Holst Architecture's Hiring Process

Thank you for your interest in Holst Architecture! Here's what you can expect from our hiring process.

Holst's Careers Committee is made up of people from the Associate to Director level of our leadership. This group works collaboratively to minimize bias in the recruitment and hiring process.

Developing Position Descriptions

When our staffing team and leadership determine the need to hire, we develop a position description. Typically, we are hiring for a standard architectural role like Project Architect, Project Manager, or Design Staff. Descriptions are usually one paragraph long and list required skills for the role in terms of how the person will operate within the firm. We encourage candidates to apply, even if they don't meet every one of our qualifications listed. We also encourage people to reach out if they are unsure whether they meet the qualifications of a position.

We are always accepting employment inquiries regardless of hiring needs. We ask that all applicants submit a single PDF of their cover letter, CV, and work samples (not to exceed 10 mb) to careers@holstarc.com.

Searching for Candidates

We always post our job openings on the Holst website first. They are frequently shared with NOMA PDX. When we require more reach, we will also post openings on various paid platforms: LinkedIn, AIA Oregon, NOMA National, Partners in Diversity, Archinect, and the HBCU Career Center.

To find internship candidates, we will share our position description with regional schools' Architecture programs (Portland State University, University of Oregon, University of Washington) and their NOMAS chapters, as well as HBCUs and other universities across the U.S. based on Holst employees' personal connections.

Evaluating Candidates

Portfolio Review

A candidate submits their portfolio and cover letter PDF as specified above to the careers@holstarc.com email address. A Holst employee reviewing the inbox will confirm receipt of their portfolio by email. This staff member then adds the portfolio as a link in a spreadsheet for the Careers Committee to review and notifies the Committee.

Careers Committee members review the new portfolio and give a "YES" or "NO" response to the submittal in the spreadsheet in their column. When a candidate has received a minimum of 3 "YES" votes, they will be scheduled for an interview.

We use what we call "Success Criteria" through the hiring process to evaluate candidates and help override implicit biases. They are a list of demographically neutral skill sets that are key to the work that we do (not all criteria apply to all roles):

- Hard skills: graphic clarity, written and verbal communication, software knowledge, technical knowledge, and project management.
- Interpersonal soft skills: presentation skills, collaboration, mentorship, engagement with community, and constructive attitude.

- Approach-based soft skills: creativity, innovation, curiosity, initiative and ownership, problem solving, response to and growth from feedback, and organization and time management.

First Interview

For the first interview, a candidate will receive a scheduling email to set up a date and time in the coming weeks. Candidates may opt for a remote or in-person interview. Interviews may last up to an hour.

The first interview is conducted by two to three Careers Committee members, grouped to provide gender, age, and/or role diversity as much as is possible. After introductions, a candidate will be invited to talk about their portfolio and work experience while navigating through their application materials on a screen. While the candidate shares their work, Careers Committee members will ask follow-up behavior questions to help candidates provide evidence to validate their skills. Behavioral questions are those which ask how a candidate operated in a past example, i.e. how they behave in the world. Questions connect to the Success Criteria. For example, to address “problem solving” as a skill: “Describe a time when you had to interact with a difficult client – what was the situation, and how did you handle it?” The interviewers will also ask about the candidate’s comfort with specific skills, software, and responsibilities related to the role. They will encourage the candidate to ask any questions they have about Holst before ending the interview.

After the first interview, the interviewers will review the interview together. They will fill out a matrix documenting how the candidate addressed each of the Success Criteria throughout their engagement and will respond to the question, “Where could there be bias in this process or decision?” They will then share their filled matrix with all members of the Careers Committee and make a recommendation to schedule or not schedule a second interview.

Second Interview

The candidate will receive an email inviting them to a second interview or thanking them for their time while declining further evaluation.

In the second interview, the candidate will meet with at least two people, at least one of whom will be a Holst Owner, Director, or Principal. This conversation will require the candidate to revisit some of the discussion from their first interview to ensure that all interviewers have the same information. This conversation will be casual and also provides space for candidates to ask questions directly of leadership.

After this interview, leadership will make a decision on hiring, and the candidate will be emailed with a thank you or a job offer. The offer will detail employee benefits, proposed salary, and start date.