Hiring Process FAQs

Q. I would like to open a search, where do I start?

A. First, you will need to determine which Applicant Tracking System the search will be posted in, iCIMS or Handshake. Handshake is for hiring only student employees and you will contact Career Services for more information on this process. iCIMS is for hiring either student or non-student employees; please work with your Business Services representative to open the search in iCIMS.

1. Select search committee members and prepare the job description.
   a. Some job descriptions are published on the USU HR site for your reference.
2. Please work with your Business Services representative to complete a New Position Request, if there is not currently an available position in the department, or position rebuild if necessary.
3. You will need to fill out the Post a Job form in ServiceNow. This form serves two purposes: 1) it provides your Business Services representative with search information, and 2) it notifies the Office of Equity so they can enter necessary information for compliance purposes.
   a. The Post a Job form can be found by visiting ServiceNow.usu.edu>Service Catalogs>Business Services>Employment Forms>Post a Job.
4. Once the search information has been transferred from ServiceNow to iCIMS by your Business Services representative, it will complete the necessary approval process and be posted online by the Office of Human Resources.

Q. I am hiring a non-benefited hourly employee, what do I need to know?

A. Handshake: Hiring students only contact Career Services for more information on this process.
   iCIMS: Hiring for a benefited or a non-benefited position that is open to students and non-students please work with your Business Services representative to open the search in iCIMS.

Non-benefited searches in iCIMS must be advertised on the USU Jobs website for a minimum of seven calendar days, and no other external advertising is required. However, additional advertising can be requested through the Office of Human Resources. We recommend having at least two people on the search committee (committee chair + 1) to avoid bias.

Q. I am hiring a non-exempt benefited employee, what do I need to know?

A. Per USU Policy 387: Benefited Employment, non-exempt benefited positions must be advertised on the USU jobs website at hr.usu.edu/jobs/ for a minimum of seven calendar days, and no other external advertising is required. However, additional advertising can be requested through the Office of Human Resources. We recommend having at least two people on the search committee (committee chair + 1) to avoid bias.

Q. I am hiring an exempt benefited employee, what do I need to know?

A. Per USU Policy 387: Benefited Employment, exempt benefited positions must be advertised on the USU jobs website at hr.usu.edu/jobs/ for a minimum of 14 calendar days with a required
Q. I am conducting a faculty search, what do I need to know?

A. Per Policy 387: Benefited Employment, faculty positions must be advertised on the USU Jobs website for a minimum of 14 calendar days with a required national advertisement on higheredjobs.com (placed by HR). Faculty Code requires at least five committee members on faculty searches (committee chair + 4), with the majority of the committee being current USU faculty members. Please refer to Policy 404: Faculty Appointments for more information.

Q. Do we need to complete a background check or a self-disclosure on the person we’d like to hire?

A. It depends on the type of search. Per Policy 386: Criminal Background Checks, a job offer is contingent upon successful completion of a background check, which must be completed for individuals hired into the following positions:

2.2.1 All benefit eligible employees.

2.2.2 All persons employed by USU in a teaching capacity including, but not limited to, adjunct, temporary, and concurrent enrollment faculty, professors, instructors, and lecturers.

2.2.3 Graduate students acting as teaching, laboratory, and/or research assistants.

2.2.4 Any employees/volunteers with significant contact with minors.

2.2.5 Any employees/volunteers in security sensitive positions. Any employee/volunteer in a security sensitive position with financial responsibility over funds of the University may also be required to submit to a financial/credit check.

A self-disclosure is required for all other positions; please work with your business services representative to complete the self-disclosure process. Once the selected candidate has been marked as hired within iCIMS, a background check or self-disclosure request is automatically sent.

Q. As search committee chair, what is my role in the search?

A. As committee chair, you are the primary contact for the search. It is your responsibility to gather pre-posting search information, request external advertisements, review hiring process training materials, and submit the ServiceNow Post a Job form. Once the search is posted online, it is your responsibility to:

- Schedule committee meetings.
- Ensure all applications are reviewed.
• Ensure interviews are scheduled after the review date has been met.
• Update applicant statuses within iCIMS.
• Communicate with applicants and answer any search-related questions.
• Conduct and close the search in a timely manner.

Note: You are required to keep search-related documents not gathered via iCIMS for three years from the job close date for auditing purposes. Additional information can be found in Policy 387: Benefited Employment.

Q. I received an email notification that my iCIMS search has been approved, but I can’t find the job online. What’s going on?

A. This occurs when the job is posted in the Dual Career Assistance/Reduction-in-Force (DCA/RIF) portal for the first 24 hours per Policy 385: Appointments of Opportunity, which applies to benefited positions. This gives our DCA/RIF candidates an opportunity to apply for the position before it is advertised to other candidates. If a DCA/RIF candidate applies for your position, the Office of Human Resources will be in contact to give you further instructions. If you would like to review the current DCA/RIF candidates before submitting a job for posting, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

Q. What should I do if a Dual Career Assistance (DCA) or Reduction-in-Force (RIF) candidate applies for my position?

A. The Office of Human Resources will contact you as soon as the candidate applies to verify their eligibility and clarify any questions you may have. Offering priority interviews to DCA and RIF candidates requires USU to keep the DCA/RIF process separate from the rest of the hiring process. If a DCA/RIF candidate applies for your position while it's posted in the DCA/RIF portal, the position will be held in the DCA/RIF portal until the necessary procedures have been completed. If a newly approved DCA/RIF candidate applies for your position after it's been posted, the Office of Human Resources will be in contact. Please review the DCA/RIF candidate's materials and if they meet the minimum qualifications of the position, a priority interview will be offered. The candidate should be interviewed before the committee reviews any other applications, if possible, and evaluated based on their own merit and qualifications. Please see Policy 385: Appointments of Opportunity and Policy 398: Reduction-in-Force for more information.

Q. What is the difference between advertised salary and budgeted salary?

A. The advertised salary field is how the salary is publicly listed to applicants. If a specific amount is listed in the advertised salary field, the department is held to that amount and cannot offer above or below. If there is any room for negotiation, the salary should be advertised as, “Minimum $XX, XXX”, or "Commensurate with experience, plus excellent benefits”. Budgeted salary is an internal field that is not viewable to applicants and allows for negotiation.

Q. Can I hire an employee at a different FTE (Full-time equivalent) than what was advertised?
A. No. If you listed a specific FTE the employee must be hired at the FTE that was advertised. If there is flexibility regarding FTE, please specify this in the job advertisement. However, short-term FTE changes may be negotiated as part of the offer. Please contact The Office of Human Resources for more information.

Q. What do I need to do to close out my search?

A. It is the committee chair’s responsibility to ensure the job is updated and closed properly. Please update your search within iCIMS as it progresses. When the search has concluded, you will need to complete these steps for each deselected candidate:

- Indicate the point at which they were deselected. Were they deselected after being reviewed or interviewed?
- Assign a disposition code (reason for non-selection) from the list provided within iCIMS.
- Communicate with applicants. We recommend sending an email to reviewed candidates and calling interviewed candidates.

Updating the job status to “Closed (Filled)” and assigning appropriate disposition codes (reasons for non-selection) is critical for compliance and auditing purposes. The job status will change to Closed (Filled) when the selected candidate is marked as hired and you click OK on the pop-up window. This action will also take the job off the web (if it hasn’t already been taken down) and send the necessary background check or self-disclosure request. Instructions on how to close your job can be found in the Hiring Toolkit or you may contact the Human Resources Employment team for help.

Application Review, Interviews, and Reference Checks

Q. When can I start reviewing applications and scheduling interviews?

A. The committee can review applications as they are received. The committee cannot schedule interviews until after the review date listed on the job advertisement. Typically, the review date is seven calendar days from the posting date for non-benefited hourly and non-exempt benefited searches, and 14 calendar days for benefited exempt and faculty searches.

Q. Do I have to conduct interviews for all candidates in the same format?

A. As an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) employer, we must offer the opportunity to interview in the same format to all applicants (e.g. in person, video conference, phone, etc.) and make reasonable accommodations to candidates’ interview requests. With the capabilities of modern technology, video conferencing and in person interviews are considered the same format. As much as possible, the interview format for each step in the interview process should be the same for all candidates. If you have any questions, please contact The Office of Human Resources.

Q. Can the committee ask different questions of the interviewees?

A. A structured interview protocol is highly recommended to prevent any appearance of discrimination. Each interviewee should have a similar interview procedure, meet with the same
committee members (or at least the majority of the committee members), be asked the same questions, etc. If one candidate’s answer necessitates a follow-up question, that question does not need to be asked of other candidates. Also, the committee is free to answer any questions that the interviewee asks during and at the conclusion of the interview. The committee may ask additional questions related to each candidate’s unique experience, relocation needs, work eligibility, etc. in addition to the standard questions.

Q. I want to check candidate references. Where can I find their reference information?

A. You can find candidate reference contact information in iCIMS on the “Experience (References)” tab. If references are not provided, you may need to collect them from the candidate. Although you don’t have to ask all candidates the same questions, ensure your questions are job related and nondiscriminatory.

Q. How should unsolicited reference information (either phone call or personal conversation) be handled?

A. We want as much valid information as possible to make an informed hiring decision. The individual who receives the information should take notes and submit them to the search committee. They should also inquire about the relationship the individual has with the candidate (i.e., colleague, friend, relative, etc.) to ensure it is firsthand information, and ask for a way to contact the reference for additional information or verification. Negative references must be corroborated by another reference, as positive references should be corroborated.

Q. Can we contact other references?

A. We suggest that if there are individuals not listed as references, who would give firsthand work-related information, contact the candidate(s) to inform them of the committee’s intention to communicate with other references. The candidate then has the opportunity to contact those references to let them know of the impending call and to provide background information related to the reference.

Q. What is the difference between a “Search” committee and a “Selection” committee?

A. Both search and selection committees evaluate each of the applications submitted for the position and determine acceptable interviewees. A search committee forwards the names of acceptable candidates to either the department head, director, dean, or vice president, who then makes the final hiring decision. A selection committee and the department head or director make a joint hiring decision. Intentions for which type of committee the search requires should be communicated upfront.

Q. Who can be a Search Committee member?

A. A potential committee member should be selected for the candid and thoughtful perspective they can bring to the search as well as the working knowledge they have of the vacant position. Diversity among committee members is best practice. If it is known at the commencement of the search that
a prospective committee member will not be available for the majority of search events, their membership should be reconsidered, and another member selected.

Students, non-USU employees, the exiting employee, and others approved by the current committee, qualify as committee members if they have a good understanding of the job position in question and are able to speak to applicants qualifications regarding the job duties. Any committee member who does not have an iCIMS account should team up with another member to review applications. All committee members have a shared responsibility to contribute and participate in the search, so each committee member’s vote will have equal value.

Q. Can non-committee members view applications?

A. We want all applicants to feel comfortable applying for a position at Utah State University. Utah State University has an obligation to protect the confidentiality of applicant materials and information. Individuals who are not official members of search committee or assisting with the search should not have access to any pre-interview information. Often, colleagues and staff are asked for input to evaluate those who have been chosen as finalists. Once finalists have been determined, interviewee information can be made available to relevant non-committee members.

Q. Can a partial committee hold an interview without the whole committee?

A. The recommendation is that the majority of committee members be present and that the missing member(s) is given appropriate notes. The missing member may participate in the decision-making process if they feel they can make an informed and unbiased decision. If a member will be missing the majority of the search events, their membership should be reconsidered.

Q. How can networking be utilized in soliciting applications?

A. Collegial networking is a proven method of increasing the applicant pool. However, caution must be used in informing a prospective candidate about a job opening. Please do not use phrases which might lead an applicant to believe he/she has an advantage over other applicants. An appropriate phrase would be, “A position is available at Utah State University in your area of expertise for which you may want to apply. I would be happy to provide you with the job description or website information.” Also, this is a great opportunity to promote Utah State University as a top-ranked employer. If you are distributing job information via list-serve or other method, please include the AA/EO statement provided by HR.

International Hiring

Q. What questions can we ask an international candidate?

A. The applications for international candidates must be evaluated exactly the same as for all other candidates. All interviewees should (U.S. citizens included) be asked a question such as, “If you are offered this position, will you be able to obtain employment authorization?” The only instance we might handle the international application different from a national application is when there are two equally well-qualified finalists, one being a U.S. citizen and the other an international citizen, who requires sponsorship. It is at the department’s discretion as to whether or not they would
choose to sponsor the international applicant. A department’s decision on whether or not to sponsor an international candidate will be made based on budgetary and departmental needs.

Q. Which questions can I ask about work authorization?

A. Search committees should, and can by law, ask international candidates if they have current U.S. work authorization.

1. If the individual answers “Yes”, you may ask which visa the individual has.
   • Usually, individuals finishing their education in the United States have an F-1 visa.
   • Often, individuals with J-1 visas are required to return to their home country for a minimum of two years prior to accepting U.S. employment (sometimes the two-year home stay is waived).
   • An H-1B Specialty Occupations visa is temporary in nature, with a stay duration for a maximum period of six (6) years at a time, and not every position may qualify.

2. If a candidate answers “No”, the search committees can, and should, ask whether or not they will be able to obtain work authorization for the position for which they are applying.

3. Once search committees have determined a finalist’s immigration status, they may ask further questions about whether or not a candidate will need employment-based sponsorship.

More information about H-1B’s can be found here: https://hr.usu.edu/employment/h1b/index.

Q. What is the cost to get an H-1B visa?

A. The Office of Human Resources can assist departments that need to get a sponsorship (H-1B) visa for their prospective employees. For an updated list of costs and fees associated with this process, please visit USU’s H-1B website.

Q. Will an H-1B visa suffice for a tenure-track position?

A. An H-1B visa is only a bridge for a tenure-track position. An international candidate must apply for permanent resident status within the initial 12-18 months of employment in that tenure-track position. The Office of Human Resources at Utah State University does not currently process permanent resident (green card) petitions. The decision to sponsor permanent residency is at the discretion of the department. If a department chooses to sponsor, they become the petitioner. It is the petitioner’s responsibility to obtain a qualified attorney to assist them with this process.

Please note: in order to be eligible for permanent residency, the Office of Human Resources will need documentation showing that the original position was advertised for a minimum of 30 days.