

## INTERVIEW COMMITTEE INFORMATION

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# Michigan Tech Staff Employment Process Checklist

(You can also refer to the [Hiring](#) Guide or contact Human Resources at any time.)

This document is available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/MTUStaffEmploymentProcessChecklist1-27-05.pdf>

## Posting Process

### 1. **Complete Position Approval Form (blue memo – print on blue paper)**

Available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/positionapprovalform.pdf>

Obtain appropriate signatures.

Forward completed form to Human Resources.

### 2. **Develop job description**

Department needs to determine:

- Essential duties and responsibilities

Human Resources will determine:

- Appropriate classification level
- Education and/or Experience (required and desirable)
- Other Skills and Abilities (required and desirable)

### 3. **Develop job posting/Determine advertising needs**

Determine what applicants need to include with their application (resume, cover letter, reference contact information, etc.) – application available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/applicregmay05.pdf>

Complete job description will be posted on Human Resource web site (available at

<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/postings/index.shtml>)

Job will be posted in *Tech Topics*

**ALL** external advertisements must be approved by both Human Resources and Affirmative Action Office.

(See NOTE below.) Resources are available at

<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/adv.htm#advertising>)

To encourage a diverse pool of applicants, consider an alternative to the traditional AA/EEO statement. Examples can be found at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/adv.htm#writing>

**NOTE:** (1) If advertising externally where payment is required, **complete Purchase Requisition** and send to Purchasing with copy of the advertisement prior to running the ad. (2) If advertising on a free web site or email group where there is not charge, submit ad copy to Human Resources for approval prior to running the advertisement.

## Screening of Application Materials/Interview Process

### 4. **Form diverse search committee** (if appropriate)

Resources available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/interviewcommitteeinfo.pdf>

### 5. **Develop interview questions and submit to Human Resources. ALL interview questions (whether for phone or in-person interviews) **MUST** be approved by Human Resources prior to the interview.**

Guide to Conducting Interviews (available at

<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/guidetoconductinginterviews1-2005.pdf>)

What You Can and Can't Ask (available at

<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/whatyoucanandcantasklongversion8-12-04.pdf>)

### 6. **Develop criteria for moving candidates through the process (required and, if applicable, desirable) based on duties and position requirements from the job description.**

Remember that you will need to document any decisions made about candidates, either from further examination of applications, resumes, or cover letters or interviews (phone or in-person). Additional information is available at

<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/developingselectioncriteria.pdf>

## Employment Process Checklist (continued)

### 7. **Human Resources prescreens applications**

Human Resources will prescreen applications based on core education/experience requirements in job description. Qualified candidates are referred to the department until the position is filled.

### 8. **Determine candidates to move forward in process**

Department needs to notify Human Resources which applicants will be interviewed prior to interviews taking place. Continue documentation of any interactions the committee and/or department has with candidates that will be used in the decision-making process.

### 9. **AA checkpoint**

AA may contact department to discuss/review interview list

### 10. **Department conducts interviews using questions approved by Human Resources**

#### 11. **Reference checks**

- Human Resources conducts reference checks at department's request **OR**
- Department conducts reference checks using questions approved by Human Resources (contact HR for additional information). Additional information is available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/checkingreferences.pdf>

## **Selection/Making the Offer/Completion of Hiring Process**

### 12. **Candidate selection**

- Following selection of a preferred candidate, department sends completed **Staff Hiring Activity Record** (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/aapro.htm#SHAR>) to Affirmative Action Office
- Applicant Flow Log** (resources at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/aapro.htm#AFL>)
  - Hiring department completes for *non-exempt or exempt positions* when the Human Resources Office sends applications of all interested candidates (does not do any screening or does not set up interviews), faculty positions, or when applicants apply directly to the department
  - Human Resources completes for *non-exempt positions* when the Human Resource Office provides the department with screening service and sets up the interviews and for *exempt positions* when the Human Resource Office provides the department with screening service and sets up the interviews and is informed of all applicants that applied directly through the department.

