
Fair Hiring Assurance Framework (FHAF)

The Fair Hiring Assurance Framework (FHAF) is an independent audit standard that evaluates how effectively an organization's controls ensure a transparent, equitable, respectful, and accessible hiring process.



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Version	Date	Description of Changes	Author / Approver
0.8.0	2026-07-06	Initial draft of core framework establishing Domains 1 through 8 (Governance to Data Privacy).	Timothy Lorens
0.9.0	2026-07-07	Added Domain 9 (Accessibility & Barrier Reduction) and Domain 10 (Offer Parity & Final Evaluation). Introduced the "Accountless" application mandate.	Timothy Lorens
1.0.0	2026-07-08	Initial Release. Integrated strict employment law compliance patches (Salary History Ban, Benefits Disclosure, Internal Opportunity Access, EEOC Data Retention). Finalized scoring model and established "Kill Switch" disqualification criteria.	Timothy Lorens

FH1. Governance

Domain Principle: The organization establishes, oversees, and continuously evaluates its hiring policies to ensure alignment with fair, equitable, and transparent recruitment standards.

FH1.1: Leadership Approval & Policy Communication

Control: Management has established, documented, and formally approved a comprehensive fair hiring policy that is accessible to all relevant personnel.

- **Intent:** To ensure that the commitment to fair hiring starts at the executive level and that the rules of engagement are not siloed within the HR department.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - A documented Hiring Policy with version control.
 - Meeting minutes or sign-offs demonstrating executive leadership or board approval.
 - System logs or intranet analytics proving the policy is published and accessible to employees.

FH1.2: Mandatory Interviewer Training

Control: All personnel involved in the interviewing or selection process must complete standardized fair-hiring and anti-bias training annually before conducting any interviews.

- **Intent:** To guarantee that anyone evaluating a candidate understands the organization's legal, ethical, and procedural standards, thereby standardizing the candidate assessment process.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Training syllabi or presentation decks detailing the curriculum.
 - Learning Management System (LMS) reports showing completion dates for all active hiring managers and interviewers.
 - A reconciliation report comparing the list of employees who conducted interviews against the list of employees with active training certifications.

FH1.3: Documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Control: Recruiters and talent acquisition staff strictly adhere to documented SOPs that define the end-to-end recruitment lifecycle, from job requisition to offer generation.

- **Intent:** To eliminate ad-hoc hiring practices and ensure every candidate experiences a consistent, predictable, and measurable process.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - The formal Recruitment SOP document.

- Process flowcharts detailing required steps (e.g., resume screening criteria, interview stages, rubric usage).
- Audit logs from the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) showing that mandatory workflow stages were not bypassed for a sample of newly hired employees.

FH1.4: Vendor & Agency Management

Control: Third-party recruiting agencies, headhunters, and sourcing vendors are bound by Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that require adherence to the organization's FHAF standards.

- **Intent:** To prevent organizations from outsourcing biased or opaque hiring practices to external entities, ensuring the framework extends to the supply chain.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Executed vendor contracts containing explicit fair-hiring clauses.
 - Completed vendor security/compliance questionnaires regarding their internal recruitment practices.

FH1.5: Candidate Grievance & Incident Reporting

Control: A defined, accessible mechanism exists for candidates and employees to report deviations from the fair hiring policy without fear of retaliation.

- **Intent:** To provide a feedback loop for identifying blind spots, rogue interviewers, or systemic failures in the hiring process.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Documentation of the reporting mechanism (e.g., an anonymous portal, an ethics hotline, or a designated compliance email).
 - An incident tracking log showing how reported grievances were investigated and resolved by management.

FH1.6: Periodic Review & Continuous Improvement

Control: Management conducts at least an annual internal review of hiring metrics, ATS data, and process deviations to assess the effectiveness of the hiring governance program.

- **Intent:** To ensure the framework adapts to organizational changes and that controls remain effective over time.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - An annual hiring compliance audit report.
 - Documented remediation plans for any control failures or gaps identified during the internal review.

FH2. Transparency & Disclosure

Domain Principle: The organization proactively provides candidates with accurate, comprehensive, and timely information regarding the role, compensation, hiring workflow, and evaluation methods prior to formal engagement.

FH2.1: Process Architecture Disclosure

Control: Prior to or at the start of the first formal interview, candidates are provided with a complete outline of the hiring workflow, including the total number of interview rounds, the format of each round, and the titles or roles of the evaluators.

