The University of South Carolina (University) Division of Law Enforcement and Safety (Division) is seeking qualified applicants to fill entry-level law enforcement officer positions. The selection process to become a law enforcement officer is very thorough. It includes many steps and will normally take several months to complete. The process is designed to select the very best applicants who live by our values of integrity, accountability, excellence, and human life.

All elements of the selection process use only those rating criteria or minimum qualifications that are job related. All elements of the selection process are administered, scored, evaluated and interpreted in a uniform manner. The selection process used by the Division is described below:

All entry-level positions at the Division will be posted on the University’s jobs website at https://uscjobs.sc.edu. All applicants must submit their applications through this website and should ensure all personal contact information (i.e. telephone number and e-mail address) is current and correct. Résumés, cover letters, and other documentation should be submitted to the University with the application and not submitted directly to the Division. After the application has been reviewed and approved by the University for compliance with minimum qualifications, it and any other supporting documentation will be sent to the Division. Applicants for employment with the Division are directed to check the USC Jobs website for updates concerning the status of their application.

When the Division receives qualified applications from the University, these applications will be reviewed based on experience, education, and knowledge for the announced positions. After a review of these factors, individuals may be selected to attend an information session hosted by the Division. This session will detail the hiring process, requirements and duties of the position, and other pertinent information related to the process. During this information session, applicants will also be required to sign additional background and personal information release forms, a conditional offer of employment, and complete a personnel selection and security screening questionnaire. The questionnaire is specifically designed to assist in the selection and hiring process for public safety agencies. Applicants will also be asked to complete a short writing sample. The number of people selected for this stage of the process will vary, depending on the number of open positions and the qualifications of the applicants.

If selected to proceed upon completion of the questionnaire, applicants will be contacted to attend a first interview. An applicant selected for a first interview will be required to provide specified documents at this interview. These documents include a completed SLED Group One State Constable Application, a completed Background Questionnaire, valid driver’s license, Social Security card, birth certificate, SC voter registration card (required by SLED for commission processing), high school diploma or equivalency certificate, higher education certificates, DD-214 (for military veterans), certified driving records from every state the applicant has resided in over the last ten years, and other documents applicable to employment (i.e. law enforcement or professional training certificates). A preliminary search of law enforcement databases on all applicants will be conducted by the Division at this time.
After the first interview, there will be a review of the applicant’s paperwork, relevant experience, and scores from the interview. Based on these results, individuals may be selected to complete a computerized psychological assessment. This assessment will be emailed to applicants to be completed in a period specified by the Division.

Next, if selected to proceed, a background investigation will be completed on the applicant. It is important for the applicant to notify their references that an investigator will be conducting interviews (both by phone and in-person), and to respond to requests for contact promptly. Upon successful completion of a background investigation, selected applicants will be required to take a polygraph examination. Polygraph examinations are normally scheduled Monday through Friday during business hours, and may require two to three hours.

Next, if an applicant is selected to proceed, he/she will be scheduled for an interview with a psychologist who specializes in law enforcement evaluations. This interview may require up to an hour and a half.

The next phase, if selected, will be an interview with members of the Division’s Command Staff. This interview is normally scheduled Monday through Friday during business hours and may require up to one hour. If other documents are required for the selection process, an applicant will be asked to provide them to the Division at this time.

Lastly, there is a final review of the applicant’s qualifications, documentation, interview scores, and testing results. Based on this review, applicants may be selected for final interviews with the Division’s Chief of Police. This interview may require up to an hour. Within two business days of this meeting, an applicant can expect a decision regarding an offer of employment.

If an offer of employment is made, all police officer applicants will be scheduled for a physical evaluation by qualified medical personnel to verify that the applicant can perform the job functions as indicated on the position description. All applicants will be required to submit to a drug screening. Applicants will also be fitted for uniforms and equipment. After a final offer of employment has been made, an applicant will generally be scheduled for an employment start date within two to four weeks of the final interview.

The employment start date usually corresponds to the start of a University pay period; therefore, there is limited flexibility on this date. However, if conflicts regarding the start of employment date exist, they may be discussed with the Division’s Personnel Supervisor. If the applicant is anticipating more than two days of planned leave during the first six months of employment, the applicant should discuss this matter with the Division’s Personnel Supervisor so scheduling adjustments can be considered.
Starting Salary

Starting salary is determined by the University of South Carolina’s Office of Salary Administration and is based on factors such as: state job classification and pay band, level of education achieved, years of experience, and duties performed*. All positions posted to the University’s jobs website will include the salary range for the position in the job posting. The University’s Office of Salary Administration has mandated set salary levels for police officers and are listed below.

**Police Officers**

Officer with a High School Diploma $34,311  
Officer with an Associate’s Degree $34,997  
Officer with a Bachelor’s Degree $35,696  
Officer with a Master’s Degree $36,409

Upon completion of field training program $36,026  
Upon completion of field training program $36,746  
Upon completion of field training program $37,480  
Upon completion of field training program $38,229

*For some positions, years of related and approved experience may be used to substitute education. For example 2 years of experience equals an Associate’s Degree, 4 years of experience equals a Bachelor’s Degree, and 6 years of experience equals a Master’s Degree.

Frequently Asked Questions

What benefits are associated with these positions? These positions have South Carolina state employee benefits which include health insurance, enrollment in applicable South Carolina Retirement Systems programs, tuition assistance program, paid leave (annual and sick), and paid holidays (as defined by the University). More information on the benefits package can be found on the University’s website.

How will I know the status of my application? Applicants should log into the USC Jobs website to determine the status of their application. The system will update automatically once changes to application status have been made.

How long will the hiring process take? Hiring processes may require four to six months, depending on the position being filled and the number of qualified applicants received.

Is the starting salary negotiable if an applicant is already a certified officer? The University’s Office of Salary Administration has mandated certain salary levels (as noted above) for police officers. The University does allow years of experience to be substituted for level of education for officer candidates (e.g. an officer with four years of direct experience would be hired at the same level as an officer with a Bachelor’s degree).

What style of dress should I wear? For formal interviews with Division staff, business attire is recommended; for all other appointments, business casual is acceptable.
If I am not selected for employment, how can I reapply? Applicants who are not selected for employment with the Division are invited to reapply via the USC Jobs website when subsequent job postings occur.

Is there a physical fitness requirement for the police officer position? There is a fitness requirement for a police officer candidate to attend South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy (SCCJA) training. The standards and a video of the Physical Abilities Test (PAT) course are located on the SCCJA’s website at [www.sccja.sc.gov/PAT.html](http://www.sccja.sc.gov/PAT.html). Currently, officers already certified in South Carolina are not required to re-take this test as a condition of employment.

Can special arrangements be made for out of state applicants due to travel expenses? If there are approaches to assist these applicants without compromising fairness, the Division will consider them.

If I am a certified officer from another state, will I have to attend the police academy? Yes, at least some training at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy will be required to become certified in South Carolina.

If I am hired, what happens next? If you are already a South Carolina certified officer, you will go through the Division’s orientation process and then begin a field training program. This process usually takes one to three months. If you have not completed the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy (SCCJA) training, you will go through the orientation process and then be scheduled for training at the SCCJA. After you complete SCCJA training and receive your certification, you will be required to complete a three-month field-training program at the Division.