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government hiring decisions, not political patronage. In order to assure the integrity of state government, every employee has a responsibility to view public service as a public trust and to act impartially. Preferential treatment will not be given to any private organization or individual based on political affiliation or influence.

Communication The Department of Commerce will implement strategies to inform employees, applicants, and the general public of the merit-based recruitment and selection plan.

A copy of the agency plan will be available to all employees on the Department of Commerce intranet <http://intranet.nccommerce.com/policies/> . Employees with questions may contact the Human Resources Office at 919-733-2104.

- Role Definitions/ Expectations**
- A. **Executive Management** staff is responsible for:
- leadership in developing and implementing merit-based procedures and demonstrating commitment
 - support for merit-based recruitment and selection.
- B. **Managers and supervisors** are responsible for:
- evaluating the need for filling vacant positions;
 - maintaining accurate and current position descriptions for subordinate jobs;
 - understanding the concepts of the merit-based system and communicating the process to employees and applicants;
 - making every effort to achieve and maintain a diverse workforce; demonstrating commitment and support for merit-based recruitment and selection;
 - making all hiring decisions based on merit principles; and, documenting selection decisions.
- C. Human resources and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) staff are responsible for:
- demonstrating commitment and support for merit-based recruitment and selection in daily operations;
 - providing technical advice and assistance to managers and supervisors;
 - developing agency specific policies and procedures for merit based actions;
 - ensuring the training of managers and supervisors on a variety of issues relating to merit-based recruitment and selection;
 - monitoring recruitment and selection activities for adherence to merit-based policies and procedures;
 - maintaining recruitment and selection data in order to conduct employment trend analysis.

Individuals with responsibilities which include human resource functions (such as Division Personnel Representatives) may also provide assistance and

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guidance to managers and supervisors. For the purposes of this plan, such individuals will be considered a part of the human resource staff. The role of these employees shall be determined by the hiring manager and the Director of Human Resources prior the evaluation of any applications.

D. Employees and applicants are responsible for:

- obtaining vacancy information in order to submit the required materials;
- providing full, accurate, and complete information as to their qualifications;
- submitting materials for the vacancy by the established deadline.

Pre-recruitment/ Recruitment Activities

The Department of Commerce will strive to insure a diverse applicant pool to achieve a diverse workforce that successfully meets the needs and demands of the agency.

E. The hiring manager, with assistance and guidance from the Human Resource staff, will:

- assess the need for the position to ensure it contributes to meeting the goals, objectives, and mission of the work unit;
- conduct a job analysis including a review of the duties, responsibilities, and qualifications of the position; and
- revise the position description if necessary.

Job analysis is necessary only when there is a change in the duties and responsibilities that impacts qualifications required. Therefore, if a current accurate job analysis already exists for a given job type, there is no need to conduct a new one for each individual vacancy.

For example, in instances where there is a high volume of positions in a class, frequent turnover in a class, or little job change, there will likely not be a need to conduct a new job analysis each time a vacancy occurs. As long as there is a job analysis on file that accurately assesses the position, there is not a requirement to conduct another one.

The hiring manager and Human Resource staff should assure that the critical tasks, KSA's, competencies, and training and experience requirements, including any selective criteria, necessary to successfully perform the duties of the position have been identified and communicated to the prospective applicant pool.

Information from the job analysis and position description will guide the hiring manager in drafting the vacancy announcement. Human Resource staff will ensure the vacancy announcement meets the requirements of State Policy.

The hiring manager and Human Resource staff will determine the appropriate option in posting a vacancy (internal to the agency, state government, or

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external). In addition, Human Resource staff consults with the hiring manager to determine additional recruitment sources, if needed, to target specific audiences, including professional journals, newspapers, and technical colleges/universities.

Hiring managers are encouraged to use interview questions and guidelines including in the hiring package. Prior to the vacancy closing date, the hiring manager and the Human Resource Director will determine any new or non-routine selection tool(s) that will be used in the final evaluation process. Any selection tool(s) utilized will be objective, based upon job-related KSAs, and be consistently applied to all applicants in the final selection pool. Some examples of selection tools include structured interview, in-basket exercises, written tests, skills tests, and reference checks.

Selection Process A. Definitions

1) Selective criteria - additional minimum qualifications specifically related to the duties and responsibilities of the individual position

2) Knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)

- knowledge - information which makes adequate performance on the job possible
- skill - a proficiency that is readily observable, quantifiable, and measurable (examples include skill in typing; skill in operating a vehicle)
- ability - capacity to perform an activity at the present time

3) Preferences

- Specific types of experiences, degrees, licenses, KSAs, or other selection factors above those minimally required to perform the duties and responsibilities of a position

4) Competencies

- Sets of knowledge, skills, and abilities an employee needs to successfully do their job. Competencies must be (1) demonstrated on the job; (2) measured according to standards set by the organization; and (3) required of the job based on the organization's needs.

5) Qualified

- those applicants whose credentials indicate the possession of training and experience, selective criteria, and KSAs included in the vacancy announcement

6) Most qualified

- the group of applicants who, to the greatest extent, possess qualifications which exceed the minimum requirements described in the vacancy announcement.

B. Differentiating qualified and among the most qualified applicants

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1) Determining qualified applicants

Applications are to be submitted to the Human Resource department. A designated human resource staff member, in consultation with a subject matter expert or management representative, will screen all applications. Any subject matter expert or management representative may provide consultation to Human Resources in the screening process. However, a staff member of the Human Resources staff shall determine which applicants meet minimum qualification requirements including any selective criteria.

If the quality of applications forwarded is deemed insufficient, the hiring manager may choose to re-advertise the position.

