The following guidelines were specifically designed to increase efficiency in hiring and retention and to ensure consistency and compliance in the recruitment and selection process for Professional & Scientific (P&S) positions. Details for each step include the best practices to attract a talented and diverse applicant pool.

**Table of Contents**

- Talent Management Framework ................................................................. 3
- Getting Started ................................................................................................. 3
  - Employing Unit Guidelines............................................................................. 4
  - Disability Accommodation Requests............................................................... 4
  - PeopleAdmin Roles......................................................................................... 4
  - University Human Resources (UHR) Consultants............................................ 4
- Roles & Responsibilities ..................................................................................... 4
  - Hiring Authority.............................................................................................. 4
  - Hiring Manager............................................................................................... 5
  - Search Committee........................................................................................... 5
  - Stakeholders.................................................................................................... 6
  - Search Firms.................................................................................................... 6
- Steps to Recruitment and Selection Process ................................................... 7
  - Step 1: Identify and Evaluate Need.................................................................. 7
  - Step 2: Utilizing a Position Description (PD).................................................... 8
    - Use of a Single Posting for Multiple Headcount ............................................ 8
    - Use of a Series Posting.................................................................................. 8
  - Step 3: Develop Recruitment/Sourcing Plan................................................... 8
    - Posting and Labor Certification...................................................................... 9
    - Advertising and Candidate Sourcing............................................................. 9
  - Step 4: Post Position and Implement Recruitment and Sourcing Plan............... 10
    - Sourcing and Outreach.................................................................................. 11
    - Managing the Recruitment and Sourcing Plan.............................................. 11
Step 5: Review of Applications ................................................................. 11
  Review of Applications and Supporting Documentation ............................... 11
  Evaluation ............................................................................................... 12
Step 6: Interview Approval........................................................................... 12
  Continuous Improvement and Compliance Review ........................................ 13
Step 7: Interviewing .................................................................................. 13
  Preparing for the Interview ....................................................................... 13
  Interview Questions .................................................................................. 14
  Interview Conclusion ................................................................................ 14
  Interview Documentation ........................................................................... 15
Step 8: Hire Selection ................................................................................ 15
  Reference Checks ..................................................................................... 15
  Reference Documentation ......................................................................... 16
  Background Check ................................................................................... 16
  Veteran’s Preference or P&S Referral – Documentation ............................... 17
  Salary Offers ............................................................................................ 17
  Coordination Involving Internal Hires ......................................................... 18
Step 9: Finalizing the Offer and Closing the Search ...................................... 18
  Electronic Letter of Intent ........................................................................ 18
  Notice to Unsuccessful Candidates/Closing the Search .............................. 18
  Retention of Job Applications and Search Files ......................................... 18

Resource Index ........................................................................................ 20
Related Policies (alphabetical order).......................................................... 20
Related Resources & Procedures ............................................................... 20
Applicant Tracking System: PeopleAdmin .................................................. 20
Electronic Letter of Intent ....................................................................... 20
New Employee Onboarding ..................................................................... 20
Interview Question Guidelines ................................................................. 20
Key University Offices .............................................................................. 20
Talent Management Framework

Talent management is an integrated and coordinated approach that begins with development of an accurate job description and includes fair, legal and consistent practices for sourcing, attracting, selecting, hiring, and onboarding employees for success in their work and careers.

The image below represents an integrated talent management framework and identifies each step of the recruiting and hiring process:

As stated in the policy, “Iowa State University employing units will engage in an active recruitment and selection process for P&S positions to attract qualified applicants to meet the unit’s employment needs and to assure compliance with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action.” The talent management framework and associated procedures are designed to support a positive experience for the candidate, and provide the structure for a consistent, fair, and legal process for the hiring manager and the institution. The procedures described within:

- Serve as a framework for candidates to feel they have been treated fairly,
- Outline adequate record keeping in the event a hiring decision must be justified,
- Assure that applicants with specific rights (e.g., veterans, disabled) are afforded the appropriate avenues,
- Establish that information used for decision making is based on the job-related criteria, and
- Aid hiring managers to avoid negligent hiring on behalf of Iowa State University.

The parties involved in the hiring process are responsible for following the procedures and ensure the university is in compliance with its own policies, as well as state and federal laws.

Getting Started

Various roles must be fulfilled in the implementation of recruitment and selection processes. The roles included here are intended to describe typical recruitment and selection roles within employing units. Employing units may inform how recruitment and selection activities are implemented to best fit the respective area’s needs and priorities.

