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Procedures for Hiring and Recruitment

I. Purpose

These procedures are meant to assist those involved in filling all vacant non-temporary personnel positions at Athens State University. The goal of these procedures and the [*Hiring and Recruiting*](#) Policy is to conduct a search that will yield the best possible candidates for these positions.

These procedures are not applicable to part-time/adjunct faculty vacancies and temporary employment (*see Section IV*).

All efforts to fill these positions will be directed toward choosing the best-suited individual based on professional qualifications and personal integrity. These procedures are designed to assist personnel in completing the search/hiring process in an efficient and effective manner.

II. Recruitment

It is important that the search process include a focus on recruitment, of all types and demographics of persons, to ensure that the best candidate is hired on the basis of merit.

In conjunction with the above notices and advertising, the University may explore creative and effective other ways to actively recruit an effective and qualified workforce. The University may employ strategies to widen the candidate net and to seek out desirable candidates at professional meetings. The University should view this task as including a process of *generating* a pool rather than merely tapping it. The University's goal is to *search* for outstanding candidates, regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or other characteristics protected by law. This may be accomplished by having members of the University community, when attending national meetings and conferences, visit presentations and develop a list of potential future candidates based on those presentations. Candidates identified in this way may be in any field, not necessarily the one targeted for a particular search.

The University may consider searching for qualified candidates outside academia, such as in industry, some of whom may be well suited to a faculty or staff position. Care should be taken to place a suitable value on non-traditional career paths and consider time spent raising children or getting particular kinds of training, unusual undergraduate degrees, and different job experiences. More than one standard may be used to measure achievement. Candidates who received their education later in life or worked part-time to meet family responsibilities, may bring rich experiences to the University.



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The University may utilize creative and effective methods to encourage and attract a diverse pool of applicants, to ensure that the best candidate is hired on the basis of his/her merit, regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or other characteristics protected by law. For example, members of the University community may contact students in their final year of Ph.D. studies to inform them about Athens State University and describe potential vacancies (perhaps inviting them to present their work).

III. Announcement of New Position/Vacancy

The appropriate Vice President, in conjunction with the Human Resources Office, identifies minimum credential requirements, qualifications, essential functions, and responsibilities of the position, classification level, salary range, and application procedures. All positions to fill/advertise are created in the online employment system based on the provided job description and posting information form sent to the Office of Human Resources on the Request to Fill form located on MyAthens Portal, Employment Services. After all approvals, the Office of Human Resources will post the position as directed.

Further, the Office of Human Resources will:

- Notify other universities/agencies of the vacancy
- Post position announcement on the University website
- Utilize other sources as appropriate for advertising

The University will require that a current position description be submitted to the Chief Human Resources Officer before advertising. The University will further require that all positions be advertised using both on-campus and off-campus resources. It shall be the responsibility of the appropriate administrator to identify the minimum qualifications and essential functions of the job; define and describe fully the duties and responsibilities of the position; specify all physical, environmental, and mental demands of the position; and obtain confirmation from Human Resources on the classification level and salary ranges. Position descriptions must reflect actual qualifications and experience required for the position.

Job announcements shall contain the job classification, a brief description of the position, and include salary and benefit information related to the job. Announcements must alert applicants of the minimum qualifications and any required pre-placement requirements. The duration and scope of advertising shall follow University practices and applicable state and/or federal laws and shall follow announcement guidelines.



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- Current members of the University community may contact colleagues at other institutions to seek nominations of potential candidates who are qualified, effective, and have qualified experiences and perspectives.
- Advertise in local and regional media.
 - Generally, all positions are advertised in a minimum of two regional and/or national sources (online and/or print) appropriate to the discipline and to enhance potential for a broader pool of applicants.
 - Current members of the University community may make personal contacts with potential candidates of all types at professional conferences and invite them to apply.
 - Avoid narrowly drawn job descriptions. Athens State University emphasizes the importance of considering the job description and whether it can be broadened to include more specialties or perspectives. An unduly narrow job description may restrict the applicant pool and ultimately inhibit the scope of ideas that help create a dynamic community.