2) Determining most qualified applicants

Applications are evaluated to determine to what extent minimum qualifications are exceeded in order to identify the most qualified. To the extent possible, the most qualified applicant pool should reflect the demographics of the initial applicant pool.

Panels may be used for this level of evaluation, particularly where positions are technically complex and/or organizationally sensitive. Any panel must include a member of Human Resource staff. However, in instances where there are large numbers of vacancies in the same class and/or qualification requirements are readily evaluated, management may opt not to use panels to determine the most qualified.

Applications are grouped according to those that meet minimum qualifications and those that clearly exceed minimum qualifications. Positions are technically complex and/or organizationally sensitive may play a role in determining those applicants that clearly exceed minimum qualifications. Those clearly exceeding minimum qualifications will be a manageable number to refer to the hiring manager. Any further analysis must continue to be based upon the job-related qualifications identified in the vacancy announcement.

If there are no applicants who clearly exceed the minimum qualifications, the applications meeting minimum qualifications are forwarded to the hiring manager or a decision may be made to re-advertise the vacancy.

Applications referred to the hiring manager must be reviewed in relation to all applicable policies and issues.

C. Use of panel/individual for evaluation process

1) Key Points

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- the hiring manager, in consultation with the human resource representative, decides if a panel is to be used.
- the hiring manager and human resource representative will identify potential panel members
- applications will be submitted to the designated human resource representative who is responsible for screening all applicants to determine whether they meet minimum qualification requirements
- individual/panel members will maintain the confidentiality of the material they review

2) When a panel evaluates applications, panel members will:

- be selected from the same or closely related field to the position being filled
- include a human resource representative as an advisor to ensure that merit-based policies and procedures are consistently applied
- be familiar with selection guidelines
- appoint a chair

3) When an individual evaluates applications, he or she will:

- possess knowledge of job subject matter or receive training
- receive orientation/training on selection process

Employment/ Reemployment Priorities

The Human Resource staff or designated individual(s) will review the initial applicant pool to identify applicants with priority status. All employment/re-employment priorities are to be afforded in accordance with State policy. This will require, in some instances that applications of individuals with certain priorities will be included among those referred to the hiring manager. All individuals involved in application evaluation, including the hiring manager, will receive advice and guidance from the Human Resource staff regarding the priority consideration which must be afforded.

Consideration must be given to applicants that have the following priorities:

Priority Reemployment	Employees scheduled to be separated or separated through reduction-in-force have priority consideration over non-state applicants. RIF candidates must only meet minimum qualifications to receive priority.
Policy-	Employees separated from exempt policy-

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Making/Managerial Exempt	making/managerial positions for reasons other than just cause have priority consideration over non-state applicants and must only meet minimum qualifications to receive priority.
Veterans Preference	Preference is to be given to eligible veterans for initial employment, subsequent employment, promotions, reassignments, horizontal transfers and reduction-in-force situations as stated in statute. (GS 126-82).
Promotional Priority	Career state employees are eligible for priority consideration over non-state applicants when the individuals possess substantially equal qualifications.
Injured-on-the-job/Workers' Compensation	Employees injured-on-the-job, placed on workers' compensation leave, and who have been released to return to work by their physician have re-employment considerations based upon maximum medical improvement.

Making the Final Selection Recommendation/Decision The final selection recommendation/decision will be made from among the most qualified applicants. Applicants with priority re-employment must also be given appropriate consideration. The hiring manager will:

- utilize selection tools that are objective and based upon job-related KSAs or competencies.
- consistently apply any selection tools to all applicants in the final pool.
- be responsible for documenting the selection process of all interviewed candidates and justifying the hiring recommendation and/or decision.

Human Resource staff will be available for guidance and assistance to the hiring manager at any time during the selection process.

Applicants in the Most Qualified Pool that are not selected for the position will receive written notification of the selection decision.

Approval Process If the hiring manager does not have final approval authority, the final selection decision must be approved by the appropriate management official.

Documentation of Process It will be the practice of Department of Commerce to maintain documentation of the merit-based recruitment and selection process in order to support the decisions and to provide fact-based information for monitoring and evaluating recruitment and selection practices and procedures.

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A file will be maintained for each hiring event for a minimum of three years. Each file will contain:

Human Resource staff will periodically review program data across the agency to ensure the recruitment and selection activities are in compliance with the agency plan. Human Resource staff will compile and analyze an annual summary of selection activity for the Secretary. This report will include analysis of the impact on demographic groups, exceptions to policy, and other relevant factors. Human Resource staff also will comply with the reporting and plan update requirements of the Office of State Personnel. any record of job analysis conducted for the vacancy including any additional KSAs, competencies, and/or selective criteria that resulted from job analysis:

- vacancy announcement
- recruitment sources other than the state web posting
- selection tools and criteria
- applications received
- selection/decision log
- inventory of applicants as unqualified, qualified, and most qualified
- recruitment and selection checklist (optional)

Monitoring/ Evaluation

Human Resource staff will periodically review program data across the agency to ensure the recruitment and selection activities are in compliance with the agency plan. Human Resource staff will compile and analyze an annual summary of selection activity for the Secretary. This report will include analysis of the impact on demographic groups, exceptions to policy, and other relevant factors. Human Resource staff also will comply with the reporting and plan update requirements of the Office of State Personnel.

Appeal Process

If an applicant has reason to believe they were denied employment due to political affiliation or influence, the applicant may appeal the hiring decision directly to the Office of Administrative Hearings within 30 days of written notification that the position has been filled if all the following conditions apply:

- Applicant timely applied for the position in question;
- Applicant was not hired into the position;
- Applicant was among the most qualified persons applying for the position;
- Successful applicant for the position was not among the most qualified persons applying for the position; and
- Hiring decision was based upon political affiliation or political influence.

