



Talent Acquisition

HIRING GUIDE

KANSAS STATE
UNIVERSITY | Division of Human
Capital Services



Overview

Kansas State University is committed to recruiting, retaining, rewarding and developing a talented and diverse workforce by providing equal employment. Selecting the best candidate for a university position is a crucial, time-consuming responsibility, and your dedication and persistence is appreciated as we strengthen the K-State family.

For more information about any of the guides or policies mentioned in this guide, view the Human Capital Services hiring toolkit at k-state.edu/hcs/tools/managers/recruitment.

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Requesting approval for position and establishing a search committee

- Determine the need to create or fill an existing position, and review position description for necessary updates/changes.
- If position description needs to be created or updated, refer to this [guide](#). (Faculty do not have position descriptions).
- Establish selection criteria based upon the education, experience, skills and abilities prospective applicants should possess.
- Determine any funds required for start-up commitments for faculty positions.
- Units reporting to the Provost, non-term appointments or those not previously approved require the Provost's approval.
- Term appointments and new positions require a new position number from the unit's budget or fiscal officer.
- Prepare the job requisition and submit it to the department or unit for approval.

Forming the search committee/interview panel

The search committee and interview panel should be comprised of a broad range of individuals who are best suited, as a group, to be able to ascertain the candidates' ability to perform the job, answer questions and provide an accurate depiction of what it will be like to work within the positions and be part of the K-State community. You may consider inviting students to participate as a member of the search committee. While some individuals may be better suited than others to serve on search committees, please keep their other work responsibilities in mind and avoid overburdening the same group of people with repeat committee staffing.

All members are required to complete the online search committee training: [Introduction to Search Committee Roles and Responsibilities and Hiring Top Talent](#).

Search committee roles and responsibilities

A search committee member's role is to emphasize and reiterate the importance of maintaining fair and consistent practices for the recruitment, interview and selection process. An effective search committee is one that will conduct a thorough and successful search for the ideal candidate, with both efficiency and professionalism.

Positions may be filled in one of two ways: The traditional search committee approach or the use of interview panels. Search committees are best used when the position will be responsible to a variety of constituents, when interdepartmental cooperation is essential, or when the expertise from peers and subject matter experts are required. A search committee may be used for faculty, dean, executive and senior staff positions reporting to a president, vice president or dean, and for many department head positions. If the decision is made to have an interview panel, the selected individuals may be involved in the interview process or only participate in meet-and-greet with a candidate.

For example, a candidate for an administrative assistant position may meet with other administrative assistants or faculty in the department. These individuals may or may not participate in the formal interview for the candidate. If supervisors or hiring managers are unsure of whether to use a search committee or interview panel, they may consult with their Talent Acquisition partner for further assistance.

Search committee responsibilities

Search committee and interview panel members have the very important responsibility of ensuring the following:

- Developing ground rules that create a respectful and productive environment for discussing the search process and candidates being considered for a position.
- Creating a timeline for the search process as well as a broad outreach plan to attract diverse talent. A discussion of the university goals for increasing diversity should occur at the committee's initial kickoff meeting. All members share responsibility for identifying appropriate venues and networks to diversify the applicant pool.
- All members must know and understand the required (minimum) and preferred qualifications for a position.
- Search committees and interview panels may write a position announcement and develop a strategic plan for sourcing. The committee should craft a compelling position announcement that embraces diversity and inclusion and that recognizes a college or major unit's [achievements](#). For example, consider mentioning that K-State strives to become a [Top 50 research institution by 2025](#), the proud recipient of the [Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award](#) (HEED), and identified as among the top 10 universities to work for in the U.S.

The Talent Acquisition partner is available to collaborate on the creation of the strategic sourcing and diversity plan to ensure a broad outreach of candidates. In some instances, the Talent Acquisition partner may compose the position announcement.

- Set aside [biases](#) and preconceptions to fully consider all those who may be qualified for a position. There is an [assessment](#) that you can complete on your own that will help identify your unconscious biases. As we become more aware of unconscious bias, we are able to reflect on it and make better decisions. It is important to note that biases are more prevalent under time pressure.

- Act promptly to ensure top candidates are not lost to universities that move more quickly through the interviewing and hiring process.
- Every candidate must be screened fairly and rated consistently based on the identified qualifications for a position. Search committees and interview panels must have a business-related reason for candidates' ratings that relate back to the job description and/or advertisement.
- Final recommendations made to the supervisor/hiring manager must be justified in great detail, outlining the strengths and areas of development for each candidate being recommended. Remember the supervisor or hiring manager has the final decision on which candidate is selected for the position and will proceed with the offer.
- The conclusion of the search process must be finalized appropriately, with proper communication not only to the selected candidate but to all candidates and applicants.
- The process is respectful for all candidates and serves as a positive representation of Kansas State University. After all, each candidate is also interviewing K-State.

