

Westfield State University

Hiring Process



PREFACE

The effective recruitment of qualified candidates is vital to furthering the mission and vision of the University. The Human Resources department utilizes a web-based application system that streamlines the recruiting process. The system features include sourcing, screening, workflow and metrics. Before filling a position, the University goes through a step-by-step hiring process that includes planning, recruitment, and employee selection. The hiring process involves the participation of multiple members of the campus community at multiple levels of responsibility.


The purpose of this document is to present a general format for the specific procedures Westfield State University uses with respect to recruitment, promotion and appointment to vacant positions. It is guided by the University's Affirmative Action Hiring Procedures policy found on the Personnel Policies page of the University's website.

NOTE: The *Hiring Process* is regularly revised. To find the most recent version of the document, refer to the Documents page of the university's portal, myWestfield:

myWestfield>Documents>Human Resources>Position
Management>Hiring Process

Westfield State University provides equal access to employment opportunities for all applicants, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital status, age, disability or veteran status in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and policies.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Hiring Process* has been developed to assist Hiring Managers and Search Committees in carrying out their search and hiring responsibilities, to ensure consistency when filling vacancies, and to recruit the best possible employees. The guide also provides clarity regarding best practice in hiring for those who are new to the online hiring process and helps to ensure that the process complies with University policies and federal and state regulations.

Format

This document has been written with hypertext links for ease of navigation on smart phones, computers and tablets. It was designed to provide general information and guidance on the first screen of each major topic area. More supporting information can be found through the drill-down links. Use related links when you need additional information or assistance. Please contact the appropriate Human Resource staff member when the necessary information or guidance is not found in the *Hiring Process*. If you are not sure who to contact Human Resources at (413) 572-8471 for assistance.

Updates and Distribution

This guide was revised in October 2018 and contains the most current information as of that date. Human Resource staff will review and revise the guide periodically. Hiring Managers are encouraged to access the guide on an ongoing basis at myWestfield, the University's portal: [myWestfield>Documents>Human Resources>The Hiring Process](#)
[MyWestfield](#)

General Provisions

The University reserves the rights to withdraw, amend, modify, or add to these materials, in whole or in part, at any time as well as the right not to apply them in a particular case.

Human Resources

Human Resources staff members provide oversight, technical assistance and recruitment advertising. The members of the department also provide advice on all matters related to affirmative action, monitor the applicant pool to ensure diversity, and approve interview questions. Human Resources staff members have overlapping responsibilities. Among their other duties, their role in the hiring process can generally be described as follows:



Dr. Jalisa D. Williams, Assistant Vice President Human Resources, 413-572-5637

- Human Resources approval of all requisitions
- Oversight of the hiring process

Evie Soucie, Associate Director, Human Resources, 413-572-5637

- Affirmative Action Officer, review of applicant pools
- Oversight of the hiring process
- Primary contact for hiring process
- Training search committees

Tina Langevin, Staff Assistant, 413-572-8106

- Reviewing online requisitions and appointments
- Processing new faculty immigration papers

Michele Lyons, Administrative Assistant II, 413-572-8192

- Assisting applicants
- Search chair assistance

Tina Bonés, Staff Associate, 413-572-5274

- Orientation, benefits

When to Ask Human Resources

Hiring Managers and Search Committee chairs are expected to be familiar with the University's [Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan \(The Plan\)](#). If there are questions they should consult with the Human Resource department. The University expects each hiring decision to be consistent with the information in this guide and with any related university policies.

AA/EO Officer

The Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Officer (AA/EO Officer) provides campus-wide leadership to promote equal opportunity, diversity and affirmative action on campus. Any member of the University Community or any applicant for employment who believes s/he has been a victim of discrimination in hiring or employment may initiate an informal claim or formal complaint as outlined in the University's Discrimination Complaint Procedures. Contact Dr. Jalisa D. Williams, (413) 572-8670, jdwilliams@westfield.ma.edu



ADA Coordinator

Westfield State University is required by law to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified employees or applicants with disabilities, unless to do so would cause undue hardship to the University. During the search process including the interview phase, if a candidate requests a reasonable accommodation, they should be referred to the Dr. Jalisa D. Williams, (413) 572-8670, jdwilliams@westfield.ma.edu.



DIVERSITY AWARENESS

Introducing a range of cultures and backgrounds into the University community is critical for a meaningful educational experience. It supports our social responsibility to reach groups who historically have not had the same level of opportunity afforded them. It also offers a greater number of role models for diverse students and makes our campus a more welcoming environment for people from diverse backgrounds.

The University continues to work toward increased diversity. This is achieved through advertising with online job lists that target candidates that self-identify as diverse, thus increasing the odds that the committee will review qualified diverse candidates.

