

Procedure: 4.1.1p3. [III.B]

Interviewing and Selection Guidelines

Revised: July 20, 2016
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I. PURPOSE:

The Technical College System on Georgia [TCSG] provides equal employment opportunity with respect to all employment practices, including recruitment, and administers these practices without regard to race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability age, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, disabled veteran, veteran of the Vietnam Era, or citizenship status (except in those special circumstances permitted or mandated by law).

The TCSG is committed to efforts to maintain a qualified work force reflecting the diverse community it serves. The guidelines outlined in this procedure are designed to promote effective interviewing and selection practices within all TCSG work units, to provide equal employment opportunity and, to provide promotion and leadership opportunities for current TCSG employees.

II. RELATED AUTHORITY:

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-11 – Powers of the Board
O.C.G.A. § 20-4-14 – TCSG Powers and Duties
Military Selection Service Act – 50 U.S.C. App et. Seq., as amended
State Board Policy 2.1.1. - Statement of Equal Opportunity
State Board Rule 6 – Recruiting, Interviewing and Hiring
TCSG Procedure 3.3.14p. Open Records Act
TCSG Procedure 4.8.1p1. – Drug Testing – Non U.S. DOT Regulated Positions
TCSG Procedure 4.8.1p2. – Drug Testing – U.S. DOT and FMCSA Regulated Positions
TCSG Procedure 4.1.9p. - Background Investigations
TCSG Procedure 4.7.2p. – Drivers Qualifications

III. APPLICABILITY:

All work units and technical colleges associated with the Technical College System of Georgia.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

Applicant: for purposes of this procedure, an individual who applies for a vacant position in any TCSG work unit to include current State of Georgia employees as well as those individuals who do not currently work for the State of Georgia.

TCSG Work Unit: the TCSG System Office, Quick Start Headquarters, Quick Start Regional Offices or training centers, or an associated technical college.

V. ATTACHMENTS: N/A

VI. PROCEDURE:

A. General Provisions:

1. With the exception of categories of positions identified TCSG procedure governing Recruitment (4.1.1p1.), all other vacant full- and part-time salaried positions, adjunct faculty, and those categories of hourly-paid, part-time/temporary positions encompassing an indefinite period of employment must be announced/posted for a minimum period of five (5) business days.
2. The goal of each selection process is to ensure that the most suitable candidate is selected for the vacant position. Each process should be conducted so that perceptions of unfairness are avoided and the hiring official(s) is/are able to justify the selection.
3. It is the responsibility of the hiring official(s), in conjunction with staff in the System Office or technical college Office of Human Resources, to follow the guidelines addressed in this procedure to better ensure that the goals of objectivity and fairness of the application screening, interviewing and selection process are met. For these reasons, only job-related, non-discriminatory criteria may be used in the application screening, interviewing and selection processes. Additionally, all such criteria must be established prior to beginning the selection process.
4. The use of any test in the applicant screening or interview processes (as differentiated from a demonstration of skills) is not permitted unless approval is first obtained from the TCSG General Counsel or Legal Services Officer. Included are soft skills tests (e.g., a personality test or a test that measures communication skills), tests that measure general intelligence (math, reading or writing) or, other cognitive, physical ability or aptitude test. Any test used in a selection process must be directly job related and reasonably predictive of successful job performance.
5. Whenever possible, the initial screening of applicants using established Minimum and Preferred Qualifications should be accomplished by staff in the System Office or technical college Office of Human Resources. If this determination is made by other college official(s), the list of applicants meeting these qualifications must be reviewed and approved by a designated Office of Human Resources representative before any interviews are scheduled.
6. An individual who does not submit a completed application in accordance with the procedure outline in the job announcement by the established closing date (if applicable) may be excluded from consideration for the position.
7. An applicant who does not meet the established Minimum Qualifications (including any required licensure, certification or other requirement established in state or federal law) shall not be interviewed or considered further for an available position.

B. Applicant Screening

1. Methodology to Establish Criteria to Identify Qualified Candidates:
 - a. the position's job description and, if available, the most recent performance plan and/or established performance standards of the previous incumbent should be reviewed to assist the hiring official(s) and, as applicable, human resources staff, in establishing the knowledge, skills, abilities and/or competencies predictive of successful performance.

