# personnel policies for museums:
## a handbook for management

by ronald l. miller

american association of museums

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# personnel policies for museums:
## a handbook for management

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# foreword

With the publication of Museum Ethics in 1978, the museum profession at last had guidelines, representing the consensus of the profession, against which museum policies and practices could be measured. It was the intent of the AAM's Committee on Ethics that each museum would use Museum Ethics to develop its own documents to deal with specific issues of policy or procedure that arise in the course of day-to-day operations.

Similarly, Personnel Policies for Museums: A Handbook for Management is intended to guide museum directors, administrators and trustees in the establishment of a document that addresses one of those important issues: personnel management. Ronald Miller has developed a manual which, as he says in his introduction, is not intended to be definitive, but, rather, is a comprehensive source of information on personnel policy, which a museum should tailor to its own needs in establishing effective policies.

This handbook is part of the American Association of Museum's continuing efforts to help museums maintain the highest standards in their programs and operations. We are grateful to the National Museum Act, Smithsonian Institution, which supported the author's extensive research. Ronald Miller thoroughly revised his original study, which was conducted in 1976, for this publication. Finally, we acknowledge the generous assistance of the Shell Companies Foundation, which contributed to the publication costs.

Museums have obligations to their employees that deserve the same kind of professional attention as do their obligations to their collections. In a recent Museum News interview (July/August 1979), several personnel administrators were asked to comment on the museum personnel function. Ronald Egherman of the University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley, observed: "Generally, museums lack sound professional management. But with limited financial resources, they can no longer afford to mismanage or 'unmanage' their human resources. Only through an enlightened, professional approach to personnel management, incorporating clear and concise job descriptions, proper delegation of responsibility and authority, regular job performance review for all employees, and the establishment of appropriate compensation and benefits, can museums hope to thrive."

The American Association of Museums offers the guidelines that follow to assist museums of all sizes respond to the increasing challenges of their role as employers.

*American Association of Museums*
*January 1980*

Lawrence L. Reger
Director

# introduction

It has been said that the last act of a dying organization is to get out a new and enlarged edition of the rule book. The development of personnel policies is often equated with stifling bureaucratic rule making. Sometimes, the criticism is warranted. More often, though, the reluctance to formulate personnel policies is a misplaced concern with "tying the hands of management." A poorly developed policy can be a hazard, possibly even more damaging to the effectiveness of an organization than having no formalized statement. Nevertheless, the experiences of widely diverse organizations--profit, nonprofit and public--have shown that personnel policies that are well thought through and effectively implemented are basic managerial tools to improve employee morale and institutional performance.

An institution's choice is not confined to either doing nothing or committing thousands of dollars for a policy manual of classic proportions. Every museum can and should have a set of written personnel policies. The comprehensiveness of those policies ought to be determined by the needs and resources of the institution and its employees.

During the summer of 1976, museums of art, history, science, zoology and botany were surveyed through the auspices of a National Museum Act grant to identify the needs of such institutions for personnel policy and procedure information. The respondents to that survey asked for material that would provide the following:

1. Information for a museum to write new policies and procedures

2. Information for a museum to revise existing policies and procedures

3. Information for a museum to assess its personnel administrative function

4. Information that is useful in evaluating alternate approaches for personnel policies and procedures.

These points became the objectives of that project, and subsequently of this handbook.

While it does not attempt to be definitive, this handbook does attempt to give a comprehensive look at the issues that a museum should consider in developing its own personnel policies. This book is substantially expanded from a draft that has been used by 26 museums on a trial basis during the past two years as part of the National Museum Act project. It is now offered to all museums and related

institutions as a source of information and as an aid for assessing contractual provisions and work place practices.

## *POLICIES AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL*

Clichés about the value of personnel policies and policy manuals often do not reveal the versatility of this managerial tool. Moreover, organizations not aware of the numerous advantages that can be derived from a comprehensive and integrated personnel policy system are reluctant to spend precious time and resources in the pursuit of abstract efficiencies. Pragmatically, organizations can "get by" with random policy statements as needed for issues perceived to be most important or pressing. For such organizations, and for those that have a personnel policy manual which merely languishes in a file drawer or on the book shelves of top administrators, the potential benefits of a personnel policy system are not being realized.

