment level. Letters from referees should support this assessment in an unequivocal fashion.

The second criterion for appointment is a record of high quality teaching that clearly establishes that the candidate can plan and sustain a quality teaching program. Given that some candidates (especially for appointment to the assistant professor rank) may not yet have

had an opportunity to teach extensively, the committee must assess whether the candidate has the potential to be a quality instructor at the University. Teaching is broadly defined to include the classroom or laboratory, advising, mentoring, program building, and curriculum development. If available, evidence and testimonials of the teaching record should be included in the file.

The outcome of the Search Committee will be a file containing the Appointment Papers and a cover letter from the Chair.

When a Search Committee process results in a positive recommendation, there will be two levels of review that are required in order to achieve ratification. Taken in order they are:

- 1) Review by the President.
- 2) If this review is positive the file, accompanied by a letter from the President, goes to the Board of Governors for final approval.

2. Skeleton Job Advertisement (Press)

*[Assistant/Associate] Professor in **Subject** (single subject advertisement)*

*Faculty Positions Open **List of Subjects** (multiple subject advertisement)*

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology [OIST] Graduate University (<http://www.oist.jp>) invites applications for new faculty positions.

[Assistant/Associate] Professor in Subject-1, with any qualifications about scope for position 1 [Reference number ynnnn]

[Assistant/Associate] Professor in Subject-2, with any qualifications about scope for position 1 [Reference number yyyyy]

...

For all positions we seek applicants with strong interdisciplinary interests and outstanding scientific records of creativity and productivity. Detailed descriptions of all n posts may be accessed at

<https://groups.oist.jp/facultypositions>

OIST is a new, English-language graduate university offering a world-class research environment and a highly diverse, international research community with faculty, staff and students from all over the world. It is located in Okinawa on a beautiful campus overlooking the East China Sea.

OIST Graduate University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer and is committed to increasing the diversity of its faculty. We strongly encourage women and minority candidates to apply.

3. Skeleton Job Advertisement (Website)

*[Assistant/Associate] Professor in **Subject** Reference number [yynnn]*

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) Graduate University (<http://www.oist.jp>) invites applications for a [tenured/tenure-track] [Assistant/Associate/Full] Professor in **Subject**.

We seek a dynamic scientist with visionary leadership and an outstanding record of scholarly achievement in **brief description of the subject**, [including any clarifications of the scope]. [Any further extension or clarification of the scope should be inserted here.][If there is an associated position open, it might be useful to add Interested applicants might also wish to look at [link](#).]

Applicants should have a PhD or equivalent degree, with an established international reputation for excellence and innovation in research. Successful candidates will be expected to lead an internationally-recognized research program, to contribute to the teaching and supervision of graduate students, and to participate in the academic life and governance of OIST. Generous institutional support will be provided, including startup costs, researcher salaries, operating costs and space in striking new laboratory buildings.

OIST has 46 faculty members and over 200 researchers, with opportunities for collaboration in a wide range of fields including life sciences such as cell biology, neurobiology, developmental biology, evolutionary biology, genomics, structural biology, and systems biology; and physical sciences such as interface science, nanotechnology, novel 2D materials and heterostructures, organic and inorganic functional materials, photocatalytic and energy materials, quantum optics, quantum materials, and surface science.

OIST emphasizes interdisciplinary research based on strong core research areas. There are no departments, and the laboratory design is open. Research resources and equipment are managed to encourage easy access and collaborative research. [Any further information about the OIST facilities, environment and/or approach should go here.]

OIST is an English-language graduate university, offering a world-class research environment in an area of distinctive culture, unique ecology, and outstanding natural beauty. The research community is highly international, with faculty, staff and students drawn from over 30 different countries. Attractive housing, after-school programs, and child care in a specially designed Child Development Center, are all available on campus.

OIST Graduate University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer and is committed to increasing the diversity of its faculty. We strongly encourage women and minority candidates to apply.

More details regarding the advantages of working at OIST, and instructions on how to apply are available from <https://groups.oist.jp/facultypositions>. For more information about this position, please contact the search committee at Search-Committee-name@oist.jp. All positions will remain open until filled. There is no deadline for the applications. However, a first shortlisting of applications will be completed by the **date1**, and a second round of shortlisting is planned for approximately **date2**⁵.

⁵ **date2** should be **date1** + 2 months unless there are exceptional circumstances

4. Sample letter for an Assistant Professor

President's Office Letterhead

Prof. Goldfinger

Address

Date

Dear Prof. Goldfinger:

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) Graduate University (<http://www.oist.jp/>) seeks your assistance in providing a written evaluation of Dr. James Bond who is being considered by OIST for an appointment as an Assistant Professor in the area of Discipline. Attached please find a copy of the advertisement for this position. OIST Graduate University has a tenure-track academic structure much like a top level American university. Thus an assistant professorship is an appointment which is reviewed after five years for advancement to Associate Professor with tenure.

