

# Search Committee Guidelines

## System Administration

### **Introduction:**

These guidelines have been developed by the University of Colorado Boulder (UCB) and adapted for the University of Colorado System Administration to guide and assist hiring authorities and search committees in carrying out their search and hiring responsibilities and to ensure that search and hiring processes comply with regent laws, university policies, and federal and state regulations. General procedures for all search committees are outlined below with an emphasis on exempt professional position searches. See [Regent Policy 3-E](#) for additional requirements related to filling officer positions.

All searches must be conducted in a timely and professional manner that respects the rights of candidates to confidentiality, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, it is critical that applicants receive a positive impression of System Administration throughout the search and hiring process. To attract a highly qualified and diverse applicant pool for system positions, outreach and recruitment efforts must follow Administrative Policy Statement (APS), [Affirmative Action, Title IX, and Section 504 Programs](#) which states:

The university will employ persons solely on the basis of merit and fitness, and will avoid discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, age, political affiliation, national origin, individual handicap, or veteran status.

A consultant from the Office of Human Resources, System Administration shall serve as a member of each search committee to assist with these functions.

### **Definitions:**

**Applicant:** An applicant is anyone who expresses an interest in a specific position by submitting an application, resume, or vita.

**Candidate:** All applicants who are interviewed become candidates.

**Department Liaison (DL):** Also referred to as a Department Recruiting Liaison (DRL) or Personnel/Payroll Liaison (PPL). An employee within a campus department who has completed required training to enter and update information in PeopleSoft HRMS and/or Jobs at CU on behalf of the hiring authority. The department liaison plays a key role in communicating information between the campus department and Human Resources.

**Finalist:** The top candidates (typically 2-5) who are identified and asked to come to campus for extensive interviews are considered finalists.

**Hiring Authority:** Comparable to an appointing authority for classified positions, the hiring authority for officer/exempt professional positions is typically a department director or chair. The hiring authority is accountable for the budget and personnel actions occurring within a department, college, school or institute per written delegation of authority from the campus chancellor through the respective division officer.

**Supervisor:** The individual or body to whom the employee or position directly reports. In some cases, the supervisor and hiring authority may be the same person.

### **Pre-Search Steps and Training:**

The hiring department must have an approved, funded position that is, or is about to become vacant in order to start the search process. For further information on creating or updating an officer/university staff (OEP) position description, see the [University Staff HR Process Guide](#), Section III.

Refer to the [University Staff HR Process Guide](#), Section IV, for specific recruitment and hiring step-by-step processes for department liaisons and hiring authorities to use for officer/exempt professional positions.

For any member of the search committee, there is a course titled [CU: Search Committee Training, Recruiting Diverse Talent to the University SkillPort](#). This course will help you learn how to conduct a University of Colorado job search that complies with state and federal regulations and maximizes your chance of finding the best person for the position. To access SkillPort, logon through the myCU portal (<https://my.cu.edu>) and click on the My.Training tab.

### **Search Committee Role and Designation:**

The basic charge of a search committee is to generate a strong pool of candidates and advise the supervisor and hiring authority of those candidates best qualified to meet the needs of the University and the hiring department. These duties shall be accomplished in a professional and timely manner. Search committee members should play a major role in the recruitment, interviewing, screening and evaluation of applicants and are expected to participate fully in committee activities, including voting as appropriate. A consultant from the Office of Human Resources, System Administration shall serve as a member of each search committee to advise on search committee best practices and affirmative action and equal employment requirements. In addition, an administrative support individual may also be included as a non-voting member of a search committee to assist with any administrative responsibilities for the committee.

The supervisor or hiring authority will appoint the members of the search committee, including a chair who will work closely with them throughout the recruitment and selection process. Search committees should have a minimum of 3 members. The composition of the committee should serve to advance the university's commitment to the principles of diversity and equal employment opportunity. The membership of the committee should reflect the diverse nature of the University through representation of underrepresented and/or protected classes whenever possible. The supervisor, as well as the hiring authority, should not be a member of the search committee. It is the search committee's role to handle the initial screening of candidates in order to recommend a top group of qualified final candidates to the supervisor and/or hiring authority for a final hiring decision.

Before commencing its search, the committee shall meet with the hiring authority and HR consultant to discuss and clarify the charge, the desired academic or management credentials for candidates, any other appropriate criteria for screening and selecting candidates, and to determine the most important competencies needed for success in the position.

### **Hiring Authority Charge:**

According to [Regent Policy 3-E](#), for each position for which a search has been authorized, the hiring authority shall issue a charge to the search committee and establish the search budget. The [charge template](#) outlines the requirements that the committee shall respect, typically:

- The scope of the search (internal, state/regional, or national) and methods of soliciting nominations;
- Target dates for completing each stage of the search process and the schedule of reporting;
- The number of candidates to be recommended;
- Information regarding the procedure to follow for committees making use of the services of a

professional consultant or search firm.