The benefits of a personnel policy system should aid all components and levels of an organization. Some employers find personnel policies most useful in budgeting and financial planning; other employers utilize policies extensively in union relations, especially in grievance administration. Personnel policies convey to employees statements concerning their rights and obligations within the organization. Thus, the comprehensive and integrated personnel policy manual offers substantial benefits in institutional performance and employee morale, but at a cost--i.e., the resources and time to develop, use and maintain the system. The following points should be considered in assessing the cost-benefit trade-off associated with personnel policy systems:

1. Personnel policies require that an organization ask basic questions of itself. This means the organization moves from abstraction to specificity in defining the employer-employee relationship. It also means that the organization must understand the linkages among policies and the impact of those policies. Policies accommodate interests, not just between an employer and employees, but also among competing employee interests and among competing institutional interests. These trade-offs are best made in advance of their use, when the implications of alternative policies can be assessed more effectively.

2. The process of accommodating interests must also take into account external law, administrative agency regulations and court decisions. As the scope and specificity of the external constraints increase, the need for established policy guidelines also increases, as does the need for updating those policies.

3. Delegation of authority is encouraged through personnel policy systems. Upper management can influence a wide range of policy decisions more effectively through established policies than if it has to be involved in each specific situation. Repetitious, time-consuming decision making can be avoided.

4. Personnel policies facilitate institutional planning and are in turn modified by the planning process. For labor intensive organizations such as museums, personnel policies would be a key component in the analysis for long-range financial plans. Similarly, well-developed personnel policies are an indispensable component in planning for union-management relations, both contract negotiation and contract administration.

5. Policies define fixed standards or tolerance limits for decision making, thereby helping to stabilize the work environment. Employees know what treatment to expect or the factors that influence decisions affecting their interests. Supervisors can realize a greater degree of confidence in making decisions and explaining them. Consistent treatment of employees is fostered, thereby reducing the potential for charges of favoritism, discrimination and arbitrary action.

6. Organizations should not have to search for the past practice on policy decisions as managerial personnel change. Established policies provide continuity even though decision makers come and go.

7. Recruiting and retaining personnel are aided because employees can better understand the full advantages of employment. For many workers, the fairness and consistency of day-to-day treatment are as important as the level of salary and benefits. Well-developed personnel policies--and that is not synonymous with lucrative or liberal provisions--can build employee support and loyalty.

8. The personnel policy manual can be an important aid in the ongoing training and development of supervisory personnel. Training in policy interpretation and application can be a means to establish and modify role perceptions and, therefore, a source for organization change.

9. Compliance with personnel policies can be used as a measure of organizational effectiveness. Established policies do not preclude exceptions and ad hoc decisions. Rather, policies are reference points for assessing the performance of management.

## *POLICIES VS. PROCEDURES*

Policies should provide guidelines or standards for decision making but not the procedures that specify how action is to be taken. However, this general rule to distinguish between policy and procedure is not valid when the procedure is essential to the overall structure and substance of the policy. For example, the procedural elements of a grievance system (such as the number of appeal steps, length of time for an answer to the grievance, etc.) leading to binding arbitration cannot be effectively separated from the basic policy determination to settle unresolved grievances at arbitration. Moreover, elements

that on first reading might appear to be procedural can have significant substantive importance. For instance, consider the implications for affirmative action and union relations in the following statement:

*The museum shall post announcements of all position vacancies. The notices shall describe duties, salary range, relevant qualifications to effectively perform the duties, and indicate the procedure by which an employee may make application.*

A policy statement confined to the intent to post position vacancies would be incomplete.

Distinguishing between policy and procedure is less troublesome if consideration is given at the outset to the degree of flexibility and specificity that will be built into a personnel policy. Policies provide tolerance limits within which supervisors exercise discretion. The flexibility for decision making could be quite broad for certain elements of a policy, while other elements are more fixed, or standardized within the organization. The degree of supervisory discretion, or flexibility, built into a policy reflects a number of factors, among them: the nature of the policy topic; the intended degree of centralized/decentralized administration; the profile of supervisor competency; and an audit system to monitor compliance with policy guidelines.

A personnel policy needs to be sufficiently comprehensive to provide guidance for policy questions that normally arise in its administration. However, a policy statement ought not attempt to address all possible policy questions. Unique elements are more appropriately decided on a case-by-case basis. This means that a thorough understanding of the topic is a prerequisite for determining the specificity of the policy statement. An appropriately developed policy statement aids supervisory decision making, whereas lack of sufficient policy guidance can result in the "runaround" for employees, inconsistent and arbitrary decisions and inefficient use of supervisor time.

