

**Search Committee Guide**

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Introduction

Thank you for your time and commitment regarding serving on this committee and making this search a priority for you! At Montana State University, we are striving to conduct legitimate, defendable, competitive, and successful searches that align with goals in our strategic plan, affirmative action plan, and equal opportunity employer responsibilities.

This guide was created to complement our presentation during the search committee training and as a tool for your upcoming search.

It is written as a living document; we encourage any feedback and/or suggestions.

For any comments and suggestions please email [recruitment@montana.edu](mailto:recruitment@montana.edu).

Recruitment Flow Chart

Once a final decision on who to hire has been made, UHR (or Search Manager) will create a Hiring Proposal. The Search Manager or UHR creates a Hiring Proposal on the system

Email hrservicecenter@montana.edu once a vacant position needs to be filled. Your HRBP/HR Generalist will work with you to draft the position description.

Search committee hands over all search documentation to UHR and provides a rationale on the hiring the successful candidate.

After the successful candidate has been identified by the committee, send the information to the Hiring Authority for a final decision.

Position is posted after securing approvals. Ask UHR if help is needed for advertising,

Reference checks are conducted. A minimum of 2 committee members must be present during reference calls with both taking notes. Reference questions need to be pre-approved by HR.

HR reviews the Hiring Proposal. If approved, HR lets the search manager know that a verbal offer can be made.

Search committee members should attend the search committee orientations if committee member has not done so within the past two years.

Search manager lets HR know once candidate accepts the offer verbally.

Phone and/or on-campus interviews are conducted by all committee members with all taking down notes. Interview questions need to be pre- approved by HR.

After an offer has been accepted the Search committee works with UHR to regret the remaining candidate pool and close the search.

Individual screening may begin upon the screening date. Committee members should review and score all applications received on or before the screening date.

Update HR with search status as applicants are moved through the process. The search chair or manager sends the list of candidates that are getting moved forward (including rationale and veterans’ rationale) and the interview questions to HR for approval.

The committee meets and decides on which candidates to invite for phone and/or on-campus interviews and formulate interview questions.

Thank you for serving Montana State University in conducting a legitimate, defendable, competitive, and successful search!!!

Recruitment Process Checklist

HOW TO FILL Staff POSITIONS

**BEFORE THE POSITION IS POSTED:**

* + Email [hrservicecenter@montana.edu](mailto:hrservicecenter@montana.edu) once a vacant position needs to be filled.
  + Your HRBP and HR Generalist will work with you to draft the current position description.
  + The HR Generalist will classify the position and determine overtime eligibility.
  + The position description will be routed for approvals (Hiring Authority, Director, Budget, OSP if grant-funded, and Provost) before HR approves the position and creates a vacancy announcement on the ATS.
  + Professional MUS positions will need President and OCHE approval as well.
  + Postings will need to be posted for a minimum of **10 working days**.
  + A minimumof **3** members, one female (not exceeding 7) should be part of the Search Committee.

**SEARCH PROCESS:**

* + Search committee members should attend the search committee orientations prior to screening candidates if committee member has not done so within the past two years.
  + **Screening of applications –** Individual screening may begin upon the screening date. Committee members should review and score all applications received on or before the screening date. Applications received after the screening date may also be scored if the committee decides that a bigger pool is needed.
    - An overall ranking assessment is applied to the candidate’s complete application based on the required qualifications of the position. Recommended format below (3 tiers).
      * Candidate exceeds the qualifications
      * Candidate meets the qualifications
      * Candidate does not meet the qualifications
* Committee meets to discuss rankings of applicants to determine initial pool of candidates.
  + **Veteran’s preference** is applied to qualified candidates by moving to top tier and discussing within the committee.
* The department may invite candidate(s) that they deem qualified for the position to apply. **Update HR with search status as applicants are moved through the process.** Search Manager (or HR) moves candidates in ATS to workflow state for approval (interviews, reference checks).
  + HR should concur with the list prior to invites being extended or calls made.
  + HR should be notified of applicants that withdraw from the process and move them in the workflow.
* **Questions/Interviews** –Telephone (Webex/Skype), Campus Interview, Reference questions need to be pre-approved by HR. Candidates may also be asked to provide a presentation, and/or video as long as this is documented and asked of each candidate.
* **Phone/Webex/Skype/On-Campus Interviews**: A minimum of 2 committee members must be present during interviews with both taking notes. ***Please note:*** professional MUS positions will need preapproval from President and OCHE to proceed to on campus interviews. Please let HR know your candidates for the on-campus interviews and we will obtain the approvals and let you know when you can proceed.
* **Reference Questions** –A minimum of 2 committee members must be present during reference calls with both taking notes. Reference recommendations/calls may also be done prior to inviting applicants to apply and should be documented. Reference questions need to be pre-approved by HR.
* Interviewing more than one candidate is recommended for a good comparison on candidates. HR would need a rationale if only one candidate will be interviewed.

