

Chapter 3 – Recruitment Process

Vacancy Announcement Contents

The vacancy announcement is based on the position description, but its purposes are different. The position description describes the duties and responsibilities of the position in detail but does not contain information about the application process itself. The purposes of a vacancy announcement are to stimulate interest in the position and in MSU and to tell potential applicants how to apply. The vacancy announcement template is located on the [Search Committee Tools website](#).

Required and Preferred Qualifications

Required and preferred qualifications should be “objective” and must be able to be evaluated on written materials alone.

The required qualifications for a position are those minimum education and experience expectations an applicant must meet to be considered eligible for the position. Required qualifications ensure that any applicant who becomes a qualified candidate is competent to assume the position.

The University has established the following minimum requirements for Board of Regents executive, Montana University Systems Contract professional, contract professional and faculty positions:

- Board of Regents executive positions requires significant academic and/or administrative experience that is directly relevant to the rank, duties, and responsibilities of the position.
- Contract professional positions usually require a minimum of a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. In limited circumstances and on a case by case basis and upon approval from Human Resources | Affirmative Action and a record of significant and/or progressively responsible work experience in a directly relevant position may be used as an equivalent required qualification and is listed as such in the vacancy announcement.
- Research professional positions require a minimum of a Master's degree. In limited circumstances and on a case by case basis and upon approval from Human Resources | Affirmative Action, a record of significant and/or progressively responsible work experience in a directly relevant position or a record of significant educational attainment may be used as an equivalent, required qualification.
- Tenurable faculty positions require a terminal degree in the field as determined by the Role, Scope, Criteria, Standards and Review documents of the faculty member's department and college.

The preferred qualifications are those qualifications that exceed the required or minimum requirements, such as a Masters degree in a field. Identifying preferred qualifications in the announcement provides the applicant the ability to include additional education and experience expectations that support their ability to do the job beyond the minimum expectations.

Height, Weight, Lifting and Driving Requirements

Position descriptions shall not specify particular physical qualifications such as the ability to lift 200 pounds or to operate heavy equipment unless these are bona fide occupational requirements.

Position descriptions that contain lifting restrictions should use the following language in the position description and vacancy announcement:

- *Candidate must possess the ability, with or without accommodations, to (lift/move/haul/etc) XX pounds...*

Some positions do require an employee to travel throughout the state, and state law requires some employees to possess valid driver's licenses. Use the following language when expressing these requirements.

- *Must possess, or be able to possess, a Montana driver's license or have other means of reliable transportation to travel within the county or state.*

Years of Experience as a Qualification

Because it is potentially discriminatory and there is no proven correlation between years of experience and ability, a years-of-experience requirement may not be used as a required qualification. (It may be used as a preferred qualification.)

A description of the level/degree of the competencies must be used instead. For example, specifying "a record of progressively responsible administrative experience" is better than requiring "five years of administrative experience" because it allows committees to evaluate the nature of an applicant's experience rather than counting the number of months someone has been employed.

Language Proficiency

Committees and hiring authorities should make no assumptions about the communication skills of any applicant based on his or her nationality or immigration status. Further, a committee that requires candidates to demonstrate a certain level of English proficiency must be able to demonstrate that the position regularly uses that level of communication skill. Language proficiency requirements must be reviewed and approved by Human Resources | Affirmative Action.

"Successful Candidate Will" (SCW) Statement

Subjective qualifications, such as "ability to work in a team environment," and qualifications that cannot be immediately and easily accessed from written application materials, such as "excellent oral communications skills," should not be listed as required or preferred qualifications. Rather, these should be elaborated upon in the "Successful Candidate Will" section of the vacancy announcement.

Skills and abilities listed in the SCW section of the vacancy announcement are essential characteristics and qualities on which candidates will be evaluated in the later stages of the screening or search process.

Examples:

- *The successful candidate will demonstrate an awareness of international development issues and the ability to work on a multidisciplinary team.*
- *The successful candidate will have knowledge of the tribes and tribal colleges in Montana, will have excellent interpersonal skills, and will be able to work with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.*
- [Click here for more examples of Successful Candidate Will](#)

Listing Salary on the Vacancy Announcement

Salary is one of the first things a prospective applicant looks at when deciding whether to apply for a position. Including salary in the vacancy announcement usually assures committees that applicants are interested in the position at the salary rate offered. Stating the salary is "commensurate with education and experience" can cause difficulties in the negotiation process. A commensurate salary at one institution may be considerably higher than MSU; therefore, commensurate may not be an option.