## *POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT*

There is no one best way for an organization to move from random policy statements to a comprehensive and integrated personnel policy manual. Usually an organization's efforts are shaped primarily by the realities of available money and staff. However, the most critical aspects of a program to develop a personnel policy system are judgmental, in order to achieve an accommodation among internal and external interests. The decisions to be made are generally not between good and bad, but between good and good. In making these decisions of policy development, a major pitfall to avoid is the failure to involve adequately first line and middle level supervisors. Without the participation and endorsement of management, policies are reduced to mere words on paper.

The process of policy development should be shaped by the particular circumstances, staff and resources of each employer. However, studies

of diverse strategies to develop and maintain personnel policy systems suggest the value of certain common components. These include:

1. A personnel policy committee is best used to react to policy drafts, rather than to write them. Depending upon the managerial style of the organization, the composition of such a committee could vary from consisting of only supervisory personnel to the participation of supervisors, governing board members and nonsupervisory employees. However, a qualified staff member, or a staff member working with a personnel consultant, can more effectively assimilate resource material and create policy drafts than can the committee as a whole. Furthermore, the staff member should have responsibility for coordinating all components of the process, from gathering resource material, through obtaining final approval of policy statements, to disseminating printed material and orientation training for supervisory personnel.

2. Current personnel practices--what is being done now at the institution--are a primary source of information. More likely than not, practices on the same issue will differ among departments. An important task during the research phase is to identify how different practices relate to various operations and functions, and how changes in practices would affect the operations and functions. This research phase would also include gathering relevant internal documents as well as external resource material, such as model policies, policy information manuals, policies from other comparable organizations, etc., and reference material on legislation, administrative agency regulations and relevant court decisions.

3. Early in the development process, it is essential that top management, possibly involving a subcommittee of the governing board, define the basic trade-offs among contending interests that are the foundation of policies. The character of the organization as an employer and the costs of operation emerge from the integration of individual policy decisions into a composite personnel policy system. For example, a commitment to encourage promotion from within should not be hindered by how seniority is defined and used in promotion decisions.

4. The policy research and drafting phases could result in alternative approaches for some issues. The assessment by a personnel policy committee of the costs/benefits associated with the alternatives is a major contribution of such a committee.

5. Drafts recommended by the personnel policy committee to the chief administrative officer should undergo a final assessment concerning the accommodation of internal and external interests, and the coordination of policy elements with institutional planning (financial, facility, program and service, etc.). To illustrate, the impact of pay policies, especially the structure of the salary schedule, upon staffing over a 10-year-period should be anticipated. Differing results will be realized depending upon the emphasis given to merit or automatic increases in salary progression.

6. Dissemination and implementation of approved policies involve effective ongoing communication to employees and training sessions for all supervisory personnel. Usually the form and specificity of personnel policies make them inappropriate for direct distribution to employees. Instead, a multipurpose employee handbook, even of modest proportions, would be more effective. The supervisory training sessions should explain how policies reflect an accommodation of internal and external interests, how policies have been integrated and how policies are to be interpreted and applied over a range of real world situations.

7. Finally, a fully developed personnel policy system should provide for periodic assessment of each policy. Is the policy working as intended? Given internal and external changes over time, does the policy need modification? Is there consistent interpretation and application among supervisors? Are exceptions to policy documented and supported? An audit of the personnel policy system could be assigned to a staff member, a personnel consultant or some combination of the two. However done, the person or persons should have the latitude and security to carry out a thorough analysis, but with an appreciation for the character, values and capacities of the organization.

## *FORMAT AND USE OF THIS HANDBOOK*

The handbook is divided into 34 categories of policy considerations. Each section consists of general material about that category, followed by discussion of the specific policy issues. The Table of Contents lists all section headings and subheadings to facilitate the use of this handbook for reference purposes.

Museums of all types and sizes should find this handbook useful for a variety of purposes. On the one hand, a museum could use the information as resource material in the development of new policies or the revision of existing policies. To be most effective, personnel policies and procedures should be tailored to the specific needs, conditions and temperament of each institution, and therefore the material offered here should be adapted to the particular institution's purposes. Alternative approaches identified in this handbook or gathered from other sources should be evaluated. This book does not profess to give the "right" or "correct" way to treat issues, but rather is a comprehensive list of issues that the institution should take into account in developing policies.

The other major use intended for this handbook is as a reference point for an assessment of the personnel administration function. The museum that already has written policies and established practices should find this handbook useful in self-evaluation. The recommendations contained here are not necessarily the "best" provisions for a particular museum, but they do identify issues that should be addressed and suggest reasonable approaches to be considered.

*ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

This handbook has been developed with the financial, administrative and technical support of the American Association of Museums and the Smithsonian Institution. The National Museum Act administered by the Smithsonian Institution funded the substantial research required in studying existing museum personnel policies and practices and in developing this handbook. Additional support from the American Association of Museums makes this publication possible.

The writer extends special appreciation to Larry Chalmers of the Art Institute of Chicago, George Rabb of Brookfield Zoo and Lee Webber of the Field Museum who served as advisors and who contributed so importantly to the planning and initiation of this project. The publications staff of the American Association of Museums and Paula Degen of Degen Associates Interpretive Services ably brought the project to completion. The writer assumes full responsibility for the substantive content of this handbook.

# 1 employment categories

Every museum employee should be placed in an employment category. Such a designation determines eligibility for benefits, notification rights and obligations, layoff-recall-displacement rights, etc. Four categories are used in these policies: full-time employment, part-time employment, adjunct employment and temporary employment.

The term "regularly scheduled" is used rather than "permanent" here to convey the meaning that while an employee should have confidence in the continuity of terms and conditions of employment, these should not be considered as permanent. Employment itself might have to be terminated through release, reduction-in-staff or even discharge. Regularly scheduled more appropriately describes the intended nature of the employment relationship.

Related to this point, the term "normal workweek" should be interpreted as applying a standard number of hours (40 hours are used in these policies) for use in distinguishing among the categories. When circumstances warrant drastic action, the workweek and/or workday might be altered--such as reducing the hours of work as an alternative to layoffs.

The terminology used to designate and describe the employment categories should not restrict or imply restrictions on employee utilization.

*FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE*

An employee who is regularly scheduled to work the normal workweek (40 hours per week). Full-time employees should receive full museum benefits to which they may be entitled. Full-time employees should be designated as either exempt or nonexempt from the overtime pay provisions. These employees should be paid either monthly or biweekly.

*PART-TIME EMPLOYEE*

An employee who is regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours, but 20 hours or more in the normal workweek. Some employers subdivide this category into constant and variable part-time employment to distinguish the employees who work a constant number of hours per week from those whose weekly hours may vary. While this degree of refinement may serve a worthwhile purpose in some work settings, it is not generally recommended. "Regularly," as used in this context, means that the employee works between 20 and 40 hours per week, whether variable or constant.

Based upon such factors as the number of part-time employees, the supply of qualified individuals willing to work part-time, the value of part-time work to the museum, the level of compensation, etc., the museum should specify whether part-time employees are entitled to employee benefits. These policies are written with the assumption that part-time employees receive prorated benefits to which they may be entitled.

An alternative approach would be to determine the cost of prorated benefits for part-time employees, and to incorporate into rates of pay a fair share of this cost. For example, a part-time employee paid $4.00 per hour might receive an additional 35 cents per hour in lieu of all benefits (vacation pay, holiday pay, sick pay, etc.).

Part-time employees should be designated as either exempt or nonexempt from the overtime pay provisions. These employees should be paid biweekly.

*ADJUNCT EMPLOYEE*

An employee who is regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours in the normal workweek. The number of hours may be constant or variable from week to week. These employees should not receive benefits (including holiday pay) except as specified, such as a museum store discount. Adjunct employees should be designated as either exempt or nonexempt from the overtime pay provisions. These employees should be paid biweekly.

*TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE*

An employee whose period of employment is not expected to last beyond six consecutive months. Under special circumstances (such as an intern assignment), the period of employment as a temporary employee could be extended to last no more than nine consecutive months. These employees should be hired for specific projects or programs and for specified periods, as stated in a letter of appointment. Temporary employees could be hired for constant or variable hours per week. It should not be the intent of the museum to use this category as a means to avoid the employment of individuals on a full-time, part-time or adjunct basis. Except for special circumstances, if employment of the individual continues beyond the sixth month, the individual should be converted to the appropriate category, i.e., full-time, part-time, adjunct.

Temporary employees should not receive benefits, except for holiday pay to which they may be entitled and other specified benefits such as a museum store discount. Temporary employees should be designated as either exempt or nonexempt from the overtime pay provisions. These employees should be paid biweekly.