- **Intent:** To eliminate surprise stages, prevent "interview fatigue," and allow candidates to adequately prepare or opt out early if the process is incompatible with their availability.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Standardized candidates welcome packets or email templates containing workflow disclosures.
 - Applicant Tracking System (ATS) automated trigger logs proving workflow details are dispatched upon candidate advancement to the interview stage.
 - A random sampling of candidate communications compared against the actual number of interview rounds conducted.

FH2.2: Timeline & SLA Communication

Control: The organization establishes and communicates target timelines for each stage of the recruitment process, including expected dates for feedback and final decision notifications.

- **Intent:** To respect the candidate's time and provide predictability, mitigating the anxiety of indefinite waiting periods.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Documented Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for candidate communication turnaround times (e.g., "feedback within 5 business days of interview").
 - ATS time-to-disposition and stage-duration reports demonstrating adherence to communicated timelines.
 - Audit samples of candidate notifications showing explicit mention of expected next-step dates.

FH2.3: Assessment & Evaluation Transparency

Control: All required technical assessments, case studies, presentations, or psychometrics are disclosed in advance, including estimated completion times and the specific evaluation criteria or rubrics that will be used.

- **Intent:** To ensure candidates are evaluated on skill rather than their ability to guess unspoken expectations, and to prevent organizations from assigning unpaid, production-level consulting work under the guise of an assessment.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Assessment documentation packages provided to candidates, including grading rubrics and time caps.
 - Policy documentation defining the boundaries of take-home assessments (e.g., maximum hour limits and ownership of intellectual property).

FH2.4: Compensation & Benefits Transparency

Control: The organization publishes accurate, approved compensation bands, alongside a general description of healthcare, retirement, equity, and PTO benefits, on all public job postings and direct sourcing outreach.

- **Intent:** To comply with strict pay transparency laws (such as those in Colorado, Washington, and Illinois) and eliminate information asymmetry, allowing candidates to evaluate the total rewards package before investing time in the interview process.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Screenshots or links to active job postings showing visible salary ranges and comprehensive benefits summaries.
 - An internal compensation matrix and standard benefits prospectus approved by HR/Finance.
 - A reconciliation report comparing the published total rewards against the actual offer letters sent to hired candidates.
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FH2.5: AI & Algorithmic Screening Disclosure

Control: The organization explicitly discloses when automated systems, Artificial Intelligence (AI), LLMs, or algorithmic tools are utilized for resume parsing, candidate ranking, or asynchronous video interview scoring.

- **Intent:** To align with emerging global regulations (e.g., NYC Local Law 144, EU AI Act) and give candidates visibility into whether they are being evaluated by a human or a machine, including an opt-out or human-review escalation path where required by law.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Privacy policies and job application disclosures stating the exact nature of algorithmic screening tools used.
 - Vendor bias-audit certificates for any third-party AI screening tools deployed in the ATS pipeline.

FH3. Candidate Experience

Domain Principle: The organization operationalizes respect for the candidate's time and effort through decisive communication, coordinated assessments, and professional preparedness.

FH3.1: Definitive Candidate Disposition

Control: All candidates who participate in at least one formal interview stage receive a definitive, documented decision (e.g., rejection, withdrawal, or offer) within a predefined timeframe.

- **Intent:** To strictly prohibit "ghosting" post-interview and ensure the organization formally closes the loop with every engaged applicant.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Applicant Tracking System (ATS) pipeline reports showing that no candidates who reached the interview stage remain in an active or unassigned status after a requisition is closed.
 - System logs demonstrating automated or manual rejection notifications were successfully sent to non-selected candidates.

FH3.2: Finalist Feedback Provision

Control: Candidates who complete the final stage of the evaluation process but are not selected are provided with constructive, role-specific feedback.

- **Intent:** To acknowledge the significant time investment of final-stage candidates and provide them with actionable value, reinforcing the organization's reputation.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Documented policy outlining the requirements and acceptable formats for delivering final-stage feedback.
 - A random sample of communication logs or documented phone screening notes showing feedback delivery for rejected finalists.

FH3.3: Interviewer Preparedness

Control: Interviewers are required to review the candidate's profile, provided materials, and specific interview objectives prior to the scheduled start time of the interview.

