**Application Guidelines for Step Three Status**

**MSU Extension**

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Updated Spring 2015

**Introduction**

Step Three status within Michigan State University Extension is a special advancement opportunity for staff who have consistently demonstrated scholarly work and leadership and consistently meet or exceed job performance expectations. It is a process that recognizes excellence in Extension education throughout one’s career and provides MSUE with a formal opportunity to reward such attributes. It is available by application to all Extension Educators, Supervising Extension Educators, Program Leaders, Associate Program Leaders and Michigan Natural Features Inventory Scientists (MNFI) who have achieved Step II status. This process includes the following components:

* Candidate Portfolio Development documenting work since achieving Step II status
* Peer Review of portfolio by Step III Committee (made up of previous Step III recipients representing all MSUE Institutes)
* External Expert Review of portfolio

There is no organizational expectation that staff members will apply for Step Three status at any given time in their career. Although a suggested minimum employment expectation is specified in this document, an applicant may choose to apply earlier or later than indicated, or not at all.

The process of applying for Step Three promotion is completely voluntary and applications are self-initiated.

Achieving Step Three status provides no additional assurances or alters in any manner conditions of employment beyond the terms and conditions of the respective applicant’s current Continuing Employment or Fixed-Term employment status.

Individuals successful in Step Three who have an administrative title will carry two titles. The base appointment title will be the appropriate academic title (e.g. Senior Extension Educator, Senior Extension Specialist, Senior Program Leader or Senior MNFI Scientist), and the second title will be the administrative title (e.g. District Coordinator, Associate Director, Associate State Leader).

The purpose of this document is to explain:

* the eligibility requirements and application process
* the expectations for portfolio and seminar development
* the review and selection processes for Step Three promotion, along with the rewards and recognition available to successful applicants.

**Eligibility**

The following criteria are required of all successful applicants for Step Three status:

* Must have achieved Step II Status and have an academic appointment of 50% or more full time equivalent (FTE).
* Minimum of a Master’s degree
* Generally, there is an expectation of a minimum of six years of service beyond achieving Step II before an individual will apply for Step III consideration. This is to ensure time for the planning, execution and accomplishment of exceptional educational initiatives that are worthy of Step III status. In extraordinary cases, an applicant may feel deserving of this status fewer than six years after achieving Step II. Applicants may submit earlier than six years after receiving Step II status, while recognizing that this is not the norm.
* Evidence of good standing in the organization as reflected by performance evaluations. Consistency of good standing will be demonstrated by annual performance ratings that consistently met or exceeded expectations since achieving Step II status.
* It is highly recommended that the portfolio be reviewed by the Institute Director and, for off-campus staff, the appropriate District Coordinator prior to submission.

**Selection Criteria**

The following are criteria used to evaluate the Step Three portfolios:

**1. Consistent evidence of excellence in scholarship.** *Scholarship in Extension is defined as the Scholarship of discovery (advancement of knowledge); Scholarship of integration (working across disciplinary boundaries, synthesizing, looking for new meaning); Scholarship of application (applying knowledge to problems in society); and Scholarship of teaching (practice and inquiry). It can consist of creating something new and valuable that has made a contribution to a professional disciplinary, multidisciplinary, or interdisciplinary field; having the work validated as such by peers; having the work adopted by other states or institutions: making the work “public” or available in an academically legitimate location for use in teaching, research and/or Extension-outreach-engagement work.*

Scholarship could be reflected in the following ways:

- State/national/international reputation as expert in area of responsibility

* Invited reviewer of publications, grants, etc.
* Invited presenter, trainer (state, national, international)
* Adoption of work by outside organizations/institutions

- High level collaborative and/or individual efforts such as:

* Affiliate status in MSU department
* Publications (refereed journals, Extension bulletins, invited articles in trade journals or fact sheets)
* State and/or national Task force membership
* Innovative, multifaceted and sustained educational initiatives

- Resource development efforts

* Successful grantsmanship
* Curriculum development
* Utilization of appropriate educational methods in innovative ways with significant and sustained impact
* Significant role in MSU or multi-state research projects

