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**Subject: Interviewing and Selection Guidelines for On-Campus Wage and Salaried Classified Positions**

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## **1. Purpose**

To comply with state and university policies, to ensure that employment practices are effective, and to provide equal employment opportunity, the following interviewing and selection guidelines and procedures must be observed in filling all on-campus wage and salaried classified positions. Similar off-campus policies are addressed in [Policy 4031, Interviewing and Selection Guidelines for Off-Campus Wage and Salaried Classified Positions](#).

## **2. Guidelines**

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University provides equal opportunity with respect to all employment practices, including employment interviewing and selection, and administers such practices without regard to race, color, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, veteran status, national origin, religion, or political affiliation.

The University's interviewing and selection guidelines and procedures must be followed for all salaried classified vacancies and for wage vacancies not exempted under [Policy 4032, Recruitment Guidelines for On and Off-Campus Wage and Salaried Classified Positions](#).

It is the responsibility of the department head and hiring supervisor to ensure that all employment practices are administered in accordance with this policy, and that all necessary steps are taken to ensure the objectivity and fairness of the interviewing and hiring process. Only job-related criteria may be used in screening applications, interviewing and selection. .

### **3. Procedures**

Procedures and guidelines for screening, interviewing, selection, and record keeping are provided in the following sections.

#### **3.1 Screening**

Following the close of recruitment, a human resources representative will collaborate with the department to identify candidates to be interviewed.

##### **3.1.1 Criteria to Identify Qualified Candidates**

Job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) should be evaluated by using a combination of the following methods to identify the most suitably qualified candidates for interviews. If used, each of the methods below should be applied consistently to all comparably qualified candidates.

1. Evaluation of KSA's as demonstrated by related education, training (including military background), paid or unpaid experience described on the application materials.
2. Evaluation of applicants' qualifications obtained in preliminary screening interviews, conducted either in person or by telephone.
3. Evaluation and verification of applicants' qualifications, including performance and conduct, obtained from current or previous supervisors, and/or the review of personnel files.
4. Evaluation of applicants' qualifications as measured by a valid test. The use of any test in the employment process requires prior approval by Personnel Services. Refer to [Policy 4045, Employment Testing Guidelines](#).
5. Evaluation of applicants' qualifications as demonstrated by work samples. This method requires advance approval by Personnel Services.

Criteria used in the identification of qualified candidates must be documented.

##### **3.1.2 Preferential Employment Under the State Layoff Policy**

Under the Department of Human Resource Management [State Layoff Policy 1.30](#) employees who have been laid off by another Executive Branch Agency may exercise preferential employment rights to a vacant position for which they are minimally qualified that is in the same Role as the employee's former position. To be considered for preferential hiring rights, the *Preferential Hiring Card* (blue card) must be submitted before the advertising deadline. Hiring departments must consider these applicants before any others except current University salaried applicants. Preferential employment rights extend for a period of 12 months from the effective date of leave without pay-layoff. If two or more employees entitled to preferential employment apply for the same vacancy and both are minimally qualified, the position must be filled competitively from among these applicants.

Employees of other Executive Branch Agencies who have been notified of layoff, are eligible, under the [State Layoff Policy 1.30](#), for preferential employment for positions that are in their same or lower Pay Band, provided they are minimally qualified. Employees who apply for a vacancy and present the *Interagency Placement Screening Form ("Yellow Form")* on or before the application deadline, must be given preference in screening and

hiring unless a current University employee or an employee submitting a *Preferential Hiring Card* is selected to fill the position. If more than one minimally qualified applicant in the same Role presents a "Yellow Form," the position must be filled competitively from among these applicants, unless a current University employee is selected.

Upon receipt of an *Interagency Placement Screening Form* or a *Preferential Hiring Card*, the hiring supervisor should contact Personnel Services for assistance and guidance in the implementation of this policy.

## 3.2 Interviewing

Interviews are a required part of every selection process. Except in the case of emergency hires or wage employees hired through a temporary agency, only applicants who apply for positions through the Personnel Services Department may be considered for employment.

Although interviews are normally conducted in person, there are certain situations where telephone interviews may be appropriate. Telephone interviews may be used to clarify and/or supplement application information, clarify the responsibilities of the vacant position and conditions of employment, and confirm the applicants' continued interest in the position. Telephone interviews may also be appropriate for screening a group of applicants to identify a smaller number who will be asked to participate in a more in-depth interview process. For other situations, hiring managers should contact Personnel Services. Questions must be job-related for any type of interview.