Individuals engaged in recruitment and selection activities should consult with their respective Human Resource Liaison for employing unit level guidance. The list of HR Liaisons is maintained on the University Human Resources web site at http://www.hr.iastate.edu/ under Resources.
**Employing Unit Guidelines**
Employing units may determine that additional guidelines for the recruitment and selection of Professional and Scientific staff are warranted to achieve college/unit goals and priorities. Guidelines established by an employing unit should be in writing and communicated to the respective hiring managers to promote a fair and effective recruitment and selection process.

**Disability Accommodation Requests**
If an applicant requests an accommodation for the application or interview process, the hiring manager should contact UHR Employee & Labor Relations at 515-294-4800 to discuss the request. Additional time may need to be added to the recruitment and sourcing plan in order to meet the university’s commitment to providing reasonable accommodations during the application and recruitment process.

**PeopleAdmin Roles**
For roles specific to PeopleAdmin, the ISU Classification and Hiring system, please refer to the system related resources listed in the Resource Index.

**University Human Resources (UHR) Consultants**
Employing units also have assigned UHR consultants from the UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) and Classification and Compensation teams. The UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) team is referenced throughout the guide as Talent Acquisition. For a complete list of your unit’s UHR Contacts, visit the UHR Homepage.

**Roles & Responsibilities**
Employing units should become familiar with the following key recruitment and selection roles: hiring authority, hiring manager, search committee, stakeholders, and search firms.

**Hiring Authority**
Per the Hiring Authority policy, “In order to assure compliance with law and Regents policy, and to manage risks associated with employment agreements, employment actions should be signed by persons with appropriate expertise, or who can assure appropriate review of the appointment.

The Board of Regents, State of Iowa, has delegated authority for hiring to specific university officials. This policy is intended to:

- Assure that hiring of employees occurs through an authorized official;
- Delegate authority to appropriate persons to ensure efficiency of operations.

While this policy specifies the delegation of authority for hiring, in addition, the "appointing authority" must adhere to all applicable university policies and procedures regarding employment...In the case of
joint appointments (i.e., an appointment split between two or more units), there will be multiple appointing authorities; however, one is designated as the primary employing unit.”

**Hiring Manager**

As stated in the Recruitment & Selection – P&S policy, “The hiring manager has primary responsibility within the employing unit’s guidelines for developing and maintaining position descriptions, screening and evaluating applicants, identifying candidates for interview, interviewing candidates, conducting reference checks, and selecting the candidate for hire.”

Generally, the hiring manager is the primary supervisor of the position. The hiring manager has the discretion to involve others in the recruitment and selection process per the guidelines defined by the respective Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee.

**NOTE:** Hiring manager is used throughout this guide. Hiring manager is also a role within the PeopleAdmin system and has specific responsibilities that are system related. These two roles may be carried out by different people based on employing unit direction. PeopleAdmin resources are in the Resource Index.

**Search Committee**

Per the Recruitment & Selection- P&S policy, the hiring manager may form a search committee to assist with the recruitment and selection for P&S positions. Search committees are strongly recommended for positions at Pay Grade 38 and above. However, the university does have several individual contributor roles typically at Pay Grade 38 which may not lend them to using a search committee. Therefore, hiring managers may determine the appropriateness of a search committee for each search consistent with guidelines outlined by the respective Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee.

For positions at Pay Grades 37 and below, the use of a search committee will be determined by the hiring manager and consistent with guidelines outlined by the respective Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee.

The hiring manager may consider the following factors to determine the appropriateness of using a search committee:

- Scope and duties of the position
- Duties of the position entail frequent interactions outside of the university
- Nature and frequency of interactions within the university

There may be other factors as determined by the hiring manager which may necessitate the use of a search committee.

Search committee size is set at the discretion of the hiring manager. The size of the committee should not be so large as to hinder the efficiency of the process or the effectiveness of the group.
Search committee members may provide representation, expertise, and/or diversity. Committee members may include:

- Persons with strong understanding of the role and its contribution to the employing unit
- Persons with close interaction with the position and/or serves as a main customer
- Persons with strong interpersonal and recruitment skills
- Persons representing a cross section of staff (Individuals from other employing units may be involved to achieve this)

The hiring manager is responsible for providing the search committee their charge, the position description, and the criteria for evaluating applicants. Each committee member is also expected to understand the recruitment and selection process and the university’s role as an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity employer.

**Stakeholders**

Stakeholders are individuals that have a vested interest in the position for which the hiring manager seeks to fill. The hiring manager identifies the key stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement should be consistent with search guidelines outlined by the respective Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee.

