EAB

The High-Efficiency HR Department

Strategies for Increasing HR Staff Productivity and Capacity for Strategic, Cross-Campus Support

Business Affairs Forum

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Executive Summary

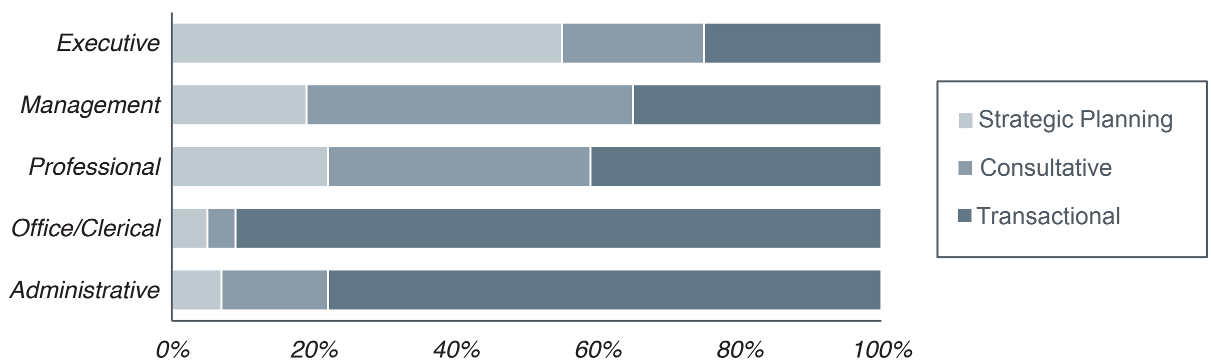
HR Central to Achieving Institutions' Strategic People Goals

Higher education is a people-intensive enterprise, so HR has a clear role to play in achieving institutional goals. As the primary "people function," HR is best positioned to drive high-level workforce effectiveness through sourcing, developing, engaging, and retaining talent. In this capacity, high-performing HR departments can significantly benefit the broader institution. Luckily, both HR leaders and business executives want HR to be more strategic and provide higher-level support to the academy and other administrative units. This, along with the widespread financial challenges facing the industry, continue to drive the evolution of HR's organizational role.

Little Departmental Capacity to Focus on Higher-Order Priorities

Despite this desired shift, HR staff often lack the capacity to focus on more strategic priorities because they are consumed by transactional tasks foundational to HR department operations. As shown below, staff at all levels dedicate significant amounts of time and attention to HR processing and administrative responsibilities. This work precludes senior-level and high-skilled staff from assuming a greater focus on higher-level strategic activities.

Representative Time Allocation of HR Staff



Driving Efficiency the First Step for Elevating HR's Strategic Role

Perhaps counterintuitively, leaders must first perfect core HR operations before pursuing a more strategic focus. There are three primary reasons for this sequence:

- First, HR departments are typically resource-constrained, making it difficult to reallocate staff time away from pressing but inefficient operational duties.
- Second, many HR professionals hold the view that automation is a cure-all for workflow inefficiencies. However, technology often serves only to automate already inefficient processes, leaving HR departments without the efficiency gains they had hoped for.
- Lastly, campus-wide perceptions of HR as a provider of core services are not always positive, leading many to question the department's credibility and ability to deliver on more complex initiatives.

Ultimately, HR departments must reduce the time and effort spent on transactional HR tasks by streamlining existing processes and staff workflows, and effectively leveraging efficiency gains.

Resources for Creating and Capturing HR Staff Capacity

To increase HR productivity and capacity for strategic, cross-campus support, this report provides 12 best practices for optimizing department operations and refocusing staff on higher-level work.

Introduction

Meeting HR's Strategic Mandate

HR Central to Achieving Institutions' People Goals

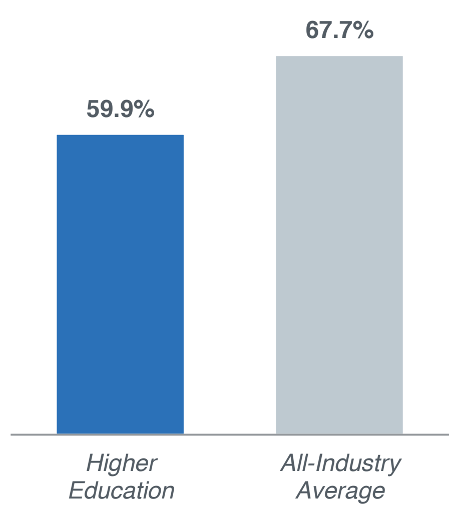
Higher education is a people-intensive enterprise, so HR has a clear role to play in achieving institutional goals. As the primary "people function," HR is best positioned to drive high-level workforce effectiveness through sourcing, developing, engaging, and retaining talent. In this capacity, high-performing HR departments can significantly benefit the broader institution. Representative outcomes of highly productive, strategically focused HR departments are presented on the right.

Unfortunately, higher education lags in many of these areas. For example, employee engagement in higher education is almost eight percentage points below the national, all-industry average. Many HR departments have ample room to improve engagement, employee skill development, performance management, and other important people objectives, which would meaningfully impact institutions' ability to fulfill their educational missions.

Representative Outcomes of a High-Performing HR Department

- Increased Employee Engagement
- Data-Driven Workforce Planning
- Defined Leadership Pathways for High-Potential Employees
- Progressive Employee Incentive Programs
- Streamlined Process Workflows
- Employer of Choice for Faculty
- Goal-Oriented Performance Reviews
- High-Impact Training and Development

Percentage of Employees Classified as Engaged, by Industry



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Position of higher education on 2014 ranking of most to least engaged industries

Source: 2012 Higher Education Employee Engagement Report, Quantum Workplace; 2014 Employee Engagement Trends Report, Quantum Workplace; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

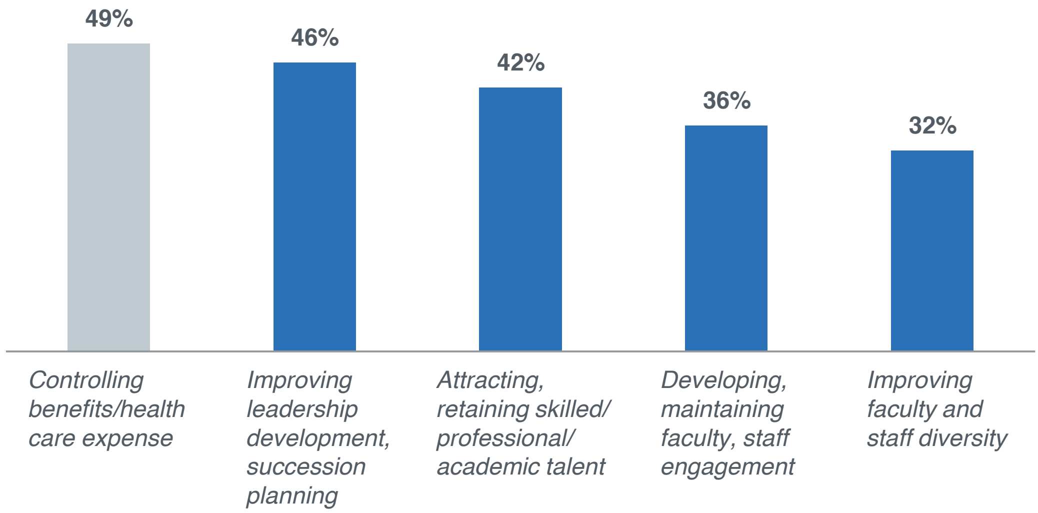
Clear Strategic Roles for HR

Both HR leaders and business executives want HR to be more strategic and provide higher-level support to the academy and other administrative units. According to one survey, four of the top five priorities most often cited by HR leaders in higher education concern strategic workforce management and development.

Likewise, business executives are looking for more proactive, consultative approaches from their HR units to address pressing, campus-wide human capital issues. This downward pressure, along with the widespread financial challenges facing the industry, continue to drive the evolution of HR's organizational role.

HR Leaders and Chief Business Officers Agree on Strategic Vision

Top Priorities of HR Leaders in Higher Education



CBOs Echoing the Sentiment

"HR needs to be able to provide strategic guidance for leaders and unit managers. They should be able to provide the best course of action for people issues across the institution to aid decision making. I'm not necessarily looking for a directive, but more strategic input and recommendations based on their expertise."

VP of Finance and Administration
Large Public Research Institution in the South

Source: "2012 Higher Education Survey: The State of HR Effectiveness," Aon Hewitt; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

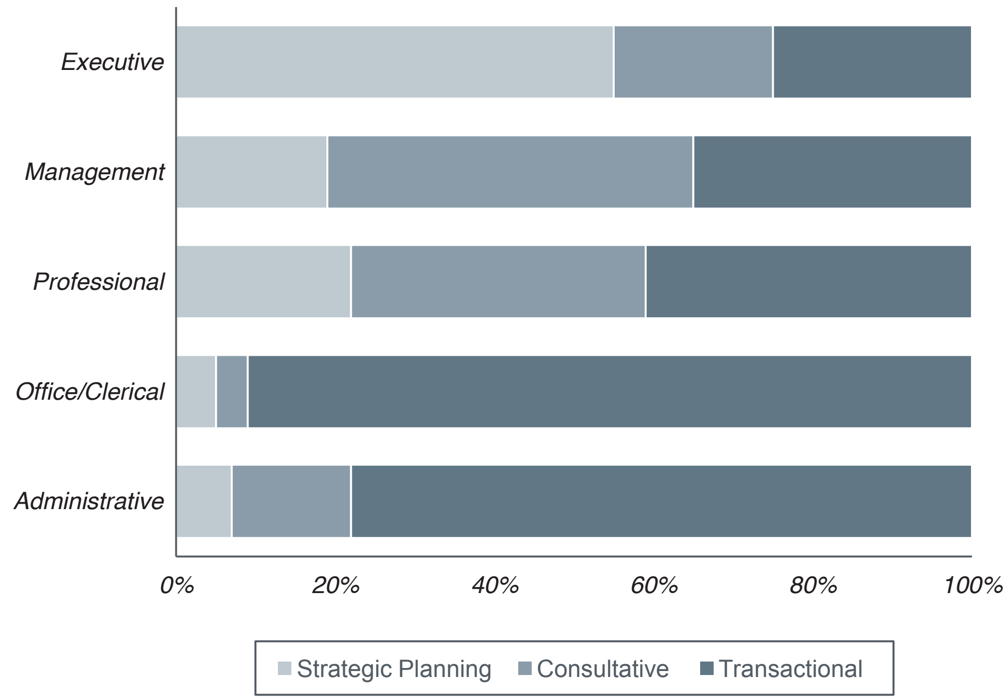
Strategy Crowded Out by Core Transactions

However, despite this desired shift, HR staff often lack the capacity to focus on more strategic priorities because they are consumed by transactional tasks foundational to HR department operations. As shown in this chart, staff at all levels dedicate significant amounts of time and attention to HR processing and administrative responsibilities. This work precludes senior-level and high-skilled staff from assuming a greater focus on higher-level strategic activities.

While HR will always be responsible for the delivery of core services, streamlining these transactional functions can provide much needed staff capacity for higher-level work.

Routine Administrative Tasks Still Comprise Bulk of Staff Time

Representative Time Allocation of HR Staff



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Mastering the Basics

Perhaps counterintuitively, HR must first perfect core HR operations before pursuing a more strategic focus. There are three primary reasons for this sequence.

First, HR departments are typically resource-constrained, making it difficult to reallocate staff time away from pressing but inefficient operational duties.

Second, many HR professionals hold the view that automation is a cure-all for workflow inefficiencies. However, technology often serves only to automate already inefficient processes, leaving HR departments without the efficiency gains they had hoped for.

Lastly, campus-wide perceptions of HR as a provider of core services are not always positive, leading many to question the department's credibility and ability to deliver on more complex initiatives.

Additional detail on each is provided across the following pages.

Three Key Reasons Achieving Operational Efficiency Must Precede Greater Strategic Focus

1

Limited Staff and Financial Resources

- HR staff consistently time-constrained with current work
- HR staff lack capacity to perform additional, higher-level activities

2

Misperception That Automation is Silver Bullet for Process Efficiency

- Automation helps reduce paper, but is not a stand-alone solution for eliminating inefficiencies
- Technical solutions often leave HR departments without the efficiency gains anticipated

3

Negative Campus Perceptions of HR Department

- Department credibility is harmed when department viewed as ineffective
- Unreliable delivery of core functions negatively impacts perceived ability of HR to deliver more complex functions

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Experiencing Significant Resource Constraints

Reason #1: Limited Staff and Financial Resources

Most HR leaders report that their departments are extremely lean, and as a result, existing staff are often overburdened by their day-to-day responsibilities. Staff spend the vast majority of their days fulfilling employee requests and processing transactions, leaving very little time to uncover operational inefficiencies.

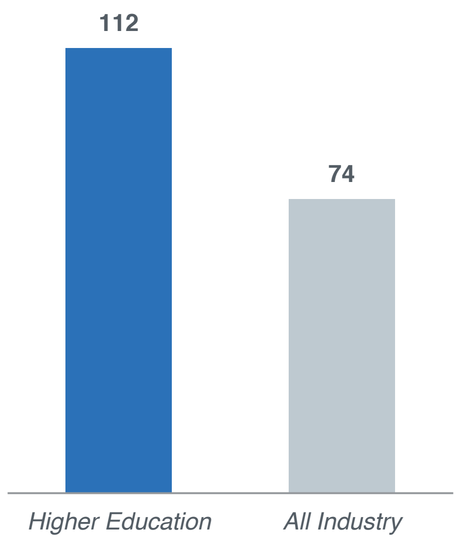
In particular, higher education HR budgets are considerably lower than those of other industries. The data on the right shows HR staff at colleges and universities are supporting comparatively more employees with fewer dollars.

HR departments are further challenged by the increasing size of the institutions they serve. From 2001 to 2011, undergraduate enrollment rose by 32 percent and is expected to rise another 14 percent across the next decade. However, HR resources have not kept pace with overall institutional growth. The quote here captures a common sentiment—that the impact of growth on HR is not fully understood or even considered.

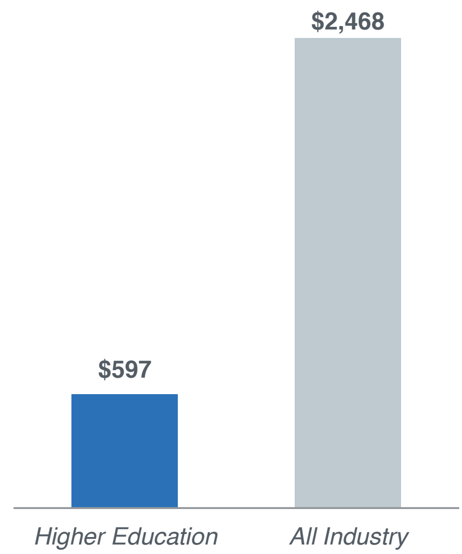
Financial pressures at most institutions will likely prevent HR leaders from receiving more resources, making department productivity and operational efficiency that much more critical for achieving new strategic imperatives.

Higher Education HR Departments Feeling the Squeeze

Number of Organization Employees per HR FTE, by Industry



HR Expense per Organization Employee, by Industry



HR Serving Ever-Growing Institutions…

32% Increase in total undergraduate enrollment at degree-granting institutions between 2001 and 2011

14% Projected increase in total undergraduate enrollment between 2012 and 2023

…Yet Department Resources Remain Stagnant

"Many schools have aggressive growth plans, but most folks in higher education don't see a connection between HR and growth. Where are we going to find the staff we'll need to hire? What about staff with the specific skill sets we'll need? No one asks about the administrative or HR burden of that—because we're not at the table."

Associate VP of HR
Large Public University in the Northwest

Source: Digest of Education Statistics 2013, National Center for Education Statistics, http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=98; The Condition of Education 2013: Undergraduate Enrollment, National Center for Education Statistics, http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cha.asp; 2012 Higher Education Survey: The State of HR Effectiveness, Aon Hewitt, http://www.aon.com/attachments/human-capital-consulting/2012_HigherEd_Survey_Highlights.pdf; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Automation Not a Cure-All

Reason #2: Misperception That Automation is Silver Bullet for Process Efficiency

Lacking additional resources, most HR departments are looking to automation to free up staff capacity. HR leaders overwhelmingly cite automation as the primary solution for process inefficiencies, and with good reason—department inefficiencies often start with too many paper-based processes. Automation inherently quickens otherwise manual processes.

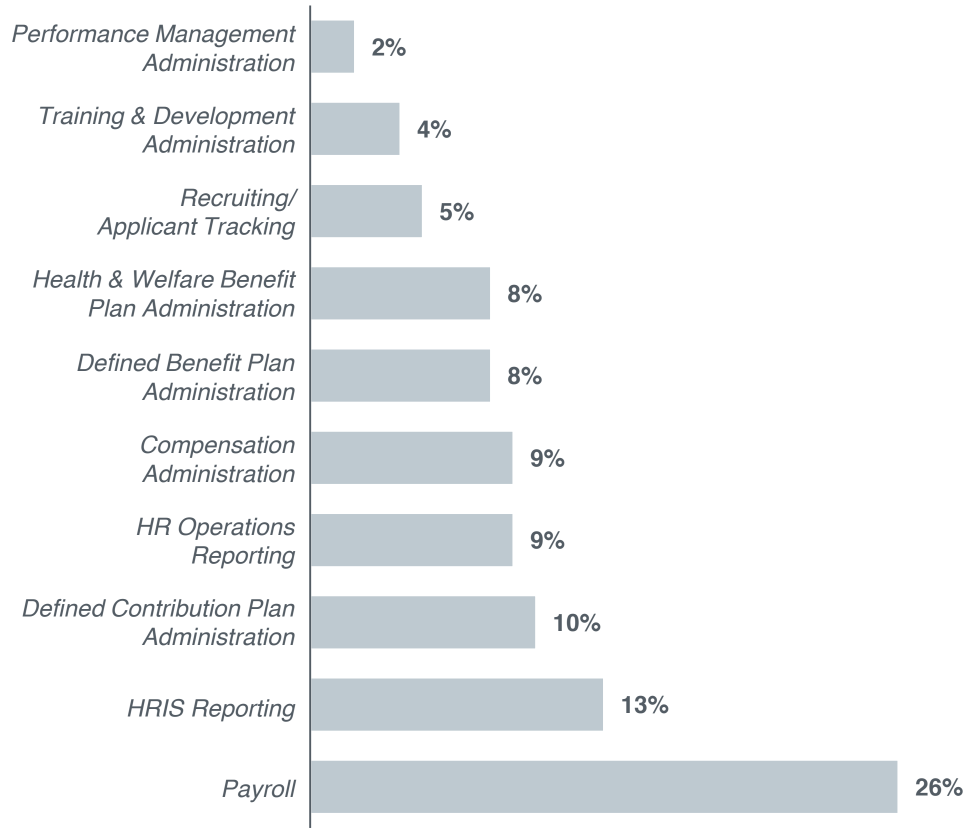
However, automation is not a stand-alone solution. Too often, technology serves to automate inefficient processes, only making poor processes faster. Automation also comes with technical challenges that can create additional end-user bottlenecks. In both cases, technological solutions often leave HR departments without the efficiency gains they hoped for.

For example, the chart on the right provides a snapshot of HR leaders' impressions of their current HRIS systems. Overall, HRIS systems leave much to be desired. Freeing up the resources necessary for strategic efforts requires an approach that goes beyond automated solutions.

Not Yet Realizing Promised Productivity Gains of Automation

HR Leaders Rating Current HRIS Module as "Very Effective"[1]

n=303



38%
HR directors agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement "Overall I am satisfied with our HRIS"

100%
HR directors agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement "Our HRIS could be better utilized"

1) Five-point Likert scale from "Very Ineffective" to "Very Effective."

Source: Sadiq U, et.al., "The Impact of Information Systems on the Performance of Human Resources Department," *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 3, No. 4, (2012): 77-91; "Transforming HR for Business Results: A Study of U.S. Organizations," Mercer Human Resources Consulting; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Struggling with Credibility Concerns

Reason #3: Negative Campus Perceptions of HR Department

At many institutions, HR lacks the credibility to provide more strategic support. Campus perceptions of HR are repeatedly hurt by flawed processes, slow response times, and poor customer service. The quotes presented here illustrate how neglecting HR's core administrative functions can negatively impact the perceived ability of HR to deliver more complex functions.

Moreover, the delivery of core HR services represents an area where HR departments have ample room for improvement. According to participants in our Administrative Alignment Survey, HR is ranked 10th relative to other campus units on overall department effectiveness.

Ample Room for Service Delivery Improvements

Fighting an Uphill Battle

"Oftentimes, HR doesn't have any credibility. We'll roll out these great projects only to screw up paychecks. It's like we're taking two steps forward and one step back."

Chief Human Resources Officer
Canadian University

Getting Your Ducks in a Row

"You can't be strategic until you have all the tactical stuff running smoothly. People won't trust you'll be able to manage strategy if you can't even process payroll right, or if benefits are messed up."

Executive Director, HR
Private Liberal Arts University

Relative Effectiveness of Campus Units as Assessed by Business Affairs Forum Administrative Alignment Survey Participants[1]

n=700+

Unit	Rank
Payroll	1
Audit & Compliance/Quality Assurance	2
Office of the Chief Business Officer/VP of Business & Finance/VP of Finance & Administration	3
Security & Public Safety/University Police/Campus Safety	4
Controller/Accounting/Financial Services	5
Environmental Health & Safety/Sustainability	6
Facilities Management/Physical Plant/Custodial/Grounds	7
Procurement/Purchasing/Sourcing	8
Risk Management	9
Human Resources and Benefits	10
Central Budgeting & Planning Office	11
Capital Planning/Real Estate/Construction	12
Office for New Programs & Strategic Initiatives	13

1) Survey respondents consist of employees campus-wide at member institutions. Respondents assessed unit effectiveness by answering four questions, each targeting a specific element of performance: Advising, Responsiveness, Proactive Function, and Policies and Communication. Responses are provided using a six-point Likert scale from "Extremely Ineffective" to "Extremely Effective".

Source: Aligning Administrative Services to Campus Needs; Findings from the Administrative Services Alignment Tool; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

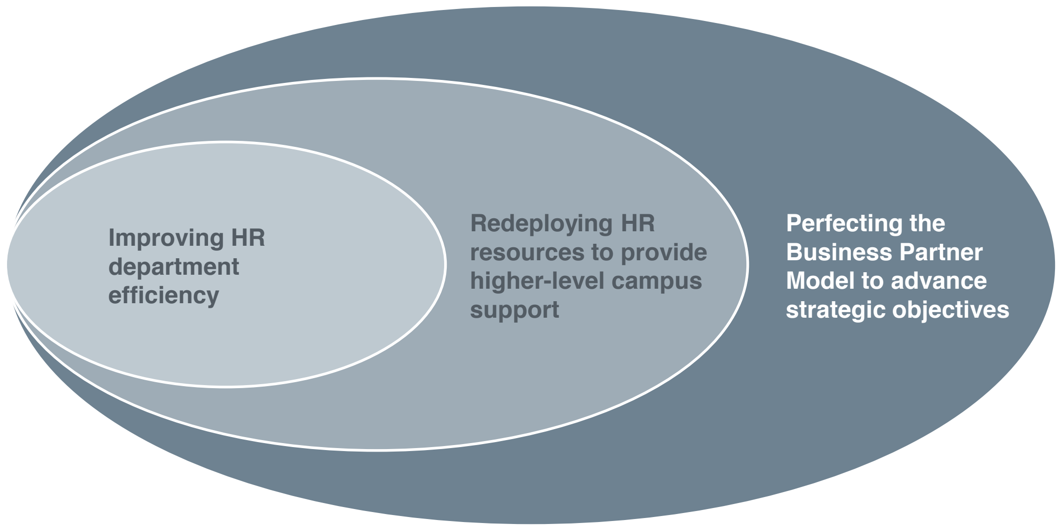
Improving Process Efficiency a Natural Starting Point

Ultimately, HR departments must reduce the time and effort spent on transactional HR tasks by streamlining existing processes, optimizing staff workflows, and effectively capturing efficiency gains. Furthermore, being more efficient is an end in and of itself—seamless processes keep the department running smoothly and contribute greatly to the value clients and customers derive from HR.

This report will focus on the two innermost sections of the graphic presented here—improving operations to create capacity for HR staff, and redirecting staff to perform higher-level work and be a more credible source of broad institutional support.

Moving forward, HR will be better positioned to pursue department models that enhance the delivery of strategic services.

Framework for Elevating HR's Organizational Role



Source: Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Executive Framework

To help HR leaders create and capture staff capacity, we recommend a two-part strategy. First, HR leaders must streamline and optimize current processes to improve HR department efficiency, providing much needed staff capacity for higher-level work. Second, HR leaders must position staff to perform higher-level work and effectively leverage efficiency gains. The flowchart below presents the two-part strategy and 12 best practices identified by the Business Affairs Forum to achieve these aims and position HR for more strategic, campus-wide service delivery.

Optimize Current Processes

I

Focusing Improvement Efforts on Most Disruptive Staff and Customer Processes

1. HR Staff Workflow Assessments
2. Customer-Driven Department Evaluations
3. Process Redesign Prioritization Tool

II

Redesigning Workflows to Correct Most Common Sources of Processing Bottlenecks

4. Process Redesign Playbook

III

Improving Coordination with Unit-Based Administrative Support

5. Stakeholder-HR Service Contract
6. Unit-Based HR Super Users
7. On-Demand Unit-Based Staff Toolkits

Reposition HR Staff to Create and Capture New Capacity

IV

Delegating HR Tasks Down to Most Appropriate Level of Staff

8. Tiered Request Service Desk
9. Internal HR Processing Unit

V

Reprioritizing Individual Staff Time and Responsibilities

10. HR Critical Responsibilities Lists
11. Customer-Focused Unit Rotations
12. New Position Applications

Section I

Focusing Improvement Efforts on Most Disruptive Staff and Customer Processes

- Practice 1: HR Staff Workflow Assessments
- Practice 2: Customer-Driven Department Evaluations
- Practice 3: Process Redesign Prioritization Tool

An Overwhelming Number of Processes

The first barrier to increasing HR efficiency is the sheer number of existing processes, making it difficult for leaders to focus initial redesign efforts. Most HR departments are responsible for such a large number of diverse processes that mapping each to determine which are the most inefficient is nearly impossible. Even departments that succeed in mapping a critical mass of processes will overwhelm and exhaust their staff along the way. This leaves too little department energy to move to the most important next phase—actually making improvements.

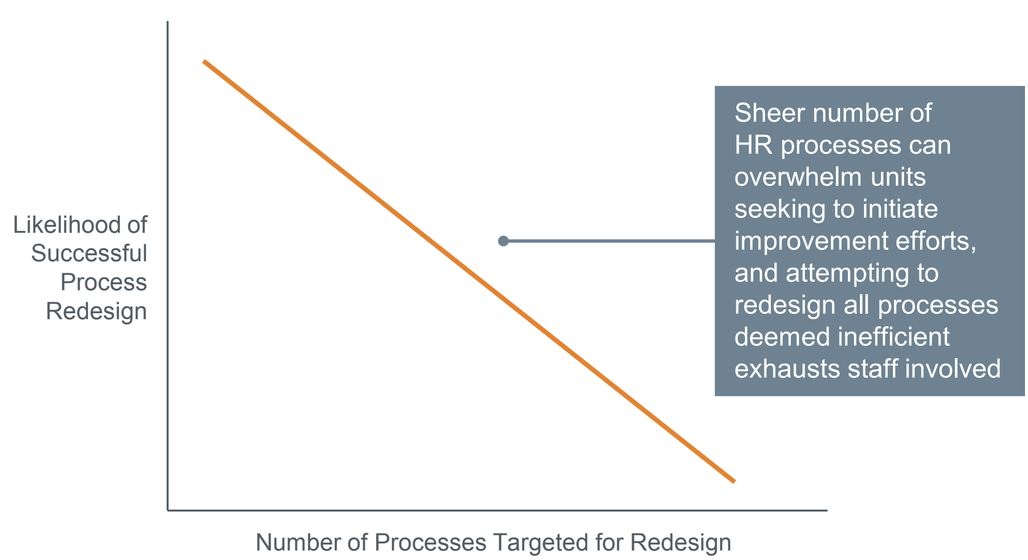
As illustrated below, the more HR leaders narrow their focus to a smaller list of processes on the front end, the more successful process redesign efforts are likely to be.

Impossible to Redesign Everything

Sample Processes Performed by HR Staff Members

- Review I-9 Forms
- Compensation Analysis
- Update W-2
- Leave without Pay Forms
- Approval to Fill a Vacancy
- Confirm Bereavement Leave
- Mediation and Conflict Resolution
- Superannuation
- Submit Pre-retirement Contract Proposals
- Process Unsatisfactory Performance Review
- Professional and Consultancy Work Approval
- Reclassification of General Staff Positions
- Advertise Available Positions
- Salary Packaging
- Rehire a Retired Employee
- Establish Hiring Committee
- Leave Accrual Verification
- Termination of Employment
- Payment for Sick Balances
- Benefits Eligibility Review
- Summer Faculty FTE Calculations
- E-Verify New Employees
- Layoff and Reemployment Procedure
- Fingerprinting
- PeopleSoft Training Requests
- Overload Requests
- Create Position Descriptions

Relationship Between Number of Processes Targeted for Redesign and Likelihood of Redesign Success



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Relying on Faulty Scoping Methods

However, even HR leaders who attempt to scope process redesign efforts down to a manageable number too often use suboptimal methods. Typically, HR leaders rely on gut feeling or anecdotal evidence to determine which processes are the most problematic. These approaches frequently miss the greatest opportunities for improvement for two primary reasons. First, they emphasize process issues that are top-of-mind for HR leadership, rather than for frontline staff responsible for performing the processes. Scoping by fiat produces a limited view of the larger impact on HR staff and customers. Second, they often fail to consider factors key for defining how problematic a process actually is. Understanding how frequently a process is performed or how many staff are involved, for example, can help unearth the greatest opportunities for process improvements.