**HIRING PROCESS:**

* Search Chair/Manager (or HR) creates a Hiring Proposal in ATS.

The following fields need to be completed:

* **Proposed Salary** 
  + If different from posted salary/low incumbent rate we will need a rationale in “Additional Information” field.
  + For classified positions: If the salary is higher than the low incumbent rate for the classified title, the salary will need to be approved by the HRBP. If the salary exceeds the high entry for the classified title the compensation/classification team will need to approve (HR Generalist/HRBP will facilitate this).
  + For professional positions: If salary requested is higher than the approved rate, the new salary will have to go through the same chain of approvals that the position had before posting the position.
  + For professional MUS positions: HR will partner with you regarding MUS salary offers/negotiations.
* **Search Summary/Hiring Rationale** – What skills, qualifications, etc. make this the best candidate? Reference the list of required qualifications on the posting and provide information as to how and why the selected candidate meets these requirements.
* Name of **1st reference** contacted.
* Name of **2nd reference** contacted.
* **Upload all search documents** - interview and reference notes for **ALL** candidates that were interviewed (both phone, reference and final interviews) before approving.
* Search manager or chair (or HR) forwards the Hiring Proposal to the Hiring Authority for approval.
  + Once the Hiring Authority has approved, they move it forward to HR for approval.
* HR moves Hiring Proposal in the workflow to approve **conditional** verbal offer to candidate.
  + Once accepted, please email your HR associate/HR Generalist that the candidate accepted the position and the firm start date. HR will initiate the Background check and will coordinate the onboarding process.
  + ***All hires are conditional upon passing the required background check***
* HR will follow-up with Search Manager/Chair to close out the position.
  + Candidates need to be regretted.

Confidentiality

All application materials are considered confidential.

* If you have an outside search committee member please inform UHR so training and signature on confidentiality agreement can be facilitated.

Confidentiality agreement:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. I acknowledge that all information concerning the candidate pool is extremely confidential and agree to permanently protect the identity of individuals who have expressed interest in exploring this employment opportunity, including individual qualifications and merits, and I will not release or share names of applicants with others. | 2. I agree to maintain absolute confidentiality about all discussions of the Search Committee, both during the search process and after its completion. I understand that any breach in confidentiality could result in considerable damage to the reputations and/or livelihoods of the candidates, the Search Committee, and the University. |
| 3. I agree to take all necessary precautions to safeguard confidential information received during the search process. Such precautions include, but are not limited to, avoiding discussing confidential information in public places where others might overhear and referring questions regarding confidential information to the Committee Chair. | 4. I agree the specific evaluation instruments and questions to be used in the applicant screening process are confidential as are any evaluation scores, ratings, descriptions or notes about an applicant. |
| 5. I agree that any and all information in the form of papers, books, files, documents, electronic communications, or in any other form or format which comes into my possession and relates to the work of the Search Committee is confidential. | 6. I acknowledge that only the Chair of the Search Committee or designee is authorized to speak on behalf of the Search Committee. |
| 7. Upon the request of the Chair of the Search Committee, I agree that I will return or destroy all materials which I have received. | |

To keep the confidentiality please:

* Do not save application materials on your computer
* Do not discuss applicants outside the Search Committee meetings
* Search Committee meetings need to be conducted in a way that discussions cannot be easily overheard (open door to conference room etc.)

Protected Classes

Montana State University values diverse perspectives and is committed to building a multicultural work force. We strongly encourage women, racial/ethnic/gender minorities, persons with disabilities, and veterans to apply. MSU is receptive to the needs of dual career couples and is dedicated to work-life integration.

Furthermore, MSU does not discriminate on the basis of the protected classes listed below:

**• Race**

**• Color**

**• Ethnicity**

**• National Origin**

**• Sex**

**• Sexual Orientation or Preference**

**• Marital or Parental Status**

**• Age**

**• Religion**

**• Creed or Political Belief**

**• Mental or Physical Handicap or Disability**

**• Status as a Covered Veteran**

All interview questions, reference check questions, and informal discussions with candidates must be ***job-related,*** and may not be geared towards obtaining information regarding the protected classes noted above.

Please **DO NOT** refer to any protected class information in your search notes!

Enhancing Diversity

MSU dedicated a Goal in our strategic plan ***Choosing Promise*** to increase diversity in applicant pools:

**GOAL 2.3: Strengthen institutional reputation in scholarship:**

METRICS and ACTIONS

*#3. Montana State University will demonstrate improved institutional reputation through the increased size of faculty applicant pools, increased diversity of applicant pools and increased ratio of offers accepted to offers made.*

President Cruzado : “With you, I look forward to advancing Montana State University’s commitment to building a more diverse and inclusive community. Together, our differences will become our strengths.”

