

Columbia University Recruitment of Academic Personnel System (RAPS)

An Overview

In 2008, Columbia implemented an online system for academic recruitment called the Recruitment of Academic Personnel System (RAPS). RAPS was customized using the same software module as Columbia's online administrative recruitment system, Jobs at Columbia (JAC), and works in a similar way, with modifications to accommodate academic searches. (*RAPS also serves as the University's system for affirmative action clearance and reporting.*)

RAPS consolidates all aspects of the search process in one online location, and is also the venue for search approvals and affirmative action clearance of selectees. As the University's affirmative action system of record, RAPS provides the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA) with data on academic hiring.

RAPS is accessible through Columbia's web page. Applicants can access the site through the *Jobs* link on the Columbia homepage or with a URL address or link that must be included in all outside online and print advertisements for academic positions at Columbia. The hiring units control who have access to applicant materials, with the oversight of the appropriate vice president, dean or director.

Hiring units are expected to use RAPS to recruit their full-time academic officers. All full-time academic openings must be posted in RAPS even if they are filled through a waiver of normal search procedures. Applicants submit their applications and supporting materials through the system. Units will record their decisions on each candidate in RAPS; the vice presidents, deans, and directors will approve the units' choices through the system; and EOAA will use RAPS to give affirmative action clearance. Units that have their own on-line recruiting systems may continue to use them; however, they will still be expected to post their full-time academic positions in RAPS at the start of their searches; arrange for the transfer of information on their applicants into the system; and use RAPS to obtain academic authorization and affirmative action clearance for their candidates for appointment.

How RAPS Works:

After receiving authorization to start a search, LDEO HR Dept. creates a posting on RAPS using a template that has been created from the information in its Standard Search and Evaluation Procedures (SSEP), which needs approval from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action for its SSEP. (*Sample guidelines for SSEP are included in this dossier.*)

Once the proposed posting is ready, the hiring unit electronically forwards it for review by the appropriate vice president, dean, or director. Once that individual has approved the position, RAPS posts it on the Columbia web site and with the Metro New York Southern Connecticut Higher Education Research Consortium (MNYSC HERC). No further review is necessary before the search can

begin. *(Hiring units will no longer need the approval of the Office of EOAA for its individual search plans.)*

RAPS informs the hiring unit once the position has been posted. At that point, the unit may open the search. While RAPS automatically posts positions on the Columbia and MNYSC HERC web sites, the hiring unit is responsible for placing advertisements in the other venue(s) listed in the submission for the RAPS posting. All outside advertisements must include a URL for the posting in RAPS.

(For LDEO, Aileen Goldberg (aileen@ldeo.columbia.edu), Recruitment Specialist, gives search committee members their Guest user and password that will enable them to view applications in RAPS, and she also assists with placing advertisements for job postings.)

Note: Search committees are requested to look at the section on mailing lists and advertising venues in this dossier and consider placing ads in these venues.

Applicants **must** apply online, submitting application materials through RAPS. In addition, applicants respond confidentially in RAPS to questions about their gender, race, and ethnicity. This information is used for affirmative action purposes but is not available to the hiring unit. RAPS sends the applicants an e-mail message and confirmation number after they have successfully submitted their applications. The hiring unit determines the text of the e-mail.

The hiring unit may give “guest” access to the application materials in RAPS for a particular opening to search committee members and any others who need to review them as part of the selection process. In addition, the vice president, dean or director has online access to the materials on all of their searches in the system. *(For LDEO, the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs and Diversity has access to searches for Officers of Research positions and is included as a search committee member).*

The hiring unit tracks the status of applicants in RAPS. When a candidate has been chosen, it enters in RAPS an explanation of the reasons he or she was selected and ensures that there is a reason for non-selection for every other candidate, using standardized reasons contained in a drop-down menu in the system. The hiring unit then indicates in RAPS that the nominee is ready for approval by the appropriate vice president, dean, or director. The vice president, dean, or director reviews the search materials, authorizes the selection, and submits the selectee for affirmative action clearance; and all of this takes place online via RAPS. *(Affirmative action clearance is done in RAPS.)*

RAPS informs the hiring unit by e-mail when the nominee has been forwarded for affirmative action clearance by the appropriate vice president, dean or director. It sends the unit a second e-mail about the outcome of the affirmative action review once it is completed. For searches that follow the unit’s SSEP, the system communicates the affirmative action decision within twenty-four hours. Waivers are reviewed within five days. Waivers can be sought for the following hires:

- **Specialist:** when the requirements for a position are specialized enough that they can be filled by

a limited number of senior academic officers, all of whom are known to the professional community

- **Star:** when an opportunity arises to recruit s senior academic officer of great eminence such as a nationally or internationally renowned professional
- **Distinguished Visitor:** when a department or school wishes to temporarily appoint a distinguished visitor for a semester or a year
- **Outstanding Diversity Candidate:** when a department or school wants to recruit a highly qualified woman or minority candidate for an academic position whose appointment would assist in meeting applicable placement goals *(Search committees are encouraged to explore the possibility of such hires at LDEO)*
- **Accompanying Spouse or Partner:** when the recruitment of a faculty member or officer of research may require appointment of an accompanying spouse or partner
- **Research Team Member:** when the recruitment of a faculty member or officer of research may require appointing others because they form an established research team
- **Grant Team Member:** when the receipt of a grant may be contingent upon assembling an appropriate research team in advance of its award
- **Candidate for Promotion:** when the outstanding achievements of a member of the research support staff may merit a promotion to the rank of staff associate.