

MERIT-BASED RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Merit-Based Recruitment and Selection Plan is to fill positions subject to the State Personnel Act from among the most qualified individuals. This plan is a reiteration of a long-standing practice, which prevents any political influence in the hiring process, and is being written at the direction of the North Carolina Office of State Personnel to more fully effectuate North Carolina General Statute 126.

Appalachian State University will, in the recruitment and selection process, give equal employment opportunity to all applicants without regard to race, religion, color, creed, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, or political affiliation and/or influence, basing all recruitment and selection decisions on solely job-related criteria. Given the staffing needs of departments and the university, the recruitment and selection process will comply with all federal and state laws, regulations, and policies, and will be based on the core principles of fairness, integrity, and the advancement of diversity in the workforce.

II. Responsibility

Due to the inherent link between the outcomes of merit-based recruitment and selection and the involvement of all parties concerned, the policy contained herein prescribes the responsibilities, roles, and expectations of the key stakeholders involved.

- A) Administrative officers of Appalachian State University have the responsibility for demonstrating commitment and support to the principles of fairness and integrity in the recruitment and selection process
- B) Hiring managers, supervisors, and/or designated individuals charged with making hiring decisions for the University have the responsibility of basing those hiring decisions on the principles of merit
- C) Human Resources and Equal Employment Opportunity staff have the responsibility of ensuring that all recruitment and selection practices are applied equitably and consistently, by: conducting periodic audits, offering training to hiring managers, providing data and analysis to university officers on policies and procedures, and maintaining recruitment and selection data in order to conduct employment trend analyses
- D) Recognizing that employees and applicants have a responsibility within a merit-based recruitment and selection system, applicants and employees are charged with furnishing true, accurate, and complete information/documentation

III. Procedures - Recruitment

- A) In accordance with the policy contained herein, all employment recruitment activities conducted by Appalachian State University will endeavor to actively recruit from a variety of sources in order to provide

access to a diverse workforce that successfully meets the needs of the university. To that end, hiring managers and/or supervisors are expected to, with assistance from Human Resources:

- 1) Assess the business need of said position in order to ensure contribution to mission, objectives, and goals of the work unit
- 2) As needed, conduct job analyses in order to review position duties, responsibilities, and necessary applicant qualifications
- 3) As needed, revise position description to reflect changes to any essential functions, responsibilities, necessary skills and/or abilities, or physical demands

Note: Essential functions, other responsibilities, necessary skills and abilities, and physical demands must be identified in the position description.

- B) The hiring manager/supervisor and the Office of Human Resources staff should assure that critical tasks, competencies (KSAs), and training/experience requirements necessary to successfully perform the duties of the position have been identified
- C) Information from the job analysis and position description will guide the hiring manager/supervisor in drafting the vacancy announcement. The Office of Human Resources staff will help to ensure that the vacancy announcement meets the requirements of state policy
- D) A position may be posted internally to the University, State government, or posted to the general public. In addition the Office of Human Resources may assist the hiring manager/supervisor to determine additional recruitment sources to target specific audiences, including professional journals, newspapers, and technical colleges/universities in order to attract a diverse pool of applicants. (Temporary employees and student employees are not eligible for consideration for internal postings or postings open only to state government employees)
- E) In consultation with the Office of Human Resources, hiring managers/supervisors will use selection tools that are objective, based upon job-related competencies (KSAs), consistently applied to all applicants, and must be pre-approved by the Office of Human Resources

IV. Procedures - Selection

A) *Definitions*

Competencies (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities) – *Knowledge*: information which makes satisfactory performance on the job possible; *Skill*: a proficiency that is observable, quantifiable, and measurable; *Ability*: capacity to perform or learn the duties of the position

Preferences – Specific types of experiences, degrees, licenses, competencies, or other selection factors above those minimally required to perform the duties and responsibilities of a position

Essential Qualifications (minimum qualifications) – The minimum education, training and/or experience requirements (including competencies) necessary to perform the essential duties of the position

Does Not Meet Minimum Qualifications – Applicants who do not meet the required minimum qualifications and required competencies referred to in the vacancy announcement. *The applicant status is changed to Does Not Meet Qualifications and applicant receives a system-generated email to notify them of status*