This section of the vacancy announcement should also list other status information pertaining to the position such as whether the position is AY, FY, or other; if it is full or part time; if the incumbent accrues health benefits or annual leave and whether the position is tenurable.

Application Procedures

Letter of Application

The typical, unstructured cover letter can be remarkably uninformative. A letter of application allows applicants to discuss their philosophies regarding an aspect of the job; therefore the applicant should be directed to address the required and preferred qualifications. If committee members want applicants to submit additional materials such as pictures of their paintings, audition tapes, or published articles, this must be specified in the vacancy announcement.

Electronic Submittals of Application Materials

Electronic submissions of application materials are highly encouraged, but cannot be mandatory. The committee must consider hard copy applications in addition to electronic submissions. The University currently requires a signed letter of application (either electronic (on the letter) or an original signature) be submitted. At such time the University can accept electronic signatures, this practice may change.

References or Recommendations

Search committees should require applicants to submit names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of 3 or 5 references. The committee can then solicit specific information from the references of candidates in whom they are specifically interested.

Committee members may not act as named references for applicants. If a committee member is asked to be a reference, he or she should recuse himself or herself from the committee to avoid the appearance of [conflict of interest](#).

Application Deadlines

The committee may establish a fixed deadline which informs potential applicants that the committee will not consider any applications received after the specified date. A fixed deadline is most useful when search committees anticipate receiving a large number of applications. Its disadvantage lies in the fact that a search with a fixed deadline must be re-advertised if no hire is made from the original applicant pool.

If the committee wishes to keep the search open while screening, the search should be "open-ended" with a screening date indicated. A screening date should be identified but applications will be accepted until such time as finalists for the position are identified. Once the screening deadline has arrived, the applicants are screened and any applicant who is evaluated as being equal to or better than the applicants then-currently under consideration should be added to that group and folded into the review process.

When to Stop Screening

Screening of applications from applicants meeting minimum qualifications can be temporarily halted when the hiring authority and/or the search committee has selected a pool of candidates to interview. However, if the interview process goes on for more than a month, applicants should be sent a letter or post card informing them that the search is still ongoing and they are still under active consideration.

Recruitment Procedures

Searches shall be conducted to fill permanent executive, administrative, faculty, and contract professional positions at the University. Searches should be conducted to fill non-permanent positions whenever possible.

Filling a Position without a Search

Requirements to conduct searches for non-permanent, non-research positions may be waived under the following, limited circumstances: to meet a temporary staffing need, to fill a permanent position on temporary basis, or to staff a unit during reorganization. In such cases, the hiring authority may hire an individual who meets the qualifications for the professional appointment for up to six months without a search. If the need for a temporary appointment extends beyond six months, the hiring authority should contact the Office of Human Resources | Affirmative Action for guidance.

Filling More Than One Position from the Same Search

Multiple hires may be made from the same search, if the positions are the same. The decision to make several hires from the same pool of qualified candidates should be made as early in the search process as possible. If possible, the intention to make multiple hires should be included in the vacancy announcement.

Affirmative Action Hires

Requirements to conduct searches for permanent positions may be waived on a case by case basis in order to redress the under-utilization of protected class members in the University's permanent professional and faculty workforce. Only the President has authority to make an affirmative action hire, but he or she should be guided by the results of the following process:

- The hiring authority seeking to make an Affirmative Action hire must make the case, to the appropriate Vice President, the Provost and Human Resources | Affirmative Action, that such a hire will advance the department and the University in achieving its mission, the goals of its 5 year plan, and/or the policies of the Board of Regents in vital ways that likely would not be achieved through a competitive search and that the person considered for the Affirmative Action hire possesses superior, not merely adequate, qualifications for the position.

Human Resources | Affirmative Action permission to initiate an affirmative action hiring process may be granted if:

- the department is determined to be underutilizing women and/or minorities as determined by an current utilization analysis, and
- a qualified protected class member has been identified.

If the request to begin an Affirmative Action hiring process is approved by the Vice President, the Provost and Human Resources | Affirmative Action, the hiring authority writes the position description and appoints a screening committee to evaluate the qualifications and experience of the candidate.

