Talent Acquisition

HIRING GUIDE

Kansas State University | Human Resources

Talent Acquisition Hiring Guide

Kansas State University is committed to recruiting, retaining, rewarding and developing a talented and diverse workforce by providing equal employment opportunities. Selecting qualified candidates for a university position is an important responsibility that can take time. Your dedication and adherence to best practices for recruitment is appreciated.

Table of Contents

Opening positions for recruitment/search committee processes

Human Resources has outlined the following guidelines and tips to assist colleges and departments when preparing for recruitment.

- Determine the need to create or fill an existing position. Review the position description for necessary updates or changes. Carefully consider the minimum and preferred qualifications, appointment type (term vs. regular) and any flexible arrangements such as remote or hybrid work, work hours, etc. Attention to these factors may attract a wider pool of candidates.
- If a position description does not exist, one should be created in our PageUp system. As a reminder, faculty positions do not require position descriptions in PageUp.
- Once the position description and salary range are approved by the Compensation and Organizational Effectiveness Team (with the exception of faculty positions), set the expected starting range based on your department budget.
- Establish selection criteria that will be used to assess candidates based on the education, experience, skills and abilities prospective applicants should possess. Consider transferrable skills and abilities and avoid screening on criteria that is too rigid, unmeasurable, or not related to the position. Committees should consider screening on only those qualifications that can be assessed based on application materials, reserving additional screening on preferred qualifications for interviews when candidates can be asked about their experience and qualifications.
- Eliminate non-essential steps from the process to improve efficiency for both candidates and search committees. If a cover letter is not necessary or critical, do not require it to be submitted upon application. Presentations may only be beneficial for Director and higher-level positions. Consider checking references only for final candidates and not for all applicants upon application.
- Ensure that HR liaisons have all the necessary details to submit the requisition in PageUp.
- Ensure that your department or college Budget Fiscal Officer is aware of the position for budgeting purposes.

Forming the search committee/interview panel

The search committee should be comprised of a broad range of individuals who are best suited, as a group, to objectively evaluate the candidates' qualifications, knowledge, skill and ability to perform the advertised position. Committee membership is not restricted to K-State employees and there is no required number of members. Professionals in your network or former employees from the department may be helpful committee members. Student may also be invited to participate in search committees. It is recommended that a search committee is composed of a diverse group and an adequate number to have a broad perspective, but not so many that it is difficult to organize and complete the search. Hiring managers may be search chairs for positions that report to them, or they may ask someone else to chair a search.

Hiring managers are encouraged to select search committee members that represent the stakeholder groups that work closely with the person to be hired. Including representation from groups across campus will help ensure diversity and inclusion in the search process. For example, consider representation from USS Senate, Faculty Senate, Affinity groups, Student government, etc.

To request PageUp access for a student or a person not affiliated with K-State, complete this form.

All search committee members and search chairs are required to complete annual online training. There is one for members and one for chairs. Both can be found on the Human Resources Search Committee Resources page.

Schedule and conduct a search kickoff meeting. Invite your HR Liaison and/or Talent Acquisition Partner to be present for the kickoff and to help the committee get started.

Search committee roles and responsibilities

A search committee member has the important responsibility to adhere to the recruitment practices of the university. A successful search committee will conduct a thorough and successful search with efficiency and professionalism. Ultimately, search committees make recommendations to the hiring manager and the hiring manager makes the final hiring decision.

Searches may be conducted entirely by the search committee, or they may include interview panels. Interview panels typically consist of stakeholders or constituents who will work closely with the person in the position to be filled. Interview panels may be as informal as a meet-and-greet opportunity or as formal as an interview or open forum with or without a presentation from the candidates.

Talent Acquisition strategic partners are available to assist a department or search committee in outlining a search process.

Search committees are expected to do the following:

- Complete search committee roles and responsibilities training.
- Develop ground rules that create a respectful and productive environment for discussing the search process and candidates being considered for a position.