IV. Part-Time/Adjunct Faculty/Temporary Employment

Part-time/Adjunct Faculty are faculty members who have part-time appointments, specifying both the part-time workload and the period of time (normally one term) with the appointment terminating automatically at the end of the specified period.

Employment opportunities for part-time/adjunct faculty are continually available in the online employment system. Part-time/Adjunct faculty applications that are submitted through this online system are kept in an applicant pool that is available to University administration should there be a future opening.

Part-time/Adjunct faculty positions are considered temporary, non-tenured track employees appointed to teach specific courses and compensated on a course-by-course basis.

Temporary appointments may be made to any position with the approval of the Vice President of Financial Affairs and the President of the University, and by submitting a request to fill form to Human Resources. Temporary appointments should not exceed 12 calendar months, but in exceptional situations, the Chief Human Resources Office, upon recommendation of the Dean/Vice President may approve an extension of an additional 12-month period. Temporary employees are



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not eligible to participate in employee benefit programs except for those required by law. (Refer to *Policy IV.08, Section III*).

[Request to Fill – Non-Instructional Position](#)

V. Search Committee/Hiring Group Process

Athens State University should utilize a search committee/hiring group to assist in filling the vacancy or a new position. The Search Committee/hiring group will be appointed at the request of the Vice President from the hiring area and will be listed on the request to fill form. However, as stated in the [Athens State University Statement on Shared Governance](#), the University President will appoint the search committee when a vacancy occurs for a Dean position. Normally, a search committee is established for an exempt position search, and a hiring group is established for a non-exempt position search. A search committee consists of employees from various areas who have experience or knowledge of the responsibilities of the position being recruited. The hiring group commonly consists of employees from the area in which the position exists. The chairperson of the search committee is appointed by the Vice President of the hiring area.

[Request to Fill – Faculty Position](#)

[Request to Fill – Non-Instructional Position](#)

Search Committees

The following criteria may be considered when forming a search committee.

- Under no circumstances should the Vice President or Dean be the Chair of a search committee in their respective areas.
- Search committees may include members with different perspectives and expertise.
- The committee may include members of the community and the general public.

The [Search Committee Chair Checklist \(Appendix A\)](#) is available to assist the committee chair with the search process.



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Receiving and Screening Applications

The Human Resources Office will perform the initial screening of all applications before submitting them to the search committee.

The search committee should document the minimum qualifications and whether or not these minimum qualifications are met. This form should be used for the overall search and must be accompanied by a summary explaining how the minimum qualifications were met. A sample [Candidate Evaluation Sheet \(Appendix B\)](#) may be used, or the search committee may compose its own.

Once a pool of applicants meeting the minimum number of requirements has been determined, the committee should develop a list of criteria that will be used to narrow the pool to a “short list” of applicants that will be further considered and interviewed.

In formulating the “short list,” the committee should consider all criteria that is relevant to the specific job and what is expected of the position. These criteria must be documented as to how they were derived. It should also be documented how these criteria were weighted, and a summary of how the criteria were applied to the pool must be provided. For those candidates who met the qualifications but were not included in the short list to be interviewed, a statement explaining the rationale applied should be included in the interview file.

An important point about the process of creating a short list is to build in checkpoints for evaluation of whether the committee is satisfied with the pool of candidates.

Once the short list has been agreed upon, the committee should proceed with the interview process.

The search committee may set up a tentative schedule for the application review and interview process and encourage the committee to:

- **Resist the urge to use one standard to measure achievement.** Candidates who received their education later in life, or worked part-time to meet other responsibilities may bring rich experiences to the campus.
- **Review of national pool and past searches.** The committee may take steps to identify the national pools of qualified candidates for the position. It is likely to be extremely useful for the search committee, and/or a larger group in the department, college, or office, to engage in a review of the national context, as well as the University's own past history of searching and hiring, before beginning a new search.



