



**Op7.10 Recruiting Our Workforce  
Guidelines for Hiring Faculty, Academic  
Administrators and Executive, Administrative  
and Professional Staff**

# Op 7.10 Recruiting Our Workforce: Guidelines for Hiring Faculty, Academic Administrators and Executive, Administrative and Professional Staff

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Definitions	3
1.2 The Requirement to Conduct a Search	4
1.3 Appointments that Do Not Require a Full Search	4
1.4 Training Requirements	5
1.5 Missouri State University Nondiscrimination Policy G1.01-13	5
1.6 Confidentiality	6
1.7 Accountability	6

### 2.0 INITIATING THE SEARCH PROCESS

2.1 Composition of the Search Committee	7
2.2 Responsibilities of the Search Committee Chair	7
2.3 Responsibilities of Search Committee Members	7

### 3.0 DEVELOPING A RECRUITMENT AND OUTREACH PLAN

3.1 Requirements	8
3.2 Defining the Position	8
3.3 Reviewing the Job Description and Preparing the Position Announcement	9

### 4.0 ADVERTISING

4.1 Additional Recruitment and Outreach Recommendations for Search Committees	10
4.2 Networking	10
4.3 Personal Contacts	10

### 5.0 SCREENING APPLICANTS

5.1 Internal Applicants	11
5.2 Nominated Applicants	11
5.3 Screening Resumes/Curricula Vitae	12
5.4 Creating the Evaluation Form	12
5.5 Pre-Employment Inquiries	13
5.6 Use of the Internet and Social Media in the Screening and Selection of University Employees	13

### 6.0 REFERENCES

6.1 General Guidelines Regarding Reference Calls	15
--	----

6.2 Off-the-List Reference Calls	15
6.3 Checklist for Letters of Reference (if required by the Hiring Unit)	15
<b>7.0 INTERVIEWS</b>	
7.1 Interview Approval Process	16
7.2 Interviewing Candidates	16
7.3 Telephone and Video Conference Interviews	17
7.4 On-Campus Interviews	17
7.5 Interviewing Individuals with Disabilities	17
<b>8.0 HIRING</b>	
8.1 The Hiring Decision	19
8.2 Negotiating the Offer	19
8.3 Criminal Background Checks	20
8.4 Completing the Appointment	20
8.5 Notification of Search Closure to Non-Selected Applicants and Candidates	20
8.6 Documenting the Search	21
<b>9.0 EXCEPTIONS TO STANDARD SEARCH PROCESSES</b>	
9.1 Appointment to an Interim or Acting position	22
9.2 Extending Temporary/Time-Limited Appointments	22
<b>10.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
10.1 Hiring Foreign Nationals	23
10.2 Granting Tenure as a Condition of Hire	23
10.3 Nepotism	23
10.4 Decision Authority	23

## Op7.10 Recruiting Our Workforce: Guidelines for Hiring Faculty, Academic Administrators and Executive, Administrative and Professional Staff

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

These search guidelines have been developed by the University to help search committees and hiring units conduct searches that both maximize their ability to establish a robust and well qualified applicant pool, while complying with University guidelines and state and federal regulations.

#### 1.1 Definitions

In describing the search process, the following terms are utilized in the search guidelines:

**Academic Unit Approver** – The Academic Unit Approver is usually the academic unit head or director requesting to fill a vacant or new position in their department/division/etc. S/he also assures that the search process is conducted in accordance with University guidelines and procedures.

**Dean/Division Approver** – For faculty searches, the Academic Unit Approver forwards search materials to the Dean for review and approval. Upon approval by the Dean, the search materials are then forwarded to the Executive Approver.

**Executive Approver** – The Executive Approver is the President, Provost, Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, or Chancellor. S/he also assures that the search process is conducted in accordance with University guidelines and procedures

**Search Committee** – This is the candidate selection vehicle and includes the Search Committee Chair. A search committee can either be a group of people or an individual. The members of the committee actively engage in recruitment, applicant screening and interviewing, and may make interview and/or hiring recommendations to the Academic Unit Approver.

**Search Committee Chair** – The Search Committee Chair is the liaison between the Academic Unit Approver and hiring unit and the search committee. The Chair ensures that the search process follows University guidelines, maintains the official record of all committee activities and serves as its official spokesperson. With respect to searches for faculty or academic department heads, the Search Committee Chair, when possible, shall not be an untenured faculty member.

**Employment Inquiry** – Letters received by any office at Missouri State University from an individual expressing interest in positions that may be available. Employment inquiries are not considered to be applications for specific vacancies.

**Applicant** – An individual who has submitted a formal application for a vacant position.

**Nominee** – An individual who is nominated by someone other than him/herself for a specific vacancy. If a person who is nominated refuses the nomination, he/she shall be called an “uninterested nominee” and shall be recorded as such.

**Candidate** – An individual who is deemed to meet the requirements for a specific vacancy, either by applying or by accepting a nomination.

**Finalist** – Each candidate who in the final stages is seriously considered for an appointment or whose name is submitted for final consideration.

