

Rev.

Guidelines for Conducting Staff Searches
At
Kennesaw State University

Created by
Human Resources

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Introduction

This publication is a reference guide for the recruitment, selection, and hiring of an individual selected to fill an approved staff vacancy, with Kennesaw State University (KSU). Kennesaw State University utilizes an electronic, online, information technology-based recruitment/retention tracking system to administer searches.

For information regarding terms of employment or employment policies, please refer to the KSU Policy Portal.

Kennesaw State University encourages departments to work diligently to recruit and retain the most qualified staff. Our policies and procedures reflect federal and state laws, and University System of Georgia policies. Our policies and procedures reflect our commitment to employment processes that are fair and equitable and promote equal opportunity in hiring and employment. Kennesaw State University, a member of the University System of Georgia, is an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer.

KSU is intentionally and actively committed to embracing and valuing difference and creating a sense of belonging for the purpose of expanding knowledge; educating capable citizens and workers; encouraging self-actualization; and serving local, state, national, and international communities.

Confidentiality, Georgia Open Records, and Recordkeeping

The privacy of all applicants must be maintained and respected during the staff search process. Search materials, including the application materials submitted by applicants and the deliberations and conversations of the search committee (if applicable), should not be shared with individuals not directly involved in the search process or individuals outside of the managerial hierarchy for the position. Search materials external to the online system should be stored in a secure location, and only those directly involved in the search process should have access to the materials. An applicant's name and application materials should remain confidential until he/she accepts an invitation to participate in the final stages of the interview process.

According to the Georgia Open Records Act, search documents are open for inspection, and applicants should be made aware that their application materials are subjected to this Act. If a department receives an Open Records request relating to a search, the department should contact the KSU Division of Legal Affairs (asklegal@kennesaw.edu), which provides all official responses to Open Records requests on behalf of the University and university officials.

At the completion of the search, the search committee chair should gather the search materials external to the online system and follow the procedures for storing the materials. (NOTE: search materials external to the online system are to be stored in the department office in a secure location for four years after the position has been filled, or until final resolution of any complaint involving an applicant, whichever is longer. After that point, these records should be appropriately marked, and the Office of Records Management should be contacted to arrange for off-site storage for four additional years. Records retained for each search include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) application materials from all candidates, including letters of application or application forms, curriculum vitae or resumes, academic transcripts, samples of writing or publications, and reference letters, (2) job descriptions/position announcements, (3) position advertisements, (4) approval documentation to initiate the position search, (5) candidate lists, (6) search committee memoranda, (7) evaluation rubrics and scoring sheets for applicants,¹ (8) interview questions (including those for telephone and face-to-face interviews) and notes,¹ (9) telephone reference check questions and notes,¹ and (10) itineraries of finalists invited to campus.

Equal Opportunity Policy

Kennesaw State University is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer. The University is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work and study. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, Board of Regents policy, and University policy, the University prohibits harassment or discrimination against any person because of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment, pregnancy, and medical

¹ Note: A master sheet reflecting the consensus of the search committee as a whole (rather than each individual search committee member's notes) is retained.

conditions related to pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran or military status by any member of the KSU Community on campus, in connection with a University program or activity, or in a manner that creates a hostile environment for members of the KSU community.

For additional information or to file a complaint under the provisions of this policy, students, employees, applicants for employment or admission or other third parties should contact the Office of Institutional Equity at English Building, Suite 202, eeo@kennesaw.edu, or by making a report [here](#).

Guidelines for Filling a Staff Vacancy

1) The Position Description

- a. The Hiring Manager will work with Human Resources to establish a position description.
- b. Because the advertisement published in any external outlets serves as the official national advertisement when the recruitment process is used for permanent residency sponsorship, it is crucial to capture the accurate job title, classification, required experience, education, and skills in the advertisement.
- c. The position description should be consistent with the department's needs and aim for consensus on specific specialties or requirements.
- d. The hiring manager should make distinctions between what are minimally required criteria (i.e., a specific degree in the discipline) and what are ideal criteria in the position description (i.e., three or more years of successful performance of like duties in a same or similar role) so that the stated criteria help to refine the pool of applicants without needlessly limiting the pool of applicants.
- e. Position descriptions must not contain ideological tests, affirmations, and oaths.

