CEHR-C 18 July 1997

MEMORANDUM FOR Human Resource Officers, Major Subordinate Commands; Laboratories and Separate Field Operating Activities; HQUSACE

SUBJECT: Selection Package for GS-15 Positions

1. CEHR-ZE memorandum dated 28 March 1997, subject, Recruitment and Selection Policy for GS-15 and Supervisory GS-14 Positions provided policy guidance on filling GS-15 positions. To assist the Panel Chair, we have developed a sample decision memo format (enclosure 1) as a guide to ensure sufficient information is forwarded with the recommendation for selection. This documentation will facilitate the review process and also provide an audit trail.

2. Please use this format when making a recommendation for selection to a GS-15 position, incorporating information relevant to your selection. The examples are not all inclusive but intended to illustrate the kinds of information needed.

3. In carrying out these responsibilities, selection panels should be cautioned to carefully review and document the criteria used to evaluate the candidates referred. Since these candidates have already been determined "best qualified", based upon a crediting plan, selection procedures involving matrices with finite point assignments can be difficult to validate and impossible to defend against challenge. As an alternative, the selection panel members could rank the referred candidates based on their overall assessment of the candidates' related experience, leadership abilities, awards, education/training, performance appraisals, etc., without assigning points to categories and subcategories.

4. Interview results should not be given undue weight, but should be considered with the results of other information. This is also true with the ~~optional~~* Leadership Competency Interview developed by the Gallup organization and often used within USACE to learn more about a candidate's leadership competencies. At enclosure 2 is an extract from the Army PERMISS section ("http://www.cpol.army.mil") which provides useful information from the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, and includes some appropriate interview questions and subjects.

* mandatory as of 28 May 1998

SUBJECT: Selection Package for GS-15 Positions

5. The decision memo should be forwarded to HQUSACE, ATTN: CEHR-C. This office will get the package coordinated with appropriate functional officials at the headquarters.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

/SIGNED/

SUSAN DUNCAN
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

SAMPLE DECISION MEMO

CEXXX-DE ***(DATE)***

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY COMMANDER, HQUSACE

SUBJECT: Recommended Selection for *(Position Title)*, GS-*(Series)*-*(Grade)*, *(Organization Title)*, Referral *(Number)*, issued *(Date)*--FOR DECISION.

1. PURPOSE: To provide results of selection panel and recommend selection of *(Name, employing location, series, and grade)* for subject position.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That the DCG select (*Name, employment location, series, and grade*) for subject position for the reasons discussed at BACKGROUND TAB H.

APPROVED_____ SEE ME_____ OTHER_____

3. BACKGROUND: a. Memorandum, CEHR-ZE, dated 28 March 1997, subject: Recruitment and Selection Policy for GS-15 established guidance for filling GS-15 level positions.

b. As required in referenced memorandum, the (*Commander/ HQUSACE Directorate Chief*) was involved in determining the recruitment strategy, which was determined to be sufficient to produce a diverse group of candidates. *(Describe if otherwise.)* The Referral List (BACKGROUND TAB A) contained *(number)* candidates, *(number)* were minorities and *(number)* were women. *(Number)* of the candidates were Executive Development Program (*EDP*) graduates *(if CP18 position)*. *(Number)* were from Army; *(Number)* were from outside Army.

c. Upon receipt of the Referral List, I established a selection panel (BACKGROUND TAB B) and approved the selection criteria (BACKGROUND TAB C), including the interview questions to be asked by the panel. Each member of the selection panel

ENCLOSURE 1

independently evaluated all of the candidates based on available information (e.g, DA 2302, SKAP packages, performance appraisals, etc.). We consolidated the names into a list of (*Number*) finalists for further consideration (*explain process for determining break point)*. The panel's evaluation is at BACKGROUND TAB D.

c. To help better understand the candidates' leadership competencies, the Gallup Organization interviewed the top *(Number)* candidates and provided a leadership profile. The results are at BACKGROUND TAB E.