## 1.2 The Requirement to Conduct a Search

All benefit-eligible vacancies are subject to the full search requirements with exceptions noted below. No distinction is made on the basis of the funding source. Benefit-eligible positions that are grant-funded must be filled according to these guidelines. The existence of external grant funding is not a justification for deviating from these guidelines; however, if special considerations are indicated by the terms of the grant, the position may qualify for an exception to the standard search process.

The University encourages as broad-based a search as possible. The type of search required will be dependent on the position and determined prior to the start of the search.

## 1.3 Appointments that Do Not Require a Full Search

The following positions do not require a full search:

- Temporary appointments.
- Formal reclassification of existing position.
- Administrative positions filled on a rotating basis.
- Collateral duty appointments where employee retains existing position (i.e., assistant academic unit head, program coordinator, etc.)
- Visiting and adjunct faculty appointments for a maximum of one year (up to three years if funded by a grant), made with the understanding that positions are subject to full searches should the terms be extended beyond the mandatory limit.
- Student appointments (Interns, Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants, Students Workers, etc.)
- Athletic coaches with prior Presidential approval

**Please note:** While these positions do not require a full search, hiring units are still required to follow applicable law and policy in the recruitment and selection of these employees. Hiring units must provide notice (either internally or externally, depending on the specific nature of the position to be filled) of the vacancy. This also helps to demonstrate transparency in the recruitment and selection processes. Finally, the hiring unit must ensure that documentation of the process utilized to fill these positions is retained.

#### **1.4 Training Requirements**

All Search Committee Chairs and Academic Unit Approvers are required to complete the search training conducted by the Office for Institutional Compliance within twelve (12) months prior to the commencement of a search. While it is not mandatory that all members of a search committee attend the training, it is advisable to ensure that all members are aware of the search processes and the necessary requirements that must be followed for a legal and effective search.

#### **1.5 Missouri State University Nondiscrimination Policy G1.01-13**

Missouri State University is a community of people with respect for diversity. The University emphasizes the dignity and equality common to all persons and adheres to a strict non-discrimination policy regarding the treatment of individual faculty, staff, and students. In accord with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin (including ancestry, or any other subcategory of national origin recognized by applicable law), religion, sex (including marital status, family status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other subcategory of sex recognized by applicable law), age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, or any other basis protected by applicable law in employment or in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the University. Sex discrimination encompasses sexual harassment, which includes sexual violence, and is strictly prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

This policy shall not be interpreted in a manner as to violate the legal rights of religious organizations or of military organizations associated with the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

The University maintains a grievance procedure incorporating due process available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. Missouri State University is an Equal Opportunity employer. Inquiries concerning the complaint/grievance procedure related to discrimination on the basis of a protected class, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, or compliance with federal and state laws and guidelines, should be addressed to the Director, [Office for Institutional Compliance](#), Carrington Hall 205, 901 S. National Ave., Springfield, Missouri 65897, [Compliance@MissouriState.edu](mailto:Compliance@MissouriState.edu), [417-836-4252](tel:417-836-4252).

## **1.6 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is vital in recruitment and retaining strong candidates and preserving the integrity of the search. People who are successful in their current positions and not seeking to change jobs are unlikely to let themselves be recruited without the protection of confidentiality until they become finalists.

All persons involved in a search (i.e., search committee members, hiring unit administrative staff, Academic Unit Approver, Executive Approver, etc.) are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the search process. Information obtained regarding an applicant must remain confidential throughout the process and thereafter. Under no circumstances should any person give information to any applicant about other applicants.

No search committee member or member of the hiring unit may contact an applicant individually, or discuss the qualifications of an applicant outside of the search committee, or call references without the approval of the Search Committee Chair. Furthermore, the status of an application should not be discussed, even with the applicant, without approval from the Search Committee Chair.

Search committee members may not serve as references for applicants in the pool for which they have assumed search committee responsibilities.

For faculty searches, after screening by the search committee has begun, all ranked faculty members in the hiring unit may review and evaluate applicant files and provide input to the search committee; however, non-search committee members must not engage in further screening activities. Faculty members who review applicant files assume the same responsibility as search committee members of maintaining confidentiality of information contained within the files.

For academic administrator searches, only the search committee and the administrators in the supervisory chain will review applicant files. The search committee shall make letters of application and vitas of candidates selected for on-campus interviews available to faculty members in the hiring department, and may also make them available to other members of the campus community as appropriate.

## **1.7 Accountability**

Hiring units are accountable for making good hiring decisions and in recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty and staff who meet – or exceed – the minimum qualifications for the position.

Communication is important in keeping all administrative levels accountable. Search Committee Chairs should keep Academic Unit Approvers informed during the search

process. Academic Unit Approvers should keep the Dean/Division Approver informed as to the progress of the search so that they may, in turn, keep the Executive Approver informed.

It is appropriate for the Provost and/or Dean/Division Approver to meet with the search committee during the search process to give the search committee its charge. The Provost and/or Dean/Division Approver should not, however, otherwise participate in or attend meetings of the search committee, as the presence of the Provost and/or Dean/Division Approver during search committee meetings may unduly influence or hinder the search committee's objectivity and independence in discharging its search obligations.

