The Classified Hiring Process

This sequence reflects the essential steps in the hiring process. Each of the steps will be described in the following pages to provide a better understanding of the hiring process.

Federal and State law, Los Rios Community College District Policy and Regulations, and collective bargaining units govern the hiring process.
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The Classified Hiring Process

1. Authorized Vacancy
When a vacancy in the classified service exists, the appropriate area manager requests the Vice President of Administrative Services to initiate a hiring request to have the position advertised. The Vice President of Administrative Services submits a completed hiring request to the District Human Resources Office. The hiring request contains the work hours, work year, job classification and budget source. The Human Resources Director signs the hiring request and then it is forwarded to the Fiscal Services department for review and approval.

2. Recruitment
Upon receipt of an authorized hiring request, the District Human Resources Office prepares a job announcement for each regular or long-term temporary position. The District Human Resources Office sends copies of the job announcement to the colleges and outreach centers within the District, as well as to outside agencies such as other colleges and organizations representing under-represented groups.

All positions are also advertised on the twenty-four hour Los Rios Job Line and Los Rios website (www.losrios.edu/hr/job_openings.htm). For positions that are difficult to fill or to attract an adequate applicant pool, supplemental advertisements may be placed in local newspapers or other publications. All classified positions are advertised for a minimum of fifteen working days.

Furthermore, additional requirements may apply based on union contracts. Please consult the applicable union contracts for further information.

3. District Testing/Screening
After the advertisement period for a vacancy has closed, the District Human Resources Office administers any required skills tests, e.g., typing. Applications are screened to ensure that the minimum education/experience requirements for the advertised position have been met. The applications of the qualified applicants are then sent to the Vice President of Administrative Services.
4. Screening/Interview Committee Appointments

The Vice President of Administrative Services is responsible for ensuring that a screening/interview committee is appointed. LRCCD regulations require the following minimum membership on screening and interview committees:

The Equity Representative is appointed by the College Equity Officer. Other members of the committee are normally selected by the manager of the area where the vacancy exists. The manager or designee serves as chairperson of the screening/interview committee.

The manager chairing the hiring committee selects the classified member to serve on the classified hiring committee and informs the Vice President of Administration (VPA). The VPA notifies the Classified Senate President and asks for any recommendations. If the Classified Senate President recommends an individual, then the VPA will notify the chair of the name of the additional committee member.

a) Hiring Committee
   • Chairperson
   • Classified members of the operating unit
   • Equity Representative (1)
   • A diverse membership which will bring a variety of perspectives to the assessment of applicant qualifications. (Title V)
   • Faculty member when the position interfaces with instructional staff (optional)

b) Screening Committee
   The following are campus guidelines relative to the composition of the screening committee if the screening process is used:
   • Screening committee members must be selected from members of the interview committee.
   • The screening committee should be diverse and must consist of at least the chairperson, and the Equity Representative. A member may serve in more than one capacity; for example, the Equity Representative and a member of an underrepresented group. Additional members of the interview committee may serve on the screening committee.
c) **Chairperson Responsibilities**

- Develop, along with the screening committee, written screening criteria to be used in the screening process and forward these to the Vice President of Administrative Services for prior approval. Any screening criteria developed must relate to the requirements included in the job description.
- Notify all committee members serving on the screening committee regarding screening dates, hours and location, etc.
- Summarize the screening ratings from each committee member and submit this information to the Vice President of Administrative Services.
- After notification from the Director of Human Resources that an offer of employment has been accepted, notify all internal candidates working at ARC who were not selected.

d) **Equity Representative Responsibilities**

- To ensure **nondiscrimination and equal treatment** of any individual on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, religion, age (over 40), national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief, parental status, or marital status through the screening and interviewing process.
- Remind the committee members that their task is to recommend “the most qualified applicant for the institution including such factors as academic credentials, employment experiences, role model, community involvement, professional relationships, and teaching abilities.”
- To assist in promoting a **“fair and equal”** screening and interviewing process whereby biases are eliminated.
- To encourage interview questions that assist the committee in determining the applicant’s sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse backgrounds of community college students, staff, and faculty.
- To assist the chairperson in developing the **best climate** possible whereby the interviewed applicants can be at their best.