While the Search Committees do not have access to the protected status of applicants, the University's AA/EO Officer, Evie Soucie, does have access to the voluntary demographic data. Search Committees are instructed to assign applicants to one of three categories, yes, no or maybe. If there are candidates from a protected group listed in the maybe category, Evie will share those the name(s) with the Search Committee and request that the committee give further consideration to the candidate(s). If the committee determines the suggested candidate(s) is/are not strong enough to be included in the first round of interviews, the committee may choose not to invite them for an interview.

NOTE: It is not legal to just look for a particular gender or only for candidates of color. The University needs to provide an equal opportunity for all candidates who meet the qualifications.



HIRING MANAGERS AND USERS

Before filling a position, the University goes through a step-by-step hiring process that includes planning, recruitment, and employee selection. The hiring process involves the participation of multiple members of the campus community at different levels of responsibility. The roles of the various members involved in the hiring process are described below:

University President

The University President gives written approval for all full time positions at the University. Position requests that have received the recommendation of the Finance Cabinet Committee are submitted to the President on a regular basis by the Vice President of Administration and Finance.

Finance Cabinet

Requests to fill vacancies or approve new positions are reviewed and recommended by the Finance Cabinet which consists of all the Area Vice Presidents and the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources. Position request forms are submitted by the Vice President that oversees the division to which the prospective employee will report.

College Dean (Faculty positions)

As part of the hiring process, the College Dean reviews faculty lines for the departments within the college, and makes recommendations to the Vice President/Provost, Academic Affairs. The Dean is also among the approvers listed on requisitions and appointment forms in the university's hiring system.

Vice President of Administration and Finance

The Vice President of Administration and Finance has final signature authority in the hiring system to approve positions that have the President's endorsement.

Area Vice President

The Area Vice President assures that funding is in place for new or vacant positions and approves requisitions in the online hiring system. The Area Vice President is also responsible for determining whether or not a finalist is hired and electronically approves the candidate's appointment form.

Assistant Vice President of Human Resources

The Assistant Vice President of Human Resources reviews, approves, and oversees all requisitions and job postings in the hiring system to ensure that they comply with federal and state regulations.

Department Head/Chair

The Department Head/Chair submits position requests to the Area Vice President, writes/updates the job description and provides electronic approvals for requisitions and appointment forms. They also determine who will serve on the Search Committee.



Department Support Person

The support staff person provides clerical support to the Search Committee if needed.

Search Committee Chair

The Search Committee chair communicates selection criteria to the committee, coordinates the review of applications, schedules interviews, contacts applicants, ensures compliance with policies, manages the status of applicants, and notifies applicants about the search's outcome. The Search Chair is also responsible for referring any concern regarding the propriety of the search or concern about the integrity of a candidate to Dr. Jalisa D. Williams, Assistant Vice President, Office of Human Resources.

Search Committee

The Search Committee works as a team to evaluate applicants, design and conduct interviews, and collaborate with the Search Chair to recommend candidate(s) for hire. The Search Committee's role is always advisory and the responsibility for hiring rests with the Area Vice President, who has the ultimate authority to select/approve the finalist from the candidates that were recommended by the committee.

AA/EO Officer

The AA/EO Officer, Evie Soucie, has access to the voluntary demographic data for every job posting. The AA/EO Officer reviews the pool of applicants for diversity, makes recommendations and approves interview questions.

Finance Review

A finance department staff member reviews all requisitions to ensure that funding for the position has been budgeted appropriately. Maria Brunelle, Assistant Director, Financial Accounting, currently performs this user role.

HR Admin

A member of the Human Resources department is designated HR Admin user type and is normally the first and last approval for all requisitions and appointment forms. HR Director, Evie Soucie, is currently the hiring system administrator.

HR Review

To insure accuracy an additional member of the Human Resources staff reviews all requisitions and appointment forms. Tina Langevin, Staff Assistant, currently performs this role.



POSITION DEVELOPMENT

Position development is based on The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which is a federal law dating back to 1938 that regulates overtime, recordkeeping and child labor standards. Massachusetts also has laws that are more generous than those standards set by the federal government. Exempt employees are paid a salary; and are not eligible for overtime wages. Non-exempt employees are paid by the hour and earn overtime wages for hours worked over 37.5 or 40 hours, depending on union affiliation. Every employee at the University is either exempt or non-exempt.

