UMass Amherst Staff Search Hiring Guide

All hiring is initiated through PageUp. PageUp is UMass Amherst's online position management and applicant tracking system, and is used for creating and updating job descriptions, and for recruiting staff and faculty.

Approval to Fill Position

Hiring departments identify a vacancy and use their departmental and/or divisional processes for gaining approval to create and re-fill positions in PageUp. Each unit has a Compensation Analyst assigned to work with you in the position management process, as well as an HR Business Partner to assist with a unit's overall organizational structure and staffing plan.

Prior to creating a new position, check with your HR contacts to inquire if a similar position or existing template may be available to use as a guide.

Once the position description has been created and gone through the approval path for your respective area in PageUp, you may use it for advertising on the Requisition.

For a video training on creating position descriptions in PageUp, please click here.

Creating a Requisition

The hiring department creates a new Requisition by launching it directly from an approved position description. Please click here for a video tutorial on launching the Requisition in PageUp.

The Requisition should contain your search proposal including the job posting application instructions with priority deadline (if applicable), advertising plan, and search committee members or planned interview participants.

The approval path chosen on the Requisition should represent your respective areas' agreed upon sequence of approvers, with Talent Management listed as the final approver.

Posting and Advertising

Postings are created directly from the approved Requisition and posting guidelines vary by bargaining unit.

- All non-exempt (classified) bargaining unit positions must be posted for at least one week. They are posted each Thursday in the Yellow Sheet, by the Talent Acquisition team.
- All non-exempt (classified) non-bargaining unit positions can be posted at any time and must be posted for a minimum of 5 business days.
- All exempt (professional) bargaining unit positions must be posted for a minimum of 10 calendar days.
- All exempt (professional) non-bargaining unit positions must be posted for a minimum of 5 business days.

Internal Posting Option

There is language in the PSU contract that allows a hiring department to advertise any PSU position internally to at least the Major Budgetary Unit (MBU) and accept applications from members for no less than ten (10) working days. The Hiring Manager may then appoint a bargaining unit member to the position provided that the bargaining unit member to be appointed meets the minimum qualifications of the vacant position. The Talent Acquisition Consultant will provide the internal job link to be emailed and the Hiring Manager is responsible for sending the email.

PageUp allows you to advertise directly to HERC, DiversityJobs.com, HigherEdJobs.com, InsideHigerEd.com, through the posting tab, and Indeed.com sweeps our site each evening for new jobs posted. In addition, the hiring department may advertise a vacancy with an external vendor directly or through Buyer Ads. Think about posting on targeted recruitment sites, newspapers, professional organizations, and trade journals.

The external ads must reflect the same job duties and qualifications as listed in the posting in PageUp and must include reference to the University's commitment to affirmative action through equal employment opportunity using either of the following statements:

UMass Amherst is committed to a policy of equal opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, military status, or genetic information in employment, admission to and participation in academic programs, activities, and services, and the selection of vendors who provide services or products to the University. To fulfill that policy, UMass Amherst is further committed to a program of affirmative action to eliminate or mitigate artificial barriers and to increase opportunities for the recruitment and advancement of qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans. It is the policy of the UMass Amherst to comply with the applicable federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations concerning equal opportunity and affirmative action.

-OR-

UMass Amherst is an Affirmative Action / Equal Opportunity / Disabled / Veterans Employer.

Search Firms

The use of outside search firms is appropriate for more senior level positions and the Office of Human Resources can review and recommend firms that have been or may be approved by Procurement. All search firms doing business with UMass Amherst must contractually agree to comply with UMass Amherst's affirmative action obligations and to collect and provide UMass Amherst with information in compliance with UMass Amherst's recordkeeping obligations.

Before retaining a search firm, it is a good idea to connect with your Talent Acquisition Consultant for potential sourcing methods utilized internally.

Waivers and Direct Hires

In exceptional circumstances, a waiver or request for a direct hire may be approved. As each request has a different set of circumstances, please begin the request for a waiver with your Talent Acquisition Consultant.

If a waiver for a direct hire is approved, the process of completing a Position Description and Requisition must be followed. Your candidate will need to apply to an internal link generated from the approved Requisition. Once they have applied, you will need to initiate an Offer Card and complete all of the steps in the hiring process, similar to a search. We do have modified, shortened applications for direct hires.

Screening and Dispositioning

Screening of applicants for exempt (professional) positions can be done as applicants apply or once the position is closed. The screening is an initial assessment of whether or not each applicant has submitted all of the requested application materials, and meets the minimum and preferred experience and qualifications as specified in the requisition.

