



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Robert H. Finch today announced approval of revised procedures for the selection and appointment of advisors and consultants hired on a part-time basis to assist the Department in non-sensitive work areas.

Highlights of these new procedures are:

(1) The present HEW practice of pre-appointive investigations by the Department's Office of Internal Security will be discontinued.

(2) The constituent agencies of the Department will be responsible for evaluating prospective advisors and consultants.

(3) Appointments will be made on the basis of professional competence, that is, integrity, judgment and ability.

(4) If an agency has evidence suggesting that a prospective appointee possesses traits that would so adversely affect the performance of his job as to disqualify him, the individual will be given the opportunity to challenge the evidence.

(5) In lieu of a pre-appointment investigation for loyalty, the individual will be required to execute an appointment affidavit which will be subject to a post-appointment veracity check as is done for all Federal employees.

The decision to institute new procedures climaxes several months of intensive study of current practices of the Department by Department officials. This study was led by HEW Under Secretary John G. Veneman, and a consultant, H. Reed Ellis, of Columbia University, who submitted a report and recommendations on December 1, 1969

The study was initiated in response to longstanding criticisms from the

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scientific community and elsewhere alleging the "blacklisting" of certain scientists as well as other arbitrary and unfair aspects of the investigation of prospective advisors and consultants. About a month after the study began, Under Secretary Veneman directed all agency heads in the Department to insure that "blacklisting" did not occur in such agencies, and agency heads were invited to submit comments and suggestions on the appointment process.

Secretary Finch said:

"On the basis of the study and the constructive comments of many interested individuals and organizations, both within and outside of the Department, we feel we can implement a procedure that will protect the rights of individuals while at the same time safeguard the public interest."

Details of the new appointment procedures will be drafted for formal inclusion in the Department's manuals.

Secretary Finch further said:

"The Ellis report traces the historical development of the Department's appointment procedures. It suggests that much of the difficulty was self-imposed by the Department over the years, but that we can overcome the difficulties by replacing archaic practices with pragmatic ones adequate to do the job. Today's decision is the first step in a long overdue updating of our appointment procedures."

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