

Suggestions for Writing The Well-Designed Position Announcement

Introduction

A well-designed search includes a well-designed position announcement. In developing the position announcement, it should be remembered that Kansas State University is committed to affirmative action and to the diversification of its faculty, staff, and administrators.

There is a difference between the goal of affirmative action and the goal of diversification. The goal of affirmative action is the inclusion in the job force of groups in our society that have previously been excluded and or are currently under-represented. In this regard, the university has a legal obligation. Ideally, the percentage of women and people of color working in a department, college, or university should be similar to the percentage of women and people of color qualified for such positions. Affirmative action does not mean showing partiality but rather reaching out to candidates and treating them with fairness and equality.

The goal of diversifying the faculty, staff, and administrators of the university means that the university is committed to having as many qualified persons in the protected classes as possible. This is not a legal mandate, but a self-interested imperative as the university evolves its workforce to respond to the demographic changes in our society. Diversifying the university's workforce means that we also value diversity in its broadest manifestations and that we are capable of identifying human talent and potential no matter how it might present itself.

The well-designed position announcement is one important starting point for meeting our obligations to affirmative action and for operationalizing our commitments to diversity and inclusion.

The Position Announcement

A position announcement usually provides information related to the following general categories: 1) overview of the position; 2) duties and responsibilities; 3) qualifications; 4) expectations; 5) salary; 6) how to apply; 7) closing date; 8) contact information; and 9) affirmative action and 504 statements. For convenience, each part of a position announcement is discussed below:

Overview of the Position: The overview summarizes key aspects of the position. For an academic career, the overview will usually include:

- Title of the position
- Rank: lecturer, instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor
- Type of appointment: term, regular, tenure-track, or tenured
- Position type: teaching and research faculty, extension faculty, or administrative/professional
- Annual appointment designation: 9-month (AY), 12-month (CY), full-time, or part-time
- Reporting and supervisory relationships
- When the appointment begins
- A concise description of the university, the college, and/or the department

Duties and Responsibilities: This section describes what the job holder will actually do. This is the part of the position announcement that is the job description.

Qualifications: Both the minimum required qualifications and the desired or preferred qualifications for the position will be listed here.

Expectations: State here norms which define the departmental culture such as valuing advisement, commitment to diversity, incorporating technology into instruction, etc. Many search committees elevate expectations to the level of qualifications that are either required or desired.

Salary: Give a numeric range or state that salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications.

How to Apply: This section states the required contents of the application package which typically include:

- Letter of application highlighting how the candidate fits the position
- Curriculum vitae
- Reference information (Specify whether the names, e-mails, and phone numbers of a certain number of references are to be provided, so that the search committee can request letters and/or

make personal contacts, or whether letters are to be requested from references by the applicant.)

Preferred Date for Receipt of Applications: This is the date when the review of applications will begin.

Contact Information: Usually this is the name, email, and telephone number of the chairperson of the search committee.

Required Statement for All Ads and Position Announcements:

Kansas State University is an EEO employer. Background check required.

Recommended Statement for All Ads and Position Announcements:

Kansas State University actively seeks diversity among its employees.

Additional Considerations

1. Past position announcements should not be just pulled out and re-cycled with new dates. The search committee should develop the position description that is appropriate for the given job.
2. Because most searches occur due to the departure of a current staff or faculty member, there is a natural tendency to think of an incoming person as a replacement of the incumbent. In other words, we often seek individuals with the same areas of expertise and qualifications as a departing person. Both the requirements and responsibilities of the position should be reconsidered to be certain that they are not simply the result of traditional practices, but are genuinely related to the current and projected needs of the unit, including the need to enhance diversity among faculty, staff, and administrators.
3. Nothing in the position announcement may be discriminatory.
4. The wording of the position announcement and any advertisements should be gender-inclusive and demonstrate cultural sensitivity.
5. Too many “required qualifications” have legal implications and implications for the diversity of the applicant pool. The search committee needs to keep in mind that any candidate selected for a position must meet all required qualifications in the position announcement. The same is not true about “preferred qualifications.” The person eventually hired is not legally bound to meet

“preferred qualifications.” With regard to diversity, too many required qualifications will unnecessarily restrict the pool of applicants. The well-designed position announcement will only have as required qualifications those qualifications that are absolutely required and anything else is stated as preferred qualifications.

6. Utilize qualifiers or adjectives with care; they may cause potential applicants to self select themselves out of consideration (see 4 of the following).
7. The university’s interest in a broad range of candidates can be demonstrated by including among the required qualifications experience with diverse populations, contributions to campus diversity, and/or evidence of cultural competence. This language in the position announcement indicates a high level of commitment to affirmative action, to workforce diversity, and to the cultural competence of those newly hired.

Examples of Flexible Wording in the Position Announcement:

1. “Candidates should possess an advanced degree, preferably the doctorate”, rather than “Ph.D. required.”
2. “Candidates should have an advanced degree in counseling or related discipline” rather than “degree in counseling required.”
3. “Candidates should have an MA degree and three years work experience, or BA degree and five years experience” rather than “an MA and three years of work experience required.”
4. “Candidates should have a solid record of scholarship and research” rather than “candidates should have a distinguished or nationally recognized body of research and scholarship.”