

Extraordinary Qualifications/Credentials "6.5(g)"

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POLICY

In accordance with State Civil Service Rule 6.5(g), Extraordinary Qualifications/Credentials, Louisiana Special Schools - Louisiana Schools for the Deaf and Visually Impaired (LSDVI) and Louisiana Special Education Center (LSEC) reserve the right to offer salaries above the minimum to applicants who possess extraordinary qualifications/credentials only when such action is necessary to recruit those persons to work for LSDVI or LSEC. LSDVI and LSEC will consider similar pay adjustments for current employees who possess the same or substantially similar qualifications.

Specific verification of the extraordinary qualifications/credentials possessed and evidence of how those extraordinary qualifications/credentials would be particularly beneficial to help fill the position is required.

APPLICABILITY

This policy shall apply to LSDVI or LSEC classified employees and prospective employees.

IMPLEMENTATION

This policy becomes effective upon the signature of the Appointing Authority and approval of State Civil Service. Subsequent revisions shall become effective on the date revisions are approved and signed by the Appointing Authority and approval of State Civil Service.

PURPOSE

Civil Service Rule 6.5(g) provides the opportunity for agencies to hire above the normal minimum of the pay range when filling classified positions with applicants who possess extraordinary qualifications/credentials beyond the minimum qualifications. This rule may be helpful to attract qualified applicants who can effectively perform the duties.

POSTING

This policy shall be posted in one or more visible locations to assure that it is accessible to all employees. The Appointing Authority must assure that the posting and any subsequent revisions remain in place permanently or is replaced when appropriate.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

When determining and setting an appropriate salary upon hire, the following factors shall be taken into consideration:

- **Market Relativity:** a comparison of the new hire's pay relative to the midpoint or market rate for his/her position;
- **Internal Equity:** a criterion that takes into consideration the relationship of one employee's salary to the salaries of other employees who have comparable levels of education and experience and perform similar duties and responsibilities, within a work unit, division or agency;
- **Work Experience/Education:** a new hire's relevant work history and academic qualifications as related to the job;
- **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:** special qualifications, competencies, and/or prerequisites needed to successfully perform the tasks required of a job;
- **Recruitment/Retention Issues:** issues related to jobs that may warrant higher salaries because of difficulty in recruiting or retaining employees with qualifications or credentials that are highly sought after.

Pay ranges are divided into quartiles in order to aid in determining employee hiring rate placement within the prescribed salary range. There are four points in the range to consider:

- **Minimum:** is the entry point for a grade and is appropriate for someone who is new to the position, when there is an abundant supply of talent, and low turnover;
- **First Quartile:** is the progress point for a pay range and is usually appropriate for someone who is experienced and performing all the duties of the position, or when there are challenges in the supply of talent, and some turnover;
- **Midpoint:** is the advanced point (midpoint or market) and is usually appropriate for a seasoned employee who is performing competently in their job over many years, or when there is a limited supply of talent, and significant turnover;
- **3rd Quartile to Maximum:** is the point up to the maximum for a grade that is usually appropriate for an employee with a level of experience and expected performance that will significantly exceed both the requirements of the job and the performance of most other employees. Hiring at this rate should be rare and factors such as a scarce supply of talent, and critical turnover should be considered.

Minimum	1st Quartile	Midpoint	3rd Quartile to Maximum
Meets minimum qualifications	Previous related experience	Subject Matter Expert	Hiring above the midpoint/market should be rare, but may be justified by the following:
No prior experience	Demonstrated ability to perform duties	Exhibits broad and deep knowledge of job and related areas	-Difficult to recruit applicants to the position
Requires additional training to build knowledge and skills	May require additional training to perform duties independently	Senior-level job expertise with no training required	-Highly qualified with industry leading expertise
			-Sought-after educational background or certifications

Employees hired at the first level of a career progression group should not typically be hired on 6.5(g) since the minimum qualifications for the majority of first level jobs require no experience. In order to justify a 6.5(g) payment an applicant must have extraordinary job-related qualifications, which would likely qualify the applicant for the cap of the career progression group.

PROVISIONS

- 1) Provisions of Rule 6.5(g) can be used for a candidate only upon probation or job appointment.
- 2) Pay can be set under Rule 6.5(g) above the minimum but not to exceed the midpoint of the pay range for the job.
 - a) The employee may be paid upon hiring or at any time within one year of the hire date.
 - b) If paid after the hiring date, the pay change must be prospective.
- 3) Extraordinary qualifications/credentials must be verified and documented as job related. The Appointing Authority shall verify any extraordinary qualifications/credentials which his request for a higher minimum salary upon appointment of a candidate will based.
 - a) Any request for pay to be set above the minimum under Rule 6.5(g) must be submitted on a Personnel Action request form by the Appointing Authority with verified credentials attached and with written justification for the requested pay. The Appointing Authority must approve the requested salary before it is officially offered or paid.

4) In requesting similar pay adjustments for current employees occupying affected job titles and who possess the same or similar qualifications/credentials, the Appointing Authority will verify those superior credentials in the same manner as for a candidate.

a) Upon approval by the Appointing Authority, salaries of current employees who occupy positions in the affected jobs and possess the same or substantially similar qualifications may be adjusted up to but not to exceed the amount of the percent difference between the special hiring rate and the minimum of the pay grade. The same verification process used for the applicant is required, and formal documentation must be created and available for audit.

b) Such adjustments shall only be made on the same effective date that the higher rate is given to the newly hired employee.

5) If an employee with permanent status resigns and is then rehired into either the same position or into the same job title or a job with a lower maximum at the same agency, the employee shall not be eligible for an increase under this rule unless there has been a break in service of at least 30 days.

6) If an employee with permanent status resigns and is then rehired into a job with a lower maximum at any other agency, the employee shall not be eligible for an increase under this rule unless there has been a break in service of at least 30 days.

7) Requests for exceptions to this rule must be approved by the State Civil Service Commission.

PROCEDURES FOR 6.5G REQUESTS

The extraordinary or superior qualifications/credentials must be verified and documented by the hiring school or division. This verification may include, but is not limited to, reference checks from previous employers, college transcripts, certificates, job-related theses/dissertations, and professional development provided by the applicant.

The hiring school or division must explain how the qualifications/credentials are job-related—how the knowledge and experience the employee brings to the agency will benefit the agency in the position for which the employee was hired. The qualifications/credentials need not be included in the minimum qualifications. For example, the minimum qualifications for an attorney are a license to practice law in the state and a certain number of years of experience. For an attorney hired to concentrate in special education, experience as a special education teacher or school administrator, though not required, would clearly be job-related and may be used to justify hiring the attorney above the minimum.

Superintendent, Special School District

Date