

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

A How-To Guide for Job Seekers and Decision Makers

Think back to the last time you were involved in a job search. Regardless of where you were seated at the table, the process probably was overwhelming at some point.

“Supervisors are trying to find the perfect employee, and applicants are hoping to be the perfect employee,” explained Pam Ledford, administrative coordinator in the Office of Human Resources at the UT Space Institute. “Everyone’s at a different place in the process, and we’re here to serve them all.”

The following how-to guide is based on interviews with seven of UT’s 12 recruitment specialists statewide. The intent is to offer guidance for both job seekers and decision makers looking to find the right fit—because when that fit is good, life can be great.

“If you send your resume out and don’t get a positive response, try changing the format or highlighting different experiences.”

Ashlie Czyz, Director of HR Programs and Executive Recruiter, UT System Administration

When’s the the best time to tell your supervisor?

“If you’re actively pursuing a change, I advise sitting down with your supervisor and talking about why you’re interested, especially if there’s a developmental purpose for your path. It doesn’t have to mean you’re not happy—unless you are. And in that case, you may not be comfortable with open dialogue. This is one of the areas where a recruiter can help. We might partner with employee relations and can work together to find a solution.”

Alica Shamblin, Recruitment Manager, Knoxville-Area Employees

Are You Making These 5 Common Mistakes?

1. NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF RESOURCES

UT’s employment recruiters are happy to help dust off your resume, talk through goals and identify positions. Maintain a current profile in UT’s online application system and enroll in UT’s training (in-person and e-learning) and certification programs. Finally, take advantage of UT’s tuition waiver benefit, if going back to school is a goal.

“Don’t just look at jobs you qualify for now. Think about what you’d like to apply for in five years and work to develop the skills and qualifications you lack.”

Judy McMorries, Assistant Director of Human Resources, UT Martin

2. LISTING UNREACHABLE REFERENCES

Don’t make someone work to chase down your references. Before listing someone as a reference, consider how well that person can speak to your experience and work ethic, and always ask permission before citing someone as a reference. Don’t forget to check his or her availability and preferred phone numbers.

3. SKIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

If a cover letter is requested, attach one, and make sure it’s addressed to the right person using his or her correct title. In addition to attaching your resume, input requested information completely in the online or paper application form.

4. CONTACTING SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Get online with one purpose—to learn as much as you can about the department, its goals and how it contributes to the University’s mission. Avoid the urge to contact search committee members, and by all means, don’t send fruit baskets after the interview. Thank you notes or emails are appropriate and appreciated expressions of gratitude.

5. LETTING JOBS CHOOSE YOU

As an applicant, sometimes you may need to say no. Think through what you’ve enjoyed most about past positions, make a list of the criteria you need to be successful, and ask plenty of questions.



Resume Dos...

- Keep it to the minimum necessary, 2-3 pages **maximum**, and error-free.
- Compare the job description to your qualifications.
- Highlight relevant experience in just enough detail to pique interest.



Resume Don'ts...

- Crowd your resume and put decision makers in a position of losing interest—it takes only about 10 seconds for the hiring manager or responsible person to decide whether to interview a candidate.
- Use an unprofessional email address—“Lonelyguy” and “foxylady” need not apply.
- Include a photo—give your experience the chance to speak for itself.



5 Tips for Conducting a Successful Search

1. GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY

Schedule a meeting with your recruiter as soon as you know about an upcoming vacancy or have approval to create a new position. The more time you have to plan and prepare, the better the outcome.

2. REALLY KNOW THE JOB

Whether you’re looking to create a new position or fill a vacancy, start by really considering what you need the position to accomplish. Don’t get hung up on what the previous person brought to the table. The best time to review a position is when it’s vacant.

“Make sure the job description reflects your expectations. Candidates may not hear everything you say in the interview and need to see what’s expected in print to avoid any miscommunication.”

Melanie Sadler, Administrative Specialist, UT Chattanooga

3. MIRROR YOUR AUDIENCE

Your department should reflect the campus population or the customers, community or audience you serve. Diversity in backgrounds, perspectives and skill sets is critical to solving problems and relating to and learning from one another.

4. DON’T POST UNTIL YOU’RE READY

Searches take time, and you shouldn’t post a position unless you’re available to get to work. If the process takes too long, you could lose a good candidate, especially for a hard-to-fill position.

“It is important for us to move as quickly as possible during the recruitment process. There are other great employers in the Memphis area, and we don’t want to lose good candidates because our hiring process is long and drawn out.”

Donna Lenoir, Employment Team Leader, UT Health Science Center

5. DON’T RULE OUT MOTIVATIONS

Just because an applicant currently works out-of-state and earns more than you can offer doesn’t mean you should toss him or her out. You never know why candidates apply and should base evaluations solely on qualifications. If a candidate’s not willing to move for the opportunity, fair enough.

“Come up with a rating tool to ensure you’re evaluating candidates based on what’s on paper. Candidates with the most points should be looked at first.”

Jennifer Wynn, HR Specialist, UT Foundation

HOW HR CAN HELP:

- Training and One-On-One Consultation
- Search Committee Counsel
- Position Description Qualifications (PDQ) Review
- Compensation Review
- Recruiting Applicants
- Advertising
- Filtering Applicants
- Coordinating with Equity and Diversity
- Background Checks
- Employment Verifications
- Onboarding New Hires

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HOW LONG DOES IT TYPICALLY TAKE TO FILL A POSITION?

NON-EXEMPT	EXEMPT	EXECUTIVE
4 - 6 Weeks	3 - 6 Months	6 - 9 Months