Approvals occur at various stages of the search process. A summary of the search process is available online.

## **2.0 INITIATING THE SEARCH PROCESS**

### **2.1 Composition of the Search Committee**

The composition of the search committee and its charge are factors likely to have consequences for the outcome of the search. It is important that issues of composition and charge be addressed deliberately and early.

- Search committees should include members with a variety of perspectives. With respect to searches for faculty or academic unit heads, if possible, a majority of search committee members shall be comprised of faculty members from the academic department in which the new hire will serve.
- Each member should have adequate time to devote to search committee duties.
- Membership may include faculty, staff, and students, as well as alumni or other outside constituents.

### **2.2 Responsibilities of the Search Committee Chair**

- Ensure that the search committee charge is understood and implemented.
- Ensure that search guidelines are followed.
- Ensure compliance with equal opportunity requirements.
- Serve as a liaison between the committee and the hiring department.
- Facilitate all committee meetings.
- Coordinate administrative support.
- Ensure that appropriate search records/documentation and meeting minutes are maintained.
- Perform all regular duties of a search committee member.
- Perform other duties as requested by the Academic Unit Approver.

### **2.3 Responsibilities of Search Committee Members**



- Adhere to the search guidelines and ensure compliance with University policy and applicable law.
- Evaluate applicants fairly based on the qualifications advertised in the position announcement.
- Create an open and welcoming environment and establish positive rapport with candidates during the interview.
- Attend all scheduled committee meetings and actively participate in the search process.
- Maintain confidentiality about search committee proceedings.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Search Committee Chair.

### **3.0 DEVELOPING A RECRUITMENT AND OUTREACH PLAN**

Developing the recruitment and outreach plan is one of the most vital aspects of the search process. Including a broad spectrum of strategies in the plan will yield a more robust pool of qualified applicants. Advertising the position is much more than simply sending out a position announcement. Search committees and hiring units should research a wide range of possible recruitment strategies and then develop an advertising plan and a carefully worded position announcement.

#### **3.1 Requirements**

Search committees and hiring units are required to develop a recruitment plan for each search. The recruitment plan is a vital function for the search committee. Each recruitment plan must also include a process for articulating qualification requirements that capture necessary intellectual and scholarship standards, while not imposing unnecessarily restrictive requirements and preserving the flexibility to consider less traditional backgrounds without compromising quality.

#### **3.2 Defining the Position**

Prior to beginning the search, the Academic Unit Approver, search committee, and/or a larger group in the academic unit, should engage in a relatively extensive review of the position requirements and job description. The position should be defined in the widest possible terms consistent with the needs of the hiring unit, division, and University. Aim for consensus on specific specialties or requirements, while planning to cast the hiring net as broadly as possible. Make sure that the position description does not needlessly limit the pool of applicants.

Search committees need to establish selection criteria and procedures for screening, interviewing candidates and keeping records before advertising the position. It is also important that the hiring criteria are directly related to the requirements of the position, clearly understood, and accepted by members of the search committee.

### 3.3 Reviewing the Job Description and Preparing the Position Announcement

The hiring unit and search committee are required to adhere to the announced position description. Care must be taken to make the announcement flexible enough to cover contingencies that may arise and broad enough to describe all viable potential applicants. The announcement must include language from Op.7.05 regarding the required criminal background check. Once a position is advertised, the applications must be screened according to the published qualifications.

**The job posting must include the following information:**

**Position title/area of specialization** - This is the title of the position. For administrative positions, this must be the same title that is listed on the job description.

**Qualifications and selection criteria** – Advertised qualifications must be consistent with the qualifications outlined in the job description or position announcement. Minimum qualifications must be clearly stated. To obtain the largest possible pool of applicants, identify only the minimum required qualifications. Desired qualifications that are not actual requirements should be specified as “preferred” qualifications.

**Compensation** - A salary range may be published if there is a compelling reason to do so (for example, if publishing the salary range may attract applicants in a difficult-to-fill position).

**Application procedure and required materials** - The Position Announcement should clearly indicate how to apply for the position. All applicants for academic administrative, faculty, executive, administrative and professional positions are **required** to complete a *Missouri State University Application for Employment*, submit a curriculum vitae/resume, and provide the names and contact information for 3-5 professional references.

**Application deadline** – Searches may have either a specific closing date or a date of first consideration. Flexibility is built into the process by the use of phrases such as: “Review of applications will begin [date] and continue until finalists are identified.” This allows the committee to begin reviewing when there are a suitable number of candidates, but also allows latecomers to apply. In most cases, the stated date of first consideration of applicants will be at least 30 calendar days from the date the position is first advertised.

**EEO statement** – An EO statement is mandatory on all announcements and publications. See the [Equal Opportunity Publication Policy](#) for information about the required wording.

## 4.0 ADVERTISING

A robust applicant pool is the most useful tool for recruiting highly qualified candidates who can further the University’s educational mission and goals. To achieve a robust

applicant pool, search committees and hiring units must be committed to the University's Inclusivity Principles. The search committee and hiring unit should not wait for applicants to come to them. Instead, the search committee should seek out the best journals, newspapers, associations and other networks in which to recruit. Keep seeking until the search is complete.