### 13. **Affirmative Action Office reviews hiring documentation**

### 14. **Human Resources reviews hiring documentation**

### 15. **Department is notified of approvals or, AAO or HR may request additional information**

### 16. **Offer made to preferred candidate**

- Exempt positions – department makes verbal offer. Department needs to confirm details of the offer (salary, shift, start dates, probation, etc.) and provide information to Human Resources. Human Resources sends letter of tender.
- Non-exempt positions – Human Resources makes offer

**NOTE:** If selected candidate declines the offer, department must notify Human Resources to determine next steps.

### 17. **Legal paperwork**

- ♦ New employee reports to Human Resources on or before their first scheduled day of work to complete paper work.
- ♦ Documentation needed – picture ID and Social Security Card; work authorization (if applicable).
- ♦ Benefit orientation will be scheduled at this time (if applicable).

## Who's Responsible for What in the Staff Hiring Process

<b>Step in process/Document required to complete step</b>	<b>Department responsible</b>	<b>Department needs to contact/work with/seek approval from Human Resources</b>	<b>Human Resources responsible</b>	<b>Affirmative Programs responsible</b>
1. Complete Position Approval Form/ <b>blue memo</b>	<b>XXX</b>			
2. Develop job description/ <b>completed job description</b>	<b>XXX</b> working with Human Resources	<b>XXX (contact)</b>		
3. Develop job posting/determine appropriate advertising for position/ <b>approved advertisement</b>	<b>XXX</b> working with Human Resources (HR <b>must</b> approve <b>all</b> advertisements)	<b>XXX (work with/ seek approval)</b>		
4. Form diverse search committee (if appropriate)	<b>XXX</b>			
5. Develop interview questions/ <b>interview questions</b>	<b>XXX</b> working with Human Resources	<b>XXX (work with)</b>		
6. Develop criteria for moving candidates through the selection process/ <b>selection criteria</b>	<b>XXX – send selection criteria to HR</b>	<b>XXX (work with)</b>		
7. HR prescreens applications			<b>XXX</b>	
8. Determine candidates to move forward in process	<b>XXX – notify HR which applicants are being interviewed</b>	<b>XXX (contact)</b>		
9. AA checkpoint				<b>XXX – AA may contact department to discuss/review interview list</b>
10. Conduct interviews using HR approved questions	<b>XXX</b>			
11. Reference checks	<b>XXX – HR must approve questions if reference checks are to be conducted by the department OR →</b>		<b>XXX – Human Resources conducts reference checks</b>	
12. Candidate selection/ (1) <b>Completed Staff Hiring Activity Record (SHAR)</b> (2) <b>Completed Applicant Flow Log (AFL)</b> (3) <b>Reference check information</b>	<b>XXX – Department selects preferred candidate and submits completed SHAR to Affirmative Programs</b>  Hiring department completes AFL for non-exempt positions when HR sends all applications to department		<b>XXX – HR completes AFL when HR screens and sets up interviews for department</b>	
13. Affirmative Action approves hire *				<b>XXX</b>
14. Human Resources approves hire *			<b>XXX</b>	
15. Department is notified of approvals			<b>XXX</b>	
16. Offer made to preferred candidate * Exempt position – HR sends <b>letter of tender</b>	<b>XXX –Exempt positions</b> – Department is authorized by Human Resources to make offer. Details of offer (starting date, salary, etc.) must be confirmed and provided to Human Resources.		<b>XXX - Non-exempt positions – Human Resources makes offer</b>	
17. Legal paperwork to be completed by new employee in Human Resources				

\* If either AAO and/or HR does not approve hire, department will be contacted for additional information.

## WRITING THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Whether an open position is a replacement or a new position, it is important that at the time of the opening, a job description be developed that accurately reflects the, responsibilities, priorities, education, experience and skill requirements of the position. Be aware that setting requirements too high may ultimately end up in reposting the position, while setting them too low gives the wrong impression about the position.

As a member of the interview committee, you may be part of the development of the job description or it may already have been completed. Either way, you need to have a solid sense of the position and what duties the person in that position will be expected to perform. If you can answer the question, "What qualifications will a person need to succeed in the position as it has been defined?", you will be well on your way to making a suitable match.