I am making this request on behalf of Prof. Chairperson who is the Chair of the Search Committee. To assist you in this request, I have included a copy of the candidate's CV and publication list, along with a description by the candidate of three of their peer-reviewed papers. Your letter will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

In building the faculty at OIST, the Board of Governors and I are requiring the highest level of qualification. We ask that you evaluate Dr. Bond commensurate with the standards that befit an appointment as a tenure-track assistant professor at a world-leading, international research university. We are seeking to fill the position with a scientist who shows exceptional promise, who has already proven their ability to lead independent research as exemplified by his/her publication record and who is showing signs of leading her/his world-wide peer group in the relevant area of research. While it is too early in her/his career to expect Dr. Bond to have had extensive class teaching and/or mentoring experience, we would welcome any comments that you may have in this regard.

Given the inter-disciplinary nature of OIST Graduate University, we would appreciate any comments that you can make regarding Dr. Bond's ability to collaborate with scientists in allied fields. Comparison to peers in the field would also be helpful to the Committee.

Please submit your signed letter as a PDF file to faculty-recruitment@oist.jp.

Peer review remains the strongest arbiter of high standards in academia. So, while I realize that this request places very significant demands on your valuable time, I hope that you will respond with a letter and I thank you in advance. I would greatly appreciate receiving your response by day, month, year

Sincerely,

Jonathan Dorfan,
President and CEO

5. Sample letter for an Associate Professor

President's Office Letterhead

Prof. Goldfinger

Address

Date

Dear Prof. Goldfinger:

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) Graduate University (<http://www.oist.jp/>) seeks your assistance in providing a written evaluation of Dr. James Bond who is being considered by OIST for an appointment as a tenured Associate Professor in the general area of Discipline. Attached please find a copy of the advertisement for this position. . Tenured Professorships at OIST Graduate University guarantee employment until retirement.

I am making this request on behalf of Prof. Chairperson who is the Chair of the Search Committee. To assist you in this request, I have included a copy of the candidate's CV and publication list, along with a description by the candidate of three of their peer-reviewed papers. Your letter will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

In building the faculty at OIST, the Board of Governors and I are requiring the highest level of qualification. Accordingly, we ask that you evaluate Dr. Bond by the standards of a world-leading, international research university. We are looking for confirmation that Dr. Bond has a record of outstanding scholarly accomplishment compatible with the top 5-10% of his world-wide peer group in the relevant area of research.

Scholarship and teaching are the primary factors in evaluation for tenure because the University is dedicated to excellence in research and education. Service to the University and/or the community is also a relevant consideration. The purpose of the tenure evaluation is to appraise, on the basis of the record to date, the academic standing and potential in the relevant scholarly discipline, the quality of teaching and mentoring, and the quality and relevance of service.

Given the inter-disciplinary nature of OIST Graduate University, I would appreciate any comments that you can make regarding Dr. Bond's ability to collaborate with scientists in allied fields. Comparison to peers in the field would also be helpful to the Committee.

Please submit your signed letter as a PDF file to faculty-recruitment@oist.jp.

Peer review remains the strongest arbiter of high standards in academia. So, while I realize that this request places very significant demands on your valuable time, I hope that you will respond with a letter and I thank you in advance. I would greatly appreciate receiving your response by day, month, year.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Dorfan,
President and CEO

6. Sample letter for a Full Professor

President's Office Letterhead

Prof. Goldfinger

Address

Date

Dear Prof. Goldfinger:

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) Graduate University (<http://www.oist.jp/>) seeks your assistance in providing a written evaluation of Prof. James Bond who is being considered by OIST for an appointment as Full Professor in the general area of Discipline. Attached please find a copy of the advertisement for this position. . A full professorship is an appointment with tenure until retirement.

I am making this request on behalf of Prof. Chairperson who is the Chair of the Search Committee. To assist you in this request, I have included a copy of the candidate's CV and publication list, along with a description by the candidate of three of their peer-reviewed papers. Your letter will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

In building the faculty at OIST, the Board of Governors and I are requiring the highest level of qualification. Accordingly, we ask that you evaluate Prof. Bond by the standards of a world-leading, international research university. We are looking for confirmation that Prof. Bond is a world-leader in his/her field. We expect that the successful candidate to have a record of sustained and outstanding scholarly accomplishment compatible with the top 5% of his/her world-wide peer group in the relevant area of research.

Given the inter-disciplinary nature of OIST Graduate University, I would appreciate any comments that you can make regarding Prof. Bond's ability to collaborate with scientists in allied fields. Comparison to peers in the field would also be helpful to the Committee.

Please submit your signed letter to as a PDF file to faculty-recruitment@oist.jp.

Peer review remains the strongest arbiter of high standards in academia. So, while I realize that this request places very significant demands on your valuable time, I hope that you will respond with a letter and I thank you in advance. I would greatly appreciate receiving your response by day, month, year.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Dorfan,
President and CEO