

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



SELECTION PROCESS

BY THE ORDER OF:

Assistant Vice President Kenneth E. Strother, Jr.

OF PAGES:

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EFFECTIVE DATE: March 12, 2025

ACCREDITATION STANDARD(S):

**CALEA 21.2.2, 31.2.1, 31.4.1, 31.4.7, 31.5.1, 31.5.7
NJSACOP 2.5.4**

**SUPERSEDES DIRECTIVE/SOP#:
028, 029**

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to outline and describe the Princeton University Department of Public Safety (DPS) selection process for all full-time and part-time positions and ensure job descriptions are current and made available to all candidates and current personnel.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Princeton University Department of Public Safety (DPS) to recruit, select and employ a diverse workforce that meets the high standards that the department requires. A comprehensive background investigation is one tool that the DPS uses to assure that selected full-time and part-time candidates are of the highest degree of character and integrity and possess the job skills, knowledge and abilities needed to succeed in the position for which they were selected. DPS will work collaboratively with the Princeton University Office of Human Resources (HR) in all phases of the recruitment and selection process for full-time and part-time positions. [Accreditation 31.4.7]

PROCEDURE:

I. Recruitment

- A. The primary objective of the DPS recruiting program, which operates in accordance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws, is to attract qualified individuals from the available workforce to pursue a career as a sworn police officer. In accordance with state law and in order to recruit and hire a qualified, talented workforce of sworn officers that reflects and serves the Princeton University community, DPS may encourage women and members of other communities that have historically applied at disproportionately low rates to apply. To assist in this objective a Recruitment Plan shall be prepared annually by the Special Projects Manager outlining the steps towards achieving the goals of a workforce composition that reflects the University Community.
[Accreditation 31.2.1a]

- B. For purposes of this goal, the available workforce will be based on the percent of available workforce population for the State of New Jersey.
- C. The DPS is subject to the provisions of applicable federal and state laws and to the policies of Princeton University in all facets of the recruitment and selection process. Accordingly, all job postings by the DPS shall include an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statement.
- D. The DPS will attempt to broadly recruit qualified female and minority candidates from all available sources by posting and advertising sworn police officer job opening on the internet, via email, printed postings, participation in job fairs, and notifying professional law enforcement organizations in accordance with the Recruitment Plan. [Accreditation 31.2.1b]
- E. The Special Projects Manager shall be responsible for the administration of the Recruitment Plan in conjunction with the Princeton University Office of Human Resources (HR). [Accreditation 31.2.1c]
- F. The Special Projects Manager shall conduct an annual review and analysis of the Recruitment Plan which shall include, but not be limited to, performing an annual agency demographic review, determining whether any substantial disparities have been reduced, and if need be, revising the Recruitment Plan accordingly if the goals and objectives are not met.
- G. By January 31st of each year, the DPS shall furnish data to the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office as part of the annual reporting requirement as directed in the New Jersey Attorney General Guideline on Promoting Diversity in Law Enforcement Recruiting and Hiring. This data will be compiled with the assistance of the Special Projects Manager and furnished by the Administrative Lieutenant.

II. Selection Process [Accreditation 31.4.1]

- A. When an opening exists in DPS, the Special Projects Manager or designee will work closely with the Office of Human Resources (HR) to secure approval to post the opening and departmental funding from the Budget Manager. When approved, HR will post the opening on their website and advertise the vacancy.
- B. The Special Projects Manager shall ensure the Job Description for the open position is current prior to providing it to the Office of Human Resources (HR) for posting. The Special Projects Manager and Hiring Managers shall complete a documented review of all job descriptions utilized by DPS at least every four years to ensure they are current. All DPS Job Descriptions shall be made available to personnel via PowerDMS, a hardcopy upon request, and a hardcopy manual maintained at the resource desk located on the second floor of headquarters. [Accreditation 21.2.2]
- C. Upon the closing of the job posting, the Special Projects Manager and Hiring Managers will review the applications, resumes and cover letters to confirm and verify they meet the eligibility requirements for the position. Selected candidates will then move to the next stage of the selection process.