Classified Positions

Classified employees have set work schedules and a pre-determined salary chart that was negotiated by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and the American Federation of State and County Municipal Employees Union (AFSCME). Some examples in the classified position category include accountants, maintainers, groundskeepers, administrative assistants, clerks, and campus police officers. Full time employees in these positions work 37.5 hours or 40 hours per week and are entitled to compensation or compensatory time when working beyond their normal hours. The minimum qualifications for classified jobs must conform to the specific language found in the broader state job specifications developed by the Massachusetts Human Resources Division (HRD):

<http://www.mass.edu/foremployees/classificationspecs/classspecs-pers.asp#R>

[State Job Specifications](#)

Administrative Positions

The majority of professional, middle and lower management employees are members of the Association of Professional Administrators union (APA). Most professionals are exempt workers, meaning their work is predominantly intellectual, requires specialized education, and involves the exercise of discretion and judgment. Work schedules, salary, duties and responsibilities for administrative positions are determined by the Department Head and Area Vice President to align with and support the mission of the University. Compensation for working beyond normal hours is determined in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and/or the APA collective bargaining agreement.



The Administrative job description is similar to the Classified one in regards to the general statement of duties, supervision received and exercised, specific duties and responsibilities. However the minimum qualifications are not bound by the state job specifications. In most cases, a minimum qualification for staff positions is a bachelor's degree. Additional educational qualifications and experience in the field are also required based on the level of the position.

Non-Unit Positions

The majority of employees at the University are members of the AFSCME, APA or MSCA union. However, some positions are excluded from union representation because of either their level, or the confidential nature of the position. Examples of non-unit employees are the President and Vice Presidents, and their direct support person.

Faculty Positions

Faculty positions are developed in accordance to the needs of the department and the guidelines set forth in the Massachusetts State College Association/MTA/NEA (MSCA) agreement. In most cases, the minimum qualification for Instructor level is a Master's degree, for Assistant Professor, Associate or full Professor is a doctorate. Faculty positions are either tenure-track or non-tenure track and in most cases the timeframe for faculty contracts is the academic year (September to May).

NOTE: The department of Academic Affairs has specific guidelines for faculty searches. Department Chairs should refer to the Dean of Faculty for further details.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

Collective bargaining agreements can be found on the university's website:

<http://www.westfield.ma.edu/offices/human-resources/guides-agreements-opportunities>

[Union Agreements](#)



REQUISITIONS

The University utilizes an online hiring system (Applicant Tracking System) for all positions with benefits and some non-benefitted positions. The information in the applicant tracking database is used for screening candidates, applicant testing, scheduling interviews, managing the hiring process, checking references, and completing new-hire paperwork. Upon the recommendation of the Finance Cabinet and approval of the President, the Department Head/Chair should provide Human Resources a new or updated position description for the job. It will be reviewed and if needed, changes will be recommended prior to the creation of an electronic requisition in the University's electronic applicant tracking system.

Budget Approval

Whether new or existing, a position may not be filled until funding has been approved. New positions are most often established through the annual budget process or at other times as needed to support the University's programs. Department heads provide their Area Vice President proper justification including a position description, funding source, and the proposed salary. In the case of faculty positions, department chairs would provide this information to their college dean for review and approval. The Area Vice Presidents review every position and submit approved requests to the Finance Cabinet committee. As vacancies occur the Department Head/Chair may request that the position be refilled. A position that has been vacant for a significant period of time may need to be requested during the annual budget process. The Position Request Form can be found on the university's portal, myWestfield: myWestfield>Documents>Human Resources>Position Management>Position Request Form

Job Descriptions

Every Classified and Professional employee at the University has an assigned job description that details job expectations and the qualifications required to perform them. Areas of responsibility for faculty positions are described in the job announcement rather than in a formal job description. Templates for job descriptions can be found on the university's portal: myWestfield>Documents>Human Resources>Position Management> AFSCME Position Description Template; myWestfield>Documents>Human Resources>Position Management> Administrative Job Description Template



Campus Titles

Most job descriptions have both a campus title and a state title. State titles are chosen from one of the administrative titles used in the state payroll system, HR/CMS. For organizational purposes, a more descriptive "Campus Title" may be used as long as it does not conflict with the state title for another position. For example, the State Title, "Staff Assistant," may have a campus title such as "Coordinator" or "Manager." However a Staff Assistant may not have the title, "Director," since *Director* is the state title for a higher level position. Human Resources staff would contact the Department Chair should there be a need to revise a job title.