Why Diversity Matters

* A diverse world exposes MSU students, staff, and faculty to people from different corners of the earth with different life experiences and perspectives
* Diverse teams and workplaces are associated with higher employee satisfaction, intellectual engagement, and productivity
* Diverse teaching and learning environments are associated with higher student achievement, creativity, critical thinking skills, and cognitive development.
* Deepens the applicant pool to find excellence people to work at MSU
* Challenges assumptions about status quo to enhance creative problem solving (study by Northwestern and BYU)
* Real people from different ethnicities, genders, religions, and walks of life disrupt stereotypes (good or bad) that we might carry around in our heads
* Access, equity, and inclusion are fundamental to public education and MSU’s land grant mission
* Enhances the translation of research findings and teaching practices to programs and policies that serve more Montanans

How to Achieve a Diverse Applicant Pool

* Consider how a diverse applicant pool would look like for your position.
* Increase the size and depth of the applicant pool
  + Use a broad VA
  + Use EEO statement showing MSU’s commitment to diversity
  + Advertise in publications that target women and minorities
  + Call or e-mail colleagues and department heads of other institutions, agencies, corporations, etc.
* Recognize we all hold unconscious biases and assumptions

See also the ADVANCE Project TRACS archive: <http://www.montana.edu/nsfadvance/>

Advertising

Required language in advertisement:

Position Title

Department- MSU

For complete job announcement and application procedures go to:

<official link to job>

Equal Opportunity; Veterans/Disabled

* Please advertise in diverse publications
* **Need help?** Please contact UHR- we will be happy to obtain a quote from our recruitment advertising partner Job Elephant that will place the job ads after your recommendations.

What you can do:

* Start with a vacancy that looks to include -> broad language!
* Call colleagues to inform them of your vacancy and to entice applicants to apply
* Promote the position at conferences
* Consider where to place your advertisements

Bias and Overcoming it

When ranking candidates, it is important to make sure that the process is fair and equitable to each candidate. Please be aware of unconscious tendencies and biases. The following procedure can help reducing such bias:

Please see below for some techniques helping to overcome Bias:

* **Pre-set ranking criteria:** Discuss in the search committee the different criteria and their relative importance for ranking each candidate. Then adhere to these criteria.
* **Look for strengths:** During the first assessment of applicants, it is important to look ***for reasons to continue considering*** the candidates for the position. This approach ensures that strengths are not overlooked and that promising candidates are not eliminated from the search.
* **Adhere to the submitted application materials:** When determining whether or not an applicant meets your ranking criteria, refer to the candidate’s application. Ensure that all candidates have submitted a complete application that includes the same materials (e.g. cover letter, teaching statement, etc.). For example, if one candidate receives an unsolicited reference from a colleague, then the search committee should disregard that reference.
* **Spend adequate time reviewing each application:** Usually it will take 15–30 minutes to review an application for a thorough assessment.
* **Each candidate should be reviewed by all Search Committee members:** Each application should be assessed by all (or at least 2) search committee members to ensure a fair evaluation.
* **Avoid elitism:** Do not let your evaluation of a candidate be influenced by the reputation of their institution.
* **Avoid premature collaboration:**  Ensure that each application has been fully considered with respect to the different criteria that were agreed upon. Avoid any collaboration on candidates prior to giving them your full consideration as this might influence your individual ranking.
* **Create a second tier:** Before choosing your preferred candidates, consider creating a second tier list of candidates. If this list lacks women and/or underrepresented minorities, consider widening your recruitment efforts.
* **Revisit underrepresented candidates in the pool:** If you see women or underrepresented minorities are just missing the ranking required to move ahead in the search, consider if bias played a role during their evaluation.
* **Please consider including at least one woman and/or underrepresented minority** to move ahead in the search, if they meet the ranking criteria

Interviews

* We recommend for our entry level staff positions to skip the phone interview stage, if possible, and conduct only an on-campus interview. In our current labor marked we need to move quickly in our recruitment efforts and a phone interview stage can mean an unnecessary delay.
* If the candidate is out-of-state you may substitute the on-campus interview for a videoconference call (please make sure you gain a visual impression from the candidate). Be aware, that for MUS contracted positions and other key positions on campus it is required to bring candidates on campus
* Obtain permission from your HR Associate/HR Generalist on your list of applicants you wish to interview and on your list of questions.
* **Please be aware that professional MUS positions require approval for on campus interviews from the President and OCHE before we can proceed!**
* When calling the applicants and schedule interviews you are welcome to ask ***all*** applicants: *“If hired, would you be able to show proof of authorization to work in the US, upon hire?”* If the applicant will need to be sponsored, kindly inform them if your department will be sponsoring for this position. If not, and the applicant still wants to proceed with the interview, we will need to honor this (e.g. this cannot affect our hiring decision) However, we have had issues obtaining visas. Depending on the timing of the search, this might be an important consideration.
* Ask anywhere from five to twelve questions to get a feel as to whether this person should be moved to the finalist stage.
* Questions should correlate to the required and preferred qualifications, successful candidate section and any other special requirements for this position
* All search committee members should be attending the phone interviews and on-campus interviews and should be supplied a list of the interview questions to note upon. You are welcome to take turn asking interview questions, while the other search committee members take notes. For phone interviews, it might be helpful to only have one person as the main voice during the call.
* Let the ADA Coordinator know if any accommodations for a finalist need to be handled.
* Remember what it’s like to be a candidate.
* Keep visit format consistent across applicants.
* Supply an informational packet to each candidate- benefit handout and departmental and college information, for instance.
* Promote the MSU positively:
  + Top 3% in research expenditures in the nation
  + Supports diversity, inclusion, and work-life integration
  + Bozeman is a great community
  + Tout the advantages, benefits, and opportunities of MSU- why do you like working here?

