



# **GUIDELINES FOR HIRING**

**FACULTY**

**ACADEMIC STAFF**

**LIMITED APPOINTMENTS**

## A Message from the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Extension:

Recruitment and selection of faculty and academic staff present new challenges to higher education. The turnover rate for faculty continues to increase and is expected to continue at a moderate pace. Preliminary estimates released by the University of Wisconsin System indicate 30 percent of faculty are expected to retire by the year 2000. The changing needs of local communities served by UW-Extension dictate the need to recruit and retain increasingly diverse faculty and academic staff to respond to societal educational needs.

In addition, institutions of higher education are at a crossroads. We are experiencing unprecedented growth and demand for our services and we are increasingly under greater scrutiny with higher standards of accountability by our constituencies, legislators and others. In these times, it is particularly crucial that the recruitment, retention and promotion of diverse faculty and academic staff be equitable and responsive to the demands of this changing environment. Also, the importance of how we treat applicants during the recruitment phases of the employment process should not be discounted; after all, it is the first step of the employment process and shapes lasting impressions of the employment environment.

Effectively managing these changes is key to maintaining the health, vitality and economic competitiveness of any institution. The history of attrition in this institution, particularly in faculty positions, makes it clear that now is the time to begin planning for future recruitment needs. By doing so now, we will have ample lead time to launch recruiting efforts to reach as diverse a group of applicants as possible.

Opportunities exist to attract applicants from talented, multifaceted and diverse groups to work as faculty and academic staff -- administrators, analysts, planners, computer specialists, programmers, business experts, nutrition educators, broadcast specialists, producer/directors, videographers and others involved in educational programming. Every selection is increasingly more important and has direct impact upon our ability to deliver high quality, relevant educational programs into the next millennium.

This handbook provides the overall framework for the recruitment and selection of faculty and academic staff. It is designed to assist hiring authorities, departments and search and screen committees with guidelines to enable attainment of UW-Extension affirmative action and diversity goals. It is the responsibility of each Dean, Division Director, Department Head, Office Chair, Unit Manager, Supervisor, Chair of a Search Committee or other hiring authority to comply with these procedures to ensure that UW-Extension does not violate state or federal laws or UW System or UW-Extension policy.

Utilization of these procedures should result in more diverse applicant pools and a more inclusive and expansive view of the characteristics of well-qualified applicants.

# **University of Wisconsin-Extension**

## **VISION FOR DIVERSITY**

UW-Extension appreciates and understands the value of diversity and will work to create and sustain it among employees, clientele and educational partners. Individuals are valued for their differences in age, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, spiritual practice and all dimensions of human diversity. UW-Extension is enriched by the diversity of the human experiences that contribute to the relevance and richness of its educational programs. By embracing the full range of these talents and experiences, UW-Extension can assure its continued educational leadership.

UW-Extension is a diverse and multicultural institution that values pluralism as an essential component of a strong organization. Through interaction with diverse populations and cultures, the institution develops and delivers relevant and effective programs that address the interests and needs of all the people of Wisconsin.

adopted November 6, 1995

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## INTRODUCTION: SETTING A CONTEXT

An institution like University of Wisconsin-Extension commonly commits about two thirds of its budget to salaries. UW-Extension depends on quality human resource decisions to maximize the accomplishment of our educational mission. Each new hire decision has direct impact upon the ability of UW-Extension to meet our own as well as public expectations of the institution.

Before you get started, a few "words of wisdom" might help you frame your responsibilities in the hiring process.

- Become familiar with the **big picture** before immersing yourself too fully in step-by-step details.
- An employment vacancy is an opportunity to align human resources to better achieve the organization's mission and goals. Before rushing into an intense recruitment and selection effort, think about where the organization wants this position to take it. Consider (a) the organization's long- and short-term needs, including affirmative action and diversity goals, (b) changes in direction the organization wishes to make, and (c) desirable role and responsibility shifts among existing personnel.
- After analysis of organizational needs and the existing workforce, identify the job duties and responsibilities that the new position will assume.
- UW-Extension has a strong commitment to diversity, equal opportunity and affirmative action. This guide will help you understand how the institutional policies can help you support that commitment and achieve a more thorough and effective search and hiring decision. Working toward these goals is a shared responsibility.
- A number of recommended practices and rules can help guide your efforts. These guidelines are designed to help you understand what is expected of you, as well as where and when you have choices to make among options.
- While every position and search may include some unique and original aspects, it isn't always necessary to start from scratch. These guidelines will refer you to examples you can draw upon as you design your own tools and procedures.

The remainder of this guide will take you step-by-step through the process of filling an unclassified staff position vacancy. These guidelines apply to the hiring of faculty, academic staff and limited appointees who will be on the UW-Extension payroll. They do not apply to civil service or integrated appointments with other UW institutions.

**STEP 1:  
ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS AND  
DEVELOPING THE POSITION DESCRIPTION**

**Key Ideas**

- ✓ **Why is this position needed?**
- ✓ **Develop an accurate position description**
- ✓ **Determine essential job functions**
- ✓ **Determine an equitable starting salary range**
- ✓ **Determine the recruitment budget**
- ✓ **Determine affirmative action and diversity goals**

**Organizational Needs Assessment**

Provided you have the budget and the FTE authorization to employ an additional person or to fill a vacancy, the first step is to conduct a thorough assessment of organizational needs at this point in time. This information will increase the likelihood that filling this position will enhance the organization's ability to meet important challenges and decrease the likelihood for misdirected, non-productive efforts during the search and selection process.

- What are the most pressing needs or demands the organization faces now or in the foreseeable future?
- What shifts in existing resources would be advantageous at this time?
- Do the talents to meet emerging needs already exist within the organization but need to be freed up for a new purpose?
- Would a different organizational structure make more sense?