Reasonable efforts should be made to contact each applicant selected for interview. It is acceptable to leave a voice mail message provided that the answering machine leaves no doubt that the correct number/person has been reached. If no voice mail message can be left then, **two** attempts, with at least one occurring before 7:30 a.m. or after 5:30 p.m., should be made. The dates and times of unsuccessful efforts to contact an applicant must be documented. Applicants who indicate that they are not available for interview within a reasonable time do not have to be interviewed.

### 3.2.1 Interviewers and Interview Questions

A set of interview questions based on job-related criteria must be developed and asked of all applicants interviewed. Specific guidelines for conducting lawful and effective interviews are provided in the [Employment Interviewing Handbook](#) or by contacting the Personnel Services Department.

Interviews should be conducted in a consistent manner, and generally the interviewer or the interview panel should be the same for each candidate. Proactive efforts should be undertaken to ensure that the interview panels reflect a diverse workforce to the greatest extent possible. Panels may include individuals from other departments or organizations.

### 3.2.2 Applicants with Disabilities

Interviewers are required to provide reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities during the interview process. For example, it may be necessary to arrange to have an interpreter present for an applicant with a hearing impairment. Interviewers are encouraged to contact Personnel Services for assistance. The University has a legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities who are qualified to perform the essential functions of the position. If a hiring supervisor believes that a qualified applicant cannot be reasonably accommodated, the supervisor must contact Personnel Services to discuss the situation prior to finalizing any selection decisions. All applicants should be asked, during the interview, if they can perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodations. See [Policy 4075, Accommodations of Employees and Applicants with Disabilities](#) for additional information.

### 3.2.3 Interviewing Exemptions

Under special circumstances, an interview may be unnecessary. The department representative must discuss any requests for interviewing exceptions with their human resources representative. If the exception is granted by Personnel Services as a result of discussion with the department representative, it should be noted on the *reason for non-selection* section of the *Applicant Interview Record*. Under the following circumstances, an exemption to the interview may be granted.

1. *A current or previous employee in the same department, without subsequent employment, who had unacceptable performance or work habits.* (The department must assume responsibility for maintaining documentation of performance or work habits. This documentation is required to support a request for an interview exemption.) Their supervisor must counsel current employees who are referred for an interview to another position within the same department if performance deficiencies prevent them from being granted an interview.
2. *An applicant previously interviewed by the same department within the preceding six (6) months who received unfavorable work references and who has not had subsequent employment that could provide another job reference.* If the applicant has related intervening experience that would provide another job reference, the applicant should be offered an interview

*An applicant who has been interviewed in the same department within six months for a position requiring the similar knowledge, skills and abilities and the application does not reflect acquisition of additional or new experience, knowledge, skills and abilities since the earlier interview.* The applicant may be rejected for the position based on the results of the previous interview. On the *Applicant Information Record*, the department should note the job title, number, reason for non-selection and interview date of the position for which the applicant had been previously interviewed.

### 3.3 Conducting Reference Checks

At a minimum, reference checks with current and at least one former supervisor (per Department of Human Resource Management [Policy 2.10, Hiring](#)) should be conducted on the selected candidate. Section 10 on the [Virginia State Application Form](#) should be checked to ensure that the applicant would permit their **current** supervisor to be contacted. Additional guidelines and recommendations for effective reference checks are included in the [Employment Interviewing Handbook](#). Required licenses or certifications must be verified. Departmental supervisors are encouraged to check other related credentials. At minimum, the supervisor must attempt to verify the following job-related information on the selected candidate.

- Name
- Employment dates
- Job held-title, duties
- Beginning and ending salaries
- Training completed
- Job performance
- Eligibility for rehire and reason for leaving

Documentation of reference checks, including notes, should be maintained in strict confidentiality. Pursuant to the *Virginia Privacy Protection Act*, an agency must not release to anyone including the employee, recommendations or letters of reference. These records should be kept in a confidential file.

If the selected candidate is or has been a Virginia Tech employee, the supervisor should contact their human resources representative in Personnel Services to review the employment history and past performance evaluations or any active formal disciplinary actions of the perspective employee.