2) Initiate the Search Process

- a. (Critical Steps) Verify: position information
 - i. Before creating a job posting request, the hiring manager must coordinate with the Business Manager and the HR Business Partner to ensure the job code, position number, position description, and all associated details regarding the position are correct for the position being advertised.
 - ii. To make changes to the position job code and/or description, an MSS transaction to update the position must be executed and fully approved prior to the job posting creation step. If a job descriptions needs edits, please consult with the HR Business Partner prior to posting.
- b. Hiring manager completes and submits the job posting request in Careers. Job aids for initiating posting are available on the HR website.
- c. Prior to being published in any form, the refill of the vacancy, available funding, the position description, and its announcement must have all proper approvals.

3) Determine the Appropriate Level of Participation in the Search Process

- a. **Note: Not all staff positions require a full search committee process. Please speak with your Talent Acquisition Specialist or HR Business Partner to determine the right process for your vacancy.**
- b. Should you elect to use a search committee, members of the committee should have relevant purpose for their input on the candidate pool and every effort should be made to keep the committee size manageable and the search process proceeding promptly. Search committee members must be granted access to a posting by a recruiter in order to view its associated applicants via the electronic applicant tracking system (ATS).

- c. Hiring Manager and/or Search Committee Chair reviews initial list of selected interviewees with their supervisor and search committee, if applicable, and is responsible for determining final disposition reasons and indicating them within the ATS for any candidates not offered employment..
- d. Hiring Manager and/or Search Committee Chair creates the multiple interview schedules for applicants and search committee members, if applicable; final candidate interviews include appropriate stakeholders.

4) Formation and Duties of a Search Committee (if applicable)

- a. A search committee can perform critical functions, including reviewing and screening applications, interviewing applicants, checking and documenting references, and recommending finalists for the position. Search committees must be sensitive to the fact that they represent the institution to an external audience.
- b. Conducting a search in a timely, professional, and legal manner reflects well upon a hiring department and upon the institution. Following the guidelines and recommendations in this document will lessen the possibility of future difficulties.
- c. The hiring manager will appoint a search committee or form a search committee in consultation with Human Resources, prior to advertising the approved and budgeted position vacancy.
- d. If a search committee is utilized for the position being recruited, the composition of the search committee will depend upon the size and specific needs of the hiring department but should be no less than three (and preferably an odd number of) members. The search committee’s composition should be representative of the hiring department or collaborative units (e.g. subject matter experts, internal customers).
- e. Identify the search committee chair and members, designating the expertise each member is bringing to the process if not easily recognizable.
- f. In order to have access to application materials in the online recruiting system, search committee members must be internal to KSU.
- g. The chair of a search committee may or may not be the hiring manager.
- h. A search committee member cannot serve on a search committee when they are also an applicant for the search. Potential search committee members who have an interest in becoming an applicant in the open search must decline an invitation to serve on the search committee. A search committee member cannot step down from the committee once the committee has been named and apply for the position.
- i. Members of a search committee should have familiarity with the vacant position and/or the expertise required to fill the opening in order to allow that member to contribute to the search process.
- j. Search committee members are encouraged to complete non-mandatory recruitment training provided by the Division of Diverse and Inclusive Excellence (ksudiverse@kennesaw.edu) or by reviewing the online KSU Inclusive Hiring Training found [here](#).
- k. To the greatest extent possible, all the search committee members should make themselves available for all portions of the screening and interview process. Therefore, the size of a search committee should be reasonable in relation to the opening.
- l. The search committee will make hiring recommendations to the hiring manager. The search committee does not make the final determination of who will be hired. Any offer of full-time employment extended to the potential staff member must be made by Human Resources. Hiring managers and/or search committee members are not authorized to extend job offers, negotiate salary amounts, or make employment commitments such as relocation packages or the promise of future promotional opportunities.