### **Role of Search Committee Chair:**

For consistency and efficiency, the search committee chair should handle all inquiries regarding the search including any applicant or potential applicant's written or verbal request for information about the search process or timelines. The search committee chair is encouraged to work with the HR consultant for assistance. The primary responsibilities of the chair shall be to ensure that the best qualified candidates are considered and to:

- Oversee the professional and timely operation of the committee;
- Guarantee an opportunity for all qualified candidates to receive committee consideration;
- Work with the HR consultant to ensure that effective recruitment mechanisms are utilized and that the committee is provided information relevant to recruitment of underrepresented groups;
- Ensure that complete records of meetings and action are maintained;
- Maintain the confidentiality of the committee proceedings, communications with candidates, and the identity of candidates, to the extent permitted by law;
- Be the sole spokesperson regarding committee activities and the status of the search process;
- Communicate with candidates and inform them of the status of the search process;
- Ensure that financial expenditures generated by the committee are approved prior to their obligation;
- Report to the supervisor, hiring authority or HR consultant the deliberations of the committee, divisions of opinion, and information it has compiled about recommended candidates. The chair should report immediately if any difficulties arise which threaten the committee's successful operation;
- Make arrangements for a meeting between the supervisor or hiring authority and the search committee at the conclusion of the search process; and
- Compile the search committee final report summarizing the process and lessons learned for the benefit of future search committees for submission to the supervisor, hiring authority and HR consultant.

### **Job Posting:**

The search committee and/or supervisor will use the [job posting template](#) creating a job posting consistent with the charge to the committee and the position description. The position description previously created and approved by HR will be the basis for developing the job posting and applicant rating criteria.

Note that the job posting and the position description are not the same thing. The job posting is targeted toward potential applicants in the job market whose attention you are trying to gain. The job posting should describe and market CU, your department, culture, and the position. The job posting should let applicants know why they should want to work here more than someplace else. In contrast, the position description is an internally focused document used to determine the most appropriate job title, salary range, job requirements and performance expectations tied to a given job. The position description is a key resource for developing the job posting.

### **Hiring International Applicants:**

If there is the potential to have international applicants in your candidate pool, then the job posting should also be reviewed by the [International Student and Scholar Services](#) (ISSS) office in International Education. ISSS exists to provide immigration advice to departments at the University of Colorado to ensure that any international that is hired can get appropriate work authorization. To ensure that an international candidate will be eligible for hire, a print ad must appear in a national publication if international applicants are expected. If you end up hiring an international for your position opening,

ISSS will need to do some visa work for your new hire in order for him/her to have the proper work visa. Early consultation will give them lead time to prepare any necessary documents and submit appropriate petitions to the relevant federal agencies, such as the Department of Labor or the Department of Homeland Security. (See additional resource on [hiring international employees](#)).

### **Jobs at CU:**

Once the search plan and job posting have been approved, the DL will enter the job posting and search committee information in *Jobs at CU*. The department may also develop specific applicant questions and establish Guest User access so the search committee can review application materials on-line. Once the job posting information is saved for approval in *Jobs at CU*, the information will be available for HR consultant review and final approval before posting.

*Jobs at CU* should be the primary recruiting source for position announcements. Job postings placed in other recruiting sources should refer candidates to *Jobs at CU* to apply or for further information. Reference the job posting number when directing candidates to *Jobs at CU*. For additional guidance on using *Jobs at CU*, see <https://www.cusys.edu/jobs/documentation.html>.

Currently, there is a direct feed of data from Jobs at CU to *InsideHigherEd.com* at no cost to the hiring department. To use this direct feed, select the appropriate category in the associated drop down box. While check boxes are also listed for other recruiting sources in *Jobs at CU*, these sources do not have direct data feeds set up at the present time. Posting in any other [advertising sources](#) is an off-line process handled by the hiring department.

### **Search and Selection Steps:**

The search committee, supervisor or DL will place job postings in other media (e.g., academic journals, specialized websites, or newspapers) and will document the posting locations in *Jobs at CU* under "other posting media". The job postings in other media must reference the *Jobs at CU* website and posting number. Every effort should be made in the search process to utilize a wide variety of sources in soliciting applications from a diverse applicant pool, including minorities, women, veterans, persons with disabilities, and others from under-represented groups. (See [advertising sources](#) list).

Applicants will complete the application process in *Jobs at CU*. The system will not accept applicants who fail to submit "required" material. The system will automatically notify applicants of receipt of application and/or materials.

Using the approved job posting, the search committee will assess each applicant's qualifications to ensure that all applicants are evaluated using the same criteria. Using a standard applicant rating form is highly recommended to ensure consistency and to provide documentation of the review process. The screening of applicants should eliminate from further consideration those individuals who clearly do not meet the minimum required qualifications set forth in the job posting. It is also important to note that candidates must have met the minimum qualifications announced in the job posting to be considered further in the search process. The HR consultant, as a search committee member, should be included in this process to assist with problems or questions throughout the screening process. Search committee members can be assigned a guest user password to review applicant materials online through *Jobs at CU* or application materials may be printed.