Stakeholders may bring valuable perspectives and input to the interview process. The opportunity for interaction and input from key stakeholders is an efficient way for the hiring manager to obtain helpful feedback throughout the interviewing step.

Once the hiring manager has identified the stakeholders, the hiring manager may consider providing information about the position and the candidates. This includes the posting announcement of the position and candidate resumes. For additional information on interview formats and structure, please refer to Step 7: Interviewing.

**Search Firms**

Hiring managers may determine that the services of a search firm are warranted for recruiting a higher pay grade level or hard-to-fill P&S position. The expense of a search firm is the responsibility of the hiring unit. UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) can consult on the use of search firms.

Employing units that have a need for search firm services must contact Purchasing to create a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a search firm. The purchasing agent will work with the employing unit to customize the RFP and position specific information and will reach out to current vendors who have the ability to provide these services. Once the bids are returned, purchasing will work with the employing unit/committee to review the bids and assist in firm selection.
When using a search firm hiring managers must comply with the requirements of the following university policies:

- **Employment Verification and Background Check**
- **Open Search**
- **Hiring Authority**
- **Procurement Authority**
- **Starting Rate of Pay – P&S**

Use of a search firm does not negate the requirement to post the P&S position on the university jobs website.

**Steps to Recruitment and Selection Process**

**Step 1: Identify and Evaluate Need**

Employing units who have a need for a new position, or to backfill an existing position, should use this as an opportunity to review the organizational structure, staffing skills and expertise, and to advance the alignment of the workforce with the college/unit’s needs and the university’s priorities.

The process of evaluating and determining the need for a position is critical in the recruitment process. Key items the hiring manager should consider when evaluating position needs include:

- Is there an appropriate business case (need) for the position?
- What are the new/changing performance expectations of the position?
- Is the position necessary given the short-term/long-term strategic goals of the college/unit?
- Is the necessary budget available to fund the position?
- What are the essential functions or primary roles and responsibilities of the position?
- What is the effect of the position on organizational structure (i.e. changing roles and responsibilities, layers of management, redundancy in roles)?
- Considering the anticipated workload, how many positions are needed to successfully perform the specific duties of the job?
- What is the level of responsibility or authority needed; does this properly align with the proposed classification? Should this position be advertised series in order to allow greater hiring flexibility?
- Is there a staffing plan in place?
  - Are there “single points of failure”?
  - Are there training or skill gaps that need to be immediately addressed?
  - Can current staff fill existing gaps, or is hiring necessary to fill such gaps?
Step 2: Utilizing a Position Description (PD)

A position description (PD) contains job-related criteria and serves as a guideline for the performance expectations of a position. Position descriptions also help establish parameters and guidance around the hiring and selection process. The PD is used in the recruiting process to provide an outline of a job’s minimum and preferred qualifications. It can also be used as a guide for developing interview questions, evaluating candidates, and formulating reference check questions. The PD will include the following:

- Summary of Duties and Responsibilities
- Job Duties
- Job Factors
- Essential Physical Functions
- Preferred Qualifications

Required qualifications are standard and cannot be changed for Merit positions. Additional “Special Qualifications” may be requested within the guidelines of the Board of Regent Merit System Rules. Upon approval of a Special Qualification by UHR, it becomes part of the minimum requirements of the position. Preferred Qualifications are those that are desired in order for a candidate to be successful in the position. They are used to further assess applicants who have met the minimum requirements of the position.

Use of a Single Posting for Multiple Headcount

Single postings may be used when multiple headcount of the same position within the same hiring unit has equal conditions and qualifications. Please reach out to your respective UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) Consultant to determine if a single posting would benefit your needs.

Additional guidelines for position descriptions can be found in the Writing a Position Description Job Aid

Step 3: Develop Recruitment/Sourcing Plan

A thorough recruitment/sourcing plan will map out and identify means to attract a diverse and qualified applicant pool. The hiring manager is encouraged to collaborate with his/her respective HR Liaison and then, as needed, the respective UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) Consultant to determine and develop the recruitment/sourcing plan.

Factors the hiring manager should consider when developing a recruitment/sourcing plan:

- Posting Period
- Applicant Rating Collection Method
- Additional Advertising Resources
### Posting Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P&amp;S Positions*</th>
<th>Term P&amp;S (Any pay grade)</th>
<th>Locally/regionally for a minimum of 15 calendar days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous P&amp;S (Pay Grade 36 and below)</td>
<td>Locally/regionally for a minimum of 15 calendar days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuous P&amp;S (Pay Grade 37 and above)</td>
<td>Nationally for a minimum of 30 calendar days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For more information about P&S posting periods, please visit the [Open Search policy](#).