- D. These candidates, whether full-time or part-time, will be selected based on the fit of the job requirements to the candidate's educational level, prior and current work experience, personal experience, and criteria established in this directive.
- E. Sworn police officer candidates must take a written examination to assess skills identified as necessary by the DPS and HR for the job of a sworn police officer.
- F. All sworn police officer and non-sworn security officer candidates must take and pass a Post-Offer Pre-Employment Screening (POPES) physical evaluation to assess essential physical functions identified as necessary by DPS and HR for the physically demanding job of the positions. [Accreditation 2.5.4]
- G. Candidates for administrative or dispatcher positions are not required to take the written examination; this includes sworn officer positions of sergeant and above.
- H. Sworn police officer candidates who successfully pass the written examination will undergo a series of interviews.
- I. The initial interview for all position openings in DPS may be a telephone interview and/or an in-person interview. These interviews will be conducted by a team of persons from DPS.
- J. The interview team will pass successful candidates to an on-campus interview with the Hiring Managers.
- K. The Assistant Vice President for Public Safety or Director of Operations will make the decision about who to hire and will work collaboratively with HR and the DPS Special Projects Manager or designee to notify the successful candidate and to give that person a conditional offer of employment.
- L. The offer of employment is conditional on the candidate successfully passing a background investigation and other requirements as may be mandated by DPS and HR. This includes examinations in accordance with state law enforcement licensure requirements and completion of the police academy, if applicable. [Accreditation 2.5.4]
- M. Candidates who successfully pass the background and other requirements will be given a hire date and starting salary as determined by HR or by the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

III. Background Investigations for all DPS Candidates

- A. HR is responsible for conducting background investigations on all DPS candidates.

- B. The HR background investigation is conducted by a service company that reviews, checks and verifies the candidates: [Accreditation 31.5.1a – f]
1. Qualifying credentials;
 2. Driving history, if driving is requirement for position;
 3. At least three personal and/or professional references;
 4. Education;
 5. Employment history;
 6. Financial Credit History; and
 7. Criminal History/Records Review.
- C. DPS shall fingerprint the candidate utilizing the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) to check for a criminal record.
- D. Background Investigations for Sworn Police Officer – Preliminary Steps:
1. The initial stage of a background investigation is to commence after a candidate successfully completes the selection process and background investigation outlined in Section II and III of this written directives and has been chosen to advance to this next stage of the process.
 2. Background investigations will be conducted by a member of the DPS Detective Bureau.
 3. The Special Projects Manager or designee will provide the investigator with the following forms that will be used to conduct the background investigation:
 - a) Background Investigation Checklist;
 - b) Applicant Instructions;
 - c) Personal History Questionnaire for Background Investigation;

Note: The investigator should email the applicant the fillable PDF version of this form and a paper copy.
 - d) Personal History Questionnaire – Supplement;
 - e) Applicant General Information Inquiry - Automatic Disqualifications; and

Note: This form coincides with the Personal History Questionnaire – Supplement.

- f) Pre-Employment Background Investigation Report.
4. Background Investigator Responsibility:
- a) Background investigators shall conduct a thorough investigation into the applicant's background to determine their character, integrity, and suitability as a sworn police officer with the DPS.
 - b) In accordance with Attorney General Directive 2019-5, background investigations shall include a review of prior internal affairs files of any applicant currently employed and/or with prior law enforcement experience in New Jersey. Applicants with out of state law enforcement experience must sign waivers of confidentiality regarding their internal affairs files so that they may be reviewed by the background investigator, where legally permissible.
 - c) All of the information gathered and learned by the DPS background investigator shall remain confidential and not be discussed with any other person except the investigator's supervisor and DPS sworn administrative supervisors.
 - d) Once the assigned investigator has been notified that a background investigation is to commence, they shall set up an initial interview with the applicant to explain the background investigation process.
5. During the initial interview, the investigator shall do the following:
- a) Instruct the applicant to sign all releases which allows the investigator to follow-up on all information contained in the Personal History Questionnaire and Personal History Questionnaire - Supplement. The releases include:
 - 1) Release of Information Agreement;
 - 2) Fingerprint Investigation Acknowledgment; and
 - 3) Authorization for Release of Military Information, if applicable.
 - b) Fingerprint the applicant utilizing DPS Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) and indicate police officer employment to ensure a check of expunged records and the Central Drug and Domestic Violence Registries is completed.
[Accreditation 31.5.1f]
 - c) Advise the applicant that if they have questions concerning the status of the hiring process, the applicant should contact the DPS Special Projects Manager.