**2. Consistent evidence of excellence in professional leadership**

This could be reflected in the following ways:

- Evidence of leadership within Extension role such as:

* Leadership or facilitation of peers/work group or team to accomplish a project or initiative,

- Internal organizational leadership roles beyond job responsibilities such as:

* + Mentor, train-the-trainer, committee leader, work team leader, significant and sustained contribution to work group initiative(s)

- Professional society leadership roles such as:

* Executive officer, committee chair, etc. at the state and/or national level

- Community collaborative or coalition leader

- Supervision of Staff

**3. Consistent evidence of continued professional growth and development**

This could be reflected in the following ways:

* Continued development in Core Competencies as evidenced by ongoing completion of specific internal and/or external training opportunities.
* Continued development in subject matter area as evidenced by trainings and/or formal study leave
* Active participation in relevant professional organizations as evidenced by consistent attendance and service.
* Participation in Institute work team professional development opportunities
* Achievement of Affiliate Status in an MSU Department
* Evidence of innovation and creativity relative to professional development such as:
  + Planning, funding, approval, execution, reporting and application of formal study leave
  + A planned and executed continuum of professional development endeavors leading to a state/national/international certification

**4. Evidence of meaningful impact** *Meaningful impact is defined as evidence of significant contribution to transformational change in targeted audiences.*

This could be reflected in the following ways:

* Documentation of broad, consistent, sustained program excellence over time (within a given educational initiative)
* Documentation of internal and/or external teaching effectiveness
  + Train-the-trainer initiatives
  + Direct educational initiatives with communities or clientele
* Results of formal longitudinal (short, medium and long term) evaluation efforts of educational initiatives (quantitative and/or qualitative)
  + All results must be summarized and clearly connected to the educational initiative being highlighted. Evaluation data for multiple programs within the initiative should be aggregated and clearly connected to identified outcomes.
* Tangible evidence of adoption or application of knowledge by targeted audiences

**5. Evidence of Excellence in Diversity, Outreach and Engagement Efforts:** *Include evidence of intentional and deliberate efforts to reach underserved audiences.*

This could be reflected in the following ways:

* Teaching or training of others (internal or external) related to issues of diversity, inclusiveness and civil rights.
* Development of curricula that addresses identified needs of diverse audiences
* Development, delivery and evaluation of a directed program that addressed identified needs of underserved/underrepresented populations in Extension.
* Significant integration of diverse audience throughout Extension efforts
* Demonstrated interest and participation in strengthening personal professional competence in diversity and civil rights compliance through a variety of professional development endeavors.
* Evidence of leadership through proactive efforts to support the development of others through coaching, mentoring, and teaching.
* Evidence of *intentional* efforts to increase diversity and integrated participation in a given educational initiative that substantially reflects the community demographic in both program advisory structures and core program delivery.

**6.** **Communication Skills as demonstrated in Seminar presentation**

- Ability to clearly communicate goals and impacts of selected, portfolio Educational Initiative to target audience.

- Demonstration of presentation skills similar to those necessary for presenting at professional conferences

**Step Three Application Process**

1. Applicants must submit a **letter of intent**
2. Prior to submitting the letter of intent, applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their intent and readiness with their Institute Director
3. The letter of intent must be submitted by July 1st to the MSUE Human Resources and Business Office Manager with a copy to Institute Director and District, Coordinator (for off-campus staff).
4. Included with the letter of intent:
   1. Names and contact information of six potential Step III portfolio assessors from higher education institutions -- at least three of which must be external to MSU and from other state(s). The information provided for each assessor should include name, title, telephone number, email address and regular mail address. Portfolio assessments need to come from diverse sources. The final list of assessors will include two external assessors (outside of Michigan State University) and two from state level faculty. Assessors should be individuals who are of higher rank than the candidate, from an appropriate education oriented professional position, and someone who is in a position to make informed judgments about the candidate’s work.

1. A **complete application packet, or portfolio, must be submitted by September 15 and** will consist of a single pdf document clearly and consistently page numbered as a single document and containing all of the components listed in the Step Three portfolio template, as follows:
   1. Applicants’ written responses to each of the selection criteria.
   2. Support materials relevant to each educational initiative included in the portfolio
      1. Maximum of 4 support items per educational initiative, maximum length of 5 pages per item. These may include samples of evaluation analyses and outcome reports, logic models developed by applicant, table of content or selections from publications (including hard copies of Internet-based materials), curricula developed, certificates, reports, white papers, agendas, and programs. All materials included should demonstrate the criteria for Step Three promotion and relationship to the portfolio.
2. **Seminar presentation topic must be submitted at the time of portfolio submission**, along with a brief (2-3 sentence) description of the topic.

The seminar should be targeted to Extension colleagues (not one of the candidate’s target audiences). The seminar should be focused on one of the initiatives included in the portfolio and treated as an opportunity to highlight the chosen initiative and provide more detail. The presentation should be of a caliber similar to what one might present at a professional conference.

The presentation is to be 20 minutes with 10 minutes for questions. Videos should not be included in seminar presentation.

Submit a 2-3 sentence summary that describes your seminar. This summary will be used to promote your seminar with your colleagues. (See additional information on page 12)

**Portfolio Template**

Portfolios must be single spaced with a font size no smaller than 10 point. It is recommended that you submit your portfolio in an easy-to-read narrative and/or bulleted format following the template below. All pages must be numbered consecutively including support materials. The portfolio is to be submitted as one continuous document – not a collection of documents.

NOTE: The portfolio template below is periodically updated and modified by the MSUE Administrative Team. Using a colleague’s previously successful Step III portfolio as a guide is NOT recommended and could result in an incomplete portfolio.

When preparing your portfolio, it is important that applicant’s allow ample time for a serious, in-depth review process prior to submission, especially when considering and deciding what support items to include for each highlighted Educational Initiative.

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| I. Candidate and Position Information  (Maximum 3 pages. Focus on time period since attaining Step II.) |

• Educator Information – Include name, current title, original date of hire with MSUE, date of receipt of Step II, education (degrees, majors, years and institutions), MSUE Institute(s) and work team affiliation(s).

• Position Description – Reflects the essence of the candidate’s responsibilities.

* Describe the geographic areas served
* Describe division of current position responsibilities using percentages
  + Educator
  + Administration -- type(s)
* Describe demographics of the population served

Describe any changes in your position since achieving Step II

• Professional Development – Summarize professional development opportunities in support of your content area, programming and/or administrative responsibilities since Step II.

○ For-credit course work completed towards an advanced degree (if currently enrolled)

○ Non-credit professional development in Extension core competencies or related to candidate’s responsibilities (extension in-service, non-extension trainings, leadership/management training, technical competency, etc) and year(s) that each occurred.

• Honors and Awards – Briefly summarize organization and peer recognition and year(s) received.

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| II. Featured Educational Initiatives  (Submit up to 3 Initiatives, maximum 4 pages per initiative. Maximum 4 support materials per initiative, maximum 5 pages each.) |

The Educational Initiatives featured in this section should reflect the scope of your Extension work. An earlier initiative should only be included if it spanned well into the last six-years and is well documented. Work submitted for Step III status consideration cannot be a repeat of work submitted for Step II status unless it has continued and been significantly expanded upon in subsequent years.

Please organize materials in this section by Educational Initiative -- a collection of well documented and significant efforts, events and activities all leading to a particular outcome or set of outcomes. Educational Initiatives featured in this section should correspond with candidate’s job responsibilities since achieving Step II.

NOTE: Supervising Educators may feature staff training initiatives using the template below.