### Posting and Labor Certification

Sponsorship for permanent residency may require additional advertisement and required documentation.

For additional information, please contact the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) by email [issoscholar@iastate.edu](mailto:issoscholar@iastate.edu) or call 515-294-1120. Also review the associated [Sponsorship Guidelines](#).

Hiring managers should consult with the ISSO in advance of initiating recruitment activities for a position on which a Labor Certification might be based. Print ads and other sources of recruitment efforts may be required if the search is related to a future Labor Certification need.

### Advertising and Candidate Sourcing

Before making any hiring decisions, the hiring manager should ensure a variety of internal and external recruiting sources are utilized. Broad advertising is critical to attracting a diverse applicant pool.

UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) provides recruitment/sourcing resources for the hiring manager which support both targeted and diverse recruiting initiatives. UHR has negotiated rates with various external advertising resources. To view these, visit the [UHR Talent Acquisition website](#).

In addition, UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) partners with outside vendors to ensure all positions posted to the university’s employment opportunities website are automatically posted to fulfill federal and state requirements. In partnership with the National Labor Exchange (NLX), all positions posted to the university’s employment opportunities website are automatically posted on the NLX ([US.jobs](https://www.us.jobs)) website and Iowa Workforce Development ([IowaJobs](https://iowajobs.iowaworkforce.com)) website. These websites automatically pull ISU job postings and allow for broader exposure through both the national and state workforce levels. It generally takes two-three days after the position is posted on the university’s employment opportunities website to appear on these outside websites.

Employing units should internally publicize openings (e.g., email to employees in the unit) and externally publish openings in sources such as journals, newspapers, and third-party websites. Externally publicized information must direct applicants to the university’s employment opportunities website and should be consistent with the approved position posting. The posting should offer a realistic portrayal of the role,
work environment, and education and experience requirements.

Iowa State University values diversity and has a strong commitment to affirmative action. Advertising in newspapers, professional trade magazines, journals, national or local publications, and relevant websites should be considered to reach the broadest and most diverse pool of applicants. UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) can provide consultation by advising employing units on position related recruitment resources. Hiring units may also consult with the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) to ensure the external advertisement meets current Equal Opportunity requirements. Placement of advertisements is the employing unit’s responsibility.

Employment advertisements must include the following:

- Job Title
- Posting Number
- Instructions for applying, such as "Apply online at [www.iastatejobs.com](http://www.iastatejobs.com)"
- Location of position (e.g. Ames, IA)
- Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Shortened Tagline

**Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Shortened Tagline:**

"Iowa State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or protected Veteran status and will not be discriminated against."

**Step 4: Post Position and Implement Recruitment and Sourcing Plan**

UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) initiates the posting after the position description has been approved by Classification and Compensation. The employing unit’s Posting Admin then works with UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) to post positions. The Posting Admin is a user group within the PeopleAdmin system that manages the posting and applicants throughout the hiring process. The following actions are taken to post the position.

- UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) sends the posting to the employing unit’s Posting Admin for review.
- The employing unit’s Posting Admin submits its approval via PeopleAdmin.
- UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) then posts the position to the university’s employment opportunities website.

For additional information regarding PeopleAdmin system roles and responsibilities, please refer to the Applicant Tracking System: PeopleAdmin section within the [Resource Index](#).
After the position is posted, the hiring manager can now implement the Recruitment and Sourcing Plan, as described above. Factors the hiring manager should consider include:

- Creation of a realistic timeline of tasks working backward from the desired start date for the position; and
- Placement of external ads (as referenced in Step 3: Develop Recruitment and Sourcing Plan).

**Sourcing and Outreach**

Sourcing and outreach is important to recruit a broad and qualified applicant pool. The hiring manager should consider the use of additional sourcing and outreach methods such as sharing announcements on social media and networking to connect with passive candidates. Additional efforts may include contacting and maintaining relationships with professional or alumni organizations to publicize the position and refer potential candidates.

**Managing the Recruitment and Sourcing Plan**

Successful searches require continuous monitoring to gauge the effectiveness of the original Recruitment and Sourcing Plan. The hiring manager may extend the posting application deadline and/or revise external sourcing methods. The intent to extend the posting application deadline must be communicated to the UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) consultant.

