



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY TRAINING CENTER AND FORT JACKSON  
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FORT JACKSON, SC 29207

26 SEP 2018

ATZJ-CG

**MEMORANDUM FOR**

Commanders, All Units Reporting Directly to This Headquarters  
Directors and Chiefs, Staff Offices, This Headquarters

**SUBJECT: Fort Jackson Policy Memorandum # 26 - U.S. Army Training Center (USATC)  
Civilian Personnel Hiring and Selection Process**

1. References:


- a. Section 2301 (b), Title 5 (United States Code, Merit System Principles), 3 Jan 12.
- b. Section 2302 (b), Title 5 (United States Code, Prohibited Personnel Practices), 7 Jan 11.
- c. Office of Personnel Management, Structured Interviews: A Practical Guide, Sep 08.

2. Purpose. To implement a hiring process with high standards of integrity, efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness that ensures applicants competing for positions within the USATC are fairly considered and allows for the selecting of the best qualified candidate for each position.

3. Policy: In order to standardize our civilian hiring process and increase transparency, I am directing the mandatory use of pre-panel resume screening and interview panels when competitively filling all permanent Army civilian positions. I encourage leaders at all levels to familiarize themselves with the references mentioned and the enclosed standard operating procedure. For exclusions and procedures for this policy, see enclosure one, USATC Civilian Hiring and Selection Process Standard Operating Procedures.

4. The proponent for this policy is the USATC G-8. This policy is effective until superseded or rescinded.

Encl

  
MILFORD H. BEAGLE, JR.  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Commanding

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1. Purpose. To establish standard operating procedures for the recruitment, evaluation, and selection of qualified applicants for filling vacant permanent Army civilian positions.

2. Applicability. This policy applies to all units and staff offices that are assigned directly to the U.S. Army Training Center (USATC).

3. General Procedures. This Command will use the basic principles of human resources and talent management to select the best qualified candidate for each position. Selection processes will adhere to Merit System Principles, adapted from § 2301 (b) of the title 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) and Prohibited Personnel Practices, adapted from § 2302 (b) of the title 5 U.S.C listed in Chapters 9 and 10. Outlined below are the mandatory requirements for initiating and completing all hiring actions in order to maintain fairness, creditability, and transparency within the hiring process.

4. Exceptions. Current exclusions to this policy include:

a. Noncompetitive promotions not to exceed 120 days.

b. A Planned Management Action (PMA).

c. Promotion resulting from an employee's position being classified at a higher grade because of additional duties and responsibilities (accretion of duties). These actions are considered as upgrading the employee's existing position, not filling a vacancy. The employee will continue to perform the same basic duties of his or her former position. Such promotions may take place if:

(1) There are no other employees at the same grade in the unit supervised by the selecting official who are performing substantially the same duties as those performed by the employee prior to addition of the new duties and responsibilities.

(2) The duties of the former position are administratively absorbed into the new position.

(3) The addition of the duties and responsibilities does not result in an adverse impact on another encumbered position, such as abolishing the position or reducing the known potential of another position.

(4) The employee meets all eligibility and qualification requirements for the position.

d. Promotion resulting from the upgrading of a position without significant change in the duties and responsibilities due to issuance of a new classification standard or the

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correction of an initial classification error.

- e. A position change permitted by reduction in force procedures.
- f. Lateral reassignment without competition only for a non-supervisory position.

5. General Guidelines.

a. Relocation Allowance. Incentives may be used to recruit for positions that are critical to the mission and require unusually high or unique qualifications. The selecting official must determine the need for unusually high or unique qualifications (i.e. attorney) and that the position is likely to be difficult to fill in the absence of this allowance. A relocation incentive may be paid to a current, eligible employee who must relocate without a break in service to accept a position in a different geographic area (more than 50 miles). The employee must have at least a 'Fully Successful' performance rating of record for the position held immediately before the relocation. A residence in the new geographic area must be established by the employee before the relocation incentive is paid.

(1) Justification for paying a relocation incentive must be documented in writing, addressing the criteria listed in enclosure 1 and must be approved by the Commanding General (CG) or his designated representative prior to starting the hiring process. Incentives will be approved for the relocation of permanent positions only. This justification memorandum will accompany the request for civilian hire to the G-8 for staffing.

(2) Personnel in the grades GS13 and above may qualify for reimbursement of relocation expenses in accordance with agency policy and if determined to be in the government's best interest. Relocation incentives may be authorized for up to 25 percent of the amount of an employee's annual basic pay at the beginning of the service period (to include either locality pay or a special rate supplement). The approved percentage, not to exceed 25 percent, will be multiplied by the number of years in the service period (including fractions of a year), not to exceed four years.

(3) The vacancy announcement will include a statement that relocation expenses (i.e. PCS) may be authorized.

(4) Before receiving a relocation incentive, an employee must sign a written agreement to complete a specified period of employment. The service agreement must specify the length, commencement, and termination dates of the service period; the amount of the incentive; the method and timing of incentive payments; the conditions under which an agreement will be terminated by the agency; any agency or employee obligations if a service agreement is terminated (including the conditions under which the employee must repay an incentive or under which the agency must make additional payments for partially completed service); and any other terms and conditions for

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receiving and retaining a relocation incentive. See enclosure 2 for service agreement.

b. Recruitment Incentive. A recruitment incentive may be paid to a newly appointed eligible employee provided the requesting official determines the position is likely to be difficult to fill in the absence of an incentive. A recruitment incentive may only be paid to a candidate who has received a written offer of employment and signed a service agreement.

(1) The requesting official must determine if the position is likely to be hard-to-fill in the absence of a recruitment incentive. The CG or his designated representative is the approving authority to grant incentives. See enclosure 1 for the criteria for submitting a request. Determinations to pay the incentive must be made prior to the candidate's entry on duty (EOD).

(2) Incentives may be authorized for up to 25 percent of the amount of an employee's basic annual pay at the beginning of the service period (to include either locality pay or a special rate supplement). The approved percentage, not to exceed 25 percent, will be multiplied by the number of years in the service period (including fractions of a year), not to exceed four years.

(3) Payment of a bonus shall be contingent upon the employee entering into a written service agreement to complete a period of employment with the USATC, not longer than four years. The agreement shall include the commencement and termination dates of the required service period (or provisions for the determination thereof); the amount of the bonus; the method of payment; and other terms and conditions under which the bonus is payable. The terms and conditions for paying a bonus, as specified in the service agreement, shall include the conditions under which the agreement may be terminated before the agreed-upon service period has been completed.

c. TRADOC 180-Day Waiver for Hiring Retiring Military. Per the FY17 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), military service members must be retired from the Armed Services for at least 180 days before entering into Federal employment as a civilian. A waiver package can be requested through G-8 to the CG. See Appendix A for TRADOC's 180 Day Waiver process and required documentation. USATC example memorandum for GS13 and below and GS14-15 are located at Appendix A-1 and A-2.

d. Standardized Position Description (PD).

(1) Army Standardized PDs (i.e., SHARP, Legal Assistant O/A) – changes to duties, roles, responsibilities, or requirements are prohibited. Minor "pen and ink" changes (i.e., supported installation) will be submitted to the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) for approval.

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(2) USATC standardized PDs will not be changed without approval from the CG or his designed representative. Request must be submitted through G-8, Manpower and Equipment Division (MED) and must include justification of why PD should be changed, summary of changes, and endorsements from units or activities that share the standardized PD. All vacancies will be considered for standardization of like positions when possible. Currently the following areas within the USATC are standardized:

- (a) All brigade positions
- (b) 120<sup>th</sup> Reception Battalion processors

e. Position Description Review. Managers/supervisors will conduct an annual review from 1-30 April of every year of active PDs, ensuring the information is accurate and consistent with current USATC missions. Upon completion of review, managers/supervisors will notify the unit's respective civilian liaison that all active PDs have been reviewed and updated. Updates will be staffed through G-8, MED for review prior to submission to CPAC. Changes that may affect the grade or classification of the position will require further coordination and approval.

6. Recruitment procedures.

a. Request for Civilian Hire.

(1) The requesting activity will identify the date a position is vacant and submit an email request for civilian hire to their G-8, manpower analyst, (PD to be used will be included in the email). Minor changes to the PD may be made during this time. The request will include a short justification on why the position needs to be filled and a summary of requested changes with the reason for the changes.

(2) G-8, MED will:

(a) Prepare civilian hiring requests, verify funding, and obtain approval from the Chief of Staff. Approval from TRADOC for exceptions may be required if USATC exceeds the authorized civilian strength levels.

(b) Track actions and provide updates to leadership as required.

(c) Maintain a digital record of all hiring action activities for a minimum of three years after the hiring decision.

b. Request for Personnel Action (RPA), PDs, and Strategic Recruitment Discussion (SRD).

(1) G-8, MED will notify the requesting activity of hiring approval.

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(2) The respective civilian liaison will initiate a Request for Personnel Action (RPA) within the Civilian Human Resources Agency Automated Nature of Action (AUTONoA) personnel system to G-8 for local approval.

(3) Upon approval, G-8 will route the RPA to the CPAC for processing.

(4) The CPAC Human Resource Specialist will coordinate with the selecting official to conduct a SRD including a job analysis, review of the position occupational assessment, and draft announcement. As a preliminary to the SRD, the selecting official will review the PD for accuracy ensuring current conditions of employment (security clearance, special job conditions, etc.) and all duty requirements are captured. The selecting official will create the position designation automated tool (PDT), required for each recruitment, using the OPM website.

(5) Once the SRD is complete, the selecting official will develop interview questions, establish and schedule a hiring panel, assist panel members with determining questions to be asked of each applicant and develop a pre-panel applicant resume evaluation matrix to be used in scoring candidates.

7. The use of selection panels and selection matrices ensure objectivity throughout the hiring process. The selection panel process is beneficial because it provides varying perspectives, helps to eliminate biases, and benefits the organization by involving employees and other stakeholders in the hiring decision. The panel is a team of individuals committed to reviewing applicant's resumes and interviewing candidates and subsequently recommending the best qualified candidates for final selection. Ultimate accountability for the selection remains with the selecting official.

a. Pre-panel applicant resume evaluation matrix. The selecting official will evaluate all resumes using a pre-panel resume evaluation matrix. This matrix is a resume screening checklist required to identify applicants to be interviewed. This checklist provides support in the event of any hiring challenges. The selecting official will identify job qualifications necessary to do the job, i.e. work experience, knowledge and skill sets, etc., using a rating scheme. The selecting official will determine the cut-off score identifying who will get an interview. See enclosure 3 for the template.

b. Selection Panels and Documents. Selection panels are mandatory when competitively hiring non-excluded positions identified in paragraph 4 for all USATC vacancies. Guidelines for selection panels are as follows:

(1) Panels must be diverse (e.g., minority, gender) and consist of at least three members (military or civilian), each of whom is of equal or higher grade equivalency to the vacant position and reasonably familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the position. Subject matter experts employed outside the employing organization should be considered.

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(2) Panel members will recuse themselves as soon as a conflict of interest between themselves and any of the candidates becomes evident. A conflict of interest may occur if a personal relationship exists between the applicant and the panel member. Employees who expect to compete for the vacancy will not participate in any part of the recruitment and selection process.

(3) The selecting official will designate the lead interviewer for the panel. When conducting interviews, panel members will develop pre-determined relevant interview questions. The panel members should refer to Appendix B to develop appropriate interview questions. The panel members will annotate their questions on the hiring matrix (enclosure 4). Each panel member will rate each candidate on each assigned element ranging from 1 to 5 (5 being the best) and annotate any additional comments which contribute to the selection process.

(5) All candidates will be asked the same questions. The interview process should consist of three components: Introduction, Interview, and Closure. During the introduction, the selecting official will explain the interview process and inform all applicants that the same questions will be asked to each candidate. During the interview portion, panel members will score each criteria using the evaluation sheet. Upon closure of the interview, the selecting official should ask the applicant if they have any questions, thank the applicant for their time and participation, and inform them when they anticipate finalizing the selection.

(6) Once the board has completed interviews, the selecting official will collect the panel's score sheets and record all the candidate's total scores on the consolidated final evaluation sheet (enclosure 5). The panel members may discuss the applicant responses; however the panel members need not agree to points awarded.

(7) Reference checks: Selecting officials will contact the candidate's references and document as part of the selection process. Reference checks are to ensure the candidate is suitable for the position being hired.

(8) Panel members and selecting officials must honor the confidentiality of information collected from applications, records, interviews, and selections. All participants are responsible for safeguarding information and for using the information in a fair and equitable manner to assist in selecting the best qualified person for the position.

8. Uphold Merit System Principles. The merit system principles are the expectations of a system that is efficient, effective, fair, open to all, free from political interference, and staffed by honest, competent, and dedicated employees. It is important that selecting officials and managers incorporate the merit system principles into every decision process they use. The merit system principles are:

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a. Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society and select and advance employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity.

b. Treat applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicap condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.

9. Refrain from Prohibited Personnel Practices (5 USC § 2302 (b)).

a. Do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap condition, marital status, or political affiliation.

b. Do not solicit or consider improper employment recommendations.

c. Do not coerce an employee's political activity.

d. Do not deceive or obstruct any person with respect to such person's right to compete for employment.

e. Do not influence any person to withdraw from competition for a position.

f. Do not give unauthorized preference or improper advantage.

g. Do not employ or advocate a relative.

h. Do not retaliate against a whistleblower, whether an employee or applicant.

i. Do not retaliate against an applicant who files an appeal.

j. Do not violate Veteran's Preference requirements.

10. Selecting Official.

a. Nominate a primary and alternate selectee if possible. The selecting official will consider the resume, interviews, and any reference check results, then based upon merit system principles, select the best qualified candidate. If there is not a second viable candidate from the referral list, the selecting official must justify in writing to CPAC why no other candidates on the referral list are qualified. This justification is required to defend any hiring challenges. The vacant position will have to be re-announced.

b. If the selecting official does not agree with the board on selecting the highest scoring candidate, a written justification is required outlining why he/she chose a



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different candidate on the consolidated final evaluation form. In the event of a tie, the selecting official will justify why one particular candidate was chosen over the others.

c. For audit purposes, all documents used for the hiring action will be maintained locally for a minimum of three years after the hiring decision with the respective unit/activity civilian liaison. Electronic or hard copy documents must be readily available in the event the hiring process is inspected locally, by higher headquarters, or by an external auditing agency.

11. Sensitivity. Leaders at all levels must maintain a positive environment that discourages rumor and innuendo; ensuring that every civilian recruitment/hiring action is treated in confidence, with discretion, privacy and on a strict "need to know" basis. Panel members will not discuss the selection process or potential results. The selecting official will submit the selection to CPAC to extend an offer to the selectee.

12. This SOP governs the USATC civilian hiring and selections process. Questions or concerns should be addressed directly to the USATC G-8, MED at (803) 751-7550.