d. The selection panel interviewed the top *(Number)* candidates utilizing the interview questions approved by the Chair (BACKGROUND TAB C). Names of candidates interviewed and the results of the panel's evaluation are at BACKGROUND TAB F. A discussion of the nonselected candidates considered, including minority, female, and CP18 EDP applicants, is contained at BACKGROUND TAB G. Based on the records presented, the results of the leadership interview, the responses to the questions asked by the selection panel, and the recommendations of past and present supervisors, we recommend *(Name)*. Our rationale for recommending this individual is at BACKGROUND TAB H.

h. The EEO Officer, (*Name, grade, employing activity*), and HR Officer (*Name, grade, employing activity*) were consulted concerning evaluation and selection processes to be used. We believe the processes were very thorough, independent, fair to all applicants, and used job-related criteria to determine the candidates to be interviewed. Hopefully this will provide you the necessary information to finalize this selection.

4. IMPACT: (*Describe impact of not selecting the recommended selectee, or other information the DCG should take into consideration.*)

5. COORDINATION:

CEHR-ZA_____ DATE: _____
CEMP-ZB_____ DATE: _____ (*FOR CP18*)

(*SIGNATURE BLOCK*)

BACKGROUND TABS

A **COPY OF ANNOTATED REFERRAL LIST**

B **SELECTION PANEL**
(Show Name, Rank/Series/Grade, Employing Activity/Symbol)

C **APPROVED SELECTION CRITERIA**
(Include Interview Questions)

D **EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES BY PANEL**

E **LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY INTERVIEW (GALLUP)**
(*OPTIONAL*)

F **PANEL EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES INTERVIEWED**
(Attach Qualification Records of Candidates Interviewed)

G **DISCUSSION OF NONSELECTED CANDIDATES**
(Attach Qualification Records of Minority, Female, and CP18 EDP Graduates)
(*See Example*)

H **RATIONALE FOR SELECTION**
(*See Example*)

EXAMPLE FOR BACKGROUND TAB G

The following minority, female, and CP18 EDP Graduates were considered but not selected for the following reasons:

***(Name)* - When comparing *(Name)* background with the other candidates, the panel did not rate this candidate as one of the top (*number*) candidates because of limited experience in Planning and Civil Works functions.**

***(Name)* - The panel did not rate *(Name)* as one of the top (*number*) candidates because of limited overall senior level leadership experience and lack of Planning experience.**

***(Name)* - The panel did not rate *(Name)* as one of the top *(number)* candidates because last three performance appraisals were HS and S, no exceptionals.**

(*Name*) - The panel did not rate *(Name)* as one of the top *(number)* candidates because experience was limited to one single specialization--no experience evident outside H&H.

***(Name)* - This candidate was one of the top *(number)* candidates and is highly qualified for the position; however, lacks relevant experience at the District level and the leadership to move organizations into the future as indicated by the results of the Leadership Competency Interview.**

(*Name*)- This candidate, one of the top *(number)* candidates, is highly qualified for the position; however, performance during the panel interview indicated a lesser knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the vacant position as compared to the knowledge possessed by the recommended selectee.

***(Name)* - This candidate was one of the top *(number)* candidates and is highly qualified for the position; however, *(Name*) lacks depth of senior level Civil Works design experience and the leadership to move organizations into the future as indicated by the results of the Leadership Competency Interview.**

EXAMPLE FOR BACKGROUND TAB H

RATIONALE FOR SELECTION
(*ATTACH A COPY OF THE QUALIFICATIONS RECORD*)

We are recommending*(name)* after conducting a personal interview with each of the final *(number)* candidates, including the *(number)* EDP graduates. We considered the leadership assessment by Gallup, a private selection consultant, who rated this individual very high in leadership traits for potential to move an organization forward into the future. This individual demonstrated not only the highest qualities of management and leadership to all involved in this selection, but also demonstrated the highest level of communications skills of all the candidates that we interviewed. We believe that this individual will dovetail with the existing Executive team members better than any other candidate considered. We also consulted with the individual's previous District Engineer, who gave the individual the highest possible recommendation for every possible aspect of leadership and management. When asked about not being an EDP graduate; the individual had applied for the program but had failed to give proper credit in the narrative portions of his package.

RECOMMENDED SELECTEE EXHIBITED THE FOLLOWING...

