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**MAKING HIRING DECISIONS:  
A GROUNDED THEORY APPROACH TO A PRACTISE-  
BASED STUDY OF FILTERING IN SELECTION**

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NOVEMBER 2014

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## THESIS SUMMARY

**Abstract:** This thesis objective is to discover “*How are informal decisions reached by screeners when filtering out undesirable job applications?*” Grounded theory techniques were employed in the field to observe and analyse informal decisions at the source by screeners in three distinct empirical studies. Whilst grounded theory provided the method for case and cross-case analysis, literature from academic and non-academic sources was evaluated and integrated to strengthen this research and create a foundation for understanding informal decisions.

As informal decisions in early hiring processes have been under researched, this thesis contributes to current knowledge in several ways. First, it locates the *Cycle of Employment* which enhances Robertson and Smith's (1993) Selection Paradigm through the integration of stages that individuals occupy whilst seeking employment. Secondly, a general depiction of the *Workflow of General Hiring Processes* provides a template for practitioners to map and further develop their organisational processes. Finally, it highlights the emergence of the *Locality Effect*, which is a geographically driven heuristic and bias that can significantly impact recruitment and informal decisions.

Although screeners make informal decisions using multiple variables, informal decisions are made in stages as evidence in the Cycle of Employment. Moreover, informal decisions can be erroneous as a result of a majority and minority influence, the weighting of information, the injection of inappropriate information and criteria, and the influence of an assessor. This thesis considers these faults and develops a basic framework of understanding informal decisions to which future research can be launched.

**Key words:** informal decisions, filtering, heuristics, hiring, selection.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to the Criminal Law Research Center of the West Virginia Public Defender Services, the Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital, and Charleston Area Medical Center Employment Center and many other “undisclosed” individuals for their assistance, dedication, and participation in this project. I would like to thank those individuals (I hope to name all, but if I do not, please accept my apologies) that made this interesting and sometimes daunting journey easier.

- To Aston University for being a wonderfully exciting place to study,
- To Patrick Tissington and Cinzia Priola for supervision and mentoring,
- To Naomi Brooks for coffee and conversation,
- To Nick Lee for being supportive,
- To Sam Aryee for helping me find an interesting story,
- To Nigel Driffield for getting me on the right foot,
- To Nathan Joseph for taking the time to review my work,
- To Jeanette Ikuomola, Ranjit Gill, Sue Rudd and Andrea McCann for keeping me on schedule,
- To Stephen Woods for direction and editing advise,
- To Mike West for making yourself available and offering encouraging words,
- To Yves Guillaume, Claudia Sacramento, Jeremy Dawson, Doug Love, Pawan Budhwar, and Duncan Shaw for reviewing my papers and projects,
- To Breno Nunes, Amr Swid, Björn Hagströmer, Marcus Hasel, Roger Hammer, Anna Topaka, Joanne Richardson, Angus Garrett, Gerald O’Callaghan, Paul Pybus, Ioannis Karamitsos, Sergej Ljubownikow, Gary Preece, Chris Owen, and Marlin Marissa Malek Abdul Malek for assisting me with the details,
- To Tom Connelly for keeping up with the paperwork,
- To Jack Rogers and Kellie Carper for believing in me,
- To Dan Shriver and Keith Wood for understanding the value of education,
- To Andrew Sikula, Sr., Lawrence Shao, Katherine Karl, Roger Adkins, and Harlan Smith II for fostering my teaching ability,
- To my family Linda Hundley (mom), Michael & Connie Tenkhoff, Elizabeth Kail, and Suzanne Tenkhoff for being my social support network,
- To my children, Joseph, Karah, and Patrick for always remembering that work requires equal amounts of play,
- And to my wife Sarah, for everything and a bit more. Words will never be enough.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## **1.1 Introduction**

Making the right recruitment decision and select the best candidate for employment is rife with uncertainties. Whether hiring a Chief Executive Officer or a farm labourer, a hiring decision is one of the most important decisions facing management. To assist with identifying the best job-seekers, management can consult subject matter experts, conduct employment testing, gather historical biographical data, and interview job-seekers. With an almost endless supply of advice available concerning the best hiring practises, hiring decisions including those delegated to third-parties are ultimately managements' responsibility.

This chapter discusses the importance of research into making hiring decisions and the direction for future research and sets the rationale for this research. The Selection Paradigm, as illustrated by Smith & Robertson (1993), will provide a common framework for discussing hiring decisions. The framework, which is presented in the following section, is used to set the grounds for discussing the importance of further our understanding of informal processes in selection and highlights the economic dilemmas such as turnover and opportunity costs which are associated with recruitment. Researchers (cf., Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Robinson & Smith, 2001; Shackleton & Newell, 1991) have evaluated how management makes those hiring decisions and have concluded that further research into hiring decisions, especially on informal decisions within filtering processes, is critical in understanding hiring decisions as a whole. Filtering processes are the rudimentary central core where hiring decisions spawn. This chapter locates this research within the wider literature on recruitment and selection to illustrate key gaps in current knowledge and the necessity to explore informal filtering decisions. It then illustrates the research problem and the research question, aims and objectives that will be used in conducting three empirical case studies.

## **1.2 The Significance of Selection for Human Resource Planning**

Selection processes are important because organisations must distinguish amongst individuals that are better suited for the work on offer. Moreover, individuals expect fair and equal opportunities in being considered for employment. This is why filtering, the removing and ranking of job-seekers, is critical in ensuring that the 'right' individuals are selected without biases and deviations in decisions that ultimately result in the employment of one or more individuals and the denial of employment for others. Hence, good selection processes are dependent on good filtering practises and both rely on human resource planning.

Human resource planning entails the strategic evaluation of organisational labour needs and the solution to satisfy those labour needs (Macfarlane et al., 1997). One solution in satisfying labour needs is hiring competent individuals. The decision to hire is an important one. So much so that organisations expend an enormous amount of energy, time, and money on establishing processes attempting to ensure that the right hiring decisions are made as the wrong hiring decisions can cause a need to rehire. Direct measurable costs to replace employees can vary significantly amongst positions and amongst industries. For example, a non-managerial restaurant employee ranges from \$500 [£273] to \$3,600 [£1,964] (Kacmar et al., 2008) whilst a Certified Nursing Assistant cost is approximately \$1,961 [£1,281] (Tilden et al., 2012). Additionally, the cost to replace a salesperson is about \$27,525 [£15,470] (Sager et al., 1988) compared to over £100,000 for a policeman (Cooper et al., 2003).

Similar to direct measurable costs that are attributed to hiring, indirect hiring costs can have an impact beyond the Human Resource function. Indirect costs can commonly manifest from poor or diminished performance which can ultimately influence products or services quality. Consider the following examples. Customer service can be disrupted when an employee departure reduces the behavioural commitment amongst other employees (Kacmar et al., 2008). Within the health care industry, a lack of employee commitment may cause patient care to suffer (Chisholm et al., 2011; Tilden et al., 2012). In the classroom, sub-optimal performance can stagnate academic learning (Dolton & Newman, 2003; Lewin & Colley, 2011). Meagre performance may stifle deliveries of goods and services (Lemay et al., 1993). No matter which industry is experiencing issues with performance, high leveraged firms are more sensitive to increases in personnel costs as decreases in profit can significantly impact operations (Gschwandtner & Lambson, 2006).

Overall, hiring costs impact every industry, some more than others, and therefore very important when planning staffing needs. No matter which position is hired, hiring costs must first be expended and then slowly recouped from an employee's performance. That is, the organisation must pay for advertising, recruiting, interviewing, traveling, and related costs up front before any profits from newcomers are realised. In some instances, profits may not be attained for several months. Furthermore, organisations that engage in hiring processes have decided that other business opportunities are less essential or productive. Management must see the value in hiring because the decision to hire means that resources cannot be diverted to other business activities such as research and development, product distribution, product advertising, and public relations (Crane, 1989). Whilst the costs to replace an employee vary amongst industries, employee turnover is hailed by some (see Kacmar et al., 2008) to attribute for much of the avoidable costs (e.g. selection, training and lost

productivity) when frequent hiring is the normal routine caused by poor selection decisions. Turnover costs also include dismissal costs as each terminated employment may trigger hiring, and possibly training, processes. Unfortunately, employee turnover can exponentially increase hiring costs and deter hiring decisions as recoupment of these expenses through an employee's production is not likely (Morrison et al., 2007). Therefore, a more stable workforce is an essential element to Human Resource Planning strategies because recouping expenses is contingent upon the longevity of employees' service: The longer an employee stays, the more profits are realised (Kacmar et al., 2008).

Because hiring costs are expensive and can change planned methods and objectives in selection processes (Oslington, 2002; Othman et al., 2011) organisations need to hire right. Although differing approaches are deployed to achieve a desirable workforce, Human Resource Planning is the strategic starting point in the selection process and consequently this process fails when individuals are wrongfully hired. To better illustrate the selection process, the next section discusses the multiple stages of selection processes using the Selection Paradigm. The Selection Paradigm represents a general plan of execution for determining specific labour needs, personnel specifications, recruiting strategies, the methods to collect filtering evidence, the choice of candidates, and the value and results of the selection process.

### **1.3 The Selection Paradigm**

Since there are several steps in making hiring decisions, this section shall briefly present these steps using Smith and Robertson's (1993) Selection Paradigm (see figure below).

**Figure 1-1: The Selection Paradigm**



### **1.3.1 Job Analysis, Personnel Specifications, Criteria, and Utility**

In Human Resource Planning, understanding how a position is integrated into and complements organisational processes is essential (Barron et al., 1985). The initial step in position development is the job analysis. A job analysis can be undertaken for a new position or to review an existing position (Bobko et al., 2008; Brannick & Levine, 2002; Pavur, 2010). Job analysis focuses on the purpose, functionality, tasks, and goals of a position to establish a strong foundation for developing a comprehensive overview of a position that will be used in the criteria development within hiring processes (Bobko et al., 2008; Harris, 1943, Taylor, 1911). First, a job analysis produces a general overview of the position known as a Job Description (Frieson, 2012; Kuo & Ho, 2010; Mafuba, 2012; Stybel, 2010). Next, each job description is augmented by job specifications which are the critical tasks and skills required to perform the position effectively (Aguinis et al., 2001; Sanchez, 2000).

Following the job description, job specifications lead to the development and establishment of personnel specifications (Moy & Lam, 2004). Personnel specifications are the basis for profiling job-seekers as these represent the minimum acceptable criteria for a position (i.e. education, experience, training, and certification) (Phillips, 1991; Cerrito, 2004;



Wendover, 1991). These criteria are expressed as competencies which are the individual behaviours that centre on production and achievement that an organisation desires applicants possess (Heinsman et al., 2007). Competencies can be used to enforce a minimum acceptable standard for applicants (Lock, 2011). Although disagreements with how best to filter competencies exist (Curran et al., 2009; Oandasan & Reeves, 2005a; 2005b), most researchers agree that competencies reduce expenses associated with a poor hire by selecting applicants exhibiting those desired behaviours (Grigorev, 2006).

Competencies capture the essence of the person specifications necessary for a job analysis (Robertson & Smith, 2001). According to Boyatzis (2008, p. 6), “*A competency is defined as a capability or ability.*” These capabilities and abilities enjoin various behaviours depending on the circumstances and intentions of the individual. These person specifications along with the desired behaviours (i.e. competencies) and criteria (i.e. tasks and skills) from the job analysis become the written “*...knowledge, skills, ability, and other characteristics (KSAO)...*” (Aguinis et al., 2001, p. 70) that compose the minimum specifications encompassing a complex position description. KSAOs represent the individual guidelines that filtering decisions are to be benchmarked against. That is, when a screener reviews an application, that application is compared to these guidelines to make a decision concerning the applicant’s desirability. Consequently, KSAO is not the term used universally. In place of the more common KSAO, “*...knowledge, skills, ability, and personal traits...*” (KSAP) may be used in organisations where the individuals’ personality is considered crucial to their success (Moy & Lam, 2004, p. 523). Likewise, knowledge, skills, and abilities, or attitudes in the United States may be used (Robertson & Smith, 2001; Searle, 2003). No matter which terms are engaged, the common meaning is that these terms represent the organisational standards as to the behaviours and performance required of a job-seeker for a particular position.

Organisational standards can specifically include leadership traits (Kottke et al., 2010), team behaviours (McClough & Rogelberg, 2003), and other characteristics that management desires. These standards become the quintessential platform in finding the ideal employee. Consequently, the ‘*ideal employee*’ is a conceptual stereotype held by management that represents the aspirations of the sought after employee (Sears & Rowe, 2003; Van Viaren & Kmiecik, 1998), that is to say, management’s wish list of KSAOs. As a stereotype, the ideal employee varies amongst members of management and also screeners (Turner & Nicholson, 2011). Thus, the necessity to capture and transfer this concept of the ideal employee into a proper organisational standard is essential in selecting the right applicant (Sprinks, 2009).

Research (cf., Collins, 1993; Motowidlo et al., 2008; Svetina et al., 2011) indicates that clarity, understanding, and the proper interpretation of these organisational standards is critical to attracting and recruiting the ideal employee. The next section provides a brief overview of attracting and recruiting job-seekers.

### **1.3.2 Attracting and Recruiting**

According to Half (1985, p.31), *“The first step to finding something [or someone] is knowing where to look.”* Good employees, notes Stanton (1977, p. 6), *“...must be aggressively and imaginatively sought out and recruited.”* Organisations must compete for qualified job-seekers to satisfy labour needs. Initially, organisations attract and recruit job-seekers by advertising a vacant position by highlighting the desired job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies or skills. Some managers go beyond advertising and focus efforts towards networking with local interest groups (i.e. clubs, service organisations, schools, and professional societies), using head-hunters and contingent firms to populate difficult applicant pools, and creating a database of prospective job-seekers (Deems, 1999; Stanton, 1977). Although knowing where to look is important, job-seekers must be motivated to apply.

The primary method of motivating job-seekers is through financial compensation packages composed of salaries and benefits along with non-financial benefits of the position (Leider, 2002; Porterfield, 2002). In fact, several authors (Bartlett, 2002; Chambers, 2001; Jordan-Evans & Kaye, 2002; Sonnenfeld, 1985) note that non-financial benefits such as organisational reputation, challenges, educational opportunities, social networks, inclusion of family into organisational events, and geographic location are equally important for attracting and retaining employees. Non-financial benefits not only increase job-seekers' attraction to organisations, but also increase the commitment and the level of participation of job-seekers thus leading to more positive organisational attracting and recruiting efforts (Noon, 2006). Thus, motivating to attract and recruit is a *two way power relationship* (Searle, 2003, p. 5) where organisations seek employees and job-seekers consider which organisations to apply (Chambers, 2001; Robertson & Makin, 1986). Consequently, not everyone that has applied can be employed; therefore, applications must be assessed.

### **1.3.3 The Choice of Candidates through the Assessment of Applicants**

Assessment is the process in which organisations evaluate potential applicant performance through various methods including information collection and testing to identify

the best performers (Searle, 2003; Smith & Robertson, 1993). Assessment distinguishes and removes applicants from consideration (Anderson, 2004; Cook, 1991; Stanton, 1977) as most of the time there are more applicants than posts, not everyone can fit within the organisational criteria, or can satisfy the job specifications (Cappelli, 1994; Kanawaty, 1992). This removal process has been called sifting (Fernandez & Weinburg, 1997); filtering (Cook, 1991; Litecky et al., 2004; Oswald et al., 2004); and pre-screening (Chia, 2005). For this thesis, the term filtering is adopted. Thus, filtering evidence (e.g. applications, biographical data, applicant histories, and digital tools) are the products of data collection processes that are used in arriving at informal filtering decisions.

Informal filtering decisions are normally contingent on evidence of an individual meeting or failing to meet the personnel specifications of a particular position. Whilst positions may have the same titles, the positions may have significantly different tasks and duties therefore significantly different personnel specifications. This means that screeners must determine if job-seekers hold minimum educational credentials such as a university or technical degree and the appropriate licenses (e.g. Registered Nurses and Private Investigator) for the position in which the application was received. Applications that do not have evidence of these minimum credentials are removed whilst those that do are further examined.

Further examination includes screeners scrutinising the applicants' experience to ensure that minimum levels of experience are supported by evidence. Evidence may be presented by job-seekers, former employers, and personal references. Additionally, screeners may turn to third-party organisations that specialise in compiling applicant histories that provide evidence of experience. The evidence of experience is considered by a screener to determine if the job-seeker is acceptable or unacceptable with respect to the personnel specifications.

Applications, which can be augmented by *résumés* or *Curriculum Vitas* ("CV"), are generally the first point of contact, as well as practical evidence, between job-seekers and organisations (Robertson & Smith, 2001); and as such, applications serve as primary sources of evidence for informal decisions. A common method at arriving at these decisions is ranking applications (Campbell et al., 1990; Cook, 1991; Drucker, 2001). Screeners can rank applicants (1) according to the representativeness of personnel specifications with the intent to filter out those applicants not meeting the personnel specifications and competencies, or (2) in comparison to other applicants to allow for a clear division amongst applicants (Bainter & Johnson, 1994; Bar-Hillel, 1991; Engleman & Kleiner, 1998; Porterfield, 2002). Those deemed the best applicants are considered for the position.

No matter which methods are used to assess applicants, the primary objective is to identify the most desirable applicants for interviews, further assessment, or for a position by filtering out undesirable and unqualified applicants quickly to ensure that the remaining number of applicants is manageable (Fritzsche & Brannick, 2002; Gatewood & Field, 1987; Robertson & Smith, 2001). The remaining applicants represent a pool from which a candidate can be chosen and an employee can be hired.

#### **1.3.4 Hiring the Employee**

The entire selection process ends with the hiring of an employee. A formal offer of employment is extended to the candidate. This offer includes a review of the job specifications with the compensation package to ensure that the organisation and the candidate understand each other. Although the candidate has repeatedly expressed her/his intention to become an employee, the possibility exists that the candidate will decline the offer or request a modification in the offer (Searle, 2003) such as increased salary and benefits (Stanton, 1977). If both parties agree to the terms of employment, the candidate becomes a newcomer. If the parties cannot agree, the organisation selects the next candidate and extends a formal offer. Eventually, a candidate does become a newcomer as a consequence of these hiring decisions. The next section discusses the process of managerial decisions-making for selection.

### **1.4 The Importance of Employee Performance**

In certain occupations, employee performance is critical to success. Poor employee performance may be linked, separately or in conjunction, to various factors that tarnish employee performance. Major factors include: Bad management (Edersheim, 2007; Guilliland, 1993), inadequate resources (e.g. equipment, money, and time) (Moss & Tilly, 2001; Stevens, 1996), improper or insufficient training (Drakeley et al., 1988; Holloran, 1983), high employee turnover (Jordan-Evans & Kaye, 2002), poor organisational structure (Drucker, 2001; Love, 1991), and employee misconduct (Cressey, 1950; Wells, 2005). Either way, poor employee performances can cost organisations lost productivity up to organisational closure (Drucker, 2001; Schmitt & Oswald, 2006; Schmitt et al., 2003).

To illustrate the importance of employee performance, consider the impact that a secretary can have upon an organisation. Although the daily routines of secretaries may vary among organisations, the general duties of secretaries require frequent interactions with staff and customers. Positive interactions promote business whilst negative interactions adversely

affect business relationships. When a secretary is disrespectful, disruptive, or incompetent, business relationships suffer. Incompetence becomes the organisational image as customer service diminishes. Customers seek alternative solutions to poor performance including becoming more hostile when dealing with staff and purchasing from competitors. Bad behaviours promote poor performance that erodes profitability by festering into a crisis that harms customer relationships.

Another example is when a patient suffering from a medical emergency arrives at hospital, (s)he expects to receive proper and adequate medical care from physicians, medical providers and staff. Since 1984, Putnam General Hospital ("Putnam") has been providing superior medical care to patients. In 1999, Putnam added maternity services with the intent to expand existing services and offer new services. In 2002, orthopaedic services were doubled. In 2004, Putnam failed. This failure was attributed to poor employee performance. An osteopathic surgeon failed to properly treat and provide adequate medical care to patients, which caused injury to over one hundred patients and facilitated Putnam's closure (McKinney & Sikula, 2008; 2009; Nyden, 2006a; 2006b; 2006e). A similar case in the UK is that of Stafford Hospital for which staff's negligence seem to be considered the main cause of its failure (Donnelly & Sawyer, 2013; Mason, 2013). Failure at both establishments was not attributed to overexpansion, a decrease in patients, or competition. This failure was attributed to patient expectations of proper medical care. When expectations are not met, and certainly when providers of medical care perform poorly, the patient suffers and providers fail to perform as required and expected.

When Putnam failed to produce the osteopathic surgeon's personnel files and his hiring details (Nyden, 2006f), the court attributed the surgeon's actions to negligent hiring practises at Putnam because they failed to verify credentials such as medical licenses, education, and previous employment (McKinney & Sikula, 2008; Nyden 2006f). If a proper background check was conducted as part of the filtering process, the surgeon's dubious past would have been revealed (State Medical Board of Ohio, 2006) and the surgeon would most likely never have been employed. Although this is an extreme example illustrating the importance of employee performance, sometimes poor performance of one or few individuals may result in drastic consequences for the organisation as a whole. It is in these circumstances that the rigour and accuracy of informal filtering processes is at its upmost importance.

High employee performance can significantly be dependent upon the right hiring and informal filtering decisions. Poor performance may simply result when an individual that is not suitable for a position is hired (Ballou, 1996; Bradford & Welch, 1996; Redding, 1994).

Hiring decisions could have been based on the wrong criteria, an unrealistic position description, or a deviation from the guidelines and policies.

Does the position description accurately reflect the job with respect to job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies? Position descriptions should be very detailed and also include the types of tools necessary for accomplishing the position's tasks (Taylor, 1911). Whilst researchers (see Bobko et al., 2008; Gordon, 2002; Sullivan, 2000) generally agree that the correct criteria leads to the right hire, they (cf., Chia, 2005; Jones & Fletcher, 2004; Litecky et al., 2004) disagree to the right mix and balance of job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies. Therefore the right hire could be contingent upon a realistic position description.

Can the job be accomplished based upon the position description? An organisation may require a job analysis to answer this question (Bobko et al., 2008). Familiarity with the job specifications and personnel specifications (Deems, 1999; Drucker, 2001) are essential in constructing accurate position descriptions that drive filtering processes (Barron et al., 1985). Consequently, most job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies are built from the most convenient criteria available (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Accurate position descriptions may not be enough.

Even if guidelines and criteria are correct, decision-makers can deviate from the established job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies. Within the hiring process there are several opportunities to deviate from guidelines and criteria, particularly when judgement is needed to assess the potential value of experiences and skills that are not directly pertinent to the job but that might have contributed to the candidate's development. Potentially, the greatest opportunity for errors to occur is in the assessment process as more information is interpreted during filtering processes when informal decisions are made (Stanton, 1977). Thus, informal decisions are critical components of hiring decisions because any deviations, including minor deviations, can subsequently determine a wrong decision.

Can minor deviations really cause performance issues? Every decision is important, even minor decisions, whether known or unknown, will impact an organisation's workforce by manifesting within performance (Geerlings & van Veen, 2006). For healthy, efficient, and productive workforce, organisations must make rigorous decisions concerning which individuals to employ. However, current employees are a result of past hiring practices and future hiring decisions can be contingent on the "best" and "worst" decisions of yesterday (Barron et al., 1985). There are deviations and flaws within informal decision processes and

the following sections explore these in more details (see for example Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Ryan et al., 1999).

### **1.5 Limiting Flaws in Human Decision Making**

Human decision making can be flawed with mishaps, mistakes, and assumptions that lead to erroneous decisions (cf., Bell & Raiffa, 1988; Benson et al., 1995; Kahneman & Tversky, 1991; Fishburn, 1988; Tversky & Kahneman, 1988); and therefore, guidance is necessary. In hiring processes, organisations provide guidance for decisions by establishing job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Applicant information is to be assessed in accordance with the job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies (Barron et al., 1985; Hacker, 1999). There is an enormous amount of information to consider when assessing applicants including, résumés (Salvador, 2010), autobiographical data (Drakeley et al., 1988), applicant histories (Owens & Schoenfeldt, 1979; Shackleton & Newell, 1991), and computer generated data such as computer proctored exams (Chapman & Webster, 2003; Porterfield, 2002; Shore, 1996) and computerised profiling performance projections (Sanchez, 2000)

Consequently, problems with some of this information can arise whilst evaluating applicants. Information may be incomplete (Garen, 1985). The collection, distribution, and use of information may be subject to jurisdictional limitations (Brooks et al., 2009; Hanson, 1993; JRF, 2004; Knowles & Riccucci, 2001). For example: Within the United States, workplace drugs testing (“WDT”) is highly regulated (Jardine-Tweedie & Wright, 1998) but this is not the case in the EU. Another problem is that information processing complications could contribute to deviant and flawed decisions (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990). Information processing could simply be the incorrect coding of data or the placement of information into the wrong file. Finally, information could be unreliable and invalid (Comer, 1994; Grubb & McDaniel, 2007; Wolf & Jenkins, 2006). In some cases, applicant tests could indicate acceptable levels of satisfaction when in fact the applicant has not performed as required.

When problems with information are not detected, assessment decisions can be flawed (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990). Since guidelines and policies affect decisions (Geerlings & Van Veen, 2006), the simple solution would be the expansion of guidelines and strict and rigorous practices to cover deficiencies and flaws within the selection process (Reason et al., 1998). Even with expanding the guidelines, adding policies, and clarifying statements, the proper application of guidelines is still subject to human interpretation (Aycan, 2005; Chapman & Johnson, 2002; Waenaar et al., 1990). Therefore, it is possible

that the selection process may need further refining. The next section presents a discussion surrounding informal filtering decisions.

## **1.6 Types of Informal Filtering Decisions**

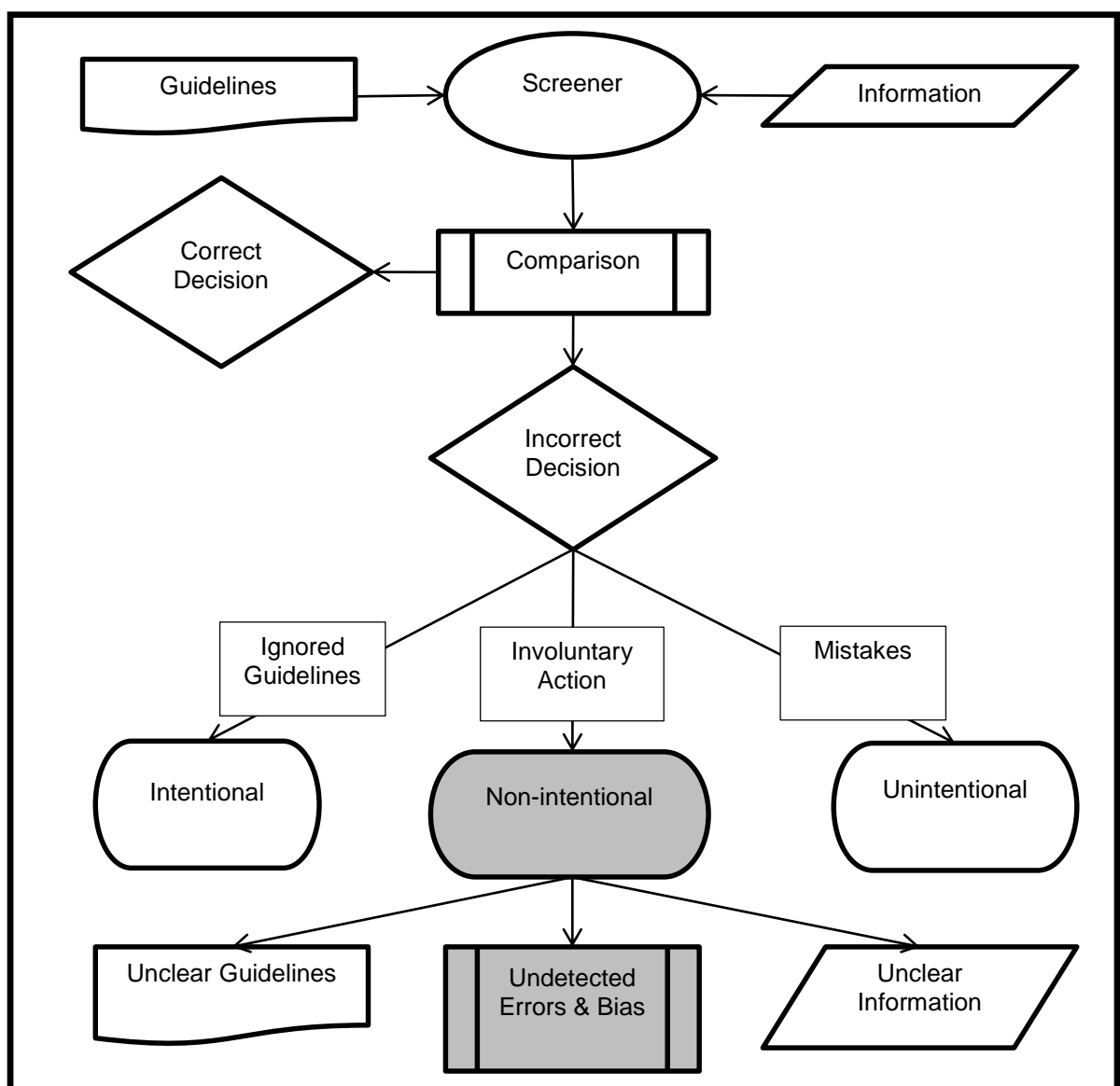
As noted in the previous section, guidelines and information about an applicant are reviewed by a screener. Whilst comparing the guidelines and information, a screener arrives at an informal filtering decision. Generally, there are two types of these decisions. First, a correct decision is produced from the proper interpretations of guidelines and information. As such, correct decisions represent the best outcome of a selection process. However, not all decisions are correct. The second type of decisions is incorrect decisions. Incorrect decisions occur when guidelines are not interpreted correctly or when guidelines are not followed appropriately. After all, procedural errors happen (Reason, 2000). According to Reason (1990), incorrect decisions can further be classified into three distinct categories: Intentional but mistaken actions; unintentional actions; and non-intentional actions.

The first category, intentional but mistaken action, of incorrect decisions occurs when a decision-maker blatantly ignores the guidelines and policies in making a decision (Reason, 1990). For example, a manager hires a child care provider knowing that this individual does not possess the necessary legal licenses to work with children. Thus, the decision-maker is aware of the guidelines but failed to adhere to those guidelines when making a decision. The second category, unintentional action, is more conservative than the intentional actions (Reason, 1984). Unintentional actions happen by accident (Reason, 1990) and are usually more problematic for experts and higher skilled activities (Reason, 1984). Even when decision-makers have good intentions, mistakes and errors can be made. Reason (1984; 1990) has defined these unintentional actions as slips and lapses. To illustrate a slip or lapse, consider that a minimum passing score for a typing test is thirty words per minute for an entry level clerk. Although a job-seeker has passed this test with a score of forty-two, (s)he had actually only scored a twenty-four. This is simply a transposition slip where 24 became 42 and a fail became a pass. This transposition slip is not likely to recur if the decision-maker re-entered the score and the unintentional score may be discovered if reviewed by the decision-maker. The third category, non-intentional or involuntary action, of incorrect decisions ensues when decisions are made based upon an assumption that the decision is correct (Reason, 1990). A non-intentional action is the hiring of an applicant that fails to meet the necessary training with the belief that the applicant has the training. Although at first this appears similar to an unintentional action, the non-intentional action is likely defined as a recurring pattern of decisions (Reason, 2000). The characteristics of this non-intentional decision are that it is considered valid and reliable, it goes undetected by the



decision-maker, and it is based upon improper assumptions (Reason, 1990). Improper assumptions cover the true value of what is being assessed (Drucker, 1980; Keysar et al., 1995; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991d). The true value requires interpretation (Bendig, 1956; Keysar, 1997; Schmidt & Hunter, 1974); interpretations require judgement (Brown, 2000; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Cabatoff, 2000; Chomsky, 2007; Derra, 2008; Kaminshy, 2000; Rallis, 2000; Stanton, 1977; Taylor, 2010; Tversky & Kahneman, 1988); judgement is subject to errors and biases (Drucker, 1995; Fishburn, 1988; Highhouse & Gallo, 1997; Kahneman & Tversky, 1991; Kasten & Weintraub, 1999); therefore, errors and biases can lead to unintentional decisions (cf., Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Epley & Gilovich, 2002; Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Reason, 1990; 2000; Wingrove et al., 1984).

**Figure 1-2: Decision Tree in Informal Filtering Processes**



Several questions can help identify the intentional decisions, non-intentional decisions, and unintentional decisions. Would someone else make the same decision given the same information? If so, the likelihood of an incorrect decision is minimal. Does the decision-maker understand the guidelines? If so, the decision is most likely an intentional decision. Does the decision-maker understand the available information? If so, the decision is also likely to be an intentional decision. If no is the answer to any of these questions, the simply countermeasure to non-intentional decisions may be to provide additional guidance and criteria to decision-makers. Using Reason's (1990; 2000) model, the figure above merely represents the preceding paragraphs as applied to informal filtering decisions.

Consequently, additional guidance and criteria provided to decision-makers may not suffice. Flawed informal decisions may continue to cause further non-intentional actions. In the next section, a brief look at the research surrounding decision theory provides some insight into informal decisions.

### **1.7 What Leads to Incorrect Decisions?**

Since hiring decisions and employee actions can benefit or harm organisations, screeners should be motivated to hire the most productive and best fitting employees (Mercer, 1993; Gordon, 2002). Screeners identify which individual are best for a position through assessment processes governed by guidance and criteria (Kanawaty, 1992; Searle, 2003; Oswald et al., 2004; Stanton, 1977). Although screeners reduce risks of hiring a poor employee by collecting additional information (DeMay & Flowers, 1999; Fernández-Araóz, 1994), incorrect decisions can still occur. As previously noted, incorrect decisions can result from errors in judgement. A vast body of research on assessment decisions is grounded on decision theory and focuses on providing explanation for judgement errors (cf. Barrick & Mount, 1991; Guion & Grottier, 1966; Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000; Hausknecht et al., 2004; Hodgkinson & Payne, 1998; Owens & Schoenfeldt, 1979; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). How questions are constructed and asked, known as framing, may affect interpretations of what information is needed (Slovic et al., 1988; Tversky & Kahneman, 1988). The importance of information may be misjudged (Boettcher, 2004; Morewedge et al., 2007). Sometimes training problems can contribute to incorrect decisions (Drakeley et al., 1988; Roch & O'Sullivan). Ultimately, screeners may be the root of incorrect decisions.

Screeners may not be objective when evaluating applications as filtering decisions can be influenced by several variables. For example, job-seekers having social relationships that are perceived as favourable to the organisation have a greater likelihood of being selected for employment (Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997). As an extension of these social

relationships, an applicant's name can convey perceptions of ethnicity, race, social class, and gender which can impact decisions (Cotton et al., 2008). Furthermore, decisions can be modified if screeners perceive an applicant to have high intelligence (McKinney et al., 2003) or low intelligence (Roth & Bobko, 2000). A screener's objectivity can be linked to conscious or unconscious preferences which affect the perception and interpretation of information and subsequently also affect decisions (Stanton, 1977).

Applicant information is not clear or is misinterpreted. Decision-makers may be hesitant in committing to a decision if not enough information is available or if confidence in a decision is lacking (Abdellaoui et al., 2005; Fishburn, 1988; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991d). This uncertainty can delay decisions or cause decisions to be very conservative. Delays and conservative decisions within the hiring processes can contribute to missed opportunities for hiring good employees. Alternatively, delays and conservative decisions can save an organisation from hiring a bad employee. Another common problem for decision-makers is misinterpreting information as understanding language is critical to communication (Chapman & Chapman, 1991; Kaminshy, 2000; Keysar & Barr, 2002; Pronin et al., 2002). Misinterpreting information can cause conflicts that can lead to delays from uncertainty in the validity and reliability of information. Thus, screeners must consult the criteria for selecting an employee.

As many jobs are different, so too are the criteria for selecting employees amongst and within organisations. If the wrong personnel specifications are used to assess applicants, then the wrong employee is possibly selected. This is why job audits should be routinely conducted to ensure that the correct specifications are realistic (Woods & West, 2010) as screeners select applicants that best represents organisational needs (Barron et al., 1985; Ferris et al., 2002; Fritzsche & Brannick, 2002; Robertson & Smith, 2001). Screeners identify job-seekers that represent the position (cf., Aguinis et al., 2001; Harris, 1943; Moy & Lam, 2004). Each position is created through personnel specifications, job specifications, competencies, organisational standards, performance expectations, positions descriptions, and other attributes and characteristics (Woods & West, 2010).

Whilst screeners strive to make reasonable decisions that minimise flaws associated with hiring the wrong employees, some authors (cf., Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Fernández-Araóz, 1994) illustrate errors and biases are most often present within decision processes. As assessments are decision processes, biases present during assessment can cause screeners to deviate from reasonable choices during decisions (Bar-Hillel & Neter, 2002). For example, decisions may be significantly influenced by a personal attachment or liking to a job-seeker (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990), a screener's perceptions concerning a job-seeker (Fine & Nevo, 2007; Porterfield, 2001), and

by the method that information is presented (e.g. first or last) to screeners (Highhouse & Gallo, 1997).

This section has illustrated that even with guidance and criteria, errors in decisions can still occur. Information may be misinterpreted. Incorrect criteria could contribute to incorrect decisions. Inaccurate assessments lead to incorrect decisions. Screeners may not be objective. However, in spite of the maturity of the selection and assessment research field, the specific area of informal decisions within filtering processes has been neglected by researchers. The next section advocates the need to conduct additional research into informal decisions.

## **1.8 The Rationale for Conducting this Research**

According to Drucker (2001, p. 127), *“no other decisions [selection and hiring] are so long-lasting in their consequences or so difficult to unmake. And yet, by and large, executives make poor promotion and staffing decisions.”* Some of these poor decisions, which lead to recurring failures in hiring if not discovered, directly result from informal decisions in employee selections (Reason, 2000). Because we want to avoid poor decisions, investigations into informal decisions are critical in understanding the shortfalls of selection decisions so that we can make better hiring decisions.

Research indicates that the informal decision is central to rigorous selection processes and errors and biases are an integral part of any decision making processes which can only be minimised (Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Schmitt et al., 2003). Hence, research has specifically focused on design processes that minimise errors. Enquiries about errors have focused on general issues (Anderson et al., 2004), screener objectivity (Oliphant & Alexander, 1982), information processing (Herriot & Wingrove, 1984), selecting and recruiting job-seekers (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998), the value associated with employees (Crane, 1989; Mayo, 2002), the metrics used to rank job-seekers (Barron et al., 1985; Robertson & Smith, 2001), interviews (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990), tests (Robertson & Kinder, 1993), autobiographical data (Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000; Rothstein et al., 1990), applicant histories (Owens & Schoenfeldt, 1979; Shackleton & Newell, 1991), and digital technology (Aguinis et al., 2001). Furthermore, some authors have examined factors that influence decisions such as biases. Specifically, personal liking bias, prototype bias, similar-to-me effect (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990), order effects (Highhouse & Gallo, 1997), anchoring effects (Chapman & Johnson, 2002), and shift of references (Kahneman & Tversky, 2004).

However, research regarding informal decisions at the screening stage is limited (Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Robertson & Smith, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2003) and researchers (Aycan, 2005; Cook, 1991; Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000) note that a critical gap is in field studies which observe how decision errors happen in practice. Additionally, a comprehensive study concerning informal decisions has not been undertaken at the source of the filtering decision – the screeners. As this has not been achieved, this thesis seeks to develop an understanding of informal decisions within filtering processes. Screeners will continue to make non-intentional decisions unless the heuristics in which these decisions followed are exposed to the screeners as being flawed. Competitive advantages, as well as disadvantages, may be attributed to how selection processes determine which applicants are good fits for an organisation. The need for more research can be summarised by Reason (2000, p. 768):

*“Without a detailed analysis of mishaps, incidents, near misses, and ‘free lessons,’ we have no way of uncovering recurrent error traps or of knowing where the ‘edge’ is until we fall over it.”*

## **1.9 The Aims and Objectives of the Thesis**

This thesis’ main objective is to extend knowledge to practitioners by providing an overview of existing research focusing on informal decisions, whilst discovering and formalising theoretical concepts concerning these processes through empirical investigation. Building on core contributions from researchers (e.g. Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Baron & Pffe, 1994; Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Wingrove et al., 1984), the grounded theory (GT) analysis of this thesis provides a deeper understanding and insight into informal filtering decisions. Unlike most research within this area (as discussed in later sections), this thesis focuses on the screeners’ perspectives in actual organisations, in three empirical studies, who have a vested interest in hiring the best applicants that meet the organisational needs.

The primary overarching research question addressed by this investigation is:

***How are informal decisions reached by screeners when filtering out undesirable job applications?***

To answer this question the following objectives will be achieved:

- To identify key concepts within the literature associated with informal decisions;
- To identify common evidence used for informal filtering decisions within organisational environments;

- To investigate information and its effect on filtering out undesirable job applications within different organisational settings; and
- To reconcile the practical findings from the case studies and the theoretical underpinnings of academic concepts concerning informal decisions into a relatable theory that can be applied beneficially to future research and practice.

The practical contribution of this research is a deeper understanding of informal decisions that enables practitioners to become more efficient and productive by understanding the common errors which can affect filtering decisions (Chia, 2005; Cook, 1991; Roch & O'Sullivan, 2003). In turn, applicants that are a better organisational fit can be selected by understanding how information can shift decisions. This deeper understanding provides a rich foundation to a theoretical contribution grounded in observations and discussions with decision-makers. This practical evidence from the three organisations will be integrated with the contributions of previous research to establish a theory concerning informal decisions within the filtering process.

#### **1.10 Research Scope**

This research was conducted under an assumption that participants provided truthful information and access to organisational personnel, records, and procedures were not unknowingly restricted. This research centres on understanding informal decisions within filtering processes, typically beginning with application intake and concluding with a decision to interview or reject an applicant, of employee selection (see the figure below). Understanding informal decisions increases the value associated with properly matching employees for positions within organisations.

**Figure 1-3: The Selection Paradigm Augmented with the Research Focus**



Source: Smith & Robertson (1993)

### **1.11 Overview of the Thesis**

Chapter 1 introduces the importance of filtering decisions, the thesis objectives, problems, scope, and rationale for conducting this research. Filtering decisions can impact organisational operations positively or negatively (Geerlings & van Veen, 2006; McKinney & Sikula, 2008) and are not free from errors and biases (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Robertson & Smith, 2001). Researchers (e.g. Anderson et al., 2004; Cook, 1991; Miller, 1991; Roch & O'Sullivan, 2003) advocate new insight into filtering processes. Therefore, research into informal decisions can address this gap.

Following the GT approach of Charmaz (2003; 2005; 2008), Glaser (1978, 2009) and Strauss and Corbin (1994), chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the literature surrounding recruitment, selection, and informal decisions. Moreover, an overview of relevant qualitative and quantitative studies of previous research is presented. By examining key studies, knowledge gaps can be identified and the contribution of this research can be strengthened. Additionally, the research question is examined.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological approaches under GT to data collection and data analysis for the three case studies. Using semi-structured interviews, the researcher

can question screeners concerning important concepts surrounding filtering decisions. This chapter will also discuss the epistemological position taken by the researcher and provide justification for the specific methodological choice taken.

Chapter 4 presents the pilot case analysis on the Criminal Law Research Centre. Whilst the Research Centre was the smallest organisation, it offered the opportunity to consider how informal decisions impacted dependant organisations. Furthermore, the Research Centre relied mostly upon cognitive job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies.

Chapter 5 presents the case analysis on the Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital. The Veterinary Hospital was an expanding middle-sized organisation seeking to enhance and develop its recruitment and selection processes. This organisation had some written policies; however, all policies were under review. Additionally, policies (i.e. WDT, background checks) were being discussed to limit risk exposure of the Veterinary Hospital.

Chapter 6 presents the case analysis on the Charleston Area Medical Center. CAMC was the most complex organisation involved in this research. Composed of seven distinct corporations operating as a conglomerate entity, CAMC had several recruitment and selection dilemmas. Considering that local labour pool, CAMC represented just under twenty-three per cent of the metropolitan labour force.

Chapter 7 discusses a theoretical framework built upon the practical research through a cross-case analysis and academic thought as presented in Chapter 2. The process of informal decisions is presented followed by the development of the ***Cycle of Employment***. Next, a depiction of the ***Workflow of General Hiring Processes*** facilitates the integration of case findings into Roberson and Smith's (1993) ***Selection Paradigm***. Although screeners make informal decisions based on information obtained by individuals, sometimes good filtering practices are circumvented. Screeners can be influenced by a majority and minority, how information is weighted, inappropriate information and criteria, and influenced by other assessors.

Chapter 8 summarises the practical knowledge discovered by this research and provides the concluding remarks about informal decisions with a way forward for future research. Chapter 8 is followed by a list of references, a glossary, the participant consent form (Appendix 1), targeted participants (Appendix 2), thirteen appendices of data organised by participant (Appendices 3-15), GT classification of studies (Appendix 16), governing and organisational references (Appendices 17-18), coding of data (Appendices 19-24), and filtering cue matrix (Appendix 25).



# **Chapter 2 An Overview of the Literature Concerning Filtering Processes**

## **2.1 Grounded Theory Approaches to Literature Reviews**

Chapter 2 discusses relevant literature emphasising informal decisions in hiring and filtering processes. Under classical GT, literature searches are conducted after data collection (Charmaz, 2005; Dunne, 2011). However, both Charmaz (2005; 2008) and Suddaby (2006) note that a researcher can have prior knowledge of the subject being investigated. In fact, Charmaz (2005) notes that research is not uninitiated and that a researcher's prior knowledge shapes his/her findings, and that data gathering is never neutral, even in pure GT research. A researcher investigates a subject based upon a curiosity of unanswered questions which are formulated by some understanding and perception of the subject. If the questions are not the researchers (e.g. a shared research project, an assignment, or a consulting engagement), the researcher interprets those questions based upon his/her understanding and knowledge of the subject. If the researcher lacks direct knowledge of the subject, then the researcher relies on related knowledge or transferable knowledge concerning the subject. Either way, the researcher's knowledge was cognitively interpreted, retained, stored, retrieved, reinterpreted, transferred, and repeated. Thus, experiences and knowledge from previous research engagements, academic training, work experience, and personal experience blends together to become knowledge that an individual (and a researcher) uses to understand and interpret current situations.

Some researchers fail to conduct a proper literature review under GT (Glaser, 2009). However some authors argue that GT is not an excuse to ignore the literature or to conduct a less rigorous review of published work (Suddaby, 2006). Suddaby (2006) contends that journal articles, peer publications and academic studies offer a wealth of information that must be consulted in conjunction with the application of GT techniques. Under GT, all written works, including newspapers and non-academic books (e.g. how to, instructional, or historical testimonies) are considered sources of literature and should be used to enhance the reliability and validity of GT studies (Glaser, 1978). In fact, Glaser and Strauss (1967) states that qualitative data within libraries can be rich, but this type of data must be subordinate to the researcher's collected data. The structure of GT research is that the central focus rests upon the collected data with literature augmenting the emerging theory.

Observational research is difficult to replicate as open approach techniques tend to dominate this qualitative fieldwork (Judd et al., 1991). Charmaz (2005; 2008) suggests that this difficulty can be overcome by reviewing the literature to establish a structure for investigation and examination of the research subject. Suddaby (2006) agrees that an overview of the literature is crucial to a good grounded research study. Therefore, this thesis took the position that a literature review should be undertaken before fieldwork to focus observations on decisions, to build upon previous research, to avoid earlier research

shortcomings, and to enable the reproduction of this research in similar or different settings (Charmaz, 2005; Suddaby, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1994). Further discussions on GT are contained in Chapter 3.

For this thesis, the literature search surveyed hiring practises, assessment environments, and decision processes in academic publications and printed materials prior to collecting data from participants. Searches for literature composed of scholarly articles focused on academic databases such as Business Source Premier (EBSCO); EconLit (EBSCO); PsycArticles; SocIndex (EBSCO), and ProQuest amongst others. These scholarly articles composed the initial review of filtering. To complement articles, university and public libraries holdings provided access to books and periodicals that met certain research guidelines (e.g. relevance, practicality, and availability). Furthermore, literature bibliographies were reviewed to locate additional sources of information. As recommended by Bailey (2007) this integration of the literature continued until the writing of the final thesis. Bailey (2007) contends that articles should be supplemented with other sources of information such as newspapers, historical accounts, and autobiographies and this is what this work has also attempted. By expanding the literature base, the conversion of theory to practical applications can commence. In the next section, early selection processes will be addressed.

## **2.2 Historical Development of Selection Systems**

Trying to locate a productive worker is nothing new. Since at least 2200 B.C.E. (Porterfield, 2002), selection processes have been used to distinguish individuals into similar performance groups for the purpose of making decisions concerning which groups would be best suited for specific tasks. One of the first recorded examples is an examination administered every three years to individual holding or seeking a position within King Shun's government in 2200 B.C.E. (Cohen & Swerdlik, 1999; Martin, 1901; 1906). The performance on an examination meant either a promotion or a dismissal for the test-taker (Martin, 1901). The decision to "*Employee the able and promote the worthy*" (Martin, 1901, p. 311) starts with how King Shun became heir to China. According to Martin (1906), the son of King Yao was not deemed a competent successor and therefore a new heir, Shun, was selected by examination. This same process of examination was used to select King Ta-yü over Shun's son.

Hanson (1993, p. 186) emphasises that the "...*Chou dynasty (ca. 1122-256 B.C.)...*" significantly improved upon Shun's methods of detecting the best individuals for positions. Although each selection system was modified by each ruling government, the core principal of skills identification was not lost but constantly enhanced and expanded. An important

example of this expansion is the 196 B.C.E. edict of Chinese Emperor Kao-tsu to formally codify selection and assessment process to include all commoners and nobility (Franke, 1960). This was the first instance that members of the upper class were no privileged to positions but had to compete with individuals of lesser stature. The Emperor valued productive workers more than he valued birth right.

Whilst selection processes have considerably been improved from the time of King Shun, selection processes have always been dependant on decisions based on human judgement. Whilst hiring decisions usually end with a formalised offer of employment, the path to this conclusion contains a significant amount of informal decision making. It is this informal decision making that this thesis focuses upon. In the next section, informal decisions are addressed.

### **2.3 Informal Decisions in Selection Processes**

Although informal selection decisions can be made by individuals or by groups, “[c]onsensus is a pervasive element of everyday social life” (Erb et al., 2006, p. 221). Erb et al. (2006, p. 221) states that “*Consensus [decisions] determines what is expected, normal, and fashionable.*” In the case of consensus decision making, information is shared amongst members in an effort to reach a decision (Hinsz et al., 1997; Kerr & Tindale, 2004). However, Kerr and Tindale (2004) note that research (citing Steiner, 1972; Tindale & Larson, 1992) indicates that a gap in knowledge exists concerning the effectiveness of teams during consensus decisions. Specifically, limited knowledge is available on how performance can be enhanced and improved when individuals are engaged in making consensus decisions.

In fact, the performance of workgroups is contingent upon clearly defined minimum objectives and the dedication towards high performance of its participants. Moreover, decision performance is also dependent upon information sharing (Hinsz et al., 1997 citing Stasser et al, 1989) which is subject to social influences (Erb et al., 2006). One such social influence is group stress as increased stress has been linked to decreased decision quality but a higher quantitative output (Kerr & Tindale, 2004 citing Kaplan et al., 1993).

Informal selection decision are influenced by several mechanisms, sometime leading to biased decision making and are there is a gap in understanding the processing of information by individuals as well of groups (Hinsz et al., 1997). In fact, Dewberry (2011, p 101) notes that there are “*a variety of dysfunctional hidden processes*” which he summarises in four groups: majority influence; weighting of information; inappropriate information and criteria; and influence of assessors. Additionally, non-intention decisions factor into these hiring mishaps (Reason, 1990). Each is subsequently discussed.

### 2.3.1 Majority and Minority Influences

Within group decision processes, the influences of majorities and minorities can impact decision outcomes (Martin et al., 2008; Sager & Gastil, 2006). Whilst this thesis focuses on individuals making informal decisions, it is important to recognise that the informal decisions reached by individuals may be influenced by the groups they belong to (e.g. social groups, demographic groups or workplace groups). According to Martin et al (2008, citing Mascovici, 1980), individuals feel compelled to be associated with the majority and some individuals will take the majority's position in order to fit into this popular group. This confirmation to the majority is known as majority influence (Dewberry, 2011). Moreover, group decisions are reached not only by the combined individual experience of members, but also the inferences of individual members of the group. In essence, the majority directs attention towards information and key factors that ultimately impact decisions (Martin et al., 2008): The “...majority status might act as a heuristic cue...” (p. 19).

However, the majority influence does not always prevail depending on the circumstances; sometimes, the minority influence dominates whilst sometimes no influence is present (Martin et al., 2008). Minority influences “...often act as the main instigators of social change...” (Papastamou, 1986 citing Moscovici, 1976) as the minority alternatives can trigger a systematic review from the majority (Martin et al., 2002). During this review, Shuper and Sorrenting, (2004) suggest that the strongest position will prevail in influencing the decision outcome.

Consequently, how groups utilise cognitive processes in arriving at decisions and how groups (i.e., majority and minority) influences those decisions are fully not understood (Martin & Hewstone, 2003; Shuper & Sorrenting, 2004). Moreover, the key to understanding these influences appears to rely on how groups process messages and information. Although organisations may have formalised policies, regulations, and rules, it is the informal rules of individuals and groups (especially of newly formed groups) that can impact consensus decisions (Sager & Gastil, 2006). In fact, organisations normally allow assessors to make individual decisions after managers and senior assessors have oriented and allied newcomer assessors towards the organisational policies and expectations. It is these policies and expectations that are the basis of shared workplace knowledge (and actions).

To summarise, a majority and minority influence are products developed from social interactions of a group making consensus decisions (Papastamou, 1986). Each group considers information in arriving at decisions. Sometimes, individuals neglect alternative

choices and fail to consider most information (Erb et al., 2006). In the next section, the weighting of information is discussed.

### **2.3.2 Weighting of Information**

Most classification decisions revolve around information provided by the applicant (Mercer, 1993), information acquired or produced by the organisation (Hanson, 1993), and third-party information (Hacker, 1999). In fact, the processing of this information and the subsequent weighting of information is critically important in assessing individuals (Dewberry, 2011). The variances in weighting information are essential for filtering decisions (Burke, 1997; Guion & Gottier, 1966; Ployhart et al., 2003). In weighting information, certain heuristics such as representativeness (Bar-Hillel, 1991; Cook, 1991), availability of instances or scenarios and anchoring (Chapman & Johnson, 2002) are used to interpret and process information; and, as such, weighting of information is subject to deviations through assumptions and errors in judgement (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991d).

As about one-third of applications contain false information (Mercer, 1993), screeners validate (e.g. pre-employment testing, skills assessment and fact finding services) or trust information presented within applications (Hanson, 1993; Robertson & Smith, 2001). However, Cook (1991) notes sometimes information that is general, vague, or not too negative is accepted as truth. Therefore, guidance in how information is weighted may be outlined by an organisation; but still, information may be erroneously weighted.

Errors can be a result of miscommunications as, according to Keysar (2007), miscommunications are random errors. Sometimes miscommunications are incorrect interpretations of words and actions that lead to wrong assessments of information and evidence. It is the listeners that interpret information based upon his/her experiences and knowledge which may not consider the mental conditions and knowledge of others. Interpretations and information processing deviations are contingent upon the meaning of language which can be highly subjective.

Miscommunications can be linked to misapplications of selection policies as these too can affect decisions concerning how to weight information. According to Geerlings and Van Veen (2006), problems with selection policies could result in a poorly selected workforce that may take up to forty years to correct. In fact, Geerlings and Van Veen (2006, p. 1257) note that selection policies are not normally followed for entry level positions even though the directives indicate that information must be processed and weighted according to such policies. This represents an intentional action (Reason, 1990) concerning how information is

weighted; and therefore, organisations must consider the long-term consequences of any selection policy before being implemented.

Part of this consideration extends to how screeners weight information and of the errors to which screeners would be subject. In fact, some organisations may use tests (e.g. background check, aptitude test, skills test, or reference checks) to provide supporting information in weighting information for informal decisions (Porterfield, 2001). The additional information reduces assumed facts and uncertainty and helps properly guide screeners according to guidelines and personnel specifications (Gatewood & Feild, 1987; Kasten & Weintraub, 1999; Schmitt & Oswald, 2006; Yates et al., 2002). However, Burke (1997) suggests that different testing environments and stimuli can cause variations in applicant test scores that increase the probability that inappropriate information and criteria will be injected into test results.

Because organisations grow and increase in complexity, different organisational environments require various stages of multiple decisions to predict an applicant's performance (Anderson et al., 2004; Bar-Hillel & Neter, 2002; Gatewood & Feild, 1987). Normally, informal filtering decisions are sequential with multiple decision stages being typical (Kenney, 1982; Litecky et al., 2004); however, Gilliland (1993) suggest decisions are actually a continuum based on multiple variables and differently weighted information in reaching a conclusion. Herriot and Wingrove (1984) and Wingrove et al. (1984) suggest that within filtering processes, too many variables and too much information exist for screeners to comprehend; therefore, screeners may reduce information to basic levels and rely on inferential and summarising reasoning to weight information. The weighting of information does influence decisions (Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Wingrove et al., 1984) and when assessors' judgements are flawed, it can corrupt assessment (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990).

Information processing deviations occur and we must periodically evaluate our selection processes to help mitigate these deviations (Bobko et al., 2008) and to assist decision-makers in comprehending subjective information appropriately (Moy & Lam, 2004). Inappropriate information and criteria, as presented in the next section, can significantly alter informal decisions.

### **2.3.3 Inappropriate Information and Criteria**

Screeners use personnel specifications to make decisions, based on judgments and experiences, concerning applicant classification (Fritzsche & Brannick, 2002; Robertson & Smith, 2001). Research has shown that individuals do not always make rational decisions

(Robertson & Smith, 2001); and too much information can burden decision makers whilst not enough information can cause poor decisions (Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Wingrove et al., 1984). Even with personnel specifications, guidelines, and methods of applicant classification, inappropriate information and criteria can enter into decisions (Dewberry, 2011).

Organisations may operate selection processes with the objective to minimise risk (Wolf and Jenkins, 2006). To reduce risk, organisations establish guidelines that identify potential undesirable behaviours (e.g. theft, absenteeism, and poor attitudes) in which screeners can consider when removing those individuals deemed a potential threat. Consequently, several authors (see Dolfen, 2006; Schmitt & Oswald, 2006) suggest that some organisations desire a simple, quick, and cheap method to select employees. Cook (1991) agrees that costs can impact selection processes and in some instances practicality and validity are sacrificed. Organisations can influence informal decisions through emphasis of inappropriate information and criteria mostly by providing contradictory guidelines to screeners (Dolfen, 2006; Thierry, 2007).

In fact, the economics of hiring may subject decisions of screeners to consider inappropriate information and criteria. Robertson and Makin (1986) suggest that organisations may estimate economic benefits of hiring using *utility theory*: Estimating value against costs. The value of a hire must exceed all costs attributed to the selection process associated with the respective hire. Additionally, *game theory* might be applicable to selection decisions as both rely on decisions from other individuals (Keysar & Barr, 2002). In social settings, game theory focuses on how economic incentives can affect decisions and behaviours based on anticipated responses and decisions from other individuals (Dixit, 2006; Coleman, 2005; Myerson, 2008). Some decisions and aspects of game theory result when the perceptual gains exceed an individual threshold known as a *hedonic limen* (see Moorewedge et al., 2007). Hedonic Limens are critical standards in decision processes that help justify the acceptance of an offer. For example: When an offer of employment is extended to an individual, that individual is motivated to accept or decline employment based upon his/her perceptions of rewards (i.e. salary, benefits and fringes, reputation and prestige, and other rewards that indicate the value of an individual/position).

Whilst research in work and organisational psychology has specific applications within subclasses of general psychology, decision theory in general psychology can facilitate understanding informal decision with respect to inappropriate information and criteria (see Choo, 1998; Hill et al., 1988; Patterson, 2001; Saha et al., 2008; Schmidt & Hunter, 1974). For example: Screeners may evaluate applicant criteria by *representativeness*, how similar applicants are to personnel specifications using reference points, for informal decisions (Bar-



Hillel, 1991; Kahneman & Tversky, 1991). Application representativeness is equally comparable under the *transitivity principle*, so no one individual has a greater preference without being subject to assessment and evaluating processes, assuming non-erroneous and unbiased comparisons amongst individuals are not made (Bell & Raiffa, 1988; Cohen et al., 1991).

However, according to Aguinis & Smith (2007, p. 165), bias can influence informal decisions by “...lead[ing] to unethical decision making.” Biases are associated with the perception of an applicant by a decision maker (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990); and as such, biases can direct screeners to inappropriate information and criteria. For example, biases are more likely to occur in informal decisions when an applicant has personal interaction with decision-makers (Porterfield, 2001): A positive interaction creates a positive image whilst a negative interaction creates a negative image. Common documented selection biases include the *halo effect* (Porterfield, 2001); *similar-to-me effect*, *personal liking bias*, *prototype bias* (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990); *overqualified* (Fine & Nevo, 2007); and *order effects* (Highhouse & Gallo, 1997). Each is briefly discussed within the glossary of this thesis. In most cases, screeners are not aware that decisions have been contaminated with bias (Litecky et al., 2004) hence biases are non-intentional errors (Reason, 1990). One method to reduce human error in organisations is the use of electronic applications (Bartram, 2004) and expert systems that evaluate applications (Shore, 1996).

According to Drucker (2001, p. 131), “...all of us have first impressions, prejudices, likes, and dislikes, we need to listen to what other people think.” However, assessors can influence decisions as presented in the next section.

#### **2.3.4 Influence of Assessors**

Since standardisation is a critical element of filtering decisions (Gatewood & Feild, 1987), organisational personnel specifications should be anchoring mechanisms that allow assessors to repeatedly make consistent decisions (Bobko et al., 2008; Epley & Gilovich, 2002). Consequently, many researchers (Heuer, 1999; Palmer & Loveland, 2008) note that assessors regularly modify organisational personnel specifications when making decisions. Sometimes these decisions based on modified organisational personnel specifications are attributed to the different methodological approaches that organisations take towards selection (Bliesener, 1996; Schmitt & Oswald, 2006). Occasionally, these decisions result from the influence of assessors (Dewberry, 2011). For example, a junior assessor may defer to more senior assessors during consensus decisions or when seeking advice about informal processes.

Organisational social structures have an increased effect on employee values and beliefs (Baron & Pfeffer, 1994) and informal decisions can be affected by different cultures, values, and beliefs (Heuer, 1999; Ryan et al., 1999; Shackleton & Newell, 1991). An assessor's characteristics such as age and gender can influence informal decisions (Lievens, 1998). Moreover, the career paths of individuals can shape and influence assessors' informal decisions (Sagie & Magnezy, 1997; Todd et al., 2005) as well as their experience as an assessor (Davis, 1999). With all these variables, the difficulty arises when an assessor injects his/her influence into informal decisions thereby causing a deviation in consistency according to organisational policies and guidelines.

As recruiting methods vary according to organisational demographics (Bartram et al., 1995), so does hiring processes. As these hiring process are critically dependant on the information used in making informal decisions, and that informal decisions are subject to majority and minority influences, differential in weighting information, injection of inappropriate information and criteria, and the influence of assessors, it sometimes is necessary to provide guidance to screeners. Organisations provide screeners with guidelines and personnel specifications to refer when making informal decisions. This is presented in the subsequent section.

## **2.4 Guidelines and Personnel Specifications**

There continues to be problems with selection processes, as Guest (1991) noted, in fact, some organisations still fail to use appropriate guidelines and personnel specifications and fall short of good practise. Organisations frame and create personnel specifications and guidelines within which decisions are made (Baron & Pfeffer, 1994; Slovic et al., 1988) without ascertain whether (a) the personnel specifications are sound (b) training and education has been provided to screeners (Roch & O'Sullivan, 2003); and (c) information has been widely distributed in recruitment and selection processes (Ballou, 1996; Iles et al., 1990). Many organisations use old personnel specifications for selection (Robertson & Makin, 1986) and some organisations base personnel specifications on stereotypical behaviours (Zachar, 2004). Both can result in guidelines that poorly predict job performance (Zachar, 2004).

An important component to the selection process is the assessment of the type of additional labour is needed. Several authors (see Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Bainter & Johnson, 1994; Robertson & Smith, 2001), in fact, suggest that organisations construct detailed guidelines and personnel specifications (e.g. job attributes, position descriptions, minimum requirements, undesirable characteristics, and other requirements) of ideal employees to

standardise filtering processes. Organisations must construct the right personnel specifications to find the most productive employees (Barron et al., 1985; Ferris et al., 2002) as the wrong personnel specifications can inadvertently remove qualified individuals (Christiansen et al., 1994) or contribute to incorrect decisions (Borjas & Goldberg, 1978; Cornell & Welch, 1996; Highhouse & Gallo, 1997). As the work and organisational environment evolve, personnel specifications must be periodically reviewed by a job analysis to ensure accuracy (Bobko et al., 2008).

Whilst personnel specifications assist decision makers, Sullivan (2000) suggests that personnel specifications should place less emphasis on applicant experience. Evaluating applicants in whole, not just in parts, could be a better indicator of organisational fit and individual performance (Oswald et al., 2004). Cappelli (2004) provides examples of how many organisations are using the wrong personnel specifications for selecting employees. For example, Microboard Processing and Architectural Support Services adopted new guidelines and personnel specifications for hiring employees (Cappelli, 2004). These new guidelines call for deviating from hiring the most qualified applicants to hiring one-third of the workforce from traditionally high-risk categories (e.g. former criminals, former substance abusers, and public assistance recipients) and using a flexible and relaxed working environment during the first ninety days of employment to orient these newcomers. These high risk newcomers were more faithful and dedicated than higher qualified applicants. Also, turnover rates declined when these new hiring guidelines were adopted by Microboard Processing and Architectural Support Services. This example shows how personnel specification, rather than job specification can be used to satisfy the specific needs of organisations or departments.

Furthermore, many managers continue to rely on interviews and references instead of revising guideline and personnel specifications (Robertson & Makin, 1986). Organisations need to re-align hiring processes with realistic expectations to accurately make decisions concerning job-seekers (Iles et al., 1990). Although guidelines and personnel specifications are critical components in any selection process, decisions about job-seekers are not generally made without information and evidence or the lack thereof concerning the job-seekers' ability to perform the job duties. In the next section, common forms of selection tools that facilitate the collecting of information and evidence are presented.

## **2.5 Common Selection Tools for the Modern Practitioner**

Once well-constructed personnel specifications are available, filtering processes may be more efficient in separating applicants into acceptable and unacceptable categories by

selecting applications that closely resemble those personnel specifications through distinctions in information and evidence that is provided by selection tools (Cook, 1991; Fritzsche & Brannick, 2002; Gatewood & Feild, 1987). Both information and evidence provides a foundation for screeners to evaluate individuals when making hiring decisions. The next sections highlights the common selection tools associated with initial filtering decisions such as applications, autobiographical data, applicant histories (e.g. background checks and substance testing), and digital tools.

### **2.5.1 Applications**

To filter applicants, organisations heavily rely on applications, *résumés*, and CVs to provide the first information about job-seekers (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Whilst personnel specifications provide the framework to measure credentials and other factual information about individuals, ultimately the process involves human judgement (Drucker, 1995). Searle (2003) suggest that the difference between *résumés* and CVs only refers to their geographic use: the term *résumé* is preferred in Australia and the United States. However, MIT (2009) and Salvador (2010) note that there are some differences between the two terms and that CVs are more comprehensive and centre on academic achievement and occupational experiences. However for the purposes of this thesis, the terms are considered interchangeable.

Whilst applicants' *résumés* provide a basis for evaluation, screeners must assess the validity and reliability of applicant provided information (Cerrito, 2004; Engleman & Kleiner, 1998). Validity and reliability can be jeopardised when unemployment rises and labour markets become more competitive, as applicants may be more likely to embellish experience and skills to gain a complete advantage over other applicants (Bishop, 2006; Davidson, 1984; Spang, 1984; Van Dam et al., 1985). Some authors (Marcoux, 2006) suggest embellishment is necessary for applicants to obtain an interview whilst others (Bishop, 2006; Green, 1991) oppose embellishment as it can lead towards deception.

Applications and *résumés* serve as a primary method for organisations to gage individual accomplishments (Arthur, 2001; Karsh with Pike, 2009; Robertson & Smith, 2001). Information contained in these applications and *résumés* determine the course of subsequent interviews and filtering tools (Stanton, 1977). Because *résumés* are unique to job-seekers, organisations generally require job-seekers to submit a standard application to promote consistency in information presentation. This is also considered best practice and thus advised by scholars (Arthur, 2001). The standard application should include the collection of biographical data (Drakeley et al., 1988; Searle, 2003).

### 2.5.2 Biographical Data (Biodata)

Based on a job analysis and a composite of characteristics and attributes of successful applicants, biodata focuses on an individual's histories (i.e. experiences, education, and successes) about applicants to predict potential aptitude and success (Bliesener, 1996; Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000; Mount et al., 2000; Oswald et al., 2004). Applicants answer a series of questions usually using a multiple-choice or Likert scale format (Searle, 2003). Although job-seekers can be presented with a diversity of questions, some legal jurisdictions do not allow organisations to collect or consider certain categories of biodata (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005; Cerrito, 2004). For examples: Birth information is normally not allowed to be considered in the United States. Even with these restrictions, biodata is overall a good predictor for employee success (Drakeley et al., 1988) and predicting avoidable employee turnover (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005).

Whilst biodata appears to predict success, flaws exist with the theoretical underpinnings of the tool itself (Searle, 2003). According to Carlson et al. (1999), biodata is generalisable when carefully created; however, Searle (2003) contradicts this generalisability and contends that biodata is not *transportable* between organisations or positions. That is, biodata is specific to particular organisations (Rothstein et al., 1990) and roles. Due to this specificity, biodata also depress diversity, an essential element to organisational creativity and innovation, by promoting sterility and consistency for a continuation of organisational culture (Searle, 2003). Job selection criteria changes with cultural differences (Peppas, 2006; Saha et al., 2008) and the use of biodata differ amongst countries and organisation size (Shackleton & Newell, 1991). Furthermore, Bobko et al. (2008) suggest that current needs and changes are not fully integrated within biodata designs as technology can alter job duties. Furthermore, the theory behind biodata needs more research to account for differences in subgroups and in relationships that surround validity (Oswald et al., 2004).

In addition to generalisability, a practical theory is needed for effective biodata prediction (Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000; Oswald et al., 2004). Some assessment and filtering processes closely resemble performance evaluations (Lazear, 1996) and are not geared towards identifying the best applicants in a cost efficient manner. The ontology of selection processes may alter hiring decisions (McIntyre et al., 1980). For example, regulations and guidelines covering certain types of information (i.e. race, ethnicity, and gender) may cause screeners to adjust decisions away from better qualified applicants.

The use of biodata could be linked to inconsistent research findings surrounding its effectiveness (Hough & Oswald, 2000); applicant perceptions in biodata fairness (Cook,

1991; Gilliland, 1993); and legal provisions (McIntyre et al., 1980). Additionally, the use of biodata can increase conflicts between organisations and applicants (Robertson & Smith, 1987, in Cook, 1991). Thus, applicant histories provide additional evidence for predicting applicant success (Owens & Schoenfeldt, 1979; Spell & Blum, 2005; Wells & Gill, 2007).

### **2.5.3 Applicant Histories**

In addition to biodata, organisations can investigate applicant histories through references, criminal checks, credit checks, and substance tests (Doyle, 2009; McKinney & Tissington, 2009; Spell & Blum, 2005) as future behaviours can be predicted from past behaviours (Owens & Schoenfeldt, 1979). Background checks should be an integrated part of assessment (Edersheim, 2007; Sumners, 2008) with key personnel undergoing more extensive background checks to identify unethical behaviours (Wells & Gill, 2007). A traditional background check is the applicant references which provide historic information on behaviours, work ethics, and skills (Searle, 2003; Shackleton & Newell, 1991). However, most references are overwhelmingly positive since an applicant supplies contact details and referees names, furthermore line managers generally avoid providing negative information about an applicant as this can spur litigation in some jurisdictions, like the United States (Engleman & Kleiner, 1998). Thus, criminal checks are necessary to reduce an organisation's litigation costs from hiring negligently. Whilst most organisations remove applicants with criminal backgrounds, this should be considered in relation to the specific offense and the specific role in order to avoid providing someone with the opportunity to be fully rehabilitated into society. Furthermore Cappelli (1994) suggests that many formal criminals can offer more loyalty and stability to an organisation's labour force, particularly in non-professional and manufacturing occupations such as landscaping and assemblers; therefore it can be argued that filtering processes should not remove all offenders.

To gauge credit worthiness, integrity, honesty, and potential organisational loss, a credit report obtained from a credit bureau or other information broker often summarise liabilities, satisfied financial agreements, and financially related information from a composite of variables and sources into a numeric value (Kolesar & Showers, 1985; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Thorne, 2007; Wagner, 2004). Based on organisational guidelines and legal regulations (see FTC, 2009; Garfinkel, 1995; Porterfield, 2001), reports may be used to filter applicants from employment consideration (Applegate, 2001; Lofton, 2007) or terminate current employment contracts (Thorne, 2007) provided proper documentation is available for decisions and selection tests (Crane, 1989). In the United States, the *Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1970* (FCRA) regulates what types of information exchanges and collections can take place as report suppliers once neglected to verify and correct information concerning files on

businesses and individuals (FTC, 2009). For example, the Fair Credit Reporting Act extends to biodata questions relating to credit and financial transactions (see FTC, 2009; Engleman & Kleiner, 1998).

Substance testing (i.e. drugs and alcohol) uses a sample of body fluid or hair to detect the use of certain substances (TrimegaLabs, 2008) associated with undesirable behaviours that may be disruptive to an organisation (Knudsen et al., 2003). When substances are detected, organisations normally remove applicants from consideration (Fernando, 2007; Jardine-Tweedie & Wright, 1998). In the United States, substance testing as a filtering tool must be done after an offer of employment, which is thus contingent to the negative test results. Most organisations only test once. Problems with test validity and variances exist. Contingent upon a sample (NACD, 2007), an individual's pigment (Jardine-Tweedie & Wright, 1998), test counter-measures (Comer, 1994; USDTL, 2008), and procedural errors (Riley et al., 2000), tests can provide false positives and false negatives (Comer, 1994; NACD, 2007). Organisations may adopt substance tests for several reasons such as to reduce theft (Busnick, 2005; Minchin et al., 2006), increase safety (Gillian, 2002; Lauver, 2007), increase productivity (Cholakis & Bruce, 2007), comply with laws (AMA, 1998; Knowles & Riccucci, 2001), and cultural attributes (Brewis et al., 2006; French et al., 2001; Gee et al., 2005; NACD, 2007). Substance testing is mostly concentrated within United States organisations (Hanson, 1993; JRF, 2004; McKinney & Tissington, 2009) and substance testing may act as a deterrent against individuals that may potentially be engaged in undesirable behaviours (Wells, 2005). Alternative tools and filtering processes provided by digital technology can expedite and enhance assessment (Ployhart et al., 2003).

#### **2.5.4 Digital Tools**

As technology becomes cheaper, some organisational processes shift towards computer-based programmes that gather evidence and test applicant's skills and knowledge (Guastello et al., 1992; Searle, 2006). For example, Internet and electronic or digital applications are rapidly replacing traditional hard copy fill-in forms (Bartram, 2004; DeMey & Flowers, 1999; Porterfield, 2002); and biodata is becoming more popular with digital programmes (Searle, 2003) such as expert systems (Shore, 1996). Expert systems may be used as decision tools which could be tailored to specific personnel specifications (Shore, 1996). Whilst an expert system can generate consistent decisions, practical problems exist. These systems may not be able to deal with rapid changes in the law as expert system learning may be limited. Also, programmers may introduce flaws into the expert system or costs may exceed benefits associated with hiring.

According to Ployhart et al. (2003), digital tests are more accurate than paper-and-pencil testing. Since digital tests are evaluated using computer programmes, job-seeker responses are assessed more consistently than tests judged by individual screeners. In effect, computer programmes can be used to compile information to develop profiles of job-seekers. Conversely, Arthur (2001) disagrees suggesting electronic profiling has the potential to remove qualified job-seekers that are outside of the pre-programmed desired range of KSAO. Aguinis et al. (2001) contend that the performance of some job-seekers actually declines with digital testing due to a lack of familiarity with the testing environment or assessment system. Furthermore, assessments in virtual reality are subjective and observers can focus on non-relevant observations and information.

Although filtering processes can be enhanced using applications, biodata, applicant histories, and digital tools, errors in judgement still may impact decisions concerning which applicants are to be removed from the hiring processes. As some variances in perception can be attributed to informal decisions, converting theory into practical applications is essential and is discussed in the next section.

## **2.6 Converting Theoretical Constructs to Practical Applications**

Drucker (1980; 1995; 1998; 2001) emphasises that personnel policies must adapt with the evolving employees and constantly moving business environment. Earlier, he suggests that a common problem amongst organisations is that the theoretical constructs in which employment decisions are based is flawed:

*“In most institutions personnel policies are based on the assumption of a homogeneous work force, and primary, of course, of a work force that consists of adult male heads of household working full time and dependent entirely on their wage or salary from one employer for their livelihood and that of their family.”*  
(1980, p. 121)

Drucker’s statement illustrates that years ago some concepts of employees are erroneous and are based on stereotypes. In fact, his references exemplify that the labour force was primarily perceived as homogeneous and that diversity had a minimal impact on workplace policies and practices, due to the outdated and artificial assumptions (cf. Peppas 2006; Saha et al., 2008; Shackleton & Newell, 1991). Generally, differences in beliefs can create deviations of informal decisions which indicates that theory has not transferred to practise. Additionally, if errors in assumptions about employees are not corrected and generalised upon the labour force, then it is likely that the practical applications of decision-making will continue without bold field-based studies despite minor advances in research. Moreover, some screeners will continue to make poor decisions.



In reality, the labour force is not standardised as variations in hiring processes have been well documented in research. It is these multiple variations that create the difficulty in transferring theoretical constructs into practical applications. For example: screeners may inappropriately weight work experience and not consider it relevant to a position (Adkins, 1995). Moreover, a relationship exists between work experiences and organisational socialisation processes but its extent is unclear. Furthermore, some job-seekers intentionally and erroneously answer questions to positively influence screener perceptions to gain an advantage over other job-seekers: this is known as *faking good* (Schmitt & Oswald, 2006). Therefore, screeners must recognise faking good, as well as other undesirable behaviours, to make appropriate informal decisions. Additionally, screeners must consider and weight some other variables such as disabled job-seekers (Saha et al., 2008), lawful selection processes (Ryan et al., 1999), cultural differences and individual values (Aycan, 2005; Ryan et al., 1999).

Essentially, the difficulty in practical applications is that they must include the multitude of variables reported in theoretical studies and make those variables applicable to the diversity of the labour force. Diversity can be stifled through the practise of *isomorphism*: the process of standardising workers into similar groups whose functions and problems are similar (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). DiMaggio & Powell (1983, p. 150) notes that there are three types of isomorphism that restrict organisational adaptivity and change: *Coercive isomorphism*, *mimetic isomorphism* and *normative isomorphism*.

Coercive isomorphism uses regulatory forces, as well as internal constraints, to exercise considerable influence upon organisational strategies and decision processes to facilitate homogenization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). For selection processes this can impact employee turnover and modifications of personnel specifications to include preferences for underrepresented groups (e.g. women and minorities). Likewise, "*mimetic isomorphism*" focuses on modifying organisational behaviours, based on uncertainty and ambiguity, to mirror successful or familiar organisations to ensure success. Similarly, "*normative isomorphism*" is defined by the internal influences from groups of specialists (e.g. lawyers, accountants and academics) that are exerted upon the organisation to control the work in progress as well as the work product. Ultimately, any form of isomorphism can enhance errors in communications and judgements and impact informal decisions. Isomorphism tends to focus on legally defending hiring decisions and not on fulfilling labour needs (Wolf & Jenkins, 2006).

## **2.7 Selected Key Studies**

As the theoretical research underpinnings surrounding informal decisions has been presented, this section presents selected published key studies, distinguished by methodological approach, that have influenced the research surrounding informal decisions. Additionally, key terms and definitions are presented within the Glossary of the thesis as meanings of words and ideas, including basic concepts, can be different.

Each subsection presents a standardised table listing key studies by primary research method. Each table has four columns: (1) the study; (2) the study focus; (3) the analytical method; and (4) the data collection method. The first column, Study, denotes authors and publication dates. The second column, Study Focus, considers the primary perspective to identifying relationships between researchers and data. There are six perspectives: Applicants, Employee, Literature, Organisation, Screener, and Tool (i.e. assessment tool). The third column, Analytical Method, classifies the data origination into (1) Field-based when actual participants and observations are involved; (2) Content Analysis when sources are archival records, literature, and records are involved; and (3) Lab-Based when data are theoretical or created by the researchers. The final column, Data Collection Method, summarises data collection methods into one of seven categories: Archival Records, Case Study, Interviews, Profiling (e.g. biodata, aptitude tests, and personality tests), Simulated Data (e.g. created for the study), Survey, and Unobtrusive Measures (i.e. obtaining indirect information from research subjects (Lee, 2000).

The next section reviews qualitative methodological approaches and presents a general overview of knowledge on informal decisions.

### **2.7.1 A Review of Qualitative Studies on Selection Measures**

The table below presents twenty-one qualitative studies concerning hiring processes. Most of these studies use content analysis and focus on organisations. However, only one study (see Ferris et al., 2002) focuses on screeners' perceptions.

**Table 2-1: Qualitative Studies Concerning Hiring Processes**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Study Focus</b>	<b>Analytical Method</b>	<b>Data Collection Method</b>
Aguinis et al., 2001	Tool	Lab-based	Unobtrusive Measures
Aycan, 2005	Organisation	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Barrick & Mount, 1991	Tool	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Bartram et al., 1995	Organisation	Field-based	Interviews
Bartram, 2004	Organisation	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Bliesener, 1996	Literature	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Bobko et al., 2008	Tool	Field-based	Case Study

Cornell & Welch, 1996	Tool	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Dick & Nadin, 2006	Applicants	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Ferris et al., 2002	Screeners	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Guest, 1991	Organisation	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Guilliland, 1993	Applicants	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Guion & Gottier, 1966	Tool	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Harris, 1943	Organisation	Field-based	Case Study
Hausknecht et al., 2004	Applicants	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Iles et al., 1990	Organisation	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Litecky et al., 2004	Tool	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Mount et al., 2000	Tool	Field-based	Personality tests
Moy & Lam, 2004	Employee	Field-based	Interviews
Patterson, 2001	Organisation	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Searle, 2006	Organisation	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures

According to Patterson (2001), some selection methods (e.g. psychological testing) used in informal decisions are moving away from paper-and-pencil tests to e-testing and e-metrics primarily as a result of increases in technology that decrease costs associated with test administration. Moreover, technological advances have significantly modified *'the way work is performed'* and these revised position descriptions call for increased employees' KSAOs. This complexity of personnel specifications translates to increased difficulty in arriving at the right decisions about individuals for assessors. For example, Litecky et al. (2004) notes that there is a disconnect between the academic concepts and the practical needs in identifying personnel specifications associated with communication skills (soft skills) and technological skills (hard skills) in some occupations such as those in information technology. Furthermore, research is lacking in observations of actual decisions in filtering environments and a comparison of those decisions against advertised organisational specifications.

Whilst Litecky et al. (2004) notes gaps exist in identifying those soft and hard skills for achieving successful decisions during filtering, Mount et al. (2000) note that using multiple selection methods (e.g., biodata, general mental ability and the five factor model personality constructs) can increase the validity of information and subsequently the filtering decision. Assessors using multiple selection methods are exposed to more information in which to profile and make decision about individuals. Although some information overlap will occur, this is not redundant since it serves to provide additional assurances concerning validity about the interpretations of information. However, Mount et al. (2000) note that interpretations of information are subject to judgements which may be different and not necessarily generalisable. For instance, there are many examples of information influencing selection decisions (Dewberry, 2011). A common finding in the U.K. and United States is that gender, consciously and subconsciously, has influenced decisions (Dick & Nadin, 2006).

Bartram et al. (1995) and Paterson (2001) identify that much research has been concentrated upon large organisations; and as a minor subject, the selection decisions of these larger organisation. Although small businesses compose a majority of organisations, the literature in this area concerning selection decision, recruiting strategies, selection methods, and the mechanics of which selection methods to use and what decisions to make is has mostly been ignored. Comparatively, it is the smaller organisations that cannot afford to spend on training, education, and experts to assist assessors in decision making (Bartram et al., 1995; Patterson, 2001). Patterson (2001, p. 383) suggests that this gap may “*distort reality*” and that smaller enterprises may be dramatically different. However, Bartram et al. (1995) note that both large and small organisations seem to rely on applications and interviews as selection methods in coming to hiring decisions. Moreover, they note that additional selection methods are routinely used in larger organisations whose selection processes are more refined and formalised. In smaller organisations and for unskilled positions, selection processes and decisions were more informal with a greater reliance on face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations and interviews than by applications, résumés and written correspondence. Furthermore, evidence suggests that organisational size impacts the formality of selection processes and the frequency of selection methods used for hiring decisions. Thus, the notable gap in knowledge is “*What are the selection processes that small organisations are using for informal decisions?*”

Although these qualitative studies provide a foundation of knowledge about hiring processes, the obvious gap is the lack of field-based research focusing on screeners. Most studies focus on content analysis from an organisational perspective. However, organisations do not make hiring decisions, people make hiring decisions and screeners are usually the first individuals that provide feedback concerning applications.

### 2.7.2 A Review of Quantitative Studies on Selection

Complementing qualitative studies, quantitative studies expand the understanding of decision making environments. The table below lists the most significant studies in the field: six studies examine perspectives from screeners surrounding filtering decisions; three use lab-based data and the other three studies use field-based data.

**Table 2-2: Quantitative Studies Concerning Hiring Processes**

Study	Study Focus	Analytical Method	Data Collection Method
Aguinis & Smith, 2007	Tool	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Adkins, 1995	Employee	Field-based	Survey
Anderson & Shackleton, 1990	Screener	Field-based	Interviews

Ballou, 1996	Organisation	Field-based	Archival Records
Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005	Applicants	Field-based	Survey
Bellizzi & Hasty, 2000	Employee	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Blakemore & Low, 1984	Tool	Lab-based	Archival Records
Borjas & Goldberg, 1978	Organisation	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Browne et al., 2005	Tool	Field-based	Survey
Burke, 1997	Tool	Field-based	Profiling
Carlson et al., 1999	Organisation	Field-based	Profiling
Chia, 2005	Applicants	Lab-based	Profiling
Christiansen et al., 1994	Applicants	Field-based	Profiling
Cotton et al., 2008	Screeners	Lab-based	Survey
Drakeley et al., 1988	Applicants	Field-based	Profiling
Frei & McDaniel, 1998	Tool	Field-based	Archival Records
Furnham & Drakeley, 2000	Applicants	Lab-based	Profiling
Garen, 1985	Organisation	Lab-based	Archival Records
Geerlings & van Veen, 2006	Organisation	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Goffin & Woycheshin, 2006	Employee	Field-based	Survey
Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000	Tool	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Highhouse & Gallo, 1997	Screeners	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Hodgkinson & Payne, 1998	Organisation	Field-based	Survey
Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994	Tool	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Jones & Fletcher, 2004	Organisation	Field-based	Survey
Judge & Cable, 1997	Applicants	Field-based	Survey
McKinney et al., 2003	Screeners	Field-based	Archival Records
Oliphant & Alexander, 1982	Screeners	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Oswald et al., 2004	Tool	Field-based	Profiling
Ployhart et al., 2003	Screeners	Field-based	Profiling
Robertson & Kinder, 1993	Tool	Field-based	Archival Records
Robertson & Makin, 1986	Organisation	Field-based	Survey
Robertson et al., 2000	Tool	Field-based	Profiling
Roth & Bobko, 2000	Tool	Field-based	Archival Records
Rothstein et al., 1990	Tool	Field-based	Profiling
Ryan et al., 1999	Organisation	Field-based	Survey
Saha et al., 2008	Organisation	Field-based	Survey
Schmitt & Oswald, 2006	Organisation	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Schmitt et al., 2003	Applicants	Lab-based	Simulated Data
Shackleton & Newell, 1991	Organisation	Field-based	Survey
Tett et al., 1991	Literature	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures

According to Ployhart et al. (2003) and as noted in Patterson (2001) above, the use of computer systems to collect and evaluate jobseekers is increasing. The researchers found that the use of Web-based measures were comparable to paper-and-pencil testing with some variances in individual assessments favouring Web-based measures. The differences that Web-based measures provide can help facilitate better decisions through extrapolating variances when comparing jobseekers. Whilst this research offers promising results, Ployhart et al. (2003) questions if these results are generalizable to other organisations. It is suggested that future research should be focused on validity of measures, proctored versus unproctored measures, and the types of selection methods that can best be adapted to Web-based measures.

In addition to the use of computer programs, Schmitt et al. (2003) note that past research has focused on examining how past performance can be identified and applied to current organisational needs during selection decisions. Past performance can be extrapolated from biodata (Schmitt & Oswald, 2006) and biodata can lead to the general identification of personality traits of individuals that help assessors predict potential employee performance and behaviours (Oswald et al., 2004; Tett et al., 1991). Consequently, self-reported data (i.e., biodata and many other noncognitive measures) can be subject to response distortion (Schmitt & Oswald, 2006) and the validity of such information is imperative in making the right informal decisions (Robertson & Kinder, 1993). How do assessors adjust for response distortion (Schmitt et al., 2003) without negatively impacting individuals that are providing valid information (Schmitt & Oswald, 2006)? Simply, this question can be generalised to *“How is information weighted for informal decisions?”* (see Dewberry, 2011). This is the gap identified in these studies requiring further examination into selection decisions.

Robertson and Makin (1986) summarise that selection methods used in making decisions vary amongst U.K. organisations but that interviews and references are the most common. Surprisingly, they note that handwriting analysis emerged as a selection method in some European organisations. However, it is unclear if handwriting analysis as a practical selection method extends beyond Europe. Moreover, Robertson and Makin (1986) found that interest in biodata as a selection method is increasing with no formal explanation to this. Potentially, this interest in new selection methods might be linked to Utility Theory as organisations know that money is saved with properly used selection methods but the amount of savings is not been fully researched. Furthermore, they identify an existing gap concerning what criteria is essential in triggering the appropriate decisions that ultimately translates to successful employees. An example of this gap is identified by Robertson et al. (2000) where promotion for management positions within the U.K. are based on a limited number of personality characteristics to determine the potential performance of the individual being considered for the position.

Building upon Robertson and Makin (1986) research, Shackleton and Newell (1991) compare the selection methods used between British and French organisations. Both British and French primarily use the interview with the French subjecting the jobseeker to more interviews. Consequently, significant differences in the use of references (73.9% for British versus 11.3 for French), psychological tests (French predominantly using these), and handwriting analysis was significantly used by French companies at 77% reported compared to less than 3% of British organisations. With respect to increased interest in selection methods, biodata was increasing in use in the U.K. but has been restricted to only large

organisations of French companies. This raises an important issue concerning the use of selection methods – To what extent does cultural and political influences contribute to the decision to use selection methods? Even more generalisable, *“What are the major influences on assessors’ informal decisions?”*

Unlike the survey of qualitative studies, quantitative studies contain more field-based studies. Even so, these field-based studies provide limited insight into screener perceptions and informal decisions; and no study provides a comprehensive overview of informal decisions. Moreover, the early stages of selection processes (e.g. filtering and screening) have been neglected.

### 2.7.3 A Review of Studies Based on Mixed Methodological Approaches

As quantitative studies complement the qualitative studies, some studies have embraced a mix of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The table below presents six field-based studies undertaken using mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative, methodology. Each study has a different focus as well as different data collection methods and only Fernandez and Weinberg's (1997) study focuses on screener perceptions.

**Table 2-3: Mixed Methods Studies Concerning Hiring Processes**

Study	Study Focus	Analytic Method	Data Collection Method
Barron et al., 1985	Organisation	Field-based	Interviews
Campbell et al., 1990	Tool	Field-based	Profiling
Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997	Screener	Field-based	Case Study
Owens & Schoenfeldt, 1979	Tool	Lab and Field-based	Questionnaires
Schmidt & Hunter, 1998	Organisation	Content Analysis	Unobtrusive Measures
Wolf & Jenkins, 2006	Organisation	Field-based	Case Study

Prior research has not fully explained the selection decision (Wolf & Jenkins, 2006). In fact, there are a number of studies (as noted above) focusing on selection method and tools and not on the decision process. Also, important factors (i.e. political and regulatory) that influence organisational decision processes are downplayed or largely ignored. For example, Wolf and Jenkins (2006) note that time and money are of greater importance to organisations than test validity and reliability, in spite of the fact that researchers (see Mount et al., 2000) tend to emphasise such aspects of selection tools. Moreover, testing is likely to increase as a result of increased litigation and governmental regulation. This may force decisions to be based on being *‘legally defensible’* which can influence the quality of decisions especially in smaller organisations where expenses could be a greater

consideration than in larger organisations. The choice of selection methods should focus on better decision results that support the organisational needs in finding employees. Furthermore, like Patterson (2001), Wolf and Jenkins (2006) agrees that too little attention has been given to decisions in smaller organisational.

Considering qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodologies, field-based studies focusing on screener perspectives and decision processes are limited. What is lacking is a comprehensive overview of informal decisions in the early stages of selection using field-based research techniques. The next section highlights the key findings of the relevant studies that have specifically focused on screeners.

#### **2.7.4 Studies Focusing on Screeners**

From the previous sections, key studies have been identified that directly relate to screener decisions. Each will be discussed in turn.

Anderson and Shackleton (1990) recruited participants from university affiliated organisations to examine non-verbal behaviours and three biases (i.e. similar-to-me effect, personal liking bias, and prototype bias) by interviewing actual screeners involved in graduate placement interviews. The researchers focused on how informal decisions can be influenced by applicants seeking graduate placements. Because this study examines filtering decisions within field-based environments, it serves as a core element to build research upon. Consequently, the sample size was limited to university populations and not business organisations.

Cotton et al. (2008) examine screener perceptions surrounding job-seeker names to discover that an applicant's name influences informal decisions. Based on actual baby names as reported on governmental and ethnical websites, researchers simulated job-seeker names that were subsequently evaluated by student screeners. Their study revealed that applicants with common names were more likely to be hired over uncommon names and names associated with ethnicity such as African-American names and Russian names. This evidence suggests that names are weighted differently based on screener perceptions of names. Cotton et al. also suggest that stereotypes associated with ethnicity may not be the only reason for informal decisions: Novelty or name originality can deter hiring decisions. In this study, screeners were allowed more time to evaluate job-seekers but in actual organisational settings screeners ordinarily spend between five and ten seconds in making a preliminary filtering decision. Whilst this study establishes a basis for certain informal decisions may fall within Reason's (1990) non-intentional decisions, actual environments may perform differently.



In addition to names, the perception surrounding an applicant's intelligence can shift decisions (McKinney et al., 2003; Roth & Bobko, 2000). For example, employers commonly use *grade point average* (a cumulative academic score to denote academic standing) as evidence supporting intelligence. Roth and Bobko (2000) note that the grade point averages of Caucasian students increased as their studies progressed whilst grade point averages of black students remained relatively stable throughout their studies. Roth and Bobko (2000) concluded that organisations must consider the value of using grade point averages as evidence for intelligence and performance as these might not be a true indicator of either. In general, Dewberry (2001) notes, selected ethnic groups such as blacks and other minorities are rated lower in intelligence and performance when they are assessed in employment related situations.

McKinney et al. (2003) presents another dilemma associated with grade point averages. Using archival records within an field-based environment, McKinney et al. (2003) focus on the relationship between a *grade point average* (GPA) and initial filtering decisions within a dichotomous environment (i.e. invited and not invited). Decisions were captured and recorded immediately within a database thereby improving study reliability. This action allowed researches to critically evaluate information and consider the impact a specific GPA had on screeners' initial ratings. Through subsequent analysis and information grouping, identification of relationships provided the researchers insight that might have been otherwise undetected concerning deviations within initial filtering decisions: Some screeners negatively evaluated higher GPAs in excess of ~3.7 and removed those applicants from consideration. These decisions were based on screener perceptions of '*what is best for the organisation*' and not according to any organisational personnel specification.

Fernandez and Weinberg (1997) found that social ties significantly influenced filtering decisions especially for entry-level positions. Job-seekers having social connections with current employees have a greater chance of getting hired. Potentially, these social ties appear to increase the personal contacts with employers and thereby increase the opportunity for job-seekers to be interviewed and present themselves to screeners and managers. The advantage of these social ties coupled with a lack of guidance concerning informal decisions about the weighting of social ties is a deviation consistent with non-intentional errors (see Reason, 1990). Fernandez and Weinberg's (1997) case study used a combination of interviews and archival data to examine the relationships between social ties and hiring outcomes from screeners' perspectives. Data was collected in the field using mixed methods in eighty branches of a major bank over twenty-seven months.

Focusing on screener perceptions, Ferris et al. (2002) suggest that screeners should use effective recruitment interviews to gain a competitive advantage for acquiring job-

seekers. This study emphasises reduced labour pools associated with high employment rates and the need to consider comprehensive compensation packages which include characteristics of the position and intrinsic rewards. As this study was solely grounded in the analysis of literature, data was gathered with no participants and no field studies. Although a conceptualisation of strategic processes is presented, this research focuses on recruitment interviews.

Highhouse and Gallo (1997) consider the effects that ordering has on selection processes. Specifically, researchers note that the *recency effects* (i.e. information that is presented last) was most often the information which raters recalled when making informal decisions. Using simulated data, evaluations were conducted using role-play exercises within the sterile settings of an academic environment. Raters were divided into two groups and provided with the same initial training consisting of a position description, training videos, and instruction. Subsequently, one group received additional instructions and video material. Because experienced raters were not part of this design, the study's generalisability is restrained; and the influence of experience upon informal decisions cannot be ascertained.

Whilst reviewing job-seeker résumé structures and variables such as “sex, age, marital status, and academic achievement”, Oliphant and Alexander (1982, p. 830) discovered that informal decisions can be influenced by a screener's gender. Female screeners, in fact, consistently scored job-seekers lower than their male counterparts. Using simulated résumés, screeners were directed to rate résumés on a seven point scale. Résumés were randomised to reduce influences associated with résumé order. Consequently, these simulated résumés had limited variance and not as complex as actual résumés which might have been submitted by job-seekers. Additionally, screeners had no vested interest, other than academic, in the actual outcome in informal decisions. Also, since all participants had similar backgrounds and likely similar characteristics, generalisability cannot be determined; but the fact remains that there was a significant difference associated with ratings based on gender.

Ployhart et al. (2003) deliberate if test formats and context impact responses by evaluating how an actual call centre processes web-based tests and paper and pencil tests for screeners to profile job-seekers when making informal decisions. This call centre acts as a third-party agent for organisations; and consequently, it had limited vested interests and accountability for the poor hiring decisions of the customer organisations beyond general fees generated from tests. Although this study did determine that web-based testing was more accurate when profiling, the study was limited as to the end user of the job-seeker profiles.

It is apparent from these studies that screeners do not always make appropriate decisions. Whilst these studies provide significant findings, the explanation of these findings can only be speculative to actual organisations. In fact, most participating screeners did not have vested interests in informal decisions similar to actual screeners. Thus, screeners would not experience or be held accountable for negative consequences from poor decisions (e.g. employee theft, poor performance, and quick turnover). From these studies, the basis of this research emerged and is further discussed in the next section.

## **2.8 Secondary Research Questions Emerged from the Literature Review**

Whilst a significant body of selection and assessment research is focused on interview processes and practices, research on filtering processes has been limited (see Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Anderson et al., 2004; Robertson & Smith, 2001). According to Oswald et al. (2004), past research has reported on some aspects of informal decisions within filtering but most research (see Bliesener, 1996; Robertson & Smith, 2001; Thierry, 2007) has failed to have significant impact on practical settings and thus has failed to address issues in practice. Current theory, in fact, could be strengthened by exploring and integrating research surrounding informal decisions (Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000) in the daily practice of ‘doing’ selection and making decisions.

As reported in the first chapter this thesis aims to address the following overarching research question:

***“How are informal decisions reached by screeners when filtering out undesirable job applications?”***,

From the review of the literature important gaps in knowledge have been identified and three further research questions (secondary research questions) have been formulated:

*“What are the selection processes that small organisations use for informal decisions?”*

*“How is information weighted for informal decisions?”*

*“What are the major influences on assessors’ informal decisions?”*

Researching these questions will facilitate a better understanding of the issue investigated and will support the answer of the primary research question.

## **2.9 Conclusions**

Whilst literature provides a foundation of understanding, practice can be radically different from theory (Brownlie et al., 2008; Iles et al., 1990).

Many organisations desire a generalisable or adaptable selection process that can be applied effectively to local jurisdictions and international fora alike (Aycan, 2005; Porterfield, 2001), but information and testing have differing legal constraints across jurisdictional limits which can influence decisions. Whilst uniformity would promote consistency, inconsistency and individualism appear to be the norm (Pronin et al., 2002). Variances in labour laws, cultural attributes, and values are part of global operations and must be considered when constructing selection processes. Therefore, understanding informal decisions can improve organisational filtering processes and ensure consistency in hiring.

Any improvement in informal decisions in selection can create a competitive advantage for an organisation. In a global environment where resources are scarce and desires can be infinite, organisations having a competitive advantage have an increased chance at survival. Decreasing waste from resources (i.e. enhancing productivity) can be a dramatic competitive advantage. For example, Ferris et al. (2002) note competitions within labour markets can obligate organisational resources towards recruitment and retention practices and not towards productivity or product research and development. Essentially, organisations gain more by locating productive workers (Barron et al., 1985). According to Drucker (1954, p. 255), “...*the greatest opportunity for improved economic performance lies in the improvement of effectiveness of people in their work.*” These points illustrate that competitive advantages are dependent on good filtering decisions. Thus, good filtering decisions cost less in the long run (Browne et al., 2005; Zachar, 2004). As Drucker (in Edersheim, 2007, p. 195) points out “*The first sign of decline of a company is loss of appeal to qualified, able, and ambitious people.*”

“*In hiring a worker one always hire the whole man [sic].*” states Drucker (1954, p. 262). Stanton (1977, p. 103) states that “...*the best way to predict an applicant’s future job performance is to take a good look at what he or she has done in the past.*” However, deviations enter hiring decisions by cultural and social assumptions, through language, and simple error. Successful hiring decisions are hinged upon strong informal decisions rooted in guidelines and personnel specifications (cf., Barron et al., 1985; Blakemore & Low, 1984; Borjas & Goldberg, 1978), information processing (cf., Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Anderson & Shackleton, 1990), and screener objectivity (cf. Oliphant & Alexander, 1982; Ryan et al., 1999). Whilst this does not encompass all deviations in informal decisions, it does highlight what is most prevalent within the literature (cf., Anderson et al., 2004; Robertson & Smith, 2001).

This chapter has provided a strong foundation to explain aspects of human decision making processes; however, the depth of understanding these processes in informal decisions has not been achieved by reviewing literature and additional sources of information alone. This review allows questions concerning the relationships and nature of informal decisions regarding filtering to be formulated and asked. Boettcher (2004) and Bobko et al., (2008) suggest that understanding the environmental factors in which decisions are made can provide an opportunity to understand and interpret decision making processes.

Reflecting upon the management environment, Half (1985) notes that successful organisations can remove (or at least reduce) assumptions from hiring practices. Individuals are best lead by their strengths and knowledge (Drucker, 2001).

*“Management is about human beings. Its task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant. This is what organization is all about, and it is the reason that management is the critical determining factor.”*

Drucker (2001, p. 10)

The significant theme here is that the final quality of hiring decisions rests within early screening and informal filtering decisions which can significantly impact an organisation's visions and continued existence (Choo, 1998; Geerlings & van Veen, 2006). To be employed, job-seekers must successfully, either on their own merits or by erroneous decisions, pass filtering processes. Applying academic insight requires constantly revisiting discoveries to improve current practises. However, this solution is impractical and unimaginable as there are no strong theoretical depictions or comprehensive studies on informal decisions. From a practitioner viewpoint, clear communication amongst managers and staff responsible for filtering processes can reduce errors in judgement (Mercer, 1993). Errors can result from problems with information: screeners can improperly weight information (cf. Guion & Gottier, 1996; Hill et al., 1988; Keysar, 1989; McGrath, 2003) or make false assumptions by the improper weighting of information (Schmitt & Oswald, 2006). Finally, shared experiences, such as training, could reduce improperly weighted information (Bendig, 1956; Cook, 1991; Roch & O'Sullivan, 2003) by promoting understanding amongst decision-makers (Keysar, 1997; Keysar & Bly, 1995; Schmidt & Hunter, 1974).

A literature review was conducted before the formation of the research question (Eisenhardt, 1989a; Miller & Salkind, 2002; Shah & Corley, 2006). Yin (1994, p. 13, in Alan, 2003, p. 8) suggests that case studies *“benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis...”* Using the identified knowledge gaps

discussed with the methodological limitations of previous research concerning informal decisions, shortfalls in knowledge were identified to form the basis for research (Allan, 2003; Gephart, 2004; Maital et al., 2008): *How are informal decisions reached by screeners when filtering out undesirable job applications?* By focusing on daily hiring practices, this research will shed light on informal decisions that may not be evident with using other more indirect tools and methodologies.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology implemented to address this research question and build a deeper understanding of informal decisions within filtering processes.

# **Chapter 3 Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Whilst organisations can use filtering processes to significantly remove undesirable applicants from consideration, errors in judgement can alter informal filtering decisions such as selecting wrong applicants or rejecting acceptable applicants (Robertson & Smith, 2001; Shackleton & Newell, 1991). Chapter 2 highlighted the gaps existing concerning our understanding of informal decisions in selection processes whilst illustrating methodological approaches used by research in the field. Although research on informal decisions has been conducted, understanding these decision processes has been limited. Greater attention needs to be paid to informal decision making to better understand the practice in 'doing' filtering.

This chapter discusses and justifies the specific methodology taken for collecting and analysing the data. Additionally, it provides an overview of the three participant organisations upon which the empirical research is based.

### **3.2 The Research Objective and Research Question**

As presented in Chapter 1 and 2, this thesis centres on a main overarching research question:

***How are informal decisions reached by screeners when filtering out undesirable job applications?***

To explore this question, actual hiring decisions, starting with the initial application processes, are observed and discussed with screeners to explore, discover, and comprehend environmental variables and factors surrounding informal decisions. As informal decisions are hard to capture without field research, the researcher focused on screener discussions and observations about behaviours to postulate likely generalisations concerning informal filtering decisions.

Three secondary research questions emerged from the literature review:

- *"What are the selection processes that small organisations use for informal decisions?"*
- *"How is information weighted for informal decisions?"*
- *"What are the major influences on assessors' informal decisions?"*



Whilst the primary question will provide a central focus on this research, these secondary questions will help address the knowledge gaps noted in literature.

### **3.3 Epistemological Perspective of the Researcher**

I have always been interested in human behaviours especially the rationale behind decision processes concerning which individual to hire. When applying for work before I became an undergraduate student, I had many unsuccessful experiences when seeking employment. Employers often offered one of several reasons for not hiring me: I had no experience; I did not meet the educational standards; I was too young; it would take too long to train me; and I was not female. Apparently, being female was essential to many office positions such as the receptionist and file clerk positions that at that time I was applying.

These unsuccessful experiences caused me to think about what attributes, characteristics, and competencies employers value. If I could understand the employers, I could become a more successful job-seeker by marketing myself with those values in mind. This evolved into questions about how job-seekers are ranked and evaluated by employers: Those informal decisions. Although I have added to my basic understanding of hiring processes over the years, I ponder over the same basic questions, except from an employer's standpoint. Some examples include: "Is experience or education better?"; "Is the information on the application transferable to the available job?" and "How reliable is this information on the application?"

Thus, this thesis is personally motivated by my interests in answering these questions as much as it is by the lack of systematic knowledge on informal filtering decisions. Because reality is not mimicked in a laboratory environment (Lin, 1998), and because the focus of this thesis is placed on the 'practice' of making screening decision, the primary method of data collection considered the most appropriate to study hiring decision in practice is that of interviewing decision makers within organisations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as hiring is about people making decision (Drucker, 1998). As current knowledge on initial screening processes is limited, the rarity of events, opportunities, and occurrences justify field-based research (Stake, 2003). Therefore, Patton (2002, p. 1) suggests that "*...when in doubt, observe and ask questions.*" This is in line with interpretivist researchers as they recommend, if we want "*...to learn what people think...*", then we must "*Ask them*" (Miller, 1991, p. 119).

### **3.4 The Four Paradigms: Interpretivism Can Unlock Meanings**

Considering the researchers' perspective, Burwell and Morgan (1979) contend that all social theories may be contained within four paradigms as a result of considering the two axes: Subjective versus objective and change versus regulation. Each paradigm exists within a separate reality based upon individual perception as depicted in the figure below. Whilst a researcher may manoeuvre amongst different paradigms, a researcher cannot function simultaneously in more than one paradigm. For example, a researcher can either focus on radical change or regulation whilst being either subjective or objective. Each will be briefly discussed.

**Figure 3-1: Four Paradigms for the Analysis of Social Theory**



The radical humanist considers the existing framework of a society for changing and challenging that structure (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). It seeks to reduce society's constraining rules to allow people to reach their potentials. The radical humanist is inappropriate for this research as the research objectives focus on identification and understanding, not making drastic changes to an existing establishment.

The radical structuralist seeks drastic change sometimes through conflict (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). It pursues simple answers from an objectivist standpoint concerning how collective establishments interact and how those establishments are influenced. Moreover, catastrophic economic and political shifts are the most common methods used by the radical structuralist for accomplishing changes within society. This paradigm is also inappropriate as this researcher seeks to understand and not change the environment surrounding filtering processes.

The functionalist objectively seeks logical reasons of social interactions (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Moreover, the functionalist emphasises testing theories. Whilst real-world

results are sought by functionalists, this thesis focuses on understanding human behaviours associated with decision-processes which may, at times, be irrational and therefore these behaviours can only be comprehended through the actors of those behaviours.

Interpretivism rejects “...*the use of mechanical and biological ideas...*” to gain knowledge through interpreting the social reality as seen and comprehended by the actors (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 27). Interpretivists assume that “...*the world of human affairs is cohesive, ordered and integrated...*” with organisations existing in abstraction (p. 31) as reality is socially constructed and “...*knowledge is gained, or at least filtered, through social constructions such as language, consciousness, and shared meanings*” (Rowlands, 2005, p. 81). Taylor (2010, p. 84) states that “*as people engage in conscious, intentional activities and attach meanings to their actions, human societies are essentially subjective realities.*” As experience is personal, it is best understood from the perspectives of those individuals whom assign significance to those experiences (Bailey, 2007; Gubrium & Holstein, 2003). The key to interpretivist research is unlocking the connotations surrounding individuals (Rowlands, 2005), specifically, how individuals interpret information and their environments (Bailey, 2007; Taylor, 2010). Thus, interpretivism is most appropriate for this research enquiry.

Interpretivism uses descriptions to establish validity and to identify general principles through data collection (Lin, 1998). The aim of interpretivist research, thus, is not generalisability and the search for causal relationships but the achievement of a shared meaning (Allan, 1998). Interpretivists can acquire stories from participants that become the foundation for shared experience amongst the researcher and participants (Ferguson, 1993; McCutcheon & Jung, 1990). A pure interpretivist focuses on the analysis of verbal data (Allan, 1998); however, analysis of other communication through spoken or written language and non-verbal cues also contribute to enhance understanding (Patton, 2000).

Jargon, metaphors, body movements, and other forms of communications are important to an interpretivist since these facilitate a deeper understanding of how people, places, things, and ideas are viewed (Brown, 2000; Kaminsky, 2000). Likewise, Patton (2000, p. 15) notes that an evaluator’s language “...*consciously or unconsciously, necessarily and inherently shapes, defines ‘reality,’ and affects mutual understanding.*” Also, an evaluator’s language, according to Kaminsky (2000, p. 69), “...*frames how they think about and practice their work.*” “*People not organizations turn data into information for its use as knowledge*” (Rallis, 2000, p. 83).

Understanding language can be complicated by its variability (Madison, 2000). Language has social applications that can be meant for multiple audiences. Madison (2000) points to Ferdinand de Saussure’s interpretation: Speech is individual and language is social.

When language is used in social concepts like policy making, language creates its own meanings and traditions (Cabatoff, 2000). Policy makers must consider how language can be interpreted as “...*language can either enable or discourage dialogue*” (Rallis, 2000, p. 81). For example, when language is interpreted as threatening, readers may become defensive, that is, become close-minded, deflect findings, and actively discard information. Thus, policy makers should promote safe environments to encourage openness and learning.

Agar (2000, p. 94) suggests that “...*if one is interested in the background of persons and communities, those surface linguistic details offer a publicly available place to start the investigation.*” This emersion of the researcher into the phenomena echoes GT’s constant comparison and analysis (Charmaz, 2008; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Under interpretivism, a standard thought process is not formalised but open to new insight and experiences (Ferguson, 1993). This openness enhances qualitative research especially when a researcher must constantly compare data, observations, and information (Bostrom, 2004).

According to Stanton (1977, p. 103), “*What is a lot harder [for the screener] is to interpret the information given to us by the job-seeker correctly.*” Whilst pragmatic science, that is a relevant phenomenon studied within a rigorous methodological setting, is the way forward for practical selection theory research (Anderson et al., 2004), researchers must understand and interpret the true environment surrounding filtering decisions to achieve the depth of knowledge desired (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Miller, 1991) and those responsible for making decisions. By understanding informal decision processes, improvements within selection processes can be made. For this research, historical context can relate to screeners’ experiences whilst social practices relate to current actions and decisions made by screeners. The rational and justification of decisions are best understood through the thoughts of the screeners making decisions in which the interpretivist paradigm focuses upon the responses generated from individuals resulting from how that individual has construed a situation or reality.

The interpretivist paradigm evaluates a phenomenon’s socially constructed nature (Rowlands, 2005) to understand the “...*humanist viewpoint...*” (Taylor, 2010, p. 83). Thus, relationships between researchers and phenomena are stressed in interpretivist research (Rowlands, 2005, p. 81) as “...*the task of the inquirer [researcher] is to unearth [or discover] that meaning*” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 134) in underpinning socially interpreted realities (Taylor, 2010). Socially interpreted realities dominant hiring processes as “*[m]ost personnel practitioners have high inherent degree of humanism and sensitivity toward people...*” (Stanton, 1977, p. 105). I believe that through discussions with screeners, these socially interpreted realities shall emerge and ultimately be discovered. This belief is shared with

other grounded theorists. Rowlands (2005, p. 87) cites Strauss & Corbin (1990) as declaring that research under interpretivism can be more than satisfied with GT. Lin (1998) agrees and contends that development of theory is most appropriate for the interpretivist paradigm. Whilst interpretivism does not generalise theory, it establishes relatable theory that may be applied to organisations (Allan, 1998). A strong theory cannot be generalised without a research strategy and a research design such as the case study.

### **3.5 The Research Strategy and Research Design: The Case Study**

The case study is an important research strategy in business research (Rowlands, 2005; Yin, 1994) as it allows depth of knowledge that is paramount in organisational research. Furthermore, it is widely used in qualitative (Maxwell & Miller, 2008) or multi-methodological research (Priola, 2010). Rowlands (2005, p. 83) cites Yin (2003) as describing case study research as critically important in obtaining insight into new topics or changing fields by allowing the researcher to “...*understand the problem, the nature and complexity of the process taking place...*” Yin (1994, p. 13) states “...*the case study is not either a data collection tactic or merely a design feature alone (Stoecker, 1991) but a comprehensive research strategy.*” Yin (1989 in Schwandt 2001, p. 23) notes:

*“...a case study strategy is preferred when the inquirer seeks answers to how or why questions, when the inquirer has little control over events being studied, when the object of study is a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context, when boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear, and when it is desirable to use multiple sources of evidence”*

Based on Schwandt's (2001) description, this research seeks to understand the cognitive decision-making processes within an environment where decisions take place and outside of the researcher's control. For this thesis, case studies will provide a critical bridge between academic and practical questions (Eisenhardt, 1989a; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007) and are well suited for research situated within social sciences such as management theory (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1994) and research rooted in GT (Allan, 2003) as recommended by Glaser (1978).

According to Yin (1994), two types of case study strategies exist: Holistic and embedded. A holistic case study examines the topic as a whole whilst an embedded case study examines individual units of analysis and potentially other data sources outside of an organisation (Yin, 1994). Contradicting Yin, Stake (2003) contends that three types of case studies exist. The first type is known as an *intrinsic case study* where a deeper understanding is sought and not necessarily theory building as the researcher is focusing on smaller aspects of the phenomenon. The second type is an *instrumental case study* where

additional information needs require specifically targeted cases to be undertaken for theory modifications. Finally, a *collective case study* is where multiple cases are conducted and integrated into a collective contribution. Whilst various authors (e.g., Patton, 2002; Rowlands, 2005; Stake, 2005) have categorised case studies in different types, this thesis follows Yin (1994) categorisation and utilises the embedded case study strategy where the researcher participated within organisational environments interviewing and observing participants.

Observations are a common element and considered a strong component of a case study strategy as observations help the researcher capture characteristics of the environment surrounding the study and direct interview questions (Bailey, 2007; Patton, 2002). Observations give the researcher a first-hand account of participant experiences and therefore conceptualisations by the researcher of organisational settings are not necessary (Patton, 2002). Whilst some observations may be ordinary, ordinary observation should not be overlooked as these add more depth and detail to a case.

A case study must have a limited duration with a definitive beginning and conclusion to be effective (Yin, 1994). A researcher must be sensitive to time as overstaying can contribute to organisational resistance and not staying long enough might cause a lack of data (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). An important aspect concerning case study analysis is maintaining the data collection activity to focus towards answering the questions posed. In turn, this focus will make data analysis occur more smoothly. Whilst many case studies focus on theoretical propositions, research questions can guide case study research just as well.

Individual case studies conducted sequentially offer the opportunity for cross-analysis and categorical saturation (Rowlands, 2005) whilst allowing for data segregation and analysis first at the single case level then at a pattern matching level amongst cases (Yin, 1994) to identify theoretical issues that are emergent in GT (Glaser, 1978). Cross-case analysis strengthens the theory generated through interpretivism (Lin, 1998). Schwandt (2001, p. 47) notes that Yin (1989) “...*advises that the choice of single or multiple cases is a design decision.*” Cases are chosen based upon expected contributions to the research at hand.

This thesis will primarily use a qualitative case study strategy based on observations and interviews in order to obtain data directly from decision makers as actual filtering decisions are contemplated and made. The case study is an appropriate strategy for exploring research questions as the researcher can discuss participants’ decisions, directly observe behaviours, and participate within organisational activities (Yin, 1994). According to Redding (1994), management research needs more case studies to develop a deep understanding of occurrences. Stake (2005) notes that case studies are a common form of

qualitative research that may focus on specific topics and compared and contrasted with other case studies.

According to Anderson et al. (2004), decisions are not always rational. As human behaviours are extremely difficult to understand, qualitative research designs, especially the case study, are used to explore this thesis's research questions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). This case study method uses a holistic approach focusing on screener perceptions (Gephart, 2004). Therefore, informal decisions were explored outside a laboratory and within field-based and natural occurring environments. For this thesis, a case study shall be defined by each participating organisation and a case defined by each participant (Stake, 2003; 2005). Thus, a case study may have multiple cases. This case study design will follow a GT approach.

### **3.5.1 Grounded Theory Approach**

GT is a methodology where researchers become integrated within the studied environment (Charmaz, 2003; 2005; 2008) to systematically analyses data and new insights that lead to the development of a generalisable theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1978). GT provides the best opportunity to understand informal filtering decisions (Shah & Corley, 2006) as GT was designed “...to study emergent social or social psychological processes” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 159 citing Glaser, 1978 and Glaser & Strauss, 1967). GT can comprehend multiple variables and deviations surrounding complex environments (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1994) through information analysis, observations, and experiences to provide a strong, rich theory about informal decisions (Lazear, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Charmaz (2005) notes that GT is an interactive methodology that can focus enquiry through constant re-evaluation to “...discover invisible relationships” concerning wonders being studied (p. 527). Therefore, GT is well equipped to develop a theory in an under-represented field that is relevant to practitioners (Fernández, 2004).

**Figure 3-2: Grounded Theory in Management Research**



Source: Kaplan (1998) as cited by Maital et al. (1998, p. 4).

The figure above was constructed by Maital et al. (1998) using the processes as outlined by Kaplan (1998) to illustrate the progression of GT. GT starts with identifying a key management challenge (Maital et al., 2008). For this thesis, the research question represents those management challenges. The next stage of GT is observation, which is represented by the three case studies. Followed by written observations of a case study (i.e. Chapters 4, 5, and 6), general innovations are identified. Like most GT, case studies provide critical insights into filtering (Gephart, 2004).

Under GT, innovations are applied, refined, and observed under constant comparison which continuously integrates and analysis new information to form a stronger theoretical basis (Charmaz, 2003; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1978; Shah & Corley, 2006). Constant comparison provides improved precision and consistency through rigorous, detailed, and clearly defined coding processes to consistently narrow, refine, and dissect this challenge to basic elements until a deep understanding of the phenomena is reached (Charmaz, 2003; 2005; Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Glaser, 1978; 2009). This is applied to information until the potential of new knowledge is minimal (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Gephart, 2004); thus, *category saturation* (Suddaby, 2006) or *theoretical saturation* (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) has occurred. Finally, GT returns to identification of a key management challenge (Maital et al., 2008).



However, GT variations exist (see Charmaz, 2003; 2008; Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). A primary variation is when to conduct a literature review: Before, during, or after data collection (Dunne, 2011; Neal, 2009). According to Glaser (1978; 2009), these variants (i.e. Charmaz, Corbin & Strauss) are actually qualitative data analysis and not proper applications of GT. Classic GT requires that literature reviews are conducted after data collection and prior to final analysis (Glaser, 1978; Glaser with Holton, 2004; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Conversely, literature reviews can be undertaken early on (Charmaz, 2005; Luckerhoff & Guillemette, 2011; Neal, 2009) as researchers must determine when to conduct them (Dunne, 2011). Moreover, many doctoral students and inexperienced researchers using GT are advised to complete a comprehensive literature review prior to data collection as research committees are often not willing to allow projects to continue without initial literature consultations (Dunne, 2011; Luckerhoff & Guillemette, 2011). Whilst doctoral research sometimes fails to follow Classic GT (Glaser, 2009), Patton (2002) states that GT is well suited for doctoral dissertations with literature review completed prior to fieldwork (see Eva, 2007; Hulko, 2004).

Another variation is the use of technology (Fernández, 2004). Classic GT discourages technology (i.e. digital and video recordings) in capturing interviews and to analyse data as technology hinders critical analysis and thinking. Fernández (2004) contends digital recording technology assists researchers in interview re-immersion to allow for a deeper understanding by constantly comparing data and researcher interpretations. Charmaz (2003) suggests that computer programmes like NUD-IST, NVIVO, Ethnograph, and HyperResearch can assist researchers with sorting, grouping, and analysing data. These programmes help solve problems associated with large data sets; but Charmaz (2003) footnotes that some users have encountered difficulties when conducting theoretical coding.

Miller and Salkind (2002, p. 155) outline GT's "*...four central criteria: fit, work, relevance, and modifiability.*" In essence, this research had to classify and fit (not force) data patterns into a working reality that was relevant to practitioners whilst continuously integrating information to allow for theory evolution (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser, 1978). For example: After decisions were analysed, data were detailed by occurrences, circumstances, and effects (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This continuum allows theory to be modified but not destroyed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Whilst variations in coding processes exists (Charmaz, 2003; 2008; Glaser, 2009), coding processes follow stringent criteria and remain central to GT (Charmaz, 2003; Glaser, 1978). Ng and Hase (2008) contend that the primary coding difference is that Strauss' approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) reviews each word and maps possibilities whilst Glaser's

(1978; 2009) focuses on meanings and content to discover the story. Miller and Salkind (2002) distinguish between three stages of coding: Open, axial, and selective stages whilst Glaser with Holton (2004) propose that coding is open, selective, and theoretical. In essence, Strauss uses a microanalysis whilst Glaser a macroanalysis to discover theory (Allan, 2003).

Under GT, coding processes occur in stages beginning with open coding (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Open coding, according to Glaser with Holton (2004, p. 9), allows the researcher the freedom to “...become selective and focused on a particular problem.” To better understand the research concept, categories and properties of data begin to emerge in open coding (Charmaz, 2008; Glaser 1978) when data is fractured through microanalysis (Duchscher & Morgan, 2004). Open coding identifies basic meanings of data by a line-by-line analysis using memoing (Glaser with Holton, 2004) to describe the actions and explanations about observations or thoughts concerning occurrences in the form of short notes (Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Glaser, 1978; 2009). Glaser (2009) suggests coding processes should not follow any preconceived thoughts or patterns as jargons can corrupt the emergence of theory. However, core categories known as a Basic Social Processes (BSP) can be discovered as these are often “...labeled by a ‘gerund’ (‘ing’)...” (Glaser, 1978, p. 97). Charmaz (2008, p. 164) agrees with Glaser (1978) and offers this advice:

*“Coding with gerunds, that is, noun forms of verbs, such as revealing, defining, feeling, or wanting, help to define what is happening in a fragment of data or a description of an incident. Gerunds enable grounded theorists to see implicit processes, to make connections between codes, and to keep their analyses active and emergent.”*

Axial coding, also known as systematic GT (Miller & Salkind, 2002), is an intermediate step between open and selective coding processes whereby categories are delimited (Charmaz, 2003; Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Citing Corbin and Strauss (1988, p. 125), Charmaz (2008, pp. 159-160) states:

*“Strauss and Corbin define axial coding as a way of specifying the dimensions of a category, relating categories to subcategories, delineating relationships between them, and bring the data back together into a coherent whole after being fractured them during initial coding.”*

Under classic GT, the axial coding concept is not addressed (cf., Charmaz, 2003; 2008; Glaser, 2009) as constant comparison allows concepts to emerge into theory (Glaser, 1978).

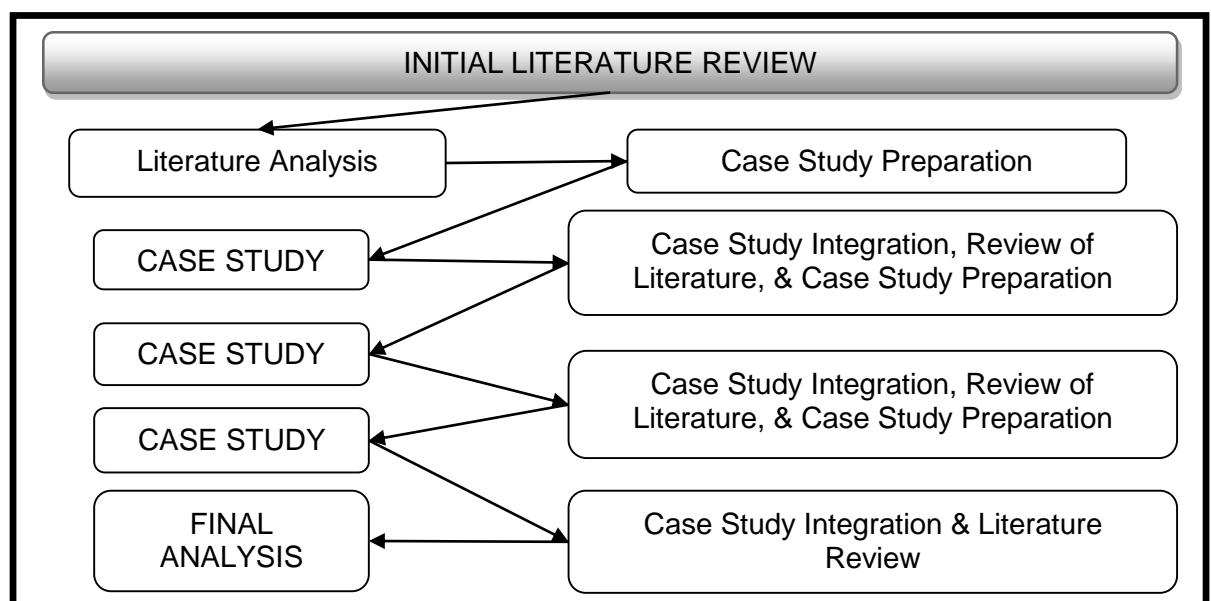
After the most significant codes and/or most frequent codes emerge, open coding yields to selective coding in Classic GT (Charmaz, 2008; Duchscher & Morgan, 2004). Selective coding reduces open categories to core categories (Glaser, 1978; Ng & Hase, 2008). Research is more focused at this stage with questions directed to saturate categories.

Selective coding helps produce ‘*parsimonious theory*’ or theory whose explanation is simple whilst being relatively generalisable (Glaser with Holton, 2004, p. 11). Selective coding generates substantive categories that become the fabric of conceptualisation for theoretical coding (Glaser with Holton, 2004).

Theoretical coding is the stage where “*advanced coding*” occurs under classic GT (Duchscher & Morgan, 2004, p. 609). Theoretical coding involves the researcher examining and conceptualising relationships associated with selectively coded data to form hypotheses that will be integrated into theory which is grounded in empirical data (Glaser, 1978; Ng & Hase, 2008). The process of theoretical coding takes significant time and must not be forced into theory (Glaser with Holton, 2004; Nunes et al., 2010). In fact, theory must be reviewed from several perspectives through constant comparison to provide a rich theoretical base. Charmaz (2008, p. 167) notes that “...*a major strength of the grounded theory method is that these budding conceptualizations [theoretical coding] can lead researchers in the most useful, often emergent and unanticipated theoretical direction to understand their data.*”

This thesis follows closely with GT discussed by Charmaz (2003; 2005; 2008) as consulting previous studies before field-work can concentrate efforts to understand informal decision environments. Furthermore, the use of recording technology has helped to capture the exact words, tones, and vocal cues of participants for a more comprehensive understanding of the meanings of actions. With reference to coding processes, open coding was used to identify general groups, selective coding to further define subgroups within a general group, and theoretical coding to define relationships amongst groups and subgroups (Glaser, 1978).

**Figure 3-3: General Overview of Grounded Theory Research Process**



After each case, a follow-up literature search was conducted to identify relevant recent publications. This phase was repeated until three case studies were completed. The figure above illustrates this approach.

#### **Figure 3-4: Pilot Studies' Context-Awareness Cycle**

Source: Nunes et al., 2010, p. 77



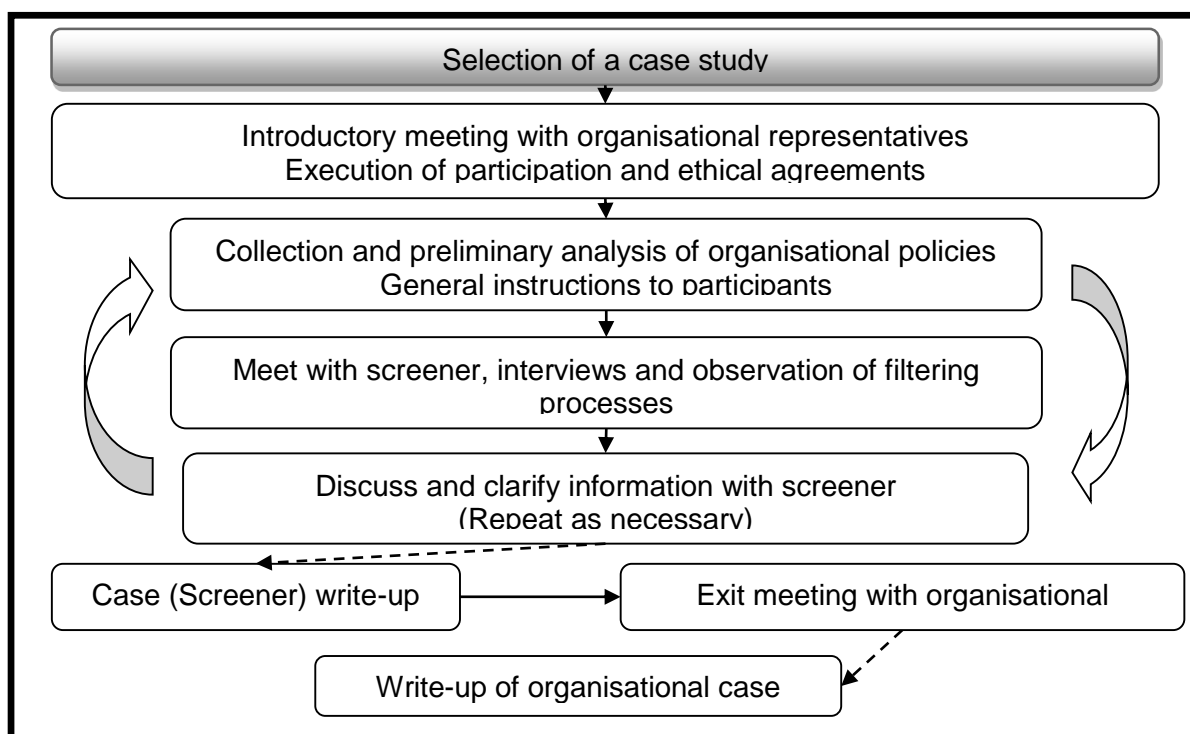
The first case study can be considered as a pilot study that guides subsequent case studies and data analysis and collection. Pilot studies are needed in GT research to mitigate risks stemming from unfocused research (Nunes et al., 2010). By focusing research, core concepts emerge allowing researchers to determine the next direction in data collection. In essence, researchers gather data, perform analysis, gather data, perform comparative analysis, and so forth as illustrated in the figure above. In this concept, three circles represent specific stages within this cycle that researcher adhere to: Recognise, capture and represent, and refine exploratory tools. The first cycle, recognise, identifies emerging core categories. The second cycle, capture and represent, describes core events. Finally, refine exploratory tools focuses upon relevant emerging categories to discover theoretical concepts.

#### **3.5.2 Case Study Organisations**

The case study is a common element in GT research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Driven by *theoretical relevance* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) with diversity in mind (Glaser, 2009), actual organisations were selected for field-based case studies centred upon uniqueness, abnormality, complexity, research needs, expectations for identification of new knowledge and researcher access (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Stake, 2003; Yin, 1994). The figure below illustrates the general approach of each case study.

Participating organisations were selected on size, industry, and the regional area where the researcher is based (Charleston, West Virginia, USA) through personal contacts (see Bailey, 2007; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Margolis & Molinsky, 2008) and with diversity in mind (Glaser, 2009). Participants for this research were classified into direct participants and indirect participants as detailed within section 4.7.7. Appendix 3 presents general information about the organisations that were approached. For the three participants, a brief explanation of the reason for selection follows with greater information being presented in the respective case study chapter.

**Figure 3-5: General Overview of a Case Study**



Three organisations were selected as case studies: a Research Centre, a Veterinary Hospital and Charleston Area Medical Centre (“CAMC”). The table below provides some key demographics concerning each organisation with respect to type of industry, number of employees, and funding source. From this table, it is apparent that there are more differences than similarities amongst organisations. Two employees of the Research Centre use funds from general tax appropriations to support to government programmes that provide legal services in eligible proceedings. Conversely, the Veterinary Hospital relies on payments for animal care services to support the thirty-two person operation. Likewise, CAMC depends on payments for medical services to support its organisation of over 7,000 employees. However, the source of these payments are a mixture of insurance and other third-party payments, contractual payments, consumer payments, and government appropriations.

**Table 3-1: General Organisational Demographics**

Organisation	Industry	Number of Employee	Source of Funds
Research Centre	State Government	2*	Government Appropriation
Veterinary Hospital	Animal Care	32	Services for Fees
CAMC	Hospital	Over 7000	Mixed: Services for Fees, Government Appropriations, and Contractual Commitments.
*Whilst the Research Centre only has two employees, they provide support to seventeen external quasi-governmental organisations comprised of approximately 200 employees.			

Based on the convenience to the researcher, the **Research Centre** was selected as a pilot study to identify issues associated with research strategy and design (Nunes et al., 2010; Yin, 1994). As the researcher was employed with the parent organisation, access to information and trusting relationships had already been established. These relationships would lead to a better data collection and thereby understanding of informal filtering decisions (Bailey, 2007; Yin, 1994). Moreover, the Research Centre was a smaller size (i.e., two employees) organisation that would be a better fit for the first case study. Furthermore, the repetition of selecting very similar applicants for the same position allows for refinement of data collection. These characteristics permit the researcher to fully embed into discussions and acquire a stronger understanding of informal decisions before moving to the next case study.

In relationship to the pilot study, the second case study (i.e., **Veterinary Hospital**) was selected because it offered diversity in terms of organisational size (i.e., 31 employees), composition of professionals and staff, and industry (i.e., animal medical services) (Glaser, 2009) and for its close proximity to the researcher. Additionally, the hiring was for permanent employees of the organisation and not for temporary employees of external agencies. This change in hiring strategy could provide interesting data concerning decision processes.

Considering the Research Centre and the Veterinary Hospital, expanding the diversity amongst organisational characteristics and demographics could provide a greater theoretical relevance to practitioners (Glaser, 2009). **Charleston Area Medical Centre ("CAMC")** was selected for the third case study for several reasons. First, CAMC was a conglomerate of seven health care organisations consisting of approximately 7,000 employees. Second, it was one of the largest employers within the State of West Virginia. Next, CAMC's recruitment and selection efforts (e.g. advertisements, billboards, job fairs,

and news stories) were highly visible. Finally, it was a very structured organisation in which hiring decisions might be examined with written policies in mind. The previous case studies lacked written procedures.

Case studies that capture experiences of several screeners within differing environments contributed to theory adaptively whilst reducing researcher biases (Glaser, 1978; 2009; Love, 1991; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Field-based participants improved epistemology through clean and uninhibited approaches towards data being collected (Eisenhardt, 1991; Hausknecht et al., 2004). Where laboratory studies control variables, field-based settings allowed variables to co-exist without researcher modifications or controls to remove those variables. Thus, tracing the journey of applications through selection processes where informal filtering decisions became a critical research design component.

Whilst “...[t]here are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry...” (Patton, 2002, p. 244), participants that were interviewed represent the key informants and most knowledgeable individuals within each organisation. Participants were labelled with the letter “S” for subject followed by a number based on the chronological order of interview. Hence the first participant is labelled S1, the second as S2, and so forth (see following Table).

**Table 3-2: List of Direct Participants**

Participant	Organisation	Gender	Education
S1	Research Centre	Male	Professional – J.D.
S2	Research Centre	Female	Undergraduate – BBA
S3	Veterinary Hospital	Female	Associate – Massage Therapy
S4	CAMC	Female	Master’s Degree – Industrial & Employee Relations
S5	CAMC	Female	Undergraduate – Organisational Leadership
S6	CAMC	Female	Undergraduate
S7	CAMC	Female	Undergraduate
S8	CAMC	Male	High School
S9	CAMC	Female	Undergraduate – Nursing
S10	CAMC	Female	Undergraduate
S11	Veterinary Hospital	Female	Associate

Access to participants was contingent upon each respective organisation: Allotted time, access to personnel, funding, and research needs (Bailey, 2007). Whilst access was limited, this researcher's presence and data collection methods was believed to have no more influence on decision makers than managers providing one-to-one training, supervision, and feedback to decision makers.

### **3.5.3 Case Study Disclosures**

To avoid a conflict of interest, actual or perceived, the disclosure of relevant information about the relationships amongst this researcher and each case is necessary and presented below (Patton, 2002). Additionally, by being an embedded researcher and working with screeners, impression management, *"the process by which people control the impressions others form of them"*, should be reduced over time (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 34). Moreover, working in team environments allows this researcher to observe employees' behaviours towards any individual engaging in impression management (Barrick & Mount, 1996). Thus, participants would likely not utilise impression management for this researcher without also using it for fellow employees.

#### Research Centre

Since 2001, this researcher has been employed with the West Virginia Public Defender Services. Since 2002, this researcher has worked closely with both participants in the same office. During this case study, this researcher served as the Public Defender Accountant and Acting Director of Operations. Subsequently, the researcher became the Director of Administration/Public Defender Operations in March 2010. Whilst there was a working relationship amongst the participants and researcher, participants were free to withdraw from this research without any penalties. However, although the possibility exists that the participants may have felt some pressure to assist the researcher, the close working relationship would allow for the freedom to withdraw.

#### Veterinary Hospital

This researcher has used the Veterinary Hospital services and facilities for family pets. Additionally, an owner's spouse owns a majority interest in an insurance business where the researcher has policies. Whilst these relationships exist, no reference to them was



made when approaching the organisation seeking access for research purposes; furthermore participants were free to withdraw from this research without any penalties.

### CAMC

During the initial part of this CAMC case study, the Veterinary Hospital case study was concluding. Also, this researcher previously worked (from January 2005 to December 2006) as an instructor for West Virginia Junior College—A school with an established relationship with CAMC.

## **3.6 Methods for the Collection of Data**

Rules for collecting data using GT are not formalised (Duchscher & Morgan, 2004). To develop a deep understanding, information was collected using several data sources: Published literature, case studies focusing on observations and open interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Yin, 1994). For this research, the GT concept that “*all is data*” was applied (Glaser with Holton, 2004; Ng & Hase, 2008, p. 159 citing Glaser, 1998, p. 8). Under GT, written accounts of phenomena (i.e. literature and research) become central to analysis and developing understanding of specific events whilst ensuring consistent measurement (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Jick, 1979; Judd et al., 1991). However, secondary data sources serve to support case studies as this research is rooted within those case studies (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 2002).

### **3.6.1 Organisational Documents, Records, and Materials**

Organisational documents, records, and materials provided an overview of the preferred processes for selecting employees (Altheide et al., 2008; Prior, 2008). These included both public and non-public information sources from organisational websites, news clippings, personnel policies, personnel procedures, computer data bases, electronic records, and other relevant sources. For each case study, critical organisational documents that were collected and consulted are identified in Appendix 17. Additionally, records remained with the organisation due to privacy and liability issues. Records are formal information sources (e.g. résumés, personnel transaction reports, evaluations, and background checks) whilst documents are for personal use (e.g. interview notes, some correspondence) (Hodder, 1998).

The benefits of this data is that historical information such as records and documents can offer understanding into the social environments (i.e. the importance and relevance of events) especially if the creator of that information is part of that social environment (Patton, 2002; Prior, 2008). Additionally, material relates to those artefacts or physical representations of an individual or a society. Documents and records provide supporting information for interviews (Hodder, 1998; Peräkylä, 2005) and to help direct the interview questions (Patton, 2002).

As the focus of this thesis are the informal decisions within filtering processes, documents, records, and materials are considered secondary to the data collected from interviews; and as such, are relevant to the individual case studies and not necessarily transferable to other organisations. Another drawback in collecting this type of data is that not all participants have adequate, if any, documents, records, and materials. Additionally, some relevant documents could have been omitted or withheld from the researcher (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1994).

During the initial meetings with participants, documents, records and materials were obtained from organisations concerning hiring and selection processes. In the Research Centre and the Veterinary Hospital, this type of data were lacking and it was necessary to rely more on interviews in collecting data. With CAMC, an abundance of data was presented which required the researcher to classify information based on its relevance to informal decisions and selection processes. Only data that had primary relevance to informal decisions and selection processes was considered.

### **3.6.2 Interview Strategy**

Central to GT, interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2008) formed a basic core for gathering information (Eisenhardt, 1989b) whilst allowing for a personal connection between the researcher and participant (Bailey, 2007). Although there are various interview strategies, the two most relevant for this thesis are the face-to-face interview (i.e. participant to researcher) and the group interviews (i.e. researcher to multiple participants) (Yin, 1994). The preference is for face-to-face interviews as these can provide more data for comparative analysis within the same organisation. Additionally, compared to group interviews, responses in face-to-face interviews are less likely to be influenced by other participants, as in this specific cases the objective is to understand individual's decision making processes.

The benefits of the interview strategy is that information will be gathered from originating sources, the screeners, where informal decisions occur (Eisenhardt, 1989b; Peräkylä, 2005). Interviews offer the flexibility to direct questions towards interesting

research findings (Patton, 2002) and for information sharing and understanding of social constraints (Fontana & Frey, 1998; Peräkylä, 2005); however, the drawback is that interviews can present only one perspective and data obtained can be repetitive (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, GT's categorical saturation is important in overcoming this barrier (Charmaz, 2005; Glaser, 1978) as this directs the "...next interview and observations" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 6). Other potential pitfalls associated with interviews are the poor interviewing skills which can lead to misinterpretation and modified responses by participants (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1994).

Prior to interviewing participants, informed consent was sought and participants were offered opportunities to ask questions prior to, during, and after interviews. During interviews, the focus was on capturing informal decisions and thought processes before intense data analysis commenced (Eisenhardt, 1989a). Field notes were compiled into a supplementary report for analysis and discussion. Only three interviews were captured using a digital recording device which allowed this researcher to re-immense himself into interviews through transcription and audio analysis (Fernández, 2004; Peräkylä, 2005; Yin, 1994). However accurate notes were taken during and after all eleven of the individual interviews. The participants who declined to be recorded cited *being uncomfortable with being recorded, fear of supervisor obtaining a copy of it, the participant had little to offer to the study, and no explanation*.

Face-to-face individual and group interviews were the primary method used to collect data from screeners (see Table below). Group interviews were used in two instances (i.e. S1 & S2 and S9 & S10) as participants worked together making decisions as a team. Under the case study strategy, these participants were identified by group and coded as a unit of analysis (Yin, 1994).

**Table 3-3: List of Participant and Interview Types and Dates**

Participants	Type of Interview	Date of Interview
S1	Group with S2	19 January 2010
S2	Group with S1	19 January 2010
S3	Individual	5 July 10
S4	Individual	2 June 2010
S5	Individual	8 July 2010
S6	Individual	8 July 2010
S7	Individual	15 July 2010

S8	Individual	15 July 2010
S9	Group with S10	29 July 2010
S10	Group with S9	29 July 2010
S11	Individual	6 February 2012

Since structured interviews leave little room for variation (Fontana & Frey, 1998), these interviews were semi-structured to provide for development of information under GT (Bailey, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Peräkylä, 2005). Interviews followed non-experimental controls surrounding informal decisions and filtering stories to identify critical decision stages that illustrate practise (Judd et al., 1991; Love, 1991). There were nine semi-structured interviews with screeners which were limited to not more than two per day. Furthermore, to gain trust and a better appreciation of the organisation, the researcher participated in staff meetings and other functions (e.g. newcomer orientation and luncheons) where he was exposed to additional information and interactions with participants. Finally, this researcher dressed fairly similar to the participants to build trust and confidence as Babbie (1990) suggests that inappropriate attire could inhibit responses from participants.

Interviews normally ranged between thirty minutes to one hour. Semi-structured open ended questions (see also Appendix 26) guided interviews. Some examples of interview questions follow:

- *Why was the educational degree(s) [or other skill] the first qualifications you reviewed?;*
- *What information was the most/least important?;*
- *Was 'how the applicant came to apply for this position' important?;*
- *What do you like/dislike about this application?;*
- *Do you know this applicant?;*
- *How accurate/truthful is the applicant information?;* and
- *Does the optional information (i.e. race, gender, nationality) help make your decision?*

These interview questions will reveal screener perceptions of organisational personnel specifications and provide a foundation for understanding informal decisions.

### 3.6.2.1 Thinking Aloud Protocol

Case studies were designed around an embedded researcher using the *thinking aloud protocol* during the interviews. Information was collected during screening processes through screeners' verbalisations describing decision processes, thought processes, application processing, and justifications for decisions (Boren & Ramey, 2000; Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002, p. 385) a benefit to the thinking aloud protocol is that it "...illuminate[s] what's going on in a person's head during the performance of a task..." This provided a field-based and realistic understanding of screener actions and organisational events through common shared experiences (Boren & Ramey, 2000; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993; Miller & Salkind, 2002). The primary difficulty in using the *thinking aloud protocol* was that participants had more difficulty using this technique in the field as distractions were more likely to interrupt thought processes. Additionally, this type of communication is not a common everyday technique for communicating and the concept of the *thinking aloud protocol* can be foreign and difficult for participants to practise.

The thinking aloud protocol was presented with examples to the participants before interviews commenced. Interviews were typically between thirty minutes and one hour per screener as category saturation had occurred since information became redundant. However, additional time was spent when information became interesting and non-repetitive. This follows GT's category saturation methodology where information is probed until repetition occurs (Glaser, 1978). Although participants were directed and redirected to use the *thinking aloud protocol*, the researcher was careful not to offend a participant with consistent redirection as it could negatively impact the flow and quality of data.

### 3.6.2.2 Transcription of Case Notes and Interviews

According to Schwandt (2001, p. 255), "*Transcription is the act of recording and preparing a record of the respondents' own words...[which] may result from retyped handwritten notes or audio recordings.*" With GT analysis, transcriptions and case notes provide the foundation for data analysis (Glaser, 1978). The primary drawback of transcription is there is not a universally established acceptable standard for presenting field notes (Patton, 2002). Unless the interview is captured by a recording device, some aspects of the interview will not be reflected in the written data especially as time can diminish memory recall (Bailey, 2007). According to Bailey (2007) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992), there are three types of notes: Mental, jotted, and full field notes. Mental notes are written shortly after an investigation/interview. Jotted notes are short memos that help trigger

memory recall about investigations. Finally, full field notes are sequentially written periodically to expand upon the phenomena being studied.

Primary, the researcher jotted notes during the interviews to draft a summary of the conversation. Usually within forty-eight hours after each interview, mental and jotted notes were used to produce a more detailed record of the discussions. In the cases of the digitally recorded interviews, notes were written before interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher to reduce unintentional errors and researcher biases. Also, interviews took much longer to transcribe as the attention to detail was crucial in ensuring the accuracy of conversations. Conversation details such as silence, laughter, and distractions were noted when possible (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). This information was necessary to include within the initial transcription to obtain a complete record of each conversation (Lin, 1998; Yin, 1994). Transcribed interviews and notes are included in the Appendices 3 to 15 (see the table below).

**Table 3-4: List of Transcripts and Notes in Appendices**

Participants	Transcripts	Notes
S1	---	Appendix 3
S2	---	Appendix 3
S3	Appendix 4	Appendix 5
S4	---	Appendix 6
S5	Appendix 7 & 8	Appendix 9
S6	---	Appendix 10
S7	Appendix 11	Appendix 12
S8	---	Appendix 13
S9	---	Appendix 14
S10	---	Appendix 14
S11	---	Appendix 15

To achieve a deeper understanding of informal decisions, I completed the documentation of notes and transcriptions of all interviews. Brackets (“[” and “]”) were used to detail notes and to document important aspects of interviews. Transcriptions included time stamps expressed as [00:00] where the first numbers indicate minutes and the second numbers indicate seconds into the interview. This allowed the researcher to match up the transcription and the recording quickly for review and to note any time lags or pauses.

As written records were produced, each respective participant was provided with a copy of the notes; and participants having consented to being recorded were provided with a transcription of the interview. By providing participants with copies of information, the researcher's records and interpretations were subject to review, which increases the reliability and validity of the information.

Finally, documentation and transcriptions were anonymised with respect to personal names and events which could identify a participant. Additionally, transcripts omitted selected information relating to non-participants such as phone conversations and daily interactions with co-workers and job-seekers. Where omissions occurred, the term "omitted" with and an explanation (e.g. personal phone call, interruption) and the time was detailed within brackets (i.e. "[ ]"). The decision to omit selected information occurred during coding processes.

### **3.6.3 Ethical Consideration**

Prior to commencing field work, a review of the plans and procedures concerning this research was conducted by Aston Business School's Research Ethics Committee (SREC). Only after the SREC approval was granted, the collection of data commenced. To ensure that individuals are appropriately treated, two classifications (i.e., direct and indirect) of participants were established based upon the level of researcher interactions and data collections. Direct participants are those individuals whose informal decisions will be the basis for evaluation whilst indirect participants are primarily those individuals (i.e. job-seekers) whose actions and information are being scrutinised by direct participants. It was determined that minimal precautions are needed during the research stages not involving direct participant interaction and stages with participant interaction require rigorous procedures to ensure participants, organisations, major stakeholders, and applicants are protected against harm and loss (Bailey, 2007; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; House, 2003; Judd et al., 1991; Stake, 2003).

Early research stages without direct participants include the identification of potential participating organizations, public sources of information (e.g., websites, publications, and financial statements) and introductory meetings with organisations. During these introductory meetings, this researcher met with organisational representatives to communicate research objectives, methodology, and goals whilst discussing the organisations' expectations (Henry & Mark, 2003; Love, 1991). Meetings amongst involved parties continued as needed and as desired to ensure continued support and cooperation with this research (Miller & Salkind, 2002). Participating individuals were provided with two copies of the Informed Consent Form

(see Appendix 1) prior to data collection. Both forms were signed by participants and the researcher and each participant kept a form. This provided the highest ethical levels for disclosure and obtaining informed consent from direct participants.

Indirect participants did not sign Consent Forms nor were these individuals provided with the details of this study. However, most employment applications (within the United States) contain a *disclosure, release, and authorisation form* which allows an organisation to release information to third parties for the purpose of collecting evidence and evaluating applicants. As this researcher will be evaluating informal decisions about employment applications, he would be considered a third party. Moreover, the researcher has entered into agreements with the participating organisations to ensure that personal identifying information about applicants is not release and that the applications would remain with the organisation.

The research adhered to the following ethical principles, in accordance with Aston ethical code and the UK and US.

- **Informed consent:** Participants were informed in advance, and in understandable terms, of any potential benefits, risks, inconvenience or obligations associated with the research that might influence their willingness to participate. This involved the use of an information sheet about the research that participants signed prior to the interview (see Appendix 1). Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw their consent at any time and that they were entitled to a copy of the information and data they provided.
- **Openness and integrity:** The researcher was open and honest about the purpose and content of the research and behaved in a professional manner at all times.
- **Protection from harm:** Every effort was made to minimise the risks of any harm, either physical or psychological. The research complies with the requirements of the UK Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the US. Equal Employment Opportunity laws, and the Fair Credit Reporting Act, as well as other relevant laws.
- **Confidentiality:** The confidentiality of participants' identities and data was respected at all times. Agreement about the disclosure of the organisations' name was obtained in advance.



### **3.7 Methods for the Analysis of Data**

The data collection stage started in January 2010 and ended in September 2010 with GT analysis occurring during and after data gathering (Charmaz, 2003; 2005; Glaser, 1978). Yin (1994, p. 142) cites Wolcott (1990, p. 20) as saying “*you cannot begin writing early enough.*” Starting with conceptual ideas, data is refined into perceptive associations surrounding informal filtering decisions and processes. When conflicts resulted between the researcher collected data and the literature, the researcher’s data prevailed over the literature (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For each case, a depiction detailing the application process was constructed from interviews (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). Finally, the cases were compared and contrasted with each other and the prior research as subsequently discussed.

#### **3.7.1 Grounded Theory Coding of Data**

During data collection, some coding and analysis processes occur at the same time and are often done concurrently (Charmaz, 2003; 2005; 2008; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Ng and Hase (2008, p. 159) in GT, “*Coding is the process of breaking down data into distinct units of meaning for analysis and thereafter systematically re-evaluating them for their inter-relationships enabling the researcher to move the data to a higher level of abstraction.*” Duchscher and Morgan (2004, p. 607) note that data is contrasted “*...first against itself, then against evolving original data, and finally against extant theoretical and conceptual claims...*” For each case, coding began with extracting and *noting* the key concepts emerged. Noting facilitates the identification and grouping into *common groups* (open coding), then by *themed subgroups* (selective coding), and finally by *relationships* (theoretical coding) (Glaser, 1978).

For this thesis, the first analysis of data started with the organisational documents, records, and materials. This analysis focused on building a preliminary understanding of the organisation and its hiring processes by identification of the basic *common groups*. With each case, this analysis was used to construct the early depictions of the application process. This included, but was not limited to, the organisational history, the identification of individuals responsible for hiring processes, position specifications, recruiting methods, assessment tools, and critical documents. These preliminary findings were used to better focus interviews and discussions with screeners in collecting information.

Interviews provided data for the second part of GT analysis, *themed subgroups*, which allowed for screening decisions to be integrated into the pre-constructed selection guidelines that emerged in the *common groups* analysis (Love, 1991). The data from

interviews were organised into two categories: *Transcriptions* and *Interview Notes*. Whilst both types of data sets provide insight into informal decisions, transcripts provide a more detailed and thorough account of interviews. Generally, the spoken word is centrally linked to actions (Peräkylä, 2005) which required this researcher to focus on each screener's account of his/her decision processes and heuristics surrounding decisions. Analysis also considered if screener voiced behaviours mimicked observations and followed established organisational policies and procedures (Peräkylä, 2005). Specifically for the interview transcripts, part of this analysis was directed at *response tokens* which are expressions or sounds from the receiver to the sender of communications that are intended to acknowledge that the message was understood and to encourage the sender to continue (Peräkylä, 2005).

The first round of interview analysis required that the *noting* of interviews was to be coded independently of the literature collected to identify phenomena that may be unique to an organisation. Moreover, themed subgroups were allowed to emerge without pre-existing jargons as preconceptions force data into categories that are not grounded within the empirical research (Glaser, 2009). Starting with the Research Centre Interview Notes, screeners' discussions were broken into segments of speech that identified the *noun* and the *action(s)* associated with that noun. Those actions translated to the GT *gerunds* that became critical in identifying the *themed subgroups* associated with informal decisions. For example, both S1 and S2 expressed that they participated in **interviews** [gerund – "interviewing"] of **applicants** [noun]. Whilst this can also be considered *collecting data*, the first round analysis was focused on the deconstruction of the interview before being fully interpreted. The act of noting gerunds focused on labelling and classifying smaller aspects of informal decisions.

The process of GT's constant comparison, review and review again, was utilised in the second round of analysis. This led to changes in some original gerunds, when more appropriate classifications, based on the meanings and interpretations of the data, were found. Constant comparison started when participant responses were grouped by gerunds within his/her organisation. Analysis amongst gerunds and review of the original coded data allowed similarities to emerge and to be consolidated. For example, *Collecting* as a themed subgroup emerged in the "Use of résumés" by both S1 and S2 (see Appendix 20). As such, it was important to ensure that the coding and analysis consider the source, in this case the participant, of the information to further understand informal decisions. This identification by participant was also important in the later theoretical analysis and cross-case analysis. Examples of the results of this coding of the themed subgroups appear in Appendix 20, 22, and 24.

After the second round of analysis, distinct themed subgroups emerged within each case. Considering each case separately, theoretical analysis examined the relationship of

these themed subgroups to the common group depictions of the application processes. During this third stage of analysis, the researcher considered the relationships between the themed subgroups of the interview data and the basic common groups of the pre-established guidelines. It is during this stage of analysis that the primary research question is considered which required this researcher to reconcile the organisational directives with the actual practise and informal decisions of the screeners.

Whilst engaging in theoretical analysis, the researcher examined the application processes starting at the entry point of an application and concluding with the hiring of an employee. The researcher identified reference points where an action or an event could alter if an application was either continued or removed from the selection process. These reference points were primarily identified through the themed subgroups surrounding screener accounts of informal decisions. In some cases, the informal decision to accept an application required that multiple criteria be met; as such, these instances were considered a single reference point. Using these reference points, original illustrations of the application process were modified by the emerging evidence from the themed subgroups.

With each case the fourth round of analysis used constant comparison to further develop (and test the depictions) theoretical analysis towards a better understanding of how social relationships and interactions amongst a participant and individuals (i.e. co-workers, job-seekers, and others) impacted informal decisions. In CAMC, S8 had a unique relationship with all screeners as a central figure that facilitated collecting and distributing applicant information from background checks and accounts of personal interactions. Also in CAMC, it was the comparison of the themed subgroups that lead to the development of the minor differences in the definition of job-hopper which played a central role in early informal decisions as identified in the number of screeners referencing this term. It was the examination of these interactions that helped identify the impact of a majority/minority influence, how information is weighted, if inappropriate information and criteria are used, and if an assessor's influence is present (see Dewberry, 2011).

Also in this analysis, field experiences, the organisational environment, screener actions, and working conditions help develop an understanding of informal decisions that are not offered in laboratory conditions (Patton, 2002; Peräkylä, 2005). During this stage of analysis, it was important to identify that individuals not having executed an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix 1) might have been included in earlier analysis. As such, it was important to omit those discussions from the final transcripts and analysis. With CAMC, those omissions were frequent as constant interruptions occurred. However, the decision to include some of this data was based on its relevance and the ability to anonymise the source. In most cases, these interactions were between the job-seeker and the screener.

Overall, the fourth round of analysis was used to strengthen the emergence of themed subgroups by identifying their relationships to each other whilst seeking answers to the research questions. The results of this process form the case study chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Finally, all cases were compared and contrasted to develop an understanding of how this data relates to current knowledge. Using the Selection Paradigm (see chapter 1) as a central point, the case findings with the prior research (see chapter 2) are reconciled through the process of constant comparison. By identifying similar themes and *delimitating* (the process of reducing subgroups) some themes, the underlying process of informal decisions can be discovered. The choice to delimit and consolidate themes was primarily based on the reference points associated with the depictions of the Application Process. This led to the development of the Cycle of Employment where certain informal decisions were only considered after a decision stage. For example, drugs testing and background checks were only conducted after a provisional offer of employment was accepted. Under GT analysis, the evidence from the data collected prevails over prior research. As such, the literature provided support that enhanced the theoretical relevance of this thesis. When conflicts arose between thesis and academics, those findings were noted. The results of this final analysis form the basis of chapter 7.

To summarise, preliminary interpretations were made and refined with each infusion of data with each additional case until the researcher was satisfied that theoretical saturation had occurred (Charmaz, 2008). This process extended to each interview in an effort to promote consistency in coding data. To strengthen theory creditability, cases were not presented in overly complex manners but by basic elements with detailed descriptions (Glaser, 1978; Judd et al., 1991). After the final write-up of each case study, basic elements were integrated within the consolidated theory through constant comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Constant comparison allowed for reflections concerning relationships surrounding informal decisions and the research question. Thus, theory emerged after the accumulation of data and information was integrated within this research (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

### **3.7.2 Consultancy Reports, Evaluations, and Re-evaluations**

Organisations often expect something in return for participating in research (Alan, 2003; Patton, 2002). In addition to the provision to participants of the copy of the interview transcript/notes, the researcher also provided Consultancy Reports to these organisations as a tangible and valuable document summarising the research whilst acting as a method of *test-retest* and *constant comparison* in reducing random errors and researcher biases (Judd

et al., 1991; Lin, 1998; Patton, 2002). Consultancy Reports did not focused on deep analysis, but on capturing and presenting a simple illustrated overview of organisational operations and informal decisions (Eisenhardt, 1989a, 1989b; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993).

Alan (2003) notes a possible weakness of GT interviews can be the accuracy of the researcher's notes and transcripts. To mitigate this weakness, individual interview notes and transcripts (if digitally recorded) were presented to every participant to review before the researcher engaged in the second round of data analysis. Individuals having any issues with this research could contact the researcher or the research supervisors with corrections and concerns. Additionally, participants could ask for feedback from the researcher at any time during or after the case study (Patton, 2002). This open relationship helps validate information and maintain participant interest.

At the organisational level, a Final Consultancy Report provided each organisation with an initial assessment of operational details, application process, and informal decisions without the depth and analytical evaluation as the following chapters dealing with case studies. These reports serve to document the comprehensive environment surrounding informal decisions as accurate and full descriptions are crucial to establishing validity in interpretivist research (Lin, 1998) and GT (Glaser, 1978). Each report, which became the foundation for each case study chapter, was written as a standalone document.

### **3.7.3 Cross-Case Analysis**

Cross-case analysis occurred after the Consulting Reports were formally issued. This analysis increase validity and reliability of research findings (Love, 1991) and strengthens the formal theory emerging from the theoretical coding processes of each case (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Each case provided accounts of screeners' informal decisions and its relationship to the organisation's formal selection process (Eisenhardt, 1989a). These relationships were consistently compared and contrasted in an effort to identify specific patterns of informal decisions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Judd et al., 1991; Yin, 1994). Instead of considering each participant as an individual data set, each case was considered a data set. This is consistent with the delimitation of data under GT.

The cross-case analysis started with the organisational demographics to establish a basic foundation in considering the general processes of informal decisions. This foundation included examining the types of positions and the attracting and recruiting of job-seekers. This first analysis focused on the part of selection processes that preceded informal decisions by screeners.

The second part of analysis examined the case findings related to Dewberry's (2011) four groups (i.e., majority influence; weighting of information; inappropriate information and criteria; and influence of assessors). Each group was delimited based on the similarities found in the relationships amongst the cases using the same methods as detailed in section 3.7.1. In fact, these groups correspond to two of the secondary research questions. The *majority influence* and the *influence of assessors* relate to the third question "*What are the major influences on assessors' informal decisions?*" The *weighting of information* and the *inappropriate information and criteria* relate to the second question "*How is information weighted for informal decisions?*" It is both of these questions that provide critical insight into informal decisions and the selection processes.

To answer the first question, "*What are the selection processes that small organisations are using for informal decisions?*", the depictions of the application process of each case were examined to construct the Workflow of General Hiring Processes. This entailed comparing the reference points of decision processes and events in each case prior to the analysis and integration of prior research. In the final cross-case analysis, elements of the Selection Paradigm were deconstructed and united with the previous analytical results. The end result focuses on the primary question "*How are informal decisions reached by screeners when filtering out undesirable job applications?*"

Although this thesis provides additional knowledge concerning informal decisions, there are methodological limitations.

### **3.8 Methodological Limitations and Other Considerations**

Whilst, "...*there are no perfect research designs...*" (Patton, 2002, p. 223), replicating qualitative research is difficult, but not impossible (Jick, 1979). This section addresses those methodological limitations and other issues confronted by this research.

The primary focus of this research is to build a foundation for understanding informal decisions and as such, the knowledge gained was limited to the researcher's experiences with participants, data, records, and documents and the researcher's interpretations of events, observations, interviews, and other related information (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). One of the risks of any interpretivist approach is for the researcher to assume that events occur precisely as observed without deviations (Lin, 1998), as "...*multiple realities or multiple truths [can exist] based on our construction of that reality.*" (Sale, 2008, p. 912). For example, participants can modify behaviours when observed (Patton, 2002). Moreover, documents may not be fully understood without insight from participants. Interpretivist research using the thinking aloud protocol hinges on shared

meanings to promote effective communications and shared perspectives (Charmaz, 2008; Keysar et al., 1998; Patton, 2002). In essence, a researcher can inject biases into any part of the research process from careless work to inaccurate memory recall to data analysis (Bailey, 2007; Stake, 2003; Yin, 1994). To combat researcher biases, constant comparison reduces associated errors with pre-conceptions and assumptions that are not grounded in empirical data (Glaser, 1978). Citing Halcolm, Patton (2002, p. 207) offers this advice: *“Make sure when you yield to temptation in the field that it appears to have something to do with what you are studying.”*

Another perceptual problem is that case studies are not generalisable to theory (Yin, 1994) or to practice in other organisations. However, case study strategies can contribute much to research projects such as the thesis and dissertations (Yin, 1994) especially when that research seeks to fill gaps in knowledge in establishing a stronger foundation for future studies. In that context, the time associated with the thesis and dissertation may give rise to the argument that data collection and analysis can take too long (Yin, 1994) or the researcher ponders in length over selected aspects of data without discovering its importance (Lin, 1998). In fact, the quintessence research components focus on supervision and review which actually strengthen and provides focus to a researcher.

### **3.9 Summary**

Whilst research in selection and filtering provide knowledge about informal decisions as illustrated in Chapter 2, questions concerning more in-depth processes surrounding these decisions remained unanswered. To triangulate information that leads to development of theory, this thesis used multiple case studies and a qualitative methodology known as GT to gain insight into informal decisions (Charmaz, 2005; Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Redding, 1994). Case studies relied on consulting with organisational personnel such as screeners and managers to gather data concerning informal decisions in the field (Shah & Corley, 2006). Furthermore, the methodological foundation for investigating these informal decisions was grounded and based on previous research (Charmaz, 2005).

Similarities and differences amongst cases provided a basis to analyse specific patterns of behaviour (Judd et al., 1991). Integrated analysis using interpretivism approaches strengthen validity and reliability through bridging academics from a solid literature review with the practical applications from case studies. Thus, this research contributes from screener perspectives a theory with a foundation to understanding informal decisions by blending academic theory with observations from actual organisations through GT analysis.

# **Chapter 4 The West**

## **Virginia Criminal Law**

### **Research Centre**



## **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the Criminal Law Research Center (“Research Centre”) and an analysis of the informal decisions with the *summer law intern programme* (“SLIP”). Data collection took place between January and February 2010 with observations being made during the final consensus discussions. Digital recording devices were not used as certain limitations on public information and communication existed. Discussions with participants occurred several times after informal decisions to clarify, validate, and understand these processes.

## **4.2 Criminal Law Research Centre Operational Details**

Located in Charleston, West Virginia, the Research Centre is a governmental division within the Department of Administration’s Public Defender Services (“PDS”) that supports indigent criminal defence programmes within the State of West Virginia. These programmes are largely decentralised with contracted services to meet primary goals and objectives established through legislation and executive direction. Under ***W.Va. Code §29-21-7 et seq.*** (see Appendix 18) the Research Centre’s provides low cost Continuing Legal Education (“CLE”) seminars for attorneys; educational services to investigators, paralegals, and students; and legal publications focusing on criminal defence and case law. To help provide legal education, the Research Centre partners with individuals and agencies to develop and address specific projects and topics for CLEs.

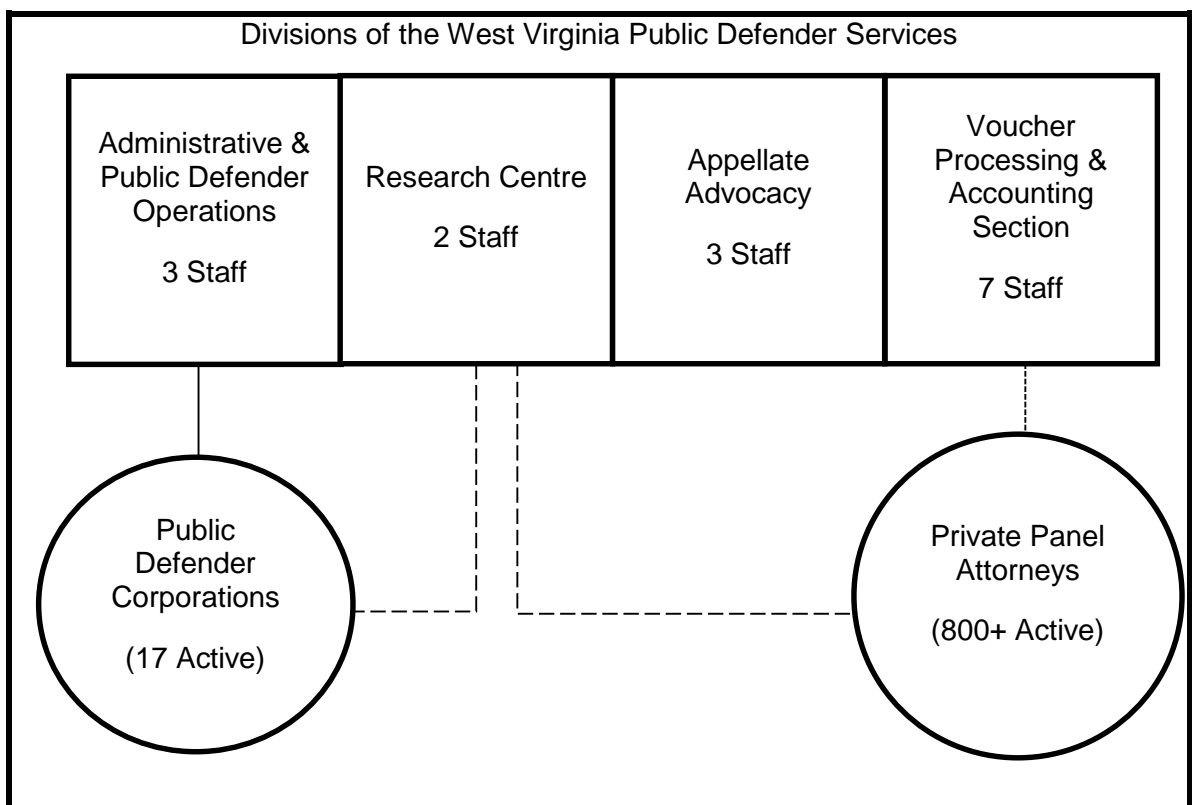
The primary focus of this research is the Research Centre’s placement of interns into one of seventeen Public Defender Corporations (“Corporation”). Corporations have a quasi-governmental relationship with PDS and operate twenty-two locations serving eighteen of thirty-one judicial circuits (WVPDS, 2010). By operational aspects, Corporations are complex independent component units of PDS that operate under several main regulations.

First, ***W.Va. Code §29-21-8 et seq.*** establishes each Corporation and serves as the Articles of Incorporation (see Appendix 18). Second, Corporations operate under two main Internal Revenue Service code provisions: As non-profit organisations under *26USC501* and public charities supported by public funds from a state government under *26USC509* (see Appendix 18). Third, Corporations are considered independent component units of PDS primarily from the funding and reporting requirements of ***W.Va. Code §29-21-13 et seq.*** (see Appendix 18). This provision provides general fiscal controls, reporting, and financial support responsibilities to PDS whilst authorising Corporations to be responsible for daily operations. Finally, as a result of ***W.Va. Code §29-21-13 et seq.***, funding contracts between PDS and Corporations provide operational and fiscal details outside of legislative direction. This

arrangement allows for efficient and autonomous daily operations of Corporations whilst giving PDS the ability to establish long-term strategic objectives (see McKinney & Shao, 2008; 2009). Part of this strategic objective is recruiting qualified individuals to practise in criminal defence within Corporations.

To assist with recruiting, the Research Centre organises the intern programme for several Corporations that support indigent criminal defence within the jurisdiction of the State of West Virginia. Federal indigent defence programmes are the responsibility of the Federal Public Defender system and are outside of the scope of PDS. The Research Centre advertises, recruits, and fills internships for participating Corporations. Each Corporation is free to participate in Research Centre's intern programme, obtain their own intern, or not seek an intern. The Research Centre did not place externs (unpaid law students) but directed interested individuals to specific organisations and persons.

**Figure 4-1: Organisation of Indigent Criminal Defence Programme in West Virginia**



The figure above illustrates the relationships of the Research Centre. The four connected squares represent PDS components: Administrative and Public Defender Operations, Criminal Law Research Centre, Appellate Advocacy, and Voucher Processing and Accounting Section. The two circles represent contracted services (i.e. the seventeen Corporations) and claimants (i.e. Private Panel Attorneys) that participate in delivering indigent defence services. The solid line between the Administrative and Public Defender

Operations and the Corporations represents a direct connection codified by West Virginia Code and written contracts. The short dashed line between Voucher Processing and Accounting Section and the Private Panel Attorneys represents an indirect relationship created through multiple court orders for payments of claims. Notice that the Research Centre has two long dashed lines extending to the Corporations and the Private Panel Attorneys. This represents supporting relationships where the Research Centre provides continuing legal education and advice to these groups. For the intern programme, the Research Centre provides support to Corporations whilst working with the Administrative and Public Defender Operations Division.

#### **4.3 Direct Participants**

After the Research Centre provided informed consent, field work commenced in January and concluded in February 2010. All individuals associated with informal filtering decisions were interviewed. S1 and S2 had been working together since 2002 and were very familiar with each other's work and working practices. S1 obtained a Jurisprudence Doctor degree from Ohio Northern University and has been practising law since 1989. He has served as an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney and Public Defender. Prior to joining the Research Centre, S2 worked as an Administrative Assistant drafting résumés and interviewing job-seekers for an employment agency. She has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. S1 and S2 were interviewed together concerning the decision processes of selecting an intern. This is discussed under section 5.6 Research Centre: Interview Analysis of Emergent Themes.

**Table 4-1: List of Research Centre Participants**

<b>Subject Identification</b>	<b>Time in Present Position</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
S1	8 years	Director
S2	8 years	Assistant to the Director

#### **The Role of the Researcher as an Employee/Insider**

This is an *emic* (insider view) ethnographic case study following GT (Aldiabat & Le Navenec, 2011; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Madison, 2005). Under GT, I asked both participants for permission to access information whilst I consistently discussed case study details with S1 and S2. Not only did these open discussions provided increased assurances that the participants' views and actions were accurately interpreted but it helped maintain the

separation of roles between researcher and Director. As an insider, I could focus and gain a more comprehensive understanding of informal decision-making by having in-depth knowledge of this organisation. During data collection, I served (and continue to serve) as the Director of Administration/Public Defender Operations. As a Director, I had unlimited access to organisational documents and personnel. Moreover, my responsibility included budgetary oversight and funding Corporations which included interns. Thus, I had knowledge of Corporation fiscal and personnel requests and understanding of their justifications of programme related expenditures and needs.

#### **4.4 Indirect Participants**

Indirect participants were job-seekers, applicants, and candidates seeking placement as an intern. Indirect participants were second or third year law students seeking a *Jurisprudence Doctorate* degree (J.D.) whilst attending either Appalachian School of Law (“ASL”) in Grundy, Virginia (ASL, 2010), Ohio Northern University Claude W. Pettit College of Law (“ONU”) in Ada, Ohio (ONU, 2010), or West Virginia University College of Law (“WVU”) in Morgantown, West Virginia (WVU Law, 2010). WVU was the only law school within the State of West Virginia. Each law school had established policies prohibiting first term law students from applying for jobs with potential employers.

Each of the thirty-eight applicants submitted résumés for an internship (see the table below). ASL submitted seven résumés of which five were from male students and two were from female students. From ONU, fifteen total résumés were received with twelve from males and three from female students. Fifteen résumés from WVU: Male students submitted seven whilst female students submitted eight résumés. One male student from WVU failed to show up for the interview and thus, his résumé was removed from the applicant pool. Whilst the removal of this résumé decreased the number of interview by one (i.e. from thirty-eight to thirty-seven), it did not affect the number of résumés presented; and therefore, it does not affect the table below. However, this observation was noted within the table and the actual figures were not adjusted. In addition to the three law schools, one female job-seeker from Vermont Law School in South Royalton, Vermont contacted the Research Centre to enquire about internships (VLS, 2010).

**Table 4-2: Research Centre Job-Seeker Demographics**

<b>Law School</b>	<b>Total Résumés</b>	<b>Job-Seeker Male</b>	<b>Job-Seeker Female</b>	<b>Interns Selected</b>
<b>ASL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>ONU</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WVU</b>	<b>15*</b>	<b>7*</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>VLS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>

\*One WVU male job-seeker failed to interview.

#### **4.5 Application Process**

This section provides analysis of each step within the intern programme hiring processes, the intern position, recruitment, placement, and employing organisation. From analysis, *collecting*, *trusting*, *interviewing*, *noting*, *ranking*, *filtering*, *specifying*, *geographing*, *credentialing*, *class rankings*, and *offering* emerged as themes within the application process of the Research Centre. Together, these themes form a continuum of informal decisions that ultimately leads to the hiring of an employee. Based on information provided, the following figure illustrates this process. It should be noted that informal decisions occurred at various points within these processes and that the formal removal of individuals seeking an internship did not occur until such time that a candidate accepted an internship. The first of these processes is the collecting of information which is discussed below.

In addition to the themes that emerged within the application process, three external components surrounding informal filtering decisions were also developed. First, the summer law intern positions serve as a basis in establishing personnel specifications. These positions are discussed in section 4.5.1. Next, the theme *recruiting* discusses general issues that the Research Centre encountered when attempting to gather enough job-seekers for positions. This is presented in Recruitment 4.5.2. Finally, in 4.5.3, Placement presents the time frames and brief discussion into the organisations to which interns were to be placed.



*“Since we go through the career centre [of the university], they take care of all that. They [job-seekers] can bring their transcripts if they want to, but they don’t have too. We don’t require them too. Since they are going to be lawyers, they have to be professionals” (S1).*

**Trusting** is the faith that information presented is accurate and truthful. The Research Centre takes résumés at face value and does not verify information.

*“Well, we don’t verify them [résumés]. After all, these are students with limited work experience and we have already talked to them [during the interviews]. We don’t need to check their references because the law school would have verified most of the information being that they [job-seekers] were admitted” (S1).*

This illustrates that screeners shift responsibility for verification of applicant information to each university. Each university admissions requirements would have been met by the job-seeker prior to submitting a résumé to the Research Centre, thereby negating the necessity for questioning information.

**Résumés** served as applications, which provided the primary source of job-seeker information to screeners. *“We use résumés as applications as these people are applying for a professional position” (S1).* Whilst some résumés were presented during an interview, most résumés were forwarded by the law school placement office and made available to screeners prior to interviews. To increase the applicant pool, job-seekers from three law schools were recruited. Job-seekers from other law schools may apply for internships, but rarely do. However, a Vermont Law School job-seeker did initiate an application for an internship. When job-seekers from outside the three recruiting law schools are interested, job-seekers are placed into the entrance stage of the intern process. Applicants could submit updated résumés prior to consensus discussions in January. Although S2 advised job-seekers during interviews that updated résumés should be sent after the academic fall term, no applicant submitted revised résumés.

Those job-seekers entering through the first and second entry points were given the status of **applicant** provided certain minimum standards were satisfied. Minimum standards were expressed as the minimum academic requirements as determined by the university (e.g. grade point average) and business etiquette (e.g. showing up to the interview). No applicants were removed for not meeting the minimum standards or being overqualified. Whilst résumés provided critical information, interviews were used to clarify job-seeker information and gather additional information for informal decisions.

For the third entry point, job-seekers may be specifically requested by Chief Defenders but this rarely occurs. Any request causes job-seekers to bypasses the hiring decision processes to become candidates for an internship. Only when requested candidates

decline employment offers are alternative candidates sought. Alternatively, Chief Defenders may not support interns or block specific individuals from serving as interns:

*“Well, there are fourteen positions after a couple of Chiefs decided not to have interns this year. [Chief 2] said he had no use for one and [office manager 18] said that they were useless last year and she did not want to babysit this year” (S2).*

This statement indicates that external personnel can significantly affect the necessity for an intern. Likewise, these personnel would be able to affect informal decisions. Thus, screener decisions may be shifted to accommodate or appease these external personnel.

**Interviewing** is the action associated with discussing application details with job-seekers. In this case, interviews within unstructured settings focused on work experience and clarification and validation of information presented on résumés: *“The interviews were used to clarify information. We focus on job experience and education is not considered experience” (S2).* Interviews were geared towards discussing job-seeker experiences, which the Research Centre uses to support reported academic and work experiences. This researcher did not observe these interviews which are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is important to identify this interview process as a critical aspect associated with subsequent informal decisions.

Interviews were conducted at three university campuses between October and November 2009. Law school placement offices assisted the Research Centre by scheduling interviews with job-seekers. Interviews provided recruiting opportunity within a structured environment for screeners to gather information associated with job-seekers. Each interview lasted between twenty to thirty minutes. Prior to interviews, résumés are distributed to screeners with each maintaining his/her notes which are not distributed amongst members. The first informal decision to reject an application during this research was triggered when a job-seeker failed to interview. Consequently, the researcher interprets the job-seeker's failure to interview to be a voluntary withdraw from consideration for internship and not a decision from either S1 or S2. Only one male WVU job-seeker failed to interview and he was subsequently removed from consideration.

Whilst past experiences could provide a basis for predicting employee success, a better predictor of success was deemed academic progress. For an intern, academic progress was more relative and current. Applicants having been interviewed during the campus visits are given preference over non-interviewed applicants: *“we give a preference to people that have interned before and also those that have interviewed in previous years” (S1).* However, preferences can be adjusted if a job-seeker was an intern or has been requested by a Chief Defender.



When face-to-face interviews were not possible, telephone interviews were conducted. S2 notes, *“And I go with S1 to each of the schools. Well, we did not go to Vermont. She just called and S1 did her interview by phone.”* Telephone interviews were rare and during this research, only one telephone interview was conducted with a subsequent formal interview with the student from the Vermont Law School.

**Noting** is the process whereby an individual documents events and communications for later review. During consensus discussions, notes taken during student interviews were consulted to make informal selection decisions. Each screener's notes were reviewed and were critically important aspects in identifying negative cues. For example, S1 used a noting technique where short descriptive sentences and main ideas are inscribed similar to memoing in GT as described below.

*“I also keep lists of all former interns, acceptances, no-shows, and declines for the following years. This way we don't waste our time on people that won't show up. I've been burned in the past and it's hard to find an intern after you have to send letters notifying them that they were not picked for an internship” (S1).*

S2 used *Alphabetic note taking* to describe attitude, attire, abilities, attributes, and impressions and document interviews. She states that *“In alphabetic note taking, vowels are excluded unless they are strong vowels.”* For example: *“Dk sut w/ dk gren shrt & blk ti”* for dark suit with dark green shirt and black tie. Although there are formal rules concerning alphabetic note taking, S2 deviates from these rules by adding/removing letters. Further discussions with S1 and S2 after the consensus discussions revealed that both S1 and S2 maintain and consult personal written documents before consensus discussions. Prior behaviours (e.g. failing to interview, accepting/declining an internship, and general feedback from Corporations) of former applicants are compiled for future selection decisions. For S1, these behaviours are noted first by year (i.e. 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010) and then by applicant name. For S2, a similar document was maintained. Although both sets of personal written documents essentially detail the same information, S2 places more emphasis the job-seekers' appearance, attitudes, and characteristics (e.g. politeness, pleasantness and enthusiasm) than S1. Interview notes were not distributed between S1 and S2 during informal decision making.

Final informal decisions about hiring occurred in two separate and consecutive stages where applicants were ranked independently and then by consensus discussions emerged: **Ranking** is the process of informally listing individuals by organisational preference. S2 notes that *“we make our choices before we meet. We each rank them before we meet. Then we [S1 and S2] work together to pick the students for an office [internship].”* Ranking differs from filtering as ranking focuses on informally listing individuals in an order determined by preference(s), whereas, filtering focuses on removing individuals from the

applicant pool or hiring process. In the Research Centre, **Filtering** is the separation of individuals into various geographically identified applicant pools by screeners to identify the individual(s) that best match a position within an organisation. Normally, some individuals are removed from consideration for a position based on established criteria (e.g. job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies), whether cognitively constructed or in written form, to systematically process individuals into categories.

In this case, personnel specifications, termed **Specifying**, consisted primarily of each screener's cognitively constructed individual perceptions of an intern. S2 notes, *"we have no written model [personnel specifications]."* For interns, formal written job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies were not adopted and screeners relied on cognitive heuristics and personal records when making informal decisions. However, further review identified external written sources of regulations and procedures that drive informal decisions. The externally written personnel specifications came from the three Universities, the American Bar Association, and the West Virginia Supreme Court. These were considered passive deliberations which are the acceptance of external employee personnel specifications with limited or no discussions between S1 and S2.

Concerning the cognitive guidelines for informal decisions, S1 expresses *"They [interns] have to work and fit into a criminal law environment."* An intern must be able to work with difficult and emotional individuals facing incarceration, various organisational representatives (e.g. prosecutor's office, police agencies, victim advocate groups), and other investigative agencies to represent the client's interests in legal proceedings. S1 clarifies and adds,

*"by practising law, you get a feel for these things. And sometimes an intern is asked for by name. [Chief 6] asked for [intern] because he [intern] was there last year and they were very happy with his performance. When they ask for someone specific, we place what was asked, just easier."*

This statement is interpreted to mean that criminal law practitioners are better able to understand the KSAO necessary for predicting successful interns and lawyers. Part of this success is that criminal law practitioners cannot be overqualified as any experience could be transferred assisting clients in legal proceedings depending on the circumstances of a case (S1). According to S1, the practise of law is essential to understanding which job-seekers are the best applicants. Based upon this assertion by S1, S2 must have different cognitive personnel specifications as she does not practise law or hold a law degree.

Additional personnel specifications, S2 contends *"they [interns] have to be enthusiastic and pleasant."* S2 identifies the heuristics found within résumés projecting these characteristics are awards and high academic achievement. Both awards and high academic

achievement illustrate that job-seekers have successfully gone beyond the minimum requirements and therefore job-seekers are enthusiastic. Consequently, a happy demeanour is more difficult to identify within résumés (S2). Consequently, S2 relies on interviews which are outside this research scope to identify job-seekers with enthusiasm and pleasantness.

From discussions with S2, evidence seems to suggest that the characteristic of being pleasant is most attributed to the interview between a job-seeker and the Research Centre personnel rather than being identified within a résumé. Furthermore, S2 seems to interpret enthusiastic and pleasant as a union or at least a conjunction occurring with enthusiasm being more a more dominant characteristic. As interviews are conducted preceding consensus discussions, job-seeker responses during interviews may influence the heuristics S2 relies upon.

During consensus discussions, deliberations usually lasted between three to six minutes concerning which applicants were best. First, screeners (first by S2 then by S1) established that an applicant's geographic preference to practice law within West Virginia for an internship dominated other preferences thereby splitting a single applicant pool into fourteen applicant pools and a reserve applicant pool based on no preference. Then, ranking focused on academic rankings with individual grade point averages (S1) and awards (S2) supporting class rankings. Academic achievements ranked superior than work experiences as individuals having higher academic standings with work experiences were ranked highest. Each is discussed.

**Geographing** is a cue where an individual is matched to a position, in whole or part, based on topography. Topographic decisions are related to relocation and individual preferences as observed during consensus discussions. Informal decisions were primarily based on topographic preferences.

*"We [the Research Centre] asked applicants about Public Defender preferences within the State [of West Virginia]. Most [interns] that wanted outside West Virginia or did not have West Virginia ties were removed. We spend money for people planning to be here" (S1).*

S2 adds *"It is easier to pick those that have [geographic] preference first and place others if slots [internships] are left."* Individuals must have social ties to West Virginia and be able to meet logistical aspects (e.g. housing and transportation) of an internship.

*"My experience is that they have some tie to where they are going cause they have to find a place to stay for ten weeks. And it's much easier to stay with family or find a place where you have some connection" (S1).*

Logistical issues change amongst interns with respect to the amenities associated with the geographic area that the intern is assigned.

Geography was the most important cue when ranking job-seekers as most informal decisions concerning intern placement were dominated by some geographic relationship about the applicant. As the purpose of the intern programme was to attract individuals to full-time law positions within a public defender system, job-seekers seeking employment outside West Virginia were routinely removed from consideration. The quick removal of job-seekers seeking employment outside of West Virginia allowed for more intense discussions of the remaining job-seekers.

Individuals having expressed geographic preferences were filtered prior to individuals not providing preferences or having the preference of *any location*. Because interns were located throughout the State of West Virginia (see the figure below), job-seekers were requested to provide a geographic preference about work locations. Preferences were viewed by screeners as the job-seeker having ties, either social or family relationships, to a specific area; and that these relationships increased the likelihood a job-seeker could satisfy logistical aspects of accepting an intern.

The geographic location of the law school where a job-seeker attended had an impact on informal decisions. For example, WVU students expressed a greater desire for geographic locations near Morgantown where the university is located. The Research Centre explained that these requests were routine as job-seekers had already secured campus housing and required little geographic mobility to accept a position. Geographically, WVU has an advantage over ASL and ONU.

**Figure 4-3: WV Public Defender Corporation Locations (Source: WVPDS, 2010)**



Subordinate to geographing, ***Credentialing***, the assessment and evaluation of KSAO (Searle, 2003), emerged from the evaluation of education: class rankings, grade point average, and awards. As each job-seeker was enrolled at an American Bar Association accredited law programme, the **education** requirement was met by all job-seekers and on the surface was not a major concern for screener decisions. S1 and S2 consider education as separate from work experience. Additionally, educational credentials beyond the law school requirement did not affect informal decisions as significantly as geography. However, job-seekers having more degrees and credentials were preferred within their respective applicant pool. For example, a former intern had both retired from a very successful career and an earned Ph.D. This former intern became involved in the practise of law after retirement. In general, applicants could not be overqualified as the complexity and nature of

indigent criminal defence means that all experience is transferable and more experience is desired to complement a law degree (S1).

**Class Rankings** were important cues for support the overall education standing and help distinguish higher performing individuals amongst a similar group of applicants. After topography (see geographing), class rank was the second primary cue used by S1 and S2 in informal decisions. From past experience, S1 notes that students having a more prestigious class rank (e.g. students being placed academically above peers) have more opportunities for internships and employment positions.

*“Class rankings have a big impact on who applies and who you get. It’s hard to compete with other offers. The ones that are the top of the class get the good internships at the most prestigious law firms. But we can offer them [students] something that the big firms can’t. We can allow limited practise of law under Rule 10 [Rules of Admission]. They [interns] have to be supervised by a licensed attorney. But they can get experience in the court room and actually practise law” (S1).*

Whilst class rankings were important, the Research Centre could not offer a competitive compensation package to attract more students having a higher-class rank; and thus, class ranking creates a recruitment problem in which S1 has acknowledged above. Additionally, when the Research Centre fills positions with students having prestigious class ranks, Chief Defenders were more likely to continue supporting the intern programme. Finally, components of class rank included grade point average and awards as noted below by S2.

*“GPA [Grade Point Average] is part of class rank” (S2).*

*“What about awards?” (Researcher).*

*“These [awards] support class rank. They are not really separate. They just show that people that are at the top of their class work hard. So they may have a book award. Maybe participate in extracurricular activities or something like that” (S2).*

Some **Grade Point Averages** would have had a greater impact on informal decisions. For example, a student having a cumulative grade point average below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale would not meet the minimum standards as law schools require individuals to maintain these averages above 2.0 for a law degree. Thus, resources associated with the intern programme would be best attributed to students having greater chances at completing law degrees. **Awards** were not as important as class rankings. Awards and academic acknowledgements associated with academic excellence such as scholarships and the Dean’s List (Honours) are viewed as supporting and validating the class rank. However, certain awards (e.g. book award) are viewed as more prestigious as noted above. Moreover, S2 notes that consistency and standardisation of awards varied by law school and establishment.

Another cue is the distinguishing qualification of work experience. Work experience is not required but is seen as a benefit to an applicant. S1 describes experience as

*“No one is overqualified as their experience can be transferable to someone somewhere. When you deal with criminal defence, every case is different. I mean, there are similarities. A B&E [Breaking and Entering] is still a B&E, but the facts are different. What was the intent? Were other crimes committed? Is the accused competent to stand trial? Is there a cognitive impairment? You even have to take in consideration the prosecutor and the judge.”*

In some instances where applicants were similar in preference, work experience provides a means to distinguish the most preferential applicant for an intern. A majority of the applicants had less than five years of work experience.

**Offering** is an organisation's proposal (verbal or written) of a position's terms and conditions to a candidate. Internships were verbally offered to top candidates. Offers were made systematically by the geographic location of a position and sequentially to second choice candidates when the top candidate declines an offer. Ranking further facilitates offering internships when candidates decline offers and when a second choice candidate is also a primary candidate for another internship with another Corporation. Each candidate is free to accept, reject, or request additional time to consider an offer. Most candidates request additional time to consider an internship spent this time in determining and securing logistical aspects (e.g. housing and other job offers) for the internship. When all positions were accepted, notification letters were sent to candidates. Those candidates accepting internships become employees after reporting to Corporations and completing formal paperwork (e.g. tax forms, emergency contact and verification of eligibility for employment). This employment is with the Corporation and not with PDS or the Research Centre. The Research Centre only facilitates employment opportunities and administers internships.

#### **4.5.1 Summer Law Intern Position**

Summer law intern positions were open to second and third year law school students attending an American Bar Association (ABA) accredited law school (see ABA, 2010). For the 2010 summer (commencing May and ending in August), internships were a ten week opportunity for selected law students to gain field-based practical experience whilst working within an indigent criminal defence quasi-governmental organisation. Fourteen internships were available and were located in the following Judicial Circuit Corporations (and cities): First (Wheeling); Fifth (Ripley); Sixth/Twenty-Fourth (Huntington/Wayne); Seventh (Logan); Eighth (Welch); Ninth (Princeton); Tenth (Beckley); Twelfth (Fayetteville); Thirteenth (Charleston); Fifteenth (Clarksburg); Eighteenth (Kingwood); Twenty-Third (Martinsburg); Twenty-Fifth (Madison); and Twenty-Eight (Summersville).

Internships require incumbents to perform at least 400 hours of work. Compensation was based upon the same rates as the Public Interest Advocate fellowship programme at WVU (see WVU-PIA, 2010): \$480.00 [£320] per week or \$12.00 [£8] per hour with medical benefits and paid leave not being in the compensation scheme. However, an additional benefit provided to selected interns was the reimbursement of expenses associated with attending the Annual West Virginia Public Defender Conference.

The primary purpose of internships was to expose students to indigent criminal defence processes through work experience. This serves as a primary recruiting tool by the Research Centre to identify potential future employees. In West Virginia, **Rule 10** of the *Rules for Admission to the Practice of Law* allows law students to operate under fully licenses and good standing attorneys to represent indigent defendants in legal proceedings provided that certain criteria and provisions are met (see SCA, 2010). This primary criterion is that legal representation is limited to students that have completed four semesters in an approved programme and recent (i.e. within six months) graduates of approved law programmes (SCA, 2010). For representation, interns were not limited by the severity of the charge(s) or the number of charges, but by the constant supervision from a West Virginia licensed practitioner in good standing. By providing interns with field-based experiences within this criminal defence environment, individuals are more likely to consider full-time work as public criminal defence attorneys after completing law school. According to the Research Centre, students perceived the actual practise of legal representation a critical hedonic benefit to intern compensation.

In addition to legal representation, interns conduct legal research and provide feedback on cases handled by the Corporations. Interns may prepare reports, draft legal briefs and motions, interpret legal opinions and various documents and provide legal advice. An intern might interview clients and investigate crime scenes. As these are high level professional interns, specific job duties and responsibilities will vary amongst offices; however, the core duties and responsibilities will remain similar.

For internships to have been available, several events must have coincided. The Chief Defender (i.e. managing attorney) of a Corporation must have requested an intern. Each May under a comprehensive budget review process, Chief Defenders are polled on the number of interns desired. Provided financial constraints are not deterrents, Chief Defenders have until the following May to make decisions since interns start between end of May and early June.



#### 4.5.2 Recruitment

**Recruiting** is the process of motivating external job-seekers to apply for positions within an organisation. Sometimes recruitment efforts were short of targeted job-seekers and requirements were modified.

*“Do you ever have a problem with getting enough applications?” (Researcher).*

*“Yes. We use first years then” (S2).*

*“Law schools don’t let you work your first year. But because they have finished their first year, technically it’s OK” (S1).*

On very rare occasions when qualified candidates were not available, first year law students have been recruited after consultations with the respective law schools. Since first year law students could be provisionally accepted as the academic term has concluded and the internships occurred after the first academic year. Adjusting these personnel specifications from second and third year students to first year students has been done on two occasions and was always made by S1 without any basis in a formal process. An example of a provision for the student would be a requirement to maintain good academic standing.

Between October and November, S1 and S2 visit ASL, ONU, and WVU to interview individuals seeking internships. Résumés are received from interested law students prior to visiting these schools with some résumés being presented during interviews. In rare instances, when job-seekers outside the three primary law schools enquire about intern opportunities, they are directed to submit a résumé and are subsequently interviewed by phone. During this research, one student enquired about internships.

#### 4.5.3 Placement

Selection decisions to place interns occurred in January. Sometimes candidates having accepted internships fail to report for work at which time they are contacted to enquire reasons for not reporting to work. Past reasons provided include: Accepted another employment offer, family emergency, and decided not to accept an intern offer. The Research Centre notes that individuals failing to report to work did not appear to fit into any specific demographic group.

Most interns had not met with individuals from Corporations that they would eventually employ them prior to the first day of employment. Thus, intern expectations and perceptions most likely resulted from interactions with screeners. On rare occasions, a Chief Defender may request specific students for internships. When this occurs, the requested

student, provided (s)he has met the minimum eligibility requirements, was offered the internship with the requesting Corporation prior to the Research Centre considering other applicants. Usually when a Chief Defender made a request, the request stemmed from having previously supervised an individual or otherwise having met with the individual seeking an internship.

#### **4.6 Emerging Empirical Evidence in the Research Centre**

This section presents the impact of the emerging empirical evidence concerning informal decisions. Connections amongst emerging themes associated with observations and discussions from the intern programme were scrutinized to discover how informal decision processes are influenced.

Several cues for informal decisions were prevalent, observed and discussed during this research. Whilst other tools might have been available or used to support cues, S1 and S2 utilise résumés, interviews, geography, class ranking, grade point average, awards and various personnel specifications when making informal decisions. Appendix 19 presents an overview of the critical filtering cues observed and discussed in the Research Centre. In addition to these cues, information from interviews (see Appendix 3) was coded using a single descriptive and then grouped categorically into themes (see Appendix 20).

Some unexpected exceptions to Charmaz's (2008) single descriptive term emerged whilst coding data. These exceptions lead to the development of a complexity. Under GT, one concept should equal one theme, but in this case, one concept can actually occupy multiple themes. The development of this complexity caused an exception in coding data to be made so that data is not forced into a specific category (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example: "*Awards support class rank*" is both **Credentialing** and **Ranking** depending on the processes and actions associated with its use. Credentialing is a method of validation whilst ranking is a preference. Furthermore, the use of documents, interview notes, and other sources of information for evaluating individuals is part of the **Filtering** theme, the taking of interview notes (S2) and updating documents (S1) is included within the separate theme of **Noting**.

#### **Majority Influence**

Majority of influence, primarily attributed to an individual, can also be attributed to an organisation. With the Research Centre, *specifying* encompasses the practical and

theoretical application of constructing and applying guidelines for hiring decisions by screeners. Although screeners indicate that their informal decisions were not governed by written specifications, external organisations did significantly establish minimum guidelines. In fact, these external specific written regulations and procedures strongly influenced S1 and S2's interpretations of the employee personnel specifications. As these external regulations and procedures are viewed as routine and not a significant factor in determining informal decisions by S1 and S2, the emergence of such external influence was not apparent at first. Moreover, S1 and S2 utilise these external specifications without a detailed in-depth understanding of how job-seekers originally met these criteria.

S1 and S2 relied upon at least two specific law school standards to identify job-seekers: (1) a job-seeker met the law school admission requirements; and (2) a job-seeker must be a student in good standing prior to interviewing with the Research Centre. However, difference in regulations and policies can vary amongst Universities; and thus, so can the external employee personnel specifications with many of these changes being made externally and accepted by S1 and S2 without discussions and in most instances without knowing that changes have occurred. Moreover, if screeners need to question an application, a law school representative serves as a liaison between the job-seeker and the Research Centre. During this research, no requests for information were observed. Additionally, discussions indicated that there had never been a need to question information. Because applicants exceed available positions, if doubt exists with an application, it is best to discard that application and move onto the next application.

In addition to the discrete influence from Universities upon personnel specifications, **Rule 10** (see SCA, 2010) serves as a written personnel specification that augments the University minimum acceptable standards. **Rule 10** firmly establishes that law school students enrolled in at least their second year may engage in the limited practise of criminal law for indigents. For this purpose, the Research Centre only accepts those job-seekers that meet the minimum requirements of **Rule 10**; unless there are more positions than job-seekers at which time, first years are included in the applicant pool.

### **Weighting of Information**

In **selecting**, some information can be more critically important to screeners in identifying successful applications. In the Research Centre, S1 and S2 used cognitive personnel specifications match applicants to internships mostly by an applicant's expressed geographic preferences. These geographic preferences were originally part of the **filtering** theme; however, geography as a method to informally filter applicants emerged as an

important theme (i.e. **geographing**) based on the frequency of occurrence and the importance (as stressed by S1 and S2) of geography. Based on the evidence, the significant weighting of geographing also falls under the section of *inappropriate information and criteria*; and, for that reason, it is further discussed in that section.

One critical variable, which shifted for each Corporation, was organisational culture and applicant fit. Education was not considered by S1 and S2 the most important cue since every applicant was required to be enrolled in an ABA accredited law programme. However, class rankings, a component of education, were considered better predictors of job-seeker success. In some cases, high academic standing did not waiver to strong personality for indigent criminal defence.

Strong personality translated to an applicant having the ability to deal with difficult and adversarial clients, prosecutors, and co-workers as discussed under **filtering**. The Research Centre noted that whilst every day is not difficult, an applicant must be able to remain calm when these difficulties arise. However, strong personality was not weighted equally amongst screeners. S2 focuses rankings more upon an applicant's appearance, behaviours, and attitudes. For example, S2 quickly identified inconsistencies in spellings, fonts, punctuations, and general appearance within résumés. Moreover, coupling notes with résumé inconsistencies could effectively heighten appearance especially since informal decisions occur after interviews. If S2 perceived a job-seeker to have a poor appearance, then potentially a poorly constructed résumé would reflect that negative appearance.

Negative information (e.g. class rank and work experience) had a stronger influence on informal rankings than positive information. Although negative information did not cause the removal of an applicant, negative information (e.g. a desire to work outside of West Virginia, limited social connections within a geographic area, and negative information from personal documents and notes) reduced job-seeker rankings and lessens the opportunities for placement. For example, lower ranked applicants were placed in alternative piles which effectively and significantly reduced the probability of an internship being offered.

### **Inappropriate Information and Criteria**

For this case, the researcher probed the nature and use of information to better understand the impact selected information has on informal decisions. From discussions with screeners, two common heuristic themes concerning inappropriate information and criteria emerged: **Geographing** and **Ranking**.

Geographing was a recurring benchmark to determine which applicants matched up to interns. Although S1 and S2 contend that job-seekers expressing a desire to work outside of West Virginia and having no West Virginia ties could be removed, the observed practice was to place those job-seekers into a reserve pool in the event that a position could not be filled. The use of a reserve pool indicates a change of preference (i.e., ranking) and not a true removal from consideration. Furthermore, informal decisions on geography yielded minimal differences between S1 and S2. These marginal differences appear when a screener had to interpret and make subjective decisions concerning the maximum distance an applicant would be willing to travel. For example, whilst S1 believes that applicants would travel ~38 kilometres to work, S2 believes that distance to be approximately ~64 kilometres. To further offer explanation, S2 notes the willingness to travel is contingent upon compensation and job prestige. In fact, geography was given more weight in informal decisions than any other criteria.

Excluding the withdrawn application, S1 and S2 made informal decisions about applications based on individual preference criteria (e.g. class rank, work experience, and interview notes) within a geographic location. This was covered under **ranking**. Furthermore, negative information about applicants strongly modified screener decisions although applicant information was not verified. Screeners considered that résumés were truthful and interviews (cf., coded interviewing) clarified any questionable or unclear information whilst adding knowledge in the form of notes (cf., coded noting) for consensus discussions. Consequently, negative notations were sparse and limited to the previous job-seekers failing to interview and those interns having negative reviews from Chief Defenders. Finally, S2 was open to shift informal decisions based on consensus discussions with S1. This is further presented under the *Influence of Assessors*.

### **Influence of Assessors**

At first, evidence suggesting the use of written specifications was not readily identifiable, but further discussions discovered that externally written specifications established minimum standards for the interns. The consistency promoted by these external personnel specifications establishes the applicant pools in which the Research Centre recruits job-seekers. This raises an important question: “What constitutes an organisational specification?” Since formally written organisational specifications were limited within the Research Centre (i.e. the reliance on external specifications), would a cognitive specifications constructed by S1 be considered an organisational specification or just the influence of an assessor? This researcher considers that organisational specifications can be

constructed through writing, reasoning, and a combination of written and cognitive processes. Thus, personnel specifications that are legitimately defined by management constitute the organisational specification(s) that are to be utilised for informal decisions assuming that these specifications are consistently applied.

As with geography, differences in ranking between S1 and S2 were observed and more pronounced. Whilst observing selection discussions, screeners spent more time scrutinising rankings and preferences of each applicant. As part of these discussions, S2 relied more on her own personal documents and notes of her interview observations (e.g. applicant appearance, behaviours, and attitudes) to justify rankings. Conversely, S1 concentrated more on the information presented within résumés. These differences between screeners appears to be attributed to abstract concepts where subjective decision making processes cause a screener to rely upon his/her experiences. To resolve differences in ranking preferences, S2 frequently yielded to the preferences of S1 as he did have significant influence as an assessor. This is an interesting finding that emerged from the observations.

In fact, where clearly defined guidelines do not exist, as in this case organisation, decisions are reconsidered and modified to fit the preferences of the dominant individual. This indicates that the perceptual interpretations of language, in this case through verbal communications, help construct criteria used in the evaluations of applicants. Moreover, the dominant assessor's interpretations of informal criteria prevail. For example, reconsideration by S2 represents an adjustment to the interpretation of personnel specifications that S1 has presented to S2. After discussions with S1, S2 re-interprets personnel specifications and re-applies cues that successively modify her original decision to a decision that agrees with S1. Moreover, S1 is a former trial attorney acquainted to presenting a systematic argument within an antagonistic environment. This former experience naturally encourages S1 to dominant discussions. Additionally, it appeared that S2 tends to avoid conflict. This behavioural mixture reassures that S1 will dominant discussions where S2 is involved. If other individuals were involved (e.g. additional screeners or a replacement of either S1 or S2), these informal decisions could be different.

Additionally, S1 is a practising lawyer whereas S2 has no direct legal experience other than serving as S1's assistant. Therefore, the researcher postulates that a screener should be able to recall similar applicants faster. S1 and S2 were asked, "Of the people selected for interns, how many are like you?" In each instance, S1 and S2 could not identify with candidates outside of basic common characteristics: Within the same age category and attended the same school. Conversely, both S1 and S2 did present that applicants were

more dissimilar than similar: Applicants varied in academic standing, work experience, and personality.

Even though S1 and S2 were the only screeners assigned to the task of selecting interns, the principals (i.e. various Corporations as employers) could withdraw support for this intern programme; which could influence informal decisions as S1 and S2 may proactively avoid negative consequences from a Corporation. This proactive avoidance could be injected as a personnel specification for a job-seeker to fit within a specific Corporation's culture. If this is the case, then multiple personnel specifications (i.e. potentially one for each of the seventeen Corporations) exist. As rankings are subject to topography and each Corporation operations geographically, then evidence suggests informal decisions are influenced by Chief Defenders.

For example, a Chief Defender may request a specific job-seeker for an internship which bypasses the hiring processes and the job-seeker is offered an internship. This circumvention indicates that personnel specifications are not concrete and may be subject to change without input from S2 further supporting S1's influence as an assessor. Since a Corporation voluntarily participates in the intern programme, any circumvention could be rationalised as the Research Centre's response to satisfy and encourage employer participation. Moreover, the preference for former interns illustrates that the Chief Defenders also serve as assessors, at least from a post-employment stance.

#### **4.7 Research Centre Case Conclusion**

Informal decisions were based on applicant provided information and the perceptions surrounding those applications. This case presented some interesting results.

First, screeners reported that written criteria were not used in making decisions regarding the appointment of interns, but observations show that they relied on university regulations, ABA standards, and Supreme Court rules in formulating minimum criteria. Furthermore, screeners failed to recognise that essentially a majority of personnel specifications, by adaptation and use of these external policies, were essentially entrenched into the intern specifications. Since information was primarily compared to cognitive criteria, written personnel specifications for an intern could be formally adopted to allow for a greater transparency and consistency concerning informal decisions within the hiring process. Additionally, personnel specifications may be used during the recruitment processes to attract more qualified job-seekers. Also, a temporal analysis may yield a better predictive competency for classifying or identifying individuals whom are high risk for job abandonment.

In fact, the Research Centre was opposed to modifications to the selection processes as it might reduce the applicant pools.

Secondly, **geographing** emerged as a dominant theme to assess job-seekers on logistical aspects of accepting employment and eliminate those individuals that may abandon posts. The attention that geographing received, considering all other criteria to establish preferences in applications, was inappropriately weighted. The expressed location was the triggering factor for the informal decisions and any subsequent informal decision thereafter.

Although applications competing for the same geographic position were ranked by screeners, S2 was always more agreeable with S1 concerning informal decisions. This influence as an assessor over S2 from S1 becomes more noticeable when differences in job-seekers within a geographic applicant pool were not as distinct. This influence becomes important as this may be S1 shifting S2's perceptions inappropriately or it could just be a correction back to a cognitive specification. Further field work is needed to make this distinction in other organisations.



# **Chapter 5 The Case of the Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital**

## **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis of the selection processes surrounding the Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital (“Veterinary Hospital”) that occurred between May and July 2010. Moreover, this analysis addresses the informal decisions that have emerged within those processes.

## **5.2 Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital Operational Details**

The Veterinary Hospital (CLVH, 2010) “...is a well-established, full-service, small animal veterinary hospital providing comprehensive medical, surgical and dental care...” within the vicinity of Cross Lanes, West Virginia. The Veterinary Hospital operates Monday to Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. and Saturday from 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. On Sunday, the facilities are closed; however, animal patients requiring overnight stays are attended to after hours. There are seven (7) Doctors of Veterinary Medicine (“DVM”) and twenty-five (25) staff employed. Six staff positions were added, making a total of thirty-one (31) staff positions, subsequent to this case study (S11).

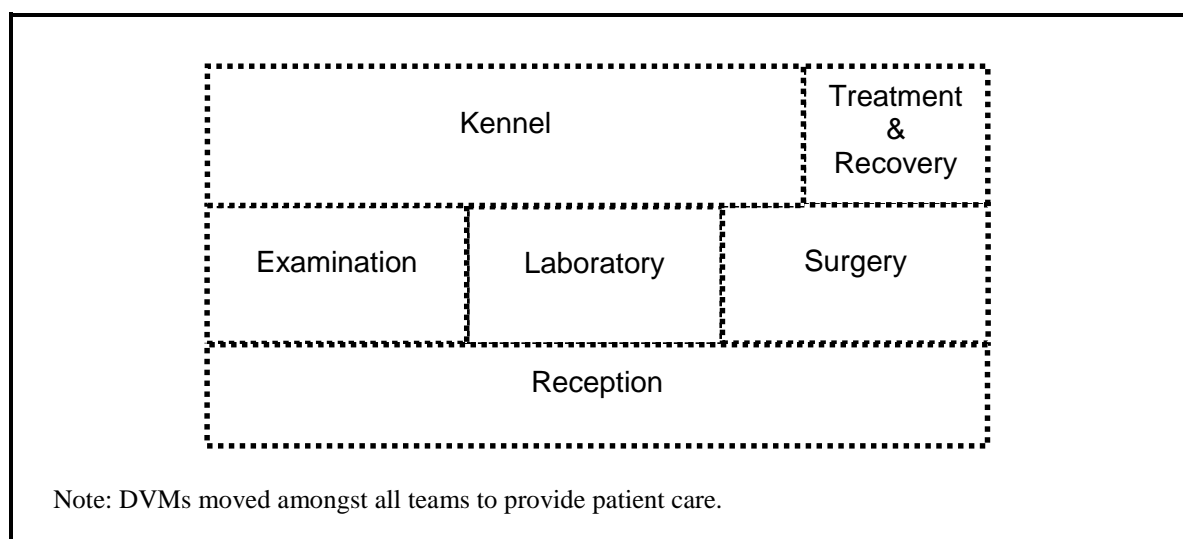
In 2008, the Veterinary Hospital underwent a massive expansion (S3) and continues to expand (S11) to better serve the community (S3, S11). During expansion, new services required additional staff positions. With new staff positions, the Veterinary Hospital re-organised and placed personnel into six specialised teams: Examination, Kennel, Laboratory, Reception, Surgery, and Treatment & Recovery. S3 notes, “*reception, lab and [examination] rooms are sorta our outpatient area,*” while “*treatment, surgery and kennels are, you know, sort of your inpatient area.*” Each team is managed by a Team Coordinator also called a Team Leader. Whilst personnel may be assigned to a primary team, staff may be cross-trained to assist other teams due to customer demands and staff shortages. The following list details each team.

- **Examination** – Responsible for routine medical examinations, sick visits, and general care of patients. This includes vaccinations and shots, prescriptions, diagnosis, and surgical consultations.
- **Kennel** – Primarily responsible for overnight care of patients. This can include daytime care of patients after released from the Treatment and Recovery Team.
- **Laboratory** – Responsible for testing specimens and providing reports to appropriate personnel. The Laboratory may fill prescriptions and include dietary foods.

- **Reception** – Responsible for registry, admitting, and billing patients. Reception is the primary patient entry point of the Veterinary Hospital; as such, reception serves as the communication hub amongst personnel and customers. This entails coordinating, directing, and facilitating medical services.
- **Surgery** – Responsible for performing medical procedures including dental care. Dental is included in surgery as the animal must be put under anaesthesia.
- **Treatment & Recovery** – Responsible for providing post-op care to patients and general non-surgical patient care supporting hospital operations such as drawing blood, wound cleaning, and x-rays. Treatment & Recovery is the central core of hospital operations geared on outpatient services.

The figure below depicts a conceptual illustration of the teams and their relationships based upon discussions with S3 and S11. A large rectangle representing the Veterinary Hospital has been divided into six smaller blocks representing the six teams. All division lines are dotted as teams were not fully formalised and in some instances individuals would be assigned to assist other teams. Whilst the Veterinary Hospital is split into six teams, two core categories revolving around patient care can be identified. The Surgery, Treatment & Recovery, and Kennel teams focus on inpatient care (S3). Reception, Examination, and Laboratory focus on outpatient care (S3). Additionally, DVMs were not assigned to a specific team, but interacted with all teams.

**Figure 5-1: Conceptual Relationships of Veterinary Hospital Specialised Teams**



### **5.3 Direct Participants**

In May 2010, the Veterinary Hospital was approached as a research participant. Informed consent was provided and research commenced in June and concluded in July 2010. Clarification of certain concepts was obtained in February 2012. Observations were made in July 2010 with digital recording devices being used in conjunction with the researcher's jotted notes. All Veterinary Hospital personnel having primary responsibilities with filtering, selection, assessment, and hiring staff participated in this research.

*"The three owners have final say [in hiring]; however, they have taken a 'hands off' approach. Essentially the office manager completes all aspects of the hiring process and informs them [the owners] of new hires" (S11).*

S3 has an Associate Degree and she serves as Office Manager having direct oversight of the recruitment and selection processes for staff. S11 serves as the Reception Team Leader. She was interviewed to provide additional details concerning the operations and hiring practises of the Veterinary Hospital.

**Table 5-1: List of Veterinary Hospital Participants**

<b>Subject Identification</b>	<b>Time in Present Position</b>	<b>Job Title</b>
S3	3 years	Office Manager
S11	8 years	Reception Team Leader

### **5.4 Indirect Participants**

Whilst indirect participants did not interact with the researcher, the researcher had access to personnel information associated with applications for staff positions. *"There are three owner doctors. They decide who comes in [as a DVM]. One is the daughter of the founder. The other two I'm not sure how they got together" (S11).* Neither the researcher nor S3 had access to this information. Additionally, the hire of a new DVM generally happens at several years interval: *"we have not hired any new doctors since I took this role [as office manager]" (S3).* Since 2002, *"two [DVM] in the last ten years [have been hired]. The last DVM was hired, August 2008" (S11).* The first DVM was hired after persistent phone calls to owners.

*"The last one worked there during the summer before. Prior to that, the [DVM] called until she was hired. Her husband was coming to work in West Virginia and she called from Georgia saying she was relocated and wanted to come to work for us. She keep calling and they [owners] finally gave in" (S11).*

Information associated with indirect participants was treated as confidential. To preserve confidentiality, information of indirect participants was not duplicated or removed from the Veterinary Hospital. Finally, all indirect participants were over the age of eighteen.

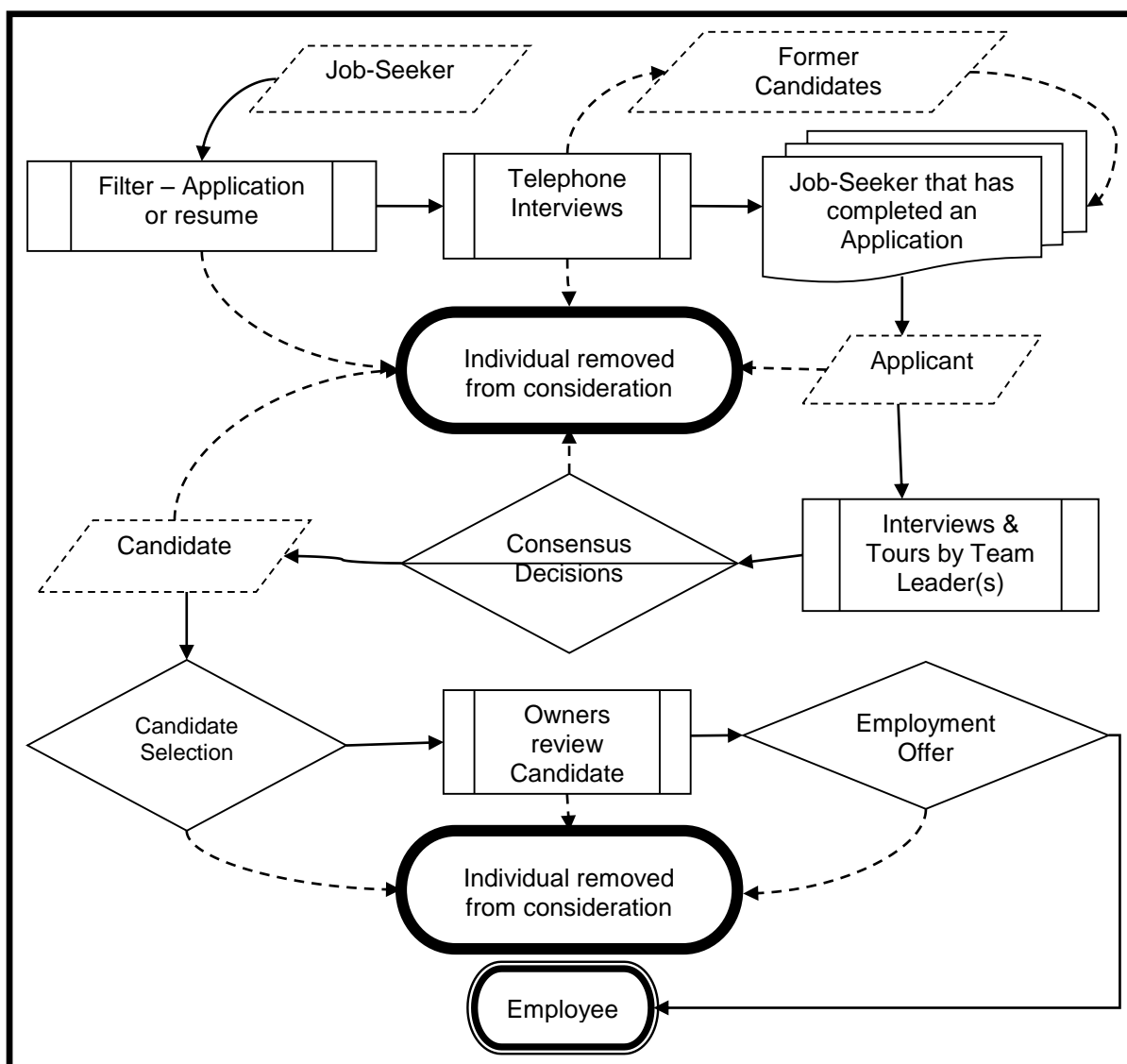
## **5.5 Application Process**

This section provides an analysis of critical steps within the Veterinary Hospital hiring processes. With the Veterinary Hospital, the decision to hire starts with the type of position that is sought. From analysis, four themes emerged: *Specifying*, *expanding*, *forming*, and *training*. *Specifying* identifies the personnel specifications for the position. The expansion (*Expanding*) of an organisation creates a need for additional positions. With expansion, the occupants of positions are *forming* team relationships. Both *expanding* and *forming* give cause to the need of employee *training* to satisfy some personnel specifications. These themes are further discussed in 5.5.1.

Within Recruitment 5.5.2, *recruiting*, *exiting*, and *timing* emerged as themes. Consequently, the Veterinary Hospital does very little in terms of *recruiting* as the preference is by word-of-mouth. *Exiting* helps identify issues in retention and therefore should improve recruiting processes. *Timing* is categorised as a component of recruiting as it was a significant influence in making the final decisions to hire. Thus, it delayed the recruiting of an employee.

Recruiting starts the process of hiring in the Veterinary Hospital which is detailed in the figure below. Analysis of the Veterinary Hospital data yielded some similar themes as the Research Centre: *collecting*, *filtering*, *credentialing*, *appearing*, *trusting*, *noting*, *interviewing* and *geographing*. Each theme is discussed below in the order it emerged in the hiring process. In addition to these themes, fundamental discriminatory aspects were more pronounced in this case compared to the Research Centre. For example, age was a consideration for insurance coverage. The combination of an application and résumé create an advantage for a job-seeker. The appearance of handwriting and physical attractiveness factored in informal decisions. Finally, experience and positive references are important criteria for making informal decisions. These aspects are discussed alongside the themes in which they emerge.

**Figure 5-2: The Veterinary Hospital Processes**



When a position becomes available either through employee departures or new positions created, the most recent applications and résumés are pulled if the former job-seeker appears to be a potential fit for the position, (s)he is placed into the current applicant pool. Additionally, job-seekers may make direct applications, submit résumés, or send letters of enquiry concerning available positions.

In order to make an application, age must be considered. **Age** is a non-negotiable cue where an individual must meet or exceed the age of eighteen (S3) to legitimately become an applicant; and therefore, age is considered credentialing. Age was established to comply with the Veterinary Hospital's insurance provisions: *"And that's [age] a thing that has to do with insurance"* (S3). This provisions mandates that employees must be at least eighteen to handle pet medications, medical waste, blood-borne pathogens (e.g. animal fluids, bodily wastes, and animal remains), and the execution of legal documents (e.g. crematorium orders, and filling of medication). As a cue, either the job-seeker has reached

eighteen or has not. This decision is not subjective but based purely on the factual details provided. Therefore age is appropriate to be placed under credentialing. Although age is a personnel specification, job-seekers must meet or exceed the age requirement prior to making an application.

Even though *résumés* and applications provide similar information, *résumés* may be significantly diverse in format and presentation. Therefore, a standardised application is used with a *résumé* acting as an ad-hoc attachment to this application. **Collecting** is the process where an organisation obtains information. The primary collection process revolves around the **Application** as it serves as the standard two-page form that job-seekers complete for screeners to evaluate (S3). When prompted with “*So there is not a standard format other than your application then?*” S3 responded,

*“Right. And that’s why typically, you know, I never used to understand this. Like if I sent a *résumé* in some place they would say, ‘Can you come fill out the application?’ Why do I have to fill out the application if I gave you my *résumé*? I appreciate it on a different level now. Um. Because that is sort of our standard that we go, of course you look at the *résumé* and whatever else they would send in also. But I keep that stuff together.”*

Each application collects general information concerning contact details, citizenship, military service, convictions, education, employment, and references. All job-seekers, including those that have submitted a *résumé* or expressed interest in employment by some other means, must complete an application prior to the formal interview to become an applicant or be removed from the hiring process.

In addition to the application, **résumés** are used by S3 to identify key KSAO for a position beyond information detailed within applications. An application was sometimes augmented with a *résumé*: S3 notes, “*we don’t tend to see CVs so much.*” Consequently, *résumés* can vary significantly which can cause a screener to spend additional time locating and interpreting information that supplements an application. For example, S3 focuses first on the objective statements or reason presented (e.g. I am looking for something in the veterinary field) within *résumés* to determine the motivation for a job-seeker’s application. S3 uses these statements along with work experience and credentials to evaluate and filter job-seekers. The theme **Filtering** emerged as the separation of individuals into categories by decision makers to identify the individual(s) that best match a position within an organisation through assessment processes. In this case, **Credentialing** and **Evaluating**.

Whilst **credentialing** and **evaluating** similarly focus on the assessment of the KSAO (Searle, 2003), the primary distinction is the level of cognitive resources that are necessary in making subjective assessments. Credentialing begins with a basic informal evaluation of third-party information (e.g. birth certificate, passport, and academic transcripts) that

supports or disproves particular personnel specification (e.g. age requirement). When these assessments become subjective, credentialing becomes evaluating as greater use of cognitive resources and stronger abilities to interpret information is required. For example,

*“sometimes it might be because they’ve had five years of experience, um, that that would be the best fit for what we’re doing. Sometimes it might be, you know, that that, I think they’re [education and experience] equally important. Although, I think, there’s a little bit more of a standard that you can expect with completion of education versus experience” (S3).*

Consider this, the acceptance of a degree based upon academic transcripts is credentialing whilst determining the relevance of individual courses to an employer’s needs is evaluating. Other examples of evaluating include interviews, the transportability of work experience to the job, comparisons amongst job-seekers, and the overall valuation of an individual as an employee. Evaluating usually takes more time and resources to reach a decision whereas credentialing is more short term. This distinction is necessary as evaluating also has the greatest potential for effecting informal decisions.

First, each résumé and application is evaluated for completeness, presentation and legibility. Whilst non-legible résumés and applications are not removed from consideration, legibility issues do present a problem to properly evaluate job-seekers. **Appearance** extends to the job-seekers’ application in terms of completion and handwriting. S3 states,

*“the first thing, I honestly that I look for, um is, sort of completion, presentation. I don’t know if that is a bad thing, but you know, I, I do kinda look to see, you know, if, if you’re asking for certain information. Did they do a reasonable job of providing it? Do you know what I mean? Um. Like on an application, is, is it fairly legible? You know. Not that I’m gonna say, uh, you know, your handwriting is terrible I don’t want to talk to you but, you know, So, you, I, I think the presentation is what catches me first.”*

Although handwriting seems to be a trivial point, handwriting is a major undertone as all applicants are required to complete an application in the job-seeker’s handwriting, any negative cues (i.e. legibility and completeness) associated with the handwriting impacts informal decisions. Graphology is not a traditional form of selected out individuals (Shackleton & Newell, 1991); however, in this case, screeners use graphology to indicate poor handwriting equals poor performance.

Since job-seeker **experiences** are assessed in relationship to other job-seekers’ experiences, experience falls under **Evaluating**. Experience may be difficult for screeners to judge as standard personnel specifications do not exist. However, direct experience, which is transferable to the position, is determined from *“where this person [an applicant] devoted their professional time and energy”* (S3). But, if an applicant provides indirect or ambiguous statements about his/her experience, (s)he is removed from consideration.



*“especially with a résumé I always want to look at what they are looking for. What the candidate is looking for. You know. So, if they have an objective or if they have provided a cover letter, I’m always most interested to know, know why are you looking for a job? In a veterinary clinic, or here specifically” (S3).*

Work experience is evaluated before educational experience. Firstly, **Work experience** is dependent upon the needed position which fluctuates amongst team leaders:

*“Well, I look at experience. If they have any reception experience or veterinary experience, that is a plus. Some have a preference for no experience because they are less likely to make mistakes. They don’t have to be retrained. I don’t care if they are old or young. I just want them to be able to do the job” (S11).*

Secondly, the team to which a position will be assigned is evaluated to identify strengths and weaknesses to determine the needs of the team. A lack of work experience can be overcome provided that a team has sufficient experience to accommodate the newcomer. For example, customer service experience can transfer to a reception type position or potentially another position within the organisation if the team has sufficient experience to complement the newcomer.

*“Obviously you’re gonna look for experience. You know that is definitely an in. Depends on what area we’re looking to hire in to how much that factors in. So, and it’s not a matter of if you have no experience, you know, you’re not considered, but it’s more, you know, what has your experience been? Um, maybe you’ve never worked in a vet clinic, but you have a lot of customer service experience, and you’re wanting to be a receptionist, or, you know, so, try to take all that into account. What is their experience and/or education, obviously” (S3).*

Finally, consideration is given to how applicants’ KSAOs can contribute to the assigned team:

*“I think if someone’s got some education, and maybe not a lot of experience, that’s an important piece of a big puzzle of an organisation, and I really look at it from a big picture standpoint too. Do, you know what I mean? Like, what are strengths and weaknesses as a group, you know, as a team?” (S3).*

Whilst these three contingencies drive informal decisions, three distinct interconnected filtering cues emerged to trigger informal decisions: Experience as a job-hopper, experience with animals, and volunteer experience. Although each application contains a section enquiring about **military experience**, it is considered with the general work experience (S3). Furthermore, military experience as a separate personnel specification did not emerge nor impact informal decisions.

**Experience as a job-hopper**, according to S3, is where an individual has been employed with the same employer for less than three months and where an individual has long gaps between employments. Although at first job-hoppers can appear to be a simple filtering decision, it is not. A job-hopper is a behavioural designation to describe an individual having *several* [emphasis added] short-term employment periods without just cause (i.e. seasonal, temporary employment). Because job-hoppers are short-term employees,

expenses associated with replacing a job-hopper are notably more. Even though long-term relationships with employees are more cost effective, the main preference for removing job-hoppers is that short-term relationships may affect the quality of patient care. The Veterinary Hospital believes that strategic hiring and promoting long-term relationships, benefits employees, patients, and the organisation. In essence, placing patient care above costs contributes to more profits over time.

*“is this person somebody who has worked three months, you know? Not three months, not. And again. I don’t use that as a, well, you know, you don’t stay at a job-longer than three months. I always try to look at the circumstances. If I’m gonna talk to them, I’ll ask them, you know, well hey, you did this. Sometimes it’s pretty obvious, like if they’re just coming out of high school. You can see where they worked a summer job” (S3).*

S3 evaluates job-hoppers in two stages: Time associated with employment and the type of employment. S3 prefers not to remove potential job-hoppers immediately as an acceptable explanation (e.g. temporary work, summer/seasonal employment or part-time work) was most likely not obtained from the application that would identify job-hoppers. Job-seekers that have an explanation are not considered job-hoppers but contingent employees of their former employers. However, S11 provides a different perspective: *“How many jobs they [job-hoppers] have had. And their attendance. On one application they listed that they were fired from the last two jobs for excessive call offs. We never interviewed them.”* Thus, some job-seekers are removed without the chance of an explanation.

After experience as a job-hopper, informal decisions focus on evaluating animal experience. *“I also look to see if they can feed an animal. If they have pets” (S11).* **Experience with animals** is evaluated competitively amongst applicants. Although applicants are not discarded for a lack of experience with animals, those applicants having experience with animals such as working at a shelter have greater value (S3). To facilitate gathering information about a job-seeker’s experience, **“Describe Animal Experience”** appears on the application. Individuals possessing more direct experience associated with veterinary care qualify and describe animal experience directly whilst those individuals having less than desirable experience with animals use ambiguous phrases.

*“Unless somebody has extensive experience, that’s what they’ll choose to put, you know? Like, animal experience, graduate, you know, dah, dah, dah. Um, or, have worked for several veterinary clinics, or whatever. Um, if they don’t have that, typically what you’ll see here is ‘have always had animals,’ ‘love to work with animals,’ you know what I mean?” (S3).*

The difference amongst these statements is that desirable job-seekers communicate direct relationships in clinical or patient setting whereas less than desirable job-seekers communicate passive relationships much like a novelty. Essentially, practical experiences

create more concrete responses whilst a lack of experience is expressed by ambiguous phrases that fail to quantify or qualify direct experience are not necessarily a good indication of animal experience. When applicants provide similar ambiguous responses, S3 tends to clarify those experiences.

*“People tend to glorify that [animal experience] a little bit if they’ve never done it. So, again, it’s not a determining factor, but it’s like an ‘icing on the, on the cake’ kind of thing” (S3).*

S3 continues,

*“I mean people tend to glorify the ‘I love working with animals’ part of the things if they’ve not actually done it. You know, if they’ve had pets, but they’ve never actually worked in a kennel or a clinic or something like that.”*

S11 adds, *“But you would be surprised to see how many people come in and are unfamiliar with breeds. They think that all dogs are the same and all cats are the same.”*

Following experience with animals, **volunteer experience and extracurricular activities** is evaluated. **Volunteer experience and extracurricular activities** do not remove applicants but distinguish high-performing applicants. Good examples of experience is shelter experience (and other unpaid animal experience), shadowing, and fundraising activities (S3). Applicants with volunteer experience or extracurricular activities are viewed more positively than those without similar experiences:

*“I definitely look at those, and I think, not because I don’t value them, um, but I think just because of the nature of, of the business that we do that’s sort of an ‘icing on the cake’ kind of thing. You know what I mean? If somebody says that ‘I’ve been involved with this,’ And we see a lot, um, come in on applications from people who have volunteered at shelters, that kind of thing. Um, that does catch my interest. It does show, you know, hey, this is somebody who has decided to take their own time, you know, to be involved with, you know, sometimes it’s fundraisers, sometimes it’s just going and walking pets or anything like that. If they’ve done preceptorships, you know, or shadowing or any of that kind of stuff where they’ve, you know, actually had a chance to get in and, um, do some hands on, get a feel for what, what it actually involves to be on this level working with animals all the time” (S3).*

Quintessentially, individuals with volunteer experience and extracurricular activities have a greater competitive advantage than those individuals without volunteer experience or having participated in extracurricular activities. But, *“It’s only counted if it relates” (S11).*

Whilst **education** is a desirable characteristic, most positions do not require a formal level of education or a High School Diploma (S11). *“We’ve, we’ve had a couple of people hired in that didn’t have their [High School] diploma yet” (S3).* For those positions requiring a formal education, legitimate accreditation (i.e. American Veterinary Medical Association or AVMA) of a degree provides a standard for incorporation into the personnel specifications

and for comparison amongst job-seekers: *“if they’ve got a degree, you know, um, in veterinary technology, or whatever, you know, there’s a pretty standard curriculum, if it’s an AVMA accredited school”* (S3).

Conversely, educational credentials are not verified nor requested, but accepted if supplied by an applicant.

*“sometimes people will bring them [transcripts] or have them sent. Um, if they talk about having an education, they ask me would you like a, you know, would you like a copy of my transcripts? I really, I leave that up to them. You know, I would like to look at them if you’re comfortable with that, but it’s not something that we typically require”* (S3).

From these informal decisions, **Trusting** emerged as the faith that information presented is accurate and truthful. Much of the information presented within the application is not verified by third-parties. Additionally, the non-verification may be attributed to most formal degrees are granted from the same institutions and the lack of education and experience needed for a position.

*“They [registered technicians] usually have a degree from Carver. That takes two years to complete. You don’t need experience to be hired. And for most positions, you don’t need a degree or have to complete high school. We have a couple of people that were hired without a diploma [High School]”* (S11).

The preference for degree verification is the assessment of knowledge retained by education from each applicant during formal interviews (S3). Experience is more important than education and S3 verifies and collects information concerning experience from references. Furthermore, job-seekers that appear to be dishonest are immediately removed. *“Lies get discarded. We don’t even look at those because we have money, and drugs, and a whole lot of other things that can be taken”* (S11). She provides this explanation, *“We have had an employee that has stolen from us before. So we don’t even consider those that might be risky.”*

Following work experience and education, if a job-seeker answers yes to the question, “Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony?” the type of conviction along with the circumstances surrounding a conviction are considered. A conviction does not eliminate an applicant; but other characteristics and experience must be considered against the conviction(s) as S3 explains, *“If you’re looking at somebody that seems to be a viable candidate up to that point [of having a criminal conviction] then, I would give the opportunity to explain at that point in time.”*

Although the Veterinary Hospital does not formally review criminal histories or require WDT, the recent expansion generated discussions concerning the integration of both criminal background checks and WDT into hiring processes (S3). *“We don’t do a criminal*

*background check. We don't do drug testing. We don't do any of that"* (S3). Both **background checks** and **WDT** focus on an individual's past performance and past behaviours. Although formal background checks are not conducted, S3 notes that relying on employer references and selected personal references are routine procedures in investigating a job-seeker's background. Additionally, S11 confirms that both formal extensive background checks and WDT has not been implemented and will not be implemented within the hiring processes.

Whilst **citizenship** is a general question within the application, S3 was surprised by the researcher's questions concerning how citizenship factors into informal decisions. *"Honestly, I've never, I have never taken an application from somebody that marked 'No' [to United States Citizenship]"* S3 advises. Because job-seekers are homogeneous with respect to citizenship, it does not remove individuals from the hiring process. In fact, this question became routine and largely ignored as all job-seekers were United States citizens.

After S3 has reviewed an application, she may consult a listed reference (employer or personal) to acquire additional information. **Referencing** is the process of gathering information about an individual by contacting current and former employers, volunteer organisations, personal contacts, and other social organisation affiliated with that individual. In some instances, personal references are also current employees. From the potential references that may be contacted, previous employer references are preferred with employee references following (S3).

The Veterinary Hospital (S3) enquires about an applicant's prior work experience, responsibilities, and workplace behaviours from **employer references** (S11).

*"Well. I look at them. Teacher. Professional. Personal. If they have references. The office manager takes care of checking all those. Normally you don't find someone listed as a reference that they don't know or that would give a bad reference"* (S11).

Employer references for each applicant are checked except when an applicant has answered no to the question "May we contact your present employer? ☐ yes ☐ no Person to contact \_\_\_\_\_." Current employers are only contacted when S3 has the applicant's permission as a current employer may retaliate against the job-seeking employee for searching for alternative work.

*"That's [employer references] who we'll call first. Um, I don't know that I ever really called a personal reference on anyone to be honest with you. But like some for example, um, sometimes people who put in applications here will list on their personal references people who work here"* (S3).

Whilst personal references are listed on each application, only those personnel references that are also Veterinary Hospital employees are consulted about the job-seeker's qualifications and behaviours (S3, S11). *"Usually they [staff] are not consulted at all. They are only approached if they are a reference. But they are treated like any other reference"* (S11). Non-employee personal references are not contacted as job-seekers tend to list individuals that will provide positive feedback about the applicant (S11); and screeners are looking at objectivity when making decisions.

**Employee References** create a dynamic where screeners must weight information against personal relationships (i.e. between the employee and the applicant). *"So, you don't have to call. They [employee references] are gonna say 'I know this person put in an application. Blah-blah.' They are going to tell you, whatever anyway"* (S3). S3 notes that a primary candidate for a position had several negative employee comments which postponed an offer of employment and the final informal hiring decision for two weeks until a resolution with the current employees could be reached.

*"we had a situation recently where we had somebody apply, who, um, did know several people who worked here already. And, um, um, those people who knew this applicant, basically were very much like, um, pissed off. Da-da-da-da-da. You know what I mean? But, this person interviewed very well. Had great references. Had some experience. Do you know what I mean? And we, we really sat on that one pretty heavy for a couple weeks. It was, it was a tough choice to make. Um, because here we had this group of people who were here saying, 'Ooo, you don't want to do that.' You know? But, everything else from our process and our perspective, it just didn't match. But then you have to worry about bringing somebody in to a bad dynamic. Do you know what I mean? Um, so we actually went back through, and talked with those individuals that knew this person and said, 'You know. Why do you say that? What are the issues? Give us some examples. At the end of the day, you know, um, what stands out more to you about this person? Their ability to be a productive member of the working team or your personal feelings?' That's basically, and, and every, every single one of them, individually said, 'The ability to work as part of the...' And so we told them all. We're going to offer, we going to offer a job to this person for these reasons. After taking in your input and we weighted it very heavily and we knew that we did. You know, because we don't typically sit that long trying to make a decision. Um, you know, we can back and, and talked with all them; and basically made it clear. All the way around, like, you know, this is a working relationship, we expect everybody to be respectful. You have a background, you have a history. You need to be able to put that aside at this point in time. And, give us a chance to, you know. It may be, it, it has been fine. It has been fine. And she's been a wonderful edition with them. So, I don't know if that's too much information, but. For example, that was, when you asked that question, like, we just had that within the last few months, where, we didn't say, 'Oh because you've said, 'Duh-duh-duh.' But it made the decision much, harder for us. Cause, minus that feedback,*

*we probably would've, um, been a lot, wa-wa, I don't think we would have had a hesitation to offer her a job" (S3).*

S3, with the support of the owners, hired this controversial applicant against staff suggestions. According to S3, the negativity associated with this newcomer dissipated after her high performance and work ethic was observed by staff. Without this negative employee feedback, there would not have been a reason to delay the hiring process.

Informal decisions are affected by referencing, with employee references contributing more significantly than other forms of referencing, to the overall hiring process as indicated by the previous example. Furthermore, referencing requires more cognitive processes from screeners to determine the relevance, value, and validity of the information provided through employers and personal contacts. Additionally, screeners must consider how referencing compares and contrasts with the application and other information about the job-seeker.

Reviewing prior applications with S3, the researcher observed notations (i.e. specifically concerning verbal communications but also extending to other cues and impressions) were not written or otherwise attached to applications, résumés, and documents associated with informal decisions. S3 states *"I don't usually highlight the actual papers themselves. Um, I kinda just make mental notes."* Thus, **Noting** (the process whereby an individual documents events and communications) emerged as being very subjective since notes were only cognitively retained to facilitate formal interviews. The researcher considers that as memory recollection can be faulty, the written information contained in the applications and résumés may be relied upon more often when making informal decisions.

**Interviewing** is the action associated with discussing application details with the job-seeker. Telephone interviews are a standard open format where an interviewer (usually S3) disseminates information (e.g., organisational operations and personnel specifications) to job-seekers, collects information from job-seekers, reduces job-seeker anxieties about formal interviews, and builds common ground prior to a formal in-person interview.

*"Like, I'll actually call them and you know, say, "I have your application here. I understand that you're interested in, um, you know, maybe joining the team." And, you know, just go through a few basics with them. Um. What did you have in mind? You know. "What are you looking for?" That kinda thing. Um. You know? You can get sort of get a feel for, um, interaction and, you know, and sometimes they're looking for something, that we are not going to be a good fit. And you might know that right off the bat. I would explain that to them at the time. You know? I understand. You know, da, da, da. We kinda work this way...and I don't know that we would, you know, necessarily be the best place for you to get that experience or do what you need to do. But usually, you end up meeting with them after" (S3).*

After perceptions of job-seekers are addressed during these telephone interviews and a job-seeker is acceptable, an offer of a formal in-person interview is extended. S3 believes formal interviews should be extended to all job-seekers during telephone interviews. In some cases, job-seekers decline the interview as the perception of a position has been altered through discussions. *"We had one woman who wanted to, um, apply. But, honestly like after talking with her, I really wasn't sure, and I'm not sure that she was exactly what she was looking to do"* (S3). The telephone interview helps *"...in my mind, it helps break the ice for that person"* (S3) and provide guidance to S3 in formal interviews. Additionally, some job-seekers may be offered formal interviews immediately after the submission of an application without participating in a telephone interview (S11). The theme **Relating**, the sharing of personal experiences with an individual to establish rapport, emerged as an individual could interview a screener as S3 shares her experiences with individuals to illustrate similarities.

Those job-seekers scheduled for formal interviews are considered applicants after the application is completed. Job-seekers must complete an application or be removed from consideration. Additionally, previous candidates having interviewed well and not hired for a position may be contacted to enquire if interested in employment. If a former candidate is interested, an interview is scheduled with the expectation that a former candidate will complete a new application; thus, the former candidate returns to the applicant stage.

Formal interviews are open format discussions between the Veterinary Hospital and applicants concerning the KSAO each applicant offers and the position specifications. Prior to conducting formal interviews, S3 reviews each application as she relies on her cognitive recollection of notes. During each formal interview with an applicant, S3 reviews the respective application and discusses applicant provided information and the personnel specifications and performance expectations. For example: The dress code requires employees to wear medical shirts and trousers, termed *scrubs*, and to be properly presentable. S3 interprets properly presentable to be when applicants are clean and neat in appearance. However, there are some exceptions for applicants to not be presentable. An example of an exception is when an applicant's appearance is somewhat untidy because (s)he has changed a flat tire prior to the interview and appearance is somewhat untidy. S11 describes her interview,

*"We sometimes interview them on the spot if we have time. I was interviewed after I turned in my application. I had been painting all day and I had [my daughter] in a stroller. They were like, 'Do you have time come back?' I was, 'Seriously? Like this?'"*

**Appearing** considers how an applicant's exterior is perceived by organisational representatives. Appearance may influence a screener's impressions, positively or



negatively, of the interview experience and subsequently informal decisions surrounding information collected during the interview.

*"I think, what will really catches my attention [in the interview] more than anything else is neatness [in attire]. Do you know what I mean? If somebody is wearing really nice clothes but they're just shovelled and messy that's going to stand out to me more than anything. Now, if they say 'I got a flat tire on the way here.' Do you know what I mean?" (S3).*

Even though S3 contends that job-seekers' wardrobes do not necessarily impact decisions, she notes that pride in appearance is important:

*"They don't have to be dressed to the tens or nines or whatever they say. Um, they don't have to be wearing heels. They don't have to be wearing a tie. Just, you know? Do they seem to take an overall sense of pride in their appearance? You know? Is it, Are they neat? Are they presentable?"*

S3 interprets pride in appearance to be at least neat, clean, and well-groomed and not necessarily dressed in formal attire.

This pride in appearance extends to job-seekers covering personal undergarments (S3, S11).

*"Um, we've had some pretty interesting things happen. Like people have worn things in that all of a sudden when they are in their interview, like, women who had interviewed that were wearing lower cut tops. And you could tell, that, they probably didn't think about it. But when they got into their interview they were suddenly very aware of it. You know? They're crossing their arms in front of them. They're fixing their shirts all the time. You know? Um, I don't necessarily tend to be, completely swayed one way or another by that because we all wear scrubs. Do you know what I mean? And, so we go through that expectation with people. You know? And even with your scrubs [theatre blues], we expect it to cover everything that it should. Even if you are down in the floor holding a dog, you gotta think about that. You know. And I do the same spill with men/women no matter what they're wearing" (S3).*

Both S3 and S11 note that some job-seekers have exposed undergarments such as bras and thongs to gain the attention of interviewers.

*"Well they have to be covered. They have to be clean and not dirty. They have to have their teeth brushed. No underwear needs to be seen. You would not believe how many people think they can get a job by letting their thongs or something else be seen" (S11).*

These instances of exposure appear to have heightened the sensitivity concerning appearance and have affected informal decisions. In fact, exposures diminish the chance that the job-seeker will be selected for a position.

*“Appearance is a big issue. This really came out before S3 left. They [owners] had her be the bad guy. They implemented a new policy on appearance. No facial piercings. No eyebrows, or lips, or noses, or anything hanging out. Tongue piercings are OK. So were earrings. You could have them, but you could not wear them while working” (S11).*

Appearance, as it relates to the dress code, is discussed during each formal interview (S3). Primarily, these discussion emphasize staff employees are required to wear medical or surgical attire. As S11 notes above, the dress code was subsequently modified after the initial discussions with S3 with policy revisions to require that tattoos must be tasteful or covered and facial piercings must be removed during working hours (S11). *“They tattoos don’t have to be covered, but they have to be tasteful, I mean, we have mostly tribal tattoos and girly tattoos [e.g. flowers and smaller tattoos]. After all, mostly women work here” (S11).* The dress policy and subsequent revisions further indicates that appearance does influence informal decisions.

Formal in-person interviews (part of the ***Interviewing*** theme) offer a forum where an applicant and Veterinary Hospital personnel can discuss a position, an application, and how an applicant can meet the Veterinary Hospital’s expectations. Formal interviews and interviews conducted whilst touring are a critical and central stage for gathering and clarifying information from job-seekers for subsequent informal decisions.

S3 structures interviews using a basic cognitive checklist with mental notes.

*“We actually don’t have a checklist per se. And this one is very rudimentary. Yes. So, this is basically, and of course I don’t have all my details listed out here because I know, in my mind, um, that, you know what I mean, I’m going through with people. But, um, I like to do a lot of open-ended stuff with people when I actually bring them in for an interview. So, I would typically just start, you know, with these open-ended kinds of things. You know? Tell me something about yourself? And, you know, I might through in specific questions to help bring out more about experience or anything like that, that I have gotten from, um, cause I’ll typically look through the résumé and or application and I’ll usually do a little bit of a phone interview first” (S3).*

The researcher observed the interview checklist which included, *“introductions about yourself, why are you seeking the clinic? Scheduling, dress code, benefits discussion, time allowed for discussion and tour.”* Furthermore, questions were centring on job-seeker experiences, objectives and motivation for seeking employment, education, references, and expectations surrounding the vacant position.

Open-ended questions are refined by probing job-seekers.

*“I look back over it [application and the résumé] right before I go into the interview. And um, again, I sorta like this open, open ended thing. So, if there’s*

*something I know I really want to visit with them, it's like here I know to work on into it. And otherwise, a lot of time my questions come more from, what the applicant says during the interview process, then from the actual application" (S3).*

Both the application and the résumé form the basis of questions with exceptions to those questions that are not allowed to be asked under United States Federal and West Virginia laws such as age, race, national origin, sexual orientation, dependants, and family status.

However, questions regarding topography did emerge. **Geographing** is where an individual is matched to a position, in whole or part, based on topography.

*"We take it [geography] into consideration. I ask if they can make it to work in bad weather. If they have a vehicle that can make it. So many younger people don't even consider the weather. I want to know if I can depend on them or if I have to have someone on standby" (S11).*

In this instance, geographing is linked to dependability as employee absences and delays can jeopardise patient care and treatment. Although part of the interview process, geographing emerged as a greater issue associated with attraction and recruitment of applicants and retention of current employees. Some former employees could not be retained as those individuals were relocating outside of the State of West Virginia and the commute between home and work was not possible (S3). This commuting distance deters an employee from continuing working.

After each formal interview, a team leader (normally S11) may give an applicant a tour of the facilities. **Touring** is a method of assessment conducted during an excursion of an organisation where an individual is informally interviewed by organisational representatives. Touring helps applicants establish an understanding with the Veterinary Hospital through a brief experience consisting of exposure to the working environment and interactions amongst employees (S3). This exposure may change applicant perceptions that subsequently may result in an applicant withdrawing from the hiring process.

*"When we take people on the tour through the hospital, um, we'll introduce other people [employees], not that they are going to get a great feel one way or another from that. But, you know. We'll introduce them to people as we go through" (S3).*

*"You kinda walk through and say 'this is that,' and 'that is that.' And you know? They'll make comments going through. They'll ask questions. A lot of the time they'll start to ask more questions, as you're walking through doing the tour then they would do when you're kinda in a room" (S3).*

Touring is used as a second interview process to extract hidden characteristics of applicants. *"We try and give everybody a tour [by a team leader], but, um, there have been times where we have not been able to" (S3).* As the focus is on patients, an emergency could delay or cancel a tour. The team leader acts as a second interviewer, answering applicant

questions whilst evaluating the applicant. *“They [applicants] tend to do more casual kinda conversation”* (S3). Based on experience, more questions are asked during the hospital tour concerning general operations than the formal interview.

Shortly after a formal interview and tour, the team leader(s) conducting the tour(s) meets with the interviewer to discuss the applicant’s behaviours and general impressions. During these consensus discussions, information is shared.

*“Caring people. I mean you have to care about what you do and want to do a good job. You can’t just treat it like a job. You have to care that you get your work done and sometimes that means you have to do more than expected. Stay over and get things done”* (S11).

Applicants having the lowest preference are removed from the hiring process. The remaining applicants are subject to having employer references contacted to obtain additional information such as his/her performance and behaviours. Negative remarks by employer references do mandate the removal of an applicant but may remove an applicant as employer provided information is considered in the aggregate with the application file and other information collected. After informal decisions, the remaining applicant(s) is/are considered candidates for the position.

The applications of candidates having the greatest potential for success are presented by S3 to the owners for review. The owners, in consultations with key personnel such as the office manager (S3) and the reception team leader (S11), select a candidate to fill the position. In practise, the owners normally do not get involved in decision making as they have delegated all aspects of the staff hiring process to the office manager (S11). However, if a candidate is selected that is objectionable to the employees; the Veterinary Hospital can re-evaluated a candidate (S3). Re-evaluation does not necessarily equate to removing a candidate, but a re-evaluation does delay the hiring process. A re-evaluation has only occurred once.

If a candidate accepts an offer of employment, the selection process concludes. If a candidate declines an offer of employment, the next candidate is selected until the position is filled or no candidates are available. By chance, if no candidate accepts a position, the selection process starts over.

#### **5.5.1 Positions within Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital**

Constant distractions from employees, customers, and general hospital operations have delayed completion of any written policies and guidelines concerning positions (S3, S11). Therefore the formal process is still under development. Additionally, as the formal

adoption of changes in personnel policies must be approved by the owners, and the owners have a preference for focusing on patient care and not necessarily on administrative operations (S11), this is an element currently neglected at Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital. Since formal written personnel specifications were unavailable for directly discovering the personnel specifications that were being used to evaluate job-seekers, indirect development of personnel specifications could be interpreted through discussions with screeners.

Considering educational and professional requirements, positions were classified into two main categories: DVM and support staff. *"There are no formal requirements"* (S11), as such, **Specifying** emerged as the practical and theoretical application of constructing personnel specifications that individuals are benchmarked against to identify the ideal individual(s) for a position. Support staff positions have different KSAO driven by specific team requirements and needs (S3). The teams do not have written job specification: *"We are still developing those [employment policies and position descriptions]"* (S11). As such, only conceptual positions and conceptual personnel specifications based upon general practise and each generalised team. *"The job duties are not written so they fall under what team they will be working on"* (S11). Compensation also varied amongst positions according to team assignment and training. Whilst staff may be assigned to a particular team, cross-training can occur:

*"we typically like for someone whose come in new, especially if they don't have any experience to be in the position that they are hired into for six months before we start looking at cross-training"* (S3).

Due to insurance requirements, employees must have attained or exceeded the age of eighteen years prior to commencing employment (S3). For the DVMs, the minimum educational requirement is a degree from an American Veterinary Medical Association accredited programme. For general staff, there are no minimum requirements for education or experience except for some laboratory positions. Certification is preferred:

*"As we have expanded our staff and now we have some certified registered technicians which we did not before, you know, how do we come up with the formula, you know, that allows some flexibility with incentive and raises and that kind of thing; but still gives us a basic foundation that makes it very clear and, and fair. Equitable for people, for everybody that they would have some idea of what they might expect"* (S3).

Moreover, each Team Leader must have experience relating to the area of assignment (S3, S11). For example, S11 has a degree in medical assisting and several years of work experience prior to becoming the Reception Team Leader. *"There so much, and it's that way with any area. But I don't think you can have somebody whose never, worked in reception, or overseen reception"* (S3).

Due to the Veterinary Hospital's expansion, job duties and responsibilities changed which also altered personnel specifications. The theme **Expanding** represents those changes that can be attributed to organisational growth. Although expanding is more historical, modifications within an organisation may have subtle effects on informal decisions. In the Veterinary Hospital, increased customer demands caused a major shift in organisational structure and culture.

*"It [expanding] took about one year. They [owners] thought and talked about it a lot before they did it" (S11).*

This shift was gradual starting with adding additional DVMs, staff, and the new positions of registered technicians. With this increase in personnel, six new staff teams were established (S3) with six new middle managers known as team leaders (S3, S11). Furthermore, the administrative functions including hiring processes were transferred to the Office Manager (S11).

Since the number of employees have increased, so too would the complexity of relationships amongst employees and customers.

*"we also went through a pretty big expansion a couple years ago. And so, we have slowly kind of filled out as we have gotten settled in and tried to find a structure that works for us as a bigger facility" (S3).*

This complexity of relationships emerged as **Forming**. The adjustments, problems, and questions currently occurring from organisational growth. Forming may be identified through its active questioning and solution seeking concerning staffing problems associated with increased customer demands. S3 notes,

*"Its, um, with the expansion and changing roles and all that we are very much, um, heavily in the process of developing our structure and our policies, um, so, I can relate when you say 'Policies usually exist until something pops up and you go, oh, you need one for that.'"*

*"We started to offer, one doctor, doing scheduled appointments, for exams and that kind of thing, um for that time of day. We have been doing that for about, probably eight months now. Um, I'm ready to move and start to, to do two doctors. Do you know what I mean? Um, the doctors are a little more hesitant at this point."*

S11 adds, *"Although we need another DVM, that position has not been authorised nor is it being considered by the owners at this time."*

To satisfy customer demands, the formation of teams, new relationships with customers (i.e. encouraging customers to make appointments), and new structures were being established. *"Um, this [Veterinary Hospital] is still a work-in-progress with everything. So I mean we definitely have, um, we call them like our departments: Um, reception, exam*

rooms, lab, treatment, surgery, and kennels” (S3). S11 adds that *“We are moving towards more written policies but have not quite made it there yet.”*

Whilst forming, an organisation naturally questions decisions and is open to new methods to facilitate better practises. One such practise was training. **Training** transfers knowledge and skills to employees through formal and work programmes. Since formal training programmes did not provide the expertise desired, on the job training became the standard. *“Everybody else has been on the job training”* (S3). Essentially, employees with knowledge and skill sets provide training to staff and newcomers. S3 continues to evaluate readily available training programmes that may be adapted to satisfy the expectations of the Veterinary Hospital.

*“We do not have a formal training programme, I, we’re just starting, in the last couple of months to say, ‘OK. When people come in for the first two weeks or whatever. This is what we’re going to do.’ Do you know what I Mean? Um, and so. I’ve been pushing for two years to, for us to devote some time and energy specifically to developing a training programme that works for us. Do you know what I mean? There are canned programmes out there. We’ve looked at a million of them. Or you can look and say, ‘OK. Week one: Duh-duh-duh, duh-duh-duh.’ But I think every facility is a little bit different; and we haven’t found one that we can look at and go, ‘Oh yes. We’ve comfortable doing it’”* (S3).

Whilst training appears to centre on current employees, training seems to be somewhat related to specifying. If employees cannot acquire skills though employer provided training, then personnel specifications must be modified to encompass the minimum desirable standards. As the Veterinary Hospital was expanding and written guidelines were being developed, training requirements were contingent upon a vacant position’s role and fit within a team.

Whilst forming, informal decisions would be more likely to be scrutinised and inconsistent as a result of changes and shifts in organisational thought processes. Conversely, an organisation can take an authoritarian approach to hiring decisions where decisions are not scrutinised or questioned. The Veterinary Hospital takes this authoritarian approach as all hiring decisions are made by the Office Manager without general, but selective feedback.

*“That depends on the team leader. Some don’t get involved. They rarely participate in the interview. I get involved in the interview whether they want me to or not. I want to know what I’m going to get”* (S11).

Whilst similar to expanding, forming occurs in the present whilst expanding has occurred and is more historical. Like expanding, forming may impact informal decisions about personnel specifications. *“We are still working on personnel policies but some things keep getting in the way. You have a call off or something else that comes along every time*

*you set time aside to do it*" (S11). Any changes in personnel specifications can impact recruitment decisions.

### 5.5.2 Recruitment

**Recruiting** is the process of motivating external job-seekers to apply for positions. Recruiting efforts are focused between two and four times per year on staff:

*"we [Veterinary Hospital] probably will hire someone in [a staff position] every three to six months on the average. Now in the last two years, that's been a combination of factors. Um. One of them been turnover. You know what I mean. Somebody's either left to take another job, or it hasn't worked out, they weren't a good fit. And then we have to hire somebody into the same position"* (S3).

To fill vacancies, the Veterinary Hospital concentrates on traditional recruiting strategies such as employee referrals, newspaper advertisements, customers, and job-seeker enquiries. During the last ten years, newspaper advertisements have only been used at most three times according to S11. Word-of-mouth recruiting plays an important part in getting applications from job-seekers.

*"Most are walk-in applications. About seventy-five per cent. I think they only ran an ad in the paper maybe two or three times since I been there [over ten years]. We also have Vet students in the summer that help. Those are paid. And we have some people that are doing a school internship and they are not paid"* (S11).

In the summer, veterinary students and unpaid school interns are integrated within the Veterinary Hospital framework. Whilst summer help is coordinated by the Office Manager, these positions are not recruited nor are these positions part of the hiring processes. As such, summer help is mentioned but not analysed in detail.

Furthermore, prior applicants can be recruited for current positions:

*"You asked me to keep you application on file. We interviewed a couple months ago. And I think we are going to have an opening coming up. You know. Are you still interested, in the possibility, you know, coming in and joining us?"* (S3).

As recruiting up to four times annually, extra effort is expended during interviews and touring to acclimate applicants to organisational operations and employees. Whilst not everyone is hired, this process does allow direct recruitment from applicants not hired when future vacancies occur.

In fact, most recruiting strategies are more reactive than proactive as most staff positions require minimal qualifications. The use of minimal qualification for recruiting is attributed to the aggregate experience and education of the current employees. The



Veterinary Hospital considers these strategies as sufficient for attracting enough individuals and does not use contingent agencies, government agencies, or academic institutions for recruiting. However, S3 notes above that part of the problem with turnover is that “...they weren’t a good fit” indicates that the selection process has faults as a recurring wrong hire problem has been identified.

Part of recruitment is the retention of staff. The theme **Exiting** emerged from discussions exploring turnover and the reason(s) employees provide concerning their departure.

*“So we do not have like a formal like a formal exit interview, process at this point. I don’t know that they ever have, um, generally people are fairly forthcoming. You know, if, if they chose to go, then they usually hand in like a short little letter of resignation but they’ll tell you the whole, the whole thing” (S3).*

Reasons such as retire, geographic movement (see *geographing*), social or economic improvement, and not a good fit were identified.

*“We had one employee who had been here for several years. Um. I think fifteen or sixteen to the point she left. Um. But she is working as a manager at a shelter now, so, she stayed within, you know, within the same basic field. Just a different take on it. One basically retired. Like, she sort of left and, um, and I don’t think she took another job anywhere at that point. And the most recent one, we had a couple who moved. Um. Who took jobs in similar fields but they actually moved out of state” (S3).*

Understanding the reasons employees leave can help improve attracting better applicants, identify gaps in common ground, and improve personnel specifications.

A variable that emerged which significantly influences informal decision processes as time. **Timing** emerged as an important resource when making consensus decisions. According to S3, **time constraints** do not significantly impact informal decisions. However, when informal decisions are uncertain, decisions are delayed until additional information about an applicant can be obtained. Uncertain decisions are better examined with new information and following the established hiring processes rather than by making quick decisions as shortcuts in hiring processes are not permitted.

*“my experience with that has been, and this is just my opinion, that we’re better off to take the time to go through the process fully and correctly for ah, or you know, the way that we do things. Then to, ah, modify it [personnel specifications and processes] to try to get somebody in. Um, you’re more likely to, you’re more likely to take the chance at having a bad fit, if we try to speed it up too much” (S3).*

Consequently, time lines do have a slight impact on informal decisions. S3 states “I always try to give every applicant an idea of what that time-line [to hire someone] is though.”

Normally, S3 advises applicants this time line is a week from the day of the last applicant's interview.

Approval for the final hiring of a newcomer is contingent upon the owners' schedules, compensation negotiated, and any unresolved issues. Informal decisions are not rushed, but announced after consultation with owners (S3). Traditionally the owners are just notified of hiring decisions unless there is a significant disagreement amongst staff (S3, S11). Disagreements concerning a newcomer have caused significant (e.g. two weeks) delays and reconsiderations of informal decisions until those disagreements have been resolved. In essence, timing appears to be of greater importance during the final informal decisions. The concern is with organisational-employee fit rather than with making quick decisions. By organisational-employee fit, the Veterinary Hospital desires pleasant and agreeable employees that may be assimilated easily. S11 describes fit: *"I look at the whole thing. Their personality has to fit into our organisation. They have to be able to learn and want to learn. They have to be dependable."*

## **5.6 Emerging Empirical Evidence in the Veterinary Hospital**

In this section, the filtering cues discovered to influence informal decisions as observed and discussed with S3 and S11 are presented in Appendix 21. In addition, the themes (see Appendix 22) that emerged from interviews are subsequently discussed in relation to how informal decisions are influenced.

Whilst coding data, the researcher encountered the same complexity emerged in the analysis of the Research Centre's data: One concept should equal one theme, but one concept occupies multiple themes. In this case, "Employees may establish a residence outside of a geographical area" is both ***Exiting*** and ***Geographing*** depending on the processes and actions associated with its use. Exiting as an action is associated with an employee's departure and a component of retention and geographing as relating to location or topography. Like the Research Centre, the primary reason for this exception is to avoid forcing data into a specific category (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

### **Majority of Influence**

The Veterinary Hospital relies on cognitive personnel specifications based upon the duties and responsibilities of the position to which an applicant has applied (S3, S11) with the only exception being the registered technicians as passing a standardised test regulates

the registered technician designation (S11). For all other staff positions, the **teams' influence** cognitive personnel specifications as S3 considers applications based upon team needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Thus, an applicant failing to meet the expectations of the personnel specifications is removed; however, passing is contingent upon the cognitive personnel specifications which can shift according to the team needs and with each new hiring process.

Generally, guidelines from personnel specifications are essential in facilitating hiring consistency by establishing a common understanding for individuals involved in decision processes. Moreover, as organisations evolve into more complex structures, such as the expansion of the Veterinary Hospital, a greater need arises for adaption of written personnel specifications, policies, and procedures. However, resistance to codification of formal written guidelines seems to have discouraged further development of personnel specifications in most instances. The exception to this seems to be that the positions such as registered technicians, team leaders, and DVMs having a greater complexity than general staff. According to S3 and S11, the organisation, as a whole, places greater value on these more complex positions. Hence, a relationship to perceptual value and personnel specification codification can be interpreted based upon these discussions and the management behaviours (e.g. active avoidance of codification) surrounding formal adaption of personnel specifications.

Considering the recent additional positions created through expansion, the Veterinary Hospital is still primarily composed of female employees (S11) and is not representative of the general population. For example, approximately twenty-three of twenty-five positions are female. This seems to indicate that the **majority influence** extends to recruiting as recruitment appears to be driven by staff and not a priority. This is best illustrated from the job-seekers primarily being walk-ins, employee referrals, or previous applicants. As a result, females are predominantly selected.

In addition to the Office Manager, some team leaders also see applicant information. *"The office manager still looks over all the applications and does all the filtering and checking references. She just lets us look over the ones that are really good"* (S11). Since the office manager shares some applications with team leaders, her influence as an assessor can inject into informal decisions as she controls which applications are seen. Furthermore, these interactions with the 'really good' applications can contribute as a reinforce effect, where positive facts are consistently reviewed. Moreover, S11 states that *"Team leaders look at applications. That is about it for most of them. I get involved more than anyone else because I like to know that they are going to come to work."* Although other team leaders may review the applications of final candidate, most team leaders accept the hiring decision (S11).

### **Weighting of Information**

The Veterinary Hospital relies and weights the information obtained from interviews more heavily; and, interviews are used in collecting much of the information. S3 uses telephone interviews to provide job-seekers with general information about the Veterinary Hospital, the available position, and compensation. Information from the telephone interviews, applications, and résumés are used to focus formal interviews (S3). Formal interviews and tours provide an opportunity for screeners to extract, confirm, and clarify information previously presented by job-seekers. After formal interviews, the same series of criteria as discussed in the previous section above along with additional criteria (e.g. work experience, team leader feedback, and employee references) are used to make informal decisions about applications. Remaining applicants are subject to referencing which helps supplement the cumulative information. Finally, applicants not being removed become candidates where candidates are ranked and presented to the owners for a formal decision.

In fact, the job-seeker as a whole must be evaluated (S11). This supports S3's mostly conservative approach when making informal decisions as she collects as much information as possible from applicants and references before making a final hiring decision (S3, S11). Under this conservative approach, very few individuals are informally removed before formal interviews as the normal preference is for individuals to withdraw from the hiring process. *"Unless somebody [job-seeker] says, you know, 'Nope. Never mind.' Then I will"* (S3).

However, there have been times where applications are informally removed immediately. For example: applicant provided information is generally considered truthful and accurate (S3); but when deception is suspected, the application is removed immediately (S11). In fact, informal decisions by S3 had a greater focus on the negative cues (e.g. incomplete, illegible, embellishing, short-term employment, and criminal records) then upon positive cues (e.g. volunteerism, education, and experience). Another example of a negative cue is the consideration that an individual is a job-hopper. If job-hoppers are readily identifiable by the information (e.g. voluntary quit, terminated for excess tardiness, short-term employment, reason for employee departure, job-seeker objective, and job-seeker's reason for the application) provided on the application, then they are never contacted for formal interviews (S11). If the application and résumés (if available) cannot confirm the potential job-hopper, subsequent enquires about their short-term employment are made during interviews (S3). When the applicant cannot provide a reasonable explanation (e.g. temporary or seasonal) for a short-term employment history during the interview, then the applicant job-hopper is removed at the conclusion of the interview. In some cases, S3 considers general

criteria for short term employment (e.g. job-hoppers), work experience, negative feedback from team leaders and employees, and negative information from employer references before making a decision.

These examples indicate that expeditious removal is contingent upon the perceptual strength of the aggregate negative cues. Moreover, hesitation is a sign of uncertainty in the informal decision and additional information is sought to allow for a greater comprehensive evaluation of selection criteria with the intent to reduce uncertainty. The conservative approach likely results from fluctuating, from expansion and growth, organisational structures and cultures that create a sense of instability or uncertainty in the work place. This uncertainty would naturally manifest into informal decisions causing a screener to further acquire supporting justification of a decision especially when formal filtering processes were not written and when a screener lacks experience. Since the position of Office Manager was newly established with S3 being the first incumbent, the hiring processes were constantly being revised with no formal adaption of general policies concerning the best practises to follow most likely due to the expansion and the formation of teams.

Concerning the positive cues, S3 notes experience and education can be substituted for each other. However, further discussions indicated experience is more subjective than education in informal decisions. Although more subjective, experience appears to be the preference as indicated above. Supporting this preference is the amount of attention dedicated to a job-seeker's objective statements, animal experience descriptions, and volunteer experience rather than his/her education. This preference is presented below with selected parts emphasised in bold:

*"I definitely look at those [volunteer experience], and I think, not because I don't value them, um, but I think just because of the nature of, of the business that we do that's sort of an '**icing on the cake**' kind of thing. You know what I mean? If somebody says that 'I've been involved with this,' And we see a lot, um, come in on applications from people who have volunteered at shelters, that kind of thing. Um, **that [volunteer experience] does catch my interest**" (S3).*

Thus, volunteer experience is weighted beyond the minimum personnel specifications and can significantly impact informal decisions.

### **Inappropriate Information and Criteria**

At the Veterinary Hospital, appearance greatly affects informal decisions. Most notably, negative cues associated with a screener's interpretation of appropriate dress attire and bad handwriting reduces the probability that the applicant is offered a position. Furthermore, appearance is more noticeable to personnel when applicants significantly

deviate from the standard dress code (i.e. as observed by screeners and staff during the formal interview process and tour). Thus, individuals that are unclean, underdressed, and overdressed (e.g. S3 notes “*dressed to the tens or nines*”) are more memorable because dress code discussions during the interviews and tours increase cognitive awareness concerning job-seekers’ exterior appearances such as clothing, jewellery, tattoos, and makeup. The visual notations coupled with discussions reinforce appearance making recall for subsequent decisions easier.

### **Influence of Assessors**

Screeners have a general preference for individuals to voluntarily withdraw from the hiring process instead of being removed (S3). A voluntary withdraw may occur at any time during any part of the hiring process but most commonly occurs during information gathering intervals (e.g. application, telephone interview, formal interview, tours, and references). As a voluntary withdraw rests with the applicant, it is not a decision by the screener. Conversely, in some instances the job-seeker and S3 concur that the available position does not meet the expectations and needs of the job-seeker and the Veterinary Hospital. This is considered a voluntary withdraw by the job-seeker and an informal decision by S3 as both decisions intersect during the same time.

Since the Office Manager (S3) is the primary person responsible to collect information (S11), any misinterpretations associated with collecting and noting information could conceivably create a deviation of an informal decision if the information was misinterpreted or erroneously noted. How information is collected becomes a critical aspect of the filtering processes as a majority of decisions are not immediate but delayed until after collection processes have concluded.

Since S11 serves as the reception team lead, the applications are normally received by her; and therefore, S11 has the opportunity to ask job-seekers questions prior to their submission of an application. This initial contact is essential in building common ground. Any concerns and observations communicated by S11 to S3 could influence her informal decisions especially when negative information is presented. Additionally, S11 is the only other person truly involved in informal decisions.

## **5.7 Veterinary Hospital Case Conclusion**

During this research, the Veterinary Hospital had reached a plateau in expansion and was struggling to understand the structure that would be best for on-going operations. Although it uses cognitive personnel specifications for informal decisions (S3), discussions focusing on drafting position specifications, policies, and procedures into formally written guidelines were being held during this case study. These discussions commenced after the expansion because the complexity of the organisation increased. This increased complexity signalled a need to standardise informal decisions and clarify position functions as illustrated by two themes: *Specifying* and *Expanding and Forming*. First, *Specifying* notes each team has separate cognitive concepts of responsibilities and duties of personnel. Second, *Expanding and Forming* identifies a need for a formal structure in this ever changing environment: *"We have slowly kind of filled our staff out as we have gotten settled in and tried to find a structure that works for us as a bigger facility"* (S3). Both themes acknowledge that the Veterinary Hospital is trying to discover working guidelines that are practical, applicable, and meet its growing needs which include the addition of registered technicians, patient scheduling, and middle management. According to S3, *"Its, um, with the expansion and changing roles and all that we [Veterinary Hospital] are very much, um, heavily in the process of developing our structure and our policies."* Ultimately, this expansion affected hiring process and contributed to the fluctuation in informal decisions.

Moreover, screeners do not take an active approach in removing undesirable individuals early in hiring processes as self-exclusion of the job-seeker is not an efficient method to make informal filtering decisions. Early removal would reduce hiring and interviewing costs, disrupting regular operations, and the number of individuals retained for future vacancies. This hesitation to remove applicants may be linked to the evolving organisation where a certain uncertainty exists. Decisions under uncertainty can cause screeners to focus on locating negative information especially when information inconsistencies occur.

The application provides a standard platform in which to collect evidence (from telephone interviews, formal interviews, tours, and employer references) beyond the minimum personnel specifications to build individual profiles. For example, there are several staff positions that did not require an educational level past a High School Diploma or GED. Additionally, military experience is neither a requirement nor an advantage for a position but is a separate classification of employment experience. Although the removal of unnecessary questions would expedite decisions, the inclusions of such questions are attributed to conservative decision processes whereby screeners responds to the evolution of the

Veterinary Hospital by collecting an abundance of evidence and disregarding unneeded information which may be consulted if informal decisions are uncertain.

Furthermore, uncertainty might be attributed to the owners delegating responsibility for hiring decisions to the Office Manager and not reviewing the informal decisions nor providing feedback concerning decisions unless an informal hiring decision causes staff disruption. Although the Office Manager makes informal hiring decisions subject to the owners' approval, informal decisions were almost exclusively made by one individual as consensus decisions occur rarely.

A deviation in informal decisions from guidelines likely occurs when S3 interprets volunteerism and experience. S3 follows two heuristics: (1) volunteerism enhances job-seeker desirability as volunteerism transfers to increased job performance; and (2) job-seekers embellish non-existent experience more often. On the surface, the preference associated with volunteerism appears to be a prototype bias where S3 has generalised that all applicants having volunteer experience are also high performers. The confirmation of embellishment may cause S3 to actively seek negative information to remove or to reduce the preference of an applicant. Even with job-hoppers, S3 generally seeks confirmation from a negative cue to justify informal decisions. Finally, similar to the Research Centre, geographing and appearance emerged as a significant influence in informal decisions. The extent of these influences appears to dominant other filtering cues which would indicate their importance. However, policies have addressed appearance but not geographing which warrants further investigation in determining the nature of geographing in informal decisions.



# **Chapter 6 A Case Study**

## **on Charleston Area**

### **Medical Center**

## **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on Charleston Area Medical Center Health System, Inc. and subsidiaries, which is collectively referred to as “CAMC”. This case study takes place between April and September 2010. Prior to interviewing screeners, information gathering focused on a new employee orientation and publicly available sources. To identifying staff with the primary responsibility for making informal decisions, discussions with key managers and staff provided a basis for observations. To capture information, this researcher uses written notes to assist in memory recall. When permission from a participant was given, digital recording devices were used. Two participants agreed to being digitally recorded.

## **6.2 CAMC Health System, Inc. Operational Details**

CAMC is a collective of non-profit (see Appendix 18 *26USC*) organisations providing, promoting, and facilitating health care to selected West Virginia communities surrounding the Charleston locality (CAMC, 2010; Deloitte & Touche, LLP, 2010). CAMC has had a community presence since 1972 (CAMC, 2010) and is the largest Medicaid provider in West Virginia (CAMC, 2009). “*We do a lot of charity care*” (S5) approximately over twenty-five per cent of the charity care within West Virginia. For 2008, over \$187.8 Million was attributable to charity care and unreimbursed medical expenses. Thus, excess funds received are used for future community care operations. CAMC fiscal year operates from 1 December to 30 November.

As the second largest employer in West Virginia, CAMC has annual payroll in excess of \$187 Million and benefits in excess of \$60 Million (CAMC, 2010 June 1). CAMC employs approximately 7,000 including over 700 physicians and over 1,800 Registered Nurses with roughly a ten per cent turnover rate. Each major component organisation is briefly described below:

- Charleston Area Medical Center Health System, Inc. (“CAMC”) is organised under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code §501(c)(3), which provides a non-profit entity status (Deloitte & Touche, 2010).
- Charleston Area Medical Center, Inc. (“CAMC Medical”) is the entity that owns and operates the General Hospital with 268 beds; the Memorial Hospital with 242 beds; and the Women & Children’s Hospital with 146 beds (CAMC, 2007; CAMC, 2009; Deloitte & Touche, 2010).
- CAMC Foundation, Inc. is the fundraising entity of CAMC (Deloitte & Touche, 2010). CAMC Foundation, Inc. has a separate non-compensated board.

- CAMC Health Education and Research Institute, Inc. (“CHERI”) focuses on medical education and research (Deloitte & Touch, 2010).
- HealthNet, Inc. (“HNET”) “...is an aeromedical transport service company” operated through an equal working relationship amongst CAMC, Cabell-Huntington Hospital, and West Virginia University Hospital (Deloitte & Touch, 2010, p. 27).
- Integrated Health Care Providers, Inc. (“IHCP”) provides physician services (Deloitte & Touche, 2010). IHCP is the only non-profit taxable entity within CAMC. IHCP operates four Health Care/Urgent Care facilities and multiple physician offices (S4).
- Teays Valley Hospital, Inc. (“CAMC-TV”) owns and operates a hospital facility in Putnam County, West Virginia (Deloitte & Touche, 2010). CAMC purchased the assets from Putnam General Hospital and organised CAMC-TV as a separate legal entity because of litigation issues stemming from allegations of medical malpractice surrounding Putnam General Hospital (see McKinney & Sikula, 2008). Whilst CAMC purchased the assets from Putnam General Hospital, CAMC did not assume any liability for any allegations against Putnam General.

Although there are several smaller units, divisions, wards, and departments within each of the above organisations, this case study is directed at understanding the informal decisions by evaluating the central organisational unit facilitating hiring decisions: The CAMC Employment Center (“CAMC-EC”) who is responsible for profiling and reviewing applications submitted to CAMC (CAMC, 2007, p. D 6). Hiring costs are not redirected or allocated to other departments, but absorbed by CAMC-EC’s budget. A notable exception is that CAMC-EC does not make informal decisions for CAMC-TV primarily for the legal protection of CAMC, as continued litigation against Putnam General Hospital cannot be determined.

For CAMC, hiring costs are attributed to the spending unit (S5), which, in most instances, is CAMC-EC. These budgetary allocations and costs contributed to the emergence of the theme **Financing**. **Financing** represents the hiring costs attributed to an organisation or department as it impacts budgets which may influence filtering decisions and the types of evidence gathered. “So, *there’s no point in us wasting the money doing a background check*” (S7). Moreover, financing may drive external partnerships (i.e. WorkForce) to reduce costs (S4; see section 7.5.7).

The following tables present information concerning CAMC-EC’s work load.

**Table 6-1: CAMC-EC 2009 Annual Report**

Total Interviews	1,197
CAMC-EC processed New Hires	1,029
Paper Applications	252
Background Checks (includes CAMC-TV)	1,257
Note: All figures exclude the month of December.	

The above and below tables highlight four major categories associated with CAMC-EC operations. The significance of these categories is two-fold (S4). First, these categories represent significant amounts of time that screeners must dedicate to complete tasks. The more time spent on one task reduces available time screeners can recruit job-seekers and carry out other obligations. Second, these tasks can contribute additional costs to CAMC-EC.

**Table 6-2: CAMC-EC 2010 1st Quarter Report**

Total Interviews	336
CAMC-EC processed New Hires	208
Paper Applications	80
Background Checks	421

By comparing total interviews with processed new hires for the first quarter, less than 62% [208/336] of the interviewees were hired. During the same time, less than 50% [208/421] of job-seekers having background checks were processed new hires. Although this indicates that CAMC-EC is filtering many applications, the true number of applications (both paper and digital) is not reflected within this report. Comparing the same information with the annual report illustrates that less than 86% [1,029/1,197] of the interviewees were hired and less than 82% [1,029/1,257] of job-seekers having background checks were processed new hires. Another problem is background checks on the annual report include figures from CAMC-TV whilst the quarterly report does not. Subsequently, the researcher learned that background checks may be conducted prior to a massive hiring event such as Interview Day (S9 & S10). Essentially, informal decisions are made in the preceding quarter and are not disclosed. Variances in these reports were considered common knowledge by CAMC and therefore disclosures were not warranted.

### **6.3 Direct Participants**

In April 2010, CAMC was approached as a research participant. After informed consent was provided, data collection and observations commenced in June and concluded in September 2010. For this case study, direct participants were either actively involved or passively involved with this project. Seven direct active participants were interviewed and provided with critical information concerning filtering decisions; and an unknown amount of passive direct participants contributed by approving and supporting this research. Informed consent was not executed with passive participants as this researcher did not interview or otherwise gather information from these individuals. The table below details selected information concerning participants.

**Table 6-3: List of CAMC Participants**

<b>Subject Identification</b>	<b>Time in Present Position</b>	<b>Job Title/Job-Family</b>
S4	Unknown years	Director – Interacts with all Job Families
S5	5 years	Employment Specialist - Allied Health
S6	2 years	Employment Specialist – Clerical and Administrative and Service and Support
S7	Unknown years	Employment Specialist – Service and Support and Professional and Technical
S8	Unknown years	Reception – Interacts with all Job families
S9	3 years	Employment Specialist – Nursing and Managerial
S10	10 years	Employment Specialist – Nursing and Managerial

Whilst efforts were made to interview all screeners, one screener was unavailable. The unavailable screener worked with S9 and S10. Since S9 and S10 felt that individual interviews would not capture the nature of the team interactions, they were interviewed jointly. Moreover, CAMC has a complex recruiting process where primary efforts are focused on entry level positions a preference for selecting internally for all other positions. This is further discussed under the theme *Recruiting, Selecting, & Enquiring* found in section 6.5.11.

### **6.4 Indirect Participants**

Indirect participants were defined as job-seekers, applicants, and candidates seeking employment with CAMC. A notable interaction is defined as when this researcher was present during the distribution of applications and job posting information to job-seekers and

during telephone conversations between CAMC-EC and job-seekers. Whilst the researcher did come in contact with some indirect participants, communication and interactions were kept at a minimum to preserve the existing environment and opportunities for job-seekers.

## **6.5 The Typical Application Process**

This section provides an analysis of the typical application process. Based on the information provided by screeners, policies and procedures, and observations, the typical application process is depicted and discussed below. Because of the complexity of these processes, this analysis describes the typical pathway that job-seekers must undertake to become employees starting with an overview of the various positions job-seekers may consider. During these application processes, most of the informal decisions emerged during the theme ***Filtering***. ***Filtering*** is the separation of individuals into categories by decision makers (usually screeners) for the purpose of identifying the individual(s) that best match a position within an organisation. In addition to the general theme, ***Filtering (compensation)*** (see 6.5.5) and ***Filtering (criminal history)*** (see 6.5.9.4) is included in this related group.

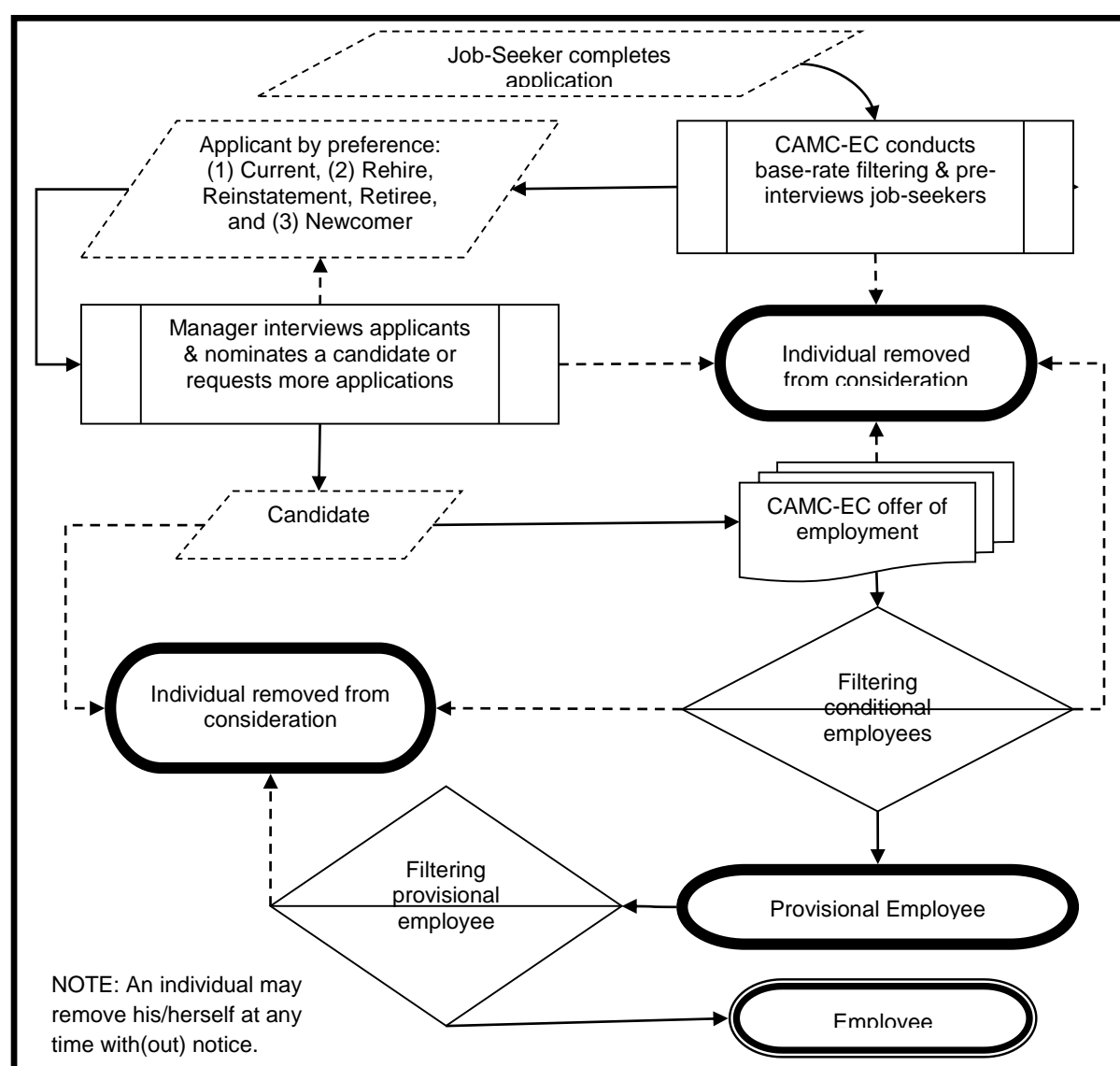
### **6.5.1 Positions within CAMC**

CAMC has a spectrum of positions fitting into several areas such as professional, physician, nursing, management, pharmacy, laboratory, psychology, accounting, admitting, and clerical services (CAMC, 2010). These positions are classified into five separate job families (CAMC, 2007, p. C 7): (1) Managerial, Other, (2) Professional & Technical, (3) Clerical & Administrative, (4) Service & Support, and (5) Nursing. For job-postings, nursing positions are listed under *Allied Health* to expedite filtering processes. Also, all positions fall into two main categories: (1) Non-administrative and non-supervisory; and (2) Administrative and supervisory positions (CAMC, 2007, p. D 7).

Position classification is further defined by hours worked and benefits (CAMC, 2007). At CAMC, six classifications are established: (1) *Regular Full-Time* works a weekly average of forty hours; (2) *Pro Rata* work between twenty to forty hours weekly and have been identified as having critical skills; (3) *Regular Part-Time* work between twenty to forty hours weekly; (4) *Special Part-Time* work less than twenty hours weekly and are not benefit eligible; (5) *Temporary* can work either full-time or part-time but employment does not exceed ninety days without an exception; and (6) *Per Diem* work a specific number of hours and perform specified duties per contractual obligations (CAMC, 2007, p. B18).

New employees or newcomers, holding positions of regular status, serve six-month probationary periods (known as the “introductory period”) where KSAO are evaluated as well as newcomers’ organisational fit (CAMC, 2007, p. B 27). New employees may be terminated without recourse for failing to meet organisational needs. This means that all positions are “at-will” and subject to termination with or without cause by CAMC and any employee can resign at any time with or without cause (CAMC, 2007, p. D4). Due to the nature of work, job-seekers seeking regular employment must have reached their eighteenth birthday (CAMC, 2007, p. D 3). Consequently, some working opportunities may be offered to individuals having reached the age of sixteen provided compliance with legal requirements. Also, United States citizenship is not a requirement for positions and non-United States’ citizens must adhere to legal requirements such as immigration policies concerning residency (p. D 4).

**Figure 6-1: CAMC Typical Selection Processes**



*"We get our number of new hires in October. That is when the budget process looks at turnover and estimates what we need"* (S10). From discussions, this turnover rate has three significant groups of departing employees: (1) Shortages of experienced staff working on the night shift; (2) first year employees leaving due to stress; and (3) employees building experience from CAMC. This turnover creates recurring demands for qualified personnel and on-going selection processes to fill these vacancies. The typical filtering process for staff selection is illustrated above. **Specifying** encompasses the practical and theoretical processes of constructing personnel specifications and guidelines to identify the ideal individual(s) for a position.

### 6.5.2 Job Postings

The typical selection process begins with posting a position internally, externally, or both. However, internal job-seekers are given first opportunity for available positions through CAMnet: An internal website which is used for employee communications, educational offerings, and announcing available positions (CAMC, 2007, p. D 5; E 3). Primarily, CAMnet is used to store and to manage applications.

Providing exceptions (e.g. hiring emergencies, legal grounds, or persuasive business explanations) are not granted, vacancies below senior management levels are posted internally for at least three working days. In practice, vacancies are announced on Fridays and closed after Tuesdays: Friday, Monday, and Tuesday constitutes the minimum waiting period. Each Wednesday, closed postings and the respective applications are evaluated. If no internal applications are received, managers are contacted and a posting is advertised externally. By using CAMnet to announce available positions, the potential applicant pool is reduced to current employees and those individuals having access to announcements. Any position not being posted must have the approval of the Human Resource Director (CAMC, 2007, D 5).

Requests for transfer or promotion must be completed using CAMnet by the deadline to be considered (CAMC, 2007, p. D 6). CAMC has built a foundation for having a preference for internal job-seekers over external job-seekers. This preference is codified and protected through extra assurances by *Policy E-06: Recruiting from the Outside Labor Market*. Whilst protected, transfer requests are greatly diminished during the summer months: *"Yea. There are less transfer requests during the summer. If they transfer they have to reschedule their vacation and they may not get it. It's all based on seniority"* (S4).

External postings may be done concurrently if a position is particularly hard to fill or is deemed a critical need position. To facilitate job-seeker interest, advertisements in local



newspapers may be placed. Other than information CAMC-EC distributes about specific positions, external candidates do not have access to general position descriptions. *"They're [position descriptions] really not out there for them to review"* (S5).

Generally, screeners follow basic concepts and processes to identify individuals that are a good fit for CAMC.

*"And personality may come into play when I've got ten pharmacist positions that I need to fill. They can be somewhat more, now they won't take the wrong person. So, I mean if somebody comes in and they are just blatantly, not a good fit for the organisation they, they will, not just make it. Most departments will not just hire a warm body"* (S5).

Consequently, a good fit and the complexity of a position can be subjective (S5) which may require position descriptions to be consulted prior to making informal filtering decisions (S9, S10).

*"Which I didn't know the positions. But job descriptions became my best friend. And I learned very quickly that you think a manager kno..., a manager would contact you and say send me Suzy Smith's application, for a phlebotomist position that I have and being naïve and green you would think well you helped write the job positions so certainly you know if Suzy meets the qualifications. No they don't"* (S5).

Moreover, specifications can be anchored upon a particular manager's expectations. *"It's a matter of which one is my manager gonna pick"* (S5). Sometimes screeners may have to anticipate a manager needs: *"Most of them, in their areas, probably just need people that meet the qualifications so they're willing to take a new grad"* (S5).

Job-seekers exhibiting positive attitudes (i.e. sincerity and compassion) are assisted by screeners in finding relevant positions (S6). Applications from external candidates are filtered more stringently than internal job-seekers (S9). Finally, as screeners gain experience, filtering efficiency increases (S5).

### **6.5.3 Applications**

The initial triggering event for informal decisions occur when job-seekers complete and submit applications, and if required, any qualifying skills tests. CAMC assumes that job-seekers understand the requirements of positions:

*"probably the thought process is in the medical field of you [job-seeker] have, what you need to have, you know you have to have a Master's degree to be an occupational therapist and you know you have to have a doctoral degree to be a physical therapist"* (S5).

Job-seekers may apply by submitting either an on-line or paper application (CAMC, 2010). Paper applications are normally entered by S8 into CAMnet as all applications are extracted from this database. Applications are valid for at least six months; however, some applications may be retained for up to three years for critical positions.

*"If its, now when we came into this situation recently with our OTs where we, um, ran into a problem with recruitment for them, we went back farther [than six months]. Then just to say that, 'We know you applied back in 2009. Um, we didn't have anything available then; and, are you still looking?' And if so, in order to be a valid application they have to reapply" (S5).*

When deadlines expire for job-postings, screeners pull applications from CAMnet. *"And they get pulled down on Wednesday; and on Thursday, um, you start looking at the application and seeing what we have" (S7).* Screeners review applications to ensure that minimum requirements are met:

*"I want to make sure that she has the education that's required because some people just wake up and decide they want to be a brain surgeon. Oh yea. You have people that apply for positions that they completely don't qualify for. Oh yea. There tra-, and an, I think a lot of times it's a, it's really just a misconception because they think in occupational therapy assistant is just somebody that helps the occupational therapist. Do you know what I'm saying? They don't realise that it's something that somebody had to get an associate's degree and a license to do" (S5).*

As CAMC has numerous positions, CAMC-EC has a representative for each general family job classification.

Two classifications (i.e. internal and external) of job-seekers have a significant influence on when applications are considered (CAMC, 2007) with greater focus being placed on evaluating external job-seekers. This focus is due to managers having more control over internal processes and they usually have someone in mind to hire. This focus may be attributed to internal job-seekers having already been processed through the external hiring processes.

External job-seekers may apply by submitting a four-page application or completing an on-line application at [www.CAMC.org](http://www.CAMC.org). Job-seekers are encouraged to complete on-line applications as a possibility exists that paper applications will be delayed which may result in a job-seeker not being considered for a particular posting. Thus, it is in the best interest of job-seekers to complete on-line applications. However, there are problems with this process:

*"They have to do, a separate application for each position they want to apply for. Well, I would like for them to be able to include a couple. Like, maybe they want to be a Health Unit Coordinator or a Nursing Assistant. Or maybe they are willing to anything in dietary. Whether it be the aid clerk, or cashier, or cook: Any of them. It be nice if they could put on the application if they, without having to go*

*down to the note section. If they could just click on each position; maybe two or three, instead of just one” (S7).*

Job-seekers submitting résumés without applications are not considered. When this occurs, a letter informing the job-seeker that an application has not been taken is sent (S8). Because résumés cannot be tracked or otherwise matched with applications, job-seekers are encouraged to submit only applications using the on-line system with résumés being taken during pre-screening interviews to support their application.

Individuals submitting paper applications will be processed in order of submission when time permits. Consequently that order is not standard.

*“I start at the bottom. And work my way back instead of starting up the front. Depending, I mean, depends on what I’m looking for. Like, my mechanics, I don’t have as many people apply for those, because they require more education, then a lot of the positions do. My dietary positions and nursing assistants, I have, hundreds of pages, so I always start at the bottom, go back to where I left off because it changes the colour when you click on that application” (S7).*

In fact, job-seekers are not equally considered and the *order effect* does enter into these decisions especially which time frame to select applications. This modified time frame is a deviation in the organisational selection process which creates decision biases such as the recency effect as some applications being the last ones to ‘arrive’ are the first ones to be considered and the first ones to ‘arrive’ may not be considered.

When a critical employee is absent or other required duties takes precedence over application processing, processing delays will likely occur and potentially cause job-seekers not to be considered for positions. Every effort to mirror the electronic application with the paper application is made: *“I enter them [applications] as best I can. If it is misspelled, it’s entered as they had it. So all CAPS, lowercase, I make it exactly as they have it” (S8).*

Informal decisions focus on matching available positions with specific desires (i.e. salary and working hours) of a job-seeker. *“So if they tell me flat out their not willing to work weekends, I’m not even going to look at the application at all” (S7).* Current applications have room to list three employers. *“And the application itself really needs re-worked” (S7).* Some screeners (i.e. S7, S9, S10) have suggested that additional space for employer details are necessary. *“Well, I’d like to see more than just three, previous employment on there. And I’d like to have a little more, history than that” (S7).* Whilst applications do not have to be complete, the more information provided by job-seekers helps facilitates informal decisions and allows screeners to build better profiles. Also, CAMC.org allows job-seekers to submit one position title on an application.

Screeners process the most recent applications: Last-in, first-out (S5, S7, S9, S10). *“We do the most recent [applications] first and we make comments so we know which ones we did” (S10).* *“It’ll [digital applications] change the colour of the link for it” (S7).* Whilst this colour change is not permanent, it provides screeners with a temporary method to quickly

identify unprocessed applications. Additionally, screeners make every effort to include permanent notations within these applications to avoid reprocessing applications.

An important deviation in processing applications is that sometimes those individuals calling more often are moved forward, providing their behaviours are not aggressive or rude. Informally, screeners have categorised these job-seekers whom frequently contact screeners as “stalkers”.

*“Now, we have ‘stalkers’. I mean, people that literally will hang up and call you back. Well, let me see. Usually I’ve got a number written beside their name where they’ve called me so many times” (S5).*

Stalkers that are aggressive and rude are often removed from the selection process. However, sometimes persistent job-seekers get priority. *“So, once I did have her scheduled for an interview, I called her back. And then, she didn’t call me anymore. So, sometimes it’s a double-edged sword” (S5).* Furthermore, S5 justifies this by saying, *“So, I have, sometimes you have to set back and remember these people are trying to get a job. And it’s a big deal when you’re that person trying to get the job.”*

From these informal decisions, two themes emerged: **Collecting** and **Noting** represent the methods of obtaining and capturing information concerning job-seekers. Both subgroups are discussed in turn. **Collecting** is the processes where an organisation obtains information. Although screeners may check daily on the number of received applications (S5), applicant pools are populated by the last-in first-out method (S5, S7, S9, S10) from digital applications (S8). Since each digital application may be used once, job-seekers must apply for each position separately (S7). This is viewed as a critical flaw within the collection process (S7, S9, S10). Collecting processes differ between internal and external job-seekers (S8, S9, S10) with different processes occurring at different times (S7). Information collected on internal job-seekers is less stringent as personnel files are electronically stored and available to screeners (S8, S9, S10). Some information collection (e.g. background checks) is outsourced (S8). Sometimes, information cannot be collected (S5, S8) and job-seekers may provide unrelated and unnecessary information (S5). Consequently, résumés are considered additions to the applications (S8, S9, S10). *“Well the application only covers three employers. So, I usually want to see a résumé” (S10).*

Information sharing amongst screeners concerning job-seekers’ behaviours, discussions, and observations is an integrated part of the collection process (S7). From these observations, **Noting** emerged. **Noting** is the process whereby an individual documents events and communications for later review.

*“I can go back to the very beginning, and, see where I know I have sent something, because you can go in and note every application. And every one of*

*them that I send, I put a note on there that I sent it. So I know, even the old ones, I know what I have done with that application” (S7).*

To ensure that applications are not reprocessed, S7 makes notes when possible on processed digital applications whilst S9 writes notes on position descriptions to guide filtering processes.

In addition to noting on applications, *“We keep a list of everything we rescind, our reason for rescinding, all of that. The date, everything. Its, we keep it, a record of it” (S7).* This is so resources are not spent on previously determined undesirable job-seekers as well as ensure that those job-seekers are not considered.

#### **6.5.4 Employment Testing**

Certain positions require job-seekers to complete qualifying basic skills tests (i.e. data entry, typing, and 10-key tests) (CAMC, 2007, p. D 4) whilst other positions require advanced tests include the Pharmacy Tech Math, Accountant, and Accountant Assistant tests. Employment tests are considered part of the completed application and those applications without employment tests are deemed incomplete and are subsequently disregarded. For completed employment tests, scores are valid for three years commencing on the examination date. However, if an individual is current CAMC employee then (s)he is exempt from taking the employment test provided that the current position has an equal or greater skill set.

Employment testing gave rise to the theme **Testing** which refers to the methods used to collect and provide job-seeker information to screeners. Of the three cores tests (i.e. employment tests, health screenings (see 6.5.9.6), and WDT (see 6.5.9.7)), screeners have the greatest influence on employment tests and WDT. CAMC-EC and WorkForce partner for conducting employment skills testing (S4, S6) but employment testing on knowledge is not predominantly conducted.

*“They [WorkForce West Virginia] get a federal grant to do all that. We don’t pay for that. But they do get credit when we hire someone that they have tested and been through” (S4).* Since 2002, WorkForce West Virginia (“WorkForce”), a State of West Virginia governmental unit, provides some testing services to CAMC: Proctoring employment tests and scoring only the basic tests as the advanced tests are composed of written short answers and essays. Scores and exams are forwarded to CAMC-EC for further processing. In addition to testing services, job-seekers can access the internet to complete CAMC on-line applications. WorkForce is easily assessable as it is located ~0.4 kilometres from CAMC-EC.

### 6.5.5 Position Descriptions & Compensation

Some positions are outsourced by CAMC. Most notably, Information Technology has been outsourced to Siemens Medical Solution USA, Inc. since August 2003 (Deloitte & Touche, 2010). *"IT is outsourced. Mm [a speech token similar to um], some of Pharmacy. We have our in-house staff, non-management and nutrition positions. But the management is all outsourced"* (S4). Outsourced positions are not considered, only internally created positions.

Whilst job titles may be the same or similar, job descriptions can significantly vary by department with no change in compensation. Written policies delegate how applications are reviewed against position descriptions. Whilst managers directly work and supervise employees, and in some instances have assisted in writing position descriptions, managers do not always understand policies, processes, and procedures. Thus, informal decisions are conducted only by CAMC-EC screeners. Therefore, each job description and position specification must be reviewed prior to evaluating applications. *"Well, I mean we print them [job description] off. We have them here. But the applicants can't get to them"* (S7). The open position is checked against a general position description to identify the need for extra experience, specific requirements, and compensation. This offers screeners ranges of specific personnel specifications that job-seekers can be assessed.

To increase complexity, most hiring is based on a ladder process (S5). For each position, at least four levels provide job-seekers and incumbents an opportunity for salary increases and advanced titles by meeting the minimum requirements of ladder expectations.

*"The lab techs have a ladder, the CTs and MRI Techs have a ladder, the Rad Techs have a ladder. Our process in the lab is to bring everybody in as a one. With the others, it's usually typically up to manger discretion, but they have to make sure they can complete the competencies for the ladder that they, the ladder level they're bringing them in on"* (S5).

The ladder process uses minimums to recruit experienced individuals. The policy C-08: *Experience Rating* uses transferable years of experience to calculate total years of experience as related to each tier. Each tier is separated by at least two years of experience.

Although compensation was not a primary filtering cue for informal decisions as many job-seekers are not really clear in compensation packages, it was a critical cue (S5, S7). To establish common ground between screeners and job-seekers, compensation is discussed during telephone discussions and interviews. When job-seekers are unwilling to consider this range of compensation, then (s)he may withdraw from hiring processes. The same general

compensation packages are offered to all job-seekers. Through these discussions, the theme **Filtering (compensation)** emerged.

**Filtering (compensation)** represents discussions surrounding a position's salary, benefits, and other compensation. First, compensation attracts and motivates job-seekers to apply for positions. From the applications, general compensation discussions usually first occur during the pre-employment or telephone interview.

*"But, um, like with her, what I did was I picked up the phone and called her and I said, 'I'm just going to be honest with you. Before I bring you in, I can't pay you twenty-five dollars an hour. So is it worth your time and mine to come in and talk about it?'"*(S5).

Whilst job-seekers may request a minimum compensation package, screeners provide information concerning available positions with possible compensation ranges (S5, S7). The first cue that S5 considers is money:

*"I'm looking at the money. What they're asking for money-wise. Because, like I said, we're competing with the private sector. Unskilled nursing facilities, you know, doctors' offices and things like that. Probably, that's one of the first things I look at is how much does this person think they're going to get paid."*

But, some screeners do not completely discuss compensation with job-seekers: *"There's a benefits presentation at New Hire Orientation"* (S5). Following discussions, job-seekers may decide to withdraw from hiring processes if the potential compensation is not attractive to the job-seeker.

*"So, it's a sales pitch with them. It's telling them about the discount on the cell phone; it's telling them about the, um, the discount on the cell phone, the pride card and the different perks that they can get with the CAMC pride card"* (S5).

As indicated by S5, compensation is not just wages and salaries but perks, discounts, and social standing; but alternatively, screeners still may remove job-seekers over compensation issues.

#### **6.5.6 CAMC History & Seniority**

Job-seekers being current or former employees are subject to a full review of their CAMC personal files and performance records (S5, S7, S8, S9, S10). For each application, screeners determine if an employment record exists.

*"So its gets really interesting looking for applications and making sure that, if they've worked here before, what was their status when they left? And, you know, did they, did they give the proper notice or did they just, walk out, and never be seen again? Or? We have to check all of that when looking for applications"* (S7).

When an undesirable employment record is located, only the CAMC-EC Director has the authority to make the decision to include that job-seeker in the applicant pool (S5). *“In Lawson, there is a ‘do not hire’ list. So if it is coded that way, we don’t even talk to them”* (S10). Also, checking to see if an individual is a current employee allows for removal of applications where multiple applications are submitted by the same job-seeker.

*“Sometimes we have so many people that apply for so many positions, that you just don’t have time to do that. So, what we do is when we’re looking for an application to send, we always check the system to see if they are employed currently or if they have been in the past”* (S7).

There are five recognised classifications for job-seekers: (1) Current employee; (2) Retired employee; (3) Rehire; (4) Reinstatement; and (5) Newcomer. A sixth classification exists for non-compensated individuals. Each classification is as follows:

- A *Current Employee* is an individual currently affiliated with CAMC who is seeking to change positions within CAMC.
- A *Retired Employee* is an employee having retired from CAMC. Retirees interested in returning to employment must undergo benefit (i.e. pension and other post-employment benefit and social security) counselling.
- A *Rehire* is a former employee having terminated employment within twenty-four months of the application date.
- A *Reinstatement* is a former employee having terminated employment more than twenty-four months prior to the application date; and, if hired, the reinstatement would place him/her into a regular status position.
- A *Newcomer* is a job-seeker having no CAMC employment history.
- Additionally, volunteers and non-compensated employees are filtered under the same processes as compensated employees. There are no exceptions to this (Policy E-09).

For former employees, screeners identify negative information that may potentially affect employment relationships.

*“And they’re [employee] going to discipline right out of the system or be termed in their introductory period [for missing work]. And now, you’ve, you’ve just really shot yourself in the foot, because I’m the second largest, or third largest private employer in the state. The largest medical facility for many, many miles around and you’re not eligible to work for me, right now”* (S5).

One major cue to identify potential bad hires is individuals coded as no hires. When negative information is identified, a job-seeker undergoes additional scrutiny before being contacted. If



circumstances have changed significantly, then a job-seeker may be moved forward in the hiring process. *“And it would have to have director [S4] approval if, if they’re listed as someone that’s not really desirable to bring back”* (S5). Significantly may be interpreted as a job-seeker has a change in life status (spouse/mate/life partner/child) and the no hire reason was attributed to work-life balance; the job-seeker was employed over ten years ago; or a manager is willing to interview this job-seeker.

CAMC uses two systems for maintaining employee files: LaserArc for employees hired before 2003 and Lawson for employees hired in and after 2003. The Lawson system contains current personnel files in a digital format (S8, S9, S10). For newcomers, verified credentials are entered into this system when a candidate accepts employment. *“We only verify the credentials once. We keep all the employee files in Lawson. So it’s up to H.R. managers to update those and verify any new credentials”* (S8). Credentials not entered into Lawson are not considered as employees are ultimately responsible in ensuring that “new” credentials and skills are accurately reflected in Lawson prior to making any applications (S6, S9, S10). Thus, Human Resource Representatives act as caretakers and gatekeepers for updating personnel files for current employees; and any information processing errors are out of scope with the responsibilities of screeners.

Following the CAMC History and Seniority check, the job-seekers’ licenses are verified if pertinent to positions.

#### **6.5.7 Licensure Verification (if pertinent to position)**

CAMC-EC maintains a master list of commonly used credentials, certifications, and licenses to provide details that facilitate license verification to make informal decisions. To verify a license (e.g. nurse, radiologist, and psychologist), the respective board or licensing entity is contacted by CAMC-EC prior to a job-seeker being offered a pre-screening interview.

*“I check to see if they have the nursing license before I call them for an interview. They have to have a valid and active West Virginia [nursing] license before they can work here. If they have disciplines on file, I have to talk to the Board [of Nursing] and find out why. If it was resolved or if it isn’t practise related, then we can move on”* (S9).

Disciplines are documented in a Consent Agreement to allow individuals to maintain licenses under restrictions or additional scrutiny. CAMC reviews each Consent Agreement and conducts a series of discussions and interviews with the licensure board, CAMC personnel, and the individual to determine if some type of working relationship is possible. Only if a relationship is possible can the application move forward.

One problem is that over thirty licensure boards exist with each having a different standard (S5). Plus, training standards vary amongst boards. For example: Training expressed in hours does not translate into clock hours on the job. These may be specific and set hours for performing so many tasks, additional course hours provided by certified individuals, or passage of an exam to get credit for hours. So, forty hours does not translate into working forty hours. This is a common language issue where screeners had to learn and understand the terminology through experience.

Driver License verification is completed by the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles (a government agency) after an individual has accepted a job offer (S7). At a minimum, a driver license number (or social security number) and name are forwarded for the background check. Although the cost of verification is \$5.00 or \$6.00 if a driver license number is not listed, it is attributed to CAMC-EC's budget. Thus financing may inject into informal decisions and hiring processes if funds are diminished.

License verification is the last step in making informal decisions about applications before interviewing applicants. *"What we do is, if it's [education] on the application, we take their word for it to bring them in for the interview"* (S7). After satisfying the minimum personnel specifications, job-seekers are subject to interviews.

#### **6.5.8 Pre-Employment and Management Interviews**

**Interviewing** is the action associated with discussing application details with the job-seeker. Job-seekers face a series of interviews from screeners, supervising managers, and agents of CAMC. Managers decide which applicants to interview (S5, S9, S10), from a list of approved applicants. Informally, the first interviews conducted by screeners are by telephone (S5, S9, S10) followed by formal face-to-face interviews. Providing preference is given to internal candidates, internal and external applicants may be interviewed concurrently to expedite the hiring process (CAMC, 2007, D 6). Interviews serve to facilitate informal decisions about job-seekers, but more importantly, interviews disseminate information concerning advancement opportunities and coach the career paths of employees.

Interviews are pivotal points within the hiring process to continuously evaluate and re-evaluate screening information with job-seekers. All interviews are governed by Policy *E-05: Interviewing Responsibilities*. According to this policy, each interview must, at a minimum, discuss compensation, position duties and responsibilities, special accommodations, and applicant qualifications. The first formal interview that job-seekers encounter is the pre-employment interview with CAMC-EC.

However, as pre-employment interviews are scheduled via telephone for those applications having met the required personnel specifications, screeners use this opportunity as an informal interview with the job-seeker. *"I use telephone interviews 'to fish' for information. I look for why they left their job. Why they are looking. Especially, anytime that I have flagged something on the application that I am unsure of"* (S9). Additionally, external postings do not present all the details and telephone interviews can facilitate understanding position descriptions. *"So, on CAMC.org, they [external job-seeker] can see what positions are available. But, if CAMC.org is a very antiquated and we have to manually post those positions on there"* (S5). Thus, telephone interviews provide an opportunity for undesirable job-seekers to be removed by either themselves or screeners.

Screeners conduct face-to-face pre-employment interviews to gather additional information from job-seekers, to review job specifications and position descriptions, and to preliminarily assess job-seekers. For external job-seekers arriving for pre-employment interviews, a position description and a "Please Read and Sign" Form ("RS-Form") are provided as described above. *"Well, when they come in, [S8] has them read the position description and have them sign a form saying they have read it and that this is what they are applying for"* (S6). Since position descriptions are not posted to an external website, external job-seekers have imperfect information concerning a position description. By imperfect information, an external job-seeker relies on the job-title and his/her perceptions of the duties, responsibilities and work environment associated with the job title. In other words, a job-seeker makes his/her best guess of what the position entails. To bring common perceptions to a job-seeker, each job-seeker is given a position description appropriate for the pre-screening interview. The job-seeker must read the position description and then complete the RS-Form.

The RS-Form asks each job-seeker, *"Did you review the job description for the position, which you are interviewing?"* and *"Can you perform the essential functions of the job without accommodation?"* to confirm that the position description with personnel specifications has been read and that there would not be any problems performing critical tasks. If the job-seeker has issues with tasks, those issues must be documented immediately and during the pre-screening interview to assure that a reasonable adjustment can be made without impacting patient care.

*"They have to sign a paper saying that they, don't do or do not need any type of accommodations. You know. Just letting us know if they have any kind of restrictions, but once they read it, and then they come in, to me and I'll tell them 'This is what you will be doing.' And I've had some tell me, 'Mm, no. I don't want to do that.' And they stop the interview themselves, and they leave. But some of them, if, depending on what their answers are, I can tell that the managers not going to want this"* (S7).

Another representative makes informal decisions based on reasonable accommodations; and if a position cannot be modified, then alternative positions are suggested. In some instances, job-seekers remove themselves from consideration after discussing the application, compensation, and CAMC policies.

In addition to reasonable accommodations, informal decisions to remove job-seekers are based on

*“If they will not look me in the eye at all, or if they have absolutely the worst answer for anything, and it’s like pulling teeth to get any answer from them, then I know. Or, I have even had some that when I bring them in and tell them this is what the job is, you know, because they read the job description out front before they come in to see me” (S7).*

Furthermore, inappropriate conversations cause job-seekers to be removed (S5, S9, S10). *“I interview them first. If I think this is absolutely a waste of the manager’s time, I send them on their way” (S7).* S10 recalls an instance where a job-seeker presented well during the early part of the interview, but shifted discussions towards inappropriate and unethical behaviours.

*“There was this one guy that came in for an interview. He was, um, um, completely unprofessional. He told us, he was fired from his previous job. I think from stealing things. He was always late, so he’d call in a lot. I think, he said that most of the time he had a hangover or something like that. There was a bunch of stuff he said. But ultimately, he was just not someone we wanted here. We thought that he would definitely not be good for our patients. Well, he was just interested in money. He was not even compassionate. He was like ‘well, if the money is good, I can do pretty much anything’” (S10).*

Based upon this discussion, S10 felt that patient care would be adversely affected if this person was hired and thus chose not to direct him to the subsequent interview with the hiring manager citing the manager’s time was spent more appropriately contributing to hospital operations. Later, this manager was informed of S10’s decision to remove this job-seeker from selection. Screeners control which job-seekers are interviewed by managers. *“I have some managers like I said, if you sent them twenty-five applications, they would want to interview twenty-five people” (S5).*

Finally, some screeners (S5, S6, S7) report a job-seeker’s appearance has impacted informal decisions. For example, tattoos must be covered and most body piercings must either be removed or covered whilst at CAMC. Although noncompliant individuals are subject to disciplinary action including termination, screener judgements concerning a job-seeker’s possible compliance with policies can affect any employment offer.

**Appearing** identifies external characteristics associated with appearance and attire of an individual. Appearing emerged as an important filtering cue which represents how a

job-seeker may portray the image of CAMC. Individuals arriving for an interview are expected to dress appropriately.

*“And I tend to put together a presentation because a lot of these kids, don’t know that they’re dressing inappropriately. They don’t know that their talking inappropriately in an interview. They’re putting down information on their application that you’re specifically not asking them for” (S5).*

*“If they have big green spikey hair and they’re covered in tattoos. You know. If they are a scary person. I mean, we don’t need anybody to scare patients” (S6).*

*“And also, whether or not they have a, a problem, if they have body piercings all over the face and they have tattoos clear down; If they’re not willing to cover this stuff up, then it’s not happening cause we have a dress code. And, you can wear earrings. You can, you can have the nose ring if you want it. But you can’t wear that in the hospital. You have to have that covered. If you have tattoos, that’s fine. but you have to keep them covered. Everybody. It doesn’t matter where it’s someone like, me or someone in housekeeping or dietary, or anybody. It doesn’t matter” (S7).*

Undesirable body modifications such as body piercings and tattoos must be hidden by clothing or covered by a bandage or the job-seeker is removed from consideration as compliance with the dress code is important.

*“Every, everybody, it doesn’t matter and not and not only that it’s unfair treatment to say, ‘Well, you have to keep your [tattoo] covered, but he doesn’t’ And, when they go to lunch, there’s a good chance they’re going to lunch in the cafeteria” (S7).*

This statement stresses the importance of homogeneity and it indicates that diversion from this policy will not be tolerated. Hence, appearance and the ability to appear similar to others is an important standard to screeners when making informal decisions. If CAMC-EC is satisfied with the pre-employment interview, then job-seekers are considered applicants and are ranked by screeners’ preferences: (1) current employees; (2) a rehire, reinstatement, and retiree employees, and (3) newcomers. After these rankings, applicants are submitted according to these rankings to managers for formal interviews. Managers are then responsible for directing formal interviews; and subsequently, based on the manager’s hiring preference, nominating those applications to become candidates for positions. The manager’s list of candidates is compared to the screeners’ original preference listing (i.e. current, former employee, and newcomer). CAMC-EC extends an offer of employment to the manager’s first choice, subject to this preference list, providing that the internal/external requirement has been followed. Once an offer has been accepted, the candidate is considered a conditional employee whom is subject to further evaluations. S5 notes, *“we are adamant about not allowing somebody [conditional employee] to start in a new hire unless they’ve had that drug screen, physical, and that background check has been entered by Wednesday prior to, their start date.”*

### 6.5.9 Comprehensive Background Checks

Extending the general theme of **Specifying**, the theme **Specifying (background)** considers the specific processes and guidelines associated with collecting and processing historical job-seeker information such as work and academic experiences, criminal histories, and financial histories.

Initially, degrees, certifications, and experience are taken at the word of the job-seeker. When a job-seeker is offered a position and accepts, a background check is completed and the application is scrutinised further.

*“And when they come back in [to accept an offer], they have to fill out, one of our background check forms saying that they’re allowing us to do a background check. When we do the background check, that’s when we verify their education” (S7).*

Each background check is coordinated by S8 and conducted by an external agency, Employment Background Investigations, Inc. (“EBI”) (see EBI, 2010), on candidates having accepted an employment offer (CAMC, 2007, p. D 3; Policy E-08; S4; S8). Background checks follow the Fair Credit Reporting Act (“FCRA”) (15 U.S.C. § 1681 (see [www.ftc.gov/credit](http://www.ftc.gov/credit))) and relevant West Virginia laws (Policy E-08). During pre-employment interviews, job-seekers complete the necessary legal paperwork to authorise background checks. Only when job-seekers accepts a transfer or an employment offer and becomes a contingent employee does the background check commence.

Background checks are geographically driven and are requested for only counties and sometimes countries where an individual has had a significant relationship (S8). These relationships are based on residence, employment, education, or other such association. Each contingent employee’s background check reviews at least three counties: Kanawha County, WV and two other counties. Screeners determine which counties background checks will be conducted within. For each additional county or country search, additional fees are charged by the external agency; thus, screeners must minimise expenses whilst obtaining necessary information as required by policy.

A limitation of background checks is when a natural disaster (i.e. flood, hurricane, and tornado) has destroyed the records associated with a job-seeker (S5, S8). In those cases, job-seekers must present credentials and validate information. Job-seekers may present original documents with raised seals for inspection and acceptance. When background checks and job-seekers are unable to validate information requested, then those credentials are not considered and exceptions to this rule are not made.

When a background check presents information that would revoke a contingent employment offer, CAMC issues a *Notice of Intent* with the respective report and the *Summary of Your Rights* to the candidate prior to issuing an Adverse Action letter formally revoking the employment offer (Policy E-08). These actions comply with the Fair Credit Reporting Act: A consumer report (i.e. background check), which was used to take adverse action against an individual, such as revocation of an employment offer, must be reported to the individual affected. Individuals are entitled to notification of adverse action, the details of the consumer reports, and the name and contact details of the supplier of the consumer report. Additionally, background checks should not normally extend beyond seven years and ten years for criminal history (S4, S5, S9, S10).

At a minimum, the following checks are authorised: (1) a Social Security match; (2) Verification of Credentials (Licensure, Certificates, Education); (3) Employment verification; (4) Criminal background checks; and (5) OIG/GSA checks. Each component of the background check is discussed in turn. In addition to the background check, each applicant must undergo a physical and WDT (S6, S7).

#### **6.5.9.1 Social Security Match**

A Social Security match identifies that a specific number matches exactly with a specific name ensures that job-seekers are not misrepresenting themselves by fraudulently using another individual's identification. Additionally, this match confirms that job-seekers can legally be employed within the United States. To assist employers verify eligibility for United States employment, the Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and Immigration Services requires the use of Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification to be completed for all new hires.

#### **6.5.9.2 Verification of Credentials**

*"That's [educational credentials] done through the background check" (S5).* Prior to 2003, credentials were accepted as presented by job-seekers (S4).

*"Well, it was our Director of Medical Affairs. They were in that position for, um, two to three years, I think. And someone called in, on our employee hotline and said, 'you know da-da-da, they didn't go to school.' It was right out of the blue. So we did a double check of the file and just called the school. They didn't have it and so we let them go. So now we check everybody" (S4).*

Currently, the verification of most credentials is outsourced to EBI. *"I don't, we don't let, the, the background check company is not responsible for verifying our licensure" (S5).*

For informal decisions, future graduation dates are scrutinised more intensely because conditional employees may not obtain the necessary credentials to hold positions prior to becoming employed. *"For most of my positions [support services], they, the minimum that they have to have is a high school education"* (S7). Thus, only individuals whom are expected to graduate within two months are considered for selected positions. Moreover, job-seekers holding more credentials are preferred:

*"And they all have their RT, their AART and West Virginia license. So that was the criteria that set those four candidates above the other, eight. Seven. Seven. Because they, they're already registered. So to them, that makes them a better candidate. because that means they have passed the registry test"* (S5).

CAMC has experienced significant problems with the validity of credentials: *"we have more problems, I think, with the high school degrees"* (S4).

*"Other than felonies that they have not disclosed to us, basically the only thing that's going to us to rescind the offer from the background check, is, if, we can't, we can't get their education verified, because I've had some that tell me that, 'Yes I have a high school education.' But when it comes right down to it, and I try to verify it, no they don't"* (S7).

Some problems can be attributed to anything from falsified credentials to problems with the background check.

*"But once she gave us the correct date, and how I discovered that is by the year she was born on. Wait a minute, you couldn't have graduated in, this date. It had to be earlier than that because you're almost the same age I am. It can't be ten years later that you graduated. She said, 'I gave you the wrong date.' Once we found that, we found it"* (S7).

Additionally, if job-seekers have High School Diplomas from being home schooled, it may not appear on background checks. *"Because my phlebotomist and my tech assistants require that they have a high school diploma; and both cases I think it's been like somebody that's been home schooled"* (S5). Furthermore, High School Diplomas and G.E.D.s were more likely than higher education degrees to be erroneous or falsified (S4, S7, S8).

*"We still verify. But that does make our background check company, a lil--, it make, it helps them to verify it. If they can bring, wa--, we still have to verify it because anybody can fake those things"* (S7).

*"And I think they, if they did that with all of the schools, and, and don't let them walk if they're a half credit or a credit short, I think it would avoid some of these problems. Because a lot of these kids, I don't know if they really realise, or, or what it is. But, I think if you let them walk and participate in the ceremony, they're like, 'Well I graduated.' Oh, no you didn't. You might have walked, but you don't have the diploma"* (S7).



### 6.5.9.3 Employment & Prior Experience Verification

Employment history determines if job-seekers satisfy requirements. Most of this information is obtained through references. **Referencing** encompasses the processes of gathering information about an individual by contacting former and current employers, volunteer organisations, personal contacts, and other social organisation affiliated with that individual. Recommendations help facilitate acceptance of applications: *"We use the lists [graduation] and we go by teacher recommendations"* (S6). Sometimes, managers request screeners to provide applicants from job-seekers that have been recommended by current employees (S5). S5 contends that employee recommendations may impact a manager's decisions especially when the position is in a highly specialised area.

Experience cannot exceed twelve months per calendar year, even when a job-seeker has held additional employment. *"We only look at the full-time job. Or if that full-time job isn't a nurse, or a medical field, then we might look at the part-time"* (S10). Screeners do not verify all information. Consequently, the inclusion of overlooked information may change informal decisions. Moreover, job-hoppers or individuals with a short-term employment history are identified and routinely removed before pre-employment interviews as (s)he would not likely be committed to a long term working relationship (S6, S7, S9, S10). Short-term employment relationships are viewed as cost prohibitive and the optimal decision is to remove job-hoppers from consideration:

*"I also, look at the, their previous job history because I've want to make sure it's not someone that is a job-hopper that only going to work for us a month or two and, and, then leave, because it's kind of pointless to put them through our training and spend all that money if they're just, hopping from job to job"* (S7).

Short-term employment was not clearly defined amongst screeners (S9): Less than six months (S7) to less than twelve months (S6, S9, S10) with a single employer. *"But if they have, if they switch from job to job to job within a month of getting that job. I, I skip over them and look for other applications"* (S7); however, *"If they are in the position for less than a year, they get tossed"* (S6). This contradiction is evident of deviations in informal decisions. But some deviations are acceptable, *"Now she only worked from April to May here. So since it was such a short period of time, I look at her reason for leaving. It was because it was an externship"* (S7). Thus, short-term employment may be justified for good cause if it is for seasonal or temporary employment, lay-off or redundant, or being a travel nurse.

*"Six jobs in a year. Really, it really depends on why they left. Sometimes a traveling nurse will have several jobs because when the patient dies their job is over. They really end of life care and go where they are needed. They may spend, um, thirteen weeks on the job"* (S9).

Employment history is scrutinised for gaps in employment and specific reasons for changing positions or jobs. Reasons for changing jobs that can be potentially disqualifying a job-seeker are: Disagreement with management; personal; did not like job; or another phase that does not indicate that the job-seeker is advancing within a career. Furthermore, former CAMC employees may be considered for positions provided that the individual left in good standing (CAMC, 2007, D 9).

#### **6.5.9.4 Criminal Record Checks**

Each contingent employee must have a criminal record check covering the previous seven years. To better protect patients from wrongful hires, the West Virginia Human Rights Commission has extended this criminal history check to ten years for convictions associated with narcotic drugs and controlled substances (S8). This is the emergence of ***Filtering (criminal history)*** which focuses on removing individuals from consideration based upon past convictions and pending legal action. *“So, it’s more of a security issue and a liability issue because a person, has a specific, I guess profile or conviction”* (S7). *“With any conviction, we consult that person and discuss it. But [S4] has to approve anyone with a conviction. Otherwise, we just send them an adverse action letter”* (S10).

Candidates having a criminal conviction may be extended an employment offer at the discretion of CAMC (CAMC, 2007, D 3). If a background check denotes a felony conviction, job-seekers are consulted to further evaluate the circumstances of the conviction: Position requirements; prior employment references; nature of conviction; individual’s age at time of conviction; length of time since conviction; information from probation and parole officers; and other consumer reports.

*“Now, I do ask, ‘What is your charge?’ because it depends on what that charge is, where we will allow you to work. Obviously, if its, if it has to do with stealing money or something, we’re not really going to put you in accounting. But you could still work in dietary”* (S7).

*“Misdemeanour, it’s going to depend. As long as it’s not an active case, and we consider, is it a lot of misdemeanours? Is it back to back? Is it real current? And if so, we’re going to call ‘em and say, ‘Hey, this is what came up on your background report. Give me some details on it.’ And, it’s going to depend on what they tell us. I mean somebody that has even misdemeanour charges for drug use and it’s over and over. And it’s just been real recent we’re probably going to tell them, ‘You’re going to need to seek gainful employment elsewhere and get your problem under control.’ But, if it’s that recent, nine times out of ten they’re going to fail the drug screen anyway”* (S7).

If the conviction passes the scrutiny of screeners and does not cause issues with the position's duties or compromise patient care, then final decisions on employability are made by the division director.

Job-seekers not disclosing criminal histories or pending litigation are removed immediately from consideration (S5, S7) whilst disclosed convictions are evaluated for potential position conflicts (S6, S7).

*"Um, and if they did disclose that they had a felony, we would have known prior to, bringing them in, what it was for. Because although we don't discriminate, because of criminal record, I'm not going to bring in a paedophile to work as a child advocate" (S5).*

*"Um, I've had one guy that had a bad check. He was a communication specialist paramedic. That was still sitting out there on his record and it was even a misdemeanour. Um, but generally, um, if they're honest, we already know what we're looking at" (S5).*

*"And I check to see, if you have ever been convicted of a felony. She put 'no'. Now, if we would hire her, and her background check comes back that she has a felony, there is nothing that's going to save her. I mean it could be a little felony. And it could have been twenty years ago. I don't care. You lied on your application and we're done" (S7).*

If an employment offer has been made, the offer is immediately rescinded. In addition to convictions, employment offers are rescinded if individuals have pending charges. These individuals may reapply after pending charges have been resolved. Job-seekers having been convicted for certain offenses (i.e. child sexual abuse) cannot be placed at CAMC.

*"And it was, um, sexual abuse on a child. And, where can you put someone in a hospital, that, has those kind of charges? There's just nowhere. I mean I can't even put this person in dietary because people come in, to see family members and they have their children with them" (S7).*

Essentially, job-seekers having a felonious criminal history have a very limited chance of gaining employment.

#### **6.5.9.5 Office of Inspector General/General Service Administration Checks**

Job-seekers are subject to Office of Inspector General/General Service Administration ("OIG/GSA") checks regardless of position (i.e. doctor, maintenance, mechanic, nurse, dietary, or laundry). These checks are conducted by the Graduated Medical Education and Compliance departments (Policy E-08) by consulting a list to determine if an individual has ever engaged in false billing schemes concerning the United States Medicare or Medicaid programmes. If an individual's name appears on this list, that individual cannot be employed.

Upon satisfying the comprehensive background check, the conditional employee becomes a provisional employee. *“And they know, when we offer that position, it's pending, that they pass our physical, our drug screen, and our background check”* (S7). Each provisional employee must undergo a health assessment and WDT prior to being eligible for paid employment.

#### **6.5.9.6 Pre-Employment Health Assessment**

A medical examination is performed by the CAMC Employee Health Department (“EHD”) on each contingent employee to determine that individuals are free from communicable diseases and able to perform a position’s critical duties (CAMC, 2007, D 8; E 6; S7). With some positions, the health assessment is performed prior to background checks. Additionally, the EHD conducts the employees’ annual medical assessments for continued employment (CAMC, 2007, p. E 6). *“Everybody has to go through Employee Health before they can work here; Even the doctors. They have to have their pre-employment physical and drug screen or they cannot work here”* (S7). Usually, individuals failing the health assessment have not properly disclosed restrictions which cannot be accommodated. *“Not very many [fail the physical check]. There are a few that fail for lifting restrictions”* (S7). Health assessment failures can only be appealed to the EHD. *“And, so they, so if they want recourse they have to go back to Employee Health. So that Employee Health has to change that in order for you to even look at that”* (S7).

#### **6.5.9.7 Drugs Screening - WDT**

After an employment offer has been accepted, contingent employees must undergo and pass a urine analysis drugs screen (S4, S5, S6, S7, S9, S10). *“I think, yea, 2007. That is done here though. Employee Health does them all. And they do a nine panel drug test. So its marijuana, speed, meth, um, all the good ones”* (S4). WDT are the efforts to identify individuals that consume undesirable substances and emerged as the theme **Testing (drugs)**. In some instances, the policy allows for WDT to be completed prior to background checks. Prior to specimen collection, an individual must show proper photo identification.

*“Now, we do make them bring in a photo I.D. [for WDT]. So, that we can, make sure that it really is the person. You, they, they’re not sending their next door neighbour in to do the drug test for ‘em. We try to be as precautions as we can. I mean, we can’t stand there and watch them, pee in a cup. Ah, you know. We just can’t do that. That’s a little bit of an invasions of privacy. So, we can’t do that; but we, try to make sure that it really is as legitimate as possible”* (S7).

If WDT indicates a specific substance, then the provisional employee has failed the WDT and may not be considered (S6, S9, S10) with no second opportunity to repeat WDT (S5). Consequently, positive WDT may be repeated only if a prescription medication may have influenced the test results (S7). Rarely, specimen collection problems cause an additional specimen to be collected from the provisional employee. This is not a second WDT, but an effort to correct errors associated with collecting the first specimen.

Job-seekers failing tests may reapply after one year (S7). Thus, failed WDT removes individuals from being considered for positions with no additional WDT being offered.

*“There was one [that appealed a positive drug test], that made a ruckus. I’m not sure what. I know that they did not allow him to retest. Um, I recently had one, and it was horrible. And, and it was totally unexpected; and I totally believe that the guy probably, just made a mistake. So, but we’re gonna allow. We never said, we’re not going to retest at that time; where we turn around and send them right back over there for another test. That’s not going to happen. But, you can give them time down the road to get it out of their system. And it’s not tracked on our end, for the most part. Other than the rescission letter that we would have” (S5).*

*“For me, that’s, that’s, [the most common drugs detected by WDT] Marijuana [Cannabis] and Meth [Methamphetamine] is top for me” (S7).*

Another erratic problem occurs when individuals attempt to introduce counter-measures (e.g. a clean urine specimen) to circumvent WDT (S7). *“And, sometimes if they know that they’re gonna fail the drug screen, they bolt” (S7)* or hastily depart before specimens can be collected. These undesirable behaviours immediately remove applicants from consideration more so than WDT. S7 states

*“We have had some of them that [select out of WDT], I have, now I don’t know about anyone else, but mine are more, the ones that, most of, most of the time if I have to rescind an offer its because they have failed the drug test. Most of the time. And I’m typically the only one here that has to recind an offer for that reason. But, so most of the time, they know. Ah, they know it up front. And, they are either going to, bolt or, we’ve had them bring, in specimens that we know that are not theirs. Because the temperature is not right, and Employee Health won’t make ‘em do it again and they, they’ll s, give ‘em some water and stick ‘em in the lobby and they take off. And so we know at that point. There no point in us doing a background check because, they’re finished. If they take off, there’s no second chance. I don’t care what your reason is for taking off. There’s no second chance.”*

Consequently, most instances where counter-measures are engaged can be detected by a routine temperature check of the specimen. Anytime a specimen is questioned, attempts to collect a new specimen are undertaken as noted above. Most requests for new specimens are not filled as these individuals tend to leave shortly thereafter without informing EHD. Avoidance and tampering with testing processes causes the removal of all applications submitted by this individual as if (s)he had tested positive for a substance.

However, those positions (e.g. entry level positions with minimal education and skill sets) in which S7 screens has a higher concentration of failure rates amongst all other positions. S7 postulates that these individuals are most likely to fail WDT:

*“But usually they will, come right out, wa, a lot of them won’t even ask you what it is. They’ll say, ‘Ah, OK.’ Well you know, they thought they had slipped one over on us; and, I mean I even had one guy tell me, ‘Well I didn’t think you would really do it. Everybody says they do background checks and drug screens but that doesn’t really mean they do do it.’ Well, we do.”*

This may be explained as entry level positions may be carried out by impaired individuals as minimal satisfactory performance expectations, relative to overall CAMC operations, may be acceptable. Furthermore, those provisional employees whom fail health assessments or WDT can have an offer of employment withdrawn.

#### **6.5.9.8 Appeals by Internal Applicants & Employee Status**

According to policy (CAMC, 2007, p. D 5), preference for available positions must be given to internal applicants with additional preferences towards applicants within the same department. Internal applicants can appeal any hiring decisions for non-administrative and non-supervisory positions (CAMC, 2007, D 7) within seven calendar days of a hiring decision (Policy E-03). If an appeal is requested, the CAMC-EC Director or member of Senior Management assesses the informal decisions that lead to the hiring decision which delays the formal hiring of an employee. After the appeal has concluded, the hiring process continues forward.

Since external job-seekers do not have access to job descriptions, they are more likely to have misconceptions about positions. Furthermore, this creates a disadvantage to external job-seekers as internal job-seekers have access to this information as well as with screeners. This means that internal job-seekers are more informed with what KSAOs screeners are evaluating for a position. It is speculated that if external job-seekers were provided with job descriptions before the submission of a digital application, the external job-seekers would most likely apply for positions in which they were qualified and interested.

Provisional employees must go through orientation, but cannot report to designated work areas until the health assessment and WDT are complete and employee status has been approved. Although this discussion has illustrated the typical selection process, there are frequent exceptions to this process: Interview Day and Clinical Affiliation Agreements (“CAA”) routinely modify some aspect of the selection process as discussed in the subsequent section.

#### 6.5.10 Exceptions to the Typical Selection Process: Interview Day

There are exceptions to this typical selection process: *Interview Day*. “In February, we set up all the interviews for April for the externs and nurse grads” (S10). “The applicants choose where they want to interview. They choose three interviews and we [CAMC-EC] pick two. These last fifteen minutes with a five minute break between each interview” (S9). Reliance is placed with the selection process as “the externs are young, there is not much information to get out of the interviews. We’ve already looked at everyone; it’s really up to the manager to pick the people that they like the most” (S9). Thus, “It’s a group [extern] interview. We have to do it that way to save time” (S10). Only “the grad interviews are done one on one” (S10).

“We do about one hundred fifty interview in one day. Five interviews per person [job-seeker]” (S10). Additionally, approximately five screeners work to coordinate this massive event with interactions amongst multiple departments (i.e. EHD and the various hiring units), thirty to forty managers, and interviewees must be run on a tight schedule. “And all the health screenings are done that day. Colour blindness, we get their titers [immunization record], the urine drug screen, all the same day. They are bussed in groups” (S9). “Those [background checks] are done before the interviews. We do those by mail. That’s the only time they are allowed to sign the papers when we’re not there” (S10).

Since significantly higher applications are being processed, most informal decisions occur prior to interviews to better accommodate CAMC and job-seekers. Thus, job-seekers have already reached the status of conditional employees as certain collecting processes (i.e. background check) require an offer of employment to be accepted. Each individual is expected to be employed as part of an educational programme which may be linked to CAA. After Interview Day, managers provide CAMC-EC with their preference of job-seekers/applicants. “Well, it’s a matter of, um, a combination of taking the manger’s picks and the where the student want to go, So, we match them up until the position is filled” (S10). Managers are consulted when a tie or equal preferences exceed the number of vacancies.

#### 6.5.11 General Recruitment & Clinical Affiliation Agreements

**Recruiting**, **Selecting**, and **Enquiring** are related categories associated with the interactions between job-seekers and an organisation. *Recruiting* and *Selecting* are usually initialled by an organisation whilst *Enquiring* is initiated by an individual. The primary purpose

of this group is to create (i.e. recruiting and selecting) or enter (i.e. enquiring) into an applicant pool. Each component is discussed in turn.

**Recruiting** is the process of motivating external job-seekers to apply for positions within an organisation. Recruiting strategies and efforts are focused mostly in West Virginia (S9, S10) with the essential element being compensation (S5, S9, S10). However, external job-seekers cannot access compensation or position descriptions on-line (S5). Job-seekers familiar with the medical field already have a cognitive understanding of positions and organisational structures.

*“Plus, you’d be surprised at how small knit these professional communities are. I mean, I brought in somebody a couple [16:30] weeks ago to interview, that, um, literally had done a residency with one of my directors of pharmacy like thirty-some years ago. I mean, they know. You send them an e-mail and somebody out of the group you send them too knows that person, went to school with that person, their wife went to school with that person” (S5).*

Since CAMC prefers to promote employees, external recruiting efforts are focused on lower positions. CAMC-EC utilises established educational relationships to fill lower positions with students. Each educational facility has an education coordinator (S5) that helps facilitate information distribution concerning medical careers (S9, S10) and schedule screener presentations to students (S5, S6, S7, S9, S10). Furthermore, some students must work as a requirement of an educational programme.

*“And, you know the best tool we have here are allowing the students to come in and do their clinical rotations. I mean, um, phlebotomists are a good example of that. They come in and do a three-week rotation. And each of the divisions, any of the divisions, just a division whether placed, it could be any division any shift, I actually, which is one of the favourite parts of my job, go out and talk to students at the local vocational schools; and I went in the spring and talked to a high school class down at Nitro High School; and I have a presentation for lab techs and a presentation for something else here” (S5).*

**Selecting** is the processes of motivating internal job-seekers to apply for positions within an organisation. Hiring processes for internal job-seekers are less stringent as most information is contained within their respective personnel file (S6, S9, S10). One barrier to selecting is that transfer requests diminish significantly during summer months as a transferred employee would be required to reschedule vacation under the new team (S4).

**Enquiring** represents communication from a job-seeker to a screener concerning the status of an application. This category emerged because these descriptions were unusual and distinct from other categories. Persistent enquiring from a job-seeker may brand the job-seeker as a “stalker” (S5, S7). A stalker is a negative term describing persistence in enquiry that may be informally used to filter out individuals (S7). *“And, um, she would call me about*



every two or three weeks, maybe once a month just to see if the position had been put out there yet. That, I don't mind that at all" (S5). S7 states

*"If they harass, if they are, we have stalkers. If they are continuously calling me, or they're continuously coming in here demanding to see me, you minas well give it up. Cause once, one you've [job-seeker] already upset and ticked off the person out front, you're done. Because they do, you know. He [S8] tells us. 'This person will, will probably be an absolutely wonderful person' or 'No. What were you thinking of even calling this person?' Then, you know. He tells us because, people will open up to him and give him information that he does not ask for. I was sitting here, sitting here in my office where I'm so close to the front, I can hear things that I probably shouldn't hear also. And, when [S6] was doing one of her interviews a guy, came in and I was sitting here with my radio on minding my own business doing my work; and you wouldn't think I would hear, but he was loud enough that, I could hear his reason for getting fired from his last job. So, you know, and he, [S8] certainly didn't ask for that information. He just, come right out and told it. So, you know. Stuff like that will definitely weed 'em out for us. You gotta be cautious what you say when you're, even out front."*

S7's statements also indicate any information that is acquired by screeners is subject to be included in informal decisions, but this does not mean that information is documented.

**Retaining** emerged as an important theme that provides a deeper understanding concerning employee turnover as it considers strategies and efforts to keep current employees. Compensation emerged as significant factor for turnover.

*"The departments, the, the employees um, we've had a situation recently where we've lost some OTs to the private sector because they're paying so much more than what we're paying, because they're reimbursed at so much. You know? They're, they're guaranteed payment from Medicare and Medicaid" (S5).*

Additionally, stress, training, and work-life balance were identified as problems.

*"The biggest problem is really keeping the people after the first year. Stress. Usually they're on night shift cause we schedule by seniority, so they have to be here for a while. And sometimes, they are just here for a year to get that experience and go somewhere else" (S9).*

*"They were so eager, they're so eager to get jobs after they been in this program that they'll take anything that you hand to them. And, and then they've taken a job on midnight shift; and they think their best friend is going to give them a ride, and they think that their cousin's going to babysit for 'em. And I tell, and it doesn't work out. So, suddenly they're not showing up or they're later" (S5).*

As CAMC is a large predominantly centralised organisation, it faces some unique geographic and population challenges to recruiting (see the table below). Using United States Census Bureau (2010) data, population estimates of the City of Charleston ("Charleston") and Kanawha County where CAMC primarily operates illustrate the potential labour pool based on an age criterion: Individuals between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five. Relative to the potential labour pool population, CAMC represents 22.3% of Charleston and 5.9% of Kanawha County. This assumes CAMC is fully staffed with approximately 7,000

employees. This potential labour pool represents a calculated maximum statistic of working adults. This maximum statistic does not consider other criteria such as education, physical ability and other personnel specifications that would remove undesirable applications. Additionally, other medical organisations directly compete for job-seekers within the same labour pool.

**Table 6-4: CAMC Potential Applicants**

<b>SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010</b>	<b>Charleston (2006)</b>	<b>Kanawha County (2009)</b>
Population	50,846	191,663
Population under age 18	10,525	40,633
Population over age 65	8,949	31,816
Potential Labour Pool	31,372	119,214
CAMC as a percentage of Labour Pool	~22.3%	~5.9%

To identify individuals interested in health care careers, various recruiting techniques including word-of-mouth, job fairs, advertising, and a recruiting team are used (CAMC, 2007, D 9). *“We have scholarships. But word-of-mouth is the best way to get people to apply”* (S9). *“We have a recruiting team composed of sixty people”* (S10) that concentrate efforts within West Virginia. But, as the prior table illustrates, some positions may not be filled within the immediate geographic area. *“If it’s pharmacy, we can go out. If it’s a specialised position, then we need to go we can get one”* (S10).

CAMC prefers to fill vacant positions through internal promotions (CAMC, 2007, D 4-7).

*“We do the internal profiles on Thursday, which I already did that this morning. I’m the early person. I’m in here at seven. So, I’ve already taken care of those; and then if there are no internal people, then I start looking for applications”* (S7).

Internal job-seekers interested in transfer and promotional opportunities may find vacancy announcements on CAMnet (CAMC, 2007, p. E 3). An employee may apply for promotion or transfer when vacancies occur provided (s)he meets four basic criteria. First, an employee has held a position for at least one year. Second, the employee meets the minimum established guidelines for a vacant position. Third, (s)he has not been disciplined above a verbal warning. Finally, employees whose work is supported from grants may not transfer or be promoted until grant obligations are satisfied (Policy E-03).

Since all positions cannot be filled with internal job-seekers, CAMC has established relationships with several educational facilities within the central recruiting area. *“We recruit mostly from schools: UC, Tech, State, Marshall”* (S10). *“That is, we have a clinical affiliation agreement with these schools, and for the lab, there is a education coordinator. Um, I think that helps place them [students] where they have room for them”* (S5). As part of these relationships, CAMC-EC advertises career opportunities and provides realistic outlooks of job markets for students through lectures, coaching, distributing career information, and advertising scholarships. *“Since we [with S7] work with the local schools, we look at graduation lists to bring people in”* (S6).

An example of a supporting academic relationship is the University of Charleston helping meet CAMC’s demand for pharmacy personnel by establishing an academic programme to educate students for pharmaceutical careers. As this programme and other such area programmes produce graduates, recruiting efforts will be re-evaluated to determine the extent of geographic recruitment. Another example is implementing school recruiting efforts to reduce turnover rates:

*“But the main point of going to the vocational schools is to talk to the phlebotomists and the pharmacy technicians and that because I find what I was running into was a really high turnover rate, especially in the phlebotomy lab area”* (S5).

As CAMC is a teaching facility, requests from students to complete degree programme clinical rotations is an integrated part of daily operations and recruiting. Each request or CAA is evaluated according to written procedures. CAA recruiting efforts tap several medical education programmes include five for allopathic residency, three for osteopathic residency, three for American Osteopathic Association & Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (i.e. AOA/ACGME) (CAMC, 2009). Also, lab CAAs have a clinical rotation of three weeks with most students participating from area schools. CAAs provide an opportunity for CAMC to identify higher performing individuals whilst become familiar with an individual’s work ethic.

## **6.6 Emerging Empirical Evidence in CAMC**

After an application has been submitted, screeners gather evidence from various sources to make informal decisions concerning applications by using the cues listed in Appendix 23. To complement these cues, the primary themes (see Appendix 24) that emerged from interviews (see Appendices 6 through 14) surrounding informal decisions are discussed in relation to the four areas that can influence informal decisions.

### **Majority of Influence**

Processing digital applications is a principal obstacle that screeners as a group encounter daily. Since digital application cannot be deleted or archived and are mixed with current applications, screeners must sift through more applications than necessary. Collaboratively, screeners have adopted a last-in, first-out method of processing applications and all applications submitted within the allotted time frame are not considered. This adaption has spawned a recency effect where only the newest applications are considered. This recency effect may not have developed if another platform for collecting and processing applications was in place. Furthermore, the screeners as a whole believed that this method of processing applications, last-in first-out, was appropriate and fair to all job-seekers. Consequently, those job-seekers submitting applications early may never be considered for a position. However, those job-seekers that procrastinate are always considered.

### **Weighting of Information**

With CAMC-EC, the weighting of information consistently varied depending on the stage that the application was being considered. Information is primarily taken as truthful with evidence of such truth occurring later. This informal decision making process in accordance to evidence gathering lead to the development of ***Credentialing and Evaluating***. ***Credentialing and Evaluating*** is composed of four intricate subordinate themes: (1) ***Specifying (credentials)***, (2) ***Credentialing***, (3) ***Specifying (experience)***, and (4) ***Evaluation***. Each theme is discussed in turn.

***Specifying (credentials)*** provides the personnel specifications and guidelines associated with the processes of credentialing. For informal filtering decisions “*...job descriptions became my best friend*” or critical reference (S5). Although individuals may provide evidence of credentials, policy specifies that only those credentials which are verified are considered (S8). Furthermore, only awarded credentials are accepted as partial credentials do not meet personnel specifications (S5, S9, S10). “*What I look for, first of all I have to make sure they have the proper education, according to the job description*” (S7).

***Credentialing*** signifies the processes to which qualifications such as education and licenses are confirmed and accepted as truth to be benchmarked against cognitive or written personnel specifications (S7). Credentialing emerged as a separate theme since education cannot be substituted for experience. “*It depends on the position. If the education is met, experience seems to be a good indicator of past performance; and you can’t always*

*substitute education for experience*” (S6). Although credentials are first accepted as truthful without confirmation, the confirmation of credentials occurs during background checks (S7). Most occurrences of falsified credentials are with high school diplomas or G.E.D.s (S4, S7, S8). This might be attributed to a job-seeker not accurately remembering the circumstances surrounding the awarding of a credential (S7). For example, sometimes individuals may take part in graduation ceremonies (e.g. high school) but fail to complete the necessary requirements for a degree (S7).

Credentials not verified for both internal and external applicants during the background check are not considered (S6). Credentials for internal applicants must have been verified by a human resource member prior to the application date (S6, S9, S10). S5 notes *“before they can actually start working for us, we have to verify [their license] with the board. We pretty much take it at face value.”* For external applicants, licenses must be confirmed before a conditional employee begins work. Although, licenses and credentials can be confirmed through agency boards and websites, screeners must know which board or website to contact concerning a license: *“Because with nursing, it’s an RN license and everybody has one, but with mine [positions] you are dealing with about thirty different boards”* (S5). S5 notes that normally licenses are obtained after a degree and certain degrees are associated with certain schools. Applications exceeding minimum standards with higher credentials are valued more by managers (S5).

***Specifying (experience)*** represents the personnel specifications associated with benchmarking and evaluating work and volunteer experience. Personnel specifications regarding experience are established from a manager’s requirements for the type of position, team experience, and the current composition of staff (S5). Managers communicate their needs to screeners so that screeners can select the best criteria for selecting the appropriate position and personnel specifications for recruiting job-seekers. Because of CAMC’s complexity, the sheer number of diverse positions, and the division of some positions (e.g. some positions are composed of four tiers known as ladders), standard positions descriptions and personnel specifications are available to screeners. These standards help screeners consistently evaluate each job-seeker’s employment history (S6).

***Evaluating*** considers how an individual’s experience compares with the personnel specifications and an organisation’s needs. Experience and past performance are the preferential indicators for future performance (S6). To be considered, previous work experience must be transferable to the current position on offer (S5). With concurrent work experience, CAMC-EC only attributes work experience within a time frame to a single employer (S9, S10). Thus, individuals working multiple jobs simultaneously can only claim experience for one.

Whilst evaluating experience, screeners identify those job-seekers that are also former employees. Although no preference exists between a re-hire and a newcomer as *“They are the same”* (S6), former employees are subject to a complete personnel file review before further evaluations are allowed (S7). This review seeks to determine if the former employee is eligible for re-employment as poor performing employees and undesirable employees cannot be considered (S7). Although this internal process is similar to reference checking for external applicants, it may have a greater impact on informal decisions as negative information from more trusted sources (i.e. CAMC) would facilitate a clear no-hire decision.

In conjunction with evaluating work experience, screeners considered how other experience and credentials ascribed a job-seeker to the personnel specifications. Younger job-seekers can be readily identified as they tend to have little or no work experience: *“Well, high school students, um, usually list soccer team captain, clubs, volunteer, stuff like that”* (S6). On the other end of the spectrum, education and certifications enhance experience according to some managers (S7). Thus, job-seekers having credentials in addition to experience generally become the preferred applicants.

Whilst the weighting of information has moved through the various aspects of Credentialing and Evaluating, some cues emerged that significantly influenced informal decisions: Geography being the first cue. **Geographing** is a critical cue where an individual is matched to a position, in whole or part, based on topography. Geography presents several issues in recruiting and employee retention (S5). Though only ~71 kilometres separate CAMC from Cabell Huntington Hospital and St. Mary’s Hospital, their locations place them into a higher reimbursement rate.

*“We compete with Huntington a lot. Um, we get a lot of people complain because we can’t pay what Huntington does. Huntington actually gets reimbursed at a different rate than we do. We’re in the southern coalfields. Huntington is in the Tri-State Region. So, it’s different. What Medicare reimburses, Medicare Medicaid reimburse is higher in that area than it is here. I don’t know why, I, I don’t pretend to understand that, but, um, so basically with a majority of my positions except for pretty much, phlebotomist. It’s market driven”* (S5).

Because this higher reimbursement rate transfers into higher salaries, some job-seekers are profiled on their potential to relocate. *“Well, there are more job requests based on relocation, mostly from new grads”* (S9). If a person lives near Huntington, why is (s)he looking at working in Charleston when compensation is greater in Huntington? If the compensation is greater than expected costs, most likely, the job-seeker will accept employment.

Secondly, geographing is used when South Carolina addresses appear on applications. Job-seekers are notified that positions are located in West Virginia. Most of the time, applications are withdrawn.

