Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Staff Hiring Guide

Introduction
The Department of Human Resources and Payroll at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts recognizes our most important resources are our faculty, administrators, and support staff. Our Office is here to support the entire community of MCLA employees. We are committed to helping the College attain its goal of a diverse workforce that enriches the college experience for all MCLA students.

We offer professional support encompassing the full recruiting and hiring process. The effective recruitment and selection of qualified candidates is crucial in furthering the mission and goals of the College and enhancing the diversity and excellence of the MCLA community. Throughout the recruitment and hiring process, we will work with search committee chairs and hiring managers to ensure compliance with all College policies, State and Federal laws, and applicable bargaining units.

I. **MCLA Mission Statement**
    Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) is the Commonwealth's public liberal arts college and a campus of the Massachusetts state university system. MCLA promotes excellence in learning and teaching, innovative scholarship, intellectual creativity, public service, applied knowledge, and active and responsible citizenship. MCLA prepares its graduates to be practical problem solvers and engaged, resilient global citizens. (http://www.mcla.edu/About_MCLA/mission/index)

II. **Federal Laws & College Policies Relevant to the Recruitment and Selection Process**
    Before initiating a search, everyone involved should be aware of important federal laws and College policies impacting the recruitment and hiring process. The laws that impact the hiring process, particularly in the area of discrimination, include Title VII, Title IX, ADEA, ADA and GINA (Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act), and are encompassed in the Massachusetts State University Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action Plan. This plan outlines the State Universities' commitment to non-discrimination, equal opportunity, diversity and dedication in providing educational, working and living environments that value the diverse backgrounds of all people.

    MCLA Affirmative Action Statement
    Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination and affirmative action in its educational programs, activities and employment practices. The College complies with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations advancing equal employment. The College is committed to taking a pro-active affirmative action posture with respect to the recruitment and selection of employees.
    Laws and policies surrounding the evaluation of applicants require that a search be objective and equitable, and that decisions are based solely on the qualifications in the job description/posting and the quality of the application materials. Although our process is intended to adhere to these guidelines, research demonstrates we all bring a lifetime of experience and cultural history that may shape our perspectives as related to candidate selection. As participants in the search process, it is critical to recognize and understand how implicit biases might impact decisions.

Confidentiality

Information gathered throughout the search process is confidential and is to be shared only with individuals involved in the search. Cover letters, resumes, curricula vitae, letters of reference/recommendation, and other submitted information are confidential materials to be used only in determining the qualifications of the candidate for the position.

III. The Recruiting Process at MCLA

The hiring process at MCLA begins with planning and considering the need this position will fulfill. We encourage hiring managers to consult with Human Resources throughout the process for specific guidance as needed. Please note, temporary, part-time, and summer employment searches are subject to the same laws and general hiring process outlined in this guide.

1. Initiating the Search

Hiring needs develop for a variety of reasons including vacancies, additional staffing or programmatic needs. For faculty searches, Department Chairs work with Academic Affairs administration as outlined in the faculty contract, the Department Chairs' handbooks, and the Department's hiring procedures. For all faculty searches, the Vice President of Academic Affairs serves as the Hiring Manager. For all other searches, the Department Head generally serves as the Hiring Manager.

Step one: The Department determines the need to hire. The Hiring Manager updates or creates a job description for the position that accurately defines both the duties and the qualifications. For existing positions, the Hiring Manager can request a copy of the existing job description from Human Resources. The Hiring Manager and Area VP or Dean, in consultation with Human Resources, will verify the class, grade, title, and salary associated with the position.

Step two: The Hiring Manager submits a Request to Hire form, which can be found on the MCLA portal under Forms/HR Forms/Request to Hire: http://www.mcla.edu/About_MCLA/admin/HR/human-resources/Request-to-Hire-Form/request-to-hire-form-instructions.html. This form is signed by the Department Chair/Head, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Human Resources Director, Vice President of Administration and Finance and the President of the College. If needed, a Search Committee of limited size is created. The committee is led by the Search Committee Chair.