See [Appendix 1](#) for a more complete list of questions you can use to probe these issues. Involve others in the analysis and try to take at least a couple of looks at your conclusions over a span of time so you can come at the task with a fresh perspective each time.

**Develop Position Description**

When you are comfortable with your analysis of needs and existing resources, develop the position description for the position you will seek to fill. The position description functions not only as a road map for recruitment and selection, but later for employee performance evaluation and position accountability.

As you develop the position description, clearly state such things as (a) the purpose or overview of the position, (b) position scope, (c) major position duties, (d) essential job functions, (e) internal and external relationships, (f) accountability expectations and (g) authority/communication channels. (See [Appendix 15](#) for sample position descriptions.)

The position scope and major duties you identify will determine if the position is faculty, academic staff, civil service or limited appointment. Your divisional personnel office can advise you on this point and help identify the correct "official" UW title. In addition to the official title, consider a "working title" that more closely describes the position.

The position description and any position announcements must include the statement that "*The University of Wisconsin-Extension is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Women, minorities, Vietnam era and disabled veterans and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.*" Under limited circumstances the abbreviated version may be appropriate: EEO/AA:W/M/V/D (see [Appendix 3](#) for additional examples of EEO/AA/ADA statements).

### **Determine Essential Job Functions**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires the inclusion of essential job functions in position descriptions. They should be identified as you develop the position description or position announcement. Essential job functions are critical to evaluating whether or not an individual with disabilities is qualified to perform a job, with or without reasonable accommodation. **It is important to focus on what must be accomplished in the job, not how it is accomplished.** Although essential job functions are not required to be included in the position advertisement, it is useful for people with disabilities to be aware of these required functions. Essential job functions can be identified by assessing if:

- the position exists to perform the function;
- the removal of a certain job responsibility would fundamentally alter the position;
- it cannot be delegated to another staff member;
- it requires a certain degree of skill not held by other staff members.

You can get assistance in determining essential job functions by contacting your divisional personnel office or the UW-Extension Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs (OEODP). Refer to [Appendix 8](#) for sample essential job functions of a position.

### **Identify Salary or Salary Range for Position**

Determine an equitable salary for the position based on an analysis of (a) other similar positions, (b) market competitiveness, (c) UW System rules regarding salaries and, of course, (d) funds available to support the salary. Remember that fringe benefits have to be paid, too. Check with your divisional personnel office or budget office to be sure that the funding you have available is adequate to support your desired salary level plus fringe benefits costs.

### **Budget**

At this stage in the process, it is wise to develop a budget for this recruitment. One must consider advertising costs, committee expenses, candidate expenses (travel, meals, housing), and relocation/moving costs. Please reference the UW System Travel Regulations or contact your divisional business office for assistance. See [Appendix 16](#) for a sample recruitment budget.

## **STEP 2: POSITION AUTHORIZATION**

### **Key Ideas**

- ✓ **Who needs to approve the filling of the position and why?**
- ✓ **What forms must be completed and processed?**

### **Why Further Authorization?**

The UW-Extension position authorization process applies to all positions, unclassified and classified, and all funding sources. From a division or department perspective, it also makes good sense to evaluate each employment opportunity. The authorization process allows each administrative level in the institution to measure whether the hiring decision is consistent with department, division and institution goals. It allows for broader awareness of personnel actions at all levels of the organization. See [Appendix 9](#) for the UW-Extension Position Vacancy Listing (PVL) Form.

### **The Approval Process**

The approval process proceeds in this order:

- department chair or unit chair approval
- division approval (process will vary - see divisional personnel office)
- institutional approval - allow three working days
  - Director Human Resources' review for correct title assignment
  - Vice Chancellor authorization to fill position if \$54,500 or above
- Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs (OEODP)
  - review all Position Descriptions, ad copy and job announcements
  - approve the recruitment plan if the position is in a job group where there is an AA goal.
- UW System approval
  - **UW System President and/or Board of Regent approval is required** for certain titles or when the salary is expected to exceed 100% of the Executive Pay Plan Group 6. See [Appendix 10](#) for UW-Extension UPG #11, Request for Authorization to Recruit form and sample letter.

### **Completing the Approval Process**

**Prior to posting**, the following materials must be approved by appropriate divisional and institutional offices (see [Appendices 9, 11 and 15](#) for sample materials):

- UW-Extension Position Vacancy Listing (PVL) Form
- Recruitment Plan Form (OEODP approval if there is an AA goal)
- position description
- position announcement
- advertising copy
- other department, unit or division forms as appropriate

### **STEP 3: RECRUITMENT PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Key Ideas**

- ✓ **The goal is to recruit a diverse pool of applicants that will provide a group of qualified candidates**
- ✓ **How to meet affirmative action goals for the vacant position**
- ✓ **Exceptions to the normal recruitment process**
- ✓ **Preparation of the position announcement and advertising copy**
- ✓ **Recruitment continues until the position is accepted by the selected candidate**

#### **Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Considerations**

These guidelines are designed to help hiring authorities and employing units act in accordance with UW-Extension rules and state and federal laws regarding equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. They also will help the employing unit identify potential employees who may not be reached through routine recruitment and selection practices. Appointments of search and screen committee members must be made in writing by the appropriate authority. Such appointments must be documented and retained on file as part of the recruitment plan, along with other applicant materials. Every effort should be made to include women and persons of color on the search and screen committee. See [Appendix 2](#) for legal foundations for affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.

Hiring authorities shall complete a **Recruitment Plan** for each search (see [Appendix 11](#) for a sample form) outlining steps they will take to recruit a diverse applicant pool. Local, statewide, regional or national recruitment must be undertaken for **all** unclassified positions that are 50% time or greater, and six months or longer in duration, regardless of funding sources. Minimal recruitment activities (e.g., local, on-campus, multicultural student organizations, Job Service) also must be undertaken for appointments of 50% time or more, but of duration for less than six months. Documentation of recruitment methods used is required for either process. This documentation must be retained with other applicant records pertaining to the recruitment, search and screen process. See also, the conditions for exceptions discussed later in this step.

Graduate Assistants, Project Assistants, emergency or other short-term appointments require listing the position with Job Service and using other local distribution sites and methods, such as community-based organizations, individuals on campus, campus job centers, multicultural resources centers, multicultural/disadvantaged services offices, local or community-based targeted print publications, classified personnel offices, other local/state/city/county personnel offices or appropriate agencies, etc.

An **Applicant Tracking System** must be established for use throughout the search to document various search activities (see Step 4). Support staff responsible for the record-keeping associated with the search should establish a series of files and procedures to collect the required information as it arrives. During the "search" phase, applications should be received in accordance with the approved search protocol and pertinent UW-Extension policies and procedures (also see Step 4, Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs Data Sheets).

## Develop the Recruitment Plan

Determine Affirmative Action Goals for Position. Refer to the current UW-Extension Affirmative Action Plan to determine whether any affirmative action goals are established for the job group and title. Also examine availability data for the relevant job group to determine the appropriate baseline for representation of women and people of color (racial/ethnic minorities) in applicant pools.

Using this information, plan your recruitment strategy to ensure that you can create an applicant pool that reflects availability data for the relevant job group. Is this a local, regional or national search? This will vary by the nature and complexity of the position. You will need to consider where qualified candidates are located (other similar position markets, diverse population centers, colleges with relevant degrees, etc.) With these thoughts in mind, begin to prepare the detailed information that comprises the recruitment plan.

Recruitment Plan. The Recruitment Plan describes the strategies for advertising each vacant position open for recruitment. You may contact your divisional personnel office or the UW-Extension Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs (OEODP) if you need assistance. See Appendix 11 for a copy of the current Recruitment Plan form.

Scope of the Search. The geographic areas of recruitment listed below are defined to enhance your efforts to create a diverse applicant pool. The time frames identified indicate the minimum amount of time positions need to remain open to ensure adequate time to advertise the position and receive applications. It is extremely critical that your planning include sufficient advance lead time for outreach to diverse groups of potential applicants. Recruitment requirements at the national, regional and statewide levels include all lower level recruitment activities specified. Contact the UW-Extension OEODP to request the most current listings of affirmative action recruitment resources. This information may be obtained in writing or you may supply a computer disk for an electronic copy. In addition, if you are on the INFOSYS LAN, you may download these files from **g:\common\eeo\recruit.mdb** ...(these files are in an MS Access file structure).

### ➤ **Searches utilizing national media - 6 weeks**

- Advertising in national professional publications of general circulation such as The Chronicle of Higher Education.
- Advertising in one or more affirmative action publications such as *Black Issues in Higher Education*, *The Affirmative Action Register* or *Hispanic Outlook* or other professional journals and publications directed toward women, persons of color, persons with disabilities and veterans.
- Making personal contacts with and sending recruitment information to individuals, groups and community-based organizations that have contact with women, persons of color, persons with disabilities and veterans.
- Making contact with students, placement offices and graduates of historically Black, Hispanic, Asian, and/or American Indian-serving institutions.
- Making personal contacts with faculty and academic staff members on campus or at other institutions who are women, persons of color, persons with disabilities and veterans.

Application Deadline: At least 6 weeks after the time announcement is to appear in the publication.

➤ **Searches utilizing regional, statewide or local media - 4 weeks**

- Advertising in general circulation publications and publications targeted to audiences such as racial/ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, veterans, etc. with special consideration given to newspapers in Milwaukee, Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Gary and Saint Louis because of significant minority populations found in these locations. You may want to consider identifying markets where diverse populations of people are likely to be employed in fields and industries related to the position vacancy.
- Advertising in statewide and local publications of general circulation and those that primarily target minority populations, including those in Madison and Milwaukee.
- Advertising in publications for multicultural student organizations at institutions of higher education.
- Letters to institutions and other contacts in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Iowa and Indiana.
- Personal contacts (including with existing racial/ethnic minority faculty and academic staff).

Application Deadline: At least 4 weeks after the time announcement is to appear in the publication.

**Exceptions to Recruitment Requirements**

On a case-by-case basis, special exceptions to this policy may be granted by the OEODP in the following situations:

- for appointments of no more than one year when unplanned conditions arise and immediate position coverage is necessary (emergency/interim appointments);
- special "project" appointments when the naming of an individual is a prerequisite to or condition of the award of a contract or grant;
- for appointments to positions as Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator on contracts and grants, whenever the naming of individuals to work on the sponsored project is a condition of the award;
- for appointments of individuals who bring specialized talent and/or knowledge for a limited time on specific project(s); may have specific expertise or abilities which set them apart from others;
- other appropriate reasons.

Requests for recruitment exceptions and waivers must be submitted to the Divisional Personnel Office for approval and routing to the UW-Extension OEODP for final approval. Include in the request:

1. A detailed explanation of the business reasons a recruitment waiver is justified in this case.

2. An assessment of the impact upon the function if the waiver is not granted.
3. The title, salary and classification of the position in question.
4. The length the appointment is expected to last.
5. Where applicable, when recruitment will be undertaken.

### **Position Announcement and Advertising Copy**

The position announcement is an invitation to prospective candidates to compete for the open position. It is important that the announcement create a positive impression. It should contain a short description of the hiring division and department, a summary of the major position responsibilities, the minimum qualifications required, application instructions, the deadline for submission of materials and an EEO/AA/ADA statement. Consider adding the statement "Women and minorities are encouraged to apply" whenever possible. Position announcements must also include a notice that application materials are available in alternative form upon request. Salary information may be included if appropriate to the position.

**PLEASE NOTE: Position vacancy must be readvertised if there are any changes in the salary or duties and responsibilities of the position at any point in the recruitment phase. See Appendix 15 for samples of position announcements.**

It is extremely important to evaluate the application process to avoid setting minimum requirements that exclude applicants based upon non-receipt of materials that are not going to be used or evaluated at the first stage of screening. For example, will videotapes be used as a work product to evaluate and select applicants for interviews or will they be examined after screening to determine whether "minimum qualifications" have been met.

Advertising copy often contains the same elements as the position announcement but condensed. See Appendix 15 for samples.

### **Implementation**

At this step in the process, you have developed a position description, a recruiting plan, position announcements and advertisements. You have received division and institution approvals to proceed with your search. Now you need to implement your plans. Remember that recruitment ends with a signed letter of acceptance from the selected candidate. The steps that precede that event -- the search/screen procedures, the style of interactions with candidates, the appearance and timing of materials provided to candidates and the overall professionalism and responsiveness of all who come in contact with candidates -- are all part of the recruiting process.

## **STEP 4: RECEIVING APPLICATIONS**

### **Key Ideas**

- ✓ **Packet of applicant information ready for distribution at posting time**
- ✓ **Plan in place for responding to applicants at posting time**
- ✓ **Contact your divisional personnel office to obtain information about the Applicant Tracking Database**
- ✓ **Plan in place for maintaining applicants' records at posting time**
- ✓ **File for each applicant**
- ✓ **How applicants are received and processed is an important part of recruitment**
- ✓ **The search and screen committee**

### **The Search**

As soon as the position is announced, the hiring authority or representative should be prepared to receive and promptly respond to an applicant's materials and inquiries. Applicants begin to form impressions of the department and the University from the moment the position is announced. UW-Extension is judged by what it does, as well as by what it says it will do.

Applicant files should be handled carefully and kept in a secure place away from the general office files. Even at this early stage, it is important to remember that everyone involved in the search has a responsibility to keep applicant information confidential. Early in the process, search and screen protocol and other ground rules need to be developed and in place before beginning the screening of applications. Nothing said or written is "*off the record*" pertaining to the evaluation of an applicant's qualifications. The highest ethical and professional standards are expected of everyone.

Only committee members and others participating in the consultation/selection process should have access to the files. Access can be extended to other faculty and staff who will review the applicant's qualifications as part of the consultation process. It is highly recommended that other faculty and staff be allowed to meet with finalists and, when appropriate, be given the opportunity to review their credentials. See Appendix 5, Operating Procedures for Search Committees.

### **The Applicant Packet of Materials**

The position announcement and advertisements inform applicants to request certain materials from the hiring division/department. The packet sent to applicants must have (see Appendix 12 for sample forms):

- a detailed position description;
- a UW-Extension Application for Employment form;
- an Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs Data Sheet;
- an applicant's open records request for confidentiality form;
- other search materials.

The UW-Extension application form, EODP data sheet and the open records request for confidentiality form are available from your divisional personnel office. Other items of interest to applicants such as brochures about the institution, division or department, may be included as informational items.

### **Applicant Tracking Database**

The Applicant Tracking Database is an institution-wide database used to collect, analyze and monitor all information for each unclassified position. It should be used at every step of the recruitment and hiring process to record information. The database contains four inter-connected tables which are linked by Position Vacancy Listing number (PVL#): PVL/Position Information, Applicant Information, EEO Data and the Applicant Log. The database is in Microsoft Access format and will be distributed on diskette by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs (OEODP).

### **Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs Data Sheets**

Equal Opportunity and Diversity Programs Data Sheets are to be inserted into each application provided to applicants<sup>1</sup>. Record the PVL# on the data sheet. This ensures proper grouping of applicant data where an applicant fails to provide adequate identifying information.

An adequate return of applicant data sheets is essential to assess the sufficiency of applicant pools and affirmative action recruitment efforts. Hiring authorities and search and screen committee chairs may obtain summary data about the composition of applicant or candidate pools from their divisional personnel office at any time during the search process. Data sheets will be tabulated by a representative in your divisional personnel office. In any case, it is extremely critical that these materials be handled only by an individual who is not involved in decision-making affecting the applicants.

Prior to the close date, send reminders to applicants who have not returned the applicant data sheets. This will help to ensure sufficient return of applicant data sheets by the closing date to allow analysis of the data so the process can continue in a timely fashion. Postcards may be obtained from your divisional personnel office.

### **Applicant Process Logs**

Applicant process logs are used to track all information received from applicants and all decisions made regarding the status (i.e., reason for rejection) of each individual applicant (see [Appendix 13](#)). The applicant process log is part of the Applicant Tracking Database. A separate applicant process log must be maintained and kept for each position vacancy that is filled through open recruitment. The applicant process log is available electronically as a Microsoft Access Database file. You may obtain a copy on disk by contacting your divisional personnel office or the OEODP.

**Contact your divisional personnel office for an assessment of whether there is a reasonable representation of women and/or racial/ethnic minority applicants based upon their availability in the labor force for the specific job group of the vacancy.** Availability information is located in the UWEX Affirmative Action Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> An applicant is one whose required application materials were received by close of recruitment. Applicants included on this list will constitute the official applicant pool.

The divisional personnel office will make a recommendation concerning **the certification of the applicant pool** and counsel you about next steps at this stage if certification is declined. The division's Dean/Director has the final authority to determine if the screening and selection process will continue or if additional recruitment is needed to ensure a diverse applicant pool. If the pool is certified for the selection process to continue, divisional personnel offices will compile EEO data and prepare a composite report detailing EEO/AA/ADA data about each individual applicant.<sup>2</sup>

**All incoming material must be logged and date stamped prior to review by the hiring authority or Committee.** A record is kept of each applicant's materials as it is received. Among other things this may include inquiries (by telephone or in person), applications, resumes, references and general correspondence. Search materials are to be stored in a secure and confidential place and separate from regular department files.