*“The ones from South Carolina we call and ask them if they want to work in West Virginia. After all, there is a Charleston, South Carolina, and if you Google us, we pop up. And they are thinking, well it’s in Charleston. And most of the time they don’t know that” (S9).*

In fact, the ability to commute to work can significantly affect the removal of applications (S7, S9, S10). Those job-seekers having access to transportation also have a greater influence in their career paths (Shao et al., 2012).

*“A lot, some of my positions require it [Driver’s License]. Not all of them do. but nine times out of ten, if they have a Driver’s License and they live in Ripley, they’re going to make it back and forth to work. Now, if they tell me they live in Ripley and they don’t have a Driver’s License, I might not really consider ‘em because, how are they going to get to work every day” (S7).*

Screeners consider a job-seeker’s residential address, possession of a Driver’s License, and availability of transportation when evaluating applications for positions. If that residential address is within the Kanawha Valley, job-seekers have access to public bus services and therefore have access to reliable transportation.

*“Now if they live in Charleston or something, they can catch the bus and I know they can catch the bus. But I still consider them. So, it’s going to depend on what position they’re looking for, and where they live” (S7).*

For selected positions (e.g. nurses, pharmacists), geography can be a significant cue for informal decisions and recruiting concern especially when coupled with advanced educational requirements.

The population of Charleston cannot completely support the staffing needs of CAMC. As illustrated in the previous table, CAMC is representative of ~22.3% of the maximum potential labour pool of Charleston where all organisations compete for job-seekers. This ~22.3% does not consider education and training requirements, certification, or necessary skill sets a job-seeker must possess. Whilst the labour pool removes the population under eighteen and over sixty-five, it does not remove those individuals that do not participate within the labour market.

Expanding the geographic area to include the maximum potential labour pool, CAMC represents ~5.9%. Again, this labour pool is not discounted for the required KSAO of job-seekers or the individuals that have selected out of the labour market. Whilst geographic filtering can be beneficial, CAMC is continuously challenged by its significant need for highly skilled and qualified personnel which is not fully supported within its geographic operations.

In addition to geographing, ***Distracting*** emerged after interruptions and other barriers delayed or prevented screeners from making informal decisions on applications. *“I have to do this [respond to e-mail] as they happen or I will forget. There’s just too many things to keep track of”* (S5). Consequently, too many vacancies can create problems as well. *“When I first came here, we had over four hundred vacancies in total here at the hospital. And I think, we’re down to a hundred and some now”* (S5).

In addition to constant interruptions, screeners are expected to serve on committees and contribute to other projects.

*“I go out, um, twice a year to each class. And the instructors ask me back every semester that they have a class go through. And we just talk about what not to do and what to do at an interview. What to wear”* (S5).

Thus, distracting impacts the time screeners can devote towards filtering processes which includes returning job-seeker calls: *“I have a philosophy if I don’t have anything to tell them, I’m not, I don’t have time to call them back”* (S5).

Finally, considering the weighting on information, more often, a single negative criterion (e.g. lack of credentials, undisclosed criminal history, and failure of WDT) can reject an application whilst a series of criteria are needed for acceptance of an application especially since criteria becomes more subjective and complex as the filtering process continues. The employment tests at CAMC are rigid with no opportunity for screeners to interpret results. The skills tests are either a pass or a fail. The health assessment is either a fail, pass, or pass with a reasonable accommodation. WDT is a pass or fail. Finally, the comprehensive background check serves only to confirm or deny applicant information. Even the appearance of an undisclosed criminal history is gauged as a denial of applicant provided information. Although tests have rigid rules that remove individuals from hiring processes, all tests have exceptions and may be repeated. From discussions, screeners have allowed applicants to repeat employment tests. These exceptions indicate that employment tests do not necessarily influence filtering decisions differently. Actually, individual behaviours overshadow employment tests especially when a screener feels an applicant was truthful in providing information. This does not diminish the importance of tests, but places tests secondary to observed behaviours.

### **Inappropriate Information and Criteria**

Inappropriate information and criteria can also be attributed to erroneous interpretations of organisational guidelines. In CAMC-EC, S5 incorrectly advised job-seekers of the required personnel specifications concerning the term *hours* for promotions. This



personnel specification concerning educational units was erroneously interpreted to refer to working hours:

*“They tell me forty hours [to get the license]. I’m an H.R. person. Forty hours, for a full-time person. So how long will it be until they’re eligible to get their raise and move to a Pharmacy Technician position? If they’re full-time a week. That’s what I’m thinking. Nobody told me that forty hours is not really forty hours. It’s a forty some type of concentration. It can actually take them up to three to four months if not longer” (S5).*

This misinterpretation caused compensation issues for newcomers since compensation increases are not attributed to working hours but educational units which take significantly longer to obtain. Although S5 had to readjust her definition of hours, some screeners do not fully comprehend the specifications when making informal decisions about applications. *“I don’t know [what the forty hours are exactly] to be honest with you. I somebody that tr--, I, I think maybe you have to have forty hours in so many different things. Doing, performing” (S5).*

In addition to *hours*, *working days* could be misinterpreted. For example, the current process noting “calendar days” for postings (Policy E-03) could be replaced with “Positions will be posted on Fridays and postings will close at 23:59 on Tuesdays” to better establish standard deadlines. The term “calendar days” excludes Saturdays and Sundays on some instances, but includes those days in other instances. Clearly defined terminology and processes minimise inappropriate information and criteria from being considered. Whilst these may be written, it is critical for relevant information to be readily accessible to job-seekers and other parties having an interest in the hiring processes. Accessible information offers transparency of processes and the ability to review those processes more easily.

### **Influence of Assessor**

The influence of an assessor can modify informal decisions. According to S5, CAMC standards tend to be greater than other organisations and therefore information must be scrutinized.

*“I mean we are very specific about our job descriptions and what we require. And we have very high standards; and sometimes that can be challenging but I think all of us are, are proud of that” (S5).*

At CAMC, informal decisions about applications are made against minimum personnel specification according to written policy (S6). Some specifications are communicated to screeners by managers: *“They [managers] communicate [experience needs] that to me. ‘Cause usually what they do, the way that they let me know is they post it:*

*Like as a CT level 3” (S5). Whilst managers work daily with a type of position(s), managers do not know the substantive details of the job descriptions as some job experience is not transferable from one employer to CAMC, even if the job-seeker has or had a similar title. Although written policies should prevail, deviations in hiring criteria can occur from manager interactions.*

*“Just because your manager calls and tells you to do it, don’t assume they know they’re telling you to do the right thing. And I mean, I have pages of e-, scathing e-mails. Because you get some that want to hire, people from their church, or their friends, or whatever. Or somebody’s daughter” (S5).*

*“But, um, there is nothing on the posting [concerning organisational fit or manager preferences]. I know what my managers want. I talk to them before we advertise the position. So, I have to look at who I send over to them. I mean, sometimes this one would be a good fit here, but not over here. I have to consider my manager’s personality. I mean, you know. I don’t want to put somebody that will clash personalities” (S9).*

Whilst managers can influence screeners’ decisions, screeners are ultimately responsible for making the informal decisions and therefore have greater influence than managers. Screeners have made exceptions in instances where information was unconfirmed by a comprehensive background check. As previously discussed, conflicting information normally removes individuals from hiring processes. This should be especially true when an inflexible test fails to confirm information, but exceptions have been made. When a background check failed to verify a high school graduation date as this individual misremembered the graduation date by approximately ten years, S7 took additional time to discuss when the graduation may have occurred. Because the individual was going through a nasty divorce, her credentials were inaccessible (S7) and therefore alternatives to identifying a date were necessary. S7 observed that this individual was similar in age and a subsequent background check was conducted successfully. This example illustrates that the behaviours of the applicant were more important than the evidence. In fact, S7 went beyond basic policy and procedures and used her influence as a screener to assist an applicant primarily because S7 perceived that the individual intended no deception or malice.

Another deviation from personnel specifications stemming from positive interactions with job-seekers follows:

*“And one of the things that I always tell them was whether or not you take a job with me or with somebody else, you need to know what your rights are. I mean people can take advantage. My mom literally went for a job interview, a few months ago, and when they called her back to tell her who got the position they said ‘You know you’re really great, and you would be great in this role. But this girl, this other girl we interviewed, she really needs this job.’ Because my mom was older and retired, so they assumed that she really didn’t need the job. You know? And living at the beach, I mean. You know. So, and I was like, ‘Mom. That’s totally illegal. They basically just age discriminated against you, because*

*you're older and you're getting Social Security. So you don't need the job as much as this other person does"* (S5).

The more positive interactions with a screener, the greater familiarity a screener has with the job-seeker. Possibility, additional time spent by a screener with a job-seeker is part of evaluating an individual more closely to match with a better position. This matching couples KSAO with organisational fit in determining where job-seekers would be more successful. If this is the case, the screener is making informal decisions about job-seekers at a higher cognitive level outside of guidelines and personnel specifications. Observations of screeners illustrate that these informal decisions occur most often as screeners gain experience in their roles, thus reinforcing that screener experience does contribute towards adjusting personnel specifications.

Finally, **Hiring** focuses on the final decision process where an individual is offered a position within an organisation. *"But ultimately, the deciding who to bring in is up to the manager. Never let them fly solo"* (S5). Managers have more control over internal positions than CAMC-EC (S9) and more often those internal processes are circumvented by management than external processes (S8). This illustrates that CAMC-EC has a greater authority concerning external hires; and external applications are filtered more intensely than internal applications (S9). Potentially, this intensity in filtering is linked to the authority attributed to hiring.

Screeners have a vested interest in the end result of selection processes well after hiring decisions. Consider this statement:

*"And initially I had a lot of really challenging situations because I was living by the job descriptions, and the way I tried to look at it was, if, and I've been involved in some of the surveys when [the compliance officer] comes in and pulled the files that they look at, because basically the last, I think their new approach to the survey is, they take a patient and they track every person that's touched that patient, from the time they were admitted, I mean, so they're looking at the emp-at the, um, employee file for the admitting clerk. You know? For the person that wheeled him in the wheelchair up to the, I mean, it's, it's the all the way back and my fear was always that, they would pull somebody that I hired, that didn't meet a job description and I just, it's because these are licensed people. I mean, and it's scary to think you hire a Rad Tech that doesn't have a license or you hire, I mean that was with typing tests and stuff like that and you have to meet those as well and it's important. But when you are talking about you can put an unlicensed, unqualified, clinical person on the floor, I'd really wouldn't want to be responsible for that"* (S5).

In fact, the previous statement indicates that an incorrect hiring decision can impact patient care and has the potential to be discovered. Moreover, this statement captures the essence of field-based research that is difficult to replicate within lab-based studies, the temporal thought processes beyond the research project. The screener is focused on the

organisational product, in this case patient care, which is contingent upon proper informal decisions that place qualified individuals into positions who will continue to perform as the screener has predicted.

## **6.7 CAMC Case Conclusion**

Evaluating evidence provided by the comprehensive background check (S4, S5, S6, S7, S9, S10) including criminal histories (S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10), WDT (S4, S5, S6, S7, S9, S10), and physicals (S5, S6, S7), requires screeners to extrapolate job-seeker behaviours through diverse reports from various sources. Similarly, appearance (S5, S6, S7) and geographing (S5, S7, S9, S10) impacted screeners' perceptions concerning job-seeker behaviours. Whilst CAMC had guidelines concerning appearance, policies concerning geographing did not exist. Furthermore, geographing was a greater concern for unskilled labour positions (S7). This attention towards geographing can be attributed to the concept of *economic mobility* where benefits of travel outweigh the expenses of travel (Shao et al., 2012). For those unskilled positions, transportation expenses can be a barrier that limits employment to a specific area. Accordingly, compensation (S5, S7) becomes increasingly important in informal decisions for unskilled positions. Another extrapolation about job-seeker behaviours is the determination that a job-seeker is a "stalker" (S5, S7). Although "stalkers" may be removed, a job-seeker must make excessive enquiries before screeners consider that a job-seeker is a "stalker".

Screeners influence and impose their own personnel specifications over the CAMC personnel specifications: Screeners forward only applications that are believed to meet the manager's preference. Whilst this appears to be a significant deviation at first, further investigation reveals that screeners (S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10) were adjusting informal decisions of personnel specifications to meet perceptions, expectations, and organisational culture within a unit of a position's supervising manager. In essence, adjusted personnel specifications were anchored to specific supervisors and informal decisions were consistently applied on a smaller level to an application group. Screeners justify this as necessary since a job-seeker must be an appropriate cultural and organisational fit within the position's team setting and organisational fit is a significant variable not directly covered by policies or procedures.

Since screeners are the critical conduit that a majority of job-seekers must pass through to become affiliated with CAMC, it is critical for screeners to select the most appropriate and best qualified people. Organisational policies and procedures coupled with position descriptions should guide decisions. Even though screeners can and do consult

amongst themselves to find common ground concerning personnel specifications, screeners deviated from personnel specifications. Although an argument may be made screeners are using experience to guide organisational personnel specifications, screeners continued to deviate from organisational personnel specifications by imposing screener personnel specifications over CAMC personnel specifications. This is why CAMC has built in redundancies within hiring processes to facilitate the standardisation of informal decisions. Three examples include: (1) applications meeting minimum passing scores as determined by screeners are subject to supplementary evaluating and interviews from managers; (2) background checks verify applicant credentials; and (3) any external candidates hired are subject to internal appeals processes initiated by employees. In the next chapter, the three cases will be analysed.

# **Chapter 7 A Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion of the Research Findings**

## **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter brings practice into theory to better understand relationships amongst informal decisions in hiring (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Huberman & Miles, 1998) by presenting a cross-case analysis of the case studies presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. First, a comparison of organisations is presented with emphasis on filtering processes, positions, and recruiting. Secondly, discussions of informal decisions are followed by the development of the Cycle of Employment and the depiction of the *Workflow of General Hiring Processes*. Finally, the emergent themes within the decision environments are delimited into the theoretical framework of the Selection Paradigm.

## **7.2 A Comparison of Organisations**

To help integrate these case studies into a theory, a comparison of the participating organisations is necessary. From the case studies, organisations having more employees (see also 3.5.2) document more comprehensively their operating environment, especially with respect to the multiple working relationships amongst personnel (Garen, 1985). Whilst this appears to hold true for this research, the focus was not on general strategic organisational policies but on informal decisions. Nevertheless, strategic policies relating to hiring processes were evaluated to obtain a comprehensive understanding of informal decisions. In fact, the reasons for this additional documentation may be linked to a necessity to reduce information into easier units to cognitively process, recall, and if necessary refer to, so that workers are not overwhelmed with information when making decisions (Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Wingrove et al., 1984).

Thinking aloud protocol exercises were more difficult to conduct with participants when written policies or selection specifications were cognitive. When selection and filtering specifications moved from cognitive to clearly defined metrics (i.e. written policies, procedures, and specifications), subjects were more likely to follow verbalising their thoughts and actions. Also, screeners with more experience filtering applications could articulate written specifications more clearly than screeners with less experience. This suggest that as organisations move away from cognitive specifications by incorporating written specifications, screeners, through repetitions, have a greater focus and understanding of the organisation's visions, goals, and objectives (Drakeley et al., 1988; Holloran, 1983).

The next section considers the strategic planning of the filtering processes of each organisation.

### 7.2.1 A Strategic Overview of Filtering Processes

Whilst each organisation has an established filtering process, the flexibility of personnel specifications varies significantly amongst these organisations as illustrated in the table below.

**Table 7-1: Flexibility in the Hiring Process**

Organisation	Filtering Specifications	Specification Flexibility
Research Centre	Cognitive (After University Filtering)	Standardised
Veterinary Hospital	Cognitive	Very Flexible
CAMC	Written	Rigid

The Research Centre relied on cognitive personnel specifications (i.e. appearance, experience, and geographic locations) that were routine and flexible. Ad-hoc filtering processes were conducted by the Research Centre which depended upon the University admissions requirements as interns are recruited from student populations. Thus, University admissions filtering errors would be transferred directly to the Research Centre (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990). Furthermore, these filtering processes were dependant on cognitive notes and processes which can degrade and impede informal decisions especially since the whole hiring process was spread over approximately five months.

Like the Research Centre, the Veterinary Hospital also relied on cognitive personnel specifications for informal decisions. However, these specifications varied since the Veterinary Hospital hired for multiple positions throughout the year and this organisation was operating within a continuously evolving by means of reorganising and expanding. These changes impacted recruiting, selecting and hiring. Moreover, personnel specifications associated with new operational structures may foster uncertainty which could lead to improper decision making (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991d).

CAMC utilises written personnel specifications, policies, and procedures to guide informal decisions. Unlike the Research Centre and the Veterinary Hospital, CAMC screeners specialise in filtering applications amongst various complex position descriptions. Processing over 1,000 applications annually, screeners operate under multiple deadlines to identify individuals from unskilled to professional positions whilst recruiting individuals for future vacancies. Because some screeners primarily recruited from schools, screeners became familiar with potential job-seekers through repeated interactions associated with educational programmes. Even though CAMC operated under inflexible written specifications, early interactions with students can cause deviations in decisions by



differences in weighting information or the injection of inappropriate information and criteria (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Porterfield, 2001). Normally, the risk of deviations occurring is amplified when screeners specialise and work independently. Consequently, screeners routinely met to discuss problems, issues, and share knowledge as a collective to mitigate macro level deviations. Additionally, a screener would consult peers if (s)he was hesitant about a filtering decision (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991d) which could subject that decision to the influence of another assessor (Dewberry, 2011).

CAMC had progressive stages of personnel specifications and assessment tests that individuals had to pass to advance within the hiring process. Some stages were directly supervised by screeners whilst other stages relied on information from contracted third-party organisations. Use of third-party organisations was deemed more economically efficient in collecting information than directly managing certain collection processes (Gschwandtner & Lambson, 2006; Morrison et al., 2007; Robertson & Smith, 2001). Whilst contracted organisations operate under general guidelines provided by CAMC, the operational details of these organisations are self-directed. Thus, screeners only received a final work product to make decisions. Consequently, the Research Centre and CAMC were more exposed to errors in decisions from these external organisations.

In addition to establishing a general strategy concerning filtering processes, organisations must also look at how and when to place individuals into these positions.

### 7.2.2 Positions and Organisational Placements

Applications for several types of positions were filtered amongst all three organisations. Additionally, each organisation was significantly different when considering variables such as the duration of employment and how often an organisation hired and thus made informal decision. The Veterinary Hospital periodically filtered applications, CAMC constantly processed applications and the Research Centre focused only on an annual group of applications. The table below illustrates the availability and types of positions during this research.

**Table 7-2: General Position Availability**

Organisation	Employment Duration	Position Turnover	Type of Positions
Research Centre	Ten Weeks	Annually	Professional Academic Training
Veterinary Hospital	Permanent	Quarterly	Support Personnel

CAMC	Variable	Constantly	Unskilled to Professional
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As with organisational complexity, position intricacy appears to drive the number of specifications and policies that are adopted, written, or otherwise codified within an organisational setting. For example: The expected employment duration may affect the number and types of assessment tests. In addition, time associated with making decisions to remove an individual decreases as position turnover increases. This is in line with Garen's (1985) assertion that larger firms have more information problems. The relationship between time and position turnover is not clear but may be related to several variables such as the volume of information, screener experience, inadequate filtering guidelines, and deadlines.

Considering these two events, duration of employment and frequency of selection may be directly linked to the two-way power relationship (Searle, 2003). Based on the case studies, the two-way power relationship appears to be weaker when short temporal variables are present. That is, when the duration of employment is short, so too are the decision processes which indicate that the hedonic benefits associated with a short-term position are less valuable than with a longer-term position (Morewedge et al., 2007). As such, the perceived value would transfer to organisational resource expenditures (i.e. the investment) associated with hiring an individual: Short-term employees equate too little investment whilst long-term employees represent larger investments (see Morewedge et al., 2007). This was certainly the case with the Research Centre as it invested very little with its reliance on external standards for filtering job-seekers. Moreover, the Veterinary Hospital primarily focused informal decisions on the assessment of information centring on application driven interviews. Finally, CAMC only considered the most recent applications with codified preferences on internal hiring, thus limiting informal decisions concerning applicants. From this analysis, short-term employees are considered small investments and as such require less resources for informal decisions. This analysis supports Robertson and Smith (2001) assertion that specifications are usually constructed using the most convenient criteria available.

### **7.2.3 General Recruiting Strategies Amongst Participant Organisations**

As discussed in Chapter 1, Human Resource Planning drives informal decisions and those decisions are contingent upon personnel specifications as discussed above and the general recruitment strategies. When an organisation becomes more complex, so too does the complexity of decisions (cf., Crane, 1989; Kacmar et al., 2008; Macfarlane et al., 1997) and also does the formality and diversity of recruitment methods.

The Research Centre is the most informal when recruiting interns by relying on university personnel to provide applicants and schedule interviews. Only when the number of positions exceeded the acceptable applications are the personnel specifications reduced to include first year students. Interns have no room for advancement. Whilst the Research Centre recruits from law schools in the area, the Veterinary Hospital relies on word-of-mouth, newspaper announcements, and employment enquires for potential employees. Veterinary Hospital employees have little room for advancement. CAMC practises the most rigorous recruitment strategy utilising a digital application system coupled with newspaper announcements, career fairs, and direct recruitment from school programmes. Moreover, CAMC's employees have vested rights including preference in internal hiring and advancement.

From the case studies, each organisation pursued different recruitment strategies which appear to be driven by the size (Bartram et al., 1995) and complexity of an organisation (Garen, 1985) and the ability to vacate an employee from a position as well as the nature of employment (e.g. internship versus stable employment). As expected, the longer the employer-employee relationship is expected to last (i.e., Research Centre internship, Veterinary Hospital staff positions, and CAMC nurses), the more energy is placed on recruitment (Robertson & Smith, 2001). As the length of employment is significantly different between an internship and stable employment, organisations must consider the impact of even minor hiring decisions as these can have long-lasting implications (Geerlings & van Veen, 2006).

Recruiting appears to be a stronger indication of how job-seekers are filtered. As organisational complexity and vested employee rights (e.g. to grieve or otherwise have disputes heard before a third-party [as noted in CAMC]) increase, recruitment strategies intensify with assessment and filtering processes becoming more focused on finding the 'ideal employee'. In finding this ideal employee, screeners assess individuals through a process of informal decisions.

### **7.3 The Process of Informal Decisions**

Observations concerning informal decisions illustrated that larger organisations (i.e. CAMC) rely on decision stages with filtering cues when making decisions to remove an application whilst smaller organisations (i.e. Research Centre and Veterinary Hospital) tend to use the information in the aggregate (Browne et al., 2005; Ferris et al., 2002; Stanton, 1977) (see Appendix 25). As an individual moves through a hiring process, informal decisions become more "formalised" requiring justifications by screeners of assessment

resources (time, energy, and costs) and practises (e.g., skills tests, background checks, and WDT) until a formal offer of employment is tendered. This was the case with the Research Centre, Veterinary Hospital, and CAMC.

Evidence in these case studies illustrate that organisations tended to invest minimal resources and utilise pre-existing processes, similar to isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), when making informal decisions concerning hiring. This follows Robertson and Smith's (2001) assertion that the most convenient specifications are utilised in hiring practises; and Iles et al.'s (1990) notation that hiring formal practices do not reflect reality. This is important as deviations and errors may most likely be injected into decisions when guidelines are lacking (Geerlings & van Veen, 2006; Iles et al., 1990; Reason, 1990). However, in some instances decisions may be influenced by the majority or minority (Dewberry, 2011).

### **7.3.1 Majority and Minority Influences**

The probability of majority and minority influence occurring increases as more screeners filter applications; and thus, personnel specifications and guidelines direct screeners' action. However, when specifications and guidelines are ambiguous or exist at the cognitive level, deviations in decision processes are more likely to occur. This conflict can be attributed to language. Madison (2000, p. 18) states *"When conflicts arise concerning language use, formal language policy provides the standard meaning. Yet, within intergroup communication networks, the contextual meanings are determined by the group."*

Overall, there were limited majority and minority influences noted during these cases. The most prevalent occurred in CAMC. CAMC-EC, as a whole by virtue of a majority influence, processes applications *Last-in, First-Out*. This process has become entrenched in the general processing of applications without any written policy supporting this method of Last-in, First-Out. As a result of inactions in not considering all applications, informally decisions were made to remove those individuals from selection. Not only does this adversely impact the first received applications, but it deprives CAMC of potentially better applicants. Furthermore, assessors believed that this process was the correct course of action as it was applied uniformly. In this case, the majority influence of processing applications Last-In, First-Out resulted as a necessity to cope with the number of applications that were received. If the uncertainty amongst screeners did not exist in how to deal with information overload, then this process would not have resulted (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991; 2004).

A majority influence was observed in the teams of the Veterinary Hospital. Although the staff did not participate nor have any direct responsibilities for hiring decisions, nonetheless, they were able to suppress a hiring decision. This was unprecedented at the Veterinary Hospital and was not observed in the other case studies. However, CAMC's written policy that allows employees to appeal decisions of external hires is similar to this event within the Veterinary Hospital. Insufficient evidence exists to link the Veterinary Hospital event with a CAMC policy decision. It is speculated that, CAMC's written policy resulted from repetitive events similar to that in the Veterinary Hospital. Consequently, this is beyond the data collected in this research.

Attempts from regulatory forces (e.g. government agencies and court orders) to correct perceptual problems with hiring decisions by modifying organisational guidelines and personnel specifications are examples of a majority influence being an outside organisation (Cerrito, 2004; Porterfield, 2001). Unbeknownst to the Research Centre, the Universities acted as a majority influence in selecting job-seekers for intern positions. By default, the Universities compiled and presented a list of job-seekers and résumés for the Research Centre's consideration. If a job-seeker is not on the list, then additional efforts by the Research Centre are undertaken only if the student is not affiliated with the three universities. This illustrates that organisations, as well as people, can exert influence on informal decisions (Erb et al., 2006). This is further supported by CAMC's use of external agencies for background checks and internal departments for health assessments. These organisations supply information to assessors through written reports but also by verbal discussions. Whilst the written reports contain information that can easily facilitate a decision (e.g., failure of a WDT equals removal of individual from selection), it is these verbal discussions that are unscripted that could influence decisions. For example: *"And, sometimes if they know that they're gonna fail the drug screen, they bolt"* (S7). The assessor did not observe this action, but learnt of it through discussions with EHD. The definition of a majority influence is that a majority of the participants do impact decisions (Dewberry, 2011); and certainly these external organisation exclusively control and provide specific information to the assessors. Through this flow of information, the majority has control and therefore also the influence. Thus, any errors from these external organisations would be passed to internal assessors.

### **7.3.2 Weighting of Information**

The weighting of information is critically important to informal decisions. In fact, information is central to the assessors' decisions and how that information is scrutinised and assigned value helps understand the final results of informal decisions. For those decisions,

most screeners preferred to make notations about applicant details. Being the exception, the Veterinary Hospital elected not to take written notes but rely solely on memory recall for information outside of applications and résumés. Written cues were used by CAMC to reduce the number of individuals seeking positions whilst the Research Centre relied on external agencies to collect and thereby limit most of the applications. Although the Research Centre spent nine months (from September to May) recruiting, making decisions and finally placing interns, efforts were concentrated in short periods. Thus, time spent on hiring was significantly less intense. In essence, Universities provided filtered applications for internships which the Research Centre focusing on geography.

As a filtering cue, the attention that geography received in every case was unexpected. Normally geography is an attraction and retention issue (see Bartlett, 2002; Chambers, 2001; Jordan-Evans & Kaye, 2002; Noon, 2006; Stevens, 1996), but geography emerged consistency as a factor in evaluating most every job-seeker for a position: A critical filtering cue in the Research Centre, a transportation concern in the Veterinary Hospital, and a cognitive benchmark in CAMC. From these case studies, geography emerged as a significant determination which applications are considered.

Whilst geography was highly subjective and inconsistent, empirical evidence noted that as positions required greater KSAO, geography as heuristic for making informal decisions emerged more often. Moreover, geography may be more strongly associated with the length of employment: Shorter employment is a filtering cue and longer employment is a cognitive benchmark (cf. Doogan, 2005; Gans, 2007; Shao et al., 2012). Geography did not completely remove individuals but did influence screener decisions. Individuals having connections or relationships with geographic areas where positions were located seemed to influence informal decisions more positively whilst those individuals having limited or no relationships to those areas were either removed or were shifted to positions where relationships existed. Another component to geographic filtering was the distance job-seekers would be expected to commute from home to employment (Henley et al., 2005). For example, public transportation is significantly limited with the Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority ("KRT") serving as the primary provider of public transportation (i.e. buses and vans) throughout much of Kanawha County (KRT, 2012). As an alternative to public transit, several private taxicabs companies offer transit; however, consistent taxicab fares can deter frequent use. With limited transportation options, geography is especially important to informal decisions.

Geographing had a significant role in each case study: employers' decision to consider job-seekers, job-seekers' decision to apply for positions close to home, a significant variable to employee commitment and organisational loyalty. In seeking career opportunities,

geography is an underlying variable that is part of moving in a higher employment status, *economic mobility*, which leads to movement amongst social classes known as *social mobility* (Gans, 2007; Shao et al., 2012). Moreover, economic and social mobility presents evidence of the two way power relationship (Searle, 2003). Employers persistently sought applications from populations generally served by that employer. This is in line with the non-financial benefits for attracting and recruiting applicants (cf., Bartlett, 2002; Chambers, 2001; Jordan-Evans & Kaye, 2002; Sonnenfeld, 1985); however, the personnel specifications did not indicate that locality was to enter into informal decisions. Nonetheless, locality was a significant part of early filtering decisions. With very little findings in published research concerning this development, geographing can and does effect informal decisions about minimum specifications. Thus, this research offers the term **Locality Effect** to describe this association with geographing.

In addition to geography, job-hoppers were generally removed from consideration. For all positions, job-hopper was a subjective specification used predominantly as a negative heuristic to indicate the potential maximum level of commitment that an individual might spend with an employer (Brown, 2005; Campbell et al., 1990). When defining the term job-hoppers, screeners had slightly different yet similar cognitive concepts of personnel specifications surrounding job-hoppers in which screeners acted upon. This specification of job-hopper varied amongst screeners potentially as a common understanding may not have been reached amongst assessors (Horton & Keysar, 1996) or from the miscommunication in the definition of job-hopper (Pronin et al., 2002). Whilst job-hopper has been identified in each case study (cf. Bernardin, 1977; Brown, 2005; Ferrell & Petersen, 1984), its impact with screener perceptions and informal decisions has not been fully discussed academically.

Thus, it is postulated that the negative connotations of job-hoppers trigger informal decisions about the removal of an individual meeting this concept of job-hopper which are likely linked to a screener experiencing loss aversion (e.g. hiring costs against perceptual benefits) (Boettcher, 2004). Effectively, the job-hopper is a stereotype generalising individuals that have undesirable behaviours surrounding short-term employment (Brown, 2005; Sadler, 2002). Although the other possibility is that the dynamics of the labour markets have changed due to regulation, culture, or consumer preference that create sectors of short-term workers (Doogan, 2005), the concept is remanded as a negative expression about the individual. Moreover, the job-hopper is not the only negative information that has been given a greater weight.

Generally, information provided by an applicant that is perceived by screeners to be deceptive triggers the removal of that individual from consideration of a position as the assessor weights negative information to be adverse to the interests of the organisation.

Outside of routine policies and procedures, screeners rely on experience to identify information mismatches amongst applications. Using investigative techniques, screeners identify common areas where individuals could provide false or embellished information (Bishop, 2006; Green, 1991). Information that is in conflict is questioned if that information is significant and relevant to the organisation. In all three organisations, the failure to be truthful meant that individuals were removed from hiring processes. Thus, truthfulness is an essential heuristic whose weight triggered by procedure or perceptual falsehood.

Consequently, truthful information is considered ordinary and not significant to remove an individual. Consider the cases. The Research Centre accepts résumés as truthful without conducting any validation or reliability testing beyond the job-seeker. Whilst they do not validate information, certain assurances from Universities provide a higher level of trust and reliability. Similarly, the Veterinary Hospital accepts application information as valid; but, employer references are utilised to validate selected information. Finally, CAMC accepts a majority of information from external job-seekers as valid until those job-seekers reach a certain status within selection processes at which time validity checks (i.e. background checks) are conducted. For internal job-seekers, only verified information is considered. Thus, perceived truthfulness appears contingent upon a two-way power relationship (Searle, 2003) influenced by hedonic benefits (Moorewedge et al., 2007) associated with the duration of employment. The expected longevity of an employment relationship intensifies organisational recruitment strategies.

Information is weighted and ranked by importance and validated in stages according to written policy or tradition. Information considered insignificant or not relevant is normally accepted as truth which supports Cook (1991). However, economics (i.e. the cost of information validation) may influence the valuation of truth. That is, ambiguous and probable information is accepted as truth provided it is not likely to harm an organisation and costs associated with validation exceeds perceptual benefits.

As the Research Centre and the Veterinary Hospital rely on cognitive personnel specifications when filtering, the rejection of applications mostly occurs when an employment offer is accepted by an individual and the remaining candidates cannot advance within the hiring process. The reverse is true for CAMC as their focus is rejection of applications based on written specifications. This may be driven by the sheer number of applications being processed. As applications increase, the speed at which rejections occur decreases. This inverse relationship helps screeners balance time with processing applications. This is supported by both the Research Centre and Veterinary Hospital processing fewer applications than CAMC with CAMC having the faster rejection time amongst the cases.



Based upon the increased number of filtering stages, position complexity increases from the Research Centre to the Veterinary Hospital to CAMC. From general observations, written personnel specifications provide additional confidence to screeners when rejecting complex applications. Rejections occurred more quickly when negative information or conflicting information was considered against personnel specifications which supports the literature presented by Aguinis and Smith (2007), Ballou (1996), Cook (1991), Fritzche and Brannick (2002), Gatewood and Field (1987), and Robertson and Smith (2001) associated with written specifications increasing the efficiency of filtering by screeners.

Whilst an application may have passed a series of criteria resulting in a series of micro decisions to accept an application, a single bit of information acts as a negative cue when this information conflicts with cognitive or written specifications. This conflict results in application rejection which was most often seen prior to employment offers. This evidence disputes Gilliland (1993) suggestion that decisions are a continuum whilst supporting Kenney (1982) and Litecky et al. (2004) suggestion that decisions are sequential with multiple stages being typical. In essence, a rejection results when a triggering event is created by a negative cue that conflicts with screener perceived specifications.

A negative cue does not have to be overly complex. In fact, most common triggering events are associated with meeting minimum position requirements (i.e. education, experience, and certification) and a failure to meet or exceed minimum guidelines (i.e. WDT, background check, and geographic profiling). Drawing from Herriot and Wingrove (1984) and Wingrove et al. (1984) excessive information can burden decision makers, thus explaining why screeners focus on simplistic negative cues when making informal decisions. Additionally, their research suggests a lack of information can contribute to poor decisions. Informal decisions that focus on finding negative cues below minimum specifications can compensate for deficient information. Whilst screeners made a single decision to accept or reject an application based on a series of criteria, applications are not required to be reviewed against every criterion, provided that a triggering event (mostly resulting from negative information or the failure to meet a specification) caused the rejection of an application. Any triggering event ceases filtering processes. Moreover, as personnel specifications become more complex, it is necessity to collect more information supporting application acceptance.

The evidence of how information is weighted supports that appropriate guidelines may not always be practised (Guest, 1991) with an overreliance on interviews to make informal filtering decisions (Robertson & Makin, 1986). Moreover, negative information and the omission of information was most likely the cause for organisations to remove individuals especially if that negative information could be linked to a written policy or procedure such as

criminal history or failed WDT (cf. Cook, 1991; Fritzsche & Brannick, 2002). Even though appearance in all cases studies had a similar impact as negative information in removing applications, appearance was significantly subjective (Drucker, 1995) and is further discussed under inappropriate information and criteria.

### **7.3.3 Inappropriate Information and Criteria**

According to Stanton (1997, p. 105) *“You must be sure that you are evaluating the applicant’s overall and total behaviour profile in order to determine his usual and typical behaviour response.”* However, instances of inappropriate information and criteria do enter into some decisions (Dewberry, 2011). Sometime, management perceptions of work performance and credibility may drive assessors to validate information (Crane, 1989). In other instances, information may be considered timeless without regard to changes resulting from age and experience (Zachar, 2004). In either event, when screeners rely on false information, organisations can suffer damages (Christiansen et al., 1994; McKinney & Sikula, 2008; Schmitt & Oswald, 2006).

First, empirical evidence in each case supports that informal decisions are significantly impacted by appearance. Appearance has a greater impact when written guidelines and specifications are adopted as these increase the awareness of appearance whilst codifying similarity through dress codes (see Esen, 2008). Both the Veterinary Hospital and CAMC had similar dress codes and appearance was a greater concern for these screeners. In the Veterinary Hospital, job-seekers appearing in inappropriate attire (e.g. revealing or too casual clothing) were more likely to be removed from the hiring process. Surprisingly, also the appearance of handwriting, which can be highly subjective, was considered in the Veterinary Hospital. With CAMC, job-seekers are almost immediately removed from consideration based upon physical appearance. With the Research Centre, a positive appearance, as indicated in S2’s notations about appearance and mannerisms, discreetly entered into decisions concerning ranking preferences of applicants. Generalising the cases, inappropriate appearance (e.g. tattoos, body modifications, and hair colour) was a significant barrier for job-seekers to overcome as it was an unacceptable conceptual standard. Screeners can make complex judgments regarding an individual’s appearance. In fact, screeners stereotype an unacceptable appearance to an unacceptable ‘employee’ (Turner & Nicholson, 2011; Van Viaren & Kmiecik, 1998). This supports the *‘ideal-employee’ mechanism* (Sears & Rowe, 2003) in which a generalised concept is applied consistently amongst all job-seekers.

Next, inappropriate information and criteria can enter into informal decision processes through informational processing errors which are most likely to occur when specifications are unclear (Keysar, 2007; Rozin & Nemeroff, 2002; Slovic et al., 1988). As observed in CAMC, definitions for *Working days* and *hours* were imprecise which led to an incorrect cognitive definition being constructed by a screener (S5) and all subsequent informal decisions being flawed by this erroneous meaning. Furthermore, the erroneous definition was distributed verbally to job-seekers concerning advancement opportunities. At first, this appeared as a mistake but this was a misapplication of guidelines. Furthermore, this was an involuntary action (see Reason, 1990; 2000) which was not discovered during a review of work but only after several consistent decision faults were reported by newly hired employees seeking advancement within CAMC.

Although distractions consistently emerged in each case study, it was not until the re-evaluation of data amongst the cases that the impact of distractions was more defined. Distractions during assessment of individuals can cause information to be discarded and otherwise weighted inappropriately (Speier et al., 1999). As CAMC assessors focused primarily on reviewing information and making informal filtering decisions, it provided the greatest evidence associated with distractions. Consequently, the numbers and types of distractions and interruptions were not fully noted and therefore cannot be accurately represented: For example, inappropriate appearance can cause distractions. However, what can be presented is that those interruptions and distractions can trigger the use of inappropriate information and criteria (Speier et al., 2003). The use of such can lead to errors in judgement by disregarding and inferring information (Porterfield, 2001; Rozin & Nemeroff, 2002; Slovic et al., 1988). Likewise, too much data (or pressure) can cause cognitive demands that affect interpreting information (Iles, 1992; Speier et al., 1999). To fully comprehend how distractions can impact informal decisions, more research is needed with special attention in capturing the minor details of interruptions (e.g., phone calls, announcements, and social interruptions) during informal decision making (cf. Jett & George, 2003; Speier et al., 1999; Speier et al., 2003).

Whilst geography and the Locality Effect were presented in the previous section concerning the weighting of information, it is also possible that geography and the Locality Effect could manifest as inappropriate information and criteria. For example, when assessing individuals for the unskilled positions at CAMC, screeners were more apt to consider where an individual lived in relation to the worksite. Compared to professional positions, screeners noted the necessity to have specialised recruitment teams to acquire enough qualified applicants for these positions. When consulting organisational policies and documents on geography, only the directives on background checks noted that location was important in

obtaining verification of credentials and additional information for final placement of individuals into *employee* status. Additional case studies are necessary to further determine how geography and the Locality Effect influence informal decisions. Studies should consider if other variables (e.g., culture, socioeconomic, and procedural justice) may contribute to these decisions (cf. Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Gilliland, 1993; Ryan et al., 1999; Shackleton & Newell, 1991).

Whilst inappropriate information and criteria can alter informal decisions, an assessor's influence can shift decisions (Dewberry, 2011).

#### **7.3.4 Influence of Assessor**

*“Man [sic] is by nature a rational ‘free will’ creature, and all major aspects of human behaviour are the product of his own personal decision process. Each individual is designed psychologically in such a manner that he alone makes the decisions which incite and direct major behaviour in his own life-span.” (Cassel, 1973, p. 285).*

Consequently, informal decisions can be influenced by other individuals and in some instances decision-makers yield their ‘free will’ in favour of alternative choices proposed by, in this research, other assessors. Potentially, some explanations for this influence rests with Robertson and Smith's (2001) assertion that assessors may seek the easiest path in making informal decisions especially in uncertainty (Thierry, 2007; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991c).

When information and decisions are uncertain, assessors default to guidelines and stereotypes (Thierry, 2007). The void of written policies and procedures fosters uncertainty (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991c) which allows assessors to have a greater influence over informal decisions. In the Research Centre, decisions were based on each screener's respective concepts as personnel specifications were unwritten. S2's decisions appear to be predisposed and influenced from prior shared experiences with S1 as final placement decisions were almost always yielded by S2 to S1; and, rarely did Chief Defenders exert any influence over S1 to circumvent hiring. In the vacuum of unguided decision processes, S1's ability to influence as an assessor could be the result of impression management (cf. Barrick & Mount, 1996; Leary & Kowalski, 1990) as he is also the legitimate authority and immediate supervisor of S2. More evidence is necessary to fully understand the nature of S1's influence.

Assessor influences seem to diminish when organisations codify filtering processes as in the case of the Veterinary Hospital. Although S3's actions are directed by established organisational culture (see Thierry, 2007), the ultimate decision to hire belongs to the owners and typically they do not review S3's informal decisions or her hiring decisions. This lack of

review facilitates an environment that increases an assessor's influence simply by management sanctioning, through the non-verbal behaviours of limited interaction, her authority over the hiring process. S11's statement *"The three owners have final say; however, they have taken a "hands off" approach. Essentially the office manager completes all aspects of the hiring process and informs them [the owners] of new hires."* supports this position. Similar to the Research Centre, the Veterinary Hospital supports that impression management (cf. Barrick & Mount, 1996; Leary & Kowalski, 1990) may account for some instances of assessor influences.

With written policies, the assessor's influence becomes more limited in scope and appears to be associated with a screener's years of experience. The exact years of experience was not tested within this research, but emerged from observations of the daily interactions of screeners in the CAMC case study. These observations appear to indicate that assessors with limited experience (less than two) tended to interpret organisational personnel specifications literally and rely on general knowledge and not common ground from the organisation. More experienced screeners (more than seven) tend to rely on this experience to overwrite and influence organisational personnel specifications.

Experience may inversely correlate to the reliance of information and tests (Wolf & Jenkins, 2006): Less experienced screeners more reliance on tests and policies whilst more experienced screeners rely less on tests and policies and more their working knowledge and experiences with the organisation. At CAMC, evidence of this influence was noted as more experienced screeners send managers only applications that are perceived to meet a hiring manager's expectations. These expectations are part of the 'unwritten' personnel specifications arbitrarily augmented by screeners in which some applications are not necessarily the most qualified. Whilst one can argue that this is not an assessor's influence, these augmentations of personnel specifications cannot be easily repeated or reviewed by another screener. As the same position classification (i.e. nurse) diverges with each hiring manager, any reconciliation of such specifications must be done with both the hiring manager and the screener working with that hiring manager. Essentially, even though screeners are part of an organisation, they are still independent individuals with their own experiences and their own minds and quite capable of making their own decisions outside of the organisation. Similarly, McKinney et al. (2003) found screeners deviated from specifications but did not determine why screeners' believed that these deviations were justified. It is possible that the experience McKinney et al.'s screeners may also be correlated to assessor influence. Consequently, more research is needed to discover if this is the case.

Overall, a screener's experience, status, education and training seem to influence other screeners' decisions and thus affect established organisational personnel

specifications. It appears that the interpretation of personnel specifications by screeners is more literal when screeners have fewer years of filtering experience; and, as experience increases, screeners make more informal filtering decisions using their own judgement of whom the organisation desires to hire. Empirical evidence from CAMC indicates that screeners having limited experience are more likely to consult organisational personnel specifications and not go beyond written policies if that screener believes (s)he understands those policies. However, when policies are ambiguous, screeners are likely to consult peers to gain additional insight. Although consultations can provide genuine insight into policies, it also offers screeners the opportunity to influence informal decisions and inject communication errors that cause differences in common ground (i.e., the interpretation of language) to occur (see Sager & Gastil, 2006).

Misinterpretations and assumptions concerning language (Johnson, Lim, 2009; Keysar, 2007) increase prospects that faults will occur in decisions; and these faults are not intentional but are slips and biases (Reason, 1990). The common language associated with building a strong comprehension of organisational personnel specifications, appears to be linked to experience as well as training (see Baron & Pfeffer, 1994; Cerrito, 2004; Epley & Gilovich, 2002; Gatewood & Feild, 1987; Porterfield, 2001). Whilst researchers (see Chapman & Johnson, 2002; Heuer, 1999; McKinney et al., 2003; Palmer & Loveland, 2008; Rozin & Nemeroff, 2002) note screeners consistently deviate from organisational personnel specifications, training and education appears to shift the reference from the screeners' personnel specifications to the organisational personnel specifications.

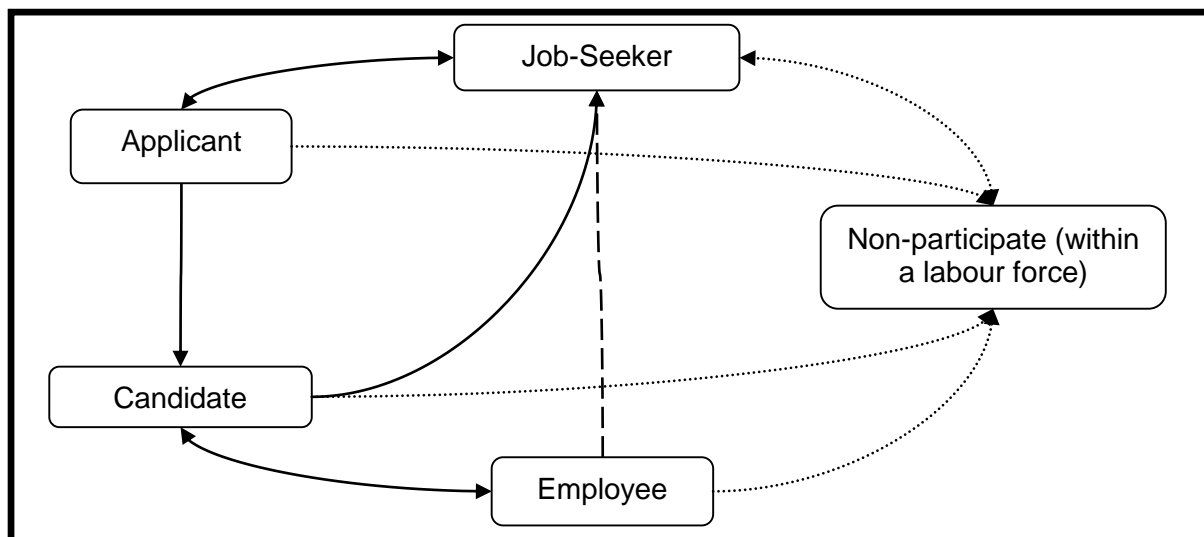
#### **7.4 The Emergence of the Cycle of Employment**

The Cycle of Employment emerged from the diagramming of various hiring processes in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 to track individuals within hiring processes. The Cycle of Employment is an important aspect of the selection process as it details the various stages that an individual may occupy in relationship to the employer and it also helps expand understanding informal decisions within the Selection Paradigm (see Chapter 1). Throughout hiring processes, individuals are assessed against different filtering heuristics and decisions are reached about their employability.

Normally, assessment and informal filtering decisions are completed in a linear process (see Kenney, 1982; Litecky et al., 2004) where individuals are ranked and either passed to the next filtering stage (i.e. decision stage) or removed from further consideration. This filtering stage signals that a screener has informally decided, and sometimes formally documented, that an individual has met some personnel specifications; and as a result of this

decision, placed that individual into another category where a decision may be rendered with respect to the occupying stage. Screeners are grouping information into rudimentary stages where it is easier for the human mind to process informal decisions (cf. Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Wingrove et al., 1984). This process is repeated until an employee is selected. The figure below illustrates the relationships between one individual and amongst the various stages that an individual could occupy (e.g. job-seeker, applicant, candidate, and employee).

**Figure 7-1: Cycle of Employment**



From an organisational perspective, the Cycle of Employment denotes general classifications of filtering decision stages that individuals may occupy and attain from participating within a labour force. Since this figure illustrates the relationship between an individual and an organisation, relationships amongst multiple organisations must be considered separately. Thus, an individual may concurrently occupy multiple stages within the same organisation except the stage of non-participation (within the labour force). Although there is a one stage (individual) to one position (employer) relationship, an individual may have various positions and therefore (s)he will occupy various stages. For example, an individual is an employee serving as a Junior Accountant and this individual is a job-seeker seeking a promotion to Senior Accountant.

Each stage represents the proximity of an individual to being employed with an organisation. Normally, an individual must enter the first stage, job-seeker, and pass through several stages prior to becoming an employee. However, an employee can enter most stages directly except applicant. An employee may seek employment with an outside organisation (external) or a position with the same company (internal). An employee most likely enters a candidate stage for an internal position. At any stage, an individual may freely decide not to participate within a labour force. If non-participation occurs, then an individual must re-join a labour force prior to entering into another stage of the Cycle of Employment.

The table below provides a comprehensive overview of the filtering stages that led to the emergence of the Cycle of Employment amongst the Research Centre, Veterinary Hospital, and CAMC. As the case studies moved towards more complex organisational relationships, the diversity amongst employees, and the diversity amongst positions, additional filtering stages emerged. The stages *job-seeker* and *applicant* were consistent amongst cases. However, the original definitions of *candidate* and *employee* were insufficient.

At CAMC, applications are classified by position and assessed according to written policies and procedures in multiple stages. After evaluating CAMC, the terms *conditional employee* and *provisional employee* emerged as intermediate stages between *candidate* and *employee*. The conditional employee and provisional employee are often distinguished from the use of government regulation(s) concerning filtering metrics which required separate authorisations by a candidate for information surrounding an application. This distinction is the significant level of intrusion that an individual will endure (Hanson, 1993). For example, a background check is less intrusive than WDT using saliva which is less intrusive than a monitored urine analysis and complete medical physical check-up.

**Table 7-3: General Filtering Stages Amongst Organisations**

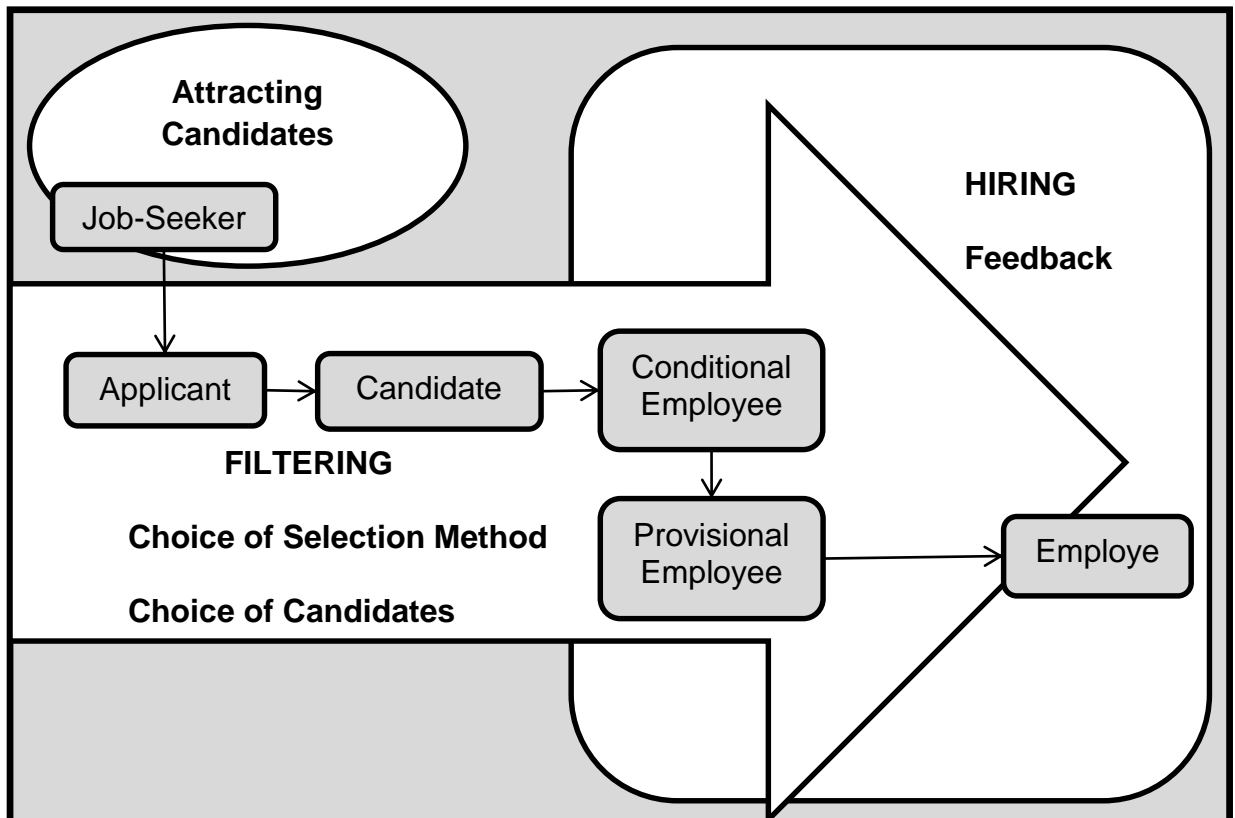
Filtering Stage	Research Centre	Veterinary Hospital	CAMC
<b>Job-Seeker</b>	<b>Original:</b> An individual actively searching and applying for an employment position.		
	An accredited ABA law school student that has submitted a résumé and completed a face-to-face interview	An individual that has completed an application and passed a telephone interview	An individual that has completed an application, satisfied minimum personnel specifications, and completed a face-to-face pre-interview
<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Original:</b> A job-seeker whose request for consideration has been accepted by an organisation.		
	An applicant that has passed the filtering process	An applicant that has passed a face-to-face interview(s) and passed the team filtering processes	An applicant that was ranked by preference, passed a face-to-face interview with a hiring manager, and nominated by a hiring manager
<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Original:</b> An applicant that has accepted a contingent employment offer from an organisation.  <b>Revised:</b> A candidate is an applicant that has been ranked in accordance of preference for a position, s(he) has accepted an offer of employment, and s(he) is waiting for additional filtering metrics to be conducted.		



	A candidate that has accepted an offer of employment	After the owners have filtered candidates, the candidate that has accepted an offer of employment	A candidate that has accepted an offer of employment
<b>Conditional Employee</b>	<b>Original:</b> There was no original definition.		
	<b>Revised:</b> A candidate that must endure addition filtering metrics such as WDT, background checks, or other processes which are governed by law.		
	Not applicable	Not applicable	A conditional employee that has passed additional filtering metrics
<b>Provisional Employee</b>	<b>Original:</b> There was no original definition.		
	<b>Revised:</b> A candidate/conditional employee that must endure addition filtering metrics such as WDT, background checks, or other processes which are governed by law. These may be more intrusive.		
	Not applicable	Not applicable	A provisional employee that has passed additional filtering metrics
<b>Employee</b>	<b>Original:</b> An individual working for an organisation.		
	<b>Revised:</b> An individual that has a working relationship with an organisation where that employee trades labour for consideration (i.e. wages and benefits) and the organisation directly receiving that labour benefits.		

This development of the Cycle of Employment, with its clearly defined general filtering stages, provides a deeper insight into Robertson and Smith's (1993) Selection Paradigm. Each stage of the Cycle of Employment has a direct relationship that may be linked to specific portions of the Selection Paradigm. The figure below illustrates this relationship.

**Figure 7-2: The Cycle of Employment and The Selection Paradigm**

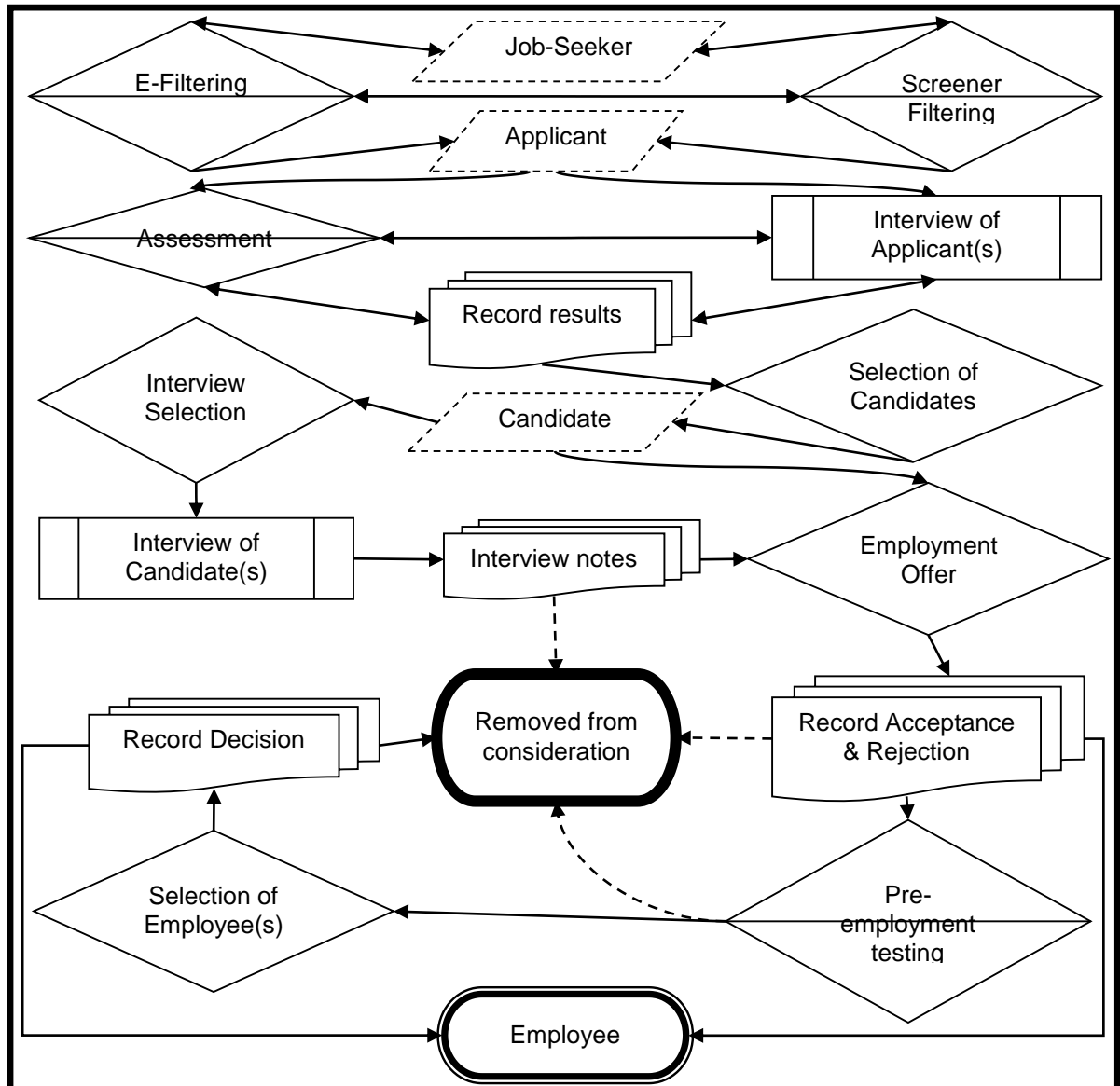


In the **Selection Paradigm**, the **Attracting Candidates** stage is where the *Cycle of Employment* begins with a job-seeker. In this stage, the organisation is engaged in recruiting, internally and externally, individuals for positions. Individuals that express interest in those positions are job-seekers. At this stage, some assessors (i.e. Veterinary Hospital) make basic informal decisions concerning if a *Job-Seeker* meets definitive requirements to be an *Applicant*.

Next, before an individual becomes an employee, (s)he must successfully pass through the *Applicant*, *Candidate*, *Conditional Employee*, and *Provisional Employee* stages. These stages fall under Filtering where the **Choice of Selection Methods** yield, by virtue of informal decisions, to the **Choice of Candidates** which is subsequently narrowed again through informal decisions to the Hiring of an *Employee*. Although the hiring of an employee is normally a formal offer, it is usually preceded by an informal discussion between the employee and the individual. Note that the *Conditional Employee* and *Provisional Employee* are part of both the Filtering stage as well as the Hiring or **Feedback** stage. This joint relationship is important as some jurisdictions (e.g. the United States) require an individual to have accepted an employment offer, even if conditional or provisional, before certain information collection processes (i.e. background checks, and WDT) can commence (Engleman & Kleiner, 1998; Hanson, 1993; Jardine-Tweedie & Wright, 1998).

Whilst the Cycle of Employment identifies an individual's path to employment with in the Selection Paradigm, the track between the **Choice of Selection Methods** and the **Choice of Candidates** is a complexity of focused informal decisions in steps supporting Kenney (1982) and Litecky et al. (2004) and rejecting Gilliland (1993). From the case studies, a depiction of this environment, the *Workflow of General Hiring Processes* is presented.

**Figure 7-3: Workflow of General Hiring Processes**



Assessment processes should utilise information from multiple sources to strengthen filtering decisions with respect to validity and reliability (Barron et al., 1985; Porterfield, 2002). Some organisations roughly evaluate each job-seeker's credentials against minimal position requirements prior to accepting a formal application. This is sometimes called a pre-application or qualifying application. Once a job-seeker has reached applicant status, information is further reviewed, where filtering is conducted through a combination of

assessment and/or interviews. Those applicants deemed acceptable are placed into the candidate stage.

Candidates undergo further filtering until the requirements of an organisational position are met and (s)he accepts an employment offer. This offer may be contingent upon final assessments such as WDT, criminal background checks, reference checks, and other tests. If contingent filtering processes have been satisfied, a candidate becomes an employee. Whilst the above figure represents a theoretical depiction, literature (cf., Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Anderson et al., 2004; Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005; Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997; Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Litecky et al., 2004; Robertson & Smith, 2001; Searle, 2003; Wingrove et al., 1984) establishes many pathways which provide opportunities for informal decisions to be sub-optimal.

As informal decisions are the central focus of this thesis, the next section provides an overview of the research question in which informal decisions are explored.

## **7.5 Delimiting Emergent Themes within the Decision Environment**

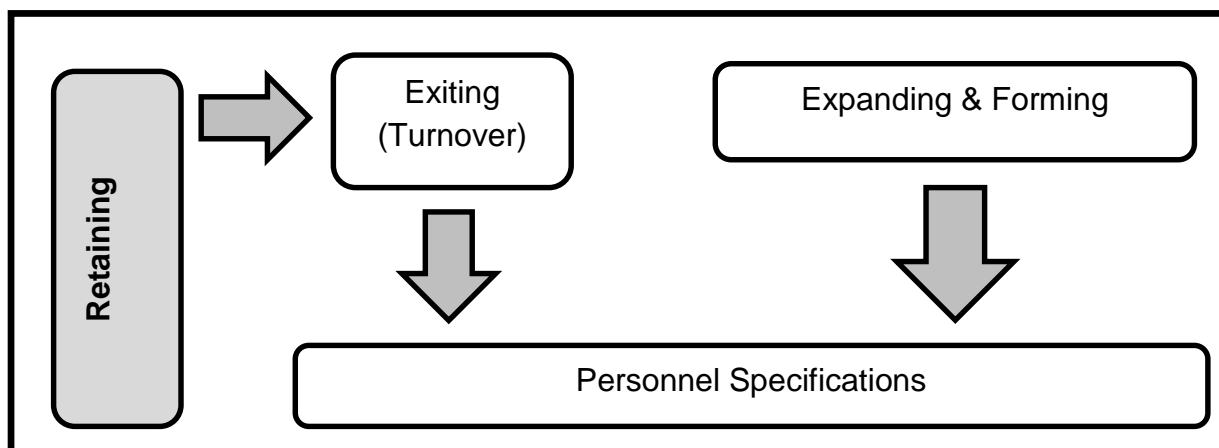
This section addresses the main objective of this thesis: *“How are informal decisions reached by screeners when filtering out undesirable job applications?”* Screeners rely on established guidelines to justify the removal of ‘unqualified’ and ‘undesirable’ applications. From the analysis of the cases, achievement of informal decisions is strongly based on a screener’s use of those guidelines which was contingent upon his/her interpretations of the personnel specifications and processes. In fact, these guidelines could be constructed through shared experiences. Screeners in the Research Centre based informal decisions on perceptual personnel specifications as well as impression management. Similarly, CAMC’s shared concept of the job-hopper is not a written specification but a cognitive heuristic which may have spawn from impression management. With the Veterinary Hospital, some individuals were evaluated against guidelines composed of similar characteristics of a team.

It is the interpretation of guidelines that are used in justifying the removal of an application. Empirical evidence indicates that the use of negative information was an effective way in making informal decisions to remove applications. Screeners first focused on negative information that did not require subjective judgement. For example, CAMC quickly removed applicants that did not have the required degrees, licenses, or experience. Moreover, a negative report at any stage of the CAMC hiring process allowed for immediate removal of an applicant. With the Veterinary Hospital, job-hoppers were quickly removed from consideration.

When applicants were similar in nature, the use of ranking emerged in all three cases as a method in achieving informal hiring decisions. This was the preference in the Research Centre as a majority of applicants were very similar. After removal of job-hoppers, the Veterinary Hospital ranked applications subsequent to interviews. For management interviews, CAMC submits applications by rank. Consequently, the decisions in ranking applications require more information and are highly subjective than the decisions to remove applicants based on a negative cue. Theoretically, hiring decisions are essentially this: *to hire or not to hire*. However, there are instances where the informal decisions before final hiring decisions are not as simple as binomial. Decisions can be overwhelmingly positive or negative, slightly positive or negative, neutral, or any combination thereof especially considering that most decisions stem from a series of informal decisions (Kenney, 1982; Litecky et al., 2004).

In the analysis of informal decisions, under GT, each theme is compared to one another to discover commonalities to delimit (reduce) categories (Glaser, 1978; 2009). After reducing themes, several categories were discovered supporting Robertson & Smith's (1993) **Selection Paradigm** as described in Chapter 1. However, some relationships amongst categories can and do blur as some actions have elements of two or more categories, therefore, each theme is discussed subsequently in relationship to the primary components of the **Selection Paradigm**. The figure below depicts the themes associated with **Job Analysis**.

**Figure 7-4: Themes Associated with Job Analysis**

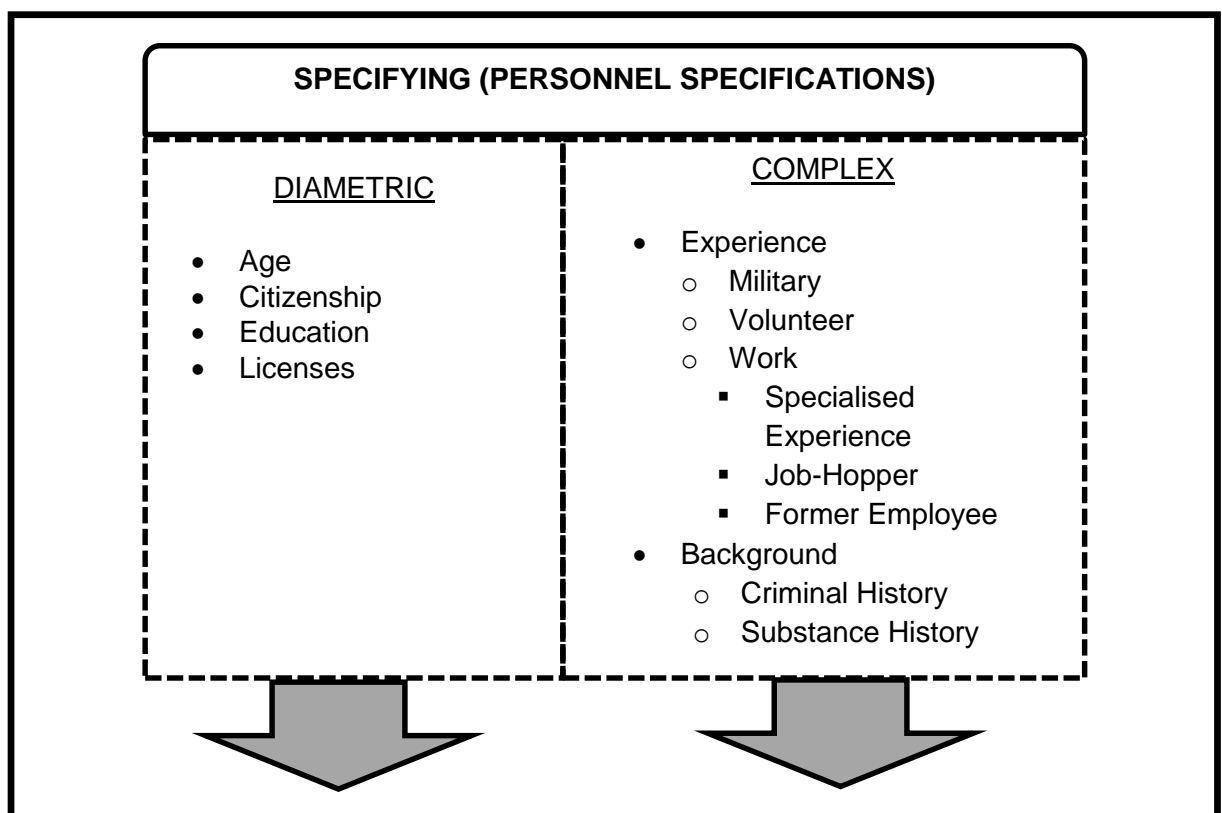


Two themes are associated with **Job Analysis**: (1) *Exiting* and (2) *Expanding and Forming*. *Exiting* is a product of turnover when retaining has failed to keep the employee-employer relationship (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005; Kacmar et al., 2008). When an individual leaves an employer, the employer can conduct an exit interview to determine why the employee is leaving and if Personnel Specifications should be modified. Thus, *Exiting* can trigger a job analysis. Next, *Expanding and Forming* is the growth and evolution of business

that stimulates consistent alterations and improvements in employee performance (Bobko et al., 2008). This drive to improve employee performance triggers a job analysis. In either theme, a job analysis begins with informal discussions that can lead to formal alterations in personnel specifications or they may lead to processing changes in how work is performed (Aguinis & Smith, 2007).

The figure below illustrates the relationships amongst the themes and categories associated with **Personnel Specifications**. *Specifying* directly correlates to **Personnel Specifications**. Within *Specifying*, several components illustrating base-rates are divided into two categories: Diametric and Complex (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991c). The distinctions between Diametric and Complex is the amount of effort a screener must expend in making informal decisions and the amount of resources an organisation must expend in *Collecting* information about the job-seeker and many times organisations are hesitant in spending to hire (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Diametric is the simple category whereas Complex is multifaceted. In Diametric, simple less subjective specifications include age, citizenship, education, and licenses. These specifications are usually the first to filter out job-seekers based on a yes or no answer. For example: Is the job-seeker of legal age to work? Does the job-seeker have the required education and licenses for the position?

**Figure 7-5: Themes Associated with Personnel Specifications**

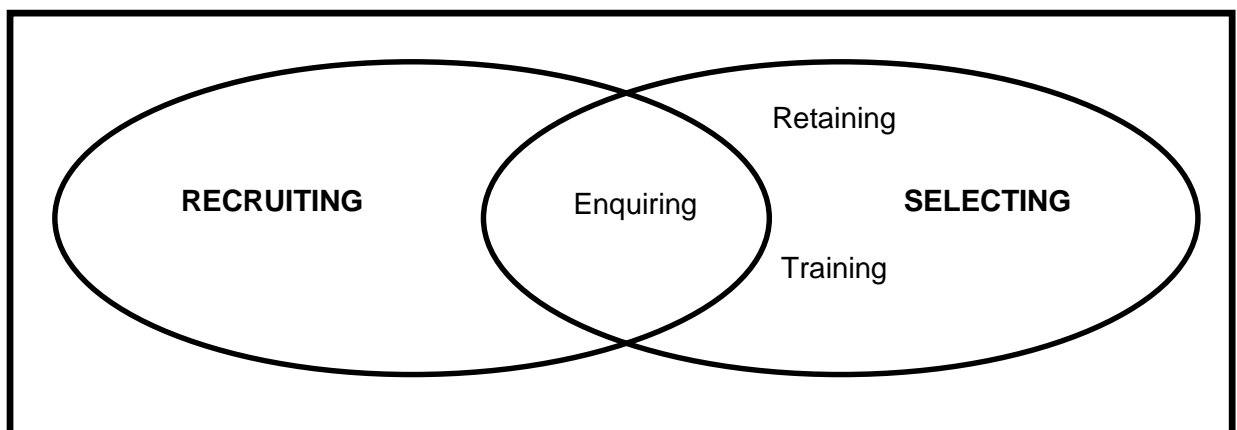


The Complex category includes elements such as Experience and Background that require more information to grasp the general **Personnel Specifications** reported by a job-

seeker. Complex questions can extend Diametric questions or offer deeper facets about a job-seeker. *Although the job-seeker has the required degree, what is the overall transferability of the courses taken outside of the requirements? Furthermore, where has this job-seeker spent a majority of his/her professional career?* Complex questions can be debated more intensely and subject job-seekers to more intrusive information *Collecting* processes. It is in this complexity of personnel specifications that faults are more likely to enter into decisions (Christiansen et al., 1994; Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Oswald et al., 2004). As case evidence has been presented, informal decisions can be influenced by a majority and minority, the weighting of information, inappropriate information and criteria, and the influence of an assessor (Dewberry, 2011).

Since **Personnel Specifications** drive **Attracting Candidates**, **Choice of Selection Methods**, and the **Choice of Candidates**, two arrows are depicted below *Specifying* in the figure above. These arrows indicate the relationship between the **Personnel Specifications** and each stage which has not been represented in the above figure, but has been represented in subsequent figures below. The next figure focuses on the themes associated with Smith and Robertson's (1993) **Attracting Candidates**.

**Figure 7-6: Themes Associated with Attracting Candidates**

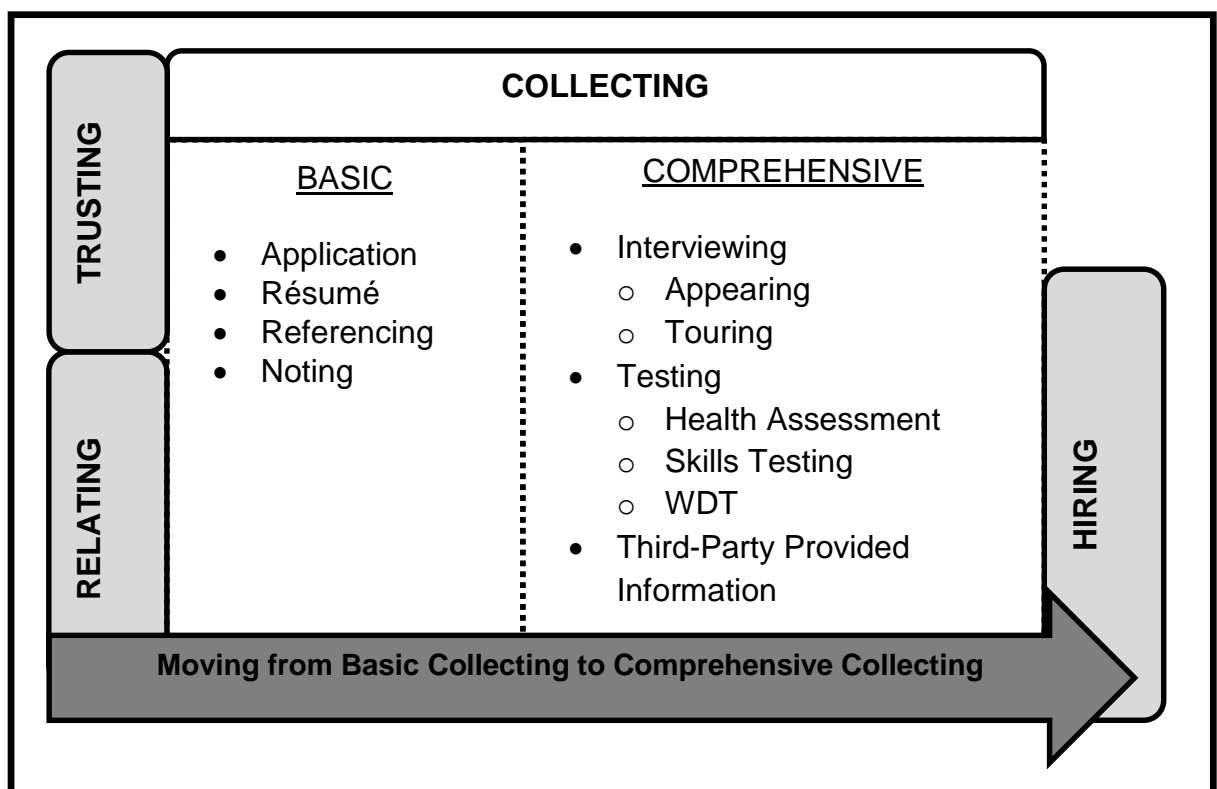


**Attracting Candidates** is contingent upon the **Personnel Specifications** that defines a position. Having the right personnel specifications determines if the organisation will engage in *Recruiting* or *Selecting* job-seekers (Noon, 2006; Stanton, 1977). Recruiting gathers external job-seekers whilst Selecting gathers internal job-seekers (Searle, 2003). Both themes are equally important and are illustrated in the figure above. Training is an important consideration in determining whether to consider an external or internal job-seeker since a required skill level for a position may extend beyond what an organisation is willing to accept (e.g. time acquiring the skills or cost of training). In the hiring process, *Training* is primarily applicable when considering *Selecting* internal job-seekers.

The **Attracting Candidates** helps promote the ‘*ideal-employee*’ mechanism (Sears & Rowe, 2003) to assessors early on in the hiring process. The impact upon the informal decisions of assessors from this **Attracting Candidates** stage was limited and beyond the scope of this thesis. Based on the limited evidence, it appears that assessors are engaged in *Attracting Candidates* and interactions with job-seekers can transfer into informal decisions potentially from *interpersonal attraction* (see Byrne, 1969, 1971), the dismantling of social barriers (Walster & Walster, 1963), or the inject of a bias (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990).

Likewise, *Retaining* is applicable to *Selecting* except *Retaining* is also linked to **Job Analysis** through *Exiting* when an employee decides to depart if (s)he is not selected for a position. The employ may be disenfranchised as (s)he perceives inadequacies concerning fairness in selection decisions (Gilliland, 1993; Hausknecht et al., 2004). For *Retaining* in *Selecting*, some organisations have a preference (e.g. CAMC) for *Selecting* employees before *Recruiting*. Finally, *Enquiring* occurs when job-seekers probe organisations either as a result of a posting or to determine the availability of a position. Since *Enquiring* affects *Recruiting* and *Selecting*, it is represented as the convergence of both themes. Consequently, obsessive *Enquiring* can remove a job-seeker from hiring processes before *Collecting* information commences as evidence by the “stalkers” in CAMC.

**Figure 7-7: Themes Associated with Choice of Selection Methods**



The Themes Associated with the **Choice of Selection Methods**, as seen in the figure above, run parallel to **Personnel Specification**. Similar to *Specifying*, *Collecting* is



composed of two components: (1) Basic and (2) Comprehensive. *Collecting* moves from Basic to Comprehensive methods in the same way as movement from Diametric to Complex within *Specifying*. In fact, Diametric drives Basic *Collecting* processes and Complex drives Comprehensive *Collecting* processes. Under Basic *Collecting*, applications provide brief summaries about job-seekers' KSAOs (Drakeley et al., 1988; Searle, 2003; Robertson & Smith, 2001). Screeners expand upon KSAOs revealed in applications under Comprehensive *Collecting* when interviewing and testing job-seekers (Stanton, 1977).

When making informal decisions, assessors may remove individuals from the hiring at any time based on information provided. In many cases, it is the negative information that triggers the removal of an individual from the hiring process. The negative information acts as a basic heuristic that assessors assign a greater weight to justify the removal of individuals from hiring processes. This further supports that decision stages are typical (Kenney, 1982; Litecky et al., 2004) and that information is reduced to basic elements as there are too many variables to comprehend in the aggregate (Herriot & Wingrove, 1984; Wingrove et al., 1984). Consequently, good *Collecting* processes rely on *Relating* and *Trusting* (Cerrito, 2004; Engleman & Kleiner, 1998).

*Trusting* and *Relating* are important themes coexisting within *Collecting* processes that facilitate information flow amongst organisations, job-seekers, and third-party sources. Screeners must believe in the job-seeker's honesty to continue spending time considering the application. In building a *Trusting* relationship between screeners and job-seekers, screeners may relate personal information to job-seekers. This *Relating* of information is instrumental in forming bonds based upon similarities (e.g. experiences, events, and situations). Job-seekers not engaging in *Relating* can be perceived as being dishonest and subsequently removed from hiring processes.

As selection processes move towards conclusion, its complexity becomes intertwined with various relationships (see *Cycle of Employment*) before hiring is attained. *Hiring* is achieved after passing through *The Workflow of General Hiring Processes* subject to the informal decisions of assessors and the pitfalls of their decisions such as errors and biases. These informal decisions are structured around the static benchmarks and guidelines of *Specifying*. *Specifying* provides the guidelines concerning *Collecting* information subject to *Credentialing and Evaluating* individuals interested in being hired. Also, *Specifying* dictates that an individual's progression through *Credentialing and Evaluating* processes should be Diametric to Complex. That is, informal decisions should focus on basic information before comprehensive information. For desirable job-seekers, informal decisions (occurring in the *Credentialing and Evaluating* theme) should be continuous in stages to reach a formal hiring

decision. Three secondary research questions emerged from the gaps in current knowledge. Each is answered in turn.

*“What are the selection processes that small organisations use for informal decisions?”* Small organisations mostly rely on cognitive personnel specifications to identify individuals suited for employment. Screeners start with reviewing information from applications and résumés to identify negative cues (e.g., a history of short-term employment and a failure to meet the minimum personnel specifications) that justify the removal of an application. For remaining applications, screeners collect additional information, primarily from interviews, in order to rank those remaining applications. In some instances, negative information from interviews causes applications to be removed. The movement from basic to comprehensive collection methods (see Figure 7-7) was linked to the complexity of the organisation. For smaller organisations (i.e. Research Centre and Veterinary Hospital), at this stage, the highest ranked applicant is offered the position. Organisations with greater complexity (as defined by the number of employees, such as CAMC) subject applications to additional selection processes (e.g., background checks, WDT, and additional interviews) after a provisional offer of employment. Individuals must pass these tests prior to finalising their employment offer. In essence, small organisations use readily available selection processes to make informal decisions. As noted, informal decisions are based on how information is weighted. This is the second question.

*“How is information weighted for informal decisions?”* The decisions concerning the weighting of information corresponds to the complexity of the personnel specifications: Diametric and complex (see Figure 7-5). Diametric information (e.g., age, citizenship, education, and license) takes precedence over complex information as the meanings of diametric information have limited interpretations. Therefore, it is easier to evaluate, weight, and use diametric information in informal decisions. With complex information (e.g., experience and background), the weighting of information requires that screeners consider its relevance and relationship to the position and how this information compares to other applicants. From the analysis, the weighting of complex information required screeners to rank applications. Consequently, negative information reduced complex information to basic concepts (i.e. acceptable and unacceptable) similar to diametric information. Thus, unacceptable complex information is given more precedence in the informal decisions to remove applications. In essence, the weighting of information follows a dual priority with applications. The first priority is the removal of applications by use of negative information (diametric then complex). The second priority is the ranking (according to personnel specifications) of applications by complex information. However, assessors can be influenced.

*“What are the major influences on assessors’ informal decisions?”* Informal decisions by assessors may be influenced by interactions with job-seekers and other assessors (see 7.3.4). From the cases, strong interactions (overwhelmingly negative and positive) with job-seekers, especially in the interview, shift assessor preferences. In CAMC, individuals labelled as “stalkers” had frequent negative interactions with assessors that impacted informal decisions to remove their application from consideration. Also, informal decisions in each case were impacted by the job-seekers’ appearance. In addition, informal decisions of assessors were more likely to be influenced when organisations lacked written guidelines and when guidelines were ambiguous. Similarly, screeners with less experience (as emerged in CAMC) are more likely to seek guidance from more experienced screeners, supervisory personnel, and written policies. Finally, tThe next section summarises this chapter.

## **7.6 Summary**

By conducting a cross-case analysis of the actual selection processes, a deeper understanding of informal decisions can be presented. Informal decisions are subject to errors by assessors (Dewberry, 2011; Hill et al., 1988; Schmidt & Hunter, 1974). Organisational complexity coupled with permutated position base-rates increased the need for written specifications and heuristics to improve informal filtering decisions (Kahneman & Tversky, 1991). Likewise, the number of employees appears to dictate the codification of written policies. This appears to be a parallel relationship: As the number of employees increases, the number of written specifications increase, and position description specification flexibility becomes more rigid. Consequently, more evidence is needed to determine the extent of this relationship.

Empirical evidence illustrates that smaller organisations utilise readily available specifications for informal decisions (see Robertson and Smith, 2001), especially when hedonic benefits are perceived as a small investment as expressed by the employment duration and recruitment strategies (Moorewedge et al., 2007). When hiring specifications, policies, and procedures are added, the likelihood of filtering stages (as noted in the *Cycle of Employment* and the *Workflow of General Hiring Processes*) will be increased (Kenney, 1982; Litecky et al., 2004). This increase is attributed to legal jurisdictional requirements that job-seekers must specifically authorise the collection and use of information.

Lastly, Chapter 8 provides a final overview of research question, the impact on practice and practitioners, and future research.

# Chapter 8 Conclusion

## **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research contribution in relation to the research question(s). Furthermore, it highlights the impact on practice and on theory, as well as discussing its limitations and future studies.

At the beginning of this research, the main aim of “***How are informal decisions reached by screeners when filtering out undesirable job applications?***” was asked. Whilst Chapter 7 focused on this question using case studies and literature, it was discovered that a majority of informal decisions in which screeners make fall between the ***Choice of Selection Methods*** and the ***Choice of Candidates*** on Robertson and Smith’s (1993) ***Selection Paradigm*** as diagrammed by the *Workflow of General Hiring Processes*. The *Workflow of General Hiring Processes* corresponds to the first secondary question: “*What are the selection processes that small organisations are using for informal decisions?*” Included in these selection process are the four stages (i.e., job-seeker, applicant, candidate, and employee) of the *Cycle of Employment* as the fifth stage, non-participant, is outside of the selection process and therefore not considered in the informal decision process. As individuals travel through these four stages of the *Cycle of Employment*, screeners are consistently making informal decisions in stages (see Kenney, 1982; Litecky et al., 2004). During each decision stage, information about individuals seeking employment is important in screeners’ informal decisions that ultimately result in the hiring of employees.

The use of information by screeners is the focus of the second question, “*How is information weighted for informal decisions?*” The weighting of information (see 7.3.2) and inappropriate information and criteria (see 7.3.3) provide the critical insight into this question. Overall, negative information had a greater weight in informal decisions as individuals were quickly removed when negative information could be readily identified and related to the personnel specifications or filtering guidelines. Moreover, screeners spent more time considering complex personnel specifications such as an individual’s experience and background information in an effort to properly weight and assign value to that information. This supports that screeners reduce information to basic levels and that as the complexity of information increases so too does the time in making informal decisions as expressed by Herriot and Wingrove (1984) and Wingrove et al. (1984). Additionally, an individual’s appearance and geographic location unconventionally presented as heuristics for informal decisions in each case. These heuristics appear to be negative stereotypes constructed by screeners denoting unacceptable employees (Turner & Nicholson, 2011; Van Viaren & Kmiecik, 1998). However, more evidence is needed to fully comprehend the relationships that appearance and geography have with informal decisions.

In addition to information, the third question asks “*What are the major influences on assessors’ informal decisions?*” From the research, groups of individuals (see 7.3.1) and assessors (see 7.3.4) are the primary influences that alter informal decisions. Groups can alter the concepts (Madison, 2000) and influence processes especially when uncertainty exists (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991; 2004). Groups may be defined as being external to the organisation such as a regulatory entity (Cerrito, 2004; Porterfield, 2001) or internal to the organisation in the case of a majority or a minority (Dewberry, 2011). Additionally, assessors may influence decisions either by surrendering their decisions (Cassel, 1973) as a result of impression management (Barrick & Mount, 1996) or differences in common ground (Sager & Gastil, 2006). In fact, the assessors influence can be intentional, non-intentional or unintentional (Reason, 1990; 2000).

To summarise, individuals may be subject to erroneous decisions by screeners through a majority and minority influence, the weighting of information, the use of inappropriate information and criteria, and the influence of an assessor (cf. Boettcher, 2004; Dewberry, 2011; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; Stanton, 1977). Screeners will still make errors in judgement intentionally, non-intentionally, and unintentionally (Reason, 2000). The errors affecting informal decisions cannot be eliminated, only reduced. Furthermore, errors can increase when a screener and an individual (e.g. job-seeker, applicant, candidate, conditional employee, and provisional employee) interact. Because interactions must be interpreted and any misinterpretation can lead to an incorrect decision, it is prudent to take appropriate steps that promote good informal decision making. Developing processes that reduce unnecessary interpretations of language and providing written guidelines and instructions that are not fraught with ambiguity are two important actions that organisations can understand (Brown, 2000; Chomsky, 2007; Tversky & Kahneman, 1988). Moreover, recurring training reminds and redirects screeners back to the organisation’s original intended meanings and concepts surrounding selection processes (Drakeley et al., 1988; Roch & O’Sullivan).