- Create a timeline for the search process as well as a broad outreach plan to attract qualified individuals. All members share responsibility for identifying appropriate venues and networks for advertising and sourcing for attracting both qualified and diverse candidates.
- Familiarize themselves with the minimum and preferred qualifications for a position.
- Evaluate candidates objectively using the identified selection criteria. Set aside biases and subjectivity. Utilize the Implicit Associate Test assessments to identify individual biases and begin working to mitigate the impact of those biases.
- Honor your planned timeline and act promptly to communicate with top candidates to ensure that they remain engaged through the interviewing process.
- Communicate with honesty and transparency by sharing the anticipated timeline for interviews and other important parts of the search and interview process.
- Ensure that candidates have a point of contact on the committee for questions.
- Make recommendations to the hiring manager. Some managers may prefer a ranking of candidates while others may want a summary of strengths and opportunities for development. The hiring manager makes the final hiring decision, considering the recommendations from the search committee.
- Ensure that all candidates have a final application status and receive timely communication. The PageUp system can be utilized to send pre-formatted emails to candidates. HR liaisons can assist search committees with this process.
  - Notifying non-selected finalists by phone is recommended.
  - For internal candidates, a personal touch will speak volumes. Acknowledging the application of an internal candidate will foster goodwill and loyalty. A candidate will remember how they were treated during the process, even if they are not selected.
- Retain interview notes and submit them to the HR liaison for saving in PageUp.
- Consistency throughout the process is essential. Ensure that all candidates receive necessary information and are treated equitably through the search.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the foundation of a credible and trustworthy search process. A breach of confidentiality can result in the immediate termination of the search, a serious loss of time and money, and the loss of talented candidates. It also can threaten the reputation of the search committee members and the greater university.

Search committee members must maintain confidentiality through the process and even after the search concludes. It is important that search committee work and communication be held in utmost confidence and not discussed outside of the search committee. Candidates may be both internal and external to K-State and all expect a confidential process.

Writing a strong position announcement

A well-crafted position announcement highlights both the position details and the benefits of working at Kansas State University.

Some things to consider when writing a position announcement:

- Word choice:
  - Avoid using unnecessary jargon or department-specific language
  - Avoid gender-coded words and consider ways some words impact a person's decision to apply for a job. Read this article for additional background on gender-coded words.
  - Emphasize how the job will help accomplish the overarching goals of the department-what impact will it have
- Length: Keep it concise and consider that many people use mobile devices to apply for jobs.
- Job title: You may consider using the Business Title in the advertisement. Job seekers may use a key word search and a clear and descriptive title is best.
- Community: Include links to local chamber of commerce or community websites as job seekers may not be familiar with the local community.
- Remote or hybrid opportunities: Clearly articulate if the position can be performed in a remote and/or hybrid capacity. Explain if in-person work is required and how often.
- Benefits: Mention any sort of non-traditional benefits. Consider the short commute, flexible hours, and other non-traditional benefits such as McCain performances, discounts or other perks.
- University mission: Describe how the position connects to the university mission, particularly the Next Gen K-State Strategic Plan or its land-grant mission.
- Projects/Impact: Mention (and include links to) exciting and challenging projects that the position will support. Highlight awards that have resulted from past projects.
- Video: Include video links that highlight the position, department and university.
- Application process: Make sure the application submission directions are simple. Consider the application period and clearly articulate the closing date or if the position will be open until filled.
- Social media: Target candidates through a variety of social media platforms, tailoring specific messages for each. Encourage search committee members to share the postings on their social media accounts.
- Education equivalency: If the position qualified, indicate that experience may be equivalent to a degree. This may broaden the applicant pool and encourage those without degrees to

apply. Ask the Compensation and Organizational Effectiveness Team if an education equivalency applies to the position.

- Get inspired:
  - Conduct a web search for position titles to learn how others are describing their open roles
  - Check out aspirant universities to discover how they promote and sell their culture
  - Research what keywords candidate are clicking on most frequently

Advertising strategy

Identify where to advertise positions, such as education publications and social media. Local advertising resources may be helpful for some positions. Developing a comprehensive advertising strategy helps to attract a broad and diverse applicant pool.

Standard advertising sources at no charge to departments include K-State Careers website, Facebook, HigherEd Jobs, Insight Into Diversity, LGBT Consortium of Higher Education, and DiversityJobs.com which posts to over 600 sites. Additional advertising at almost any online or printed publication can be coordinated through our third-party advertising partner, JobElephant.

Consider enhancing your ads with Diversity & Inclusion enhancements such as emails to listservs. These enhancements can be purchased through JobElephant.