### 3.4 Selecting New Employees

It is the policy of Virginia Tech to hire a qualified and diverse workforce. Applicants are to be selected on the basis of their job related qualifications and credentials.

#### 3.4.1 Reasonable Accommodations for Applicants with Disabilities

The University has a legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities who are qualified to perform the essential functions of the position. If a hiring supervisor believes that a qualified applicant cannot be reasonably accommodated, the supervisor must contact Personnel Services to discuss the situation prior to finalizing any selection decisions. See [Policy 4075, Accommodations of Employees and Applicants with Disabilities](#), for additional information.

#### 3.4.2 Reasons for Non-Selection

Reasons for non-selection of applicants must be specific and job-related. Hiring managers must maintain, for the purpose of response to audit, records that describe sufficient details of the reason for non-selection. The reasons for non-interview and non-selection are recorded on the *Applicant Information Record*, which is part of the employment record for each position vacancy. This documentation is used to insure compliance with Employment and EO/AA policies and is examined in the routine audit of selection decisions, in the investigation of any complaints, and during Federal audits of the university's Affirmative Action Plan and employment processes.

It is essential that the human resources representative be informed of any information obtained during the reference checks or interviews indicating that the applicant has provided inaccurate information about education/experience, has potentially job-related convictions, or has serious performance/disciplinary problems so further investigations can be conducted.

Reasons for non-selection **may not** be related to:

1. Race, gender, age, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, political affiliation or veteran status.
2. Physical or mental disability that does not interfere with the applicant's ability to perform the essential functions of the job.
3. Other factors which have no bearing on the job-related requirements.

#### 3.4.3 Acceptable Reasons for Non-Selection

Acceptable reasons for non-selection may include any one or a combination of the following.

1. Unsatisfactory references or relatively weak references in comparison with selected candidate.
2. Applicant's refusal or inability to accept work schedule, salary, duties, or other job-related conditions.
3. Job-related education and/or training insufficient or not as strong as selected candidate.
4. Job-related experience insufficient or not as strong as selected candidate.
5. Job-related knowledge/skills/abilities insufficient or not as strong as selected candidate.
6. Interpersonal or communications abilities not suited to the needs of the position.

The reason must be tied specifically to job requirements and applicant qualifications. Reasons for non-selection should not normally be based on the absence of a particular skill or knowledge that could be learned during a normal job orientation or within a brief training time.

These guidelines do not cover every situation that may arise in the selection process. Questions about acceptable reasons for non-selection should be referred to Personnel Services.

### 3.4.4 Criminal Conviction Check and Driver's Record Check

After the applicants have been interviewed and reference checks completed, the most suitably qualified applicant is identified. Individuals selected for identified security sensitive positions or those requiring the use of a state vehicle are instructed by the hiring authority to initiate a conviction record check or driver's record check. Refer to [Policy 4060, Criminal History and Driver's Record Investigation](#). Personnel Services will contact the department with the results of the conviction check or driver's check as soon as possible. If the employee has been offered the position, the continuation of employment will be contingent upon the results of the tests. In some cases, the offer of the position will be delayed until the results of criminal or driver's record check are received. If job-related convictions are found, a determination may be made in accordance with the policy to deny employment. The *Criminal History and Driver's Record Investigation* policy describes the University policy and related procedures in detail.

### 3.4.5 Drug and Alcohol Testing Guidelines

Certain positions at the University have been identified as falling under the *Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991*. This law requires that job candidates must undergo and pass pre-employment drug tests if the position requires a commercial driver's license. Refer to [Guideline 4061, Drug and Alcohol Testing Guidelines for Commercial Drivers](#), for information on the procedures to follow.

### 3.4.6 Selective Service Requirement for Male Employees

An amendment to Section 2.1-32.1 of the Code of Virginia requires selective service compliance as a condition for employment. Newly hired male faculty, staff and students must complete the [Selective Service Registration Questionnaire](#) before they can start work. After the employee accepts the offer of employment, they are required to complete this form. Prospective employees who indicate on the form that they were required to register but did not register must present verification from the Selective Service System to Personnel Services indicating the requirement is terminated or inactive before they can be hired. To ensure that prospective employees are aware of this requirement, the following language must be included in letters of offer.

