

Assessment Practices Guide

U.S. Department of the Interior
Assessment Practices Working Group



Supplemental Guidance to Executive Order 13932 and Personnel Bulletin 20-21

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Overview of the Assessment and Selection Process

Merit System Principles ensure that the Federal Government is basing hiring decisions on relevant, job-related factors such as experience, education, or job-related competencies. The assessment process involves determining which candidates for a vacancy will be the best qualified candidates for the job based on those factors. Assessment tools are any test or procedure administered to individuals to evaluate these job-related factors.

When choosing assessment tools or developing an assessment strategy to identify top candidates for a vacancy, there are a few requirements to keep in mind. Any assessment tool or assessment strategy must be reliable, valid, and meet the following criteria established in the 5 CFR Part 300 and outlined in 5 USC Part 2301:

- Fair and practical – Assessment and selection procedures must be practical and provide candidates a fair chance to have their job-related abilities evaluated.
- Selection from among the best qualified candidates – Assessment and selection procedures should be successful in identifying a highly qualified, diverse pool of candidates who can perform successfully in the position.
- Develop and use without discrimination based on any non-merit factors – Candidates should not be discriminated against on the basis of any non-job-related characteristics such as: race, sex, religion, age, etc.
- Provide candidates with the opportunity to appeal – Assessment tools and procedures should have a process in place for candidates to appeal if they believe they have been treated unfairly (See 5 CFR 300.103 and 5 CFR 300.104).
- Job analysis – Any assessment tool or procedure used must be based on a job analysis that identifies the basic duties and responsibilities of the position, the competencies required to perform the duties and responsibilities, and the factors important in evaluating the competencies.
- Relevance – A candidate’s success or failure on any assessment tool or procedure should be indicative of their actual ability to perform the work of the position.

The assessment tool or assessment strategy used will vary depending on the type of position being filled, the competencies identified for that position, the volume of applicants expected, the area of consideration for the position (i.e., merit promotion vs. delegated examining), and the resources available (e.g., time, budget, and subject matter expertise).

The following sections of this guide will provide in-depth direction on how to select assessment tools and design an effective assessment strategy that will identify the best candidates for vacancies. It contains illustrative examples of how the assessment and selection process works and the flexibilities available to meet hiring needs.

General Assessment Requirements

Any assessment tool used for the selection of employees must be both reliable and valid, but what does that mean in practice?

Reliability

The term “reliability” refers to consistency. The reliability of an assessment tool is demonstrated when there is consistency of scores obtained from the same applicant in multiple administrations of the assessment tool. When a test vendor develops an assessment tool, they might measure the reliability of that assessment tool a few different ways. They could have a sample of test-takers complete the assessment tool multiple times and examine the correlation between a test-taker’s first assessment score and their second assessment score. They could review the performance by test-takers on similar test items to ensure their similarity. If you are procuring an assessment tool from a test vendor, they should be able to speak to and demonstrate the reliability of their product.

Other types of assessment tools are those that can be developed in-house without in-depth psychometric expertise. These might have a different process for ensuring reliability. For example, when conducting structured interviews with a panel of subject matter experts (SMEs), you would look to consistencies from ratings from different SMEs (e.g., different SMEs are rating the same candidates similarly). One way to ensure consistency is to ensure a consensus in ratings (e.g., all ratings for each response must be within one point of each other on a five point scale, or all SMEs must be in agreement for the final ratings for each response). Building your assessment process with reliability in mind will help ensure it meets the first condition for being a valid assessment process.

Validity

The second condition that all assessment tools or processes must meet is validity. The term “validity” refers to the relationship between performance on the assessment and performance on the job. Professionally contracted test developers might demonstrate the validity of their assessment tools in a variety of ways. The most common validation technique is “content validity.” This means that the content of the assessment tool is similar to the tasks performed on the job or the competencies required to perform those tasks, as determined by subject matter experts. A more rigorous approach to establishing validity is a predictive validity study. This is where a test developer would have either a sample of current incumbent employees or applicants complete the assessment tool and correlate their performance to their subsequent job performance data.

In most assessment scenarios where an assessment tool or process is used to identify potential new hires for very few positions (e.g., a dozen or fewer), a predictive validity study would not be practical. In these situations, it is sufficient to ensure validity through:

- Measuring only job-related competencies identified in a job analysis
- Relying on types of assessment tools that demonstrate a strong track record of validity

The table below displays the validity of commonly-used assessment types (per a validity meta-analysis by Schmidt & Hunter, 1998):

- Validity Coefficients of Commonly-Used Assessments (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998):
 - Work Samples .54
 - Structured Interviews .51
 - Cognitive Ability Tests .51
 - Job Knowledge Tests .48
 - Biographical Data .35
 - Occupational Questionnaires .11

In the table above, the figures can range from -1 to 1, with higher positive numbers indicating a higher degree of validity for the assessment type. For example, with a validity coefficient of .51, structured interviews and cognitive ability tests are each nearly five times as valid in predicting performance on the job as occupational questionnaires, with a validity coefficient of .11.

Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) and Alternatives

Background

For many years, certain occupational series carried a testing requirement as part of the qualifications for the position (i.e., “ACWA-covered” positions). While these vacancies required the use of the ACWA Rating Schedules or another valid alternative assessment tool, the requirements for the use of a valid alternative assessment tool were the same as that of the use of an assessment tool for any other vacancy (i.e., reliable, valid, based on a job analysis, etc.). These test requirements were generally for appointments in the competitive service meeting the following criteria:

1. The position is being filled at the entry level (GS-5 or GS-7), and
2. The position is classified at a 2 grade interval level, and
3. The position has a promotion potential to a GS-9 or higher.

When ACWA is Required and When ACWA Can Be Used

With the introduction of Executive Order (E.O.) 13932, the assessment requirements for all vacancies are essentially the same as they previously were for “ACWA-covered” positions. All vacancies require the use of a valid assessment tool(s) that measure job-related competencies needed for successful performance in the position.

ACWA’s Rating Schedules meet the criteria for assessment tools established in E.O. 13932, but can only be used for the occupational series and grade levels for which they were developed. For a full list of ACWA-eligible occupations and detailed instructions for utilizing the ACWA Rating Schedules in USA Staffing please refer to USA Staffing’s [ACWA User Guide](#).

