



Human Resources Advice Regarding Social Media in Hiring

Purpose

The purpose of this advice is to establish the best practices and procedures for the use of social media in the evaluation and selection of qualified personnel.

HR Advice

It is the advice of Skidmore College Human Resources to provide a uniform practice for the use of social media in conducting pre-employment checks. When requested by a hiring manager, information obtained from social media will be used to verify the accuracy of information provided by applicants, to identify or verify job-related accomplishments, skills, abilities, and characteristics that help establish the applicant's qualifications for employment, and to obtain other job-related information to ensure the applicant's overall suitability for the position in question. (This process may supplement the Background Check Policy and Procedure) Social media will not be utilized to identify applicants' protected status and no information obtained via social media will be utilized for an unlawful purpose.

Scope

This advice applies to all applicants applying for any position.

Definition of Social Media

Social media is defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Examples include but are not limited to blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, and Google.

Human Resources does not support the use of Social Media by Hiring Managers & Search Committee Members

Skidmore College Human Resources does not support the use of social media by hiring managers and search committees to obtain applicant information. Any hiring manager or search committee member found to have used social media inappropriately to search for information regarding a candidate may not be covered by college insurance in the event of a lawsuit and may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination. For the purposes of this advice, "hiring manager" shall mean any College personnel with decision-making authority in the selection of a candidate for hire. "Search Committee" shall mean any College personnel interviewing or interacting with a candidate who will provide input or feedback on the individual's candidacy for the position. See below for acceptable process.

Procedure

When requested by a hiring manager, the Employment Coordinator in Human Resources will be responsible for conducting social media checks. The social media check will be conducted prior to an offer to hire in accordance with this procedure.

Conducting Social Media Checks

- A. A request may be made to the Employment Coordinator to conduct specific social media checks to verify the accuracy of employment, academic information or to identify and/or verify job-related accomplishments, skills, abilities, and characteristics that help establish the applicant's qualifications for employment, and to obtain other job-related information relevant to the determination of the applicant's overall suitability for the position in question.
- B. The Employment Coordinator will conduct searches using an internet-based search engine (*e.g.*, Google search). If appropriate, the Employment Coordinator will also conduct searches using other available social media sites.
- C. Under no circumstances will the Employment Coordinator or any other College personnel seek to obtain access (through creation of a false identity or use of another's account) to a candidate's restricted social network.

Limitations

- A. The Employment Coordinator shall not search for and, if discovered, shall not communicate to those involved in the hiring decision any information regarding a candidate's protected statuses - race, creed, color, religion, gender, age, national or ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other category protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.
- B. The Employment Coordinator shall not search for and, if discovered, shall not communicate to those involved in the hiring decision the following information regarding certain protected activities; unless such activity creates a material conflict of interest related to the College's business interest:
- a candidate's political affiliation or engagement in political activities;
 - a candidate's legal use of consumable products outside of work hours, off an employer's premises and without use of an employer's equipment or other property;
 - a candidate's legal recreational activities outside work hours, off of the College's premises and without use of an employer's equipment or other property; or
 - a candidate's membership in a union, or engagement in any concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.

Documentation

After completing his/her search, the Employment Coordinator will prepare a report of the social media check, documenting the social media sites searched and the specific job-related information requested and obtained. This report will also include "hard copy" print outs of web pages relative to the information contained in the report. The report shall be provided to the ADEWD who will then provide appropriate information to the hiring manager for consideration in the evaluation and selection of qualified personnel. No information concerning a candidate's Protected Status will be shared with the hiring manager(s).