



Frequently Asked Questions About Affirmative Action Goals and Goal Setting at FIT

Why does FIT establish affirmative action goals?

FASHION INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY is a federal contractor subject to the affirmative action requirements of Executive Order 11246, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the Vietnam Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, Section 4212. FIT is required to prepare annual written Affirmative Action Plans (AAP's) for minorities and women, for covered veterans, and for persons with disabilities.

How are affirmative action goals established?

Goals are established based on analytical studies that set placement goals for groups of jobs, not for specific positions. These groups are composed of jobs that are similar with regard to their content, pay and opportunity. Based on a comparison to population statistics both external and internal to the College, a determination is made whether or not a placement goal is required. The objective of goal setting and their subsequent accomplishment is to have our workforce reflect the population from which we attract workers. Progress against placement goals is monitored based on the number of hiring or promotional opportunities that occurred in under represented job groups.

How do I know if there is a goal within my area of responsibility?

In establishing goals, responsible human resources staff members are made aware of goals on an annual basis. When an opening occurs, Human Resources will check that opening against established placement goals and initiate a good faith effort to attract qualified candidates to fill the position.

Is there a difference between a placement "goal" and a "quota?"

A placement goal is something we must strive to achieve or make reasonable efforts to bring about a desired result. We may make such efforts and still not reach a goal. The emphasis here is on striving. We are not required by law to reach goals without exception.

Quotas offer no such flexibility. While it is possible for an employer to be required to achieve a specific numerical target for hiring, such situations arise as a means of correcting a long-standing situation where minorities and/or women are unable to secure employment. Such a determination would come from either a government agency as part of a conciliation agreement, or through a court action if necessary.

Affirmative Action relies on the concept of goals, not quotas. It encourages employers to achieve desired representation of minorities and women in the workforce.

What is the search committee's responsibility?

A search committee's responsibility is to ensure equal employment opportunity in the hiring process. Committees are expected to interview qualified candidates who have been referred through Human Resources, including internal candidates who might help meet the placement goal. Committee's are also required to document the hiring process. In no case are they required or expected to hire or promote unqualified applicants for a position.



What is meant by “good faith effort?”

The objective of affirmative action is to bring about an improvement in the representation of minorities and females in the workforce. The emphasis is on results. Therefore, effective good faith efforts should ultimately lead to tangible results. *Examples of good faith efforts include extra outreach efforts in recruiting, an extension of a job offer to a qualified minority or female candidate even though the offer may be rejected or retention strategies such as mentoring or training and development opportunities for female and minority employees.*

If there is a goal, and no qualified minority or female applicant is available, can I hire someone else?

The affirmative action program does not require the college to hire a person who lacks qualifications to perform the job successfully, or to hire a less qualified person in preference to a more qualified one.

If there is no goal, am I free to hire anyone I want?

We are still required to provide equal opportunity for all openings. That is, we must consider for employment qualified applicants and make selections from that group of applicants. Human Resources will always be focused on attracting qualified applicants and will provide a pool from which the committee can make their decision.

Who can I contact with questions in regard to affirmative action goals or programs?

Griselda Gonzalez, Executive Associate and Affirmative Action Officer, can be reached at 212-217-4009 or by e-mail at Griselda_Gonzalez@fitnyc.edu.



What NOT to Ask When Interviewing Candidates

Following are illegal inquiries listed by category.

Also provided are questions that are acceptable in a few of these categories.

Age

- **DO NOT** ask an applicant's age or date of birth.
- **DO NOT** request a birth certificate prior to hiring.

Birthplace

- **DO NOT** ask birthplace of applicant or that of his/her parents, spouse or other relatives.
- **DO NOT** require an applicant to submit birth certificate, naturalization or baptismal record.

Citizenship

- **DO NOT** require proof of citizenship before hiring.
- **DO NOT** inquire whether parents and/or spouse are native born or naturalized citizens of the United States.
- **DO NOT** ask country or date of citizenship.

You May Ask:

- Are you legally authorized to work in the United States? (yes or no)

Disability

- **DO NOT** make inquiries regarding an individual's physical or mental condition which are not directly related to the requirements of a specific job. This is illegal and inappropriate.

You May Ask:

- After describing the essential duties of the position, you may and should ask candidates if they are able to perform the position as described.

Gender

- **DO NOT** make any inquiry regarding gender.

Height and Weight

- **DO NOT** make any inquiry regarding applicant's height or weight.

Marital Status / Parental Status

- **DO NOT** require or ask an applicant to provide any information regarding marital status or children.

Name

- **DO NOT** ask applicant's maiden name or any previous name he/she has used.
- **DO NOT** ask if a woman is Mrs., Miss or Ms.



National Origin

- **DO NOT** inquire into applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, parentage or nationality.
- **DO NOT** inquire about the nationality of an applicant's parents or spouse.
- **DO NOT** ask how foreign language ability was acquired.

Organizations

- **DO NOT** request a listing of clubs, societies and lodges to which applicant belongs or has belonged.

Photograph

- **DO NOT** require a photograph prior to hire.
- **DO NOT** take pictures of applicants during interviews.

Race/Color

- **DO NOT** make any inquiry that would indicate race and/or color of skin.

Religion

- **DO NOT** inquire into an applicant's religious denomination, religious affiliations, customs, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed.