

Introduction

The purpose of the UW-Madison personnel system is to recruit, develop, retain and advance the best talent in higher education to support UW-Madison's missions as Wisconsin's land grant university and as a world-class research and teaching university. UW-Madison is committed to personnel practices that maximize the development of all its employees. The personnel system will be based on the civil-service concept (applied as appropriate to employee groups), will facilitate achievement of workforce diversity at all levels, and will ensure a positive discrimination-free environment that encourages employees to balance their work and personal lives.

University process for the development of the new personnel system shall:

- Be transparent and collaborative.
- Include regular consultation with the elected governance bodies of the faculty, staff and students; alternative, non-elected groups may not substitute for the formal governance processes.
- Include stakeholder consultation and participation.
- Maintain open communications with UW System, which also will be developing a new personnel system for all system employees except those at UW-Madison.
- Include an examination of other organizations, particularly higher education institutions, with the goal of identifying best practices for UW-Madison.

Guiding principles for the new UW-Madison personnel system

- The system will incorporate, as appropriate, good practices and principles that currently exist in Wisconsin State Statute Chapters 36, 111 and 230, Faculty Policies and Procedures, Academic Staff Policies and Procedures, union contracts, UW System administrative codes and Board of Regents policies. Changes to any existing policies and procedures will follow normal procedures including shared governance processes.
- The systemⁱ will be based on demonstrated ability or achievement that meets transparent and objective criteria, which will be applied in a non-discriminatory manner. The system also will provide employees with due process to achieve fairness, apply a just-cause standardⁱⁱ when a negative job action is being pursued, protect employees and the personnel system from political interference and influence, and safeguard employees from discrimination. Where applicable, these standards will apply to all employees.
- The system will be integrated, transparent, rational, and more unified.

ⁱ Act 32 requires that the new personnel system “include a civil service system.” Currently, both classified and unclassified employees are covered by the state civil service system. For purposes of the new personnel system, civil service is an employment system that is built on the merit concept. Merit is defined as the hiring, retaining, rewarding, competitively compensating, developing and promoting of staff based on qualifications to do the work.

ⁱⁱ Although the statutes do not define just cause for this purpose, the term has a well-accepted meaning in employment and labor relations. Just-cause standards have been incorporated into state collective bargaining agreements and in academic staff policies. In short, the standard requires the employer to prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, that each of seven steps has been met. Briefly, the steps are: notice, reasonable rule or expectation, investigation, fair investigation, proof, equal treatment, and appropriate penalty.