- d) Provide the applicant with a copy of the Personal Questionnaire for Background Investigation and Personal History Questionnaire - Supplement.
6. Personal Questionnaire for Background Investigation:
- a) This questionnaire is completed by the sworn police officer applicant and provides information about their background including, but not limited to, personal, family, education, employment, personal and professional references, qualifying credentials, and financial matters.
 - b) The background investigator shall do the following:
 - 1) Instruct the applicant that they must return the completed Pre-Employment Background Investigation Report to the investigator within seven (7) days and notarized.
 - 2) Instruct the applicant that they must have the high school and or college(s) that he or she attended, send a school record transcript directly to the background investigator via DPS.
 - 3) Instruct applicants that they must satisfy the requirements for initial and subsequent renewal licensing with the State of New Jersey Police Training Commission (PTC).
 - 4) Instruct applicants with pre-existing certification from the State of New Jersey Police Training Commission (PTC) that they must provide a copy of their certificate.
 - 5) Instruct applicants with social media accounts that they must allow the investigator access and that their accounts will be reviewed as per NJ Licensing requirements.
 - 6) Instruct applicants with pre-existing licensing from the State of New Jersey Police Training Commission (PTC) that they must provide a copy of their current license and maintain their license in accordance with PTC renewal requirements.
 - 7) Upon return, the investigator shall review the "Pre-Employment Background Investigation Report" for completeness. Omissions shall be marked with a highlighter.
7. Personal History Questionnaire – Supplement
- a) This report is completed by the sworn police officer applicant and provides information about their background including any information concerning their criminal and driving history, drug use, character, employment, and financial issues.

- b) This form is used in conjunction with the Applicant General Information Inquiry - Automatic Disqualifications Form.
 - c) This investigator will instruct the applicant that they must return the report to the investigator within seven (7) days and notarized.
- 8. Applicant General Information Inquiry - Automatic Disqualifications Form
 - a) This form is used by the investigator to score answers in the Personal Questionnaire for Background Investigation and Personal History Questionnaire - Supplement. Most “yes” answers to this form will automatically disqualify the applicant from the selection process.

IV. Background Investigation for Sworn Police Officer

- A. The second stage of the applicant background process is when the investigator conducts a thorough check of the applicant’s background. This investigation is designed to determine the person’s character, integrity, and suitability as a DPS sworn police officer.
- B. The employee assigned to conduct the background investigation shall use the Background Investigation Checklist to guide them through their investigation.
- C. Pre-Employment Background Investigation Report Contents:
 - 1. The investigator shall thoroughly complete a “Pre-Employment Background Investigation Report” for each applicant that they are assigned.
 - 2. Much of this report requires the investigator to conduct interviews and follow leads found in the “Personal Questionnaire for Background Investigation completed by the applicant.
 - 3. When practical, interviews shall be conducted by the investigator in person. If the driving distance is too far (usually over one hour) telephone interviews will suffice.
 - 4. The “Pre-Employment Background Investigation Report” includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:
 - a) Family Contacts:
 - 1) All people listed as family members, if practical, will be interviewed by the assigned investigator.
 - 2) The investigator may summarize the interviews with family members in the report particularly making note if they uncovered any disqualifying information.

b) Personal and Professional Reference Contacts:

- 1) All people listed as references should be interviewed by the assigned investigator.
- 2) The investigator shall question all references and acquaintances listed in the applicant's Personal Questionnaire for Background Investigation.
- 3) The investigator may choose to summarize the reference interviews report, particularly making note if they uncovered any disqualifying information.

c) Employer Contacts:

- 1) All present and former employers should be interviewed by the assigned investigator.
- 2) The investigator shall question all current and former employers listed in the applicant's Personal Questionnaire for Background Investigation and summarize their findings in the report.
- 3) Attempt to obtain copies of the applicant's performance evaluation reports, disciplinary records, commendations, etc.
- 4) If applicable, attempt to obtain copies of the applicant's background investigation report completed when the applicant was hired by the agency.
- 5) In accordance with Attorney General Directive 2019-5, background investigations shall include a review of prior internal affairs files of any applicant currently employed and/or with prior law enforcement experience in New Jersey. Applicants with out-of-state law enforcement experience must sign waivers of confidentiality regarding their internal affairs files so that they may be reviewed by the background investigator, where legally permissible.

d) Neighborhood Contacts:

- 1) At least three neighbors who live in close proximity to the applicant shall be interviewed.
- 2) The investigator shall question these neighbors and summarize their findings in the report.

- e) Local Police Checks
 - 1) The investigator shall send a “police applicant -records check” form to each jurisdiction that the applicant listed in their Personal Questionnaire for Background Investigation as residing.
 - 2) If the applicant went to college, the investigator shall also conduct a records check with the campus police/public safety department(s).
- f) Investigators Conclusion
 - 1) The investigator shall note any disqualifying information discovered and other noteworthy information obtained in this section.
 - 2) The investigator shall also comment on the punctuality of the applicant in meeting deadlines and appointments, completeness of the Personal Questionnaire for Background Investigation and Applicant General Information Inquiry - Automatic Disqualification forms.
 - 3) In the “comments” section of this report, the investigator shall give their opinion of the applicant’s character, integrity, and suitability as a DPS sworn police officer. These opinions must be supported by facts.

V. Medical and Psychological Examinations

- A. All applicants for the position of sworn police officer and non-sworn security officer must successfully pass a post-offer/pre-employment medical examination.
- B. The purpose of this examination and related tests are to certify the general health and fitness of each applicant, prior to commencing their employment with the DPS, and consist of:
 - 1. POPES (Post Offer Pre-Employment Screening) Evaluation; and
 - 2. Medical screening and drug testing conducted by University Health Services. [Accreditation 2.5.4]
- C. All applicants for sworn police officer are required to take and successfully pass a pre-employment/post-offer psychological examination conducted by a licensed and qualified psychologist or psychiatrist. [Accreditation 2.5.4, 31.5.7]

VI. Selection Process Final Stage

A. New Hire Start Date and Field Training Program:

1. Upon successful completion of all pre-employment/post offer conditions, the applicant will be notified by either the DPS Special Projects Manager or a staff member from HR of their start date with the DPS.
2. Sworn police officers with pre-existing certification from a New Jersey Police Academy shall enter the Field Training Program upon commencing employment.
3. Sworn police officers who were not previously certified by a New Jersey Police Academy prior to being hired shall enter the Field Training Program upon completion of a basic police training course.
4. Non-sworn security officers shall enter the Field Training Program upon commencing employment.
5. Dispatchers shall enter the Communications Training Officer (CTO) Program upon commencing employment.

B. Probationary Period for Newly Hired DPS Personnel:

1. Sworn Police Officer
 - a) Sworn police officers who were not previously certified by a New Jersey Police Academy prior to being hired shall be in probationary status for six (6) months following the date of hire or successful completion of the police academy, whichever is greater.
 - b) Sworn police officers with pre-existing certification from a New Jersey Police Academy shall serve a twelve (12) month probationary period from their date of hire.
2. Non-Sworn Security Officer
 - a) The probationary period for security officers will be a period of twelve (12) months from their date of hire.
3. Dispatcher
 - a) The probationary period for dispatchers will be a period of twelve (12) months from their date of hire.