Step three: Once the Request to Hire form is approved, Human Resources initiates the posting process within Interview Exchange and forwards the posting for approvals. Once approved, Human Resources posts the position on Interview Exchange.

The minimum posting timeframe is ten calendar days for AFSCME positions as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement. Postings are typically made internally and externally simultaneously. An application deadline is contractually required for all AFSCME and APA position postings, and highly recommended for MSCA and Non-Unit (NUP) postings.

Step four: The Hiring Manager consults with Human Resources and the Chief Diversity Officer to develop a sourcing/advertising plan to draw a well-qualified, diverse pool of candidates. Human Resources places all outside advertising.

Step five: Once the Committee is created, the Hiring Manager contacts Human Resources to schedule Search Committee training. This training addresses the recruiting process, applicant screening, interviewing information, and legal guidelines.

2. Reviewing Applicants

Candidates apply through Interview Exchange. Applicants must submit a letter of interest (cover letter), CV or resume, contact information for three professional references, and complete the online application within Interview Exchange. Additional materials may be requested and uploaded via Interview Exchange, such as portfolios, writing samples, etc.

The Search Committee:
- Review the job description and necessary requirements carefully. Limit evaluation of applicants to materials submitted on Interview Exchange. Thoroughly review all applicants through Interview Exchange, including employment applications. Compare applicants' qualifications against those required/preferred for the position.
- Do not conduct an internet search seeking information about any applicant. The only materials and information considered in evaluating a candidate should be that submitted or disclosed by the applicant in the interview process.
- As each applicant is reviewed, identify the reason(s) why the applicant has not been advanced. These reasons must be articulated and defensible. Human Resources can help Search Committees understand what qualifies as legally defensible.
- If an applicant does not meet the minimum qualifications, do not consider the applicant.
- Discuss any red flags or areas of concerns with Human Resources prior to interviewing any applicants.
- Human Resources reviews the applicant pool to check that the process meets the College's diversity goals.
- Committee Members must disclose to the Search Committee Chair/Hiring Manager any potential conflict that may exist. The Search Committee Chair/Hiring Manager will evaluate whether the conflict affects, or could have the appearance of affecting the Committee Member's ability to objectively review applicants and remain impartial. Knowing an applicant in the pool either personally or professionally does not automatically disqualify an individual from serving on the Committee. If an inability to remain objective exists, the Committee Member should recuse themselves from the Committee.

3. Conducting the Interviews
- The Search Committee Chair or Hiring Manager invites candidates to interview.
- Skype/telephone interviews may be used to interview applicants at the initial pre-screening stage. The process must be consistent for all candidates (i.e., all interviews in the same search must be conducted using the same format). Have a communications back-up plan in the case of tech issues, including notifying the candidate who and how to contact in the case of an issue on their end.

- The committee develops questions for the candidates prior to any interview being conducted. Ask all candidates the same questions, with an understanding that relevant follow-up questions specific to the candidate's experience are permissible.
- Ensure that all members of the Search Committee are present for all interviews for consistency to the extent this is possible.
- Once candidates are pre-screened, the Search Committee determines who will move forward, again identifying legally-defensible reasons for their decisions. The Search Committee Chair or Hiring Manager will invite the finalists to interview on campus.
- Candidates are responsible for their own travel arrangements to and from campus. Contact the Accountant I in Administration and Finance for information regarding reduced prices at area hotels.
- **For more detailed information regarding best practices for conducting interviews, please see Appendix B.**

4. **Post-Interview/Pre-Offer**
   - For all non-faculty positions: the Search Committee Chair or Hiring Manager contacts the finalist's professional references. Human Resources can provide a sample set of reference questions. Once the search is complete, the Hiring Manager submits the Reference Forms to Human Resources as part of the official search file.
   - For faculty positions, please refer to the department procedure for collecting reference letters. These letters will be submitted as part of the official search file.
   - The Search Committee Chair or Hiring Manager completes and submits the Affirmative Action Selection Form to Human Resources and confers with Human Resources on the final details of the search. This includes a discussion of the selection form, applicant pool, and salary.
   - For Faculty searches, the Search Committee Chair submits final candidates to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, with pros and cons documented for each candidate.
   - The Search Committee Chair moves all applicants into the appropriate folders in Interview exchange (Hired, No, etc.) Moving applicants into folders does not close the search, but must be completed before an offer can be made.
   - The Affirmative Action Selection Form and the final disposition of applicants in Interview Exchange must be complete before a formal offer letter will be generated.

5. **Offer of Employment**
   - The Hiring Manager makes a verbal offer of employment to the finalist after receiving approval from the division executive.
     - It is important when making the offer to be enthusiastic and positive. We want the candidate to know we are excited for them to come on board.
   - Once the finalist verbally accepts the position, Human Resources sends a formal employment offer to the finalist.
   - All offers of employment are contingent on the completion of a background check. Human Resources contracts with an outside vendor to conduct the background check. Current MCLA employees are not subject to this background check.
   - The Search Committee Chair/Hiring Manager sends regrets to those candidates who were interviewed and not selected. This is preferably done as a phone call.
   - Human Resources sends regrets to those applicants who were not interviewed.
   - At the conclusion of the search, the Search Committee Chair and Hiring Manager forward all search materials, including reference check materials and notes, to the Human Resources Office to place in the search file (or to Academic Affairs for faculty searches).

6. **Post-Offer Process**

   The Office of Human Resources will oversee the post offer process and onboarding including new hire paperwork, background check and employee orientation.

   The Hiring Manager will work with IT (helpdesk@mcla.edu or x5276) and Facilities to arrange any technical or facilities needs.

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The Hiring Process

Step 1: Initiating the search

- Determine the need to hire
- Submit a Request to Hire
- Post Job on Interview Exchange
- Develop Advertising Plan
- Schedule Search Committee Training

Step 2: Reviewing Applicants

- Compare Skills/Experience to Job Requirements
- Identify Pros/Cons for each candidate

Step 3: Conducting the Interviews

Consistency of Process

Step 4: Post-Interview/Pre-Offer

- Do not rank candidates
- Reference Checks
- Submit Candidates to VPAA for Faculty Searches

Step 5: Offer of Employment

- Search Chair must sort applicants in IE and complete Affirmative Action Form
- Hiring Manager makes verbal offer
- HR generates offer letter
- Search Chair sends regrets to interviewees
- HR sends regrets to other applicants

Step 6: Post-Offer Process

- HR oversees onboarding
- Hiring Manager coordinate with IT and Facilities

Appendix A: Search Checklist

Initiating the Search

- Update job description to accurately define both duties and qualifications (Hiring Manager)

- Verify class, grade, title and salary of the position (Hiring Manager)

- If needed, identify Search Chair/Committee (Hiring Manager)

- Complete Request to Hire Form, with job description attached (Hiring Manager)

- Consult with Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer to develop a sourcing/advertising plan. Human Resources publishes posting and places all external advertising (Hiring Manager)

- Identify timeline for search, schedule Search Committee meetings (Search Chair)

- Conduct Search Committee Training (Hiring Manager and Human Resources)

Reviewing Applicants

- Provide Search Committee Members relevant information and materials (Search Chair)

- Initial Review of applicant pool. Move applications that do not meet the minimum requirements to the "No" folder in Interview Exchange. Discuss any red flags or areas of concern with Human Resources. (Hiring Manager and Search Committee)

- Note legally defensible reason why each applicant is not being advanced in Interview Exchange. (Search Committee)

- If a committee member has any potential conflict of interest, disclose to the Search Chair (Search Committee)

- In consultation with the job description, develop a common set of interview questions for each stage of the process. (Search Committee)

Conducting the Interviews

- Determine how interviews are to be conducted (e.g. Skype/Phone Screen, on-campus) (Search Committee)

- Invite candidates interview (Search Chair)

- If conducting multiple rounds, identify and note legally defensible reason why each applicant is not being advanced in Interview Exchange (Search Committee)

Post-Interview

- Once a finalist is selected, check the candidate's professional references by phone. (Search Chair)

- For faculty positions, refer to department procedure for collecting reference letters. Submit a summary of finalists to the Vice President of Academic Affairs with pros and cons for each (no ranking) (Search Chair)

Offer of Employment

- Complete Affirmative Action Selection Form (Search Chair)

- Consult with Human Resources regarding final details of the search, including salary (Hiring Manager)

- Make verbal offer to the finalist (Hiring Manager)

- Notify Human Resources verbal acceptance to begin formal offer of employment process. (Hiring Manager)

- Sort all applicants into the appropriate folders in Interview Exchange. Place each applicant in the farthest step to which they made it in the process (No, Phone Screen, On-Campus Interview, Hired) (Search Chair)

- Upon receipt of a signed offer letter, send regrets to all other candidates (Search Chair for all candidates that received an interview, Human Resources for all others.)

- All search materials collected to be placed in the search file

    - For Faculty searches, forward materials to Academic Affairs

    - For all other searches, forward materials to Human Resources

Appendix B: Important Interviewing Information

Conducting the Interview

- Establish rapport with the candidates. Select an interview setting that is conducive to good communication and conversation. A warm greeting and small talk will help relax candidates. In casual conversation, be careful, however, to avoid any questions which may be perceived as seeking personal information. Topics like marital status, family, etc. may uncover information that should not be considered in employment decisions.
- Notes are helpful to remember key points from the interview. Be sure to let candidates know notes will be taken prior to beginning the interview.
- Engage in careful, active listening. Listen to what is and is *not* being said. <u>Never</u> assume an answer.
- Ask open ended questions to garner a comprehensive response vs. a "yes" or "no" response.
- Ask candidates to support their statements by giving examples. Do not "lead" with possible answers, using certain phrases imply an expected or slanted response such as asking "do you agree" or "you must have liked…"
- Be cognizant of your non-verbal communication. Remember to stay focused and avoid appearing preoccupied.
- Describe MCLA, the position, duties, levels of authority/supervision, and support systems available. Remember candidates are also interviewing MCLA. Allow time for and respond to the candidates' questions. Provide sufficient facts about the favorable and unfavorable aspects of the position in a straightforward manner.
- When the Search Committee interviews, it is advisable to meet as a group immediately following each interview for a feedback session. During this time, it is useful to compare interview notes, while being careful not to reach any premature decisions.

Important Reminders for Conducting Interviews

- Remember and remind Search Committee members that State and Federal laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, veteran status, marital status, and national origin. Avoid any questions or discussion concerning these subjects. Even if candidates make comments related to one of these areas, do not pursue it. Reference the table of legally acceptable questions following this section.
- Ask candidates the same set of questions to ensure consistency.
- Ask questions about candidates' education, training, work history, and job-related skills.
- Cite the hours required of the position and ask whether candidates foresee any difficulties in meeting them. If choosing to ask this question, be sure to ask this same question of <u>all</u> candidates being interviewed for the position.
- Ask about candidates' ability to work evenings or weekends only if it is a requirement of the position.
- Discuss the job description with each candidate and ask if they can perform the essential functions with or without accommodations. Do not ask about any perceived disability.
- Inquire if candidates are legally able to work in the United States. If offered the position, the candidate would then be required to present to Human Resources any combination of legally-acceptable documents to establish work authorization within three days of the date of hire.
- Inquire about **professional memberships related to the position**; however, avoid asking questions about organizations whose name or character would be indicative of candidates' economic or social class, race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, or national heritage. These might include country clubs, social clubs, religious clubs, fraternal orders, etc.
- Do not inquire about candidates' hobbies, social interest or what they like to do in their free time.
- Do not inquire about political activities or activities involving civil rights organizations.

- Do not inquire as to whether or not candidates have been involved, in any way, in discrimination complaints or lawsuits.
- Ask only job-related questions regardless of the venue in which interviews occur. This includes lunches, dinners, and even car rides. When outside of a formal setting, it is easy to become overly personal. If candidates share personal information, that line of questioning should not be pursued. Bring the conversation back to the job-related content.
- Appropriately close an interview by:
  - thanking candidates for their time;
  - describing the next steps in the search process;
  - giving candidates a date by which to expect follow-up actions or when decisions will be made;
  - letting candidates know they may follow up with any questions after the interview concludes.
- Always have legally defensible reasons to not interview or hire candidates. Human Resources can help the Search Committee, if needed, understand what qualifies as legally defensible.

Appendix C: Legal Questions

Topic	Acceptable	Not Acceptable
Attendance/Reliability	– What hours and days are you available to work? – Are there specific times you cannot work? – This position requires night or weekend work and/over overnight travel – are you able to meet these requirements?	– How many children do you have? – Do you have childcare arrangement?
Citizenship/National Origin	Have you ever worked under a different name?	What is your maiden name?
Arrest/Conviction	Have you ever been convicted of a felony or do have an arrest currently pending?	Have you ever been arrested?
Disabilities	Can you perform the essential functions of the job for which you are applying, with or without reasonable accommodations?	– Do you have any disabilities? – Have you ever filed a workers compensation claim? – Have you ever been injured on the job?
Credit Record	None	Have your ever declared bankruptcy?
Military Record	What type of education, training, and work experience relevant to this job did you receive while in the military?	What type of discharge did you receive?
Language	What languages do you speak and write fluently? If the job requires additional language.)	What is your native language?
Organizations	Inquiry into candidates' memberships in organizations relevant to the position and their ability to perform the job.	List all clubs, societies, and lodges to which you belong.
Race	None	Asking about the complexion or color of skin.
Weight, height, etc.	Only if there is a bona fide occupational qualification, which is extremely rare	
Religion	Only if there is a bona fide occupational qualification.	What is your religious affiliation?
Previous and current address	What is your address?	– What are your previous addresses? – How long did you reside there? – Do you own your own home?
Education	– Do you have a high school diploma or equivalent? – Do you have a college degree? (If relevant to the position)	What year did you graduate from high school or college?
Names of Friends/Relatives Employed	None – this is not relevant to the applicant's ability to perform the job	
Past Salary	What are you salary requirements?	What is your salary history?

Appendix D: Telephone Reference Checks

Faculty

Candidate:

Position:

Date:

Name of committee member checking reference:

Name of Reference:

1. How would you describe the candidate's teaching style as perceived by students? By faculty colleagues? By administrators?

2. In what areas does the candidate have strengths? What areas need improvement? Request specific examples…

3. How would you rate the candidate's ability to build relationships with students, faculty, colleagues, support staff, and others in the University community? Can you comment on their relationships with external constituencies?

Staff

Candidate:

Position:

Date:

Name of committee member checking reference:

Name, Title, Organization of Reference:

Position with former company/Nature of work relationship:

DESCRIBE MCLA AND DESCRIBE THE POSITION

1. How would you describe the applicant's overall performance?

2. How well did the applicant get along with coworkers and build professional relationships?

3. What were the person's strong points?

4. What were the person's limitations and areas for development?

5. Were there any performance issues?

6. Did the person take initiative in performing additional responsibilities and projects?

7. Were there any attendance or tardiness issues?

8. Reason for termination?

9. Would you rehire the person?

10. What else would you like me to know about this person?