#### **4.1 Additional Recruitment and Outreach Recommendations for Search Committees**

**Encourage faculty and staff** who will be attending professional conferences or who will be delivering papers at other universities to **combine their visits with recruitment efforts** for present and future positions. They should be encouraged to solicit curricula vitae from promising applicants.

**Make contact with professionals and scholars** who have received professional recognition or whose work or contributions you admire and encourage them to apply, as well as to ask for the names of other promising candidates who the University could contact about the position.

**Keep national higher education associations informed** of present and possible future positions.

**Maintain ongoing contact** with professional organizations, associations, and agencies that have job referral services.

**Maintain close contact with graduates** of Missouri State University.

**Invite scholars** from other institutions to participate in department-sponsored symposia and visiting professorships. A one-year visiting professorship to replace a faculty member who is on leave will not only help a department in meeting its instructional responsibilities but will also strengthen the link between the department at Missouri State University and a similar department at another institution.

#### **4.2 Networking**

Making direct contact with professional departments in the field, professional organizations, and colleagues is an extremely effective method of expanding the search. In fact, the informal, word-of-mouth approach to recruitment is one of the most successful practices for identifying qualified candidates.

#### **4.3 Personal Contacts**

It is highly recommended that the hiring unit and search committee make direct contact with professional colleagues in the field notifying them of the department's open position and requesting names of potential qualified candidates. Many outstanding candidates are

not necessarily looking for new positions and do not apply for advertised positions. An Academic Unit Approver or search committee member has to personally ask them to apply. This indicates that the University recognizes and values that person's professional contributions.

Some successful personal contact strategies include:

- A personal phone call or e-mail from a colleague or committee member;
- A personalized letter from the director, department head, or search committee chair, or;
- A colleague meeting the candidate(s) at a professional meeting.

## **5.0 SCREENING APPLICANTS**

The screening process begins after the published deadline/date of first consideration with an analysis of application materials submitted by applicants in response to the announcement of an open position. The search committee is responsible for selecting the candidates for interview who meet all minimum requirements and are most qualified to fill the vacancy based on the stated requisite and desirable qualifications.

Hiring units and search committees must uniformly apply the evaluation process to all applicants. For criteria that are deemed to be essential components of the job, it is difficult, if not impossible, to explain why a certain criterion is necessary for successful job performance if there is a lack of consistency regarding that component within the hiring process. For example, if a search is challenged by a particular applicant, how can the hiring unit and search committee prove that the applicant was not qualified for the position if his/her experience was not evaluated in the same manner as other applicants?

### **5.1 Internal Applicants**

In external searches in which there is an internal applicant(s) (whether internal to the hiring unit or to the University), applicant files must not be made accessible to that person(s). The internal applicant(s) will not attend any activity, presentation, or interview for any other applicant. In no instance should the internal candidate vote or decide who is to be interviewed or offered the position. If tenure deliberations are an element of the hiring decision, an internal candidate(s) waives his or her right to participate in those deliberations regarding other candidates.

### **5.2 Nominated Applicants**

No individual is an applicant until he or she has contacted the University by letter, or electronically, and submitted all of the required documents. Only bona-fide applicants

who submitted a letter of interest, resume/curriculum vitae, employment application, and provided references, may be evaluated by the search committee.

### **5.3 Screening Resumes/Curricula Vitae**

Prior to reviewing resumes or curricula vitae, search committees shall determine the criteria they will use to screen applicants based on the qualifications specified in the position announcement.

The following tips help ensure a fair screening process:

- Assign several committee members to screen application materials.
- Create a well-documented screening process in which each applicant's qualifications are compared with the qualifications specified in the position announcement.
- A screening matrix which charts each applicant's qualifications vis-à-vis the requisite and desired qualifications allows the search committee to compare each applicant's qualifications at a glance.
- Telephone interviews may be used as a screening tool to determine or clarify whether applicants meet the requisite and desirable qualifications.

### **5.4 Creating the Evaluation Form**

Although evaluation procedures vary, the search committee shall develop an evaluation form based on job-related criteria. Job relevance should be broadly defined. In the evaluation of applicants, the search committee shall utilize only information that is relevant to performance in all aspects of the position. Sample evaluation forms are available online.

Written comments reflecting the judgment of the search committee should be made for each applicant; however, it is not necessary that each committee member individually rate each applicant. Most committees work best in a consensus environment in which committee members review and make initial rankings. These initial rankings are then discussed in committee meeting and consensus decisions are documented in the search summary report.

- The form should have both qualitative and quantitative information.
- For quantitative information consider ranges (i.e. low, average, high; 1–10; etc.)
- Include a measurement for every requirement, including preferred qualifications.
- Utilize objective measurements whenever possible.
- If using subjective measurements, provide a mechanism for explaining what is meant (i.e. communication skills – cover letter easy to follow and no grammatical errors; cover letter poorly written and spelling errors, etc.).
- Include a place for additional comments.

- All evaluation forms must identify the name of the evaluator and become part of the official search record.

