I. Faculty and Exempt Personnel Searches

A. Summary and Introduction

This document is meant to serve as a guideline for those involved in filling vacant or new full-time faculty and exempt personnel positions at Athens State University. The goal of these guidelines is to conduct a search that will yield the best possible candidates for these positions.

All efforts to fill these positions will be directed toward choosing the best suited individual based on professional qualifications, personal integrity, and equal opportunity/equal access considerations. These procedures are designed to assist personnel in completing the search process in an efficient and effective manner.

All faculty and staff search committees should ensure compliance with the minimum requirements during the applicant screening process BEFORE interviews are requested. Official transcripts must be a part of the completed file. Unofficial transcripts may be used to evaluate the minimum requirements. Continued employment is contingent upon receiving official transcripts. Transcripts must be received from all institution where degrees are granted and from other institutions attended when appropriate.

Equal Employment Opportunity

No employee or applicant for employment or promotion shall be discriminated against on the basis of any legally impermissible criterion or characteristic, including without limitation race, sex, or age. Athens State University is an equal opportunity employer. Its policy is to provide equal opportunity for employment and advancement to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, national origin, age, marital status, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, disability, religion, genetic information, or veteran status, as provided in federal and state law.

All correspondence, including advertisements, brochures, and flyers must include the following statement:

NONDISCRIMINATION Athens State University, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. Athens State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, disability, religion, genetic information, or veteran status in employment, or admissions to or participation in educational programs and activities. Inquiries or concerns may be addressed to the Office of the Vice President of Enrollment and Student Support Services, 300 N. Beaty St., Athens, AL 35611, 256-233-8175.

The Committee should make certain that the Athens State University publicity materials appear welcoming to all persons, including but not limited to women and underrepresented minority faculty. Proactive language can be included in job descriptions to indicate a department’s commitment to diversity.
Diversity

Athens State University strives to recruit outstanding faculty and staff members and to create an overall climate that welcomes diversity in many areas, including ethnicity, national origin, religion, race, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation. The immediate goal is twofold: (1) to broaden the recruitment net to include a wide-range of highly qualified candidates; and (2) to keep track of recruitment efforts and outcomes to assess progress and continue to improve. There are no specific numeric targets or quotas – only the important goal of broadening the search process for each open full-time position.

In connection with the issue of diversity, it is important that the search process include a focus on recruitment, retention, and promotion of women and underrepresented minority faculty and staff members. Studies show that there is a relatively low representation of women and underrepresented minority faculty and staff in higher education, and the reasons for the relatively low representation are complex and will not be solved by recruitment alone. However, different recruitment practices are a crucial part of the solution. Increasing the number of women and underrepresented minority faculty can do a great deal to change the academic climate, making it better and helping to ensure that students, faculty and staff thrive.

B. Search Committees - Formation and Composition

• When a vacancy occurs or a new faculty or exempt position is approved, and the position must be filled, Athens State University shall utilize a search committee to assist in filling the vacancy or new position.

• The Search Committee will be appointed by the President at the request of the Vice President from the hiring area. The size, composition, and membership of the committee shall be determined by the President.

  ➢ Search committees should include members with different perspectives and expertise as well as those who have demonstrated commitments to diversity.
  ➢ Search committees should consist of a diverse makeup of faculty and staff members. The committee may also include members of the community and general public.
  ➢ Data shows that, of all possible interventions to increase diversity, a diverse search committee is most likely to bring in a wide range of candidates. The University strives to have search committees that are diverse and include representatives from women and minority or underrepresented groups.
  ➢ Search committees may include members from outside the department or office, whether or not those individuals are members of minority groups, to bring a range of perspectives to the search process.

C. The Search Committee Process

Preliminary Work /Setting Qualifications / Job Description / Past Searches

The search committee, with appropriate input from the department or supervisor related to the vacancy or new position, should determine and specify in writing the minimum qualifications, as well as any specific...
requirements, for an acceptable applicant as well as preferred requirements when considered necessary. The essential functions and responsibilities for the applicant to qualify for the position should be specified.

- Set up a tentative schedule for the hiring process.