Typical Methods Used to Scope Improvement Efforts

Department Leader Gut Feeling

Limited Anecdotal Evidence

!

Fundamental Problems with Typical Scoping Methods

- Emphasize top-of-mind problems with a limited view of the larger impact on HR staff and customers
- Overlook key factors such as process frequency, number of staff involved, and criticality of process when defining which processes are the most problematic; as a result, HR administrators miss the greatest opportunities to reduce process inefficiencies

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

A Better Approach

Consequently, HR leaders must employ a more structured method for scoping down the number of processes on which to focus process mapping and redesign efforts. There are two separate sources of information that HR leaders can reliably use to isolate the most problematic processes and target improvement efforts: staff who perform HR work and campus customers who receive it. First, HR leaders can gauge efficiency by assessing how much department time and resources are dedicated to various HR processes. Alternatively, customer feedback provides a quantifiable measure of satisfaction with any given HR service, which can be a strong indicator of process inefficiencies. The first two practices in this section provide leaders a means for accessing each of these sources in order to identify the most inefficient department processes. These more structured methods also offer a secondary benefit—they give HR leaders the quantifiable data needed to gain institutional buy-in and pursue broad process changes. Note, these practices represent two options for scoping HR improvement efforts; most HR departments will need to utilize only one of these methods.

Once HR leaders have identified which processes to target, they must prioritize the mapping and redesign of these processes. The third practice in this section provides a tool to help HR leaders assess processes on a number of key redesign variables and prioritize improvement efforts on those considered most critical.

Systematically Scoping Processes for Redesign

Two Reliable Sources to Identify Which Processes Are Most Inefficient

HR Staff

Central and decentralized HR staff that perform the majority of HR processes

Practice 1: HR Staff Workflow Assessments

HR Customers

Employees across campus who receive HR services

Practice 2: Customer-Driven Department Evaluations

Recommended Method for Prioritizing Where to Begin Implementation Efforts

Process Ranking

Rank identified processes on meaningful success factors

Practice 3: Process Redesign Prioritization Tool

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 1: HR Staff Workflow Assessments

Practice in Brief

HR staff document the amount of time spent completing various HR tasks. The time assessment forms allow HR administrators to narrow the number of potential processes for redesign to those processes that consume the most HR staff time.

Rationale

HR units that attempt to map every process will exhaust staff and reduce the likelihood of redesign success. Those that do narrow the number of processes for redesign often use less effective methods, missing the greatest opportunities for improvement.

One method for scoping the number of potential processes for redesign is to target those that consume the greatest percentage of staff time. Documenting how much time individual processes require for completion helps administrators identify the most burdensome processes for HR staff and focus process mapping and redesign efforts.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Collect and Calculate the Time Allocated to HR Process Activities
HR leaders provide staff with a time assessment form that lists all HR activities. Staff complete the form by assigning a percentage to each activity that represents his or her annual time commitment, relative to other job responsibilities.

Component #2: Aggregate Response Data and Calculate Staff Time per Process
HR leaders calculate which HR function demands the most time from staff. Leaders can also determine the cost of time spent on each activity using staff salaries. The most time-consuming and costly processes are targeted for near-term process mapping and redesign.

Capturing How HR Staff Spend Their Time

Component #1: Collect and Calculate the Time Allocated to HR Process Activities

At University of North Carolina (UNC) Wilmington, HR administrators systematically scoped which HR processes to target for redesign by assessing time required for completion. Two components were essential to UNC Wilmington's approach.

The first component is to asses how much time HR staff are spending on various HR activities. HR administrators at UNC Wilmington focused assessments on unit-based administrative staff with HR-related responsibilities. HR administrators created an assessment form listing HR activities performed by decentralized administrative staff across campus. During hour-long, in-person sessions, staff completed the form by providing estimates of the percentage of time spent on each activity. The form also included non-HR administrative activities performed to ensure staff could provide a comprehensive account of their time.

Characteristics of University of North Carolina Wilmington's Assessment Process

Participants

- HR administrators at UNC Wilmington chose to assess the amount of time decentralized support staff spent on a variety of HR activities
- In total, 300 decentralized support staff completed the assessment

Assessment Form

- HR administrators distributed a one-page document listing a series of HR activities to all decentralized support staff with HR-related responsibilities
- Instructions asked participants to document the amount of time he/she spent performing each activity, relative to other job duties
- A free-text box response option allowed participants to add, provide time estimates for other HR tasks not listed

Methodology

- HR administrators scheduled three one-hour sessions for decentralized support staff to complete assessment forms in person
- All responses were kept anonymous to encourage honesty, candor

Case in Brief: University of North Carolina-Wilmington

- 13,937-student, public master's university located in Wilmington, North Carolina
- In 2013, developed an HR data collection questionnaire for decentralized support staff to capture the percentage of time spent completing various HR tasks
- Identified that processes related to onboarding consumed the largest percentage of external HR staff time

Source: University of North Carolina, Wilmington, NC; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Breaking Down HR Support Staff's Responsibilities

This page shows an excerpt of the form UNC Wilmington provided to staff. Importantly, time assessment forms are standardized to ensure data can be reliably aggregated across all staff in all units.

Although leaders at UNC Wilmington chose to focus on unit-based HR support staff, other institutions can easily adapt this practice to assess the functional work performed by central HR staff.

Unit-Based Support Staff at UNC Wilmington Quantify Annual Time Spent on Specified Activities

Instructions to Complete HR Data Collection Questionnaire

In this section, please indicate what percentage of time you devote to HR, Budget, Other Business Processes (other financial activities that do not include budget), Student Service, Faculty Services, and General Administrative tasks annually. There is an opportunity to detail additional tasks you complete in the next section.

Note: You may not need to indicate a percentage for each task listed. Your grand total will equal 100%.

% of Time	Function	Task
	Human Resources	Supplemental Pay Forms
	Human Resources	Processing HR Online Transactions
	Human Resources	Employee Classification Activities (developing job descriptions, entering into PeopleAdmin, competency assessments, salary decision worksheets).
	Human Resources	Employee Recruitment Activities (developing ads, managing information in Consensus, entering recruitment/selection actions into PeopleAdmin, contacting applicants, scheduling interviews, etc.)
	Human Resources	Onboarding New Employees (new hire paperwork, I-9, requesting computer access, phone/computer setup, department orientation)
	Human Resources	Leave-Keeping Activities for Permanent Employees, Temporary, Employees, and Students (e.g., time sheet review/processing, leave entry into Banner)
	Human Resources	Performance Management (evaluations, employee relations)
	Human Resources	Other Human Resources Tasks. Please list in the box provided.
	HR & Budget	Position Control (salary action paperwork, HR 3.30 and HR 3.35)
	Other Business Process	Travel

Participants enter percentage of time spent completing each task

Standardized form allows for cross-departmental data comparisons

Participants have option to add, provide time estimates for other HR tasks not listed in text box on separate page

Source: University of North Carolina, Wilmington, NC; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Quantifying the Wasted Time

Component #2: Aggregate Response Data and Calculate Staff Time per Process

After collecting staff data through the time assessment forms, the second component of this practice is to aggregate the number of FTEs required to perform each HR task annually. The tables on the right provide a snapshot of UNC Wilmington's findings. Compared to other HR tasks, onboarding activities consumed the greatest amount of staff time, requiring the equivalent of 12.21 unit-based FTEs to complete annually.

Next, by using staff salary data, HR leaders were also able to determine the financial cost of completing these processes. With this information, HR leaders at UNC Wilmington could more accurately evaluate the resource and cost opportunities associated with various HR processes and make better decisions about which to target for improvement.

UNC Wilmington Assesses Resource Allocation, Associated Labor Costs for Each HR Activity

Annual FTE Allocation per HR Function, by Staff Title

Title	Leave Keeping	Supp. Pay	Onboarding[1]
Admin. Associate	5.53	2.53	7.36
Admin. Specialist	1.55	0.53	1.66
Business Services Coordinator	0.07	0.59	0.31
Business Officer	0.69	0.34	0.57
Exec. Assistant	1.95	0.53	1.63
University Program Associate	0.15	0.00	0.28
Other	0.53	0.07	0.42
Total FTE	**10.47**	**4.59**	**12.21**

Annual FTE Cost per HR Function, by Staff Title

Title	Average Base Salary w/o Benefits	Leave Keeping	Supp. Pay	Onboarding
Admin. Associate	$30,245	$167,254	$76,520	$222,603
Admin. Specialist	$33,861	$52,485	$17,946	$39,279
Business Services Coordinator	$40,890	$2,862	$24,125	$12,676
Business Officer	$52,548	$36,258	$17,866	$29,952
Exec. Assistant	$37,119	$72,382	$19,673	$60,504
University Program Associate	$36,756	$5,513	$0	$10,292
Other	$41,282	$21,879	$2,890	$17,338
Total Average Cost	---	**$358,633**	**$159,020**	**$392,644**

1) Does not total due to rounding.

Source: University of North Carolina, Wilmington, NC; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 2: Customer-Driven Department Evaluations

Practice in Brief

A focus group of HR clients advises HR leaders on common processing pitfalls, which informs the creation of a campus-wide survey to further evaluate identified processes. The survey allows HR leaders to isolate processes most dissatisfying to HR customers.

Rationale

HR units that attempt to map every process will exhaust staff and reduce the likelihood of redesign success. Those that do narrow the number of processes for redesign often use less effective methods, missing the greatest opportunities for improvement.

One method for scoping improvement efforts is to target processes HR customers identify as the most problematic. A survey of HR customers helps leaders identify and prioritize processes for mapping and redesign.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Hold Focus Group of HR Stakeholders to Uncover Most Prevalent Pain Points
HR leaders invite a small group of HR clients to participate in a focus group, which helps identify the most problematic HR processes. The focus group also helps to create a customer survey of these identified processes to distribute campus-wide.

Component #2: Survey Campus on Identified HR Department Pain Points
HR administrators distribute the survey to HR customers across campus. Survey participants evaluate the processes identified by the focus group and have an opportunity to provide feedback on any processes not included in the survey in open text fields.

A Manageable Starting Point

Component #1: Hold Focus Group of HR Stakeholders to Uncover Most Prevalent Pain Points

HR leaders at University of Maryland Baltimore Country (UMBC) scoped their redesign efforts by focusing on processes HR clients and customers across campus identified as the most problematic. UMBC's approach has two key implementation components.

The first component is to engage a small set of HR clients to get a preliminary sense of the most prominent HR processing issues. Rather than solicit campus opinion on a broad array of HR processes, UMBC honed their approach by first gathering a small, diverse group of HR clients to understand their top-of-mind HR issues. The focus group was composed of 20 clients from across the institution that either owned, or were frequently involved in, HR processing. The group convened for a one-day session and devised a list of top HR "pain points," a subset listed here. Participants also suggested potential process modifications for future consideration by HR leadership.

Ultimately, this small subset of HR clients provided HR leaders with an informed starting point and helped them narrow in on a more manageable subset of HR problem areas.

University of Maryland Baltimore County Convenes Focus Group to Identify Preliminary Problem Areas

Elements of UMBC's Client Focus Group

High-User HR Clients

- HR leaders selected 20 HR clients in academic and administrative units frequently involved in the processing of HR tasks to participate in focus group

Interactive Format

- During one-day session, HR leaders asked participants to discuss HR processes that generate the most frustration for clients

Outcomes-Driven

- Focus group developed list of 21 different pain points and inefficient processes
- HR administrators developed a survey for HR customers across campus based on the pain points and broken processes identified by the focus group

Select UMBC Client-Identified HR Pain Points

- No electronic timesheets
- Too many approval signatures required
- Limited document storage systems
- Hiring and payroll resources not clearly defined for campus
- No training for HR liaisons
- Understaffed classification, compensation areas
- Insufficient communication between HR and units
- Internal departmental onboarding checklists not easily accessible
- No hiring process workshops
- No internal departmental hiring checklists
- No electronic applicant system and portal
- Unclear record retention guidelines for hiring documents

Case in Brief: University of Maryland Baltimore County

- 13,969 student, public research university located in Baltimore, Maryland
- Established focus groups with HR clients to identify and zero in on a manageable subset of HR problem areas
- Administrators used the pain points identified by the focus group to develop a campus-wide survey in which customers ranked each by importance
- Using the survey results, HR leaders were able to pinpoint the most palpable, customer-identified HR processes in need of improvement

Source: University of Maryland Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Another Source of Initial Feedback

Instead of a focus group, HR leaders could also utilize customer or user complaints to narrow the list of HR processes to evaluate. Incoming complaints provide a near real-time view of the most burdensome HR processes and common processing roadblocks. Three common sources of complaints are presented on the right.

Like the focus group, complaints can indicate areas in need of redesign and processes to include in more broadly distributed customer surveys.

Complaint Tracking Provides a Pulse on Customer Frustrations

Common Sources of Complaints

Anecdotal Complaints

- HR staff receive ad hoc feedback from HR clients, customers during user-group meetings, HR training sessions

ERP Service Reports

- ERP system users submit service request reports asking for additional guidance or technical support with hosted tasks
- Service request reports indicate troublesome components of HR processes

Emailed/Call-in Complaints

- HR clients email or call HR department seeking support with HR processes
- Staff document incoming requests to pinpoint which processes receive the most negative feedback

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Polling Customers on Focus Group Findings

Component #2: Survey Campus on Identified HR Department Pain Points

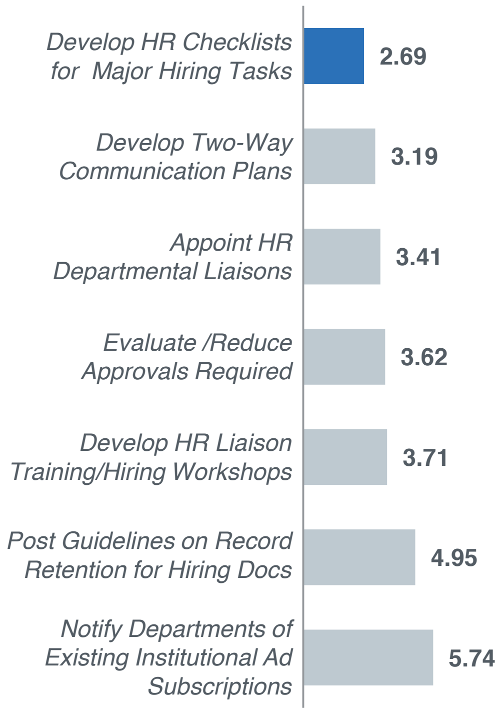
The second component is to create a campus-wide customer survey based on the problematic processes identified by the focus group. Using information gathered through the HR client focus group, HR administrators at UMBC created a survey with recommendations to address each identified pain point. The recommendations fell broadly into two categories: “quick hit” recommendations that could be implemented in less than three months, and long-term recommendations that would require three months or more. Participants ranked each group of recommendations in order of importance from highest to lowest, with a score of one representing highest priority. Leaders then calculated an average score for each recommendation, shown here.

Within hiring, participants identified the development of HR checklists for all major hiring tasks as their top quick-hit priority, and the addition of an electronic workflow system as the most desired long-term solution. Within payroll, a contact guide and the development of an electronic timesheet system ranked as the top quick-hit and long-term HR priorities, respectively.

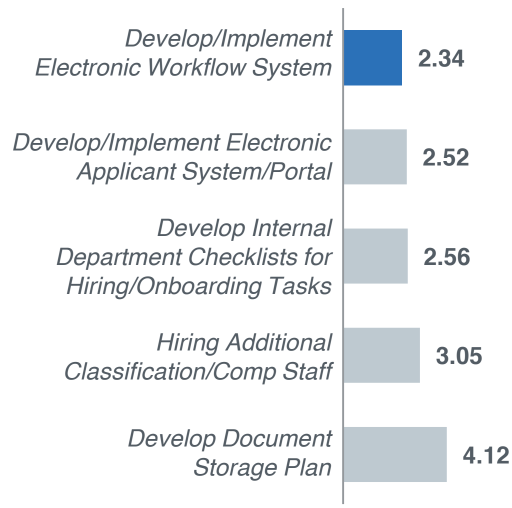
HR leaders continue to work on initiatives identified through the focus group and survey, and are making progress on both quick-hit and longer-term projects.

UMBC Staff Rank Most Desired Pain Point Recommendations

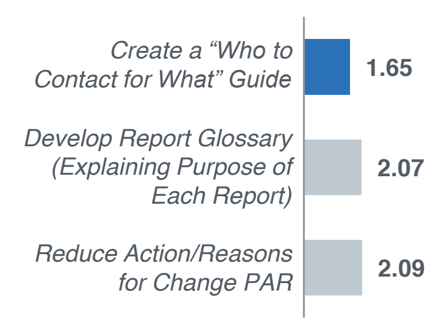
Customer Ranking of Quick-Hit Hiring Recommendations[1]



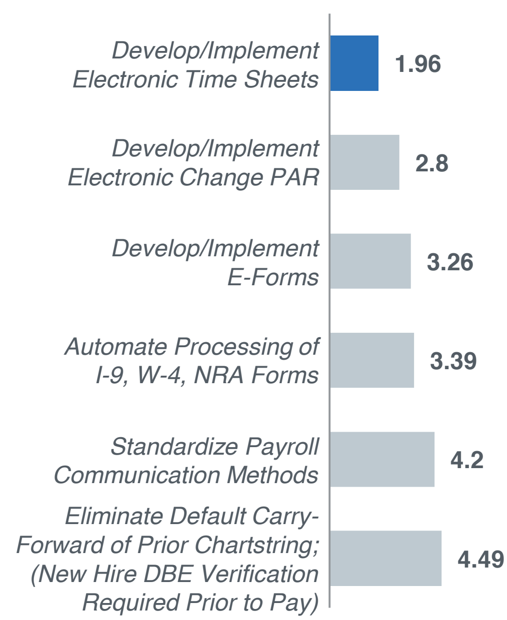
Customer Ranking of Long-Term Hiring Recommendations[1]



Customer Ranking of Quick-Hit Payroll Recommendations[1]



Customer Ranking of Long-Term Payroll Recommendations[1]



1) Survey participants ranked items on a scale in which “1” represented the highest priority.

Source: University of Maryland Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 3: Process Redesign Prioritization Tool

Practice in Brief

HR leaders assess inefficient processes identified by HR staff and/or customers against a number of key redesign variables. Using meaningful evaluation criteria, HR leaders are able to establish an “order of implementation” strategy and prioritize process mapping and improvement efforts on the highest ranking processes.

Rationale

Although HR departments can utilize HR staff (Practice 1) or customers (Practice 2) to help identify inefficient HR processes, many institutions will need to employ a methodology to further cull down the list of problematic processes to an actionable few that will receive redesign priority. Attempting to tackle all identified processes at once makes successful implementation of improvement plans less likely. This practice provides a tool by which to segment and stagger redesign initiatives.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Select Variables on Which to Evaluate Problem Processes
HR leaders identify institutional factors influential for successful process redesign. Leaders must limit the number of variables chosen to ensure processes are measured only against those representing the most relevant institutional priorities.

Component #2: Score Each Process on Selected Variables
HR leaders create a simple numerical scale to score each process against chosen variables. The definitions of numerical values are respective to each variable.

Component #3: Total and Rank Process Priority
HR leaders add scores across all selected variables for each process to create a total score. Processes with the highest total scores receive priority when initiating process mapping and redesign efforts.

Not All Processes Created Equal

After successfully pinpointing the most inefficient HR processes, HR leaders must prioritize these processes for mapping and redesign. Process improvement is resource-intensive, and few HR units have the internal capacity to immediately pursue all problematic processes. Therefore, it is important for HR leaders to stagger the effort.

One principled method for prioritizing improvement efforts is to weigh each identified process against a common set of factors that meaningfully impact redesign. For many HR units, different institutional considerations have the potential to help or hinder redesign progress. Sample factors are presented here. Considering how each process fares against such factors can help HR leaders determine which should receive redesign priority.

A handful of institutions have employed this approach to establish an "order of implementation" strategy for problematic processes. This practice outlines the three key components of this approach.

Many Factors Impacting Process Redesign

Timeliness to Fix

What is the expected timeline for process redesign and implementation?

Organizational Readiness

How prepared are process stakeholders for process redesign?

Compliance Risk

Does the process currently comply with institution, state, or federal regulations?

Expense to Fix

What are the expected costs of the process redesign?

Impact on HR Customers

What impact will process reformation have on customer experience and satisfaction?

Expense to Continue

What are the expected costs of maintaining the status quo?

Impact on HR Staff Efficiency

Does the process consume a significant amount of support staff time?

Ease of Implementation

How easily can HR administrators amend process steps to make the process less burdensome?

Control

To what degree is reformation of the identified process dependent on collaboration with external units?

Strategic Alignment

Is redesigning the identified process critical for meeting larger institutional goals, strategic objectives?

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Establishing Meaningful Criteria

Component #1: Select Variables on Which to Evaluate Problem Processes

The first component is to identify the key variables influential for redesign success at the institution. Leaders at University of Wisconsin, University of Florida, and Oregon State each selected a limited number of variables on which to assess their short list of processes identified for redesign.

It is important that HR leaders limit the number of variables chosen to ensure processes are measured only against those representing the most relevant institutional priorities. As such, variables chosen will likely vary across institutions.

Institutions Review Inefficient Processes Against Impactful Redesign Variables

WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

- Value Added to Campus
- Feasibility of Success
- Strategic Alignment
- Campus Control
- Resources Required
- Organizational Readiness

UF | UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

- Impact of Change
- Level of Effort Required

OSU Oregon State UNIVERSITY

- Compliance Risk

Source: Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR; "Process Mapping – Improving Organizational Performance", University of Florida Gator Business Administrator Services, November 14 2013, http://hr.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/resources/GBAS%20Website/Process%20Mapping.pdf; University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Assessing the Urgency, Feasibility of Redesign

Component #2: Score Each Process on Selected Variables

The second component is to score each process against the chosen variables. Leaders at Layne University[1] scored each process using a three-point scale. Although exact definitions of each score differ by variable, a score of one always represents the least ideal scenario, and a score of three is always the most ideal scenario for redesign.

Evaluating inefficient processes against redesign variables will often rely on subjective interpretations. Whenever possible, HR leaders should select quantitative variables (e.g., time, cost, etc.) to create a more objective scoring scale. However, this is not possible in all instances.

Layne University[1] Scores Each Process Using Simple Three-Point Variable Scales

Sample Scoring Scale and Definitions

	Score		
Variable	1	2	3
Expense to Fix	High cost to fix	Moderate cost to fix	Low cost to fix
Timeliness	>6 Months	2-6 Months	<1 Month
Compliance Risk	Low risk of noncompliance	Moderate risk of noncompliance	High risk for noncompliance
Impact on HR Staff Efficiency	Consumes 0-10% of staff's time	Consumes 10-20% of staff's time	Consumes 20% or more of staff's time
Percent of People Affected	<20% of campus community affected	20-50% of campus community affected	>80% of campus community affected
Ease of Implementation	Requires contracting with third- party vendor	Requires collaboration with external unit	Does not require external collaboration or consultation

Case in Brief: Layne University[1]

- Public master's university in the Midwest
- In 2007, leaders developed a process redesign toolkit, including a template for ranking their list of inefficient processes, to prioritize redesign efforts
- The tool has helped administrators focus their efforts and sequentially implement 46 newly designed processes across campus

1) Pseudonym.

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Isolating Your Top Redesign Priority

Component #3: Total and Rank Process Priority

The last component is to sum variable scores for each process and rank them by the total score. Processes with the highest total are given top rankings and should receive redesign priority.

A full sample version of the Redesign Prioritization Tool can be found on pages 39-40.

Creating a Process Index with the Redesign Prioritization Tool

1. Score each process on selected variables
2. Add scores across variables
3. Rank processes by total score

Process Name (Selected by Team)	Expense to Fix (H, M, L) (1, 2, 3)	Timeliness to Fix (<1 mo, 3-6 mo, >6 mo) (3, 2, 1)	Compliance Risk (H, M, L) (3, 2, 1)	Impact on HR Staff Efficiency (>20%, 10-20%, <10%) (3, 2, 1)	% of People Affected (80%-50%-20%) (3, 2, 1)	Ease of Implementation (H, M, L) (3, 2, 1)	Total Score	Rank
E-Verify New Employees	3	2	1	1	1	2	10	
Superannuation	3	3	1	3	1	3	14	
Leave Accrual Verification								
Overload Requests								
Salary Packaging								
Rehiring a Retired Employee								
Create Position Description s								
Advertise Available Positions								

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

A More Efficient and Methodical Process Redesign

University of Wisconsin has realized significant efficiency gains as a result of its approach to process redesign. By prioritizing improvement efforts and scaling implementation over time, Wisconsin has redesigned over 45 processes, including the human resources overload request process. Since the redesign, overload request processing time has decreased by 56%.

Reductions in Overload Request Process Wait Time at Wisconsin

Problems with Original Overload Request Process

- Process required up to seven approvals
- Staff unable to track pending overload requests
- Unclear routing order
- Average processing time ≈25 days

1 More approval delegation from the Academic Personnel Office

2 All overloads uploaded into single system for easy monitoring

3 Suggested routing order built into the approval process

Results of Overload Request Process Redesign

- 50% increase in same-day overload request approvals
- More than 70% of requests for approvals decided in five days or less
- Average processing time reduced to 11 days

Source: University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Sample Redesign Prioritization Tool

HR Process Redesign
Process Ranking

I. Purpose
Evaluate each process on a select number of key redesign variable and rank to determine which should receive redesign priority. To produce this ranking, administrators should evaluate each process according to the questions below, corresponding to the variables chosen. Institutions need not select every variable and are encouraged to consider others that best reflect current institutional priorities.

II. Variables to Consider:

- *Timeliness to Fix:* What is the expected timeline for process redesign and implementation?
- *Compliance Risk:* Does the process currently comply with institution, state, or federal regulations?
- *Impact on HR Customers:* What impact will process reformation have on customer experience and satisfaction?
- *Impact on HR Staff Efficiency:* Does the process consume a significant amount of support staff time?
- *Control*: To what degree is reformation of the identified process dependent on collaboration with external units?
- *Organizational Readiness:* How prepared are process stakeholders for process redesign?
- *Expense to Fix:* What are the expected costs of the process redesign?
- *Expense to Continue:* What are the expected costs of maintaining the status quo?
- *Ease of Implementation:* How easily can HR administrators amend process steps to make the process less burdensome?
- *Strategic Alignment:* Is redesigning identified processes critical for meeting larger institutional goals and strategic initiatives?

III. Instructions

- Catalogue all identified problematic processes into template.
- Select variables that emphasize unit-level goals or represent the most relevant institutional priorities
- Enter selected variables into template.
- Define each variable on a scale of one to three. Scores represent a range of redesign circumstances—with a score of one representing the least ideal scenario and a score of three representing the most ideal scenario for redesign.
- Evaluate each process on selected variables. Assign a variable scores of one to three using the variable definitions as a guide.
- Sum variable scores for each process and rank by the total score. Give top rankings to processes with the highest totals.
- Higher ratings indicate a process is a strong candidate for process redesign
- Rank the processes according to total score to determine which processes should receive redesign priority.

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Sample Redesign Prioritization Tool (cont.)

IV. Redesign Prioritization Template

	Selected Variables						
Process Name						Total Score	Rank

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Section II

Redesigning Workflows to Correct Most Common Sources of Processing Bottlenecks

- Practice 4: Process Redesign Playbook

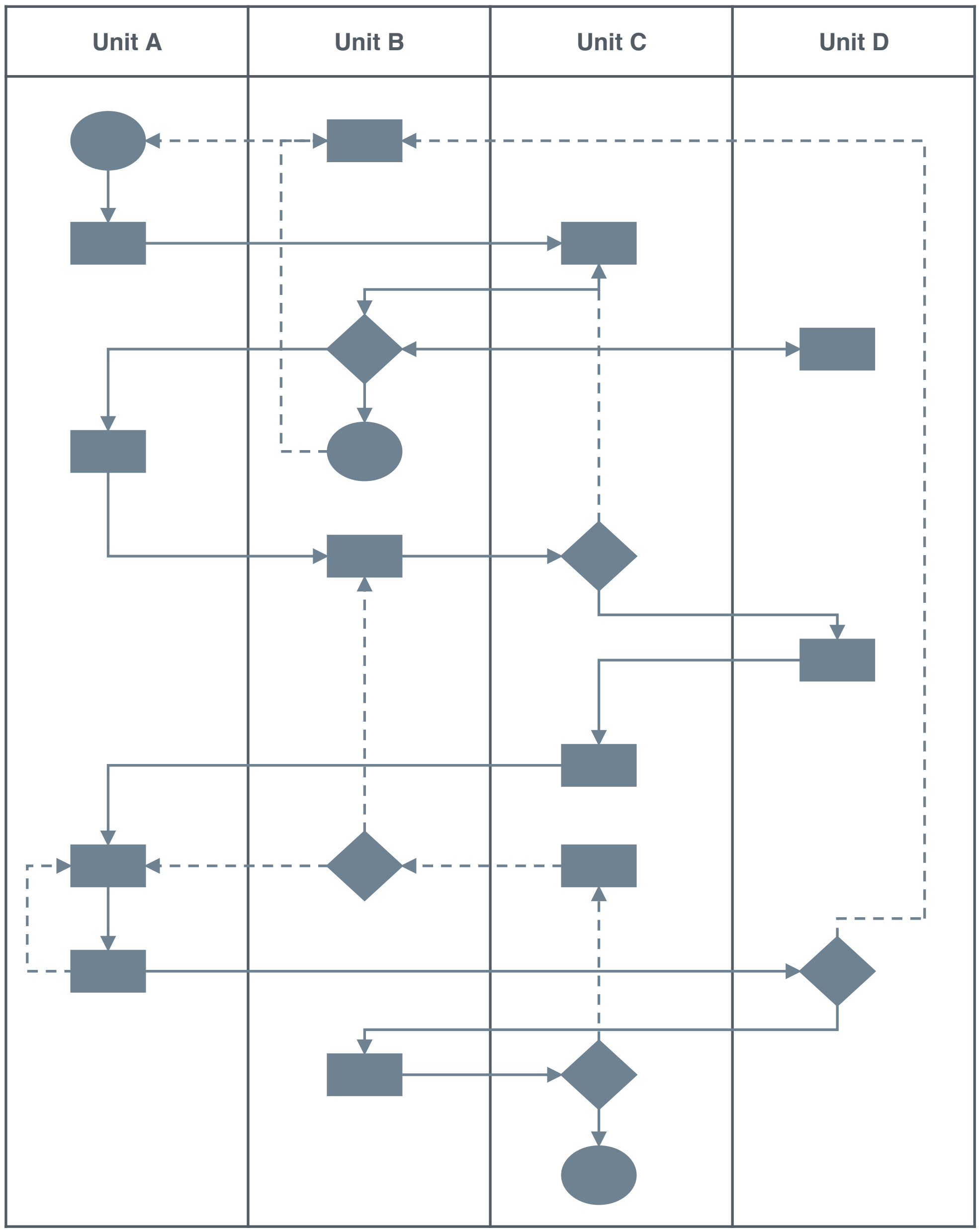
Where to Begin?

