

IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM AREAS

(Section 46a-68-87)

September 2023

This section of the previous filing was found to be in compliance and there were no proposals or recommendations.

Subsection (a)

If an occupational category or title employing a significant number of persons or position classification for which an availability base is calculated experiences an increase or reduction in force, the UConn Health examines its personnel policies and practices to identify non-quantifiable aspects of the employment process that may impede or prevent the full and fair participation of protected race and sex group members in the employment process. The following aspects of the employment process have been addressed:

1. Employment applications
2. Job qualifications
3. Recruitment practices
4. Personnel policies
5. Orientation
6. Training
7. Counseling
8. Discrimination complaint process
9. Evaluation
10. Layoffs
11. Terminations

The narrative below is a summary of the analyses of these eleven factors as they affect the employment process for both the classified and unclassified positions.

Employment Applications

UConn Health utilizes a standard application form designed specifically to enable applicants to apply for any position in any Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) category. The application process for the online system mirrors the paper application form.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Job Qualifications

UConn Health has completed an objective job evaluation for all non-faculty job classifications. All job qualifications were reviewed, and new job specifications were developed when needed or requested in all EEO categories.

Most position classifications at UConn Health are unclassified and do not require that an applicant take an examination to be considered for employment or promotional opportunities. Effective this past year, the State has discontinued the exam process for most of its positions. Exams are only given on an as needed basis for a limited number of positions. This significantly reduces the numbers of positions that require examination and reduces the time to fill.

Most of UConn Health's full-time employees are in positions that do not require an examination as they are professionally licensed. Agencies are required to post the positions on their job posting sites as well as the DAS site. The posting and application process are considered the examination.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Recruitment Practices

UConn Health is comprised of an acute care hospital, a medical school, a dental school, a physician's practice group, and research facilities performing a broad range of research activities.

Recruiting and hiring qualified applicants in the health care field continues to be a challenging issue nationwide. As hospitals are approved to perform new procedures i.e., transplants, or develop new research opportunities, employees with specialized skills must be recruited and hired. The competition in the field increases as the pool of candidates decreases.

Some positions that are challenging to fill include: Critical care and other specialty areas such as Cardiac Catheterization and Interventional Radiology Nurses, Operating Room Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists, Respiratory Therapists, Dosimetrists, Pharmacists including those with informatics and chemotherapy, Perfusionists, Information Technology positions, Psychiatrists, and physicians in specialty areas.

The goals of the research experience include developing an understanding of how research leads to advancement of knowledge and the improvement of clinical programs and community health; to acquire research skills and methodologies; and to collaborate with colleagues from a variety of fields and specialties. Often there are limited numbers of funded research grants and/or individuals performing research that are compatible with the goals of UConn Health. In some cases, a Principal Investigator may be able to transfer a grant to the agency along with any staff that has the specialized skills required to work on a project. As the scope of some research positions is extremely narrow, finding individuals with the required skills is challenging. Some of these areas include stem cell research, genomics, neuron and geriatric psychiatry, tissue regeneration, translational research, research on aging, biostatistics, developmental disabilities, and cancer.

The School of Medicine is responsible for education at the graduate and professional levels for practitioners, teachers, and researchers. Faculty must be recruited that can fulfill the mission of providing educational opportunities for students pursuing careers in the patient care professions, education, public health, biomedical and/or behavioral sciences; providing advanced knowledge through basic, biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and social research; developing, demonstrating

and delivering health care services based on effectiveness, efficiency and the application of the latest advances in clinical and health care research, helping health care professionals maintain their competence through continuing education program, and providing clinical care to a large population. Some of the clinical specialties at UConn Health are cardiology, cancer including sickle cell and bone marrow transplant, joint replacement, endocrinology, infertility, diagnostic imaging, dialysis, nuclear medicine, vascular, and urology.