## *EMPLOYMENT PROBATION*

Employment probation should not be considered a category of employment but rather the initial phase in the employment relationship. Individuals are hired as full-time, part-time, adjunct or temporary employees who must satisfactorily complete the probationary period as a condition for continued employment.

Although the probationary period is fully discussed in its own policy section (see section 6), its provisions are summarized here because they apply to all new employees, regardless of the employment category. An exception may be that if a former employee of the museum is rehired, all or a portion of the probationary period may be waived at the discretion of the museum. This judgment should be based upon the past employment record and the relationship, if any, between former position duties and new position duties.

The probationary period should last for six consecutive months from the date of most recent hire. For various reasons, such as absences during the initial six-month period, the probationary period could be extended. Termination of an employee during the probationary period should be without notice or pay in lieu of notice. Probationary employees should have no layoff, recall or displacement rights.

If the period of employment for a temporary employee is extended beyond six consecutive months, the employee's probationary period should be similarly extended--in other words, temporary employees should always be in a probationary period.

## *EXEMPT/NONEXEMPT CLASSIFICATIONS*

Depending upon the ownership, control and commercial activities of the museum, it may be subject to the provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (1938 as amended). If the museum is a covered employer under the act, job classifications must be designated as exempt or nonexempt from the overtime payment provisions of the law (see section 29). These overtime compensation designations should be distinguished from the employment categories (full-time, part-time, adjunct and temporary). An employee is designated as exempt or nonexempt from the overtime provisions of the act, depending upon the duties of his or her job classification. Exempt/nonexempt designations should have the approval of the personnel administration manager and the museum's chief administrative officer.

## *CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY*

During the course of employment, an employee may have occasion to change from one employment category to another. Change of category should be with the mutual agreement of the employee and the museum. However, if an employee works outside of his or her category for four consecutive calendar weeks, the employee should be entitled to regular assignment in that category.

If the change is from part-time, adjunct or temporary to full-time, the most recent date of hire should be adjusted to reflect the full-time equivalent (FTE) of any period of less than full-time employment. For example, an individual was hired as a part-time employee (half-time: 20 hours of the normal 40 hours); she worked for a year and then changed to full-time employment. For the purpose of calculating service credits, her date of hire would be adjusted forward by six months and she would begin full-time employment with six months of service credits.

Part-time employees who change to full-time status should carry over any earned and accrued vacation pay credits or sick pay credits. Adjunct and temporary employees who change to full-time status should be assigned sick pay credits and vacation pay credits retroactively, based upon their FTE service credits. Use of the vacation pay credits and sick pay credits should be consistent with sick pay and vacation policies (see sections 18 and 19).

The number of personal days (if this benefit is available) which the employee may become eligible to use, should be based upon a prorated adjustment. For example, a man who worked part-time (half-time: 20 hours of the normal 40 hours) changes to full-time employment on July 1. The museum provides five personal days per year. The man has used no personal days to date. It would be reasonable to allocate 2½ days to the first half of the year and 2½ days to the second half of the year. The man would be assigned 2½ days for the second half of the year and 1½ days for the first half (the prorated amount rounded to the greater half day) for a total of four days. If the man had been an adjunct or temporary employee (not entitled to personal days), following the change to full-time employment, he would be eligible for 2½ days.

When a full-time employee changes to part-time employment, the employee should continue with the most recent date of hire (possibly adjusted for past periods of absence) and should begin to accrue benefits and service credits on a prorated basis. Past service credits, sick pay credits and vacation credits should be carried forward. For example, a woman who had seven years of full-time service, 31 days of accumulated sick pay and 12 days of accrued vacation pay would retain these benefits and service credits when she converted to half-time employment.

Although these policies assume that employees' dates of hire are adjustable (to reflect periods of extended absence or less than full employment), the museum could simplify matters by retaining original hire dates. Whether the museum adjusts or does not adjust original hire dates should reflect the attitudes and interest of full-time employees concerning equitable treatment. Thus, if service credits (seniority) are important factors in staffing decisions such as promotion, layoff, recall, etc., then full-time employees are likely to assert that service as a part-time employee should be counted on a prorated basis.

*GRANT EMPLOYEE*

An individual employed to perform services funded by government and other external agency grants should be considered an employee of the museum only for the duration of the grant. Full-time, part-time, adjunct or temporary grant employees should be entitled to salary, hours of work, benefits, etc., equal to those of regular employees of the same (or related) position classification and length of employment. Recruitment to fill positions funded by grant money should be in accordance with the museum's affirmative action plan.