Even after the most problematic processes have been identified and mapped, redesign efforts often stall because confusing process maps provide little intuitive guidance about what to fix. Given the many handoffs, steps, decision points, and units involved, staff often struggle to pinpoint the most prevalent processing inefficiencies. Unfortunately, this confusion is especially acute for the more complex processes most in need of redesign.

With enough time, HR staff could sort through any map. However, HR staff already inundated with daily work responsibilities need a simpler way to analyze these processes.

Process Maps Unwieldy, Next Steps Unclear

Sample HR Process Map



!

Confusing process maps make it difficult for already busy HR staff to identify and fix process inefficiencies

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Targeting the Primary Sources of Process Inefficiency

To ensure successful process redesign, HR leaders must provide HR staff with prescriptive guidance to quickly identify and fix common inefficiencies. Fortunately, the vast majority of process inefficiencies stem from a common set of issues. In particular, HR process bottlenecks are often a result of one of the four problems presented here.

Rather than starting from scratch with each process redesign, HR leaders should scan each process specifically for these issues. This targeted and actionable guidance provides staff with a plan of action to interpret complex process maps and tackle the most probable sources of department inefficiency.

The remainder of this section lays out a process redesign playbook with detailed examples and guidance for addressing each of these problem areas.

Four Common Problems Plaguing Many HR Processes

Too Many Process Steps

Staff complete work that adds little value to the process or is duplicative to other steps

Only One Step Processed at a Time

Staff needlessly wait to begin designated portion of process work

Too Many Cross-Unit Handoffs

Staff perform process work in fragments, creating excessive back and forth between HR and other units

HR Performs Work Better Suited for External Units

Central HR completes activities that units have better knowledge of, or are better positioned to perform

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 4: Process Redesign Playbook

Practice in Brief

HR staff vet problematic processes against four specific issues that cause the majority of HR process inefficiencies. The goal is to provide HR staff with a proscriptive framework for manageably identifying and fixing the most likely causes of inefficiencies, increasing the likelihood of successful improvement efforts.

Rationale

Redesign efforts stall because HR staff often lack the time or expertise to analyze complex process maps, or identify and correct processing bottlenecks. To aid overwhelmed HR staff already inundated with daily responsibilities, this resource helps make sense of confusing process maps by focusing staff on four primary sources of process inefficiency.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Identify and Eliminate Low-Value, Redundant Process Steps
HR staff eliminate process steps that contribute relatively little to the process yet consume significant staff time. The goal is to shorten processing time by reducing duplicative steps and the total amount of work required.

Component #2: Parallel Process Non-sequential Steps
HR staff restructure processes allowing units to complete multiple steps simultaneously. Rather than completing all steps in rigid sequence, staff work on non-prerequisite steps parallel to prerequisite steps. The goal is to speed up the process and allow HR staff to more effectively manage other job responsibilities in tandem.

Component #3: Rearrange and Re-sequence Task Order by Unit Ownership
HR staff collapse process steps by unit so that every unit involved in the process completes as much of its total work as possible before handing it off. The goal is to reduce the number of cross-unit handoffs.

Component #4: Reassign Task Responsibilities from HR to Decentralized Units
HR delegates process steps that unit-based staff are better positioned to complete back to those units. The goal is to free central HR from needless coordination with units on unit-specific actions and build oversight capacity for central HR staff.

Process Redesign Tools

- Tool #1: Approval Elimination Audit
- Tool #2: Identifying Tasks for Parallel Processing
- Tool #3: Limitations for Rearranging and Re-sequencing Process Steps
- Tool #4: Considerations for Delegating Tasks from Central HR to Unit-Based Staff

Cutting Out the Fat

Component #1: Identify and Eliminate Low-Value, Redundant Process Steps

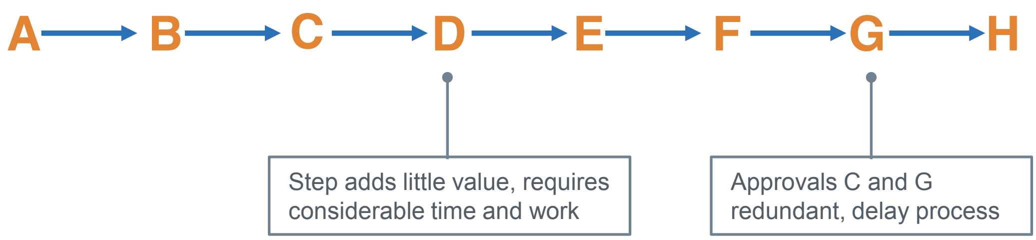
The first component for actionable process redesign is to identify and eliminate low-value process steps. Removing process steps reduces the total amount of work staff must perform, accelerating the process and freeing up staff time for other work. Eliminating steps is also likely to reduce the number of handoffs, particularly when eliminating approvals from otherwise uninvolved non-HR staff.

There are two types of process steps to target for elimination, illustrated here. First, reduce steps that add little value to the overall process yet consume significant staff time. Second, eliminate redundant steps, such as duplicative approvals.

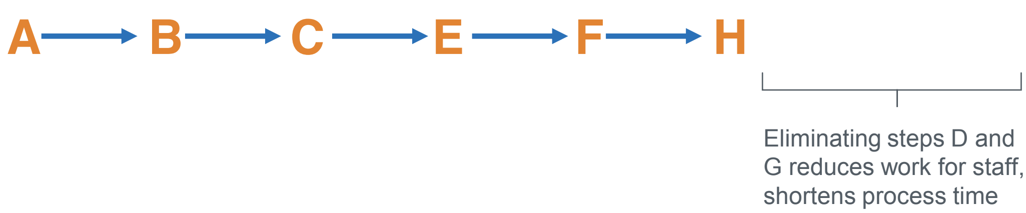
Of course, determining what qualifies as a low-value or redundant step may not always be obvious. The following three pages provide guidance and examples to help HR leaders identify these steps.

Representative Model for Step Reduction within a Process

Sample Process Before Redesign



Sample Process After Redesign



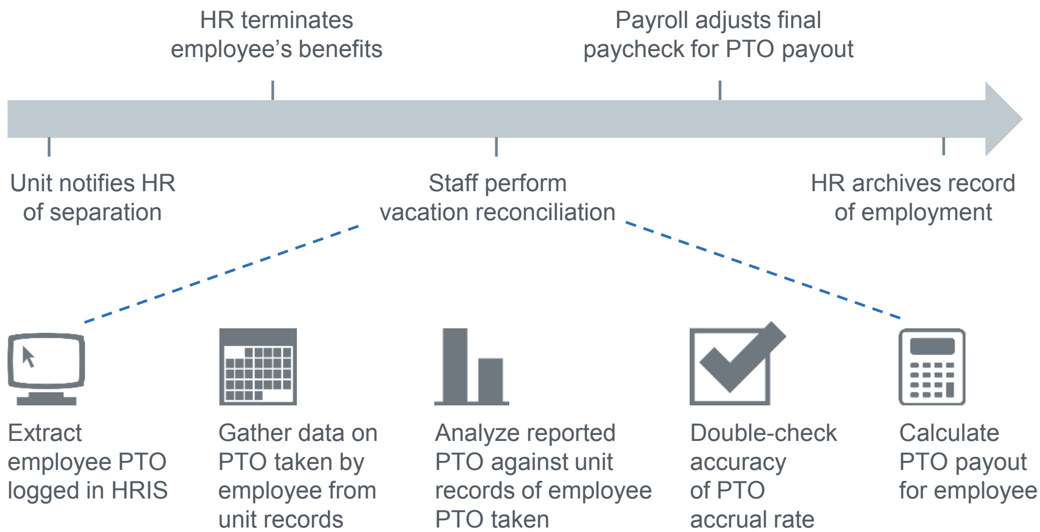
Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Assessing the ROI of Process Steps

To identify low-value process steps, HR must consider both how important the task is to the overall process, and whether the value of the task justifies the time staff spend completing the step.

For example, HR leaders at University of Alberta questioned the value of vacation reconciliation as part of their separation process. To assess whether employees leaving the university received the correct PTO payout in their final paycheck, staff audited the amount of PTO reported and verified that unused PTO documented in the HRIS matched unit records. On average, the audit took an HR staff member two hours to complete. However, HR only rarely uncovered discrepancies, and when they did, the typical discrepancy was minimal—roughly five hours.

University of Alberta's Separation Process



Unsatisfactory Outcomes of Vacation Reconciliation Audit

2
Number of hours HR staff spent on each vacation reconciliation audit

10%
Audits that found a discrepancy in reported versus accrued vacation

5
Number of hours difference in typical discrepancy

Case in Brief: University of Alberta

- 39,312-student, public research university located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
- Eliminated vacation reconciliation audit from separation process after calculating that the audit's labor costs outweighed the savings of uncovered PTO discrepancies
- HR director now shows employee's manager reported PTO to spot-check overall accuracy

Source: University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis..

Removing Low-Value Steps

Alberta eliminated the vacation reconciliation audit after judging that the cost to perform it outweighed the savings it generated. Back-of-the-envelope calculations are shown on the right. While the vacation reconciliation audit generated average savings of $15 per audit that the university would have otherwise mistakenly paid out, the cost associated with completing this step of the separation process averaged $90. Faced with these numbers, Alberta eliminated this step.

The HR director now shows the employee's manager the reported PTO to spot-check its accuracy, effectively preserving department resources.

University of Alberta Eliminates Time-Consuming, Low-Yield Vacation Reconciliation Audit

Value of Audit Savings Compared to Cost to Perform Each Reconciliation Audit

Average Savings Value

10%	×	5	×	$30	=	$15
Percent of time audit discrepancies found		Average number of discrepant hours found, when uncovered		Average hourly PTO payout		Amount recouped for each vacation reconciliation audit performed, on average

Average Cost of Vacation Reconciliation Audit

2	×	$45	=	$90
Number of hours it takes to perform audit, on average		Hourly compensation for HR specialist, including benefits		Cost to perform each vacation reconciliation audit

Source: University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Removing Excessive Approvals

At most institutions, duplicative approvals represent the largest opportunity to eliminate unnecessary or redundant steps—particularly when approvers are otherwise uninvolved in the process itself.

For example, University of New England reduced their time-to-hire for administrative positions by 10 weeks after removing multiple approvals from the process. Previously, senior administrators had to approve open staff position three separate times before a unit could make a hiring decision. HR leaders eliminated the latter two approvals. They also cut the final approval by the president, as her frequent trips away from campus delayed final hiring decisions. HR argued that prior approvals by senior administrators' were legitimate enough to push the hiring process forward.

Interestingly, eliminating redundant approvals has also made the remaining approvals more rigorous. When approvals are no longer dispersed among multiple staff, those maintaining approval authority feel more individually accountable for their decisions.

University of New England (UNE) Cuts Duplicate New Hire Approvals

✔ **Approval to Hire**
Hiring unit obtains initial approval from senior administrators before beginning search for new hires

✖ **Approval to Advertise**
HR solicits approval from the same senior administers to advertise requested position; approval deemed redundant and eliminated

✖ **Final Senior Administrator Approval**
Prior to offering position to most qualified candidate, unit needs final approval from the same group of senior administrators; approval eliminated since senior administrators already approved hiring twice

✖ **President's Approval**
President gives final approval; approval eliminated because of president's frequent trips away and her trust in senior administrators' approval

"The hiring process used to take seven signatures. I started asking people what they were looking for before signing off. The most common answer was 'Did the person before me sign off?'"

VPHR at Public Research University

10

Number of weeks the hiring process was condensed after UNE eliminated specific approvals and assigned dedicated HR employee to handle hiring workflow

Case in Brief: University of New England

- 9,679-student, private master's university located in Biddeford, Maine
- Eliminated redundant forms and approvals as part of broader hiring and onboarding process redesign
- Reduced average time-to-hire from three months to two weeks

Source: University of New England, Biddeford, ME; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Process Redesign Tool #1

Approval Elimination Audit

Redundant approvals represent process steps that can often be eliminated. As such, this audit provides guidance for gauging the opportunity to remove existing approvals. Answer the following questions regarding approvals in processes undergoing redesign. The greater the number of "yes" responses, the greater the opportunity to reduce the number of approvals in the given process.

1 Consider Standards Set by High-Functioning Units

HR works with many academic and administrative units, often with processes that have been customized over time. As a result, the number of approvals often varies across decentralized units. Thus, opportunities exist to identify high-functioning units employing the least number of process approvals and standardize the practice across all remaining units.

	Yes	No
▪ Do the number of approvals required for the process vary across campus units?	❑	❑
▪ Is the number of approvals required for the process significantly greater than the minimum number of approvals required by campus, system, or regulatory policy?	❑	❑

2 Consider the Position of an Approval in the Process Flow

While ostensibly serving as a final check, approvals near the end of a process typically consider the same criteria used for earlier approvals. Furthermore, approvals near the end of a process are more often based on the previous approval decision than on the criteria itself. Rather than littering a process with scattered approvals, decisions about whether to move a process forward should occur early in the process, before staff dedicate considerable time to its completion. Additionally, final approvals should exist only if key elements of the process have been significantly modified or adapted since initial approval.

	Yes	No
▪ Do approvals closer to the end of the process offer little input, guidance, or instruction that extends beyond what has already been by contributed by previous approvers?	❑	❑

3 Consider the Reporting Chain of Existing Approvers

Although senior-level leaders can provide strategic perspectives that lower-level managers may not have, their approval is not always necessary to move forward with every process. When processes do require the approval of senior-level staff, additional approvals within the same reporting chain are unlikely to add value.

	Yes	No
▪ Are process activities relatively standard, requiring little senior-level oversight or intervention?	❑	❑
▪ Are multiple staff within the same reporting chain required to sign off on various steps within the process?	❑	❑

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Process Redesign Tool #1 (cont.)

4 Consider Risk of Non-compliance

In some cases, eliminating approvals or checks can increase compliance risk. For instance, one institution eliminated the managerial approval needed for employees to receive tuition discounts for job-relevant courses. Although there is now a greater risk of employees using the tuition discount for courses unrelated to their current positions, HR leaders believe the gains from eliminating the approval outweigh the small likelihood of noncompliance.

	Yes	No
▪ Is there a relatively low risk of policy non-compliance associated with eliminating approvals for the process?	❑	❑

5 Consider Notifications in Place of Approvals

Eliminating approvals is often politically challenging because staff want to be involved in decisions affecting their units. Yet, approvals are only one way to keep staff informed and involved in process decisions.

	Yes	No
▪ Can HR shift from seeking approvals to sending notifications of decisions to key constituents?	❑	❑

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Multitasking Process Activities

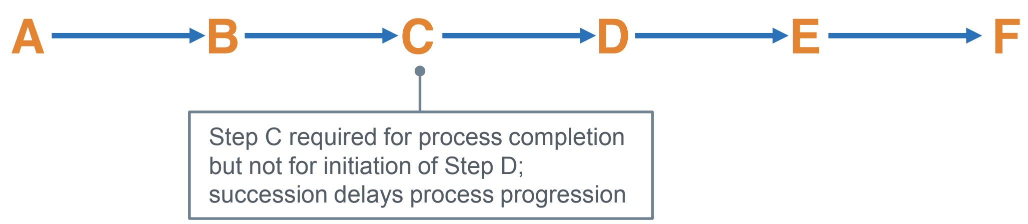
Component #2: Parallel Process Non-sequential Steps

The second component is to complete more process steps concurrently. To do this, HR leaders must distinguish between two types of process steps: prerequisite steps and secondary steps. Prerequisite steps must be completed before the subsequent step can be initiated. Most process steps are prerequisite steps. Secondary steps, on the other hand, do not have to be completed in order for subsequent step to be initiated, though their completion is necessary to fulfill future steps or finalize the process.

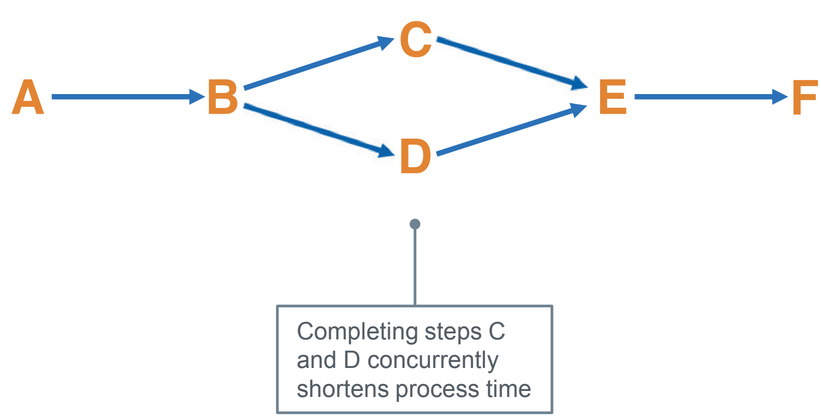
Rather than completing all steps in sequence, one at a time, staff can complete secondary steps and prerequisite steps concurrently. This idea is illustrated by the graphic on the right. Step C is a secondary step because its completion is not necessary to initiate step D. Rather than waiting until step C is complete before beginning step D, the process can move from step B immediately to step D, while staff parallel process step C. This accelerates process completion, and shortens the time staff must wait to initiate subsequent tasks.

Representative Model for Concurrent Processing

Sample Process Before Redesign



Sample Process After Redesign



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Prioritizing Handoffs For Faster Process Completion

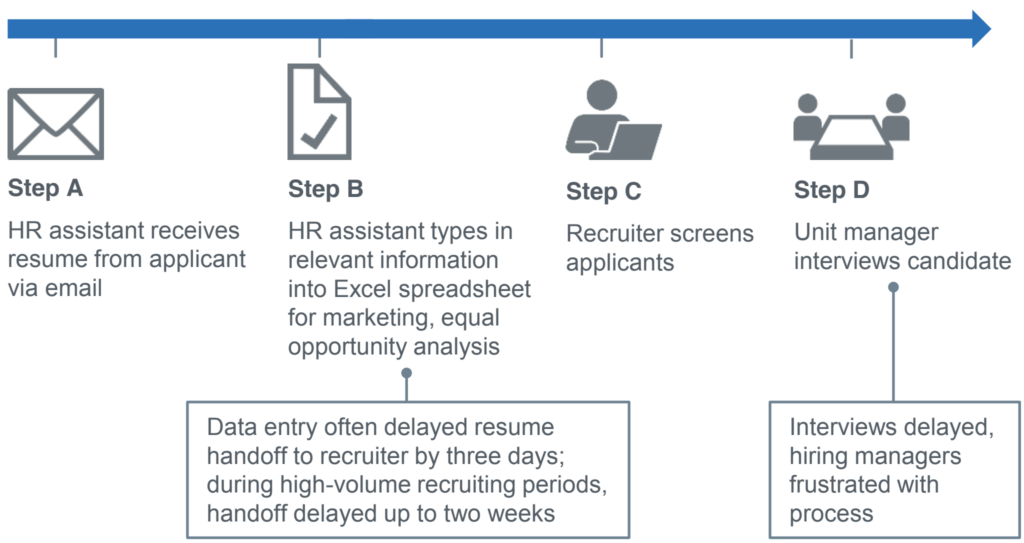
Marino State University[1] improved the applicant screening process by parallel processing non-sequential tasks. Prior to the redesign, an HR assistant entered data from every resume received into an Excel spreadsheet for future analysis, prior to passing them onto a recruiter who would screen the applicants.

However, during periods with high applicant volumes, the HR assistant was typically backlogged. At peak hiring times, up to two weeks elapsed between an applicant submitting a resume and the HR assistant handing the resume off to a recruiter. This not only delayed the entire process, but was a source of frustration for hiring units.

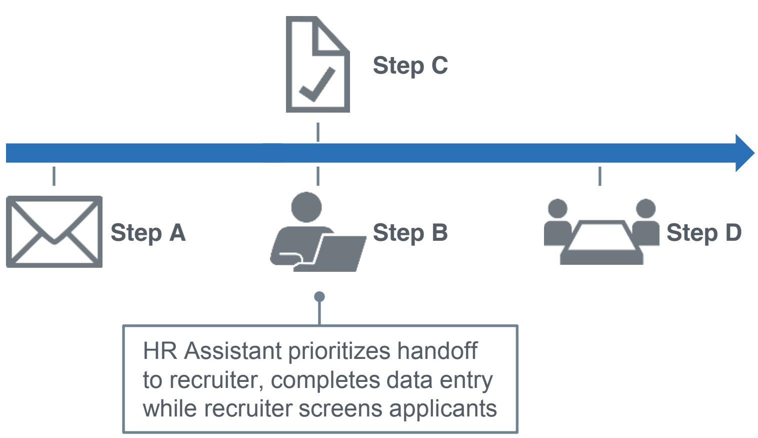
HR leaders recognized the HR assistants job of documenting resume data was not necessary for the recruiter to initiate applicant screening. In the redesigned process, the HR assistant immediately forwards all submitted resumes to the recruiter, allowing candidate screening to begin immediately. After this handoff, the HR assistant completes data entry concurrently with recruiter candidate screening.

Marino State University[1] Simultaneously Screens Applicants, Completes Candidate Data Entry

Applicant Screening Prior to Parallel Processing



Applicant Screening After Introduction of Parallel Processing



Case in Brief: Marino State University[1]

- Large private research university located in the East
- After managers complained of lengthy time-to-hire, HR expedited the process by completing two process tasks concurrently: applicant data entry and candidate screening
- Received 2,966 resumes in 2013; on average, reduced hiring process time by three days

1) Pseudonym.

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

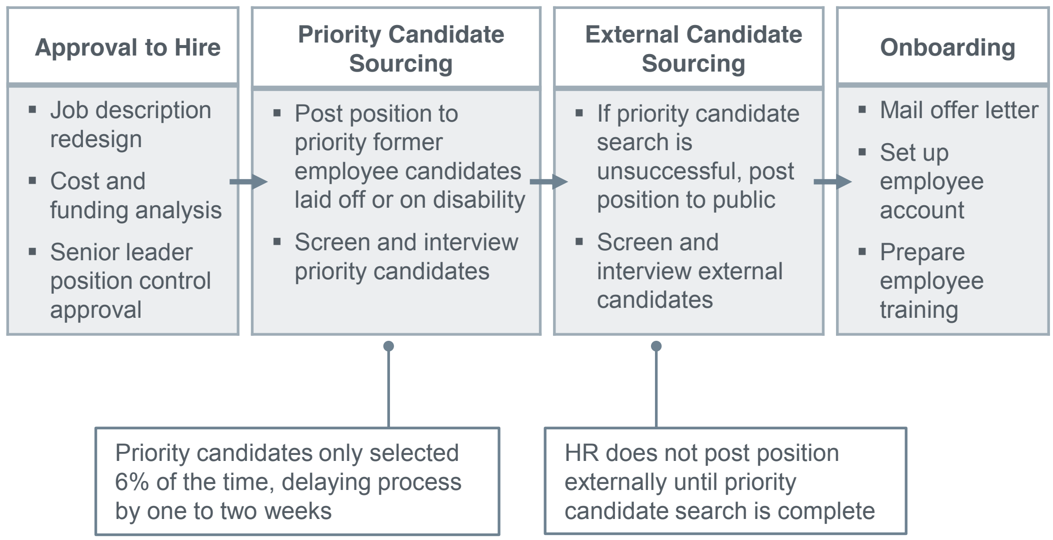
Parallel Processing Entire Sequence of Steps

In addition to parallel processing single steps, larger sequences of steps can be completed simultaneously as well. University of Minnesota (UMN) policy mandates that for all civil service and labor-represented position openings, it must give first consideration to former employees who had been laid off or left their job due to a disability. As a result, HR postponed external searches for candidates until after priority candidates were identified, screened, and interviewed. In most cases, the priority hire candidate was not qualified for the opening and was not selected, yet these steps delayed the external search as long as two weeks.

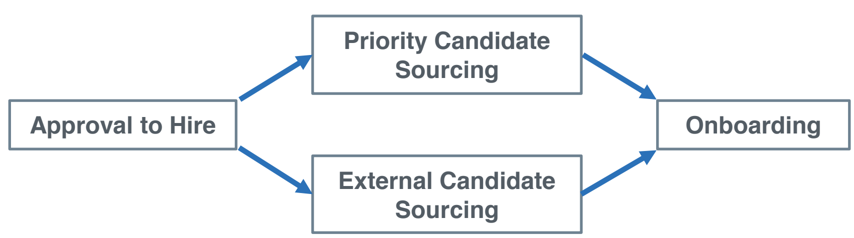
To minimize the delay in supporting the priority hire sources, UMN began initiating the priority candidate search and external candidate search processes simultaneously. If a qualified priority candidate is selected, the external search is aborted. However, if a priority candidate is not selected, no time has been lost looking externally.

University of Minnesota Performs Priority and External Candidate Screening Processes in Tandem

Hiring Workflow Prior to Parallel Processing



Hiring Workflow After Introduction of Parallel Processing



Case in Brief: University of Minnesota

- 51,147-student, public research university located in Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Previously, HR postponed external searches for candidates until after priority candidates were identified, screened, and interviewed; in most cases, priority hire candidates were found to be unqualified for new opening
- HR now begins priority candidate sourcing and external candidate sourcing simultaneously; if priority candidate is selected, external search aborted
- HR is able to avoid process delays as the external search is well underway

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Process Redesign Tool #2

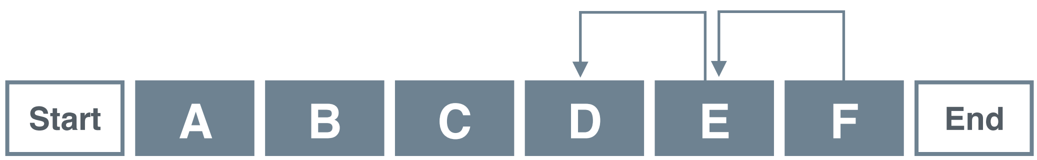
Identifying Tasks for Parallel Processing

Parallel processing involves pulling all secondary steps out of the prerequisite task workflow in order to initiate prerequisite tasks as soon as possible. This allows processes to progress more quickly so staff can move on to other job responsibilities. The following tool provides a guide for identifying secondary steps to perform concurrently with prerequisite process steps.

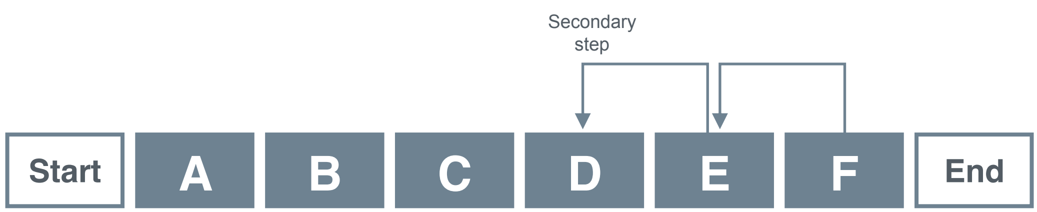
1 Identify Secondary Steps

i. Beginning with the last step in the process, identify whether each step is directly dependent on the preceding step's completion.

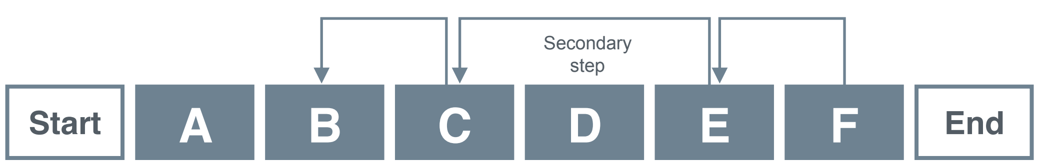
   If the step is directly dependent on the step before it, the preceding step is a prerequisite task. Continue working backward, until finding a step that is ***not*** directly dependent on completion of the preceding step.



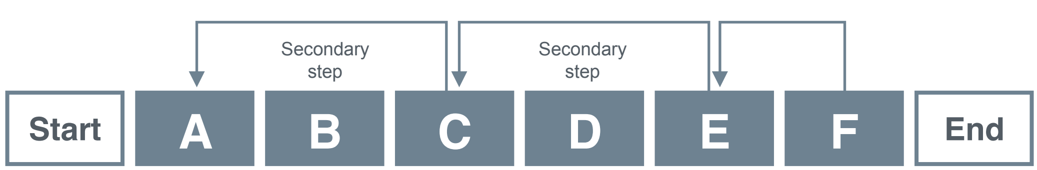
ii. If the step is not directly dependent on the preceding step's completion, the preceding step is a secondary step. Label it accordingly.



iii. Returning to the last step in the process, repeat the above exercise, asking whether each step is directly dependent on the preceding step's completion, ***but skipping labeled secondary steps.*** For example, in the illustration below, ask if step E is directly dependent on step C.



iv. Continue this exercise, returning to the last step each time a secondary step is identified, until reaching the first step in the process.

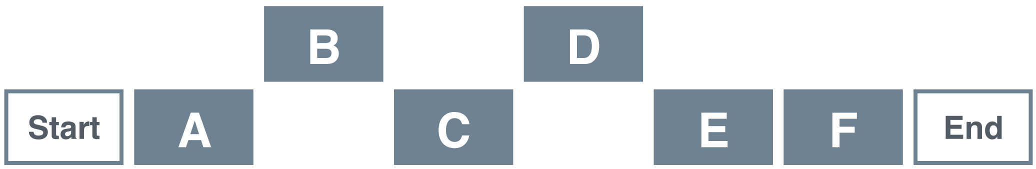


Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

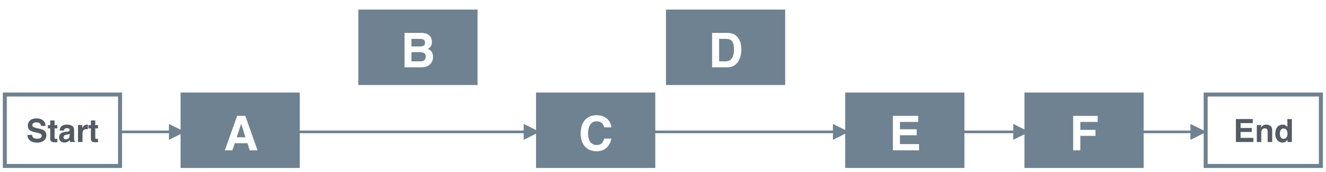
Process Redesign Tool #2 (cont.)

2 Determine Secondary Step Dependencies

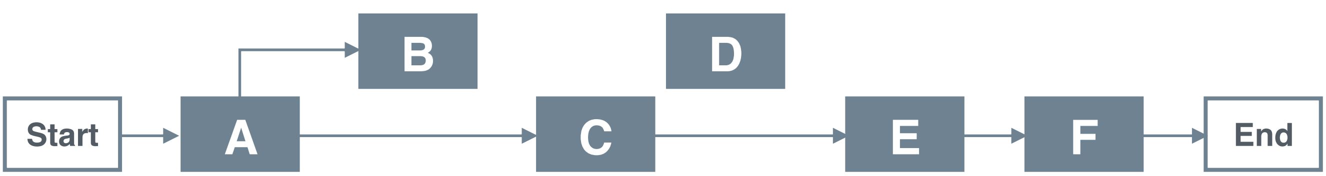
i. Write all secondary steps identified in Section 1 above the primary process path.



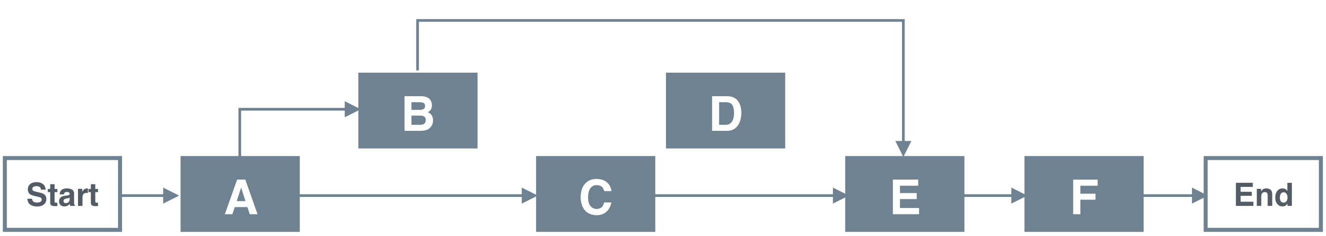
ii. Using arrows, connect all prerequisite steps remaining on the primary process path.



iii. Examining the first secondary step in the process, determine which of the preceding steps are necessary for initiation of that secondary step. Draw an arrow connecting the most immediately preceding step to the secondary step. If no preceding steps are necessary for the initiation of the secondary step, the step can commence at the start of the process. In this case, draw an arrow connecting the secondary step to the start of the process.



iv. Now determine which of the subsequent process steps are dependent upon the completion of that secondary step. Draw an arrow connecting the most immediately dependent subsequent step to the secondary step. If no steps are directly dependent on the secondary step, the step is necessary only for the completion of the process as a whole. In this case, draw an arrow connecting the secondary step to the end of the process.



v. Repeat (iii) and (iv) for each secondary step, moving from first to last.

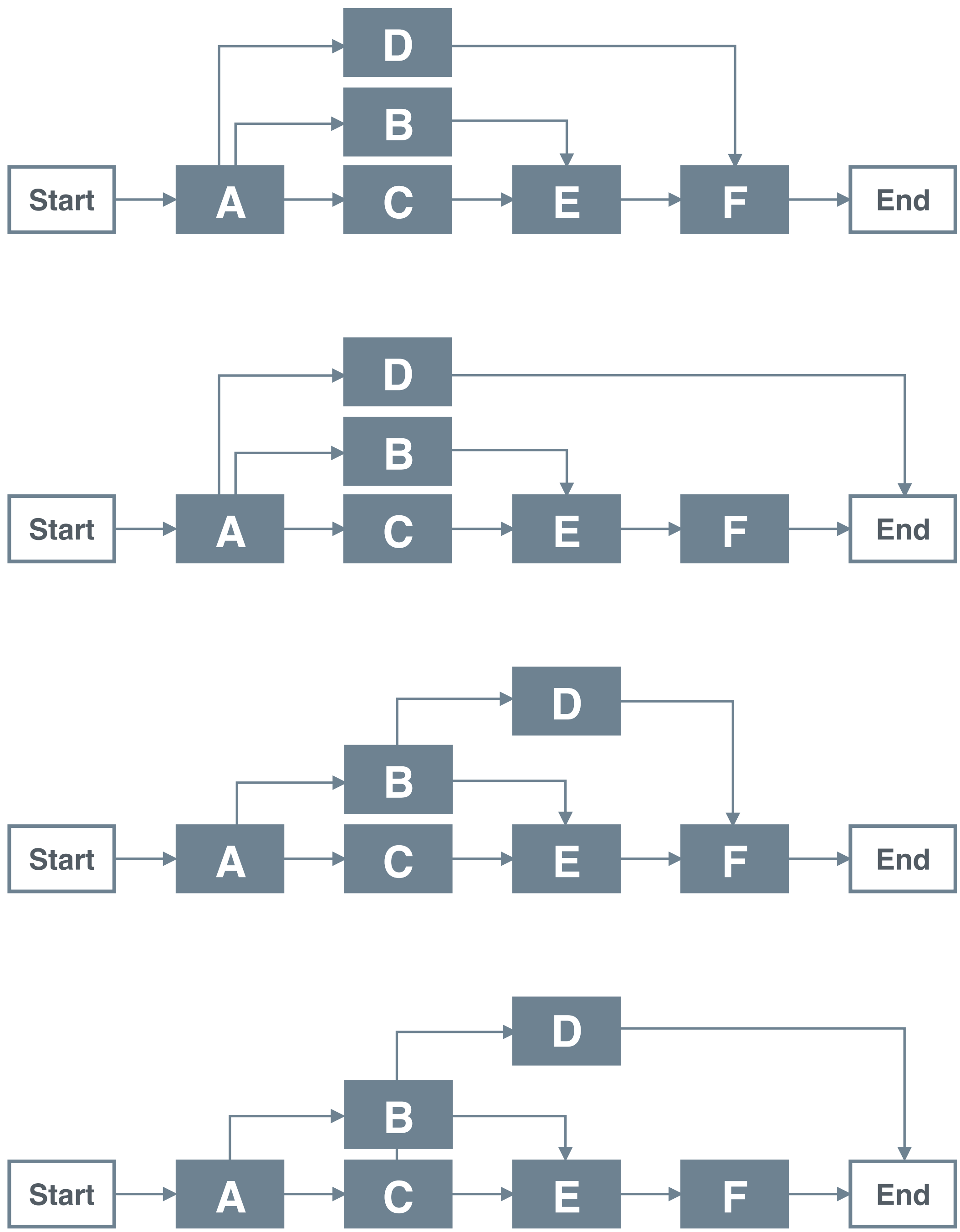
Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Process Redesign Tool #2 (cont.)

3 Position All Steps So That They Are Preceded by a Task Necessary for Its Completion

i. Arrange the resulting process map so secondary steps immediately follow the step necessary for its initiation, and sit directly above prerequisite steps that can be parallel processed.

Possible sequences based on this example include, but are not limited to:



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Reducing Cross-Unit Handoffs

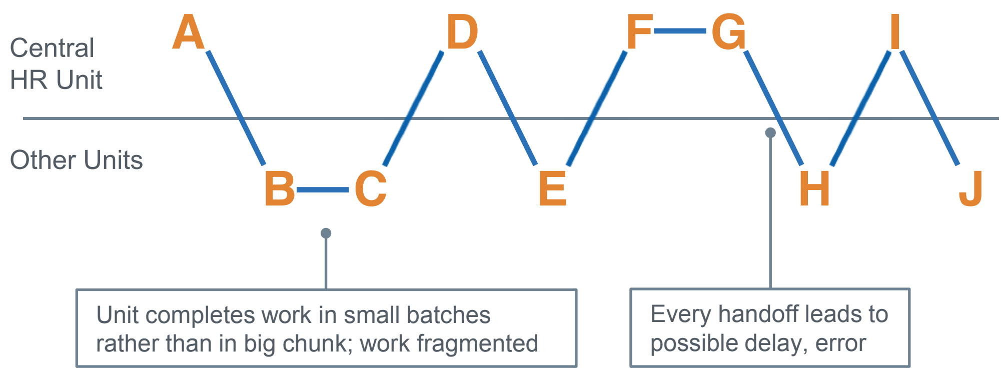
Component #3: Rearrange and Re-sequence Task Order by Unit Ownership

The third component is rearranging process steps by unit ownership to reduce cross-unit handoffs. The collaborative nature of HR work necessitates interactions with other units. However, excessive back-and-forth causes two significant process inefficiencies. First, staff productivity is lowered because unit staff are completing process work in small batches, rather than consecutively. As a result, staff are constantly disrupted from their current tasks each time the process returns to the unit. Second, handoffs increase the likelihood of delays—unit lag times and errors have the potential to grow each time a process is passed.

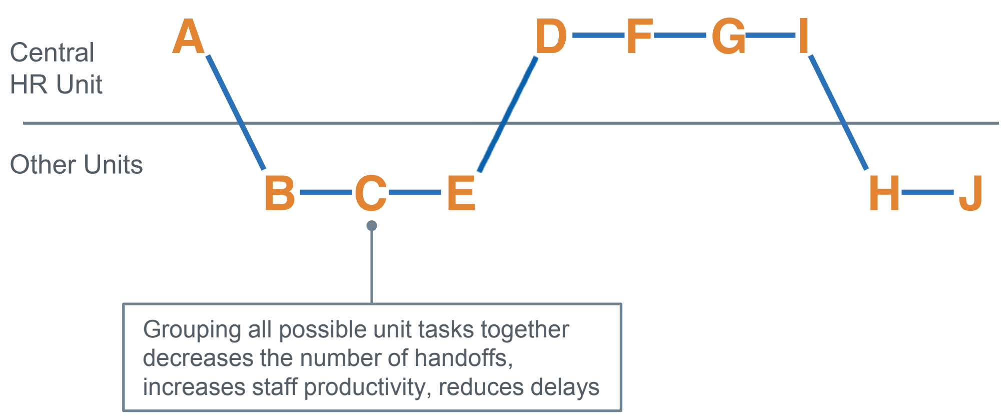
The graphic on the right illustrates this component—by repositioning process steps, HR can consolidate tasks within each unit, enhancing work continuity and eliminating several handoffs.

Representative Model for Batching Unit Responsibilities

Sample Process Before Redesign



Sample Process After Redesign



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

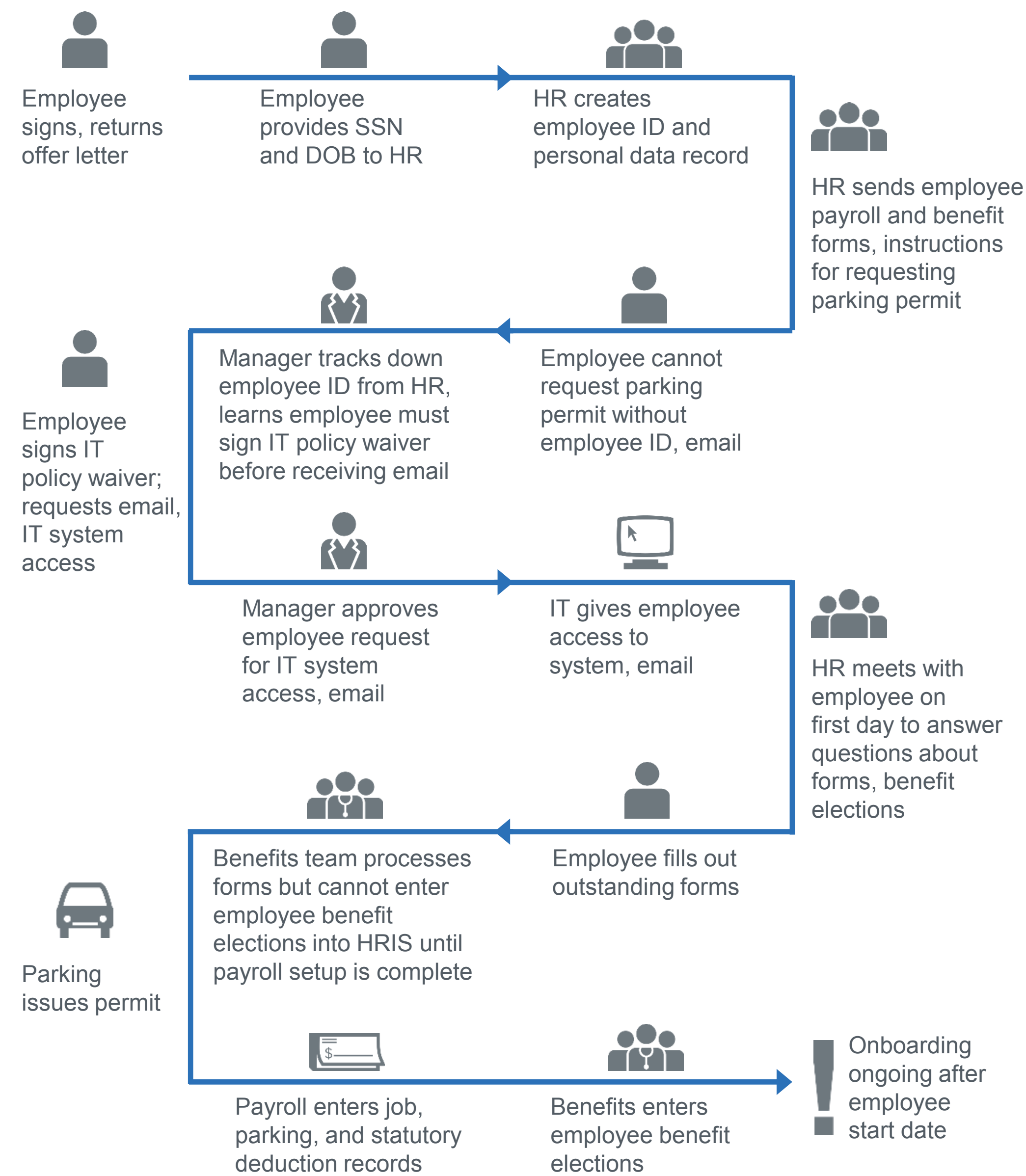
Excessive Back and Forth Causing More Work

Onboarding at Wilfrid Laurier University involves many units and, until recently, was extremely fragmented. Segmented and disordered process steps meant participating units often lacked adequate information needed to complete their tasks. This graphic illustrates the disjointed process.

For example, HR informs new employees to contact Parking in order to obtain a parking permit. However, Parking responds to the employee's request saying it cannot issue a permit without the employee's ID and email. The employee calls the unit manager who obtains the employee ID from HR, but learns from IT that new employees must sign an IT policy waiver before receiving an email address. The employee signs the waiver, and the employee's manager signs off and submits the request to IT. Now, the employee can once again contact Parking.

This fragmentation forced multiple process handoffs and disrupted workflows in several units. It also caused confusion among new hires—HR staff often met one-on-one with new employees to answer their questions.

Multiple Unit Touches in Wilfrid Laurier Onboarding Process



Case in Brief: Wilfrid Laurier University

- 19,322-student, public research university located in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
- Poorly sequenced onboarding process increased unit handoffs, disrupted work continuity, and caused delays
- Reordered onboarding process based on unit ownership and sequence to consolidate unit work, reduce handoffs

Source: Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Minimizing Unnecessary Exchanges

HR leaders at Wilfrid Laurier reformed the onboarding process in two ways. First, they consolidated process steps by unit, allowing units to complete as many tasks as possible at one time. Second, they reordered each unit's responsibilities to front-load all prerequisite tasks and properly sequence process activities.

As depicted in this graphic, the onboarding process now flows smoothly from one unit to another. As a result, there is less back and forth between units, and staff are able to complete their onboarding tasks quickly and independently. Additionally, HR staff no longer need to meet with every employee on their first day. Instead, new employees are greeted by their manager ready to begin orientation and training.

Wilfrid Laurier Groups Process Tasks by Unit, Front-Loads Most Critical Process Segments

Consolidate Tasks by Unit

Grouping tasks together by unit ownership allows staff to complete all steps in one batch, reducing time spent revisiting process, limiting delays from handoffs

Order Which Units Go First

Sequencing unit order so prerequisite information, tasks completed first reduces back-and-forth, saves staff time

HR Administration

- Creates employee ID, personnel record
- Provides employee access to onboarding system

HR staff move to other work after completing their onboarding process segment; half-hour in-person meeting no longer needed

Employee

- Completes all forms (confidentiality agreement, IT policy acknowledgment, parking elections, etc.) in onboarding system

Employee provides all required information for subsequent steps all at once

Benefits

- Completes internal portion of employee forms, passes forms off to payroll for entry into HRIS

Payroll

- Sets up pay and all deduction records in HRIS

Hiring Manager

- Requests physical equipment
- Requests employee IT system access

IT can create email since employee has already signed IT waiver

Parking

- Issues parking permit

Parking already received employee ID and email needed to issue permit

Employee greeted by hiring manager on first day, ready to start training

Source: Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Process Redesign Tool #3

Limitations for Rearranging and Re-sequencing Process Steps

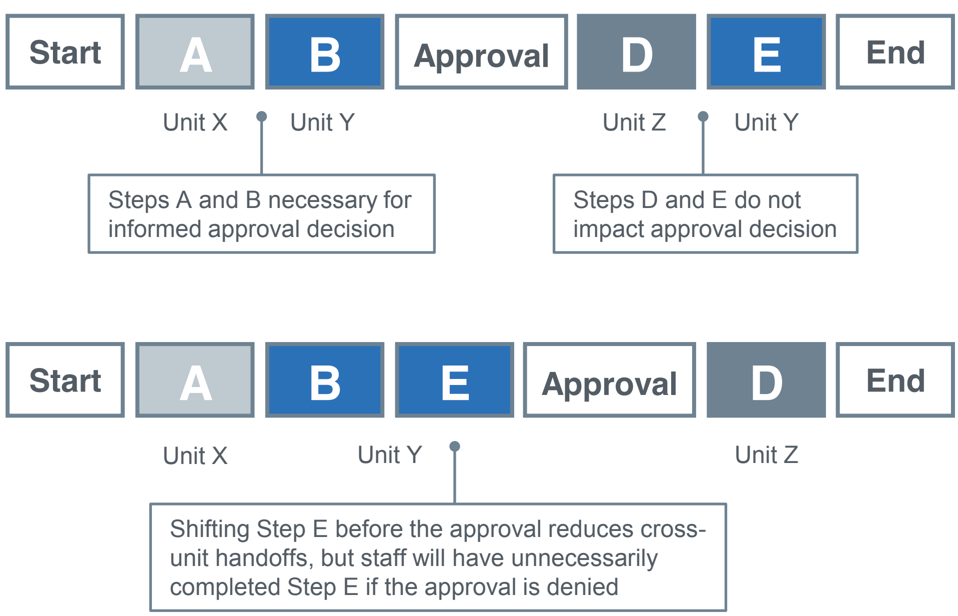
Grouping and reordering process tasks based on unit ownership can reduce the number of handoffs that often contribute to process errors and delays. However, HR leaders must be cognizant of two limitations to avoid inadvertently creating new process inefficiencies:

1 Prerequisite Process Steps

Some process steps are directly dependent on others or must be completed before others can be initiated. This limits HR's ability to freely move these tasks within a process. To pinpoint prerequisite steps that are less flexible and secondary steps that can more easily be grouped or reordered, refer to Process Redesign Tool #2 on pages 54-56.

2 Approvals

Approval steps in a process can limit HR's ability to group or reorder other steps within a process. A denied approval can result in the termination of a process prior to its completion. Front-loading tasks that are not necessary for an approval decision increases the likelihood that staff will unnecessarily dedicate time to suspended process activities. Instead, HR staff should use approvals as boundaries when consolidating or sequencing process tasks.



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Pushing Work Down to the Source

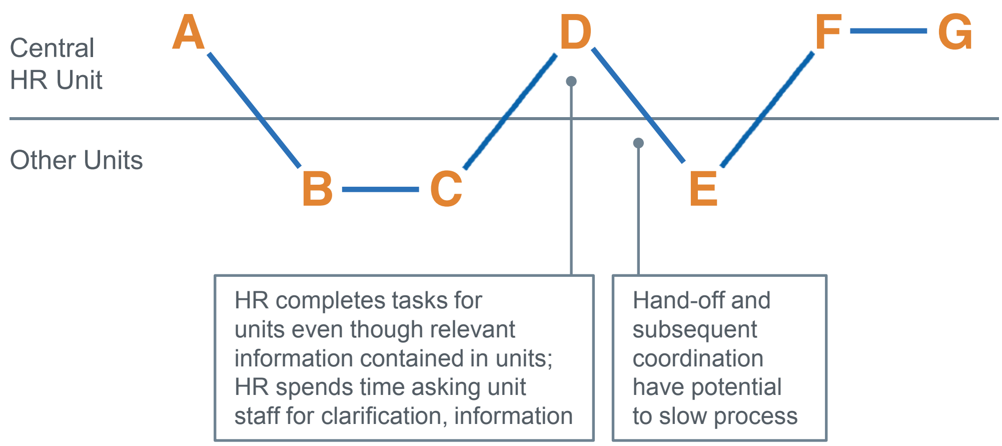
Component #4: Reassign Task Responsibilities from HR to Decentralized Units

The fourth component is to reallocate tasks from HR to decentralized units based on unit-staff expertise. Currently, HR completes many process activities requiring unit-specific information that only unit-based staff possess. Consequently, HR spends considerable time coordinating and clarifying details with unit staff.

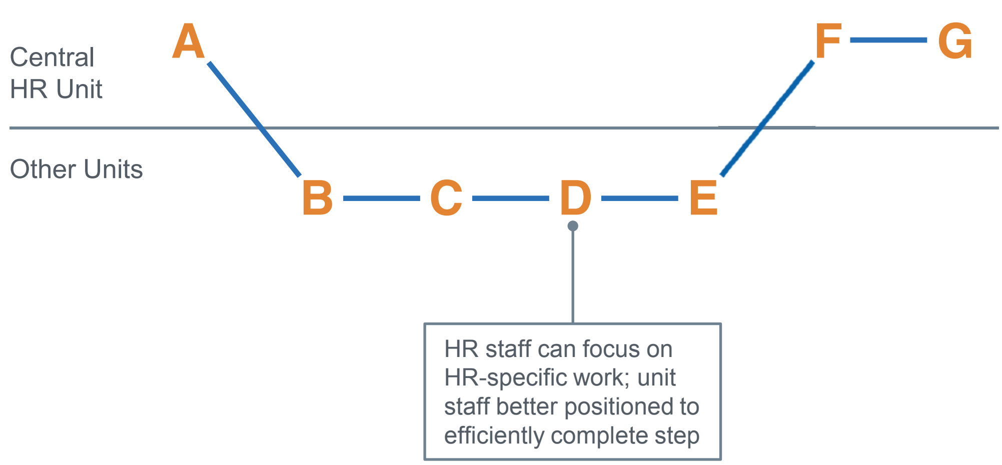
Because unit-based staff are often equipped with relevant information and skills to efficiently and effectively complete certain process steps, HR should reassign ownership over specific tasks to units. This ensures process steps are completed accurately and minimizes the back-and-forth between units and central HR. It also allows HR staff to focus on tasks requiring their specialized expertise.

Representative Model for Redistributing Suitable Work to External Units

Sample Process Before Redesign



Sample Process After Redesign



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Giving Time Back to Central HR Staff

University of Illinois improved service to end users by reassigning unit-specific tasks previously completed by HR staff to the originating unit. Unit-based support staff now complete most tasks concerning employment and budgeting history, as these tasks require an intimate knowledge of unit operations. Central HR staff who used to own these tasks now act in a support capacity, conducting final reviews of higher-risk activities (such as faculty compensation changes) and auditing lower-risk transactions (such as graduate assistant reappointment letters).

Shifting task responsibility to unit staff allowed HR leaders at Illinois to redirect staff toward more complex HR work. The HR department reduced the number of HR appointment processing staff and secretarial positions through attrition and has shifted staff time and resources to supporting directors focused on issues such as performance management, labor relations, and HR technology upgrades.

University of Illinois Delegates Low-Risk, High-Volume Process Tasks

Sample Responsibilities Shifted from HR to Decentralized Units

- New hire letters
- Candidate salary data
- Tenure letters
- Reappointment letters
- New hire job titling
- All tasks related to hourly employees and student-workers

Restructuring Opportunities Created by Shifting Tasks to Decentralized Units

4 Number of HR appointment processing staff, down from seven, after delegating tasks to decentralized units

2 Number of HR secretary positions eliminated through attrition after shifting work to decentralized units

3 Number of HR directors able to focus on more specialized HR tasks because of the reduction in processing duties

Case in Brief: University of Illinois

- 44,520-student, public research university located in Champaign, Illinois
- Central HR delegated specific HR processing tasks out to external units; unit-based staff had access to relevant data and were well positioned to effectively and efficiently complete process activities
- HR now serves in an audit capacity, checking decentralized unit staff work rather than processing it

Source: University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Process Redesign Tool #4

Considerations for Delegating Tasks from Central HR to Unit-Based Staff

The goal of reassigning HR process activities to unit-based staff is to ensure tasks are completed by those equipped with the relevant information and skills to efficiently and effectively complete certain process steps. This improves service to the end-customer and accelerates process timelines. HR staff should review the following considerations to determine if process steps currently performed by HR staff might be better suited for unit-based staff.

Delegation Considerations	Representative Examples
Task is adjacent to other process steps completed by unit staff	Central HR eliminates two unit handoffs by delegating an initial class and compensation review to unit-based staff. This step, previously completed by central HR, occurred between two steps for which units were responsible.
Task requires unit-specific information	HR staff shift responsibility for entering candidate compensation data into the HRIS to unit staff, who previously received the information from central HR.
Risk that a task will be completed incorrectly is low	HR leaders delegate faculty reappointment letters to unit staff.
Limited, manageable consequences if task is completed incorrectly	HR staff shift compensation reviews for hourly and student workers to unit staff.
Frequently occurring task	Due to the high volume of new student workers hires each semester, central HR shift responsibility for hiring student workers to requesting units.
Task is time-sensitive	With over 2,000 graduate assistants, graduate reappointments created central HR bottlenecks that impacted graduate assistant tuition waivers, financial aid decisions, and paychecks. Graduate assistant reappointments are now the responsibility of the respective unit.
Unit staff can utilize HRIS to complete task independently	HR works with IT to build a user-friendly portal that provides unit-based staff with access to the HRIS. Access is restricted, allowing unit staff to only see and input information relevant to their processing responsibilities. In addition, clearly defined business rules require unit staff to fill in all necessary information in the correct format for the step to be considered compete. This has allowed HR staff to delegate additional data-entry tasks to unit staff.

