

**Subject: Interviewing and Selection Guidelines for Off-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 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 from advertising under the [Recruitment Guidelines for On- and Off-Campus Wage and Salaried Classified Positions, No. 4032](#).

It is the responsibility of the department head and hiring supervisor to ensure all employment practices are fairly administered and that all necessary steps are taken to ensure the objectivity and fairness of the interviewing and hiring process. Department heads must ensure that hourly wage employees (including emergency hires) are appropriately compensated. 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 Applicant Eligibility**

Only individuals who have submitted the application materials by the application deadline may be considered as candidates for the position. Current university employees who have not completed their six-month probationary period are not eligible to be considered for other salaried positions outside of their department. Contact Personnel Services for guidance.

### **3.2 Screening**

Following the close of recruitment for the vacant position, the hiring department reviews and screens the application materials received by the application deadline to determine the most suitably qualified group of applicants to be interviewed. The [Unit Applicant Status Log](#) should be completed at this time documenting the names of all applicants, reasons for interviewing or not interviewing, and reasons for non-selection.

#### **3.2.1 Criteria to Identify Qualified Candidates**

Job-related knowledge, skills and abilities (ksa's) are to be evaluated using a combination of the following methods to identify the most suitably qualified candidates for interviews based on the specified criteria:

1. Evaluation of ksa's as demonstrated by related education, training, and paid or unpaid experience described on the application materials.
2. Evaluation of applicants' qualifications obtained from screening interviews conducted in person or by telephone.
3. Evaluation and verification of applicant qualifications, including performance and conduct, obtained from current or previous supervisors.
4. Evaluation of applicant qualifications as measured by a valid test. The use of any test in the employment process requires the prior approval of Personnel Services. Refer to [Guideline No. 4045, Employment Testing Guidelines](#).
5. Evaluation of applicant's qualifications as demonstrated by work samples in positions such as Graphic Arts or Public Relations. This method requires advance approval by Personnel Services.

Screening criteria used in the evaluation process and reasons for non-selection for each applicant must be documented at each step of the employment process.

### 3.2.2 Interviewing Exceptions

An exception to interview may be granted for applicants who would be considered qualified and would be included in the interview process under most circumstances. The department representative should discuss any requests for interviewing exceptions with a Human Resource Consultant. 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 [Unit Applicant Status Log](#). The following are categories of applicants who may be exempted from an interview:

1. **A previous employee in the same department** who had unacceptable performance or work habits and no intervening employment. (The department must assume responsibility for maintaining documentation of performance or work habits. This documentation can provide support for a decision to deny an interview.)
2. **Current employees** in the department with poor work habits or performance who are referred for an interview to another position within the same department must be counseled by their supervisor if issues with their current work performance or habits will prevent them from being granted an interview. When a department acts as work reference on current or former employees, reference checks are to be conducted on **all** applicants referred for interview to insure consistency in the use of reference information.
3. **An applicant previously interviewed** by the same department who received unfavorable work references and who has not had intervening employment that would provide another job reference. If the applicant has related intervening experience that would provide another job reference, the applicant should be offered an interview unless the new reference is also unfavorable.
4. **An applicant who does not live in the immediate vicinity** and who indicates to the department representative that they cannot afford to travel to Virginia Tech for an interview when the department is not paying travel expenses. (A preliminary telephone interview may be conducted if this is mutually acceptable to the applicant and the hiring authority.)
5. **An applicant who refuses to make available adequate disclosures** about references or employment.
6. **Applicants who indicate that they are not available for an interview** within a reasonable period of time.
7. **An applicant who the department representative has been unable to contact** (see Section 3.2.).
8. **An applicant who indicates to the department representative during the scheduling of the interview that the conditions of employment (such as salary, work hours, etc.) are unacceptable.**
9. **An applicant who has been interviewed in the department by the same interviewer** or essentially the same interview panel for the same type of position within six months when the same duties, knowledge, skills and abilities are required and the applicant has not demonstrated the acquisition of additional experience or skills since the interview. The applicant may be selected or rejected for the position based on the results of the previous interview. On the [Applicant Interview Record P115](#) note the job title, number, name of interviewer, and interview date of the position for which the applicant had been previously interviewed.
10. **An applicant for whom unsatisfactory work references** are received prior to the interview when the department is paying travel expenses.

### 3.2.3 Preferential Employment Under State Layoff Policy

Under the State [Layoff Policy \(DPT Policy 1.30\)](#), employees who have actually been laid off by another Executive Branch Agency are given preference in hiring in their occupational classification if they submit the *Preferential Hiring*

*Card* (blue card) before the advertising deadline. 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 employee with the most seniority must be hired.

Employees of other Executive Branch Agencies who have been notified of layoff, are eligible, under the State [Layoff Policy](#), for preferential employment for positions that are in their same or lower salary grade, provided they are minimally qualified. Employees who apply for a vacancy and present the yellow *Inter-agency Placement Screening 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.

Upon receipt of a *Inter-agency 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.

### 3.3 Interviewing

Except in the case of some emergency hires or wage hires through a temporary agency, interviews must be a part of every selection process. Although interviews are normally conducted in person, there are some situations where telephone interviews may be appropriate. For information on this interviewing method, contact Personnel Services.

At least three attempts should be made to contact each applicant selected for interview, with at least one attempt made outside the normal working hours (8 a.m.-5 p.m.) The dates and times of unsuccessful efforts to contact an applicant must be documented.

#### 3.3.1 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 contact Personnel Services.

The interviews should be conducted in a consistent manner. To ensure this, the interviewer or the interview panel, as well as the interview questions, should be the same for each candidate. Interview panels should reflect a diverse workforce when possible.

#### 3.3.2 Applicants with Disabilities

Interviewers may be 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. Contact Personnel Services with questions or for assistance with accommodations.

#### 3.3.3 Conditions of Employment

Conditions of employment, such as hours of employment, unusual or hazardous working conditions, Commercial Driver's License requirements, conviction check or drivers record check, required training periods, leave policies and restrictions, and status of the position (part-time, temporary, etc.), should be explained to the applicants during the interview. Each interviewed applicant should be asked to review and sign the [Applicant Interview Record](#) that should provide a description of the relevant employment conditions. It is strongly suggested that interviewed candidates be shown the work area and be provided basic information about the position duties.

### 3.4 Conducting Reference Checks

Reference checks with current and previous supervisors must be conducted on the finalists for the position. Section 9 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](#). Degrees, required licenses or certifications should also be verified. At a minimum, the supervisor must attempt to obtain the following job-related information.

- 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 should not release to anyone including the employee, recommendations or letters of reference. These records should be kept in a confidential file.

### 3.5 Pre-hire Review

The Department Head/Unit Head must conduct a pre-hire review for any position which has affirmative action goals when the unit has an opportunity to interview a member of a group that is under-represented in the vacant positions job category. For assistance contact Personnel Services.

### 3.6 Selecting New Employees

#### 3.6.1 Reasons for Non-Selection

Reasons for non-selection of applicants must be specific and job-related. The reasons for non-interview and non-selection are recorded on the [Unit Applicant Status Log](#) that will become part of the record for each position vacancy. It is used to insure compliance with employment and EO/AA policies and is examined in the routine audit of selection decisions and in the investigation of any complaints.

Personnel Services should be contacted if any information obtained during the reference checks or interviews indicates that the applicant has:

- provided inaccurate information about education and/or experience;
- potentially job-related convictions; or
- serious performance/disciplinary problems so further investigations can be conducted.

#### 3.6.2 Unacceptable Reasons for Non-Selection

Reasons for non-selection may not be related to:

1. Race, gender, age, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, veteran status, or sexual orientation.
2. Physical or mental disability which 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 for this position.

### 3.6.3 Reasons for Non-Interview or Non-Selection

Appropriate reasons for non-interview or 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 the 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.

For any of the reasons for non-selection listed above or for others that may be appropriate, a specific explanation is required. For example, the statement that an individual *does not have as much experience as the selected candidate* is insufficient. The reason must be tied specifically to job duties and requirements. Also, reasons for non-selection should not be based solely 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.

### 3.6.4 Reasonable Accommodation 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 job duties. 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.

### 3.6.5 Criminal Conviction Check and Drivers 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 drivers record check. Refer to [Policy 4060, Criminal History and Drivers Record Investigation](#). Personnel Services will contact the department with the results of the conviction check or drivers 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.

### 3.6.6 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. Testing may also be conducted periodically at random and post-accident. Refer to [Guideline 4061, Drug and Alcohol Testing Guidelines for Commercial Drivers License Holders](#) for information on the procedures to follow.

### 3.6.7 Exceptional Salary/Wage Request

An Exceptional Salary/Wage request may be appropriate if the selected candidate will not accept the entry step. An above-entrance offer for a salaried position **cannot** be made without prior approval of Personnel Services. For a

detailed explanation of the procedures to request an exceptional starting pay rate Refer to [Guideline No. 4065, Guidelines on Starting Pay for Salaried or Wage Classified Employees.](#)

### 3.6.8 -Informing the Successful and Unsuccessful Candidates

Each of the applicants interviewed and not selected must be informed of the decision in writing unless the applicant withdrew or declined an offer. It is recommended, as a courtesy, that other applicants not receiving interviews be informed by letter that the position has been filled.