- b. the identified job-related knowledge, skills, abilities and/or competencies may be evaluated by using a combination of the following methods to identify the most qualified candidates to be interviewed. If used, any/all of the following methods should be applied consistently to all qualified candidates:
1. an evaluation of an applicant's knowledge, skills, abilities and/or competencies as demonstrated by related education, training (including military service), and paid or unpaid experience outlined on his/her employment application;
 2. an evaluation of an applicant's qualifications obtained in a preliminary screening interview conducted either in person or by telephone. It is permissible to ask each applicant participating in a preliminary screening interview if he/she can perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodations.
 3. an evaluation of an applicant's qualifications obtained through a job-related questionnaire (e.g., Pre-Employment Questionnaire – P.O.S.T. Certified Law Enforcement Positions);
 4. an evaluation and verification of an applicant's qualifications including performance and conduct, obtained from current or previous employer(s), e.g., obtained through a current or previous immediate supervisor; and/or,
 5. an evaluation of an applicant's qualifications as demonstrated by the presentation of work samples or a job-related demonstration of skills (e.g., keyboard skills for a position whose primary duty involves the use of a computer). NOTE: this method requires the approval of the System Office or technical college Office of Human Resources before utilization.
 - a. as referenced in Paragraph VI.A.4., the use of any test in the applicant screening process must first be approved by the TCSG General Counsel or Legal Services Officer.
 - b. all criteria used in the identification of qualified candidates to be interviewed must be documented.
 - c. hiring official(s) or human resources staff may require applicants to provide proof of required education credentials, a license, or certification as a screening measure prior to conducting personal interviews. NOTE: all such the materials/documents must be provided prior to the selected candidate beginning employment.

C. Interviewing

1. Interviews may be conducted by a hiring official or an interview panel.
2. If an interview panel is utilized, its composition should reflect the diverse nature of the System Office or technical college workforce. It is permissible that the panel include individuals from other TCSG work units, other areas of the System Office or technical college or, dependent upon the uniqueness of the position, individual(s) not associated with the TCSG or those on governing boards.
3. The same hiring official or interview panel should conduct all interviews for the available position.

4. All interviewer(s) should be knowledgeable of the position, its assigned duties and responsibilities, and measures of successful performance.
5. A series of open-ended interview questions based on relevant, job-related criteria should be developed and asked of all applicants interviewed. Interview questions should be designed to gather in-depth responses with an accompanying description or explanation; Questions that can be answered with a “Yes or NO” response should generally be avoided.
6. It is permissible to ask each applicant interviewed if he/she can perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodations.
7. Interviewers have the flexibility to ask follow-up questions, as needed, based on an applicant’s initial response.
8. As previously indicated, the use of any test in the interview process must first be approved by the TCSG General Counsel or Legal Services Officer. Any job-related skills demonstration conducted at the interview stage of the selection process must be approved prior to its use by the System Office or technical college Office of Human Resources.
9. It is permissible for the hiring official or an interview team to develop/use a response key to permit responses to be rated in a numerical or non-numerical (e.g., excellent, satisfactory or not acceptable) rating scale/rubric. Any rating scale used during the interviewing process must first be approved by the System Office or technical college’s Office of Human Resources, as appropriate.

D. Applicants with Disabilities

1. The TCSG has a legal obligation to provide a qualified applicant with a disability with reasonable accommodation(s) to permit his/her participation in the interview process. For purposes of this procedure, a qualified applicant is one who meets established minimum qualifications, as applicable, preferred qualifications and, who can perform the essential functions of the position with or without accommodations. An example of a requested reasonable accommodation could be arranging for an interpreter for an applicant with a hearing impairment.
2. In the event that a qualified candidate does not disclose a request for a reasonable accommodation until the date of his/her scheduled interview and the hiring official or chair of the interview panel believes that the applicant cannot be reasonably accommodated to participate in the interview process, the hiring official/panel chair should immediately contact the System Office or technical college Office of Human Resources.