- The search committee shall ensure that complete and accurate job descriptions have been developed for the position. The job description should contain at least the following: (1) duties and responsibilities of the job; (2) required education and work experience; (3) required license, certification, and other credentials; and (4) all other special qualifications or requirements of the job.

  - The committee should ensure that the hiring criteria are directly related to the requirements of the position and clearly understood.
  - **The committee should resist the urge to use one standard to measure achievement.** Candidates who received their education later in life, or worked part-time to meet family responsibilities may bring rich experiences to the campus.
  - **The search committee should make sure that the position description does not needlessly limit the applicant pool.** The search committee should consider, among the selection criteria, the ability of the candidate to add intellectual diversity to the department and the ability to work with diverse students and colleagues.
  - **The search committee should avoid narrowly drawn job descriptions.** Athens State University emphasizes the importance of considering the job description and whether it can be broadened to include more diverse specialties or perspectives. An unduly narrow job description may restrict the applicant pool and ultimately inhibit the scope of ideas that help create a dynamic community.
  - **Review of national pool and past searches.** The committee should take steps to identify the national pools of qualified candidates for the position. It is likely to be extremely useful for the search committee, and/or a larger group in the department, college or office, to engage in a review of the national context, as well as the University’s own past history of searching and hiring, before beginning a new search. The department or office is more likely to be able to achieve the desired outcome if it has some understanding of factors that may have played a role in limiting past success, or fostering past achievements, in effective and diverse recruitment.
  - **The committee should identify any institutions or individuals nationally that are especially successful at producing diverse outcomes** (including women and underrepresented minority doctorates and/or post-doctorates) and be sure to recruit actively from those sources.
  - **The committee should take steps to review the approaches of past Committee searches** to determine the most effective procedures for obtaining a qualified applicant pool and a diverse applicant pool (including examining the successes and failures in securing applications, interviews, and hires from women and underrepresented minorities). For example, if possible, the committee should find out (i) how many women and underrepresented minority applicants have applied in the past for similar positions, (ii) how many women and underrepresented minority applicants have been brought to campus for interviews in the past for similar positions, and (iii) if women and minority applicants have been hired in recent searches, consider asking the search committees, the chairs, and the candidates themselves how they were successfully recruited. Likewise, if women and underrepresented minority applicants have been offered positions but have turned them down,
consider finding out why they declined. Moreover, the committee may consider what has happened to women and underrepresented minority faculty and staff members who were offered appointments in previous searches, and their present status. If no women or underrepresented minority candidates have been offered positions in recent searches, the committee should consider what might have happened to cause this, as well as if the positions have been defined too narrowly.

Announcement of New Position / Vacancy

After the search committee has completed its preliminary efforts concerning the schedule, job description, and review of national pool/past searches, it should begin the process of posting and advertising. The search committee should:

- **Prepare an announcement/advertisement for the position to include:**
  - Position, rank, discipline
  - Starting date
  - Minimal credentials required
  - Preferred qualifications, if helpful
  - Statement of salary being competitive
  - Application materials required (letter of interest, vita, transcripts, etc.)
  - Closing date or review date for applications
  - Equal Opportunity/Equal Access Employer statement

  **NOTE:** All announcements/advertisements must be approved by the HR Director.

- **Notify other universities/agencies of the vacancy.**

- **Post position announcement on University website.**

- **Ask each member to contact colleagues at other institutions to seek nominations of qualified candidates.** Each person on the search committee should be asked to contact persons in the field to suggest candidates that are qualified, effective, and that have diverse experiences and perspectives.

- **Advertise in local and regional media.**

  - All positions must be advertised in a minimum of two regional and national sources (on-line and/or print) appropriate to the discipline and to enhance potential for a diverse pool of applicants.

  - Advertisement shall be made in at least one publication or website that specifically attracts women or underrepresented minority faculty and staff members. This demonstrates Athens State's commitment to broadening the search process and may attract individuals who might not otherwise apply. Moreover, the committee should use electronic job-posting services, list serves, newspapers, journals and publications that are targeted at diverse groups in the required discipline.

  - The committee may make personal contacts with diverse candidates of all types, including women and minority group members at professional conferences, and invite them to apply. Similarly, the
committee may seek assistance in identifying diverse candidates of all types, including women and minority candidates.

**NOTE:** The Committee should attempt to advertise the position for at least thirty days before the application deadline, where reasonable, such as where the advertisement timeline will not materially prejudice the University.

In conjunction with the above notices and advertising, the search committee should explore creative and effective other ways for Athens State University to actively recruit an effective, qualified, and diverse workforce. The search committee should discuss active ways to widen the candidate net and to seek out desirable candidates at professional meetings. The committee should view its task as including a process of **generating a pool rather than merely tapping it.** The committee’s goal is to **search** for outstanding candidates and not merely sort through applications. This may be accomplished by having committee members, when attending national meetings and conferences, visit presentations and develop a list of potential future candidates based on those presentations. Candidates identified in this way may be in any field, not necessarily the one targeted for a particular search.

The committee should consider searching for qualified candidates outside academia, such as in industry, some of whom may be well suited to a faculty or staff position. The committee should be careful to place a suitable value on non-traditional career paths. The committee should take into account time spent raising children or getting particular kinds of training, unusual undergraduate degrees, and different job experiences. The committee should resist the urge to use one standard to measure achievement. Candidates who received their education later in life, or worked part-time to meet family responsibilities may bring rich experiences to the campus.

Committee members should utilize creative and effective methods to encourage and attract a diverse pool of applicants. For example, committee members should contact women and underrepresented minority candidates in their final year of their Ph.D. studies to inform them about Athens State University and describe potential vacancies (perhaps inviting them to present their work). To encourage a diverse group of candidates, the search committee should (i) consider interaction (such as a faculty exchange program) with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), colleges with large underrepresented minority populations, or women’s colleges, (ii) identify suitable women and minority faculty at other institutions, particularly faculty members who may currently be under-placed, and send job announcements, and/or (iii) for faculty, contact relevant professional organizations for rosters listing women and minorities receiving Ph.D.s in a certain field. The committee should consider re-opening the search if the pool of applicants does not include a diverse group of candidates (such as female or underrepresented minority candidates) who will be seriously considered by the search committee. In the event of a recurring lack of candidates from diverse backgrounds, the department, college or office may consider creating a committee to generate women and/or underrepresented minority candidates, who can then be considered for targeted recruitment outside of defined searches.

**Receiving and Screening Applications / Creating a Short List**

The Committee must first determine whether or not the minimum job qualifications are met by applicants. Athens State University utilizes a Candidate Evaluation Sheet to document the minimum qualifications and whether or not these minimum qualifications are met. A sample form is attached at **Appendix C.** This form
serves as an example of what should be used for the overall search and must be accompanied by a summary explaining how the minimum qualifications were met. Once a pool of applicants meeting the minimum number of requirements has been determined, the committee should develop a list of criteria that will be used to narrow the pool to a “short list” of applicants that will be further considered and interviewed.

In formulating the “short list,” the committee should consider all criteria that is relevant to the specific job and what is expected of the position. These criteria must be documented as to how they were derived. It should also be documented how these criteria were weighted, and a summary of how the criteria were applied to the pool must be provided. For those candidates who met the qualifications but were not included in the short list to be interviewed, a statement explaining the rationale applied should be included in the interview file.

An important point about the process of creating a short list is to build in checkpoints for evaluation of whether the committee is satisfied with the pool of candidates. The committee should expect to interview more than one woman and/or minority candidate, if possible, and if there are no women or minority candidates on the short list, the committee may consider re-opening the search before moving forward.

Once the short list has been agreed upon, the group or committee should proceed with the interview process.

**Reference Checks**

Athens State University must make a reasonable effort to learn about a candidate before inviting him/her to join the community. The University can best protect against liability for negligent hiring by checking background and references to the extent reasonably possible. Also, reference checks may help clarify or dispel any concerns or uncertainties about a candidate and may give information that will help one supervise the employee more effectively. Many organizations give only the slightest information about a former or present employee (e.g., position title and years of employment). The committee should attempt to conduct a reference check and document results.

Where references are utilized, references are normally contacted by telephone, but special care must be taken to keep all information confidential, using it only for administrative purposes.

The committee may check references at the time it deems appropriate and helpful to the process. However, when references are checked, the manner in which they are checked must be consistent within the same search.

Suggestions for conducting reference checks can be found at Appendix B.