Classified state employees are not to be employed under employment contracts either expressed or implied. The [sample offer letter](#) should be used as a guide for the official letter of offer. It is important to include the applicable provisions of the specific position being offered in the letter to ensure the selected candidate is fully informed of any employment conditions

### 3.6.9 Virginia Employment Commission Notification

The Virginia Employment Commission Office should be notified immediately when a selection decision has been made. The notification should include the name, social security number, and employment date of the selected candidate.

## 3.7 Employment Records

Departments must retain any interview and selections notes for a period of three years. Reasons for non-selection are checked for job-relatedness, acceptability, accuracy, and consistency. The hiring department is responsible for confidentially maintaining 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. In addition, the following is required when a new employee is hired.

### 3.7.1 Unit Applicant Flow Log

A log of all applicants for a position must be maintained separate from applications until the hiring decision has been made. The [Unit Applicant Flow Log P113](#) or a similar form providing the same information should be used to record the following information for each applicant: name, race, sex, age, veteran status, date of application, and the advertised position title. This information is obtained from the tear-off sheet at the bottom of the [State Application Form](#) before removing it from the application. If the information is not provided, the applicant is recorded on the log as unknown. Information collected on this form can be used when completing the [Off-Campus Classified Position Filled Report P116](#).

### 3.7.2 Off-campus Position Filled Report

The [Off-Campus Classified Position Filled Report](#) must be completed by the hiring department for each position filled by original appointment, transfer, demotion, promotion or re-employment. The data on this form is required in order to comply with state and federal requirements. It is used to complete reports that are included in the university's *Affirmative Action Plan*.

### 3.7.3 Recruitment and Selection Folders

A confidential *Recruitment and Selection Folder* for each vacancy (labeled with the position number and title, and date filled) must be established and retained for three years from the date the position was filled. Employment records may be reviewed by Personnel Services, the EO/AA staff, and representatives of state and federal regulatory agencies. **After the retention period the folders must be destroyed by shredding.** The records should include:

1. A copy of the position description for salaried positions.
2. Copies of all vacancy announcements and advertisements, showing dates and methods of announcement.

3. A copy of the [Unit Applicant Flow Log P113](#) (see Section 3.7.1).
4. All completed state application forms received and all supplementary information received concerning applicants with a copy of the selected applicant's state application.
5. Race/sex application tear-off forms (which have been removed from the state applications.)
6. Screening criteria used in identifying the applicants to be interviewed and names of individuals responsible for screening applications.
7. The [Unit Applicant Status Log P114](#) (see Section 3.2) containing recorded reasons for not selecting applicants for interviews and for not hiring interviewed candidates.
8. A list of interview questions asked of all applicants for the position, interview notes, and a list of the interviewers or interview panel.
9. The [Applicant Interview Record Form P115](#) (see Section 3.3.3).
10. Copies of the job offer letter sent to the successful applicant, and copies of the letters informing unsuccessful interviewed applicants the position was filled. Acceptance or rejection letters from the selected candidate should be included, if available.
11. All notes and memos associated with the selection process for the vacancy.
12. Letters of reference and results of reference checks, including notes taken.
13. A copy of the completed [Off-Campus Classified Position Filled Report P116](#) listing information about applicants for both wage and salary positions (see Section 3.7.2).

### 3.8 Payroll and Personnel Records

The following documents and forms must be prepared and submitted through proper approval channels to Personnel Services when a new employee is hired:

#### 3.8.1 Classified Salaried Positions

1. When a salaried position advertises, a representative from Personnel Services will contact the hiring supervisor to request the following forms and information. As soon as the employment offer has been accepted, the following forms should be submitted to Personnel Services.
  - [Report of Appointment or Change of Status P3A](#)
  - [Off-Campus Classified Position Filled Report for Wage or Salaried Employees P116](#) including applicant race/sex data (see Section 3.7.2)
  - [Unit Applicant Flow Log P113](#) (see Section 3.7.1)
  - Original *State Application* with original signature of the applicant selected
  - Copy of the offer letter
2. The following forms should be completed or copied on the first work day and submitted immediately to Personnel Services.
  - *Orientation Checklists* (P-76A and P-76B)

- Benefits forms
- In compliance with the *Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988*, the alcohol and drug policy information should be given to the employee.
- 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 will notify the Payroll Department, 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.

