

STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

*Sunnycrest Center
1717 Philo Road, Suite 24
Urbana, Illinois 61802-6099*



*Julie Annette Jones
Merit Board Chair
Gail Schiesser
Interim Executive Director*

August 5, 2020

Guiyou Huang, Ph.D.
President
Western Illinois University

Dr. Bill Polley
Interim Vice President for Administrative
Services
Western Illinois University

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Designated Employer Representative
Western Illinois University

Mr. Michael Sowinski
Director of Internal Auditing
Western Illinois University

Ms. Julie Jones
Merit Board Chair
State Universities Civil Service System

Ms. Kisha MJ Lang
Merit Board Representative
State Universities Civil Service System

The State Universities Civil Service System respectfully submits the Governance, Risk, and Compliance Audit of the Office of Human Resources at Western Illinois University, covering the period of August 1, 2016 through September 30, 2020.

We are pleased to inform you that the results of this compliance audit concluded that there are no findings for this reporting period. Those WIU Human Resource staff members charged with this compliance responsibility are to be commended for their business practices leading to this excellent report. All compliance questions and issues related to temporary upgrades provided in the Draft Audit Report have been satisfactorily resolved.

On behalf of the Legal and Compliance Services Division, we thank you and the human resource staff for a very productive audit experience. If there are any questions or a personal briefing on any item is desired, please contact me at (217) 278-3151 or Lucinda M. Neitzel, Assistant Director of Legal and Compliance Services at (217) 305-6604.


Gail Schiesser
Interim Executive Director

STATE UNIVERSITIES CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM



Governance, Risk and Compliance Audit Report (Final)

August 5, 2021

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Audit Time Frame:
August 1, 2016 – September 30, 2020

Remote Visit:
November 16 – 18, 2020

Prepared by:

Lucinda M. Neitzel

Assistant Director, Legal and Compliance Services

**State Universities Civil Service System
Legal and Compliance Services
Final Audit Report**

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Overview of Specific Areas Subject to Review

The following Human Resource topic areas are considered and reviewed when identifying the Audit Objective and Scope, Risk Assessment Categories, and Findings identified in this report:

Assignment of Positions to Classes

The Auditor completes a review of selected job descriptions for timely updates, proper administration, and correct assignment of position classifications. Additional desk audits of selected positions are conducted onsite for appropriateness of position classification. There is also an evaluation of the Employer's position audit process and corresponding determinations.

Compensation Programs

The Auditor completes an analysis of the Employer's use of pay rates and pay ranges, as approved by the Merit Board. An overall evaluation is conducted of the Employer's compensation program and initiatives to meet requirements of pay equity within the Employer's market area.

Examination Program

The Auditor conducts a review of pre-employment testing operations. This includes test administration, admission procedures of applicants to examinations, license and certification verifications, scheduling, security, and register management.

Administration of Employment and Separation Procedures

The Auditor reviews the Employer's business processes and procedures related to the Civil Service employment cycle, utilization and monitoring of non-status appointments, probationary and status employment transactions, and separation programs.

Administration and Employment Protocols of Positions Exempt from Civil Service Regulations

The Auditor completes a review of the employment protocols and assigned responsibilities related to those positions categorically exempt from Civil Service regulations to ensure compliance with the Act and recognized procedures. The Employer's method of exemption, administrative procedures, and related position descriptions are reviewed; and selected incumbent interviews are conducted for validation of approved exemptions.

General Review of the Employer's Human Resource Program

The Auditor completes a general review of the Employer's human resource programs with respect to effectiveness, efficiency and levels of communication to constituencies. There is also an assessment of the recognition and interaction of human resource programs within the Employer's faculty, administrative and support staff employee groups.

Other Follow-up Items from Previous Audit

Other follow-up items from previous audits, as well as other matters deemed necessary and appropriate, may have been reviewed and submitted as additional audit topics.

Audit Objective and Scope

Objective: As stated in the Governance, Risk, and Compliance Audit Charter for the State Universities Civil Service System, and approved by the Merit Board on August 17, 2016, the primary objective and purpose of the audit program is to evaluate and verify compliance with the Act, Code, and System Procedures. The University System is also charged with building strategic partnerships, evaluating processes and performance, providing direct guidance and support services, and implementing flexibilities that meet the needs of each employer, consistent with the Act.

Audit Scope: The Scope of this FY2021 Audit Cycle for Western Illinois University included a comprehensive evaluation of employment designations and/or category of status, non-status, and exempt appointments, register maintenance, compliance with the 900-hour limitation with respect to Extra Help Appointments, civil service and Exempt (PAA) desk audits, personnel transaction reviews, time frame requirements for Temporary Upgrade Assignments, an update regarding previously cited audit findings, and personnel file reviews.

Risk Assessment Categories

Prior to performing audit activities, the University System Office (SUCSS) reviews and prioritizes specific areas of risk system-wide and categorizes each topic area to be evaluated during the upcoming compliance audit cycle. While subject to change, audit findings are typically issued and defined consistent with the following designated and predetermined risk assessments as follows:

- Category 1: Serious Impact/Immediate Action Required
- Category 2: Medium Impact/Needs Improvement
- Category 3: Minimal Impact/Observation Only

For the current FY2021 Governance, Risk, and Compliance Audit at the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the following risk assessments and areas of focus were communicated to the Employer prior to conducting the audit examination:

Category I: Identification of Civil Service Classifications Used, Use of Approved Rates and Ranges, Admission of Applicants to Examination, Examination Security Protocols, Register Referral of Candidates and Register Maintenance, Extra Help Appointments, and Temporary Upgrade Assignments.

Category II: Position Control Management, Removal of Names from Registers, Maintenance of Personnel Files, Temporary PAA Assignments, and Transaction Documents (Intern Requests, Disciplinary Suspensions, Dismissals, and Layoff Notices) on file at the University System Office.

Category III: Civil Service Desk Audits, Position Description Reviews, Timeliness of Classification Requests (Desk Audits), and Scheduling/Inventory of Examinations.

In general, each Employer is evaluated on the basis of compliance history, specific topic area, and Auditor discretion. The Legal and Compliance Division recognizes and identifies these three finding categories based on the facts presented by the Employer during the audit process, which are evaluated against requirements consistent with regulatory guidelines in the Act, Code, and System Procedures. **While not a definitive statement of outcome, documented findings depend largely on the severity of the violation.**

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Executive Summary
YEAR ENDED—FY2021

The compliance testing performed during this examination was conducted in accordance with State Universities Civil Service Act (110 ILCS 70/36b et seq.), Part 250 of the Illinois Administrative Code (Code) (80 Ill. Adm. Code 250), State Universities Civil Service Procedures Manuals, applicable University/agency policies/procedures, and auditing standards.

SUMMARY

<u>Number of</u>	<u>This Report</u>
Positive Observations	1
Category 1 Findings	0
Category 2 Findings	0
Category 3 Findings	0
Repeated findings from previous audit®	0

REPORT SCHEDULE OF POSITIVE OBSERVATIONS AND AUDIT FINDINGS

<u>Item</u>		
<u>Number</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Description</u>
		<u>POSITIVE OBSERVATION</u>
WIU FY21-01	5	Transition of Exempt Positions to Appropriate Civil Service Classifications

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Positive Observation and Auditor Comments

WIU FY20-01	TRANSITION OF EXEMPT POSITIONS TO APPROPRIATE CIVIL SERVICE CLASSIFICATIONS
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CRITERIA/STANDARDS:

- 1) *State Universities Civil Service Act (Act), Section 70/36e Coverage;*
- 2) *Illinois Administrative Code (Code), Section 250.30(a) Coverage; and*
- 3) *Exemption Procedures Manual, Section 2, Administrator Exemptions.*

All employees of the Illinois Community College Board, Southern Illinois University, Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Northern Illinois University, Western Illinois University, University of Illinois, State Universities Civil Service System, State Universities Retirement System, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and the Board of Higher Education shall be covered by the University System described in Sections 36b to 36q, inclusive, of this Act, except the following persons:

- (1) The members and officers of the Merit Board and the board of trustees, and the commissioners of the institutions and agencies covered hereunder;
- (2) The presidents and vice-presidents of each educational institution;
- (3) Other principal administrative employees of each institution and agency as determined by the Merit Board;
- (4) The teaching, research and extension faculties of each institution and agency;
- (5) Students employed under rules prescribed by the Merit Board, without examination or certification.

The current Exemption Procedures Manual was approved by the Merit Board and became effective on October 1, 2018. These procedures contain the guidelines and criteria to be used in properly designating and validating exempt positions, and employees in those positions, as exempt from the Act, as categorically defined above.

The Merit Board permits the Designated Employer Representative (DER) at each of the universities and agencies to make an initial determination as to whether a position qualifies as an exemption pursuant to section 36e of the Act. This authority is granted and may be revoked, in whole or in part, at the sole discretion of the Merit Board.

Exemptions are authorized in accordance with current procedures, requiring verification of exemption authorization through the comprehensive development and ongoing review of accurate position descriptions. Accordingly, it is extremely important that employers maintain an updated, accurate, and complete position description for all positions. A routine and regular position review program is necessary to properly assign classification designations and accurately validate exemption status.

Periodic job description reviews, updated procedures, and ongoing classification plan changes may indicate that a position originally identified as exempt from the Act has been revised or changed, and may now fall within civil service classification plan parameters, requiring the department and/or the Human Resource Office to transition a specific position, and any employee currently occupying the position, to an identified and appropriate Civil Service classification.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT:

Typically, positions categorically exempt from Civil Service regulations are sampled and reviewed under the purview of a Category 1 Risk Assessment to determine proper designation and exemption from the Act. For this audit, the review of exempt positions in payroll documents and quarterly employee data submissions were primarily focused on new appointments in the months leading up to the new procedural effective date of October 1, 2018, or after its formal implementation. The Auditor also evaluates this topic area based upon the extent to which an Employer's history related to this specific audit topic impacts the current sampling method and depth of review.

As part of the new GRC Audit Process, the Auditor provides the Designated Employer Representative (DER) with a Pre-Audit Questionnaire prior to requesting materials from which to select an audit sample. As part of this questionnaire, the Employer was required to provide their policy and procedure for exempting positions from Civil Service regulatory guidelines, which was provided to the Auditor in the response indicated below:

The Employer's Policy for the Exemption of Positions and Ongoing Review of Position Descriptions:

- *August 1, 2016 – September 30, 2018*

Western followed the Principal Administrative Position Exemptions (PAPE) process which required administrative review and approval, including the President, if appropriate. For new positions, the Class/Comp division evaluated the PAPE and job description and determined if there were Civil Service classifications that align with the PAPE. If there was Class/Comp personnel would contact the position's supervisor if necessary to gather further information. Class/Comp sends its recommendation to the HR Director who either approves or denies the PAPE. That PAPE is then archived by the Academic Personnel Office within the Provost's Office.

- *October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2020*

In October 2018, Western established a Position Review Committee (comprised of the Director of Human Resources, Director of Academic Personnel, Director of Equal Opportunity and Access, Legal Counsel and the Supervisor of the Classification division) to review open positions to determine the appropriate classification (Civil Service or exempted from Civil Service) prior to filling the position. In January 2019, all Principle Administrative Appointment positions with incumbents were reviewed by the Committee and 270 positions were converted to Civil Service. Since then, positions are reviewed by the Committee when vacant or when significant changes have been made to the position that

would warrant a review for possible exemption. Due to some institutional reorganization, the Position Review Committee makeup has changed. As of September 2020, the Committee is comprised of the Executive Director of Personnel and Financial Affairs, Director of Human Resources, Director of Equal Opportunity and Access, Assistant Director of Human Resources (classification supervisor), and Assistant Director of Human Resources (talent acquisition).

The Position Review Committee at WIU conducts a review of the job description and compares it to the standards established by SUCSS. An interview with the supervisor and/or incumbent of the position is performed as needed to understand the scope of the position and the duties assigned.

CONDITIONS/FACTS:

Prior to the remote visit, the Auditor provided the Employer with a Designated Employer Representative (DER) Questionnaire, which requested preliminary information regarding headcount, processes, and campus policies related to Act, Code, and System Procedures. The Employer provided this information for all categorized positions, as well as the number of positions converted from Exempt to Civil Service during the audit period.

The Employer reported one-hundred seventy-five (175) positions that were converted from Exempt to Civil Service since the implementation of new Exemption Procedures on October 1, 2018. It should be noted that even though the University System provided the Employer with interactive guidance throughout this massive position review and transition process, the Employer should be commended for the thorough and efficient manner with which this was accomplished. The liability and negative consequences for not doing so would have been significant to the campus at large.

With respect to exempt position testing for FY2021 GRC Audit, the Auditor requested a small sample of **ten (10)** position descriptions the Employer identified through payroll documents as categorically exempt under 36e(3) or 36e(4) of the Act. It should be noted that each of these positions were correctly categorized and exempted consistent with current procedures.

AUDITOR'S COMMENTS:

Again, the Auditor commends the Employer for their prompt attention to compliance in this matter consistent with statutory requirements and Merit Board procedures.