

Strategic Hiring and Pay Adjustment Approval Process

Background:

The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) has requested all state agencies to institute a strategic hiring approval process for all regular, full-time faculty and staff positions. Please see the attached letter to the USG Presidents from Chancellor Wrigley.

In accordance with the Chancellor's directive, this process applies to all regular, full-time faculty and staff positions (30 hours or more) regardless of funding source which includes: creating new positions, filling vacant positions, promotions, job reclassifications, and base salary adjustments. Effective December 16, 2019, the following process must be followed.

Strategic Hiring/Pay Adjustment Approval Process:

- 1) The AVP/Dean/Director completes and submits the Strategic Critical Hiring/Pay Adjustment Form to the President or Divisional Vice President.
 - a) Provide a thorough and strategic justification of the need for the position or base salary adjustment. The justification should include the impact on the institution if the position is not filled. Include any supporting data or information regarding student success, patient/life safety, and compliance or accreditation requirements.
 - b) "A critical Hire is a position the institution must fill in order to maintain student success, patient/life safety, and to successfully meet required compliance and accreditation standards. A critical hire is not the same as an important hire. We have many positions within the university system that are important to institutional success, but would not be considered critical." *Refer to the Critical Hire FAQ's.*
 - c) For grant and contract-funded positions: attach the award letter and documentation that supports the requirements for personnel and the compensation rates that have been agreed to.
 - d) The form can be used to submit requests for one position.
- 2) The Strategic Critical Hiring/Pay Adjustment form will be reviewed by the President and Vice Presidents. Approval will be confirmed in writing by the signature of the President and Chief Business Officer and sent to the Chief Human Resources Officer or Director of Human Resources for processing.
- 3) To post new or vacant staff positions over \$40,000: Human Resources will submit the signed form and justification to the USG office for approval at: <https://survey.usg.edu/s3/CHPJT>. This occurs prior to posting the position. While the strategic hiring process is in effect, only critical positions will be approved. *Refer to the Critical Hire FAQ's.*
 - a) All requests received at the USG by the end of the business day on Monday should receive a response (approval or denial) from the USG no later than the end of the business day on Friday of the same week.

- 4) Upon notification from the USG, the Strategic Critical Hire/Pay Adjustment form will be processed by Human Resources. The Chief Business Officer and Chief Human Resources Officer are copied on all notifications from the USG office.
 - a) If the critical hire is approved, HR will notify the AVP/Dean/Director, the Divisional Vice President and the President and will work with institutional officials or offices (Budget Services) to post or fill the position according to established hiring procedures.
 - b) All staff positions must be vacant a minimum of 60 days before they can be filled, unless an exemption is granted by the President or Chief Business Officer. Requests for an exception must be submitted in writing to the Chief Human Resources Officer. Please note, the processing time for approval to post or fill a position counts toward the 60-day waiting period.
 - c) If the critical hire is not approved, HR will notify the AVP/Dean/Director, the Divisional Vice President and the President and work with institutional officials or offices on the next steps.
- 5) The Chief Human Resources Officer is responsible for submitting a monthly report of all faculty and staff hires or appointments completed during the previous calendar month. The report is due on the 10th of each month and must be emailed to criticalhire@usg.edu.

Internal Review:

Internal review defines the process where the President and Vice Presidents review personnel and pay actions that do not require approval by the USG office and/or actions that are not permanent in nature. These requests include temporary or interim appointments/assignments, supplemental pay requests, continuing education payments or dual appointments.

The Strategic Critical Hiring/Pay Adjustment form is not required for these actions. You should use current forms and adhere to established procedures, with appropriate justification and supporting documents (ex. budget amendment), for submission to your Divisional Vice President. The President and Vice Presidents will conduct an internal review as needed. Approval of internal review actions will be confirmed in writing by the signature of the President or Divisional Vice President and the initials of the Chief Business Officer or designee. Upon approval, the forms will be routed to Human Resources, Budget Services and Payroll according to established guidelines and protocols.



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December 13, 2019

Presidents
University System of Georgia
Sent via email

Dear Presidents:

As you know, all state agencies were asked to reduce FY 2020 budgets by 4% and FY 2021 by the same 4% plus an additional 2%. Though the Teaching program has been exempted thus far, the USG could be affected if State revenue collections do not meet budgeted collections. For all of these reasons, we must be prepared to absorb any reductions.

Governor Kemp asked all state agencies to think strategically about how to improve business processes by eliminating duplication, better utilizing technology, or other methods of efficiency, to include thinking strategically about workforce needs and how to best leverage existing positions and personal services funding. Additionally, the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) asked all state agencies to institute a strategic hire approval process.

Therefore, effective December 15, 2019, the USG will institute a strategic hire approval process. As a part of the process, institutions should think critically about opportunities to restructure the delivery of services consistent with the tenets of the Comprehensive Administrative Review.

Strategic Hire Approval Process (Critical Hire Process):

- The critical hire process will apply to all vacant and new regular, full-time faculty and staff positions with a salary above \$40,000.
- A critical hire justification narrative will be required for all vacant and new positions prior to posting the position, to include the impact on your institution if the position is not filled.
- The President and Chief Business Office are required to review and approve all vacant and new regular, full-time faculty and staff vacant positions with a salary above \$40,000.
- Additionally, the System Office will review and approve all vacant and new regular, full-time staff vacant positions with a salary above \$40,000 before the recruitment of the position. Institutions will receive instructions via separate email on how to submit requests to the System Office for consideration.
- On a monthly basis, institutions will provide a report to the System Office of all regular, full-time faculty and staff positions hired with a salary above \$40,000.

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USG Presidents
December 13, 2019
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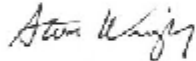
Your institution will likely need to develop an internal process to review critical hire requests and other fiscal management strategies during this time. For example, institutions may choose to hold vacant positions for 60, 90, and 120 days to allow time for strategic evaluation and utilization of funds prior to a System Office submission.

The System Office is here to assist you and your institution with major budget decisions and strategies as indicated in the letter from the Executive Vice Chancellors on November 20, 2019. Please remember that you have been asked to consult the System Office prior to making final determinations.

Your institution should begin to identify budgeted positions which have been vacant for an extended period of time. These positions should be inactivated and funding redirected to areas that directly impact student success no later than April 30, 2020. For questions, please reach out to the System Office.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Steve Wrigley

cc: Tracey Cook, Executive Vice Chancellor for Strategy and Fiscal Affairs
Tristan Denley, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer
Teresa MacCartney, Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration
Ashley Jones, Vice Chancellor for External Affairs and Chief of Staff
Institutional Chief Business Officers
Institutional Chief Academic Officers
Institutional Chief Human Resource Directors

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Critical Hire Process FAQs

Last updated December 31, 2019

What is a critical hire?

A critical hire is considered a position that the institution must fill in order to maintain student success, patient/life safety, and to successfully meet required compliance and accreditation standards. A critical hire is not the same as an *important* hire. We have many positions within the university system that are important to institutional success, but would not be considered critical. Important positions will not be approved while the critical hire process is in effect.

The critical hire process and submission link was shared with CBOs and CHROs via email on December 16, 2019.

Institutions should plan early and start the critical hire process as soon as possible. Critical hire requests can be submitted as soon as an institution is aware of new position or vacancy even if the position will be filled later. Justification forms should provide complete details upon submission in order to expedite the response timeframe.

Why are we doing this?

Governor Kemp asked all state agencies to think strategically about how to improve business processes by eliminating duplication, better utilizing technology, or other methods of efficiency, to include thinking strategically about workforce needs and how to best leverage existing positions and personal services funding. Additionally, the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) asked all state agencies to institute a strategic hire (critical hire) approval process.

What type of documentation will be required for the justification?

The institution should provide a compelling case for critical nature of a position in the critical hire form. Any supporting data regarding student success, patient/life safety, and compliance or accreditation requirements that must be met should be provided. For grant or contract funded positions, an institution should submit the award letter and documentation that supports the requirements for personnel and the compensation rates that have been agreed to.

How long will the critical hire process be in place?

The critical hire process went into effect December 15, 2019 without a defined end date. If and when the process changes, a notification will be sent to the President, Chief Business Officer, and Chief Human Resources Officer.

What positions will be subject to the critical hire process?

As of December 15, 2019, all full-time regular positions, faculty and staff, above \$40,000 will be subject to the critical hire process.

A justification form will not be required for positions posted prior to December 15, 2019; however, positions filled December 15, 2019 and after should be reflected on the monthly institution report.

Are grant-funded and contract positions included in the critical hire process?

Yes, the critical hire process is applicable to all fund sources.

Will the use of temporary staff require approval?

No, the critical hire process is only applicable to full-time regular employees. Temporary staffing decisions should follow existing institutional review and approval processes.

If an institution chooses to reclassify an existing position, should a critical hire form be submitted?

No, an institution has the ability to restructure existing roles to find efficiencies and accommodate changes to the workforce. The USG policy on Salary and Wage Administration must be followed if a change in compensation is warranted with the reclassification. We encourage institutions to incorporate reclassification requests into the internal critical hire review process.

Can an institution hold a position to save funds?

Yes, an institution can make the determination to hold a position during the strategic review process or as a fiscal management strategy. When and if the institution determines that they would like to proceed with filling the role, a critical hire form will be required at that time.

Are positions within my institution's approved CAR plan subject to the critical hire process?

Yes, newly created positions that are included in your institutions approved CAR plan must be submitted for approval through the critical hire process before posting. Any additional changes or consideration given should be included in the justification narrative.

Can campuses continue existing projects that involve position description reviews and compensation equity analysis?

Yes, existing organizational effectiveness and compliance projects may continue. If an institution considers making compensation strategy changes or adjustments, a notification to the University System Office should be provided along with a summary of the proposed activity. This notification may be submitted to criticalhire@usg.edu.

What response will I get from the system office review team?

You will receive a letter with one of two responses: approved or denied. It is the responsibility of the institution to provide adequate justification and documentation for the critical hire as a part of their submission. Please note that the USO review team will not be able to assist a campus with developing their justification statements.

Is there a way to expedite a request?

Institutions should plan early and start the critical hire process as soon as possible. Critical hire requests can be submitted as soon as an institution is aware of new position or vacancy even if the position will be filled later. Justification forms should provide complete details upon submission in order to expedite the response timeframe.

Urgent positions that involve patient/life safety such as medical personnel or public safety officers can be posted immediately on a contingent basis if deemed necessary through this campus critical hire process. A critical hire form should be submitted simultaneously to the USO for approval to continue. If the request is denied, the institution should immediately remove the contingent posting and discontinue the recruitment process. This process is only acceptable for positions that are deemed critical to patient/life safety by the president and CBO.

When is the campus monthly report due?

The campus report of all full-time regular faculty and staff hired during the preceding calendar month will be due by the 10th of the month or closest Monday if the 10th falls on the weekend. The December 2019 report will be due on January 10th for all full-time regular faculty and staff positions with start dates on or after December 15, 2019 above \$40,000 annually. Reports should be emailed to criticalhire@usg.edu.

Can the president or Chief Business Officer delegate their signature authority?

Generally speaking the USG submission process requires the approval and signature of both the president and CBO, not a designee. If the president or CBO are away for extended travel and unable to authorize, notification of a designee may be sent to the criticalhire@usg.edu inbox along with the timeframe of designation.

Are electronic signatures acceptable for the president and CBO?

Yes, if routed through a secure process or system such as DocuSign. It is expected that the campus process will engage the president and chief business officer directly on requests that proceed to the system office for approval.

Who should I contact with questions?

The critical hire process has an email address that will be monitored by the USO review team. Questions may be submitted to criticalhire@usg.edu.