Position Management at UW–Madison

Building a consistent way to manage positions across the university

Position management is the **process the university uses to create, maintain, track, and manage positions**, regardless of whether they are currently filled. A position is a seat that exists in the organizational chart on its own, without an individual tied to it.

Challenges

Across the university, positions are created, changed, and approved differently across Schools/Colleges/Divisions.

- Different approval processes
- Unique and separate tracking systems
- Limited visibility into workforce and budget data
- Inconsistent reporting across the university

These differences make it difficult to align workforce planning, budgeting, and decision-making across the institution.

Position Management will enable

- **Standardized and automated process** with clear criteria and better workforce visibility
- **Stronger coordination** between strategy, budget, and hiring decisions
- **Single, approved source of truth** for existing positions aligned with budgets
- **Trusted position data** for HR and Finance reporting and enhanced S/C/D decision-making

Solutions

- **Establish campus-wide position management framework** (e.g., criteria for position status, security/access)
- **Tie position budgeting** to the annual budget cycle and align positions to approved budgets
- **Maintain position history** for reporting, governance, and audits
- **Establish a clear position status framework** (filled, vacant, or frozen)
- **Align OHR, MBO, and S/C/D** around shared accountability
- **Balance standardization with flexibility** to meet emerging needs while ensuring requests follow the established process

Purpose of the Pilot

Launch a consistent process to manage positions that ties position decisions to budget availability, creates consistent governance, and enables data-informed decision-making across schools, colleges, divisions, and central campus.

Scope of the Pilot

Pilot units:

- Office of Human Resources
- Madison Budget Office
- Wisconsin School of Business
- School of Veterinary Medicine
- College of Engineering

In-scope for pilot:

- **Most job types,** excluding faculty, instructional academic staff, research staff, student assistants, employees-in-training, temporary employees, and student hourly appointments.

For most employees, day-to-day work will not change.

Engagement with Pilot Units

Pilot activities are underway with the Wisconsin School of Business, School of Veterinary Medicine, College of Engineering, Office of Human Resources, and the Madison Budget Office.

These units are co-designing the future-state process through design sessions, structured feedback, and ongoing engagement.

The resulting frameworks will be validated with other campus units before broader rollout.

More information is available on the Position Management website (*finadmin.wisc.edu/position-management*)

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This initiative is part of the Operational Excellence portfolio

IN PRACTICE, POSITION MANAGEMENT LOOKS LIKE:

Assigned Seating

- **A position is an authorized seat** that exists in the org chart independently of any individual who may occupy it.
- **Open positions hold spots** until someone is hired or replaced.
- **All position attributes** (security, job profile, compensation) **and history are retained** even when vacant, enabling more accurate forecasting and workforce planning.



FUTURE-STATE POSITION MANAGEMENT PROCESS FLOW:



Find or Create a Position

- Is there a business need for this position?
- What type of role is needed?
- Where will this position sit in the org?
- What is the budget for this position?

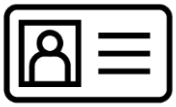


- What type of employee is needed for this role?
- Where should we look for candidates?
- When does this role need to be filled?



Hire an Employee

- When will the employee start?
- What is the compensation for this role?
- What employee information needs to be entered in the system?



Fill the Position

- What post-hire actions need to be completed?
- Are position attributes and status updated in Workday?

Today

Position Management is **underutilized**, **inconsistently applied**, and **not standardized** across the organization.

Example – Current State
Position Cap Tracking: Currently, position cap adherence must be tracked manually with legacy reports.

Future

Position Management will provide **structures around how roles exist** and data-driven visibility into how positions are budgeted and planned.

Example – Future State
Position Cap Tracking: Departments can identify position cap inclusion or exemption directly in Workday or a supplemental system. Reporting will be enabled at the departmental, school/college/unit, and campus-wide level.

Building a proactive, fiscally-aligned position management framework that ties position decisions to budget availability and enables data-informed decision-making across campus.