Selecting Official and Subject Matter Expert (SME) Involvement

Human Resources (HR) Specialists, Hiring Managers, and SMEs all play integral roles in the recruitment and hiring process. Each brings unique insights that are valuable to selecting the best candidates available. There are a variety of ways **both** hiring managers and SMEs can and should be involved in recruitment and hiring:

- ✓ Ensure the position description is accurate and up-to-date;
- ✓ Participate in the job analysis to identify the most critical competencies for the position;
- ✓ Develop a recruitment strategy (**Hiring Manager Only**);
- ✓ Identify or develop assessment tools;
- ✓ Ensure the job opportunity announcement (JOA) accurately describes the job;
- ✓ Actively recruit for open positions:
 - Hiring managers and SMEs can share job opportunity announcements with others and invite individuals to apply for positions;
- ✓ Work with HR during the minimum qualifications review or to evaluate specialized experience (**SMEs only**);
 - HR still makes the final minimum qualification determinations.
- ✓ Rate and rank candidates (**SMEs only**);
- ✓ Interview candidates:
 - SMEs can participate in the development of assessment materials or on panels as part of the assessment process for a variety of assessment methods, including:
 - Structured interviews, including developing questions, response benchmarks, and scoring rubrics;
 - Structured résumé review, including developing scoring benchmarks;
 - Writing sample review, including designing writing prompts and developing scoring benchmarks;
 - Technical questionnaire development, including response options and scoring rubrics;
 - Hiring managers can conduct selection interviews with any candidates on the best qualified certificate (SMEs can be involved with these interviews as well);
- ✓ Select candidates to hire (**Hiring Manager Only**).

Best Practices to Keep in Mind:

- ✓ Work with the hiring manager to decide how to involve SMEs before the job opportunity announcement is posted.
- ✓ HR provides oversight of SME involvement throughout the recruitment and hiring process.
- ✓ There is no Department- or Government-wide policy barring the same non-hiring manager SME from being involved at multiple phases of the hiring process (e.g., reviewing resumes, rating and ranking applicants, participating in selection interviews), but bureau or office policy may differ.

What if SMEs disagree in their evaluations?

Occasionally SMEs may differ in their evaluations of candidates' job-related competencies. This could happen if multiple SMEs disagree with one another, or if one or more SMEs disagree with the HR specialist about a rating. In this situation, raters should review the candidate's response (e.g., in an interview, each rater would read aloud their notes of what the candidate said in their response – in many cases, there may be something a rater misheard or misunderstood), then have a discussion about how each rater determined their rating for the response. This process continues until raters are close enough in their ratings to provide a consensus rating (e.g., no more than 1 point apart on a 5 point scale). This process helps ensure that raters are basing their ratings of candidate's responses on the same information using the same criteria.

Use of Self-Report Assessment Tools

In the advent of the 2010 Presidential Memorandum on Hiring Reform, the use of narrative essays in the first step of the application process to assess applicants was eliminated. At this time, automated, self-report assessment questionnaires became an extremely popular assessment option. These self-report assessment tools were relatively easy to develop and automate. Unfortunately, they were also less effective in identifying top-performing candidates for positions. This was due to a variety of factors (e.g., transparency of the “best” response options, candidates inflating their experience or abilities, and overall limitations of this style of assessment tool and self-report information). Subsequently, in 2020, Executive Order 13932 was issued, which bars agencies from relying solely on self-report assessment tools in the assessment process prior to the development of a certificate of eligibles. Self-report questionnaires can still be used in conjunction with another assessment tool that measures job-related competencies without relying on self-report ratings. The requirements of Executive Order 13932 apply to all vacancies in the competitive service with the exception of competitive hiring actions that do not require competitive rating and ranking of candidates (e.g., when using a direct hire authority). It does not cover vacancies in the excepted service (e.g., Pathways, Schedule A hiring).

There are many situations when the use of a self-report assessment tool can be used. For example, a self-report questionnaire asking about candidates’ technical skills or expertise might be paired with an assessment of general competencies such as USA Hire. In this situation, it is a good idea to follow up the technical questionnaire with questions about technical skills or expertise during a hiring interview. A self-report questionnaire asking about candidates’ technical skills or expertise could also be paired with a more manual type of assessment tool, such as a SME panel interview, structured resume review, or evaluation of a writing sample from the candidate (note: you must ensure candidates have been screened for minimum qualifications prior to requesting or prompting a writing sample, per the 2010 Hiring Reform Memorandum). When asking about technical skills or expertise in these situations, it is a good idea to verify responses from the self-report questionnaires. Additionally, it is a good idea to base some part of the assessment process on general competencies (e.g., interpersonal skills, teamwork, writing), as those will often dictate how effective a candidate will be in applying their technical skills or expertise on the job.

Another best practice to reduce response inflation from candidates while using self-report questionnaires is to provide a strong verification statement up front in the job opportunity announcement or the instructions of the self-report questionnaire. This may lead candidates to respond more honestly about their skills and expertise. The exact wording can vary, but often a verification statement will inform candidates that 1) their responses to the questionnaire will be verified, and 2) that there will be consequences for falsification of their information (e.g., adjustment of their score on the questionnaire, removal from consideration for the position, etc.). When using a verification process, it is critically important that you follow the process outlined for applicants in the initial verification statement (e.g., do not adjust their score if it was not stated that was a possibility for falsifying information).

Multiple Hurdle Assessment Process

When assessing applicants for a position, some of the best assessment tools available can also be some of the most resource-intensive, so using them for a large number of applicants is not feasible. When developing an assessment strategy, a multiple hurdle approach can be utilized to address this issue. A multiple hurdle approach maximizes the efficiency of resources by utilizing the most time and cost-intensive resources on the best qualified individuals. In this approach, applicants meeting the minimum qualifications for the position complete the first “hurdle” of the assessment process, typically an automated, self-report questionnaire or inexpensive online test. The top-rated performers move on to the next, more-rigorous assessment tool. This strategy permits for better assessment tools to be used without depleting resources in the process and allows for the best qualified candidates to be considered for the position.

- *Common First Hurdles – Application & Self-Report*
 - Application and Résumé
 - Occupational Questionnaire
 - Biodata
 - Personality Tests
- *Verification*
 - Verify applicants’ self-report data matches their résumé
- *Common Second Hurdles – Ability or Knowledge Tests*
 - Cognitive Ability Test
 - Job Knowledge Test
 - Situational Judgment Test
- *Common Final Hurdles – Simulations or Interviews*
 - Assessment Center
 - Writing Assessment
 - Work Sample
 - Structured Interview

The following scenarios are examples of how a multiple hurdle assessment process could work in your bureau or office. These examples of assessment tools, scores, or processes used are not meant to be prescriptive and could potentially vary in practice (e.g., using a different combination of assessment tools, using different cut-off scores for categories, use of assessment processes with area of consideration).

Veterans Preference in Multiple Hurdle

When using a multiple hurdle assessment process for competitive examining, agencies must still follow applicable veterans’ preference rules and regulations:

- Veterans’ preference applies after the candidates are assessed.
- Preference-eligible veterans meeting the qualification requirements are assessed and placed in the appropriate quality categories. Preference eligibles receive veterans’ preference by being

listed ahead of non-preference eligibles within the same quality category in which they are placed.

- Preference eligibles who meet the qualification requirements for the position and have a compensable service-connected disability of at least 10% must be listed in the highest quality category regardless of their assessment scores (except in the case of scientific or professional positions at the GS-9 level or higher).
 - If a cutoff score for an assessment tool has been established, all candidates, including preference eligibles with a compensable service-connected disability of 10% or more must score above the cutoff in order to be listed on the certificate of eligibles.
- An agency may not select a non-preference eligible if there is a preference eligible in the same category unless the agency receives approval to pass over the preference eligible in accordance with [5 USC Part 3318](#).

Example 1: Job Knowledge Test + SME Panel Interview (Delegated Examining)

When submitting their application in USA Jobs, an applicant completes an automated, multiple-choice job knowledge test questionnaire. This test consists of 15-20 technical subject matter area questions developed by subject matter experts (SMEs). The SMEs base the questions on technical expertise that is important and needed upon hire for the position. This test differs from a self-report questionnaire in that the applicant must choose the correct responses to questions rather than provide information about their own experience or expertise. Scores for minimally qualified candidates vary from 70-100, depending on their responses to the questionnaire. Based on recommendations from SMEs on the acceptable responses to the questionnaire items, a questionnaire cut-off score of 85 is used. All candidates with a score of 85 or above advance to the next assessment phase. These candidates participate in a structured interview with a SME panel. Scoring on the interview ranges from 0-100, and prior to the interview process and based on the range of acceptable responses for each question, the SME panel determines that a score of 90 or above is the cut-off for the highest quality category. All candidates scoring a 90 or above on the interview are listed on the certificate of eligibles, with all preference eligible candidates listed above non-veterans.

Example 2: Occupational Questionnaire + Writing Sample + SME Panel Interview (Delegated Examining)

When submitting their application in USA Jobs, an applicant completes a short multiple-choice self-report questionnaire about their experience and expertise. Scores for minimally qualified candidates vary from 70-100, depending on their responses to the questionnaire. Based on recommendations from SMEs, a cut-off score of 80 is used for the questionnaire. All candidates with a score of 80 or above, and any veterans preference eligible candidates claiming 10 point preference or higher, advance to the next assessment phase. These candidates are invited to submit a writing sample. The writing sample is evaluated by SMEs using a structured scoring rubric to assess candidates' technical and writing skills. Scoring on the writing sample ranges from 0-100, and prior to the assessment process, the SMEs determine that a score of 85 or above should be used as a cut-off. All candidates with advance to the next assessment phase. These candidates are invited to participate in a structured interview with a SME panel. Scoring on the interview ranges from 0-100, and prior to the interview process and based on the range of acceptable responses for each question, the SME panel determines that a score of 90 or above

is the cut-off for the highest quality category. All candidates scoring a 90 or above on the interview are listed on the certificate of eligibles, with all preference eligible candidates listed above non-veterans.

Example 3: Occupational Questionnaire + SME Panel Interview (Merit Promotion)

When submitting their application in USA Jobs, an applicant completes a short multiple-choice self-report questionnaire about their experience and expertise. Scores for minimally qualified candidates vary from 70-100, depending on their responses to the questionnaire. Based on recommendations from SMEs, a cut-off score of 80 is used for the questionnaire. All candidates with a score of 80 or above advance to the next assessment phase. These candidates are invited to participate in a structured interview with a SME panel. Scoring on the interview ranges from 0-100, and prior to the interview process and based on the range of acceptable responses for each question, the SME panel determines that a score of 90 or above is the cut-off for the highest quality category. All candidates scoring a 90 or above on the interview are listed on the certificate of eligible.

Example 4: Occupational Questionnaire + SME Resume Review (Merit Promotion)

When submitting their application in USA Jobs, an applicant completes a short multiple-choice self-report questionnaire about their experience and expertise. Scores for minimally qualified candidates vary from 70-100, depending on their responses to the questionnaire. All applicants whose self-ratings place them in the pre-determined cut-off score (i.e., 90 and above) are reviewed by HR to confirm eligibility and basic qualification requirements are met (including any minimum education requirements). All eligible and qualified candidates with a score of 90 or above advance to the next assessment phase. The SME panel will independently conduct a resume review using a pre-determined scoring matrix based on the competencies and task statements contained in the job analysis. Scoring for each competency will range from 0-5, based on the information reflected in the resume. The SME panel determines the overall cut-off score that will be used for the best qualified during this 2nd hurdle resume review. The panel will convene to discuss and tally the scores for each applicant. All candidates who meet the pre-determined cut-off score are listed on the certificate of eligibles.

Please see Chapter 5 of the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook for examples of the use of progressive hurdles and application of Veterans Preference during the competitive hiring process.

Job Opportunity Announcement Language for Multiple Hurdle

Per 5 CFR 300.104, agencies must include their basis for rating applicants in the Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA). This is listed in the “How You Will Be Evaluated” section of the JOA, and at a minimum, the description of the assessment process should include:

- A general overview of the assessment process – this need not be exhausted, but is rather just to provide applicants an idea of what the process will entail and what types of assessments they will complete (e.g., writing sample, online questionnaire, USA Hire, etc.).
- A list of the competencies to be assessed during the assessment process – this includes the competency titles and definitions identified during the job analysis and targeted in the assessment process.

Example Language for the JOA:

You will be evaluated based on how well you meet the qualifications listed in this vacancy announcement. Your qualifications will be evaluated based on your application materials (e.g., resume, supporting documents), the responses you provide on the application questionnaire, and the result of the additional assessments required for this position. You will be assessed on the following competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics):

Problem Solving - Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives, and to make recommendations.

Planning and Evaluating - Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines short- or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them; coordinates with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes.

Written Communication - Ability to communicate sufficiently to speak convincingly on issues involving talent management topics to internal and external audiences with varying levels of technical expertise, including professional groups and other agencies.

Teamwork - Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.

In order to be considered for this position, you must complete all required steps in the process. In addition to the application and application questionnaire, this position requires successful completion of additional assessments, including a panel interview and a writing sample. These assessments measure the critical competencies listed above that are required to successfully perform the job.

USA Hire Implementation Guidance

USA Hire is an OPM-developed suite of assessment tools available for use across the Department of the Interior. USA Hire is mapped to over 100 occupational series at multiple grade levels and is automated through USA Staffing. To determine whether the USA Hire Standard Assessments must be used during the selection process for a vacancy, follow the instructions below.

Step 1) Is this vacancy for a supervisory position?

- No – Continue to Step 2
- Yes – Continue to Step 7

Step 2) Is this vacancy for an occupational series and grade that is covered by USA Hire? [View the occupational series and grades covered by USA Hire here](#)

- Yes – continue to Step 3
- No – continue to Step 7

Step 3) Is this vacancy for a temporary or term position?

- No – continue to Step 4
- Yes – continue to Step 7

Step 4) What is the area of consideration for the vacancy?

- Delegated Examining – continue to Step 5
- Merit Promotion *external* to your bureau or office (for example, all Federal employees or all DOI employees) - continue to Step 5
- Merit Promotion *internal* to your bureau or office (in other words, only employees within your bureau or office can apply) - continue to Step 7

Step 5) What is the anticipated applicant volume (note: this can be determined through looking at the results of similar past job postings or conversations with the hiring manager)?

- Medium or High Volume (more than 20-30 applicants) - Continue to Step 6
- Low Volume¹ (fewer than 20 applicants) - Continue to Step 7

Step 6) Which competencies are important to measure (note: this should be determined by the hiring manager and/or subject matter experts during the job analysis)?

- General competencies only – **Use USA Hire** as the assessment tool for the vacancy
- General *and* Technical Competencies – Combination – **Use USA Hire plus one of the following:**
 - Self-report technical questionnaire, *or*
 - SME panel interview,
 - Structured resume review, *or*
 - SME review of written narratives
- Technical Competencies Only – Continue to Step 7

¹ This may apply to positions filled through a Direct Hire Authority (DHA). Most DHAs allow for the use of assessments, but read the DHA thoroughly to understand any applicable requirements or restrictions when developing your assessment strategy.

Step 7) Use one or more of the following assessment tools:

- SME panel interview
- SME review of written narratives
- SME structured résumé review
- Another valid assessment alternative

If in step 6 above USA Hire is identified for use for the hiring situation, USA Hire MUST be used. If using USA Hire with an additional assessment tool, the default scoring setting weighs USA Hire at 50% and the other assessment tool at 50%.

For additional guidance on how to use USA Hire within the USA Staffing system, please reference the USA Hire Resource Center at

https://help.usastaffing.gov/ResourceCenter/index.php/USA_Hire_Resource_Center.

Additional Assessment Options Compliant with E.O. 13932

If USA Hire is not available or suitable for assessing candidates for a particular vacancy, there are a range of other assessment options available that are compliant with the E.O. 13932 requirement to use non-self-rated, competency-based assessment tools.

Writing Assessments

Writing evaluations that are used to assess an applicant’s writing abilities belong to a class of assessments referred to as “work sample tests,” which require applicants to perform the types of tasks performed on the job. They are useful when writing is a critical aspect of the position (as supported by being a critical competency on the job analysis).

In addition, written short essay style responses that applicants write in response to a request for a demonstration of competencies or knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) can be used to assess other competencies or experience (e.g., technical subject matter expertise). This type of written narrative belongs to a class of assessments referred to as “accomplishment records”. Accomplishment records are useful when the assessment strategy includes a review of personal accomplishments to illustrate an applicant’s proficiency in critical job competencies.

When using any kind of writing assessment, the Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA) must be clear on the possibility of the writing exercise and when it will be required. It is important that written assessments are requested after the initial application to keep in alignment with the 2010 Presidential Memorandum on Hiring Reform. Writing assessments can be used as 1) the sole assessment method, 2) as another assessment to be averaged for an applicant’s final rating, or 3) as another assessment in a hurdled assessment approach.

Writing Assessment (Work Sample Tests):

Here are some examples of the different ways that work sample writing assessments can be used²:

Assessment Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<i>Portfolio Assessment</i>	Applicants provide writing samples from school or work	<input type="checkbox"/> High face validity (applicants perceive test as valid) <input type="checkbox"/> Can easily be administered remotely	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty verifying authorship <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of opportunity (if applicant does not have a writing sample) <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Bias (only the best writing samples chosen)

² From OPM’s Writing Samples Summary (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/other-assessment-methods/writing-samples-summary.pdf>)

<i>Written Task</i>	Applicants complete a task typical of the job that involves writing	<input type="checkbox"/> High face validity <input type="checkbox"/> Task is very representative of work performed in the job <input type="checkbox"/> All applicants assessed under standardized conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Can be expensive (in terms of both time and money) to develop and administer <input type="checkbox"/> Writing skill assessed based on a single work sample (potentially lower reliability and validity)
<i>Prompted Essay</i>	Applicants receive an essay prompt and have a set amount of time to write an essay about the topic	<input type="checkbox"/> High face validity <input type="checkbox"/> All applicants assessed under standardized conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing skill assessed based on a single work sample

Writing prompts are typically either general or technical. Technical prompts require applicants to have technical knowledge and adjust their level of writing to the audience, while general prompts do not require technical knowledge. Below are some examples of written task and essay prompts you could administer:³

<u>Written Task Example:</u>
Question type: General
Example: Previously, employees were able to telework on Mondays and Fridays, but not on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. Employees will now be allowed to telework any day except for Wednesdays. Compose an internal memo informing coworkers of this change in the office’s telework policy.
Question type: Technical
Example: Assume the hiring manager you are working with has no experience with conducting job analysis and does not know why you might need to conduct one. Write an email to the hiring manager explaining what a job analysis is, how to conduct a job analysis, and why conducting a job analysis is important.
<u>Prompted Essay Example:</u>
Question type: General
Example: Do you think telework has made it easier or harder to do your job and why?
Question type: Technical
Example: If somebody didn’t know anything about job analysis, how would you explain it to them?

All candidates must receive the same question or prompt and have the same amount of time to respond. In addition, if asking for a writing sample, or other work sample, for SME evaluation, an alternative assessment or method for candidate participation must be considered in instances where a writing or work sample cannot be obtained (e.g. a candidate may be restricted from sharing a writing or work sample based on his/her business policy).

³ From OPM’s Writing Samples Summary (<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/other-assessment-methods/writing-samples-summary.pdf>)

It is important to note that scoring writing work samples can be very time-consuming regardless of method (e.g., whether the samples are obtained using the portfolio or by a timed essay). There is assessment expertise that is necessary to develop and establish the evaluation criteria that will be used to assess candidates. A scoring rubric (that is, a set of standards or rules for scoring) is needed to guide raters in applying the criteria used to evaluate the writing samples. Scoring criteria typically cover different aspects of writing such as content, organization, grammar, sentence structure, and fluency⁴.

[\(Sample Writing Assessment Rubric\)](#)

Writing Assessment (Accomplishment Record):

Here is an example of a traditional type of accomplishment record:

Accomplishment Record: Example

Oral communication is critical for the Park Ranger position. Oral communication is defined as expressing information (for example, ideas or facts) to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (for example, technical, sensitive, controversial); making clear and convincing oral presentations; listening to others, attending to nonverbal cues, and responding appropriately.

Using the text box below, please describe one specific instance from your training and/or experience in which you demonstrated experience in oral communication. In your response, please follow these important guidelines as you write your accomplishment:

- Describe the situation -- i.e., the challenge faced, the problem to be solved...
- Describe the specific actions you took...
- State the outcome, results, or long-term impact of your accomplishment...

Provide the name and a telephone number or email address or other method of contacting someone who can verify this information.

KSA narratives are a variation of an accomplishment record. When using a KSA narrative an applicant is provided with a competency/KSA and asked to write a narrative to support how they possess the competency/KSA. This varies from the traditional accomplishment record example in that the applicant is not being asked to select a single accomplishment and can summarize their multiple capabilities associated with the competency/KSA. Scoring accomplishment records are done through competency-based benchmarks that typically provide specific behavioral examples of various levels of proficiency.

KSA with Rating Instructions: Example

Instructions:

General: Candidates will be rated on each of the factors describing required knowledge, skills, abilities (KSA's), and/or competencies identified below. After reading all of the application materials provided by the applicant, select the best match from the three benchmark levels described either, Superior, Fully Satisfactory, or Minimally Acceptable for each rating factor. The examples provided under each benchmark level are not intended to be all-inclusive, but are meant to provide the rater with sufficient

⁴ OPM FAQ on general guidance on writing assessments
(<https://www.opm.gov/faqs/topic/assessment/index.aspx?cid=b940a3c7-b7f4-437b-a902-12b119b94a20>)

information to determine which benchmark level the applicant's background of education, experience, training, awards, or other indicators, best matches.

Assigning Ratings: A Superior Rating should be credited when the candidate demonstrates functional expertise and a high level of experience, knowledge and ability in all important functions of the rating factor. A person credited at this level should need only a brief period of orientation in order to be fully effective in the position.

A Fully Satisfactory Rating should be credited when the candidate demonstrates the knowledge and ability to satisfactorily carry out almost all. of the functions described in the rating factor, with no more than normal orientation or supervision to be fully effective. There should be evidence of direct experience for most aspects of the rating factor.

A Minimally Acceptable Rating is credited when the candidate demonstrates a limited level of the type of experience, knowledge and ability required to successfully perform most of the functions described in the rating factor. A longer than usual period of orientation may be required to be effective in the position.

Scores: The Superior level is worth 5 points, Fully Satisfactory, 3 points, and the Minimally Acceptable level is worth 1 point. If a candidate has background that falls between two levels described, you may assign the intervening point value.

Each rating factor has been given a weight to reflect its relative importance for this position. The weight is indicated below the factor title. To determine an applicant's score for each rating factor, multiply the weight indicated for each factor by the points (5, 3, or 1) for the benchmark level you assigned. For example, a candidate receiving a Superior level for a factor with a weight of 2 would receive 10 points for that rating factor (5 X 2 =10).

KSA: Skill in oral communications in order to explain, negotiate, justify and defend the organization's positions and to provide technical advisory services to top level management officials. (Factor Weight: 1)

Description: Participates actively in group and individual planning sessions and furnishes advice; makes presentations; serves on taskforces to discuss problems and develop solutions; and communicates to obtain information and to negotiate and resolve personnel problems. Has frequent contact with the Director's Office, senior leaders within WASO and DOI and with representatives of public and private special interest organizations.

(Examples need not necessarily relate to HR work to illustrate oral communication ability.)

Superior Level (5 X 1 =5 Points)

Examples:

- Communicates, explains, or defends complex ideas or information clearly and adapts to the audience's level of knowledge. Thoughts are extremely well organized. Actively listens to others and clarifies communications.
- Justifies controversial decisions, conclusions, findings, or recommendations to high-level management or policy officials.
- Represents the agency by presenting oral arguments in court or at administrative proceedings.
- Represents agency and serves as expert speaker at external meetings/conferences.
- Serves as management negotiator during collective bargaining agreement negotiations.

- Presents highly complex and controversial findings, costly and extensive suggestions for improvement, and recommendations to headquarter officials to obtain necessary approval in making HR program changes.
- Persuades management officials to place emphasis on not only "problem areas," but also areas in which "satisfactory" situations may be improved.

Fully Satisfactory (3 X 1 =3 Points)

Examples:

- Communicates, educates, or explains technical and non-technical information clearly and adapts to the audience's level of knowledge. Thoughts are well organized. Listens to others, and clarifies miscommunication.
- Delivers training courses to participants.
- Makes presentations to managers to fully integrate human resources management into the planning and operations of the organization.
- Serves as a consultant to provide program advice and recommendations, explain policy, or provide legal or regulatory guidance.
- Meets with managers or supervisors to provide options relative to complex or highly sensitive issues such as performance and disciplinary related issues.
- Serves as the HR representative during organization's all employee meetings, during management meetings.
- Communicates project goals to employee groups, or presents project results to interested stakeholders.
- Represents an organizational unit, for example by providing education, training or other informational activities.

Minimally Acceptable (2 X1 =2 Points)

Examples:

- Communicates or explains moderately complex ideas or information clearly. Thoughts are well organized. Listens to others, and, recognizes potential miscommunications.
- Provides verbal guidance to individuals on new policies, procedures and/or regulations.
- Consults and advises management on personnel program activities.
- Participates in advisory or operational discussion groups or committees within the office to coordinate program activities or discuss new procedures.
- Describes the organization's programs and services to individuals or groups within the community.
- Presents a summary of new regulations affecting the agency/corporation's mission to the work unit.

Structured Resume Review

For this assessment method HR will confirm that the applicant has provided all documentation and that they meet the stated eligibility requirement(s). Next, HR or an SME, will review all applicant's whose self-ratings place them in the pre-determined best qualified category (DE) or cut-off score (MP) to confirm basic qualification requirements are met (including any minimum education requirements and/or selective placement factors). The SME panel will conduct a resume review for these applicants

(see example in Appendix A). The SME panel will develop a scoring matrix based on the competencies and task statements contained in the job analysis (see example in Appendix A). The panel will also determine the overall cut-off score that will be used for the highest category. Each panel member independently completes the resume review and assigns scores for each applicant. The panel will convene to discuss and tally the scores for each applicant. All candidates who meet the pre-determined cut-off score are listed on the certificate of eligibles.

Structured Interviews

Structured interviews are among the best assessment methods available for determining the best qualified candidates for a position. In a structured interview, each individual is asked the same job-related questions and evaluated against the same pre-determined rating criteria. Structured interviews conducted prior to establishing a certificate of eligibles and based on job-related competencies meet the criteria for assessments established in E.O. 13932. Developing and administering a structured interview involves working with SMEs to develop competency-based questions and acceptable response options, scheduling the interviews, and conducting each interview and rating each candidate's responses. This can be time consuming, especially if there is a high volume of individuals to interview, so structured interviews are a good assessment option if there is a manageable number of applicants or as a later phase in a multiple hurdle assessment process.

For detailed instructions on developing and administering structured interviews, please reference OPM's [Structured Interview Guide](#). For sample interview rating forms and examples of completed interview rating forms, please reference Appendices B-F of this guide.

Job Knowledge Tests

Job knowledge tests include questions designed to assess technical or professional expertise in specific subject matter areas. These questions differ from self-report in that they require candidates to demonstrate job-related competencies rather than asking candidates to rate themselves on their level of competence. Job knowledge test questions can be included into questionnaires as part of an automated staffing system (e.g., USA Staffing), which can make them useful for winnowing an applicant pool to a manageable number of qualified candidates. When using job knowledge test items, the following considerations should be made:

- Level of the position – job knowledge test questions may be better suited for higher graded positions where applicants are expected to have some requisite level of technical expertise. Job knowledge test items should not ask candidates about subject matter that can be quickly learned on the job after hire.
- Subject matter expert involvement – it is critically important to work with subject matter experts to develop job knowledge test questions and response options.
- Question development – questions must be written clearly and concisely with unambiguous response options. The correct response option(s) must be factual and verifiable and not based on opinion. Incorrect response options must also be clearly incorrect based on verifiable evidence and not opinion.
- Competencies – questions must be linked to the job-related competencies identified in a job analysis for the position.

Job knowledge test questions can be built into automated questionnaires and included with self-rated items (e.g., occupational questionnaires) in order to ensure the questionnaire is not solely reliant on applicant self-evaluations during the assessment process.

Developing Rating Schedules

Purpose

Rating schedules provide levels of work experience that demonstrate the kind of work required to do the job at varying levels and is the criteria used for evaluating applicants for referral.

Example of Proficiency Levels

Each proficiency level needs to include examples of work assignments that an applicant may have performed that demonstrates their ability to meet the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies needed for each level.

- Superior (5 Points) – Defines the level of ability that will enable an individual to perform successfully all of the major aspects of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies required by the position. At this level an individual should need only a brief period of orientation to the minor particulars of the job in order to perform the job functions with full effectiveness.
- Good (3 Points) – Defines the level of ability that will enable an individual to carry out satisfactorily most of the common functions of the positions, given normal orientation and/or supervision.
- Acceptable (1 Point) – This should define the minimum level of ability that is required to perform successfully the job functions. This should be written to include all candidates who meet the minimum qualifications (specialized experience equivalent to at least the next lowest grade level and/or competencies needed).

NOTE: It's acceptable to say "Education and/or experience equivalent to..." It is unacceptable to require specific higher-level education, e.g., a Ph.D., when it's not required in OPM's Qualification Standard.

Things to Avoid in the Rating Schedule

- Education Requirements – education requirements are only required for certain occupations and become part of the basic qualification requirements for the position. They are not considered in the rating of an applicant.
- Progressions of time or quantity of experience – e.g., possess 2 years of experience performing a specific task.
- Using Qualifiers – e.g., lead large, medium-sized, small organizations. It's better to be as specific as possible so that the subject matter experts who are rating applicants evaluate candidates consistently.

Manual and Automated Assessments

When using an automated staffing system like USA Staffing, there are two options for how assessments function within the system: manual assessments and automated assessments. Manual assessments are administered outside of the staffing system and then candidate scores are input into the system manually. Automated assessments are administered to candidates directly via the staffing system.

Examples of automated assessments include:

- Multiple choice occupational questionnaires (e.g., self-report questionnaires)
- Job knowledge test items (as incorporated into the automated questionnaire system)
- USA Hire
- ACWA

Examples of manual assessments include:

- Writing Assessments
- Structured Interviews
- Rating Schedules
- Structured SME Resume Reviews

For additional information on how to administer both manual and automated assessment types in USA Staffing, please reference the USA Staffing Assessment Resources site at <https://help.usastaffing.gov/ResourceCenter/index.php?title=Resources>.

Tracking Results

Regardless of the assessment tool(s) chosen as part of your assessment strategy, it is important to evaluate the results you are getting from your assessments. This ensures that any assessment used is consistently identifying the best candidates for positions. Additionally, evaluating assessment effectiveness is also required of agencies per E.O. 13932. Personnel Bulletin 20-XX on Assessment Practices stipulates that DOI's Office of Human Capital will monitor the effectiveness of assessment practices across the Department. This is accomplished in the following ways:

- Reviewing Hiring Manager Satisfaction Survey data to examine managers' perceptions of the quality of candidates on certificates
- Reviewing Applicant Satisfaction Survey data to examine applicants' perceptions of the fairness and job-relatedness of assessments used in the hiring process
- Reviewing Time to Hire data to evaluate the impact of the assessment process on timely hiring practices
- Tracking utilization of shared services assessment tools such as USA Hire to ensure optimization of available assessment options
- Review of Applicant Flow Data in order to identify barriers to recruiting a well-qualified and diverse candidate pool
- Merit Systems Accountability Reviews and Audits to ensure competency-based assessment tools are being used for hiring

The evaluation strategies listed above can be conducted at the bureau or office level as well. Additionally, there are other strategies that bureaus can use in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their assessment tool(s) and processes:

- Seek feedback from the hiring manager after a vacancy is filled or if a certificate is returned without a selection
- Track and review the performance of particular assessment tools in various hiring scenarios (e.g., how well are SME interview panels working for selecting for scientist positions, or how effectively are evaluations of writing samples in identifying candidates with writing skills)
- Obtain feedback from SMEs involved in the assessment process. Questions you might ask include:
 - General: Were assessment instructions easy to follow?
 - General: Did the assessment help in identify talented candidates?
 - General: Did the assessment process make sense for the position being filled?
 - Scoring Rubrics (for interviews, writing samples, etc.): How well did scoring benchmarks match up to candidates' responses?
 - Work Sample: How closely did the assessment match the work performed on the job?

By regularly obtaining feedback, evaluating the effectiveness of the assessment processes, and making adjustments, you can ensure that your assessments contribute to success in hiring the best candidates.

Additional Information

For additional information on additional assessment-related resources, please utilize the resources below.

OPM Assessment and Selection website: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/>

This site features a general overview of assessment terms, concepts, and types of assessment tools available. This site also includes OPM's *Assessment Decision Guide*, which contains comprehensive information on assessment practices.

Delegated Examining Operations Handbook (DEOH): https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/competitive-hiring/deo_handbook.pdf

The DEOH outlines competitive hiring practices for the Federal Government and provides detailed instructions on conducting a job analysis, requirements and allowable practices in assessing candidates, and even includes a Vendor Criteria Checklist in Appendix B, which outlines criteria to be mindful of if hiring a contractor to develop or administer assessment tools for your selection process.

DOI Assessment and Selection website: <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/hr/assessment>

The DOI Assessment and Selection website provides updated links to USA Hire resources and recent Federal assessment directives, such as Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) Council memoranda, Executive Orders, and Merit Systems Protection Board reports. This website also contains information on assessment tools available for Department-wide use, such as USA Hire and structured interview questions and rating scales.

Appendix A – Panel Resume Review Scoring Matrix Example

Human Resources Specialist, GS-0201-12

Job Announcement #:

Applicant Name: _____

Panel Member: _____

Date: _____

	<i>1-Awareness</i>	<i>2-Basic</i>	<i>3- Intermediate</i>	<i>4- Advanced</i>	<i>5-Expert</i>
OPM Proficiency Level	Resume demonstrates that applicant can apply the competency in simple and/or routine situations. Requires close and extensive guidance.	Resume demonstrates that applicant can apply the competency in somewhat difficult situations. Requires frequent guidance.	Resume demonstrates that applicant can apply the competency in difficult situations. The applicant requires occasional guidance.	Resume demonstrates that applicant can apply the competency in considerably difficult situations. The applicant requires little or no guidance.	Resume demonstrates that applicant can apply the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. The applicant serves as a key resource and advises others.

KSA/Competency	Panel Member Notes	Score
<p>Technical Competency: Staffing Rules and Regulations</p> <p>Understands and appropriately applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and polices related to staffing rules and regulations. Develops Job Opportunity Announcements, evaluates applicants, adjudicates veteran’s preference, issues certificates, audits selections and ensures personnel actions meet regulatory requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant completes Merit Promotion (MP) and Delegated Examining (DE) recruitment actions for professional/scientific, administrative/management, technical, and clerical/administrative support positions up to GS-15 grade level. • Applicant completes MP and DE recruitment actions for Wage Board positions including leader and/or supervisory positions. • Applicant is in a lead position and is responsible for completing quality reviews for all recruitment actions in the servicing HR Office. • Applicant trains new HR Specialists on all aspects of staffing and recruitment actions. 	5

KSA/Competency	Panel Member Notes	Score
<p>Technical Competency: Classification</p> <p>Understands and appropriately applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and polices related to classification and position management rules and regulations. Properly assigns pay plan, series, grade to General Schedule and Wage Board positions adhering to proper position management principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has completed classification actions for clerical/administrative support positions only. • Resume does not reflect experience with position management. 	2
<p>General Competency: Writing</p> <p>Uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information (for example, facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner; produces written information, which may include technical material that is appropriate for the intended audience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume is well written and concise. No grammatical or spelling errors. • Applicant develops Standard Operating Procedures for use in immediate office. 	3
<p>General Competency: Interpersonal Skills</p> <p>Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant serves as point of contact to address applicant questions/concerns. • Applicant developed and delivered training for managers/supervisors. • Applicant serves as Bureau representative on DOI committees/teams. 	5
Total Score:		15

Appendix B – Structured Interview Individual Rating Form for General Competencies

Candidate: _____ Rater: _____

Position Title/Series/Grade _____

Vacancy Announcement ID: _____

Competency:		
Definition:		
Question: Lead Question:		
Proficiency Level (choose only one)	Definition	Question-Specific Behavioral Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	The candidate can apply the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. The candidate has served as a key resource and advised others.	.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	The candidate can apply the competency in considerably difficult situations. The candidate requires no guidance.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	The candidate can apply the competency in difficult situations. The candidate may require occasional guidance.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	The candidate can apply the competency in somewhat difficult situations. The candidate will require frequent guidance.	.
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	The candidate can apply the competency in the simplest situations. The candidate requires close and extensive guidance.	

Interview Notes:

Appendix C – Structured Interview Individual Rating Form for Technical Competencies

Candidate: _____ Rater: _____

Position Title/Series/Grade _____

Vacancy Announcement ID: _____

Competency:		
Definition:		
Interview Question:		
Proficiency Level (choose only one)	Proficiency Definition	Question-Specific Behavioral Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. Serve as a key resource and advises others. Demonstrates comprehensive expert understanding of concepts and processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Applies the competency in considerable difficult situations. Generally requires little or no guidance. Demonstrates broad understanding of concepts and processes	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations. Requires occasional guidance. Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations. Requires frequent guidance. Demonstrates familiarity with concepts and processes.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Applies the competency in the simplest situations. Requires close and extensive guidance	

Interview Notes:

Appendix D – Final Individual Rating Form for Structured Interview Process

Candidate: _____ **Rater:**

Vacancy Announcement No: _____

Position Title/Series/Grade _____

Competencies (General and/or Technical)	Rating
#1	
#2	
#3	
#4	
#5	
#6	
Total Score	

NOTES:

SME's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E – Structured Interview Group Rating Form

Candidate: _____ Date of Interview: _____				
Vacancy Announcement No: _____				
Position Title/Series/Grade: _____				
Instructions: Transfer each interviewer’s competency ratings onto this form. A consensus discussion must occur with each panel member justifying his or her rating. Any changes to the individual ratings during consensus discussion should be initialed by the panel members. A final group consensus rating must be entered for each competency.				
Competency	Panelists’ Individual Ratings			Consensus Group Rating
	(1)	(2)	(3)	
ACTION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Qualified move forward for selection consideration • Qualified move forward for selection consideration if candidate is non-competitive • Not Qualified 				
COMMENTS:				
Name of Panel Chairperson #1 :				
Name of Panel Member #2:				
Name of Panel Member #3:				