**Interviews**

After the above screening and evaluation process is completed, the committee will select a “short list” of candidates, typically three (3) candidates, for campus interview.

If the search committee deems it helpful to the process, prior to selecting a “short list” of candidates for campus interviews, initial interviews may be conducted either face-to-face or by telephone or video. (To save travel time for candidates and expense for Athens State University, search committees are increasingly using telephone or video interviews as the first step in the screening process.) The phone or video interview should be taken as seriously as any face-to-face interview, with plenty of advance notice given to all participants and at least 30 minutes set aside without interruptions for everyone on the call. It can be conducted via video or
conference call with the candidate and search committee members at various locations, or by having the members of the search committee gathered in one room. If such initial interviews are utilized, then the manner in which these interviews are conducted must be consistent within the same search. These initial interviews may be used to determine whether or not the candidate and the position are likely to be a good match, and to aid the committee in developing a short list for campus interviews. Once the initial interviews are conducted, the committee should narrow the pool to a reasonable number of candidates to be brought to campus for face-to-face interviews.

As stated, the number of candidates scheduled for campus interviews generally should not exceed three; however, the committee may decide to invite more than three for on-campus interviews. In certain cases where the candidate pools are very small, it may be appropriate to only bring one or two candidates to campus for an interview. If the one candidate is not deemed a good fit for the University, it is most likely that the search would be re-opened; however, in certain cases, the University would not be prohibited from bringing to campus other candidates from the same pool for face-to-face interviews.

Search Committees must obtain prior approval from the appropriate Vice President before scheduling campus visits/interviews.

Once Vice President approval is obtained, the committee should contact the selected candidates, invite him/her to campus, make arrangements (lodging, interview schedule, meals, escorts, etc.), and publish schedule and brief resume for all interested parties. Candidates selected for on-campus interviews will be reimbursed in accordance with University procedures.

Guidelines and suggestions for conducting interviews are found at Appendix A.

- The committee should consider whether or not to schedule a scholarly presentation and/or teaching demonstration to be made by the candidate where appropriate.
- Conduct interviews. (A specific interview process must be determined prior to the actual visit.)
- Solicit reactions from those people who meet with the candidate(s) during the interview process.
- Evaluate candidates, including the solicited responses.

**Recommendation and Selection**

Once the campus interviews have been completed, the search committee is to make its recommendations to the Human Resources Director. The chair of the search committee is responsible for entering the results at each phase of the search process. The appropriate documentation for candidates moving to the next phase must be entered into the online employment systems. The committee’s report should include:

- The completed file of each interviewed candidate; and
- The perceived strengths and weaknesses of each candidate

The Human Resources Director will forward the recommendation to the appropriate Vice President of the University. The appropriate Vice President in coordination with the department head, director, manager or dean will work with the Office of Financial Affairs and the HR Director to determine the appropriate pay scale for the position. Once these parties are in agreement with respect to the terms, the recommendation will be issued to the President for review and approval. If the President approves the hire, the chair of the search committee or appropriate hiring agent will extend an offer to the final candidate. The hire date and other
conditions of employment can be negotiated at this time. Salaries and other conditions outside of the pre-approved ranges and norms must be approved by the President.

The final candidate must be informed that the offer is contingent on the candidate passing the background check which investigates the following: social security number verification, criminal background, sex offender, degree verification, and employment verification. **No offer of employment is finalized until background checks are completed and HR has contacted the hiring agent with the results.**

**An appointment letter will not be issued until the following is received and verified in the Human Resource Director's office:**

- Completed File with required documentation: curriculum vitae, memo with recommendation from the selection committee, and unofficial transcripts from all institutions of higher learning from which a degree was received or other institutions attended as appropriately determined.
- Satisfactory results of the degree verification.
- Satisfactory results of the background check. Applicants convicted of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude must obtain approval from the President of the University that the applicant is suitable for employment.
- Documentation indicating completion of Harassment and Discrimination Training.

**Notifications**

- The Human Resources Director or designee will notify the candidates that were interviewed, but did not get selected, of the decision to hire another candidate. The notification should not go into detail about why a candidate was not selected and should merely indicate another candidate was a better fit for the position.