You will want to document the screening selection process, and one idea is to create a screening evaluation matrix which lists each applicant with each of the criteria used to qualify or disqualify candidates. The criteria should closely match the minimum and preferred qualifications on the position description to assess how closely each candidate matches the requirements. Carefully review the selection criteria for each vacancy to ensure that only job-related nondiscriminatory factors are considered in making employment decisions and that women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans in the applicant pool have been given fair consideration. No substitutes are accepted for education credentials unless language specifies such.

As you work your way through the applicant pool, disposition each applicant. This step will ensure that the applicants who are not moving forward in the process are sent an email to let them know that they are no longer being considered as an applicant for the position.

The statuses you should be using at this stage are:

- Meets Minimum Qualifications
- Screened – No Longer Under Consideration

If you uncover applicants who have not submitted all of the requested materials (i.e., cover letter) and would still like to consider them, you may move them to the status of "Pending Additional Documents" and send them a quick email to let them know they will not be considered until their materials are complete. Please note that if you do this for one applicant whose materials are incomplete, you must do it for all, and you may not be selective.

It is critical that candidates meet minimum qualifications in order to be considered for the position and move through the process. If you get to the end of the process and select a candidate who does not meet the minimum qualifications, you will need to select another candidate, or start a new search. Ensure cover letter is included, if required.

The candidates that are moved to the recruitment status of "Meets Minimum Qualifications" make up your short list of candidates that can be considered for an interview. Based on the number of minimally qualified candidates, you may want to consider further evaluation by rating them as either highly qualified or minimally qualified, and then begin your interview process by interviewing the highly qualified pool first. If you do rank your short list, ensure to make clear and strong objective comments that differentiate the highly qualified from the minimally qualified. Comments such as "would not be a good fit" are subjective and not acceptable.

Remember that dispositioning through the entire search process is best practice documentation, and tells the story of how each applicant moved through the process, helping to meet our OFCCP reporting requirements.

Interviewing

There are several different formats for interviews and the number of interviews for each search will vary. The search team will want to decide ahead of time on how many rounds of interviews, i.e., phone screen, first round, second round, etc.

Phone Screens

Prior to an interview, you may wish to phone screen your short list to eliminate those candidates who may have unreasonable salary expectations or who may no longer be interested in the role. We recommend this step as it provides a first opportunity to assess their communication skills, set the tone for the interview process, and probe into what the candidate is really looking for in their next career move.

The phone screen should be prescheduled, conducted by one person on the search team, and should be no longer than 20-30 minutes in length. Take notes and take time to write a more thorough debrief after the call.

Some typical questions that are asked;

- Why are you searching for a new position?
- What interests you about this role?
- What do you see as your strongest skills?
- What are some of the skills you would like to develop?
- The salary range for this position is $xx to $xx, does that meet your requirements?
- What is your interview availability over the next couple of weeks?
- Do you have any questions for me at this time about the position?

At the end of the call, you should outline the next steps in the process including approximate timeline.

1st Interview

The first interview may be done in person or via Zoom (or another video method) depending on location. It is not necessary for all candidates in the same search to use the same format as long at the interviews are structured similarly, keeping in mind that candidates should be given the same opportunities to give the best presentation of themselves. Similar questions should be asked of each candidate, but follow up questions may be asked if answers are not clear or if there is additional information desired based on a candidate's individual background and experience. Remember, the purpose of the interview is to gather relevant information in order to make a selection decision about who will be the most successful in the role.

In general, you are looking to assess:

- General cognitive ability
- Job related knowledge
- Values and behaviors required for success in UMass culture
- Leadership skills (where applicable, even at individual contributor levels)

A typical structure interview can be set up as follows:

1. Opening and overview of the interview. Introduce committee members. Describe the format of the interview and how much time you have allotted for the interview. Remember that a

candidate is interviewing UMass Amherst just as much as you are interviewing them. Be professional, courteous, and positive.

2. Questions related to candidate's experience, where you are looking to confirm background and experience listed on resume and other materials
3. Behavioral interview questions. Any questions should always be relevant to and structured off of requirements of role. ***A good general rule of thumb to follow is, does your question pertain to the candidate's knowledge, skills, and abilities, and how they relate to the position?***
    a. Past focused, designed to match what they would be expected to do in the role
    b. "Tell me about a time when… What did you learn from it?"
2. Situational/Hypothetical interview questions
    a. Future focused, designed to illustrate how they would approach realistic issues here
    b. "Imagine you will need to….. What information will you gather? What questions would you ask?"
3. Ask some self-evaluation, self-reflection questions
4. Provide an opportunity for the candidate to ask the interview panel questions
5. Thank candidate for their time and provide timeline of next steps

You will want to document the candidate's answers to the questions and use their answers to fill out the evaluation form provided by the search lead. Keep all interview notes in the department for three years.