- **Intent:** To prevent the candidate from having to repeatedly summarize their basic background and to ensure the allotted time is used for meaningful assessment rather than preliminary review.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**

- ATS access logs proving interviewers viewed the candidate's resume or profile *before* the interview start time.
- Aggregated data from post-interview candidate experience surveys specifically rating interviewer preparedness.

FH3.4: Coordinated Assessment Strategy

Control: Multi-stage interview panels utilize structured interview kits that assign distinct, non-overlapping focus areas or competencies to specific interviewers.

- **Intent:** To prevent candidate fatigue from answering identical questions across multiple interviews and to ensure the organization gathers a comprehensive, multi-faceted evaluation.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Completed interview plans detailing which competencies (e.g., architecture, leadership, specific technical skills) are assigned to which interview stage.
 - Completed scoring rubrics from different interviewers on the same panel demonstrating that distinct topics were evaluated.

FH4. Equity & Evaluation

Domain Principle: The organization evaluates candidates based on consistent, objective, and documented criteria to mitigate bias and ensure equitable hiring outcomes.

FH4.1: Standardized Scorecards

Control: Interviewers use predefined, structured scorecards or rubrics to grade candidates against specific competencies, rather than relying on unstructured feedback.

- **Intent:** To eliminate subjective "gut-feeling" hiring and ensure every candidate for a given role is measured against the exact same baseline criteria.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Rubric templates mapped to specific job profiles.
 - A random sample of completed scorecards from the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) demonstrating that numerical or categorical grading was utilized.

FH4.2: Evidence-Based Documentation

Control: Interviewers must submit documented, evidence-based feedback justifying their scores before discussing the candidate with other panel members or viewing other interviewers' feedback.

- **Intent:** To prevent groupthink or the "halo effect" (where one strong interviewer influences the rest of the panel) and to create a clear audit trail for the final hiring decision.

- **Verifiable Artifacts:**

- ATS configuration settings enforcing "blind feedback" (locking interviewers out of peer reviews until their own scorecard is submitted).
- Audit logs showing scorecard submission timestamps relative to candidate debrief meetings.
- Qualitative review of sample scorecards to ensure ratings include written justifications, not just blind scores.

FH4.3: Consistent Job Requirements

Control: The core requirements, required qualifications, and grading criteria for a role remain locked once the first candidate enters the evaluation phase. Substantial changes require closing the role and opening a new requisition.

- **Intent:** To prevent "moving the goalposts" mid-process to favor a specific candidate or retroactively justify disqualifying another.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Audit logs of the job requisition demonstrating no post-publishing edits to the core requirements.
 - A policy document defining the threshold for when a requisition must be canceled and re-opened due to scope changes.

FH4.4: Job-Related Questioning

Control: All interview questions and technical assessments are directly mapped to the required skills, competencies, and daily responsibilities of the role.

- **Intent:** To eliminate discriminatory questioning, irrelevant trivia, or abstract "brainteasers" that do not accurately predict job performance and disproportionately introduce bias.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Documented interview question banks mapped directly to role competencies.
 - Meeting minutes or sign-offs showing an annual review of standard interview questions by HR, Legal, or a compliance officer to ensure adherence to equal employment opportunity standards.

FH4.5: Salary History Ban

Control: The organization explicitly prohibits interviewers, recruiters, and the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) from requesting a candidate's current or historical compensation. Final compensation offers must be based solely on market rate and internal rubric scores.

- **Intent:** To prevent the perpetuation of systemic wage gaps and comply with state and local laws prohibiting salary history inquiries, ensuring candidates are paid for the value of the role, not anchored to their previous earnings.

- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - ATS application form configurations demonstrating the complete absence of salary history fields.
 - Standardized interview scripts and interviewer training materials expressly forbidding past compensation questions.
 - A documented internal compensation policy stating offers are calculated independently of a candidate's historical pay.

FH5. Time & Compensation

Domain Principle: The organization respects the candidate's personal time and intellectual property by enforcing strict boundaries on evaluation length and providing fair compensation for extensive or proprietary work.

FH5.1: Bounded Interview Durations

Control: The total required time commitment for all interview stages combined is capped at a documented maximum duration, categorized by role level (e.g., max 4 hours for individual contributors, max 6 hours for leadership).

- **Intent:** To prevent endless interview loops that drain candidate time and disproportionately penalize candidates who cannot easily take time off from their current employment or caregiving responsibilities.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - A policy matrix defining maximum interview hours per job tier.
 - Applicant Tracking System (ATS) scheduling reports calculating the total cumulative interview time scheduled for hired and rejected finalists, demonstrating adherence to the caps.

