

**Department of Administration
Division of Personnel Services**

**Guidelines for Above Step Hires Based on
Exceptional Qualifications
Effective May 24, 2005**

Background

K.A.R. 1-5-8(b)(1) provides the authority to appoint new hires at a salary step above the normal starting salary based on exceptional qualifications. Similar authority is provided by K.A.R. 1-5-10(a) for employees who are rehired by reinstatement or reemployment and by K.A.R. 1-5-13(a)(4) for employees who are promoted to a higher class. In all instances, determinations of exceptional qualifications are to be based on the candidate's/employee's education, training, experience, skills, and other relevant qualifications.

To date, there have been no formal guidelines to help agencies quantify the amounts of relevant qualifications that can be applied to determine the appropriate salary step for a candidate/employee with exceptional qualifications. That circumstance creates the potential for misunderstandings, inconsistencies and potential inequities.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are offered for above step appointments based on exceptional qualifications. These guidelines are just that, "guidelines." Agencies can deviate from these guidelines when the appointing authority has valid and justifiable reasons. Also, as indicated the regulations cited above, above step appointments based on exceptional qualifications are optional actions -- an appointing authority is not required to hire above step solely because a candidate has credentials that exceed those minimally required.

1. Candidates/employees meeting only minimum requirements should be appointed at the beginning salary step of the appropriate pay grade.
2. For each year of relevant experience, beyond that **minimally** required, the appointing authority **may** authorize one additional salary step.
3. Additional salary steps **may** be authorized for levels or increments of relevant training and/or education beyond that minimally required. Generally:
 - For the completion of technical training, which is at least 9 months in duration and beyond any minimally required, the appointing authority **may** authorize one additional salary step;

- for the completion of an Associate of Arts degree, which is relevant and is beyond minimum requirements, the appointing authority **may** authorize one additional salary step;
 - for the completion of Bachelor's degree, which is relevant and is beyond minimum requirements, the appointing authority **may** authorize two additional salary steps;
 - for a Master's degree, in a relevant field, when a Bachelor's degree is minimally required, the appointing authority **may** authorized two additional steps; and
 - for a Doctorate degree, in a relevant field, when a Master's degree is minimally required, the appointing authority **may** authorize two additional steps.
4. In those circumstances in which a candidate/employee has special relevant skills, certification or licensure, the appointing authority **may**, after evaluating the need for or impact of those skills and/or credentials, make a determination to quantify their value in terms of the number of steps warranted for an above the normal starting salary step appointment.

Note: A combination of additional training, education, experience and/or special skills or credentials **may**, proportionally, serve as the basis for authorizing more increments of additional steps.

While a different circumstance, in those instances in which a candidate is employed by an employer other than the State of Kansas, a salary level equal to or higher than the (verified) salary the candidate **currently** earns may be authorized when the candidate has relevant education or experience beyond that minimally required, although the amount of that education and/or experience does not have to meet the tests established in items 2 and 3 above.

In all instances of above step appointments, appointing authorities should 1) consider the equity of the action in view of the salary levels and credentials of current employees and 2) maintain documentation on the candidate's/employee's credentials and the rationale for the decision.

SHARP Instructions

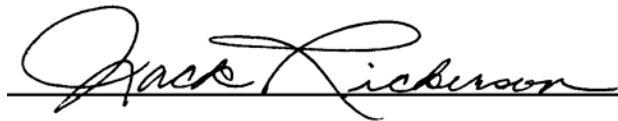
When entering above step appointments in SHARP agencies should use the appropriate action reason code as described below:

- 1) **Hire – Exceptional Qualifications.** Use the following action/reason code:
HIR/HSB – Hire/Hire Higher Step – Excep Qual
- 2) **Rehire – Exceptional Qualifications.** Use one of the following action/reason codes:
REH/HSE – Rehire/Higher Step Reemployment-Excep Qual

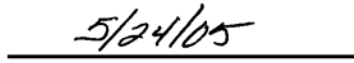
REH/HSN – Rehire/Higher Step Reinstatement-Excep Qual
REH/HSR – Rehire/Higher Step Rehire-Excep Qual

3) **Promotion – Exceptional Qualifications.** Use the following action/reason code:
PRO/HSP – Promotion/Promote Higher Step-Excep Qual

Questions about these guidelines or requests for assistance in determining above step salary appointments based on exceptional qualifications should be directed to Elizabeth Wong in the Division of Personnel Services, Agency Services Unit at 785-296-6895.



Jack Rickerson, Director



Date