Classified Staff Hiring - Standard Hiring Operating Procedure (SHOP)

Effective Date: September 1, 2025

Issuing Department: Human Resources

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1. Purpose

To define the roles and responsibilities of Hiring Managers and other designated personnel involved in the hiring process. This procedure ensures consistency, transparency, and appropriate stakeholder involvement at each stage. It also supports effective collaboration, timely processing, policy compliance, and alignment with Lehigh University's strategic staffing goals.

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2. Scope

This Standard Hiring Operating Procedure (SHOP) applies to all departments and units at Lehigh University conducting a search for classified staff positions. It is designed to promote consistent hiring practices and ensure compliance with university policies and procedures.

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3. Definitions (individual may take on more than one role)

- **Classified Staff:** Non faculty positions that have unique position numbers and corresponding position descriptions. They have been classified and graded by Human Resources within Lehigh's salary structure using a market reference job evaluation system. This population is managed by Human Resources.

- **Hiring Manager:** The individual primarily responsible for overseeing a specific hiring process. This person leads the search, ensures compliance with institutional policy, and retains decision-making authority. Typically, this is the position's direct supervisor unless an exception is granted. *For detailed responsibilities, please refer to section 4. For exceptions, please refer to section 6*.

- **Employment Coordinator:** A formally assigned role, usually included in a position description, that supports the hiring process by coordinating logistics, documentation, and communications on behalf of a department. This role acts as a liaison to Human Resources but does not assume final hiring authority. *For detailed responsibilities, please refer to section 4.*

- **Business Manager**: Responsible for financial oversight in the hiring process, including compensation decisions and budgetary approvals. This role may be involved in offer preparation but does not extend formal offers. *For detailed responsibilities, please refer to section 4.*

- **Administrative Support**: Provides logistical assistance such as scheduling interviews and sending candidate communications. This role does not participate in candidate evaluation or hiring decisions, though individuals may also serve on interview panels or search committees. *For detailed responsibilities, please refer to section 4*.

- **Search Committee**: A selected group (often including faculty and staff) that participates in the early stages of the hiring process. Responsibilities may include screening applications, conducting initial interviews, and recommending finalists. Final hiring decisions rest with the Hiring Manager. *For detailed responsibilities, please refer to section 4.*

- **Search Committee Chair***:* A designated leader of the search committee who serves as both a participating member and primary coordinator of the group. The Chair is responsible for organizing and facilitating committee meetings, collecting and synthesizing member feedback, and addressing questions or concerns that arise during the search. This individual often serves as the liaison between the search committee and the Hiring Manager, representing the committee's perspectives and ensuring consistent communication.

- **Interview Panel**: Participants in candidate interviews—often later in the process—who evaluate applicants and provide feedback. May overlap with the search committee or include additional stakeholders. *For detailed responsibilities, please refer to section 4.*

- **Human Resources Talent Acquisition:** A division of Human Resources that oversees hiring for classified staff positions. HR TA ensures compliance, supports recruitment strategies, posts job ads, and drafts formal offers. They may also assist with direct recruiting and applicant screening when requested. Services may vary by search and are not guaranteed unless arranged in advance. *For detailed responsibilities please refer to section 4.*

- **Human Resources Business Partner:** A strategic advisor who works closely with a designated unit and provides guidance on various HR topics. By understanding the distinct needs of a specific department or unit, the HRBP helps drive institutional effectiveness and provides specialized support.*For detailed responsibilities please refer to section 4.*

- **Applicant**: An applicant is anyone who submits an application for a job. This includes all individuals who express interest, regardless of whether they meet the qualifications or move forward in the process.

- **Candidate**: An individual who has progressed beyond the initial application stage and is actively being considered for a specific position. Unlike applicants, candidates have met preliminary qualifications and are under formal review by the hiring team.

- **Internal Applicant/Candidate:** An existing classified staff member who **formally** expresses interest in a job or position by submitting the required materials—such as a résumé or curriculum vitae (CV), cover letter, application form, and other supporting documents—in response to a posted employment opportunity through the institution's official application system or process. *This does not include: wage employees, temporary workers, contractors, adjunct faculty, graduate assistants, student workers, pre or post doc research associates, research scientists, or work/study students.*

- **External Applicant/Candidate:** Any individual who is not a current classified staff member which **formally** expresses interest in a job or position by submitting the required materials—such as a résumé or curriculum vitae (CV), cover letter, application form, and other supporting documents—in response to a posted employment opportunity through the institution's official application system or process.

- **Requisition:** An electronic request form to fill a position. This is NOT a position description. A requisition is required when filling any classified staff position whether being filled internally through promotion, demotion, or transfer or externally through a formal search process.