FH5.2: Compensated Assessments

Control: Any take-home project, technical assessment, or presentation reasonably expected to exceed two hours of focused effort is financially compensated at a predefined flat rate or hourly fair-market equivalent.

- **Intent:** To ensure candidates are not performing unpaid labor under the guise of an assessment, and to lower the barrier to entry for candidates with limited free time.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - A policy document defining the compensation threshold, payment rate, and disbursement timeline.

- Accounts payable ledgers, expense reports, or third-party payment receipts (e.g., gift cards, direct deposits) reconciling candidate assessment submissions with actual payments made.

FH5.3: Intellectual Property Protection

Control: The organization is strictly prohibited from utilizing candidate assessment submissions, ideas, designs, or code for commercial gain, internal production, or resolving active business problems.

- **Intent:** To protect the candidate from exploitative practices—sometimes referred to as "brewdogging"—where companies crowdsource free consulting or development work through the interview process.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Assessment prompts and repositories proving the use of sandbox environments, hypothetical scenarios, or explicitly synthetic datasets.
 - A formal candidate agreement or terms of service for the assessment explicitly stating the organization waives all rights to use the submission commercially.

FH5.4: Timeline Adherence & Notification

Control: If internal delays cause the hiring process for a requisition to extend beyond the originally disclosed timeline, all active candidates must be proactively notified of the delay, provided a revised schedule, and given the opportunity to withdraw.

- **Intent:** To eliminate anxiety caused by prolonged silence and allow candidates to make informed decisions if they have competing offers.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Documented internal SLAs defining what constitutes a "timeline breach" requiring notification.
 - System audit logs or email templates demonstrating batch updates sent to active candidates when a requisition was paused or extended.

FH6. Communication

Domain Principle: The organization guarantees active, two-way communication throughout the hiring lifecycle, ensuring candidates are never abandoned in the pipeline and are promptly informed of any status changes.

FH6.1: Active Pipeline Updates

Control: All active candidates in the interview pipeline must receive a status update at least once every 10 business days, even if the update only confirms they are still under consideration.

- **Intent:** To actively prevent candidate "ghosting" and reduce anxiety during internal delays or prolonged decision-making periods.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Applicant Tracking System (ATS) "time-since-last-contact" reporting.
 - System audit logs demonstrating automated "keep-warm" emails or manual recruiter check-ins sent to active candidates before the 10-day threshold is breached.

FH6.2: Prompt Requisition Closure Notification

Control: If a job requisition is canceled, frozen, or filled, all remaining active candidates must be formally notified within a defined SLA (e.g., 48 hours) of the requisition status change in the system.

- **Intent:** To prevent candidates from preparing for interviews or waiting for outcomes on roles that no longer exist.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - ATS logs mapping the exact timestamp a requisition was closed against the timestamps of rejection or update emails sent to the pipeline.
 - Documented policy defining the timeframe for notifying candidates of closed roles.

FH6.3: Justified Offer Withdrawal

Control: If a formal, extended job offer is rescinded or withdrawn, the organization must provide the candidate with written documentation stating the objective business or compliance reason (e.g., failed background check, sudden budget freeze, loss of funding).

- **Intent:** To protect candidates from arbitrary, retaliatory, or discriminatory offer revocations, especially since candidates may have already resigned from their current positions.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - A documented HR policy dictating the approval chain and permissible reasons for offer revocation.
 - Copies of formal withdrawal communications sent to candidates.
 - Sign-offs from Legal or HR leadership approving the withdrawal before the candidate was notified.

FH6.4: Candidate Inquiry SLAs

Control: Recruiters and hiring coordinators must acknowledge and respond to direct candidate communications (e.g., logistical questions, accommodation requests) within a documented Service Level Agreement, such as 2 business days.

- **Intent:** To ensure a reliable, two-way communication channel remains open so candidates are not ignored when seeking critical clarification.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Documented SLA standards for candidate responsiveness.
 - Email ticketing or ATS inbox metrics showing the average time-to-first-response for inbound candidate emails.

FH7. Integrity

Domain Principle: The organization conducts its hiring practices ethically, ensuring that all published opportunities are legitimate, financially backed, and transparently represented to the talent market.

FH7.1: Prohibition of Phantom Requisitions

Control: The organization explicitly prohibits publishing "ghost" or "phantom" job postings created solely for resume harvesting, market research, or external optics without a genuine, active intent to hire.