5) Charging the Search Committee (if applicable)

- a. Each search committee should be clearly “charged” by its hiring manager
- b. The charge should occur in person at the committee’s first meeting. The committee charge should include, at minimum, the following:
 - i. In general, all the search committee members should be present at all interviews, including phone, web, and/or in-person interviews. It is understood issues arise and the presence of all members during interviews might not be possible. If all members of a

search committee cannot be present, it is highly recommended that the search committee set a quorum that reflects the minimum number of members that must be present to conduct an interview, regardless of the type of interview. That quorum should be set before the interviews start and met for the duration of all interviews. Adherence to the quorum helps to ensure that all candidates are treated in the same manner and there is a fair and equitable process.

- ii. While advertising positions at professional conferences/meetings is encouraged, interviewing and short-listing of candidates cannot take place at professional conferences/meetings.
- iii. The availability of non-mandatory recruitment training provided by the Division of Diverse and Inclusive Excellence (ksudiverse@kennesaw.edu) or by reviewing the online KSU Inclusive Hiring Training found [here](#).
- iv. A review of the job description including the following: acceptable degree(s); any specific skills or experience or licenses/certifications the successful applicant should possess; and other areas deemed appropriate for the specific position and hiring unit.
- v. Once the position is posted with qualifications, expectations, etc., changes may not be made to these qualifications or requirements and recommendations about a candidate's suitability must be based on the information posted in the advertisement.
- vi. A reminder of the campus resources available to consult as questions arise throughout the search process, include the USG policy on Employee Recruitment which provides samples of inappropriate and appropriate questions: Appendices I (Appropriate Screening Questions) & II (Appropriate Competency Based Employment Questions) (https://www.usg.edu/hr/assets/hr/hrap_manual/HRAP_Employee_Recruitment.pdf)
- vii. The committee may include appropriate scenario-based questions during the interview process to collect information related to specific experiences supporting specific student populations when it is directly correlated and relevant to the duties associated with the role. Questions must be free of ideological tests, affirmations, or oaths.²
- viii. Information on how to solicit and utilize feedback on candidates and process for providing feedback about the finalists (for example, rank ordering or providing only strengths and weaknesses to the hiring manager).
- ix. A reminder about privacy expectations and confidentiality of applicant information throughout the search process.
- x. Information about methods for treating all candidates the same during the screening process in effort to provide an equitable candidate interview experience.
- xi. A reminder that Georgia is an Open Records state and the significance this law has for searches.
- xii. Information on the search committee's budget.
- xiii. A general timeframe for completing the search; and,
- xiv. A reminder that, in order to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, following the closing date and after initial review of the application documents of all qualified applicants, if a search committee member discovers that one or more applicants is a person or persons with whom the member has or has had a prior relationship (for example, a colleague at a prior institution, a colleague with whom one has published, a prior intimate/dating partner, a sister or brother, a spouse, and so on), s/he must make this information known to the committee, the hiring manager, who will then discuss whether it is appropriate for that search committee member to be replaced on the search committee.

6) Advertising the Position

² Ideological Tests are defined as tests or questions based on or relating to a system of ideas and ideals, especially concerning economic or political theory and policy. An affirmation is the action or process of affirming a strongly held belief as a requirement for employment. An oath is a solemn attestation of truth, adherence, or agreement to belief system or structures unrelated to the standards required for employment. See [USG Employee Recruitment Policy](#).

- a. Based on the specific opening, the hiring manager will determine what outlets apart from the KSU ATS website will be used to advertise the vacancy.
- b. All job searches will be automatically advertised with HigherEdJobs.com and other sites using an automated sweep and will appear as long as the job opening is active and accepting applications on the ATS portal. Hiring managers should speak with their Talent Acquisition specialist if they wish to post the position on specific sites, professional organizations, etc.
- c. All external searches must be advertised for a minimum of 5 business days. Searches internal to KSU must be posted for a minimum of 3 business days.
- d. Pool postings are allowed to be open for one year only in order to refresh the pool. After one year from the posting date on the KSU applicant portal, the pool posting will automatically be removed from the portal. The hiring manager must take action in the online system to dispense of all applicants in the pool by applying the appropriate disposition code identifying why each candidate was not selected.
- e. All other mechanisms for recruiting should be documented, including listserves, role specific associations, conferences, etc.

7) Conducting the Search (all future references within these guidelines refer to “the search committee” regardless of the level of search participation as determined in step three above)

- a. All applicants for positions must apply via the online search system (ATS).
- b. The hiring manager should review the size of the pool. The hiring manager will make a decision to move forward with the next phase of the search or to extend the application deadline in order to cast a wider net to attract more qualified applicants. The final decision on moving forward with a search or extending the application time rests with the hiring manager.
- c. The position description will be used to develop evaluation criteria for choosing a short list of candidates.
- d. Application materials must be reviewed via the online ATS system. Applications must not be viewed outside the online ATS system. Applicants who are sourced using an external vendor/applicant collection site or executive search firm must ultimately apply via the KSU ATS.
- e. The appropriate search committee member(s) must conduct an initial screening of each applicant’s credentials based on job posting requirements and following procedures established by the search committee and in accordance with KSU and Board of Regents (BoR) expectations.
- f. Initial screening of applicants should occur as applications are received and candidates not being considered should be promptly eliminated from the applicant pool by the hiring manager via the ATS. Incomplete applications should not be considered or proceed beyond the initial screening phase. Application materials should not be collected outside the online ATS system.
- g. The short list of candidates will be reviewed more intensely to determine the most viable candidates. Based on close review of their credentials, interview candidates should be determined. While many factors such as the number of vacancies being filled, the nature of the position, and the quality of the applicant pool will be a determining factor, the general recommended business practice is that a minimum of three and maximum of ten candidates will be included in interview screenings.
 - i. The key to obtaining a good short list is to create a fair evaluative process that is consistent across all applicants.
 - ii. While advertising positions at professional conferences/meetings is encouraged, interviewing and short-listing of candidates cannot take place at professional conferences/meetings.
- h. Based on the evaluation criteria, the nature of the job, and the variety of experience among the candidates, a predetermined set of questions should be compiled for each step of the interview process and must be asked of all applicants. Please see the USG Human Resources Administrative Manual Policy on Employee Recruitment Appendices I (Appropriate Screening Questions) & II (Appropriate Competency Based Employment Questions) (https://www.usg.edu/hr/assets/hr/hrap_manual/HRAP_Employee_Recruitment.pdf) for appropriate screening and competency-based employment questions. Questions must be free of ideological tests, affirmations, or oaths.
- i. The set of questions for the final round of interviews may be revised after the initial interviews; however, all candidates should be asked the established question set.

- j. Follow-up questions asked to an individual candidate as a result of their response(s) should be documented in the interview notes.
- k. Interview notes should include responses to questions, the questions asked by the candidate of the search committee, and ancillary notes regarding the candidate's presence and interview skills as observed by the committee. Ancillary notes should always be job, skill, behavior, or knowledge based and should never include descriptions associated with personal or demographic attributes.
- l. One set of notes should be designated as the summary documents to be retained by the hiring manager in accordance with retention policies. These may be the notes of the hiring manager, search committee chair, or a designated note taker but they should include pertinent components of any group conversations that were a factor in determining selection of final candidates and/or elimination of other candidates.
- m. Phone or virtual screening is recommended as the medium for initial interviews. At the end of the phone interview process, candidates should be informed of the next steps and timeline for the continued search process. This should include clarifying any questions regarding available references. Candidates should be informed that the search committee intends to confer with references (both provided by the applicant and off-list references). In order to remain sensitive to candidate confidentiality, appropriate care should be taken concerning reference checking at an applicant's current employer.
- n. Reference checks should occur prior to or after the campus visit. Typically, a successful process of reference checking will include at least one of the candidate's previous supervisors and at least one peer, client/customer, or other relevant stakeholder at their current employer. For internal candidates, the hiring manager should contact the current supervisor for a reference. The HR Business Partner and/or Talent Acquisition Specialist are available as resources to determine the appropriate process and timing of contacting current supervisors.
- o. After evaluating the results of initial interviews and references, invitations to participate in final interviews should be limited to the most qualified candidates. Although most search committees invite two or three candidates to campus, there is not a minimum number required. If only one viable candidate is available, he/she should be invited for an on-campus interview.
- p. In general, all final interviews will be expected to be held in person, on campus. However, except where noted below, exceptions can be appropriate if the candidate is unable to travel to campus.
- q. Candidates for leadership positions and/or those positions that will interact with multiple stakeholders should give a presentation on a topic to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities for the vacancy.

