Unless departmental faculty are part of the duly constituted search committee, application materials at the initial phase of candidate review should not be shared with departmental faculty members (or other individuals). This applies even where the applicant has answered “yes” to the *question “The application materials of semi-final or final candidates for this position may be shared with relevant reviewers beyond just the hiring official and search committee. If you are a semi-final or final candidate, do you agree to the release of your application materials to relevant reviewers?”* listed on the candidate profile. The rationale is that initial applicants aren’t “semi-final” or “final” candidates.

Once the search committee has narrowed down the pool of candidates to those who would be given further consideration (ex: meet position requirements and preferences), those applicants may be considered “semi-finalists”’ and materials could be shared with the departmental faculty. However, there are best practices to keep in mind at this phase:

* Review the candidate profile to confirm that the candidates have agreed to release applicant materials beyond the committee if they are considered a “semi-finalist” or “finalist”. Even if the applicant checked “yes” on the candidate profile, contact the individual to confirm their permission for the sharing of materials to occur before providing materials with the larger departmental faculty. This can be done informally by a telephone call with a notation in the file or even an e-mail notifying the individual that you are planning to share the materials with the departmental faculty and asking for confirmation from the candidate that it’s okay to do so.
* As a best practice, it would also be prudent and advisable to have the candidate material available in a read-only format and provided in a fashion where it could not be duplicated and distributed beyond the departmental faculty—that is, either viewable in hard copy in the departmental office or on a confidential or “looped” drive where only authorized people who have been granted access are able to view the information.
* Please note that reference letters may not be shared outside the search committee (unless the reference letters were submitted by the applicant as part of the application materials).
* Faculty beyond the search committee should not be permitted to read letters of reference submitted by others on an applicant’s behalf that were not part of the original candidate submission even if the applicant gives permission—these letters should remain confidential within the search committee. Faculty beyond the search committee should not be informed of the names and institutional affiliations of the reference letter writers. The members of the duly constituted search committee and the hiring authority should be the only persons to review and consider these materials.
* Search committee and departmental faculty should be made aware of the potential consequences of disclosure of applicant materials to unauthorized persons—that is, it is a misdemeanor pursuant to N.C. General Statute 126-127; in addition, it could lead to civil liability to the university or to the individual based on violations of privacy.

These guidelines were developed by Human Resources in partnership with NC State University Office of General Counsel. Questions? Contact David Perryman, Assistant Director of Talent Solutions at david\_perryman@ncsu.edu or 919.515.4276