- **Intent:** To protect candidates from expending time, effort, and emotional energy applying to roles that do not exist.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - A reconciliation report matching all external job postings to active internal headcounts.
 - Applicant Tracking System (ATS) audits of requisitions open for an extended period (e.g., 90+ days) requiring documented justification from hiring managers to remain active.

FH7.2: Verified Financial Backing

Control: Every open requisition must have documented financial approval and secured budget allocation before it can be published externally or sourced by recruiters.

- **Intent:** To prevent candidates from completing an interview loop only to have the role evaporate because the budget was entirely speculative.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Approved headcount requisition forms containing digital sign-offs from the Finance department or executive leadership prior to the job posting date.
 - System configurations ensuring recruiters cannot push a draft requisition to the careers page without the required internal budget approval flags.

FH7.3: Transparency of Internal Preferences

Control: If an external posting is legally or procedurally required but an internal candidate is already the designated frontrunner, the organization must either explicitly disclose this in the posting or immediately notify external applicants before formal interviews begin.

- **Intent:** To prevent external candidates from acting as unwitting placeholders in a process where the outcome is practically predetermined, saving both candidate and interviewer time.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Documented HR policies dictating the protocol for parallel internal and external interviews.
 - ATS pipeline data demonstrating that external candidates were not needlessly advanced to final stages when an internal offer was already being drafted.

FH7.4: Accurate Role Representation

Control: Recruiters, job descriptions, and hiring managers must accurately represent the role's primary duties, required on-site presence, on-call expectations, and title, strictly prohibiting bait-and-switch tactics.

- **Intent:** To ensure candidates are making significant career and life decisions based on factual realities, preventing immediate turnover driven by false promises (e.g., selling a role as fully remote, then demanding hybrid attendance post-hire).
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - A formal review process ensuring the published job description matches the actual internal role profile and compliance requirements.
 - Aggregated data from 90-day new-hire surveys or exit interviews specifically querying if the job matched how it was represented during the interview process, with documented remediation for any flagged discrepancies.

FH7.5: Internal Opportunity Equal Access

Control: All active employees are notified of open positions or promotion opportunities concurrently with, or prior to, the publication of external job postings.

- **Intent:** To comply with state-level promotion transparency laws and ensure existing employees have an equitable opportunity for career advancement and upward mobility before the organization recruits externally.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Time-stamped internal communications (e.g., company-wide emails, intranet postings, Slack/Teams announcements) announcing the open role prior to or on the same day as the external job board posting.
 - A documented HR policy dictating the internal posting and notification timeframe for all new requisitions.

- ATS logs confirming internal candidates had the ability to apply during the mandated internal posting window.

FH8. Data Privacy

Domain Principle: The organization safeguards candidate personal data through strict access controls, transparent data lifecycle management, and explicit consent mechanisms, respecting the candidate's digital privacy rights.

FH8.1: Explicit Consent & Purpose Limitation

Control: The organization obtains explicit, opt-in consent before collecting sensitive data (e.g., background checks, reference checks, diversity demographic data) and strictly limits the use of this data to the hiring process.

- **Intent:** To ensure candidates retain agency over their personal information and to guarantee that demographic data cannot be weaponized or sold to third-party data brokers.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Timestamped audit logs from the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) showing candidate acceptance of the privacy policy and specific consent disclosures.
 - Signed authorization forms for any third-party background or credit checks.

FH8.2: Data Retention & Statutory Compliance

Control: Candidate data is systematically purged or fully anonymized only *after* satisfying the statutory minimum retention periods mandated by the EEOC and applicable state laws (e.g., 1 to 4 years post-decision). Candidates requesting immediate deletion under privacy frameworks are informed of these specific legal holds.

- **Intent:** To balance the candidate's right to digital privacy with the organization's strict legal obligation to retain hiring records to prove non-discrimination during potential EEOC or state labor audits.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - A formal Data Retention Policy explicitly citing EEOC and state statutory minimums as the prerequisite baseline before candidate data purging can occur.
 - System configuration rules or automated script logs proving that data purging occurs on schedule, but strictly after the legal hold period expires.
 - Standardized response templates for Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) explaining the legal requirement for retaining specific hiring artifacts during the statutory window.