Requisition Details

Every requisition contains the data needed to justify, support and advertise the position online. Once a position request has been approved by the President, Department Heads/Chairs should provide the following details to Human Resources:

- Previous incumbent's name and salary
- Shift/days off
- Anticipated start date
- Search Committee and Search Chair names
- Special advertising requests
- Job description
- List of required applicant supporting documents

Types of Applications

The University's online hiring system has five application types:

- Classified Application - for either non-unit classified, classified positions or for part-time, seasonal employment
- Professional Application - for all APA professional and non-unit professional positions
- Faculty Application - for faculty positions
- Internal Application - for current employees applying for a classified position
- Dining Services Student Application - for part time student employment

Electronic Approvals

Once the requisition is created it moves through a series of electronic approvals starting with the Department Head/Chair or immediate supervisor. The approval process, or workflow, varies according to the type of position and level of complexity of the University division.



During the approval workflow, a requisition may only be edited by the current approver. If changes are needed at a later date, contact Human Resources.

The workflow for most full-time positions with benefits is as follows:

- Immediate Supervisor
- Department Head/Chair
- College Dean (faculty positions)
- Area Vice President
- Human Resources Review
- Assistant Vice President of Human Resources
- Finance Review
- Vice President of Administration and Finance
- Human Resources Hiring System Administrator

Once the requisition's electronic approvals are completed, the position is then posted and advertised.

Advertising

The recruitment and hiring of staff is vitally important to the University. Among the University's core principles are learning, community, respect, service, teamwork, and communication. The University advertises with HigherEdJobs.com, ChronicleCareers.com, Masslive.com, Indeed.com, HERC (Higher Education Recruitment Consortium) and JobQuest the Mass state job board. Search Committees may request additional advertising with professional online organizations.

AFSCME Union Stewards and APA/ MSCA Chapter Presidents are notified by email whenever a full time position is posted online. Photocopies of these job postings are displayed on bulletin boards across the campus.



SEARCH COMMITTEES

The University must ensure that applicants who apply for University positions have an equal opportunity for employment through a thorough and consistent hiring process. This process is an integral component of the University's Affirmative Action Plan. In keeping with the University's legal mandate, Search Committees work closely with the Human Resources to fill positions.

Search Committee Selection

Once a position has been approved for recruitment, a Search Committee is normally formed. The person responsible for selecting committee members for Classified and Professional positions varies by department and division. Department Heads should consult with their Vice President for guidance. Department Chairs should consult their college dean.

Whenever possible, the Search Committee should be structured to include a minimum of three members from diverse backgrounds, gender and ages who are committed to diversity and excellence. Some departments may lack the diversity of staff to meet this guideline. In this case persons of diverse backgrounds from other departments may be invited to join the Search Committee. Upper level positions (dean and above) may include members from multiple constituencies including faculty, professional staff, classified staff, as well as a student representative.

Academic departments have written search policies and procedures that address Search Committee selection for faculty positions. The Department Chair *may not* serve as a member of the Search Committee. Only (and all) full-time members of the department faculty are eligible to serve as voting members of the Search Committee. The Search Chair should contact the Dean of Faculty for a copy of the guidelines for faculty searches.

NOTE: Search Committees are always advisory; responsibility for hiring rests with the Area Vice President.

Search Committee Training

Human Resources has developed a training for Search Committees. Once a job is posted and advertised, the search committee chair should contact Human Resources to schedule a meeting with the committee.



The training provides clarity for those who are new to the hiring process and helps to ensure that the process complies with University policies and federal and state regulations. In most cases, committees are not given access to the applicant pool until they have either completed the training.

Search Committee Guide

A *Search Committee Guide* has been developed to assist Hiring Managers and Search Committees in carrying out their search and hiring responsibilities, to ensure consistency when filling vacancies, and to recruit the best possible employees. Please refer to the *Search Committee Guide* for complete details regarding the Search Committee's role in the hiring process. The guide can be found on the University's portal:

myWestfield>Documents>Human Resources>Search
Committees>Search Committee Guide

[MyWestfield](#)



ONLINE HIRING SYSTEM

The University utilizes an online applicant tracking system, Interview Exchange, for all positions with benefits and some non-benefitted positions. Interview Exchange provides an automated way to manage the entire recruiting process, from receiving applications to hiring employees. When a position has received funding approval, an online requisition is created and sent through a series of electronic approvals. The information in the Applicant Tracking database can be used to screen candidates, communicate with applicants, schedule interviews, manage the hiring process, check references, manage letters of recommendation, and to complete new-hire paperwork. The hiring system has multiple user types with each being assigned a different set of viewing permissions.

