A Guide for Hiring

This document is provided to assist with the hiring process. The document, tools referenced, and forms can be found online at: http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx

All Positions must be posted in PATH – Portal Access for Total HR for ALL hires including faculty, staff, ad-interim, post docs, and adjunct faculty. All applicants must apply online in the PATH system.

Emergency situations where a faculty member is necessary due to increased enrollment or unexpected vacancy must obtain Provost approval for the emergency one year appointment.

Support will be provided by Human Resources for training on the use of the PATH portal, legal and regulatory requirements, evaluation tools and hiring procedures and guidelines.

All hiring managers and committee members will be required to take an online course developed by Texas A&M System by logging onto TrainTraq: 2111264 - Effective Hiring Practices

Search Committee

A search committee will be used in the hiring process for all permanent faculty and director level and above positions. All staff positions below director level do not require a search committee. However, the guidelines specified in this document must be followed whether or not there is a search committee.

Things to consider when appointing a committee include:

- The committee requires a minimum of five (5) committee members with two (2) being from outside the department. Committees must be approved by the Dean and/or VP. Committee members that are external to the university must be pre-approved by the appropriate VP and must sign a confidentiality agreement prior to serving on a committee. Human Resources must be notified of all individuals that will have access to applicant information.
- Bringing a wide spectrum of backgrounds to a search committee can serve to better identify the most qualified person for the position. The committee should be diverse in race and gender and should be a broad representation of the faculty and staff who will work with the individual.
- Appoint individuals who are independent thinkers with personal integrity and support the goals of the university. Committee members must be able to maintain confidentiality during and after the completion of the process.
- Administrative support should be identified for the committee.
- Detailed communication is to be provided to the search committee by the hiring manager including: outline of committee tasks; timeline; scale of the search; and defined scope of the committee decision (advisory/decision making).
- Committee members will be given access to applicant information, position description/requirements, and evaluation tools and be provided the legal and regulatory requirements by a Human Resources representative.

Confidentiality

It is imperative all committee members and anyone involved in hiring keep the process focused and self-contained. Specifics of the hiring process should not be discussed with anyone outside the search committee or those involved. This is to respect and protect the privacy of candidates and to protect the committee or those involved in hiring. Those making the selection must be free to discuss the candidates in committee meetings without fearing that their comments will be shared outside the deliberations. This information should be held confidential in perpetuity, not just until the search is over. Once finalists are announced, those involved in the hiring process should only speak about the applicants’ information that has been made public.
Requirements for all positions:

Review the Position Description
At the beginning of the hiring process, the department head/hiring manager should review the current Position Description (PD) for staff or Position Requirements (PR) for faculty and revise if necessary. It is important to review the detailed requirements carefully since it will be used throughout the hiring process. It serves as the basis for preparing the PATH posting, placing advertisements, conducting job interviews, explaining the job to applicants, and communicating exact job expectations to the new employee. When a position becomes vacant, it can be an opportunity to re-evaluate the associated job functions.

Significant changes to the PD may impact the appropriateness of the position’s title, salary or minimum qualifications and will be reviewed by Human Resources. A change to the position’s title will also require a job evaluation and approval by Human Resources.

The PD and PR wording need to reflect the university’s initiatives or other strategic initiatives as appropriate. It should include the position’s essential duties, minimum educational and experience requirements, and preferred qualifications.

Submitting the PATH Posting and request to fill
The PATH posting form is submitted by the department head/hiring manager by sending the electronic version of the posting form to the designated Liaison for the department. The Liaison will obtain approval from the budget officer and input the position posting into PATH. It will then be routed to all approvers. The PATH posting document mirrors the approved PD or faculty PR with respect to title, salary, job duties, minimum and preferred qualifications. Qualifying questions, based on the listed minimum education and experience, are added to the PATH posting. Applicants will be referred/not referred to the committee or hiring manager, as appropriate, based on the responses to these questions. The department head/hiring manager or committee may decide to submit additional questions through the PATH posting process to help them further identify applicant qualifications. Such supplemental questions can generate more specific information about past work experience and assist in evaluating applicants. Human Resources will review these questions prior to posting.

Steps to be completed and documented:
1. Place broad scale advertising and build a diverse pool of applicants.
2. Assess the applications/resumes/cover letters for job qualifications and experience via a matrix that is created by the Search Committee or Hiring Manager and pre-approved by Human Resources. If a search committee is used each committee member must complete an individual matrix to be compiled by the committee chair once all have been completed.
3. Write your interview questions ahead of time and submit to Human Resources for approval.
4. Conduct and evaluate phone interviews. Phone interviews are recommended to narrow the field of applicants to be considered for on-campus visits.
5. Conduct reference checks and record the responses for final applicants.
6. Conduct and evaluate face to face interviews.
7. Make determination and recommendation of individuals to the hiring manager.
8. Complete the closing / hiring process.
Step 1:

**Broad scale advertising and building a diverse pool of applicants**

All positions must be posted on the university website for a minimum of five (5) calendar days. Hiring departments may decide to place advertisements in other venues such as designated newspapers and academic journals. Advertising and using professional associations and networks will help to reach a broader audience and enrich the diversity of the pool. Hiring departments are responsible for funding needed for additional advertisements. These advertisements should mirror the PATH posting requirements, salary and job description.