Sample Interview Questions

* What made you interested, and how have your past work experiences prepared you for this position?
* How does this job relate to your long-term professional goals?
* Tell us about your experience in (name requirement/s listed in vacancy announcement; example: statistical analysis, customer service, etc).
* Please tell us about a time you had to prioritize multiple projects to meet deadlines on time. What is your approach to managing multiple tasks in a busy environment?
* Tell us about a time where you worked on a project that required experience organizing and prioritizing heavy workloads and meeting deadlines. What was the most significant challenge you encountered? How did you resolve it?
* This position will require you to work under little supervision. Please describe your time management and organizational skills that enable you to successfully work independently.
* This position requires an ability to adapt to changing situations and work effectively with a wide variety of people. Would you give us specific examples that illustrate your abilities in these areas?
* How would you describe your project management style?
* This position requires strong interpersonal communication skills. Give us an example of your work experience/s that show/s your skills in this area.
* Please describe a time when you collaborated with someone who had a very different working style from your own and how you handled that.
* Describe a time when you had conflict with another work colleague. How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
* Can you give us an example of your capacity to work successfully both individually and as part of a team?
* How would you develop a positive working relationship with the team? Give us an example of how you have worked within a team to achieve organizational goals?
* How do you best communicate your professional opinions to your peers? To your manager?
* Can you tell us about a time when a mistake or error in judgement was made by someone you supervised and how you handled the situation?
* Tell us about your experience with various office software programs including Excel and various design programs (Photoshop or InDesign, for example), if any.
* Tell us about your experience with computers and computer applications, for example processing, spreadsheets, intranet, electronic calendars, and email.
* Tell us about a time where you were given a new task/project with little guidance or explanation. Tell us the steps you took to become knowledgeable about the project and succeeded?
* Tell us about a time you had to handle demanding and/or insistent clientele/ faculty/ or staff. What was the issue and the final resolution?
* Please describe a situation in which you had to deal with a difficult person, for example, a customer or co-worker. How did you handle it? Is there anything that you wish you had done differently?
* Please describe your approach to customer service in the following situations: a). Handling confidential information b). Dealing with confrontation
* Please tell us what types of issues or information you have had to handle in a highly sensitive or confidential manner?
* Can you please describe a difficult customer service situation that you encountered in the past, how you handled the situation and what you learned? If you had to do it again, would you do anything differently?
* Describe a situation in which you independently improved upon the quality of your work processes, products, or services. How did you recognize the need for improvement in the first place?
* What strategies do you employ to ensure you are productive and effective team member in a fast-paced working environment?
* What do you think will be the most challenging aspect for you in this position? How do you see yourself meeting that challenge?
* These positions require a great deal of accuracy and attention to detail. Please describe the system you use to ensure your work is accurate and all details are attended to.
* This position requires data entry often prioritizing a high-volume workload during peak times. How do you handle what may become routine, repetitive work to ensure accuracy and stay motivated in your position?
* Priorities often change suddenly throughout the day. If you are asked to quickly do another task, how do you react to that? Give an example of when that’s happened to you and how did you handle the situation?
* Tell us about an experience where you had to explain a complex concept to someone with very limited understanding of the subject. Would you have done anything differently?
* Think of a time when a situation required you to deliver information that would negatively impact a customer. What did you say and how did you say it?
* Tell us about a situation in which information, instructions or objectives were ambiguous. What did you do to clarify the situation?
* Give us an example demonstrating your ability to work as a member of a collaborative team, and please share what strengths you bring to the team setting.