E. Reference Checks

1. Reference checks on the selected candidate for employment must be conducted with the individual’s current employer (i.e., his/her immediate supervisor), when possible, and at with at least one (1) other former supervisor. Hiring official(s) may extend the scope of the reference checks to other candidates/finalists (e.g., the top three [3] applicants).
2. Reference must be with a current (when possible) or former supervisor and cannot include co-workers. Additionally, family, friends, and other personal acquaintances should not be accepted as professional references.

3. Applicants are to be advised that reference checks will be conducted and all associated questions will be limited to job-related inquiries in an attempt to verify such job-related information as:
 - a.name;
 - b. employment dates;
 - c. job-title held and duties;
 - d. beginning and ending salaries;
 - e. training completed;
 - f. job performance;
 - g. disciplinary history;
 - h. as applicable, eligibility for re-hire and
 - i. as applicable, reason for leaving a past employer.
4. All collected documentation should be maintained confidentially and only released on a “need to know” basis (e.g., to those employees/individuals participating in the selection process) unless any such release is required pursuant to state or federal law.
5. Pursuant to applicable provisions of State Personnel Board Rule 6, the PeopleSoft records of a former State employee to be provided a contingent offer of employment must first be reviewed to ensure that he/she is appropriate for re-hire and to determine whether the individual has ever been dismissed from a State position. A “no-rehire” designation in PeopleSoft will not automatically exclude an individual from employment. In all instances, the information discovered should be reviewed in conjunction with information provided on the individual’s employment application.

F. Contingent Offer of Employment

1. All offers of full- or part-time and/or temporary employment will be extended in writing to the selected candidate with notice that the candidate must accept the offer in writing or through e-mail.
2. The contingent offer of employment letter must also reference:
 - a. all post-offer requirements which must be successfully completed before a hiring decision is finalized to include a criminal history records check as provided in the TCSG Procedure governing Background Investigations (4.1.9p.);
 - b. other relevant information to include the anticipated start date; the accompanying salary, hourly-rate of pay or, for adjunct faculty, the hourly rate or lump sum payment for each course taught; and,
 - c. as applicable, the need to produce verification of a required license, certificate, verification and/or college/university transcript, diploma, etc.
3. Other post-offer requirements may include: a pre-employment drug test; a motor vehicle records check; a credit history check; a medical examination; and, a psychological examination.
4. When the selected candidate for employment is a male between the ages of eighteen (18) and twenty-six (26), the Military Selective Service Act stipulates that the applicant present proof of having registered with the Selective Service System or, instead, to present proof of being exempt of such service. Pursuant to this statute, such proof must be presented within fifteen (15) calendar days of the contingent offer of employment.

5. If the selected candidate successfully completes all stipulated conditions of employment, he/she will be notified, in writing, that the hiring decision is finalized.
6. The TCSG has a legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodations in employment for applicants with disabilities who are qualified to perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodations. If a System Office or technical college hiring official or representative of the Office of Human Resources believes that a qualified candidate who has participated in the interview process cannot be reasonably accommodated, the official/representative should contact the TCSG General Counsel or Legal Services Officer before finalizing the selection decision.

G. Reasons for Non-Selection

1. Reason(s) for non-selection may not be related to:
 - a. race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, veteran status, or citizenship status (except in those special circumstances permitted or mandated by law);
 - b. a physical or other disability that does not interfere with the applicant's ability to perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodations; or,
 - c. any other factor that has no bearing on established job-related requirements.
2. In addition to reason(s) referenced in Paragraph VI.G.1., non-selection should not normally be based on the absence of a particular skill or a knowledge that can be learned/acquired during the normal job orientation or training period that regularly follows a new employee assuming the identified position.
3. Reasons for non-selection should, instead, pertain directly to established job requirements and/or an applicant's qualifications.

H. Notification of Non-Selection

1. Each applicant interviewed, but not selected, for an available position should be notified, in writing, of this decision unless the applicant withdrew from consideration or declined an offer of employment.
2. The written notification should not contain the reason(s) for an applicant's non-selection.

VII. Records Retention

1. All employment related documents generated or collected pursuant to this procedure shall be maintained in a manner consistent with the Georgia Archive's Retention Schedule for State Government Paper and Electronic Records.
2. Any written or verbal request for the release of selection-related documents/materials shall be managed pursuant to the provisions of TCSG Procedure 3.3.14p. (the Open Records Act).