## **8.2 Research Contribution**

This section presents the contribution of this research for: (a) theory and (b) practice. Each is discussed in turn.

### 8.2.1 Contributions to Theory

Prior research has been conducted on the best practices and methods for applicant assessment, conducting interview, and selecting the best individual for a position. As presented in Chapter 1, research gaps existed concerning informal decision until this research expanded the theoretical underpinnings through:

- The development of the ***Cycle of Employment*** and its integration into the Selection Paradigm (Robertson & Smith, 1993) enhances our understanding of the stages that individuals occupy whilst seeking employment.
- The development of a geographing bias known as the ***Locality Effect*** brings attention to a bias not formally acknowledged. Although research has noted that geography impacts recruitment and job-seekers, research has not considered geography as a filtering cue until this thesis.
- The depiction of the various Themes Associated with five filtering components of the *Selection Paradigm* was possible through dissection: (1) Job Analysis; (2) Personnel Specifications; (3) Attracting Candidates; (4) Choice of Selection Methods; and (5) Choice of Candidates. These depictions provide an overall understanding of filtering processes whilst providing a strong foundation for appreciating informal decisions.

In addition to the three theoretical contributions, the next section presents contributions to practice.

### 8.2.2 Contributions to Practice

Research (cf. Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Bainter & Johnson, 1994; Robertson & Makin, 1986; Robertson & Smith, 2001) suggests that organisations periodically review their hiring practices. As part of this review process, practitioners may benefit from the following:

- A general depiction of the ***Workflow of General Hiring Processes*** provides a template for practitioners to map and further develop their organisational processes to increase efficiency in hiring practises. This is especially beneficial to those organisations establishing written selection policies. For organisations having established processes, the use of maps to depict selection processes adds transparency and openness to the decision environment.
- The presentation of General Filtering Cues identifies heuristics found in the three case studies. When considering filtering processes, practitioners may consult these cues in developing their own processes. By consulting these

cues, organisations can identify those heuristics that best represent organisational expectations and that also comply with employment laws. Furthermore, the identification of heuristics that assessors should not use

- Whilst all errors in judgement may not be eliminated (Aguinis & Smith, 2007; Gilliland, 1993), this research has illustrated where and how some of these are likely to occur using different organisational demographics. Practitioners can minimise the effects that faulty conclusions have upon informal decisions in filtering processes through incorporating these aspects into training programmes.

Practitioners should be familiar with selection processes and especially how informal decisions can impact the hiring of an employee. As such, three areas in which practise can be improved have been presented. The next section addresses the implications of this research.

### **8.3 Implications of this Research**

This research provides a stronger foundation for understanding informal decisions and how information and assessors can be alter perceptions about individuals within hiring processes. Practitioners and academics using this research will become more aware of various pitfalls when making informal decisions, the environment that these hazards thrive, and how these can effect perceptions. Problems concerning *how to select individuals for positions* can develop and emerge from organisational growth, complex workplace relationships, and personal experiences.

When researching informal decisions, practitioners must examine the organisational selection paradigm (Dewberry, 2011; Robertson & Smith, 1993) and the flow of decision processes. Practitioners should construct their own organisation maps illustrating the general filtering stages with respect to the *Cycle of Employment* before searching for errors and assumptions in informal decisions. Using these depictions assists with discovering the environment in which flaws in decisions can emerge (Reason, 1990). Through proper interpretation, construction, and analysis of decisions, practitioners can identify flaws and thereby improve informal decisions whilst assessing individuals for positions.

Although this research has significantly enhanced understanding informal decisions, this research does have its limitations.



#### **8.4 Research Limitations**

Even though this research has produced a robust theory that captures the essence of informal decisions from screener perceptions, this research is not without its limitations. All case studies were conducted within the same geographic area (i.e. West Virginia). Whilst this provides for consistent evaluations with respect to diversity, it may also transfer to limiting the cultural diversity of this research. Even though three separate industries were represented, a true comparative analysis was difficult as the organisations were so different in structure and funding (private and government funded).

Furthermore, the small number of participants is a limitation but also a strength as it allowed for the depth and details of the environment and informal decision processes to be explored fully which is critically essential in studies where theory is lacking. Another limitation was screener participants had difficulties with thinking aloud protocols; thus, the researcher utilised some prompts for data collection (e.g. a semi-structured interview protocol). Moreover, digital verbal recordings were also limited. With the opportunity to re-immense into interviews being restricted, the transcripts could not fully capture every word, sigh, distraction and event of the decision and the environment in which it occurred.

Although many issues and problems associated with informal decisions have been mentioned not all of these are represented as they did not clearly emerge. As GT dictates, evidence must clearly emerge and not be forced (Charmaz, 2008; Glaser, 1978; 2009). Further research can improve understanding informal decisions processes, the relationships of these decisions to hiring processes, and identify significant faults that occur in making decisions.

#### **8.5 Future Research**

To build upon this research, additional organisational case studies following the same methodology and rigor for consistency can be conducted and integrated as an ad-hoc to this thesis. Furthermore, in the case of the large organisation (CAMC) it would be beneficial to extend the research to other areas to further understand screeners and organisational culture influences. Additionally, case studies should focus on organisations outside of West Virginia such as in other countries and industries to strengthen this study's relatability and to further identify deviations. Using other organisations can determine if the research findings are limited to geographical, cultural, and industrial differences. Methodologies other than GT can yield additional evidence to extend the applications of this research. From this thesis, there are several emerging and notable concepts.

Firstly, in addition to the Locality Effect, it is likely that other biases may have been present during this research. However, this research focused on building a general understanding of informal decisions and therefore could not fully emerge into understanding biases in informal decisions. From this research, information was weighted differently amongst organisations and incorrect information and criteria injected into some decisions (Dewberry, 2011). It is possible that some of the decisions in weighting information and some of these deviations in informal decisions are a result of biases (cf. Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Drucker, 1995; Fishburn, 1998; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991d) that potentially fall within the definition of non-intention errors (see Reason, 1984; 1990; 2000). For example: appearance impacted assessors in all three cases with similar results but with different degrees of influence.

Secondly, *“What are the different degrees of influence?”* Using the ‘*ideal-employee mechanism*’ (see Sears & Rowe, 2003; Van Viaren & Kmiecik, 1998), a quantitative analysis could help identify this range of deviation between ‘ideal’ and ‘selected’ individual (Sprinks, 2009). A quantitative analysis should begin with the overall assessment of deviations in the aggregate and then move towards the identification and understanding of how a particular variable (e.g., appearance, bias, and locality) would shift an informal decision (cf. Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Robertson & Kinder, 1993; Robertson & Smith, 2003; Roch & O’Sullivan, 2003). Research must consider the common definitions and use of language in the assessment and execution of informal decisions by screeners (Chomsky, 2007; Keysar & Barr, 2002; Keysar et al., 1998) as well as the training provided to assessors (Bartlett, 2002; Drakeley et al., 1988). By conducting such research, a visual depiction can be presented to better understand and chart informal decisions and anticipated informal decisions.

Thirdly, research (cf. Branick & Levine, 200; Goette et al., 1996; Howard & Choi, 2000; McKinney et al., 2003) focusing on the assessor making informal decisions could identify certain characteristics (e.g., gender (Oliphant & Alexander, 1982); social affiliations (Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997)) that might be indicators of informal decision outcomes. For example, in CAMC, limited evidence seems to indicate that assessors with less experience filtering applications make less subjective judgements and review organisational policies and procedures more often when making informal decisions. Moreover, screeners with more experience appear to make decisions based on their previous experience filtering applications and rely less on policies and procedures. This is consistent with Davis (1999) findings that errors decrease as the assessor’s experience increases. Furthermore, the influence of an assessor (see Dewberry, 2011; Brutus et al., 2005) could be linked to certain characteristics as noted above.

Next, this thesis noted small distinctions between ‘unskilled’ labour and ‘professional’ labour in the CAMC case in both recruiting strategies and informal filtering decisions. Whilst the extents of these distinctions are not fully understood, some research has been conducted on interviews (see Ferris et al., 2002; Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; Posthuma et al., 2002) and recruitment and selection strategies (Cooper et al., 2003; Love, 1991; Searle, 2003; 2006). Also, management (Robertson & Makin, 1996; Shackleton & Newell, 1991) and general selection has been reviewed (Robertson & Smith, 2001; Smith et al., 1993) but more field-based research is needed to provide a deeper understanding of similarities and differences between these two distinct labour pools – the ‘unskilled’ and the ‘professional’ – that will assist practitioners in making informal decisions.

Finally, distractions emerged as having some impact on informal decisions, especially in CAMC when informal decisions were rendered faster and more frequent. Distractions could cause information to be weighted inappropriately, disregarded, and otherwise processed outside of organisational specifications (Jett & George, 2003; Speier et al., 1999; Speier et al., 2003). Consequently, data could not project definitively to what extent distractions had on these case studies. A field-based quantitative analysis is suggested to capture data that would provide a more comprehensive view of distractions. Furthermore, how assessors adjust to these distractions and refocus on tasks at hand (i.e., evaluations and the informal decisions) should be an integrated element in the research design. In turn, strategies for informal decisions could be proposed that reduces social interruptions and allows for multitasking.

Five proposals for future research have been presented above. In the next section, the concluding remarks are presented.

## **8.6 Concluding Remarks**

The primary objective of this study was to answer ‘*How are informal decisions reached by screeners filtering our undesirable job applications?*’ Prior to this study, empirical data about informal decisions within filtering processes obtained from organisations were scarce. This research fills that gap and contributes empirical data from actual organisation personnel having the greatest responsibility for making informal decisions. This research has successfully fulfilled its objectives and key question by discovering knowledge that is rooted in everyday practical filtering decisions coupled with a comprehensive literature analysis.

Chapter 1 introduced that selecting the right individual for a position is a primary concern when making informal filtering decisions. In fact, screeners continue to make poor decisions as variables (i.e., majority and minority influences, the weighting of information, the

use of inappropriate information and criteria, and the influence of assessors (Dewberry, 2011)) contribute to non-intentional errors in decisions (Reason, 1990; 2000). Early formalised selection processes date back to 2200 BCE (Martin, 1901), as described in Chapter 2, with modern advancements to processes such as digital technology (Searle, 2006) but no significant advancements in understanding informal filtering decisions (Robertson & Smith, 2001). Consequently, filtering decisions are subjective, judgemental (Bell & Raiffa, 1988; Fishburn, 1988; Tversky & Kahneman, 1988) and based on assumptions (Drucker, 1980) with limited research focusing on errors in judgement concerning informal decisions (Anderson et al., 2004; Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000).

Chapter 2 explored various studies and their methodological approaches to identify the best way to conduct research in a severely under researched field. The thesis methodological plan, detailed in Chapter 3, utilises GT case studies to obtain deep insight into thought processes about filtering. The emic ethnographic case study of the Research Centre described in Chapter 4 provides a first look at informal decisions. Using the knowledge gained from the Research Centre, the case study in Chapter 5 of the Veterinary Hospital provided further insight into informal decisions. Chapter 6 presented the final case study of CAMC where multiple screeners and very formal selection processes were in place.

In Chapter 7, the convergence of case findings and literature yielded a theoretical understanding of how information and assessors can influence perceptions about individuals seeking employment and the various stages that those individuals may occupy whilst traveling through the *Selection Paradigm*. Moreover, the depictions help facilitate understanding this theory through visualisations and fill a gap in literature as illustrations concerning informal decisions have been lacking. Furthermore, Chapter 8 proposes the way forward for future research including methods to build upon this thesis.

In conclusion, formal selection processes have been around for well over four thousand years with limited attention on informal decisions. This thesis addressed that gap by providing a stronger theoretical understanding surrounding informal decisions within selection processes.

*“...researchers must recognise that outside the laboratory, small groups have diverse historical origins and changing norms. Newly formed groups after often have the freedom to shape their decision-making process, and the selection of a decision rule is one of the most important choices they can make.”* (Sager & Gastil, 2006, p. 4).

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## GLOSSARY

*Anchoring effect* – is caused by an internal shift that occurs when a screener fails to separate personal beliefs from organisational guidelines and personnel specifications; and therefore a screener's personal beliefs dominant organisational guidelines and personnel specifications (Chapman & Johnson, 2002; Plous, 1993; Taylor, 1991). This dominance causes biases stemming from inconsistencies between screener beliefs and organisational guidelines and personnel specifications. Biases result when individuals remember similar information and perceive familiarity with current information where similarity should not be assumed (Domeyer, 2005; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991d).

*Applicant* – is a job-seeker whose request for consideration has been accepted by an organisation. An applicant becomes a candidate after an employment offer is tendered. (see also *job-seeker* and *candidate*).

*Application Tailoring* – “... is a type of fraud that occurs when an individual applicant seeks to obtain an organizational position by deliberately creating, misrepresenting or exaggerating information.” (McKinney & Sikula, 2009). In some jurisdictions, individuals providing deception information for employment purposes may be prosecuted. (see also *faking*).

*Bias* – “...systematic over- or under-estimation of a true value. Can result from a skew in the content or interpretation of candidates' results.” (Searle, 2003, p. 282). Biases can be “...a fixed, negative, virtually automatic rejection of certain background factors or characteristics of a given applicant. Or, on the other side of the coin, it may be a strong subjective preference for certain personal factors or characteristics that are completely unrelated to the job specifications.” (Stanton, 1977, p. 124). Biases may also be known as a preference.

*Candidate* – is an applicant that has accepted a contingent employment offer from an organisation. The candidate becomes an employee after contingencies (i.e. WDT, background checks, and other final filtering processes) have been satisfied. If a candidate fails to satisfy a contingency, an offer of employment may be revoked, thus returning a candidate to job-seeker status.

*Ceiling Effect* – occurs when scores cluster near the upper limit of a range (Vogt, 1999). In filtering processes, individuals exceeding a ceiling may be deemed overqualified.

*Communication errors* – can result from a number of issues (see Horton & Keysar, 1996; Keysar, 1997; Keysar & Barr, 2002; Pronin et al., 2002; Roberson & Smith, 2001; Ruscher, 2001; Shintel & Keysar, 2007). According to Pronin et al. (2002, p. 636), communications processes can create biases in selection processes as people “...interpret, and frequently misinterpret, each other's words and deeds...” This type of miscommunication was defined as the *false consensus effect* where a message sender assumes the receiver has the same level of knowledge and understanding when in fact the receiver does not have a different perspective. The lack of *common ground*, mutual knowledge from similar references and experience amongst communicators, can provide an explanation to communication biases (Horton & Keysar, 1996). Keysar and Barr (2002) illustrate that any differences in perspectives can lead to biases. Keysar and Barr (2002) and Ruscher (2001) suggest that language impacts decisions, especially when an individual faces a deadline. In some instances, adjectives can deter individuals from seeking employment (Roberson & Smith, 2001). Simple words and definitions can be enough to trigger biases (Keysar & Barr, 2002).

*Confirmation bias* – “...is the cognitive process whereby a person makes an initial hypothesis, then seeks to confirm that hypothesis by seeking out information to support

*it, disregards information that disconfirms it, and interprets information in such a way as to confirm it.”* (Kempton et al., 2002, p. 7). Written guidelines and personnel specifications appear to mitigate confirmation bias.

*Cultural differences* – occur where culture and identity cause problems in perception amongst participants (Hodgkinson & Payne, 1998, Keysar & Barr, 2002; Ryan et al., 1999; Shackleton & Newell, 1991). These differences may lead to cultural biases (Sadler, 2002). An example of cultural bias is focusing and favouring traditional methods of attracting job-seekers whilst ignoring or discounting other methods which could produce similar results.

*Curriculum vitae* – “...a summary of work experience, qualifications, skills, and competencies prepared by an individual making a job application...” (Searle, 2003, p. 283). Curriculum vitae may be abbreviated with CV. For this research, CV will have the same meaning as résumé.

*Direct participants* – are defined as an organisational representatives that have provided informed consent to actively contribute and partake in this research. Direct participants are free to withdraw from this research at any time.

*Drug testing* – “... is a biological method to determine a probability that an individual has engaged in the consumption of certain substances.” (McKinney & Tissington, 2009, p. 5). WDT is used to denote workplace drug testing.

*Faking* – “...distortion of information by an individual during a selection and recruitment process that may or may not be deliberate.” (Searle, 2003, p. 284). Faking is differentiated from application tailoring as application tailoring is an intentional deception from an applicant to obtain access to organisational resources (McKinney & Sikula, 2008; 2009). Whilst faking is an element of application tailoring, not all faking leads to application tailoring (see also application tailoring).

*Filtering* – is the process of assessment organisations use to classify applications (Cook, 1991; Searle, 2003). Filtering may be done through computer applications.

*Generational differences* – distinct variations in groups of employee values, ideologies, and demographics which can be attributed to birth years that are clustered in about twenty consecutive years (Zemke, 2002).

*Holism* – a belief that the larger exceeds the summation of all components (Vogt, 1999).

*Halo effect* – “...the positive influence from one aspect of a candidate that boosts the ratings they receive from assessors, for example, their physical attractiveness.” (Searle, 2003, p. 284). These earlier influences can affect any subsequent decision (Vogt, 1999). Also called halo bias.

The *halo effect* results when a decision-maker (e.g. screener) creates a broad positive view surrounding an individual (i.e. a job-seeker, applicant, and candidate) upon which subsequent decisions are based (Porterfield, 2001). Subsequent decisions and scores may be favourable or detrimental to an individual based on impressions such as likeability and attractiveness. Because a professional judgement or misjudgement can be mistaken for bias from a halo effect, a halo effect bias may be difficult to detect. Whilst a halo effect can blind faults, prejudices create faults (Half, 1985) and the halo effect may be slightly different than the similar-to-me effect (Porterfield, 2001).

*Horns effect* – “...the negative influence from one aspect of a candidate (typically physical appearance) that lowers the ratings the applicant receives from assessors.” (Searle, 2003, p. 285).



*Illusory correlation* – occurs when an individual observes circumstances and makes false assumptions about an application (Chapman & Chapman, 1991). This can cause applications to be classified into improper categories (Bar-Hillel & Neter, 2002). Tversky and Kahneman (1991a) state perceptions, even on false assumptions, are difficult to alter.

*Indirect participants* – are defined as job-seekers, applicants, and candidates seeking placement within an organisational position. This research does not directly observe the behaviours or actions of individuals seeking positions, but observes the responses and decisions of decision makers concerning the information provided by indirect participants.

*Information processing errors* – occur when information is erroneously inputted or altered from its original content such as transposition errors where “121” becomes “211” (Einhorn & Hogarth, 1988b; Keysar, 2007; Keysar & Barr, 2002; Keysar et al., 1995; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991d; Yates et al., 2002).

*Interview* – “...a dialogue between the candidate and representative(s) of the organization with a view to establishing job or promotion suitability or job performance...” (Searle, 2003, p. 285).

*Job-seeker* – is an individual actively searching and applying for an employment position. A job-seeker becomes an applicant after an organisation accepts a job-seeker’s request for consideration. (See also *applicant* and *candidate*).

*Nonresponse Bias* – results when members of a particular group (i.e. application pool) fail to disclose information that if disclosed would alter a filtering decision (Vogt, 1999).

*Omitted Variable Bias* – errors resulting when causal variables are not included within a justification (Vogt, 1999). This can be associated with information processing errors.

*Order effect* – can potentially alter a filtering decision based on when information is presented (Highhouse & Gallo, 1997). If decisions are influenced sooner a *primacy effect* has occurred, if later, a *recency effect* has occurred. Because research into order effects has produced inconsistent results, the *belief-adjustment model* by Hogarth and Einhorn (1992, citing Highhouse and Gallo, 1997, p. 31), “...posits that *primacy/recency is a function of the interaction of various features of the judgement task.*” If information inconsistencies result, screeners will more likely base decisions on the most recent information and not necessarily the most valid and reliable.

*Overqualified* – the excess applicant skills which are expected to contribute very little, if anything, to an organisation (Fine & Nevo, 2007). In some cases, applicant overqualification can eliminate an individual from consideration (Frenette, 2000; Fernandex & Weinberg, 1997; Sikula, 2001).

Fine and Nevo (2007, p. 328) note that overqualification, a type of underemployment, may be further classified as a *cognitive overqualification*, “*overeducation, skill-underutilization, and overexperience...*” Since organisations prefer to hire within a “set” range for a position, overqualification may represent the perception that excess applicant skills will contribute very little, if anything, to an organisation. Thus, overqualification marks the point of diminishing returns and potentially declining returns. However, overqualification seems to diminish as position complexity (the demand for education and skills) increases (Fine & Neva, 2007; Frenette, 2000).

Perceptions of overqualification vary amongst organisations, positions and screeners. In Canada, an applicant’s gender and degree level can and have triggered overqualification: Frenette (2000) notes that on average in similar positions women are overqualified with a bachelor’s, men with a master’s, and no significant difference

between men and women at doctoral levels. Professional positions such as educators and physicians are not necessarily viewed as overqualified since advanced degrees are required and expected. However, overqualification in Frenette (2000) may not be applicable to similar positions outside of Canada. Potentially, better qualified individuals could be routinely removed by filtering processes using poor guidelines (Ballou, 1996). Stanton (1977) advises organisations to be forthcoming about compensation to job-seekers as some overqualified individuals may withdraw from the filtering processes. Fernandez and Weinberg (1997) report overqualified applicants are removed due to screeners' general perceptions that applicants are not fully committed to long service. Drucker (1954; 1998) and Stanton (1977) imply organisations should not hire an overqualified individual as (s)he will eventually leave because (s)he will use the organisation to transition into another position with another firm.

*Personal liking bias* – occurs when a decision maker, having a favourable opinion about an applicant, allows personal feelings to influence a selection decision (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990). Personal liking biases were traditionally associated with interviews, however, a personal liking bias can occur at any stage of the hiring process including assessment and filtering processes (Esen, 2008). According to Esen (2008), if a decision (i.e. to hire or to filter) is primarily associated with either liking or disliking a job-seeker, a personal liking bias has occurred.

*Pre-employment application* – is a type of request for consideration where an organisation has a job-seeker complete a form of pre-defined questions before issuing a formal application to a job-seeker. The pre-employment application allows an organisation to save resources by quickly filtering job-seekers unable to meet basic minimum qualifications.

*Prototype bias* – occurs when a perceived stereotype influences the outcome of a filtering decision (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990). Stereotyping commonly removes group of individuals based on evaluator perceptions (Sadler, 2002). Lin et al. (1992) note that screeners use stereotypes when uncertainty increases especially under constraints such as time and emergency hiring. Rosette et al. (2008) cite Kahneman's (2003) (see Bar-Hillel, 1991; Kahneman, 1991c) concept of *representativeness* and Bruner (1957) and Kunda and Spencer's (2003) concept of *category accessibility* as having similarities of stereotyping. According to Rosette et al. (2008), race appears to affect the selection to management positions negatively for the majority and positively for the minority. This may be explained as regulated government guidelines (i.e. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) may shift preferences towards minorities, thereby encouraging stereotypes, through hiring quotas and using different standards of evaluating evidence of performance (McIntyre et al., 1980).

*Pygmalion Effect* – a participant's behaviours are modified to fit researcher expectations (Vogt, 1999).

*Reinforcer Effect* – occurs when a variable amplifies the significance of other relationships (Vogt, 1999). A suppression effect is the opposing effect.

*Request for consideration* – is a job-seeker's verbal or written intention for employment to an organisation. A request for consideration becomes an application after an organisation has accepted a job-seeker's intention. In some cases, organisations may reject requests for consideration if job-seekers fail to meet minimum position requirements. These may also be referred to as pre-employment applications. (See also *pre-employment application*).

*Résumé* – see curriculum vitae.

*Screening* – see filtering.

*Shift of reference* – occurs when external information alters a screener's perception of organisational guidelines and personnel specifications (Kahneman & Tversky, 2004; Plous, 1993; Taylor, 1991). Like the anchoring effect, the external information dominates organisational guidelines and personnel specifications and causes decisions to be biased.

*Similar-to-me effect* – may occur when an applicant is perceived as having like characteristics, experience, and skills as a decision maker such as a screener (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990). According to Sears and Rowe (2003) and Lin et al. (1992), the similar-to-me effect may influence subsequent decisions concerning the legitimacy of an applicant's credentials and skills. Whilst observing the similar-to-me effect during interviews, Sears and Rowe (2003, p. 22) postulate screeners used an *"ideal-employee" mechanism* to project an applicant's (in)ability to perform based upon the perceived similarities between an applicant and screener and the screener's self-reflected ability to perform the job.

Some authors (see Baskett, 1973; Sears & Rowe, 2003) suggest *interpersonal attraction*, as defined by Byrne (1969, 1971), could provide a foundation for causation of the similar-to-me effect. Interpersonal attraction stipulates that *"...similarity to another person increases the likelihood that one will obtain consensual validation for one's own views and opinions from that person..."* leading to increased attraction (Frank & Hackman, 1975, p. 359). Increased attraction and similarities remove social barriers and uncertainty and facilitate group acceptance (Walster & Walster, 1963).

*Social projection* – caused by the anchoring effect when an individual assumes that some similarities exist with another individual (Robbins & Krueger, 2005). The assumed similarities cause an individual to project that behaviours and performances of another individual will be similar. Social projection is stronger within common group environments (Robbins & Krueger, 2005); and close friends (Gershoff & Johar, 2006). Thus, internal applications could be perceived more similar than external applicants.

*Suppression Effect* – occurs when a variable decreases the significance of other relationships (Vogt, 1999). A reinforcer effect is the opposing effect.

*Uncertainty avoidance* – is *"...the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations."* (Hofstede, 1991 as cited by Ryan et al., 1999, p. 362).

# APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS

## BIASES WITHIN FILTERING PROCESSES Participant Consent Forms

This form constitutes a general agreement, associated with the student thesis entitled “*Biases within filtering processes*”, between the researcher, **Ralph E. McKinney, Jr., of Aston Business School, Aston University, Birmingham, U.K. B4 7ET** hereinafter “**RM**”, and the undersigned participant(s).

The purpose of this research is to examine and understand an organisation’s hiring processes as relating to application screening and filtering. These processes include, but are not limited to, applications, résumés, CVs, pre-employment testing, drug testing, background checks, interviews, and organisational policies and procedures.

This research traces the filtering process of hiring decisions and uses *Thinking Aloud Protocols* (“TAP”), where a participant vocally expresses thought processes to a researcher, to capture information for analysis. The researcher will ask to record the interview but participants have a right to refuse recording of information and experiences. RM shall debrief participants concerning the observations, impressions, and analysis associated with the organisational case study.

Each participant agrees to participate in a research project titled “Biases within Filtering Processes.”; and (A) the participant understands participation is strictly and completely voluntary; (B) the participant is free to stop, refuse or otherwise withdraw as a participant at any time without penalty; and (C) the participant understands there are no foreseeable risks associated with participation.

Organisational participants agree that (A) the identity of individual participants shall be kept anonymous; (B) that information obtained from this research may be used in developing and enhancing organisational efficiencies, including a participant’s skills and knowledge; and (C) that participants’ rights, as defined in the preceding paragraph, shall not be limited, restricted, or otherwise diminished.

While conducting research, most information will be stored in a hard copy format. At the conclusion of the study, most information will be transferred to electronic media (i.e. .pdf files). Files will be retained with the University: Hard copy formats for two years and electronic records for five years.

For additional information and questions relating to this research, you may contact:

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Your signature below indicates you have read and understand this form.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 2: LIST OF TARGETED ORGANISATIONS

Those organisations that withdrew or declined to participate are only identified by an alternative name to respect anonymity.

Organisation	Participant	Industry
Research Centre	Case (see Chapter 4)	Legal Education
Veterinary Hospital	Case (see Chapter 5)	Animal Hospital
CAMC	Case (see Chapter 6)	Health Care
Police Department	Accepted but hiring freeze required withdraw	Law Enforcement
Electric Utility	Non-participant	Utility
Human Resource Division	Accepted but frequent turnover of management was an issue	Government
Pharmacy	Declined	Health Care
Regional Bank	Non-participant	Financial Services
Personnel Agency	Declined	Temporary Labour
Military	Non-participant (Interested for longer term)	Government
Educational Facility	Declined	Higher Education

## **APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW NOTES (S1 & S2)**

### **CRIMINAL LAW RESEARCH CENTRE General Interview Notes Tuesday, 19 January 2010 ~10:30 A.M.**

#### **PRIOR TO INTERVIEW**

On 12 January 2010, both participants were provided information concerning this research including the Participant Consent Forms. S1 and S2 were to review this information and complete the Participant Consent Forms in advance of the researcher making observations concerning filtering decisions. For this interview the researcher jotted notes that were used to generate a more comprehensive account of the interview.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

The filtering environment and the primary observations and interview took place within a general purpose conference room located at the West Virginia Public Defender Services. This conference room had white walls with neutral carpeting and void of windows. However, two pictures hung on opposing walls and a large map of the State of West Virginia hung on another wall. There were two doors on the same wall leading to a hallway. The conference room was illuminated by artificial lights. Twelve neutral grey chairs surrounded a large rectangular table composed of four smaller rectangular tables (modular units). The conference room provided a private and quiet place to review applications.

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

Subject 1 (S1) is a white male with an Ohio Northern University law degree serving as the Director of the West Virginia Criminal Law Research Centre.

Subject 2 (S2) is a white female with an undergraduate degree serving as the Assistant to the Director of the Criminal Law Research Centre.

S1 and S2 have worked together since 2002. Both individuals compose the entire Research Centre staff. Only S1 and S2 process and filter the résumés/applications for the summer law intern programme.

#### **RÉSUMÉS/APPLICATIONS**

Applicants – All applicants applied to the Summer Law Intern Programme which runs from May to August. Interns are compensated at the Public Interest Advocate rate of \$480 per week and some interns may attend the annual Public Defender conference in June for free. Appalachian School of Law, Ohio Northern University & West Virginia University College of Law students in years two and three are eligible to apply. Chief Defenders of Public Defender Corporations can make requests for interns on their budgets each May. In October and November 2009, Criminal Law Research Centre does interviews at schools.

#### **INTERVIEW DISCUSSIONS (Joint Interview)**

For summer 2010, fourteen (14) intern positions were available. An intern would work for a ten (10) weeks between May and August for a Public Defender Corporation. Interns had no benefits, but were compensated at the Public Interest Advocate rate established at \$480.00 per week.

For the intern positions, thirty-eight (38) applications were submitted from four law schools: Seven from Appalachian Law School; Fifteen from Ohio Northern University; Fifteen from West Virginia School of Law; and One from Vermont Law School. Only the first three law schools were solicited for résumés. The Vermont Law School student contacted S1 by telephone and later met with S1.

The Research Centre does not use a formal application opting to use résumés in place of a standard application. At end of the fall term (December, 2009), job-seekers are encouraged to submit revised résumé. Most job-seekers did not submit revised CVs.

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RM: How many interns spots are we looking at filling?

S2: Well, there are fourteen positions after a couple of the Chiefs decided not to have interns this year. [Chief 2] said he had no use for one and [Office Manager 18] said that they were useless last year and she did not want to babysit this year.

RM: So nothing unusual.

S2: Yea.

RM: Based on last year, interns will serve ten weeks starting sometime in May and concluding in August?

S2: Same routine.

RM: And this year, the PIA rates are \$480?

S2: Yep.

RM: How many applications did we get?

S2: Um, let me see. Total is, thirty-seven: fifteen from WVU, seven from Grundy [ALS], and fifteen from Ohio. Wait. Thirty-eight. There was one lady that called S1 from Vermont about an internship. Since she lives in Charleston, he talked to her on the phone. So she makes thirty-eight.

RM: Is there a standard application that we use?

S2: No. We just ask them to send in their résumé before we go meet with them. Or, we at least collect their résumé when we interview them.

RM: And all the interviews are conducted in October and November?

S2: Yes. And I go with S1 to each of the schools. Well, we did not go to Vermont. She just called and S1 did her interview by phone.

RM: So you did not participate in that interview?

S2: I think I was off or something, but I was not here for that one. He [S1] just gave me a copy of what she sent to him for our files.

RM: How are résumés used?

- S1: We use résumés as applications as these people are applying for a professional position.
- RM: So these [résumés] are the primary source of your information?
- S1: Yea.
- RM: How do you check these out and make sure that all the information is correct?
- S1: Well, we don't verify them. After all, these are students with limited work experience and we have already talked to them [during the interviews]. We don't need to check their references because the law school would have verified most of the information being that they were admitted.
- RM: What about academic transcripts?
- S1: Since we go through the career centre [of the university], they take care of all that. They can bring their transcripts if they want to, but they don't have too. We don't require them too. Since they are going to be lawyers, they have to be professionals.
- RM: OK. So this is the first time that you guys are looking at the applicants together? Well, since the interview?
- S2: Yea. But we make our choices before we meet. We each rank them before we meet. Then we work together to pick the students for an office [internship].
- RM: How is experience evaluated? Are there overqualified individuals?
- S1: No one is overqualified as their experience can be transferable to someone somewhere. When you deal with criminal defence, every case is different. I mean, there are similarities. A B&E [Breaking and Entering] is still a B&E, but the facts are different. What was the intent? Were other crimes committed? Is the accused competent to stand trial? Is there a cognitive impairment? You even have to take in consideration the prosecutor and the judge.
- S2: The interviews [October/November 2009] were used to clarify information. [During the interview] We focus on job experience and education is not considered experience.
- RM: Do you take notes?
- S2: I use alphabetic note taking during those interviews.
- RM: Alphabetic note taking?
- S2: In alphabetic note taking, vowels are excluded unless they are strong vowels.
- S1: I just make general short notes to remember individuals. Plus, we give a preference to people that have interned before and also to those that have interviewed in previous years.
- RM: And you make note of this?
- S1: Not really. I can remember. There are not really that many people that interview and it's the same people from year to year. So you get real familiar with them.
- OBSERVATION: S1 and S2 tended to divide résumés into categories based on the preference for geographic regions.
- RM: Why is geography the first cue for sorting résumés?



- S1: We [the Researcher Centre] asked applicants about Public Defender preferences within the State [of West Virginia]. Most [interns] that wanted outside West Virginia or did not have West Virginia ties were removed. We spend money for people planning on being here.
- S2: It is easier to pick those that have preference first and place others if slots [intern positions] are left.
- RM: After geographic preferences, what is the next cue you look for?
- S1: Class rankings have a big impact on who applies and who you get. It's hard to compete with other offers. The ones' that are the top of the class get the good internships at the most prestigious law firms. But we can offer them [students] something that the big firms can't. We can allow limited practice of law under Rule 10 [Rules of Admission]. They [interns] have to be supervised by a licensed attorney. But they can get experience in the court room and actually practise law.
- RM: What determines class rankings?
- S2: GPA [Grade Point Average] is part of class rank.
- RM: What about awards?
- S2: These [awards] support class rank. They are not really separate. They just show that people that are at the top of their class work hard. So they may have a book award. Maybe participate in extracurricular activities or something like that.
- RM: What about models or personnel specifications?
- S2: We have no written model.
- S1: They [interns] have to work and fit into a criminal law environment.
- S2: And they have to be enthusiastic and pleasant.
- RM: Do you need written specifications?
- S1: No. By practicing law, you get a feel for these things. And sometimes an intern is asked for by name. Chief 6 asked for [intern] because he [intern] was there last year and they were very happy with his performance. When they ask for someone specific, we place what was asked, just easier.
- RM: You [to S1] mentioned that preferences were given to prior interns. How do you keep track of these preferences? Other than by memory?
- S2: We don't interview a lot of people. You remember who you saw.
- S1: I also keep lists of all former interns, acceptances, no-shows, and declines for the following years. This way we don't waste our time on people that won't show up. I've been burned in the past and it's hard to find an intern after you have had to send letters notifying them that they were not picked for an internship. Usually, they make other arrangements. Not only that, but to ask someone to consider the internship when they know that they are the last resort to not filling the position is kinda, it's just not good. Also, it's hard to get housing and moved in for a ten week job.
- RM: Why does geography have such an impact on your filtering processes?
- S1: My experience is that they have to have some tie to where they are going cause they have to find a place to stay for ten weeks. And it's much easier to stay with family or find a place where you have some connection.

RM: Do you ever have a problem with getting enough applications?

S2: Yes. We used first years then.

S1: Law schools don't let you work your first year. But because they have finished their first year, technically it's OK.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

The researcher observed that geography was the first filtering preference. Geography was followed by class rank as the second preference for applications. It was observed that negative attributes were more readily discussed than positive attributes. In some cases, negative attributes caused a résumé to be shifted from one stack of papers to another or cause that résumé to be placed closer to the bottom of the applications after geographical sorting. Job-seekers were not truly removed as in practice, the researcher observed job-seekers being reconsidered for other intern positions. On average, S1 and S2 would discuss the résumés, the applicants, and the intern position within 3-6 minutes prior to making a final decision. S2 tended to be the second speaker on most items unless prompted by S1. Both would agree on an applicant to be placed into a particular intern position before moving to the next intern position. Usually, S2 would concede to S1 concerning a decision.

### **OFFERS**

Individuals are offered summer law intern programme positions one at a time. When one accepts, the next position is filled. When one declines, then the next preferred individual is offered and so forth.

## **APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION (S3)**

### **CROSS LANES VETERINARY HOSPITAL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION 5 July 2010 (TIME 45:51)**

S3: I know. It's been since before...this is the application I filled out.

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: And so, [laughter] it's been for... for a good amount of time, probably.

RM: OK.

S3: Um.

RM: How often do you hire, umm, what kind of turnover...for the last twelve months? Maybe?

S3: Um. It really varies somewhat. Um. I would say somewhat...that...on the average... we probably will hire someone in every three to six months on the average. Now in the last two years...that's been a combination of factors. Um. One of them been turnover. You know what I mean. Somebody's either left to take another job, or it hasn't worked out...they weren't a good fit. And then we have to hire somebody into that same position. But, we also went through a pretty big expansion a couple years ago. And so, we have slowly kind of filled our staff out as we have gotten settled in and tried to find a structure that works for us as a bigger facility. So, I would say on the average three to six months. But that's partially turnover of existing staff and adding in to staff out for appropriate support. [01:15].

RM: Now, when we...when we talk about turnover for existing staff and...and leaving for other...other jobs, um, leaving for other jobs within the type, the same type of field or different field or...or...or

S3: We've had a little bit of both. Um. We had one employee who had been here for several years. Um. I think fifteen or sixteen to the point she left...Um...but she is working as a manager at a shelter, now, so...

RM: OK.

S3: ...she stayed within, you know, within the same basic field. Just a different take on it. One basically retired. Like, she sort of left and...Um...and I don't think she took another job anywhere at that point. And the most recent one...we had a couple who moved. Um. Who took jobs in similar fields but they actually moved out of state.

RM: Oh. OK.

S3: And then our most recent one left to go back to a job where she did before she came here.

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: So, she had worked, um, doing agricultural stuff or the government and had gotten out of that and moved down this way, moved back to where she had lived so had a longer commute had an opportunity to back in with them, so...

RM: Do you conduct exit interviews when people leave or how do you get the information? Like, say, well, I'm, I'm leaving...

S3: People are usually pretty forthcoming with it. Honestly, we don't have a formal exit interview...set-up...

RM: OK.

S3: ...yet. Its, um, with the expansion and changing roles and all that we are very much...um...heavily in the process of developing our structure and our policies...um...so, I can relate when you say "Policies [laughter] usually exist until something pops up and you go, oh, you need one for that."

RM: Exactly. [03:00]

S3: Um. So we do not have like a formal exit interview...process at this point. I don't know that they ever have...um...generally people are fairly forthcoming. You know, if, if they chose to go, then they usually hand in like a short little letter of resignation but they'll tell you the whole...the whole thing. [03:20].

RM: Whereas...as...as organisations change, as they...they span...of course the complexity changes too.

S3: Yes.

RM: The nature of relationships changes.

S3: Right. [03:28]

RM: Um, so...that's, that's ...a few years ago maybe prior.... prior to the expansion you didn't necessarily need that?

S3: Yea...Right

RM: You're only dealing with five or six staff people and if one leaves then...

S3: Heavy core, you know what I mean, a heavy core of people have been here between, you know, six and sixteen years I think so...

RM: Yea...

S3: Um. And I...from what I understand, prior to the expansion newer people coming in typically either didn't last very long or they last forever. You know what I mean? Like...

RM: Yea. OK. [04:01]

S3: There weren't a lot of those in between. Maybe came and did it for a year and gone to something else. From what I understand. But I was not involved in all of this then. So...

RM: OK. Let's take a look...

S3: ...sure...

RM: ...at the application here for a minute.

S3: Can I get you something to drink? [04:22]

RM: No.

S3: [soft laughter]

RM: I appreciate that though.

S3: Sure. Our air conditioner is not working on this side...

RM: [laughter]

S3: They are fixing it tomorrow so I'm sorry it's a little bit stuffy.

RM: Oh, it's OK [04:32]. Now, when you...when you ...when you take a look at the application.

S3: MMM-Huh.

RM: Um. Do you...do you ever get any résumés or CVs or...

S3: We do.

RM: OK. And would you have some of those on file that you can take ...

S3: Any that people have sent in?

RM: Yea. [04:50].

S3: [Getting in file cabinet]. So. Sorry. This stuff always stays here.

RM: That's OK.

S3: We don't tend to see CVs so much. Although, I'm sure with some of the doctors who have been hired in...

RM: mm-huh.

S3: They...the owners probably have those.

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: Um, but we have not hired any new doctors since I took this role...so... [05:11].

RM: [soft] Let me put this aside for a second.

S3: So here is a pretty standard example of... [05:30] of a résumé that we...

RM: Oh OK.

S3: ...received from someone...

RM: OK.

S3: Do you need a copy of those or you just looking for?

RM: [inaudible...but no copy was requested]

S3: OK. [05:42-06:02: sound of pages turning].

RM: When you're looking at...at these, um

S3: Here's another one. Different kind of format

RM: Oh, OK. [06:10].

S3: we get. See what they come

RM: So there is not a standard format other than your application then?

S3: Right. And that's why typically, you know, I never used to understand this. Like if I sent a résumé in someplace they would say, "Can you come fill out the application?" Why do I have to fill out the application if I gave you my résumé? I appreciate it on a different level now. Um. Because that is sort of our standard that we go...of course you look at the résumé and whatever else they would send in also. But I keep that stuff together.

RM: OK. [06:35].

S3: Um.

RM: Which one do you look at first: The résumé or the, ah, the application?

S3: Honestly, depends on what I receive...

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: Like some people will just stop by and ask for an application and fill it out and that will come to me. So I look through that. Um, I get résumés in the mail sometimes...

RM: OK.

S3: or every now and then somebody will drop by a résumé. So, I will usually get whatever I am presented with first. And then, [07:00] kinda go from there. But if they have dropped off a résumé and we go any further, like if we set up an interview, we, for example, I usually ask that they come a few minutes early and just fill out our standard application form.

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: And then I'll put that in their...in with their résumé. [07:14].

RM: Um, OK. So, when you're looking at this for example, say this, this, particular résumé or the applicant, what's the first...ah...information that you look at?

S3: First information or first thing?

RM: First thing.

S3: [laughter].

- RM: What's, what are you looking at when you are looking at, at a particular person? Um. [07:31].
- S3: The, the first thing, honestly that I look for, um is...sort of completion, presentation. I don't know if that is a bad thing, but you know, I, I do kinda look to see, you know, if, if you're asking for certain information...Did they do a reasonable job of providing it? Do you know what I mean? Um. Like on an application, is, is it fairly legible? You know. Not that I'm gonna say, uh, you know, your handwriting is terrible I don't want to talk to you but, you know, So... you, I, I think the presentation is what catches me first. [08:03]. Um, and then from there, especially with a résumé I always want to look at what they are looking for. What the candidate is looking for. You know. So, if they have an objective or if they have provided a cover letter, I'm always most interested to know, know why are you looking for a job? In a veterinary clinic, or here specifically [08:25]. You know.
- RM: OK. OK. And then once you looked at those
- S3: mm-huh
- RM: those, those, um, the objective statement, your satisfied with that and your satisfied with the cover letter. What are, ah, bits of information, you know, take me through; just, just walk me through your process.
- S3: My thought process? [Soft laughter]
- RM: Your thought process, exactly.
- S3: If you're ready to go on a crazy ride. No. Um. I think I'm pretty simple [08:47] about it really. Um. Obviously you're gonna look for...experience. You know, that is definitely an in. Depends on what area we're looking to hire in to how much that factors in. So, [09:00] and it's not a matter of if you have no experience, you know, you're not considered, but it's more, you know, what has your experience been? Um, maybe you've never worked in a vet clinic, but you have a lot of customer service experience, and you're wanting to be a receptionist, or, you know, so, try to take all that into account. What is their experience and/or education, obviously. Um...
- RM: Do you weight one more than the other, experience or education? [09:26]
- S3: [short pause] I can't say more than the other, um... I know it probably doesn't help, but I'm not that black and white about it. Um, I think if someone's got some education, and maybe not a lot of experience, [pause] that's an important piece of a big puzzle of an organisation, and I really look at it from a big picture standpoint too. Do, do you know what I mean? Like, what are strengths and weaknesses as a group, you know, as a team? And, what may this add into the puzzle that we've already got goin' on?
- RM: OK.
- S3: So, you know, sometimes it might be because they've had five years of experience, um, that that would be the best fit for what we're doing. [10:03] Sometimes it might be, you know, that that...I think they're...I think they're equally important. Although, I think, there's a little bit more of a standard that you can expect with completion of education versus experience. Does that make sense?

RM: yeah.

S3: If someone could have worked in three other veterinary clinics...

RM: gotcha

S3: ...but that may not really give me a good feel for what I can expect them to be, um, knowledgeable about or aware of. [10:30] You, you have to do a little bit more, um, talking with them to, to get a feel for that. Where, if they've got a degree, you know, um, in veterinary technology, or whatever, you know, there's a pretty standard curriculum, if it's an AVMA accredited school.

RM: OK

S3: You know, that I know that there are specific things that they have to have. Now, how much of it that they've retained and understood, that's, that's where you have to, but, you know. [10:54] But you have a little bit more of a standard, I think, with education, um. Clinics all run so differently that could be a little more variable, I think. [Long pause to 11:02-11:09]

RM: Have you ever asked for transcripts, or do you look at transcripts, um, and they say well, I've got an educational degree or I went so long to, one or two years here or there, I mean... [11:20]

S3: I don't, I've never required that. But if people, sometimes people will bring them or have them sent. Um, if they talk about having an education, they ask me would you like a, you know, would you like a copy of my transcripts? I really, I leave that up to them. You know, I would like to look at them if you're comfortable with that, but it's not something that we typically require, um, aside from doctors. Which, I'm sure that they have that information on the doctors that they've hired in. We just recently have, um, developed a small team of registered technicians.

RM: uh-huh.

S3: Everybody else has been on the job training. So, [11:54]

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: They may or may not have had education that's actually directly pertinent to the job that they do here.

RM: gotcha

S3: If that makes sense?

RM: Gotcha. OK. What else do you look at, um, on the, uh, CV, résumé, or the application? Um, what else jumps out after that?

S3: I definitely look at, um... I guess, sort of, consistency. You know what I mean? Like, is this person somebody who has worked three months, you know? Not three months, not. And again, I don't use that as a, well, you know, you don't stay at a job longer than three months. [12:28] I always try to look at the circumstances. If I'm gonna talk to them, I'll ask them, you know, well hey, you did this. Sometimes it's pretty obvious, like



if they're just coming out of high school. You can see where they worked a summer job. But I, I do look for that. And I look for, um, you know, where, where has this person devoted their professional time and energy?

RM: Gotcha

S3: You know? Yeah.

RM: What about, um, other curricular activities? Any activities, volunteer organisations, uh, separate section? Do you look at those at all? How do you weight those? [12:59]

S3: Uh, I definitely look at those, and I think...not because I don't value them, [laughs] um, but I think just because of the nature of, of the business that we do that's sort of an "icing on the cake" kind of thing. You know what I mean? If somebody says that "I've been involved with this..." And we see a lot, um, come in on applications from people who have volunteered at shelters, that kind of thing. Um, that does catch my interest. It does show, you know, hey, this is somebody who has decided to take their own time, you know, to be involved with, you know, sometimes it's fundraisers, sometimes it's just going and walking pets [13:34] or anything like that. If they've done preceptorships, you know, or shadowing or any of that kind of stuff where they've, you know, actually had a chance to get in and, um, do some hands on, get a feel for what, what it actually involves to be on this level working with animals all the time.

RM: OK.

S3: People tend to glorify that a little bit if they've never done it. So, again, it's not a determining factor, but it's like an "icing on the, on the cake" kind of thing. Absolutely. [13:59]

RM: When you say people tend to glorify

S3: mm-hmm.

RM: it, when, when they've not done it

S3: mm-hmm.

RM: You, you mean they focus on their, um, extracurricular activities more so than their experience or, or are [14:14. Note: Simultaneous]

S3: Oh...

RM: ...you...

S3: ...no,...

RM: saying

S3: ...no...

RM: ...that...

S3: ...I, I probably should have been clearer. I mean people tend to glorify the "I love working with animals" [14:21]

RM: Oh, OK

S3: part of things if they've not actually done it. You know, if they've had pets, but they've never actually worked in a kennel or a clinic

RM: [inaudible]...OK

S3: or something like that. Do you know what I mean?

RM: Yeah. OK.

S3: If they maybe don't have as much of a feel for, you know, it's not fun just playing with the puppies and kittens all day [laughs].

RM: um, OK

S3: And there are some, you know, challenges along with it. And, you know, so. So, I like to see...

RM: OK

S3: ...where people have taken the opportunity or if it's been offered, you know, if they haven't gotten the work experience or gone to school, that they've at least, you know, put some time into it. [14:53] [sound of door being opened]

RM: So, when, when they're saying they like to work with animals...

S3: mm-hmm.

RM: ...that is a cue, then that they lack the practical experience that you're looking for, um, in a more clinical environment with, with pets. And, and, and it's outside of, like you said, the puppy and the kitty, and playing with the puppy and the kitty. And, when I would be, say I was applying, and I said, well, "I like working with animals. I love animals." Um, you're saying that is a, a cue that you need to look deeper into my background because maybe I don't have that experience outside of the home pets? [15:31]

S3: Well, I'm definitely, if I were to do an interview with you, I'm definitely gonna, um, probably not more though, 'cause I ask everybody about their experience. You know what I mean?

RM: Uh-huh.

S3: Um... I'm trying to decide if I can make that as a blanket statement or not. It's almost a comment that you see on every application. Do you know what I mean? Like almost every application. Unless somebody has extensive experience, that's what they'll choose to put, you know? Like, animal experience...

RM: Uh-huh. [15:59]

S3: ...graduate, you know, dah, dah, dah. Um, or, have worked for several veterinary clinics, or whatever. Um, if they don't have that, typically what you'll see here is [faint clinical noise in background] "have always had animals," "love to work with animals," you know what I mean? I, I don't know that that...

RM: Well, yeah, that, that is important because that's... What you're saying then is, is on your application we've got this "Describe Animal Experience" and the people that you're looking at that do have the direct experience that you're looking for actually list, um, the education, the degrees... [16:30]

S3: They typically do, yes.

RM: ...their experience on there...

S3: uh-huh.

RM: Um, whereas people that, that don't have those are referring to they enjoy working with animals, and uh...

S3: Absolutely. Yeah. I do feel comfortable making that statement.

RM: Ok, ok.

S3: Or, if they volunteered even, a lot of the time, that'll be there.

RM: Ok.

S3: Um, but that's where that tends to get sort of highlighted.

RM: Oh, ok.

S3: Yeah.

RM: Ok, ok. Um, with U.S. citizenship, I know we've got that, that listed. You can be a, uh, non-U.S. citizen, is that correct? [17:00]

S3: And apply for a...

RM: Yeah.

S3: Oh, I would imagine so, yeah. Honestly, I've never, I have never taken an application from somebody that marked "No".

RM: Oh, ok.

S3: Do you know what I mean?

RM: Ok.

S3: But, yeah. I don't think that that's, you know.

RM: And military experience...um, any preference points or anything like that? [17:16]

S3: [soft]. No.

RM: Um, OK How 'bout felony convictions? Um. A misdemeanour or felony...does that play a role if somebody may have selected yes and say "Well, yea. I was convicted of a misdemeanour..."

S3: um-hm.

RM: ...or a felony.” How does that play out? As far as when you are looking at the applications [17:33].

S3: Would say, usually, um, you know, if you looked at all the other things. Cause you can kinda go through that checklist. You know what I mean? First. If you’re looking at somebody that seems to be a viable candidate up to that point...then, I would give them the opportunity to explain at...

RM: OK.

S3: ...that point in time. You know. Um. [17:50]

RM: What kind of checklist are we looking at? Just walk me through your checklist.

S3: As far as when I do, like, an interview with somebody?

RM: Yea. When, when you’re looking at this. So when you’ve looked at the information here...[18:00]

S3: Let me make sure I don’t mess this up too much.

RM; Yea.

S3: I have tendency to spread my papers about everywhere and then, have a hard time putting them all back together. Um. We actually don’t have a checklist per se. And this one is very rudimentary. Yes. So, this is basically, and of course I don’t have all my details listed out here because I know, in my mind, um, that, you know what I mean, I’m going through with people. But, um, I like to do [18:30] a lot of open-ended stuff with people when I actually bring them in for an interview.

RM: mm-huh.

S3: So, I would typically just start, you know, with these open-ended kinds of things. You know? Tell me something about yourself? And, you know, I might throw in specific questions to help bring out more about experience or anything like that, that I have gotten from, um, [18:49], ‘cause I’ll typically look through the résumé and or application and I’ll usually do a little bit of a phone interview first.

RM: OK.

S3: Like, I’ll actually call them and you know, say, “I have your application here. I understand that you’re interested in, um, you know, maybe joining the team.” And, you know, just go through a few basics with them. Um. What did you have in mind? You know. “What are you looking for?” That kinda thing. Um. You know? You can get sort of get a feel for, um, interaction and, you know, and sometimes they’re looking for something, that we are not going to be a good fit. And you might know that right off the bat. I would explain that to them at the time. You know? I understand. You know, da, da, da. We kinda work this way...and I don’t know that we would, you know, necessarily be the best place for you to get that experience or do what you need to do. But usually, you end up meeting with them after.

RM: OK.

S3: So, um...

RM: Have you ever...You said you usually, have you ever said after you have had this phone interview, that before your regular interview have said, "Well, you know, it's not a good fit, so let's, you know, walk, walk, walk away with it from here." Have you ever, said well they're not a good fit, so, let's, let's set this application aside. Kinda remove them from...

S3: Not typically [20:00]. Um, I sort of like to give people that opportunity. Although, I will highlight for them, like for example: We had one woman who wanted to, um, apply. But, honestly like after talking with her, I really wasn't sure, and I'm not sure that she was exactly what she was looking to do. Like her husband had a rotating schedule. You know? They had kids. They had, and I don't ask those questions. You know. I don't say "Do you have children?" or, you know?

RM: Right.

S3: That's stuff that, she [laughter]

RM: That's just it.

S3: You know? Um, and you know, at the end of it all, was like, well, you know, and I understand. My husband is a paramedic. He works a rotating schedule too. It's a big pain in the touchy [laughter]. You know? [20:39] But, I think what she was looking to try to do was like fit in a day here and there, in between what he worked.

RM: Ah, OK.

S3: Do you know what I mean? And, and so I was able to say to her, there on the phone "I'm really not sure that we would be able to accommodate what you're looking to do." You know? "But, I'm running interviews through next week. Knowing that, if you would still like to come in [page...] and talk to me, [21:00] [...[NAME DELETED], line one please] you know. You're, absolutely; maybe think a little more about it between now and then. You know. And, and see if you can get a firmer grasp on what it is that your hoping to do, and you know, we can talk about it some more. I don't, I can't honestly say that I've never done a phone interview with somebody and then not actually spoken to them.

RM: OK. OK. [21:22]

S3: I don't think I have.

RM: But that, but that phone interview gets you additional information...

S3: mm-huh

RM: ...that you can use to guide your interview process...

S3: Yes.

RM: that, to definitely do that...OK.

S3: And in my mind, at least, it may or may not be the case. In my mind it helps break the ice for that person.

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: It's used so that when they come in. I've seen so many people, um, become totally different people when they are nervous. You know what I mean? That I really like for people to try to be as comfortable as they can, when they come in for their interview. Um. You know, sometimes when their nerves kick in, you know, you fumble and bumble and you say that, although that's telling. But I feel that's kind of, at least they are coming in, and they have already talked to me, and they know who they are coming to see. Um. [22:05]. I think that takes a little bit of that, um, nerve racking element of things out.

RM: OK. OK. Um, Looking at your interview sheet here, um, let's see. Introductions about yourself, why are you seeking the clinic?, scheduling, dress code, benefit discussion, time allowed for decision and tour. Um, do you offer [22:30] it says if time, do you offer tours to everybody just to get, to give them a view of everything?

S3: um-huh. [In agreement].

RM: It's OK [referring to cell phone ringing].

S3: We try to. I mean, there are times sometimes if we're very busy

RM: Right. Right.

S3: Because my team leader typically does that. Um, if she is helping out in surgery, or back on the [inaudible], I will try and do it if I can. We try and give everybody a tour, but, um, there have been times where we have not been able to. So...

RM: Does that seem to, ah, work as a better fit after they have see the facilities [23:00] after they, um, you know, get acquainted with, with maybe get a better picture of what you guys do here?

S3: I think so, and I think it also offers, ah, an opportunity...again, it's a little bit more casual in some senses, you know? Instead of standing in a room, and I always give people the option. There's always a seat, I say "you can sit or stand. Whatever you're most comfortable with." Um. But, so you're not just two of you there in a room. I usually try to introduce them to the team leader of the area that they would be working in, once I have talked with them.

RM: Oh, OK. [23:32].

S3: Let them talk a little bit. You know what I mean? And then we sorta pal wow after.

RM: Oh.

S3: So, but they tend to do more casual kinda conversation. Do you know what I mean?

RM: Right. Right, right.

S3: Um.

RM: So, so...

S3: And during that tour, it's the same kinda thing. You know? You kinda walk through and say "this is that", and "that is that." And, you know? They'll make comments going through. They'll ask questions. A lot of the time they'll start to ask more questions, as you're walking through doing the tour then they would do when you're kinda in a room. And you...

RM: Gotcha.

S3: give them the opportunity. So, [24:00]

RM: So, would the team leader that, that, that, that, ah, takes the person around,

S3: Um-huh,

RM: Um, they are kinda conducting a second interview and answering questions?

S3: Mm-huh [Agreement]

RM: Following up? Do you meet with that team leader afterwards...

S3: Mm-huh [Agreement]

RM: to discuss everything? OK.

S3: Yea, yea.

RM: And I noticed when you mentioned that after you look over the, the résumés and CVs and, and the application, when you do, you do the interview, you just got things highlighted on the CV and résumé and you use that to just kind of cue your memory?

S3: Um, I don't usually highlight the actual papers themselves. Um, [24:30] I kinda just make mental notes [soft laughter]

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: Do you know what I mean? Then I look back over it right before I go into the interview. And, um, again I sorta like this open, open ended thing. So, if there's something I know I really want [NAME DELETED...line one please.] to visit with them, it's like here I know to work...

RM: Gotcha.

S3: ...on into it. And otherwise, a lot of time my questions come more from, what the applicant says during the interview process, then from the actual application. Do you know what I mean?

RM: OK.

S3: A lot of that stuff is fairly straight forward.

RM: OK. [25:00]

S3: I usually provide a lot of that information. So, and like you said look for the story. You're looking to, you know? Who are you? What are you about? What are you hoping to do with things?

RM: Right, right, right.

S3: That's the stuff that I find interesting.

RM: Mm. OK. OK. Um. The dress code...

S3: Mm-hum.

RM: Does this mean you're talking about dress code or are you reviewing what they're wearing.

S3: Oh, it means we talk about dress codes.

RM: Oh, OK.

S3: Yea.

RM: OK. Um, does dress code, somebody coming in here, um, I mean, what do you look at ideally when a person walks into the door?

S3: Oh. As far as what they're wearing? [25:30].

RM: Yea. I mean...

S3: I'm, I'm, you know? I think, again I'm pretty basic and simple. Um, just look for something that is. I don't know. Hum, that is a good question. I don't have a specific, you know? I think, what will really catches my attention more than anything else is neatness. Do you know what I mean? If somebody is wearing really nice clothes but they're just shoveled and messy that's going to stand out to me [26:00] more than anything. Now, if they say "I got a flat tire on the way here..." [Laughter]. Do you know what I mean?

RM: Gotha. Gotha.

S3: I take that into account. Um, really for that overall presentation, do you know what I mean? They don't have to be dressed to the tens or nines or whatever they say. Um, they don't have to be wearing heels. They don't have to be wearing a tie. Just, you know? Do they seem to take an overall sense of pride in their appearance? You know? Is it...Are they neat? Are they presentable? Um, [26:30] we've had some pretty interesting things happen. Like people have worn things in that all of a sudden when they are in their interview, like, women who had interviewed that were wearing lower cut tops. And you could tell, that, they probably didn't think about it. But when they got into their interview they were suddenly very aware of it. You know? They're crossing their arms in front of them. They're...

RM: [Laughter]

S3: fixing their shirts all the time. You know? Um, I don't necessarily tend to be, completely swayed one way or another by that because we all wear scrubs. [27:00]. Do you know what I mean? And...

RM: Right, right, right.



S3: so we go through that expectation with people. You know? And even with your scrubs, we expect it to cover everything that it should. Even if you are down in the floor holding a dog, you gotta think about that. You know. And I do the same spill with men/women no matter what they're wearing. So,

RM: OK. OK. OK.

S3: Probably doesn't help. I'm blo-da-da-da-la. But,

RM: Yea. That that is

S3: [Laughter]

RM: important. Yea. Yea. Um, let's see. [27:30]. What time, type of time-line do you look at after you interview a person? Um, do you make a decision?

S3: Um, that varies a little bit depending on a couple of factors. I always try to give every applicant an idea of what that time-line is though. You know. I feel like if they take their time to come, talk with me. It's my time too. But, I'm looking at bringing somebody in, so that's what I do. Um, it'll partially depend on the owners' schedules, because I will meet with the team leader. When we take people on the tour [28:00] through the hospital, um, we'll introduce other people, not that they are going to get a great feel one way or another from that. But, you know. We'll introduce them to people as we go through. I always got to come back to the owners and say "OK. These are the people that we interviewed." You know what I mean? Kinda go through details of everything with them before the final decision. Starting salary and all that stuff is decided upon. So, um, if the two owners that are involved in that aspect of things are here, um, then usually, within a f-f-f- [28:30], within the week with completing that last interview.

RM: Oh, ok.

S3: Like I'll try to run a few days of interviews, and, um, have a decision made by, that Friday or the following Monday.

RM: Gotcha.

S3: Depending on...

RM: How everything works.

S3: Yea. Does that make sense?

RM: Yea.

S3: Yea.

RM: So you're looking at maybe a week at the most?

S3: Yea, I try to really keep it, yea.

RM: Of course it depends on the owners' schedule and, and what else is going on.

S3: Right, right.

RM: Um, do you ever get into a situation where you have, you know, s-s-s, well...obviously with the turnover, where you have had somebody in here quickly? Does that [29:00] since speed up your process?

S3: We have been in that situation. Um, my experience with that has been, and this is just my opinion, that we're better off to take the time to go through the process fully and correctly for ah, or you know, the way that we do things. Then to, ah, modify it to try to get somebody in. Um, you're more likely to, you're more likely to [29:30] take the chance at having a bad fit, if we try to speed it up too much.

RM: So anytime that you're compressed it or shortcut something there's been a, I wouldn't say anytime, but there's, is, you're more likely to, to have the candidate maybe leave, or, or not be the best. I should,

S3: Yea, exactly.

RM: Yea, ok.

S3: We've been fortunate there have been a couple of times that um, I have run a series of interviews, maybe, two months ago or something. [30:00]. And, I may still have an application on file from someone that I interviewed that time around but someone else ended up being, a better, you know, a better fit at that point in time. We find ourselves coming up, on an opening; do you know what I mean?

RM: Right.

S3: And, I might call, that has happened a couple of times. I call somebody back and I say "You know. You asked me to keep your application on file. We interviewed a couple months ago. And I think we are going to have an opening coming up. You know. Are you still interested, in the possibility, you know, coming in and joining us? [30:30].

RM: So the individual that, after you've done the interviewing and after you've made the decision, um, some of the individuals you retain their applications.

S3: I retain everybody's application.

RM: Oh, you retain...

S3: Mm-huh.

RM: Oh, ok.

S3: Unless they ask me not too.

RM: When was that?

S3: Unless somebody says, you know, "Nope. Never mind." Then I will...

RM: And, and, and you've had that on occasion where they've withdrawn their application completely. And said "Well..."

S3: Only one time.

RM: Ok.

S3: Yea.

RM: Ok. Um. Now is six months kinda routine [31:00] that you, that you keep it for six months and then pitch it? I mean...

S3: [Agreement]

RM: And you're pretty thorough.

S3: For me [Laughter],

RM: Well, yea.

S3: For me, yea, yea.

RM: Ok. Ok.

S3: Yea.

RM: Now I notice with, with your...

S3: Ok, say I might not have like one a month long, you know, I try to go through every month though and sort of, whatever, is past that six months then I shred it. Its...

RM: Ok, um, How about references? Do you call the references? Call the employers? I mean, how do you do that?

S3: We, um, [31:30] the focus, really does tend to be on employer, previous employer references.

RM: Oh, ok.

S3: That's who we'll call first. Um, I don't know that I ever really called a personal reference on anyone to be honest with you. But like some for example, um, sometimes people who put in applications here will list on their personal references people who work here. [chuckles]. You know what I...

RM: Right, right, right.

S3: mean? They know them. So, you don't have to call. They are gonna say "I know this person put in an application. Blah-blah [32:00]." They are going to tell you, whatever anyway. So, we definitely call, um, previous employers.

RM: Ok. And with people, that, um, work here that maybe have a referral, or anything like that. How are those treated? Are those treated any different? Do you weight those, maybe, hey, since you know somebody...

S3: Not necessarily. Not necessarily. Um, we have a really interesting dynamic here [laughter]. So, I think you have to be careful [32:30] and objective in how you weight anything out. You also run that risk, when somebody knows somebody who's already here da-da-da-da-da. There is a whole other set of dynamics that comes with that. Do you know what I mean? So I, I wouldn't say we, necessarily favor it or look at it any more heavily or anything like that. Like...

RM: Do you look at it...

S3: we still review them the same way.

RM: Do you look at it, and say, "Oh, well they know somebody so; maybe we shouldn't hire this person?" Do you look at it from the other end?

S3: We don't. And actually, in all honesty [33:00], we had a situation recently where we had somebody apply, who, um, did know several people who worked here already. And, um, um, those people who knew this applicant, basically were very much like, um, pissed off. Da-da-da-da-da. You know what I mean?

RM: [Laughter]

S3: But, this person interviewed very well. Had great references. Had some experience. Do you know what I mean? And we, we really sat on that one pretty heavy for a couple weeks [33:30]. It was, it was a tough choice to make. Um, because here we had this group of people who were here saying, "Ooo, you don't want to do that." You know? But, everything else from our process and our perspective, it just didn't match. But then you have to worry about bringing somebody in to a bad dynamic. Do you...

RM: OK.

S3: know what I mean? Um, so we actually went back through, and talked with those individuals that knew this person and said, "You know. Why do you say that? What are the issues? [34:00]. Give us some examples. At the end of the day, you know, um, what stands out more to you about this person? Their ability to be a productive member of the working team or your personal feelings?" That's basically, and, and every, every single one of them, individually said, "The ability to work as part of the..." And so we told them all. We're going to offer, we going to offer a job to this person for these reasons. After taking in your input and we weighted it very heavily [34:30] and we knew that we did. You know, because we don't typically sit that long...

RM: Mm-huh.

S3: trying to make a decision. Um, you know, we can back and, and talked with all them; and basically made it clear. All the way around, like, you know, this is a working relationship, we expect everybody to be respectful. You have a background, you have a history. You need to be able to put that aside at this point in time. And, give us a chance to, you know. It may be, it, it has been fine. It has been fine. And she's been a wonderful [35:00] edition with them. So, I don't know if that's too much information, but...

RM: But, but...

S3: For example, that was, when you asked that question, like, we just had that within the last few months, where, we didn't say, "Oh because you've said, "Duh-duh-duh." But it made the decision much, harder for us.

RM: Right.

S3: Cause, minus that feedback, we probably would've, um, been a lot, wa-wa, I don't think we would have had a hesitation to offer her a job [35:30].

RM: So essentially, because the employees had some issues, and you're looking at the, the fit in the organisational culture, that did kind of delay everything. Didn't it?

S3: And they may not be the right thing. But I, I know for us, that was the right way to have handled it. Um, so...

RM: Now, I noticed with, with the high schooling, is that, is that an important factor to have the high school listed? [36:00]. Ah, it says, "Do you have a high school diploma? Yes or No?"

S3: Actually no. We've, we've had a couple of people hired in that didn't have their diploma yet. So...

RM: Oh, ok, ok.

S3: Um, we had, two, had two people in the last couple of years that came in and did not have a diploma. Um, that had left school, um, before finishing their diploma, before, medical reasons or family medical reasons. They came in and worked, and then, both went back when they were ready [36:30], and we were as supportive of that as we could be in terms of scheduling around classes and that kind of thing to get their GED. So, we strongly encourage it. Um, but we have hired people in who didn't have it.

RM: Um, is there an age limit or anything like that that you look for? Do they have to be over the age of eighteen?

S3: [Nodding in agreement]

RM: Eighteen. OK.

S3: And that's a thing that has to do with insurance.

RM: Ok.

S3: The insurance policy for the business. That is my understanding from the owners.

RM: Ok. How about twenty-one? Would some insurance policies [37:00] dealing with drugs or any type of pharmaceuticals or anything like that, ah, does that have a bearing on, on anything? Or, is it just eighteen? Or...

S3: It's eighteen to my knowledge.

RM: Ok. And ah, when, when you're thinking of a, um, um, I know we talked about you had multiple positions with support staff that, that you deal with. Ah, and, and you had some lab techs too. What kind of break down do you look at? Um, and, and you mentioned team leaders. How many, how many teams do you [37:30] have?

S3: Um, this is still a work-in-progress [laughter]

RM: Ok.

S3: with everything. So, I mean we definitely have, um, we call them like our departments: Um, reception, exam rooms, lab, treatment, surgery, and kennels [38:00].

RM: We got about six different ones right now? OK? Now, um, of course reception is out front

S3: Mm-huh.

RM: Um, exam room is someone that cleans everything and?

S3: And they go in and assist the doctors in the rooms and they'll, they'll load up the rooms, take basic, you know, basic history, weight, temperature, you know, that kind of thing.

RM: Ok.

S3: Restrain the animals, um, so the doctors can do their exams. Help get medication out [38:30], go over that with the subject.

RM: In the laboratory, they actually have the testing and stuff

S3: Mm-huh...

RM: like that

S3: testing and a lot of the pharmaceuticals actually. The lab, um, assistants are the ones that fill a lot of the prescriptions and do other things.

RM: Um, treatment. How, how...

S3: Treatment is, treatment is where all the magic happens [laughter]. Um, treatment is like the central area of the hospital here, where, um, basically, if an animal needs blood drawn, if it needs x-rays done, if it needs an I.V. catheter [39:00] placed. Um, any of that kind of stuff, we take it to the treatment area to do it. So, they may be admitted to the hospital

RM: Mm-huh.

S3: and brought in for that, um wound cleaning, and any of that sort of thing that's not surgical. Um, except for dentals, which are not technically surgical, but we have to ah, put animals under anaesthesia for it. We have a dental area over to the side.

RM: Ok.

S3: So, um, basically anything that is not happening in an exam room, or in surgery...

RM: Sort of like outpatient...

S3: Yea, yea, so, we, we kinda [39:30] talk about it that way. Like we say, like reception, lab and rooms are sorta [Intercom: Like, Mrs. [NAME DELETED] is on line one checking on [NAME DELETED]] our outpatient area. Like, if you have ever worked in a restaurant, like we joke and say front of the house, back of the house. You know what I mean? And then, treatment, surgery and kennels are, you know, sort of your inpatient area.

RM: Gotcha.

S3: Your back of the house or whatever.

RM: Ok, ok.

S3: Not just to say there not exchange between the two, cause there is. But, um, when we sort of split out with teams leaders, the original structure, was to, have someone for [40:00] reception. Basically, to have a lead receptionist, cause, reception is sort of a creature, all its own. Do you know what I mean?

RM: Yea.

S3: Its, um, and you really have to have somebody that's been in that area and worked it heavily. I think to really, have a grasp on, how to make things, better and smoother, in, in that kind of thing up there. There so much, and it's that way with any area. But I don't think you can have somebody whose never, worked in reception, or overseen reception.

RM: Gotcha.

S3: Do you know what I mean? Same as any place else. So, [40:31] then we've had a team leader for exam rooms and lab; and one for treatment/surgery; and one for kennels. We've had to restructure that some, as we've gone. Cause we've, um, had the need to turn some of our focus like training, that's really our focus, for the next year. We do not have a formal training programme. I, we're just starting, in the last couple of months to say, "Ok. When people come in for the first two weeks or whatever. This is what we're going to do [41:00]." Do you know what I mean? Um, and so, I've been pushing for two years to, for us to devote some time and energy specifically to developing a training programme that works

RM: Ok.

S3: for us. Do you know what I mean? There are canned programmes out there. We've looked at a million of them. Or you can look and say, "Ok. Week one: Duh-duh-duh, duh-duh-duh." But I think every facility is a little bit different; and we haven't found one that we can look at and go, "Oh, yes. We've comfortable doing it."

RM: Gotcha. Gotcha.

S3: Just like that. So, one of our team leaders, just recently made, kind of a lateral move [41:30] I guess. I don't know. You go from like, the direct supervision of daily activities to, working on, helping us, gather up resources, and devise, some phase training. Just what we're, working on with her, so...

RM: Oh, ok, ok. Um, getting our people cross-trained or will they always work within that team setting?

S3: We really have never encouraged cross-training. Um, we typically, [clears throat] we typically like for someone whose come in new, especially if they don't have any experience to be [42:00] in the position that they are hired into for six months

RM: Ok.

S3: before we start looking at cross-training.

RM: Ok.

S3: Um, I think it's important for people to show, comfort in the, in the clinic and competency within the role they already have, before we start throwing more responsibility

RM: Gotcha.

S3: at them.

RM: Gotcha.

S3: So, we do though. We strongly encourage that. And I would say, at any given point in time we probably have at least three team members, um, cross-training from another area to another [42:30] area. So,

RM: Ok. Are there pay differentials or anything like that? Or, how is that maybe somebody in surgery gets, extra incentive or?

S3: There are pay differentials; I don't do, the raises in, in the pay, and that sort of

RM: Right, right, right.

S3: thing. So I don't know exactly what they are. But, actually I was just talking to one of the owners where he came in. That is the structure that we're working on setting up right now as well.

RM: Ok, ok.

S3: As we have expanded our staff and [43:00] now we have some certified registered technicians which we did not before, you know, how do we come up with the formula, you know, that allows some flexibility with incentive and raises and that kind of thing; but still gives us a basic foundation that makes it very clear and, and fair. Equitable

RM: Yea.

S3: for people, for everybody that they would have some idea of what they might expect.

RM: Right.

S3: So, it's on our project list. But,

RM: Now, with expansion, are you looking at actually going twenty-four hour care? [43:30]

S3: No. Not at this point; although, one of the doctors would love to [laughter]. He has been saying that forever. Um, no. Not at this point in time.

RM: Ok. Just focusing on what you have now?

S3: Yes. Trying to get a handle on what we're doing. Um, as far as making changes and things, we've just started to offer; it's always just been a walk in clinic.

RM: Oh.

S3: The only thing you had to schedule for was, surgery: Anything that required anaesthesia. So, and it wasn't even specific time [44:00]. You would just set, schedule surgery for that day.



RM: Gotcha.

S3: And then drop off anytime between, we would say "between eight and nine." But if they would come between eight and ten it would be fine. You know, we're, we're really trying to get some parameters set for that. So,

RM: Gotcha.

S3: um, we've started scheduling check-in times for surgery. Hoping that'll help the mornings go a little smoother. Oh, we're doing that for about, six weeks now. And I do think, for the most part, it is helping. We would have this mad chaos every morning [44:30]. Um, and then all of our clients would be walk-in to. So you just would never know whose going to come when

RM: Right, right.

S3: when, they are going to come. It's just really difficult to staff for that. Do you know what I mean? You always end up having too many people or not enough people.

RM: Right.

S3: Or, um, so we were doing baby steps. We started to offer, one doctor, doing scheduled appointments, for exams and that kind of thing, um for that time of day. We have been doing that for about, [45:00] probably about eight months now. Um, I'm ready to move and start to, to do two doctors. Do you know what I mean? Um, the doctors are a little more hesitant at this point.

RM: Right,

S3: So,

RM: right, right. And you only got seven doctors? So,

S3: Right.

RM: change... Um, do you do any other type of background checks, other than the reference checks or anything like that?

S3: We do not at this time. We don't do a criminal background check. We don't do drug testing. We don't do any of that.

RM: Any plans to do that

S3: I don't think they ever have. Um, we've discussed it [45:30], in a very general sense.

RM: Mm-huh.

S3: I would not say that at this point, that I have any indication that something we're heading towards, but it's been, it's been through out there

RM: Mm. Ok.

S3: in discussion.

RM: Ok. Let's stop this thing [45:50].



## **APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW NOTES (S3)**

### **CROSS LANES VETERINARY HOSPITAL General Interview Notes Tuesday, 5 July 2010, ~15:00**

#### **PRIOR TO INTERVIEW**

Prior to the interview, the researcher and S3 reviewed the Informed Consent Form and discussed how this research would be conducted. As the Veterinary Hospital was developing written policies and position descriptions were not formally adopted, it was decided that the best way forward was to review the filtering process and present the consultancy report. For this interview, jotted notes provided a means to prepare a more comprehensive account of the interview. Additionally, recording the interview allowed the researcher to evaluate the interview through transcription and listening to the conversations repeatedly.

*The Veterinary Hospital has seven (7) doctors as Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and twenty-five (25) staff members. Staff members compose several divisions or teams within the Veterinary Hospital. The Veterinary Hospital also conducts some lab work in-house.*

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

The interview between the researcher and the Veterinary Hospital Office Manager ("S3") commenced on or about 15:00 on 5 July 2010 at the Veterinary Hospital office. The interview took place within the file room/office manager's office. The room appeared to be approximately six feet by twelve feet accessible by one door. The door always remained open as other employees consistently needed access to some files. Within the file room, a computer workstation, telephone, and some working papers were directly across from the veterinary patient files. The air conditioner was being repaired during the interview.

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

S3 was a female with an associate's degree in massage therapy. She was hired around August 2007. She is married with children and pets.

#### **INTERVIEW DISCUSSIONS**

The need to hire or replace a staff member is approximately every three to six (3-6) months an individual is selected. S3 notes "we probably will hire someone in every three to six months on the average." Turnover has been a problem, more so within the last two years. This can be explained in part from the turnover of existing staff and the current expansion of facilities. Facility expansion commenced approximately two years ago (~year 2008). This hiring is both replacing individuals that have left and integrating new positions resulting from expansion.

The researcher enquires about why employees leave the Veterinary Hospital. S3 states some employees left for other positions within the same line of work (e.g. animal shelter manager), some retire, and some moved out of West Virginia. The researcher: "Do you conduct exit interviews when people leave or how do you get the information?" S3 responds

"People are usually pretty forthcoming with it. Honestly, we don't have a formal exit interview." S3 adds that the Veterinary Hospital is expanding and roles are changing, thus policies are still being developed. When the Veterinary Hospital was smaller, you did not need the policies. In fact, a large group of employees have been with the Veterinary Hospital for six to sixteen years.

The researcher asks about the résumés and CVs that the Veterinary Hospital gets. S3 notes "We don't tend to see CVs so much [for staff]." Maybe for doctors, but they have those. No doctors have been hired since I have been here. S3 takes a few seconds to review some résumés from the file cabinet. Showing these to the researcher, S3 illustrates that the résumés are in various formats and therefore the standard Veterinary Hospital application must be completed for résumés to be considered. The researcher asks S3 if she looks at the application first or the résumé. S3 states that there is no order, just what is available first.

The researcher asks S3 which information is looked at first. S3 answers "...I look for...completion, presentation." That is, did the applicant attempt to complete the application? "...is it fairly legible?" Definitely, presentation first. In essence, S3 focuses on negative cues: If information within the résumé is lacking and difficult to read. Next, S3 notes "I'm always most interested to know, know why are you [the job-seeker] looking for a job?" S3 states second item most noticed is the objective statements and cover letter. This usually explains, "Why job-seeker is looking for a job".

The researcher asks S3 to "...walk me through your process." S3 responds "Obviously you're gonna look for...experience." Experience is contingent upon what position is available and the needs of the Veterinary Hospital. The experience of the job-seeker must be transferable to the position.

The researcher asks S3, "Do you weight one more than the other, experience or education?" S3 elaborated over this question, and responded "...I think, there's a little bit more of a standard that you can expect with completion of education versus experience." S3 continues to expand the concept that work experience can sometimes be difficult to judge. S3 considers education and experience and provides this statement: "...you have to do a little bit more, um, talking with them [to judge experience]..." especially if education is accredited. Thus, S3 considers education and experience roughly equal; but, education can be standard based on accreditation and can be compared more easily.

"Have you ever asked for transcripts, or do you look at transcripts..." posed the researcher. S3 answered no; however, S3 will preview transcripts if presented by the job-seeker. After some discussion, S3 adds a small team of registered technicians has developed at the Veterinary Hospital. Also, S3 notes some employees have education that does not fit with their responsibilities and duties.

After education, S3 evaluates the experience and the time associated with employers. S3 asks, "...where has this person devoted their professional time and energy?" S3 looks for short term employment that cannot be explained. [Researcher NOTE: This may be defined as a job-hopper]. Individuals [Job hoppers] whose employment was less than three (3) months per job trend to be not hired.

The researcher enquires about extracurricular activities. S3 offers that extracurricular activities are important, but not required. Those with shelter experience, shadowing, fundraisers and other related animal experience are valued greater. The primary reason for the increased value is the job-seeker has taken the initiative and his/her time to become involved in these activities. These activities cannot be substituted for experience and sometimes job-seekers emphasize the extracurricular activities when a lack of employment exists. For example: According to S3, "People tend to glorify that a little bit if they've never done it." "...I mean people tend to glorify the 'I love working with animals'." On the application, "Describe Animal Experience" facilitates a job-seeker to provide an answer. S3

notes that individuals listing phrases such as “I like to work with animals” and other phrases that are ambiguous or do not quantify or qualify direct experience are not necessarily a good fit. Answers similar to those are used as a filtering cue for S3 to question and clarify the experience of the job-seeker.

Next, the question concerning U.S. citizenship was examined. S3 advises all job-seekers have presented themselves as U.S. citizens. This question does not impact the filtering process. Likewise, questions concerning military experience do not impact the filtering process. However, questions concerning criminal history do affect the filtering process. S3 states “If you’re looking at somebody that seems to be a viable candidate up to that point...[criminal history] then, I would give them the opportunity to explain at that point in time.”

The researcher and S3 discussed some of the interview processes. S3 uses a cognitive checklist and mental notes while conducting interviews. This includes the formal in person interview and the telephone interview. S3 uses the telephone interview to provide job-seekers information concerning the Veterinary Hospital and the position. In some cases, job-seekers remove themselves from consideration for a position. S3 states another benefit of this telephone interview help “...break the ice for that person.” Occasionally, a job-seeker reacts nervously during the formal interview.

If time permits, applicants tour the Veterinary Hospital and meet some of the team members that the vacant position would interact. The tour is conducted by a team leader. While this tour is informal, this provides a method of conducting a second interview.

While reviewing the applications, résumés, CVs, and other papers, S3 only makes only mental notes. S3 does not mark upon any of the papers. She does refresh her memory by reviewing the information prior to formal interviews.

Dress code is discussed during the interview. S3 looks for individuals whose appearance is neat. S3 explains during prior interviews, individuals became aware of some issues with their wardrobes. Because the Veterinary Hospital staff members wear scrubs, filtering decisions are not influenced by an applicant’s attire.

Additionally, time lines do not affect filtering decisions (S3). S3 notes uncertain decisions are better examined with new information and following hiring processes than making quick decisions to hire. Shortcuts are not permitted.

Applications are retained for around six months (S3). When applicant pools are not sufficient, S3 recruits prior applicants.

For references, S3 consults with previous and current employers. Personal references are not called. Sometimes, job-seekers place Veterinary Hospital current employees as personal references. When this occurs, S3 notes that the employee personal reference is consulted by the Veterinary Hospital concerning the job-seeker. The researcher asks if staff referrals influence filtering decisions. S3 states that referrals create a dynamic where the Veterinary Hospital must weight information against personal relationships. For example: An applicant having several negative employee comments was considered for a position. These negative comments postponed the decision for two weeks until a resolution with the current employees was reached. Without the employee feedback, there would not have been any reason to delay the hiring process.

The researcher questions the importance of a high school diploma. S3 notes that high school is not an important factor as the Veterinary Hospital has hired individuals that do not have a high school diploma. S3 explains medical (i.e. personal or family) reasons were the barrier in obtaining the diploma. Also, the Veterinary Hospital does encourage completion of the diploma or GED by being flexible with scheduling.

The researcher asks, "...is there an age limit or anything like that that you look for?" The Veterinary Hospital requires job-seekers to be eighteen due to insurance requirements (S3). Seeking clarification, the researcher confirms that the age is eighteen and not twenty-one as pharmaceuticals and laboratory requirements. S3 confirms the age of eighteen.

S3 details the divisions of the Veterinary Hospital: "...we call them like our departments: Um, reception, exam rooms, lab, treatment, surgery, and kennels." Reception is out front. Exam room assist doctors by prepping rooms, taking basic information and vitals, and review medicine with patients. The laboratory performs testing. Treatment is the central area where non-surgical procedures are done: Blood drawn, I.V. catheter, wound cleaning, and x-rays. Treatment, surgery, and kennels are more inpatient.

Team leaders must have experience that is transferable to the specific team needs. S3 provides this example: "...you really have to have somebody that's been in that area [reception] and worked it heavily." These changes are necessary with the restructuring of the Veterinary Hospital. In fact, training will be the focus for the next year (S3). A two week orientation and training for newcomers has just been implemented within the last few months. S3 advises several off-the-shelf training programmes were found to be lacking concerning the needs of the Veterinary Hospital. Cross-training is becoming more important as the Veterinary Hospital is expanding. But, employees are not cross-trained until after completing six months of service.

The researcher enquires about pay differentials and extra incentives for training. S3 confirms that "There are pay differentials..." and we [the owners and S3] are evaluating and formalising a system to be implemented. For example: "...now we have some certified registered technicians which we did not before..." resulting from organisational growth (S3). The Veterinary Hospital has considered extending operating hours; however, this expansion has been placed on hold until the owners are comfortable with the current expansion from 2008. The Veterinary Hospital takes a conservative approach towards expansion (S3).

Finally, the researcher asks, "...any other types of background checks..." S3 confirms that the Veterinary Hospital does not conduct a criminal background check or require drug testing. But, general policy discussions surrounding drug testing and criminal background checks have occurred.

## **APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW NOTES (S4)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTRE EMPLOYMENT CENTER General Interview Notes with S4 Wednesday, 2 June 2010 – Morning**

These are general notes concerning the conversation that occurred on 2 June 2010. As part of the conversation, general information concerning this case study was provided to S4 (the Director of the CAMC-EC). Additionally, S4 provided information concerning the operational aspects of CAMC-EC and CAMC which included the policies, procedures, and general information to the researcher for this case study.

CAMC is mostly organised as a non-profit conglomerate under Internal Revenue Code 501(c) (3) [potentially b].

CHERI has no hospitals. The CAMC Foundation is a fundraising arm of CAMC with a separate Board that serves without compensation. CAMC has affiliated agreements with West Virginia University. The IHCPI are the Doctor's offices and the HealthCare/Urgent Care facilities. There are four HealthCare/Urgent Care operations.

CAMC-TV has a separate board as this was a new hospital acquisition. CAMC-TV was established when CAMC purchased the assets from Putnam General. CAMC-TV was organised as a separate legal entity until such time as litigation issues stemming from allegations surrounding medical malpractice have been resolved with Putnam General. While CAMC purchased the assets from Putnam General, CAMC did not assume liability for the allegations against Putnam General.

CAMC has three hospitals: Women & Children's; Memorial; and General.

CAMC-EC does hiring for all CAMC facilities with the exception of CAMC-TV. However, CAMC-TV has adopted the procedures and processes of CAMC-EC. Employees at all CAMC entities have the same benefits. In FY 2009, 252 paper applications were processed by CAMC-EC.

Fiscal Year is from 1 December to 30 November. This is intentional as October is when the U.S. Government adjusts the Medicare rates and policy updates.

CAMC Information Technology is outsourced. The Pharmacy is partially outsourced. Pharmacy CAMC employees are non-management and nutrition.

Background checks cover seven years. Unfavourable findings from background checks can jeopardise employment opportunities based on the position and charges. Background checks are outsourced.

Drug screenings began in 2007. The drug screen is a nine panel screen.

Since 2003, credentials have been verified. This became policy after a Director of Medical Affairs, having been in the position for 2-3 years, was found to not have the proper credentials. There have been more problems with High School Diplomas and G.E.D.s than other school degrees when verifying credentials. H.S./GED more likely to be falsified.