It is highly recommended that applicant files be checked two weeks prior to the close date for completeness. Contact applicants with incomplete files to remind them of the approaching deadline and encourage them to submit any required materials omitted from their application materials. A telephone log also should be maintained to record any contacts relating to recruitment. This information becomes part of the official search records.

### **Search and Screen Committees**

Search and screen committees are expected to help identify and recruit applicants. They may be called upon to participate in the recruitment and selection process in a number of other ways. Committee members' roles are significant and critical if the process is to be fair, objective and consistently applied to all applicants under consideration. Committee members have the responsibility of identifying and selecting the best person for the position and for applying the principles of nondiscrimination and affirmative action.

It is the hiring authority's responsibility to name the search and screen committee and to help clarify expectations for the committee's role in the search. Membership on the search and screen committee shall reflect diversity, including representation of women and persons of color. Where appropriate, both classified and unclassified staff should be represented.

Search and screen committee members may be asked to manage the process from the development of the position description through the selection of semi-finalists or finalists to be interviewed by the hiring authority. The chairperson of the search and screen committee becomes the contact between the committee members, the Dean/Director, the divisional personnel/human resources function, the OEODP and the Department/Unit head. See Appendix 5 for sample Operating Procedures for Search Committees.

Plan for a thorough committee orientation right at the beginning. Check with your divisional personnel office or the UW-Extension OEODP for help, but plan to include:

- a thorough explanation and discussion of the position vacancy to be filled;
- the appointing authority's expectations for the committee's role in recruitment and selection;
- parameters within which the committee is to operate;

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<sup>2</sup> To avoid illegal discrimination or the perception thereof, this information shall not be given to individuals involved in screening and selection decisions regarding this pool of applicants.

- a thorough briefing on EEO/AA/ADA laws, rules and expectations;
- recommended recruitment and selection practices;
- general time guidelines;
- how committee expenses will be handled;
- how the committee agrees to reach decisions;
- procedures to help maintain confidentiality.

## **STEP 5: CLOSING RECRUITMENT**

### **Key Ideas**

- ✓ **Applications must be received by close of recruitment**
- ✓ **Comply with Wisconsin Open Records Law regarding applicants**
- ✓ **Certify the pool of candidates before making screening decisions**

### **Deadline for Receipt of Applications**

In order for an applicant to be considered, all required application materials must be received by application deadline. Other materials may be required to be submitted at later times.

Any unusual circumstances should be discussed with divisional personnel offices as soon as they become known. Some illustrative examples of circumstances that should be discussed before any actions are taken could be (a) a clear administrative error that resulted in an applicant's materials arriving late, or (b) a notice that a mail delivery service had attempted to deliver the package in a timely manner but was misdirected so the materials are received late.

Have a consistent process in place for handling late applications. It is important that the process be understood and used by all who receive applications so that all instances are handled in a timely and consistent manner.

### **Applicant List to UW-Extension Vice Chancellor (Wisconsin Open Records Law)**

The Wisconsin Open Records Law requires that names of applicants for State of Wisconsin employment vacancies be available to the public upon inquiry. It is permissible for an applicant to request confidentiality in writing at time of application. The law permits the names of such applicants to be held in confidence from public inquiry unless the applicant is a finalist for the position.

Upon receipt of a request for applicant or finalist names, divisional personnel offices are required to forward a list of all applicants **not** requesting public records confidentiality to the office of the UW-Extension Vice Chancellor within two working days of the close of recruitment. The list must include:

- applicant's name;
- applicant's address;
- position/title currently or most recently held by applicant.

**Only the Vice Chancellor is authorized to release this applicant information. Other UW-Extension personnel or search and screen committee members are not authorized to release names or numbers of applicants -- not orally nor in writing, not formally nor informally.**

## **Certification of Applicant Pool**

After recruitment closes and prior to any applicant screening decisions being made, assess the diversity of the applicant pool with the job group availability information found in the UW-Extension Affirmative Action Plan to determine if it adequately represents the relevant labor force of women and persons of color (racial/ethnic minorities).<sup>3</sup> The decision will consider:

- labor force availability data in the annual UW-Extension Affirmative Action Plan;
- impact of geographic location of the position;
- other issues determined to be relevant.

After assessment, submit information about the pool to your divisional personnel office for certification and for counsel about your next steps. The division's Dean/Director has the final authority to determine if screening and selection procedures will proceed or if additional recruitment will be undertaken.

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<sup>3</sup> An applicant is one whose required application materials were received by close of recruitment. The applicants included on this list will constitute the official applicant pool.

## **STEP 6: SCREENING CANDIDATES**

### **Key Ideas**

- ✓ **Developing a screening and selection process and tools that are authorized by your divisional personnel office prior to use**
- ✓ **Screening/selection criteria**
- ✓ **Documenting reasons applicants are removed from further consideration at each step**

### **Designing a Comprehensive, Coordinated Strategy for Screening Applicants**

All phases of screening and selection should be coordinated with the others. Every screening and selection process will include at least:

- screening submitted application materials;
- candidate interviews;
- reference checks.

A process might also include such optional activities as:

- performing actual work activities for an abbreviated period of time;
- candidate presentations or seminars;
- less formal interactions over meals, as well as other forums that are appropriate to the nature of the position (remember it is important to interact with all candidates in a consistent manner).

Reviewing submitted application materials occurs first. Reference checks and interviews may be handled in differing order. Reference checks may be:

- collected and reviewed simultaneously with applicant written materials;
- completed before interviews;
- done after interviews are completed;
- done during screening or before interviews with additional checks completed after interviews.

The other optional activities could also occur at varying times throughout the screening and selection process. It is important that you determine your procedures in advance and use them consistently with all candidates.

