

## **FAQs for Deans for Hiring During Temporary Hiring Suspension**

### **Introduction**

On March 23, 2020, UAB announced an immediate hiring suspension that applies for all faculty and staff positions (new positions and refill vacancies), including temporary and part-time positions. Posted positions were immediately placed on hold, and the positions will be closed unless a documented exception is granted by President Watts. No new positions may be posted unless an exception is granted. Student workers and work study students were exempted from the hiring suspension.

### **Process**

We will use the already-established systems for faculty hiring (PeopleAdmin) and for staff hiring (Taleo) for obtaining approvals of hiring exceptions. PeopleAdmin will be modified so that it is the mechanism for hiring 04 irregular faculty (Credentialed Course Instructors). PeopleAdmin will accommodate submission of the supporting documentation described below. Resources on how to use PeopleAdmin generally can be found at the [Provost Faculty website](#).

All hiring in the schools and college, and in the Libraries, will require approval of the applicable Dean before they are submitted for approval of the Provost and then for approval by the President. Schools, the college, and the Libraries may have their own internal processes leading to approval by their respective deans, but dean-level approval is required before there will be review by the Provost and the President. Please let us know if you have such internal processes. Further instructions will be provided for the mechanics of submitting requests for exceptions, including how to submit supporting documentation. The purpose of these FAQs is to help guide decision-making, at all levels.

### **Exception Categories**

- Documented offer
- Clinical personnel in areas of demonstrated shortage (e.g., nursing)
- Research faculty, if substantially and durably funded
- Specialized research personnel needed to fulfill extramural grant/contract obligations that cannot be met by existing or redeployed personnel
- Specialized personnel needed to provide critical online training and/or instruction when these needs cannot be met by existing or redeployed personnel
- Specialized personnel in critical areas of safety or compliance that cannot be delayed or met by existing or redeployed personnel
- Other personnel with topical or technical expertise that is deemed mission critical and cannot be met by existing or redeployed personnel

## **Documented Offers**

### ***What is meant by a “documented offer?”***

A documented offer should be a letter of offer signed by a UAB authorized official dated on or before March 23, 2020, whether or not signed by the offeree (individual to be hired). In the absence of an actual letter of offer, we will also review email correspondence showing UAB has made the equivalent of a letter of offer, again dated on or before March 23, 2020.

### ***Will you accept a “letter of intent” as a documented offer, rather than a letter of offer?***

The actual wording of the letter would have to be reviewed. If the letter was not designed to be an offer binding on UAB, but just an indication of a desire to keep talking, then no this would likely not be a documented offer.

### ***What if we would have had a signed letter of offer by a UAB authorized official by March 23, but there was a delay in sending out the offer beyond our control (even if just waiting for normal processing outside of our school)?***

We likely would not accept these situations as exceptions.

### ***Do I even need to submit an exception request if I have a documented offer dated before March 23, 2020?***

Yes, we would like to see the documented offer and record it in our system. We will process these quickly.

### ***Do I need to submit an exception request if the position had been posted in UAB Careers or PeopleAdmin before March 23, 2020?***

Yes. Even if the position had been posted before March 23, 2020, one or more of the exception categories would have to be met. As noted in the Introduction above, all posted positions were placed on hold in the system until an exception might be made.

### ***What about a verbal offer?***

If it can be demonstrated that a verbal offer was made with the same terms and conditions as a normal letter of offer before March 23, 2020, then this would likely be approved. However, we cannot just accept such an assertion without some sort of supporting documentation or proof.

### ***Can we make an exception for an internal candidate with whom we have done everything to offer a position to except make a written offer?***

Same rules as other candidates.

### ***Should I be submitting hiring proposals just to get them “in the queue” for when the hiring suspension might be lifted?***

No. Please limit your approval requests to hiring that you believe meets one of the exception categories.

## **Credentialed Course Instructors**

### ***What about offers for new Credentialed Course Instructors?***

Offers to new CCIs are discouraged. If a qualified existing employee could be redeployed at the same or lesser cost, then the existing employee should be used. In each such case, we ask that there be a demonstrable need; i.e., that the offer is not being made to have someone “just in case,” such as because a regular employee is retiring or because a regular employee line cannot be filled due to the temporary suspension. Making class sizes larger should be considered before using existing or hiring new CCIs. New CCI offers should be submitted for review, using the new category to be built into PeopleAdmin.

### ***What about CCIs we have had an ongoing relationship with?***

There is no need to submit exception requests for these individuals. Of course, there should be a demonstrable need. Again, making class sizes larger should be considered before using existing or hiring new CCIs. See below about appointment letters.

### ***What about appointment letters?***

Each CCI should have an appointment letter with an end date for the appointment letter, which may have automatic renewal. We recognize that this is not always the case, and encourage you to look at all your CCI appointment letters. Please use the form of CCI appointment letter found at the [Provost Faculty website](#).

We also ask that any new offer letter (including for appointment letters with existing CCIs that need updating as described above) contain language that would allow UAB to terminate the relationship if its needs change, at its discretion, such as “Notwithstanding anything to the contrary elsewhere in this letter, UAB reserves the right to terminate this agreement at any time without any further obligation except for payment for work already performed, because of the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

### ***Can we hire full-time regular employees under the conditions in the foregoing question for CCIs?***

No, unless an exception category is applicable.

