

## **Guidelines on the Application of the Appointments Procedure**

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## 1 Abbreviations

‘HF’ – ‘högskoleförordningen’, the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100)

‘HL’ – ‘högskolelagen’, the Swedish Higher Education Act (1992:1434)

‘FL’ – ‘förvaltningslag’, the Swedish Administrative Procedure Act (2017:900)

‘AF’ – ‘anställningsförordning’, Employment Ordinance (1994:373)

‘SOU’ – Swedish Government Official Report

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 About the guidelines

Guidelines on the Application of the Appointments Procedure describe processes and procedures for appointments and promotions (including admission of associate professor and affiliation). These processes are supported by several different templates and instructions.

### 2.2 Basic principles for recruitment and promotions

As a state authority, University West has specific responsibility for ensuring that the entire employment and promotion process is characterised by impartiality, transparency, competency-based assessment and equality.

A basis for making appointments to posts within the state administration is that only objective factors, such as merit and competence, should be taken into account. Competence should take precedence, unless there are reasons for a different approach. Conflicts of interest should be considered in each aspect of the process for each case.

Every preparatory body and decision-making authority should work towards a more equal gender distribution at the university, based on laws, political targets and the university’s internal strategies<sup>1</sup>. The target is for all professional groups at the university to be quantitatively equal, which means endeavouring to ensure that neither gender has less than 40-percent representation. The university endeavours to increase the number of newly recruited female professors, in accordance with letter of regulation issued by the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research. Action should therefore always be taken when recruiting and promoting to work towards equal

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<sup>1</sup> Gender-balanced personnel is considered to be in place when the percentage of women and men respectively is 40/60 percent or more equal ([www.jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se](http://www.jamstalldhetsmyndigheten.se)).

gender distribution. The Guidelines on the Application of the Appointments Procedure provide details of the processes and procedures that support this.

## 2.3 Career paths at University West

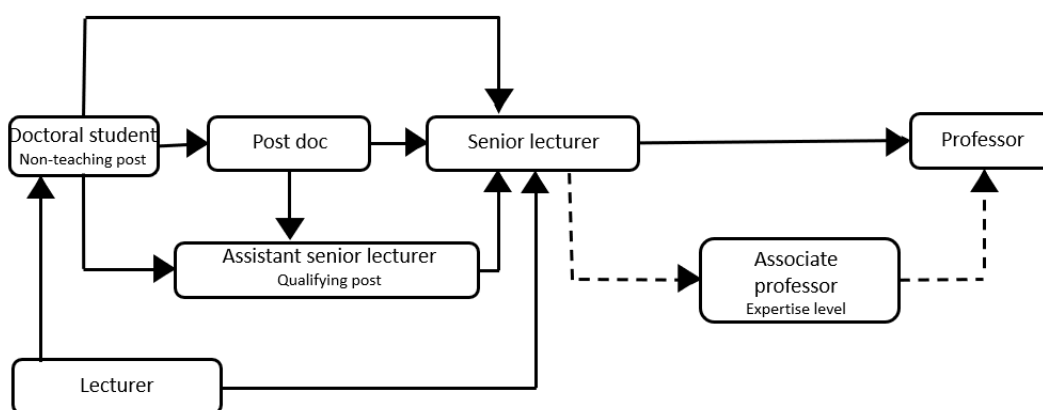


Figure 1 illustrates career paths for teaching staff at University West.

## 3 Division of responsibility

The information below sets out the division of responsibility in matters regarding employment and promotions (including admission of associate professor and affiliation).

### 3.1 Vice-chancellor

When appointing a professor, the vice-chancellor decides, based on a needs analysis, whether the recruitment group may initiate a recruitment process. Once the recruitment group has drawn up a draft recruitment profile, this is confirmed by the vice-chancellor. The vice-chancellor takes decisions regarding any screening out of applicants before an expert evaluation.

Decisions regarding the appointment of professors are taken by the vice-chancellor and may not be delegated (Chap. 4, Art. 13, HF).

### 3.2 Heads of department

When appointing teaching staff (other than professors), the head of department decides, based on a needs analysis, whether the recruitment group may initiate a

recruitment process. Once the recruitment group has drawn up a draft recruitment profile, this is confirmed by the head of department. The head of department decides on any screening out of applicants before an expert evaluation.

Decisions regarding the employment of teaching staff (other than professors) are taken by the head of department.

### **3.3 Recruitment group**

When recruiting teaching staff, a recruitment group should be in place that is responsible for ensuring the recruitment process is conducted in accordance with what is determined by the needs analysis.

### **3.4 Employment board**

Under the auspices of the vice-chancellor, the employment board has overall responsibility for quality management in recruitment, promotions and the admission of associate professor and affiliation. In particular, it is incumbent upon the employment board to ensure that the institutions' recruitment of teaching staff meets the quality requirements that the board believes should be set for the organisation, and that regulations, the appointments procedure and guidelines are adhered to when employing and promoting teaching staff and admitting associate professors. The employment board has an advisory function, but can also issue a general directive or instructions for the management of a particular employment process.

The employment board determines whether to assign experts and submits proposals for decisions on employment matters. The employment board also decides on the admission of associate professor.

### **3.5 HR**

HR participates in the recruitment group to provide professional recruitment support and supports the work of the employment board.

HR supports recruitment groups by providing information about regulations, internal governing documents and the university's collective approach to equality and dealing with applicants. HR also assists by providing consulting and preparatory support and presenting information to support decisions.

## 4 Handling of appointments

### 4.1 Needs analysis

Before a recruitment process starts, the need for the appointment must be assessed. The recruiting manager assesses whether there is a need for recruitment or whether the need can be met by existing personnel. The needs analysis is determined by the head of department. The vice-chancellor decides on the needs analysis for the appointment of professors.

### 4.2 Recruitment profile

Once it has been determined that a recruitment process should be initiated, the recruitment group is responsible for ensuring a recruitment profile is drawn up. The recruitment profile is the basis for a successful recruitment process. It is important to think carefully about what are essential and what are desirable factors in candidates and to word this clearly, as it increases the legal certainty and transparency of the recruitment and reduces the risk of discrimination. When drawing up the recruitment profile, requirements for the appointment should be relevant to the duties of the post. For instance, a recruitment profile with requirements that are set too high could result in people who could be suitable for the position being screened out.

The recruitment profile should also specify the assessment criteria that will be applied and how they will be weighted in relation to one another. Decisions on recruitment profiles are taken by heads of department. For the appointment of professors, the vice-chancellor decides on the recruitment profile.

#### 4.2.1 Subject or area description

The subject area for the appointment of teaching staff should be formulated based on the university's overarching skills provision efforts. A great deal of consideration should be given to the title of the position and whether a specific subject description should be established. The job title will normally consist of a subject or a teaching area/main area. The general approach is for the title of the position to be worded broadly to help the university achieve a more equal gender balance and greater diversity. A focus may be specified, however, if there are special reasons to do so.

If there are specific operational reasons, the subject or area name can – after review – be changed during ongoing employment. An application to change the name of the subject or area may only take place two years at the earliest after an appointment for an indefinite period is made. Expert evaluation may be applied as required. A

decision to change the name of the subject or area is taken by the head of department/vice-chancellor based on a proposal by the employment board.

### 4.3 Advertising

Advertising of positions is based on the recruitment profile and should contain information about the subject area and any focus, the role's duties, essential requirements for the position, desirable attributes for the position, assessment criteria and terms and conditions for the post.

A well-written and clear advertisement increases the chance of attracting applicants with the right skills. The advertisement should be formulated in an inclusive manner, reflected, for example, through the choice of text and image, which could help promote diversity and gender equality.

As a state authority, the university should provide information about all vacant positions, unless there are special reasons not to (Art. 6, AF). Vacant posts at University West should usually be advertised on the university's website, the official notice board and on the website of the Swedish Public Employment Service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*). In addition to this, an assessment is made for each specific recruitment process about which advertising channels are relevant. Vacancies should be advertised internationally to promote internationalisation and expand recruitment. The advertisement should always be published in Swedish, but may also be published in English if required. The application period should be at least three weeks.

For information about advertising vacancies, see the guidelines for advertising vacant posts at University West (reference in Appendix 1).

### 4.4 Application documentation

Applications should be submitted using the university's template for vacant positions (reference in Appendix 1).

Application documentation should be received by a specified application deadline. The basic principle is for application documents received after the application deadline to not be considered. An application that arrives after the deadline may, however, be considered if there were exceptional circumstances, such as illness or holiday. Exceptional circumstances may also include a person whose application is received after the deadline being more suitable than the other applicants (SOU 1992:60). Applicants are encouraged to apply via the university's digital recruitment system.



If an application is incomplete, the university should, to an appropriate extent, provide the applicant with guidance, for example, by requesting supplementary documentation (Art. 23, FL).

#### 4.5 Initial screening of applicants

Initial screening of applicants may be carried out before expert evaluation if an applicant is clearly not suitable for the post. A decision on initial screening is taken by the head of department. The vice-chancellor screens applicants for the appointment of professors. Documentation stating the reason for such screening should be established. Applicants that are screened out should be informed that they are not being considered for the post.

#### 4.6 Expert evaluation

The appointment and promotion of teaching staff at University West are subject to expert evaluation as per the table below.

If an expert evaluation is obtained from more than one expert, women and men should be equally represented, unless there are special reasons (Chap. 4, Art. 6, HF). If equal gender balance among the experts cannot be achieved, the reason for this should be given before a decision is made on the appointment.

Expert evaluation should be carried out unless it is clearly unnecessary. Clearly unnecessary means, for example, that there is only one applicant, who has previously been subject to expert evaluation within the relevant subject. Expert evaluation may also be excluded if a simplified procedure is applied (see description in Section 4.11).

Category	Expert evaluation
Lecturer	Expert evaluation should be applied as required.
Postdoc	Expert evaluation should be applied as required.
Assistant senior lecturer	The number of experts for the appointment of an assistant senior lecturer should be at least one. At least one expert should be an external party.

Senior lecturer	The number of experts for the appointment of and promotion to senior lecturer should be at least one. At least one expert should be an external party. An expert evaluation for promotions to senior lecturer may be deemed unnecessary if the applicant has completed a doctoral degree in the subject for which they are applying to teach.
Professor	An expert evaluation should be conducted for the appointment of and promotion to professor, unless it is clearly unnecessary for the assessment of competence (Chap. 4, Art. 6, HF). The number of experts should be at least two. At least two experts should be external parties.
Senior professor	Expert evaluation should be applied as required.
Visiting teaching staff	When appointing visiting teaching staff, an expert evaluation should be conducted for the assessment of senior appointments or for eligibility in a subject other than that in which they work at the principle employer.
Adjunct teaching staff	<p>Expert evaluation may take place as required for the appointment of an adjunct lecturer.</p> <p>The number of experts for the appointment of an adjunct senior lecturer should be at least one. At least one expert should be an external party.</p> <p>An expert evaluation should be conducted for the appointment of an</p>

	adjunct professor, unless it is clearly unnecessary for the assessment of competence (Chap. 4, Art. 6, HF). The number of experts for the appointment of an adjunct professor should be at least two. At least two experts should be external parties.
Associate professor	There should be at least two experts involved in assessing the admission of an associate professor. At least two experts should be external parties.
Affiliated researcher/professor	Qualifications are assessed by the employment board.

For vacant positions, the recruitment group submits proposals of experts to the employment board. The experts who are proposed should usually be academically more senior than the teaching category of the vacant position. The experts should not work at the same educational institution. Conflicts of interest should be taken into account to the extent this is possible when experts are proposed. When asked about an expert assignment, the expert should state if there are any conflicts of interest. The employment board assigns experts based on the proposals of the recruitment group.

HR ensures that the application documents are complete before the expert evaluation. An expert assignment request should be sent by HR. The request specifies the timeframe for the assignment and whether ranking or shortlisting should be applied. Once an expert/experts has/have accepted the assignment, HR is responsible for ensuring that the expert(s) can study the documentation. See Appendix 1 for reference to instructions for experts and expert opinion templates.

Once an expert opinion has been received, HR is responsible for initially checking the opinion and consulting with the chair of the employment board if it needs supplementing or clarification. If the expert needs to be contacted in order to supplement or clarify the opinion, a discussion is had with the chair of the employment board about who should make contact. If the expert opinion is not received in time, HR sends a reminder. A new expert can be assigned if the expert opinion is not received, despite a reminder being sent.

An expert opinion received by the university is a public document.

## 4.7 Selection

The recruitment group assesses which applicants should be invited to interview. The selection should be based on the recruitment profile and the expert opinion(s), if expert evaluation is used. If more than one candidate is deemed to be suitable for the post, all such candidates should be interviewed to ensure equal assessment.

### 4.7.1 Interview

The purpose of the interview is to evaluate the applicant's abilities and skills, which cannot only be assessed by means of an expert evaluation.

HR invites applicants to interview based on the recruitment group's selection. Together with an invitation to interview, information is provided about the interview and whether a trial lecture/work sample will be required.

In advance of the interview date, the recruitment group should prepare the details of how the interview is to be conducted. HR may assist by providing interview guides based on a skills-based interview method. The interview should be structured, which means that the questions are set in advance and based on the recruitment profile. A structured interview reduces the risk of the interview being events-focused, based on impressions, coincidences and feelings. In addition, a structured interview helps to ensure that all applicants are treated equally and can be compared based on the same criteria (Salminen-Karlsson & Fägerlind, 2012).

The recruitment group is responsible for the conduct of the interviews and decides who participates. It is recommended that there should be no more than three people interviewing an applicant. If it is necessary for more people to participate in the interview, there should be a clear definition of roles to ensure that all questions are asked and the applicant is given sufficient time to answer them. In order to highlight the applicant's suitability from different perspectives, it is an advantage if the group holding the interview, to the extent possible, is varied in terms of gender, age, position and background. Having people of different backgrounds participating in the interview increases the chances that the applicant's skills will be evaluated in a nuanced and impartial manner (Salminen-Karlsson & Fägerlind, 2012). In addition, the aim should be for the same people to interview the candidates.

The information that the recruitment group may obtain at the interview should be noted and be added to the dossier to the extent that it is relevant. These notes consequently become a public document.

#### 4.7.2 Trial lecture/work sample

The purpose of a trial lecture/work sample is to strengthen the basis for the recruitment decision by gaining an indication of expected work performance. A trial lecture/work sample should be undertaken unless there are exceptional circumstances.

A trial lecture/work sample should ideally be undertaken in conjunction with the interview.

HR can assist with suggestions on how the trial lecture/work test may be structured.

#### 4.7.3 References

References are taken in order to obtain supplementary information about the applicant. References should be taken before the appointment decision is made unless there are exceptional circumstances. The recruitment group is responsible for ensuring that references are taken. The person who takes the references should have participated in the interview.

It is recommended that at least two references should be contacted (preferably employers). References should be taken in a structured manner, using pre-prepared questions based on the recruitment profile.

The information that the recruitment group may obtain by taking references should be noted and added to the dossier to the extent that it is relevant. These notes consequently become a public document.

### 4.8 Decisions

Decisions regarding appointments are made according to University West's procedural rules.

#### 4.8.1 Appointment decision

Once the recruitment group has completed the selection process, a proposed appointment decision is submitted to the employment board. The documentation submitted to the employment board should use the appointment decision template (reference in Appendix 1). Based on the documentation, the employment board submits a proposed decision to the person deciding on the appointment, as per the description in Section 3.

Once the appointment decision has been taken, the decision is posted on the university's official notice board with an appeals reference (Art. 7, AF). Other

applicants should be informed that post has been filled when the decision is posted on the notice board.

#### **4.8.2 Decision to appoint more than one person**

It is possible to employ more than one applicant for an advertised position. The reasons for the increased should be explained in the appointment decision template (reference in Appendix 1).

#### **4.8.3 Decision to not make an appointment**

The university may decide to discontinue a recruitment process. The decision to discontinue a recruitment process is taken by the person who would have taken the appointment decision. The university is not required to give a reason for such discontinuation. A decision to discontinue a recruitment process may not be appealed (Art. 21, para. 2, AF). A decision to discontinue a recruitment process could, however, be reviewed under the Anti-Discrimination Act (2008:567) if an applicant feels that such discontinuation of the recruitment process was due to grounds of discrimination.

#### **4.8.4 Appeals**

It is possible to appeal a decision taken by a state authority.

The following decisions by the university may be appealed to the Higher Education Appeals Board (Chap. 12, Art. 2, HF).

- Employment decisions, with the exception of decisions to appoint a doctoral student or a senior lecturer by means of promotion from assistant senior lecturer.
- Decisions to reject an application for promotion from assistant senior lecturer to senior lecturer.

Information about the university's decisions should be posted on the university's official notice board (Art. 7, AF). Information does not need to be submitted if the appointment is expected to be for a maximum of six months. A notice should contain information about the date that the information was posted on the notice board, information about the appeal process, and any divergent statements noted in the minutes or other document (Art. 8, AF).

For employment decisions, only applicants may appeal such decisions (Art. 42, FL).

## 4.9 Call to professorship

The vice-chancellor may decide to call a person for employment as a professor if the appointment is of particular importance for the institution's activities (Chap. 4, Art. 7, HF). An invitation to employment as a professor means that the provisions about advertising a post in Art. 6, AF need not be applied. Only someone who is eligible for appointment as a professor may be employed by means of a call to professorship. Provisions about expert evaluations should be applied unless it is clearly unnecessary. The reasons that the appointment is of particular importance to the university should be documented (Chap. 4, Art. 7, HF). This invitation procedure should be used restrictively.

Before such procedure is begun, the head of department initiates dialogue with the vice-chancellor about a proposal for a call to professorship. The proposal should adhere to the call to professorship template (reference in Appendix 1).

The proposal from the head of department is submitted together with a complete CV and publication list to HR. HR presents the matter to the employment board, which in turn submits a proposed decision on the call to professorship. The vice-chancellor takes the employment decision.

## 4.10 Combined posts

A position as professor or senior lecturer at the university may be combined with a position at a healthcare unit that is licensed for medical education and research, as per Chap. 4, Art. 2, HF. A combined post requires the healthcare authority to have given consent. Ordinary rules for recruitment apply.

Combined posts are subject to the same eligibility requirements and assessment criteria that apply to the appointment of the respective teaching category. For an appointment combined with a position as per Chap. 4, Art. 2 of HF, the eligibility requirement for the clinical appointment, such as registration as a medical practitioner, should always constitute grounds for eligibility (Chap. 3, Art. 8, HL).

## 4.11 Simplified procedure

A simplified employment procedure may be used for teaching staff appointments for a maximum fixed term of 10 months under the Swedish Employment Protection Act (1982:80). A simplified procedure means preparation by the employment board and expert evaluation may be excluded. In other respects, the recruiting manager, in consultation with HR, decides how the recruitment process should be structured. If

an appointment has been preceded by a simplified procedure, an ordinary process should be applied when employment is renewed.

The employment of teaching staff on another fixed-term basis (postdoc, assistant senior lecturer, visiting professor and adjunct teaching staff) should be prepared by the employment board at the time of initial employment. When the term of employment is extended, preparation by the employment board may be excluded, irrespective of the period of employment. When appointing an adjunct senior lecturer, expert evaluation may be excluded if the appointment is for no more than 10 months. Other provisions regarding expert evaluation are described in Section 4.6.

## 5 Handling of promotions

Assessment of promotion to a more senior position should take place with the same care and thoroughness as for an appointment to a vacant position. An application for promotion should be in the same subject as the current appointment. Assessment of promotion may not normally take place until two years, at the earliest, after employment for an indefinite period has been obtained.

Application of expert evaluation for promotion is described in Section 4.6.

Below is a description of the requirements and approach for each type of promotion.

### 5.1 Promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer

After their application, a lecturer employed for an indefinite period should be assessed for employment as a senior lecturer. An application for promotion must be in the same subject as the current post.

#### 5.1.1 Preparation and decision

Applications should be submitted according to the university's template for applications for promotion (reference in Appendix 1).

Applications are submitted to the head of department. The head of department forwards the application to HR further handling. HR is responsible for ensuring that applications are complete and reports on the matter to the employment board. The employment board submits a proposed decision to the head of department. The head of department takes a decision on the promotion.

Rejections of applications for promotion to senior lecturer are taken by the head of department.



## 5.2 Promotion from assistant senior lecturer to senior lecturer

After their application, an assistant senior lecturer should be assessed for employment as a senior lecturer. Such a promotion entails employment for an indefinite period as a senior lecturer (Chap. 4, Art. 12 c, HF). An application for promotion must be in the same subject as the current post. The applicant should submit an application for promotion no later than six months before the end of their fixed-term employment.

### 5.2.1 Preparation and decision

Applications should be submitted according to the university's template for applications for promotion (reference in Appendix 1).

Applications are submitted to the head of department. The head of department forwards the application to HR further handling. HR is responsible for ensuring that the applications are complete and reports on the matter to the employment board. The employment board submits a proposed decision to the head of department. The head of department takes a decision on the promotion.

Rejections of applications for promotion to senior lecturer are taken by the head of department.

## 5.3 Promotion from senior lecturer to professor

Following their application, a senior lecturer employed for an indefinite period can be assessed for employment as a professor. An application for promotion must be in the same subject as the current post. The vice-chancellor determines the right to assessment, in consultation with the head of department. A decision not to assess an application for promotion may not be appealed.

### 5.3.1 Preparation and decision

Applications should be submitted according to the university's template for applications for promotion (reference in Appendix 1).

The application, together with a proposal of expert, is submitted to the head of department. The head of department initiates dialogue with the vice-chancellor about a decision on the right to assessment. Once the vice-chancellor has taken a decision on the right of assessment, the application is forwarded to HR for further handling. HR is responsible for ensuring that the documentation is complete before the employment board assigns experts and determines that the application is ready for expert evaluation. Once an expert opinion has been received, HR is responsible for

initially checking the expert opinion and consulting with the chair of the employment board if anything needs supplementing or clarification.

HR reports on the matter to the employment board. The employment board submits a proposed decision to the vice-chancellor. The vice-chancellor takes a decision on the promotion.

Rejections of applications for promotion to professor are taken by the vice-chancellor.

## 6 Handling of admission of associate professor

The rules for admitting associate professors (doc. no. HV 2020/309) contain a description of the eligibility requirements for being admitted as an associate professor. An appointment as an associate professor is not associated with an employment. Normally, only someone employed for an indefinite period at University West may apply to be admitted as an associate professor. An applicant without an employment for an indefinite period may be admitted as an associate professor if it is of benefit for the organisation.

### 6.1 Preparation and decision

Applications should be submitted according to the university's template for applications for admission of associate professor (reference in Appendix 1).

The application, together with a proposal of expert, is submitted to the head of department for information. The head of department forwards the application to HR for further handling. HR is responsible for ensuring that the documentation is complete before the employment board assigns experts and determines that the application is ready for expert evaluation. Once an expert opinion has been received, HR is responsible for initially checking the expert opinion and consulting with the chair of the employment board if anything needs supplementing or clarification.

HR reports on the matter to the employment board. The employment board determines whether to admit an applicant as an associate professor. Admission as an associate professor is fulfilled upon the giving of a trial lecture.

Rejection of an application for admission as an associate professor is determined by the employment board.

For further instructions, see the rules for admission of associate professor (doc. no. HV 2020/309).

## 7 Handling of affiliations

Being accepted as an affiliate professor requires employment as a professor at another educational institution. Being accepted as an affiliate researcher requires that the person holds a doctoral degree or equivalent academic expertise.

An affiliation is used when employment is, for various reasons, not applicable. Affiliates undertake to adhere to University West's rules, according to an arrangement. In addition, the affiliate should specify their formal affiliation in, e.g., articles and applications for funds. An affiliation entails no financial obligation for the university. The university may, however, decide to fund costs related to the affiliation, such as travel, accommodation and occupational injury insurance.

Affiliation should be determined for a particular period of time, but no longer than two years at a time.

The university is entitled to discontinue an affiliation arrangement. Decisions to discontinue an affiliation are taken by the person who decided on the affiliation. An affiliation can also be discontinued if the affiliate wishes to end the arrangement themselves.

### 7.1 Preparation and decision

The head of department submits a proposed decision about an affiliation to HR, which prepares and reports on the matter for the employment board. The documentation should adhere to the affiliation template (reference in Appendix 1).

The employment board submits a proposed decision to the vice-chancellor for affiliated professors and to the head of department for affiliated researchers.

Once a decision has been taken, a contract is entered into between the university and the affiliate in accordance with the contract template (reference in Appendix 1).

## **Appendix 1: Reference to support material**

Support material is being developed. Contact HR for further information.