

Search Exemption Requests

Virginia Tech is committed to ensuring equal employment opportunity to all qualified individuals. The university will conduct a competitive recruitment for all salaried positions, unless a unique opportunity and a compelling justification for an exceptional appointment (external to the university) presents itself.

There are several key elements that must be addressed early to ensure a non-competitive search can be approved. It is recommended that a pre-discussion with Affirmative Action in the Office for Equity and Accessibility is scheduled to discuss items such as desired experience level of your candidate; knowledge, skills, and abilities required to do the job; affirmative action goals that may exist; the job description; and the selected candidates resume/cv.

Below is an outline of elements required when submitting a search exemption request in the applicant tracking system, exempt reasoning categories and helpful information in building a justification to support the request why a competitive search will not deliver a pool of viable, qualified applicants. Once a search exemption is approved, you will receive a 'secret link' that is unique to the request. It is required that the individual apply to the link and dispositioned into a hired status and all onboarding steps are conducted.

Information to remember:

- Not all search exemptions are approved, for example;
 - Positions that are not unique or specialized, unless approval by Provost/President.
 - Poorly written position descriptions with limited required qualifications, for example; if the only required qualification is a Ph.D. in Chemistry, that indicates that any individual with a Ph.D. in Chemistry is qualified for the position and a competitive search should be conducted.
 - Individual does not meet the search criteria for the position.
- If a search exemption is approved and if the candidate declines the offer, no second search exemption will be approved. The department must do a competitive search.
- Prior to making an offer, the approval process must be completed.
- Position Descriptions should be thought-out to the position and not be tailored to the individual's qualifications, skills, education, etc.

For additional information regarding the Search Exemption process, please contact Affirmative Action.

Elements Required for Exemption Request

- Well written position description that include,
 - Specific expectations of position
 - Well developed and thought-out required and preferred qualifications
- Select Exempt Reasoning Category (See categories below)
 - Provide documentation for exempt reasoning, if requested.
- Candidate's Resume/CV
- Justification (See below for elements for building the justification)
- If position is a restricted appointment type, department must include expected start and end date
- If position is tenured, tenured-track, or collegiate faculty, the approved Provost Index number must be included
- Additional documents that will support the request for exemption

Elements in Building a Search Exemption Justification

- *What will be the outcome of the hire?*
- *What impact will the hire have on the department/research project(s)?*
- *Explanation of the candidate's unique skill set, knowledge or expertise, including how and where acquired*
- *If the candidate is named in the research grant explain role in project and attach a copy of the award showing where the candidate is named*
- *If the candidate previously worked in a significant role on the project explain the role and why it is imperative for the individual to continue work on the project*
- *Explanation of why the exemption is necessary and/or appropriate*
- *Justification for search exemptions for dual career hires should include the original hire's name, rank and department*
- *Is there an employee who can be considered for the position?*
- *How was this individual recruited/identified/selected?*
- *Why a competitive search will not recruit a more viable candidate?*

Exempt Reasoning Options

Exempt Reasoning at the Rank of Postdoctoral Associate

PhD awarded in last 5 years with a minimum of 1 year of postdoctoral eligibility remaining.

Candidate's PhD is in progress or has not yet been awarded. PhD must be awarded by the effective date on the Terms of Faculty Offer in order to begin salaried employment. Hiring department is responsible for verification of degree completion.

Exempt Reasoning All Other Options

Research Only: The Identified candidate is named in the research grant or is listed as PI or Co-PI. Department must provide documentation.

Research Only: The identified candidate previously worked on the project in a significant role and continuation of personnel is critical to the success of the project (short-term wage employment is not sufficient for this exemption). Department must explain.

T&R - AP Only: The identified candidate is the leading expert in the field and has no viable competitors. Department must explain.

T&R - AP Only: Position is one year or less or is salaried part-time. If position goes beyond 1 year, the department must do a competitive search.

T&R - AP - Research: The identified candidate is the only one possessing the unusual set of experience and skills required for the position (ranks of research associate and project associate are not eligible for this exemption). Department must explain.

T&R - AP - Research: Candidate is a dual career hire. The guidelines on dual career appointments issued by the Office of the Provost is available at <http://www.hr.vt.edu/employment/dualcareers/index.html> (Provost approval is required). Must include primary hire and their department.

T&R - AP Only: Target of Opportunity for Excellence Positions (TOP).

Conditional: Target of Talent (TOT): BEFORE using this category, it is required for pre-approval by the Office for Equity and Accessibilities Affirmative Action Unit. Situational use for extensive, competitive, comprehensive match programs.

Checklist to Include in the Request	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Candidate's Resume/CV
<input type="checkbox"/>	Justification
<input type="checkbox"/>	Start and End Date if Restricted Appointment Type
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provost Index Number for Tenured, Tenure-Track or Collegiate Faculty Positions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional Documentation that support the request for the exemption