- Any requests for information and questions about the search should be referred to the Human Resources Director to resolve any issues/concerns.

**Evaluating the Search Process**

The evaluation of the search process should be ongoing during the search as well as a summative process at the end of the search. If at any point during the search it becomes apparent that the applicant pool is not diverse enough, or sufficiently well-qualified, the committee should reassess the advertising and recruitment process. The committee should analyze whether the hiring net was cast broadly enough and, if it was not, what can be done to address that issue in the future.

If a woman and/or underrepresented minority candidate is hired, the committee should consider the factors that may have enabled it to do so and keep a record of good practices and successful searches for future reference. If the applicant pool was not as large, as qualified, or as diverse as was anticipated, the committee should consider these questions:

- Could the job description have been constructed in a way that would have brought in a broader pool of candidates?
- Could the applicable department have recruited more actively?
Were there criteria for this position that were consistently not met by a diverse grouping, including women or underrepresented minorities?

If women and/or underrepresented minority candidates were offered positions that they chose not to accept, what reasons did they offer? Consider as many factors as you can identify. Are there things that the department could do to make it more attractive to such candidates in the future? Be sure that any analysis and insight is shared with departmental decision-makers and is part of the process of initiating future searches.

II. Hiring Non-Exempt Employees

For new non-exempt positions or vacancies of current non-exempt employees, the University will require that a current position description be submitted to the Human Resources Director before advertising. The University will further require that all non-exempt positions be advertised using both on-campus and off-campus resources. Vacancies and new positions can also be filled under the same guidelines as discussed in sections III and IV. It shall be the responsibility of the appropriate administrator to identify the minimum qualifications and essential functions of the job; define and describe fully the duties and responsibilities of the position; specify all physical, environmental and mental demands of the position; and obtain confirmation from Human Resources on the classification level and salary ranges. Position descriptions must reflect actual qualifications and experience required for the position.

It shall be the responsibility of the Human Resources Director in conjunction with the appropriate administrator to identify the appropriate job classification for each position in order to approve the position announcement. Job announcements shall contain the job classification, a brief description of the position, and may include salary and benefit information relating to the job. Announcements must alert applicants of minimum qualifications and any required pre-placement requirements. The duration and scope of advertising shall follow University practices and applicable state and/or federal laws and shall follow the announcement guidelines discussed in Section I.

Once the advertisement of the position has closed, the appropriate Vice President, or delegate, shall coordinate with the Director and/or supervisor for the vacant position a review of all complete interview packets in order to determine a list of qualified candidates. These individuals shall be referred to as the hiring group unless, at the discretion of the Vice President, other key personnel are included in the hiring process. At this point, the hiring group will determine a set of criteria that will be used to rank the qualified candidates in order to come up with a short list who will be interviewed for the position. The hiring group may choose to conduct phone interviews or may elect to bring the short list to campus for face-to-face interviews.

The interviews will be conducted in a similar manner as section I of this document. A standard list of questions should be used for every candidate. If the candidates who are interviewed are not considered a fit for the position, the vacancy will generally be re-opened, but the University is not prohibited from interviewing other candidates from the same pool. Upon completion of the first stage of interviews, the hiring group may choose to conduct another stage of interviews but is not required to do so. Once a candidate is selected, the Vice President for the appropriate area will make a recommendation to the President. If the President approves the hire, the appropriate Vice President or delegate will extend a job offer to the selected candidate. The Human Resources Director will notify other candidates that the position has been filled.

III. Internal Searches
Normally, all faculty, non-exempt and exempt administrative positions are filled following an advertised search process as described in this document. In certain instances, however, Athens State University may elect to limit the search process for a vacant position (such as a dean, assistant/associate dean, vice president, or department head) to internal applicants. An internal search could be justified in any of the following circumstances:

- when there is consensus that a qualified individual is already with Athens State University’s employ and there is urgency to fill the position in order to prevent prolonged disruption of University services;

- when there is consensus that a qualified individual is already with Athens State University’s employ and that individual would serve to increase the diversity among the faculty or exempt personnel by the appointment of a qualified minority and/or female who is already within Athens State University’s employ; or when there are fiscal constraints.