“An amendment to the Code of Virginia requires selective service compliance as a condition for employment. Newly hired faculty, staff, and students cannot start work until they have satisfied the conditions of the state law. To comply with this Code change, which became effective July 1, 1999, all male prospective employees must complete the Selective Service Registration Questionnaire before they can start work. After you accept our offer of employment, you will be asked to complete this form. Prospective employees who indicate on the form, that they were required to register but did not register, must present verification from the Selective Service System to Personnel Services indicating the requirement is terminated or inactive before they can be hired. If you are unaware of your status, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Selective Service System at 1-847-688-6888 for a determination as soon as possible so that you may obtain the appropriate paperwork in advance of your effective hire date. Their website is located at [www.sss.gov/](http://www.sss.gov/) where you can register on-line and/or access other related information.”

### 3.4.7 Pre-Hire Review

Personnel Services will conduct a pre-hire review for any position that has affirmative action goals when the hiring authority has an opportunity to interview a member of a group that is under-represented in that job category.

### 3.4.8

**Wage positions:** Hiring managers may negotiate and offer a wage rate within the advertised pay range. Department heads must ensure that hourly wage employees (including emergency hires) are appropriately compensated.

**Salaried positions:** Hiring managers must consult with their human resources representative prior to making an offer to a candidate for a salaried position. The university's compensation philosophy is to offer salaries that are sufficiently competitive to be able to attract and retain a qualified and committed work force. Salary offers should consider the value of the job, the contributions of the prospective employee and the market value of the work to be performed. Salary offers may not exceed the maximum of the pay band to which the position has been assigned and should normally be within the advertised pay range.

### 3.4.9 Informing the Successful and Unsuccessful Candidates

Each of the applicants interviewed, and not selected, should be informed in writing unless the applicant withdrew from consideration or declined an offer. Applicants who are currently employed by the department offering the position may be verbally informed of the outcome of the selection process. In these cases hiring managers should also use this time to discuss employee career growth and should document in the *Applicant Information Record* that the employee was notified personally.

If the department is unable to make a selection for any reason, the hiring manager should contact the human resources representative in Personnel Services to discuss options as soon as possible.

The selected candidate must receive a formal offer letter. The offer letter must follow the format provided in the [sample offer guidelines](#). It is important to include the applicable provisions of the position in the offer letter to ensure the selected candidate is fully informed of any employment conditions.

Classified state employees are employed according to the provisions of the *Virginia Personnel Act* and/or applicable personnel policies, not according to any contract, either express or implied. The [sample offer letter](#) may be used as a guide for the official letter of offer. An example of a sample letter is also available in the [Employment Interviewing Handbook](#) or by contacting Personnel Services.

## 3.5 Record Keeping

### 3.5.1 Interviewing records to be returned to Personnel Services

The following documents must be returned to Personnel Services as soon as possible:

- A copy of the interview questions
- The completed *Applicant Interview Record* for each candidate who was referred
- Original applications
- Copies of offer and rejection letters

Departments must retain any interview and selections notes for a period of three years. The hiring department is responsible for maintaining confidentially of all other records related to the search (screening notes, interviewing notes, reference check notes, etc.) for a period of three years from the date of appointment.

### 3.5.2 Recruitment and Selection Records

Recruitment and selection records including records of those not selected must be retained by the University for three (3) years from the date the position is filled or action completed, then destroyed by shredding. A *Certificate of Records Disposal* must be obtained from Records Management Services before final destruction.

The following are required when either a new salaried or hourly wage employee is hired:

1. The [Position and Performance Activity Form P112](#) authorizing recruitment of positions and detailing position responsibilities.
2. Virginia Tech hires only U.S. citizens and lawfully authorized alien workers. Immigration and Naturalization Service regulations require that the employee complete the [I-9 Form](#), Section 1, Employee

Information and Verification, on or prior to their first day of employment. The hiring authority or designee must complete Section 2, Employer Review and Verification, by no later than the third workday. Once completed, the form should be forwarded immediately to the Payroll Department.