All applicants should be directed to the online application process at:

https://jobpath.tamu.edu/

(If you place an advertisement for a specific position you may refer applicants to the QuickLink listed on the PATH posting that will direct them to that individual position.)

Keep copies of all advertisements both printed and online and provide with the Hiring Process Compliance checklist.

**Advertisements for International Applicants**

*NOTE: Special conditions must be met for advertising positions for international applicants. Please see “Position Advertisement Essentials”* http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx

**Job Title and Track**

State the job title (Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Full Professor) and if it is tenured/tenure track or non-tenure track.

**Educational Requirements**

State the educational requirements (degree, area or field of study). You are not required to state experience requirements. If you will consider ABDs for the position, you must include a statement that the degree must be in-hand when the job starts.

Do not include preferred requirements. These will be deemed as minimum requirements for the position.

**Job Duties**

State the job duties (what will the individual do?). Specify the teaching, research and service expectations. Teaching expectations must be present.

**Where to Advertise**

- National printed professional journal (scholarly journal, Chronicle of Higher Education)
- Electronic or web-based national professional journal for at least 30 calendar days.

Step 2:

**Rate the applications/resumes/cover letters**

Any evaluation tool including the recommended Hiring Matrix must be pre-approved by Human Resources. When developing the matrix, determine what job-related factors you will consider. These job-related factors must be noted on the PATH posting in the description of the job as well as the requirements of the job. You may also consider any preferred qualifications noted on the posting. Develop a numerical method of evaluating the application materials and determine the weight you want to assign to each factor.

The recommended tool to use when rating your applicants is the Hiring Matrix which is available online at:

http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx
Step 3:
Interview Questions
All interview questions must be pre-approved by Human Resources. Compose your interview questions early in the process. There is an Interview Guide online.
http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx

Some guidelines to remember for composing interview questions:
- Questions must be job-related, not personal.
- All questions must be legal and non-discriminatory.
- Ask the same questions of all interviewed applicants.
- Document all interviewed applicant responses so they may be scored numerically.

Step 4:
Reference Checks for Final Interviewees
You must complete reference checks on any applicants being brought to campus before their arrival. Sample questions to use when conducting reference checks are available online. At least two reference checks must be documented for the applicants selected.
http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx

- The applicant’s electronic signature at the end of the Texas A&M University Application for Employment gives consent for reference checks with previous employers. It is recommended that we do not contact current employers as we do not want to put anyone’s current job in jeopardy.
- Hiring department heads/hiring managers and search committee members should not raise any questions that fall under the EEO discriminatory practice areas, such as questions regarding sex, race, color, national origin, age, disability, or religion. The same questions should be asked of all references. Questions and answers should be documented.
- He/she may also use the employer(s) for whom the applicant has worked the longest in a related position. If an unsatisfactory reference is received, he or she should contact another reference.
- Hiring department heads/hiring managers and search committee members should not tell the applicant or the reference source(s) that he/she is conducting reference checks because the applicant has “been selected” for the position. He/she should only indicate that the applicant is “being considered.”
- Committees should avoid seeking or using information from social media websites or general internet searches of candidates. Such sources may disclose information that is not true, inappropriate or illegal for consideration. Caution must be used when information cannot be verified.
- A previous employer may, on occasion, have rules regarding supplying references and may provide only the position title, dates of employment, salary, and eligibility for rehire. If this is found to be true, this should be documented on the reference contact form.
- Department heads/hiring managers or search committee members should document identified problem areas or responses and determine a reference check score. This quantifiable score should be entered into the Hiring Matrix.

Step 5:
Conducting interviews
THE INTERVIEW
Interviews must be structured and conducted in a manner to ensure equal treatment of all candidates. Interviews should be confined to the applicant’s responses to job-related questions or by the performance of job-related practical exercises that can be quantifiably measured. Such questions or exercises and measured responses should focus exclusively on the applicant’s professional and technical ability or knowledge to perform the job as set out in the job description.
The committee or interviewer should do the following:

1. Arrange for an appropriate environment for the interview that is comfortable and free from interruptions.

2. Explain the purpose to the applicant and set the agenda:
   This step will help relax applicants by letting them know what to expect. It also enables the interviewer to control the interview by providing a “road map.”

3. Control the interview:
   The key to controlling the interview is careful listening combined with good questions. Interviewers need to encourage and guide the applicant’s sharing of facts. A common error of ineffective interviewers is to concentrate exclusively on the questions they intended to ask and not hear what the applicant is saying. Interviewers ideally should not talk more than 25% of the time. Their job is to listen and evaluate.