* Title of Educational Initiative (EI) *with a short paragraph/description of the initiative (Direct education to target audience(s), train-the-trainer, staff training, etc.)*
* Needs Assessment
  + What was your process for identifying need and acquiring stakeholder input relative to need for this Educational Initiative? (Survey, focus group, etc.) NOTE: Needs assessment is a process not just a compilation of statistics about your audience.
* EI Objectives (stated in terms of expected client outcomes from your work tea logic model.)
* Candidate Role(s) in this EI– Include all that apply:
  + Supervisor of program staff or volunteers
  + Trainer of program staff or volunteers
  + Instructor – direct instruction of target audience
  + Leadership within Teams – candidate’s significant role on the EI development, delivery and evaluation.
* Method(s) of delivery within this EI – e.g. face-to-face workshop(s), webinar(s) demonstration(s), field trial(s), distance education(s), on-line courses, eXtension, etc.
* Applied Research (if applicable) – Brief synopsis of any applied research project(s) associated with this EI along with a description of the candidate’s significant role in the project. (This does not mean use of evidence-based curricula in the design and delivery of the EI).
  + Funding/grant writer/administrator – candidate’s role in securing and/or administering resources to support this EI such as grants, contracts, service agreements, cost recovery, endowment, gifts, etc
  + Facilitator – classic definition of facilitator (i.e. facilitation of community members/leaders as related to programming effort)
  + Marketing campaign/strategy – include outreach efforts to target and diverse audiences

* Adaptation(s) implemented to accommodate diverse audiences – translation, sign language, special materials, etc.
* Creative accomplishments associated with this EI. These may include:
  + Collaborations/Partnerships – include scope (local, regional, multi-state, national, international)
  + Involvement of Volunteers -- describe the role(s) and responsibility(s) of volunteer stakeholder(s) in program planning and implementation, if applicable.
  + Secured Resources -- include the amount(s) generated and from whom. For grants include the name of the grantor, amount of the grant award dedicated to this EI and the grant period.
  + Presentations – sharing of program outcomes and/or research findings with peers on a regional, state, multi-state, and/or national level
  + Publication(s) associated with this EI. Include citation, title, date, authors, etc. Describe candidate’s contribution.
* Methods of Evaluation for Program Impact (There may be multiple programs and methodologies within a robust Educational Initiative.)
  + Describe candidate’s role in program evaluation process
  + Describe program evaluation method(s) (pre/posttest, exit survey, post-reflective survey, longitudinal follow-up survey, etc.)
  + Describe how the evaluation instrument was administered, i.e. written, verbal, online, etc.
  + Describe any efforts to make the evaluation process accessible to diverse audiences.

* Outcome(s) and Impact(s) of this Educational Initiative: Summarize results of longitudinal program evaluation efforts showing alignment with EI objectives. Aggregate findings/results from multiple EI events and activities. Do not copy and paste from MiPRS or other reporting systems. For the narrative:
  + - Organize findings into clear and concise bullets supported by summarized data. Bullets should include:
      * Event/activity description
      * Audience description
      * Evaluation methodology
      * Total number of attendees/possible responses (N = population)
      * Total number of responses (n = sample size)
      * Impact (finding)
    - Report aggregated and/or longitudinal data on key objectives, if available
    - Compare participant outcome with control group outcome, if available
* Support narrative claims with clear and concise data summary table(s) included in support materials.
* Support Materials for this Educational Initiative (maximum of 4 items, maximum 5 pages each). Support materials for each initiative must be exhibited immediately following the narrative. They should be referenced in the narrative to illustrate the relationship to the initiative. At the end of the narrative and prior to the support pieces for each initiative, provide an exhibit list of associated support pieces that includes the following:
  + Name of support piece
  + Brief description of the relationship of the piece to the initiative
  + Role of the candidate in the development of that piece. For example: “Co-authored by Smith and Jones” or “Developed by Smith”

NOTE: The purpose of the support materials is to help illustrate the work described in the corresponding Educational Initiative. Support materials are not about quantity but rather a selected variety of items that demonstrate your skills in program planning, implementation, evaluation, publication, etc. Do not include entire publications – only a scan of the cover, acknowledgments and table of contents. Please highlight segments of support materials that are particularly relevant to your role or impact.