### ***What about retired or about-to-retire faculty whom we wish to rehire on an 04 Irregular basis?***

Same as other candidates. For faculty, after approval, please also use the [Rehire Retiree Request form](#), found on the Provost Faculty website.

### ***Does this new hiring suspension affect our ability to make equity increases to employee compensation, for retention and other reasons?***

As is current practice, these would be reviewed on a case-by-basis to ensure that there were important retention purposes and that there would not be negative unintended effects on internal pay equity.

***Once I have an approved exception to conduct a faculty search, what is the next step?***

The current requisition form and approval paths in PeopleAdmin have been modified to accommodate this new exception process during the hiring suspension. If a request to hire or search is approved, then PeopleAdmin will automatically forward the position for posting.

***What about Postdocs? Can offers move forward where there has been an appointment signed by the postdoc, a faculty member, and someone from the Office of Postdoctoral Education (OPE)?***

Yes. However, if the faculty mentor wishes to delay the start of the postdoc's training, s/he should communicate directly with the in-coming postdoc as soon as possible to schedule an alternative start date. Once agreed upon, the faculty mentor should notify his/her department administrator, who, in turn, should contact the OPE to request a revised letter of appointment that includes the new start date.

***May faculty hire new postdocs, who do not yet have a letter of appointment?***

Yes, but only upon approval by the faculty mentor's dept chair, dean, and the Provost. Once finalized, approval documentation should then be forwarded to the OPE, requesting a letter of appointment.

***What about Student Workers, Work Study Students, Student Assistants, Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants?***

Neither graduate students nor undergraduate students with these titles are subject to the hiring suspension.

**Research Faculty and Other Personnel**

***What is meant by “substantially and durably funded?”***

The definitions and applications of these terms will vary from school to school and by discipline in some cases. These determinations will be made in consultation with Melinda Cotten, Associate Vice President for Research Business Operations, and if necessary with others. We would expect to see:

- any written guidelines in place for funding in a school, or in the absence of such guidelines, examples of typical offer letters in the hiring unit specifying percentages of salary or other amounts (e.g., lab costs) required to be covered, and for how long.
- communication by a unit to the proposed hire as to specific expectations for coverage of salary and other costs (e.g., lab costs) by the proposed hire and by the unit or school.

Please think about your request in the context of a reduced workforce, if that ever became necessary, where this new hire might have to be compared with an existing employee who could have been redeployed.

**Clinical Faculty and Other Shortages**

***What do we have to provide in order to demonstrate that a proposed hire is to fill a clinical position where there is currently a shortage?***

Please provide a description of exactly what the need is, an affirmative statement that the need cannot be met by existing or redeployed faculty, and how you reached that conclusion. Please think about your request in the context of a reduced workforce, if that ever became necessary, where this new hire might have to be compared with an existing employee who could have been redeployed. If in a particular request to fill a clinical position a school has used a mechanism by which clinical positions have been approved by a committee or particular assistant or associate dean before being approved by a dean, please note that in your request for approval.

### **Specialized Research Faculty and Other Personnel**

***What do we have to provide in order to demonstrate a proposed hire to fulfill extramural grant/contract obligations?***

First, please provide an affirmative statement that the need cannot be met by existing or redeployed faculty, and how you reached that conclusion. Please think about your request in the context of a reduced workforce, if that ever became necessary, where this new hire might have to be compared with an existing employee who could have been redeployed. Second, we would need to see the applicable funded grant award or agreement budget describing the position in question as it relates to the specific aims and/or scope of work along with the grant or contract funding period. If you have concluded that a skillset or expertise is absent in the current UAB workforce, then please describe how you reached this conclusion. We will also consult with Melinda Cotton on these requests.

### **Online Training or Instructional Faculty or Personnel**

***What do we have to provide in order to demonstrate a proposed hire to instruct online or provide training for those who instruct online?***

First, please provide an affirmative statement that the need cannot be met by existing or redeployed faculty, and how you reached that conclusion. Please think about your request in the context of a reduced workforce, if that ever became necessary, where this new hire might have to be compared with an existing employee who could have been redeployed. Second, in the case of faculty who will teach online, we would need an assurance that the individual will receive the necessary training for online teaching before beginning work. Of course, in the case of those training other instructors, we would also expect additional distance education training.

### **Safety or Compliance Personnel**

***What do we have to provide in order to demonstrate a proposed hire in critical areas of safety or compliance?***

We think it is unlikely that there would be any hires here in the schools or college.

### **Topical or Mission Critical Personnel**

***What do we have to provide in order to demonstrate a proposed hire with topical or technical expertise that is deemed mission critical?***

These requests will necessarily be handled on a case by case basis. However, certainly a position related to research into the COVID-19 virus would be carefully considered. In the form please provide an

affirmative statement that the need cannot be met by existing or redeployed employees. Please think about your request in the context of a reduced workforce, if that ever became necessary, where this new hire might have to be compared with an existing employee who could have been redeployed. Where applicable, please also provide the applicable funded grant award or agreement budget describing the position in question as it relates to the specific aims and/or scope of work along with the grant or contract funding period. If you have concluded that a skillset or expertise is absent in the current UAB workforce, then please describe how you reached this conclusion.