Social media posts on Facebook and Twitter can be created by the Talent Acquisition Team for any job upon request. Search committee chairs and members, along with hiring managers are encouraged to share social media posts using their personal LinkedIn accounts as well. Each job announcement on K-State Careers page can be shared using Whatsapp, Facebook, LinkedIn and email.

Consider campus communication sources such as K-State Today, affinity group listservs, alumni email listservs, magazines, student career center (Handshake), or college/department specific newsletters and website pages.

Attend job/career fairs. Inform your Talent Acquisition strategic partner if you learn of career fairs that may be great sources of talent for your positions. Talent Acquisition can support you with marketing materials, documents, tips and attendance at events as well.

Screening candidates in the Applicant Tracking System

Search committee members are expected to utilize the selection criteria in PageUp to screen candidate application materials. Utilizing the tools and selection criteria in PageUp allows for search committee members to log their ratings and comments and search chairs can compile the ratings of all the members to help assess the candidates' overall ratings.

Selection criteria are the minimum and preferred qualifications for the position. Search committees screen applicants within the applicant tracking system on the minimum qualifications and one or more preferred qualification(s). Committees should consider screening on only those qualifications that can be assessed based on application materials, reserving additional screening on preferred qualifications for interviews when candidates can be asked direct questions about their experience and qualifications.

The candidate ratings help determine which candidates should be invited for interviews.

Talent Acquisition Partners review all applications for University Support Staff positions for minimum qualifications before sending applications for committee review.

Social media content

Use wise judgement when considering the use of information found on social medial when screening a candidate. Social media information not directly related to the job requirements may not be used as hiring criteria. Consult your Talent Acquisition strategic partner with questions.

Conducting interviews

The committee may conduct a phone/video or in-person interview. Sometimes a video interview is sufficient, and sometimes both video and in-person are important.

Interview questions

The committee will draft interview questions based on the requirements and expectations of the position and all candidates should be asked the same set of questions. Follow-up questions after a candidate response may vary depending on the individual interview.

Open-ended, informational, situational and behavioral based questions are recommended. Interview guides in PageUp may help with drafting questions. Additionally, we have competency-based interview questions on our HR website that may also be helpful.

Inform candidates on the anticipated timeline and when they can expect to hear back from you.

Open forums and presentations

If an in-person interview includes an open forum or presentation, the search committee will make arrangements for the room and zoom option (as applicable), provide a topic for the presentation and provide candidates with adequate time to prepare. All candidates must present on the same topic. The search chair may request that the hiring department handle the administrative details including scheduling meeting rooms, inviting stakeholders to interviews, and sharing candidate materials.

Candidate materials should be kept confidential and shared appropriately. Please notify candidates that their materials will be shared with stakeholders. It is recommended that personal information such as home addresses and phone numbers be redacted and that documents be made available on department websites or Canvas site behind eID and password access. Candidate materials should be shared for a short time prior to and just after interviews. For example, it is recommended that candidate materials are shared behind eID and password 24 hours before an open forum and then removed within 24 hours after the open forum.

*Interviews and open forums may NOT be recorded, but presentations may be recorded with candidate permission.

If an open forum is conducted, include a feedback survey for participants to provide feedback to the search committee. Use questions that are objective and assess the candidates' qualifications for the position. Provide a deadline for submitting responses-generally around 2-3 business days. Search committees should review the survey responses together and include that feedback when making their recommendations to the hiring manager. Talent Acquisition Partners can provide survey question samples as needed. Sample feedback survey questions for faculty and staff are available on the Human Resources website.

Open forums are generally reserved for high level positions. Consider both the candidate experience and the time and cost to prepare and host the open forum. You may gather stakeholder feedback in a variety of ways such as a special meeting with stakeholder groups. Open forums are not always necessary.

Consider announcing the open forum or interview in K-State Today. The deadline for submission is noon the weekday before the requested publication date. For Monday's edition, the deadline is Friday.

On-Campus interview scheduling guide checklist

The following are some important things to consider when scheduling interviews. Remember to keep some space in schedules to allow for down time and transition time between meetings or buildings. Search chairs may ask the hiring department administrative staff to coordinate these items.