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Section III

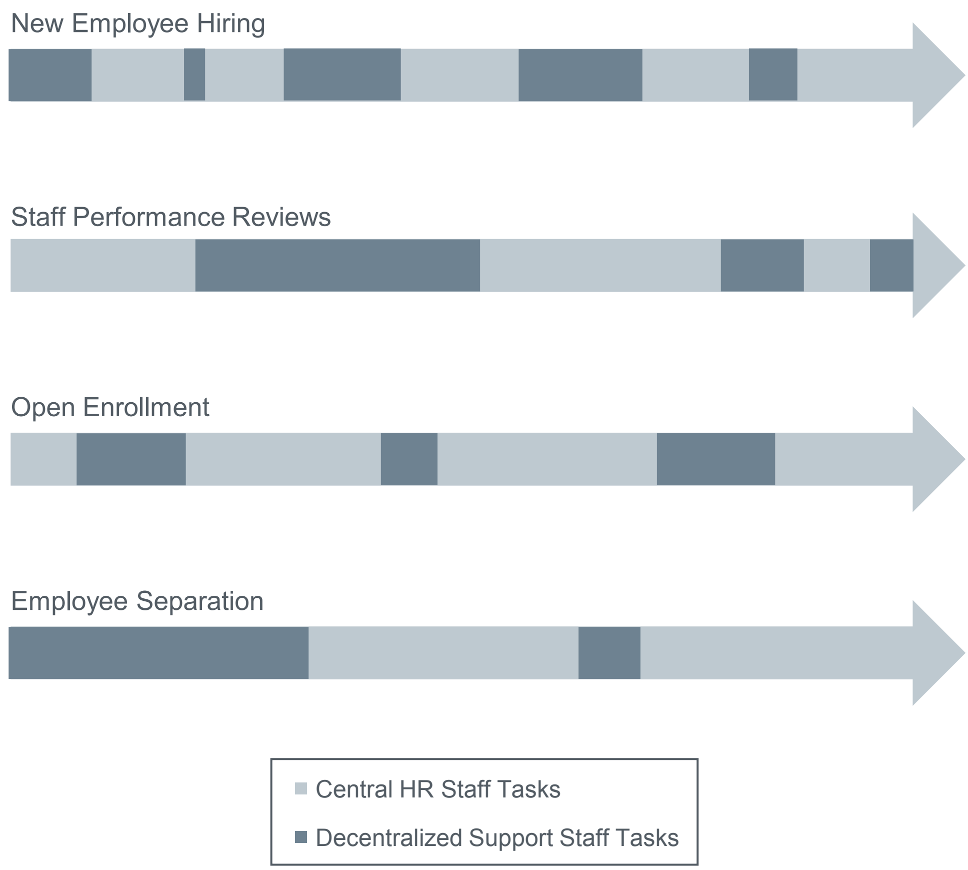
Improving Coordination with Unit-Based Administrative Support

- Practice 5: Stakeholder-HR Service Contract
- Practice 6: Unit-Based HR Super Users
- Practice 7: On-Demand Unit-Based Staff Toolkits

Relying Heavily on Staff in Decentralized Units

In addition to redesigning processes and ensuring HR staff comply with new protocols, HR leaders must also consider the role unit-based support staff play in realizing process efficiencies. HR departments rely heavily on decentralized, unit-based support staff for the completion of a number of HR processes. Most often, these staff are responsible for initiating processes and fulfilling prerequisite steps. Therefore, significant collaboration is necessary to ensure timely process progression.

Representative Involvement of Unit-Based Support Staff in HR Processes



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis

Jack of All Trades, Master of None

Unfortunately, unit-based support staff are often unprepared to effectively complete HR process tasks. As administrative generalists, they are responsible for many disparate activities, from scheduling travel to submitting unit budgets to new employee onboarding. This wide breadth of work creates two key challenges for achieving HR process efficiency.

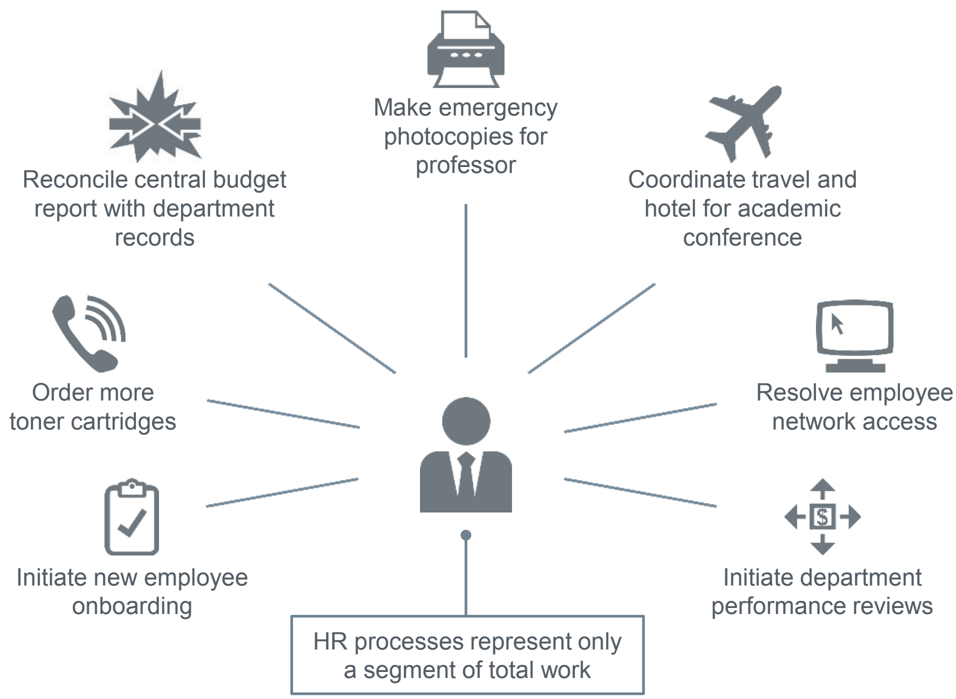
First, unit-based staff are often unsure of HR process task responsibilities, handoff-sequences, and timelines for process completion. This is particularly true of decentralized staff in small units who perform HR tasks infrequently.

Second, even when they understand key process steps, unit-based staff are not always proficient in assigned process steps. For example, the HR leader at one institution reports that roughly 70% of personnel action forms are returned to the originating units due to errors.

Both of these challenges delay process completion and necessitate significant involvement from central HR to coach support staff through HR processes.

Support Staff Responsible for Numerous Disparate Activities

Sample Unit-Based Support Staff Tasks



Key Challenges for Unit-Based Support Staff Performing HR Work

1 Unsure of HR Process Responsibilities

Support staff unfamiliar with overall workflow, process handoff sequence, and timeline for completion

Result: HR staff spend time coordinating handoffs, checking in with unit support staff for completion status

2 Not Always Proficient at HR Process Tasks

Support staff lack the expertise to accurately complete process steps

Result: HR staff spend time answering how-to questions, correcting support staff mistakes

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

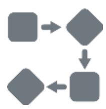
Two Approaches for Supporting Unit-Based Staff

Given unit-based staff's heavy involvement in HR processes and competing pressures for their time and expertise, providing proper support to these staff is essential for improving HR process efficiency.

The practices in this section target two strategies to better support unit-based staff. The first strategy is to clarify the role of unit-based staff in various HR processes to increase their understanding of process workflows, handoffs, and deadlines. The second strategy is to equip unit-based staff to complete process steps more independently and proficiently by providing them in-depth, on-demand support on the most challenging HR processes.

Improving Coordination Through Process Structure and Targeted Training

Clarify HR Process Roles for Unit-Based Staff



HR provides unit staff with detailed information about workflow, order of handoffs, and completion timeline for key processes

Practice 5: Stakeholder-HR Service Contract

Provide Unit-Based Staff Resources to Help Them Complete Process Steps Independently

Rather than broad, infrequent trainings, central HR supports decentralized staff with in-depth, on-demand trainings for most troublesome processes

Practice 6: Unit-Based HR Super Users

Practice 7: On-Demand Unit-Based Staff Toolkits

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 5: Stakeholder-HR Service Contract

Practice in Brief

Central HR and constituent units sign a contract detailing unit-specific responsibilities, outlining handoff sequences, and defining timeline expectations for task completion. The goal is to reduce the amount of time HR staff spend facilitating process flow with unit-based support staff and accelerate process completion.

Rationale

Many HR processes involve unit-based support staff, upon whom central HR relies to complete certain steps within any given process. However, these staff are often unaware of which steps they are responsible for, how soon they need to complete them, and how their work fits into the larger process. When decentralized staff are less proficient or unclear about how to execute their responsibilities, it can take them longer to complete tasks, delaying the overall process. A formal service contract offers a method to clearly document and detail each process, delineate unit and HR responsibilities, and set overall expectations for process completion.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Illustrate Full Process and Highlight Unit-Based Support Staff Role
Central HR provides unit-based support staff with an overview of all process steps so staff understand how they fit into the larger process. Specifically, staff learn which steps they are responsible for and the proper handoff sequence.

Component #2: Clearly Outline Specific Action Steps for Process Participants
HR leaders provide unit-based support staff with a detailed checklist of specific action items for every process step support staff are responsible for completing.

Component #3: Set Uniform Time Frame for Each Process Step to Hold Units Accountable for Completion
HR leaders establish time frames for how long each process step should take, and unit-based support staff set specific dates for each step's completion.

Component #4: Sign Off on Documented Actions and Metrics
Unit-based support staff and central HR sign a service contract acknowledging all responsibilities and timelines.

Lacking Prescriptive Workflow Guidance

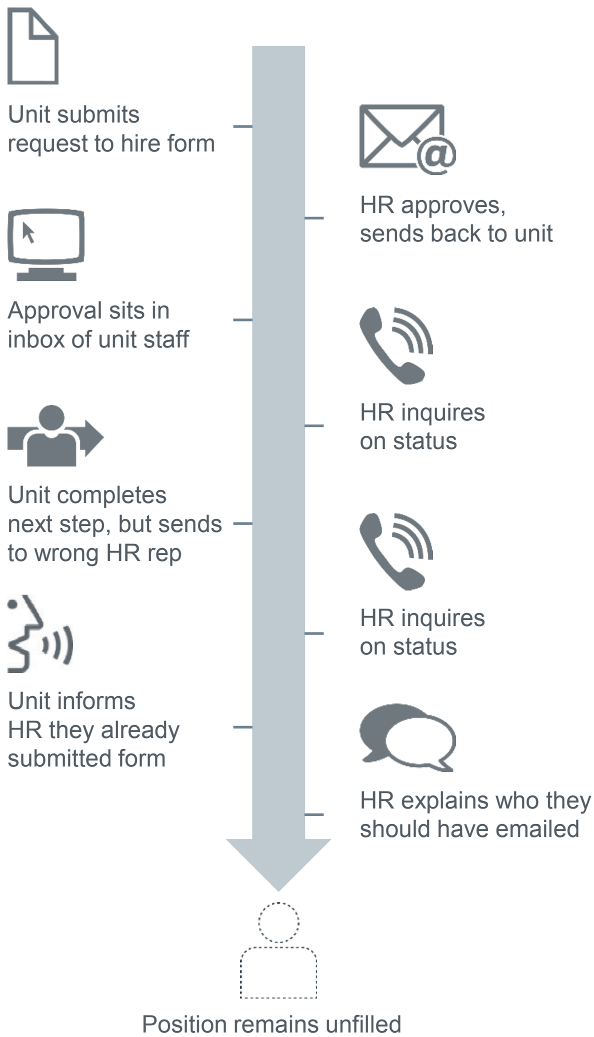
When unit-based support staff do not understand their role within HR processes, the processes are delayed, forcing central HR to intervene. The graphic on the right depicts some common coordination roadblocks between central HR and unit-based staff at many institutions.

Too often, unit-based staff lack a reference point for how long process steps should take, are unsure to whom to pass off documents, and sometimes, are unaware of the tasks they are responsible for completing. Consequently, HR staff devote a significant amount of time to facilitating each process and ensuring steps are completed in a timely manner.

To prevent process delays, central HR must clarify the role of unit-based staff in various HR processes and proactively provide them with prescriptive workflow guidance.

HR Reactively Responds to Support Staff Process Delays

Representative Interaction Between HR and Decentralized Support Staff



Making the Rounds…

"In our hiring process, we sent the process back to the unit after our compensation analysis for them to post the position. But the hiring units would sit on the process without posting, and this held everything up. So now my staff spend each Monday morning calling every hiring unit to see if they've posted, reminding them what they have to do."

Vice President of HR
Public University in the Southwest

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Displaying Units’ Involvement in Overall Process

Component #1: Illustrate Full Process and Highlight Unit-Based Support Staff Role

The first component of this practice is to provide unit-based staff with an overview of all process steps and respective owners. This provides clarity on which steps each unit is responsible for before the process begins. It also defines the sequence of required handoffs so staff can anticipate where work will come from, and to whom they should pass finished tasks.

At the University of Minnesota (UMN), every unit use to have a unique, unstructured approach to hiring that resulted in unit-based support staff confusion and hiring delays. To address this issue, HR leaders developed a hiring service agreement detailing a prescriptive hiring process and standardizing support staff’s role in the process for all units across campus.

University of Minnesota Staff Hiring Process and Owners

	Hiring Unit	HR Job Center
Post and Recruit	Update job description, gain approvals, form search committee	
		Confirm job classification
		Finalize requisition
	Develop recruitment plan (with HR)	Develop recruitment plan (with hiring unit)
		Post requisition
Screen and Select		Screen applicants for minimum requirements
	Evaluate and interview candidates	
Offer and Accept	Extend offer	
		Check background
	Finalize hire	
		Close requisition

Shows entire process so hiring unit understands handoff sequence, overall workflow

Specifies points of hiring unit involvement

Case in Brief: University of Minnesota

- 64,964-student, public research university located in Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Created a service agreement that clearly documented the hiring process, delineating the roles of unit staff and central HR in the hiring process, and setting overall expectations for process completion
- HR piloted the concept in10 units; after positive results, implemented campus-wide
- The introduction of a hiring service agreement and standardization of the process across units reduced time-to-hire by over 50%

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Defining Key Staff Responsibilities

Component #2: Clearly Outline Specific Action Steps for Process Participants

The second component is to list specific activities for the process steps unit-based support staff are responsible for completing. Beyond simply highlighting where staff fit into a given process, this component provides action items for how to complete each step. Staff can work through the outline of specific action items like a checklist to ensure all prescribed steps are completed.

For example, HR leaders at UMN discovered that many unit-based support staff failed to contact job candidates that did not receive offers. This action is now listed as a key action item for unit-based staff involved in finalizing a hire.

It's important to note that some units will have unique process requirements. HR leaders at UMN document all unit-specific process customizations in the hiring service agreement so unique steps or activities are not overlooked by staff.

Sample Unit-Specific Action Items in UMN's Hiring Process

	Hiring Unit	Activity Description
Post and Recruit	Update job description, gain approvals, form search committee	▪ For organizational changes or new positions, write job description, consult with Compensation & Classification, determine FLSA exemption status, and create position ▪ Determine salary range and ensure adequate funding is in place ▪ In the case of a search committee, determine the size, identify the chair, ensure diversity, and consider advisory group
	Develop recruitment plan (with HR)	▪ Establish the recruitment scope (national, regional, University community only, etc.) ▪ Identify potential internal and external applicants to invite to apply ▪ Develop strategy for print and online ads, professional associations, and alternative recruitment strategies such as external search firms ▪ Instruct all applicants to apply online to the posted position ▪ Develop applicant comparison tool
Screen and Select	Evaluate and interview candidates	▪ Review qualified applicants and determine if pool is sufficient; if pool is insufficient, augment recruitment plan ▪ Assemble interview team and develop interview questions ▪ Conduct initial phone screen, calibrate skills, and ensure total compensation expectations are aligned ▪ Utilize applicant comparison tool to rank top applicants ▪ Interviewers should utilize applicant evaluation form to rate applicants based on objective criteria relevant to the job
Offer and Accept	Extend offer	▪ Negotiate terms within established parameters, set tentative start date, and prepare offer letter ▪ Present offer letter contingent upon successful background check
	Finalize hire	▪ Capture reason for non-selection of all candidates besides finalist ▪ Communicate with non-selected applicants

Service agreement can be customized for units requiring unique considerations, unit-specific process steps or activities

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Setting Expectations for Process Completion

Component #3: Set Uniform Time Frame for Each Process Step to Hold Units Accountable for Completion

The third component is to establish timelines for each process step. Processes are often delayed because unit-based support staff lack clear deadlines or are unaware how long process steps should take to complete. Providing a timeline for each step establishes expectations for step completion and drives staff accountability for meeting set goals. Timelines also allow units to plan ahead and coordinate other process tasks accordingly.

At UMN, HR staff meet in-person with units initiating the hiring process to set a target hiring date. Once this date is set, HR and unit staff work backwards to fill in the completion date for each step to create a process timeline. If unit staff take longer than scheduled to complete a step, HR and unit staff shorten subsequent process step time frames to ensure the overall process deadline is met.

For frequently recurring processes, HR leaders can avoid numerous in-person meetings by providing standardized time frames for each step and allowing units to independently fill in final completion dates.

UMN Prescribes Time Frames to Individual Process Steps to Keep All Unit Staff on Track

Sample Timelines for Select Hiring Process Steps

	Owner	Process Step	Timeline	Completion Date
Offer and Accept	Hiring Unit	Extend offer	1 day	
	HR Job Center	Check background	3 days	
	Hiring Unit	Finalize hire	1 day	
	HR Job Center	Close requisition	1 day	

Timeline provides guidance for staff, sets accountability target

If a step takes longer than scheduled, staff recalibrate dates to ensure original process completion date is met

!

For frequent and/or recurring processes, provide timeline for each step and allow units to fill in corresponding completion dates independently.

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Solidifying the Partnership

Component #4: Sign Off on Documented Actions and Metrics

The final component for clarifying unit-based staff responsibilities is to sign off on the agreed upon process conditions. This solidifies the agreement between central HR and unit-based support staff and documents staff's recognition of process roles and timelines.

UMN's Hiring Service Agreement includes a section for both central HR and the hiring unit to sign, bolstering accountability for process completion.

For the complete version of UMN's Hiring Service Agreement, please see pages 76-77.

UMN's Hiring Service Agreement Reaffirms Commitment to Process Responsibilities and Timelines

Acknowledgement of Partnership Principles and Service Agreement

I will work to ensure that the agreed upon dates outlined in this service agreement are followed, and will provide updates if there is any change to the anticipated timeline.

Hiring Unit Partner: ______________________

Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

HR Job Center Partner: ___________________

Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

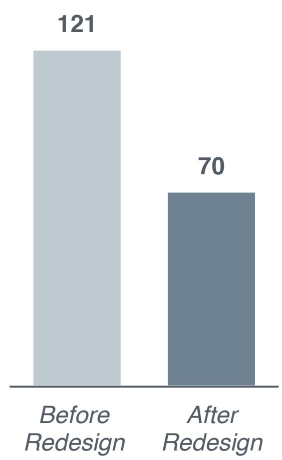
Across-the-Board Reductions in Time to Hire

UMN realized impressive improvements in time-to-hire after introducing the hiring service agreement and standardizing hiring roles for unit-based support staff. HR leaders reduced average time-to-hire for faculty and P&A[1] staff by 42% and average time-to-hire for civil service and labor-represented staff by 53%.

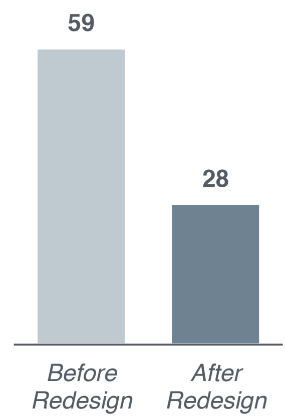
In addition to speeding the hiring process, the service agreement has also improved the quality of hires. Previously, top candidates would frequently take jobs elsewhere before UMN units could complete their lengthy hiring process. Hiring managers report that they are now able to interview and extend offers to attractive candidates before they are successfully recruited away by other employers.

UMN Reduces Average Hiring Time for Faculty and Staff

Average Number of Days to Hire Faculty and P&A[1] Staff



Average Number of Days to Hire Civil Service and Labor Represented Staff



Additional Benefits of UMN's Hiring Service Agreement

Units Select More Highly Qualified Candidates

Establishing rigorous hiring process timelines prevents delays, ensures hiring units can extend offers to top applicants before they are successfully recruited by other employers

Improved Professional Reputation

Prescriptive, step-by-step unit instructions ensure non-selected candidates are informed of final decisions, upholding the professionalism of the institution

1) Professional and Administrative.

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

UMN Hiring Service Agreement

Office of Human Resources

Hiring Service Agreement

Anticipated Hire Date	Requisition Number	Job Code	Position	Job Title

This Agreement includes activities that are essential to the hiring process and is a formalized commitment between the OHR Job Center and the Hiring Unit. It is designed to define activities, clarify accountabilities, and outline a shared commitment to timing expectations and anticipated dates. It can also be used as a checklist to ensure all steps of the recruitment process are completed. Anticipated dates can be added to the calendar and can serve as a reminder of important activities to be completed. Placing specific hiring activities on the calendar at the outset of this agreement will help to keep the timelines top of mind and prioritized across various competing demands. Key activities to add to the calendar include selecting applicants for interview, conducting interviews, finalist selection, and offer. It is recommended that the service agreement be widely communicated/shared across the search participants. All steps in the service agreement are performed for all employee groups. The service agreement is a tool offered in the spirit of shared vision, cooperation, and trust using the following:

Partnership Principles:

- **Be accountable** – to the joint responsibilities and timelines set out in this Agreement;
- **Collaborate and cooperate** – work collaboratively to complete the activities, identify improvements, eliminate redundancies and reduce the cost of service;
- **Be open and responsive** – communicate openly and in a timely fashion about major or minor concerns, issues or opportunities, and status updates or timing shifts relating to the process;
- **Learn, develop and achieve potential** – share information, experience, and skills to learn from each other and develop new ways of working.

In an effort to maintain data integrity and improve the applicant experience, requisitions will be reviewed jointly on a regular basis to determine requisitions with no activity. Requisitions with no activity should be removed from the web and placed on hold.

Acknowledgement of Partnership Principles and Service Agreement

I will work to ensure that the agreed upon dates outlined in this service agreement are followed and will provide updates if there is any change to the anticipated timeline.

Hiring Unit Partner: ____________________________ HR Job Center Partner: ________________________

Signature: ____________________________________ Signature: ____________________________________

Date: ____________ Date: ____________

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

UMN Hiring Service Agreement (cont.)

	Owner	Activity	Activity Description	Dates	Unit-Specific Activities
Post and Recruit	Hiring Unit	Determine hiring need & gain approval	Review job description and validate position details. For organizational changes or new positions, write job description, consult with Compensation & Classification, determine FLSA exemption status, and create positions. Determine salary range and ensure adequate funding is in place. Follow the process within your campus, college or unit to gain approval to hire.		
		Identify and engage others	Determine the necessity of a search committee. In the case of a search committee, determine the size, identify the Chair, ensure diversity is represented, and consider advisory group and/or Senate committee participation. Formally charge the committee and solicit input from the participants on the recruitment plan.		
		Enter requisition	Enter requisition in employment system ensuring all fields are completed. The job posting should recognize the importance of diversity. Minimum requirements must be consistent with the job classification.		
	Class & Comp	Confirm job classification	Compensation & Classification will evaluate job description to ensure alignment with job classification. **Suggested Timeline: 1-2 days**		
	Job Center	Finalize requisition	Job Center will finalize job positing and determine if there is a priority hire. **Suggested Timeline: 1 day**		
		Administrate priority or "no search" hire	In the case of priority candidates, Job Center will refer them to the hiring unit for immediate action. To extend an offer to a priority hire applicant, proceed to "Select finalist" step. To request a no-search direct hire exception (e.g., spousal, exceptional, temporary no post, etc.), complete Requesting a No Search Hire Checklist and proceed to "Select finalist" step. **Suggested Timeline: 0-10 days**		
	Hiring Unit/Job Center	Initiate and execute recruitments plan	With the HR Leader and EOAA Liaison, examine the diversity and affirmative action goals of the unit. Establish the recruitment scope (national, local/regional, University community only, unit only). Identify potential internal and external applicants to invite to apply. Develop sourcing strategy to include print and online ads, professional associations, outreach efforts, and alternative recruitment strategies such as external search firms. If search is likely to attract international applicants, contact International Student & Scholar Services regarding advertising requirements. All applicants must be instructed to apply online to the posted position. Develop applicant comparison tool. **Suggested Timeline: 1 day**		
	Job Center	Post requisition	Post requisition per required posting timelines. **Suggested Timeline: 1 day**		
Screen and Select	Hiring Unit/Job Center	Screen applicants for minimum requirements	Eliminate from consideration those who do not meet minimum qualifications. Update applicants' status in the system. **Suggested Timeline: 14 days**		
	Hiring Unit	Evaluate applicant pool	Review qualified applicants and determine if pool is sufficient. Consider diversity goals and availability. If applicant pool is insufficient, reevaluate and consider augmenting recruitment plan. **Suggested Timeline: 1 day**		
		Select applicants for interview	Evaluate applications, curriculum vitaes, resumes, cover letters, and other relevant materials of minimally qualified applicants. Conduct initial phone screen. Calibrate skills and ensure total compensation expectations are aligned. Utilize applicant comparison tool to rank top applicants. Update applicants' statuses in the system. **Suggested Timeline: 10 days**		
		Conduct interviews	Assemble interview team. Develop interview questions. Invite applicants, arrange for travel and accommodations as necessary. Conduct interviews. Interviewers should utilize applicant evaluation form to rate applicants based on objective criteria relevant to the job. Discuss interview results with search members. **Suggested Timeline: 5 days**		
		Select finalist(s)	Check references. Gain necessary unit approvals. In the case of senior leader positions, offers to include tenure or continuous appointment, and/or no-search direct hires, additional approvals are necessary. When a foreign national is seriously considered for employment, engage International Student & Scholar Services and the Office of General Counsel prior to making offer. **Suggested Timeline: 1 day**		
Offer and Accept	Hiring Unit	Extend offer	Negotiate terms within established parameters, set tentative start date and prepare offer letter. Present offer contingent upon successful background check, other verifications, required degree completion, and/or pending approvals. Send offer letter and background check instructions to finalist. Collect signed offer acceptance. **Suggested Timeline: 1 day**		
	Job Center	Check background	Applicants must provide information. Checks and verifications are completed. Note: Verification of highest degree is required for all Faculty and P&A employees. If checks and verifications are satisfactory, confirm start date. Finalist may not start employment before satisfactory background check is completed. **Suggested Timeline: 3 days**		
	Hiring Unit	Finalize hire	Capture reason for non-selection for all candidates besides finalist(s) and update applicants' statuses in system to ensure accurate EOAA reporting statistics. Communicate with non-selected applicants. Confirm with Job Center that requisition is ready to be closed. **Suggested Timeline: 1 day**		
	Hiring Unit/Job Center	Close requisition	Notify Job Center to designate position as filled in recruiting system. **Suggested Timeline: 1 day**		

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

Practice 6: Unit-Based HR Super Users

Practice in Brief

HR leverages highly proficient unit-based staff to train and support other unit-based staff on HR processes that cause the most confusion. The goal is to reduce the time central HR spends answering questions and correcting errors by enabling unit-based staff to independently and effectively complete HR process tasks.

Rationale

Although many HR units provide training for unit-based staff, the sessions are often too broad and infrequent to successfully set up unit-based staff to accurately and independently complete tasks. Typically, training sessions are large and do not specifically target processes that cause the most confusion and error among unit-based staff. As a result, central HR staff must regularly guide unit-based staff through the completion of various process tasks, correct reoccurring mistakes, and hunt down missing information. This consumes central staff time and prevents them from focusing on more strategic, higher-level work. Developing unit-based experts helps HR provide on-demand support and targeted training to address the most prevalent unit-based staff problems without over-relying on already over-extended central HR staff.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Identify and Select Unit-Based Super Users
HR leaders identify unit-based support staff highly proficient in HR processes.

Component #2: Provide Super Users In-Depth Training to Enable On-Demand Troubleshooting in Respective Units
HR leaders train super users on processes that cause the most errors and confusion for unit-based staff. Super users then replicate the training for other unit-based staff, enabling continuous, in-the-moment process support.

Component #3: Utilize Super Users to Bridge Communication Between Central HR and Decentralized Unit Staff
HR leaders draw on super users' familiarity with unit-based process issues to help design appropriate trainings and communicate important information back to unit-based staff.

Expanding HR's Reach

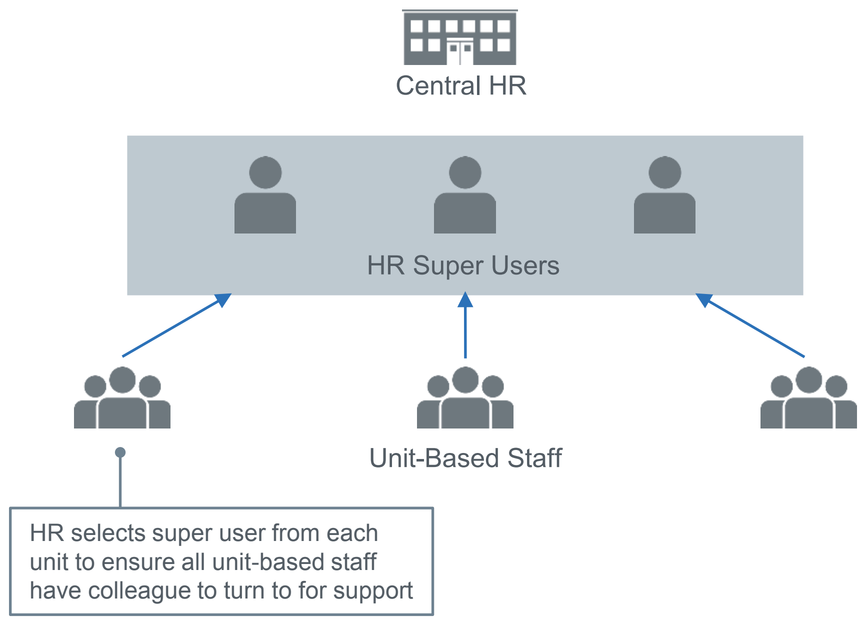
Component #1: Identify and Select Unit-Based Super Users

In addition to clarifying unit staff responsibilities, HR leaders must also provide dedicated resources to help unit staff accurately and independently complete HR process tasks.

At Ball State University and the University of Arizona, HR leaders provide support by identifying super users—staff within each unit who possess substantial HR process expertise. These highly proficient HR clients act as an intermediary between the unit and central HR, providing training to unit-based staff and troubleshooting questions as they arise.

The first component for creating a network of unit-based HR super users is to identify the right candidates. HR leaders can solicit unit manager recommendations or draw from experience working with units to identify staff with the most HR experience. In either instance, HR leaders should select at least one super user from each unit to ensure all unit-based staff have a local colleague to turn to for support.

Leveraging High-Proficiency HR Clients as Supplementary Support for Unit-Based Staff



Two Ways to Identify High-Proficiency Unit-Based Staff

Manager Recommendation

Managers identify particularly motivated, knowledgeable support staff

Prior HR Expertise

HR selects unit-based staff with prior HR work experience, certifications

Case in Brief: Ball State University

- 21,000-student, public research university located in Muncie, Indiana
- Trained 25 "Super Admins" in decentralized units to provide technical training, process support for staff; Super Admins receive stipend in recognition of additional duties

Case in Brief: University of Arizona

- 41,000-student, public research university located in Tucson, Arizona
- HR Alliance Council, composed of 12 unit-based support staff, provide feedback to central HR, design trainings, and act as peer mentors to other unit-based staff

Source: Ball State University, Muncie, IN; University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Employing a Train-the-Trainer Model

Component #2: Provide Super Users In-Depth Training to Enable On-Demand Troubleshooting in Respective Units

The second component of this practice is training super users on the most problematic HR processes to enable on-demand support for unit-based staff. To maximize the impact of Ball State's "Super Admins," HR leaders first review a central inventory of incoming questions and complaints from unit-based staff. HR then provides Super Admins with in-depth, small-group trainings on the identified processes.

When Super Admins return to their units, they are equipped to provide similarly effective, in-depth trainings for other unit staff and offer ongoing support. Utilizing Super Admins in this way has extended the quality and availability of HR support for unit-based staff while also reducing the time burden on central HR.

Ball State Trains Super Users on Most Problematic Processes

Ball State "Super Admin" Training Process

HR evaluates incoming user complaints and questions captured by central HR staff

HR identifies top problems, technical issues related to HRIS functionality

HR and IT provide Super Admins with in-depth training on identified issues

Super Admins equipped to provide trainings and continuous troubleshooting support to unit-based staff

Reducing the Burden on Central HR While Improving Support

- HR delivers in-depth training to small, manageable group of Super Admins, who then provide same in-depth, small-group training to support staff
- Super Admins, trained on the most commonly asked questions, buffer HR by absorbing the bulk of questions from support staff
- Super Admins available on-demand to support unit staff when issues arise
- Unit support staff receive focused answers to specific problems

Source: Ball State University, Muncie, IN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

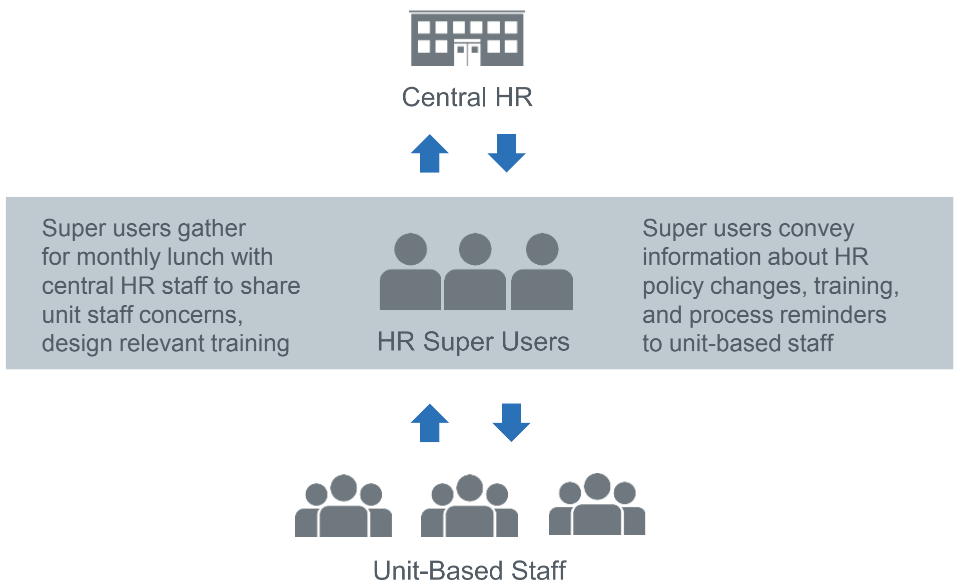
Establishing a Bi-directional Flow of Information

Component #3: Utilize Super Users to Bridge Communication Between Central HR and Decentralized Unit Staff

The final component is utilizing super users to facilitate a dialogue between central HR and unit-based staff. Members of University of Arizona's super-user group—the HR Alliance Council—act as representatives of unit-based staff. Council members meet once a month with central HR to share unit concerns and questions and help design relevant training to address those issues. In turn, council members communicate information about upcoming HR training, policy changes, and process reminders to their unit-based colleagues.

Arizona acknowledges two additional advantages of establishing a super-user group. First, involving super users in developing new HR policy and processes eases unit-based staff resistance to change. Since super users are unit-based staff themselves, unit staff trust that their interests are well conveyed and represented. Second, super users are designated as role models, so staff have a local example from whom to adopt exemplary behaviors.

University of Arizona's HR Alliance Council Relays User Concerns to Central HR, Best Practices to Unit-Based Staff



Additional Advantages of Super-User Partnership with HR

Provide Support Staff Representation

Super user participation in HR policy and process changes provides support staff with voice, eases resistance to process changes

Serve as Unit Role Models

Recognition as super user encourages mastery of HR processes, encourages unit staff to adopt exemplary practices

Source: University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 7: On-Demand Unit-Based Staff Toolkits

Practice in Brief

HR consolidates all relevant process documents into an easily accessible, on-demand toolkit for unit-based staff. For more complex process, HR creates step-by-step instructions. The goal is to provides in-the-moment resources, enabling unit-based staff to independently and effectively complete HR process tasks.

Rationale

Even when central HR staff create resources to help unit-based staff effectively complete a process, the resources are rarely all-inclusive or easily accessible. As a result, unit-based staff are more likely to inundate central HR with questions or make mistakes that require later correction. Comprehensive toolkits consolidate all relevant process information in one, easy-to-access location and contain all pertinent information unit-based staff need to independently perform process tasks.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Group All Process Documents and Make Easily Accessible for High-Frequency Processes
HR leaders consolidate all relevant process documents, instructions, workflows, and forms, and make them easily accessible to unit-based staff.

Component #2: Make Step-by-Step Guides for Most Complex Processes
HR staff add in-depth, step-by-step guides for the most complex processes to create more in-depth resources for unit-based staff.

Building a Repository of Process Resources

Component #1: Group All Process Documents and Make Easily Accessible for High-Frequency Processes

Another type of resource central HR can provide for unit-based staff is a set of comprehensive toolkits for staff to use in the moment. Even when central HR staff create resources to help unit-based staff effectively complete a process, the resources are rarely all-inclusive or easily accessible.

The University of New England created comprehensive process toolkits consolidating all relevant process information—instructions, forms, process maps, and FAQs—in one, easy-to-access location. The toolkits contain all pertinent information unit-based staff need to independently perform process tasks and are posted on the institution's HR website. A screenshot of the website containing sample toolkits is shown here.

UNE created these toolkits specifically for the handful of processes that elicited the greatest number of staff inquiries and caused the most confusion. Consolidating existing process documents into on-demand toolkits is not time intensive, particularly if focused on the most high-frequency processes.

Characteristics of Effective On-Demand Toolkits

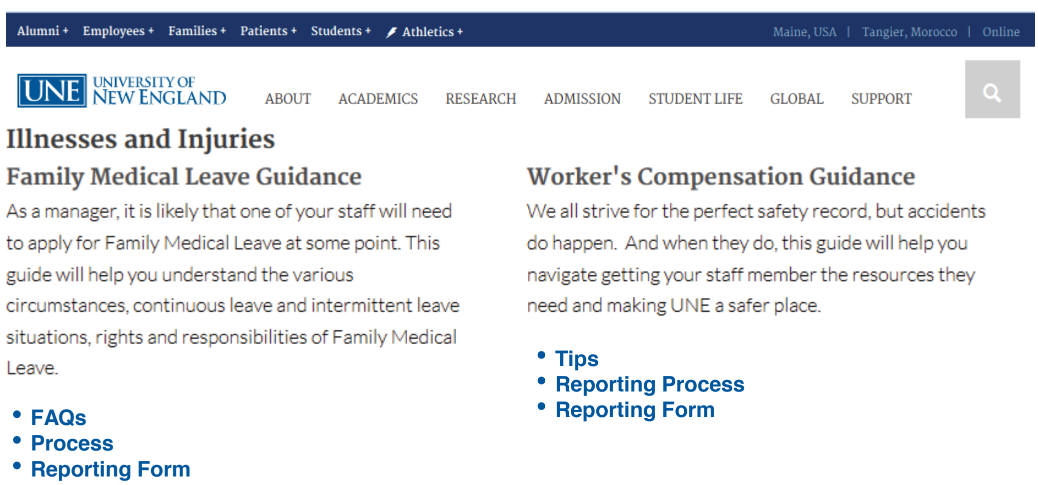
Group All Relevant Documents

HR groups together all existing process documents, including process map, forms, instructions, and FAQs

Make Documents Readily Accessible

HR ensures support staff can easily find and use relevant documents

University of New England Puts All Process Documents on Employee Website



Case in Brief: University of New England

- 9,679-student, private master's university located in Biddeford, Maine
- For particularly cumbersome processes, HR leaders consolidated all relevant process documents on the institution's HR website for easy access by unit-based staff

Source: University of New England, Biddeford, ME; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

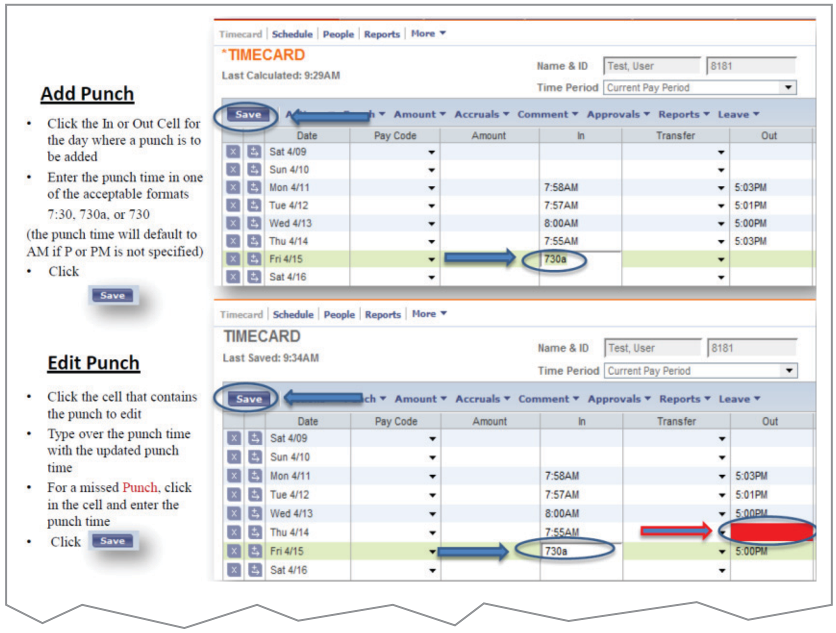
Adding Step-by-Step Instructions

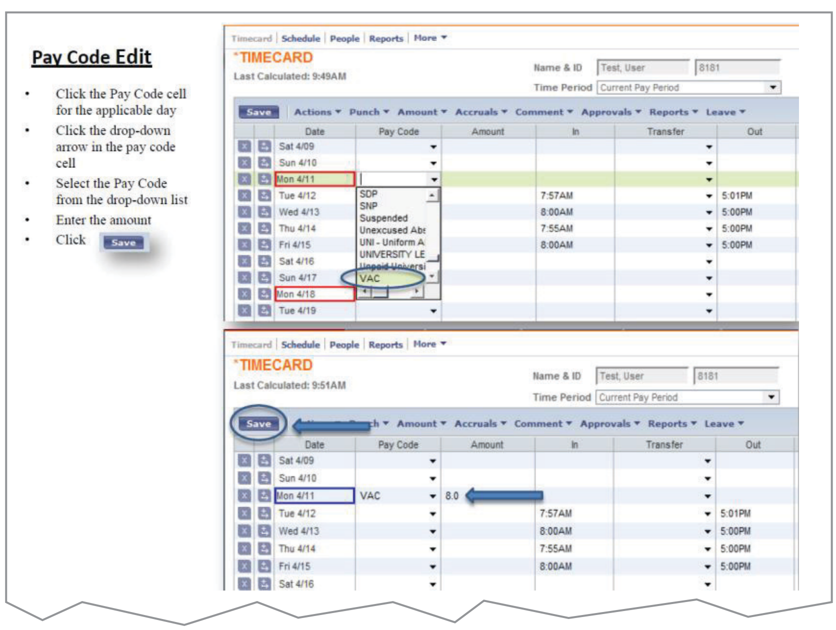
Component #2: Make Step-by-Step Guides for Most Complex Processes

A second optional component of this practice involves providing more in-depth instructional guides for HR process tasks that cause significant confusion and errors among unit-based staff. To help unit-based staff complete payroll tasks in the new HRIS time-keeping module, Temple University created a step-by-step user guide specifically for unit-based staff. As illustrated here, the 22-page document includes detailed instructions and a screenshot of the module for each discrete action.

Temple also created an online training video on the time-keeping module to further assist staff.

Temple University Complements Existing Support with In-Depth Instructional Resources for Most Complex Transactions





Case in Brief: Temple University

- 38,600-student, public research university located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Complemented in-person training with on-demand, step-by-step instruction guides and videos for processes that caused most confusion for support staff

Source: Temple University, Philadelphia, PA; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Section IV

Delegating HR Tasks Down to Most Appropriate Level of Staff

- Practice 8: Tiered Request Service Desk
- Practice 9: Internal HR Processing Unit

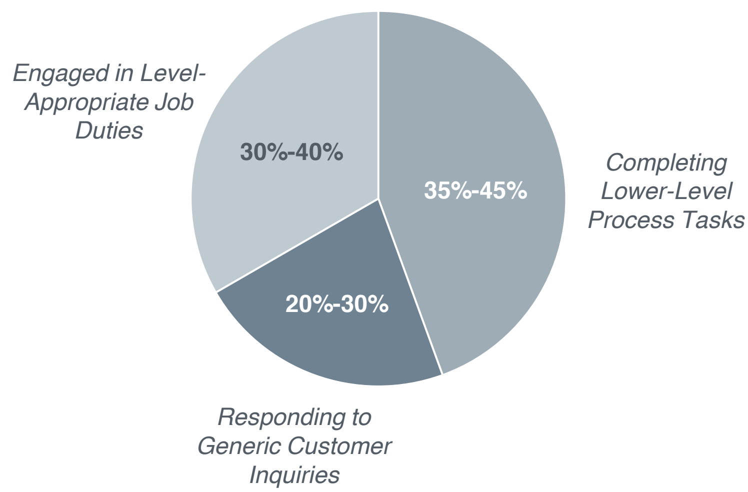
Highly Skilled Staff Burdened by Lower-Skill Activities

Beyond cumbersome processes, one of the biggest contributors to HR inefficiency is staff performing lower-level work. For more senior staff, completing lower-level process tasks and responding to routine customer inquiries can consume sizeable chunks of time. These tasks take valuable time away from job duties more in line with higher-level positions and reduce capacity to complete strategic activities.

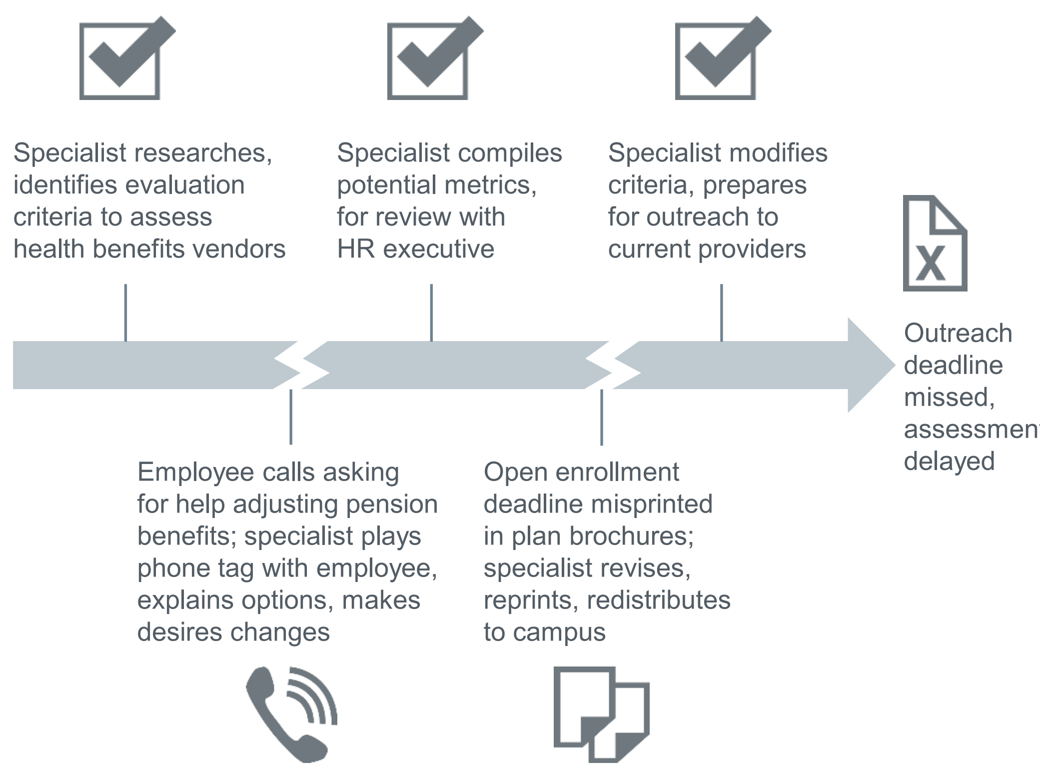
Furthermore, as shown below, lower-level activities create workflow disruptions for senior staff and often result in delays for higher-priority items.

Reducing Staff Attention to Higher-Order Responsibilities

Representative Breakdown of Time Senior Staff Spend on Department Activities



Sample Vendor Assessment Workflow for Benefits Specialist



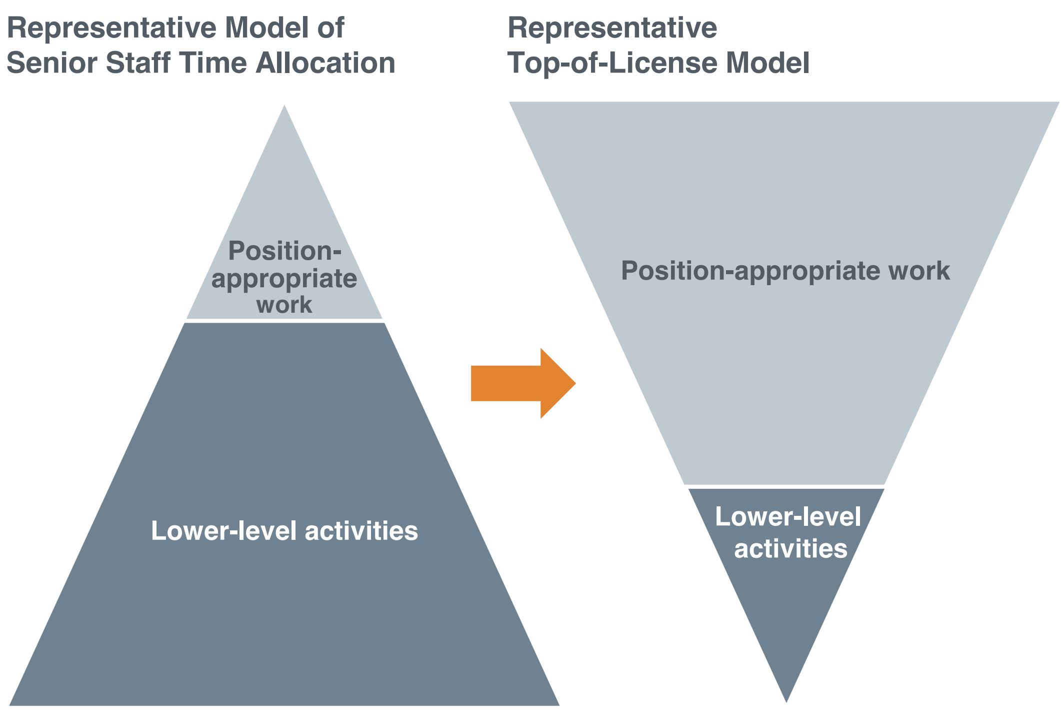
Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Moving Toward "Top-of-License" Practice

To ensure staff at all levels are operating as efficiently as possible, HR must promote top-of-license practice. This is a concept borrowed from the health care industry which posits that every worker should only perform the activities for which they are qualified (or licensed), and not tasks an employee at a lower level could do. By redistributing department activities so each employee works at the top of his or her skill set, HR avoids having employees consumed with tasks that can be more appropriately performed by another staff member.

The most effective strategy for promoting top-of-license practice is to delegate cumbersome transactional work to a smaller segment of lower-skilled HR staff.

Realigning HR Staff Responsibilities by Skill Level



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Two Approaches for Achieving Top-of-License Practice

The practices in this section target two distinct sources of transactional work: incoming customer requests and recurrent internal processing. These two sources represent the majority of work that most often pull more senior staff away from their position-appropriate responsibilities. The practices in this section ensure that more routine, transactional tasks do not unnecessarily creep up to higher-skilled staff.

Addressing Distinct Sources of Transactional Work

Incoming Customer Requests

Campus faculty and employees regularly call and email HR with a wide range of personal inquiries and other support requests

Practice 8: Tiered Request Service Desk

Recurrent Internal Processing

HR departments continuously perform large numbers of personnel actions to keep employees current and ensure institutional compliance

Practice 9: Internal HR Processing Unit

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 8: Tiered Request Service Desk

Practice in Brief

All HR inquiries and customer requests are channeled through a single service desk where entry-level HR staff members classify incoming inquiries by complexity, and either directly address the concern or triage to staff at the appropriate level.

Rationale

When faced with an HR question or concern, staff and faculty from across the institution typically reach out to any email, phone number, or HR employee they happen to know to get the issue resolved. With no dedicated service point, all staff within the department—regardless of functional area, position, or title—can and will receive incoming HR requests. This results in specialized and more senior-level staff being inundated with calls that (1) may have no relevance to their expertise, responsibility, or functional area, and (2) could have easily been addressed by HR staff at a lower, more appropriate level. Having a single triage point and structured system for elevating requests to appropriate HR representatives keeps tasks with the appropriate staff level and promotes top-of-license work.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Define Tiers of HR Service Based on Frequency and Complexity of Customer Inquiries
Based on incoming customer request data, HR managers create a model for what kinds of requests should be handled by various levels of staff within the department.

Component #2: Create User-Friendly Scripts for Most Commonly Asked Questions
HR managers develop scripts that enable service desk staff to independently and efficiently respond to the most common customer questions. The goal is to prevent inbound requests from unnecessarily migrating beyond the service desk.

Component #3: Establish a Clear Process for Question Escalation
HR managers develop a protocol for service desk staff to appropriately pass work upward. The goal is to document when and to whom elevated request should be transferred for resolution.

Component #4: Continually Evaluate Opportunities for Lower-Tier Request Resolution
Service desk mangers collaborate with HR functional specialists to periodically review elevated requests and identify which customer inquiries the service desk could answer given appropriate training and resources.

All Hands on Deck

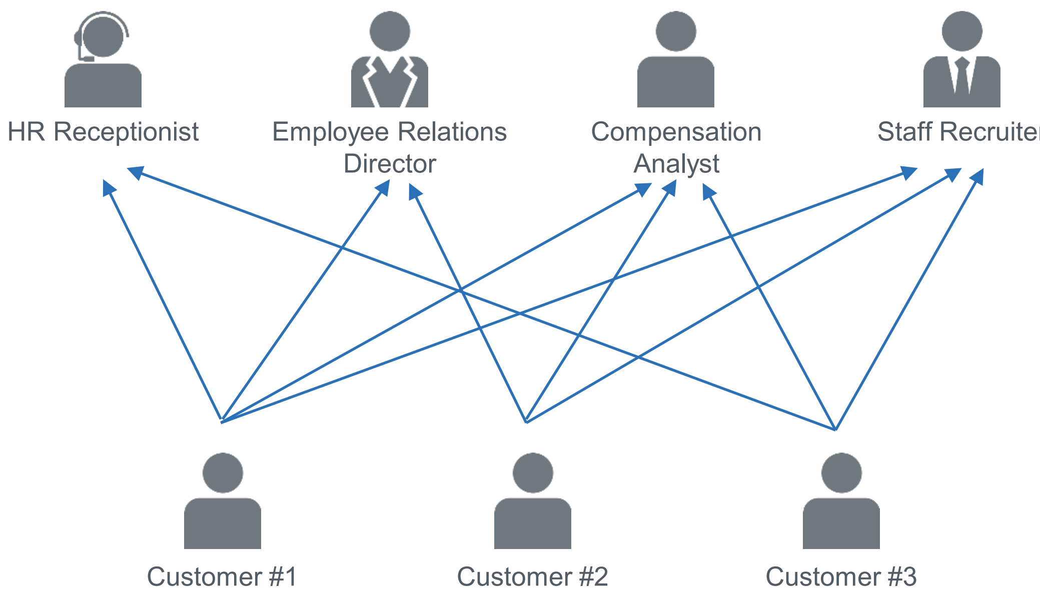
When faced with an HR question or concern, staff and faculty from across the institution may call any one of many phone numbers associated with the department to get their issue resolved. With no dedicated phone line or service point, all staff within the department—regardless of functional area, position, or title—can become inundated with incoming HR inquiries from the campus.

This creates the two problems outlined below. First, customer inquiries are often fielded by the wrong HR staff members. Department staff regularly receive inquiries irrelevant to their expertise, responsibility, or functional area, making them ill-equipped to effectively handle the customer request. Second, specialists and senior-level staff are often dedicating time to generic requests that could easily be handled by HR staff at a lower, more appropriate level.

In worst case scenarios, customers "call around" to various HR staff members multiple times in search of different or more favorable responses.

All HR Staff Serving as Frontline Customer Support Reps

Typical Method for Receiving Incoming HR Requests



Problems Associated with an Undirected Call Structure

1 Customer Inquiries Fielded by Wrong HR Staff Members

Calls are often answered by an HR staff member unfamiliar with various functional content areas, ill-equipped to resolve customer concerns

2 Senior-Level Staff Dedicating Time to Lower-Level Requests

Specialists and department leaders spend significant amounts of time handling inquires better suited for more junior staff

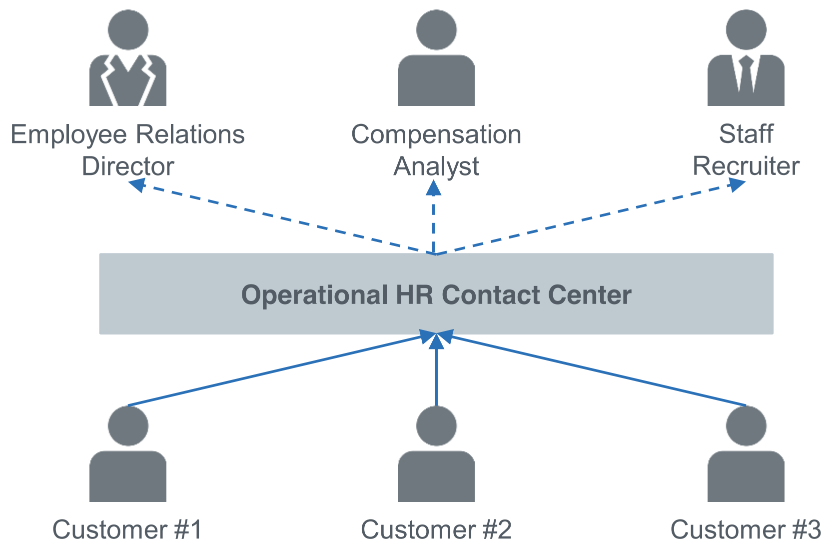
> **If at first you don't succeed…**
>
> "The worst case scenario is when you get customers who have been primed to call multiple people multiple times until they get the answer they want."
>
> *Vice President of HR*
> *Public University in the Midwest*

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Channeling Inquiries to Single Service Desk

A single customer service point and a structured system for elevating requests to appropriate HR staff can significantly lessen the burden of incoming calls on all department staff. At the University of Minnesota (UMN), all customer inquiries are channeled through a single-line service desk operated by entry-level HR staff. Staff in UMN's Contact Center are capable of handling a large portion of incoming questions and triage only the most complex requests, shielding department staff from general or irrelevant inquiries.

Entry-Level HR Staff at University of Minnesota Gatekeepers for Customer Questions



Primary Benefits of a Single Triage Point

- Service desk staff can resolve a large number of incoming requests
- Service desk staff can route requests to most appropriate HR staff member
- Department staff are insulated from general, unrelated inquiries

Case in Brief: University of Minnesota

- 64,964-student, public research university located in Minneapolis, Minnesota
- In 2013, established a seven-employee HR Contact Center with one dedicated phone line to serve as the single triage point for all incoming customer requests
- Decreased call volumes to higher-level department specialists by roughly 25%

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Segmenting Customer Requests

Component #1: Define Tiers of HR Service Based on Frequency and Complexity of Customer Inquiries

The first component for implementing a tiered request service desk is to define who should appropriately handle various types of inquiries. Before establishing the Contact Center, HR leaders at UMN collected data on overall call volumes, the various types of incoming requests, and the most common customer questions.

Most incoming requests were simple in nature—requests that required limited staff involvement, or requests for which employees could be directed to self-service platforms. HR leaders determined that these two types of requests could easily be handled by junior-level HR staff.

A smaller percentage of requests required HR subject matter experts, or in some cases, senior leadership involvement. These calls required escalation to appropriate senior-level staff members. Based on this assessment, HR leaders created a four-tier model defining what kinds of requests should be handled by various levels of staff within the department.

