



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

August 15, 2022

PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 22-04

SUBJECT: Requirements for Assessment Practices During the Selection Process

1. Purpose. This Personnel Bulletin (PB) provides policy on the use of assessment tools to measure job-related competencies during the assessment and selection process. This PB supersedes the provisions of 370 DM 337.1.1 and PB 20-21.

2. Scope. This policy applies Department-wide in the Department of the Interior (DOI). This policy will assist DOI with asserting hiring best practices and complying with Executive Order (EO) 13932: *Modernizing and Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates*.

3. Authorities. 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 300, Employment (General); 5 CFR Part 332, Recruitment and Selection Through Competitive Examination; 29 CFR Part 1607, Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures; 5 United States Code (USC) Part 1104, Delegation of Authority for Personnel Management; 5 USC Part 2301, Merit System Principles; 5 USC Part 3301, Civil Service; Generally; 5 USC Part 3318, Competitive Service; Selection from Certificates; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); Executive Order (EO) 13932 on Modernizing and Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates; 2010 Presidential Memorandum – Improving the Federal Hiring Process; OPM 2022 Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies; Delegated Examination Operations Handbook.

4. Background. 5 CFR Part 300 establishes that each employment practice of the Federal Government shall be based, in part, on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the job. It also states that there shall be a relationship between performance in the position to be filled and the employment practice used. EO 13932 directs merit-based reforms to ensure that the individuals most capable of performing the roles and responsibilities required of a specific position are those hired for the position. Specifically, EO 13932 requires that:

- Position descriptions and job announcements should be based on the specific skills and competencies required to perform those jobs
- Agencies are required to assess candidates in a manner that does not rely solely on educational attainment or self-evaluations to determine their eligibility for positions
- Agencies are required to continually evaluate the effectiveness of different assessment strategies to promote the quality and integrity of their hiring process

For purposes of this policy, “self-report assessment” refers to any hiring assessment tool that relies solely on applicant self-evaluations and does not utilize any other methodology for measuring job-related competencies. Please refer to the *DOI Assessment Practices Guide* and resources on the Department’s assessment and selection page for additional information and examples of “self-report” and “non-self-report” assessment tools.

5. Policy.

- (a) All hiring actions for permanent, General Schedule (GS) positions in the competitive service must be compliant with EO 13932, Modernizing and Reforming the Assessment and Hiring of Federal Job Candidates. When hiring for permanent GS positions in the competitive service, a non-self-report assessment must be used. Hiring actions that do not require competitive rating and ranking of candidates (e.g., when using a direct hire authority), vacancies filled by excepted service hiring authorities (e.g., Pathways, Schedule A), time-limited positions (e.g., temporary or term appointments), and positions in the Federal Wage Grade (WG) System are excepted from the assessment requirements in EO 13932.
- (b) In alignment with EO 13932, DOI Servicing Human Resources Offices (SHROs) must implement the following procedures:
 1. Any assessment tool (a test or procedure used to measure an individual’s employment or job-related competencies) used for selection purposes must be reliable, valid, and meet the criteria established in the [5 CFR Part 300](#) and outlined in [5 USC Part 2301](#).
 2. The assessment process or assessment tools used for hiring must be based on the results of a job analysis.
 3. Each Bureau/Office must have a well-developed assessment strategic plan. The plan shall be reviewed and updated at least annually. Plans should include/address:
 - Human Resources (HR) strategy parallels, supports, and facilitates the business strategies of the organization (bureau/office). Assessment strategic plans should align with the organization’s strategic plan, mission, vision, and principles and the HR strategic plan. The assessment strategy should further support agency mission and hiring goals.
 - Assessment strategic plans are considered operational strategic plans and should support the overall HR strategic plan. The plans include topics such as: planned programs, required resources, organizational strategies, and plans for

new business/acquisitions. Additionally, budgetary and performance information, implementation of results, contingency planning, and tracking of results should be covered. Lastly, the assessment plans should support topics in the HR strategic plan, such as forecasting requirements and projected organizational changes.

- Assessment practices must be included in your annual “self-audit” or “self-evaluation” of your delegated examining operations. Assessment practices must also be included in any regular evaluations of merit staffing policy and procedures. As part of the annual self-audits, include results from your assessment tracking in alignment with your assessment strategic plans. Additionally, a gap analysis should occur to evaluate any discrepancies between the current performance state and the desired performance state. The gap analysis should include a root cause analysis and recommendations to address the gaps.
4. Utilize a valid EO 13932-compliant assessment or suite of assessment tools for all permanent, GS positions in the competitive service. Self-report assessment tools may be used as long as these tools are paired with one or more non-self-report assessment tools.
 5. SHROs have the option to include or exclude non-competitive candidates from assessment requirements as non-competitive candidates are not included in the requirements of EO 13932. For example, a SHRO could require *all* candidates to complete the same assessment process, including non-competitive candidates; or a SHRO could require candidates with non-competitive eligibility to be exempt from the assessment process. Please refer to any bureau policy or procedures for additional guidance on the handling of non-competitive candidates.

(c) **Procuring an Assessment Tool.** DOI’s assessment guide includes information and a checklist for procuring an assessment tool. In addition to following the criteria established in the Assessment Guide’s *Selecting an Assessment Vendor Checklist*, the Department’s Office of Human Capital (OHC) must be involved in the selection and procurement process. This requirement is waived if the bureau or office has one or more personnel psychologists on staff with experience in test development, measurement, or psychometrics that is/are involved in the procurement process.

(d) **Self-Report Verification.** Reasonable steps may be taken to ensure the integrity of any self-report assessment tools. In the event that an applicant’s response on a self-report questionnaire (i.e., occupational questionnaire) cannot be verified elsewhere within their application materials (e.g., resume, cover letter, SF-50), their score on that item may be adjusted to the response level supported by their application materials. Score adjustments

may only take place if all applicants have been notified in advance about the self-report verification policy. This verification policy must be listed on the job opportunity announcement or in the instructions section of the questionnaire. Bureaus and offices must be consistent in their self-report verification process and ensure score adjustments are applied uniformly to all applicants.

(e)**Tracking Results.** Each Bureau/office will track and evaluate their assessment strategies and practices to verify that the requirements for EO 13932, Section 3(c) are met. OHC will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of assessment and selection processes and strategies utilized across the Department to verify the requirements of Section 5(a) of this PB are met. This meets the requirement for EO 13932, Section 3(c).

6. Additional Guidance. For additional guidance on the use of assessment tools in the selection process, please reference the Department's Assessment Practices Guide and additional resources located at <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/hr/assessment>.

7. Contact. Bureau human resources offices may contact the OHC Strategic Talent Management division at doi_office_of_human_resources@ios.doi.gov for questions or additional information on this policy.

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