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- **Take steps to review the approaches of past Committee searches** to determine the most effective procedures for obtaining a qualified applicant pool, including examining the successes and failures in securing applications, interviews, and hires.
- All members of the search committee must sign the *Confidentiality Agreement for Faculty and Staff Recruiting* that will be provided by the Office of Human Resources.

Recommendation and Selection

Once the campus interviews have been completed, the search committee is to provide the appropriate Vice President with the completed file of each interviewed candidate and the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each candidate in an unranked order.

The chair of the search committee is responsible for entering the results in the online employment system at each phase of the search process.

Hiring Groups

Once the advertisement for the non-exempt position has closed, the Human Resources Office will perform the initial screening of all applications before submitting them to the appropriate Vice President. The Vice President, or delegate, shall coordinate with the Director and/or supervisor for the vacant position a review of all applications in order to determine a list of qualified candidates. These individuals shall be referred to as the hiring group unless, at the discretion of the Vice President, other key personnel are included in the hiring process. At this point, the hiring group will determine a set of criteria, based on the minimum qualifications listed for the position, that will be used to rank the qualified candidates in order to come up with a short list who will be interviewed for the position. However, the appropriate Vice President may utilize a search committee. If a search committee is used, the same procedures should be followed as outlined herein.

Once the campus interviews have been completed, the hiring group is to provide the appropriate Vice President with the completed file of each interviewed candidate and the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each candidate in an unranked order.

The hiring group, in coordination with the Office of Human Resources, is responsible for entering the results in the online employment system at each phase of the search process.



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VI. Interviews

Once the screening and evaluation process is completed, candidates will be selected for an initial interview. Initial interviews may be conducted either face-to-face or by telephone or via video conference. The phone or video conference interview should be taken as seriously as any face-to-face interview, with plenty of advance notice given to all participants and at least 30 minutes set aside without interruptions for everyone on the call. These initial interviews may be used to determine whether or not the candidate and the position are likely to be a good match, and to aid the committee in developing a short list for campus interviews.

Whichever initial interview process is utilized, all initial interviews must be consistent within the same search. At the conclusion of the initial interview process, the candidate pool is narrowed to a reasonable number (generally should not exceed three) to be brought to campus for face-to-face interviews. In certain cases, where the candidate pools are very small, it may be appropriate to only bring one or two candidates to campus for an interview. If the candidates are not deemed a good fit for the University, it is most likely that the search would be reopened; however, in certain cases, the University would not be prohibited from bringing to campus other candidates from the same pool for face-to-face interviews.

Search Committees/hiring groups **must obtain prior approval** from the appropriate Vice President **before** scheduling campus visits/interviews. Once this approval is obtained, the selected candidates will be invited to campus. The search committee/hiring group will be responsible for making arrangements (lodging, interview schedule, meals, escorts, etc.), and publishing the interview schedule and brief resume for all interested parties as requested. Candidates selected for on-campus interviews will be reimbursed in accordance with University procedures. ([Candidate Interview Expense Travel](#))

All search committees/hiring groups should ensure compliance with the minimum requirements during the applicant screening process **BEFORE** interviews are requested. The [Faculty Credential Form](#) must be used for faculty positions. Official transcripts must be a part of the completed file. Unofficial or official transcripts may be used to evaluate the minimum requirements.

Upon completion of the first stage of interviews, the search committee/hiring group may choose to conduct another stage of interviews, but is not required to do so. The chair of the search committee/hiring group will notify the appropriate Vice President of the top finalists with strengths and weaknesses of each, in an unranked order. The Vice President will make a recommendation to the Chief Human Resources Officer, who will then forward it to the President.



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Useful tips for managing interviews:

- A standard list of questions should be used for every candidate and either provided to every candidate in advance or not provided to any candidate in advance. [Sample Interview Questions \(Appendix C\)](#) The actual list should be devised by the search committee/hiring group and customized to fit the requirements of the position.
- Make it clear that you are interested in the candidate's qualifications and skills.
- Schedule interviews and events consistently. Allow equal time for each candidate to interview and meet with the same personnel whenever possible.
- Use a set of common questions with all candidates to allow comparative judgment and ensure that crucial information related to the position is obtained.
- Treat internal candidates with the same consistency.
- Give the candidate a chance to interact with the appropriate faculty and staff.
- Formal talks may not reveal every candidate's strengths. Consider including Q+A sessions and other less formal interactions. Focus on the candidate's ability to perform the essential functions of the job and avoid making assumptions based on perceived race, ethnic background, religion, marital or familial status, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.
- If the candidate will assume a leadership role (division chief, department chair, etc.) examine the candidate's commitment to equal treatment of all kinds of persons, without determination based on race, sex, religion, national origin, or other protected characteristics.
- Introduce all members of the offices and departments to all candidates, without any differentiation based on race, sex, religion, national origin, or other protected characteristics.

Guidelines for Interview Questions

All candidates should be asked the same interview questions and given the same amount of time for the interview. However, appropriate follow-up questions are allowed.

Understanding the types of questions that are appropriate and lawful to ask during a pre-employment interview is essential to ensuring compliance with equal opportunity obligations.

Three basic guidelines should be followed when selecting questions to be used in the interview process:

1. Ask only for information you intend to use in making a hiring decision.



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2. Know in advance how you will use the information to make that decision.
3. Recognize that it is extremely difficult to defend the seeking of information that is not directly relevant to the job.

The following are guidelines about specific question areas:

- **Age and Date of Birth** – Federal and state law prohibit discrimination on the basis of age. The applicant may be asked if he/she meet the minimum age requirement as set out by law (usually 18), but may not be asked to state age or date of birth or to provide proof of age.
- **Name and National Origin** – No inquiry should be made about an applicant's maiden name, a person's lineage, ancestry, national origin, or descent. This also applies to questions about spouse, parents, or other relatives. Applicants should provide their current legal name for identification purposes and may be asked to provide any other names he/she has used in the past (needed for checking academic and work history).
- **Marital Status** – Any questions about an applicant's relatives, marital status, dependents (number, ages, child care arrangements, etc.), and spouse's employment (salary, shift or travel schedule) are prohibited. You may ask only whether the applicant is able to meet the work schedule.
- **Birthplace/Citizenship** – You may ask an applicant if he/she is legally eligible to work in the U.S. You may not ask for an applicant's country of citizenship or country of origin.
- **Religion/Creed** – Inquiries about an applicant's religious denomination, affiliation, parish, pastor, or holidays observed are not permitted.
- **Military Service** – It is permissible to ask about the type of education and experience gained from military service if it is related to the job. Interviewers should refrain, however, from asking about the type of discharge received.
- **Education** – It is permissible to ask about an applicant's academic, professional, or vocational educational background when it is related to the applicant's ability to perform the essential functions of the job. Asking about the national, racial, or religious affiliation of a school, or its gender restrictions is prohibited.
- **Organizations** – It is permissible to ask about professional organizational memberships as long as the applicant is made aware of his/her right to exclude the name or character of any organization that is predominantly racial, religious, or sexual in nature.
- **Financial Data, Credit Record, Garnishment Record, or Fidelity Bond** – Questions to applicants about these issues are inappropriate unless there is a clear business necessity for this information. In the latter case, Human Resources will handle this inquiry.
- **Arrest/Conviction Record** – It is inappropriate to ask about the arrest record of an applicant because an arrest does not necessarily mean that the individual was convicted. Inquiries



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about convictions may not be made unless they are made of all applicants. A conviction may prejudice the applicant's status only if the nature of the conviction has a bearing on job performance in that specific position. The required background check by Human Resources, after an offer is made, will generate pertinent information.

- **Photographs** – Photographs may not be reviewed or requested prior to employment.
- **Height and Weight** – This information may not be requested of applicants and should not be used as a consideration for employment.
- **Physical/Mental Disabilities** – No questions should be asked about whether a person has a disability or about the severity or nature of the disability. You may ask whether the individual is able to carry out all essential job requirements in a safe manner, as long as this question is posed to all candidates.
- **Language Skills** – Questions about the ability to speak, read or write English or a foreign language are permitted only if that skill is required by the job.
- **Race** – No questions are appropriate or permitted.
- **Sexual Orientation** – No questions are appropriate or permitted.

These guidelines are not all-inclusive.

VII. Reference Checks

Athens State University must make a reasonable effort to learn about a candidate before extending an invitation to join the community. The University can best protect against liability for negligent hiring by checking background and references to the extent reasonably possible. Also, reference checks may help clarify or dispel any concerns or uncertainties about a candidate and may give information about a former or present employee (e.g., position title and years of employment). Reference checks should be conducted and results documented via the online employment system through the Office of Human Resources. It is suggested that the references be contacted before the on-campus interview takes place.

It is important to remember that all questions asked during reference checks should be job-related. One should not ask questions of references that should not be asked of the applicant.

The search committee/hiring group should not do online research about candidates, although it is acceptable to visit a candidate's website if the candidate has specifically referred you to it, for example, by listing the website on their CV. Online research has the potential of inadvertently uncovering private information about the candidate that is irrelevant to his/her ability to perform



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the job duties, including information about the candidate's race, religion, or sexual orientation, potentially introducing bias into the process.

VIII. Offer of Employment

The appropriate Vice President, in coordination with the department head, director, manager, or dean, will work with the Office of Financial Affairs and the Chief Human Resources Officer to determine the appropriate pay scale for the position. Once these parties agree with respect to the terms, the recommendation will be issued to the President for review and approval. The hire date and other conditions of employment can be negotiated at this time. Salaries and other conditions outside of the pre-approved ranges and norms must be approved by the President. If the President approves the hire, the appropriate Vice President or designee, in consultation with the Chief Human Resources Officer, will extend a job offer to the selected candidate based on the approved parameters of the offer (relocation, tenure, and other special employment conditions).

The final candidate must be informed that the **offer is contingent** on the candidate passing the background check, which investigates the following: social security number verification, criminal background check (State and National Criminal Database and Sex Offender Registry), degree verification, motor vehicle record (MVR) check, and employment verification.

Background Checks and Self-Disclosure of Criminal Convictions. ***No offer of employment is finalized until background checks are completed and HR has contacted the hiring agent with the results.***

Once a candidate is chosen to receive an offer of employment, and a verbal acceptance has been made by the candidate, an appointment letter will be issued by the Office of Human Resources upon verification of the following:

- Completed file with required documentation: curriculum vitae, memo with recommendation from the selection committee, and unofficial transcripts from all institutions of higher learning from which a degree was received or other institutions attended, as appropriately determined
- Satisfactory results of the degree verification via the *Faculty Credential Form.*

Once the appointment letter has been signed, the employee understands that employment is contingent upon the following:

- Satisfactory results of the background check. Applicants convicted of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude must obtain approval from the President of the University that the applicant is suitable for employment.



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- Documentation indicating completion of Harassment, Ethics, and Discrimination training.
- Official transcripts from all institutions attended

IX. Notification of Non-Selection

The Chief Human Resources Officer or designee will notify the candidates who were not interviewed/not selected. Any requests for information and questions about the search should be referred to the Office of Human Resources to resolve any issues/concerns.

It is recommended that finalists who were invited to campus to interview be notified personally (via telephone, email, or letter) of their non-selection by the Search Committee/Hiring Group Chair or a member of the Search Committee/Hiring Group. The notification will not detail why a candidate was not selected but merely indicate that another candidate was a better fit for the position.

X. Internal Searches, Lateral Transfers, Job Reorganization/Modification

Internal Searches

Notwithstanding the generally applicable procedures for filling a vacant position, the appropriate vice president or administrative head, in consultation with the Chief Human Resources Officer and the President, may declare an internal search to fill a vacancy. Internal searches should be conducted in the same manner as discussed in these guidelines, except that the position announcement and/or advertisement will be limited to the Athens State University community.