**Step 5: Review of Applications**

Applicants are those who apply via the university’s employment opportunities website during the initial application period (on or before the guaranteed consideration date) as described in the Screening Applicants Job Aid. Applicants complete an electronic application for each posting, in addition to, attaching the requested documents. The typical documents are:

- resume/curriculum vitae
- cover letter
- contact information for references

The hiring manager should begin reviewing and rating applicant materials as applications are received. All applications submitted through the guaranteed consideration date must be reviewed. Those applicants meeting the minimum qualifications must then be considered.

**Review of Applications and Supporting Documentation**

The Rating and Routing Applicants Job Aid and Screening Applicants Job Aid outline the steps to follow when reviewing applications within PeopleAdmin. The hiring manager is responsible for developing a matrix for the recording of applicant ratings and associated reason codes. Establishing a matrix facilitates transparency and clarity in the evaluation process. Hiring managers should refer to the Optional Matrix Template and Sample Completed Matrix.

The hiring manager’s review of applications is recorded in the matrix and the ratings entered into PeopleAdmin. This documents the hiring manager’s decisions and demonstrates that the interview pool is selected based on job-related criteria.
Completion of the matrix demonstrates that all applications were reviewed. Creating and maintaining proper documentation of employment decisions is a critical component to ensuring ISU practices and policies are compliant with university, state, and federal requirements.

**Evaluation**
Before beginning the evaluation of application materials, the hiring manager should review and discuss the position’s minimum requirements and the preferred qualifications with the Stakeholders, as applicable. The hiring manager should describe the desired ‘related experience’ and/or ‘related education’ to the stakeholders, as applicable. It is critical that the same evaluative criteria are applied to all application materials throughout the evaluation process. Steps 1-6 of the Screening Applicants Job Aid can serve as a guide.

**Step 6: Interview Approval**
After the hiring manager’s review and rating of all applicants, the hiring manager identifies qualified candidates for interview.

Interview approvals will be granted based on the written application materials provided by the applicant and based on the advertised criteria (required and preferred education and experience) listed on the posting. All forms of interviews, including phone interviews, can only proceed after interview approval.

All interview requests will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee. Each approval serves as certification that all required qualifications were represented in a quantified and consistent rating system, including that:

- Applicants selected for interview meet all requirements for the position
- Each applicant was rated on the preferred qualifications
- Verification that qualified applicants who have requested Veteran’s Preference were included in the interview selection
- Qualified applicants who have requested P&S Referral were included in the interview selection (see Workforce Reorganization-P&S policy).

Refer to above Step 5: Review of Applications for additional information to ensure consistency was applied. After approval by the respective Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee, the applicants can then be

**Veterans Preference and P&S Referral**
Upon receipt of applicant requests for Veterans’ Preference, UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) is responsible for ensuring that the applicant’s request and application materials were submitted on or before the guaranteed consideration date.

UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) evaluates the applicant’s qualifications against the position requirements. If the requirements are met, UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) notifies the hiring manager and the respective Posting Admin and HR Liaison via email of the applicant’s request for Veterans’ Preference.

The email explains that the qualified applicant requesting Veterans’ Preference must be selected for interview.
contacted for interviews.

**Continuous Improvement and Compliance Review**

UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) will review a random selection of positions on a quarterly basis for compliance with candidate interview selection procedures. Outcomes will also inform continuous improvement efforts related to policy and procedure application including training and job tools.

Specifically, UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) will review that the interview selection was based on job-related criteria as advertised in the posting announcement for each position. UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) will communicate the filled posting to be reviewed and will advise the employing unit of the review findings. The employing unit/division may need to take remedial action if warranted by the findings of the review.

**Step 7: Interviewing**

Interviews are a crucial step in the selection process. Carefully planned and well executed interviews are those that allow for key questions to be addressed. Interviews should be structured in the form of conversation and allow for the opportunity to further assess the degree to which the candidate meets the position qualifications while also gauging alignment with the employing unit.

As noted in **Step 6: Interview Approval**, interviews should only occur after interview approval by the Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee. Once approved, the employing unit may begin scheduling candidates for interview. The hiring manager ensures that consistent interview events occur, for example, interviews with the same stakeholders, an equal amount of time allotted for all interviews, and the same set of core interview questions are asked of each candidate. A [sample interview agenda](#) can assist in the interview preparation process.