In such cases, the appropriate vice president or administrative head, in consultation with the President, may declare an internal search to fill a vacancy. Internal searches should be conducted in the same manner as discussed in Sections I and II except that the position announcement and/or advertisement will be limited to the Athens State University community.

IV. Lateral Transfers and Reorganizations

Notwithstanding the procedures for filling vacant positions, in the event that there is one or more employees at Athens State University in positions which are at least equivalent to a vacant position in terms of salary and level of responsibility, the President shall have the discretion, in lieu of the procedures stated herein, to offer all such equivalently positioned employees the opportunity to apply for a lateral transfer to said vacancy. The President’s decision to do so should be supported by a written explanation of the reasons for his/her choice. Additionally, prior to the lateral transfer, all equivalently positioned employees must be given the opportunity to apply for and be considered for the lateral transfer without discrimination.

There may be occasional situations where Athens State University finds it necessary and appropriate to expand or to otherwise modify an existing position. In such cases, the University may do so without the position being considered a vacancy. Examples of such circumstances would include expanding the duties of an incumbent employee or reassigning duties among incumbent employees to avoid the need for hiring a new employee. Prior to such action, the President must approve the reorganization, and ensure that it is necessary and appropriate given the circumstances (and not made for impermissible reasons or to frustrate the usual search process).
Appendix A - Interviews

A standard list of questions should be used for every candidate and either provided to every candidate in advance or not provided to any candidate in advance. A sample list of questions is provided here, but the actual list should be devised by the search committee and customized to fit the requirements of the position.

The following list provides useful tips for managing interviews:

- Make it clear that you are interested in the candidate’s qualifications and skills, rather than his or her demographic characteristics. It is generally not helpful to make a point with candidates that the department is eager to hire women and minorities.
- Schedule interviews and events consistently. Allow equal time for each candidate to interview and meet with the same personnel whenever possible.
- Use a set of common questions with all candidates to allow comparative judgment and ensure that crucial information related to the position is obtained.
- Treat internal candidates with the same consistency.
- Give the candidate a chance to interact with the appropriate faculty and staff.
- Formal talks may not reveal every candidate’s strengths. Consider including Q+A sessions and other less formal interactions. Focus on the candidate’s ability to perform the essential functions of the job and avoid making assumptions based on perceived race, ethnic background, religion, marital or familial status, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.
- If the candidate will assume a leadership role (division chief, department chair, etc.) examine the candidate’s commitment to goals of diversity and gender equity, as well as the candidate’s history of mentoring women and underrepresented minority faculty.
- Introduce women and minority members of the offices and departments to all candidates, not just women and minority candidates.

Guidelines for Interview Questions

All candidates should be asked the same interview questions and given the same amount of time for the interview.

Understanding the types of questions that are appropriate and lawful to ask during a pre-employment interview is essential to ensuring compliance with equal opportunity obligations.

Three basic guidelines should be followed when selecting questions to be used in the interview process:

1. Ask only for information you intend to use in making a hiring decision.
2. Know in advance how you will use the information to make that decision.
3. Recognize that it is extremely difficult to defend the seeking of information that is not directly relevant to the job.

The following are guidelines about specific question areas:

- **Age and Date of Birth** – Federal and state law prohibits discrimination on the basis of age. The applicant may be asked if he/she meets the minimum age requirement as set out by law (usually 18) but may not be asked to state age or date of birth or to provide proof of age.
- **Name and National Origin** – No inquiry should be made about an applicant’s maiden name, a person’s lineage, ancestry, national origin or descent. This also applies to questions about spouse, parents, or other
relatives. Applicant should provide current legal name for identification purposes and may be asked to provide any other names he/she has used in the past (needed for checking academic and work history).

- **Marital Status** – Any questions about an applicant’s relatives, marital status, dependents (number, ages, child care arrangements, etc.) and spouse’s employment (salary, shift or travel schedule) are prohibited. You may ask only whether the applicant is able to meet the work schedule.

- **Birthplace/Citizenship** – You may ask an applicant if he/she is legally eligible to work in the U.S. You may not ask for an applicant’s country of citizenship or country of origin.

- **Religion/Creed** – Inquiries about an applicant’s religious denomination, affiliation, parish, pastor, or holidays observed are not permitted.

- **Military Service** – It is permissible to ask about the type of education and experience gained from military service if it is related to the job. Interviewers should refrain, however, from asking about the type of discharge received.

- **Education** – It is permissible to ask about an applicant’s academic, professional or vocational educational background, when it is related to the applicant’s ability to perform the essential functions of the job. Asking about national, racial or religious affiliation of a school, or its gender restrictions is prohibited.

- **Organizations** – It is permissible to ask about professional organizational memberships as long as the applicant is made aware of his/her right to exclude the name or character of any organization that is predominantly racial, religious or sexual in nature.

- **Financial Data, Credit Record, Garnishment Record or Fidelity Bond** – Questions to applicants about these issues are inappropriate unless there is a clear business necessity for this information. In the latter case, Human Resources will handle this inquiry.

- **Arrest/Conviction Record** – It is inappropriate to ask about the arrest record of an applicant because an arrest does not necessarily mean that the individual was convicted. Inquiries about convictions may not be made unless they are made of all applicants. A conviction may prejudice the applicant’s status only if the nature of the conviction has a bearing on job performance in that specific position. The required background check by Human Resources, after an offer is made, will generate pertinent information.

- **Photographs** – Photographs may not be reviewed or requested prior to employment.

- **Height and Weight** – This information may not be requested of applicants and should not be used as a consideration for employment.

- **Physical/Mental Disabilities** – No questions should be asked about whether a person has a disability or about the severity or nature of the disability. You may ask whether the individual is able to carry out all essential job requirements in a safe manner, as long as this question is posed to all candidates.

- **Language Skills** – Questions about ability to speak, read or write English or a foreign language are permitted only if that skill is required by the job.

- **Race** – No questions are appropriate or permitted.

- **Sexual Orientation** – No questions are appropriate or permitted.

**Guidelines for Providing Accommodations for Disabilities**

For assistance in preparing to interview or evaluate a candidate with a disability, please contact the ADA Coordinator.

One provision of the laws on disability is that the University must provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities who are able to perform the essential functions of the job in question.

These requirements should be well understood by those involved in a search process. All employers must be sensitive to the barriers faced by the qualified individuals with disabilities and must ensure that they have the same opportunity as all other applicants to be considered fairly for positions at the University. This may require
providing accommodations in the interview process or in testing. In addition, we must clearly identify the essential functions of the job in order to determine whether or not each applicant can perform those tasks, with or without reasonable accommodations. When conducting an interview, all questions must be job-related and focus on the candidate’s ability to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Qualified candidates cannot be rejected for employment because they need, or it is thought that they need, reasonable accommodations. It is important to note that the cost of potential accommodations should also not be considered when making employment decisions.

Although it is important to understand that people with the same disability or functional limitation may not have the same needs, the following guidelines might be helpful to hiring officials and search committees when interviewing candidates with specific disabilities.

Candidates who use wheelchairs
People who use wheelchairs can hold physically demanding jobs and need not be confined to desk jobs.
- Make sure that the interview is conducted at a wheelchair-accessible location.
- Don’t be surprised if the person transfers, or asks to transfer, from a wheelchair to a piece of furniture or gets out of the wheelchair to move about for a short while.
- Don’t be overly sensitive about using words like running or walking.

Candidates who are blind or visually impaired
A person’s visual acuity may change under different light conditions. Keep in mind that visual impairment is not necessarily total lack of vision.
- If the candidate seems to need assistance, offer your services. If you need to guide a person who is blind through a door or to a chair, let the person take your arm and follow the movement of your body. Guide his or her hand to the back of the chair.
- Speak directly to the individual who is blind or visually impaired. Inform the person when you are leaving or entering the room.
- Introduce other people in the room or have them introduce themselves in order to assist the candidate in orienting him or herself to the room and its occupants.
- When you are guiding the candidate into a new or strange surrounding, you may want to describe special features or decorations.
- When giving directions, use directional words with the orientation of the person who is blind.
- Be prepared to read aloud information that is written, or ask the person if he or she will need a reader.