FH8.3: AI & Automated Decision Transparency

Control: The organization explicitly discloses the use of any Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, or automated profiling tools used for resume screening, candidate ranking, or video interview analysis *before* the candidate applies.

- **Intent:** To ensure candidates understand if they are being evaluated by an algorithm rather than a human, allowing them to format their materials appropriately or opt out of biometric/algorithmic analysis.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Clear, unambiguous disclosure statements visible on the career portal and application forms.
 - Completed security and bias-auditing questionnaires for any third-party AI vendors integrated into the ATS.

FH8.4: Least Privilege Access Controls

Control: Access to candidate records is enforced via strict Role-Based Access Control (RBAC), ensuring that personnel can only view the specific data necessary for their role in the interview process.

- **Intent:** To prevent internal snooping and data leaks. For example, technical interviewers should see a resume, but they should never have access to a candidate's background check results, requested salary, or diversity demographic data.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - An Identity and Access Management (IAM) matrix mapping HR, recruiting, and interviewer roles to specific ATS permissions.
 - Evidence of quarterly access reviews ensuring that offboarded employees or transferred interviewers have had their ATS access revoked.

FH9. Accessibility & Barrier Reduction

Domain Principle: The organization actively removes logistical, physical, and socioeconomic barriers from the hiring process, assuming the operational burden of making the process accessible to all candidates.

FH9.1: Proactive Accommodations

Control: The organization proactively provides a frictionless, non-stigmatizing mechanism for candidates to request reasonable accommodations (e.g., closed captioning, extended assessment time, alternative formats) before the first interview stage.

- **Intent:** To remove the burden on the applicant to "out" a disability or navigate a complex HR labyrinth just to secure an equitable interview environment.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**

- Standardized candidate intake forms or scheduling emails explicitly offering accommodation options.
- Applicant Tracking System (ATS) configuration showing accommodation workflows that hide the medical reasoning from the interviewing panel to prevent bias.

FH9.2: Centralized Scheduling Logistics

Control: The organization assumes full responsibility for coordinating panel availability, time zones, and calendar tetrises. Candidates are provided with self-serve availability links or consolidated itineraries, rather than being forced to coordinate with multiple interviewers directly.

- **Intent:** To respect candidates who are currently employed or have caregiving duties, ensuring they do not have to act as unpaid administrative assistants to schedule their own interviews.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - ATS integrations with enterprise calendaring systems (e.g., Calendly, Microsoft Bookings).
 - Candidate communication logs demonstrating the use of consolidated scheduling workflows.

FH9.3: Credential Deflation & Competency Focus

Control: Job requisitions evaluate verifiable skills and competencies rather than relying on proxy credentials (e.g., blanket four-year degree mandates) unless the credential is legally, medically, or structurally required for the specific profession.

- **Intent:** To prevent arbitrary gatekeeping that disproportionately filters out applicants from non-traditional or socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds who possess the exact skills required.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - An HR policy requiring hiring managers to justify degree or certification requirements during the requisition approval process.
 - A random sample of approved job descriptions demonstrating that "equivalent experience" is explicitly listed as an acceptable alternative to academic degrees.

FH9.4: Low-Friction Application Entry

Control: The organization must provide a seamless application pathway that does not require the candidate to create a company-specific account, establish a password, or manually re-type employment history that is already present on their submitted resume.

- **Intent:** To respect the candidate's time at the very top of the funnel by eliminating redundant data entry and password fatigue. The burden of parsing and organizing

application data rests on the organization's Applicant Tracking System (ATS), not the applicant.

- **Acceptable Mechanisms:**
 - "Apply as Guest" or direct resume upload (e.g., Greenhouse, Lever).
 - Universal profile integrations (e.g., "Apply with LinkedIn" or Single Sign-On).
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - Auditor walk-through of the public careers page demonstrating that an application can be submitted successfully without passing through a mandatory account-creation gate.
 - ATS configuration settings confirming that manual data-entry fields (like chronological job history) are either entirely optional or automatically parsed from the resume file with high fidelity.

FH10. Offer Parity & Final Evaluation

Domain Principle: The organization ensures that final offers and pre-employment screenings are governed by objective data and strict role relevance, preventing systemic inequalities at the finish line.

FH10.1: Formula-Driven Offer Generation

Control: Final compensation offers are calculated using a standardized internal matrix that correlates the candidate's scorecard results (from FH4.1) directly to the published salary band (from FH2.4), explicitly stripping "negotiation leverage" from the initial offer calculation.