3. In compliance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the *Alcohol and Drug Policy Information* should be given to the new employee.
4. To comply with Virginia House Bill 2046 enacted in 1993 on child support disclosure requirements, all new employees should be asked if they are under an *income withholding order*. If the answer is *yes*, the supervisor should notify the Payroll Department and then ask the employee to forward a copy of the current withholding order directly to Payroll. If the employee responds that they are not under an *income withholding order*, no further action is required.
5. An amendment to the Code of Virginia requires selective service compliance as a condition for employment. Newly hired male faculty, staff and students must complete the *Selective Service Registration Questionnaire* before they can start work. After an employee accepts an offer, he must complete this form. Prospective employees who indicate on the form that they were required to register but did not register must present verification from the Selective Service System to Personnel Services indicating the requirement is terminated or inactive before they can be hired.

In addition, the following is needed for employees hired into salaried positions:

1. The [Report of Appointment or Change of Status Form P3A](#) should be submitted as soon as the employment offer is made and accepted to ensure that the employee is placed on the university payroll as promptly as possible. Personnel Services is available to assist in making a salary determination.
2. Completed [Pay Action Request P144](#) if needed.

## 4. Resources

### 4.1 Assistance

The following issues and questions may arise during the interviewing and selection process with the appropriate department listed to contact for information and assistance:

#### **Personnel Services - (540) 231-5301**

- Employment process
- Interviewing process
- Salary determinations
- Legitimate reasons for non-selection
- Reasonable accommodations for disabled applicants
- Problems associated with hiring
- Questions from applicants or other individuals about the release of employment information
- Information on the retention and destruction of official personnel records

#### **Human Resources Information Systems Support Help Line- (540) 231-7763**

- Questions concerning training for the Information System (HRIS)
- Questions about the entry of hours worked on the HRIS
- Time cards for wage employees

#### **Payroll Department (540) 231-5201**

- Federal and state withholding certificates
- Forms - Arrival/departure records issued by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS.)
- Copy of the I-9 employment verification form



**The Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action Office (540) 231-7500**

- Equal opportunity issues
- Affirmative action issues
- Discrimination issues

## **5. References**

[Employment Interviewing Handbook](#), published by the Virginia Tech Human Resources Department

Department of Human Resource Management, [Policy 2.10, Hiring](#)

[VPI&SU Affirmative Action Plan](#)

Department of Human Resource Management, [Policy 2.05, Equal Employment Opportunity](#)

[Guideline 4032, Recruitment Guidelines for On and Off-Campus Wage and Salaried Classified Positions](#)

[Guideline 4031, Interviewing and Selection Guidelines for Off-Campus Wage and Salaried Classified Positions](#)

[Guideline 4045, Employment Testing Guidelines](#)

*The Virginia Privacy Protection Act*

[Policy 4060, Criminal History and Driver's Record Investigation](#)

[Guideline 4061, Drug and Alcohol Testing Guidelines for Commercial Drivers](#)

Department of Human Resource Management, [Policy 1.30, Layoff](#)

[Guideline 4080, Guidelines for the Release of Personnel Services Department Records](#)

[Guideline 4085, Guidelines for the Retention of Wage Personnel Records](#)

*Virginia Personnel Act*

## **6. Approval and Revisions**

Approved August 23, 1996, by the Associate Vice President for Personnel and Administrative Services, Ann Spencer.

- Revision 1

Section 2.0. Addition of: Department heads must also ensure that hourly wage employees (including emergency hires) are appropriately compensated.

Links to the appropriate web sites were established for policies and forms referenced.

Section 3.4.5. Language was added to clarify that some conviction checks are conducted prior to the offer of employment. If the employee has been offered the position, the continuation of employment will be contingent upon the results of the tests.

Approved February 20, 1999, by Director of Personnel Services, Linda Woodard.

- Revision 2

General. Changes to order and format of different sections; technical corrections to fix policy links; name change for the Commonwealth's Department of Human Resource Management, formerly Department of Personnel and Training.

Section 3.1.2. Revisions to address State Compensation and Layoff Policy changes from pay grades to pay bands.

Section 3.2. Revisions included format changes and consolidation of Interviewing Exemptions; addition of statement suggesting methods to diversify interview panels.

Section 3.4. Section 3.4.6 was added to include the Selective Service Requirement for Male Employees. Section 3.4.8 was revised to address changes in making salary offers to comply with changes in State Compensation Policy 3.05.

Approved December 5, 2001, by Vice President for Budget and Financial Management, M. Dwight Shelton, Jr.