

# **Staff Search Committee Handbook**

UUCSC  
2014

*Updated January 2024*

The purpose of this handbook is to help each Search Committee responsible for hiring staff to carry out their duties following the protocols specified in the UUCSC Personnel Policy Manual approved by the UUCSC Board. The following protocols for hiring staff come directly from the UUCSC Personnel Policy Manual.

The Search Committee is directed to follow the UUCSC Personnel Policy Manual protocols and to use all the forms specified.

**Thank you for reviewing and following these guidelines and procedures. May your committee accomplish its work in a loving, open and joyous spirit.**

## **J. RECRUITMENT AND HIRING**

### **1. Hiring Policy**

It is UUCSC policy to hire individuals who are qualified or trainable for employment as determined by our standards of education, experience, aptitude and character. All decisions regarding the recruitment, selection and placement of employees are made solely on the basis of job-related criteria. Every effort will be made to hire new employees for positions which best utilize their abilities and in which they will be able to achieve both personal satisfaction and opportunity for growth. In no event shall the policies within the Personnel Policy Manual regarding the hiring of an employee be considered as creating a contractual relationship between the employee and the UUCSC; see “At Will Statement” section I. A., page 1, paragraph 4.

The UUA recommends, and it is the preferred policy of the UUCSC, to hire outside the congregation, unless there are extraordinary circumstances.

### **2. Recruitment and Hiring Process**

Appropriate committees and relevant individuals will bear responsibility for the recruitment and hiring process, adhering to EEO standards; see section I. B.

#### Search Procedure

When a Search Committee is charged with hiring a new employee, the committee will consist of at least six members. The committee will include a member of the Personnel Committee, a member of the Board, the Minister, a member of the staff with a formal relationship to the new position, and any other UUCSC member with position-related expertise.

The Search Committee will hold an organizational meeting. A timeline for the hiring of the new employee will be determined, a help wanted ad will be written and advertised in area media such as one or more of the following: South County Independent, the Brown University non-profit website, Craig’s List, Patch.

## Application Requirements

A complete application is a cover letter in relation to the position, and a resume.

## Selection and Interview Procedure

Shortly after the application deadline, the committee will meet to review the applications. Each application will be read and ranked by the committee. Applicants with the highest rankings will be selected for a preliminary interview. (Interview Process/Questions form VII. p. 26). Of those, three will be chosen for a final interview with the Minister and two committee members. The three finalists will fill out the Employee Reference Inquiry forms (VII. p. 27) before the final interview. The finalists will be ranked, and the position offered in order of the ranking. All new employees must complete Background Check Procedure (p. 28.)

Each unsuccessful applicant will receive a letter of regret (see sample letters: Section VII. pp. 30, 31) from the Search Committee Chairperson. The finalist will receive a letter from the Chair (Section VII. p. 33), and a phone call from the Minister. All applications received will be kept in the Personnel Filing Cabinet for three years before being shredded.

## Hiring Procedure

The Minister will offer the position via phone and the Personnel Committee Chair will offer it in writing (Employment Offer Letter VII. p. 29) contingent upon an acceptable background check.

The contract will be written by the Personnel Committee and then signed by the President of the Congregation and the new employee. Orientation (Employee Orientation Procedure VII. p. 32) will include providing and reviewing a copy of the relevant Committee/Staff Handbook, and a copy of the Personnel Policy Manual to the new employee, who will sign the ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT on page 22.

Please Note: New employees and employees who are transferred to another position are required to complete an initial review period of ninety days, which may be shortened or lengthened at the Employer's discretion. (Section I. M. p. 10)

Note: Forms and letters should be altered as necessary for each search.

## **SEARCH PROCEDURE FORMS**

### **Interview Process/Questions**

Chair of committee welcomes the interviewee and introduces self and members of the committee. The Chair then reviews the job duties and employment particulars, e.g., part time/full-time, 10-month position with option for renewal, and the background check requirement.

To determine the best-qualified person for the position, the search committee will have

prepared direct questions concerning the applicant's resume as well as questions not addressed on the resume.

These direct questions will be followed by non-directed questions that the interviewee answers without further intervention from the committee member asking the questions. This will help the committee to assess the ability of the interviewee to organize their thoughts. Sample questions:

- a) Why did you apply for this position? Why part-time/full-time?
- b) Confidentiality is very important. How would you deflect a question that would involve confidentiality?
- c) Tell us about a challenging employment situation and how you handled it? d) What employment experiences have you had that would help you be a successful \_\_\_\_\_?
- e) Tell us about yourself; hobbies, talents or other things that are important in your life. f) Do you have any questions about this position, or the UUCSC and its policies?

To close the interview, tell the applicant when they can expect to get feedback about the selection decision.

NOTE: Form and letter templates should be copied, pasted onto a word document, filled out by the Search Committee Chair, and given to the Personnel Chair.