For example, (and not as a limitation), an internal search could be justified in any of the following circumstances:

- when there is consensus that a qualified individual or individuals already exists within Athens State University's employ and there is urgency to fill the position in order to prevent prolonged disruption of University services;
- when there are fiscal constraints.

Only current permanent employees who have previously been through a University search process are eligible to apply for internal search positions.

Lateral Transfers

Notwithstanding the generally applicable procedures for filling vacant positions, in the event that there is one or more employees at Athens State University in positions which are at least equivalent to a vacant position in terms of salary and level of responsibility, the President shall have the discretion, in lieu of the procedures stated herein, to offer all such equivalently positioned employees



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the opportunity to apply and be considered for a lateral transfer, without discrimination, to said vacancy. The President's decision to do so should be supported by a written explanation of the reasons for his/her choice.

Job Reorganization/Modification

There may be occasional situations where Athens State University finds it necessary and appropriate to reorganize, expand, reduce, redefine, change, and/or to otherwise modify the job duties, compensation, and/or schedule of an existing position. In such cases, the University may do so without the position being considered a vacancy. For example, (and not as a limitation), such circumstances could include expanding the duties of an incumbent employee or reassigning duties among incumbent employees to avoid the need for hiring a new employee. Prior to such action, the President must approve the same, and ensure that it is necessary and appropriate given the circumstances (and not made for impermissible reasons or to frustrate the usual search process).

XI. Accommodations for Disabilities

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 makes it unlawful for the University to discriminate against a qualified applicant with a disability. The University must provide reasonable accommodations to enable applicants to be considered for a job opening (unless it would cause an undue hardship).

These requirements should be understood by those involved in a search process. Employers should be sensitive to the barriers faced by qualified individuals with disabilities and work to ensure that they have the same opportunity as all other applicants to be considered fairly for positions at the University. This may require providing accommodations in the interview process or in testing.

In addition, the University should work to identify the essential functions of a job. An applicant with a disability, like other applicants, must be able to perform the essential functions of a job either on his/her own, or with the help of a reasonable accommodation (unless it will cause undue hardship). When conducting an interview, all questions should be job-related and focus on the candidate's ability to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Qualified candidates cannot be rejected for employment because they need, or it is thought that they need, reasonable accommodations.

XII. Evaluating the Search Process

The evaluation of the search process should be ongoing during the search as well as a summative process at the end of the search. If at any point during the search it becomes apparent that the applicant pool does not contain numerous enough or sufficiently well-qualified applicants, the



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committee should reassess the advertising and recruitment process. The committee should analyze whether the hiring net was cast broadly enough and, if it was not, what can be done to address that issue in the future.

If the applicant pool was not as large or as qualified as was anticipated, the committee should consider these questions:

- Could the job description have been constructed in a way that would have brought in a broader pool of candidates?
- Could the applicable department have recruited more actively?

XIII. Responsibility for this Operating Policy

Policy Owner

As part of the initial approval of this policy by the President and subsequent to the original dissemination of the policy, the Vice President for Financial Affairs is the policy owner for the ongoing evaluation, review, and approval of this policy. Subsequent reviews and revisions to this policy must be in accordance with approved operating policy procedures and processes.

These guidelines will be reviewed every three years or more frequently as needed by the Policy Owner. Revisions will be reviewed/affirmed by the Cabinet and approved by the University President. These guidelines will be updated/published in the University's Policy Library.

Responsibility for Policy Implementation

The President has assigned the responsibility of implementing this policy to the Chief Human Resources Officer, under the direction of the Vice President for Financial Affairs. In accordance with Act 2012-497, all full-time employees, whether tenured, non-tenured, non-probationary, or probationary, who were employed by the University on October 1, 2012, shall retain any and all rights and privileges as provided in Chapter 24C of Title 16, Code of Alabama 1975 (the "Students First Act of 2011"). All employees hired after October 1, 2012, will follow the new personnel policies and procedures adopted by the University unless specifically excluded. Effective dates for the new personnel policies and procedures will be retroactive to October 1, 2012, unless alternate effective dates are specifically identified.