**** Strong answers and demonstrated excellent knowledge on questions related to Engineering and Planning. Showed leadership and a drive to excel.***

**** Discussed excellent examples of development of people, including meaningful work, developmental assignments, training, and having fun on the job. Especially concerned with employee morale.***

**** Prior knowledge and expressed vision relating to technical review, cost effective design and quality.***

**** Strong background in customer relationships and marketing with the Corps. (References have indicated that this may be the candidate's strength.)***

Extract from ARMY PERMISS

"http://www.cpol.army.mil"

Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures

Elements used in a selection process must be job-related. Any criteria used to determine which candidates are referred and selected must be related to the job to be filled. This is not a new concept. Merit principles and job-relatedness have been long-standing requirements in Federal and Department of the Army personnel management.

In 1978, the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (UGESP) were issued. The guidelines establish a uniform basis for procedures for referral and selection in the Federal sector. This guide provides criteria used by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to evaluate hiring practices to ensure adherence to merit principles. The UGESP applies to both in service placement actions and external hiring practices.

A selection procedure is any measure, combination of measures, or procedures used as a basis for an employment decision. In Army, this would apply, but not be limited to, job analysis, crediting plan, interviews, and the selection process itself.

All these documents, and the processes which develop these documents, which together support the referral and selection of candidates, must clearly contain only job-related criteria.

REF: 5 CFR 335; 5 CFR 300

RELATED TOPICS: Interviews, Qualification and Candidate Evaluation

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CANDIDATE REFERRAL AND SELECTION

Once candidates have been rated and ranked for a vacant position, they can be referred for consideration. There are different procedures for referrals under the merit promotion program than from other sources. After you receive a list of properly referred candidates, you may decide an interview is required before a selection can be made. Because interviews are part of the screening and selection process they must also meet the Uniformed Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures.

REF: None

RELATED TOPICS: None

Interviews

If a supervisor elects to interview candidates, the questions should be prepared in advance, and should be job related. It is generally best that all candidates referred be provided the opportunity to interview, but the selecting official decides, unless the merit promotion plan provides otherwise. Interviews may be conducted over the phone or face-to-face meeting.

All interview proceedings should be well-documented. Interview results should not be given undue weight in determining the best qualified candidate(s). Rather, they should be combined with the results of other information to determine a candidate's final position relative to other competitors.

RELATED TOPICS: Selection Interview, Ranking Interview, Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, Merit Promotion Program

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Inappropriate Interview Questions

Interview questions should be concerned with the experience, training, skills, etc. These answers should provide evidence of whether the candidate possesses knowledge, skills or abilities (KSA) you are looking for.

For example, the KSA of "ability to give oral presentations to large groups" may be one to be examined in the interview. A good interview question might be: "*What experience have you had in giving oral presentations to large groups?*" In the questioning, you could ask what the size of the group addressed was, if audiences addressed were hostile, and to what extent the candidate participated in preparing the presentation. This type of question is objective; it does not lead" the candidate to an answer. Rather, it seeks to find enough information for you to make a decision from and its job related. Incorrect questions for this KSA would be: "*Do you have trouble speaking before large groups*?" "*Can you speak well*?"

Do not formulate hypothetical cases and ask the candidate to provide possible solutions. For example, typically found in supervisory positions is the KSA the "ability to delegate work." A good interview question would state: "*What experience do you have in delegating work; what was the workload, how many subordinates did you supervise, what were the situations*?" Do not ask: "*What would you do in the following situation: You have 1,000 cartons of widgets to deliver.....your clerk is on leave; how do you get the cartons delivered*?" This type of question is not objective and there are no right answers.

Do not ask questions that have an obvious answer and provide no means for distinguishing among candidates. The question "*Do you like working with people*?" has an obvious response. A question such as "*What experience have you had that would show you can effectively deal with the public*?" would be more appropriate.

Some questions have been included in so many interviews that candidates may expect them. An example of this type of question would be "*Why do you want this job?*" There is no right answer. Candidates tend to have prepared answers for these kinds of questions aimed at what they think interviewers want to hear. This type of question adds nothing to the interview.

The vocabulary used in interview questions should be geared to the level of the candidates. Specialized terminology, organizational abbreviations, and so forth, which may intimidate or confuse the candidate should not be used.