Questions Regarding Diversity

* What is the role for diversity initiatives in education and research?
* Montana State University is committed to increasing diversity among students, faculty, and staff, and we’re very interested in fostering success among all groups in our community. What approaches might you use to facilitate success among people from diverse backgrounds?
* Do you have any ideas for increasing and promoting diversity within the department/college?
* Describe your understanding of diversity [or inclusion] and why it is important to this position.
* What does it mean for you to have a commitment to diversity? How have you demonstrated that commitment, and how would you see yourself demonstrating it here?
* Please describe how you would work to create a campus environment that is welcoming, inclusive and increasingly diverse.
* Describe how you, as a faculty/staff member, function and communicate effectively and respectfully within the context of varying beliefs, behaviors, and backgrounds.
* What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in diverse, multicultural and inclusive settings?
* What is your definition of diversity? How do you encourage people to honor the uniqueness of each individual? How do you challenge stereotypes and promote sensitivity and inclusion?
* How do you seek opportunities to improve the learning environment to better meet the needs of students from all backgrounds and from students who have been historically marginalized?
* Describe a situation in which you encountered a conflict with a person from a different cultural background than yours. How did you handle the situation? (Please be specific)
* Tell us about a time when you changed your style to work more effectively with a person from a different background.
* What do you see as the most challenging aspects of an increasingly diverse academic community? Follow-up question: What initiatives have you taken or engaged with to meet such challenges?
* Talk about a time that you successfully adapted to a culturally different environment.
* What issues have arisen from your work with non-traditional and first-generation students? What has gone smoothly and what has been challenging in this work?
* What are some specific things you would like to do within the next two years to further your development in cultural competency?
* How have your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment that values diversity [or is committed to inclusion] where we see awareness of and respect for diversity as an important value?

**Permissible & Impermissible Questions/Inquiries**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject** | **Permissible** | **Impermissible** |
| **Age** | * Can only make inquires related to the minimum age requirements, if hiring a minor | * Cannot ask an applicant to state their age and/or date of birth * Cannot inquire how old an applicant is * Cannot use terms such “younger” or “older” |
| **Birthplace** | * None | * Cannot make any inquiry regarding national origin |
| **Citizenship** | * Can only make inquires of whether or not if hired, would they be able to show proof of authorization to work in the U.S   *-If asked of one applicant, must be asked of all applicants*  -*For verifying authorization after being hired, applicants must be allowed to choose from any of the approved forms of proof available on the I-9 form* | * Cannot ask if someone has a green card * Cannot request an applicant’s date of citizenship * Cannot request proof of citizenship or work authorization *before* hiring (done after offer) * Cannot inquire about a spouse or parent’s birthplace |
| **Convictions and Arrests** | * Can inquire about convictions for acts of dishonesty or breach of trust***if*** there is a clear job-related reason for obtaining the information   *-If asked of one applicant, must be asked of all applicants*  -*This is often dealt with through a comprehensive background check or conviction self-disclosure form that would ask about any crime convictions* | * Cannot ask about any arrests (arrests are different from convictions and are not required to be disclosed) |
| **Disability (impairment that substantially limits a major life activity; a record of such, or is regarded as having such an impairment)** | * Can only focus on an applicant’s ability to perform required job duties and not the disability itself * Can ask an applicant if they think they would be able to perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodation   -*If accommodation is requested because of a disability, call HR/AA for specifics*   * Applicants with disabilities can be tested in the pre-offer stage   *-If asked of one applicant, must be asked of all applicants* | * Cannot ask if applicant has a disability or inquiry as to the nature of their disability, medical examinations, or any disability-related information * Cannot ask if applicant has ever been hospitalized, formerly used or been addicted to illegal drugs or alcohol, treated for mental illness, or filed worker’s compensation claim * Cannot impose an accommodation upon a candidate that has not specifically asked for one |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Education** | * Can ask about the academic, vocational, and/or professional education of an applicant, including the name(s) of schools attended, degree(s)/diploma(s) received, date of graduation and courses of study | * Cannot ask the candidate about national, racial, or religious affiliation of any school(s) attended |
| **Experience** | * Can ask about work experience, including any volunteer work experience, but it must be job related * Can ask about employment dates, names, addresses, and qualifications of references as well as reasons for leaving | * Cannot ask about the national, racial, or religious affiliation of any organizations |
| **Language Ability** | * Can ask about applicants’ oral and written communication skills as well as fluency in English or any another language, ***only if*** this is a genuine occupational qualification (BFOQ)   *-Said qualification must be indicated on the vacancy announcement* | * Cannot ask questions about an applicant’s national origin |
| **Marital** | * Can ask questions about marital status ***only after hired*** and only for tax purposes | * Cannot asks questions regarding an applicant’s marital status unless it is directly related to tax purposes |
| **Military Service** | * Can ask questions re: job related military experience, type of education, and dates as it relates to a specific job * Can ask questions in regards to verifying claims of Veteran’s Preference obtained from HR | * Cannot ask questions about Military or reserves service records * Cannot ask questions about Military service for any country other than U.S. * Cannot ask questions about type of discharge |
| **National Origin** | * Can only ask about languages, travel, or cultural experiences as it relates to specific job requirements | * Cannot ask about the birthplace of the applicant, applicant’s parents, grandparents, or spouse * Cannot make any other inquiry into national origin |
| **Name** | * Can ask applicants if there is any other name under which the person’s previous employment or academic records would be listed | * Cannot make inquires that would indicate applicant’s lineage, ancestry, national origin, or descent * Cannot ask applicants about a previous name(s) that has(have) been changed by court order * Cannot ask a woman how they want to be addressed (i.e. Miss, Mrs., or Ms.) or ask for her maiden name |
| **Organization** | * Can ask applicants about the name and purpose of professional or academic organizations the applicant is a member of, *as long as* the affiliation ***directly*** relates to job qualifications | * Cannot ask for a list of all organization to which an applicant is a member |
| **Photographs** | * None | * Cannot request photographs for any reason   *-If an applicant includes a photograph, the search chair is advised to remove the photo from the applicant’s file before the application is reviewed* |
| **Pregnancy/Care of Children** | * Can ask whether applicant can meet specified work schedules or has activities or commitments that may prevent him or her from meeting attendance requirement. * Can ask if there are any reason why they would not be able to work evening or weekends if needed * Can ask an applicant if they would be able to work a specific schedule * Can ask an applicant if they have any anticipated absences   *-If asked of female applicants, must be asked of males as well* | * Cannot ask about the number and/or age of children * Cannot ask any questions concerning pregnancy current or future * Cannot ask about childcare arrangements |
| **Race or Color** | * None | * Cannot ask any questions concerning race or color, including, but not limited to color of eyes, hair, skin or other feature |
| **Religion or Creed** | * None   -After hiring, it is permissible to discuss accommodations for religious practice, if requested by the employee | * Cannot ask for recommendations or references from church officials * Cannot ask anything that would indicate religion or creed, such as religious holidays observed or church they attend |
| **Residence** | * Can ask about address to the extent needed to facilitate contacting the applicant (a post office box is a valid address) * Can ask if they will be able to get to work at a specified time | * Cannot ask for the names or relationship of persons with whom an applicant resides * Cannot ask whether the applicant owns or rents a home * Cannot ask if they live in town |
| **Retaliation** | * None | * Cannot ask if they have ever brought charges or filed a grievance against a former employer |
| **Sex** | * None | * Any inquiry that would indicate sex, unless for a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ) qualification. |

