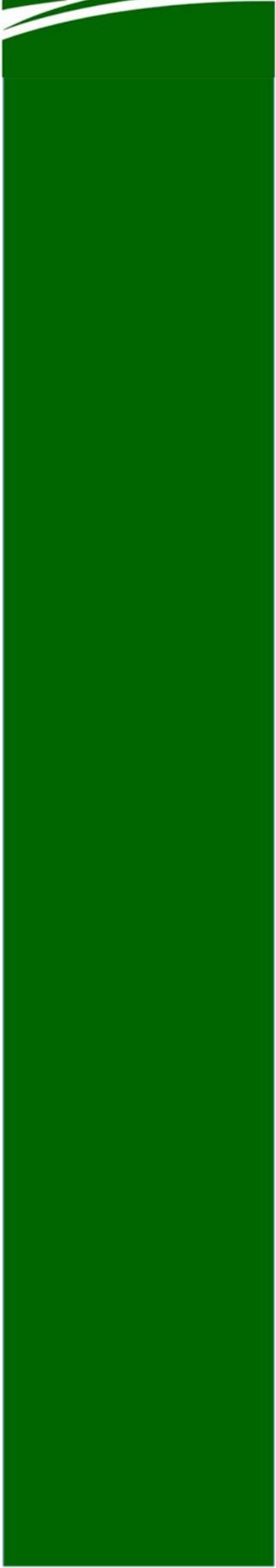


USDA



**USDA MRP HRD
Human Resources Operations**

**Hiring Manager
Handbook**

Marketing and Regulatory Programs

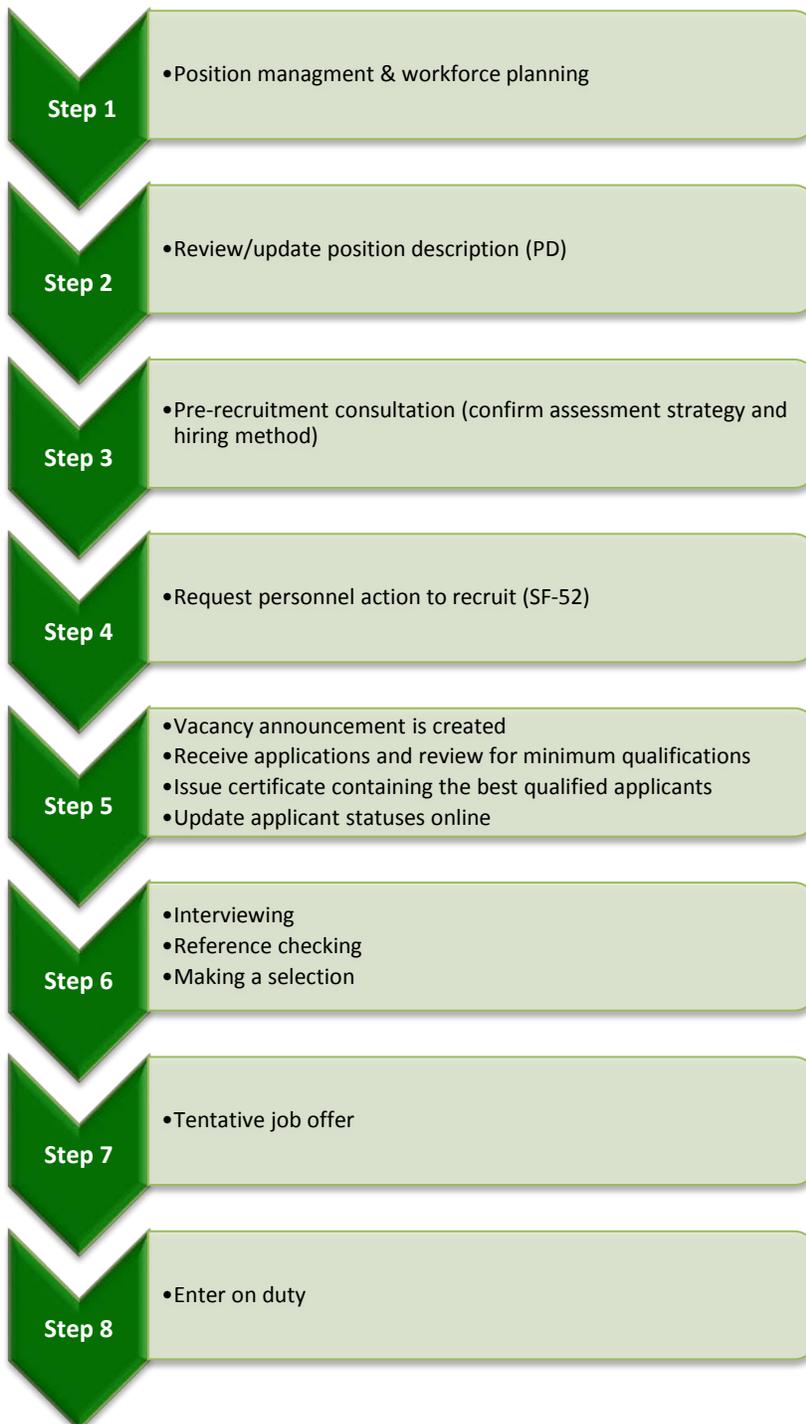
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Overview of Hiring Process

This guide is intended to help Marketing and Regulatory Program (MRP) supervisors, managers and selecting officials understand the MRP hiring process and the important role selecting officials have in every phase. The information below explains each step of the hiring process after the hiring manager has identified a need to fill a vacant position.

Hiring Model Overview:

The chart below provides an overview of the main steps in the hiring process that are detailed more thoroughly in this guide.



STEP 1 – Position Management/Workforce Planning

Position management and workforce planning are essential for an effective, efficient hiring process, which will result in hiring the right person for the right job in a timely manner. Once you determine there is a need to fill a position, whether it is new or existing, it is incumbent upon you to contact your Staffing Specialist to discuss the position itself, recruitment strategies, and any current or potential issues that could impact the hiring process.

HR service provider list: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/contact_us/hrd/hrd

When you have a recently vacated, soon-to be vacated position, or a newly established position to fill, you must:

- Conduct workforce planning:
https://my.aphis.usda.gov/myportal/myaphis/employeeresources/human-resources/staffing_recruitment/workforce_planning
- Obtain applicable hiring approval required within your program;
- Determine how long your position will be needed (see below for short-term staffing options); and
- Decide on which recruitment option(s) to pursue.

Short Term Staffing Options

Temporary Appointments (1 year or less)

You may use temporary appointments in the competitive service to fill a short-term position that you expect to last 1 year or less. The appointment may be extended up to a maximum of one additional year (24 months of total service). You must fill appointments competitively through delegated examining procedures (5 CFR 316, subpart D).

Term Appointments (more than 1 year, up to a total of 4 years)

You may use this authority when the need for the employee's services is not permanent, including, but not limited to: project work; extraordinary workload; scheduled abolishment, reorganization, or contracting out of the function; uncertainty of future funding; or the need to maintain permanent positions for placement of employees who would otherwise be displaced from other parts of the organization. To recruit for term appointments, you will usually use the case examining process, but you also have some noncompetitive authorities listed below under “Alternative Staffing Options.” (5 CFR part 316, subpart C)

Temporary Promotions

You can make noncompetitive temporary promotions for up to 120 days. Note that prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive temporary promotions or noncompetitive details to higher graded positions counts toward the 120-day limit. The candidate must still meet time-in-grade and qualification requirements. Temporary promotions lasting more than 120 days (up to a maximum of 5 years) must be announced through merit promotion procedures; the announcement can include a provision that the action can be made permanent without further competition. (5 CFR part 335.102(f) and 335.103(c)(1)(i))

Details

Employees may be detailed to positions at the same or lower grade level or unclassified duties in increments of 120 days or less and may be extended. Details to higher graded positions or to a position with promotion potential are limited to 120 days without competition (prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive temporary promotions or noncompetitive details to higher graded positions counts toward the 120 day limit). (5 CFR part 335.103(c)(1)(ii))

[HR Fact Sheet: Detail Assignments and Requirements for Reimbursement](#)

Experts or Consultants

You may use this excepted service appointment to hire experts and consultants to perform expert or consultant work that is temporary (not to exceed one year) or intermittent. (This differs from employing experts and consultants through procurement contracts, which are covered by regulations issued by the General Services Administration.) An expert is someone who is specifically qualified by education and experience to perform difficult and challenging tasks in a particular field beyond the usual range of achievement. A consultant is someone who can provide valuable and pertinent advice generally drawn from a high degree of broad administrative, professional, or technical knowledge or experience. (5 U.S.C. 3109; 5 CFR 304)

Commercial Temporary

You may use this option for brief periods (120 days, with extension of additional 120 days) for short-term situations when regular recruitment and hiring procedures are impractical, and the commercial service is purchased by whom through the Federal procurement system. (5 CFR part 300, subpart E)

Critical Hiring Need

An agency with a critical hiring need may employ an individual under this excepted service authority in any series/grade level for 30 calendar days with one 30-day extension. You cannot employ the same person under this authority for more than 60 days in a 12- month period. You cannot use these appointments to extend the service limits of any other authority. (5 CFR 213.3102(i)(2))

Excepted Service Authorities

These authorities exist to meet specific needs of MRP programs outside of the competitive examining process. Specific authorities and their requirements are listed below.

Schedule A, 213.3113 (a)(1)

- o Cooperatively funded field positions, used primarily by APHIS, WS
- o May also be used to make term-equivalent and indefinite appointments

Schedule A, 213.3113 (a)(5)-APHIS

- o Temporary, intermittent, or seasonal field positions
- o Limited to GS-7 and WG-10 sub professional occupations (excluding clerical jobs)
- o Employment is limited to either 1,039 hours or 180 days in a service year
- o Additional Training hours may be available for 1,039 hours appointments

Schedule A, 213.3113 (f)(1)-AMS

- o GS-1980, GS-1981 positions at GS-9 and below in the tobacco, dairy, and poultry commodities
- o Meat Acceptance Specialists at GS-11 and below
- o Clerks, OA Clerks, and Computer Clerks at GS-5 and below o Laborers under the Wage System
- o Employment is limited to either 1,280 hours or 180 days in a service year o May also be used to make term-equivalent or indefinite appointments

Schedule A, 213.3113 (f)(2)-AMS

- o GS-1980 and GS-1981 at GS-11 and below in the cotton, raisin, peanut, and processed and fresh fruit and vegetable commodities
- o Clerks, OA Clerks, and Computer Clerks at GS-5 and below in support of those commodities
- o HVI Operators and Leaders at WG/WL-2 and below
- o Instrument Mechanics/Workers/Helpers at WG-10 and below, and Laborers
- o Employment is limited to 180 days in a service year and up to 240 days in a service year due to unforeseen conditions (approval required)
- o May also be used to make term-equivalent or indefinite appointments
- o Cotton Graders may be employed as trainees for the first appointment for 6 months of training without regard to the service year limitation

Schedule A, 213.3113 (m)(1)-GIPSA

- o Part-time, seasonal, or intermittent positions
- o 150 Agricultural Commodity Aids-GS-2 through 4
- o 100 Agricultural Commodity Technicians-GS-4 through 7

Recruitment Methods

Competitive Recruitment Options – you may use only one option unless your Program authorizes a waiver. (*see Hiring Transformation Guidance at the end of Step 1*)

Case Examination

Appointment Summary:

Case examination (also known as Delegated Examining (DE)) is an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) delegation of hiring authority that enables recruitment from outside of the Federal workforce. The case examining process differs from the merit promotion hiring process; separate regulations apply to each.

