

Officer Hiring Process

Initial Application

The first step for prospective applicants to the NMSU Police Department is to obtain, complete, and submit an application form. Once applications are received, they are screened to determine whether or not the applicants meet the minimum requirements. (The minimum requirements and a description of the job are contained in the job announcement, and the deadline for applications can be found in the important dates listing.)

Competitive Phase

Applicants must bring all required forms to the assessment, which usually begins at 7:30 am on the scheduled day. This includes the application form, the Background Verification Form, waivers, and a government-issued photo identification card (like a driver's license).

For applicants who are not already certified as police officers in the State of New Mexico, the physical fitness assessment starts the day. This consists of timed push-ups, timed sit-ups, flexibility, bench press, leg press, and a 1.5 mile run/walk. This usually takes two hours. Applicants must meet the minimum guidelines in each area in order to proceed to the written examination.

The standardized written examination is administered starting at 11:00 am. Currently certified applicants join the process at this stage. Applicants are allowed a short amount of time to review a study guide before taking the test. The examination is nationally validated, and it measures reading comprehension, ability to learn written information, spelling and grammar, and related issues. Applicants must score 80 points or higher in order to proceed to the next phase of the assessment.

After completing the standardized written examination, applicants are required to write a short essay on a topic provided to them. The essays are evaluated based on the ability to communicate thoughts in writing, basic sentence structure, basic grammar, and spelling. All applicants making it to this stage are then scheduled for an oral interview board later in the afternoon/evening.

The oral interview board is comprised of at least three officers and a person from the university community. All applicants are asked the same questions, which often include scenarios, logic questions, and/or analysis of information provided. Each applicant's performance in the oral interview board is then rated to determine whether or not the applicant meets the needs of the NMSU Police Department. Applicants who receive a favorable recommendation are then sent forward for a thorough background investigation.

The background investigation usually takes four to six weeks. It includes a complete review of criminal history, employment history, references, education, driving history, military records, illicit drug use, etceteras. Recommendations from the background investigators are then forwarded to the Chief of Police for final decisions on hiring.

Applicants selected by the Chief of Police are extended a conditional offer of employment. Applicants accepting the conditional offer must then complete a psychological examination, medical examination, illicit drug testing, and polygraph. Conditional employees who fail one or more of these may have their offer of employment withdrawn. All others are then referred to the Training Office to schedule appropriate training (including a basic police academy if needed).