8) Campus Visits during the Interview Process (if applicable)

- a. Final interviews for all full-time positions should be held on campus. The schedule may include meetings with:
 - i. the search committee,
 - ii. the hiring manager
 - iii. next level supervisor,
 - iv. stakeholders,
 - v. and possibly internal customers.
- b. The components of the interview schedule should be consistent for all finalists, internal or external.
- c. Reimbursement by KSU of authorized travel expenses is subject to the allowable limits and conditions as discussed in the Georgia Board of Regents Business Procedures Manual. Reimbursing finalists for covered travel expenses associated with their on-campus interview may be possible under the following circumstances:
 - i. The position qualifications meet an appropriate standard:
 - ii. Funds are available to reimburse all finalists that meet eligible criteria based on distance between their home and campus. Funds may be used from state or foundation resources; please refer to appropriate guidelines for applicable requirements and restrictions.
 - iii. A maximum reimbursement amount may be established provided it is applied consistently for all finalists eligible for travel reimbursement during each search process.

9) Recommending a Candidate

- a. To ensure the greatest level of consistency and integrity of the hiring process, the following search attributes should be deciding factors when determining the final and top candidate:
 - i. Experience and education must match the job posting as advertised.
 - ii. Minimum education as identified in the posting requirements must be satisfied.
 - iii. Minimum years of experience and/or rank must also be met except where specifically permitted otherwise by Human Resources.
 - iv. In situations where search committees have been charged to rank finalists (see Section 5, vii), ranking of finalists should correlate to values assigned during the interview process (examples: rubrics, prioritization of qualification components, and interaction with the search committee).
- b. The hiring manager confers with appropriate departmental leadership and Human Resources regarding the preferred candidate, suggested salary, and other offer attributes (examples: relocation reimbursement)

10) Preparing a Job Offer

- a. The hiring manager will use the online system to begin the job offer for the applicant selected as the final candidate recommended for hire.
- b. If a candidate is currently employed at another University System of Georgia institution, the hiring manager must work with Human Resources who will coordinate with the President's office prior to making a verbal offer. KSU's President will contact the President of the other institution before an offer is made to the candidate.
- c. After obtaining proper approvals, Human Resources will extend verbal offers to finalists.
- d. Human Resources will contact the candidate and will follow up with an offer letter in writing.
- e. If a selected candidate is a foreign national who requires a work visa, work authorization for their visa, or sponsorship from KSU, the Talent Acquisition Specialist must contact the Immigration Specialist in Global Education at internationalscholar@kennesaw.edu within five (5) business days after the verbal offer has been accepted to ensure that the newly hired individual will be eligible to work in the United States at the time he/she begins work at the institution. Information on hiring International Employees can be found at the Human Resources website.
- f. Departments must be careful to communicate to potential candidates for limited term positions that the position is only funded for a designated period of time. Limited term staff must not be led to believe they are guaranteed employment beyond the designated time period.

11) Disposition of Interviewees

- a. Upon final candidate's acceptance of the job offer and the hire is complete via the ATS/online system, all other applicants not at "offer accepted" will be automatically dispensed by the online system and the job posting will be closed. Hiring managers should make every effort to apply an appropriate disposition reason to each candidate before the ATS applies the default disposition reason needed to close out the recruitment process. Communication to all candidates will be sent via the ATS.

12) Failed Searches

- a. If no acceptable candidate surfaces in the search, or if all acceptable candidates decline or withdraw from the search, the hiring manager has two options.
 - i. Simply extend the search.
 - ii. Contact the Talent Acquisition Specialist to request the search be marked as failed.
- b. All steps required to close a posting of a failed search must be made within 10 days of the decision to fail, close, or cancel the search.
- c. If a search is approved to be marked as failed, the hiring manager may work with Human Resources Business Partner to review and potentially edit the job description and requirements in

order to repost. All job changes must be compliant with the established Career Framework structure administered by Human Resources. Especially when revising minimum job requirements, the changes should be for purposes of widening the qualified applicant population and not for the benefit of a single candidate.