Appendix F – Structured Interview Individual Rating Form

Example #1 - Structured Interview Individual Rating Form

Candidate: _____ Rater: _____

Position Title/Series/Grade: Wildlife Refuge Specialist, GS-485-11

Vacancy Announcement ID: _____

<p>Competency: Natural Resource Management</p> <p>Definition: Applies rules, regulations, and policies to plan and execute activities and actions at the field level for a variety of natural resource management priorities.</p>		
<p>Question: Give an example of how you have applied your technical knowledge in a practical way? Probing Question: Tell me/us about the most recent project you work on. What were your responsibilities?</p>		
Proficiency Level (choose only one)	Proficiency Definition	Question-Specific Behavioral Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<p>Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. Serve as a key resource and advises others. Demonstrates comprehensive expert understanding of concepts and processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures actions comply with the ES Act, NEPA and other natural resource policies and guidelines for management of threatened or endangered species and natural resources; • Advises and delivers wildlife habitat management activities. • Assist with developing and implementing natural resource management plan(s). • Evaluate management practices, activities, and operational procedures to ensure consistency and accordance with land management policies.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<p>Applies the competency in considerable difficult situations. Generally requires little or no guidance. Demonstrates broad understanding of concepts and processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures actions comply with the ES Act, NEPA and other natural resource policies and guidelines for management of threatened or endangered species and natural resources. • Delivers wildlife habitat management activities. • Advise on and assist with implementing natural

		<p>resource management plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with evaluating management practices, activities, and operational procedures to ensure consistency and accordance with land management policies.
□ 3	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations. Requires occasional guidance. Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interprets and applies natural resource policies and guidelines, ES Act and NEPA for management of threatened or endangered species. Assist with delivery of wildlife habitat management activities. Assist with implementing natural resource management plans.
□ 2	<p>Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations. Requires frequent guidance. Demonstrates familiarity with concepts and processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with management of threatened or endangered species according to natural resource policies, guidelines, ES Act, and NEPA. Performs day-to-day wildlife habitat management activities for major and critical programs. Follows new or revised guidelines and policies for assigned natural resources functions.
□ 1	<p>Applies the competency in the simplest situations. Requires close and extensive guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform day-to-day duties that supports management of threatened or endangered species Performs day-to-day wildlife habitat management activities for a major program. Perform day-to-day duties that support a natural resource function.

Interview Notes:

Example #2 - Structured Interview Individual Rating Form

Candidate: _____ **Rater:** _____

Position Title/Series/Grade: Wildlife Refuge Specialist, GS-485-11

Vacancy Announcement ID: _____

<p>Competency: Interpersonal Skills Definition: Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences</p>		
<p>Question: Lead Question: Describe a situation in which you dealt with individuals who were difficult, hostile, or distressed. Who was involved? What specific actions did you take? What was the outcome?</p>		
Proficiency Level (choose only one)	Definition	Question-Specific Behavioral Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<p>The candidate can apply the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. The candidate has served as a key resource and advised others.</p>	<p>Presents shortcomings of public land use for recreation in a tactful manner to irate individuals at a public meeting Inform the public of natural resource issues and the benefits of controversial policy changes. Diffuses an emotionally charged meeting with external stakeholders by expressing empathy for their concerns.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<p>The candidate can apply the competency in considerably difficult situations. The candidate requires no guidance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates an open forum to discuss management of natural resources. • Maintains contact with stakeholder groups when implementing new natural resources priorities. • Builds on the ideas of others to foster cooperation and collaboration on controversial issues. • Identifies and emphasizes common goals to promote natural resources management.
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<p>The candidate can apply the competency in difficult situations. The candidate may require occasional guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restores a working relationship between angry co-workers who have opposing views. • Acts courteous and tactful when confronted by an internal or external customer who is

		<p>frustrated by agency policy or priority decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes cooperative working relationships with co-workers to promote cooperation among staff members.
□ 2	The candidate can apply the competency in somewhat difficult situations. The candidate will require frequent guidance.	<p>Offers to assist employees in resolving technical problems with performing their day-to-day duties</p> <p>Works with others on a cross-functional team to improve coordination of activities.</p> <p>Works with others to minimize disruptions to an employee working under tight deadlines</p> <p>.</p>
□ 1	The candidate can apply the competency in the simplest situations. The candidate requires close and extensive guidance	<p>Responds to general inquiries from internal and external customers within the agency</p> <p>Works with others in the office to responds to customers inquiries.</p>

Interview Notes:

Example #3 - Structured Interview Individual Rating Form

Candidate: _____ **Rater:** _____

Position Title/Series/Grade: Wildlife Refuge Specialist, GS-485-11

Vacancy Announcement ID: _____

<p>Competency: Problem Solving Definition: Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives, and to make recommendations</p>		
<p>Question: Lead Question: Describe a situation where you had to solve a problem. What did you do? What was the result? What might you have done differently?</p>		
Proficiency Rating (choose only one)	Definition	Question-Specific Behavioral Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	The candidate can apply the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. The candidate has served as a key resource and advised others.	Analyzes and solves complex problems with implementation and communicating controversial agency priorities to stakeholders. Resolves logistical problems associated with delivering wildlife habitat management at the field station. Resolves issues with managing multiple competing priorities of major programs operations. Integrates a variety of strategic management plans to address natural resource issues.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	The candidate can apply the competency in considerably difficult situations. The candidate requires no guidance.	Resolves conflicting issues with management’s natural resource plans. Resolves deficiencies in land management policies that result in inconsistent practices and operational procedures. Resolves internal and external customers concerns about inconsistent management practices by recommending updates to agency policies or operational procedures.
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	The candidate can apply the competency in difficult situations. The candidate may require occasional guidance	Resolves natural resources issues by researching agency policy, other sources of information or federal regulations. Analyze management’s plan for critical program operation such as prescribed burn, invasive control

		Assess wildlife habitat conditions and make recommendations to resolve problems/issues. Resolve issues with planning and communicating public land for recreational use.
□ 2	The candidate can apply the competency in somewhat difficult situations. The candidate will require frequent guidance.	Research agency policies and federal regulations to educate the public about illegal activity on public land. Determines the appropriate procedure(s) for handling illegal activity on public land. Recommends options for effectively communicating to the public and stakeholders use of public land for recreation purposes.
□ 1	The candidate can apply the competency in the simplest situations. The candidate requires close and extensive guidance	Corrects simple problems occurring with performing day-to-day natural resource management. Identifies missing data, files, and problems with annual work plans.

Interview Notes: