2. Standards of the Service and the unit are applied to the background of applicants by cooperative unit headquarters staff to determine acceptable candidates.

3. The headquarters staff presents the credentials of candidates who are acceptable to the Service, to the university, and to state cooperators for review by local selection committees that represent the cooperators.

4. The local selection committee schedules interviews and seminars in the host state for final candidates.

5. University and state cooperators present rankings of candidates to unit headquarters.

6. The unit headquarters staff requests that the appropriate federal personnel office hire the recommended candidate.

The hiring procedure often takes 2 to 3 months after the list of candidates has been received from OPM by the unit headquarters office. The OPM requirement commonly is for selection from the register within 30 days of issuance to the Service. The OPM time frame meets requirements for filling most federal positions, but it does not allow time for cooperator involvement in the selection procedure. Requests for time extensions are normal for recruitment to units. Personnel recruitment registers sometimes must be reissued to complete the selection process.

Selection of individuals that are new to the Service for assistant unit leader positions presents some problems because of differences between the objectives and priorities of the university cooperator and of the Service for the position. Universities prefer individuals with the highest possible level of scientific expertise; the Service views the positions as appropriate for a new Ph.D. A secondary issue may be a difference in emphasis by each cooperator on hiring females or minorities for these positions.

The Service desires to hire newly graduated Ph.D.'s as assistant unit leaders. Reasons include (1) recent Ph.D.'s are trained in the most recent ecological concepts, research approaches, and techniques that are important to the agency in a time when new issues, new problems, and new techniques of inquiry are important in the ever-changing field of environmental sciences; (2) individuals with less experience can more easily adjust to a new research course that meets the agency's priorities; and (3) the budgetary constraints of the unit program favor the beginning scientist level. Hiring senior or experienced scientists, eligible for a higher salary levels, works hardships on the unit program by causing a reduction in available funds to fill more vacancies.

Universities, on the other hand, seek candidates with mature credentials to increase the stature of the university department that hosts the unit and to increase the department's grantsmanship ability by accepting someone with an established research record. Service budget constraints make the difference in cooperator objectives a real problem and often limit Service flexibility.