University of Minnesota’s HR Contact Center Model

Tier 1 Self-Service	**Tier 2** Admin Services	**Tier 3** Subject Expert	**Tier 4** Policy Expert
Request Owner	**Request Owner**	**Request Owner**	**Request Owner**
HR Contact Center staff enable campus employees to self-serve	HR Contact Center staff manage requests from campus employees	HR subject experts consult with campus employees in areas of expertise	Policy experts consult with unit leadership
Call Volume	**Call Volume**	**Call Volume**	**Call Volume**
≈60% of initial inquiries processed at this level	≈25% of service requests	≈10% of service requests	≈5% of service requests

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Providing Center Staff with Ready-Made Answers

Component #2: Create User-Friendly Scripts for Most Commonly Asked Questions

Once HR leaders determine the service desk staff's scope of responsibility, the second necessary component is to ensure service desk staff can effectively resolve relevant requests. At UMN, HR leaders and functional area specialists work together to develop call scripts for Contact Center staff. These scripts enable staff to independently and efficiently respond to the most common customer questions in the moment, preventing most inbound requests from unnecessarily migrating beyond the service desk.

Sample University of Minnesota Contact Center Tier 1 and Tier 2 Response Scripts

Question Category	Question	Tier	Response Guidance
Job Center	*What is the website for all employment listings?*	1	*All of the University's employment opportunities are listed at employment.umn.edu.*
	I applied to XXX job and wasn't referred. Could you tell me why?	2	Ask the caller for the requisition number, view the individual's notes/history section and provide that information to the caller. If the caller would like additional information or to discuss his/her application materials, route the call to the identified recruiter for that requisition.
Org. Effectiveness	*I don't know where/when my workshop is.*	1	*You should have received an email reminder that gives you the details of the workshop. If you did not receive it, you can go to this website to find the details: http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/training/index.html.*
	Your website shows the date of a workshop, but when I try to register it won't let me.	2	*The website will show the dates of the workshop, but will not allow any more registrations when it becomes full. You can register for the next available workshop.*
Employee Relations	*I am a union member. How would I obtain a copy of my union contract?*	1	*The contract is available online at www.umn.edu.ohr. Choose Contracts and Governing Document. If you would like a hard copy, please contact your union representative.*
	How do I find out my Civil Service seniority?	2	*Civil Service seniority is managed at the departmental level. We do not maintain seniority rosters for Civil Service employees. Please contact your department.*

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Knowing Who and When to Ask for Help

Component #3: Establish a Clear Process for Question Escalation

The third component of this practice is to provide staff with a clear protocol for elevating select customer requests. Although the goal of a tiered request service desk should be to effectively resolve as many requests as possible, some issues are too complex to be resolved at this level. At UMN, HR leaders explicitly detail what requests at each tier look like. Additionally, Contact Center staff keep a contact list of the department staff in various functional areas that should receive elevated Tier 3 and Tier 4 requests.

Contact Center Staff Transfer Tier 3 and Tier 4 Calls to Appropriate Specialists

Tier 1

Service Rep | Service Rep

- Easily known departmental information or questions for which staff can direct the caller to answers likely found in self-service portals
- General requests that do not need access to sensitive records
- Content examples include: directions, hours of operation, process deadlines, name or address changes, training registration, pay dates, etc.

Tier 2

Service Rep | Service Rep

- Introductory questions about HR policies, processes
- Questions for which answers can be easily looked up using internal department resources
- Content examples include: employment processing, process troubleshooting, payroll issues, training/workshop scheduling, etc.

Tier 3 Content Experts

Benefits Generalist | HRMS Generalist | HR Consultant | Payroll Ops Group | Job Center Specialists | OE Specialist

- Questions for which employee records need to be pulled
- Questions for which in-depth, functional area-specific knowledge or plan analysis is required

Tier 4 Policy Experts and Management

Operations Managers | Benefits Managers/ Counselor | HR/ER Team Managers | OE Managers

- Complex individualized problem normally requiring a supervisor
- HR strategy and planning initiatives

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Surfacing Unnecessarily Elevated Requests

Component #4: Continually Evaluate Opportunities for Lower-Tier Request Resolution

The final component of this practice is to identify elevated requests that could be resolved by lower-tier, service desk staff given additional guidance and training.

At Unitas College,[1] the HR Call Center manager and HR functional area managers together compile a list of the most frequently elevated requests and determine if they could effectively equip Call Center staff to answer them instead. When request types are pushed down to the Call Center, managers help prepare staff by creating FAQ documents and providing initial in-person specialist support.

Unitas College uses a specific ticketing software that allows HR leaders to easily categorize calls and track which are elevated. However, a technical solution is not a prerequisite for applying this component. Institutions without a ticketing system can proactively identify impending policy or process changes likely to generate customer questions and equip service desk staff with information to address related concerns.

Unitas College[1] Identifies Inquires Better-Suited for Service Desk Resolution

Process for Reactively Migrating Requests to the Call Center

1. **Identify Elevated Requests**
2. **Compose Answer Sheet**
3. **Provide Temporary In-Person Support**

- Every month, the Call Center manager reviews a list of elevated requests in order to identify patterns in types of requests elevated to specialists in the HR department's Centers of Excellence.
- Call Center manager meets with each Center of Excellence manager to evaluate which requests could be resolved in the Call Center once additional training is provided.
- Both managers agree on transition date when Call Center will begin answering identified requests and create an action plan to equip Call Center with relevant tools and information prior to transition date.

Case in Brief: Unitas College[1]

- Large, private baccalaureate university in the East
- Opened HR Call Center in 2005; currently staffed by five FTEs
- Call Center manager identifies opportunities to resolve more inbound requests at the first tier by regularly reviewing a list of elevated requests and meeting biweekly with Centers of Excellence specialists
- Specialists provide documented, in-person guidance to help call center staff respond to the most common types of new requests
- As a result of the downward migration of requests, Call Center now handles benefits enrollment, FMLA, and performance management support requests

1) Pseudonym.

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

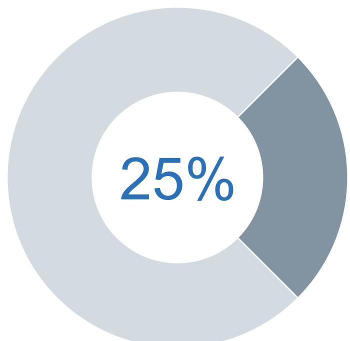
Realizing Gains from Triaging Customer Requests

Implementation of an HR Contact Center at UMN has reduced interruptions for senior staff members. Specialists affirm that they are able to focus on higher-level HR activities and spend less time responding to lower-level service requests. For example, in the benefits area, specialists dedicate more time to ensuring disability claims are properly handled and effectively processed.

Having a consolidated team of Contact Center staff has also allowed the HR department to reduce the overall number of entry-level reception staff through attrition and redirect those resources to more strategic areas—most notably, toward organizational development activities.

Freeing Up Specialist Time, Spurring Resource Reallocation

Approximate Decrease in HR Specialist Call Volumes



> "Since the service desk has been operational, the HR unit stopped filling as many entry-level positions. Through attrition, the HR unit reduced reception staff and redirected those positions and those resources to more strategic areas.
>
> *Kathy Brown, VP of HR*
> *University of Minnesota*

Source: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 9: Internal HR Processing Unit

Practice in Brief

Manual HR processing work and transactional activities common across the department are delegated to staff in a centralized HR operating unit, allowing specialists and more senior-level HR staff to focus exclusively on strategic work.

Rationale

Staff, regardless of specialty, seniority, or department model, are often responsible for performing some level of manual processing or transactional activity in their day-to-day roles. This work takes valuable time away from more senior staff and prevents them from engaging fully in strategic, more customer-focused work. Rearranging staff structures to ensure more entry-level staff are performing transactional processes allows specialists and business partners to address higher-order, campus-wide concerns.

As a secondary benefit, changes to staff structures can also create downstream process efficiencies. Employees dedicated to particular types of transactional processing naturally become more proficient at these activities than someone trying to balance policy work and processing work simultaneously.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Define Scope of Processing Unit by Assigning Key Tasks
HR leaders determine which transactions should be performed in the internal processing unit. The goal is to ensure processing staff are responsible for a manageable number of transactions and the unit is relieving the department of the most disruptive processes.

Component #2: Write Step-by-Step Transactional Guides
HR managers help transactional staff members write process instructions containing easy-to-follow language and action steps. The goal is to prevent unnecessary upward handoffs by ensuring processing unit staff have the information they need to independently and efficiently perform required actions.

Too Far in the Weeds

Staff, regardless of specialty, seniority, or department model, are often responsible for performing some level of manual processing or transactional activity in their day-to-day roles. Unfortunately, these activities often extend far beyond what is expected of specialists and more senior-level HR staff. More importantly, it takes valuable time away from more senior staff and prevents them from engaging fully in needed strategic priorities and more customer-focused work.

Senior Staff Overly Occupied with Every Process in Functional Area

Recruitment Director	Payroll Manager	HR Business Partner
▪ Assists units in determining short- and long-term staffing needs	▪ Evaluates and negotiates with data systems vendors	▪ Monitors industry trends and develops workforce strategy
▪ Establishes recruitment and sourcing protocols	▪ Maintains compliance standards, relationships with external auditors	▪ Promotes employee engagement initiatives

!

Senior Staff Deep in the Weeds

▪ Processes and files candidate applications	▪ Maintains time and attendance records	▪ Processes requests for student workers
▪ Prints, mails offer letters	▪ Distributes staff W2s	▪ Submits change forms

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

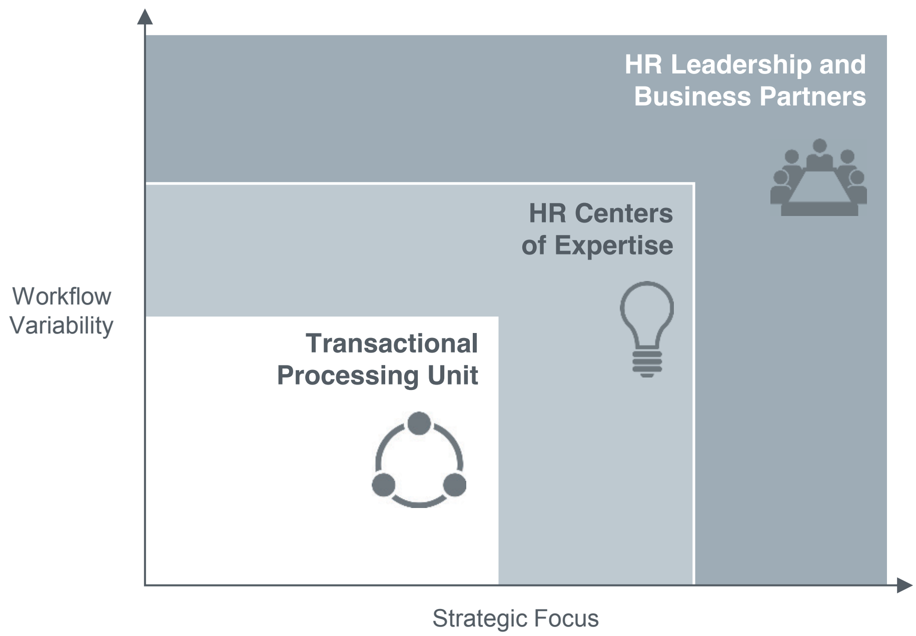
Delegating Transactions to Central Processing Center

Assigning common or manual processing activities to dedicated transactional staff allows specialists and HR leaders to focus on higher-order work and broader campus-wide initiatives. In the representative HR staffing structure depicted here, manual HR processing work and transactional activities common across the department are delegated to staff in a centralized HR operating unit—essentially creating a shared service unit within a unit. The goal is to prevent work from needlessly floating up, allowing specialists and more senior-level HR staff to focus exclusively on higher-level work.

Changes to staff structures can also create downstream process efficiencies. Employees dedicated to particular types of transactional processing naturally become more proficient at these activities than someone trying to balance policy work and processing work simultaneously.

Separate HR Unit Takes on Prevalent Department Tasks

Representative HR Staffing Structure



Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Scoping Processing Unit Efforts

Component #1: Define Scope of Processing Unit by Assigning Key Tasks

The first component for creating an internal HR processing unit is to determine which transactions the unit should own. Given the vast number of HR processes, processing units should not be accountable for every department transaction. Instead, HR leaders must ensure processing unit staff are assigned a manageable number of transactions, and that the unit is relieving the department of the most disruptive processes. Both Concordia University and University of Texas at Brownsville targeted a small number of the most time-consuming transactional activities for their processing units.

Structurally, institutions must define the role of the HR processing unit task by task, slowly building out the unit's scope of responsibility over time. Chosen tasks will inevitably vary by institution; however, most institutions pursuing this strategy select transactions that align with one or more of the considerations listed to the right.

Tasks Assigned to Processing Unit at Two Institutions

Université Concordia University

- Payroll processing
- Benefits administration
- Leave processing
- Employee data administration

UT Brownsville

- Payroll data entry
- New hire data administration
- Travel processing

Considerations for Determining Which Transactions to Move to an HR Processing Unit

- Most frequently requested transactions
- Transactions with greatest impact on customers
- Transactions most critical to ongoing campus, HR department operations
- Most standardized, least variable transactions
- Most time-consuming transactions
- Transactions spanning multiple functional areas, individual staff

Source: Concordia University, Montréal, Québec, Canada; University of Texas, Brownsville, TX; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Ensuring Successful Change Management

successfully deploying an HR processing unit will require a thoughtful change management effort. A processing unit will meaningfully impact how HR operates as a unit—for example, how and where resources are deployed to support various functional areas—as well as how HR staff and campus employees interact with the HR department. Therefore, it is critical that all HR staff, clients, and customers understand the value of the new service delivery.

Four executive recommendations for successfully migrating to such a model are presented here.

Key Executive Recommendations for Migrating to Transactional Model

- ❑ **Be explicit about the processing unit's scope of responsibility.** Clearly defining which transactions are supported by the unit prevents confusion among customers as well as HR staff. This also helps preserve the unit's integrity and alignment with larger HR department objectives and workflows, even as objectives and operating landscapes evolve.
- ❑ **Frame structural changes to the HR department as "renewal" efforts, rather than "transformations" or "overhauls."** Large-scale organizational change is difficult for most employees, and while broad change management plans are essential, more subtle adjustments to how change is communicated can help garner more staff support. A department renewal focuses attention on efforts to improve and rejuvenate the department, staff, and service delivery, whereas HR transformation puts the disruptive change front and center.
- ❑ **Communicate the importance of transactional work among unit staff.** Processing unit staff can easily feel isolated or degraded if their roles are defined by work considered transactional orlow-level. Position the unit as one that will have different, but equally valuable responsibilities. Additionally, emphasize the key competencies of chosen unit staff—customer-focused, solution-oriented—rather than over-focusing on the transactional tasks that will be performed.
- ❑ **Meet regularly with unit staff to keep them well-informed of potential change.** Transitioning staff will need to adjust to new ways of working, so must understand when and why changes are happening, what exactly is going to happen, and what they should do to prepare. Establishing ongoing communication mechanisms will aid in the transition and provide staff with a means to raise concerns and resolve operational roadblocks. Clearly document issue resolutions to avoid rehashing settled disputes and improve transparency.

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Centralizing Transactional Tasks on a Smaller Scale

For some institutions, isolating transactional work in a central processing unit may not be feasible—some HR units are simply too small to realize benefits from dramatic restructuring or staffing shifts. Alternatively, HR leaders at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) focused on collapsing ownership of one dispersed, transactional process down to one HR Associate. UMBC's contingent and temporary labor processing used to be routed through three HR functional areas—payroll, employment, and HRIS—each overseen by a different HR director. Staff in each functional area dedicated time to completing only pieces of the process. Because ownership was spread over several units, staff lacked accountability for policy compliance and process outcomes. Ultimately, poor coordination resulted in delayed service for the units requesting temporary labor.

Centralizing all tasks associated with this process into one HR employee has resulted in several key benefits. There is now clear accountability for process compliance and task completion, and staff previously involved in the process have increased capacity to perform their function-specific duties. Further, the arrangement has reduced the time it takes to process temporary or contingent worker requests from three weeks to five days, increasing units' satisfaction with the process.

UMBC Consolidates Contingent Employment Process Tasks Split Across Functional Areas

Employment Function

- Review and assign appropriate title codes
- Review, approve contracts for new hires and renewals

Payroll Function

- Review contract, supporting documents
- Process onboarding documents including W-4s, I-9s

HR Associate

- One associate now handles the entire process from end to end
- Process now owned by one unit—the HRIS, Compensation and Benefits unit, responsible for data entry for all employment categories
- HR Associate reports to one functional manager within unit

Key Benefits of UMBC's Process Consolidation

1. Reduced time to process temporary or contingent worker requests by almost 2 weeks
2. Created capacity for staff in HRIS, Payroll, and Employment units to focus on more function-specific work
3. Ensures all process steps, compliance checks are completed, reducing compliance risks
4. Increased client satisfaction with the process since able to secure needed temporary workers more quickly

Case in Brief: University of Maryland, Baltimore County

- 13,979-student, public research university located in Baltimore, Maryland
- Collapsed internal ownership of tedious contingent employment processing, previously split between functional areas, to one HR Associate
- Lead times associated with unit hand-offs were eliminated, reducing the overall time to process requests from three weeks to five business days

Source: University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, MD; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Providing Clear Instructions for Each Task

Component #2: Write Step-by-Step Transactional Guides

The second component is creating accessible, user-friendly process guides for each transaction. To prevent upward handoffs of transactional tasks, the HR department must ensure processing unit staff have the information they need to independently and efficiently perform required actions. Best-in-class checklists exhibit the four characteristics shown here. Staff responsible for completing transactional processes create guides using easy-to-follow language. Managers review them for completeness and clarity and ensure they are easily accessible to all staff.

For sample HR Transactional Guides, please see pages 105-107.

Key Characteristics of Transactional Process Guides

Staff-Written

Staff members write instructions for processes they oversee in order to ensure accuracy

User-Friendly

Instructions contain easy-to-follow language and screenshots where applicable

Quality-Monitored

Manager reviews each checklist for completeness and clarity; checklists are revisited regularly to ensure continued accuracy

Accessible to Team

Team can easily access checklists via Sharepoint or knowledge data base

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Putting Extra Capacity to Good Use

After assigning transactional work to an internal processing unit, the HR department at the University of Texas Brownsville realized notable staffing improvements. HR leaders estimate the move reduced the weekly workload of six staff members by 10 hours each. Moreover, the number of overtime hours worked each month within the department declined significantly.

As a result, staff now have the bandwidth to pursue HR certifications and higher-level HR roles. For example, compensation specialists who previously spent considerable time processing paperwork now focus on reviewing and analyzing salary data for benchmarking against other institutions.

Transferring time-consuming transactional work to the processing unit also created capacity for an HR generalist in the department to take on position-appropriate labor relations responsibilities previously assumed by the vice president of HR.

University of Texas Brownsville Elevating HR Staff Roles

60

Collective reduction in the number of hours per week six HR specialists are spending on routine processing tasks

Refocusing Staff on Higher Level Activities

- Labor Relations Training
- Compensation Analysis and Review
- Professional HR Certification Courses

Source: University of Texas, Brownsville, TX; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Sample Staff-Written HR Process Guides

HRSC Procedure
New Hire Data Entry

Purpose: To ensure that new employees are entered into PeopleSoft in a timely and accurate manner.

Required Documents: New Appointment Document (NAD)

Required Information:

- Complete name as it appears on the social security card
- Social security number
- Position number—must have this to data enter employee into PeopleSoft
- Job title—must be exact
- Position/employee status (i.e. full-time, part-time, temporary) and the percentage of full-time hours to be worked (50%, 48%, etc.).
- Annual salary—even if the employee is temporary, the salary should be calculated as though the employee were working twelve full months.
- Employee's actual start date including orientation. This may be any day other than Monday if an employee is a direct state transfer or a walk-through who will not be attending orientation.
- Employee location information—box number, LOA code (a.k.a. timesheet code), office phone number, and mail group (if box number is 57, 82, 92, or 112). This is important information because it tells payroll where to send the employee's paycheck and tells Kronos where the employee is located.
- I-9—required by Federal law for every employee. We can take the date of birth from the drivers license.
- EEOC form—Institutional requirement used to report data to the state (also has DOB).
- Copy of social security card—We are required by law to verify the social security number. Our records must have the same name spelling and social security number as the IRS and the SSA. If an employee declines to present his/her social security card, the number and name can be verified by calling the SSA at 1-800-772-6270. You will need to have M.D. Anderson's federal employer identification number (74-6001118) and the employee's name and date of birth ready to present. The employee must be currently employed by M.D. Anderson at the time of the verification. M.D. Anderson could be fined for discrepancies in reported information.

I. Personal Data

- Name—first name, middle initial, and last name. No spaces or punctuation are entered
- Address—current and correct address and all telephone numbers. Impacts the types of benefits options available. Also ensures that W-2 forms and other correspondence are mailed correctly.
- Personal profile (information to complete this panel is found on the EEOC form or new hire paperwork).
  1. Choose correct gender of employee—impacts benefits and is reported to the state comptroller.
  2. Choose highest education level
  3. Choose referral source
- Eligibility/Identity
  1. Date of birth—mandatory for payroll. A paycheck will not be produced if the DOB is not entered. This information is also reported to the EEOC and the state comptroller.
  2. Social security number—No employee should be entered without a social security number under any

Source: University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX.

Sample Staff-Written HR Process Guides (cont.)

circumstances. If an employee does not have a number he/she will be required to apply for one immediately. The SSA will provide the person with a receipt when they apply. If the receipt has no social security number, then the employee should be entered into PeopleSoft with a dummy social security number obtained from the payroll office. The payroll office must be notified once we receive and enter the social security number into PeopleSoft.

3. Ethnic origin—also reported to the EEOC and the state comptroller. This will default to "white" and inaccurate information will be reported if it is not entered.
4. Military status—reported to the EEOC

II. Job Data

- Work location
  1. Hire date—accuracy is extremely important because it impacts TRS vesting and other tenure-driven benefits.
  2. Position number—brings up the title and department. Be sure the job title matches the one on the NAD.
- Job Information
  1. Enter employee class (classified, hourly, or admin staff)
  2. Enter standard hours (defaults to 40 hrs.)
  3. FLSA (will automatically default when you enter the position number)
  4. Enter work day hours
- Job labor (no data entry required)
- Payroll
  1. Enter pay group
  2. Enter employee type
  3. Enter tax location code - this should always default to **HOUST** even for Science Park employees.
- Salary Plan
  1. Salary grade will default when you enter the position number
- Compensation
  1. Enter ABBR-Same as the salary for new hires and rehires
  2. Enter rate code (NAANNL)
  3. Enter annual compensation rate (PeopleSoft does not take cents, therefore you must round up or down.)
- MDA Kronos
  1. Enter effective (same as hire or rehire date)
  2. Enter time clock
  3. Enter meal length
  4. Enter timekeeper code

III. Benefit Program Participation

- Enter benefit program type for new hires. For rehires, a row must be inserted and the new effective date should be entered (MDA or NON).

IV. Enter Education and License/Certifications into PeopleSoft

Source: University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX.

Sample Staff-Written HR Process Guides (cont.)

HRIS Procedures
JDUF Processing
PROMOTION

Purpose: To ensure that the employee receives correct title and compensation.

Definition: A change from one job to another, with increase in scope, responsibility, and/or skill

JDUF Requirements:

Sec. A: Action – PRO/PRO

Sec. B: Position number (if applicable: job code, employee type, employee class, paygroup)

Sec .C: Annual salary

Sec. D: Standard hours (when a change in time status has occurred)

Sec. E: Box #, check code, location (if applicable) (OB&F to enter)
timekeeper code, homeclock, meal length (if applicable) (HRIS to enter)

Sec. F: Check for signatures from dept., budget office. And HR-compensation

Processing:

1. Open Administer Workforce
2. Select "USE"
3. Select "Job Data"
4. Select "Work Location"
5. Insert row at effective date; enter effective date
6. Tab to sequence number; (enter if applicable; use if date of previous action is same)
7. Tab to action/reason; enter action "PRO"; reason; PRO
8. Tab to position number; (enter if applicable)
9. Select "Job Information"; enter changes in "standard hours (if applicable)
10. Check for change in FLSA and update "Payroll" panel with new pay group
11. Select "Compensation" page; enter "new" compensation rate
12. Update Ben Elig Field if applicable under Benefits Program Participation
13. Select "MDA KRONOS" page; Insert row (+), enter eff. date (same as action; enter any changes to timekeeper code, time clock, meal length (if applicable).
14. Return to "Work Location"
15. Select "SAVE" to save new record.

Note: Always check with BenAdmin when making a correction to record.

FYI – If a change in time status is to take place along with the promotion:

1. Notify benefits
2. Process the DTA/TIH or DTA/TIP or DTA/TIM 1st and PRO 2nd(refer to HRIS processing doc.)
3. Check for PTS (refer to HRIS processing doc for processing)

Source: University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX.

Section V

Reprioritizing Individual Staff Time and Responsibilities

- Practice 10: HR Critical Responsibilities Lists
- Practice 11: Customer-Focused Unit Rotations
- Practice 12: New Position Applications

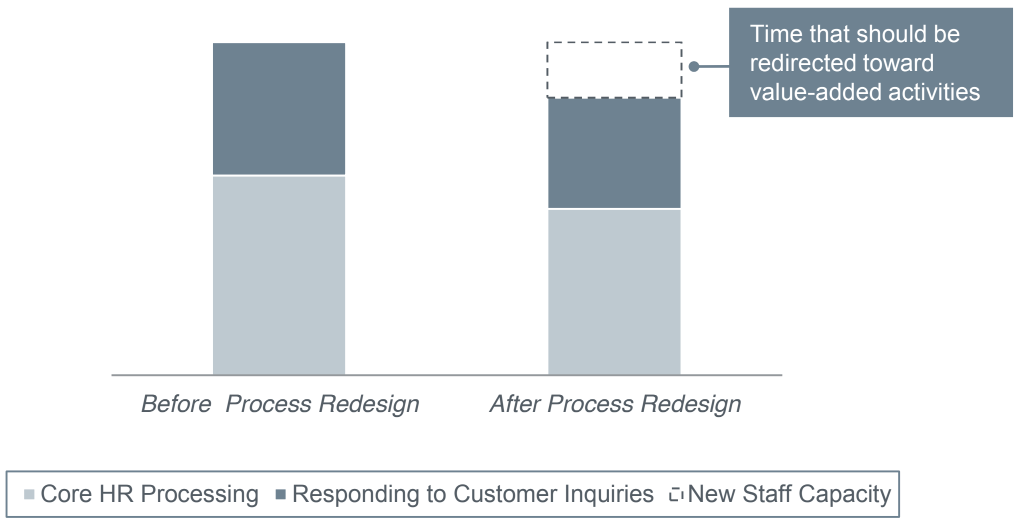
Leveraging Efficiency Gains at the Employee Level

Although broad HR restructuring can yield department capacity for more strategic initiatives, there is also a significant opportunity to better leverage capacity at an individual employee level. As process improvement efforts uncover and eliminate inefficiencies, staff require less time to complete process activities. The chart on the right shows how this can create capacity at the employee level.

Unfortunately, HR leaders do not always refocus individual staff members toward new unit priorities. Failing to capitalize on staff hours freed-up after process improvement will result in one of two equally poor outcomes. First, staff's current work may once again expand to fill the newly freed-up time, even if process tasks do not actually require the time allotted. Alternatively, staff may misuse available work hours—spending considerable time each day engaged in personal activities, for example. Therefore, HR leaders must redirect staff toward value-added department activities as their capacity increases.

Individual Staff Hours Often Impacted by Process Redesign

Representative Allocation of HR Staff Time Before and After Process Redesign



!

Be Mindful of Parkinson's Law

Parkinson's Law asserts work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion. HR leaders must not let new staff capacity go unfulfilled or risk staff misusing work hours, maintaining operational status quo.

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Meaningfully Filling Staff Time

There are two primary considerations for meaningfully repurposing individual staff capacity. First, HR leaders must identify the types of higher-priority activities staff can absorb with their available time. Potential tasks to introduce into staff roles include new department duties, tasks not currently being performed effectively, tasks with no clear owner, or customer-focused activities.

Second, HR leaders must decide how to distribute newly prioritized tasks across staff members. The department can take a straight-forward approach to allocating high-priority staff responsibilities—assigning them one-by-one to appropriate staff members as new needs arise. Alternatively, the department can revise all existing HR roles—crafting new positions that reflect new department priorities.

These two approaches are outlined here. This section details case studies of institutions taking each approach.

Aligning Staff Activities to Shifting Department Priorities

Types of Department Tasks to Introduce into Staff Roles

- New department duties, higher-level activities not previously performed
- Tasks not effectively performed or completed in a timely, organized fashion
- Existing tasks with no clear owner
- Customer-centric activities, enhancements to service delivery

Two Approaches for Reprioritizing Staff Time and Responsibilities

Assign High-Priority Activities Task-by-Task

HR leaders identify high-priority activities and allocate them appropriately across department staff

Practice 10: HR Critical Responsibilities Lists

Practice 11: Customer-Focused Unit Rotations

Revamp All HR Unit Roles, Redeploy Staff

HR leaders revise existing staff roles, craft new positions to reflect process changes, evolving department priorities

Practice 12: New Position Applications

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 10: HR Critical Responsibilities Lists

Practice in Brief

As process efficiencies are uncovered and eliminated, HR leaders and staff collaboratively modify and document staffs' key responsibilities. The goal is to redirect staff time toward the newly defined, high-priority responsibilities within their role, not just on the activities they have always performed.

Rationale

Even after process improvement efforts shorten laborious processes or reduce the amount of manual and transactional work, HR staff roles do not always evolve to reflect these operational changes. Staff responsibilities reflect outdated workflows and often incorporate low-value process steps. Additionally, HR staff members may find it difficult to prioritize new and competing projects and responsibilities. Clearly defined and prioritized lists of responsibilities provide role clarity and enable staff to prioritize tasks.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Limit the Number of Defined Responsibilities for Each Role
HR leaders limit each critical responsibility list to a manageable number of clearly defined activities—no more than eight.