User Types

Hiring Manager

The Search Committee Chair is assigned the Hiring Manager role. The Hiring Manager user can only see the jobs assigned to them. This role allows the Search Chair to organize, rank, sort and take further action on applicants. The Search Chair may also:

- View all applications for jobs that are assigned to them
- Create new folders specific to the job
- View a summary report of all Candidates or a specific report of all candidates in a particular workflow folder (e.g., Interview folder)
- Move Candidates between workflow folders
- Contact one or more Candidates through the “Send Email” option or the “Follow-up Questions” section of the applicant’s page

Reviewer

The Reviewer user type provides more limited access to the hiring system. It is assigned to those people who approve requisitions and appointment forms, as well as Search Committee members. Reviewers may:

- View all applications of the jobs that are assigned to Reviewer.
- Write notes.



- Communicate with other team members.
- View a list of all Candidates in a particular workflow folder (e.g., Interview folder)

Initial Application Review

Applicant information is accessed by clicking on the title of the position and then on the name of the applicant. This provides access to the application, references and supporting materials. After the committee has reviewed the pool of applicants, the field of qualified candidates is narrowed by sorting them into one of three folders, “Yes,” “No,” and “Maybe.” At this point, the Search Chair emails a request for the Assistant Vice President of HR, and the AA/EO Officer to review applicant pool.

Contacting Applicants

The hiring system has the capability to email an individual applicant or a group of applicants. This is a very important tool that can be used to communicate the status of an applicant’s candidacy. For example, once the initial screening of applications has occurred, the Search Chair should contact those applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications by using the “Regret” email template.

NOTE: For additional information about the online hiring system contact Administrative Assistant II, Michele Lyons at mlyons@westfield.ma.edu or call ext. 8471.



INTERVIEWS/ REFERENCE CHECKS

In order to reduce the possibility of bias, the University's interview process is a structured one. The schedule and questions should be the same for every candidate to ensure an equitable basis for evaluation. The goal of the interview is to impartially match a candidate's job history, knowledge, skills, and abilities to those that have been determined as necessary and essential for success on the job.

The Search Chair is responsible for insuring that reference checks take place. Normally the Search Chair conducts the reference calls, however, reference calls may be divided among the committee members. While developing the reference questions, the person who conducts reference calls should take careful notes and share them with the committee. These notes should be forwarded to Human Resources at the conclusion of the search. Refer to the *Search Committee Guide* found on the university's internal portal, for further details on this topic:

[myWestfield>Documents>Human Resources>Search Committee.](#)



CONCLUDING STEPS

Once the finalist(s) is/are chosen, the Search Chair should contact the Department Head/Chair for instructions on how to present the committee's final recommendation(s). There are a number of possible ways that a Department Head/Chair may request this information. For example, they may wish to meet with the finalist(s), seek a meeting with the committee to discuss the search, ask for the finalist(s) application materials and/or review the Search Committee notes and rating forms. The ultimate decision to hire rests with the Area Vice President.

Appointment Form

When a candidate has verbally accepted an offer of employment the Area Vice President, or their designee (Department Chair/Head) should notify Human Resources. An online appointment form then goes through the approval process. The finalized online appointment form triggers the issuance of a written letter of appointment either by the Office of Human Resources (for staff positions) or the Office of Academic Affairs (for faculty positions).

Appointment Letter

The ultimate conclusion of a search for classified and professional staff occurs when a signed letter of appointment is received by Human Resources or Academic Affairs. This occurs once the online appointment form has completed the online approval process.

Background Check

Employment at Westfield State University is contingent upon a background check that is satisfactory to the University. Background checks occur after the online appointment form has been approved. Failure to provide written authorization for a background check will nullify the appointment.

Archiving Search Materials

At the conclusion of the search, all documents that were printed from the online hiring system (cover letter, resumé, reference contact information) should be shredded. All other search materials including Search Committee confidentiality forms, application rating forms, and notes from the interviews should be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources. This information will be kept securely/confidentially on file in Human Resources for three years.



SEARCH FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

myWestfield>Human Resources>Search Committee

Document Name

[Application Screening Matrix](#)

[Common Bias in the Hiring Process](#)

[Competency Based Interview Questions](#)

[Ethics Commission Disclosure, Appearance of Favor or Influence](#)

[Fringe Benefits Options Overview](#)

[Hiring Process](#)

[Identifying applicant skills - 40 Great Interview Questions](#)

[Interview Rating Form AFSCME](#)

[Interview Rating Form. Faculty and Administrative](#)

[Learn More About Our Community](#)

[MCAD Permissible Interview Questions](#)

[Microsoft Word Formatting Exercise](#)

[Narrative Search Summary - Sample](#)

[Narrative Summary Guide](#)

[Reference Check Form](#)

[Search Chair Guide to Managing Applicants](#)

[Search Committee Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest](#)

[Search Committee Guide](#)

[Search Committee Review and Update](#)

[Search Committees and the Conflict of Interest Law](#)

[Ten Steps to a Great Search](#)