Confidentiality

This is the foundation of a credible search committee and trustworthy search process. A breach of confidentiality threatens a successful outcome since it can result in the immediate termination of the search, a serious loss of time and money, and loss of potentially viable candidates. It may also cause the most qualified candidates to withdraw from the search because they fear a premature disclosure of their candidacy will jeopardize their current employment.

Hiring top talent at Kansas State University requires a search committee to be clear about its purpose and responsibilities throughout the search process. Broadly, the search committee's role is to recruit, screen, interview and recommend the best candidates for a position. To do this effectively, each committee member must have an in-depth understanding of the position that must be filled, as well as a set of timelines, legal and professional guidelines, and best practices.

Mastering the position announcement

A guide to attracting the perfect candidate

Why do position announcements matter?

Crafting the perfect position announcement sells both the position and the university. When your announcement is accurate, simple and catchy, it's easy to find the perfect match, because the perfect match finds you.

What makes a good position announcement?

You know you're on the right track when you're targeting — and receiving applications from — qualified candidates. A great position announcement makes candidates aware of not only the open position, but also the university itself and what it offers employees. Additionally, it avoids "buyer's remorse" from hires who regret coming on board based on information they were given.

There are a variety of ways to craft a great position announcement that will attract the perfect candidate. Here is a list to get you started.

Tips for crafting an attractive position announcement

- **Word choice:** Tailor your language to fit both your target candidate and the Kansas State University culture, as well as the particular feel of your department. Provide minimum job qualifications and skills, as listing too many may deter great candidates from applying.
- **Length:** Avoid dense, lengthy paragraphs and utilize bullet points. Remember, many job seekers will use mobile devices in their search.
- **Job title:** Use descriptive keywords such as "higher education experience" or "human resources director." Avoid words like "guru" or "self-starter." Not only are they not descriptive, but job seekers will also not search for these words. Incorporate search engine logic and use specific keywords.
- **Location:** List the city and state. Candidates may not be familiar with the location.
- **Benefits:** Mention any sort of nontraditional benefit. Play up a short commute, flexible hours and cultural events, such as McCain performances and other perks.
- **University mission:** Describe how the position ties into the university mission, particularly the K-State 2025 initiative or its land-grant history.

- **Projects:** Mention exciting and challenging projects in which the chosen candidate will be involved. Additionally, include any department or unit 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. Direct applicants to k-state.edu/jobs. If an applicant is not hired for a particular role, they may be right for another.
- **Social media:** Target candidates through a variety of social media platforms, tailoring specific messages for each. Encourage viewers to share the postings.
- Encourage potential applicants to follow your Twitter or LinkedIn account for updates.

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 candidates are clicking on most frequently.

Keep in mind: Top 5 factors for job seekers

1. Salary and compensation
2. Career growth opportunities
3. Work-life balance
4. Location/commute
5. Company culture and values

(From Glassdoor.com)

Sourcing strategy

Implementing a sourcing strategy

- The search committee or HCS liaison prepares the position announcement and indicates the sourcing and diversity plan in the applicant tracking system.
- Talent Acquisition posts the vacant position to the K-State Careers website, social media and newspaper (as requested).
- Identify where to advertise positions, such as education publications and social media.
- All internal job searches must be posted for a minimum of seven days.
- External searches may indicate that screening begins immediately, the date on which screening begins, or an application deadline.

Advertisement guidelines

Developing a comprehensive advertising strategy will attract a broad and diverse applicant pool. Your Talent Acquisition strategic partner can assist in developing effective strategies and will review all postings. To further strengthen the university employer brand, utilize templates provided by your Talent Acquisition partner.

Recruiting Historically Underrepresented (HUR) faculty and staff

- Promote Talent Acquisition's diversity resources to the search committee.
- Talent Acquisition will document recruiting resources used and the yield based on voluntary applicant self-identification.
- Integrate the Diversity Point Person (DPP) into the search process.
- Craft position announcement to appeal to a broad base of excellent, diverse applications.
- Share applicable university diversity recognition in the position announcement, such as Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award (HEED Award).
- Develop a standard set of interview questions that address cultural competence.
- Enhance the campus visit/interview by encouraging all faculty and staff to attend open forums and receptions.

Interviewing

Selecting candidates for interviews

- University support staff searches: Talent Acquisition reviews resumes for the position's minimum qualifications, then forwards qualified applications for consideration.
- All other searches: The HCS liaison, hiring manager or search committee reviews resumes for minimum qualifications. Please contact your Talent Acquisition partner if you want applicant materials screened for minimum qualifications.
- [Evaluate credentials](#) of applicants based on established job-related criteria.
- If the committee determines that no applicants are qualified, the search may be declared unsuccessful and other actions will be considered.
- Notify applicants who are no longer being considered for the position.

