

State of Wisconsin

DOA – DIVISION OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

- MERIT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION BULLETIN -

Date: January 10, 2023

Locator No. DPM-0592-MRS

Subject: Notification of Policy Changes Regarding
Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook
Chapter 176

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide notice and guidance regarding policy changes relevant to Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook (WHRH) Chapter 176 “Competitive Selection Procedures.” **This bulletin is effective immediately and will expire upon publication of a new version of WHRH Chapter 176.**

History

The State’s human resources workforce has undergone a significant reduction in authorized FTE, while managing various aspects of a global pandemic and experiencing exceptionally high rates of turnover and difficulty recruiting for and filling positions in multiple critical job areas, including but not limited to: Nursing, Security, Social Services, Administrative Support, and Information Technology. The changes communicated in this bulletin are part of a concentrated effort to enable human resources staff across the enterprise to fill vacant positions as quickly and efficiently as possible, while maintaining clarity, consistency in practice, and the integrity of the Wisconsin civil service system.

Changes

176.080 3.b. Current text: “Benchmark criteria will include detail describing the criteria for a more than acceptable or model answer, an acceptable answer, and a less than acceptable answer.”

It is no longer necessary to define criteria for a score below the passing point when using a 3-point scale.

- 0 – No scoreable response; no relevant experience; incomplete application
- 1 – Candidate does not meet the acceptable criteria, but does have relevant experience
- 2 – Acceptable/minimally qualified candidate (*requires detailed criteria*)
- 3 – Model/more than acceptable candidate (*requires detailed criteria*)

Criteria must still be defined at the less than acceptable level for a 9-point scale. This is important because if the unit determines it is necessary to adjust the passing point as described in WHRH 202.100, the difference between a score of 1 and 3 can be significant.

176.100 1. Current text: “To maintain the integrity of the process, panel members involved with evaluating applicant material prior to register/certification creation cannot be involved with the next step of the selection process post certification.”

Panel members involved with evaluating applicant material prior to register/certification creation have knowledge of initial assessment results (scores). As such, they (or anyone else with knowledge of initial assessment results) cannot be involved in subsequent steps of the selection process. This is in accordance with [ER-MRS 6.08\(3\)\(c\)](#). Note that if a supervisor wishes to participate in the interview panel, they cannot be involved with the rating of the assessments; BMRS recommends supervisors never be involved in evaluating applicant materials.

Once a selection has been made, individuals with knowledge of initial assessment results may assist with other post-certification steps (checking references, background checks, and/or personnel file checks).

Individuals who helped develop the assessment (supervisor, HR staff, subject matter experts) may participate in the initial assessment evaluation OR the interviews, but not both.

176.110 1. Current text: “**Interview:** This is a mandatory step in the selection process.”

An interview is still required if there is more than one candidate. However, there are instances where only a single qualified candidate is available. Provided other adequate vetting processes still take place (references, background check, personnel file check, etc.) an interview may be waived at the discretion of the Agency Human Resources Manager or delegate.

176.110 2. F. Current text: “[Interview] Benchmarks must be organized in three categories; Less than Acceptable, Acceptable, and More than Acceptable. The use of point systems, such as 9-point scale used for a Resume Screen to determine a civil service score, is strictly prohibited.”

Benchmarks must be organized in *at least* three structured categories, where job-related criteria for each category (above Less Than Acceptable or equivalent – see note below) are clearly described, and candidates can be evaluated and assigned to a category. A “pass/fail” type benchmark may also be utilized in some circumstances. Use of a point system, or use of a single benchmark to assign a different rating to different candidates, are both prohibited.

Note: Similar to the above-described changes to 176.080 3.b., it is not necessary to define “Less Than Acceptable”. Simply stating, “Does not meet acceptable criteria, but has relevant (experience, training, etc.)” is adequate.

176.110 3.d.(2) Current text: “Additionally, panel members that are not the direct hiring supervisor of the position must be at the level of the vacancy or higher and be capable of lending credible perspective in judging candidates (e.g., similar classification, previous comparable employment, related education, etc.)”

The Bureau of Merit Recruitment and Selection recommends interview panel members be at or above the level of the vacancy. However, agency HR Managers are authorized to allow employees who are not at the level of the vacancy or higher to participate on the interview panel if they are capable of lending credible perspective in evaluating candidates (e.g., expertise related to the position, similar classification, previous comparable employment, related education.)

Individuals in positions that report to a vacant supervisory position shall not participate as an interview panelist unless all filled subordinate positions are allowed (or offered the opportunity, if available) to meet and interact with final supervisory candidates prior to a selection being made (i.e. informal meet and greet). Feedback to the hiring manager in such circumstances should be considered as advisory rather than determinative, and benchmarks are not required.

Contact the BMRS Director for approval of situations where the unit feels it would be appropriate for a subordinate position to participate in an interview panel other than that described above.

Note: Although the above authorizes HR Managers or delegates to permit exceptions for interview panelists to be at or above the level of the vacancy, exceptions to the requirement for assessment raters to be at or above the level of the vacancy must still be approved by the BMRS Director.

Administrative Information

This bulletin supersedes any conflicting policy guidance in Chapter 176 of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*. Future updates to Chapter 176 will reflect the policy changes put forth in this bulletin.

Questions related to this bulletin may be directed to Karla King by email at Karla.King@wisconsin.gov or by phone at (608) 267-0712.



James G. Feldhausen, Director
Division of Personnel Management
Bureau Merit Recruitment and Selection