Qualified – Applicants whose credentials indicate the possession of required education, training, experience, and competencies included in the vacancy announcement. *Hiring Manager/HR selects an initial status of Not Among the Most Qualified-Step 1*

Most Qualified – The group of applicants who possess qualifications which exceed the essential requirements described in the vacancy announcement. This group is to be the “pool” from which the candidate for employment will be selected. *Hiring Manager will select an initial applicant status of Among the Most Qualified-Step 1*

When the posting window has officially closed, a designated staff member of the Office of Human Resources will screen all applications to determine which applicants meet or exceed the essential qualification requirements. These “qualified” applications are then forwarded to the originating hiring department at which point the hiring manager/supervisor or designee will evaluate the applications to determine who are among the most qualified and who are not among the most qualified. Applicants selected for interview will be from among the most qualified applicant pool.

B) *Employment/Re-employment Priorities*

The Office of Human Resources staff (or an individual with human resource function responsibilities) will review the initial applicant pool in order to identify those applicants with priority status. All employment/re-employment priorities are to be afforded in accordance with State policy. Thus, consideration must be given to applicants that have the following priorities:

- Priority Re-Employment/RIF –Employees receiving official written notification of Reduction-In-Force have priority consideration. Please see the State Personnel Manual for details regarding priority consideration
- Exempt Policy Making/Exempt Managerial –Employees separated from exempt policymaking/managerial positions for reasons other than just cause have priority consideration. Please see the State Personnel Manual for additional details
- Promotional – Career State employees are eligible for priority consideration over non-state applicants when both parties possess substantially equal qualifications
- Veterans Preference – Preference is to be given in initial employment, subsequent employment, promotion, reassignments, horizontal transfers, and RIF opportunities to qualified veteran applicants
- Injured-On-The-Job/Worker’s Compensation – Employees injured on the job, placed on worker’s compensation leave, and who have been released to return to work by their physician, have re-employment priority considerations based upon maximum medical improvement.

C) *Interviews*

- 1) The originating hiring department holds responsibility for selecting applicants to interview and scheduling those interviews. A minimum of three (3) candidates is recommended to be interviewed for any advertised position. In the rare instance when less than three (<3) qualified candidates exist, the originating hiring department can exercise the option to interview only those candidates who qualify, or repost the position to yield a more diverse applicant field.
- 2) Interview questions must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources prior to conducting interviews. If appropriate to the position, the originating hiring department may also administer a pre-interview work sampling exercise as a screening aid with prior approval from the Office of Human Resources.
- 3) All contact with applicants shall be conducted in a manner which assures fair and impartial treatment of all applicants. Given that interviewing provides the most direct information about the applicant, the interviewer must ask only those questions that solicit the needed job-related information to evaluate the applicant's ability to perform work expectations.
- 4) Questions or comments that solicit information (intentionally or unintentionally) concerning the applicant's race, sex, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy status, age, color, national origin, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, veteran status, or relationship to other university constituents must be avoided.
- 5) Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, an employer is expected to interview applicants without a) asking if the applicant has a disability (or if obvious, about the nature of the disability or its seriousness) or b) requiring the applicant to undergo any medical exam or answer any medical inquiries. It is permissible however, to ask an applicant a) if he/she has the ability to perform specific job functions (with or without accommodation) or b) to demonstrate or describe how he/she would be able to perform specific job functions (with or without accommodation). However, it must be noted that these questions must be asked of all applicants.
- 6) A medical exam or inquiry may be conducted only if it is a stated requirement for the job in the vacancy announcement, and if all new hires in the same job category are required to undergo said exam or inquiry, regardless of disability. Further, any medical exams or inquiries must be job-related and consistent with the employer's business need.
- 7) Applicant's who incur travel costs in order to interview are responsible for those costs unless the originating hiring department has agreed in writing to reimburse the prospective employee. Please refer to Appalachian State University's travel policies for any additional information.