Eligibility Requirements:

All U.S. Citizens may apply under Case Exam

Types of Appointments: Career/Career

Conditional Temporary

Term

Case examination announcements are subject to Category Rating policies and procedures.

What is Category Rating?

- A ranking and selection procedure used to assess applicants for positions filled through the case examining process
- A cornerstone of OPM's Hiring Reform Initiative
- Mandatory under the Presidential Memorandum issued on May 11, 2010

What is the Purpose of Category Rating?

To increase the number of eligible candidates from which a selecting official can choose while preserving veterans' preference rights.

For more information on Category Rating (e.g., referral of candidates, merging certificates), please visit: [Category Rating Process and FAQ](#)

How is veterans' preference applied on DE announcements and certificates? [Category Rating - Application of Veterans' Preference](#)

Merit Promotion

Appointment Summary:

Merit Promotion announcements are competitive announcements that target Federal employees with competitive status; reinstatement-eligible individuals, and individuals who may apply under special hiring authorities.

For complete information on merit promotion requirements, see: [USDA Merit Promotion Plan](#)

Eligibility Requirements: The following individuals may apply under merit promotion announcements:

- Status candidates (within the Area of Consideration (AOC), if applicable)
 - o The Hiring Manager may limit the AOC to specific programs, agencies, and/or a geographic location
 - o Non-competitive candidates and reinstatement eligibles are exempt from the AOC
- Reinstatement eligibles
- Candidates who qualify under special hiring authorities such as Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA), Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA), and disability appointments

The candidate must also meet the qualification requirements for the position being filled. Only "best qualified" candidates are referred on a certificate under merit promotion. There is no category rating, or veterans' preference in merit promotion.

Types of Appointments:

Career/career conditional

Excepted appointments (special hiring authorities)

Temporary promotions (for career/career conditional employees)

Veterans Employment Opportunity Act of 1998, as amended (VEOA) Veterans Employment Opportunity Act of 1998, as amended (VEOA) is a competitive service appointing authority that can only be used when filling permanent, competitive service positions.

To be eligible for a VEOA appointment, a candidate's latest discharge must be issued under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge), AND the candidate must be either:

- a preference eligible (defined in title 5 U.S.C. 2108(3)), OR
- a veteran who substantially completed 3 or more years of active service.

Pathways Internship Program

The internship program is for current students enrolled at least half-time. The program provides students in high schools, colleges, trade schools and other qualifying educational institutions with paid opportunities to work in agencies and explore Federal careers while completing their education.

Recent Graduates Program

The recent graduates program provides developmental experiences in the Federal Government. It is intended to promote possible careers in the civil service to individuals who, within the previous two years, graduated from qualifying educational institutions with an associates, bachelors, masters, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate from qualifying educational institutions. To be eligible, applicants must apply within the previous two years of degree or certificate completion except for veterans precluded from doing so due to their military service obligation, who will have up to six years after degree or certificate completion to apply.

Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program

For more than three decades, the PMF Program has been the Federal Government's premier leadership development program for advanced degree (e.g., masters or professional degree) candidates. Executive Order 13562 expands the eligibility window for applicants, making it more "student friendly" by aligning it with academic calendars and allowing those who have received a qualifying advanced degree within the preceding two years to participate. It also directs OPM to set eligibility requirements and minimum qualification standards, and to make the PMF experience more robust and substantive for participants.

Noncompetitive Recruitment – can be considered as an alternative or in conjunction with a competitive announcement.