Grant employees should be treated equally with regular employees concerning the terms and conditions of employment, such as probation period, standards for personal conduct, discipline, complaint and appeal procedure, etc.

Grant employees should not have the right to displace regular employees in case of a layoff, to bid for promotion or transfer to a position funded by nongrant money or to work overtime except as provided for by grant money.

If a grant-funded employee is subsequently converted to regular museum employment, the date of original employment under the grant (or the adjusted date of employment) should be used for museum compensation, benefits, promotion, layoff, etc.

# 2 requisition and recruitment

Staffing involves all the activities of matching people with employment positions. These policies divide staffing into six closely integrated phases: requisition and recruitment; evaluation and selection; placement and orientation; employment probation; promotion and transfer; personnel forecasting and planning. These phases are discussed in sections 2 through 8. The related issues of layoff, recall from layoff and termination are discussed in sections 12 and 13. Although there is also a separate discussion of affirmative action (section 9), these staffing policies include nondiscrimination and affirmative action topics.

Policy cannot be clearly separated from procedure in discussing the staffing process. While the discussion of techniques is kept to a minimum, certain procedural issues are necessarily included in policy analysis. For example, testing techniques and methodology are inseparable from policy issues involving recruitment and selection.

For the purposes of this policy, "requisition" refers to the submission by a hiring supervisor of a formal request for a new or replacement employee. The requisition system provides for maintenance of control on personnel budgeting and costs, while also supplying information for personnel planning and forecasting. "Recruitment" is the process of locating and attracting qualified applicants for a position opening. An important and often overlooked source for applicants is the museum's current work force. Recruitment, therefore, should incorporate provisions for promotion from within (see section 7).

These policies assume that all staffing activities are under the direction, control and coordination of the museum's manager of personnel administration (or an equivalent official).

## *POSITION DESCRIPTIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS*

Up-to-date position descriptions (clear and concise statement of duties) and position specifications (identification of education, experience and skill requirements for successful position performance) should be prerequisites for all staffing activities. The museum should require audits on a regular basis to assure the accuracy and appropriateness of all position descriptions (see section 28). Similarly, position specifications should be reviewed by the hiring supervisor and the personnel officer on a regular basis or prior to initiating a staffing action (new hire or promotion).

Particular care should be taken to assure that selection criteria listed in the position specification statement are job related and that they meet Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) standards for either criterion-related validity or content validity. Selection criteria should be logically linked to the duties of the position.

## *EMPLOYEE REQUISITION*

An employee requisition form should be the basis for new hires, intra- or inter-department promotions and intra- or inter-department transfers. The requisition form should make reference to or have attached the relevant position description and position specification statements. In addition, the form should indicate the specific authority to fill a budgeted position. The requisition form could also be used in conjunction with a request for such authority to fill a budgeted position and/or to establish a position.

Except when authorized by the museum's director, specific staffing activities should not be initiated without completion of the requisition form. In particular, no commitment to hire, promote or transfer should be made without the budget approval and designation of duties that are implicitly a part of the requisition process.

An employee requisition form should have a designated life span, with provision for limited renewal, after which the authority to hire, promote or transfer terminates.

The personnel administration office should periodically advise the hiring supervisor of the status of recruiting and selection activities associated with each requisition and ascertain the continuing need for such activities.

## *PROMOTION FROM WITHIN*

The museum should comply with promotion-from-within policies and procedures prior to initiating specific external recruiting activities (see section 7).

## *RELATIVES AND IMMEDIATE FAMILY*

The policy alternatives related to hiring members of an employee's immediate family range from encouraging the practice to prohibiting it. Some employers believe that friends and relatives are an inexpensive and high-quality source for recruitment that contributes significantly to personnel morale and productivity. Other employers conclude just the opposite. There is no conclusive evidence from studies to support either position. More often than not, an employer's preference is based upon personal experiences, horror or success stories related by others, reactions to patronage systems, etc.

If relatives or members of the immediate family are employable, there should be provisions that such individuals not be employed in the same administrative unit (such as a department) and/or not have direct or indirect supervisory authority of one individual over the other. These provisions should apply to both initial and subsequent employment. A policy prohibiting the hiring of members of an employee's immediate family could permit employment of other relatives if the individuals are not assigned to the same administrative unit and/or if one individual does not have supervisory authority over another.