### **Documenting Reasons for Selection and Non-Selection**

You will be expected to document in the applicant process log the **specific reasons for inclusion or exclusion of each applicant** from further consideration. The reasons must be based upon the duties and responsibilities of the position and directly related to the position requirements. Examples:

- ♦ "...research and scholarly activities too limited"
- ♦ "...did not have required five years teaching experience"
- ♦ "...lacked design experience"
- ♦ "...refused offer for personal reasons"

NOTE: These are only examples; they are not intended to be an all-inclusive list.

### **Develop Screening and Selection Process**

You will need to develop tools (forms, scales, questions, etc.) to use at various stages of the screening and selection process. All of the tools will be based upon job requirements detailed in the position description. Not all criteria have to be applied at the very earliest stage of screening and selection; some are more appropriately addressed at subsequent stages.

It is important that screening and selection tools, when taken as a whole, address all the listed criteria, including essential job functions (see Step 1 for discussion of essential job functions). REMEMBER: Hiring decisions cannot be based on an applicant's inability to perform a non-essential job function or if the task is marginal, infrequently performed, could be delegated to someone else, or could be accomplished with assistance from other staff.<sup>4</sup>

It is highly recommended that you develop a two-stage screening process. This way reviewers can exercise their independent judgments about an applicant based upon the job-related criteria. For instance:

- require that applicants submit samples of their writing ability as part of their written application information
- ask references to evaluate the candidate's writing ability
- have the candidate complete an in-person writing exercise on the day of interviews

If the judgments are consistent, you can be more confident in their accuracy. If there are great disparities in how applicants are rated, it will be important for committee members to review decisions and discuss the reasons for the significant differences or determine whether more information is needed.

A fair and high quality applicant screening and selection process must be job related. It requires:

- a thorough understanding of what predicts success in this position
- a means for applying the predictors of success to each applicant's materials

You can find examples of the tools discussed in the rest of this section in the Appendices.

Screening and Selection Criteria. Prior to beginning the review of applicants, you must clearly establish the criteria that will be used to guide the screening and selection processes. Think of the criteria as the indicators and predictors of success in the position. This is an extremely important step as these criteria form the foundation for:

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<sup>4</sup> 41 CFR 60-741.2(u) Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination Obligations ... Regarding Individuals with Disabilities.

- reviewing and evaluating written application materials;
- conducting reference checks;
- interviewing candidates;
- making selection decisions.

You are asked to first identify a comprehensive set of criteria that cover all points you will consider at some time in applicant screening and selection. The criteria should be directly related to successful accomplishment of the position's duties and should be sure to address:

- all required and preferred job qualifications as stated in the position announcement;
- significant job roles and responsibilities as stated in the position description;
- affirmative action and equal opportunity considerations appropriate to the nature of the position (i.e., broader and more extensive experience with affirmative action or equal opportunity practices for managers than for entry level professional positions).

Try trouble shooting your list of criteria to see if you can find some aspect of a potential candidate's qualifications that you would want to assess but couldn't using these criteria. Keep refining or expanding your criteria until you can find no further gaps. See [Appendix 17](#) for examples of screening criteria.

Tool for Screening Submitted Application Materials. All people reviewing submitted application materials are expected to use a common screening tool based on the selection criteria. Review the list and identify the criteria that can be assessed from the applicants' submitted materials. Some criteria may be more appropriately assessed at other stages of the selection process. Your criteria will lose their validity and usefulness if you try to use inappropriate information to measure them. As you develop the tool:

- be sure that each criterion is clearly written so that all reviewers have an accurate and consistent understanding of what is being measured and how it will be used;
- devise a consistent, easily understood and easily used rating system to measure the extent to which an applicant meets a given criterion;
- determine the relative weight that will be given to each criterion in regards to importance to success in the position when determining each applicant's comparative strength;
- if differing weights will be assigned to criteria, develop an easily used process by which the rating score given to each criterion is correctly weighted when compiled into the applicant's composite score or rating.

The screening tool for applicant materials must be authorized by your divisional personnel office prior to use. You might want to delay seeking authorization until you have completed all screening and selection tools. It's possible that you may need to reconsider which criteria will be measured in each stage of screening if you find that you have repeatedly assessed some criteria but have not assessed

others at all. When you're sure this screening tool is final, check with your divisional personnel office for divisional approval. See [Appendix 17](#) for examples of screening tools.

Interview Questions. Again, go back to your comprehensive list of screening and selection criteria. This time, identify all of the criteria that can most appropriately be assessed through personal interaction with candidates in an interview format. Craft questions to address the criteria, taking into consideration the following:

- keeping a question as concise and direct as possible so the applicant has a sporting chance to remember it all or divide the question into parts and be prepared to repeat each part;
- avoiding in-house jargon that will be confusing to external candidates;
- asking lots of questions that have candidates relate things they have actually done in regards to job-related issues (research shows that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior);
- balancing the concrete answers with some opportunities for candidates to share their philosophy on issues related to the position if this is appropriate to the position's roles and responsibilities;
- asking candidates how they would respond to realistic job-related scenarios avoiding scenarios that require extensive inside knowledge of the organization;
- designing several questions to address some of the criteria from slightly different perspectives so answers can be compared for consistency or the extent to which they complement each other;
- asking several people to respond to the questions to be confident that each question is understood in a similar way.

When the questions are final, check with your divisional personnel office for approval before use. See [Appendix 19](#) for examples of interview questions.

Interview Rating Forms. Every interviewer should use a common form to rate an applicant's answers to interview questions. It is very important that the form be easy to use in an unobtrusive manner during the interview and allows interviewers to capture all relevant information generated by the interview. Develop a rating form that:

- has easy to use rating scales;
- has easy to use weighting scales;
- has room for interviewer notes and comments;
- is easy to follow along with questions and answers.

Again, when the form is finalized, get approval from your divisional personnel office before using. See [Appendix 19](#) for examples of interview rating forms.

Reference Checks. Reference checks give you the opportunity to assess criteria that aren't appropriately measured solely by the candidate's own responses. On the flip side, keep in mind that

reference checks are not the time to assess criteria that require information that only candidates possess. Review your screening and selection criteria and identify the ones that reference checks should be used to assess.

Determine how reference checks will be accomplished. A number of alternatives exist. Some illustrative examples include soliciting:

- unstructured reference letters (send a copy of the position description to the person supplying the reference);
- reference letters that are requested to be focused on specified aspects of the position or specified criteria;
- written references on a structured form;
- oral responses to a structured form.

Now develop the questions or lists to which people providing references will respond. Be sure that you are using unambiguous, concise and direct language. Have several people respond to what you develop and keep refining it until all people are hearing the same questions or seeing the same purpose for what you ask them to do. Seek ways to measure the extent to which the references think a candidate will meet an expectation and the basis upon which the judgment is made -- or how confident they are in making that judgment. It can make a big difference in how you evaluate the information if a reference gives a high rating on some criterion, but admits having limited experience with the candidate upon which to base the rating.

Plan how you will introduce your request for reference comments explaining the nature of the position being filled, some background on the employing organization and the general procedure you are following in soliciting references. If the reference is being solicited by letter, include this in your written request. If the reference will be obtained by phone, clarify about how long you expect it will take to interview the referent and confirm if this is a good time to talk or if another time could be identified that would be more appropriate.

Finally, establish an accurate and consistent way in which reference checks are scored or rated across reference checkers and across candidates. And once again, when the reference check format and rating method are finalized, get approval from your divisional personnel office prior to use. See [Appendix 18](#) for examples of reference checks.

Other screening tools and procedures. If other screening or selection procedures or materials will be used in addition to those discussed above, these must also receive divisional approval before being used. For instance, some positions may require the use of audio or video tapes, writing samples or instructional presentations. Check with your divisional personnel office.

## Screening Applicants

Once your screening tools are authorized, screening can commence. The authorized screening tools are expected to be used consistently throughout the screening and selection process.

- In large applicant pools, you need to take caution that your "standards" don't change as you progress through the pool. You may find that you tightened up or loosened your standards of excellence as you progressed. If the pool is large, it would be wise to occasionally go back to several candidates you evaluated earlier and see if your present evaluation decisions would be consistent with your earlier ones.
- **Do not begin screening until applicant pool is reviewed and certified by your divisional personnel office.**

When you have initially screened all applicants' submitted materials, you are asked to place each applicant in one of two categories:

- Persons with complete files who do not meet minimum qualifications. These applicants **cannot** be considered for the position and do not receive further consideration. These people are also notified that they will not receive further consideration. Document for each applicant the specific reasons for exclusion (see the forms and codes in the Applicant Tracking Database).
- Persons with complete files who meet minimum qualifications. These people continue to be considered according to the previously established search and screen protocol until a small group of finalists are identified to be invited to interview for the position. It's recommended that at least three finalists be identified, if this is possible, with several alternates in case selected finalists withdraw.

At this point, persons conducting applicant screening must make a decision as to whether the remaining applicant pool contains enough talent for the position to justify going forward with selection or to suspend selection activities and undertake actions to expand the talent pool under consideration. It is recommended that you regularly reconsider the overall talent in your pool of candidates to determine if it is appropriate to continue selection procedures.

If the decision is to proceed, the pool should represent a group of applicants who have acceptable qualifications and for whom no further differentiation can be made without additional information to be obtained by other stages of the screening and selection process.

## Reference Checking

Checking references is an important step in the selection process. It is fraught with potential pitfalls. Safeguards should be built into this step to ensure consistency of process and accuracy of information:

- if reference checking includes an oral discussion with the reference, it can be a safeguard to have several members present when the contact is made;
- without exception, authorization to check references must be obtained from each applicant/candidate prior to contacting any references (the provision of names of references constitutes authorization);

- if you wish to contact references whose names were not provided by the candidate, clarify this with the candidate prior to making the contacts and don't make the contacts if you don't get permission; if this is done orally, document the agreement in writing;
- guard against anonymous references, gossip or unsubstantiated hearsay;
- if strongly negative information is obtained through reference checks,
  - compare the negative information with information from other references, and
  - seek and fully consider the candidate's response before rejecting a candidate based upon the negative reference information.

It is highly recommended that at least three references be contacted for each candidate for whom references are checked. The contacts and their responses to the reference check questions must be summarized, recorded and retained on file along with other applicant information. The date, time and name of the reference and the person(s) contacting the reference must be noted.

### **Other Screening Activities**

Other screening activities are carried out in accordance with previously authorized tools and procedures.

### **Certification of Finalist Pool**

The list of finalists is forwarded to the divisional personnel office (use Certification Form [Appendix 14](#) to communicate this information). The divisional personnel office will report its recommendations to the divisional Dean/Director within two working days as one of the following alternatives:

- certify the finalist pool is adequate and the search and screen process may proceed
- decline to certify the finalist pool and recommend at least one of the following courses of action
  - reexamine/reevaluate the finalists' pool;
  - re-open the screening process, with specific direction as to process and expected outcome;
  - cancel the search and begin a new search;
  - propose another alternative.

Upon receipt of the written evaluation of the pool of finalists, the divisional Dean/Director or designate reviews the results and recommends if selection should continue or if more recruitment should be done. Your divisional personnel office will counsel you at this stage.

If the Dean/Director or designate does not approve the pool of finalists, s/he may adopt the recommendations in the written evaluation and/or decide to take alternative action.

### **Finalist List to Vice Chancellor**

Upon receipt of a request, the Wisconsin Open Records Law requires that a list of all final candidates, regardless of requested open records confidentiality, be made available. As before, the list should indicate applicants' names, most recent job or title and mailing address.

**Only the Vice Chancellor is authorized to release this applicant information. Other UW-Extension personnel or search and screen committee members are not authorized to release names or identities of any applicants -- not orally nor in writing, not formally nor informally.**

### **Documenting Selection Decisions Leading to Selection of Finalists**

Record on the applicant process log the job-related reasons why unsuccessful applicants were removed from further consideration. Record all pertinent information in the Applicant Tracking Database as indicated.

### **Inviting Candidates to Interview**

Prior to contacting candidates to invite them to interview, be sure you have done all your homework so you present a comprehensive, well organized offer to them. Do not lose sight that recruitment is still in force. Your contact with finalists at this point can make a significant impact on their impression of the organization and their interest in accepting an employment offer. Before contacting candidates:

- Thoroughly understand all the required and optional activities you offer the candidates as part of the interviewing experience and be sure that you schedule them all. The key is to be well-prepared and well-organized, but not so rigid that the candidates feel they have no influence in the experience they will have.
  - Have several alternative itineraries from which individual candidates can choose.
  - Consider offering a host for the candidate if the interviews are in person.
  - Understand what assistance you can provide the candidate regarding transportation to and from airports, hotels, interview sites, etc.
  - Be ready to confirm their preferences in hotel lodging (as long as it stays within State limits).
  - Be ready to concisely communicate how expenses will be handled.
  - If a candidate will be relocating, be ready to discuss contacts you can help them make regarding personal issues they want to address (i.e., housing, spousal employment, schools, churches, shopping, cultural amenities, etc.)
  
- Try to create ways to minimize out-of-pocket costs to candidates by central billing hotels, purchasing airline tickets, buying meals and others to the extent possible in accordance with UW-Extension business procedures.

- Consider initially contacting candidates by phone to discuss alternatives -- itineraries, travel schedules, if spouses/family members will attend, things they want to do while in for the interview -- then promptly confirm all arrangements in writing.
  - Be sure you understand if the written confirmation should be sent to a business or home address.

## **Interviewing Candidates**

Using previously authorized tools and questions, thoughtfully structure the candidate interview experience. Don't lose sight of the fact that candidates are interviewing you as a potential employer, just as you are interviewing them as a potential employee. Some points to consider include:

- Will interviews be in-person or via telephone?
- What other activities (if any) will candidates take part in as part of the interview
  - work assessment exercise;
  - giving position-related presentation to committee or larger group;
  - meeting other people who will be associated with the position;
  - becoming familiar with community as a place to live -- housing, community organizations, schools, cultural amenities, etc.
- Seek ways to use the total interview experience to
  - gather information about candidates you still lack after reviewing submitted information and conducting reference checks;
  - gather information about candidates that cannot be obtained through exchange of written information or reference checks;
  - verify candidate information received through other sources.
- Keep in mind that candidates also have agendas for their interviews with you -- don't frustrate them by giving them no opportunity to ask their own questions or to meet with people they want to meet.
- Be sensitive to the impact of "little things" upon candidates -- how they are greeted, who hosts them, considerations and courtesies they are afforded.
- Ensure that all finalists are afforded equitable opportunities for interviews, to meet with appropriate persons to demonstrate their professional abilities, and to follow similar meeting schedules.
  - Similar expenses must be reimbursed or covered for candidates in comparable situations.
- In the applicant process log, document for each applicant the specific reasons for inclusion or exclusion -- reasons must be concrete and directly related to position requirements, i.e., "research and scholarly activities too limited," "did not have five years teaching experience," "lacked design experience," "refused offer for personal reasons."

Several UW System or UW-Extension business policies impact on how interviews are conducted (do not proceed until you get instruction and authorization from your divisional business office):

- reimbursement of candidate expenses;
- reimbursement of candidate host expenses;
- reimbursement of employee expenses in work site city;
- centrally billing vs. seeking individual reimbursement (for interviewers, for candidates).

### **Recruitment/Selection Report Completed Prior to Extending Job Offer**

After candidates are interviewed and selection decisions are made, using the Applicant Tracking Database, record the reasons explaining your decision for each candidate (see [Appendix 13](#)).

The hiring authority or Search and Screen Committee consults with the divisional personnel office regarding extending an offer of employment. By the time this communication occurs, the hiring authority or Search and Screen Committee will have submitted the following to the divisional personnel office:

- candidate(s) selected for hire;
- narrative discussion of the comparative strengths and limitations of all finalists including
  - the reasons for recommending the selected finalist(s), and
  - the reasons other finalists are not being recommended;
- applicant process log summarizing decisions made regarding all applicants.

**Prior to extending an offer, the divisional personnel office will review this information and obtain the approval of the divisional Dean/Director. This must be completed before a job offer is made.**

**STEP 7:  
EXTENDING A JOB OFFER**

Once a final candidate has been selected for hire, certified by the divisional Dean/Director and any remaining issues have been resolved, it's time to make the offer. Discuss these issues with your divisional personnel office when you reach this point. Items you'll need to cover include:

- letter of offer with position description and terms of appointment (fixed, probationary, etc.);
- distributing I9 and W4 forms;
- other related personnel policy documents that new hires receive;
- moving expenses (see your divisional business office for policy);
- salary;
- start date;
- staff benefits;
- special resources or equipment needed;
- office space.

## **STEP 8: RECORDS RETENTION**

The purpose of retaining records related to filling a vacancy is to be able to explain or defend the hiring decision at any future date. These materials also serve as a valuable resource for future searches. The following records must be retained for at least six years:

- Certification Form: Recruitment and Selection
- Name of the hiring authority
- Position description and announcement
- Request for Authorization to Recruit and advertisement copy
- Application materials used
- Applicant process log
- Screening tools, reference check procedures and interview procedures
- List of all applicants
- All applicant files
- Reference letters, completed reference forms or notes of interviews with references
- Correspondence and telecommunications with candidates
- Record of all decisions made (be specific)
- Demographic information on people involved in screening and selection (name, position, title, race, sex) and who served as chair (if a committee was used)
- Committee operating procedures
- Minutes of search/screen committee meetings (optional)