D) *References/Selection Provisions*

- Prior to extending any offer of employment, the hiring manager/supervisor must check references on the recommended candidate(s). At minimum one (1) Reference Record must be included in the Hiring Proposal for the recommended candidate. *Note: A Reference Record is not required in the Hiring Proposal if recommended candidate is a permanent Appalachian State University employee*

- Reference checks from current employers should only be made after completing the interview and obtaining permission from the applicant. *Note: The application form indicates whether an applicant has granted permission to contact previous and/or current employers.*
- Applicants who are among the most qualified candidates but not selected for the position will receive timely written notice from the originating department.
- Applicants who are not among the most qualified candidates will receive an automatic email notification generated by the application system once the position is designated as filled.

V. Procedures - Approvals

Once the hiring manager/supervisor has selected the finalist for the vacancy, said hiring manager/supervisor will prepare the Hiring Proposal. Included within the Hiring Proposal will be:

- Justification for the hiring decision (including how the finalist possesses the required qualifications per the job posting, and why the selected candidate is the best match for said vacancy)
- Recommended salary¹ (including salary justification using all Pay Factors)
- Proposed start date²
- Competency level of selected candidate based on his/her application
- Interview results
- Reference check results

Once complete, the hiring manager/supervisor will submit the Hiring Proposal forward through designated channels for approval. Once approved by all applicable parties and forwarded to the Office of Human Resources, the Hiring Proposal will be reviewed by the Assistant HR Director of Employment and the University EEO/Compliance Officer in order to ensure accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, and/or policies. The hiring manager/supervisor may only extend an offer of employment to selected candidate after receiving approval from the Office of Human Resources.

Note: All new University employees are hired under a probationary period ranging from three (3) to nine (9) months, based on supervisor's recommendations. The supervisor will receive a letter from the Office of Human Resources within employee's probationary time period requesting the supervisor's recommendation to either forward employee to permanent status or extend the probationary period. Based on this recommendation, the employee will receive notification from Human Resource Services as to any change in their probationary status.

VI. Documentation

In order to support decisions and provide fact-based information for monitoring and evaluation, Appalachian State University will maintain documentation of the merit-based recruitment and selection process.

¹ Starting salaries for new employees must: a) conform to the advertised hiring range, b) be consistent with new employee's qualifications, and c) be consistent with internal equity

² Once applicant accepts the offer of employment and agrees to said start date, the hiring manager/supervisor must notify the Office of Human Resources in order to prepare the official university appointment letter. Upon completion, the Office of Human Resources will forward appointment letter to selected applicant's immediate supervisor for review and distribution. *Note: Hiring managers/supervisors are encouraged to review appointment letter for errors in either/or start date and salary*

Documentation shall be in the form of a file designated for each hiring event, maintained for a minimum of three (3) years, and containing:

- Recruitment sources other than the Appalachian State University website
- Selection tools and criteria
- Interview questions and responses
- Supporting documentation
- Job analyses (if completed prior to the hiring event)
- Any additional documentation related to the recruitment/selection process
- List of applicants identified as Not Qualified, Not Among the Most Qualified, and Among the Most Qualified. *Hiring Manager/HR selects the appropriate applicant status for each applicant in the applicant pool in the online system. These applicant statuses can be used in lieu of this list*

The Office of Human Resources staff will provide program data and analysis with regard to relevant recruitment and selection activities, and provide an annual summary of selection activity for the Chancellor's review. In addition, the Office of Human Resources staff will also comply with the reporting and plan update requirements from the Office of State Personnel.

VII. Special Provisions

If an applicant has reason to believe he/she was denied employment due to political affiliation or influence, the applicant may appeal the hiring decision directly to the Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) within 30 days of written notification that the position has been filled if all the following conditions apply:

Note: The complaining State employee or applicant must file said complaint with the Civil Rights Division of OAH within thirty (30) days after the complainant receives written notice that the position in question has been filled.

- The person alleging the violation applied for the position in question during the open application period
- The person alleging the violation was not hired into the position in question
- The person alleging the violation was among the pool of the most qualified applicants
- The successful applicant for the position was not among the pool of the most qualified applicants
- The hiring decision was in violation of G.S. 126-14.2 because of political affiliation or political influence

Approved By: Chancellor Kenneth E. Peacock

Date: May 14, 2013