- **Intent:** To eliminate the "negotiation penalty" that historically harms underrepresented groups. The organization makes its highest, most equitable offer based on the candidate's assessed skill level, rather than lowballing and waiting to see if the candidate pushes back.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - An internal compensation matrix mapped to interview rubric scores.
 - A reconciliation report showing that candidates who achieved similar rubric scores for the same role were offered identical compensation packages, regardless of their negotiation attempts.

FH10.2: Targeted & Relevant Background Screening

Control: Background checks, credit checks, and drug screenings are only conducted post-offer, and the results are strictly evaluated against criteria directly relevant to the daily duties of the role.

- **Intent:** To prevent broad, dragnet screenings from unfairly disqualifying candidates. For example, a candidate's credit score has zero bearing on a graphic design role, and non-violent, irrelevant history should not trigger an automated revocation.
- **Verifiable Artifacts:**
 - A documented screening matrix defining which specific flags are permissible disqualifiers for specific job profiles.
 - Logs of any rescinded offers due to background checks, accompanied by documented justification from HR/Legal proving direct role relevance.

1. The Audit Sampling Methodology

- **Operating Effectively ($0 \leq E \leq 0.05$):** $M_c = 1.0$ (Full Points)
- **Minor Deficiency ($0.05 < E \leq 0.15$):** $M_c = 0.5$ (Half Points)
- **Material Failure ($E > 0.15$):** $M_c = 0.0$ (Zero Points)

2. Point Distribution & Weighting

To provide a granular, easily understood metric for the public, the framework uses a **1,000-point scale**. Domains are weighted based on their direct impact on fairness and candidate harm. Equity & Evaluation carries the most weight, while Governance establishes the baseline.

The Point Distribution

Domain	Total Points	Rationale
FH4. Equity & Evaluation	150	The core of fair hiring; directly impacts the decision.
FH3. Candidate Experience	125	Heavily dictates the operational reality of the candidate's journey.
FH2. Transparency	100	Information symmetry is critical for candidates to opt-in fairly.

FH5. Time & Compensation	100	Prevents exploitative practices and unpaid labor.
FH6. Communication	100	Addresses "ghosting," the most frequent candidate grievance.
FH9. Accessibility & Barrier Reduction	100	Accounts for countless ATS entry and frictionless accommodations.
FH10. Offer Parity & Final Evaluation	100	Prevents the negotiation penalty and ensures relevant background checks.
FH1. Governance	75	Ensures foundational policies and leadership buy-in exist.
FH7. Integrity	75	Protects the ecosystem from phantom jobs and internal shadowing.
FH8. Data Privacy	75	Secures candidate PII and enforces consent and retention laws.
Total Maximum Score	1,000	

The Math

An auditor samples the ATS data for the 12-month audit period. For each control, an Exception Rate (\$E\$) is calculated based on process deviations. The Exception Rate determines the point multiplier for that control:

- ***Operating Effectively (\$E \le 0.05\$): 1.0 multiplier (Full points)***

- **Minor Deficiency (\$0.05 < E ≤ 0.15\$):** 0.5 multiplier (Half points)
- **Material Failure (\$E > 0.15\$):** 0.0 multiplier (Zero points)

3. Certification Tiers

A high score alone is insufficient if a company critically fails a major ethical barrier. To achieve certification, an organization must meet the baseline score *and* avoid catastrophic failures.

The "Kill Switch" Controls

Certain controls represent absolute minimum ethical standards. If an organization receives an $EM_c = 0.0$ (Material Failure) on any of the following, they are immediately disqualified from certification, regardless of their overall score:

- **FH4.4:** Non-job-related/discriminatory questioning.
- **FH5.3:** Commercial use of uncompensated candidate work.
- **FH7.1:** Publishing fake or phantom job postings.

Grading Outcomes

- **FHAF Certified (Score 850–1,000):** The organization operates a highly equitable, transparent hiring process. All domains must score at least **70%** of their available points.
- **FHAF Certified with Exceptions (Score 750–849):** The organization is generally fair but exhibits systemic process breakdowns (e.g., slow SLA response times or inconsistent feedback delivery). The audit report will list the specific areas requiring remediation.
- **Uncertified (Score < 750 or Kill Switch Tripped):** The hiring process is opaque, inconsistent, or highly susceptible to bias. A recruiter or candidate would see "Certification Failed" or no badge at all.