**Note:** No individual who reviews applicant materials should make any notes/notations directly on the application materials of any applicant.

## 5.5 Pre-Employment Inquiries

Questions asked during an interview should be designed to obtain information that will help determine whether the applicant is qualified for the position. While it is an employer's right to establish job-related requirements and to seek the most qualified applicant for a job, inquiries about race, sex, disability, religion, etc. usually are not relevant to an applicant's qualifications and are not legitimate. Only those inquiries necessary to determine an applicant's qualifications and eligibility for employment, that is, job-related inquiries, should be made during job interviews.

Any pre-employment inquiries which express any limitation, specification or preference due to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, ancestry, disability or age violate both Missouri State University policy, the Missouri Human Rights Act, and federal law unless they are based upon a bona fide occupational qualification.

Information obtained through application forms and interviews is presumed to be used by employers in making hiring and work assignment decisions. For this reason, only those inquiries necessary to determine the applicant's qualifications and eligibility for employment shall be made.

## 5.6 Use of the Internet and Social Media in the Screening and Selection of University Employees

Conducting Internet research on applicants for employment by entering their names in search engines such as Google or Bing can result in the discovery of information about applicants not otherwise available to a search committee; however, much of what would be found would be unverifiable, anonymous, or untrue. That is particularly true of information that would be found on blogs, social networks, and websites such as Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Second Life, and YouTube. Moreover, some of the information would be protected under the University's nondiscrimination policy, such as race, age, disability, and religious preference. Finally, some of the information would not accurately predict how well an applicant would perform in the job.

As a result, the University has adopted the following internet search rules for search committees and hiring administrators:

1. No Internet search of any applicant shall be performed until after applicants have been selected for telephone interviews.

2. No reference to anything found through an Internet search shall be made in a search committee meeting unless it is verifiable and job-related.
3. Protected information shall never be referenced in any search committee meeting or considered by a hiring administrator.
4. An applicant shall be allowed to respond to any information found on an Internet search that will be considered by the search committee or hiring administrator.
5. If Internet searches are to be done of any finalist for a position, they shall be performed on all finalists. Internet search results shall be retained in the search committee file.
6. Search committees or hiring administrators shall never use fake identities to gain access to information on social networks.

This policy does not prohibit verifying an applicant's current employment by accessing an official website of the applicant's employer, or verifying an applicant's listed publications by directly checking websites which list publications.

Failure to follow these search rules may result in closure of a search, removal of a search committee member who failed to follow the search rules, or other action necessary to correct the situation.

## 6.0 REFERENCES

Reference checks can be conducted pre- or post-interview at the discretion of the hiring unit. Reference calls are required prior to extending an offer of employment. Academic Unit Approvers and/or Executive Approvers may determine when in the search process such calls must be completed and, in the event a reference cannot be reached, if adequate background information is known about a candidate to extend an offer. This flexibility is provided so that the search process is not delayed in the event a reference cannot be contacted. In most cases reference calls are made after the individual has been scheduled for an interview and before the negotiation of an offer, but the exact timing may vary.

The search committee is not obligated to contact every reference the candidate submits. Hiring units shall not ask for more references than they are willing to contact.

The University Application for Employment grants permission to conduct reference calls as part of the screening process; however, as a courtesy, the Academic Unit Approver and/or search committee shall contact the candidate prior to making reference calls. This is also an excellent strategy to let the candidate know they are still being seriously considered for the position. Candidates shall be asked if there is anyone they do not wish to be contacted at the present time. The Academic Unit Approver and search committee shall not contact any party who was identified unless that candidate becomes a finalist under consideration for hire. In that case, another call shall be made to the candidate, informing them that they are a finalist and previously excluded references will now be contacted. If the candidate

continues to refuse permission to contact certain references, the Academic Unit Approver and search committee shall respect the candidate's request, but may wish to reconsider the candidate's status as a finalist or recommendation for hire.

### **6.1 General Guidelines Regarding Reference Calls**

Information from references shall be solicited in good faith, in an unbiased manner, given appropriate (not sole) weight, and not used as a pretext for discrimination. Questions shall focus on the candidate's job-related experience, qualifications, and accomplishments. Search committees shall ask the same basic questions about each candidate so that all candidates can be evaluated fairly. Written notes shall be taken by the individual interviewing the reference and shall be retained in the search files. No "off the record" information may be solicited.

### **6.2 Off-the-List Reference Calls**

It is presumed that a candidate will list references who would recommend them for the job; therefore, it is recommended that the Academic Unit Approver and/or the search committee contact at least one "off-the-list" professional reference to obtain job-related background information prior to extending an offer of employment.

For professional staff, academic administrative and faculty searches, a minimum of one (1) off-the-list reference call is required.

Frequently, the question arises as to how to identify an "off-the-list" reference. Some recommendations include:

- In most cases, "off the list" references will include current and past supervisors, dissertation advisor, etc.
- In speaking with the references provided by the candidate, ask if there is anyone else with whom to discuss the candidate's background and qualifications.
- A candidate may have been involved with a significant "off campus" project – perhaps they were working with industry as part of their research – the community contacts may be appropriate "off the list" references.
- A candidate may have been involved with a significant "on campus" project – perhaps they were chair of faculty senate or headed a Presidential Committee, for example – persons affiliated with these activities may be viable "off the list" contacts.