Regarding either approach, "immediate family" should include the following: spouse (legal or common law), child (natural, step or foster), parent (natural, step or in-law), brother, sister or any other relative residing in the employee's household.

The museum should include in its hiring policies the treatment of relatives and members of the immediate family of present or former governing board members.

*FORMER EMPLOYEE*

The museum should indicate its willingness to consider former employees for reemployment. Such individuals, if hired again, should be treated as new employees, except the museum should reserve the right to waive all or a portion of the probation period (see section 6).

An alternative approach might provide for full benefit and service credit reinstatement if the former employee is rehired within 30 calendar days of the termination date.

*RECRUITMENT FROM ANOTHER MUSEUM*

The museum should indicate the conditions, if any, under which it would accept an employment application from an employee of another museum. Some employers refuse to accept an application or discuss employment opportunities for individuals currently employed at an institution within designated job classifications and/or a designated geographic region. Other employers will not "initiate" employment discussions but will "respond" to an individual's initiative. This approach is recommended. However, still other employers impose no restrictions on such recruiting activities and therefore do not mention this policy issue.

*EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM*

Employment application forms have come under close examination by EEOC. Information requested from applicants must be "job related." If a museum limited its application questions to the following items, it would be within EEOC's current content-validity guidelines:

1. Identification of the applicant and information needed to communicate with the applicant

2. Fulfillment of government reporting requirements and information required by law

3. Information necessary for benefit enrollment

4. Applicant background information to be used in evaluating and matching employment experience, education, skill attainment, etc., and position specifications

5. Verification of education, employment, certification, etc.

6. Reference checks and communication with past employers

7. Conviction record (state laws should be checked frequently for limitations on requesting conviction information).

Some employers are even more cautious. They divide the application form into two parts: the first part calls for information needed immediately for an employment decision; the second part, to be used if the applicant is hired, requests information for benefit enrollment, emergency communication with friends or relatives, etc.

Unless there is an overriding need to do so, the employment application should avoid asking about such items as marital status, spouse, number of children, and date of birth. With respect to age, it is prudent for the museum to ask only whether the applicant is over 18 years of age. If more specific age information is needed for insurance or other purposes, it could be obtained after hire.

Numerous studies of the accuracy of information given on application forms indicate that the level of falsification and serious errors is significant. If an applicant becomes a candidate for employment, verification of such items as recent employment history and educational attainment should be required.

The museum should establish a standard procedure for initial screening of and response to applicants. If an applicant is not processed as a candidate for employment, the reason should be recorded on the application and the application retained for possible future reference and/or use. Storage of these applications by classification cluster (such as clerical, service-maintenance or professional) is advisable. If an applicant is advised that the application will be retained for future reference, the museum should be able to demonstrate that such review is carried out; otherwise, the application should be terminated.

## *RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES*

All recruitment activities should be coordinated through and/or carried out by the personnel administration office. Even though the recruitment of professional staff is a continuing informal activity

among department heads, administrators and professional employees, the personnel administration manager should be advised of these activities regularly.

Hiring supervisors should not initiate specific recruitment activities, such as placement of newspaper advertisements, listings with employment agencies, etc., without approval by the manager of personnel administration. All applicants should be referred to the personnel administration office for processing in accordance with approved policies and procedures.

*RECRUITMENT AUDIT*

The museum's recruitment activities should be evaluated periodically to determine the cost-effectiveness, compliance with EEOC guidelines and attainment of the museum's staffing objectives.

# 3 evaluation and selection

The hiring supervisor or department head should have primary responsibility for assuring that position description and position specification statements are accurate and complete. While the personnel administration office should direct and coordinate selection activities, the decision to hire or promote should be the responsibility of the hiring supervisor or department head.

To assure consistency in treatment and to maintain compliance with laws and museum policies, the offer of employment should be communicated to a candidate by the personnel administration manager, unless specific authority is given for another person to communicate the employment offer. Hiring supervisors or department heads should not informally advise a candidate that an employment offer is forthcoming.

To facilitate selection, the museum should designate job classification clusters for which a properly authorized requisition is also authority to hire, such as clerical job classifications or service-maintenance job classifications. For other job classifications, such as curatorial positions, specific approval by the museum's chief administrative officer to hire should be required.

## *JOB-RELATED SELECTION CRITERIA*

All aspects of the selection process must be job related. The burden falls on the museum to demonstrate that selection criteria are valid predictors for satisfactory performance of required duties. For example, is a college degree requirement necessary for effective performance? Or, are experience requirements reasonable? Selection criteria, embodied in the position specification statement, should be based upon a careful analysis of position duties and responsibilities.

