Sonoma State University Recruitment Procedures

The Sonoma State University Recruitment Procedures aim to provide guidance for each phase of the recruitment for non-faculty staff and management positions. The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that the recruitment process adheres to federal and state laws, the Sonoma State University (SSU) recruitment policy and non-discrimination policy, as well as stipulations of respective collective bargaining agreements affecting represented employees. In addition, these procedures recognize that Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity are key variables that should be incorporated into all phases of the recruitment process to support the achievement of excellence at Sonoma State University.

A member of the HR staff will be available to meet with the hiring manager or Search Committee to offer assistance throughout the recruitment process and to ensure that those individuals involved in hiring decisions are fully knowledgeable of the University's recruitment policy, Affirmative Action, Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity.
**Recruitment Process Flow**

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There are two (2) types of recruitments, backfill or evolution of a new position – both which provide opportunities for departments to align staff skill sets to initiatives and goals, while building departmental and individual growth. Proper planning and evaluation of the staffing will lead to hiring the right person for the role and bridging gaps of the existing team. The typical recruitment process has four phases: pre-recruitment, recruitment, screening, and selection/offer of employment.

I. Pre-Recruitment

During this phase, the hiring manager is expected to evaluate departmental staffing needs, and discuss with his/her management team and budget manager, if appropriate, prior to submitting an updated position description and requisition form to Human Resources (HR).

Position description should identify the minimum qualifications and essential functions of the job (consistent with established classification standards); define and describe fully the primary duties and responsibilities; and specify all physical, mental and environmental demands of the position. Position description must reflect the actual qualifications and experience required for success in the position.

An HR representative will provide necessary assistance and support, including reviewing position descriptions, confirming classification and recommending salary ranges prior to recruitment.

II. Recruitment

a. Posting of Vacancy:

To comply with Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and Sonoma State Recruitment Policy, the University requires all campus vacancies to be posted except for short-term temporary positions.¹

¹ Unit 4 Academic Professionals of California CBA defines short-term temporary positions as those with a duration of sixty (60) days or less. CSUEU identifies as 180 days or less, with union membership extended at ninety (90) days. SUPA provides specific details regarding Unit 8 appointments in HR 2008-24. Other CBAs identify these positions as those with a duration of ninety (90) days or less.
Procedures

In addition, the University requires posting of the vacancy when a significant change has occurred in the nature of a non-faculty position, such as:

- A temporary position is re-identified as a permanent probationary position;
- A short-term temporary position is re-identified as long-term temporary position; or
- A non-benefits eligible position is re-identified as benefits eligible.

Posting of the vacancy is not required under the following circumstances:

- Appointments are funded by a grant, contract, or fee-for-service trust fund where the individual is specifically named in the grant or contract;
- Special or emergency appointments as deemed necessary by the President; or
- Transition of an employee from an auxiliary to state employment within the same position where recruitment was previously conducted by the auxiliary.

b. Job Posting

Job postings will contain the job classification, a brief description of the position, and may include salary and benefits information relating to the position. Announcements must alert applicants of minimum qualifications and any required pre-placement physicals, screening, testing, background checks, required licenses and/or certifications.

c. Duration and Scope of Advertising

The duration and scope of advertising of vacancies must follow all applicable University policies and procedures. HR is responsible for working with the hiring department to determine the scope and duration of advertising.

Advertising of vacancies typically includes various electronic posting locations, including the SSU campus web site, CSU job board, CalJobs and Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC). HR will provide the hiring manager with
recommendations for additional industry and/or position specific locations that can be considered based on forecasted posting return on investment (ROI).

All non-faculty vacancies, including non-faculty staff and management positions, will be posted for a minimum of fourteen (14) days.

HR is committed to an open recruitment process and aims to have all vacancies posted to both on-campus and off-campus applicants. When Collective Bargaining Agreement permits, vacancy can be posted to internal employees for up to five (5) days prior to making it available to off-campus applicants.

For positions governed by the California State University Employees Union (Unit 2, 5, 7 and 9), if a qualified internal candidate is identified during the internal posting period, the job posting is not required to be made available externally however the vacancy needs to remain open for the duration of the 14-day posting period.

d. **Search Committee Chair**

The chair of the search committee shall be selected by the hiring manager and must be a member of the Management Personnel Plan (MPP). Exceptions may be approved by President Designee.

e. **Search Committee**

Certain positions of university-wide importance, including Administrator III or higher management positions, require a search committee be formed to interview candidates and conduct the recruitment. See: [Faculty Representation Policy](#)

For positions other than those noted above, the decision to form a search committee will be at the discretion of the hiring manager.

In the event a search committee is to be formed, HR can assist the hiring manager and/or search committee chair to identify and/or solicit appropriate members.
f. Search Committee Membership

California State University system-wide HR office recommends that MPP employees participate as search committee members except when Collective Bargaining Agreements, campus policies or practices require otherwise. It is also recommended that the search committee mirror the campus’ commitment to diversity and include a diverse group of participants.