The **minimum** requirements are the benchmarks against which all applicants will be measured. Therefore, those requirements must be appropriate, realistic and reasonable. When a position carries unrealistic requirements, often it goes unfilled or is filled by an individual who may be disenchanted by the lack of challenge offered.

It is important to identify minimum, essential requirements in the areas of degrees, experience, knowledge, skills, and personal traits. Additional preferred qualities can also be identified. Contact Human Resources for additional information and/or assistance during the writing of the description.

## WRITING AN ADVERTISEMENT

Additional resources are available at [www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/res.htm#recruitment](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/res.htm#recruitment)

Advertisements need to include

- Title of Position
- List of duties to be performed by the candidate (optional)
- Requirements for degree(s), years of experience and any other qualification requirements
- Applications are available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/applicregmay05.pdf> and must be included with a cover letter and resume
- Application packet must be mailed to:  
Human Resources  
Michigan Technological University  
1400 Townsend Drive  
Houghton, MI 49931-1295
- Complete job descriptions are available at [www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/postings/](http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/postings/)
- Michigan Technological University is an equal opportunity educational institution/equal opportunity employer. (Other options for EEO statement are available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/adv.htm#statements>)

**ALL ADVERTISEMENTS**, WHETHER OR NOT THEY REQUIRE PAYMENT,  
**MUST BE APPROVED** BY HUMAN RESOURCES.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IF YOU'RE LEADING THE COMMITTEE

When you accepted the responsibility of leading an interview committee, you were given a charge that may have included a sense of scope or limits, the tasks and role of the committee, a preferred time by when the process should be completed, instructions as to the format in which the committee's final recommendations are to be brought forward (for example, recommend top candidate or top 2-3 candidates), how the hiring manager/chair wishes to be involved and/or informed of the committee's progress, etc.

What may not have been expressed to you is how critical you will be to the efficient and effective use of the committee members' time and energies. As with any committee process, there will be individuals with different styles, personal agendas, and differing levels of commitment and experience.

**Remember:** An interview committee is a task-oriented group. Do not let the members lose sight of the task at hand.

An interview committee is **not** a leaderless group formed for the expressed purpose of building community and collegiality. That is to say that you should manage a process that is sensitive, respectful and supportive. You need the members to want to attend, to contribute, to cooperate, and to communicate. However, responsibilities such as organization, record keeping, coordinating schedules, and completing the task are yours.

HR can support you in those responsibilities.

## DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT, DOCUMENT

The employment process is one of record keeping. The interview committee will need to keep a record of its proceedings. A recorder should be designated for each meeting. Failure to keep notes can invite trouble and conflict. Records help the interview committee maintain consistent procedures. In discrimination suits arising from an interview process, courts tend to look for biases that taint the process. Since the bias is not often blatant, a court may ask, "Did you follow your own rules, or set them and ignore them? Did you change the job description after you began screening?"

It is not so much that a "yes" to any of these questions makes a flawed process, or that a flawed process adds up to discrimination, but that it is all fertile ground.

**Remember:** Keep track of your decisions as preventative strategy, but primarily as a check on sloppy practice.

The notes from reference checks, screening meetings, interviews, and evaluations of candidates, as well as the Affirmative Action Record are a two-edged sword. If you have followed a lawful employment process, they will be invaluable documentation to have available in the event of a discrimination charge. However, if the documentation is replete with such statements as: "She wore her skirt very short." "Too young, probably won't fit in." "A man – he will be uncomfortable in our all-woman office."

You get the point. Those notes could be your worst enemies! They could lead to losing the lawsuit.

**Remember:** If you don't know whether to write something down, use a post-it note and call HR!

## SOME STRATEGIES FOR SCREENING RESUMES

If you have established minimum requirements and preferred qualities, a simple matrix may help you to categorize and prioritize the qualifications of the applicants.

A candidate comparison matrix will focus each individual committee member and then the search committee as a whole to evaluate the resumes according to the criteria for selection. The matrix does not prevent bias or determine which candidate will be chosen, only you can do that.