## *VALIDATION AND "BOTTOM LINE" COMPLIANCE*

Unless the museum is prepared to undertake costly validation procedures as an indicator or predictor of job performance, testing should be limited to skill measurement, such as typing, shorthand and arithmetic tests. Content validity is an acceptable method for justifying the use of skill tests. EEOC's regulations state that content validity is based on "sufficient information from job analysis which demonstrate the relevance of the content." In other words, skill tests can be used in selection if there is a rational link between the performance that is measured through the test and the required duties of the position. Intelligence and aptitude tests usually require criterion-related validity and, therefore, should be avoided.

The basic principle in EEOC-type nondiscrimination guidelines requires that employers using a written test or other selection procedure must justify that procedure if it has an adverse impact on minorities or women. For example, it has an adverse impact if it excludes a disproportionately higher number of blacks than whites, or women than men.

Although validation is the principal way an employer may justify the use of a test, there is an alternative to test validation. With the "bottom line" approach, an employer using a test that has a potential or actual adverse impact may come into compliance by using other methods as well, such as assigning greater weight for experience or bilingual skills. The "bottom line" concept provides that if an analysis of the overall selection process demonstrates that an employer has overcome adverse impact by in fact hiring and promoting minorities and women, the EEOC generally will not require an employer to justify individual elements of the selection process.

Furthermore, even where validation techniques are used, a museum should conduct a reasonable search for alternatives that will have lesser adverse impact and substantially equal validity before it defends the test on the basis of its validity. Where testing is used, it is essential to keep complete records. Considering the potential difficulties involved, it is advisable to avoid testing unless necessary.

If tests are utilized, however, the museum must provide a "testing environment," having low noise level, good lighting, well-maintained machines, etc., conducive to a fair and consistent measure of skill and ability.

## *SELECTION INTERVIEW*

Supervisors generally regard the employment or promotion interview as the single most important element of the selection process. Nevertheless, numerous studies have shown that judgments based upon interviews are poor predictors of performance of job-related factors. Lack of proper training in effective interview techniques among supervisors is the major contributing reason for this shortcoming. Another problem is that interviews by different management representatives are often uncoordinated and conducted without specific understanding of the position description and position specification statements. The following techniques can be used to avoid these pitfalls:

1. Proper training of all supervisors and managers involved in the interview process

2. Specification of an interview plan

3. Development of techniques for recording and interpreting findings.

The interview training should also assure that supervisors know how to comply with federal and state nondiscrimination guidelines.

Interview records should be held in confidence and maintained as part of the candidate's file.

*REFERENCES*

General character references tend to be of little value as predictors of work performance. More important are prior employment references. The museum should contact prior employers to verify employment dates and duties and to obtain assessments of work performance. If the museum wishes to go beyond verification of education attainment, it should seek only instructors who have had extensive exposure to the performance of the applicant.

Preferably, no offer of employment should be extended without verification and assessment of recent work experience. If it is necessary to offer employment first, then the candidate should be advised that the offer could be rescinded if discrepancies or errors are uncovered or unfavorable assessments are received from former employers.

The museum should obtain specific approval from an applicant before initiating background and reference checks (the application form can be used for this purpose). The museum should also establish procedures for the documentation and interpretation of background checks. This information should be held in confidence and retained as part of the candidate's file.

A museum should not seek information in a reference or background check that is not job related. For instance, it would be relevant to inquire of a former employer if the applicant had an absenteeism or other clearly job-related problem. By way of contrast, inquiries to former employers concerning a person's marital status or living arrangements would not be relevant. The prudent museum would give an applicant the chance to explain or refute adverse information obtained through a background check, before making an employment or rejection decision.

*CREDIT CHECK*

The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (1970) imposes certain disclosure requirements on employers who use consumer credit reports. Museums that are not covered employers under the act should nonetheless voluntarily adhere to its provisions. In brief, if the museum denies employment (wholly or partly) because of information contained in a consumer credit report, the applicant must be advised of this fact and given the name and address of the credit reporting agency. Furthermore, if the museum anticipates using an investigative consumer report in the selection process, the applicant must be notified in writing in advance. Under the law, the museum would not be required to disclose the substance of the report, although the applicant has certain disclosure rights directly with the credit agency. Credit reports should be held in confidence and retained as part of the candidate's file.