Reference Checks

* Let your HR Associate/HR Generalist know your list of applicants you wish to check on references. We will also approve the reference check questions.
* You must check 2 references on your finalist, however you may use this as a screening tool as well. We are recommending checking references on everyone that will be invited to campus beforehand.
* Notify candidate(s) you will be doing reference checks; verify you have 3 professional references.
* Since the search is confidential, please ***only*** use the references given on the ATS by the applicant.
* Contact UHR should you feel you are missing a reference (current supervisor wasn’t given etc.) or have problems reaching references.
* 2 committee members are required to be on the call, both of which are taking notes.

|  |  |  |
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| https://www.montana.edu/msuinfo/jobs/class/msu-logo.jpg | **Recommended**  **Reference Check Questions** |  |

Candidate’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reference’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Persons Conducting Reference Check: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from Montana State University-Bozeman. This candidate (name) has applied for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ position and has given your name as a reference. If this is a good time for you, we’d like to ask you a few questions (if not, set up a better time to do the reference check). With me is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and if it’s all right with you, I’ll put you on speakerphone.

1. Please describe the nature of your working relationship with the candidate (supervisor, coworker, subordinate, etc.).
2. What were (are) the candidate’s duties and responsibilities? How would you describe his/her performance?
3. (Describe the posted position). Based on the description of these duties and responsibilities, how would you describe the candidate’s overall ability to perform in this position?
4. Please rate in the following areas (scale 1 = low; 5 = high)

(Use the following that are relevant to the position you have posted, or substitute other position-specific criteria)

Ability to prioritize and meet deadlines \_\_\_\_\_  
Verbal and written communication skills \_\_\_\_\_  
Motivation and initiative \_\_\_\_\_  
Appropriate assertiveness \_\_\_\_\_  
Judgment \_\_\_\_\_  
Willingness to take direction or suggestions \_\_\_\_\_  
Honesty/Integrity \_\_\_\_\_  
Reliability/Dependability \_\_\_\_\_  
Customer Service Skills \_\_\_\_\_  
Team work \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please tell us about any work habits that affected the candidate’s job performance such as punctuality, attendance, sense of responsibility, professionalism, attitude, etc.
2. Please describe the candidate’s working relations with co-workers, the public, and supervisors. Were there any particular problems experienced?
3. Is there anything else you feel we should be aware of in making this hiring decision?

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!***

Additional Sample Reference Check Questions:

* How long and in what capacity you have known and worked with (name of candidate)?
* Describe (name of candidate)’s working relationship with you, subordinates and co-workers.
* Please describe (name of candidate)’s ability to multitask and juggle multiple projects and deadlines.
* How did the candidate perform in an environment that requires active and effective collaboration?
* How would you describe (name of candidate)’s management style and leadership skills?
* How did (name of candidate) handle work-related stress and/or stress related to coworkers, particularly conflict among staff and changes in the work environment?
* How successful or effective is the candidate when given a project without established parameters? Was the project completed successfully? How?
* How would you describe the candidate’s written, interpersonal, and verbal communication skills?
* How do they handle difficult people? What is their conflict resolution protocol?
* How would you describe candidate’s interpersonal relationships within the organization?
* What do you view as candidate’s main job strengths? Conversely, what limitations can you identify?
* How independently does the candidate work as oppose to checking in with stakeholders and supervisor?
* What are the candidate’s key accomplishments or impact on the organization?
* What area of development could the candidate focus on?

Hiring Proposal

* After identifying the finalist, a Hiring Proposal is drafted (done by Search Manager or UHR can help).
* Please formulate a hiring rationale that outlines how the candidate meets all required qualifications and which of the preferred qualifications.
* Enter the names of the 2 references called.
* Please specify which salary amount you would like to offer (hourly amount for classified, professional can be annual salary).
* Be aware that UHR will approve the Hiring Proposal and we ***cannot*** offer the candidate the position until UHR approved the Hiring Proposal!
* Please attach all search documentation to the Hiring Proposal.
* Documentation to include:
  + Interview questions and notes from all search committee members for ***all*** interviewed candidates
  + Reference questions and notes from at least two members

Verbal Offer

* Please make sure to mention that the verbal offer for the position is contingent upon passing the required background check.
* When the candidate accepts the position please mention that they will receive an email from A Check Global (our background check facilitator) and DocuSign (collecting PII for Banner setup).
* Let your HR Associate/HR Generalist know that the position was accepted and let us know the start date.
* UHR will facilitate the background check and further onboarding as agreed upon with your Unit.
* If the candidate wants to negotiate salary, please let the candidate know that you will get back to them and let your HR Associate/HR Generalists know, so that we can reevaluate the salary requirement for the position.
* Please note that salary offerings on professional MUS positions will require additional approvals.

Regretting Candidates/Closing the Search

* After a hire has been made, please regret the unsuccessful candidates.
* Every candidate that made an effort to come to an on-campus interview should be regretted personally (usually via phone, sometimes via personalized, HR approved email)
* Candidates phone interviewed and the remaining pool can receive ATS generated regrets emails (please coordinate with your HR Generalist)
* Internal candidates are usually regretted personally (phone or email)

**Search Committee Quick Reference Sheet**

**LOGIN**

Login directly at [jobs.montana.edu/hr](https://jobs.montana.edu/)

Log in with Net ID and password

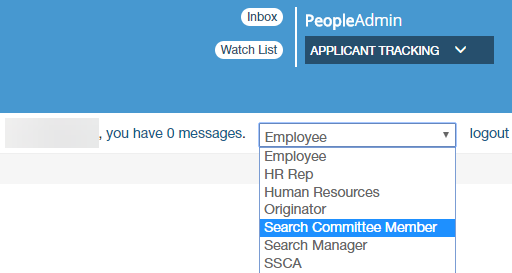
**or** [montana.edu/hr](http://www.montana.edu/hr/index.html) and select under **For Your Reference** on lower left

**Online Applicant Tracking System (ATS) – MSU Employee Access Only**



**CHANGING ROLES**

On the upper right change role from Employee to Search Committee Member



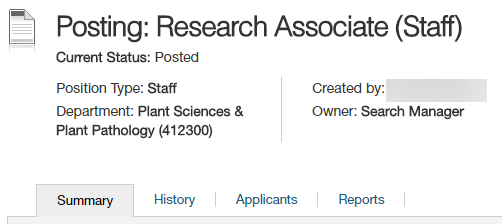
**ACCESSING POSTING**

Click on **Postings** then *Staff* or *Faculty* depending on type of search

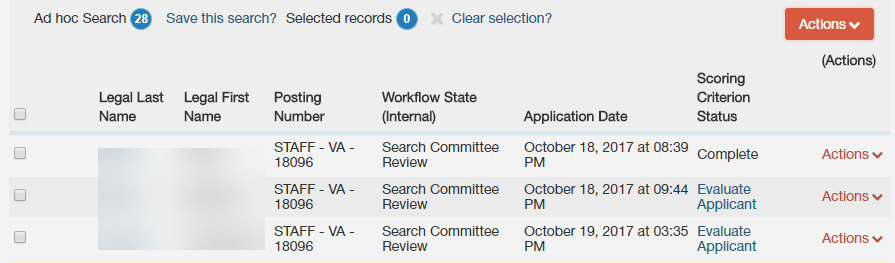
Open posting by clicking on title

**ACCESSING APPLICANTS**

Select **Applicants** tab



**Option 1**

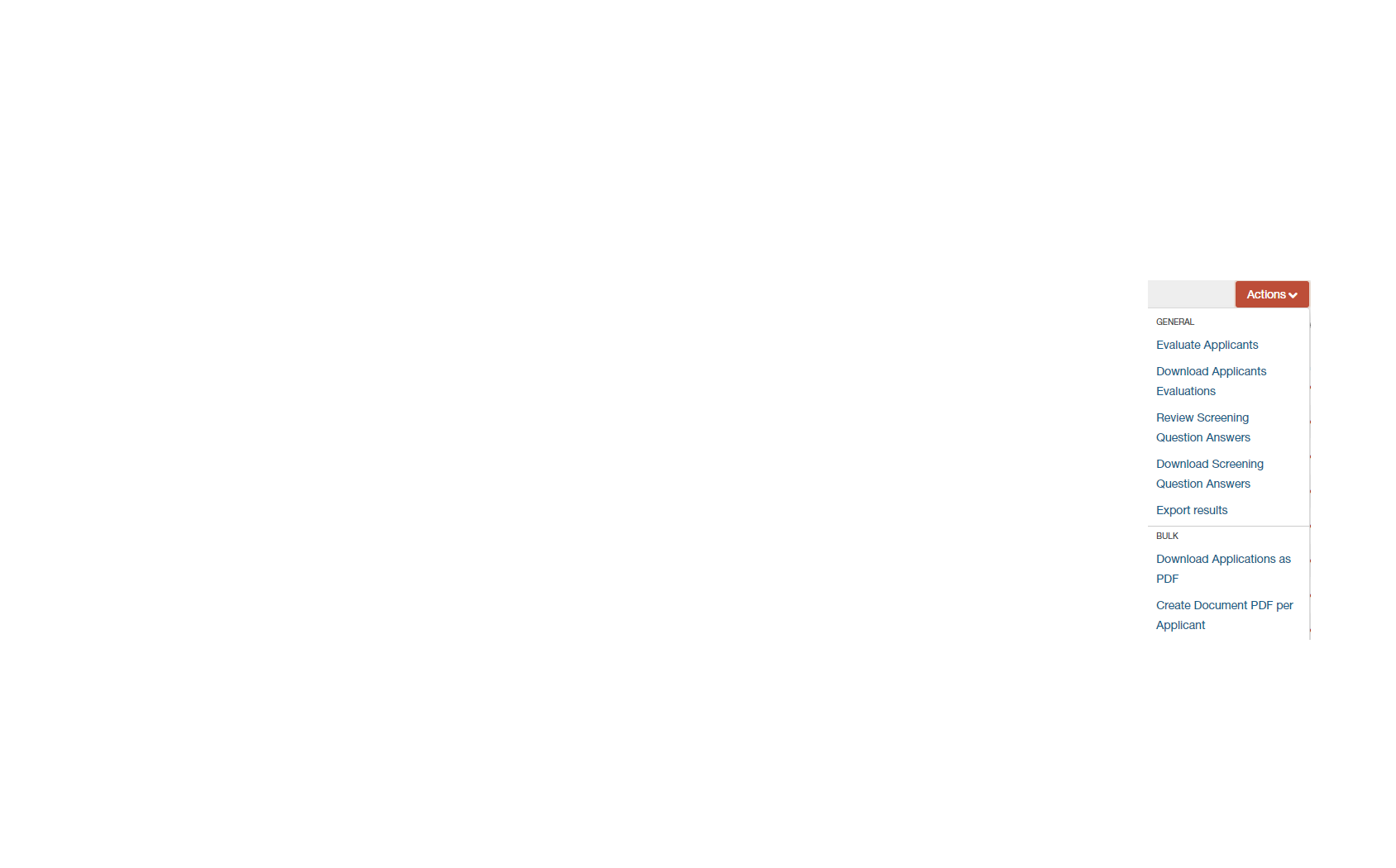


Click on **Evaluate Applicant**

* This opens their application
* A floating Evaluation Criteria window will be open
* The window will scroll up and down the screen
* Any uploaded documents will be linked at the bottom of the page scroll down and click to open in new window
  + To open uploaded documents close floating window, open documents in another window
  + At top of application click Evaluate applicant to reopen floating window.
* Once evaluation is finished click **Save and Next**
  + This will open the next application in line.

**Option 2**

Check box next to **Legal Last Name** to select all

Then under **Actions** select **Evaluate Applicants** 

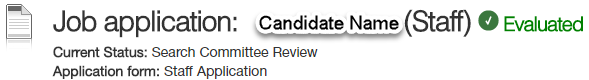
This will bring up all the Scoring Criteria questions for all applicants.

Click applicant’s name to review to open application

* This will open the application in a new tab
* Any uploaded documents will be linked at the bottom of the page scroll down and click to open in new window

Go to 1st window tab to put in evaluation **or** on left side of the application click Evaluate Applicant

* This will open a floating Evaluation Criteria window
* The window will scroll up and down the screen
* Once evaluation is finished click **Save and Next**
  + This will open the next application in line.

Once an Applicant has been evaluated:

 **Who to Contact:**

**General Email Boxes**

[recruitment@montana.edu](mailto:recruitment@montana.edu)

[HRservicecenter@montana.edu](mailto:HRservicecenter@montana.edu)

[ATShelpdesk@montana.edu](mailto:ATShelpdesk@montana.edu)

**Mailing Address**

University Human Resource

920 Technology Blvd., Suite A  
Bozeman, MT 59718

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*ATS Helpdesk*

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