The committee should be composed of a minimum of three members, of whom at least one should be a woman and/or member of an appropriate underrepresented group.

The hiring authority should not serve on this committee, but should write a brief charge to the screening committee giving any special instructions or considerations they should consider in their work.

The screening committee reviews the candidate's submitted materials (curriculum vitae and publications) and makes a recommendation as to the advisability of the Affirmative Action hire to the hiring authority. The committee may

conduct reference checks, phone and on-campus interviews and other screening activities in order to make its recommendation.

The committee submits its recommendation to the hiring authority, who submits it to Human Resources | Affirmative Action, the appropriate Vice President, and the President for approval. If approved, the hiring authority prepares the Letter of Hire and the PTF. If not approved, the hiring authority may consider conducting a search to fill the position.

Research Career Ladders

- A Research Scientist or Research Engineer may advance from:

Research Scientist/Engineer, to

Senior Research Scientist/Engineer

through a Career Ladder established in the department and based on department policies.

- Research Engineers must have a Masters or terminal degree in engineering and perform functions generally associated with the profession of engineering.
- Research Scientists must have a Masters or terminal degree in a science field and perform functions associated with scientific research.

A Postdoctoral Researcher may advance to Assistant Research Professor if he or she has applied for and received an externally funded grant or contract as Principal Investigator.

A Research Associate may be advanced to a Research Scientist or Research Engineer if he or she has a record of significant, extensive, and progressively responsible research experience and meets the minimum requirements identified above.

Approval of the Department Head, Dean, Vice President for Research and the Office of Human Resources | Affirmative Action are required for an individual to advance through any one of these research career ladders.

Recruitment Type and Length of Recruitment Requirements

A search to fill a vacant position may be conducted on a national, regional, statewide, local or on-campus basis depending on the recruitment area established for the position. Each type of position has a different recruitment area and imposes different requirements in terms of advertising source and length of the recruitment period.

The following list summarizes the required recruitment procedures by overall category of the position.

University Executives and Academic Deans

University executives are the senior administrators of the institution and are hired on Board of Regents contracts. Deans are the senior administrators of colleges or similar units of the University. Deans are hired on MUS Employment Contracts. Searches for University executives and academic deans may be conducted by hired search firms.

Recruitment Area: National

Type of Committee: Search Committee

Minimum Advertising Period: Six weeks from date of first appearance of the advertisement in a major national print or electronic publication appropriate to the profession.

Tenure Track Faculty Positions

Recruitment Area: National

Type of Committee: Search Committee

Minimum Advertising Period: One (1) month or four weeks from date of first appearance of the advertisement in a major national print or electronic publication appropriate to the profession.

Department Heads

(including Department Chair, Director of Schools and Superintendent of an Agricultural Research Center):

Recruitment Area: National search recommended; internal search permitted.

Type of Committee: Search committee required for national search; screening committee required for internal search.

Minimum Advertising Period: One (1) month or four weeks from date of first appearance of the advertisement in a major national print or electronic publication appropriate to the discipline. If the search is internal, ten (10) working days from date of internal announcement/advertisement.

Directors (Faculty)

(including directors University Honors, University Studies, Montana Manufacturing Extension Center and Center for Biofilm Engineering):

Recruitment Area: Regional recommended; on-campus recruitment required.

Type of Committee: Search committee required for regional search; screening committee required for an on-campus search.

Minimum Advertising Period: One (1) month or four weeks from date of first appearance of the advertisement in a regional print or electronic publication appropriate to the discipline, or two (2) weeks from date of notice for an on-campus search.

Non-Tenured Faculty

Will follow procedures outlined in the NTT CBA.

Affiliate Faculty

No recruitment required.

Visiting Faculty

Recruitment Area: Recruiting is not required but is highly recommended. If the appointment will be for an academic year, or longer, a national recruitment process is highly recommended. Positions should be posted on the MSU Job Webpage.

Type of Committee: None; hiring authority may review applications and make appointments.

Minimum Advertising Period: Two (2) weeks from date of first appearance of the advertisement in a discipline specific recruitment resource or electronic publication.

Contract Professionals

(including Administrators, Managers and Directors):

Recruitment Area: National search recommended; regional recruitment required.

