

**Office of Equal Opportunity &  
Accessibility (EOA)  
Exempt Staff Search Procedures**

1. Draft position description, have position evaluated, create a position, and post on UT's website. When the position is live on Taleo, request that only search committee members are added to the requisition. Anyone outside of the search committee (even the hiring decision-maker) is not to be included.
2. Determine who will be on the search committee. If you are the hiring decision-maker determine who will chair the committee, the hiring decision-maker cannot be on the search committee.
3. The search chair should contact Nicole Cangey ([ncangey@utk.edu](mailto:ncangey@utk.edu)) to schedule an exempt staff search orientation session. Under very limited circumstances, this orientation can be waived, however, attendance is mandatory annually. Also, the search chair will be responsible to complete the Exempt Staff Search Summary Report; sections 1 and 2 before the start of the search, and the remainder of the report throughout the life of the search.
4. Search Committee Charge Instructions:
  - a. The hiring decision-maker must attend the charge meeting and convey what the needs are for the position and an anticipated timeline
  - b. For all positions **director-level or above**, a member of EOA's leadership team must attend the charge meeting to provide guidance that is separate from the hiring decision-maker's guidance
  - c. Discuss and develop an active recruitment plan
  - d. Determine how committee will share information and access application materials, via UT Vault or Taleo access only
  - e. Discuss commitment to **confidentiality**, throughout and after search
  - f. Create (if desired) a method of evaluating applicants, i.e., a rubric
  - g. Have a thorough conversation with the committee regarding the **required** qualifications and the **preferred** qualifications
  - h. Discuss any **work experience** requirements; **related degree** requirements
  - i. Committee members may **NOT** search for applicants/candidates on the Internet or on social media platforms
5. Initial screening methods prior to on-campus interviews:
  - a. Telephone or Zoom-based interviews, and writing samples
  - b. Questions must be pre-determined, as well as be fair and consistent across applicants
6. Pool development
  - a. Primary pool candidates **MUST** be invited for on-campus interviews
  - b. Primary pool must be greater than 1 (generally)
  - c. Secondary pool – beneficial if primary candidates not selected but not required
  - d. All primary and secondary candidates **MUST** meet required qualifications

- e. The search chair, with input from committee, must complete the Exempt Staff Search Summary Report including strengths and weaknesses for candidates in the pools.
  - f. Send the completed report to Nicole Cangey, [eo-a-opportunity@utk.edu](mailto:eo-a-opportunity@utk.edu)
7. Diversity considerations
- a. EOA will review the full applicant list for demographics of applicants
  - b. EOA will review list of Primary and Secondary candidates in comparison with full list
  - c. EOA may require additional strengths and weaknesses for diverse candidates who appear to meet qualifications but are not under further consideration
  - d. Committee chair may contact EOA, Nicole Cangey, to review and discuss diversity of pool prior to making primary and secondary pool decisions to determine whether additional recruiting should take place
8. On-Campus interviews
- a. Determine length and scope of interview process
  - b. Be consistent with itinerary – should contain same elements for each candidate
  - c. All primary candidates **must** be interviewed before offer can be extended
  - d. Be sure to include the hiring decision-maker in the interview process, as a one on one meeting
  - e. For all positions **director-level or above**, EOA must be included as part of the interview itinerary for all on-campus interviews held
  - f. Secondary candidates can be interviewed one at a time
  - g. Meals, “casual” times – are all part of the interview
    - i. Avoid problematic questions or discussions of personal issues
    - ii. Answer candidate questions, but don’t probe areas that would not be appropriate for questioning
    - iii. If inappropriate questions are asked, address immediately and inform the candidate that the question will not be used to evaluate the candidacy. Document any issues that arise and discuss with EOA, as soon as possible.
    - iv. Be consistent with initial questions in an effort to elicit same type of information, but feel free to probe answers further
9. Reference checks
- a. Notify successful candidate that you will be contacting references
  - b. Ask to speak to direct supervisor
  - c. Be consistent with questions
  - d. Do not probe inappropriate areas
10. Internal Candidates
- a. Treat the same way as external candidates
  - b. Avoid consideration of unsolicited information as a basis of rejection of candidate in initial evaluation
  - c. Personal knowledge of candidate may be appropriate later in process at time references are checked
11. TALEO Processes throughout
12. In the event you would like to perform an internal exempt staff search you must submit a Request for Exemption form, with a rationale memo statement to Tina Smith ([tsmith18@utk.edu](mailto:tsmith18@utk.edu)) for Katrice Morgan to review.