## **Employment Reference Inquiry Template**

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County  
27 North Road  
Peace Dale, RI 02879  
401-783-4170

### EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE INQUIRY

The below former employee has applied for the position of \_\_\_\_\_. By signing this form, \_\_\_\_\_ has given you permission to answer the following questions candidly:

Former Employee ( Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Dates of Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Position at Separation: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Salary at Separation: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Overall Work Performance Evaluation During Last Year of Employment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Eligibility for reemployment: Eligible Ineligible (Circle one). If "Ineligible" please state reason (Please Use Back of form if needed):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Extension \_\_\_\_\_

### **Background Check Procedure for UUCSC Staff members, Applicants and RE Volunteers**

As part of the application process to work on staff or volunteer in Religious Education for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County, a background investigation is required. The UUCSC will pay any charges for this service for volunteers, staff members or applicants. **Contact UUCSC Congregational Administrator (CA) to assist with processing BCI requests.**

**Current UUCSC BCI policy (2024):** All new staff hires and all RE volunteers and instructors, who are required supervising adults in any RE space, must complete or show evidence of a federal background check (Bureau of Criminal Investigation-BCI). Parents of children in RE and visitors are exempt. See our Congregational Administrator to complete the BCI.

## HIRING PROCEDURE FORMS

### Employment Offer Letter Template

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Unitarian Universalist Church of South County  
27 North Road  
Peace Dale, RI 02879

Prospective Employee  
Street  
Any town, State

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County, this letter confirms our offer to you to become the \_\_\_\_\_ . You will report directly to \_\_\_\_\_ , our minister.

Your employment will commence on \_\_\_\_\_. Your salary will be \_\_\_\_\_ per hour.

The first full year of this position commences on ( Date ). It is our practice to offer a one-year contract after the congregational annual meeting the first Sunday in June assuming you and the Congregation wish to continue our relationship.

We are all excited about you becoming a vital part of our community at UUCSC! Please sign and return one copy of this offer letter in the enclosed self-addressed envelope while retaining the other copy for yourself.

If you have any further questions, please call me.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Personnel Committee

I understand and accept the above conditions of employment.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Copies: Minister \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel Committee file \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION PROCEDURE

**Employment Information:**

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Starting Salary: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Schedule \_\_\_\_\_

First Performance Evaluation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Work/Alien Permit # (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

**Orientation Record:**

1. Greeted by supervisor
2. Completed Employment forms:
  - a. W-4: Federal and State
  - b. I-9: Department of Immigration
  - c. State Work Permit for minors
  - d. Employment application (if not completed)
  - e. Insurance applications (if eligible)
3. Tour of UUCSC and work area; introduction to coworkers and review of work schedule
4. Explain UUCSC rules (working from the Personnel Policy Manual with employee)
  - a. Training period
  - b. Importance of attendance and punctuality
  - c. Phone supervisor when ill or delayed
  - d. Parking
  - e. Personal appearance
5. Performance evaluations and wage increases
6. Staff meeting: day and time and importance of attending
7. Other information/Answer questions
8. Work Safety and Fire Prevention:
  - a. Contact supervisor in case of accident
  - b. Location of first aid kit
  - c. Slippery floors
  - d. Objects on floor
  - e. Lifting objects
  - f. Proper shoes (Housekeeping employees)
9. On the job training:
  - a. Review of work materials and schedule
  - b. Review of job description
  - c. Introduction to trainer who will explain job
  - d. Employee observes job tasks
  - e. Employee performs job tasks
  - f. Trainer corrects employee if needed
10. End of day review with employee by supervisor
  - a. How did your day go?
  - b. Questions?

Orientation completed (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of RECEIPT of Personnel Policy Manual

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County Personnel Policy Manual. I understand that it is my responsibility to read the Manual and to comply with the policies, practices, and rules of the Employer.

I specifically understand and agree that my employment is at will and for an unspecified period of time, and that either the Employer or I may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without reason and with or without notice. Both parties will make a good faith effort to give at least a two-week notice. I specifically understand and agree that this statement of policy contains all the terms relating to employment, and that no representations may be made contrary to the foregoing, either expressed or implied. I understand that this statement of policy is not subject to change.

I understand that this Manual supersedes all previous policies, written or oral, expressed, or implied. I also understand that this Manual is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document, and that the Employer reserves discretion to add, change or rescind any policy, practice or rule at any time, with or without notice. It is understood that any change will be communicated through the usual channels and will become effective immediately.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read, understood, and will comply with the above statements, and have received a copy of the \_\_\_\_\_ (current year) Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County Personnel Policy Manual.

Employee Name (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**LETTERS OF REGRET**

NOTE: The Search Committee Chair should fill out Letters of Regret.

SAMPLE LETTER: NOT SELECTED FOR INTERVIEW

Date

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County  
27 North Road  
Peace Dale, RI 02879

(Applicant's name)  
(Address)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Your interest in the position of \_\_\_\_\_ at the UUCSC is appreciated. Following our review of all applicants, we regret to inform you that you have not been selected to interview for this position.

The selection committee appreciates the time you invested in your application. We wish you every personal and professional success with your job search. Thank you again for your interest in our congregation.

Regards,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Search Committee Chair

SAMPLE LETTER: NOT SELECTED FOR FINAL INTERVIEW OR POSITION

Date

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South County  
27 North Road  
Peace Dale, RI 02879

(Applicants Name)  
(Address)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

We appreciate the time you took to apply and interview for the position of \_\_\_\_\_ . After careful consideration of your qualifications, we regret to inform you that you have not been selected (for a final interview/ to fill the position).

We wish you success with your job search. Thank you again for your interest in our congregation.

Regards,

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Search Committee Chair