Type of Committee: Search Committee.

Minimum Advertising Period: One (1) month from date of first appearance of the advertisement in a major national or regional print or electronic publication appropriate to the profession.

Academic/Institutional Support Professionals

(where in-depth knowledge of University policies, procedures, and protocols are required qualifications including Assistant and Associate Provosts; Assistant and Associate Deans; and Assistant to the Dean, Assistants to the Dean, Academic Advisors and other Student Support Staff; fiscal and administrative and other positions):

Recruitment Area: On-campus recruitment required; regional search recommended.

Type of Committee: Screening Committee required for On-campus search; search committee required for regional search;

Minimum Advertising Period: Two (2) weeks from date of notice for an on-campus search; one (1) month from date of first appearance of the advertisement in a major national or regional print or electronic publication appropriate to the profession.

Research Faculty

(including Research Professors, Associate Research Professors, and Assistant Research Professor):

Recruitment Area: National

Type of Committee: Search Committee.

Minimum Advertising Period: One (1) months from date of first appearance of the advertisement in the major recruitment publication; concurrent posting on a discipline-specific website is required.

Research Scientist/Engineer

Recruitment Area: Regional.

Type of Committee: Search Committee.

Minimum Advertising Period: At least three weeks from date of first appearance of the advertisement in the major recruitment publication; electronic posting on a discipline specific website may substitute for advertisement in a print journal.

Postdoctoral Research Associate/Postdoctoral Scholar

Recruitment Area: National

Type of Committee: None; hiring authority may review applications and make hiring decision.

Minimum Advertising Period: Three (3) weeks from date of first appearance of the advertisement in the major recruitment publication; electronic posting on a discipline-specific website may substitute for advertisement in a print journal.

Research Associate

Recruitment Area: Statewide (minimum). Regional or national recruitment is recommended depending on the type of research or discipline.

Type of Committee: None, hiring authority may review applications and make hiring decision.

Minimum Advertising Period: Two (2) weeks from date of first appearance of the advertisement in the newspaper; electronic posting on a discipline-specific website may substitute for print advertisement.

Pooled Search

A pool search is a variation of a local search whose specific purpose is to generate a pool of qualified applicants from which one or more hires may be made. Pooled searches generally seek to fill a variety of entry level or temporary positions and usually remain open over several months.

Pool searches for assistant coaches should be advertised in The Bozeman Daily Chronicle and electronically on the NCAA News website at www.ncaa.org.

Internal (Department/College) Search

Requires Human Resources | Affirmative Action Approval

An internal search is a search advertised only within a department or college and is open only to current employees of that unit. Each person in the department who is eligible to apply for the position or to make nominations must receive a hard copy of the vacancy or proof of distribution to all employees.

On-Campus Search

Requires Human Resources | Affirmative Action Approval

An on-campus search solicits applications from current employees from across Montana State University. The vacancy announcement posted on the MSU Jobs website must specify that applications from non-employees will not be considered. In addition, hiring authorities and/or search committees for such positions must make every possible effort to inform potential on-campus applicants of the availability of the position through MSU Today and other similar methods of distribution to employees. Hard copies of the vacancy announcement should be sent/mailed to all University Departments for posting purposes.

Advertising Requirements

National search

The position must be advertised in:

- At least one (1) general national recruitment source or a national or international publication relevant to the field.
- National recruitment sources include professional journals, national higher education newsletters, print/electronic newspapers such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and electronic higher education publications such as *Inside Higher Education*.
- Electronic jobs posting websites and other services specific to the appropriate discipline that have national readership may be substituted, on a case by case basis, for advertisement in a general higher education publication.

Go to the [HR|AA Website for additional advertisement information](#) including enhanced diversity based resources that may allow for broader advertisement options.

Regional search

Requires that the position be advertised:

- At least one time the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* on a Sunday run, and
- At least one Sunday in at least one regional newspaper.

The hiring authority or search committee may define the "region" as the one most appropriate for the position such as the Salt Lake Tribune, The Denver Post, Portland Oregonian, Seattle Post-Intelligencer and/or Seattle Times and Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Statewide search

Requires that the position be advertised:

- At least two times in the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* in Sunday runs;
- In the Sunday editions of at least two Montana newspapers of general circulation;
- Newspapers of general circulation include The Great Falls Tribune, The Billings Gazette, The Missoulian and The Independent Record (Helena).