4. Rate each candidate’s responses to the questions. Each committee member is to take notes with strengths/weaknesses of applicants. Please date the interview notes.

5. Give applicants a chance to ask questions about the job and performance expectations.

6. Be prepared to provide a detailed position description to the applicant.

7. Close the interview.

8. Inform applicants as to the next step of the interview process.

9. In house applicants are to be interviewed first.

10. Audio and video recordings of the applicants are not allowed.

11. Assessment testing such as cognitive, personality, etc. is not allowed.

At the close of the interview, the supervisor or committee chair should relay to the applicant the place where the interview falls in the hiring process, when a decision will be made, and how they will be notified.

**COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS**

If the hiring supervisor plans to use a committee, the same team or panel should be present during each interview to ensure consistent treatment of all applicants and consistent interpretation of the information obtained during the interview.

**Step 6:**

**Score the interview:**

Interview scores will be placed on the matrix form for consideration in the final selection process.

**Special note regarding mandatory hiring preferences:** After all scoring is complete determine if one of the top applicants is entitled to a hiring preference. Hiring preferences may include:

- Veterans - see application to determine if applicable.
- Former Foster Child - see application to determine if applicable.
- Reduction in Force (RIF) from The Texas A&M University System members – see attachments to application to determine if applicable and for further detail regarding preference

Specific information regarding the preferences above is explained in the Hiring Matrix. If preference(s) are applicable and used in the hiring decision, the applicant must provide proof of eligibility to claim such preference(s). Please note that according to State law, Veteran’s and Former Foster Child preferences take precedence over the RIF’s preference.
Step 7:

Determination of hiring selection:

Search committee members should:

- Provide a summary of their selection and be sure to note whether any hiring preferences are applicable to the final candidates, such as the veteran’s preference or former foster child preference as indicated on the employment application.

The department heads/hiring managers should:

- Use the weighted job-related criteria.
- Judge the applicants’ specific knowledge, skills, and abilities in context to the job requirements, using the application, resume, and interview information.
- Form the basis for the final decision after careful consideration of all information, including interview evaluations, reference checks, and committee recommendations and correspondence.
- Select the individual that best meets the identified job criteria.

Making the Job Offer

Following a selection decision, the department heads/hiring managers should notify the selected applicant. Initial notification may be done verbally, but the applicant should also receive a written official offer letter confirming the salary, job title, start date and contingencies. **The official written offer letter should not be sent before the clearance on the criminal background check and final approval is received from the appropriate VP.**

Criminal Background Check Release Form

All budgeted positions are considered to be SECURITY SENSITIVE. The applicant must obtain the form at: [http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx](http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx)

Once the form is completed then the applicant must follow the submission instructions as specified. The form should be returned to Human Resources and not to the hiring department or committee. Results of the background check will be shared with the hiring management.

Foreign Nationals

As an important note, all job offers must be made conditional upon proof of authorization to work in the U.S. If a foreign national who has a temporary work permit is selected to fill a vacant position, he/she must be notified that his/her employment may end at the expiration of the temporary work permit.

Records Retention

The department conducting the hiring process will upload all documentation for retention after completing the process. Documentation should include information on both hired and non-hired applicants. Departments should not keep copies of other applications/resumes/cover letters since these are maintained electronically and will be purged according to retention schedules.

- A signed copy of the application of the person you hired should go into their personnel file.
- The signed copy of the official offer letter to the person you hired should be added to their personnel file.

Step 8:

Complete closing process

Hiring Process Compliance Checklist / Final Approval Form

A Final Approval Form must be fully executed and submitted for all faculty and budgeted staff positions at Texas A&M University-Commerce. [http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx](http://web.tamuc.edu/facultyStaffServices/humanResources/employment/HiringProcedures/default.aspx)
Changes to the status for all applicants and the following documents must be attached to the posting for the Compliance Checklist to be complete:

- Hiring Matrix or Numerical Ranking System (All individual matrices including compiled matrix)
- Interview Documentation (Notes taken by each committee members and/or Hiring Manager of the phone and face-to-face interview questions and the responses of each applicant interviewed)
- References (Reference Verifications / Reference contact forms with responses for all reference checks)
- Notes/Emails/Narratives
- Criminal History Form (Attach email from HR confirming background check is complete)
- Credentials/Licensure Form – (Attach email from HR confirming degree verification is complete if required for position)
- Official Transcript (All transcripts, originals must be on file in the Provost office)
- Primary Language Form (required for faculty appointments)
- FERPA (required for faculty appointments and other positions as necessary)
- Faculty Credential Forms with all signatures (if applicable to position)
- Graduate Faculty Membership Application form (if applicable to position)
- Outside Ads (Copy of any ads placed)
- Any other correspondence or other information pertinent to the hiring process