Adding to the complexity of faculty recruitment were changes in the requirement of the number of hours that resident physicians could work. These changes have increased the need to hire “hospitalists” to work shifts previously covered by residents. Applicants for Hospitalists positions are generally physicians who are completing a residency program and are planning to go into a fellowship. This creates a situation of constant turnover as the Hospitalists’ length of employment is typically one to two (1-2) years. UConn Health continues to recruit through the Human Resources’ website, web pages of associations, and various journals. UConn Health also sponsors applicants’ visas to fill some of these positions.

The School of Dental Medicine is responsible for the education and training of general dentists, specialists, and dental academicians. The strength of the program is recognized internationally, and the graduates of these programs have achieved prominence throughout the United States and internationally. The School of Dental Medicine consistently ranks as one of the top United States dental facilities in number of research projects funded by the National Institutes of Health.

This group has specialty physicians in all areas of dental medicine including Endodontics, Prosthodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Oral Medicine Pathology, Orthodontics, Periodontics, Dental Implants, and General Restorative Dentistry that provide outpatient care to a large number of patients on the main campus as well as in various sites in the community.

Recruitment of faculty positions for all areas of UConn Health is an increasingly difficult challenge. Even with extensive advertising, some searches remain open for two to three years. There are searches that despite extensive recruiting produce only one applicant. We continue to recruit from our residency and fellowship programs and depend on word of mouth from our current staff. Recruitment of candidates with specific skills and the ability to work in direct patient care, teaching, and research will continue to be a challenge in the future.

All Faculty and Director and above positions are required to have formal search committees with the responsibility of developing detailed strategies for the recruitment of qualified goal applicants. Some of these strategies include networking activities such as national meetings and contacting colleagues at other institutions to identify candidates interested in UConn Health positions.

UConn Health’s Office of Health Career Opportunity Programs’ top priority for the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine is to recruit and retain students from diverse groups that are underrepresented in American health care professions. The Office actively recruits underrepresented medical and dental students and supports those enrolled throughout the academic year. This program continues to be a source of applicants for vacancies at UConn Health.

A resource web page is located on the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) website to provide search committees with information about their responsibilities for recruitment, evaluation, candidate recommendation, affirmative action, and equal employment opportunity requirements. **Please see External Communications, Exhibit #2.**

Despite the many challenges in hiring the most qualified individuals, UConn Health continues to be committed to equal employment opportunity and ensuring non-discrimination in conditions of employment, educational programs, and patient services. Therefore, recruitment is an area of the employment process that is constantly monitored. Updated goal achievement reports from OIE are distributed to Talent Acquisition Specialists. Affirmative Action goals for each position are available to the hiring manager through the iHiring system and on the OIE website. Contacts with hiring departments and discussions of the Affirmative Action goals were highlighted in each search throughout the reporting period. Discussions with hiring managers included the importance of diversifying the UConn Health workforce in all areas. If a search resulted in no qualified goal applicants in the pool, the job specification and search efforts were reviewed to ensure that there were no qualification or other barriers and that the appropriate good faith efforts were made.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Personnel Policies

The Department of Human Resources policies conform to the state merit system and all collective bargaining agreements for all EEO categories.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Orientation

New Employee Orientation sessions are conducted at the start of each pay period. The pandemic changed the orientation from in person to virtual sessions. UConn Health continues to have two (2) days of orientation providing all the required components. Beyond communicating policies, procedures and compliance requirements, New Employee Orientation creates a shared vision by acclimating new hires to UConn Health's culture and values, as well as the overall framework. UConn Health embraces the importance of building strong relationships. To that end, the orientation offers an opportunity to receive welcome messages from administrative leadership, focus on personal organizational leadership, focus on personal organizational purpose, and meet various representatives of UConn Health in an inviting and welcoming learning environment. This program is also the mechanism for meeting various mandatory and regulatory requirements including safety and occupational health standards, basic fire and police personal safety procedures and compliance programs. A discussion on affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, diversity, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and the complaint process is also facilitated. Copies of OIE policies are distributed along with duties, responsibilities, and contact information. The orientation program is evaluated and updated twice a year (more often as

needed) to ensure that new policy and procedural changes are addressed. **Please see Internal Communications, Exhibit #2.**

The New Employee Orientation includes mandatory diversity training for new employees.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Training

UConn Health encourages employees from all EEO categories to participate in training programs that are designed to enhance employees' existing skill levels, support health/wellness, add new areas of competence, prepare for future growth and/or upward mobility and enable employees to fully realize their potential.