- Calendars:
  - Request holds on calendars as soon as potential dates are identified
  - Once dates are confirmed, notify committee members and candidates; share zoom link if applicable

- Meeting rooms:
  - When scheduling rooms, be mindful of the size of the room and equipment needed. Be sure to ask if the equipment is in good working order.
  - Consider the location of the room. Are there distractions such as glass windows or outside noise?

    Room locations that are often utilized (K-State Student Union rooms, Alumni Center, Staley School of Leadership, Hale Library, Bluemont Hotel, Holiday Inn at the Campus or large lecture spaces) Please note that there may be costs associated with reserving some rooms.

- Hosts:
  - Arrange for a host to escort the candidate from on location to another. The host should wear a name tag and be prepared to give the candidate directions to the restroom, water fountains, etc. Include the host's name and phone number on the schedule.

- Flights:
  - Assist candidates with travel arrangements to include booking flights on their behalf or reimbursing the candidate after their trip.
  - List the flight numbers and times on the schedule. Include the contact information of the individual who is picking up the candidate or instructions for the candidate to get to the hotel. If the candidate has a late flight into town, consider a later start time the next morning to account for potential delays.

- Tours:
    - Plan for campus and community tours

      New Student Services (785-532-6237) will give tours as requested.

      Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce (785-776-8829), Olathe Chamber of Commerce (913-764-1050) and Salina Area Chamber of Commerce (785-827-9301) will provide community tours.

- Meals:
    - Find a few individuals who are willing to host candidates for a meal
    - Determine reimbursement arrangements for individual hosting the meal
    - If the candidate will be responsible for their own meals provide available options
    - Consider dietary restrictions and preferences when planning meals

- Parking:
    - If your candidate is arriving by car, be sure they have parking information.
    - Interview announcements (generally reserved for high level positions like Director and above)

- Final preparations:
    - Confirm schedules, host duties, hotel room reservations and meeting space reservations.
    - Send candidates their schedule along with information about the university (including a map) and community information.
        - Email the final schedule to everyone involved. Be prepared for last-minute changes.
    - It is optional to prepare a small welcome packet for your candidate to include things such as a welcome note, materials about K-State or the community, and a small, branded token such as a pen, department mug, etc.
    - Inform the candidate of any special needs for the visit such as comfortable shoes or a light jacket.
    - Consider necessities such as water, facial tissue, hand sanitizer, umbrella, etc.

- Special accommodations:

Individuals may request a reasonable accommodation during the interview process. Please contact the ADA Coordinator for assistance at 785-532-6277.

Making the offer of employment

Search committees meet with the hiring manager to present their recommendation and generally provide strengths and opportunities for each candidate so the hiring manager can make their final decision.

Upon that decision, the hiring manager will:

- Conduct necessary reference checks (there is no required number, but it is recommended that references be contacted before making an offer)
- Make a verbal offer to the candidate within the pay range that was advertised on the position announcement.
- When the candidate accepts the verbal offer, inform them that a written offer will be forthcoming from Human Resources and next steps will be handled by HR. Set a future start date for employment.
- Inform the department HR liaison that a verbal offer has been accepted and the start date so that the written offer, background check and onboarding processes may be initiated.

When the verbal offer of employment has been accepted, the search committee will then:

- Inform the hiring department HR Liaison about the non-selected candidate statuses.
- Notify candidates who were interviewed that they were not selected. For internal candidates, and those who had an in-person interview, it is recommended that they receive a call or personal message instead of the system-generated message from the applicant tracking system. Communicate clearly with the hiring department HR Liaison so they know what communications are being sent to candidates.

Reference and background checks

Reference checks may be conducted in writing via PageUp or by phone. Again, there is no required number of references to call. Hiring Managers are encouraged to conducts as many reference checks as deemed appropriate for them to confirm their decision.

- Inform candidates before you contact their references
- References may include current/previous supervisors or peers, department heads or colleagues.
- Do not ask any questions concerning family status, age, religion, or medical conditions.

Background checks are required for all new hires others per the background check policy. The background check process is initiated after the candidate accepts their written offer of employment via PageUp.

Hiring and onboarding

The candidate will receive an official offer and contract via the applicant tracking system. Once accepted, the candidate will authorize a background check (if applicable) and receive their onboarding task list in the applicant tracking system. More information about onboarding can be found in this Onboarding Guide.

More Information

If you have any questions about the hiring process, we are glad to help. Please contact:

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