e) **Screening of Applicants**

The screening of applicants for an interview is an important step in the hiring process of classified employees.
As a member of the screening and/or interview committee, you must consider all applicants equally and fairly. To ensure equal treatment of an applicant, you should not serve on a screening/interview committee if:

- You are related to, living with, or similarly close to an applicant.
- You have submitted a current letter of recommendation for an applicant.
- You have declared yourself in support of an applicant.

f) Screening Options:
The following options may be selected for the screening process (No screening is necessary as long as all applicants for a given position are scheduled for interview.):

- A meeting of the entire interview committee may be held to screen the applications submitted for the position,
- A subcommittee may be appointed by the chairperson from the members of the interview committee at large to meet as a group to screen the applications,
- The subcommittee may screen the applications on an individual basis.

5. Notification of Applicants
The screening committee will identify the applicants to be called for interview. These names are submitted by the chairperson to the Vice President of Administrative Services along with time and place for interview for forwarding to the Human Resources Office. Generally, the Human Resources Office will notify each applicant that he/she has been selected for an interview and advise of the time and place for interview. At least five (5) working days must be provided from when the names are submitted to the Vice President of Administrative Services and the date of the interview to allow the Human Resources Office enough time to contact the applicants selected for interviews.

6. Interviews
The primary purpose of the interview is to obtain information and evaluate the applicants with regard to their ability to perform the duties of the position. To the greatest extent possible, the interview should be an attempt to assess the specific qualities and aptitudes that are important for success in the position.
Prior to interviews being held, the chairperson will develop the interview questions with the interview committee and provide appropriate answers for any technical questions being asked of the applicants. The committee shall submit the questions to the Vice President of Administrative Services for review prior to the interviews being held.

As part of the interview process, applicants may be asked to complete a writing sample and/or skills exercise. The writing sample or skills exercise must be approved in advance by the Vice President of Administrative Services. Each applicant is to be given the same amount of time and conditions for completing the exercise.

a) Qualities of a Good Interview

A good interview has a basic structure, starting with an ice-breaker question about past education and experience. It concludes with an opportunity for the applicant to make a summary statement. The chairperson and the committee should express sincere appreciation to the applicant for the interest shown.

b) Establish Rapport

Applicants are naturally tense; it is the responsibility of the committee to put them at ease as much as possible. Smiles and introductions are appreciated and appropriate.

c) Be Attentive

The committee developed the questions and chose to interview these applicants. These applicants deserve the committee’s undivided attention.

d) Timing

Sufficient time must be allocated to allow for a thorough evaluation of each applicant for each interview. Generally, interviews will be 20 to 30 minutes apart. This interval allows at least 15 to 25 minutes with each applicant, plus time to review the material presented and to complete your notes.

The committee chairperson, at the start of interviews, should tell the applicants how much time has been allotted and should attempt to conclude interviews within that time so that all applicants have equal opportunity to make their presentations.
e) Conducting Consistent Interviews

When interviewing applicants, you have the opportunity to learn more about each applicant’s skills, work style, personality, interests, and suitability for the position.

To ensure that the interviews do not expose you or the college to lawsuits, only the questions previously agreed to by the committee and approved by the Vice President of Administrative Services may be asked of the applicants. Be sure all questions are strictly job-related, non-discriminatory, and not an invasion of the applicant’s privacy. The same questions must be asked of each applicant.

Be sure the interviewers ask each applicant the same question. The chairperson will instruct each interviewer not to deviate from the question.

f) Asking Appropriate Questions

Do not ask questions about marital status or children. For example, you may not ask an applicant if she is pregnant, has children, or is planning to have them. If you know a applicant has children, you may not ask whether he/she has made provisions for child care. Similarly, if you would not ask a question of a man, do not ask it of a woman (for example, “If you became pregnant, how much time would you need away from work?”).

Be careful when asking about hobbies or outside activities. It is discriminatory to ask about clubs, societies, lodges, or organizations to which the applicant belongs that might indicate race, religion, national origin, gender, age, etc.

Don’t ask what language an applicant knows unless the job requires the applicant to speak and/or write a particular language fluently.

Be aware that some questions about an applicant’s education may be interpreted as seeking information about age. While it is fine to ask where an applicant went to school, asking what year he/she graduated from high school or college or inquiring if he/she is a “recent graduate” may be deemed discriminatory.

Due to potential liability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and California’s Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA),
it is wise to familiarize yourself with the basic requirements of those laws before interviewing. While it may seem only natural to ask certain questions of an applicant whose physical disability is obvious, you may discover that many of those questions are strictly prohibited.

Please consult the interview committee chairperson, equity representative or the campus' equity officer whenever you have questions regarding appropriate interview questions.

g) Taking Notes during Interviews

When interviewing several applicants, it usually is necessary to take notes you can review when making a final decision about whom to hire. Take brief, clear, and legible notes that pertain to the applicant’s answers. Don't use abbreviations or a coded rating system that could be incorrectly interpreted at a later date.

Keep objective records of why an applicant was or was not hired to avoid any inference of discriminatory motives. Good examples are:

- For a computer technician: “Did not have experience with necessary equipment” rather than “not impressed;”
- For a police officer: “Unwilling to work weekends” rather than “wasn't right for the job.”

In addition, be sure your notes evaluate criteria actually necessary to perform the job. For instance, when interviewing for a Clerk position, your notes should reflect items such as “good interpersonal skills, types 75wpm” rather than “handsome, blue suit.”

h) Rating of the Applicants

- It is helpful to take notes during the interview regarding the content and clarity of answers. A rating should be given for each answer as given, but done in such a way that the applicant cannot see it.
- If the interviews are to extend over two or more days, it is especially important to take notes and indicate the relative merits of the applicants of the first day so that their answers will not be forgotten.
- You may find it helpful to make a note about the applicant to help you recall each individual when interviews are completed. Examples would be color of attire, hair, etc.
• At the conclusion of each interview, you should record an Overall Rating on the interview sheet of that applicant.

• Ranking sheets are turned into the chairperson at the end of the interviews.

i) Ranking

• Do not discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the applicants until the top applicants have been identified.

• Following completion of all interviews, each interview committee member independently ranks all of the applicants, e.g., one out of 10, two out of 10, etc.

• The committee chairperson collects the independent ranking sheets and totals the scores to determine at least the three top applicants.

• The committee chairperson informs the committee of a minimum of the top three applicants, unranked and in alphabetical order.

After the top applicants have been announced, the committee chairperson may lead a discussion regarding the relative strengths and weaknesses of the leading applicants as perceived by the interviewers. The purpose of this discussion is not to achieve consensus but to provide the chairperson with the perceptions of the committee members.

The names of the top applicants as recommended by the interview committee will be submitted to the Vice President of Administrative Services. The chairperson will rank the applicants according to overall committee preference for the information of the appropriate vice president and the Vice President of Administrative Services only. The finalists may be interviewed by the supervisor and appropriate vice president before a recommendation is made.

The Vice President of Administrative Services submits the name of the recommended applicant to the Director of Human Resources.
7. Recommendations

The names of at least three candidates as recommended by the interview committee will be submitted to the Vice President of Administrative Services. The chairperson will rank the candidates according to overall committee preference for the information of the appropriate vice president and the Vice President of Administrative Services only. The finalists may be interviewed by the supervisor and appropriate vice president before a recommendation is made.

The chairperson must submit to the Vice President of Administrative Services the screening rating sheets of each member of the screening committee, all oral interview rating sheets, the Equal Employment Opportunity Checklist, and the applications of the candidates interviewed.

The Vice President of Administrative Services submits the name of the recommended candidate to the Director of Human Resources.