Types of Support materials to consider:

* Evaluation data summaries demonstrating your skills in data handling and reporting of key evaluation findings as related to stated EI objectives.
* Evaluation instrumentation used to collect the data used in your summaries.
* Categorized participant comments regarding the programming effort. (Be concise)
* Candidate-developed educational materials -- may include outline of educational presentation, fact sheets, selected portions of publications, educational handouts, PowerPoint handout (6 slides/page) or a listing of these with active links.
* Pertinent information on the program (may include marketing brochures, news releases, website links, etc.)
* Publications (scan of cover/title page, acknowledgements and table of contents only)
* Other significant items developed by the candidate that relate directly to the programming effort.

Do NOT include:

* Personal letters from clientele or partners thanking you for the program or recommending you for promotion
* News releases about the program
* Master’s or doctoral thesis (Executive Summary acceptable)

NOTE: Incomplete portfolios that are submitted will not be reviewed by the Peer Review Committee or sent to assessors for review. They will be returned to the applicant for possible submission in a future year.

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| III. Extension Administrative Responsibilities |

Supervising Educators should complete this section. Focus on administrative responsibilities (not staff training) in this section.

* Describe your supervisory assignment (percentage, number of staff, geographic region, etc.)
* Describe major administrative goals of the candidate since Step II. Each goal should coincide with the candidate’s responsibilities. For each major goal, provide a 1 to 2 page narrative/outline that presents the following:

○ Title

○ Objectives

* + Target audience

○ Impact/Outcomes achieved

○ Role

○ Creative Accomplishments

▪ Collaborations and partnerships developed-include scope (local, regional, multi-state, national, international)

▪ Secured Resources (in kind contributions, cost recover, enhanced program sustainability, grants and contracts, endowment, gifts, other)

▪ Peer Presentations-sharing of program or research findings with peers

• Support Materials (same guidelines as previous)

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| IV. Service  (Maximum of 2 pages) |

• Service to the Organization – to be organized by county, regional, state, interstate and/or national service, include year(s) that each occurred.

**Examples:**

○ Service on educational program planning committees (curriculum committees, Institute work teams/work groups, regional educational program teams)

○ Service in support of the University, College and/or Extension organization. (Advisory Committees, Taskforce membership, working with District Extension Council, search committees, review committees)

* Service to MSU colleagues, and others, as a peer reviewer of materials, curriculum, publications, etc. (Do not include the casual peer review of monthly MSUE articles.)

• Service to the Local Community as a representative of the University, include year(s) that each occurred. (not to be confused with other community volunteer roles you might take on such as church or local civic organizations)

**Examples:**

○ Service (As an MSUE representative) on local advisory committees, business and industry groups, government agencies and task forces (not led by the local extension program) which benefit from the educator’s expertise (in both subject matter and organizational leadership abilities)

• Service to the Profession, include year(s) that each occurred.

○ Involvement with professional associations

○ Involvement in planning professional development opportunities (association conferences, in –service opportunities, etc.)

○ mentoring of new staff (helping to establish sound working practices for effective extension educators)

○ supervising of program interns

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| V. Critical Reflection (3 page maximum) |

Critical Reflection:

A personal reflection written in essay format, about the candidate’s accomplishments and philosophy as relates to their Extension efforts, since attainment of Step II.

The Critical Reflection Essay holds a unique position in the candidate’s Step III portfolio. The portfolio will be read and discussed by reviewers. Consequently, the Essay should *not* be a summary of evidence presented in the portfolio or a historical account of the candidate’s Extension career. Instead, the Essay should provide insight into the candidate’s understanding of his/her professional pursuits (since Step II) as related to his/her vision of future professional goals and objectives.

The Essay should (a) convey the candidate’s vision of herself/himself as a maturing professional in Extension including scholarly niche; (b) communicate the contributions made in advancing toward that vision; and (c) show how the candidate’s work and scholarship have prepared them for that future.