### **6.3 Checklist for Letters of Reference (if required by the Hiring Unit)**

- Does the reference state their relationship to the applicant?
- Is specific knowledge of the applicant's subject matter background mentioned?
- Is the quality of research and publications mentioned?



- Are applicant's duties in current position noted? Does the reference state how well the applicant performs his/her duties?
- Are interpersonal relationship abilities noted? Are administrative skills mentioned?
- Are specific instances of excellent performance documented?
- Does any part of the letter raise additional questions about the candidate's skills, abilities, knowledge, or judgment?
- Are there negative components that are echoed in other letters of reference?
- Are student-professor or superior-subordinate relations mentioned?

## **7.0 INTERVIEWS**

### **7.1 Interview Approval Process**

Once applications have been screened and a preliminary determination of candidates for interviews has been made, the search committee chair or administrative support person initiates the process requesting permission to conduct interviews. The Academic Unit Approver, Dean/Division Approver, and Executive Approver shall carefully review the applicant pool and the justifications provided in support of the candidate rankings and interview recommendations. In addition, the Academic Unit Approver, Dean/Division Approver, and Executive Approver shall evaluate the depth and breadth of the candidate pool, and any other job-related information to determine whether interviews shall be approved.

Interviews cannot be conducted (including telephone, in-person interviews at professional conferences, videoconference, or on-campus) until reviewed and approved by the Academic Unit Approver, Dean/Division Approver, Executive Approver, and the Office for Institutional Compliance.

### **7.2 Interviewing Candidates**

The Office for Institutional Compliance will review the potential candidate pool and interview recommendations for every executive, administrative, faculty, and professional staff search. The review will be conducted once in advance of any type of interview. Search committees and hiring units must initiate a request to conduct interviews in advance of scheduling any type of interview (telephone/videoconference and/or on-campus interviews).

The interview process serves two primary purposes: (1) to allow the search committee to assess candidates' qualifications for the position; and (2) to allow candidates to assess their interest in employment at Missouri State University. Candidates' impressions of the University will be influenced by the consideration, competence, and sincerity of each search committee member.

Search committee members should be present for all interviews and interviews should be conducted in a consistent manner for each candidate.

### **7.3 Telephone and Video Conference Interviews**

The purpose of a telephone or video conference interview is to determine the candidate's interest in the position, to clarify, verify and/or confirm the candidate's experience, and/or to determine whether the individual should be brought to campus for a face-to-face interview. Telephone or video conference interviews are an extremely helpful evaluation tool during the selection process and serve as an efficient and cost-effective way to screen candidates in advance of scheduling on-campus interviews. It is strongly recommended that search committees conduct telephone or video conference interviews prior to inviting any candidates for on-campus interviews.

Consistent with Sections 5.3 and 5.4, the search committee shall develop an interview screening tool to use for each candidate. All questions asked and issues raised must be job-related and similar for all candidates. Notes shall be taken during the telephone or video-conference interview so that a written record of the conversation can be retained in the search file.

### **7.4 On-Campus Interviews**

The hiring unit sets the agenda for the on-campus interview. [Note: In faculty searches, departments should schedule on-campus interviews with the Deputy Provost or Provost Designee for tenure-track faculty candidates. On-campus interviews should be scheduled with the Provost for Academic Unit Head, Director, Associate Dean and Dean candidates.] The agenda should be designed in such a way to provide the candidate with information about the department, the University and the community. Each candidate should be interviewed by the same search committee members. The Office of Human Resources is available to meet with applicants regarding the Missouri State University benefits package. Consider scheduling a University tour, a community tour, and any other activity that will leave the candidate with a favorable impression of the University and community.

As part of the interview process, candidates should meet with members of the department, the Academic Unit Approver, the Dean/Division Approver, the Executive Approver, and other appropriate administrators and staff members. Candidates for a Academic Unit Head position will meet with faculty members and staff of the academic department. To obtain the maximum benefit from these interviews, the hiring unit should circulate a copy of each candidates resume, a copy of the job description and a copy of the interview schedule.

### **7.5 Interviewing Individuals with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires the University to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are employees or applicants for employment, except when such accommodation would cause an undue hardship. The ADA also establishes rules about “disability-related inquiries,” which consist of a question or series of questions that is likely to solicit information about a disability. The ADA prohibits all disability-related inquiries before an offer of employment, even if they are related to the job.

Key points to remember when interviewing a candidate with a disability:

- Ensure that the interview location is accessible to all people with disabilities.
- Do not assume that an applicant needs assistance.
- Do not ask questions regarding:
  - The nature of a disability
  - The severity of a disability
  - The condition causing a disability
  - Any prognosis or expectation regarding a disability
  - Whether or not the person will need treatment or special leave because of a disability
- You may ask an applicant:
  - To describe or demonstrate an essential position function(s) and whether they can perform the functions with or without accommodation.
  - If they are aware of any reason that she or he cannot perform the essential functions of the position.

More information about the University’s [disability accommodation policy and procedures](#) is available online.

## 8.0 HIRING

The search committee is charged with providing a list of the finalists’ strengths and weaknesses to the Academic Unit Approver, in the format deemed appropriate by the search committee. Evaluations from open forums and other search activities should also be provided to the Academic Unit Approver. In addition, if any questions remain about a finalist, these should be documented for the Academic Unit Approver.

**Key considerations in making the hiring recommendation:**

- Each search committee member should give his/her honest input on each candidate interviewed.
- Think broadly rather than narrowly about the types of experiences and/or skills each candidate might bring to Missouri State University.
- Avoid attempting to “clone” those already in the hiring unit.

- Acknowledge that candidates with different paths and experiences can make positive contributions that have previously been untapped by the hiring unit, division, or University.
- Avoid falling victim to the “halo effect” that can occur when one positive aspect of a candidate’s talents or skills is inappropriately transferred to other aspects of her/his qualifications.
- Provide information regarding the finalists’ strengths and weaknesses to the Academic Unit Approver and Executive Approver based on advertised position requirements and substantive qualifications.

### 8.1 The Hiring Decision

The search committee is not responsible for deciding which candidate is to be hired for a particular position. Rather, the Academic Unit Approver, in consultation with the Dean/Division Approver or Executive Approver, will select the finalist to be offered the position based on the ability of the finalist to perform the job requirements as evidenced by the candidate’s credentials, interviews, references, and job-related criteria. When the Academic Unit Approver is ready to recommend a candidate for hire, the Academic Unit Approver or administrative support person submits a request to extend an offer of employment.

This is the final documentation of the search process, indicating the recommended finalist and comparing all interviewed candidates. This documentation allows the hiring unit to briefly explain how the recommended candidate met the qualifications for the position and provide written documentation for review and auditing purposes. The Academic Unit Approver must ensure that the hiring recommendation covers all *finalists* relative to basic and desirable qualifications, and any other criteria that distinguish the recommended candidate from other applicants, such as years of experience, references, publications, record or honors received. All explanations for the hiring decision must be factual and specific. If the proposed salary exceeds the proposed salary range, salary approval must be obtained from Human Resources prior to making the offer to the candidate. For faculty positions, proposed salaries must be approved by the Dean and Provost.

Before a position is offered to a candidate, a request to extend an offer must be completed and approved by the Academic Unit Approver, Dean (for faculty searches), the Executive Approver and the Office for Institutional Compliance. At any step in the approval line, the search committee chair and/or the hiring unit may be contacted for further information on how the search committee came to their decisions. This could include requesting further information on why certain candidates were not selected.

### 8.2 Negotiating the Offer

The way an offer is negotiated can have a huge impact not only on the immediate hiring outcome, but also on a new hire’s future career. Candidates who feel that the Academic Unit Approver conducts negotiations honestly and openly, and aim to create

circumstances in which they will thrive, are typically more satisfied in their positions and more likely to stay at Missouri State University than those who feel that a Academic Unit Approver has deliberately withheld information, resources, or opportunities from them. With respect to the decision on granting rank and tenure to academic administrators, it will be based on departmental guidelines (see Section 10.2). Initial equity in both the negotiated conditions and in the hiring unit's follow-through on the commitments it makes are important factors in retention as well as recruitment.

### **8.3 Criminal Background Checks**

It is the policy of Missouri State University that all new hires ("Applicant") will be subject to a criminal background check as a condition of appointment (student hourly positions, per course faculty, part time and temporary employees are exempt except for "sensitive positions" and some departmental per course faculty). Criminal background checks (including the sexual offender registry) shall be completed on finalists before an offer of employment is made. Results of the background checks shall be provided to the Office of Human Resources (HR) and the responsible Vice-President, Chief Financial Officer, Chancellor or Provost.

### **8.4 Completing the Appointment**

With approval from the Executive Approver, an appointment letter is prepared and issued to the finalist. (Note: The Office of the Provost issues all appointment letters for faculty and academic administrator positions.) The hiring unit also must initiate the University process to appoint the finalist. Once the University has received the acceptance of an appointment from a finalist, the original applicant file of the finalist must be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources. When approved by the Board of Governors, the appointment becomes binding subject to the University's bylaws and policies. No employment is official until approved by the Missouri State University Board of Governors.

### **8.5 Notification of Search Closure to Non-Selected Applicants and Candidates**

Each applicant and candidate, especially those interviewed, have invested time and other resources into the search process. It is important that the hiring unit and search committee treat each of them with courtesy and sensitivity. Upon request of an applicant, it may also be necessary to provide pertinent information to the applicant regarding the reason he/she was not selected for the position. Applicants who were not interviewed should be notified by the search committee chair and the Academic Unit Approver of their non-selection as soon as a firm decision of their non-selection has been made, rather than waiting until the entire search has been completed. As soon as possible after an offer is accepted, interviewees not chosen should be notified by letter or e-mail. An Academic Unit Approver may also wish to contact the finalists not selected for the position via telephone. It is important to notify unsuccessful candidates before public announcements of appointments. Official timely notification to internal candidates is especially important. It

is the responsibility of the hiring department to communicate in a timely manner with all interviewed candidates who were not selected for the position.