1. The education, experience, and non-negotiable skills of each applicant should be compared to the minimum requirements listed in the job description. (If the applications have been prescreened in Human Resources, you will be notified which requirements were screened. Once received by the hiring department, applications should still be reviewed and if questions come up, contact the person in HR who did the screening. Any applicants that appear minimally qualified will be forwarded to the hiring department.) The comparison is generally straight forward – either the applicants meet the minimum requirements or they don't. Be careful – some requirements can only be determined during the interview process.

Applications that will no longer be considered are noted on the Affirmative Action Record as not meeting the minimum requirements.

**Remember:** Stay focused on the job-related skills and experience and you will not wish you had said or done things differently.

2. Applications that meet or exceed the minimum requirements are then compared to the preferred qualities as listed in the job description. Some form of weighing may be useful, depending on the job. Leadership, customer-service, attention to detail, public speaking skills, analytical skills, problem solving abilities, and team orientation are all examples of characteristics that may be identified as preferred qualities. Clearly, they cannot be measured by the yea/nay system as with the requirements. Some matrices use a point system of one to five or words such as low, medium, high or unsatisfactory, satisfactory and exceeds expectations, to differentiate between their weight and significance.

Applications for all of the candidates (applicants who meet the minimum requirements) are compared using the matrix. At this point candidates should not necessarily be eliminated, but questions and concerns may begin to surface. Depending on the size of the applicant pool, you may be able to pare down the pool based on the qualifications of the applicants. Those issues become a basis for developing interview questions to be used either in screening interviews or finalist interviews.

3. Sometimes screening interviews are necessary to further differentiate among candidates or to clarify ambiguities. Telephone interviews are not only permissible, but may be the most efficient and cost-effective strategy.

4. Reference checks should not be conducted at the screening stage to eliminate candidates.

It is recommended that interview search committees conduct reference checks on only the finalists (candidates who are selected to be interviewed). After interviews, questions and information surface that require confirmation from references. For example, an individual may appear to be friendly and pleasant in the interview, but certain answers may trigger the search committee to wonder whether the individual is truly cooperative on the job.

5. The comparison matrix (if used), supporting screening interview questions and reference notes are all a part of the documentation of the hiring process and should be sent to Affirmative Programs along with the Staff Hiring Activity Record. If all of the supporting documentation is not included, you may be contacted and asked to provide the records before an authorization to hire is given.

6. Resources are available for Developing Selection Criteria at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/developingselectioncriteria.pdf>

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Interviews have at least two purposes, to get to know and to court each candidate or finalist. There are a few points to always keep in mind:

- Questions must be legal ('What You Can and Can't Ask' available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/whatyoucanandcantasklongversion8-12-04.pdf>). Open-ended or case study questions create the most useful responses. (Resources for interview questions are available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/guidetoconductinginterviews1-2005.pdf>).
- **All interview questions must be approved by Human Resources prior to scheduling interviews.**
- The interview committee should develop questions that will be used consistently with all people who are interviewed. Naturally, follow-up or clarification questions will vary from individual to individual. Well constructed and organized questions will keep the interview focused, efficient and productive. If the position requires complex analysis of data or a specific skill set, questions should be included to address those issues.
- If specialized skills are required for the position (i.e., computer or writing), departments may opt to conduct skills tests. If used, send detailed supporting documents to HR about the test, especially if it is being used to disqualify an applicant.
- Questions should be written and, if a team or group interview is to be conducted, someone should facilitate the interview session. The person facilitating the meeting needs to be cognizant of time constraints to ensure that the basic questions are addressed in the time allotted.

**Remember:** The notes taken at the interviews and commentary by the interviewers must reflect a lawful process. Don't just pay attention to the legal guidelines as they relate to developing questions. Sometimes candidates will provide information about themselves that under the law you should not know. Don't acknowledge to the candidates that you heard the unlawful information and **DON'T WRITE IT DOWN!**

## STAYING WITHIN THE LAW

The purpose of an employment search is to find a qualified person to do a job. Employment laws protect individuals from being excluded from being hired to do a job because of factors unrelated to their qualifications.