Candidates who are deaf or hearing impaired
- Face the candidate directly. Do not position yourself so that you are directly in front of harsh light or window as it obscures/silhouettes the interviewer’s face, making it difficult to see.
- Not all people who are hearing impaired can lip-read, but many do it quite well. When speaking, use meaningful facial expressions and gestures to emphasize your intent and attitude as a substitute for tone of voice, even in the presence of a sign language or oral interpreter. Do not change the subject without warning.
- Do not shout. Use a normal tone of voice and do not restrict yourself to monosyllabic words.
- If you cannot understand the candidate with a hearing impairment, do not be afraid to ask that the statement be repeated. If this does not work, try paper and pencil.

Candidates who have Cerebral Palsy (and other conditions that have musculoskeletal or neurological limitations)
Cerebral Palsy may affect motor ability and/or speech but does not affect intelligence. Some involuntary or halting movement or limitation of movement may be observed, as well as lisping, disrupted speech or flatness of tone due to lack of motor control of the tongue and lips. The severity and functional effects of the disability vary from
person to person. Unless the candidate is severely disabled, or has other disabilities, no accommodation may be needed for the interview itself. If the candidate’s speech is difficult to understand, the interviewer should not be afraid to ask the candidate to repeat what was said. If a candidate has severe cerebral palsy, he or she may find it more effective to communicate by writing, typing or using communication boards of electronic devices.

**Mental Illness**

Mental illness can be successfully treated, and people who are mentally restored have skills, experiences and abilities that are not affected by their illness. For the purposes of employment, a person who is mentally restored is one who has experienced a mental or emotional difficulty that currently is under control to the extent that the individual is able to function effectively and satisfactorily in a specific job. The qualifications of people who are mentally restored must be given the same consideration as those of other applicants.
Appendix B - Reference Guidelines

Call only the references that the candidate has given you permission to contact. If you would like to contact the employee’s direct supervisor or present employer, be sure that you obtain permission from the candidate.

Identify yourself immediately, explain your position with Athens State University, and tell the person that you are calling for a reference on a candidate for employment with the University.

Ask if he/she is free to discuss the candidate, and assure him/her that the discussion is in confidence.

Describe the position for which the candidate is being considered so that the reference can give a more accurate evaluation of the candidate’s suitability.

Let the reference talk freely for as long as he/she wishes without interruption. Often a question at the wrong time will prevent you from getting important information.

Follow up and probe when you feel the contact is reluctant to discuss certain factors.

Do not conclude the call until you are sure you know the opinion of the person you have called. You may have received ambiguous answers or the reference may not have provided much useful information. You may want to summarize the conversation by saying —I take it that you don’t recommend the candidate very highly for this position, or —It sounds like you highly recommend the candidate for this position. This may encourage the reference to clarify his/her opinion.

Conclude the call by thanking the reference.

If you have received very positive or very negative information from a reference, it is recommended that additional references be checked to ensure that you are not getting a one-dimensional opinion.

It is important to remember that all questions asked during references checks must be job-related. It is illegal to ask questions of references that cannot be legally asked of the applicant.

Do not do online research about candidates, although it is acceptable to visit a candidate’s website if the candidate has specifically referred you to it, for example by listing the website on their CV. Online research has the potential of inadvertently uncovering private information about the candidate that is irrelevant to his/her ability to perform the job duties, including information about the candidate’s race, religion, or sexual orientation, potentially introducing bias into the process.
Appendix C – Candidate Evaluation Sheet

This form offers a method for search committee members to evaluate job candidates.

Candidate’s Name ____________________________________________

Methods of Evaluation (check all that apply)

- Reviewed candidate’s CV/Resume
- Met with candidate
- Reviewed candidate’s scholarship (if applicable)
- Reviewed candidate’s letters of recommendation
- Attended candidate’s presentation (if applicable)
- Reference check
- Other (please explain) _____________________________________________

Please rate as (5) Excellent, (4) Good, (3) Fair, (2) Poor, or (1) Unable to judge

Educational Requirements, verified _________________________

Experience Requirements, especially in postsecondary environment, verified _________________________

Evidence of or potential for scholarly impact (if applicable) _________________________

Evidence of or potential for research productivity (if applicable) _________________________

Potential to make positive contributions to the department’s climate _________________________

Potential to serve the University community _________________________

Additional comments on the positive or negative aspects of having this candidate join the Athens State faculty or staff:

Search Committee Chair ________________________________

Committee Member ________________________________