As an applicant's status changes (i.e., not qualified, invited to interview, finalist) the department should document the change in status in *Jobs at CU* after notifying the applicant. The search committee chair or DL should also document the search process in the Notes/History section as applicable. A final status for each applicant must be entered before the job posting can be closed in *Jobs at CU*. The HR

consultant is also available to assist with making these status changes in the *Jobs at CU* system.

Applicants who clearly do not meet the minimum requirements may be removed from consideration at this point. Applicants who are no longer under consideration must be notified of their status. *Jobs at CU* can be used to send e-mail notifications to applicants who have not met the job requirements and are no longer under consideration. Use the “not selected–send e-mail” status to utilize this option.

### **Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality of the names of applicants and information developed about them and their employing institutions is necessary to attract high quality finalists, to avoid putting their current positions in jeopardy, and to protect the University’s integrity. Under the Colorado Open Records Act, all applicants (even in-house candidates) are protected until they are declared finalists, at which point their records may be released if requested. The search committee is required to conduct its meetings and deliberations consistent with this commitment, unless as specified otherwise under law. Other university employees outside of the search committee are also expected to honor these confidentiality guidelines and the role of the search committee.

The following confidentiality guidelines will assist you:

- Do not disclose the names of the position applicants
- All discussions among committee members are confidential
- All applicant files should be stored in a locked filing cabinet or password-protected computer
- Remind faculty and staff who may access the files that the information is confidential
- Disclose confidentiality breaches to the committee chair or HR consultant

### **Interviewing:**

Prior to interviewing, the search committee chair along with the committee will formulate interview questions to be used in the interview process. (See [sample interview questions](#)). The search committee chair, with assistance from the HR consultant, will ensure that interview questions are non-discriminatory and designed to assess each candidate’s skills and experience as related to the requirements of the job. Phone interviews may be conducted to assist in screening applicants. (See [lawful vs. unlawful inquiries](#) resource).

### **Reference Checks:**

Reference checks must be completed for all finalists and may be conducted by the search committee and/or the supervisor/hiring authority. Reference checking may be used by the search committee as part of the application review or interview process to help identify finalists. (See guidelines for [reference checking](#).) It is recommended that candidates be informed when the committee is ready to begin checking references. As a professional courtesy, the search committee should honor requests to refrain from contacting specific references until the candidate is named as a finalist. If a finalist refuses to allow contact with a potential reference that the committee deems important, the finalist should be informed that this refusal limits the committee’s ability to complete its evaluation and that the candidate may not receive full consideration. It is important to respect the confidentiality of the reference provider and the information gathered when checking references. Do not delegate the reference gathering process to anyone outside the hiring process and share information gathered on a need to know basis only.

**Background Checks:**

A Criminal History Record check must be obtained for the final candidate being hired, as described in the System Administration policy on [Background Checks](#). Other background checks, such as financial and motor vehicle history checks may also be required depending on the position.

The following statement should be included in the main job:

*The University of Colorado is committed to providing a safe and productive learning and living community. To achieve that goal, we conduct background investigations for all final applicants being considered for employment. Background investigations include a criminal history record check, and when appropriate, a financial and/or motor vehicle history.*

**Search Summary Report, Data Collections and Final Steps:**

The search committee chair will complete a [search summary report](#) which explains the process that the search committee used to identify finalists for the position and provides documentation for reporting requirements. The initial search plan may be used as a guide when creating the search summary and may be attached to the search summary report.

The search summary report should also describe the selection process, such as evaluation criteria, scoring sheets, elimination steps, diversity outreach efforts, interview process, etc. The search summary report must be completed and submitted to the HR consultant to complete the search process.

The supervisor/hiring authority will then negotiate the start date, starting salary, and other arrangements with the finalist. A recommended starting salary outside of the approved market pay range given at the beginning of the search process requires advanced consultation with HR, Budget and Finance, and the appropriate vice president before a formal offer is made to the candidate. The hiring department will prepare the [Letter of Offer](#) using the approved campus template and forward to HR for approval. Refer to the [University Staff HR Process Guide](#), Sections VI and VII, for additional information on offer letters.

Once a job offer has been accepted, the DL can change the status of the finalist in *Jobs at CU* to "recommend for hire." This will automatically start the background check process between the finalist and HR. Once the offer letter has been approved, and any contingencies have been finalized, the hiring department will notify the HR consultant to designate the job posting as filled and remove it from the web. Before the posting status can be changed to "filled," all candidates, unless already notified, must be notified by the hiring department that they are no longer being considered. Each applicant status in *Jobs at CU* should be updated accordingly.

The completed search committee records should be maintained by the hiring department in a secured location for a period of no less than 3 years from the date of hire.