Management position search committees should be formed in the manner specified in the University’s Policy on Faculty Representation on Administrative Appointment Committees.

g. HR Responsibilities

HR receives, logs, tracks, acknowledges, and stores all applications for non-faculty employment with the University. Only applications that have been received by and logged in HR may be considered for interview and potential hire.

HR is also responsible for ensuring appropriate applicant information is captured for federal reporting purposes. All applications from qualified candidates for a position vacancy received by the first review date will be reviewed for consideration. Applications received on or after the first review date may not be considered.

The University reserves the right to eliminate former employees and applicants previously reviewed, based on employment suitability. Any additional applications received following the first review date may be reviewed at the discretion of the hiring manager or the Search Committee Chair.

III. Screening

Screening criteria must be based on the stated position qualifications published in the job posting. The screening criteria and interview questions are typically developed by the hiring manager and/or search committee while the job posting is still being posted. An HR Representative must review and approve the established questions, criteria and applicant
skill tests (if applicable) prior to releasing application materials to the hiring manager and/or search committee members.

The selection process consists of a review of applications and a phone, videoconference or in-person interview of the most qualified applicants by the hiring manager and/or search committee. This process may also include initial telephone screenings/interviews, appropriate skills testing, and presentations.

Certain designated positions may require a final interview by senior management. The search committee chair should discuss this possibility at the beginning of the recruitment to identify the recruiting timeline and associated milestones.

a. Initial Review of Applications

HR will screen all applicants for minimum qualifications prior to passing pools to search committees. The hiring manager, along with his/her search committee, is to then independently rank the remaining candidates and try to discern who should be interviewed. If the pool remains large and needs to be narrowed, the committee should use established criteria to narrow the remaining applicants to a group of finalists. It is recommended that the committee members separately rank the applications using established criteria, then reconvene as a committee to identify the candidates to be interviewed.

HR remains a resource throughout the recruitment and can assist the hiring manager/search committee chair with scheduling of the candidates and compiling of electronic interview materials (i.e. interview schedule, applicant resume, job application, interview questions, and other documentation such as a rating sheet or candidate assessment form, and etc.)

Applications should be treated as confidential until a selection is made unless campus policies/practices permit otherwise and the applicants were properly notified. For certain positions, the committee must honor applicable collective
b. **Conduct Interviews**

In the interview process, the most qualified applicants will be interviewed, subject to requirements in applicable collective bargaining agreements, including preferences afforded to qualified applicants currently employed at the campus. It is recommended that departments interview at least three applicants for a position, unless the pool lacks a sufficient number of qualified applicants.

Once the hiring manager/search committee identifies which applicants meet the minimum qualifications and they wish to interview, the hiring manager will provide these names to HR. Upon receipt, HR will send out a Supplemental Questionnaire that must be returned prior to interviews being conducted. Applicants have 48 hours following receipt of the questionnaire to return, HR will notify the hiring manager upon receipt that s/he may begin scheduling interviews.

It is especially important that all applicants receive the same, or similar, treatment. Therefore it is recommended that HR manage all in-person testing, such as writing or programming tests during the interview.

All members of the search committee should be present for interviews to ensure a fair assessment of all candidates. If a committee member misses a candidate’s visit or cannot attend all scheduled interviews, it is necessary for the member to recuse him/herself from participating in the selection process and providing the committee with hiring recommendations for that candidate.

Even if a candidate is already known to committee members (for example, because the candidate has been working in the department), hearsay is not to be taken into consideration at the point and the recruiting process should remain unchanged.
The hiring manager or the search committee chair is encouraged to communicate with candidates on the progress of a search in order to assist in reducing calls and duplicate applications. At the close of recruitment, the search committee chair is responsible for contacting all candidates who were interviewed, HR will notify other applicants.

c. **Campus Visit (optional)**

A campus visit provides an opportunity to highlight the benefits of working for the University, such as the defined benefit pension system, and learn pride points about the campus, including its diversity, special programs and initiatives, distinctions, and so forth. The visit could include a tour of the campus as well as the work area, meeting with a benefits representative or other campus staff, participating in an Open Forum and/or other activities that serve to represent the campus as a desirable place to work. It is important to represent the campus as it is and to highlight its mission.

In many cases, especially on high level recruitments, meal times can be used as opportunities for informal interactions between the candidate and search committee members or others from the department; at some point in the visit, the candidate should be provided an opportunity to ask questions and provide candid answers about working in the department and on the campus, living in the area, and other items of interest specific to the candidate.

Campus visits normally include other members of the hiring department in addition to the search committee, as well as meetings with members of the campus community at large. Comments expressed by colleagues or other staff members who are not committee members should have no bearing or impact on the recommendation of the committee, except as part of formal input solicited according to campus policy. The hiring manager and search committee are responsible to evaluate and recommend or not recommend candidates for a position.
d. Reference Checks

The purpose of a reference check is to obtain information about a candidate’s behavior and work performance from prior employers that could be critical to your decision, regardless of their skills, knowledge, and abilities. As past performance is the best predictor of future success, it is required that references be obtained from the current or most recent employer and recommended that references be obtained from previous supervisors who can speak to the candidate’s on the job performance.

Reference checks must be conducted on the finalist(s) prior to making an offer. All applicants are to be informed (during or after the interview) should they be a finalist, an offer would be contingent upon a reference from their current supervisor. The candidate should be informed that a single reference would not be the sole reason for a disqualification and all aspects of their candidacy, including their interview, will be taken into consideration.

The hiring manager and/or search committee must complete a minimum of two reference checks – one from a previous employer and one from the current employer before making a recommendation for hire, and attempt to verify such information as current salary, degrees, employment dates and titles. Any previous employment at a CSU campus and/or other employment by a California state agency MUST be checked. Reference checks are not limited to persons provided by the applicant as a reference.

HR is available to provide support and information regarding checking references. A template of questions to be posed to the referee would be developed jointly by the hiring manager and the HR Representative at the onset of the recruitment effort. An Applicant Authorization and Release Form must be signed by the candidate and returned to the committee chair prior to conducting any reference/employment verifications. Additionally, HR recommends that at least two (2) committee members participate in the reference check process; these.
Responsibilities may be divided among committee members so as to create perspective for final discussions and recommendations.

Should a reference from the candidate’s current supervisor/employer not be obtained, you must contact Human Resources.

**IV. Selection/Offer of Employment**

**a. Final Candidate**

Once the interviews are complete, the search committee should meet to discuss the interviewees. Committee members will need to assess the extent to which each candidate met the selection criteria. The hiring manager has final authority on who he/she elects to hire.

As one of the most critical steps in the process, it is important to keep in mind that the best candidate for the position was chosen based on qualifications that are most appropriate to carry out the University and Department’s mission.

**b. Verbal Offer of Employment**

Once a review of the selection process has been completed and the final applicant has been identified, the hiring manager/committee chair will draft the Recruitment Report to demonstrate the selection decision and submit a draft to HR via email for review. HR shall review the selection process and Recruitment Report to ensure the search was conducted in accordance with the recruiting policy and procedures. A verbal (conditional) offer of employment shall only be extended after HR reviews the report.

Whenever possible, it’s recommended that the best offer be made the first time as this displays proper market and internal equity practices and demonstrates good faith to the applicant. HR recommends that other qualified finalists and applicants are not notified until after the offer has been accepted.
When offering the finalist the position, be sure to discuss the total compensation package (in addition to salary) such as paid time off and retirement benefits. CSU benefits and retirement programs are great selling points and significantly increase total compensation. Finalists with additional benefit related questions should be referred to the HR representative responsible for the recruitment.

Any offer or counter offer must be pre-approved in writing by HR and the University Budget Office and is subject to the Procedures outlined herein.

c. **Hiring Prerequisites**

Depending upon the nature of the position, additional hiring prerequisites may be required. Any costs associated with these prerequisites are the responsibility of the hiring department. HR shall be responsible for scheduling any required pre-placement physicals, drug screens and/or background investigations.

All offers of employment for such positions will be made expressly (in writing) contingent upon satisfactory completion of the necessary hiring prerequisites, and no candidate may begin work before the results have been obtained.

d. **Conclude Recruitment**

To properly close recruitment, the following steps should be followed:

i. Once verbal (conditional) offer is accepted, the hiring manager/committee chair is to notify HR and begin routing Recruitment Report for approvals.

ii. Once verbal (conditional) offer is accepted, HR will arrange for necessary pre-placement physicals, drug screens and/or background investigations.

iii. Once the final candidate clears the pre-employment prerequisites, HR will prepare the appointment letter and share with the hiring manager for review. The hiring manager will have the option to request a soft copy of the appointment letter and position description be shared with the candidate via email.
iv. The President or his designee shall extend all formal offers of employment, except for offers of employment with auxiliaries, which shall be extended by an Officer of the auxiliary organization on auxiliary letterhead.

v. The hiring manager/search committee chair should personally contact those individuals interviewed and not selected for hire. HR will provide a script with recommendations for handling this conversation. HR will contact other candidates who applied but were not selected for interviews via email to notify them that the position has been filled.

vi. An HR representative will ensure all recruitment related documents are received from hiring manager/committee chair and close recruitment.

All new employees must report to HR on their first day of employment to complete a new hire orientation, with the exception of new auxiliary employees (who are not employees of Sonoma State University and would report to the office designated by the auxiliary organization). No employee may begin work before providing proof of authorization to work in the U.S. in compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and signing the oath required by law for all State employees.

HR will remain a resource to provide ongoing support for new employees and the hiring manager on any personnel related, classification and/or compensation matters that may arise. Additional tools are provided by HR to support managers under Managers’ Tools on the Employment Services webpage (https://www.sonoma.edu/hr/es/).