HR Services Definitions

- **Preliminary screening:**HR will review your applicant pool and provide recommendations on candidates to advance, as well as feedback on the overall quality and quantity of applicants.
- **Direct recruiting:** *($300 per search)* HR will conduct targeted outreach to qualified candidates using multiple pipelines and channels. This option is ideal for highly specialized roles.
- **First-round interviews:** HR will manage the first round of interviews for up to six candidates per position, using behavioral-based techniques. A detailed summary with feedback and recommendations will be provided afterward.
- **Completing reference checks:** HR will complete at least two reference checks with previous or current supervisors for the final candidate and provide a detailed report.

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4. Responsibilities

This section outlines the functional responsibilities of key roles involved in the hiring process. Each role contributes differently depending on the scope, level, and structure of the search. Not all roles are required in every search.

Hiring Manager

The Hiring Manager is the lead decision-maker and is accountable for compliance, strategy, and the overall success of the hiring process. ***Required training includes*** Confidentiality Agreement, Uncovering Unconscious Bias, Applicant Screening Best Practices, Legality and Compliance in Hiring Process, Behavioral Based Interviewing, Reference Video, ***which must be completed at the launch of each search—unless serving in this role within the past year.***

Key responsibilities include:

- Reviewing the position description
- Defining selection criteria
- Identifying appropriate recruitment channels

- Participating in or leading the search committee
- Assigning appropriate roles to search participants
- Ensuring the appropriate involvement of peers and subordinates (e.g., avoiding their participation in salary discussions or access to confidential applicant information)
- Conducting interviews and ensuring complete and accurate search documentation
- Completing employment reference checks in accordance with **Policy 210 Reference Checks**
- Making final candidate selection recommendations
- Coordinating with HR and the Business Manager on compensation packages including hiring salaries determined in accordance with **Policy 407 Hiring Salaries for New Staff**
- Making the verbal offer and approving the formal written offer prepared by HR
- Communicating regrets to unsuccessful candidates

Business Manager (if assigned)

The Business Manager supports the search process in a financial and administrative capacity. ***Required training includes*** Confidentiality Agreement, which must be completed at the launch of each search—unless serving in this role within the past year.

Key responsibilities include:

- Participating in initial planning discussions with HR and the Hiring Manager
- Reviewing and confirming budget availability
- Supporting the development of compensation packages
- Reviewing the draft offer letter prior to release

The Hiring Manager is still responsible for extending the verbal offer and making final decisions.

Employment Coordinator (if assigned)

The Employment Coordinator facilitates operational support throughout the search process. ***Required training includes*** Confidentiality Agreement, Uncovering Unconscious Bias, Legality and Compliance in Hiring Process, which must be completed at the launch of each search—unless serving in this role within the past year.

Key responsibilities include:

- Coordinating job posting logistics and approvals
- Assisting with interview scheduling, reference checks, and documentation
- Communicating with candidates, as appropriate
- Serving as liaison to HR for procedural and compliance-related tasks

This role does not assume authority for hiring decisions or verbal/written offers.

Administrative Support (if assigned)

Administrative Support roles contribute to the logistical execution of the search. ***Required training includes*** Confidentiality Agreement, which must be completed at the launch of each search—unless serving in this role within the past year.

Key responsibilities include:

- Scheduling interviews and coordinating candidate itineraries
- Managing routine communications, such as sending confirmations or regrets
- Supporting interview day logistics (e.g., room bookings, catering, campus tours)
- Maintaining professionalism and confidentiality throughout the process

This role is not involved in evaluating candidates or making hiring decisions. Individuals may also serve on the interview panel or search committee if appropriate.

Search Committee

A Search Committee is a group of individuals selected to assist with the early stages of a classified staff hiring process. It is typically composed of staff, faculty, and occasionally students, depending on the position's scope and campus impact. ***Required training includes*** Confidentiality Agreement, All about Search Committees, Uncovering Unconscious Bias, Applicant Screening Best Practices, Legality and Compliance in Hiring Process, Behavioral Based Interviewing, which must be completed at the launch of each search—unless serving in this role within the past year.

Use of a Search Committee is recommended when:

- The position interacts regularly with multiple departments or key stakeholders
- Broader input will improve the evaluation of qualifications and potential contributions
- The role includes leadership, supervisory, or high-visibility responsibilities
- Inclusion, fairness, and transparency are priorities in the hiring process

Search committees help mitigate bias, promote equitable hiring practices, and strengthen institutional engagement and shared ownership of the decision. While not required for every classified staff search, they are a valuable tool, particularly for positions with campus-wide influence or strategic importance.

Key responsibilities include:

- Reviewing application materials using defined, job-related criteria
- Conducting first-round interviews (e.g., phone, Zoom, or in-person)
- Documenting and evaluating candidate responses
- Participating in structured discussions to recommend finalists to the Hiring Manager
- Upholding institutional policies related to fairness, equity, and confidentiality

Final hiring decisions remain the responsibility of the Hiring Manager, informed by the committee's input.

Interview Panel

The Interview Panel contributes to evaluating finalist candidates and providing feedback to inform the hiring decision. ***Required training includes*** Confidentiality Agreement, Uncovering Unconscious Bias, Behavioral Based Interviewing, which must be completed at the launch of each search—unless serving in this role within the past year.