After the interview, the search lead or record keeper should distribute an evaluation form to collect feedback about the candidate. We recommend an online tool similar to Survey Monkey that can be anonymous and summarize the data for you. You must maintain the feedback for three years.

<u>2nd and Final Interviews</u>

If your first interviews were conducted via Zoom, you will want to make sure your finalist(s) is brought to campus if they are being considered for an offer.

This round of interviews is a good opportunity to introduce your candidate to additional colleagues that the position works closely with, and also plan some extended time at the end for the candidate to meet with the committee or hiring manager to answer any final questions they might have about the role or hiring process. It will be important to close the interview with a timeline of next steps.

For additional assistance with creating interview questions, please see our (forthcoming <u>Behavioral and Situational Interviewing Guide.)</u>

<u>*Will You Have Out of Town Visitors?*</u>

The search committee should be clear with the candidate about what travel expenses (i.e., flight, accommodations, food, car, etc.) will be covered by UMass and what is not. For those expenses that are reimbursable, notify the candidate as to any parameters that must be met (i.e., price limits on hotel, rental car class, etc.).

Please work with your department administrator and Procurement on what is permissible for reimbursement if you have any questions prior to making arrangements with the candidate.

Selection of Finalist

Hiring Departments are required to keep any notes, resumes, electronic (emails) or paper documents used during the interview process for three years after the hire is made. For purposes of appropriate record-keeping, and to comply with the University's EEO/AA obligations, the Search Committee or Hiring Manager will provide justification for the decision made for each candidate referred for interview. Talent Acquisition will contact the Hiring Department after the hire is made to assist with the recordkeeping portion of this process if needed.

Once your offer has been accepted, the hiring manager should contact the candidates who were interviewed and not selected, to notify them of the decision. This is the appropriate time to ensure that all of your candidates have a final disposition code in the PageUp system.

References

Reference checks are an essential step in the recruitment process and must be timed appropriately. If done too soon, you could jeopardize the candidate's current employment situation, or on the contrary, their current employer could implement a retention plan to keep the candidate from entertaining your offer.

Reference checks are always done after ***one*** finalist is selected. These checks are meant to confirm information gathered during the interview process, not to uncover any new information.

You should conduct reference checks only once you have permission from the finalist and you have let them know they have been selected. The candidate needs to be informed in advance of when you will be contacting their references and it is advisable to confirm the reference information that was submitted as part of their online application is still correct.

You should always check at least two to three references on your final candidate via phone, including their current supervisor. This potentially means making a conditional offer of employment first. Refrain from peer checks who have or had no authority of your candidate.

<u>Internal and Former Employees</u>
UMass Amherst, regardless of the hiring department, is considered to be one employer. If hiring a current or former employee, the hiring authority must conduct a reference check with the current or former supervisor. If the candidate is uncomfortable with their current supervisor being contacted prior to an offer being made, the hiring authority may contact the Office of Human Resources for a preliminary check on the candidate's personnel file. If an offer is made to the internal candidate, it should be contingent upon a satisfactory reference check with their current internal supervisor.

When conducting a reference check, never ask about information that is not job related, and this includes:

a. Participation (complainant or witness) in a complaint/grievance;
b. Filing of a worker's compensation claim;
c. Protected medical leave;
d. Health conditions;
e. Disabilities, or other protected class information

You can use objective job-related references as a reason not to hire. If questioned by the candidate or a third party agency, we must demonstrate that our decision-making was based upon the applicant's experience and background and not on any discriminatory or illegal information.

Some helpful questions to ask:

- Tell me about how you and (the finalist) worked together.
- For this position, we need someone who can provide excellent customer service and problem solve. How would you rate (the finalist) on each?
- What are (the finalist)'s greatest strengths?
- Is there any area where (the finalist) would need some additional support in his first 90 days?
- Was (the finalist) a good communicator and listener?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, compared to other people you've hired, how would you rate (the finalist)? If they rated anything less than an 8, I follow–up with this question: What would it have taken for them to get to an 8, 9, or 10?

Offer Card

Verbal offers may not be made until the Offer Card in PageUp is approved. Once a verbal offer is made, it should be made with the clear contingency regarding the background check process. When the background check has cleared, a formal written offer can be extended to the candidate.

Background Check

Candidates should be informed that all offers of employment are contingent upon the successful completion of the background check. Candidates may not begin work prior to their respective hiring departments receiving notification from Human Resources that pre-screening criteria have been met. Human Resources utilizes a third party vendor, Creative Services Inc., (CSI) to conduct all background checks. The background check process begins after a contingent offer of employment is made to the selected candidate.

Key Contacts

Talent Acquisition, HR Business Partners, and Compensation Contacts

Members of the Office of Human Resources are available to work with you in the recruitment and selection process. Please get in touch with your area's key contacts for assistance regarding any search questions!