It is important to be aware that any part of the interview process, including meals or informal gatherings with a candidate, is still considered to be part of the process. Everyone who will have contact with candidates should be made aware of areas of inquiry that are not appropriate or illegal questions that should not be asked in order to avoid future complaints. If the candidate raises an issue that is on the 'do not ask list', it should be documented in your post-interview notes. You may respond to the question that is asked, but you shouldn't ask for further information from the candidate.

Please review the "What You Can and Can't Ask" (available at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/whatyoucanandcantasklongversion8-12-04.pdf>).

## OBSERVATIONS TO MAKE DURING THE INTERVIEW

Face-to-face interviews are a great way to not only listen to the candidate's responses to the questions, but to also make some observations.

### Communication Skills

- How verbal and articulate is the candidate?
- How well does the applicant express his/her ideas?
- Is the applicant able to present herself or himself effectively and in a well-organized manner?
- Does the applicant express thoughts and ideas in a convincing manner?
- Does the applicant have good eye contact?
- Are grammar and sentence structure appropriate?

### Interpersonal Skills

- Does the candidate express regard for others, even if they came from a not-so-positive experience?
- Does the candidate seem to relate to others?
- How does the candidate show his/her ability to deal with issues in working with others?
- Does the applicant seem willing to accept suggestions and accept responsibility for their actions?
- Does the applicant have a cooperative attitude?
- Is the candidate critical of former supervisors or of companies where previously employed? (You may ask follow-up questions to gather additional information if needed.)

### Intellectual Ability

- Does the applicant have a good understanding of the position and what will be expected of him/her?
- Is the applicant able to think and respond spontaneously? (if applicable)
- Does the applicant display the ability to concentrate and solve problems? (if applicable)

## CHECKING REFERENCES

An important part of the process is checking references. The committee should decide if they want to conduct the reference checks or have them done by someone in Human Resources. HR has a set of approved questions or the committee may opt to determine their own list of questions. If the latter is chosen, the reference check questions must be approved by Human Resources.

There is a separate document on checking references (located at <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/checkingreferences.pdf>).

## SOME ADDITIONAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

**Candidates are people too.** Remember when you were a candidate? It is important to remember what it was like when you plan interview schedules and set timelines for completing the process. One of the questions a candidate will likely ask is when a decision can be expected. Be honest. Likewise, if you don't know the answer to a question that is asked, let them know you'll get back to them with a response.

**Remember:** If you are not up-front with candidates, if you do not ask questions appropriately, if you promise them things you do not know that the University can provide, if you allow them to meet with negative people, they may turn you down or leave soon after coming and then you will have to go through the search all over again!!

## CLOSING OUT THE PROCESS

Once a decision has been reached and a recommendation or final determination has been provided to the dean or department head, the interview committee chair has the responsibility to close out the process.

While the hiring paperwork will be provided to Human Resources by the hiring manager, it is the interview committee chair who must gather the documentation that will be kept in the employment file.

It is the department's responsibility to complete the Staff Hiring Activity Record (SHAR) and forward it to Affirmative Programs, along with the Applicant Flow Log, selection criteria and reference check information. Once approved by Affirmative Programs and Human Resources, HR will notify the department. If the position is exempt, the department contacts the successful candidate to establish the starting date and salary. That information needs to be shared with HR as soon as possible so an offer letter can be sent. If the position is not exempt, Human Resources extends the offer to the candidate and lets the department know the outcome.

**Remember:** Records must be kept for three years. Memories dim in moments.

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- Human Resources Employment Office
- Affirmative Programs
- Staff Hiring Guide (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aao/hiringguide04.htm>)
- Guide to Conducting Interviews (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/guidetoconductinginterviews1-2005.pdf>)
- What You Can and Can't Ask (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/whatyoucanandcantasklongversion8-12-04.pdf>)
- Developing Selection Criteria (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/developingselectioncriteria.pdf>)
- Checking References (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/hro/forms/checkingreferences.pdf>)