Local search

Requires that a position be advertised:

- In the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* at least three times, of which one must be a Sunday.
- If the position is located away from the Bozeman campus, at, for example, one of the University's Research Centers, at an extended campus, or in a county Extension office, advertisement in the local newspaper where the position resides may be substituted for the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*.

Positions in which there is a high likelihood of making a hire of a non-U.S. worker should be posted for 30 days with the state Workforce Services Agency.

Enhanced Recruitment Efforts

Enhanced recruitment involves making an extra effort to inform protected class members of the availability of positions. Montana State University fulfills its affirmative action commitments, in part, through enhanced recruitment of women, minorities, Vietnam era and disabled veterans, and persons with disabilities.

Committees are encouraged report their enhanced recruitment efforts to Human Resources | Affirmative Action and document these efforts in their search files. [Click here for Recruitment Advertising Resources.](#)

Enhanced Print Advertising

To enhance their recruitment efforts, committees should:

- Place ads or post announcements in publications such as: *Indian Country Today*, *Women in Higher Education*, *Insight into Diversity*, *Diversity, Inc.*, *Society of Women Engineers*, *Modern Language Association (MLA)* and

other magazines and journals specifically targeted to minorities and women. Human Resources | Affirmative Action can provide assistance in determining such sources.

Notify clearing houses, vita or resume banks or other agencies of position openings.

"Pre-Interviews" at Job Fairs, Conferences and Professional Meetings

Many professional associations encourage employers to recruit potential employees during annual conferences or job fairs. If a University representative meets with potential applicants at a professional conference, he or she must be careful to explain that the meeting is not a formal or screening interview. If appropriate, the University representative should encourage the potential applicant to apply for the position or continue to consider MSU for future employment but should not promise the person an interview or a job.

EEO/AA Notice of Compliance in Advertisements

Advertisements placed in newspapers or journals for **which a fee is charged** should use the following notice of compliance:

- *ADA/EO/AA/Veterans Preference Employer*

Advertisements in the rare newspaper or journal **that does not charge a fee** to run the ad should use the following notice:

- *ADA/EO/AA/Veterans Preference Employer. Claim veteran's preference or request an accommodation from HR|AA, MSU, Bozeman, MT 59717-2430. (406-994-2042 or hraa@montana.edu)*

Failed Search Process

When a search does not result in a hire, the hiring authority may:

- Go back into the qualified candidate pool to see if there are any applicants who could be interviewed. These may include those applications that came in after the screening deadline and were paused, **or**
- Cancel the search, appoint a new committee and re-advertise the position, **or**
- Reopen the search by continuing the same committee and, if appropriate, re-advertising the position. A position need not be re-advertised if the search was open-ended and the position is still on the MSU job website.

If a candidate initially accepts and later declines an offer or resigns shortly after being appointed, the hiring authority may seek permission from HR|AA to reopen the applicant pool. Usually, a pool can be considered "active" for six (6) months from the date a hire was made.

Terminating or Suspending a Search

The hiring authority or the Director of Human Resources | Affirmative Action may **terminate or suspend a search when**:

- Violations of federal or state law, University policy, confidentiality, or the requirements and guidelines outlined in this Handbook have been identified and confirmed;
- The search process has been unreasonably compromised by bias, nepotism, or other prohibited practice;
- There are no legitimate candidates who meet minimum qualifications;
- The committee finds no applicants who meet preferred qualifications;
- The committee finds no interviewee to be acceptable;
- All qualified applicants or interviewees withdraw;

- The incumbent in the position rescinds his or her resignation;
- The department is in the process of reorganization and the hiring authority decides not to fill the position;
- A unit is undergoing an internal or external program evaluation, making hiring premature;
- A new hiring authority prefers to operate with less staffing while reassessing the unit's needs;
- The position to be filled is no longer available, due to reallocation of the position, lack of funds, program reduction, loss of FTE, or financial exigency.

The Director of Human Resources | Affirmative Action will not suspend or terminate a search for procedural irregularities or violation of these policies without first consulting with the hiring authority. If the Director of Human Resources | Affirmative Action decides to terminate a search, the hiring authority may appeal that decision to the President.