**Seminar**

Applicants will present a substantive public seminar on a topic related to one of their highlighted Educational Initiatives.  The presentation should be similar to what an individual might present at a professional conference.  The presentation itself is to be 20 minutes maximum with 10 minutes for questions following the presentation. MSU Extension staff and faculty members shall be invited to participate in the seminar via MSUE distance technology, or another similar interactive and recordable medium, which will be available for others to view. New staff members will especially be encouraged to attend as a professional development opportunity.

Candidates will be asked to choose a date and time for their seminar, based on the timeline established for the Step Three process. Power Point slides will be due at least two days ahead of time. Candidates will need to have a webcam available as they present their seminar, so they may be viewed by the audience. There will be an opportunity to receive instruction from the Director’s office prior to the live seminar, to ensure comfort with the technology.

**Portfolio Review and Assessment Process**

1. MSUE HR is responsible for ensuring assessments are provided for all candidates applying for Step Three status.

2. Names and contact information of six (6) potential assessors will be supplied by the candidate – at the time s/he submits a Letter of Intent – and approved by the Institute Director, or Associate Director, depending upon the candidate’s reporting line.

The Institute Directors, in concert with the Associate Director, will consider the list provided by the candidate and may add additional potential assessors to develop the final list of four assessors to be contacted. Assessments need to come from diverse sources and include two external assessors (outside of Michigan State University) and two from state level faculty. Assessors should be individuals who are of higher rank than the candidate, from an appropriate education oriented professional position, and someone who is in a position to make informed judgments about the candidate’s work.

3. In addition to the assessors noted above, the candidate’s Institute Director plus the Associate Director will submit assessments.

4. MSUE HR will email the assessors requesting the individuals’ participation as an assessor and then, if they agree, to request the review and assessment of the portfolio.

5. All assessments will be completed by October 15.

NOTE: Incomplete portfolios that are submitted will not be reviewed by the Peer Review Committee or sent to assessors for review. They will be returned to the applicant for possible submission in a future year.

**Timeline Overview** (a detailed timeline may be found in the MSU Extension Administrative Handbook)

1. The application process begins with the applicant’s letter of intent to the Director’s office, a period for developing the portfolio and submitting it online, the review period, a selection period and the awarding of Step Three status. Please see the Step III timeline for critical dates and deadlines.
2. The candidate will develop a portfolio, following the criteria and guidelines outlined in this document and submit it online as a pdf document.
3. The candidatewill present a substantive public seminar on a topic related to one of their highlighted Educational Initiatives.  The presentation should be similar to what an individual might present at a professional conference.  The presentation itself is to be 20 minutes maximum with 10 minutes for questions following the presentation. MSU Extension staff and faculty members shall be invited to participate in the seminar via MSUE distance technology which will be recorded and available for others to view.
4. The Peer Review Committee will meet annually to review portfolios and make recommendations for individual(s) promotion to Step III status. The committee’s recommendations will be sent to the MSU Extension Director’s office for final consideration. Successful candidates must be approved by the Dean’s and Provost’s offices before Step III status is awarded.
5. **Decisions will be made by the second quarter of the following year** and the applicants will be informed.
6. **The announcement about those who achieve Step Three status will be made no later than June 30 of the year following portfolio submission**. Those attaining Step III status within the year will be recognized before their peers at MSUE’s annual conference or an alternative major organizational event.
7. Title changes are effective July 1 with respective raises effective October 1, of the year that Step III status is awarded.

**Review Committee**

The Review Committee will consist of five Senior Educator peer representatives, one from each of the four Program Institutes, and one person appointed by the MSU Extension Director. Peer representatives shall serve staggered three year terms*.* The peer representatives will be elected by staff in each Institute.

**A representative from the Extension Director’s office** will facilitate the process as a non-voting resource person.

**Reward and Recognition**

Persons attaining Step Three will be titled “Senior” with the appropriate academic title, which is effective July 1 of the year Step III status is awarded.

A base salary increase of $2,500 shall be applied on October 1, following the attainment of Step Three status, in accordance with University policies and practices concerning promotional raises.