

Staff Recruitment and Selection Process Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action?

Both Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA) are used to reduce discrimination in the workplace. The United States Federal Government instituted both programs to encourage diversity in hiring and promotion; however, the programs differ in their goals, requirements, and administration methods.

Equal Employment Opportunity refers to freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, status as a protected veteran, and any other legally protected category, class, or characteristic. EEO rights are guaranteed by federal and state fair employment laws; they are enforced by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and its state counterparts.

Affirmative Action (AA) is a proactive method of hiring that requires the University to actively seek out and recruit applicants of historically underrepresented groups, such as women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities who are qualified for vacant positions.

Affirmative Action Plans (AAPs) define the University's standard for proactively recruiting, hiring, and promoting women, minorities, veterans, and disabled individuals. Certain federal contractors are required to institute AAPs, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) is charged with enforcing contractor affirmative action mandates.

Does Affirmative Action require hiring managers/search committees to give preference to individuals from underrepresented groups when making hiring decisions?

No. Hiring managers/search committees should not give preferential treatment to individuals from underrepresented groups. Affirmative Action requires all applicants to be evaluated equally without regard to their protected status. The primary purpose of affirmative action is to encourage aggressive outreach and recruitment efforts by hiring managers/search committees to attract a diverse applicant pool. When making a hiring decision, the hiring manager/search committee should select the best applicant based on job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, and education. Additional consideration may be given to candidates who have experience working with diverse populations and/or have life experiences supporting the University's goal of preparing students to thrive in a diverse and global society.

Is Affirmative Action a form of reverse discrimination?

Affirmative Action is deemed a moral and social obligation to amend historical inequities and to eliminate the present effects of past discrimination by requiring equal treatment and consideration of every individual so vacant positions will be awarded to the most qualified applicants. Intentional recruitment efforts will ensure the greatest likelihood of producing a diverse applicant pool that includes qualified minorities, women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

Does the University have hiring quotes?

The University has hiring goals, not quotas. As outlined in federal regulation 41 CFR § 60-2.10:

If women and minorities are not being employed at a rate to be expected given their availability in the relevant labor pool, the contractor's affirmative action program includes specific practical steps designed to address this underutilization. Effective affirmative action programs also include internal auditing and reporting systems as a means of measuring the contractor's progress toward achieving the workforce that would be expected in the absence of discrimination.

Texas Tech University's hiring goals are established by the Texas Tech University System Office of Equal Opportunity.

Should external advertising be placed?

Yes. External advertising should be placed in two sources to increase diverse pools of applicants for job groups with hiring goals as identified in the University's Affirmative Action Plan.

How many people should be on a search committee?

The hiring manager should appoint at least three people to a search committee.

Can someone on the search committee serve as a reference for one of the applicants?

If an applicant names a search committee member as a reference, it is recommended that the committee member, in coordination with the committee chair, consider in which capacity they will serve since one cannot objectively fulfill both roles concurrently.

When may the hiring manager/search committee begin looking at applications?

The hiring manager/search committees may begin reviewing applications as soon as the job is posted on the Texas Tech Careers website, unless the job posting states review of applications is scheduled to begin on a certain date. For example, "Review of applications will begin on October 3, 2018, and will continue until the position is filled." If the advertisement states that, "review of applications will begin immediately," reviewers may begin assessing applications at once. The hiring manager/search committee must continue to review all applications and give each applicant full consideration until the position is filled.

What if an applicant did not complete the application process, i.e., did not attach all required documents?

An incomplete application is defined as one which does not include all required attached documents. Incomplete applications should be treated consistently. If one incomplete application is considered, then all incomplete applications must be accepted and reviewed.

What happens if a committee member resigns from the search committee or is no longer able to serve?

If someone resigns during the search, it is appropriate to add another member or reconstitute the committee.

Can a search committee member Skype in?

Yes. It is acceptable to have a committee member Skype in if they cannot attend in person.

Is a search committee required?

No, not all positions warrant a search committee. Some entry and mid-level positions can be hired by the direct supervisor or department head. Please follow your department/college/division's approval authority rules.

Is a phone screen considered to be an interview?

Yes, contacting an applicant via phone to assess their interest and qualifications for a job vacancy is considered an interview and must be documented in *Kenexa*. A structured format should be utilized in a phone interview just as it is in an in-person interview.

Do I have to interview more than one person?

Human Resources encourages hiring managers to interview the most appropriately qualified applicants. If more than one applicant meets the required minimum qualifications, then more than one applicant should be interviewed.

How do you ensure interview accommodations for internal and external applicants are fair?

While you do not have to make travel arrangements and hotel room reservations for internal candidates selected for campus visits, the rest of the interview accommodations should be the same as those offered to external applicants. Interview accommodations may include dinner arrangements, campus tours, and other events deemed appropriate by the hiring committee. Though internal applicants may decline the campus tour, it should be offered. The actual interview process should be the same for both types of applicants.

Why are hiring managers/search committees prohibited from seeing the voluntary demographic data provided by applicants?

The EEO Applicant Form requests information about applicants' race/ethnicity and sex on a voluntary basis. Applicants are informed the information will be kept separate from their application materials. The information is used to comply with federal reporting requirements, as well as to assess the effectiveness of the university's recruitment efforts to attract diverse applicants. In order to protect the integrity of the application process and ensure the information does not influence hiring decisions, the information is kept separate. However, a summary of the information regarding the applicant pool may be shared with the search committee or hiring department.

When should reference checks take place?

Reference checks are usually conducted once interviews have been completed, but should be completed prior to making an offer.

When are background checks conducted?

Background checks are conducted only after the applicant has been offered the position, but before the applicant is officially hired. Employment is conditional upon the University's receipt of a satisfactory criminal background report.

When should applicants be notified they are no longer under consideration?

Applicants may be notified in writing after the hiring manager/search committee has decided to eliminate them from further consideration. The notifications may occur in stages throughout the selection process; however, applicants who are being held in reserve for consideration in case the top finalist is unsuccessful should not be notified until the final selection has been made.

Whom do I contact to have a job announcement removed from the Texas Tech Careers website?

Once the hiring manager/search committee is ready to review applicants, an email should be sent to Human Resources Talent Acquisition at hirs.recruiting@ttu.edu to remove the posting from the website. Removing the job posting from the website does not close the job posting requisition. The job posting requisition will be closed later in the hiring process.

Do I have to wait for a current employee to leave their job before I can recruit?

No, as long as you have received appropriate approval from your departmental hiring authority. Human Resources highly recommends you have a written resignation letter from the departing employee prior to beginning recruitment.

Can I hire someone into a different title or position than the one that was posted?

No, the person who is hired from the posted applicant pool must be hired with the title and position as it was posted in the applicant tracking system. If you think you are needing a new title, please contact Compensation/Operations to review your job.