3. The following should be completed on the first day of work and sent directly to the Payroll Office:
  - *I-94* (Arrival/Departure Record issued by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to non-immigrant aliens and attached to the unexpired foreign passport) or *I-20* (Certificate of Eligibility for Non-immigrant and F-1 Students) and copy of the Visa if applicable.
  - *I-9 Employment Verification Form*. On the first day of employment, the new employee must complete Part I of the form and provide acceptable documentation of their identity and employment eligibility in order for the department to complete the I-9 Form. Once completed and within three days it must be sent to the Payroll Department.
  - *Selective Service Registration Questionnaire*. Recent amendments to the Code of Virginia require selective service compliance as a condition for employment. To comply with this code change, all male employees hired after July 1, 1999, must complete the Selective Service Registration Questionnaire in order to continue as a state employee. Once completed, send to the Payroll Department along with the I-9 form.

### 3.8.2 Wage Positions

1. The following information should be completed and appropriate forms forwarded to Personnel Services:
  - The [Off Campus Classified Position Filled Report for Wage or Salaried Employees P116](#) (see Section 3.7.2).
  - [Unit Applicant Flow Log](#) (see Section 3.7.1).
  - In compliance with the *Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988*, the alcohol and drug policy information should be given to the employee.
  - *Orientation checklist for Wage Employees P-76C*.
2. The following information should be completed and submitted to the Payroll Department
  - Copy of the Social Security Card.
  - Federal Tax Withholding Certificate (W-4.)
  - State Tax Withholding Certificate (VA-4.)
  - *I-94* (Arrival/Departure Record issued by INS to non-immigrant aliens and attached to the unexpired foreign passport) or *I-20* (Certificate of Eligibility for Non-Immigrant and F-1 Students) and a copy of the visa if applicable.

- *I-9 Employment Verification Form.* On the first day of employment, the new employee must complete Part I of the form and provide acceptable documentation of their identity and employment eligibility in order for the department to complete the I-9 Form. Once completed and within three days it must be sent to the Payroll Department.
- *Selective Service Registration Questionnaire.* Recent amendments to the Code of Virginia require selective service compliance as a condition for employment. To comply with this code change, all male employees hired after July 1, 1999, must complete the Selective Service Registration Questionnaire in order to continue as a state employee. Once completed, send to the Payroll Department along with the I-9 form.
- 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 will notify the Payroll Department, 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.

3. The following transactions should be completed prior to the wage payroll cutoff date
  - Demographic information entered on-line indicating hire date and position ending date, if known.
  - Time cards entered each pay period.

## 4. Resources

### 4.1 Assistance

The following are issues and questions that 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 on the Retention and Destruction of Official Personnel Records

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

- Federal and State Withholding Certificates
- I-94 Forms - Arrival/Departure Records Issued by INS
- Employment Verification Forms

- Time Cards for Wage Employees

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

- Questions concerning training for the Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS)
- Questions about the Entry of Hours Worked on the HRIS

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

- Equal Opportunity Issues
- Affirmative Action Issues
- Discrimination Issues

## **5. References**

1. [\*Policy No. 4032, Recruitment Guidelines for On- and Off-Campus Wage and Salaried Classified Positions\*](#)
2. *Guideline No. 4045, Employment Testing Guidelines*
3. [\*State Layoff Policy\*](#) Department of Personnel and Training Policy 1.30
4. [\*Employment Interviewing Handbook\*](#) published by the Virginia Tech Personnel Services Department April 6, 1987 and as revised.
5. *The Virginia Privacy Protection Act*
6. [\*Criminal History and Drivers Record Investigation, Policy No. 4060\*](#)
7. *Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991*
8. [\*Guideline No. 4061, Drug and Alcohol Testing Guidelines for Commercial Drivers License Holders\*](#)
9. [\*Guideline No. 4065, Starting Pay for Salaried or Wage Classified Employees\*](#)
10. University's [\*Affirmative Action Plan\*](#)
11. Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988
12. Virginia House Bill 2046, 1993

## **6. Approval and Revisions**

- Revision 0

Additions to the policy are the Interviewing Exceptions in Section 3.2.2, the reporting requirements and records management in Section 3.7.

Approved October 29, 1996 by the Associate Vice President for Personnel

- Revision 1

Section 3.1, second sentence, "other salaried" was added.

Approved June 27, 1997

- Revision 2

Section 2.0. Added “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 3.6.5. 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.

- Revision 3

Sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.2. Added Selective Service requirements due to change in Code of Virginia.

Section 3.8.2, #1. Added “Orientation Checklist for Wage Employees P-76C” to list.

Approved February 26, 2000 by Assistant Vice President for Personnel Services, Linda S. Woodard.