### **8.6 Documenting the Search**

All searches must be documented to ensure compliance with Missouri State University policy and the U.S. Department of Labor records retention requirements. Careful completion and retention of these files by the hiring unit provides protection in two ways: (1) the files provide documentation of "good faith" recruiting procedures; (2) should it be necessary, the files also provide an official record for use in investigating complaints of discrimination in the selection process.

The hiring unit is required to retain the resumes/curricular vitae and all search documents for all applicants for a period of two years following the closure of the search. Search committee members should turn over all notes and files they have to the search committee chair at the end of the search. The hiring unit is responsible for maintaining the search file. In some cases the search file may be stored by the college or administrative unit, particularly for high level searches.

The electronic applications, resumes/curricular vitas, and other documents uploaded by applicants are stored on the central server; therefore, hiring units need not keep paper copies of the resumes unless the Academic Unit Approver and/or Executive Approver require that they do so. Any materials sent by applicants directly to the hiring unit (e.g. writing samples, portfolios, etc.) should be maintained by the hiring unit in a secure location.

## **9.0 EXCEPTIONS TO STANDARD SEARCH PROCESSES**

In an effort to retain the best talent with varying backgrounds and skill sets, it is the University's policy that the pool of applicants for all positions being filled at the University be as broad as possible and that all current employees have the opportunity to be considered for open positions for which they are qualified. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the President, based on prior written request endorsed by the appropriate Executive Approver and reviewed by the Office for Institutional Compliance and Office of Human Resources.

Should an exception to standard search procedures be approved, the hiring unit will ordinarily use the same forms and processes for a regular hire with a full search. In all cases, the criteria for selection of a candidate must be job-related and nondiscriminatory.

Requests for exceptions or variances may be granted under the following circumstances:

**Internal Searches** - Under certain circumstances vacant positions may be filled through internal recruitment based on the business needs of the University.

**Business and/or Instructional Necessity** - An exception to the standard search procedures may be requested when conducting a full search would negatively impact the operational effectiveness of a department/unit or would violate a formal contractual obligation of the University.

**Qualified Applicant Pool** - An exception to the standard search procedures may be requested if a hiring unit has recently conducted a full search that yielded a qualified applicant pool.

**Special Circumstances** - There may be other special circumstances that justify abridging the standard hiring procedures when a full search is not in the best interests of the University. The President may identify potential employees that, if the regular search process was used, may cause the University to lose unique talent.

**President's Discretion** - If a deviation is in the best interest of the University, the President may make an exception at his/her discretion.

### **9.1 Appointment to an Interim or Acting Position**

An appointment to an interim or acting position is considered to be a temporary appointment for which only full-time, regular employees can be considered. Consideration is based on job-related qualifications as determined in the applicable job description and position announcement. Generally, in order for the Academic Unit Approver to appoint an employee to an interim or acting position without posting the vacancy internally, the Academic Unit Approver must demonstrate the intent to fill the vacancy on a permanent basis by immediately beginning the formal search process. If the Academic Unit Approver does not intend to immediately begin the formal search process to fill the vacancy on a permanent basis, the vacancy for an interim or acting position must be posted internally and filled through University search processes. In cases of emergency or compelling business necessity when it may not be feasible to begin a search process immediately, the Academic Unit Approver must seek approval for an exception in advance by the appropriate Executive Approver, the Director of Human Resources, and the Equal Opportunity Officer.

### **9.2 Extending Temporary/Time-Limited Appointments**

Temporary and time-limited appointments cannot be extended beyond the stated ending date without a written request to and approval from the Office for Institutional Compliance. The request should state the reason(s) for the extension and the new ending date. A maximum of two extensions will be considered for approval.

## **10.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **10.1 Hiring Foreign Nationals**

Foreign nationals who apply for and are offered University employment are required to have or be eligible for the work visa appropriate for the position. Inquiries regarding the national origin of an applicant are illegal; however, it is legal and appropriate to verify that applicants are eligible to accept employment in the United States.

### **10.2 Granting Tenure as a Condition of Hire**

When an Academic Unit Approver seeks to hire an academic administrator with tenure and rank, the department or school to which the faculty member would be initially assigned must be asked to conduct a tenure vote based on departmental guidelines, and a statement of the departmental faculty vote must be submitted to the Office of the Provost.

### **10.3 Nepotism**

The University's policy regarding the employment of relatives is set forth in the nepotism provision of the Conflict of Interest Policy.

### **10.4 Decision Authority**

If there are instances in which the search process and/or selection decision does not receive concurrence by the Office for Institutional Compliance, the President may make a decision as to whether the search process can continue and/or whether an offer of employment can be extended. No employment offer is official until approved by the Missouri State Board of Governors.

## **Line of Authority**

**Responsible administrator and office:** General Counsel & Vice President for Legal Affairs & Compliance; Office of Legal Affairs & Compliance

**Contact person in that office:** Director, Office for Institutional Compliance

**Effective date:** April 17, 2025