Component #2: Rank Order Responsibilities by Importance
HR leaders list responsibilities by importance to ensure staff focus on the most critical tasks.

Component #3: Ensure Lists are Widely Accessible within the HR Department
HR leaders share lists among all HR staff by posting lists to an easily accessible location such as a shared drive. The goal is to ensure staff not only understand their own roles, but peers' roles as well.

Component #4: Develop Lists with Staff Input
HR leaders and staff collaboratively develop critical responsibility lists to promote staff buy-in.

Allocating High-Priority Staff Responsibilities

To ensure individual HR staff member responsibilities consistently map to the larger department priorities, HR leaders at Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare equip every HR employee with a list of their seven core responsibilities, ranked in order of importance. Leaders revisit these lists annually to ensure staff responsibilities stay up to date with operational changes and continue to reflect HR department goals.

For additional examples of HR Critical Responsibilities Lists, please see pages 115-116.

The "Critical 7" at Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare

Sample "Critical 7" Responsibilities for Select HR Staff Members

Benefit Specialist	Employment Specialist	HRIS Administrator
1. Enrollment & Termination of Benefits	**1.** Job Postings	**1.** My HR Maintenance and Set Up
2. New Employee Benefits Enrollment	**2.** Advertisements & Job Line Recording	**2.** PTO Accruals, Year End and Longevity Pay
3. Payroll Correction Processing	**3.** Agency Staffing & Billing	**3.** HR Reporting
4. Employee Liaison with Carriers	**4.** Collateral Materials and Employment Forms	**4.** Perfect Attendance Program
5. Open Enrollment Implementation	**5.** Bonus in Lieu of Vacation, Certification, Bonus & EEs Without Earnings	**5.** Turnover Reporting and Analysis
6. Benefits Newsletter	**6.** Exit Interviews & Term Vouchers	**6.** Position Control
7. Performance Evaluation Processing	**7.** Voucher Processing (Status Changes)	**7.** Pre/Post Lawson Processing

Case in Brief: Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare

- 370-bed unionized health system located in Utica, New York; 17.8 HR FTE
- Previously, all HR staff were department generalists each serving as an 'Employee Relations Representative; however staff job functions became stale as the institution grew and the role of HR on campus evolved
- In response, the new VPHR differentiated staff responsibilities and gave each staff member a list of the seven most critical tasks for them to execute upon, ranked in order of importance
- The "Critical Seven" are included in non-management staff performance reviews and linked to a merit payouts

Source: Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare, Utica, NY; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Ensuring a Successful Rollout

Successful implementation of HR Critical Responsibility Lists depends on four key components: limiting the lists to manageable number of responsibilities, ordering the tasks by importance, sharing the lists widely among the HR department, and developing the lists collaboratively with staff. Additional detail on each component is shown here.

HR Critical Responsibility Lists can cause considerable shifts in staff's day-to-day activities, particularly in departments with significant role overlap or ambiguity. To aide implementation, HR leaders are encouraged to consider the additional guidance listed below.

Key Components of the "Critical 7"

Limit the Number of Defined Responsibilities for Each Role

HR leaders limit each list to a manageable number of clearly defined responsibilities—no more than eight

Rank Order Responsibilities by Importance

HR leaders list responsibilities by importance to ensure staff focus on the most critical tasks

Ensure Lists are Widely Acceptable within HR Department

HR leaders share lists among all HR staff by posting lists to an easily accessible location such as a shared drive; the goal is to ensure staff not only understand their own roles, but peers' roles as well

Develop Lists with Staff Input

HR leaders and staff collaboratively develop critical responsibility lists to promote staff buy-in

Implementation Considerations for HR Critical Responsibility Lists

1. When crafting HR Critical Responsibility Lists, ensure responsibilities accurately reflect department needs and are not overly modified to accommodate current staff roles.
2. On an annual basis, solicit staff input on industry, regulatory changes, or internal process improvements (e.g., software upgrades) that impact positions and alter HR Critical Responsibility Lists accordingly.
3. Consider incorporating HR Critical Responsibility Lists into staff performance evaluation and linking to merit pay.

Source: Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare, Utica, NY; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Sample HR Critical Responsibility Lists by Role

	Director, EE & Labor Relations	Employment Coordinator	Employment Specialist	Recruitment Specialist	HRIS Administrator	Asst. Director, HR & Volunteers
#1	Labor Relations & Legal Issues (Fx, SL and VNA)	Front Desk Reception	Job Postings	Interviewing	My HR Maintenance and Setup	Employee & Labor Relations
#2	Employee Relations: Main Campus	New Hire Processing	Advertisements & Job Line Recording	Unemployment Administration	PTO Accruals, Year End and Longevity pay	Volunteer Recruitment & Processing
#3	MVN HRIS Strategy & Implementation Plans	Applicant Tracker	Agency Staffing & Agency Billing	Intranet and Internet Web Site Maintenance	HR Reporting	Volunteer Competency and File Maintenance
#4	MVN Recruitment Strategy & Management Recruitment – Main Campus	License Renewals & Primary Source Verification	Collateral Materials and Employment Forms	Job Fairs	Perfect Attendance Program	Reward and Recognition Programs
#5	HR Policies and Procedures	ID Badge System	Bonus in Lieu of Vacation, Certification Bonus & EEs without earnings	Graduate Nurse	Turnover Reporting and Analysis	Volunteer Communication
#6	Satellite A Campus HR Oversight	Drug Tests and Background Checks	Exit Interviews & Term Vouchers	HR Metrics	Position Control	Special Events for Volunteers
#7	Satellite Campus B Oversight	Referral Program	Voucher Processing (status changes)	Program & School Outreach Programs	Pre/Post Lawson Processing	Volunteer Hours Tracking

Source: Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare, Utica, NY; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Sample HR Critical Responsibility Lists by Role (cont.)

	Director, Benefits	Benefits Administrator	Benefits Specialist	Disability & Leave Coordinator	Retirement Plan Administrator	Employee Records Assistant	Chief Learning Officer	Training Specialist
#1	Benefit Compliance (5500s and SPDs)	Payment of all benefit bills (FSLH)	Enrollment & Termination of benefits	Disability Processing	Payroll Bi-Weekly & Monthly Processing	Employee Files	Center for Learning	New Hire Orientation
#2	Broker & Vendor Liaison	Open Enrollment Coordinator	New Employee Benefits Enrollment	Reasonable Accommodation Processing	Verification of Contributions	Employment & Mortgage Verifications	DDI Programs	Net Learning Admin.
#3	Salary Surveys and Compensation Grading Requests	MVN Affiliate Liaison for Benefit Questions	Payroll Correction Processing	LOA Processing	Quarterly Audits	Information Subpoenas	Aspiring Leaders	School At Work Program
#4	Open Enrollment Strategic Plan & RFP Process	Child Care Subsidy	Employee Liaison with carriers (day to day questions)	Tuition Reimbursement	Annual Audit	Admin Manual Updates / I-9 Maintenance	Employee Survey	Toastmasters
#5	Employee Health & Benefit Team Supervision	Benefit Plan Audits	Open Enrollment Implementation	LTD Hourly and Salary Processing	ADP/ACP Testing	Applause Mailbox Printing	Peer Mediation	Sexual Harassment Training
#6	Benefit Collateral Materials & Forms; Lawson System Changes	Life Insurance Processing	Benefits Newsletter	Departmental HR Payroll KRONOS	Plan Administrator (loans, distributions, enrollment)	File Audits	Assessment	Interview Training
#7	Budget Preparation & Monitoring and Monthly Statistical Data Reporting	Ancillary Benefits Coordination	Performance Evaluation Processing	Employee Discount Program	HANYS Broker Liaison	HR Reception Back Up	Team Building	Customer Service Training

Source: Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare, Utica, NY; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 11: Customer-Focused Unit Rotations

Practice in Brief

HR staff round on departments and academic units across the institution to interact directly with internal customers and clients, collecting feedback, providing staff education, and identifying improvement opportunities. The goal is to refocus staff capacity on higher-level, customer-focused activities that create added value for the department.

Rationale

Although many HR staff members work with customers across campus processing transactions, resolving grievances, or initiating personnel changes, few in the department have opportunities to meaningfully interact with customers to fully understand their needs or gather performance feedback. Facilitating more frequent, high-value exchanges between HR staff and customers enhances HR service delivery and emphasizes frontline staff's key role in meeting the department's strategic objectives.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Select Staff Rounders
HR leaders choose two staff members each month to round on administrative and academic units across the institution.

Component #2: Schedule Unit Visits
Rounding staff organize monthly visits to various campus units. Staff round on two to three different units per visit.

Component #3: Meet and Interact with Internal Clients and Customers
Rounding staff solicit feedback on the HR department's effectiveness, offer subject matter expertise, and identify improvement opportunities.

Component #4: Conduct Post-Rounding Debriefing Sessions
Rounding staff report back to their department on findings from the visits and discuss customer feedback and areas for improvement.

Incorporating Customer-Centric Tasks into Staff Roles

Staff rounding allows HR staff to focus on higher-level, customer-centric activities that create value for the department. Although many HR staff members work with customers across campus to process transactions, resolve grievances, or initiate personnel changes, few in the department have opportunities to meaningfully interact with customers to fully understand their needs or gather performance feedback. Facilitating more frequent, high-value exchanges between HR staff, clients, and customers enhances HR service delivery and emphasizes frontline staff's key role in meeting strategic department objectives.

To elevate staffs' customer service focus, Tarkenton State[1] established a staff-rounding program in which HR staff regularly round on departments across campus. Four components are particularly critical to ensuring success: selecting staff rounders, scheduling facility visits, engaging internal customers, and debriefing the team. Additional detail on these components is shown here.

For sample Rounding Documentation Form, please see page 119.

Gaining a Boots-on-the-Ground Perspective

Key Steps of Tarkenton State University's[1] HR Staff Rounding

1 Select Staff Rounders

- HR department chooses two staff members from various functional areas to round on units across the institution each month
- Staff members selected during monthly staff meetings

2 Schedule Unit Visits

- Rounding staff organize two to three unit visits per month
- Rounding staff spend approximately one hour "on site" with each administrative unit

3 Meet and Interact with Internal Clients and Customers

- Rounding staff solicit feedback on their department's effectiveness, offer subject matter expertise, and identify improvement opportunities
- Information documented in a rounding form

4 Conduct Post-Rounding Debriefing Sessions

- Rounding staff document findings from the unit visit, discuss customer feedback and areas for improvement with larger HR department
- Team addresses improvement opportunities during monthly staff meetings

Case in Brief: Tarkenton State Univeristy[1]

- Public masters university in the Northwest
- HR staff round on departments across system; rounding staff seek feedback on their departments and often provide HR-specific staff support as well
- Leaders report relationship-building, problem identification, and mission reinforcement as primary benefits

1) Pseudonym.

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Rounding Documentation Form

Rounding Documentation Form

Rounding should take place in departments within your institution, or in departments on other affiliated campuses over which the HR department has operational reach. Rounding should help you discover what areas may need improvement and should instigate professional development discussions.

- Make personal connections.
- Keep the questions to a minimum.
- Record feedback on the documentation form.
- Follow up on any action items from your rounding session(s).

"I am visiting your department today to see how our team can better serve you. As a department, our goal is to improve communication; therefore I am going to ask you a few questions in regards to our department's service to you."

Date: ______________________________

Department Visiting: ______________________________

What are we doing well in regards to our service to you?

What are our challenge areas that need to be addressed in order to better serve you?

Have there been any conflicts or issues that haven't been resolved within your department or outside of your department this week?

What problems were solved or need to be solved, and what departments were involved, this month?

Follow-up recommendations:

Other questions/comments:

Action item(s) from this rounding session:

Date feedback was shared with my staff: ______________________________

Date of follow up appointment (if necessary): ______________________________

Source: Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Practice 12: New Position Applications

Practice in Brief

After process improvements, HR leaders outline all HR responsibilities and identify new staff roles that reflect reductions in manual tasks, newly required activities, and other operational shifts. Existing HR staff then apply for the newly crafted roles within the department. The goal is to create and fill roles that accurately reflect process changes and evolving department priorities.

Rationale

After a process redesign, HR departments often maintain status quo with respect to staffing—existing staff roles remain unchanged even after processes have been improved and time needed to perform certain activities has decreased. When HR staff positions do not evolve with new unit-critical needs, it can leave staff underutilized, higher-priority activities under-resourced, and service delivery outdated. This tactic offers a formal mechanism through which staff can move into new roles that better reflect shifting department priorities.

Implementation Components

Component #1: Define Roles and Responsibilities Necessary to Fulfill New Department Priorities
HR leaders clearly outline staff activities critical for meeting the department's operational and strategic objectives, and craft new roles to better reflect these responsibilities.

Component #2: Assess Current Skills and Capabilities of Staff to Ensure Proper Placement into New Department Positions
HR leaders use a combination of employee self-assessments, manager reviews, and in-person interviews to evaluate skill-levels of HR staff and make "best-fit" determinations for current staff moving into new department positions.

Component #3: Train Staff to Succeed in New Roles
HR leaders establish position-specific training plans to ensure staff are equipped with the information they need to fulfill assigned roles and responsibilities.

Maintaining the Staffing Status Quo

After a process redesign, HR departments often maintain status quo with respect to staffing—existing staff roles remain unchanged even after processes have been improved and time needed to perform certain activities has decreased. Compounding the problem, evolving campus needs often create new department responsibilities for which staff ownership is unclear.

However, when HR staff positions do not evolve with new unit-critical needs, it can leave staff underutilized, new or more pressing activities under-resourced, and service delivery outdated.

This practice profiles Wayne State University, which successfully revised HR staff roles department-wide, defining new staff positions to reflect process changes and evolving department priorities.

Existing Staff Roles Not Always Accommodating to Evolving Department Needs

Sample HR Staff Positions at Representative Institution

- **Employment Coordinator**
- **Director, Labor Relations**
- **Benefits Specialists**
- **Payroll Administrator**
- **Administrative Recruiter**

New HR Department Priorities at Representative Institution

- Maintain effective partnerships, build HR service level agreements with business units
- Monitor employee engagement, administer organizational climate surveys
- Ensure overall department regulatory compliance, audit HRIS data reports
- Manage transition to electronic personnel records system, streamline processing workflows

Case in Brief: Wayne State University

- 28,000-student, public research university located in Detroit, Michigan
- As part of a larger campus-wide HR transformation, HR leaders redesigned current HR staff roles to accommodate the new department service delivery model—HR leaders created new employment categories encompassing all activities required by the new model
- HR leaders transitioned all existing full-time HR staff to new positions within the department using three assessment criteria—staff self-assessments, manager assessments, and employee interviews
- Roughly 70 HR employees applied and were placed in new HR department roles

Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Aligning Staff Responsibilities to HR Unit Objectives

Component #1: Define Roles and Responsibilities Necessary to Fulfill New Department Priorities

To accommodate their new centralized client services model, HR leaders at Wayne State University removed all existing HR staff from their current roles and eliminated those positions. HR leaders then created new staff roles and required all full-time HR staff to formally apply for newly created positions within the HR organization. Three components are essential for ensuring this process runs smoothly and staff can successfully move into roles that better reflect shifting department priorities.

The first component is to clearly define the new roles needed. Too often, leaders assign tasks based on the skills and capabilities of the person in the role, rather than on the appropriateness of the task for the role itself. At Wayne State, HR leaders designed new roles around needed department tasks, not around employees in the existing roles. They thought through which tasks logically grouped together and clearly outlined new role categories and responsibilities associated with each. All staff positions within the new HR department structure fell under one of the five role categories outlined here.

Roles in Wayne State's New Client Services HR Organization

Role	Description of Responsibilities
HR Directors	▪ Has responsibility for their client services team's overall performance ▪ Serves as the leader/manager for all team members ▪ Builds, maintains effective partnerships with regional group leaders ▪ Monitors service-level agreements for their clients ▪ Manages, oversees work of team members (to ensure timeliness, accuracy, customer service) ▪ Balances work loads, helps to prioritize work ▪ Responsible for team member training and development
Sr. HR Consultants/ HR Consultants	▪ Strategic partner to assigned S/C/Ds ▪ Leads efforts to resolves complex employee relations issues in consultation with Labor Relations, EEO, Academic Personnel, General Counsel ▪ Investigates formal and informal complaints, resolves management conflicts ▪ Provides guidance on state and federal laws (FMLA, FLSA, ADA, etc.) ▪ Responds to organizational issues (Root cause analyses, climate surveys, needs assessments, developing and delivering customized training, compensation, job description and reorganizations etc.) ▪ Compiles data and metrics to formulate recommendations to address organizational issues
Talent Management Coordinators	▪ Coordinates S/C/D recruiting efforts ▪ Develops sourcing and staffing plans in consultation with the HR Consultant ▪ Conducts first-round screening and interviewing of applicants ▪ Conducts background checks, makes recommendations for hire in consultation with General Counsel, makes job offers ▪ Coordinates onboarding and orientation processes ▪ Compiles data and statistical reports on employment activity
HR Coordinators	▪ Coordinates, oversees all HR transactional and payroll processes ▪ Monitors day-to-day transaction operational activities, monitors workflows ▪ Interfaces with central offices (i.e., Payroll, OISS, HR) to ensure employees are paid accurately and timely ▪ Monitors HRMS data and reports to identify errors and resolve issues ▪ Provides transactional assistance, guidance related to employment transactions ▪ Processes, approves electronic approvals via HR systems (i.e., Banner, EPAF, I-9 eXpress/E-Verify, Application X-tender) ▪ Updates, maintains electronic employee records ▪ Prepares statistical reports and summaries, makes recommendations to director on process improvements
HR Administrators	▪ Processes HR transactions ▪ Gathers, completes required documents for originating electronic approvals ▪ Codes and data enters transactions into HRMS ▪ Provides advice, instructs unit administrators on paperwork requirements, forms completion, remedial actions required ▪ Updates, maintains electronic employee records and personnel files ▪ Interfaces with central offices (i.e., Payroll, OISS, HR) to resolve unique transactional processing issues ▪ Prepares statistical reports

Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Getting the Right People in the Right Roles

Component #2: Assess Current Skills and Capabilities of Staff to Ensure Proper Placement into New Department Positions

The second component is to evaluate staff's' skills and competencies in various HR functional areas, processes, policies, and systems. At Wayne State, HR leaders assessed staff capabilities using the three measures shown on the right.

First, all staff completed a self-evaluation. Employees self-reported their current skill levels on a five-point scale, along with their three greatest competencies. Staff also indicated their role preference and provided a short narrative regarding their level of interest and developmental needs specific to preferred roles.

Second, managers completed downward reviews of their direct reports. Lastly, senior leaders conduct one-on-one interviews with each staff member to verify responses to manager and self-assessments.

Leaders at Wayne State affirm that taking this three-pronged approach for evaluating staff was key to identifying skill gaps and ensuring the proper placement of HR staff.

For a complete version of Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment, please see pages 125-134.

Wayne State's Three Applicant Assessment Measures

1

Employee Self-Assessment

Application process initiated with employee self-reviews

2

Manager Assessment

Managers provide downward review of direct reports' capabilities

3

Employee Interview

HR leaders conduct one-on-one interviews with each staff member, comparing employee self and manager reviews

Key Elements of HR Employee Self-Assessments

- Each employee must select first and second choice of available roles for which he/she would like to be considered
- Each employee honestly assesses current skill levels in HR functional areas, University processes, policies and systems, and Microsoft applications
- Each employee must identifies three competencies representing his/her greatest strengths
- Each employee provides short narrative regarding his/her level of interest, motivation, and developmental needs specific to roles of choice

Inviting staff participation in the process can help ease resistance to imminent staffing shifts in the HR unit.

Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Setting Staff up for Success

Component #3: Train Staff to Succeed in New Roles

The third component of this practice is to provide appropriate and targeted training for staff transitioning into new roles. Wayne State devised comprehensive, role-specific training plans to ensure staff had a foundational understanding of the nature of their position and new job responsibilities.

Training modules were offered at various times and often repeated, allowing staff to choose the most convenient times and facilitators to adapt course materials for varying audiences. Additionally, trainings used a blended format, including classroom sessions and an e-learning platforms.

Because HR leaders placed staff in roles that best aligned to current skill levels, training needs were not overly extensive or overwhelming to staff. On average, HR employees completed the training required for their new roles within 1-2 months of transitioning.

HR Leaders at Wayne State report that ongoing education is also important—they offer additional training sessions periodically to provide more in-depth subject matter guidance and help staff refresh on the basics.

Training Plans for New Employee Roles at Wayne State

Date	Module	Director	Sr./ Consultant	TMC	Coord/ Admin	Time	Location
7/2	Banner Navigation	X	X			9:00-12:00	UGL Lab A
7/2	Banner Navigation			X	X	12:00-3:00	UGL Lab A
7/3	The Role of the Sr. HR/HR Consultant		X			1:00-3:30	3700 AAB
7/3	The Role of the Coordinator/Administrator				X	9:00-11:30	3700 AAB
7/8	The Role of the Talent Management Coordinator			X		2:00-4:30	3700 AAB
7/8	EPAF I				X	2:30-4:30	3700 AAB
7/9	WSU HR Fundamentals	X	X	X		9:00-10:30	3700 AAB
7/10	Overview: Partnering with Labor Relations/Academic Personnel	X	X	X		1:00-2:30	4339 FAB
7/11	WSU Background Check Assessment Program	X		X		2:00-5:00	3700 AAB
7/11	AppXtender				X	8:00-10:30	1700 AAB
7/31	Investigations: Handling Employee Concerns and Complaints		X			10:00-11:30	3700 AAB
7/31	The “How-To” for Student Employment			X		1:00-3:30	4339 FAB

Courses offerings varied to ensure staff at all levels have access to role-relevant HR topics

HR leaders modify training plans to meet the needs of employees in various roles, levels

Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI; Business Affairs Forum interviews and analysis.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

Introduction

Welcome to the HR Transformation Self Assessment tool! On the following pages, you will be asked to provide information on your current level of skill in the areas of HR functional disciplines, Wayne State University processes, policies and systems, and competencies associated with being an HR professional at WSU. As well, you will be asked to provide a short narrative regarding your level of interest, motivation and developmental needs specific to the HR role that you have a strong interest in filling.

This self assessment tool will close on Wednesday March 27, 2013. All assessments MUST be completed by this date. Please be honest in the assessment of your skills. Your immediate supervisor will also be asked to provide an assessment of your skills. Any clarification needed on the questions contained in this self assessment survey should be directed to ______________________ @ _____________________. Should you have any questions regarding the available job roles listed in this tool, please contact _________________________ @ __________________.

In addition to completing this self assessment, you are also required to email your updated resume to ____________________ @ ____________________ by March 27, 2013.

Page 1

Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

Section 1 – Demographic Information

*1. **Please enter your full name (i.e., first, last)**

Name

*2. **Please list the School/College/Division and Department that you currently work in.**

School/College/Division

Department

*3. **What region would you prefer to work within going forward? Please identify your first and second choice.**

	First Choice	Second Choice
Region A (College of Liberal Arts/Sciences, College of Fine & Performing Arts, School of Social Work)	○	○
Region B (College of Engineering, School of Library/Info Sciences, Honors College, Research, Research Support)	○	○
Region C (School of Nursing, Law School, School of Business, College of Education)	○	○
Region D (Educational Outreach, Provost Office, Student Affairs, University Press, Institutional Research, Budget, Planning & Analysis, Graduate School)	○	○
Region E (School of Medicine, School of Pharmacy & HealthServices)	○	○
Region F (Administrative Services: e.g., Athletics, C&IT, General Counsel, Governmental Affairs, Public Safety, President's Office, FP&M, etc.)	○	○

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

***4. Please identify your first and second choice for the roles that are available.**

	First Choice	Second Choice
Sr. HR Consultant –Lead special projects, partner with client on investigating and solving complex employee relations issues, provide strategic consultative services and guidance on general employment procedures, employee and labor relations, organizational development, training, compensation and/or benefits administration and affirmative action/ equal employment opportunity. Serves as a mentor in developing HR Consultants. Requires a high level of HR competence gained through 5 or more years of HR Generalist experience.	○	○
HR Consultant provide strategic consultative services and guidance on general employment procedures, employee and labor relations, organizational development, training, compensation and/or benefits administration and affirmative action/equal employment opportunity. Requires 2 years of HR Generalist experience.	○	○
Recruiting Specialist gathers job requirements, creates job postings and enters via Online Hiring System, interprets policies and contractual agreements related to hiring and placement, screens applicants and conducts first round interviews, applicant testing and referrals for in-person interviews. Performs background checks and makes job offers. Facilitates onboarding procedures. Requires at least 3 years of related employment/recruiting experience.	○	○

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

Section 2 – Functional HR Disciplines

Please assess your level of skill relative to the HR functional areas listed below.

*5. **Please self-assess your skill in the following HR functional areas.**

	Not at all skilled	Not very skilled	Average level of skill	Skilled	Highly skilled
Affirmative Action					
Benefits Program					
Compensation					
Change Management					
Career Planning					
Downsizing/Rightsizing					
Employee Relations					
Equal Employment Opportunity					
General HR Metrics (i.e., time-to-fill, turnover)					
HRIS Utilization					
Job Advertisement/Sourcing					
Job Analysis & Job Description Design/Development					
Leave Management (i.e., FMLA, ADA)					
Labor Law Guidance					
Labor Relations (i.e., contract interpretation & administration)					
Organizational Development					
Organizational Exit					
Orientation/Onboarding					
Policy Development					
Policy Interpretation					
Recruitment (i.e., phone screening, interviewing, selection)					
Staffing Metrics					
Training					
Talent Management					
Workforce Planning					
Workplace Health & Safety					
Workplace Investigations					

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

*6. **Please select the employee group(s) that you are used to dealing with the MOST. (Select all that apply)**

- ☐ Academic/Non-Represented
- ☐ Academic Represented
- ☐ Non-Academic/Non-Represented
- ☐ Non-Academic/Represented

7. **Please select the union group(s) that you are used to dealing with the most. (Select all that apply)**

- ☐ UAW Staff Association
- ☐ UAW Professional and Administrative
- ☐ AFSCME
- ☐ Michigan Building and Construction Trades Council
- ☐ Unite Here! Local 24 (Janitors)
- ☐ Unite Here! Local 24 (Housekeepers)
- ☐ Operating Engineers
- ☐ Supervisor's Operating Engineers
- ☐ Service Employees International Union
- ☐ Police Officers Labor Council
- ☐ AAUP – American Association of University Professors
- ☐ GEOC – Graduate Employees Organizing Committee
- ☐ UPTF – Union of Part-Time Faculty

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

Section 3 – WSU Policies, Processes, and Systems

Please assess your working knowledge/skill specific to the WSU policies and processes listed below.

***8. Assess your level of working knowledge/skill specific to the WSU policies and processes below.**

	Not at all skilled	Not very skilled	Average level of skill	Skilled	Highly skilled
Collective bargaining agreements	○	○	○	○	○
Administration of policies contained in APPM	○	○	○	○	○
Administration of policies contained in Non-Rep Manual	○	○	○	○	○
Background checks	○	○	○	○	○
EEO-Non/discrimination policy	○	○	○	○	○
Employee records management (i.e., active, termed personnel files)	○	○	○	○	○
EPAF transactions	○	○	○	○	○
I-9 verification process/E-verify	○	○	○	○	○
Exit interview process	○	○	○	○	○
Employment verification (TALX)	○	○	○	○	○
FMLA/Leave of absence (i.e., case management)	○	○	○	○	○
Personnel transactions process	○	○	○	○	○
Statistical reporting analysis	○	○	○	○	○
University policy	○	○	○	○	○

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

***9. Assess your level of working knowledge/skill specific to the WSU systems listed below.**

	Not at all skilled	Not very skilled	Average level of skill	Skilled	Highly skilled
Online hiring system	○	○	○	○	○
Banner (HRMS)	○	○	○	○	○
EPAF system	○	○	○	○	○
COGNOS	○	○	○	○	○
Application X-Tender	○	○	○	○	○
I-9 Express	○	○	○	○	○
FMLA Source	○	○	○	○	○
The Work Number	○	○	○	○	○
OISS/Work Authorization (WAR)	○	○	○	○	○

***10. Assess your level of working knowledge/skill specific to the Microsoft Office applications listed below.**

	Not at all skilled	Not very skilled	Average level of skill	Skilled	Highly skilled
Word	○	○	○	○	○
Excel	○	○	○	○	○
Access	○	○	○	○	○
Project	○	○	○	○	○

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

Section 4 – Competencies

You will now be asked to identify the top three (3) competencies where you feel you have the GREATEST strength.

***11. Please select the top three (3) competencies where you feel you have the greatest strength. Please select three (3) ONLY.**

- ☐ Customer Service
- ☐ Interpersonal Skills
- ☐ Oral Communication
- ☐ Written Communication
- ☐ Technology/Computer Skills
- ☐ Partnering/Relationship Building
- ☐ Judgment/Decision Making
- ☐ Organizational Skills
- ☐ Problem Solving

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

Section 5 – Short Answer Question

Please provide a response (two paragraph minimum) to the question posed below.

***12. Please provide a written narrative describing your level of interest, motivation and developmental needs relative to the role that you selected as your FIRST choice (e.g., role that you selected in Section #1/Question #4). All three components (e.g., level of interest, motivation and developmental needs) MUST be included in your narrative.**

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

Wayne State's Employee Self-Assessment (cont.)

HR Transformation_Self Assessment

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this self assessment. This information will be forwarded to the Human Resources Selection/Assessment Team. Please remember to email your updated resume to ______________________ @ ________________________ by March 27, 2013.

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Source: Wayne State University, Detroit, MI.

EAB

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