Key responsibilities include:

- Participating in interviews using prepared, job-related questions
- Observing candidate communication, professionalism, and expertise
- Completing evaluation forms or structured feedback for review by the Hiring Manager or Search Committee

Panel members do not make final hiring decisions.

Human Resources – Talent Acquisition (HR TA)/ Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP)

HR TA/HRBP provides oversight, strategic support, and compliance monitoring throughout the hiring process.

Core responsibilities can include:

- Participating in planning meetings with departments to clarify roles and timelines
- Creating and posting job advertisements
- Advising on recruitment strategies, compliance, and policy
- Crafting compensation packages in conjunction with Hiring Managers and or Business Managers
- Drafting and Dispersing formal offer letters upon verbal acceptance
- Monitoring search documentation for policy adherence

Optional support services (upon request and availability):

- Preliminary screening
- Direct recruiting (there is a cost associated with this option)
- First-round interviews
- Full search on behalf of the department
- Completing reference checks

Support levels vary and must be arranged at the beginning of the search process.

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5. Procedure

The following steps outline the standard process for classified staff hiring at Lehigh University. The steps are presented for clarity and completeness; however, they may be carried out in a different order as deemed

necessary. Timely coordination among the Hiring Manager, Human Resources, and designated support roles is essential to ensure efficiency, compliance, and a positive applicant & candidate experience.

A. Position Vacancy Identified

- The Hiring Manager notifies Human Resources and, if applicable, the Business Manager and/or Employment Coordinator. This is often initiated by forwarding a resignation letter or another form of vacancy notification.
- The Hiring Manager or Business Manager completes the electronic requisition form.
- The requisition is routed for necessary approvals, including budget review.
- If approved, Human Resources Talent Acquisition (HR TA) is notified and begins preparing the job posting.
- If not approved, the requisition is declined and no further action is taken.

B. Initial Planning Meeting

Once the requisition is approved, HR TA schedules a planning meeting with the Hiring Manager, and, if applicable, the Business Manager and/or Employment Coordinator. This meeting is used to:

- Clarify each participant's role in the process
- Identify recruitment strategies and outreach plans
- Discuss timeline, potential challenges, and interview logistics
- Review legal, policy, and compliance considerations

C. Job Posting

- HR TA drafts the job posting and notifies the Hiring Manager for review.
- The Hiring Manager has 24 hours to approve or request revisions.
- Once approved, HR TA posts the position to the Lehigh job board and any contracted external sites.
- Business Managers or Employment Coordinators may be consulted during this step as needed.

D. Candidate Review and Interview Process

- The Hiring Manager participates in all phases of candidate evaluation, beginning with screening the applicant pool. Screening should begin within 1–2 weeks of the position being posted.
- Input from the Employment Coordinator, Business Manager, or Search Committee may be used during initial screening.
- The Hiring Manager defines the full interview process—including format, sequence, and participants—to ensure fairness and consistency.
  Example: Round 1 virtual interviews by the Search Committee; finalist interviews in person with the Hiring Manager and leadership.
- Administrative Support or the Employment Coordinator may assist with scheduling interviews.

- First-round interviews should ideally occur within 1–3 weeks of posting.
- Throughout the process, all participants should prioritize professionalism, hospitality, and clear communication to provide an exceptional candidate experience. This includes sharing benefits information, offering campus tours, covering travel costs when appropriate, and reinforcing Lehigh University's employment brand.

E. References in accordance with Policy 210 Reference Checks

- The Hiring Manager contacts the finalist to notify them that references will be checked.
- While the Employment Coordinator may assist, it is preferred that the Hiring Manager completes this step.
- For **internal candidates**, only a reference from their current Lehigh University supervisor is required.
- For **external candidates**, a minimum of two positive supervisory references is required.
- Reference documentation must be added to the electronic search record.

F. Offer/Closing the Search

- The Hiring Manager and, if applicable, the Business Manager work with HR TA to determine a competitive compensation package in conjunction with **Policy 407 Hiring Salaries for New Staff**.
- HR TA reviews the search for compliance and and either approves moving forward with an offer or works with the Hiring Manager to make any necessary updates
- When HR TA approves the Hiring Manager to move forward the Hiring Manager makes the verbal offer, which should include: base salary, start date, and any approved bonuses (e.g., sign-on, relocation).
- If the candidate does not accept immediately, a response deadline should be provided (typically within 24–48 hours or by the next business day).
- Upon verbal acceptance, the Hiring Manager notifies HR TA to initiate the formal offer letter.
- HR TA drafts the offer letter and sends it to the Hiring Manager and relevant parties for final approval.
- Once approved, HR TA issues the offer letter and formally closes the search.

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6. Exceptions

If an exception to the Hiring Manager role is needed for your department, contact the HR Talent Acquisition team to initiate the exception request process. All exceptions must be reviewed and approved by both departmental leadership and the HR Talent Acquisition team.