There are some areas that are sensitive and should not be part of

the interview. There are legal and illegal subjects that you should be aware of. Legal areas may be addressed in the interview, but the questioning should be tactful and appropriate for the job to be filled (see "Interview Subjects".)

REF: Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection

RELATED TOPICS: Interviews; Selection Interview; Ranking Interview; Interview Subjects; Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures; Merit Promotion Program.

Interview Subjects

Subject	Illegal	Legal If Job Related
AGE	Any question which tends to Identify applicants between 40-64 years of age is illegal. EXAMPLE: "Do you remember the 1940 election?"	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject. The CPOC may request documentation to verify age if necessary, to ensure legally set minimum age and maximum age limits are met.
CITIZENSHIP	Any of the following questions cannot be asked: Are you a citizen of the United States? Are your parents/ spouse a US citizen? When did you acquire US citizenship? Are you/ spouse/parent native born or naturalized?	There is no legal question you can ask on this subject. The CPOC may request documentation to verify citizenship requirements, if they exist for the job being filled.
NATIONAL ORIGIN	Any of the following questions cannot be asked: What is your national origin? What language is spoken in your home? What is your native language?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject
RACE/COLOR	You may not ask any question that directly or indirectly relates to race or color.	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
RELIGION	The following questions cannot be asked: What church do you attend? What religious holidays do you observe?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
SEX	You may not ask any questions which inquires as to one's gender. For example: What are your plans regarding having children in the near future? Do you mind having a male/female supervisor?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.

	Can you work with a group of men/women?	
MARITAL STATUS/FAMILY	Any of the following questions can not be asked: Are you married? Divorced? Widowed? With whom do you live? Do your children live with you? What ages are your children? Is your husband/ wife in the military?	There is no legal questions you can ask regarding this subject. The CPOC may request documentation to verify if other family members work at the installation to fulfill OPM requirements.
EDUCATION	You may not ask questions that specifically ask the nationality, racial, or religious affiliation of a school; the candidates's education level in general, if not related to the job being filled.	You may ask questions concerning a candidate's academic, vocation,, or professional education as long as it pertains to KSAs related to the position being filled.
ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION	You may not ask the following question: To what organization, societies and clubs do you belong?	You may ask questions related to this subject if they are related to the job being filled and how the candidate's participation in the organization may fulfill the KSAs.
POLICE RECORD	Do not ask: Have you ever been arrested?	If the job being filled has special requirements (i.e., bonding), you may ask a question such as: In order to fill this job, you must be bonded. Is there any problem that this presents?
WORK SCHEDULE/ TRAVEL	Do not ask any questions that relate to child care, ages of children or other non-job related areas.	If the job being filled has special requirements (i.e., travel, overtime, unusual hours, etc.) these conditions may be stated. For example: In this job you would have to travel 1 week in every month. Does this present a problem to you?
MILITARY DISCHARGE	The following question may not be asked : Were you honorably discharged from military service?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject. The CPOC may request documentation to verify this information if there is a requirement to do so.

ECONOMIC STATUS	The following questions may not be asked: Do you have a good credit rating? Do you have any trouble with bills/collection agencies?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
SECURITY CLEARANCE	The following question may not be asked: Do you have a secret/ top secret/ other security clearance?	If the job to be filled requires a certain type of security clearance, this condition may be stated. For example: "This job requires a top secret clearance. Does this requirement present any problem?"
PERSONAL PLANS	The following question may not be asked: Do you have plans to live in this area long?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
PARTICIPATION IN CERTAIN ACTIVITIES	Do not ask the following questions: Do you plan to contribute to the Combined Federal Campaign/take savings bonds/join the coffee club/join the United States Army Association (USAA)?	There is no legal question you can ask regarding this subject.
MISCELLANEOUS	You should not ask any question that is not job related or necessary for determining a candidate's possession of required KSAs.	You may notify the candidate that statements, misstatements or omissions of significant facts may be cause for nonselection

REF: Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection
RELATED TOPICS: Interviews; Selection Interview; Ranking Interview; Inappropriate Interview Questions; Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures; Merit Promotion Program.