**Preparing for the Interview**

The hiring manager should review and determine the desired interview format(s), questions and conclusion for the interview process:

- Determine the location and timeframe for interviewing
- Choose an effective interview format(s)
  - Phone Screen
  - Individual/Personal Interview
  - Panel/Stakeholder Interview
  - Virtual Interviews
  - Onsite Interview
- Define the interview questions
- Identify key items to cover in the interview conclusion
  - Realistic start date for the position
  - Additional position details which should be shared with the candidates
  - Salary expectations (to prepare in advance for potential salary exceptions)
  - Reference checks (next phase of the process)
  - Background check process
Interviews should be conducted in a way that creates consistency across the selected group at each phase of the interview process. For example, if a decision is made to conduct phone screens, all interviews (even for internal candidates) must be conducted via phone.

**Interview Questions**

Hiring managers should develop behavioral/situational questions based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities which are essential to the position. Behavioral based, open-ended questions allow the hiring manager to gain insight on the candidate’s ability to react or respond to differing situations that go beyond a simple yes or no response.

Interviewers can use behavioral based interview questions to target specific experiences and characteristics. Responses to behavioral based questions tend to be descriptive and allow for further exploration and probing into details. Responses typically follow a structure that includes describing the situation, the actions taken, and the outcome or result. The chart below illustrates some examples of traditional and behavioral based interview questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Interview Questions</th>
<th>Behavioral Based Interview Questions*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about yourself.</td>
<td>Tell me about a time...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would others describe you?</td>
<td>Describe a recent situation...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe your near-term and long-range goals.</td>
<td>Give me an example of a time...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were your most recent job responsibilities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Questions are structured to generate responses that describe situations/periences.

UHR offers Behavioral-Based Interviewing Training. For more information and to see a list of course offerings in which you may enroll, go to Learn@ISU, click on the Schedule and search using key word ‘behavior’.

Interview questions can help to clarify anomalies in applicant materials, assess job motivation, and organizational fit. Additional guidance on interviews includes:

- The same set of questions should be used to interview all candidates.
- The interviewer may ask follow-up clarifying questions based on candidate responses.
- Interviewers should document responses in a similar degree of detail and depth.
- The questions asked and responses should be retained as part of the search documentation.

Hiring managers should avoid questions that are not acceptable during the interview. The Office of Equal Opportunity provides a guide for non-discriminatory interviewing.

**Interview Conclusion**

At the end of the interview, the hiring manager must ensure that any/all remaining questions are
answered. The hiring manager should give the candidate the opportunity to share any additional information regarding their training or experience. It is advisable to inform the candidate of next steps in the process:

- Reminding the candidate that there will be reference checks
- Background check process for candidates moving forward in the process
- Offering the candidate the chance to add/update any reference contact information at this time
- Estimating the schedule for filling the position
- Explaining how/when the hiring manager will communicate back to the candidate with an employment decision

Interview Documentation

As soon as possible, once the interviews have concluded, interviewers should review their notes and complete their documentation of the interview. Interviewers should take the same type (depth, detail, etc.) of notes for each candidate who is interviewed. Hiring manager interview notes must be retained as a part of the search file.

Step 8: Hire Selection

The hiring manager is responsible for making the hiring selection, consistent with guidelines provided by the respective Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee. The hiring manager should rely upon interview documentation, culminating from Step 7: Interviewing, in determining that the finalist:

- Is the best qualified candidate;
- Was chosen based on the advertised requirements; and
- Demonstrates organizational fit to best carry out both the vision and mission of the university and the employing unit.

Once the finalist is selected, but prior to making a formal offer, the hiring manager must:

- Confirm finalist interest;
- Conduct and document reference checks; and
- Confirm the completion of background check.

Prior to making a formal offer, the hiring manager may also:

- Confirm anticipated salary expectations;
- Share the anticipated hiring timeline; and
- Discuss any outstanding next steps or candidate questions.

Reference Checks
When completing the online application, candidates for Merit positions consent to allow the university to conduct reference checks. In addition to the consent, the applicant answers a question on the employment application that may assist the hiring manager with the applicant’s preferred timing of the reference check. As noted in Step 7: Interviewing, hiring managers should communicate to the candidates the reference check process and the timeline in which references will be contacted.

The purpose of a reference check is to obtain information from prior employers or professional colleagues about a candidate’s work-related behavior and performance that could be critical to the hiring manager’s decision, regardless of the candidate’s apparent knowledge, skills, and abilities. As past performance is the best predictor of future success, references should be obtained from current and previous supervisors and professional colleagues who can speak to the candidate’s on the job performance.

Failure to check references can have serious legal, reputational, and financial consequences. If an employee engages in harmful behavior, which would have been revealed in a reference check, the university could be held legally responsible for “negligent hiring”.

Per the Employment Verification and Background Check Policy, the hiring manager shall conduct and document reference checks on, at a minimum, the finalist selected for hire – including current employees being considered. Final offers shall not be made without first completing a meaningful check of the finalist’s references and completion of the background check, described below.

The hiring manager may consider conducting reference checks on all finalists before the final selection is made. The Posting Admin certifies reference checks were completed before routing the hiring proposal in the PeopleAdmin system.

A final candidate may request the hiring manager not contact a current or past employer. Such requests shall be honored by the employing unit. Under such circumstances, the Hiring Manager may ask the candidate to provide additional references, such as a former supervisor or a current professional colleague. The hiring manager may also explore alternatives first with their respective HR Liaison and then, as needed, the respective UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) Consultant.

Questions used for reference checks should be work-related, such as dates of employment and other information of which the reference would have personal knowledge. Additional guidelines the hiring manager should use to structure reference check questions can be found in Guidelines for Checking References.

Reference Documentation

Reference check documentation should include candidate name, questions which are asked of each reference, and record of the responses.
Best Practices in Cyber Searches
Hiring managers, stakeholders, HR Liaisons, or anyone involved in the hiring process, should refrain from doing their own cyber searches of a potential candidate. If a cyber search is desired, contact UHR to develop appropriate parameters, such as who will perform it and when it will be conducted, in order to ensure a fair and equitable hiring process. There are pros and cons that must be weighed as well as guidance to be followed in order to avoid legal risks or violation of policies.

Background Check
Per the Employment Verification and Background Check Policy, UHR is responsible for completing the background check. Criminal history, motor vehicle, and sex offender checks will be conducted for all positions. Credit checks may also be conducted based on the responsibilities of the position. Education and Licensure/Certification Verifications may also be conducted based on the position requirements. Current Merit employees could be subject to a background check if they are changing positions or if current position duties change and warrant a background check.

UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) submits a background check request to the university’s vendor. The vendor then sends an email link directly to the candidate requesting information and requests consent to conduct the background check.

The average turn-around time is three to five business days after the candidate responds to the vendor’s email link. However, the length of time will vary based on factors such as:

- Candidate response time;
- The number of countries, states, or counties in which the candidate has resided;
- The availability and format of public records (such as court records); and
- The accuracy and completeness of the candidate information provided.

If the vendor report provided to the UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) Consultant discloses information adversely impacting employment eligibility, the UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) Consultant will report to the Associate Vice President of University Human Resources to discuss further evaluation and next steps.

New hires shall not begin employment until the background check has been successfully completed.

Further information about Background checks can be found in Background Check Process & FAQ.

Veteran’s Preference or P&S Referral – Documentation
Should an individual be afforded certain rights under Veterans’ Preference and he or she is not selected, the employing unit is responsible for emailing a notification to UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) outlining reasons for the non-selection of any Veterans’ Preference candidates. The reasons for non-selection serve as search documentation.

Veteran’s Preference: The employing unit is responsible for emailing a notification to UHR Talent Acquisition (Recruitment) outlining reasons for the non-selection of any Veterans’ Preference candidates.

P&S Referral: The employing unit is responsible for emailing a notification to the Associate Vice
President for University Human Resources outlining reasons for the non-selection of any P&S referral candidates (see Workforce Reorganization-P&S policy).

**Salary Offers**

It is recommended that the starting salary for a position be commensurate with the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the finalist. Furthermore, factors such as current market trends for the required skills and internal equity should be considered. The hiring manager may contact their respective HR Liaison and then, as needed, their UHR Classification and Compensation Consultant for recommendations in determining an appropriate starting salary. Starting salary offers should be in line with the university’s policy, Starting Rate of Pay – P&S. Exceptions to the Starting Rate of Pay – P&S policy must be submitted in writing to the Director of Classification and Compensation, or his or her designee, for review and determination of a final decision.

**Coordination Involving Internal Hires**

When a university staff member is selected for a position in another unit, a minimum notice of two-weeks is encouraged to promote an effective transition for the employee and for each unit. Based on the situation, an alternative arrangement for the transition may be negotiated by agreement among the relevant parties.

**Step 9: Finalizing the Offer and Closing the Search**

Once steps 1 through 8, above, are complete, a formal offer may be made. The hiring manager also completes tasks to notify non-selected applicants and candidates, closes out the search, and retains the search record.