Conducting interviews

- You may conduct phone screen interviews. It is your opportunity to assess the candidate's communication skills and experience. By asking the right questions, you can determine whether or not the candidate should be invited to an on-campus interview.
- Draft questions and agree on an interview format. All interviewed candidates must be asked the same questions. However, follow-up questions may differ.
- Only conduct interviews with candidates who meet the minimum requirements for the position.
- Ask open-ended, informational, situational and behavioral questions. You may develop [interview guides](#) in PageUp. Allow applicants time to ask their own questions.
- You may inform the applicant of the advertised salary range as well as any applicable [benefits](#).
- Tell the applicant if you have other interviews scheduled, and that no official offer can be made until all necessary parties approve.
- Inform the applicant when to expect to hear back from you.
- If the position requires an open forum presentation, the search committee will make arrangements, provide a topic and leave adequate time to prepare. All candidates must present on the same topic.
- In an open forum, the committee also will create a feedback survey for attendees.

Interview scheduling guide checklist

The following information is important to consider when scheduling interviews for candidates. A first impression is important and keep in mind how important a positive experience is for all of our candidates. Remember, some down time and preparation time will be helpful to candidates. We do not need to fill every minute of their day.

Calendars:

- Request holds on calendars as soon as potential dates are identified.
- Once dates are confirmed, notify staff to release the held dates.

Meetings rooms:

- When scheduling rooms be mindful of the size of the room and the 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 ([K-State Student Union](#), [Alumni Center](#), [Leadership Studies](#), [Hale Library](#), [Bluemont Hotel](#), [Holiday Inn at the Campus](#) or large lecture space). Please note there may be cost associated with some of these locations.

Hosts:

- Arrange for a host to escort the candidate from one location to another. The host should wear a name tag and be prepared to give the candidate directions to restrooms, drinking fountains, etc. Include the host's name and phone number on the schedule. Please provide hotel information if the candidate is arriving by car.

Flights:

- List the flight numbers and time 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 city tours.
 - New Student Services (785-532-6237) will give one-hour 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 give a community tour (90 minutes).
- Include a short tour of the candidate's potential work area.

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 his/her own meals provide options available.

Parking:

- If your candidate is driving to campus, be sure he or she has a campus map marked with the closest parking lot. If possible, reserve a metered parking stall.

Interview announcements:

- The Division of Communications and Marketing can assist you in creating a website to post the candidates materials. We recommend that you redact personal information, such as the candidate's home address and phone number prior to posting on a website.
- K-State Today will list your candidate's interview. Provide a link to your departmental webpage. The deadline for submissions is noon the weekday before the requested publication date. For Monday's edition, the deadline is Friday at noon.

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. The Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce has packets available.
- Email the final schedule to everyone involved. Be prepared for last-minute changes.
- It is optional to prepare a small welcome packet for your top candidates. A handwritten "welcome to K-State" note is a nice touch. This may be left at the hotel so the candidate will receive at the time of check-in or it may be placed in their hotel room. Be consistent and conscious of a reasonable limit on the monetary value. Items such as departmental mugs, coasters, pen and paper, K-State magazines, etc., are appropriate.
- Inform the candidate of any special needs for the visit, such as comfortable shoes or a light jacket.
- Be prepared with an umbrella if needed.
- Necessities: Water, facial tissues and mini hand sanitizer.

Special accommodations (if need or requested):

- Individuals may request a reasonable accommodation during the interview process. Please contact the ADA Coordinator for assistance at 785-532-6227.

Hiring

When hiring:

- Offer the selected candidate the approved hourly rate or salary within the salary range approved by compensation and organizational effectiveness (as applicable). Inform the candidate that the offer is contingent on the background check results.
- Conduct necessary reference and [background checks](#).

Reference and background checks

Reference checks may be conducted in writing or by the phone. Background checks are required for all state employees and are completed within the applicant tracking system. Templates are available in the applicant tracking system. Keep in mind:

- Candidates should be informed before any references are contacted.
- References may include current/previous supervisors/peers, department heads or colleagues.
- You may not ask any questions concerning family status, age, religion, medical conditions, etc.
- Background checks include searches for felony and misdemeanor convictions, sex offender registry and other verifications required for specific positions.
- The Policy and Procedure Manual references Criminal Background Check Policy Chapter 4015.

Social media

Use wise judgment when considering the use of information on social media when hiring a candidate. Social media information not directly related to job requirements may not be used as hiring criteria.



More Information

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

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