8. Reference Checks

The Vice President of Administrative Services or Director of Human Resources will make the critically important reference checking calls.

While there is no specific law requiring that Los Rios check a potential employee’s references, courts have held employers liable for negligent hiring for certain acts of their employees that the employer should have known might occur. For example, by initially checking the references of an employee who later assaults someone in our workplace, we could have discovered that the employee had record of similar assaults. Our actual ignorance of the employee’s record is unlikely to be a good defense because with a few simple telephone calls, we could have become aware of the previous assaults. Even if the applicant’s former employer refuses to give you any information, documenting that you attempted to check the applicant’s prior work history may fulfill your obligation to avoid negligent hiring.

Exercise caution when using reports from credit agencies and investigative consumer reporting agencies to check the backgrounds of applicants and employees. These activities are regulated by both federal and state law.
9. **Offer of Employment**

An offer of employment may only be extended by the Director of Human Resources/designee. All offers of employment are contingent on approval of the Board of Trustees, criminal history clearance, and physical exam clearance if applicable. Once an offer of employment has been accepted, the chairperson will be notified of the acceptance and employment date. After the selection has been finalized but before the name becomes public, the chairperson is to notify all internal applicants working at ARC who were not selected.

10. **Board of Trustees Approval**

The Board of Trustees at a regular meeting acts upon the appointments of individuals to classified positions.

**Confidentiality**

The hiring process requires sensitivity and adherence to confidentiality on the part of committee members. The following are guidelines regarding confidentiality:

The names of applicants for a position must not be shared with anyone who is not a member of the screening/interview committee.

Interview questions must not be discussed or shared with anyone who is not a member of the screening/interview committee.

During the interview process, committee members must not discuss their rating or make comments about the applicants. The strengths and weaknesses of the applicants may be discussed with the chairperson after final rankings have been submitted. The chairperson may elect to have the committee discuss their impressions of the applicants. The effectiveness of this process rests on the candidness of committee members. Opinions expressed by committee members must remain confidential in order for individuals to feel comfortable in sharing their impressions of the applicants.

After the interview process has been concluded, members must not discuss applicants and/or the ratings with anyone, other than the chairperson, at any time.
Americans with Disabilities Act

In January 1992, all state and local governments became covered by provisions of Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The ADA prohibits employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. “A qualified individual with a disability is an individual with a disability who meets the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of a position held or desired, and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of a job.”

A person with a disability is defined as an individual who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of his/her major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or
- Is regarded as having an impairment.

As a member of a screening/interview committee, it is essential that you keep in mind the following:

- The interview committee should not comment on or discuss an individual's disability.
- The interview committee is precluded from discussing what “reasonable accommodation” for an applicant might be. The Human Resources Office is responsible for determining reasonable accommodation.
- An applicant’s disability shall not be a consideration in the screening of applicants or ranking of applicants.
- The Equity Representative will be able to instruct the committee on appropriate conduct for interviewing an applicant with a disability. Any accommodations needed for the interview itself will be communicated from the Human Resources Office to the Vice President of Administrative Services.
Putting Your Best Foot Forward

Things to Do

• Be on time for the interview. Arriving late disrupts the entire process and makes the applicant uncomfortable. This could also nullify the interview process.

• Dress appropriately; as if you were being interviewed.

• Remain seated during the entire interview. Don’t get up for coffee just because you have already asked your question.

• Jot down a personal note or two to help you remember each applicant.

• When initially filling out the interview form during the interview, use small notations to allow for confidentiality.

• The chairperson should help the applicant feel comfortable. You may smile and make positive eye contact.

• If you are on an interview committee for a position with which you are unfamiliar, find out what would be acceptable answers for each question.

Things to Avoid

• Negative body language/facial expressions during the interview.

• Any ethnic or sexist comments.

• Favoritism to any single applicant.

• Discussion of the applicants during the interview.

We have all been applicants at one time or another. Have empathy for the applicant; put yourself in the applicant’s shoes!
Notes