**Electronic Letter of Intent**

The final candidate for a position must receive a formal offer in the form of an authorized Letter of Intent with the terms and conditions as outlined in the posting. Offers of employment for P&S positions hired through PeopleAdmin will be made electronically through AccessPlus. All of the routing and approvals happen electronically within AccessPlus. Refer to the Electronic Letter of Intent web page for guidelines.

**Notice to Unsuccessful Candidates/Closing the Search**

Once the selected candidate has accepted the position, it is the responsibility of the hiring manager to contact all candidates interviewed to inform them that a hiring decision has been made.

The hiring manager shall ensure that all applicants/candidates are dispensed (set to a final status) in the PeopleAdmin system as described in the Rating and Routing Applicants Job Aid. At this point, UHR will set the posting to a filled status in PeopleAdmin. This action triggers PeopleAdmin to send an email to all unsuccessful applicants notifying them that the position has been filled.

**Retention of Job Applications and Search Files**

Hiring managers and search committee members are required to document their searches to remain in compliance with university policy and federal law. The hiring manager is responsible for assuring that documentation of the search is complete and properly
maintained in accordance with the Retention of Job Applications policy.
The retention of information is further defined below for University Human Resources and for the employing unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Human Resources</th>
<th>Employing Unit*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Candidate application and materials</td>
<td>• Interview questions and responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applicant request for Accommodation</td>
<td>• Reference questions and responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Posting announcement</td>
<td>• Evaluation criteria with ratings (matrix)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applicant request for Veteran’s Preference or P&amp;S Referral</td>
<td>• As applicable, advertising required for Sponsorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Email from employing unit outlining non-selection for either Veteran’s Preference or P&amp;S Referral candidate</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Some employing units may have guidelines that require the hiring manager to maintain the search file.

**Welcoming the New Employee: Onboarding and Orientation**

Welcoming new employees occurs in multiple areas of the university, including the employing unit and University Human Resources. The details below outline how a new P&S employee is onboarded and oriented.

- A new P&S employee hired in PeopleAdmin will receive an electronic welcome letter that outlines tasks for new employees to complete.
- New employee onboarding begins as soon as the offer is accepted and is managed by the employing unit consistent with guidelines established by the respective Dean, Vice President, Senior Vice President, President or his or her designee.
- University Orientation and Employee Benefit information sessions are managed by UHR.
  - All new P&S employees are invited by UHR to attend the regularly scheduled sessions.

For more information about the electronic Onboarding process, please visit the [Onboarding website](#).
Resource Index

Related Policies (alphabetical order)
- Affirmative Action
- Appointment Duration-P&S
- Change in Status of Current Employee - P&S
- Employment Verification and Background Check Policy
- Hiring Authority
- Open Search
- P&S Positions At-Will and Exempt from P&S Policies
- Procurement Authority
- Retention of Job Applications
- Starting Rate of Pay – P&S
- Workforce Reorganization - P&S

Related Resources & Procedures
- Applicant FAQ
- Advertising P&S Positions in a Series
- Guidelines for Checking References
- Hiring Responsibilities Based on Roles Checklist
- Optional Matrix Template
- Sample Completed Matrix
- Screening Applicants
- Sponsorship Guidelines
- Writing a Position Description Job Aid
- Veterans Employment Preference

Applicant Tracking System: PeopleAdmin Basics
- Logging into PeopleAdmin
- Understanding the PeopleAdmin Interface
- Understanding Your Profile Information
- Understanding Saved Searches
- Understanding Routing and Work flows
- Reviewing Applicant Reports
- PeopleAdmin Glossary of Terms
- PeopleAdmin 7 Email Templates

PeopleAdmin Procedures
- Creating a P&S Temporary or Emergency Posting
- Approving a Posting
- Rating and Routing Applicants
- Initiating a Hiring Proposal
- Completing a Hiring Proposal
- Understanding the Unique Identifier (SSN/UID)
- Updating Final Verbal Offer Details

Electronic Letter of Intent
- Understanding the Electronic Letter of Intent (eLOI)
- Understanding eLOI User Roles
- Locating an eLOI
- eLOI Glossary of Terms
- eLOI Training Presentation
- Completing an eLOI (P&S Staff)
- Approving an eLOI
- Extending an eLOI to the Candidate
- Viewing Your Electronic Letter of Intent from Iowa State University

New Employee Onboarding
- Understanding Onboarding as a New Employee
- Review Progress of a New Employee

Interview Question Guidelines
- Guide to Non-Discriminatory Interviewing
- Sample Interview Agenda

Key University Offices
- International Students and Scholars Office
- Office of Equal Opportunity
- University Human Resources