WorkForce WV does the typing tests, computer tests, and data entry tests. A federal grant enables WorkForce WV to provide this service to CAMC at no cost. Additionally, WorkForce gets credit if CAMC hires.

CAMC must compete with St. Francis Hospital, Thomas Hospital, and other medical facilities. Med-Xpress would be in competition with the Urgent Care.

CAMC-EC noted that transfer requests are greatly reduced during the summer months as vacations would have to be rescheduled and are contingent upon seniority.

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RM: How is CAMC setup?

S4: CAMC, itself is setup as a non-profit. I think a 501(c)...3, b? Maybe?

RM: OK.

S4: And CHERI has no hospitals.

RM: Mm, hum.

S4: CAMC Foundation does a lot of fundraising. It's the fundraising arm. They have a separate board that are all volunteers and they work really close with WVU.

RM: OK.

S4: IHCPI takes care of the four Health Care Urgent cares. Oh. And the physician offices. Some physicians would rather treat patients than do administration things: Payroll, hire, pay bills. That type of thing. They get a steady paycheck and no headaches. Um. They get bonuses too. I think quarterly, it's like profit sharing.

RM: OK. Putnam General?

S4: Yea. It's now CAMC Teays Valley.

RM: What about the litigation?

S4: Well, its considered, they set it up as a separate entity until all the legal issues are over. They are pretty smart. They had a lot of lawyers and discussions before this ever happened. I mean, it took a lot of planning.

RM: So, just the assets were purchased?

S4: Exactly. CAMC, just created CAMC-Teays Valley. Bought their stuff and transferred everything on paper. They even have a separate board.

RM: Like the coal mines?

S4: Yep.

RM: And how many hospitals? Other than the one in Teays Valley.

S4: Three. CAMC General is in Charleston. Women and Children's', just off the bridge. And Memorial is across the river.

RM: Kanawha City?

S4: Near U.C.



RM: OK. So what does this Employment Centre do for CAMC?

S4: [laughs] We do the hiring for everybody. Well, everybody except Teays Valley. They have their own processes. But they adopted all our policies and procedures. They even get the same benefits.

RM: OK. And does everyone use the same fiscal year?

S4: December first to November thirtieth. October is when all the new federal reimbursement rates come out. And Medicaid as well.

RM: OK. Roughly, how many paper applications were processed?

S4: Let's see. Two hundred fifty-two last year. [Handing papers over].

RM: Are there any other position that the Employment Centre does not hire for?

S4: IT [Information Technology] is outsourced. Mm, some of Pharmacy. We have our in-house staff, non-management and nutrition positions. But the management is all outsourced.

RM: How about filtering, testing, any other outsourcing?

S4: Background checks. Um. Those are done by another company.

RM: How does that work?

S4: Well. I think its EBI. You have to ask [S8] about that. He does all that. I think they go back, seven years? And it's also contingent on the position and the type of charges. We don't want to have someone convicted of child abuse or something like that here. I mean, if it's something that going get us a headline in the Charleston Gazette, then chances are we don't want to do it. But, you know, if they got a traffic ticket they can work here. Maybe not drive for us. But they can still work here.

RM: When did you start background checks?

S4: [laughs] Since, 2003.

RM: Is there a story behind this?

S4: Mm. Yea. We had a problem and we had to really look at how we did things here.

RM: What kind of problem. Did you have an issue with someone that hired on?

S4: Not exactly. This was someone that was already here. I mean, we did check their background and they had everything. It just wasn't right.

RM: How so? Can you tell me the story?

S4: Um... Well. This person did not have the education that they said they had. I mean, they had a copy of a degree, but they never got it.

RM: OK.

S4: Well, it was our Director of Medical Affairs. They were in that position for, um, two to three years, I think. And someone called in, on our employee hotline and said, "you

know da-da-da, they didn't go to school." It was right out of the blue. So we did a double check of the file and just called the school. They didn't have it and so we let them go. So now we check everybody. But really, we have more problems, I think, with the high school degrees. I'm not sure why, but we do.

RM: And for drug testing?

S4: I think, yea, 2007. That is done here though. Employee Health does them all. And they do a nine panel drug test. So its marijuana, speed, meth, um, all the good ones.

RM: OK. What about other tests? I remember pre-employment testing?

S4: Workforce does all those: Typing, computer, data entry tests. They get a federal grant to do all that. We don't pay for that. But they do get credit when we hire someone that they have tested and been through.

RM: And you have to compete with St. Francis, Thomas Hospital, Med Xpress and other health care facilities for people to apply?

S4: Yea.

RM: Any slow times of the year for applications? I mean, are there any times where you don't have enough people applying?

S4: Yea. There are less transfer requests during the summer. If they transfer they have to reschedule their vacation and they may not get it. It's all based on seniority.

RM: OK. Looking at the hiring process, there are two groups: Internal and external job-seekers. With the external, that is where the paper applications come from?

S4: Yea. The employees have access to computers so there is no need for them to use paper. It's just much easier without it.

RM: OK. And if an employee is not happy with an external hire, they can appeal it?

S4: Yea. But they only have so long.

RM: And everyone is subject to the background check, drug test, the health assessment, um, right?

S4: Mm, huh.

RM: OK. This gives me a good start.

S4: [laughs] Well you have all those policies to go through, and, yea, it's gonna take a while.

## **APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION (S5-Part 1 of 2)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTRE EMPLOYMENT CENTER Interview Transcription with S5 (Part 1 of 2) Thursday, 8 July 2010**

S5: Like with [S7's] position.

RM: Oh ok.

S5: [S7] gets twenty-five people that are very qualified, secretaries.

RM: These are your copies.

S5: Oh ok. Thank you.

RM: Yea, [inaudible]

S5: And personality may come into play when I've got ten pharmacist positions that I need to fill. They can be somewhat more, now they won't take the wrong person. So, I mean if somebody comes in and they are just blatantly, not a good fit for the organisation they, they will, not just make it. Most departments will [00:30] not just hire a warm body.

RM: Right, right, right.

S5: After I do this I should be good [S5 is responding to email messages]. [00:48] I have to do this as they happen or I will forget. There's just too many things to keep track of.

RM: I completely understand. Now what types of, you talked about the pharmacy techs, what [01:00] other types of...

S5: I have all of Allied Health. So I have pharmacy, the lab, basically anything that's clinical that's not a nurse or a doctor.

RM: Ok.

S5: I mean, I have all of imaging, um, physician's assistants, social workers, counsellors, communication specialists, ED techs, [01:30] wish I could...

RM: Is that everything?

S5: anything that's not a phys..., anything that's not a doctor or a nurse or clerical or support. Anything clinical that's not a doctor or a nurse is mine.

RM: Ok, ok.

S5: So learning the lights and journals if for that...if um, I'm glad I am at where I am now and not where I was.

RM: How many, how many years have you been in this position?

S5: Um, Well I came here, would be, five years ago, right? [son] started middle [02:00] school; [son] was in sixth grade when I went to HR and he'll be in eleventh -- four years. So I've been here four.

RM: Four years? Ok.

S5: I think I'm going into my fifth year is what I'm doing.

RM: And did you have any experience prior to, that? Ok.

S5: No. I have a degree in organisational leadership. [Omitted third-party conversation. 02:30 to 03:00].

RM: Ok, I'll let you just finish that before...

S5: I am so sorry. I feel like I'm...

RM: you're fine.

S5: being extremely rude

RM: No, no.

S5: and I need to just stop.

RM: I understand. You got stuff to do.

S5: I've got to finish it or I can't leave today. [S5 responding to emails] Honest to god... [03:00] [Long pause from 03:00 to 03:46] I started with, um, support, I had what what [S7] had.

RM: Oh, ok.

S5: And I did support from August until, January. And then someone left [04:00]; and, they were afraid to put a brand new per... even though I had a big whopping, what? August, September, October, November, December, January, five months [laughter] of doing it. They were afraid to give Allied to someone who didn't have any experience. With, at least I knew the hiring process.

RM: Right, right.

S5: Which I didn't know the positions. But job descriptions became my best friend. And I learned very quickly that you think a manager kno..., a manager would contact you and say send me Suzy Smith's application, [04:30] for a phlebotomist position that I have and being naïve and green you would think well you helped write the job positions so certainly you know if Suzy meets the qualifications. No, they don't.

RM: [laughs]

S5: No, they don't. And initially I had a lot of really challenging situations because I was living by the job descriptions, and the way I tried to look at it was, if, and I've been involved in some of the surveys when [the compliance officer] comes in and pulled the files that they look at, [05:00] because basically the last, I think their new approach to the survey is, they take a patient and they track every person that's touched that

patient, from the time they were admitted, I mean, so they're looking at the emp...at the, um, employee file for the admitting clerk. You know? For the person that wheeled him in the wheelchair up to the, I mean, it's, it's the all the way back and my fear was always that, they would pull somebody that I hired, that didn't meet a job description and I just, it's because these are licensed people. [05:30] I mean, and it's scary to think you hire a Rad Tech that doesn't have a license or you hire... I mean that was with typing tests and stuff like that and you have to meet those as well and it's important. But when you are talking about you can put an unlicensed, unqualified, clinical person on the floor, I'd really wouldn't want to be responsible for that.

RM: Right, right, right.

S5: So, that's been a lot of, of, a lot of learning; and I'll be [06:00], if you talk to [another screener] and then they hate my positions the most. Because with nursing it's an RN license and everybody has one, but with mine you are dealing with about thirty different boards.

RM: oh, thirty different boards?

S5: Oh, ease, easily because I have the board of social workers. I've got the board of psychologists. I've got the board, of, of radiologic technology, the American Registry of Rad Techs. Um, ARDMS, I mean, it's been gre..., I have really learned, a lot. I mean it's, it's really [06:30] and I still to this day get calls from our processors every time I hire ultra-stenographer wanting to know why I didn't verify their license. They don't have to have one. Ultra-stenographers do not have a licensing board in West Virginia. They can be ARDMS certified which is a national registry which requires an exam, and we have very high standards here at CAMC. I mean, just because you are a phlebotomist at one place doesn't mean you are qualified to be one here.

RM: Hm.

S5: I mean we are very specific about our job descriptions and what we require. And we have very high standards; [07:00] and sometimes that can be challenging but I think all of us are, are proud of that, fact that...

RM: So just because someone held a position it is not necessarily transferable for your, for your

S5: Exactly. Exactly. Not always. Not always. I mean, um, we require that a phlebotomist either have had training within the last five years through a programme that we recognize and there are only a handful of those around the area or that they have worked in a CLIA [Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments: see US DHHS, Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services] approved laboratory, um, [07:30] full time, for a year. So if they work six months as a phlebotomist at a lab that's not CLIA approved I couldn't hire them here as a phlebotomist.

RM: Not as...

S5 See what I'm saying?

RM: Yea, yea.

S5: So, um, [07:40 to 07:43 inaudible]. This is like, the fourth or fifth time this has happened.

RM: That, that's what she was saying.

S5: Yea. This building was just, used to be a warehouse [inaudible] and sat here. I don't know. But it's nice now, so I'm not complaining. Yeah that basically... [08:00][S5 answers the phone. Third-party conversation omitted [08:30 to 10:00] Excuse me.

RM: OK.

S5: Be right back. [Long pause from 10:02 to 10:11. Recording was stopped for a short intermission].

## **APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION (S5-Part 2 of 2)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTRE EMPLOYMENT CENTER Interview Transcript with S5 (Part 2 of 2) Thursday, 8 July 2010 [42:26]**

RM: [Part 2 of 2; continues ~00:05]

S5: Alright.

RM: Walk me through just a standard process of how you,

S5: Um,

RM: evaluate an individual.

S5: Let's talk about the person we just hired.

RM: Ok.

S5: I go out every day and check to see, especially for my hard to fill vacancies, if I have received any new applications under, um, there March as you can see, they been sent over to a manager. The most recent ones were [00:30] [Omitted third-party conversation].

S5: And my thing that I'm looking at, first of all she's wanting twenty-five dollars an hour.

RM: Hm.

S5: She says she can work full-time. No weekends, which that's our problem because they all want on-call on the weekends. So when I identify, I mean if it's somebody that puts that they [01:00] want per diem code work, I don't have any positions available. So, basically it's looking to see what I have out there, versus what they're looking for. So,

RM: Yea.

S5: mine is more that type of thing then, a skill and a skill set. Ok. So, then I want to make sure that she has the education that's required because some people just wake up and decide they want to be a brain surgeon.

RM: Really.

S5: Oh yea. You have people that apply for positions that they completely don't qualify for.

RM: [laughs]

S5: Oh yea. There tra-, and an, I think a lot of times it's a, it's really just a misconception because [01:30] they think in occupational therapy assistant is just somebody that helps the occupational therapist. Do you know what I'm saying? They don't realise that it's something that somebody had to get an associate's degree and a

RM: Ok.

S5: license to do.

RM: Um, do, do, do they, are the position descriptions available for them to review?

S5: They're not. They're really not out there for them to review.

RM: Oh, ok.

S5: So, on CAMC.org, they can see what positions are available. But, if CAMC.org is a very antiquated and we have to manually post those positions on there [02:00]. And, I'll show you that in just a minute.

RM: Ok.

S5: But I don't think it has specific requirements. Ah, probably the thought process is in the medical field if you have, what you need to have, you know you have to have a Master's degree to be an occupational therapist and you know you have to have a doctoral degree to be a physical therapist, and...

RM: Mm-huh. But, so you, you have a lot of people applying for those positions...

S5: Yea. People that apply that don't, yea, exactly. Alright. Now, she has her license so we're good there. And she's [02:30] worked as an occupational therapist before so I'm going to look and see what she was making so. And like I said, I offered her eighteen somethin'. The last job she was making twenty-four fifty. Private, this is assist living in private. They get reimbursed from Medicare at a different rate then I do. And they have a different skill set mix then I do. They can have, one occupational therapist with two or three, oh, CODAs working underneath of them and go out and help provide the therapy. We require that, that the CODA work directly with the OT. It's a one [03:00] on one, balance that they hold us too. So, and, and also our reimbursement rates are different. We compete with Huntington a lot. Um, we get a lot of people complain because we can't pay what Huntington does. Huntington actually gets reimbursed at a different rate then we do. We're in the southern coalfields. Huntington is in the Tri-State Region. So, it's different.

RM: Oh, really.

S5: Mm-huh. What Medicare reimburses, Medicare Medicaid reimburse is higher in that area then it is here. I don't know why. I, I don't pretend to understand that, but, um, so basically with a majority of my positions [03:30] except for pretty much, phlebotomist. It's market driven. Um, phlebotomists are probably, they're my lowest paying.

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: And lab assistants, they don't require... Lab assistants only require a high school diploma.

RM: Ok.

S5: And technical assistants are, people that work in radiology; and there used to be a programme that they could take to actually be trained to be a technical assistant. There's no programme out there anymore. Basically we use those positions to fill with students [04:00] that are at UC or one of the local colleges in a Rad Tech programme. They can go ahead and get their feet in the door. Learn the workings of the hospital, get to know the people around them; and then upon graduation, there's no guarantee,



that the, we hope to be able to place them in an RT position so they can stay here and work. It's very market driven; and the biggest thing that I learned when I went from Support Clerical to Allied Health was the fact that doing an interview with a phlebotomist is completely different than doing an interview with a pharmacist; because I might see, [04:30] eighteen phlebotomist in one day for six positions. If I spend ten to thirty minutes going over benefits with them, it's going to ah, and then only hire two: How much time have I just wasted?

RM: Right, right, right.

S5: There's a benefits presentation at New Hire Orientation. And I guarantee you that if all sixteen came in to see me; there all sixteen looking for a job and pretty much sixteen of them know what I'm going to pay. It's a matter of which one is my manager gonna pick. With a pharmacist, it's a sales job. It is a total sales pitch. With this CODA, that was, that was a sales pitch [05:00]. I couldn't give her the money that she wanted, but they're offering her flexibility in her hours that the other place is not offering her. Plus I'm offering her a total compensation package which consists of retirement matching after one year. I mean, when I'm working with a pharmacist, a graduate pharmacist, just trying to bring them onboard; I go so far as to take their salary and then, which is a brand new pharmacist forty-five eight-six [\$45.86]. We're currently working on a two per cent merit scale which, we're really can't afford, but we're [05:30] capped at two but I always like to err to the side of caution, which is the lower end. So they're going to get a two per cent merit increase next year, chances are, which brings their rate to forty-six seventy seven [\$46.77] times twenty eighty [2,080] makes their annual salary after, raises next year of ninety-seven thousand [\$97,000]. By that time, they have met their one year requirement. So, CAMC is going to start matching retirement. So, if they put in four per cent, we'll put in four per cent [06:00]. Cause a lot of these people don't understand this. So, let's say, if somebody offered you more money than I did, but I'll telling you by next year, CAMC is gonna contribute almost four thousand dollars [\$4,000] into your retirement plan. So add that to your annual salary. So it's a sales pitch with them. It's telling them about, the discount on the cell phone; it's telling them about the, um, the discount on the cell phone, the pride card and the different perks that they can get with the CAMC pride card. Um, and it took me a while to learn [06:30] that, cause I was used to having a really cookie-cutter type of position. You know. If I had an admitting clerk job, I'd probably have twenty people. And, and the market has changed a lot, um, since I came to employment. When I first came here, we had over four hundred vacancies, in total...

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: here at the hospital. And I think, we're down to a hundred and some now.

RM: Really?

S5: Oh, yea.

RM: That's about twenty-five per cent.

S5: I would say so. I don't wanna, wanna tell you, but, we're starting to see a climb, a little bit [07:00]. At four hundred, we were staying in trouble, I mean [laughs]. That's bad. Um, we also had some, um, movement around of positions and people and things like

that. I mean, it's a whole different ballgame when every time you hire somebody you have to print a job description and look at it and understand what the... I mean now I know, that, a cardiac Catha ultra-stranographer starts out at nineteen thirty-two [\$19.32] an hour and they require ARRT and RT. I know that and I don't have to look it up anymore. But there was a time, I'll give you an example, I [07:30] hired a pharmacy, um, technicians, and they go through a programme at Carver, which is ASHP recognised. It has to be ASHP certified. And, um, they have that programme and they gra-, they can come here and do clinical hours as a student and we can hire them. Um, and do their clinical hours while they're getting paid for it; and we call them a Pharmacy Technician Trainee.

RM: Ok.

S5: What they tell me is, after forty hours, a trainee is eligible to be a Pharmacy [08:00] Technician. That's wha-, that's the law in the State of West Virginia is there's this forty hours of training, and then they can apply for their Pharmacy Technician license after they, cause out Pharmacy Technicians have to be licensed.

RM: Mm-k, mm-k.

S5: We use that tech trainee role just as a transitioning role between school and getting the license.

RM: M-k.

S5: They tell me forty hours. I'm an H.R. person. Forty hours, for a full-time person. So how long will it be until they're eligible to get, their raise and move to a Pharmacy Technician position? If they're full-time, a week. That's what I'm thinking [08:30]. Nobody told me that forty hours is not really forty hours. It's a forty hour some type of concentration. It can actually take them up to three to four months if not longer. Yea. But their slang for it is a, a, a, so after forty hours they're eligible to sit for, for their licensure. So I was bringing people in and like, "Hey in a week, you're be moving up to that new pay grade." You know. Nobody was, nobody, oh yea.

RM: Three months later.

S5: Yea. Three or six months later they're calling me wanting to know when they're gonna be [09:00] moving into their new pay grade; and, I mean, that, that was just one of the trial and error things that I have kinda learned as I...

RM: What's the forty hours exactly?

S5: I don't really know to be honest with you. I, somebody that tr--, I, I think maybe you have to have forty hours in so many different things. Doing, performing,

RM: Ok.

S5: different

RM: so it might be, ah, forty hours in total, but, three hours over here doing this

S5: Yes.

RM: particular

S5: yes,

RM: type of work and... [09:30]

S5: yes. So something, it's not, it, it, I, that was, that was probably the biggest. I've been very fortunate my managers have been very kind. But once again, the, the first thing I taught, I trained [S6]. The first thing I taught [S6] was: Just because your manager calls and tells you to do it, don't assume they know they're telling you to do the right thing. And I mean, I have pages of e-, scathing e-mails. Because you get some that want to hire, people from their church, or their friends, or whatever. Or somebody's [10:00] daughter. [Phone rings] This is about that OT thing. Just one second.

RM: Ok.

S5: [Answers phone: 11:30 - 12:30: Omitted third-party conversation. Hangs up phone]. That's a, that's a new hire that just started and she's having some trouble fulfilling her status [13:00]. But really, once they get, she wanted to see if I had a phone number because she's worried about her. Um,

RM: How so?

S5: One of the, real-, cause the girl called and said she was having car trouble but she would be here and she still never showed up.

RM: Mm.

S5: So she was worried about here. But, and she wanted to see if I had a different number for her. [Phone rings: Omitted third-party conversation. Hangs up phone]. Alright [13:30].

RM: [laughs]

S5: Busy.

RM: I understand.

S5: [laughs]

RM: Um, so when you're looking at the grades an, an, an everything like that, and you have a particular position. How do you confirm that they have these credentials?

S5: If an offer is made then we,

RM: Ok.

S5: before they can actually start working for us, we have to verify with the board. We pretty much take it at face value. Um, an, and I guess too, I'm kinda fortunate because I have been working with them long enough that I know where the degree is going to come from.

RM: Ok.

S5: So, [14:00] these CODAs are all going to pretty much come from Mountain State. Um, my OTs and PTs are going to come from WVU. Um, but we do go on, all of these places have a either a website or some type of telephone. I don't, we don't let, the, the background check company is not responsible for verifying our licensure. We self verify.

RM: Ok.

S5: It makes me feel better. That I printed off a piece of paper that says they have what they are supposed to have. And then, a lot of my areas require, that, um, their license be posted within the department [14:30].

RM: Oh, ok.

S5: Yea. If you've ever gone into a place before and see all those licenses up on the wall. Like if you go to a pharmacy. If you go to Rite-Aid, you will see all the pharmacists and all the pharmacy technicians' licenses up on the wall.

RM: Ok, ok. Now, so after they've pretty much got the job offer, and they've accepted, you go an, an, and verify each individual license and I'm assuming that there is a different [15:00] process depending on the board, whether it's, phone-in

S5: Exactly.

RM: [inaudible]

S5: e-mail

RM: e-mail

S5: or you can just check a database. The better ones you can just check a database on line. Um, but yea, pretty much know. I GOOGLE a lot [laughs]

RM: Google a lot [laughs]

S5: to find the boards...

RM: an, an, and is there a, I guess, a separate form that you fill out and yes I do...

S5: License verification form

RM: Ok. I, I've seen that. Ok. And that's done for each person?

S5: Yea.

RM: What about the educational credentials? That's...

S5: That's done through the background check.

RM: Through the background check [15:30].

S5: Mm-huh. And with my position typically you're gonna find that, they're not gonna have the, if, if they couldn't have the license if they didn't have the degree.

RM: Ok. Maybe?

- S5: For the most part. You never say anything is definitive [laughs].
- RM: Have you ever had a problem where somebody has claimed a degr-, a degree and then they've not [inaudible (had it)]
- S5: No.
- RM: No.
- S5: Not that I'm aware of. Um, probably, the, the only time I had anything happen was with a high school diploma. Because my phlebotomist and my tech assistants require that they have a high school diploma [16:00]; and both cases I think it's been like somebody that's been home schooled. Or you know, something like that and we had trouble verifying, um and the only issue I usually have is a lot of these little vocational schools are bad and slow about doing verifications in the summer time when they're off and they're closed.
- RM: Oh, ok.
- S5: So, but really, for the, I mean I've never had somebody claim to be a pharmacist; and then they get here and I find out they're not really a pharmacist.
- RM: Ok.
- S5: Plus, you'd be surprised at how small knit these professional communities are. I mean, I brought in somebody a couple [16:30] weeks ago to interview, that, um, literally had done a residency with one of my directors of pharmacy like thirty-some years ago. I mean, they know. You send them an e-mail and somebody out of the group you send them too knows that person, went to school with that person, their wife went to school with that person. Um, we also, have the opportunity to go out into schools and meet them when they're students these, these professional positions like pharmacy and stuff like that, the large schools have career days for 'em [17:00]. Where you're going up and doing a reception and then interviewing for graduates all day the next day. And, you do receptions throughout the area for, for the new graduates. So, some of their faces you've seen for a long time before
- RM: Gotcha.
- S5: you actually hire them. And, you know the best tool we have here are allowing the students to come in and do their clinical rotations. I mean, um, phlebotomists are a good example of that. They come in and do a three-week rotation [17:30]. And each of the divisions, any of the divisions, just a division whether placed, it could be any division any shift, I actually, which is one of the favourite parts of my job, go out and talk to students at the local vocational schools; and I went in the spring and talked to a high school class down at Nitro High School; and I have a presentation for lab techs and a presentation for something else here. But the main point of going to the vocational schools is to talk to the phlebotomists and the [18:00] pharmacy technicians and that because I find what I was running into was a really high turnover rate, especially in the phlebotomy lab area. And I tend to put together a presentation because a lot of these kids, don't know that they're dressing inappropriately. They don't know that their talking inappropriately in an interview. They're putting down information on their application that you're specifically not asking them for.

RM: Hmm.

S5: And one of the things that I always tell them was whether or not you take a job with me or with somebody else, you need to know what your rights are. I mean [18:30] people can take advantage. My mom literally went for a job interview, a few months ago, and when they called her back to tell her who got the position they said "You know you're really great, and you would be great in this role. But this girl, this other girl we interviewed, she really needs this job." Because my mom was older and retired, so they assumed that she really didn't need the job. You know? And living at the beach, I mean. You know. So, and I was like, "Mom. That's totally illegal. They basically just age discriminated against you, because you're older and you're getting Social Security. So you don't need the job as much as [19:00] this other person does."

RM: Right, right.

S5: But we go out, but I, it is one of the favourite parts of my job. I go out, um, twice a year to each class. And the instructors ask me back every semester that they have a class go through. And we just talk about what not to do and what to do at an interview. What to wear. Um, I also make them aware of what the um, I always feel bad to bring this up when they're not even hired yet. But let them know what the disciplinary process is. What they're rights are with respect to that. Um, [19:30] what to do if they're having trouble with a co-worker because I see it all the time where somebody is harassed and they just drop their, phlebotomy training and walk out the door and half the time they're putting an application in, as they're, walking out. And now they're not eligible to come back. And we don't have, there's, there is, in no way shape or form any implication that somebody will never be brought back. That you've done something that you will never ever come back to work here. But, we do require that someone would give me a reason as to why I'm [20:00] going to bring them back.

RM: Right, right, right.

S5: And it would have to have director approval if, if they're listed as someone that's not really desirable to bring back.

RM: Right. I understand.

S5: So, um, some departments have more issue with that with, then the others and the lab was one of those. So, I was hoping that by going out and telling the students what to expect, that, potentially, we might be able to cut down on some of that and be able to tell them too about; They were so eager, they're so eager to get jobs after they been in this programme that they'll take anything that you hand to them. And, and then they've taken a job [20:30] on midnight shift; and they think their best friend is going to give them a ride, and they think that their, their cousin's going to babysit for 'em.

RM: [inaudible]

S5: and I tell, and it doesn't work out. So, suddenly they're not showing up or they're later. And they're going to discipline right out of the system or be termed in their introductory period. And now, you've, you've just really shot yourself in the foot, because I'm the second largest, or third largest private employer in the state. The largest medical facility for many, many miles around and you're not eligible to work for me, right now.

So, um, [21:00] I try. And, and managers have said they've seen an improvement; um, in how, as far as the turnover what those students. And I tell them when you come for a clinical you're on a three week interview and if every, every time somebody is trying to find you and you're out on a smoke break...

RM: It's not good.

S5: It's not good. You know.

RM: So how do they get placed from these clinicals? I mean, is there a...

S5: That is, we have a clinical affiliation agreement

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: with these schools, and for the lab, there is a education coordinator. Um, I think that [21:30] helps to place them, where they have room for them. And, we really, we wear out our preceptors cause we have four programmes that are coming through here; and they come out twice a year at the same time. So,

RM: Oh ok.

S5: they basically, these poor people, for like, three weeks they have Carver, three weeks they have Garnet, three weeks they have Boone, three weeks they have Southern. And it's just boom, boom, boom, boom. [22:00].

RM: Now, do you do any background check on the clinical students that are doing the rotation.

S5: You have to ask [S4] about that. That's part of the clinical affiliation agreement.

RM: OK.

S5: Yea.

RM: So that's not done by you.

S5: No.

RM: But, that's ok. You got the [inaudible] [laughter]

S5: No, no, no.

RM: Ok. And, after you verify that they got a good license and everything like that, um,

S5: Mm-huh.

RM: what else do you look for, as for as experience goes?

S5: Um, [22:32] it's really going to be dependent upon what the manager is looking for. Most of them, in their areas, probably just need people that meet the qualifications so they're willing to take a new grad. They're willing to take, you know, Um, I do have certain situations probably happens the most in imaging. Where they get to get to a place where they, imaging when you get to CT and MMRI, is pretty much cross-training on the job: They're all Rad Techs.

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: Um, and there will, there becomes, becomes situations where [23:00] they have promoted two or three Rad Techs into a CT Technologist's positions, so they're very new at it. They've been cross-trained, but they're still new at their role. And they need an experienced CT Technologist to be in there working with these two people. You know? Working with, they don't need three brand new, people that just started.

RM: Right.

S5: They need a more experienced, so. In those situations we'd be going out looking for people that have, you know, more extensive experience in the line of, that we're looking for.

RM: And you know what the team has, as far as experience, [23:30]

S5: They communicate that to me. Cause usually what they do, the way that they let me know is they post it: Like as a CT level 3.

RM: oh, ok.

S5: And, and I have gone back to them and said, "Now wait a minute, your cross-training and you've got, these other people that are not going to qualify for a level three position because, they don't meet the qualifications because there's an experience or you have to be in the role for so long", and...

RM: Hm.

S5: and that's usually when they say to me, "But, I need an experienced person in this." I'm going have to look outside, or unless, unless somebody at that level wants to transfer. So this can be little tricky [24:00] with the ones, twos, and threes. The lab techs have a ladder, the CTs and MRI Techs have a ladder, the Rad Techs have a ladder. Our process in the lab is to bring everybody in as a one. With the others, it's usually typically up to manager discretion, but they have to make sure they can complete the competencies for the ladder that they, the ladder level they're bringing them in on. [24:30].

RM: And when you're first reviewing the applications, what are you looking for? What stands out more, specific names, their addresses, or ah, or anything in particular?

S5: Probably for me, it's money.

RM: It's money?

S5: I'm looking at the money. What they're asking for money-wise. Because, like I said, we're competing with the private sector.

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: Unskilled nursing facilities, you know, doctors' offices and things like that. Probably, that's one of the first things I look at is how much does this person think they're going to get paid [25:00].

RM: Is, is that, do you turn a lot of people away because,



S5: My practice,

RM: or do they withdraw?

S5: my practice in that situation, just like, ok, when I looked at [this job-seeker's] application she asked for twenty-five dollars [\$25.00] an hour.

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: And then I noticed that previously she was making twenty... twenty, fifty seven [\$20.57] and twenty-four fifty [\$24.50]. Before I, because there is so much unrest out in the departments, because anytime they think they can use a reason to ask for more money, they will do it. I would. The departments, the, the employees [25:30] um, we've had a situation recently where we've lost some OTs to the private sector because they're paying so much more than what we're paying, because they're reimbursed at so much. You know? They're, they're guaranteed payment from Medicare and Medicaid.

RM: Right, right, right.

S5: And we do cases where we might not. We do a lot of charity care.

RM: Right.

S5: We do a lot of, I think it's sad that there's not more mention made about the amount of money that CAMC contributes to this community on an annual basis. I mean, every time I hear the news and hear about somebody that was shot on the Westside or, what do you think the likelihood was that those people, that they had insurance [26:00] cards and they presented at the ER?

RM: Right.

S5: Very unlikely. But are they going to take care of that person and, you know, put them in an ICU bed. And, I mean, and nobody ever hears about that. Well, I mean, I just think it's sad that the community doesn't know about the amount of charity care that goes on out there. But, um, like with her, what I did was I picked up the phone and called her and I said, "I'm just going to be honest with you. Before I bring you in, I can't pay you twenty-five dollars [\$25.00] an hour. So is it worth your time and mine to come in and talk about it?" And she said, "Yea." [26:30] So,

RM: Mm-k.

S5: I mean, that's, that's, I wouldn't, I, yea. If it's a position that I need, I'm certainly probably not immediately discount somebody just because of the rate. I'm going to call them and ask them about it.

RM: So you kind of pre-screen everybody with the phone conversation?

S5: About, pay. Now if, if there's not a pay issue involved; what, then my process is, um to, um, if a manager, basically I look at my vacancy report which I was doing yesterday, and I noticed that the phlebotomists have four positions over at Memorial [27:00]. Two are still sitting, idly because they were internal candidates for them. And there were actually, there's four positions and probably four internal candidates that have been

passed on. So, I sent them an email yesterday saying, "Do you need me to send applications because, you got four holes sitting out there and I don't know if you've filled them or not. If you filled them would you let me know so I can close the postings?" You know. "If not, I just interviewed a group of people for a cancer center job, and, they were a really good bunch of phlebotomists and I would like to send them on to you." [27:30]. But, so if they told me they wanted applications, I'd go out there and I'd go back and pull ones that meet the qualifications, um, most recent applications that have come in. Um, when you're doing phlebotomists you run into a lot of them that aren't eligible to be brought back at that that time.

RM: Ok.

S5: Mm-huh. Where they don't meet our requirements for training and that type of thing. You know? We send them to the managers and we ask them, "Who do you want to interview? And, when do you want to interview?"

RM: Ok.

S5: And then they have their criteria. Like if they see that somebody got all this really [28:00] extensive hospital experience as opposed to somebody who, is just working a small physician's office. You know? If they, if they make determinations based upon, um, I think there is a lot of staff recommendations that comes into play as well. You know.

RM: Right.

S5: The staff tells them about people who are out there. And, and it's a small community, and they've worked together before. They've worked here before. But ultimately, the deciding who to bring in is up to the manager. [28:30]. Never let them fly solo.

RM: [laughs]

S5: Never.

RM: So, so when you filter the applications, you, say you got a group of ten people, that meets the minimum requirements, that they are, of course credentials and all that is not verified until after,

S5: Right.

RM: but, that's, if there's a pay issue, that's already

S5: call 'em

RM: screened out and

S5: right.

RM: taken care of before-hand. So only those people, say that's, out of a group of twenty, you've got ten

S5: Mm-huh.

RM: that are willing. It's sent over to the manger. The manager picks,

S5: who they want to interview.

RM: who they want to interview?

S5: Exactly [29:00].

RM: So is that...

S5: Sometimes it's all of them.

RM: Ok.

S5: Sometimes it's three of them. You know?

RM: Ok.

S5: Sometimes, Ok. I sent them. I just recently sent and I need to call, um. I sent. These are, Rad Techs. They needed Rad Techs.

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: I sent them, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven. Um ok. They responded back and ask for two others that, that, that employees had suggested [29:30].

RM: Oh, ok.

S5: Mm, Ok. So I sent them those. Then they sent back to me that they wanted to interview, four of them. And they all have their RT, their AART and West Virginia license. So that was the criteria that set those four candidates above the other, eight. Seven. Seven. Because they, they're already registered. So to them,

RM: Gotcha.

S5: that makes them a better candidate. Because that means they have passed the registry test.

RM: And you don't have to worry about termination?

S5: Exactly.

RM: or anything like that? Ok. [30:00].

S5: Yea. So, those

RM: Ok.

S5: were the four they chose that they wanted which I'm trying to get set up.

RM: Ok. Ok. And then when you said you pull out the most recent applications,

S5: Mm-huh.

RM: Um, everything is pretty much, if you made an application six months ago, are you looking at that or are you looking at something more recent?

S5: Technically, I'm going to be looking at something more recent.

RM: Mm-k.

S5: If its, now when we came into this situation recently with our OTs where we, um, ran into a problem with recruitment for them, we went back farther. Then just to say that, "We know you [30:30] applied back in 2009. Um, we didn't have anything available then; and, are you still looking?" And if so,

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: in order to be a valid application they have to reapply.

RM: Ok. But you're looking at, like you said, with the ladder tiering, you've got a lot of phlebotomists

S5: Exactly.

RM: There's a lot of people out there. So, you just want to pick out...

S5: You want to look at most recent and see how far they, until I've got ten or twelve, fifteen people to send them; and

RM: Go with that?

S5: Go with, go, because I have some managers like I said, if you sent them twenty-five applications, they would want to interview [31:00] twenty-five people.

RM: Gotcha. Gotcha.

S5: So, for one ten dollar position. So,

RM: Yea.

S5: kind a limit. You know? And I mean like I said there are people, that, I, I tell the candidates this, "I don't have any problem being persistent. There's a difference being persistent and being a pest." So if you pick up the phone and call, I mea-, I would be amazed at how many people put in an application and never hardly follow-up on it. I mean, for an organisation that gets as many applications in, on a, on an annual basis as we do [31:30] I certainly would think that I would follow-up if I had put one in and hadn't heard anything. And I don't have a problem with somebody doing that. Now, we have "stalkers". I mean, people that literally will hang up and call you back. Well, let me see. Usually I've got a number written beside their name where they've called me so many times. I don't think I have. That times four. She had called in that one day.

RM: Four times?

S5: Four times in one day. Oh, two times there. That's the twenty-first. [32:00]. That's still the twenty-first, so, six times in one day.

RM: I guess two morning and four afternoon.

S5: Yea.

RM: I--

S5: Six times in one day.

RM: Wha-, what position was she...

S5: Oh, here she is now...Phlebotomy.

RM: Phlebotomy? Just looking for an opening or?

S5: She wanted me to schedule her. She kept calling and saying, "Will you just schedule me an interview?" Now, this girl right here, she is a lab, she is a lab tech student at WVU; and she, she would, we're trying to get a student position set up for her. Lab assistant position so she [32:30] can come in and work for the summer and somewhat get acclimated to our lab; and, then she'd go back to WVU in the fall. And, our hope is, when, she eventually graduates she come here and be a lab tech for us.

RM: Ok.

S5: And, um, she would call me about every two or three weeks, maybe once a month just to see if the position had been put out there yet. That, I don't mind that at all.

RM: Yea, checking on...

S5: But, it's the six to eight times in a day. Because, I have a philosophy if I don't have anything to tell them, I'm not, I don't have time to call them back.

RM: Right,

S5: I don't have anything to tell them.

RM: right, right

S5: So,

RM: Best time to call is Thursdays after postings are gone?

S5: Mm-huh [agreement] [33:00].

RM: Ok, ok. Now, woul-, would that change with, with the lady that called six times, would that, maybe change your opinion? Of, of, of, if you, if she did have an application, if you were going to send it over to a manager cause she's so...?

S5: Persistent?

RM: Yea.

S5: I think I did send her on to a manager.

RM: Oh, ok.

S5: Yea. Let's see. [inaudible] I think she was one of these. And she interviewed very well.

RM: Mm-huh.

S5: Yep. She's in there. So, [33:30] and in her defence, I wasn't calling her back.

RM: Uh-huh.

S5: I mean, because I didn't have anything to tell her.

RM: Right.

S5: So, once I did have her scheduled for an interview, I called her back. And then, she didn't call me anymore. So, sometimes it's a double edged sword. You know? But, yea. You've, I've, I've got...

RM: [laughs]. Squeaky wheel sometimes got the...

S5: Yea. Sometimes it does.

RM: Ok. Ok.

S5: So, I have, sometimes you have to set back and remember these people are trying to get a job. And it's a big deal when you're that person trying to get the job. [34:00]. [34:00-34:14 silence]. We have a newsletter that's getting ready to go out. And one of our comedians is... I'm on the ambassador's team and the new hire team and... I was so ambitious when I first got here [laughs].

RM: [laughs]. To do anything?

S5: Now, it's like [laughs].

RM: Uh-oh [laughs]. [34:30]. So,

S5: Anything else?

RM: I'm, I just, I didn't know if there was anything else that you wanted to add

S5: I,

RM: when you're looking at everything? Everything seems very, you know, straight forward. And then, and most of the processes that you get, is after the fact. When, when these background checks come in,

S5: Mm-huh.

RM: Um, say somebody's got a felony,

S5: Mm-huh.

RM: What items are you looking for on the background checks to, to say, disqualify

S5: Ok.

RM: them for a position?

S5: Um, anytime somebody, that, they have a felony, [35:00] the first thing we're going to look to make sure is did they disclose that on our application. Where it says, "Have you been convicted of a felony?"

RM: Ok.

S5: Because if they didn't, they falsified their application. [Phone rings: Omitted third-party conversation [35:07 to 35:30]].

S5: Um, and if they did disclose that they had a felony, we would have known prior to, bringing them in, what it was for. Because although we don't discriminate, because of criminal record, I'm not going to bring in a paedophile to work as a child advocate.

RM: Right.

S5: You know? My children's advocacy-, advocacy center.

RM: Right.

S5: So, I mean, if there are honest about it, we are anticipating what we're going see. Probably the best person to talk to about that is going to be [S7] when [36:00] she's back. Because she deals with it more than anybody else does, based upon the positions she hires for. I don't have it happen very often. Um, I've had one guy that had a bad check. He was a communication specialist paramedic. That was still sitting out there on his record and it was even a misdemeanour. Um, but generally, um, if they're honest, we already know what we're looking at.

RM: Ok.

S5: And we just want to verify that what we get on the background check, what it says they've done, matches what they said they did.

RM: Ok. Gotcha. Gotcha.

S5: You know what I mean?

RM: If it matches, it's ok? [36:30].

S5: If it, if we've already gotten to that point and it matches, you know? Then, we've gone to [S4] previously and said, "You know, I've got Susie here and back in, you know, two-thousand and one [2001] she was, convicted of, truancy because her seventeen daughter, seventeen year-old daughter wouldn't go to school. And, I'm bringing her in to be dietician. Do you have a problem with that?" And we have a form that she actually signs off on and says, "No. That's not going to impact." And we just check, run a background check and oh, yea. She had truancy in 2001 and that's exactly what she told us. Check it off and move on [37:00].

RM: Ok. Ok.

S5: You know. If it came back and she had, you know, beaten her daughter [laughs].

RM: [Laughs]

S5: It was the second charge underneath of it. That, if she was accused, that she, was convicted of battery, or whatever. That would change the story a little bit.

RM: Right, right, right.

S5: But, I don't have that happen very often with mine.

RM: Now, if they were, had like felony battery or other things, then it goes based on the job performance itself?

S5: Yea. What kind of job is it. [yawns] Excuse me. How long ago was it. You know. That [37:30] type of thing. So we do get funny situations sometimes. Funny situations.

RM: Such as?

S5: Oh, I don't know if I should. It,

RM: Oh, ok.

S5: It wasn't. The person never actually hit the floor. We caught it with, with the background check. And it's one of those things that I don't know how in the world you would have ever caught it without it. He had an ankle bracelet. He was on home confinement. You could be wearing one. I wouldn't have any way to know.

RM: Ah.

S5: He didn't disclose on his [38:00] application that he had the felony. So of course right there was our grounds to, and he got caught before he ever started. Um, but he went to [the President/CEO], wanting to know why we couldn't hire him. And it was very, you know, all the charges were very, bless his heart, I truly believe that he was a kid that got messed up, mixed up in the wrong crowd. Um, he had signed letters from his former teachers, former principals, community leaders, you know, that said he was a great kid. He just got mixed up in some trouble. He did his time. He's better [38:30] now. You know. He needs this job, duh-duh-duh. And I felt horrible And, you know, I went to my director. I think [S4] was out of town; and said, "What do you want me to say?" She said, "Well, you need to commend him for the fact he's trying to get his life back together; and assure him that this doesn't mean he will never work for us. That's not what this means. We just can't do it right now. Because literally the kid had just gotten out of jail and put on home confinement, and went to school to be the profession that he [39:00] was going to be in. And, school training was over. And then, he comes here to start work. You know. He comes here and applies and, and we're ready to bring him on-board. So, we're talking it's only been six or eight weeks that he'd been out.

RM: Gotcha.

S5: Of jail.

RM: Gotcha.

S5: you know, and so, I have a philosophy of, and this is true, I really operate like this: How would I feel if this was on the front page of the Gazette? You know. CAMC hires ankle bracelet worker on home [39:30] confinement to, you know, for patient care. I mean, that, how, how would that look? No matter how innocent it is. It just, and I deal with e-mails the same way when I send somebody an e-mail. My thought is always, do I want some to see this on the front page of the Gazette? That [S5] said that, "We need to offer, more money to this group of people", or, you know, "We need to hire more of this", or so, it's, it's challenging.

RM: I can imagine so. So, definitely with that, you would want the length to be there. And in that case, he [40:00] didn't disclose on the



S5: Exactly.

RM: application.

S5: He didn't disclose on the application.

RM: But if he did...

S5: He went all the way to the president of CAMC wanting to know. Whi-, first of all, why he got hired to begin with; I mean, he was being entered into the system and ready to start the hire, new hire process. When we caught this, and, you know.

RM: So was he caught before orientation?

S5: Yea.

RM: Yea. Ok. What else on the background check would, would through you or...give you an indication, I mean, a background check goes back, what? Seven years?

S5: I think so [40:30].

RM: Ok.

S5: Um, like I said, I don't get that very often. On-line, I mean. We'll have them with a rap sheet of misdemeanours. You know [laughs]. For different bad checks I mean if I have a phlebotomist that has a couple of misdemeanour bad checks, that's not going to have any impact on, on me bringing her on-board. Like I said, I don't deal with it. I don't have the interesting cases.

RM: Ok.

S5: [S7] has the interesting cases. Ms. S. has a trifecta of drug screening where they have tested positive for three different substances. You know, I don't have that [41:00]. And I mean, there, we are adamant about not allowing somebody to start in a new hire unless they've had that drug screen, physical, and that background check has been

RM: Right, right.

S5: entered by Wednesday prior to, their start date.

RM: Right, right.

S5: So we know we're going to have that stuff back in time. And, um,

RM: Now, if they hire, if they have a drug test that has a positive, and they tested for a substance. Do you give them a second opportunity to, to take that now that...

S5: No. They're done.

RM: Ok. Um, have you ever had any appeal that in your [41:30] cases? Or...

S5: Um,

RM: or offered...

S5: We had, it wasn't mine. There was one, that made a ruckus. I'm not sure what. I know that they did not allow him to retest. Um, I recently had one, and it was horrible. And, and it was totally unexpected; and I totally believe that the guy probably, just made a mistake. So, but we're gonna allow [42:00]. We never said, we're not going to retest at that time; where we turn around and send them right back over there for another test. That's not going to happen. But, you can give them time down the road to get it out of their system. And it's not tracked on our end, for the most part. Other than the rescission letter that we would have.

RM: Ok.

S5: So.

RM: Covers pretty much everything.

S5: Ok.

RM: Alright. Do you have any questions for [end of recording 42:26].

## **APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW NOTES (S5)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTRE EMPLOYMENT CENTER General Interview Notes with S5 Thursday, 8 July 2010**

S5 focuses on Allied Health which consists of pharmacy and laboratory and all clinical positions excluding nurses and doctors. S5 has been in this position for four (4) years. Prior to Allied Health, S5 spent five months in CAMC-EC Support Services (August – January). S5 holds a degree in Organisational Leadership.

Most departments will not hire a warm body: A job-seeker/applicant must be a good fit. Something else that one must consider when filtering applications is that Huntington area pays more as reimbursement rates for Medicare are greater. The greater rates transfer into higher salaries for personnel. This means that CAMC has to profile some job-seekers on the probability of commitment based on geography. For example: If a person lives near Huntington, why is (s)he looking at working in Charleston when Huntington pays more? The economy is market driven and one has to look at the total economic package for compensation.

Job descriptions become the “best friend” or critical reference for filtering decisions. While managers work daily with a type of position(s), managers do not know the job descriptions. For example, some job experience is not transferable from one employer to CAMC, even if the job-seeker has or had a similar title. CAMC standards tend to be greater than other organisations.

Filtering decisions focus and match available CAMC positions with what a job-seeker desires. External job-seekers do not have access to position descriptions as CAMC does not post job descriptions for external candidates. After matching a position with a job-seeker, a job-seeker’s eligibility/credentials are reviewed.

One problem is that there are over thirty (30) licensure boards and each has different standards. Plus, training standards vary amongst boards. For example: Training expressed in hours does not translate into clock hours on the job. These may be specific and set hours for performing so many tasks, additional course hours provided by certified individuals, or passage of an exam to get credit for hours. So, forty (40) hours does not translate into working forty hours. This is a common language issue where S5 had to learn on the job what the terms mean.

Degrees/Certifications and experience are taken at face value (at the word of the job-seeker) initially. If the job-seeker is offered a position and accepts a position, then a background check is completed and the application is scrutinised further. Sometimes problems with the background check occur. If a job-seeker has been home-schooled for a High School Diploma, sometimes this credential does not appear on a background check.

At CAMC, students complete clinical rotations as part of a degree programme. S5 notes that this is an excellent opportunity for CAMC to identify higher performing individuals and become familiar with an individual’s work ethic. To help recruit students for clinical rotations and other CAMC positions, S5 travels to schools (Higher Education, vocational, and High Schools) to provide students an opportunity to meet with a CAMC representative. During these visits, S5 coaches students and provides career guidance: S5 focuses on interviews and discipline. S5 notes that CAMC lab positions had a high turnover rate until these coaching visits provided a better understanding of CAMC expectations and position duties and responsibilities.

CAMC has a clinical agreement for lab with the following (not an all-inclusive list): Carver, Garnet, Boone County, and Southern. A clinical rotation for the lab lasts three weeks. These educational placements are not handled by S5

Most hiring is based on a ladder process. For each position, four levels (sometimes more) can provide a job-seeker/or incumbent an opportunity for salary increases and increased titles by meeting pre-established requirements. For filtering, there may be additional skill sets or experience required to meet the ladder expectations. The ladder process for recruitment is mostly used when a team needs experienced individuals.

During the pre-screen interview process, compensation is discussed with a job-seeker. This discussion, as part of the pre-screen interview, allows for a job-seeker and CAMC to establish common ground. If common ground cannot be established, then the job-seeker may withdraw from the selection process.

Staff recommendations are critical for filtering job-seekers.

The most recent applications are pulled and processed first: Last-in, First-out. However, sometimes individuals that call more often ("Stalkers") get moved forward.

Background checks are conducted as part of the contingent employment process. For the criminal history report, when a felony or other conviction is identified, the application is reviewed to determine if the conviction was disclosed. If the conviction was disclosed, then the employment offer will be further reviewed against what was disclosed. If the conviction was not disclosed, then the employment offer is rescinded.

Hiring costs are not redirected to any other department but absorbed by CAMC-EC budget.

## **APPENDIX 10: INTERVIEW NOTES (S6)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTER General Interview Notes (S6) Thursday, July 8, 2010 – 12:30-13:10**

S6 declined to be digitally recording for this interview. Thus, this record is made using the notes from the interview.

S6 focuses on filtering applications and providing support for CAMC-EC. Specifically, S6 focuses on Management, clerical, and administrative positions that are non-clinical. S6 processes approximately 250 applications per year.

#### **Recruitment**

S6 has relationships with several tech schools within the area. Leveraging these relationships, S6 will look at graduation lists for external hires. Additionally, if a teacher or professor makes a recommendation concerning a student, the recommendation helps facilitate an application from the recommended student.

#### **Base-rates**

Applications are processed according to written policy. To assist in filtering applications, the job requirements for a vacant position are reviewed. Applications are first reviewed against minimum position requirements (base-rates) such as knowledge, skills, and attributes. Included in base-rates are testing requirements.

Next, the employment history is reviewed to determine if a job-seeker might be a job-hopper. S6 considers a job-hopper to be an individual with a history of short-term employment. Short-term employment was defined as less than one year with an employer. If an individual is considered a job-hopper, then the application is immediately removed from consideration.

#### **Testing**

Although WorkForce WV proctors all employment related tests for CAMC, WorkForce WV does not grade certain tests, mostly, written tests are not graded. For example: The accounting test is not graded. Tests that are not graded are forwarded to S6 to process and score. [A scantron form (a fill-in bubble form readable by computer) could be used to process written scores.]

#### **For Employment Experience**

Past history and relevant history are critical for a job-seeker. Considering experience versus education, experience and past performance always seem to be the preferential indicator for future performance. However, a job-seeker must meet the base-rates before being considered. In some cases, education cannot be substituted for experience.

S6 notes that High School students will usually list soccer team captain or other volunteer activities and clubs in which the student was affiliated.

To help facilitate a basic understanding of a position, the job-seeker completes a form after reading the position description shortly after arrival for an interview. Another individual assists with the completion of the form and provides the position description.

S6 notes that there are no preferences between a re-hire or a newcomer.

#### **Interview: Dress Effect**

Job-seekers need to be properly dressed for an interview. For example: A job-seeker having green spiked hair and is tattooed is not considered properly dressed.

### **Tests**

For internal applications, credentials would have been verified by human resources. If an job-seeker has unverified credentials on an application, the credentials are not considered. The employee is the responsible party to ensure that credentials are verified and correct with human resources prior to making any application.

For external job-seekers, a drug screen, a physical, and a background check must be completed satisfactory prior to commencing work at CAMC. If a drug test is positive (i.e. the test indicates the presence of a specific substance), then the individual is considered to have failed the drug screen and may not be considered. Any other submitted applications within the web-based system are flagged and noted. Thus, failing a drug test removes an individual from consideration.

For the background check, the criminal history is reviewed. When a conviction appears, the application is reviewed to determine if the specific conviction was disclosed. If undisclosed, an offer is rescinded. But, if pending charges are noted, then the offer is rescinded and the job-seeker is encouraged to apply after resolution of charges.

EBI also verifies educational credentials.

### **Other Factors**

If the job-seeker is sincere and compassionate, S6 will also review the individual against other positions in CAMC.

**Demographics:** S6 has been in current position for around two years and has had no prior experience in filtering.

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RM: What types of positions do you focus on?

S6: I do the non-clinical positions for management level, clerical, and administration.

RM: How long have you been in this position?

S6: Ah, two years.

RM: What H.R. experience did you have before this?

S6: Um, none really.

RM: OK. How many applications do you do a year?

S6: About, two hundred fifty.

RM: Can you walk me through you process?

S6: Um, sure. [getting applications]. First, I look at the job-requirements. I see if this person meets what it says [specifications]. I have at, um, if they have testing requirements for this position. College experience. Job history is good. Just make sure the job-hoppers are out.

RM: How so?

S6: If they are in the position for less than a year, they get tossed.

RM: And what other kinds of experience do you note?

S6: Well, high school students, um, usually list soccer team captain, clubs, volunteer, stuff like that.

RM: OK. Let's see. Tests. How do those factor in?

S6: The multiple choice tests are graded here for the Accounting positions and those test that WorkForce does not grade.

RM: And,

S6: They don't do written tests.

RM: Why don't they grade 'em?

S6: Not sure.

RM: Do they use a scantron, or kiosk, or?

S6: No. I think they just use a computer.

RM: OK. And after the tests are ok, past employment history is critical?

S6: Yea, but relevant history is more critical. Since we [with S7] work with the local schools, we look at graduation lists to bring people in.

RM: For external hires? So you and [S7] use the existing relationships with the tech schools to recruit then?

S6: Yea. We use the lists and we go by teacher recommendations.

RM: So is experience more important or education?

S6: It depends on the position. If the education is met, experience seems to be a good indicator of past performance; and you can't always substitute education for experience.

RM: So, do you make those decisions before the interview?

S6: Sometimes you can, but you can't get the whole picture from what they put on the application. Sometimes you just have to bring 'em in.

RM: For interview?

S6: Yea.

RM: How does that work?

S6: Well, when they come in, [S8] has them read the position description and have them sign a form saying that they have read it and that this is what they are applying for.

RM: When they come in, what do you look for?

S6: Um. If they have big green spikey hair and they're covered in tattoos. You know. If they are a scary person. I mean, we don't need anybody to scare the patients.

RM: OK. And they have to have passed a drug test, background check, and the physical.

S6: Yea.

RM: How about the internal job-seekers?

S6: We just look at the employee file after they apply. All their stuff is in there.

RM: So any new information, completed college degrees, courses, certifications, all that is in the file?

S6: Yes.

RM: Who updates that?

S6: It's a human resource function. Their HR director does that and each hospital has an HR person there that does all that.

RM: OK. So current employees have everything in their file and you get nothing outside of their file. Right?

S6: Exactly. Once they're here, it's their job to keep that updated.

RM: OK. Do you allow re-tests for failed drug tests?

S6: No. Once they fail, that's it. I go back and flag all other applications that they may have.

RM: So anything else they may have applied for they don't even get another chance?

S6: Yep.

RM: And the background check confirms the education and all that. And it looks for criminal history. I know that you take that into consideration. How does it work?

S6: Well, the felonies get tossed and if they have pending criminal charges.

RM: So all felonies get removed and pending is not convicted?

S6: Yea. For my positions, we can't have felonies; and, if any charges are unresolved they can apply after the charges are concluded. It would be too much for us to hire then only to fire then if they get convicted. So it's best that they get everything resolved. Besides, most likely they lied about the felony on the application and we have to rescind it anyway.

RM: OK. Do you have any preference between a rehire or a newcomer?

S6: No. They are the same.

RM: And do you just focus on one position?



S6: Well if they are interested, and they're really wanting to work for CAMC, but they have to be compassionate, then we can look at other positions. You know. I can talk to them about other jobs that might be coming up or that would be a good match for them.

RM: OK. Anything else?

S6: Nope.

## **APPENDIX 11: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION (S7)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTER Interview Transcription (S7) Thursday, 15 July 2010 [Total time 35:10]**

RM: [Pause 00:01 to 00:04] Now what kinds of positions do you, interview for? Look at?

S7: I hire for support services, such as, housekeeping, dietary, transport attendants. I hire for maintenance, nursing assistance, health unit coordinators, which, are abbreviated as HUC. H-U-C. Um, [00:30] I hire for linen. I hire for our daycare center, material handling, central service, and students.

RM: You've got a whole barrage of...

S7: A little bit of everything

RM: everything. OK.

S7: I like it that way because, it's never the same. It's always different [01:00].

RM: Now what's a typical, process go? Say you've got a vacancy that you need to post, and I, I understand that those get posted Friday.

S7: Mm-hm.

RM: And they get pulled down on Wednesday; and on Thursdays, um, you start looking at the application and seeing what we have.

S7: We do the internal profiles on Thursday, which I already did that this morning. I'm the early person. I'm in here at seven.

RM: [laughs]

S7: So, I've already taken care of those; and then if there are no internal people, then I start looking for applications. OK. [01:30] Um, I just scheduled yesterday some interviews for a Health Unit Coordinator.

RM: Mm-huh.

S7: What I look for, first of all I have to make sure they have the proper education, according to the job description. And, then I also, look at the, their previous job history because I've want to make sure it's not someone that is a job-hopper that only going to work for us a month or two and, and, then leave, because it's kind of pointless [02:00] to put them through our training and spend all that money if they're just, hopping from job to job.

RM: When you said "job-hop", what do you classify "job-hop" as?

S7: I look at their, employment history, and if they have, several minds to a year, then I'll pass them along. But,

RM: Ok.

S7: But if they have, if they switch from job to job to job within a month of getting that job. I, I skip over them and look for other applications [02:30].

RM: Ok.

S7: But as long as it's at least six months, then, I pretty much, I'm ok with that.

RM: Ok. So, so what's your looking at, they have to be six months within that position...

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: pretty much. And...

S7: Cause it takes a good six months to a year to learn the position, that you've been hired for.

RM: Yea.

S7: And really feel comfortable with it. So if someone is switching from job to job every month, then they're really not learning it. So, I consider that a job-hopper and I move on.

RM: OK, ok [03:00]. Now, in addition to the, the, to the previous job history, you mentioned the education. What kind of credentials are you looking for? Are there certain credentials that stand out more than others?

S7: For most of my positions, they, the minimum that they have to have is a high school education.

RM: Oh.

S7: Because most of mine are entry level positions. Now my Health Unit Coordinators, they are required to have formalised medical [03:30] assistant training. Now it doesn't matter whether they go to, one of the career centres, such as Garnet or, or West Virginia Junior College someplace like that; or if they go to college and get it. It doesn't matter, as long as they have that formalised medical assistant training. Now they don't have to have the certification. It helps. A lot of the managers like to have that. But it's not required.

RM: Now how do, how do you validate their education? For, start with high school. How do you validate the high school? [04:00]

S7: What we do is, if it's on the application, we take their word for it to bring them in for the interview.

RM: Ok.

S7: I'll bring you in for the interviews, if, once I have interviewed them, I send them to the manager for the interview. If the manager wants me to make an offer, I will call them and make an offer. They have to then be scheduled for their pre-employment physical and drug screen.

RM: Uh-huh.

S7: And when they come back in they have to fill out, one of our background check...

RM: OK.

S7: forms saying that they're allowing us [04:30] to do a background check. When we do the background check, that's when we verify their education.

RM: Ok.

S7: And they know, when we offer that position, it's pending, that they pass our physical, our drug screen, and our background check.

RM: Ok. Now, why do you do the physical and drug screen prior to the background check? Is that, always something that's been done or...?

S7: It's actually done, well because we don't bring, we don't make them, we can't do the background check until after we have [05:00] made an offer. We can't background check everyone, it's too expensive.

RM: Right, right.

S7: And so, we usually just wait till we have made the formal offer. And, sometimes if they know that they're gonna fail the drug screen, they bolt.

RM: Ah, ok.

S7: So,

RM: Ok.

S7: So, there's no point in us wasting the money doing a background check.

RM: Gotcha.

S7: If they're not gonna pass the physical. But we usually, we've done it the same day.

RM: Ok. Making everything up front known, that you're, you're now going to go through, a physical [05:30], a drug screen, and then a background check using that, in that specific order, sometimes people, select out of your processes and well...

S7: We have had some of them that, I have, now I don't know about anyone else, but mine are more, the ones that, most of, most of the time if I have to rescind an offer its because they have failed the drug test. Most of the time. And I'm typically the only one here that has to rescind an offer for that reason. But, so most [06:00] of the time, they know. Ah, they know it up front. And, they are either going to, bolt or, we've had them bring, in specimens that we know that are not theirs. Because the temperature is not right, and...

RM: I...

S7: Employee Health won't make 'em do it again and they, they'll s..., give 'em some water and stick 'em in the lobby and they take off. And so we know at that point. There no point in us doing a background check because, they're finished. [06:30] If they take off,

there's no second chance. I don't care what your reason is for taking off. There's no second chance.

RM: Ok, ok. So they've actually brought in somebody else's stuff and other, counter-measures to ah,

S7: Oh yea. They're pretty slick.

RM: Now, if, if say a person has failed a drug test, obviously, if, if they've used counter-measures or anything like that, they don't get a second chance. If they have left, they don't get a second chance. If they've failed one, do you, do you give them an opportunity to, to um...

S7: Re-test?

RM: re-test? [07:00]

S7: No.

RM: Ok.

S7: No. A positive screen is positive no matter what. Now, we have had, instances where somebody might test positive for something, that, they could have had a prescription for and they forgot to tell us they have a prescription. While, as long as they prove they have a prescription for it, we're ok with it. But if they test positive, for like, drugs like marijuana or something – No. You're, you're done. And that's not saying that you can never work for us. But you need to [07:30] seek gainful employment for at least a year and then reapply. We won't consider them for at least a year.

RM: Ok. Now, what are the drugs that most often give you the problems? You mentioned marijuana. Is that the top...?

S7: For me, that's, that's...Marijuana and meth is top for me. [08:00]

RM: Ok. Anything else that you can add on the drug test that's done, here, internally? Ok.

S7: It's, it's done over at Memorial at our Employee Health. Um, such as, what? What are you...

RM: Anything. I don't know that I may have missed, or anything that you care to add on that?

S7: Not...

RM: So they take care of all that for you?

S7: We take care of, Employee Health takes care of it. It's all done, within us.

RM: Ok.

S7: Now, we do make them bring in a photo I.D. [08:30] So, that we can, make sure that it really is the person.

RM: Ok.

S7: You, they, they're not sending their next door neighbour in to do the drug test for 'em. We try to be as precautious as we can. I mean, we can't stand there and watch them, pee in a cup. Ah, you know.

RM: [laughs]

S7: We just can't do that. That's a little bit of an invasions of privacy. So, we can't do that; but we, try to make sure that it really is [09:00]as legitimate as possible.

RM: Ok.

S7: But I had one that I had to rescind, just this past Monday; and, this person tested positive for marijuana. They told me that it was impossible. Somehow I'm sorry that's what Employee Health told me. So, if you have any issue or concern with that you'll have to contact Employee Health. But at this point, we have to rescind the offer. This person called me back, probably an hour [09:30], an hour and a half later and said, "Can I give you an explanation." No. There is no explanation when you test positive for marijuana, there is no explanation. So...

RM: Ok.

S7: But usually they will, come right out, wa..., a lot of them won't even ask you what it is. They'll say,

RM: [laughs]

S7: "Ah, Ok." Well you know,

RM: Ah, Ok. [laughs]

S7: they thought they had slipped one over on us; and, I mean I even had one guy tell me, "Well I didn't think you would really do it. Everybody says they do background checks [10:00] and drug screens but that doesn't really mean they do do it." Well, we do. [laughs]

RM: [laughs]

S7: And, and lying to us is the worst. You know, if you have a felony, on your record...

RM: Uh, huh.

S7: It's not going to stop you from getting a job. Now, I do ask, "What is your charge?" because it depends on what that charge is, where we will allow you to work. Obviously, if its, if its has to do with stealing money or something, we're not going to put you in accounting.

RM: Right.

S7: But you could still work in dietary [10:30]. You couldn't be a cashier, but we could still, or housekeeping or something like that. You know, I could do that. But, we're not gonna put you anywhere handling money.

RM: Mm-huh,

S7: But, if you lie about the felony, that's it. You're, you're never working here.

RM: And you flag that on the application?

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: And then, anytime that they would reapply, you would have that...

S7: We keep a list of everything we rescind,

RM: Mm-huh.

S7: our reason for rescinding, all of that. The date...

RM: Ok.

S7: Everything. Its, we keep it, a record of it [11:00]

RM: Ok.

S7: So it gets really interesting looking for applications and making sure that, if they've worked here before, what was their status when they left? And, you know, did they, did they give the proper notice or did they just, walk out, and never be seen again? Or? We have to check all of that when looking for applications

RM: Now, with the physical [11:30], do you have a lot of people that fail that or?

S7: Not very many. There are a few that fail for lifting restrictions.

RM: Mm, ok.

S7: And, I had one that I had, just this, she was suppose to start Monday, but she can't start until the next orientation, which is two weeks; Because her blood pressure was up and she was in the middle of switching blood pressure medications.

RM: Mm, ok.

S7: So, she just had to go back to her family doctor and get a not saying that; and go back to Employee Health and let them re-check her blood pressure once the new medicine [12:00] was in her system. So, you know. We have little issues like that. But normally, if we rescind for failing the physical, it's because they have a restriction that we cannot accommodate.

RM: Right. Ok.

S7: Which is usually a restriction that they have neglected to tell us but when they get to Employee Health, they tell them.

RM: Uh-huh. So, once Employee Health, evaluates them, or drug screens or physical, you get the report, whatever employee said helps and, it's got a positive drug test or failed the physical [12:30]. You take that and say, "That's it. We're done."

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: And, so they, so if they want recourse they have to go back to Employee Health. So that Employee Health has to change that in order for you to even look at that.

S7: Right.

RM: OK. That's, that's fair enough. Um,

S7: Everybody has to go through Employee Health before they can work here; Even the doctors. They have to have their pre-employment physical and drug screen or they cannot work here.

RM: Well that's good to know. Um, [13:00] now after that, I know we have an orientation and, and of course the background check. When you're looking at the background check, you mentioned felonies, and oth-, and restrictions of where you would place those individuals. What else on a background check might flag you to, to um, go rescind an offer, or to ah, to ah, to ah, remove that person from...

S7: Other than felonies that they have not disclosed to us, basically the only thing that's going to us to rescind [13:30] the offer from the background check, is, if, we can't, we can't get their education verified, because I've had some that tell me that, "Yes I have a high school education." But when it comes right down to it, and I try and verify it, no they don't.

RM: Ok. So, so, because the position requires a degree of some kind, high school/GED and if they can't [14:00] confirm or verify or, pro-provide proof that they have received that, then they can't be considered for that position.

S7: Right.

RM: Now, if hey bring a copy of, of transcripts of a high school diploma, will you take that or does it still have to be verified through the background check process?

S7: We still verify. But that does make our background check company, a lil--, it make, it helps them to verify it. If they can bring, wa--, we still have to verify it because anybody can fake those things.

RM: Ok.

S7: So, we still [14:30] do verify it. But if they bring it in, then you can pretty much guarantee that they really do have it. It's just a matter of verifying them. Where it wasn't and a lot of times it's just a simple thing like they forgot to tell us what their maiden name was. You know? The background check form says, "Any other names used?" They will forget to tell us. Or I have one, that it was just a couple of weeks ago, the girl gave me the wrong date that she graduated. And we liked to never have tracked it down.

RM: [laughs] [15:00]

S7: And once, and she was in the middle of a nasty divorce and all of her stuff was still, at the old house. He wouldn't give her, her diploma, for her to be able to bring it in.

RM: Ah, ok.



S7: But once she gave us the correct date, and how I discovered that is by the year she was born on. Wait a minute, you couldn't have graduated in, this date. It had to be earlier than that because you're almost the same age I am. It can't be ten years later that you graduated. She said, "I gave you the wrong date." [15:30]. Once we found that, we found it.

RM: Hm.

S7: But, sometimes it's just little things like that. Sometimes, they're a half credit off. And thought they had graduate. At least they say that they had graduated, but they may be a half off, and really didn't graduate.

RM: Gotcha. They could have walked. But,

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: in anticipation for summer school...

S7: Which they won't allow them to do that at Hoover any more.

RM: Ok. [16:00]

S7: And I think they, if they did that with all of the schools, and, and don't let them walk if they're a half credit or a credit short, I think it would avoid some of these problems. Because a lot of these kids, I don't know if they really realise, or, or what it is. But, I think if you let them walk and participate in the ceremony, they're like, "Well I graduated." Oh, no you didn't. You might have walked, but you don't have the diploma.

RM: Right, right. The ceremony acts as a reward [16:30] and then, "I've got it, and I don't need to do anything else."

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: Ok. Um, I understand with, with the system that we have the applications on. Ah, one of the problems is, it keeps all the old stuff. And when you're looking for a new, a new person or a new candidate you have to go through the old stuff to get to the new stuff.

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: How do you do that? How do you get, how do you by-pass the old stuff?

S7: I start at the bottom.

RM: Mm-huh.

S7: And work my way back instead of [17:00] starting up the front.

RM: Ok.

S7: Depending. I mean, depends on what I'm looking for. Like, my mechanics, I don't have as many people apply for those, because they require more education, then a lot of the positions do. My dietary positions and nursing assistants, I have, hundreds of pages, so I always start at the bottom, go back to where I left off because it changes the colour [17:30] when you click on that application...

RM: Mm-huh.

S7: It'll change the colour of the link for it. So, I start back where I left off, and then...

RM: Ah, Ok. So the links actually change colour?

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: And is that a permanent change?

S7: No.

RM: Ah, ok.

S7: No. I can go back to the very beginning, and, see where I know I have sent something, because you can go in and note every application. And every one of them that [18:00] I send, I put a note on there that I sent it. So I know, even the old ones, I know what I have done with that application.

RM: Ok. Now what are the limitations do you have with the computer system? Like within the application? Is it pretty good when it comes to that? Or, or are there some things that you have to add, and, and go through or anything?

S7: Well, it be nice if [18:30], if it would, if things were a little more, compatible. Now, if we could just click on that application and get it to drop over into other systems that we're using. Unfortunately, it won't do that.

RM: [laughs]

S7: And the application itself really needs re-worked.

RM: When you say "Re-worked", um, [19:00] how so? What are your ideas for that?

S7: Well, I'd like to see more than just three, previous employment on there. And I'd like to have a little more, history than that. And, let me look [getting a paper application from desk drawer] at the application. Just things that...This is one that I have scheduled for an interview [19:30]. They're career choices. That's another one. They have to do, a separate application for each position they want to apply for. Well, I would like for them to be able to include a couple. Like, maybe they want to be a Health Unit Coordinator or a Nursing Assistant. Or maybe they are willing to anything in dietary. Whether it be the aid clerk, or cashier, or cook: Any of them. It be nice if they could put that on the application if they, [20:00] without having to go down to the note section. If they

RM: Ok.

S7: could just click on each position; maybe two or three, instead of just one.

RM: Ok. Sort of like, ok, if, if we got some positions offered, name four positions that you would be interested in,

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: write them or so forth

S7: Yea.

RM: like that? And that didn't [Note: Duden't is a common contraction for *does not* and *did not*] do that they have to do a separate application for each

S7: Separate one for each position

RM: Now once you hire somebody, then you also have to look at everything that they have applied for and remove that. Am I correct? Or note the other applications that you have not processed? [20:30].

S7: It depends. Sometimes we have so many people that apply for so many positions, that you just don't have time to do that. So, what we do is when we're looking for an application to send, we always check the system to see if they are employed currently or if they have been in the past. So, you know, we always check that.

RM: Do you check that before you bring them in here for an interview?

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: So, so, you kinda do the CAMC History [21:00] and say, "OK, let's see where you are." And, and if your actually employable

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: or, if you're already employed.

S7: I do that before I ever send the application to the manager.

RM: Ok.

S7: What I do is, if I'm looking for someone, I look through the applications. If it's somebody that I think they meet all the qual..., all of the qualifications, and, they're not, their salary, is request is within range [21:30] and, if they specifically say they want, certain hours then I have to ah, try and match them up with hours they want with what I have open. But, if they meet everything, then I will send that application with the manager if the manager has one of them I usually send anywhere from three to five applications [22:00]. That way they have a variety of choices. Then, they let me know which of those ones, or if they want to interview all of them, they let me know who they want to interview. They give me dates and times that are good for them. Then, I set up the interviews. Bring 'em in here. I interview them first. If I think this is absolutely a waste of the manager's time, I send them on their way.

RM: Ok.

S7: If, I think it's somebody that will be a good candidate, I send them on to the manager interview. [22:30] And then the manager lets me know who they want.

RM: Ah, the people that are a waste of time; how do you determine that in an interview? I mean...

S7: If they will not look me in the eye at all, or if they have absolutely the worst answer for anything, and it's like pulling teeth to get any answer from them, then I know. Or, I have even had some that when I bring them in and tell them this is what the job is, you know, because they read the job description out front before they come in to see me.

RM: OK. Out front here?

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: Ok [23:00]. Is it on-line or is the job description...

S7: No.

RM: No. Ok, ok, so

S7: Well, I mean we print them off. We have them here. But the applicants can't get to them.

RM: Ok.

S7: And, they read it. They have to sign a paper saying that they, don't, do or do not need any type of accommodations. You know. Just letting us know if they have any kind of restrictions, but once they read it, and then they come in, to me and I'll tell them "This is what you [23:30] will be doing." And I've had some tell me, "Mm, no. I don't want to do that." And they stop the interview themselves, and they leave. But some of them, if, depending on what their answers are, I can just tell that the managers not going to want this.

RM: Now does that vary from manager to manager?

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: Some people are...OK.

S7: It does. And also, whether or not they have a, a problem, if they have body piercings all over the face and they have tattoos [24:00] clear down; If they're not willing to cover this stuff up, then it's not happening cause we have a dress code.

RM: Ok.

S7: And, you can wear earrings. You can, you can have the nose ring if you want it. But you can't wear that in the hospital. You have to have that covered.

RM: Ok.

S7: If you have tattoos, that's fine. But you have to keep them covered.

RM: Ok. And that's for everybody?

S7: Everybody. It doesn't matter where it's someone like, me or someone in housekeeping or dietary or, anybody [24:30]. It doesn't matter.

RM: Ok. So, so, there's not a position let's say in laundry because they're out of the view from, from the public that they can get away with, maybe with, maybe with not covering a tattoo?

S7: Still has to be covered because, even though laundry is a whole little section and you would think publics not there. Anybody is welcome to come in there at any time.

RM: Mm-k.

S7: You know, they, they don't keep anything hidden. In fact, I went over and took a tour of the place. It's amazing. It is amazing the work they put though [25:00] there.

RM: I've heard.

S7: But, yes. Every, everybody, it doesn't matter and not only that it's unfair treatment to say, "Well, you have to keep yours covered, but he doesn't."

RM: Mm.

S7: And, when they go to lunch, there's a good chance they're going to lunch in the cafeteria. So...

RM: Gotcha. Gotcha. Anything else that you can think of that ah, that helps you remove certain applications [25:30] out of the processes?

S7: If they harass me continuously.

RM: If they harass you? You mean...

S7: If they harass, if they are, we have stalkers [laughs]. If they are continuously calling me, or they're continuously coming in here demanding to see me, you minas well give it up. Cause once, once you've already upset and ticked off the person out front, your done. Because they do, [26:00] you know. He tells us, "This person will, will probably be an absolutely wonderful person" or "No. What were you thinking of even calling this person?" Then, you know. He tells us because, people will open up to him and give him information that he does not ask for. I was sitting here, sitting here in my office where I'm so close to the front, I can hear things that I probably shouldn't hear also. And, when, [S6] was doing one of her interviews [26:30] a guy, came in and I was sitting here with my radio on minding my own business doing my work; and you wouldn't think I would hear, but he was loud enough that, I could hear his reason for getting fired from his last job. So, you know, and he, [S8] certainly didn't ask for that information. He just, come right out and told it. So, you know. Stuff like that will definitely [27:00] weed 'em out for us. You gotta be cautious what you say when you're, even out front.

RM: Right, right, right. And does that help you a lot? Talking with [S8] and

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: everything? Getting everything?

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: Do you do that after, after the interview day or after the interview?

S7: A lot times I will walk out and say, "Well, what'd you think about that person?" Because if they're going to be rude to him, and nice to me, and nice to the manager – fine, good and well – but they're going to be rude to the customers. If they're going be mean and nasty to him [27:30], then that's what the patients are gonna see. And we have to protect the patients; that's the number one thing.

RM: Are there any applications that you can walk me through to show me your process?

S7: For a particular position?

RM: For any type of position or anything like that just to...

S7: I can show you one that I have scheduled for an interview if you like.

RM: Ok. Ok. [28:00]

S7: Now this one, I know she has the education because she's from West Virginia Junior College; and [S6] and I go to, West Virginia Junior College regularly. Part of their class, their final exam is they have to go through mock interviews with us. And they also have to take the certification, so not only can they be a Health Unit Coordinator, they can be a Certified Medical Assistant. So I know all of these have had the education. So, but what I look for [28:30], first of all,

RM: Mm-huh,

S7: is, I check, she wanted to be a Health Unit Coordinator which is what I was looking for. And, I look then to see, does she have her training. And normally I look for the date, that I know they, they have completed; because, just because they're in the programme doesn't mean I can hire them for that position.

RM: [inaudible]

S7: They have to complete the programme first.

RM: So you look at the graduation date?

S7: Right.

RM: Once that date has past [29:00],

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: Um, the, the, that's able to be, to be hired.

S7: Right. Which I knew she has because we did their mock interviews; and I also checked to see what programme they're in. Because, this one is the medical assistant, some of them are the secretarial. The secretarial, I can't use. [S6] could but I couldn't. I check to make sure they have their high school education.

RM: Mm-huh.

S7: Which, with West Virginia Junior College, they verify that [29:30]. We know they verify that. So, I know she has it. There are some of the career centers that do not verify high school. I know that Everest doesn't.

RM: Mm-huh.

S7: So, if it's Everest, I make sure it says that they have the high school education. Then we still, we're going to verify all of it. Regardless, when

RM: Right.

S7: we do the background check. Then I also look to see, what, her employment, is like. Now she only worked, from, [30:00] April to May here. So since it was such a short period of time, I look at her reason for leaving. It was because it was an externship. Same thing with this one.

RM: Ah, ok.

S7: It was just, an externship. Now, a finished externship.

RM: Right.

S7: So, I know that she was a, this was doing her school time. So, I'm ok with that. So, then I know that it's ok, to move on. So then the next thing I check is, what her required earnings are. Starting [30:30] salary. Is she willing to work weekends? If they put, "No they're not willing to work weekends", I'm not even going to consider them. Because every one of my positions, you're going to work weekends. Probably not every weekend, but you are going to have to do your turn, just like everybody else. I don't hire for any of the clerical positions, [S6] does. Some of those have weekends off. But none of the positions I hire for do.

RM: Ok.

S7: So if they tell me flat out their not willing to work weekends, I'm not even going to look at the application at all.

RM: Mm-ok [31:00].

S7: Then, I also look at; do they want full-time or part-time? Well the position I am hiring for is full-time. She wants full-time; so that's good. Well, she prefers days; and normally I might not send this one to a manager, but this manager has three positions. There's a

RM: Mm-huh.

S7: chance she could work with her and do days. So I sent this one on to the manager.

RM: Mm-k.

S7: And [31:30] she told me to go ahead and schedule her. And I also look, one thing I look: Do they have a Driver's License?

RM: Mm-k.

S7: A lot, some of my positions require it. Not all of them do. But nine times out of ten, if they have a Driver's License and they live in Ripley, they're going to make it back and forth to work. Now, if they tell me they live in Ripley and they don't have a Driver's License, I might not really consider 'em because, how are they going to get to work every day?

RM: Transportation issues and everything...

S7: Exactly [32:00]. It depends. Now if they live in Charleston or something, they can catch the bus and I know they can catch the

RM: Right, right.

S7: bus. But I still consider them. So it's going to depend on what position they're looking for, and where they live.

RM: So you're looking at transportation and, and, their ability to really be successful, and

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: and do well. Yea.

S7: And I check to see, if you have ever been convicted of a felony. She put "no". Now if, we would hire her, and her background check comes back that she has a felony, there

RM: [inaudible]

S7: is nothing that's going to [32:30] save her. I mean it could be a little felony. And it could have been twenty years ago. I don't care. You lied on your application and we're done.

RM: Right. Now, with a misdemeanour, do you consider those? If it's a misdemeanour or just felonies?

S7: Misdemeanour, it's going to depend. As long as it's not an active case,

RM: Mm-huh.

S7: and we consider, is it a lot of misdemeanours? Is it back to back? Is it real current? And if so, we're going to call 'em and say, "Hey, this is what came up on your background report [33:00]. Give me some details on it." And, it's going to depend on what they tell us. I mean somebody that has even misdemeanour charges for drug use and it's over and over and over. And it's just been real recent

RM: Hm.

S7: we're probably going to tell them, "You're going to need to seek gainful employment elsewhere and get your problem under control." But, if it's that recent, nine times out of ten they're going to fail the drug screen anyway.

RM: Ok, ok. So it's kind of self-checking [33:30] sometimes?

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: Ok.

S7: But most misdemeanours, actually most felonies, most are not going to prevent you, from getting a job here. It's just whether or not you truthfully, truthfully disclose it. The only person, I've had one, that had a felony charge, that we will absolutely not hire. Period. For anything. And it was, um, sexual abuse on a child. And, where can you put someone in a hospital [34:00], that, has those kind of charges? There's just nowhere. I mean I can't even put this person in dietary because people come in, to see family members and they have their children with them.

RM: Right.

S7: They go to the cafeteria. I'm not going to take that risk. I'm not willing to take it.



RM: And, and that also includes laundry, because, they could, come out and have lunch or something else because they...

S7: They could be anywhere in the hospital. Your ID will get you almost anywhere in the hospital [34:30].

RM: Oh, ok.

S7: I can't get in the Pediatric section and that's about the only place I can't get into and all I have to do is tell them who I am and they'll let me. So, you know. I could go anywhere I wanted to, and, I'm just not willing to take that risk.

RM: So, it's more of a security issue and a liability issue because a person, has a specific, I guess profile or conviction.

S7: Mm-huh.

RM: Ok.

S7: But that is the only, one that I have ever, had that I wouldn't even try to place.

RM: Ok [35:00]. Anything else that you can add?

S7: Not that I can think of. Anything else, you have questions about?

RM: I think we have covered everything. I'll go ahead and...[END OF RECORDING]

## **APPENDIX 12: INTERVIEW NOTES (S7)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTER**

#### **General Interview Notes with S7**

Thursday, 15 July 2010 - Morning

S7 focuses on Support Services which includes housekeeping, dietary, maintenance, nursing assistants, health unit coordinators (HUCs), linen, day care (Lighthouse), material services, central services, and students.

S7 processes applications by working backwards: Most recent applications are processed until the desired acceptable number for an applicant pool has been attained. S7 notes that applications that have been previewed have changed colour in the CAMC.org system. It should be noted that these colour changes are not permanent changes within the system. To assist with processing, notations are made on each application so that applications are processed once.

Individual applications are required to ensure that base line requirements meet the position description. The requests for working hours and salary are matched within a relevant range to available positions. Job-seekers cannot view position descriptions on CAMC.org. Job-seekers must make assumptions concerning which positions to apply for.

HUC – Education by job description, previous job history. S7 removes job-hoppers (6 months or less on job). Job-hoppers are removed as costs are prohibitive: Costs surrounding hiring and training exceed any benefits that CAMC would receive. Thus, best to remove these from consideration.

As most positions are entry-level, High School/GED credentials are validated. Validation is done through a background checks. Educational credentials are important to verify as anyone can fake credentials. Background checks also turn up undisclosed criminal convictions.

Depending on the position, sometimes physicals and drug screens may be completed prior to the background check. If either test is failed, especially the drug test, offer is rescinded. Marijuana and Meth are the top drugs that are detected. If a positive drug screen occurs, a job-seeker may reapply after one year. However, once disqualified, an individual is most likely not employed. Because applications can try to use counter-measures, photo identification is used to help deter criminal behaviour.

The CAMC history is reviewed first before the pre-filtering interview at CAMC-EC. Job-seekers must meet dress codes. Managers receive approximate 3 to 5 applications from CAMC-EC.

The applications are not user friendly and S7 suggests that the applications need to be re-worked. For example: More than three employers would help with profiling individuals. Additionally, having an individual select several career choices would assist in processing applications. Currently, job-seekers must submit a separate application for each job title. If changed, a single application containing multiple career choices would provide a better profiling and filtering tool.

S7 noted that sometimes job-seekers will continuously call and enquire about jobs. CAMC-EC loosely defined this as "Stalking". If these behaviours transfer to aggression or rudeness to other individuals, the job-seeker is removed from consideration. Additionally, CAMC-EC members whom interact with a job-seeker outside of an interview process (i.e. chit-chat) may

be consulted for additional information: Information that relates to overall impressions and experiences with the job-seeker.

## **APPENDIX 13: INTERVIEW NOTES (S8)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTER EMPLOYMENT CENTER Interview Notes with S8 Thursday, 15 July 2010 - Afternoon**

S8 declined to be digitally recording for this interview. Thus, this record is made using the notes from the interview.

S8 focuses on processing selected external applications and providing support for CAMC-EC. S8 also answers basic informational questions for internal job-seekers.

External job-seekers may apply by submitting a CAMC four-page application or completing an on-line application at [www.CAMC.org](http://www.CAMC.org). S8 encourages job-seekers to complete applications using the on-line application process as a possibility exists that applications submitted by paper will be delayed. Any delays in processing will result in a job-seeker not being considered for a posting. Thus, it is in the best interest of the job-seeker to complete an on-line application. For job-seekers that do not have a computer or access to internet, WorkForce WV offers access to the on-line application process. WorkForce WV is located a short walking distance (approximately 0.25 mi) from the CAMC-EC.

Job-seekers submitting a résumé/CV and not submitting a CAMC application are not considered. When a job-seeker makes a submission without a CAMC application, a letter informing the job-seeker that an application has not been taken is issued. As CAMC cannot track résumés at this time, the job-seeker is encouraged to submit an application using the on-line system.

Individuals submitting an application on paper will be processed in order of submission as time permits S8 to process. In the event of an absence, or other required duties, then a delay in processing will occur. When S8 processes each application, corrections for spelling, ALL CAPS/lowercase, or grammatical changes are not made. Additionally, errors are not flagged. S8 makes every effort to mirror the information presented within the application. Each application, when submitted, is stamped received with the date. Processed paper applications are given to the appropriate CAMC-EC at the end of the month. Applications are valid for six months; however, some applications might be around for three years.

Background checks are requested for only counties (within West Virginia & other states in the United States) and sometimes countries where an individual has had a relationship either through residence, employment, education, or other such association. Background checks are outsourced to Employment Background Investigations (EBI). EBI completed a background check for each contingent employee. Each background check reviews at least three counties: Kanawha County, WV and two other counties. CAMC-EC representatives determine which counties background checks will be conducted within. For each additional county search, additional fees are charged by EBI; thus, CAMC-EC attempts to minimise expenses while obtaining necessary information as required by policy.

Background checks can be sometimes problematic for some schools. Graduation dates, confirmation dates, and other dates can be reported differently. Another limitation of background checks occur when a natural disaster (i.e. flood, hurricane, and tornado) has destroyed the records associated with a job-seeker. In those cases, a job-seeker must present credentials and validate information. A job-seeker may present original documents with raised seals for inspection and acceptance. When EBI and a job-seeker are unable to validate information requested, then a job-seeker is not considered to have those credentials. Exceptions are not made to this rule.

For a current employee, credentials required for a position were verified prior to employment as required by policy. Therefore, these credentials are not confirmed. The Lawson system, CAMC, H.R. system contains an electronic personnel file. Verified credentials are entered into this system when a candidate accepts employment with CAMC. For “new” credentials (e.g. credentials that are unconfirmed and not entered into Lawson. These are usually obtained during employment), an employee presents credentials to a Human Resource (HR) representative. The HR representative is responsible for verification and entry of new credentials into the Lawson system. This is out of scope with S8 duties.

For external candidates arriving for an interview with CAMC-EC, a position description and a “Please Read and Sign” form are provided. CAMC does not post position descriptions to the external website. Therefore, external job-seekers have imperfect information concerning a position description. By impact information, an external job-seeker relies on the job-title and his/her perceptions of the duties, responsibilities and work environment associated with the job title. In other words, a job-seeker makes his/her best guess of what the position entails. To bring common ground and common perceptions to a job-seeker, each job-seeker is given a position description appropriate for the interview. The job-seeker must read the position description and then complete the form. The form asks the job-seeker “Did you review the job description for the position, which you are interviewing?”, then asks “Can you perform the essential functions of the job without accommodation?” The objective of the form is to confirm that a job-seeker has read the position description (model) and enquires if a job-seeker would have any problems performing critical tasks. If the job-seeker does has issues with performance, these issues must be documented at this point and during the interview to assure that a reasonable adjustment can be made that does not impact patient care. Another representative makes filtering decisions based on reasonable accommodations.

Drug testing is scheduled by S8. The WV Human Rights Commission has granted CAMC permission to specifically enquire about a job-seeker’s criminal history with respect to convictions having occurred within ten years of the application date. Specifically to convictions associated with narcotic drugs and controlled substances. Permission was granted to better protect patients from wrongful hires. While a conviction may not disqualify an individual, failing to disclose such conviction will disqualify an individual for falsification of an application.

Managers can sometimes circumvent a hiring process. This is with internal candidates and therefore out of scope of S8.

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RM: What is your role here?

S8: [laughs] I get coffee. Actually, a little bit of everything.

RM: Since you are out here in reception, you get to see everybody?

S8: Yea. I get to give out the applications, do the background checks, and, get all the phone calls.

RM: Mm, huh.

S8: I answer the basic questions for the employees [looking for jobs].

RM: So you get all the calls? And you get all the basic questions for internal job-seekers?

S8: Yea. Sometimes I can answer questions from non-employees.

RM: For example,

S8: Well. If they call about pay, or some requirements like a license. Maybe “does this job require a college degree?” [Someone comes in, asks questions, and S8 directs this job-seeker to WorkForce].

RM: OK. So the person that came in, you sent to WorkForce?

S8: Yea. He wanted to apply for a job: Housekeeping. And instead of giving him a paper application, I sent him to WorkForce. They have computers for people to apply for jobs. And sometimes they have to do a test. So the job he wanted does not require a test, there may be one that does. And if he is already there, then he can just take the test.

RM: Now since you enter the paper apps in the system, do you do anything special that would point out that you did this?

S8: No. Well, sometimes I enter comments if they were rude or if there might be a problem. But unless someone looks at those comments, no one would know that I put them there or they may think those were put in by the applicant.

RM: So what about spelling errors or grammar or...

S8: I enter them as best I can. If it is misspelled, it's entered as they had it. So all CAPS, lowercase, I make it exactly as they have it.

RM: Do you take résumés or CVs?

S8: No. If we get those, we send a letter out telling them to fill out an application and we have the web address and instructions on it.

RM: OK. How about those background checks?

S8: Um. We do Kanawha County since CAMC is here and usually two other counties. If they live outside Kanawha and say Putnam, then we would also do Putnam. Sometimes if they worked somewhere else, we get that county too.

RM: So, it's whatever three counties they are associated with?

S8: Yea. And we can do more but it costs.

RM: Just the U.S.?

S8: No. We can do and do other countries too. I don't know how some off those [phone]

RM: OK. Um. It was mentioned that you also help with the interviews that are done here. How so?

S8: Um. Everybody that comes in for an interview has to have an appointment. So, [phone]. I get a copy of the interviews from each person. If they don't have an appointment and they have not applied, then the first step is they have to apply. Just like the guy in here earlier. If they have an appointment, I give them the job description to read [S8 showing clipboards with schedules and names and job descriptions]. Its usually during this time that they tell me their life story. I mean, some things I don't want to know. And its not like I'm going to keep the secrets from [S4, S6, and S7] or anybody else.

RM: So you get extra information from these people?

S8: Sometime too much. I mean, way too much.

RM: And you report the information to whoever they have the interview with?

S8: Yea.

RM: You e-mail do a note?

S8: Usually after they leave, I go back or they come out here and ask if it was questionable. Sometimes they are so loud that everyone wants the story.

RM: OK.

S8: But only if there is something to tell.

RM: OK, and, um, what about the paper applications that you have processed? Where do they go? [phone]

S8: Every paper application gets a received date stamped on it and an enter date. At the end of the month, the paper applications goes to the person that has that job. Most of 'em go to [S7].

RM: How long do you keep them?

S8: Well, they're only good for six months. But some of them we keep three years. Um, especially if it's a hard to fill job.

RM: Going back to the background checks, who determines which counties to request?

S8: It's usually the employment specialists [screener]. But sometimes, it's rare that we do, do another background check cause something came up in the first one. And we don't do that for everyone. Only the critical jobs and only if we really want that person.

RM: So sometimes, um, can you give some examples of when you would do another background check?

S8: Well, um, schools. The background check can have problems if the name doesn't match, the year [graduation] is off, um, if the school is no longer there. Sometimes a major disaster like a flood will wipe out everything. So it might be harder to do. In those cases, we have to ask [S4] what to do. Sometimes she doesn't know either and she has to ask or look into it. Sometimes we can't do anything cause its policy.

RM: So natural disasters can really influence the background check?

S8: Mm-huh. Fires, floods, but yea, we still have to verify, somehow for the file or we can't hire.

RM: Now here are some questions on how far back these background checks go. Seven years?

S8: Yea. Seven years except for criminal history. We can go back ten years.

RM: How come ten years?

S8: The [West Virginia] Human Rights Commission has given us an exemption because of patient safety.

RM: What about employees looking to transfer? How do you, um, verify their credentials?

S8: We only verify the credentials once. We keep all the employee files in Lawson. So it's up to H.R. managers to update those and verify any new credentials. And, [phone] sorry.

RM: It's OK. Was there anything else to add to the, um, processes, or how you get information, or ?

S8: Not that I can think of. Oh, yea. If EBI can't verify the High School graduation date, then we can use the diploma, with the raised seal. This was really important after Hurricane Katrina.

RM: OK. So there are some work arounds that can be done under, certain circumstances?

S8: Yea.

RM: Are there any other exceptions to the rules?

S8: Not really.

RM: Are there any differences between the external job-seekers and internal job-seekers?

S8: Um not really. We don't do too much with the internals. We just make sure that everyone on the outside coming in has everything done right.

RM: So you have some difficulties with processing internal applicants?

S8: Um, well, sometimes managers can by-pass some of our processes. That does not happen very often.

RM: OK.

S8: We don't get involved in much of those.



## **APPENDIX 14: INTERVIEW NOTES (S9 & S10)**

### **CHARLESTON AREA MEDICAL CENTER General Interview Notes with S9 & S10 Thursday, 29 July 2010 (~09:30-12:10)**

S9 and S10 declined to be digitally recording for this interview. Thus, this record is made using the notes from the interview.

S9 and S10 compose a team of three individuals (other individual was on leave during this interview) that primarily filter nursing staff applications. Nursing staff would include but would not be limited to nurse externs, new graduate nurses, experienced RNs, student RN, nurse practitioners, SRNA (student RNA), CRNA (experienced and licensed), research LPN (licensed practical nurse).

Job descriptions are posted on the internal CAMC website and are not posted or available for general review by external job-seekers. Job titles may be the same or similar, job descriptions can significantly vary by department. While variability exists within the same job titles, variability does not change pay rates or pay grades. S9 and S10 noted that with these variances in job descriptions, each job description is reviewed prior to filtering applications. The open position (vacancy) is checked against the general position to identify the needs for extra experience, specific requirements, and pay grade potentials.

Internal job postings are posted to the CAMC internal website on Fridays. After postings are available for internal viewing, S9 prints copies, usually on Friday afternoons. Notations are placed on postings with respect to the special requirements outside the general position descriptions. This list is kept until Thursday when filtering processes begin for internal postings. Note: Postings may be internal, external, or simultaneous. However, internal job-seekers are given first opportunity for available positions. If no internal applications are received, managers are contacted and a posting is advertised externally.

S9 notes that external applications are focused on more so than internal applications. Focus is primary due to managers having more control over the internal process and managers usually have someone in mind to hire. [NOTE: Internal job-seekers have already been processed through the external hire process].

For internal job-seekers, employees are responsible for ensuring that Human Resources have correct and updated information. Confirmation of credentials is critically important to managers. Without confirmation of credentials, the job-seeker is considered to not have those credentials.

#### **POSITIONS**

The number of vacancies to be filled for the upcoming year is determined during the October Budget process. The prior year's turnover rates form the foundation of analysis for projecting vacancies.

#### **RECRUITMENT**

CAMC recruits from a number of schools. The University of Charleston (Charleston, WV); Tech (Montgomery); Kanawha Valley Community & Technology (Institute, WV & Formally WVSU Community & Tech College); St. Mary's; Marshall University (Huntington, WV); Southern; and several other schools within the WV geography. However, sometimes students from South Carolina, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Maryland, South Carolina, and Washington have applied.

GEOGRAPHY is a critical filtering cue. This is more so for grad nurses. Notably, reimbursement rates for Medicaid and Medicare are higher in Huntington (~40 miles west of CAMC) and to the north. Cabell Huntington Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital can significantly pay more money, individuals seeking and being employed may be motivated to seek employment that offers more compensation if the distance between work and home is comparable. Another issue with geography is sometimes applications come from job-seekers that have incorrectly assumed CAMC was located in Charleston, South Carolina and not in WV. Thus, anytime a South Carolina address appears on the application, the job-seeker is notified that the position is in WV. Most of the time, the job-seeker withdraws the application. NOTE: S9 and S10 noted that relocation occurs more so with new grads.

For recruiting positions, CAMC has a team composed of sixty members of the hospital staff. This team operates and concentrates recruiting efforts within West Virginia. However, some positions such as pharmacy have expanded areas of recruitment. This is largely due to a lack of qualified individuals seeking employment within the normal CAMC area. To help meet the demand of pharmacy personnel, the University of Charleston established an academic programme to train individuals. As the UC and other programmes produce graduates, recruiting efforts will be re-evaluated.

Pamphlets and other information are sent to schools. Word-of-mouth is critical for recruitment. Scholarships help with advertising CAMC to job-seekers.

Experience ratings of a job-seeker can help facilitate salaries. Experience is not counted concurrent (only 12 months can be attributive to an employee) and the experience must be transferable with the type of position.

Staff shortages tend to be mostly on night shift for experienced personnel. Also, many 1<sup>st</sup> year employees leave from stress. Also, CAMC is a teaching facility and job-seekers build experience and move to another employer.

### **INTERVIEW DAY**

S10 noted that externs and nurse grad applications are taken in February and interviews are held in April. The day starts with a 7:00 AM registration and concludes roughly around 15:30 to 16:00. Each job-seeker attends up to five interviews. The job-seeker selects three interviews and two interviews are selected by the CAMC-EC. Interviews are 15 minutes long with a 5 minute break between interviews. Extern interviews are conducted in group settings and are not done individually. New grad interviews are done one-on one.

Approximately 150 interviews are completed in one day. In addition to interviews, health screenings (with a colour blind test), titers ("shoot record"), and a urine/drug screen (job-seekers are bussed off-site for testing) are completed the same day. Background checks are completed prior to interviews by mail. Background checks verify in-school status and credentials. After this event, approximately three days are needed to process all information.

S9 & S10 noted that externs are young and not much information can be obtained from interviews. Reliance is placed with the filtering process. Based on the type of educational programme, an extern can be two to four years long and is paid. Pay can range between \$9.36 - \$10.00 USD per hour.

After the interview day, Managers provide CAMC-EC with a preference of job-seekers/applicants. This preference list is compared with the preferences of the applicants. Preferences of each are matched up as best as possible. In some cases, managers are consulted when a tie or equal preferences exceed the number of vacancies.

Sometimes information can present issues that need to be resolved, prior to an applicant being offered a position. For example, if a background check denotes a felony conviction the

job-seeker is consulted to further collect information and evaluate the circumstances of the felony. If the felony conviction does not prohibit or cause issues with the duties of the position or compromise patient care, then the information is presented to division director. The division director makes the final decision on employability.

If a drug test is positive (the presence of a substance having been detected), then the job-seeker/applicant is removed completely. A subsequent drug test is not used. However, if the drug test could not be performed based on problems with the collection of a specimen, then another specimen is collected for drug testing. In three years, only two individuals have been removed because of drug tests.

## **FILTERING**

When filtering applications, S9 focuses on the time a job-seeker is in the current position as short (less than one year) may indicate a job-seeker is more likely a job-hopper or (s)he is not as committed as CAMC would like. Next, the graduation date is considered as dates outside of a specified time frame mean a job-seeker cannot obtain the necessary credentials prior to becoming employed. Thus, only those job-seekers whom are expected to graduate shortly (i.e. within two months) are considered. Then the employment history is scrutinised for gaps in employment and specific reasons for changing positions or jobs. Specific reasons for changing jobs that are potentially disqualifying to a job-seeker are: Disagreement with management; Personal; did not like job; or another phase that does not indicate that the job-seeker is advancing within a career.

S9 notes that nursing licenses are checked prior to contacting a job-seeker for an interview. Job-seekers, to be considered for an interview, must have a valid and active WV license before beginning employment; disciplines on file must have been resolved and disciplines must not be practice related or limiting on the job-seeker. Each job-seeker's shift preferences are matched with his/her skill sets. While managers can have the ultimate hiring decision, S9 forwards only applications that S9 believes to meet the manager's preference.

Telephone interviews are used to fish information (solicit explanations) from a job-seeker when applicant information is flagged. Applicant information is normally first seen (for external candidates) in CAMC-EC. Thus, when S9 & S10 feels a job-seeker is not qualified for a position with a particular manager or title, then the job-seeker is removed from selection. S10 tells a story of a job-seeker presenting poorly. The job-seeker discussed inappropriate and unethical behaviours and highlighted several unfavourable characteristics and behaviours to S10. Due to these issues, which directly affected patient care, S10 chose not to send the job-seeker to the scheduled interview with a manager. S10 felt that the manager's time was spent more appropriately contributing to the hospital operations and not with the job-seeker. The interviewing manager was informed by S10 of the decision to not further a job-seeker in the selection process. S9 agreed with S10.

Salary information was not a filtering factor for decisions S9 & S10 noted that many job-seekers are not really clear on the pay rates and total compensation packages. During the initial interview with CAMC-EC, S9 & S10 provides information concerning benefits and general information concerning the hospital.

If an employee has worked for CAMC and is not currently employed (this being a re-hire/re-instatement/no hire), S9 & S10 consults Lawson and other CAMC-EC systems to determine the issues surrounding a no hire or departure. If a job-seeker is provided with a favourable opinion, then the job-seeker advances. If the job-seeker is not provided with a favourable opinion, then S9 & S10 investigates further. If circumstances have changed significantly, then a job-seeker may be moved forward in the filtering process. Significantly can be interpreted as the job-seeker has changed (spouse/mate/life partner) and the no-hire reason was attributed to work-life balance; the job-seeker was employed over ten years ago; a

manager is willing to interview a job-seeker. S9 & S10 does not have a preference amongst external hires, re-hires, or reinstatements.

Base-rates on positions are focused more so on job responsibilities. S9 & S10 noted that a flaw with the application is that the application only covers three employers. Thus, S9 & S10 requests job-seekers to present a résumé at the time of interview.

The applications do not have to be completed. If enough information can indicate that a job-seeker could be a good match for a position, then the job-seeker is contact. With computerised applications, categories for positions are more general and broad. Additionally, there are less qualified job-seekers to be very specific in details. Applications are worked from most current backward: Last-in, first-out.

The term job-hopper is contingent upon a position. A job-seeker should not have more than six jobs in a year unless seriously good reasons are available. A travel nurse would be a good reason. A travel nurse may spend 13 weeks as a short-term temporary employee at several hospitals.

### **S9 & S10 EXPERIENCE**

S9 has been with CAMC-EC for approximately three years. Prior to CAMC-EC, S9 was a nurse for 16 years (Since 1991). S9 still maintains a license in good standing.

S10 has been with CAMC-EC since fall of 2000. S10 was a HUC (Health Unit Coordinator) for ten years.

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RM: Can you walk me though your process?

S9: Well, we check on the vacancy against the general position [description]. It may be that we need someone with extra experience, specific requirements, maybe even a special pay grade for some of this. We print those [applications] on Friday afternoon after the postings close. Then we write notes on the applications.

RM: Is there an order that you process the applications?

S9: Of course we do the internals first, but Lawson has all that information. So, I guess, we really spend more time on the external applicants. On Thursdays, we contact the managers and do all the internal applicants first. Or, if we have none, then we send external applications.

S10: Well, for the most part.

RM: OK.

S10: In February, we set up all the interviews for April for the externs and nurse grads.

RM: Some special event?

S10: Interview day. We do about one hundred fifty interviews in one day. Five interviews per person [job-seeker]. Um, we're looking at hiring eighty nurse grads.

RM: How do you know how many to hire?

S10: We get our number of new hires in October. That is when the budget process looks at turnover and estimates what we need.

RM: OK. So these people come from all over?

S9: Yes.

S10: We recruit mostly from schools: UC, Tech, State, Marshall. But, sometimes, we have people apply from elsewhere.

RM: Such as?

S10: South Carolina, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Maryland, even as far away as Washington State.

S9: The ones from South Carolina we call and ask them if they want to work in West Virginia. After all, there is a Charleston, South Carolina, and if you Google us, we pop up. And they are thinking, well it's in Charleston. And most of the time they don't know that.

RM: So where they are from, is that important to think about when you are looking at their applications and what they want?

S9: Yea.

S10: [nodding]. More so with our new grad nurses.

RM: OK. How does this interview day operate?

S9: The applicants choose where they want to interview. They choose three interviews and we [CAMC-EC] pick two. These last fifteen minutes with a five minute break between each interview.

RM: So you interview these people one-on-one?

S10: No. It's a group [externs] interview. We have to do it that way to save time.

S9: And all the health screenings are done that day.

RM: What kinds of screenings?

S9: Colour blindness, we get their titers, the urine drug screen, all the same day. They are bussed in groups. It takes three days to get everything done.

RM: What about background checks?

S10: Those are done before the interviews. We do those by mail. That's the only time they are allowed to sign the papers when we're not there.

RM: How do you decide who gets the position and who doesn't?

S10: Well, it's a matter of, um, a combination of taking the manager's picks and the where the student wants to go. So, we match them up until the position is filled.

RM: Are they ranked.

S10: Yea, they rank 'em one to five since they have five interviews.

RM: OK. So if a manager has ranked somebody a one, and the applicant has ranked them a two, then they're a close match.

S10: Exactly.

RM: So everyone goes through the group interview.

S10: Um, no. Just the externs. The grad interviews are done one on one.

RM: What time does all this start?

S10: Registration is at seven [A.M.] and it lasts until one thirty or two.

S9: Since the externs are young, there is not much information to get out of the interviews. We've already looked at everyone; it's really up to the manager to pick the people that they like the most.

RM: Are the externs paid?

S10: Yea. An externship can be two to four years and are paid: \$9.36 to \$10 plus an hour.

RM: OK. Let's see. The background checks are done before the interviews. The in-school credentials are verified. And what happens if a conviction is found.

S10: With any conviction, we consult that person and discuss it. But [S4] has to approve anyone with a conviction. Otherwise, we just send them an adverse action letter.

RM: OK. Failed drug test?

S10: A failure disqualifies them entirely. Unless there was a collection [specimen] issue, then they might be able to resubmit. But I only know of that happening twice in the last three years. So, I wouldn't count on it.

RM: And what is the recruitment strategy?

S10: We send pamphlets to schools. We have a recruiting team composed of sixty people.

RM: Do you focus only in West Virginia?

S10: It depends on the position. If it's pharmacy, we can go out. If it's a specialised position, then we need to go where we can get one.

RM: Do you do the same when recruiting from the inside?

S10: No. Everything is in Lawson, so the employees are responsible for making sure everything is in there before they apply.

RM: OK. Now, outside of the interview day, how do you [S9] review the applications?

S9: Well. First, it's time in current position. Then, the graduation dates, um, employment history, I'm looking for the reason for leaving and gaps in employment.

RM: Mm, huh.

S9: I check to see if they have the nursing license before I call them for an interview. They have to have a valid and active West Virginia [nursing] license before they can work

here. If they have disciplines on file, I have to talk to the Board [of Nursing] and find out what it was for. If it [discipline] was resolved or if it isn't practice related, then we can move on.

RM: OK.

S9: We look at what they have to offer [skill set] and what shift they want so that we can match them together. The hiring manager ultimately makes the final decision.

RM: So they look at all the applications too.

S9: No. I only forward the applications that fit the manager.

RM: So you consider what the manager wants and you forward only those applications to him or her that meet their needs? Is that on the posting somehow, organisational fit? Or?

S9: Yea. But, um, there is nothing on the posting. I know what my managers want. I talk to them before we advertise the position. So, I have to look at who I send over to them. I mean, sometimes this one would be a good fit here, but not over here. I have to consider my manager's personality. I mean, you know. I don't want to put somebody that will clash personalities.

RM: Ah, OK. So you have to adjust who goes where because you know what is right for the team based on your knowledge of the managers' personalities?

S9: Exactly.

RM: How long have you been here [CAMC-EC]?

S9: I was a nurse for sixteen years, um, since '91. So, I've been here for three years.

S10: I've been here [CAMC-EC] since the end of 2000. Before that, I was a HUC for ten years.

RM: OK. So you have some pretty interesting stories then?

S10: [laughs] Yea.

RM: OK. Can you share one?

S10: Well. There was this one guy that came in for an interview. He was, um, um, completely unprofessional. He told us, he was fired from his previous job. I think from stealing things. He was always late, so he'd call in a lot. I think [looking at S9], he said that most of the time he had a hangover or something like that [S9 nodding in agreement]. There was a bunch of stuff he said. But ultimately, he was just not someone we wanted here. We [looking at S9 with S9 nodding in agreement] thought that he would definitely not be good for our patients.

RM: How so?

S10: Well, he was just interested in money. He was not even compassionate. He was like, well, if the money is good, I can do pretty much anything.

RM: OK. And are other interviews conducted this way?

S9: Well. I use telephone interviews 'to fish' for information. I look for why they left their job. Why they are looking. Especially, anytime that I have flagged something on the application that I am unsure of. And if they aren't a good fit, or if it wrong, we don't bring them in.

RM: What about salary?

S10: No. That does not come into play.

RM: OK. What about rehires?

S10: In Lawson, there is a 'Do not hire' list. So if it is coded that way, we don't even talk to them.

RM: Would you rather hire a newcomer or a rehire?

S10: Makes no difference to me.

RM: Do you look at more of the job responsibilities they had or?

S10: Well the application only covers three employers. So, I usually want to see a résumé.

RM: Mm, huh and that gives you the additional information?

S10: Yea.

RM: Any other comments?

S9: Well, there are more job requests based on relocation, mostly coming from new grads.

S10: And the applications do not have to be completed. Even though they complete them on the computer, there just is not enough room for them to list everything. That is why I ask for the résumé.

RM: How do you know where to start on the applications?

S10: We do the most recent first and we make comments so we know which ones we did.

S9: Our categories are broader than the other jobs, so there are less applications submitted [applicants per job-seeker].

RM: What about job-hoppers?

S9: It might be ok. It depends on the position. You know. Six jobs in a year. Really, it really depends on why they left. Sometimes a traveling nurse will have several jobs because when the patient dies their job is over. They really end of life care and go where they are needed. They may spend, um, thirteen weeks on the job.

RM: Is there a standard definition or benchmark or something that you can say, 'here is a job-hopper'?

S9: No.

S10: No.

RM: Are there any problems with hiring.



S9: We have a problem trying to find experienced people that want to work nights. Everybody wants the day shift. To be home with the kids and all that.

RM: Are there incentives that help people apply?

S9: We have scholarships. But, word-of-mouth is the best way to get people to apply. The biggest problem is really keeping the people after the first year.

RM: Why?

S9: Stress. Usually, they're on night shift cause we schedule by seniority, so they have to be here for a while. And sometimes, they are just here for a year to get that experience and go somewhere else. So, yea.

RM: So experience is important, but especially at night?

S10: Yea. It helps make the salaries all equal based on experience.

RM: Do you count concurrent experience? For example: Someone working full-time at the hospital at night, and then working in a doctor's office only part-time?

S10: No. We only look at the full-time job. Or if that full-time job isn't a nurse, or a medical field, then we might look at the part-time.

RM: So it has to be relevant?

S10: Yea.

RM: And the type of position must be relevant then?

S10: Exactly.

## **APPENDIX 15: INTERVIEW NOTES (S11)**

### **CROSS LANES VETERINARY HOSPITAL General Interview Notes – S11 Monday, 6 February 2012, ~14:00**

#### **PRIOR TO INTERVIEW**

Prior to the interview, the researcher and S11 reviewed the Informed Consent Form and discussed how this research would be conducted. This interview was conducted as a follow-up to the information provided by S3. S11 had declined to be recorded prior to the interview, thus, jotted notes provided a means to prepare a more comprehensive account of the interview.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS**

The interview between the researcher and the Veterinary Hospital Team Leader Reception ("S11") commenced on or about 14:00 on 6 February 2012 at a local restaurant.

#### **PARTICIPANTS**

S11 was a female with an associate's degree. She was hired at the Veterinary Hospital around ten and a half years ago. She is married with two children and pets.

#### **INTERVIEW DISCUSSION**

RM: Is S3 still the office manager?

S11: S3 took a position located in Massachusetts and S3's last day was 29 October 2011.

RM: Was S3 seeking alternative employment in Massachusetts?

S11: A vendor that supplies us [the Veterinary Hospital] had some Hospitals in Massachusetts. That vendor offered a position to [S3] that had a higher salary and less responsibilities. So she [S3] took it.

RM: S3 established the "The Veterinary Hospital has seven (7) doctors as Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and twenty-five (25) staff members. Staff members compose several divisions or teams within the Veterinary Hospital. The Veterinary Hospital also conducts some lab work in-house." Are there any changes with respect to personnel numbers that have changed?

S11: The same DVMs continue to be employed and some changes in staff personnel have occurred. S3 had left and the number of staff members has increased to thirty-one (31).

RM: Was this increase in staff attributed to expansion?

S11: Yes. Although we need another DVM, that position has not been authorised nor is it being considered by the owners at this time.

RM: Do you have any written employment policies or position descriptions?

S11: No. We are still developing those.

RM: Who is the primary person that handles all of the employment applications?

S11: The office manager. [NOTE: S3 was the office manager during the time of the first interview with the Veterinary Hospital].

RM: Since S3 left, has there been any role changes among staff?

S11: No. The new office manager has the same functions as before.

RM: Are there other people involved at any stage in selecting and hiring employees?

S11: Yes. The three owners have final say; however, they have taken a "hands off" approach. Essentially the office manager completes all aspects of the hiring process and informs them [the owners] of new hires.

RM: How about the team leaders? What roles do the team leaders fulfil?

S11: Some team leaders are more involved now.

RM: How so?

S11: They look at the applications.

RM: So the team leaders look at all the applications now?

S11: No. The office manager still looks over all the applications and does all the filtering and checking references. She just lets us look over the ones that are really good.

RM: So the office manager does all the filtering and choses which applications you and other team leaders see?

S11: Yea. But most of the team leaders are indifferent. They don't get as involved as I do. I'm nosy.

RM: Do you have a preference of seeing something on an application?

S11: Well, I look at experience. If they have any reception experience or veterinary experience, that is a plus. Some have a preference for no experience because they are less likely to make mistakes. They don't have to be retrained. I don't care if they are old or young. I just want them to be able to do the job.

RM: How about for the registered technicians? What are the education and experience requirements for them?

S11: They usually have a degree from Carver. [NOTE: Carver Career Center is located within Kanawha County, West Virginia]. That takes two years to complete. You don't need experience to be hired. And for most positions, you don't need a degree or have to complete high school. We have had a couple of people that were hired without a

diploma [High School]. Dr. [one of the owners] really got them to go back and finish school.

RM: What can the registered technicians do different than a regular staff member?

S11: Well, they can do the dentals [clean teeth], the laboratories, draw blood and fluids, conduct educational classes, pretty much anything except surgery.

RM: So a registered technician is like a watered down DVM?

S11: Yea. They would do surgery if they were allowed.

RM: How are DVMs hired?

S11: There are three (3) owner doctors. They decide who comes in [as a DVM]. One is the daughter of the founder. The other two I'm not sure how they got together.

RM: Are they related? Did they go to the same school?

S11: No. I'm not sure how they got together.

RM: How many DVMs have been hired since you have been there?

S11: Two (2) in the last ten (10) years. The last DVM was hired, August 2008.

RM: What are the roles of the team leaders in the hiring process? Do they participate at any stage?

S11: Team leaders look at applications. That is about it for most of them. I get involved more than anyone else because I like to know that they are going to come to work.

RM: The office manager provides the applications and resumes.

S11: Yea. She selects and hands out those that stand out the most. I get to see most everyone because I usually take them in. So I read them over before I hand them to her.

RM: What do you look for? What stands out more on the applications for you?

S11: How many jobs they have had [NOTE: Job-hoppers]. And their attendance. On one application they listed that they were fired from the last two jobs for excessive call-offs. We never interviewed them.

RM: How about references?

S11: Well. I look at them. Teacher. Professional. Personal. If they have references. The office manager takes care of checking all those. Normally you don't find someone listed as a reference that they don't know or that would give them a bad reference.

RM: You list only positive choices.

S11: Exactly. I also look to see if they can feed an animal. If they have pets.

RM: Veterinary experience?

S11: Not as much. But you would be surprised to see how many people come in and are unfamiliar with breeds. They think that all dogs are the same and all cats are the same.

RM: Other than size?

S11: If you're lucky. They really have no clue. They just don't know.

RM: What is the role of the company owners in hiring for the various staff positions?

S11: They are pretty much hands off. For the most part, the office manager just makes the decision and that is it.

RM: How does the Veterinary Hospital recruit for openings?

S11: Most are walk-in applications. About 75%. I think that they only ran an ad in the paper maybe two or three times since I been there [NOTE: Over ten years]. We also have Vet students in the summer that help. Those are paid. And we have some people that are doing a school internship and they are not paid.

RM: What is the process of selecting DVMs?

S11: Well. There have only been two hired since I have been there. The last one [August, 2008] worked there during the summer before. Prior to that, the [DVM] called until she was hired. Her husband was coming to work in West Virginia and she called from Georgia saying she was relocated and wanted to come to work for us. She keep calling and they [owners] finally gave in.

RM: Other than graduating as a DVM, are there any other requirements?

S11: No. I'm pretty sure that she was finishing up school.

RM: What are the requirements for the laboratory positions?

S11: There are none except for the registered technicians.

RM: What are the requirements for other staff such as administration?

S11: There are no formal requirements. We are still working on personnel policies but some things keep getting in the way. You have a call off or something else that comes along every time you set time aside to do it.

RM: OK. Do the team leaders have any requirements?

S11: Caring people. I mean you have to care about what you do and want to do a good job. You can't just treat it like just a job. You have to care that you get your work done and sometimes that means you have to do more than expected. Stay over and get things done. Like when they came to me and talked to me about being a team leader. I had no clue. It was a big secret until later. I had no clue that they were going to make me a team leader. There are no formal requirements.

RM: Does the staff participate within the hiring processes?

S11: Not really.

RM: So they have a limited role.

S11: Usually they are not consulted at all. They are only approached if they are a reference. But they are treated like any other reference.

RM: How does appearance affect the selection process?

S11: Appearance is a big issue. This really came out before S3 left. They [owners] had her be the bad guy. They implemented a new policy on appearance. No facial piercings. No eyebrows, or lips, or noses, or anything hanging out. Tongue piercings are OK. So were earrings. You could have them, but you could not wear them while working.

RM: How about tattoos?

S11: Tattoos are OK.

RM: Do they have to be covered? Are there inappropriate or offensive tattoos?

S11: They don't have to be covered, but they have to be tasteful. I mean, we have mostly tribal tattoos and girly tattoos [This being flowers and smaller tattoos]. After all, mostly women work here.

RM: How about what they look like?

S11: Well that depends on if it's an appointment or spur of the moment. We sometimes interview them on the spot if we have time. I was interviewed after I turned in my application. I had been painting all day and I had [my daughter] in a stroller. They were like, "Do you have time to come back?" I was, "Seriously? Like this?"

RM: What about dress?

S11: Well they have to be covered. They have to be clean and not dirty. They have to have their teeth brushed. No underwear needs to be seen. You would not believe how many people think they can get a job by letting their thongs or something else be seen.

RM: So personal grooming and not exposing too much.

S11: Yea.

RM: Is there a written checklist of things that you look for or ask a job-seeker?

S11: No.

RM: How about a cognitive checklist?

S11: There is not a standard one. The job duties are not written so they fall under what team they will be working with.

RM: Examination, Kennel, Laboratory, Reception, Surgery, and Treatment & Recovery? [RM presented the definitions of these as presented from S3].

S11: That's it. We are moving towards more written policies but have not quite made it there yet.

RM: The expansion resulted as part of the community need. Is this correct?

S11: Yes. It took about one year. They [owners] thought and talked about it [the expansion] a lot before they did it.

RM: What has changed since the expansion of the practice in relation to the hiring process? Are there more specialized teams?

S11: The hiring processes have transferred to the office manager from the three owners. We are moving towards written policies but there have been delays. Also, everything that is in writing has to be checked off by the three owners so it takes forever to do something.

RM: Is this why the office manager does the hiring and tells the owners who was hired?

S11: Yea.

RM: What hiring details does the office manager discuss with team leaders?

S11: That depends on the team leader. Some don't get involved. They rarely participate in the interview. I get involved in the interview whether they want me to or not. I want to know what I'm going to get.

RM: Are there any written policies concerning hiring?

S11: Not really.

RM: Can you offer me any interesting hiring stories?

S11: Not off-hand.

RM: Do you do drug testing?

S11: No.

RM: How about background checks?

S11: All references are called by the office manager.

RM: How is an application with volunteer experience considered?

S11: It's only counted if it relates.

RM: Does geography play a role in hiring?

S11: We take it into consideration. I ask if they can make it to work in bad weather. If they have a vehicle that can make it. So many younger people don't even consider the weather. I want to know if I can depend on them or if I have to have someone on standby.

RM: Is there one factor that will remove an application? [From RQ1]

S11: No. I look at the whole thing. Their personality has to fit into our organisation. They have to be able to learn and want to learn. They have to be dependable.

RM: How about those applications that information is questionable? [From RQ2].

S11: Lies get discarded. We don't even look at those because we have money, and drugs, and a whole lot of other things that can be taken.

RM: So you have had employee theft.

S11: Yea. We have had an employee that has stolen from us before. So we don't even consider those that might be risky.

RM: The current guidelines, models, and policies that you are using are cognitive with written ones being produced.

S11: Yea. The team leaders are supposed to write how they do their jobs down. So far, we have not finished. Some just haven't started.



## **APPENDIX 16: GROUNDED THEORY CLASSIFICATION OF RELEVANT STUDIES CONCERNING FILTERING PROCESSES**

Appendix 16 serves to provide additional insight into the researcher's analysis of key academic publications. These six tables summarise the general grounded theory grouping of the literature.

### **Studies on Biodata**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Major Themes Focusing on Biodata</b>
Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005	Biodata can predict voluntary avoidable turnover
Carlson et al., 1999	Biodata is generalisable
Drakeley et al., 1988	Biodata is a good predictor of professional training success
Harvey-Cook & Taffler, 2000	Biodata on application forms can predict future performance at professional entry level
Mount et al., 2000	Biodata predictors can account for incremental variance in criteria beyond incumbent job experience
Owens & Schoenfeldt, 1979	Biodata can help to identify past behaviours to predict future behaviours
Rothstein et al., 1990	Biodata is specific to particular organisations

### **Studies on Screener Objectivity**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Major Theme Focusing on Screener Objectivity</b>
Bartram et al., 1995	Small businesses use difference tools for recruiting than large organisations
Bellizzi & Hasty, 2000	Hiring responsibility translates to severity of discipline
Cotton et al., 2008	Applicant names can affect hiring decisions.
Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997	Social ties affect hiring processes
McKinney, A. et al., 2003	Discusses screener decisions concerning grade point average
Oliphant & Alexander, 1982	A screener's gender can affect selection decisions
Roth & Bobko, 2000	Grade point averages may contribute to adverse impact amongst ethnic groups

### **Studies on Information Processing**

<b>Study</b>	<b>Major Theme Focusing on Information Processing</b>
Aguinis & Smith, 2007	Statistical principle integrating test validity, test bias, selection errors, and adverse impact
Anderson & Shackleton, 1990	Information processing can be flawed which can corrupt assessment
Ballou, 1996	Hiring decisions are suboptimal (from undervaluing cognitive skills and subject matter)
Browne et al., 2005	Banks are more efficient for predicting success
Burke, 1997	Applicant results may differentiate due to an applicant's testing experience
Garen, 1985	Large firms face more information problems than small firms
Furnham & Drakeley,	Students are good at predicating their own personality test

2000	scores but overestimate their actual personality scores
Geerlings & van Veen, 2006	Provides a theory concerning how selection policies can affect decisions
Goffin & Woycheshin, 2006	Provides an original theory to determine employer competencies and KSAO from incumbents rating task-based job analytic procedures
Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994	Validity of interviews for entry-level jobs is higher than previous research indicated
Moy & Lam, 2004	Presents the hiring preference of Hong Kong employers in relationship to the Big Five personality traits
Ployhart et al., 2003	Web-based testing is more reliable than paper-and-pencil testing
Schmitt et al., 2003	Elaborate responses produce lower scores
Searle, 2006	Provides an overview concerning technology in human resource practices and its potential for misuse
Shackleton & Newell, 1991	Presents an original theory about the reliability and validity of selection methods are being practiced more

### Studies Focusing on Converting Theoretical to Practical Applications

Study	Major Theme Focusing on Practical Applications
Adkins, 1995	A relationship between work experience and socialisation process exists
Aguinis et al., 2001	Virtual reality technology has a practical use in selection
Aycan, 2005	Research focusing on cross-cultural issues is necessary. This study provides a qualitative core reference and discussion for future research.
Dick & Nadin, 2006	Gender inequities can be preventable if questioned
Patterson, 2001	Work psychology, as a sub-discipline of psychology, is successful for the application of theory to practice.
Ryan et al., 1999	Cultural differences contribute to staffing practices
Saha et al., 2008	Values and culture affect employment equity
Schmitt & Oswald, 2006	Extends knowledge into faking
Tett et al., 1991	Personality measures have a place in personnel selection research. The value of using personality traits will emerge after personality-oriented job analysis is practical.
Wolf & Jenkins, 2006	Extends academic theory to practitioners concerning formal tests within filtering processes. Organisations tend to adapt tests to legally defend hiring practises and decisions before organisational needs.

### Studies on Guidelines and Personnel Specifications

Study	Major Theme Focusing on Guidelines & Personnel Specifications
Barron et al., 1985	Presents evidence and original guidelines supporting employers gain more by locating productive employees
Blakemore & Low, 1984	Presents original guidelines (human capital approach) for occupational selection. Students select majors based on their expected labour participation and career obsolescence.
Bobko et al., 2008	Job analysis should be periodically checked for accuracy.
Borjas & Goldberg, 1978	Presents original guidelines illustrating screening bias affect wages
Campbell et al., 1990	Some job personnel specifications may be applicable to similar

	jobs
Chia, 2005	Emotional intelligence measures can be used for filtering applicants
Christiansen et al., 1994	The Sixteen Personality Factor Test (16PF) correction for faking or motivated distortion may adversely affect up to 20% of non-faking applicants.
Cornell & Welch, 1996	Presents original guidelines that predict screening discrimination more likely to occur where applicant quality must be inferred; the incumbent must acquire on-the job skills; filtering interviews are inexpensive; and within larger applicant pools.
Ferris et al., 2002	Competition for talent has forced organisations to focus recruitment strategies
Frei & McDaniel, 1998	Customer service measures (i.e. friendly, stable, and dependability) can predict job performance.
Harris, 1943	Provides an account of new methods (guidelines) for selection and training for U.S. civil affairs officers. Discusses the transference of private industry experience to military service. Emphasis focuses on education, skill sets, and foreign language ability.
Highhouse & Gallo, 1997	Provides evidence concerning students used in simulated environments to explore recency affect and anchoring heuristics in selection
Iles et al., 1990	Organisations need to work hard to make their recruitment and selection processes congruent with reality
Jones & Fletcher, 2004	Self-assessment can be valid predictors of applicant competencies especially when coupled with instructions requesting realistic assessments.
Judge & Cable, 1997	Applicant characteristics determines job path
Litecky et al., 2004	Presents original guidelines for information technology hiring using both technical skills and soft skills.
Oswald et al., 2004	Students should be assessed more broadly by universities (advocates changes in personnel specifications). Biographical data and situational judgment inventory should be used with entrance exams and grade point averages.
Robertson & Kinder, 1993	Personality variables add unique criterion-related (e.g. creativity, analysis, and judgment) information beyond ability variables
Robertson & Makin, 1986	U.K. organisations primarily select managers by interviews and references even though assessment centre exercises and biographical data use is increasing.
Robertson et al., 2000	Dependability is associated with overall management performance

### Studies Focusing on Literature Reviews

Study	Major Theme Focusing on Literature Reviews
Barrick & Mount, 1991	A meta-analysis on the Big Five Personality
Bartram, 2004	Supports future research on cross-cultural differences and assessment practices
Bliesener, 1996	A meta-analysis supporting different methodological approach create variance

Guest, 1991	Presents human resource management strategies and questions sustainability within the field if HRM does not reconcile personnel management with good practice and the appropriate guidelines and personnel specifications
Guilliland, 1993	Provides a framework on applicant perspectives
Guion & Gottier, 1966	Discusses personality tests
Hausknecht et al., 2004	A meta-analysis concerning applicants view selection in terms of justice
Hodgkinson & Payne, 1998	Advocates more qualitative data is needed to understand selection environments
Schmidt & Hunter, 1998	A meta-analysis of 85 years of research

## **APPENDIX 17: ORGANISATIONAL AND GOVERNING DOCUMENTS OF THE EMPIRICAL CASE STUDIES**

### **Research Centre Organisational and Governing Documents**

American Bar Association (“ABA”). (2010). ABA Approved Law Schools [Website]. Accessed from <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/approvedlawschools/approved.html> on January 20, 2010.

Appalachian School of Law (“ASL”). (2010). Home Website. Accessed from <http://www.asl.edu> on January 20, 2010.

Ohio Northern University College of Law (“ONU”). (2010). Home Website. Accessed from <http://www.law.onu.edu> on January 20, 2010.

Research Centre Interview. (2010, January 19). Interview with S1 and S2.

Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia (“SCA”). (2010). Rules for admission to the practice of law in West Virginia [Website]. Accessed from <http://www.state.wv.us/wvsca/> on February 10, 2010.

Vermont Law School (“VLS”). (2010). Home Website. Accessed from <http://www.vermontlaw.edu> on February 11, 2010.

West Virginia Public Defender Services (“WVPDS”). (2010). Annual Report Fiscal Year 2008-2009. Charleston, WV: Author.

West Virginia University College of Law (“WVU Law”). (2010). Home Website. Accessed from <http://www.law.wvu.edu> on January 20, 2010.

West Virginia University College of Law, Public Interest Advocates (“WVU-PIA”). (2010). Public Interest Advocates [Website]. Accessed from [http://law.wvu.edu/student\\_life/student\\_organizations/public\\_interest\\_advocates](http://law.wvu.edu/student_life/student_organizations/public_interest_advocates) on January 20, 2010.

### **Veterinary Hospital Organisational and Governing Documents**

Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital (CLVH). (2010). Website. Accessed May 22, 2010 from <http://crosslanesvet.com>.

Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital (CLVH) Interview. (2010, June 14). Interview with S3.

Cross Lanes Veterinary Hospital (CLVH) Interview. (2012, February 6). Interview with S11.

Kanawha Valley Regional Transportation Authority (KRT). (2012). Website. Accessed June 5, 2012 from <http://www.rideonkrt.com>.

### **CAMC Organisational and Governing Documents**

CAMC Health System, Inc. (CAMC). (2007, July 1). Employee Handbook. Charleston, WV: Author.

CAMC Health System, Inc. (CAMC). (2009, May 29). Community Benefit Report, 2008.

CAMC Health System, Inc. (CAMC). (2010, June 1). 'New employee orientation' at CAMC, Charleston, WV.

CAMC Health System, Inc. (CAMC). (2010). Website. Accessed June 4, 2010 from <http://www.camc.org> .

CAMC-EC Interview (2010, June 2). Interview with S4.

CAMC-EC Interview (2010, July 8). Interview with S5.

CAMC-EC Interview (2010, July 8). Interview with S6.

CAMC-EC Interview (2010, July 15). Interview with S7.

CAMC-EC Interview (2010, July 15). Interview with S8.

CAMC-EC Interview (2010, July 29). Interview with S9 and S10.

Deloitte & Touche, LLP. (2010, April 27). CAMC Health System, Inc. and Subsidiaries: Consolidated Financial Statements and Other Financial Information as of and for the Years Ended December 31, 2009 and 2008, and Independent Auditors' Report.

#### **Human Resources Policy and Procedure Manual**

(2009, November 9). C-08: Experience Rating.

(2007, October 1). E-03: Internal transfer and promotion.

(1992, August 1). E-04: Interviewing guidelines.

(1997, November 2). E-05: Interviewing responsibilities.

(1997, November 9). E-06: Recruitment from the outside labor market.

(2008, August 15). E-08: Background investigations.

(2009, January 19). E-09: Seniority.

#### **CAMC Related Sources of Information**

Employment Background Investigations, Inc. (EBI). (2010). Corporate website. Retrieved July 14, 2010 from <http://www.ebiinc.com> .

University of Charleston. (2010). Corporate website. Retrieved July 14, 2010 from <http://www.ucwv.edu/> .

U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). QuickFacts [Website]. Accessed August 26, 2010 from <http://www.quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/54/54039.html>

## **APPENDIX 18: RELEVANT WV CODE AND 26USC TO THE RESEARCH CENTRE**

### **§29-21-7. Criminal law research center established; functions.**

(a) Within the agency, there shall be a division known as the criminal law research center which may:

(1) Undertake research, studies and analyses and act as a central repository, clearinghouse and disseminator of research materials;

(2) Prepare and distribute a criminal law manual and other materials and establish and implement standard and specialized training program for attorneys practicing criminal law;

(3) Provide and coordinate continuing legal education programs and services for attorneys practicing criminal law; and

(4) Prepare, supplement and disseminate indices and digests of decisions of the West Virginia supreme court of appeals and other courts, statutes and other legal authorities relating to criminal law.

(b) The services of the criminal law research center shall be offered at reasonable rates or by subscription to prosecuting attorneys and their professional staffs, panel attorneys, and private attorneys engaged in the practice of criminal law. The services may be provided to public defender corporations, public defenders and assistant public defenders at reduced rates.

### **§29-21-8. Public defender corporations; establishment thereof.**

(a) (1) In each judicial circuit of the state, there is hereby created a public defender corporation of the circuit: *Provided*, That the executive director, with the approval of the Indigent Defense Commission, may authorize the creation, merger or dissolution of a public defender corporation in a judicial circuit where the creation, merger or dissolution of such a public defender corporation would improve the quality of legal representation, assure the prudent and resourceful expenditure of state funds and further the purposes of this article: *Provided, however*, That prior to the creation, merger or dissolution of a public defender corporation in accordance with this subsection, the commission shall provide a report to the Legislature pursuant to subsection (g), section three-b of this article for approval of the creation, merger, or dissolution of any public defender corporation.

(2) The purpose of these public defender corporations is to provide legal representation in the respective circuits in accordance with the provisions of this article. A public defender corporation may employ full-time attorneys and employ part-time attorneys in whatever combination that the public defender corporation deems most cost effective.

(b) If the executive director, with the approval of the Indigent Defense Commission, determines there is a need to activate, merge or dissolve a corporation in a judicial circuit of the state, pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, the Indigent Defense Commission shall first consult with and give substantial consideration to the recommendation of the judge of a single-judge circuit or the chief judge of a multi-judge circuit.

**Internal Revenue Code §501(c)(3) cited as 26USC501**

Sec. 501. Exemption from tax on corporations, certain trusts, etc.

(c) List of exempt organizations

(3) Corporations, and any community chest, fund, or foundation, organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, or educational purposes, or to foster national or international amateur sports competition (but only if no part of its activities involve the provision of athletic facilities or equipment), or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals, no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual, no substantial part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting, to influence legislation (except as otherwise provided in subsection (h)), and which does not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

**26USC501**

Although the terms *not-for-profit* and *non-profit* can be synonymous in the U.K., in the U.S., the terms have a significant impact on the treatment of an organisation. For example, a non-profit refers to a business whilst a not-for-profit denotes a hobby or activity (26USC). A non-profit is not normally taxed unless it elects to be taxable whilst a not-for-profit is taxable.

**Internal Revenue Code §509(a)(1) cited as 26USC509**

Sec. 509. Private foundation defined

(a) General rule

For purposes of this title, the term “private foundation” means a domestic or foreign organization described in section 501(c)(3) other than—

(1) an organization described in section 170(b)(1)(A) (other than in clauses (vii) and (viii));

**26USC509**

**§29-21-13. Approval of public defender corporation funding applications; funding; recordkeeping by public defender corporations.**

(a) On or before the first day of May of each year, each active public defender corporation shall submit to the executive director and the commission a funding application and a proposed budget for the ensuing fiscal year. The accounting and auditing division shall review all funding applications and prepare recommendations for an operating plan and annual budget for each public



defender corporation. The executive director shall review the funding applications and the accounting and auditing recommendations and shall, in consultation with the board of directors of each public defender corporation, prepare a plan for providing legal services, execute a funding contract for the fiscal year and commit funds for that purpose.

(b) Upon final approval of a funding application by the executive director, the approved budget shall be set forth in an approval notice. The total cost to the agency shall not exceed the amount set forth in the approval notice and the agency shall not be obligated to reimburse the recipient for costs incurred in excess of the amount unless and until a program modification has been approved in accordance with the provisions of this article. At the discretion of the executive director, when caseloads increase or unusual expenses occur, funding contracts may be amended during a fiscal year if necessary to provide cost effective representation.

(c) Funding of public defender corporations or other programs or entities providing legal representation under the provisions of this article shall be by annual grants disbursed in such periodic allotments as the executive director shall deem appropriate.

(d) All recipients of funding under this article shall maintain such records as required by the executive director.

## APPENDIX 19: FILTERING CUES OF THE RESEARCH CENTRE

Filtering Cues of the Research Centre

Filtering Cue	Fail	Pass	Notes
Awards		Competitive	Awards support class rankings
Class Rankings		Competitive	Higher rankings provide greater probability of selection
Education	Not in an ABA law programme		Job-seekers have similar backgrounds
Filtering Specifications	Contingent on prior documents, if a job-seeker has applied before.	Law student	Formal personnel specifications were not written but were independently constructed by the experiences of each screener. However, S1 maintained documents detailing behaviours of prior applicants.
Geography		Competitive	Subject to several variables
Grade Point Average		Competitive	GPA supports class rankings
Interview	When a job-seeker does not attend an interview.	Pass	Used to clarify information. This may be either a face-to-face or telephone interview.
Overqualified			No one is overqualified. The primary information source for this tool was the résumé followed by the interview.
Résumé		Pass with a résumé submission	Primary source of job-seeker information
Work Experience		Competitive	Limited experience (All experience is good)

These core categories are listed on the left side of the table under FILTERING CUE. The next column, FAIL, lists the reason(s) that an applicant may be removed from the filtering process. Most spots within the fail column are blank as screeners focused on ranking job-seekers and not removing any individual from the pool of applicants. However, one individual was removed from the applicant pool for a failure to show up at the interview. This was interpreted to be a voluntary withdraw by the individual job-seeker and not a removal by a screener.

Following the FAIL column, the PASS column details the minimum requirements for a job-seeker to move through the filtering process. As previously mentioned, screeners focused on ranking applicants, therefore the term “competitive” is listed under most

categories. Whilst no distinct base-rates for passing some filtering cues truly existed, competitive denotes that applicants within the filtering cue were in constant rivalry for top spots. Additionally, most filtering cues were taken in the aggregate to determine the overall ranking and preference of each applicant. Because of the competitive nature of the PASS column, the NOTES column provides additional details in the form of short memos. These memos concern each filtering cue with respect to the macro approach for filtering decisions. Moreover, all filtering processes were informal decisions and not formalised until such time that the final selected candidate formally accepted a position. At which time, all other individuals having applied for an internship were formally notified via post.

## APPENDIX 20: RESEARCH CENTRE CODED DATA

Coding	Data	Source
Collecting	Use of Résumés	S1, S2
Credentialing	Education was not considered. Academic transcripts are not reviewed.	S1
Credentialing	Prior employment equated to experience	S1
Credentialing	Awards support class rank (validation)	S2
Credentialing	Class rankings – “ <i>It’s hard to compete with other offers.</i> ”	S1
Credentialing	Grade point average supports class rank	S2
Credentialing	Work experience – “ <i>no one is over qualified as experience can be transferable to someone somewhere.</i> ”	S1
Filtering	Prior applicants behaviours are listed for future decisions: No shows, accepted, declined.	S1
Filtering	Screeners ranked job-seekers prior to consensus discussions	S1, S2
Filtering	Filtering criteria such as job specifications, personnel specifications, and competencies were not written but individually constructed by a screener.	S1, S2
Filtering	The use of interview notes.	S2
Geographing	Filtering individuals by geographic differences	S1, S2
Geographing	Individuals must have West Virginia social ties	S1
Geographing	Individuals requesting internships outside West Virginia	S2
Geographing	10-week internship requires social support and meeting logistical needs (i.e. housing and transportation)	S1
Interviewing	Interviews used for clarification of information presented on résumés	S1, S2
Noting	Used alphabetic note taking for coding interviews	S2
Noting	Updated documents concerning behaviours of applicants.	S1
Offering	One offer at a time is made	S1, S2
Ranking	Awards support class rank (Preference)	S2
Ranking	Class rankings impact filtering	S1
Ranking	Grade Point Average is part of class rank	S1
Recruiting	Can allow limited practise of law under <i>West Virginia Rule 10 Rules of Admission</i>	S1
Recruiting	Filling requests of organisations [Pulling strategy]	S1
Recruiting	Sometimes not enough applications so we recruit from 1 <sup>st</sup> year students	S2
Specifying	Individuals had to “work and fit into a criminal law environment”	S1
Specifying	Job-seeker characteristics are enthusiastic and pleasant	S2
Specifying	“...by practising law, you get a feel for these things.” [Cognitive personnel specifications]	S1
Specifying	No written personnel specifications for filtering	S2
Trusting	Information on résumés is not verified	S1

## APPENDIX 21: FILTERING CUES OF THE VETERINARY HOSPITAL

### Filtering Cues of the Veterinary Hospital

Filtering Cue	Fail	Pass	Notes
Age	Under 18 years	Over 18 Years	Minimum age requirement per insurance provisions.
Application	Incomplete	*	If completed, neat, and legible. This is a standard Veterinary Hospital form.
Attire/Dress Code		*	If "...they seem to take an overall sense of pride in their appearance." (S3).
Background checks	---	---	Not conducted at this time. Some discussion on this tool.
Citizenship	---	---	Not considered as non-U.S. individuals have not made an application.
Drug Testing	---	---	Not conducted at this time. Some discussion on this tool.
Education	Contingent	Contingent	Can be weighted easily as education is considered standardised.
Experience	If applicant does not meet expectations	Competitive	Contingent upon position, team composition, and attributes and characteristics of an applicant
Experience (with animals)	No failure	Contingent & Competitive	Based on the position and the needs of the Veterinary Hospital.
Experience (Job-Hopper)	When classified as a job-hopper	Only if reasonable explanation is accepted	Gaps in employment or employed less than six months
Experience (Military)	---	---	Not considered.
Experience (Volunteer and extracurricular)	No failure	Competitive	Used to identify high performers. S3 noted this is "icing on the cake". Not essential, but appears to affect screeners positively.
Filtering Personnel Specifications	If applicant does not meet expectations	Contingent	Personnel specifications are linked based on the duties of the position. The Veterinary Hospital relies on cognitive personnel specifications constructed by the screener.
Geography	---	---	This was more of a recruitment and retention variable than a Veterinary

			Hospital cue.
Interview (Personal)	Failure to meet expectations	Competitive	Used to support information within the application.
Interview (Telephone)	Job-seeker withdraws	If job-seeker accepts an interview	Used to establish common ground. Most common for a job-seeker to withdraw than to be removed by the Veterinary Hospital.
Noting	---	---	Notes are not written but cognitively retained for memory recall.
References (Employee)	Negative	Positive	Appears to impact filtering decisions towards the direction of the message (Positive, Pass and Negative, Fail).
References (Employer)	Negative	Positive	Appears to impact filtering decisions towards the direction of the message (Positive, Pass and Negative, Fail).
Résumé	If no application is available.	Conditional	Job-seeker must have or file a standard application. The résumé provides supporting information to an application.
Time Constraints			More of a filtering variable – The Veterinary Hospital is not as concerned with time as it is with organisational-employee fit.
Touring (2ND interview)		Competitive	Acted as a second interview to obtain more information and to establish common ground with an applicant.
Work experience	Indirect or ambiguous statements	Direct experience	Contingent upon a position, key phases are classified in either qualified or quantified categories with respect to direct experience.

Whilst some of these core categories appear to be subcategories (e.g. experience, interviews), distinctions were significant to recognise related and separate categories. Likewise, certain filtering cues were included as the Veterinary Hospital was expanding and reconsidering filtering strategies. For example: There are six instances, denoted by a triple dash (---) under FAIL or PASS, where filtering cues are not used. In some cases, the Veterinary Hospital does not use the filtering cues to directly remove an individual, but uses a filtering cue in conjunction with other filtering cues to make a decision. Under the PASS column, the term “competitive” is listed in several categories as individuals are judged against each other. Another term, “Conditional”, is used to denote that passing is subject to completion of some occurrence.

## APPENDIX 22: VETERINARY HOSPITAL CODED DATA

### Veterinary Hospital Coded Data

Coding	Data	Source
Appearing	During an interview or tour, the appearance of an applicant is taken into consideration.	S3
Appearing	"...what will really catches my attention more than anything else is neatness [in attire]."	S3
Appearing	"Appearing is a big issue."	S11
Appearing	Policy on appearance is no facial piercings (i.e. eyebrows, lips, noses, or anything hanging out). Earrings and tongue piercings must be removed before working.	S11
Appearing	Tattoos must be tasteful (e.g. tribal, flowers, and small tattoos). These do not have to be covered.	S11
Appearing	Job-seekers have to be clean with teeth brushed.	S11
Appearing	Some job-seekers "...think they can get a job by letting their thongs or something else be seen."	S11
Collecting	Standard application to be completed by all job-seekers	S3
Collecting	Résumés more common than CVs: "We don't tend to see CVs so much [for staff]."	S3
Collecting	Résumés come in different formats	S3
Collecting	"If you're looking at somebody that seems to be a viable candidate up to that point...[criminal history] then, I would give them the opportunity to explain at that point in time."	S3
Collecting	"I'm always most interested to know, know why are you looking for a job?"	S3
Collecting	"...you have to do a little bit more, um, talking with them [to judge experience than education]..."	S3
Collecting	"We don't do drug testing."	S3
Collecting	Drug testing and background checks are not done.	S11
Collecting	S3 is the primary person handling all of the employment applications	S11
Credentialing	"...we've has a couple of people hired in that didn't have their diploma yet."	S3
Credentialing	"...for most positions, you don't need a degree..."	S11
Credentialing	"...we were as supportive of that [going back to school] as we could be in terms of scheduling around classes and that kind of thing to get their GED. So, we strongly encourage it."	S3
Credentialing	"They [registered technicians] usually have a degree from Carver."	S11
Evaluating	Volunteering experience is only considered if it relates.	S11
Evaluating	Is experience of the job seeker transferable?	S3
Evaluating	"...where has this person devoted their professional time and energy?"	S3
Evaluating	"They [employees] may or may not have had education that's actually directly pertinent to the job that they do here."	S3
Evaluating	"...what stands out more to you about this person? Their ability to be a productive member of the working team or your personal feelings?"	S3
Exiting	Employees are sometimes not a good fit	S3
Exiting	Employees may gain better opportunities [Social or economic improvement]	S3
Exiting	Employees sometimes retire	S3

Exiting	Employees may establish a residence outside of a geographical area.	S3
Expanding	"...now we have some certified registered technicians which we did not before..."	S3
Expanding	"We just recently have, um, developed a small team of registered technicians."	S3
Expanding	"The hiring processes have transferred to the office manager from the three owners."	S11
Expanding	Staff went from twenty-five to thirty-one.	S11
Filtering	Screeners reviews the first presented information which is either on the application or a résumé: "...depends on what I receive..."	S3
Filtering	"Team leaders look at applications. That is about it for most of them. I get involved more than anyone else because I like to know that they are going to come to work."	S11
Filtering	Screeners looks for completion of the application	S3
Filtering	Screeners looks for neatness and legible writing	S3
Filtering	Screeners identifies short-term employment periods, consistency in employment.	S3
Filtering	Job-hoppers stand out more on applications	S11
Filtering	After job-hoppers, attendance – job-seekers with excessive call offs are filtered immediately.	S11
Filtering	"...especially with a résumé I always want to look at what they [job-seekers] are looking for."	S3
Filtering	Experience, and the type of experience are critical	S3
Filtering	"I think they're [education and experience] equally important."	S3
Filtering	"...there's a little bit more of a standard that you can expect with completion of education versus experience."	S3
Filtering	"...you have a little bit more of a standard, I think, with education..."	S3
Filtering	Volunteer organisations are "icing on the cake".	S3
Filtering	Volunteering shows job-seekers have given time to other organisations.	S3
Filtering	Job-seekers tend to glorify or embellish what they have not experienced	S3
Filtering	Screeners had no experience with non-U.S. citizen job-seekers.	S3
Filtering	Criminal records are probed to determine circumstances and events surrounding a conviction.	S3
Filtering	"We don't do a criminal background check."	S3
Filtering	"We don't do drug testing."	S3
Filtering	"She [S3] just lets us look over the ones [applications] that are really good."	S11
Filtering	Most team leaders do not get involved in hiring processes.	S11
Filtering	If they have any reception experience or veterinary experience, that is a plus.	S11
Filtering	Some [team leaders] have a preference for no experience because they are less likely to make mistakes. They don't need to be retrained.	S11
Filtering	I don't care if they are old or young. I just want them to be able to do the job.	S11
Filtering	The job-seeker as a whole must be evaluated: Ability to fit into an organisation, ability and eagerness to learn, and job-seeker dependability.	S11
Forming	"We have slowly kind of filled our staff out as we have gotten settled in and tried to find a structure that works for us as a bigger facility"	S3



Forming	"...we call them like our departments: Um, reception, exam rooms, lab, treatment, surgery, and kennels."	S3
Forming	"...we have some certified registered technicians which we did not before..."	S3
Forming	Veterinary Hospital has started to offer patient appointments to better staff and meet customer needs.	S3
Forming	"It's really difficult to staff for that [patients without appointments]."	S3
Forming	"...we are very much...um...heavily in the process of developing our structure and our policies..."	S3
Forming	The three owners have taken a hands-off approach to hiring.	S11
Forming	"...the office manager just makes the [hiring] decision and that is it."	S11
Forming	"...mostly women work here."	S11
Geographing	Employees value commuting distance and time from home to Veterinary Hospital	S3
Geographing	Employees may establish a residence outside of a geographical area.	S3
Geographing	"I ask if they can make it to work in bad weather."	S11
Interviewing	"...we don't have a formal exit interview..."	S3
Interviewing	"...I'll usually do a little bit of a phone interview first."	S3
Interviewing	Phone interview probes for additional information that guides screener face-to-face interview process.	S3
Interviewing	Screener reviews employment application immediately prior to interview.	S3
Interviewing	"...you have to do a little bit more, um, talking with them [job-seekers] to, to get a feel for that [their experience]."	S3
Interviewing	A team leader conducts a second interview whilst touring the Veterinary Hospital with the applicant.	S3
Interviewing	Sometimes interviews are done on the spot.	S11
Noting	"Um, I don't usually highlight the actual papers themselves. Um, I kinda just make mental notes."	S3
Recruiting	"Most [job-seekers] are walk-in applications. About 75%."	S11
Recruiting	Newspaper advertisements have been used two to three times within last ~ten years.	S11
Recruiting	Vet students and unpaid school interns provide summer help.	S11
Recruiting	Hire every three to six months	S3
Recruiting	Establishes common ground by providing details about position to allow job-seekers to withdraw an application.	S3
Recruiting	Retains applications for about six months.	S3
Recruiting	Veterinary Hospital is looking at a formalised pay scale to better attract job-seekers.	S3
Referencing	The office manager (S3) takes care of references.	S11
Referencing	"Normally you don't find someone listed as a reference that they don't know or that would give them a bad reference."	S11
Referencing	For references, "...the focus, really does tend to be on employer, previous employer references."	S3
Referencing	"...I don't know that I ever really called a personal reference on anyone..."	S3
Referencing	Staff are only consulted when listed as a reference.	S11
Referencing	"I know this person put in an application. Blah-blah. They are going to tell you, whatever anyway."	S3
Referencing	Considers feedback from employees and has delayed hiring decisions based upon that feedback.	S3

Relating	Screener shares personal experience with job-seeker to relate to similarities in experiences.	S3
Specifying	"...a heavy core of people have been here between, you know, six and sixteen years..."	S3
Specifying	Personnel specifications are not written but cognitive	S3
Specifying	"...job duties are not written so they fall under what team they will be working with."	S11
Specifying	Written personnel policies are being developed.	S11
Specifying	Written policies must be approved by the owners. "...so it takes forever to do something."	S11
Specifying	"I've seen so many people, um, become totally different people when they are nervous."	S3
Specifying	Exam room is someone that "...assist the doctors in the rooms and they'll, they'll load up the rooms, take basic, you know, basic history, weight, temperature, you know, that kind of thing."	S3
Specifying	"The lab, um, assistants are the ones that fill a lot of the prescriptions and do other things." The lab also performs testing.	S3
Specifying	"...treatment is like the central area of the hospital here, where, um, basically if an animal needs blood drawn, if it needs x-rays done, if it needs an I.V. catheter placed.	S3
Specifying	Treatment is all non-surgical procedures and dental.	S3
Specifying	"...reception is sort of a creature, all its own."	S3
Specifying	"Depends on what area we're looking to hire in to how much that [experience] factors in."	S3
Specifying	"People tend to glorify that a little bit if they've never done it." "...I mean people tend to glorify the 'I love working with animals'."	S3
Specifying	"I also look to see if they can feed an animal. If they have pets." [Note: The application lists experience with pets.]	S11
Specifying	Some job-seekers do not distinguish between different breeds of dogs and cats.	S11
Specifying	"...they [registered technicians] can do the dentals, the laboratories, draw blood and fluids, conduct educational classes, pretty much anything except surgery."	S11
Specifying	Team leaders must be high performing and caring people.	S11
Timing	Hiring decisions are announced after consultation with owners and feedback from employees.	S3
Timing	"...we're better off to take the time to go through the process fully and correctly..."	S3
Timing	"...you're more likely to take the chance at having a bad fit, if we try to speed it up too much."	S3
Training	"Everybody else [employees] has been on the job training."	S3
Training	"We do not have a formal training programme"	S3
Training	Veterinary Hospital has evaluated pre-packaged programmes and has determined that any programme must be tailored to the organisation.	S3
Training	"We really have never encouraged cross-training."	S3
Training	"...at any given point in time we probably have at least three team members, um, cross-training from another area to another area."	S3
Training	The Veterinary Hospital is considering offering more incentives to employees for being cross-trained.	S3
Trusting	"...it's [academic transcripts] not something that we typically require..." to be verified.	S3
Trusting	Job-seekers that lie are immediately removed.	S11
Touring	Applicants are offered tours of the Veterinary Hospital.	S3

Touring	Veterinary Hospital team leaders conduct tours if possible.	S3
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## APPENDIX 23: FILTERING CUES OF CAMC-EC

### Filtering Cues of CAMC-EC

Filtering Cue	Fail	Pass	Notes
Appeal by Internal Applicant	If applicant was external	Unmerited	Assumes applicant is qualified for the position
Appearance, Job-Seeker	Subjective	Subjective	Highly subjective, varies amongst staff. Some staff use dress code requirements
Application, Digital	If unfamiliar with digital operations	Submitted	Only digital applications are considered.
Application, Paper	Not signed	Submitted	Delays processing
Candidate, External	When an internal applicant is available	If posted externally	Assumes no qualified internal candidate is available or interested.
Candidate, Internal	If unqualified	Preference	Must be hired before any external individual
Collecting	Contingent	Contingent	Last-in, First-out: Not all submitted applications are considered. Applications that have been submitted near the received time have a greater chance of being considered.
Compensation Requested by Job-Seeker	Sometimes if outside salary range		Highly subjective and various amongst staff with positions
Drug Screen	Positive	Negative	Looks for the presence of substances
Degree (if required)	Unconfirmed	Confirmed	If unconfirmed, special process
Experience: Certified Employer (i.e. Labs) Responsibility Transferable	If uncertain and relevant to a position	When verified	Subjective to position
Experience (Job-Hopper)	Short employment	Subjective	When a job-seeker spent less than 12 months with employer(s), application is removed. These are cognitive personnel specifications that vary with screener.
Filtering Personnel Specifications	Does not meet minimum specifications	Meets minimum specifications	Screeners consult position descriptions prior to filtering applications
Filtering Personnel Specifications (Terminology)	Subjective	Subjective	Subjective. Contingent upon a screener's knowledge and understanding the context and relationships of the terms.
Geography	Subjective	Competitive	Subjective to position, available transportation, and compensation
History, Criminal:	If felony,	None or	Exceptions are not granted often.

Disclosed by Job-Seeker	contingent upon filtering	exception granted	
History, Criminal: Undisclosed by Job-Seeker	If any criminal history appears	No passing condition	No exceptions to this have been made
History, Employment: CAMC (no history)	---	No history	When a job-seeker has no history with CAMC, (s)he passes. If history exists, another filtering cue is required.
History, Employment: CAMC (No rehire)	Subjective – Depends on investigation	Subjective – Depends on investigation	Further filtering by contacting former manager(s); if unable to complete investigation, failure occurs.
Interview, Pre-employment with CAMC-EC	Not a good match or fit	Acceptable Applicant	Highly subjective
Licensure (if required)	No	Yes	Good Standing
License Disciplines	Unresolved or Severe	None or Resolved	Subjective
OIG/GSA Checks	If name is listed	No findings	For Medicaid/Medicare Fraud
Physical	Unfit & Contains Diseases	Fit & Disease Free	The EHD performs testing and assessments.
Recruiting	Contingent	Contingent	Screeners can become familiar with job-seekers prior to an application being made. Cognitive personnel specifications of schools and recruiting grounds may be stereotypical.
Résumé	If filed without an application	Contingent	Used as supporting information only after application is received.
Schedule Requested by Job-Seeker	If not available	If matches available	The more restrictive a job-seeker's request, position availability diminishes
Social Security Check	Conflicting Information	Matched	Verifies identity of job-seeker

Appendix 23 uses the same format as Appendix 19 to present twenty-seven critical filtering cues that CAMC utilised. Although some of these categories may be consolidated, significant differences caused separation of categories. The decision to separate categories was based upon a triggering event to use a specific filtering tool. For example, a background check requires an individual to authorise the release of information. Consequently, this release may be used to obtain information from one source or from multiple sources (i.e. EBI, licensing board, employer reference); therefore, a screener's decision would directly impact which filtering tool to utilise. In some instances, a return of negative information may end the selection process as an individual would be filtered out.

## APPENDIX 24: CAMC CODED DATA

### CAMC Coded Data

Coding	Data	Source
Appearing	Green spiked hair and tattoos are not proper dress.	S6
Appearing	"...if they have body piercings all over the face and they have tattoos clear down; If they're not willing to cover this stuff up, then it's not happening cause we have a dress code."	S7
Appearing	"...a lot of these kids, don't know that their dressing inappropriately."	S5
Appearing	Job-seekers need to be properly dressed for interviews.	S6
Collecting	"I go out every day and check to see, especially for my hard to fill vacancies, if I have received any new applications..."	S5
Collecting	"That's [educational credentials] done through the background check."	S5
Collecting	Sometimes educational credentials (i.e. home schooling or vocational schools) do not appear on the background checks.	S5, S8
Collecting	"...you [job-seeker] need to know what your rights are. I mean people can take advantage." Job-seekers should have knowledge concerning information that is deemed illegal or inappropriate for organisations to request.	S5
Collecting	Screeners are in constant contact with managers to ensure that a selection of individuals is available for the opening.	S5
Collecting	The method that applications for positions are collected by screeners is reverse chronological order. Most recent first until the number of applications have reached the requested or desired level.	S5, S7, S9, S10
Collecting	Résumés and CVs are not considered applications, but may be used to support an application.	S8, S9, S10
Collecting	Paper applications are entered into the on-line application by CAMC-EC when time permits. Errors are not corrected or flagged and grammatical changes are not made. Applications are entered as if the job-seeker had typed the information into the on-line application.	S8
Collecting	WorkForce West Virginia offers access to the on-line application to all job-seekers.	S8
Collecting	"They [job-seekers] have to do a separate application for each position they want to apply for."	S7
Collecting	Improvements to the application are needed: allowing job-seekers to exceed three current and former employers; and allowing job-seekers to select more than one position.	S7, S9, S10
Collecting	"They're [kids or younger job-seekers] putting down information on their application that you're specifically not asking them for."	S5
Collecting	"We do the internal profiles on Thursday..."	S7
Collecting	Background checks are completed after an employment offer is made.	S7
Collecting	Employees within CAMC-EC share information concerning job-seekers. In some instances, these are job-seeker behaviours, overheard discussions, and conversations with the job-seeker.	S7
Collecting	The Lawson system contains the personnel file that is used to filter internal applicants.	S8, S9, S10
Credentialing	"...we still have to verify it [academic credentials, high school diploma and G.E.D.] because anybody can fake those	S7

	things.”	
Credentialing	“I GOOGLE a lot to find the boards [licensing]...”	S5
Credentialing	Licenses must be verified by respective boards.	S5
Credentialing	“...before they [conditional employees] can actually start working for us, we have to verify with the board [licensing board].”	S5
Credentialing	“...typically you’re gonna find that, they’re [job-seekers] not gonna have the, if, if they couldn’t have the license if they didn’t have the degree.”	S5
Credentialing	Applicants having Board licenses and registrations are rated higher by managers.	S5
Credentialing	Credentials for internal job-seekers must have been verified in advance of the application by a human resource member.	S6, S9, S10
Credentialing	Unverified credentials are not considered.	S6
Credentialing	Credentials on the application are taken at face value and verified through the background check.	S7
Evaluating	More problems are found with High School Diplomas and G.E.D.s than other types of credentials.	S4, S7, S8
Evaluating	“...CODAs are all going to pretty much come from Mountain State. Um, my OTs and PTs are going to come from WVU [West Virginia University].”	S5
Evaluating	Sometimes job-seekers do not have accurate memories of earning a high school diploma as they were allowed to take part in the ceremonies with an understanding that the diploma would be completed shortly thereafter. In most cases, the job-seekers did not complete their obligations.	S7
Evaluating	Educational requirements are reviewed against position description.	S7
Evaluating	Education cannot be substituted for experience.	S6
Evaluating	Some schools have verified prior education, others have not. Thus, knowledge of which schools verify can dramatically reduce filtering time.	S7
Evaluating	“...we have very high standards here at CAMC. I mean, just because you are a phlebotomist at one place doesn’t mean you are qualified to be one here.”	S5
Evaluating	Job-hoppers are removed from consideration.	S6, S7, S9, S10
Evaluating	Job-hoppers are individuals that have less than twelve months with an employer.	S6, S9, S10
Evaluating	Job-hoppers are individuals that have several jobs within a year. Jobs exceeding six months are not considered job-hoppers.	S7
Evaluating	Experience and past performance seem to be the preferential indicator for future performance.	S6
Evaluating	Volunteer positions, clubs, and athletics are more often seen as experience for high school students.	S6
Evaluating	No preference between a re-hire and a newcomer.	S6
Evaluating	“...they [job-seekers applying for medical assistant positions] don’t have to have the certification. It helps. A lot of the managers like to have that. But it’s not required.”	S7
Evaluating	Reviewing prior CAMC service to determine if job-seeker meets guidelines for being re-employed.	S7
Evaluating	The reason for leaving is reviewed for short term employment.	S7

Evaluating	Concurrent experience is not counted. Only twelve months can be attributed to an employer.	S9, S10
Distracting	Screeners are subject to constant interruptions.	S4, S5, S6, S7, S8
Distracting	Screeners may serve on additional committees and on other projects.	S5
Enquiring	"I don't have any problem being persistent. There's a difference being persistent and being a pest." This statement refers to individuals checking on their status within the hiring process.	S5
Enquiring	"Now, we have "stalkers". I mean, people that literally will hang up and call you back." "Stalker" was a negative term used to describe individuals that go beyond enquiry.	S5
Enquiring	In some instances, stalkers are scheduled for interviews as their persistent enquiries alter some filtering decisions.	S5
Enquiring	"If they harass, if they are, we have stalkers. If they are continuously calling me or they're continuously coming in here demanding to see me, you minas well give it up."	S7
Enquiring	"...once you've [job-seekers] already upset and ticked off the person out front, you're done."	S7
Filtering	"...if somebody comes in and they are just blatantly, not a good fit for the organisation they, they will, not just make it."	S5
Filtering	"Most departments will not just hire a warm body."	S5
Filtering	"It's a matter of which one [job-seeker] my manager gonna pick."	S5
Filtering	Position complexity requires more work to identify good job-seekers.	S5
Filtering	Screeners experience reduces the dependency on personnel specifications as screeners become more familiar with personnel specifications.	S5
Filtering	"...that [terminology associated with filtering decisions] was just one of the trial and error things that I have kinda learned..."	S5
Filtering	When job-seekers are sincere and compassionate, they are reviewed against other positions for which they may qualify.	S6
Filtering	"...if we rescind for failing the physical, it's because they [provisional employees] have a restriction that we cannot accommodate."	S7
Filtering	Job descriptions are reviewed prior to making filtering decisions.	S9, S10
Filtering	External applications are filtered more so than internal applications.	S9
Filtering (compensation)	When reviewing applications, the compensation that a job-seeker requests is critical to filtering.	S5, S7
Filtering (compensation)	Identification of employee wishes for salary, schedule, availability, and skill sets against positions available	S5, S7
Filtering (compensation)	"There's a benefits presentation at New Hire Orientation." Some screeners do not discuss benefits.	S5
Filtering (criminal history)	"...anytime somebody, that, they have a felony, the first thing we're going to look to make sure is did they [job-seeker] disclose that [criminal conviction] on our application."	S5
Filtering (criminal history)	Failure to disclose criminal convictions or pending charges removes a job-seeker from consideration.	S5, S7
Filtering	"...although we don't discriminate, because of criminal record,	S5



(criminal history)	I'm not going to bring in a paedophile to work as a child advocate."	
Filtering (criminal history)	When a criminal conviction or pending action is identified, a job offer is rescinded if it was undisclosed or conflicts with the position.	S6, S7
Filtering (criminal history)	A criminal history is a liability issue and a security concern.	S7
Filtering (criminal history)	The West Virginia Human Rights Commission allows CAMC to review criminal backgrounds for up to ten years of the application date.	S8
Financing	Hiring costs are not redirected to any other department but absorbed by CAMC-EC budget.	S5
Geographing	CAMC has geographic recruitment issues based on regional disbursement rates. Medicare and Medicaid reimburse CAMC less.	S5
Geographing	The travel distance and job-seeker transportation resources to get to work.	S7, S9, S10
Geographing	Local (Kanawha Valley) job-seekers have better access to transportation.	S7
Geographing	Job-seekers having connections to South Carolina are contacted to confirm that they had intended to apply to a West Virginia Hospital.	S9, S10
Hiring	"But ultimately, the deciding who to bring in is up to the manager."	S5
Hiring	Managers can sometimes circumvent the higher process. This is more often done with internal candidates.	S8
Hiring	Managers have more control over the internal positions.	S9
Interviewing	"They [kids or younger job-seekers] don't know that their talking inappropriately in an interview."	S5
Interviewing	Telephone interviews offer an opportunity for establishing common ground and collecting information.	S5, S9, S10
Interviewing	Managers decide which applicants to interview.	S5, S9, S10
Interviewing	"If they [job-seekers] will not look me in the eye at all, or if they have absolutely the worst answer for anything, and it's like pulling teeth to get any answer from them, then I know." These job-seekers are removed from the selection process.	S7
Interviewing	When job-seekers discuss inappropriate subjects and behaviours, they are not forwarded to managers for a subsequent interview.	S9, S10
Noting	Digital applications are noted when processed.	S7
Noting	Sometimes there are too many applications to note.	S7
Noting	Notes are written directly on position descriptions to help guide filtering decisions.	S9
Recruiting	CAMC competes with several hospitals and other facilities within the area.	S4
Recruiting	Job-seekers cannot see position description on CAMC.org	S5
Recruiting	CAMC-EC manually enters positions into CAMC.org to post for recruitment.	S5
Recruiting	Job-seekers familiar with medical field have a cognitive understanding of the position descriptions and requirements	S5
Recruiting	Students fill lower positions as part of a required educational programme.	S5
Recruiting	Compensation is an essential element of recruitment.	S5, S9, S10

Recruiting	"...you'd be surprised at how small knit these professional communities are." Refers to the limited number of highly skilled practitioners to meet the labour needs to an organisation.	S5
Recruiting	"...the best tool we have here are allowing the students to come in and do their clinical rotations."	S5
Recruiting	Screeners travel to schools to present career opportunities and advice to students.	S5, S6, S7, S9, S10
Recruiting	"...with these schools, and for the lab, there is a education coordinator."	S5
Recruiting	A team composed of sixty members of the hospital staff focuses recruiting efforts within West Virginia.	S9, S10
Recruiting	Educational information is sent to schools to solicit applications from qualified job-seekers.	S9, S10
Retaining	"...we've lost some OTs [and other employees] to the private sector because they're paying so much more than what we're paying..."	S5
Retaining	Many first year employees leave from stress.	S9, S10
Referencing	"...I think there is a lot of staff recommendations that comes into play as well."	S5
Referencing	Managers sometimes ask for applicants that have been recommended from current employees.	S5
Referencing	Recommendations from school personnel and staff help facilitate the acceptance of an application.	S6
Selecting	Employee transfer requests are significantly lower during the summer months.	S4
Specifying	"...job descriptions became my best friend."	S5
Specifying	"They're [position descriptions] really not out there for them [job-seekers] to review."	S5
Specifying	"Nobody told me that forty hours is not really forty hours." Refers to a misunderstanding of the hours worked and the educational units (or similar metric) received.	S5
Specifying	"...Just because your manager calls and tells you to do it, don't assume they know they're telling you to do the right thing."	S5
Specifying	"...some [managers] that want to hire, people from their church, or their friends, or whatever. Or somebody's daughter."	S5
Specifying	"...we are adamant about not allowing somebody to start in a new hire unless they've had that drug screen, physical, and that background check has been entered by Wednesday prior to, their start date."	S5
Specifying	A physical, drug screen, and background check must be completed in that order for each individual.	S6, S7
Specifying	Individuals are required to present photo identification when reporting to take a physical and drug screen.	S7
Specifying	Applications are processed according to written policy.	S6
Specifying	Applications are reviewed against base-rates (i.e. KSAO).	S6
Specifying	Job descriptions are available from the internal website to CAMC-EC.	S9, S10
Specifying	After internal postings are made available to job-seekers, CAMC-EC prints copies for filtering.	S9
Specifying	Background checks review the prior seven years.	S4, S5,

(background)		S9, S10
Specifying (background)	Unfavourable findings discovered through background checks must be compared to the position	S4
Specifying (background)	Background checks are outsourced to EBI.	S4, S8
Specifying (background)	Individuals must provide accurate information and other names (i.e. maiden and nicknames) that they have used to ensure complete background checks.	S7
Specifying (background)	Background checks review at least three counties of interest. One of which, is Kanawha County.	S8
Specifying (background)	Background checks may be extended to additional counties and even other countries. Each additional county adds incremental costs.	S8
Specifying (credentials)	Credentials have been verified since 2003.	S4
Specifying (credentials)	Verification of credentials resulted after the Director of Medical Affairs did not have the proper credentials.	S4
Specifying (credentials)	"They [job-seekers] have to complete the programme [academic degree] first."	S5
Specifying (credentials)	Credentials must have been obtained and verified prior to employment.	S9, S10
Specifying (credentials)	Whilst individuals may provide field-based documents support credentials, the policy is that if the background check cannot identify or determine those credentials, the credentials are not considered.	S8
Specifying (experience)	Director approval required to re-hire former employees who are listed as undesirable.	S5
Specifying (experience)	Employees that have walked off the job are normally not eligible for re-hire.	S5
Specifying (experience)	"...it's [experience] really going to be dependent upon what the manager is looking for." Variables include team experience, staff number, and type of position.	S5
Specifying (experience)	Managers communicate to screeners the experience needs of their division. Screeners then select from the appropriate sub-classification (known as a ladder) of the position.	S5
Specifying (experience)	For some positions there are four sub-classifications.	S5
Specifying (experience)	Employment history is reviewed against position requirements.	S6
Testing	WorkForce West Virginia proctors exams and provides testing services to CAMC.	S4
Testing	WorkForce West Virginia does not grade advanced tests. Grading is the responsibility of a screener.	S6
Testing (drug)	Drug screening started in 2007.	S4
Testing (drug)	Drug screening is a nine-panel screen.	S4
Testing (drug)	Individuals are not allows a second opportunity for a drug test. Once an individual has tested positive for a substance, that individual is removed from consideration.	S5
Testing (drug)	Individuals that have had a positive drug test can be re-tested provided that their prescription medication could have impacted the test.	S7
Testing (drug)	When a job-seeker has a positive substance test, all applications submitted are removed from consideration.	S6, S9, S10
Testing (drug)	"...sometimes if they know that they're gonna fail the drug	S7

	screen, they bolt.”	
Testing (drug)	“...we’ve had them bring, in specimens [urine] that we know that are not theirs. Because the temperature is not right...”	S7

Appendix 24 details twenty-three separate components that emerged from interviews with screeners. After constant comparison of these components, fourteen themes emerged representing distinct aspects of CAMC selection processes. Moreover, some of these themes have close relationships to each other but were distinct enough to categorise separately. Furthermore, some data having components of multiple themes was grouped in the category in which had the greatest influence. An example of this is S7’s notation that *“...sometimes if they know that they’re gonna fail the drug screen, they bolt”* is grouped under Testing (drug) rather than considering that the individual withdrew from the selection process. It is the drugs testing policy that contributed to the individual withdrawing as the individual was participating in this WDT in which (s)he failed to complete the task. A failure, included this withdraw, is recorded as a failed drug screen which deters any future applications from being accepted by CAMC. Thus, the primary theme *Testing (drug)* is appropriate.

## APPENDIX 25: FILTERING CUES USED BY ORGANISATIONS

A comparative matrix below of the general filtering cues utilised by the organisations is presented below.

### Filtering Cues Used by Organisation

Filtering Cues	Research Centre	Veterinary Hospital	CAMC
Age	---  Yielded to University admission standards	Over 18 Years	Over 18 Years
Application	None	Standard (Primary Tool)	Standard digital application
Appearance	Cognitive	Cognitive	Cognitive
Awards	Supports an academic specification	No specification	No specification
Background Checks	---  Yielded to University admission standards	---	Outsourced to EBI
Citizenship	---	---	Outsourced to EBI
Class Rankings	Supports an academic specification (Critical benchmark)	---	Not as important as the completion of an educational programme
Criminal Records Check	---  Yielded to University admission standards	---	Outsourced to EBI
Drug Screen	---  Yielded to University admission standards	No specification	Internally conducted according to written policy
Education: Degree & Certification	Law student	Considered standard	Evaluated per written policy

Employment Testing	---	---	Outsourced to WorkForce
Experience: Work, Volunteer & Military	Viewed as good	Preference is with direct industry experience with volunteerism	Evaluated per written policy
Filtering Specifications	Cognitive	Cognitive	Extensively written
Geography	Job-seeker must have geographic relationships with placement  (Critical tool)	---	Varies amongst screeners – distinction amongst positions  (Cognitive benchmark)
Grade Point Average	Supports an academic specification	No specification	No specification
Interview: Face to face)	Used to collect information	Used to collect information	Used to collect information
Interview: Telephone	---	Establish common ground	Establish common ground
Job-seeker	---	---	Written policy on internal and external
Specification: Job-Hopper	---	Gaps in employment	Gaps in employment (varies by screener)
Notes	Notes are written	No written notes, only cognitive	Notes are written and some are attached to digital applications
Overqualified	No specification	No specification	No specification
Position Description	Cognitive	Cognitive	Written
References	---  Yielded to University admission standards	Influences decisions greatly	
Résumé	Primary tool	Supports application	Supports application
Time Constraints	Time sensitive with limited flexibility	No specification	Written policies  (Extremely Time sensitive)

Touring	---	Part of the interview process	---
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## APPENDIX 26: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

This appendix presents a summary of questions below that were used to facilitate semi-structured interviews. The intent of these questions was to help facilitate data gathering from participants. For each interview, questions were not asked in a specific order nor asked verbatim. Under GT, it is best to let the interview unfold with the researcher directing the next area (question) in which data (the interview) will be gathered (focused).

- *Why was the educational degree(s) [or other skill] the first qualifications you reviewed?;*
- *What information was the most/least important?;*
- *Was 'how the applicant came to apply for this position' important?;*
- *What do you like/dislike about this application?;*
- *Do you know this applicant?;*
- *How accurate/truthful is the applicant information?; and*
- *Does the optional information (i.e. race, gender, nationality) help make your decision?*