Sexual Harassment Prevention and Diversity Awareness are ongoing training programs available to UConn Health staff. During the *Plan* year, the Diversity Awareness and Sexual Harassment Prevention trainings were updated with additional enhanced content regarding the University of Connecticut Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence. Due to the pandemic, revised Sexual Harassment Prevention training is now offered online and must be completed by new employees within six months of hire. All current employees are required to complete the training on an annual basis. The presentation provides information on responding to reports of discrimination, discriminatory harassment sexual assault, stalking, and interpersonal violence in a timely and comprehensive manner.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Counseling

Upon request, employees of all EEO categories are counseled on a one-to-one basis regarding career mobility opportunities, education, resume updates, interviewing techniques, training needs, and specific skill development by Human Resources. In addition to one-to-one coaching, the Organization Staff Development department in Human Resources offers online and in-person courses throughout the year, concentrating on various professional development topics. UConn Health also has an Employee Assistance Program that provides confidential counseling services for employees in all EEO categories.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Discrimination Complaint Process

A copy of the UConn Health's discrimination complaint process and policy statements that specifically state an employee's protection under EEO laws and regulations are provided at New Employee Orientation and are on the OIE website along with links to additional resources. The complaint process and all forms are explained and included in the **Discrimination Complaint Process** section.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Evaluation

UConn Health conducts employee personnel evaluations pursuant to state requirements and specific Collective Bargaining Agreements. UConn Health has eight (8) bargaining units. The evaluations are conducted at the end of a working test period and on a semi-annual or annual basis. Goals and objectives, including affirmative action responsibilities, are established, and are discussed with managers and directors. To fully report all service ratings, Human Resources utilizes a database to track service ratings, which includes faculty, managerial, confidential, and unionized employees. An analysis of the employee evaluations from all EEO categories is included in the **Employment Analyses** section.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Layoffs

During the reporting period, UConn Health has experienced some layoffs due to the expiration of grants. Most of these employees remained on the recall list for one (1) year and reemployment lists for three (3) years to be hired into vacant positions for which they meet the minimum and any specific requirements. Pursuant to the Collective Bargaining Unit Agreements, active recall lists are reviewed before filling vacant positions. Those classes with research titles were not subject to the job security provisions of the State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) agreement.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Terminations

UConn Health has not experienced any problems in this area of the personnel process. Most terminations are voluntary. The Employee and Labor Relations Unit of Human Resources carefully review all non-voluntary terminations prior to implementation to ensure no transgression has occurred. All voluntary terminations from each EEO category are offered an exit interview upon termination. Exit interviews can be completed on-line and are reviewed by the Talent Acquisition Specialist to identify any problems/issues. Employees may also have a personal exit interview if they wish. A review of completed exit interviews by Human Resources did not indicate any issues with the employment process. OIE also reviewed all Exit Interviews to determine whether discrimination issues were identified and to determine the steps to be taken for training and programs.

No problems have been identified in this area.

Subsection (b)

The *Plan* itemizes in subsection (a) all non-quantifiable elements of the employment process that have been identified as a problem area. The University has not identified any non-quantifiable elements as a problem area.

Subsection (c)

Pursuant to this subsection, the University has examined all aspects of the employment process itemized in subsection (a), to determine if any might impede or prevent the full and fair participation of individuals with disabilities or older persons in the workforce. As a result of this examination, there is no evidence to show any barrier or discriminatory employment practice against individuals with disabilities or older persons.