Veterans Noncompetitive Hiring and Employment Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA)

Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA) is an excepted authority that allows agencies, to

appoint eligible veterans without competition. The candidate must be either:

- in receipt of a campaign badge for service during a war or in a campaign or expedition; OR
- a disabled veteran, OR
- in receipt of an Armed forces Service Medal for participation in a military operation, OR
- a recently separated veteran (within the last 3 years), AND
- separated under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge).

30% or More Disabled Veteran

The 30% or More Disabled Veteran authority allows any veteran with a 30% or more service-connected disability to be non-competitively appointed.

A candidate must be either:

- retired from active military service with a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more; OR
- have a rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs showing a compensable service-connected disability of 30% or more, AND
- separated under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge).

Schedule A Appointing Authority for People with Disabilities

The Schedule A authority for people with disabilities, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), is an excepted authority that agencies can use to appoint individuals who have a severe physical, psychological, or intellectual disability. To be eligible the candidate must:

Show proof of disability. Documentation may be from any licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified by a State, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. Territory to practice medicine), a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (i.e., State or private), or any Federal or State agency, or agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits.

For more information on competitive and noncompetitive hiring, visit the following:

HR Fact Sheet: Available Recruitment and Hiring Options:

https://my.aphis.usda.gov/wcm/myconnect/2130b2d8-214f-462a-b97d-356d616eb62c/fact_sheet.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=lbc7v&CVID=lbc7v&CVID=lbc7v

Disability Employment - Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC) Directory:

<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/selective-placement-program-coordinator-directory/>

Disability Employment - OPM Shared List of People with Disabilities (Bender List) and Reasonable Accommodations: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/>

HR Fact Sheet: Veterans Hiring Options: [Veterans Hiring Options](#)

USDA Veterans Employment Program Manager - Monshi Ramdass: <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/AgencyDirectory/Monshi-Ramdass.aspx>

Hiring Transformation Guidance: <https://my.aphis.usda.gov/wcm/myconnect/a53bb97f-2130-4f50-ac2e-c3572fd5698f/HR+Fact+Sheet+-+Transforming+Hiring+in+USDA+.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

For additional information or questions regarding noncompetitive hiring options, please contact your HR service provider: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/contact_us/hrd/hrd

STEP 2 - Review and Update Position Description (PD)

A current position description (PD) is essential for an accurate job announcement. Often, this isn't addressed at the start of the hiring process and causes delays. If you have a PD five years or older, we would recommend reviewing the PD and working with your Classification Specialist to make any necessary updates. This is especially true if there has been a change of supervisor in the work unit and/ or a reorganization within the program. The updates can range from minor – cosmetic organizational language – to major – substantive additions and/or subtractions in the job duties. If you are unsure if your PDs are current, need help updating them or simply want copies for your files, contact your servicing classification specialist.

For more information on classification, please visit the following link: [Classification Guide](#)

Your servicing classification specialist can help answer your questions.
<https://my.aphis.usda.gov/myportal/myaphis/employeeresources/human-resources/classification/>

STEP 3 – Pre-Recruitment Consultation

To begin the hiring process, you must submit a recruitment package to the HR Specialist.

Complete Recruitment Package

Steps in Hiring Process	Required Document	What is this Document?	Why is this Document Step Needed?	Owner
1. Position Description (PD) and Coversheet	AD-332	This document serves as the position description and coversheet for a position.	This document defines the duties, responsibilities, and tasks associated with the job. It serves as the official record upon which most personnel actions are based. This ensures that managers and employees are clear on what KSAs are required within that position to accomplish the organization/division goals. It also aids HRO in making appropriate determinations upon reviewing the applications.	HM/Classification Specialist
2. Vacancy Assessment Questions	Occupational Series Question Library(s)	Job Analysis that contains competencies related to the series and questions related to those competencies.	The question library serves as the assessment method to assign an automated score to each applicant based on his or her experience and skills related to the position.	HM/Staffing Specialist (Staffing Specialist provides the established library for the manager to select from or works with them to establish new questions)
3. Examples of Specialized Experience		Listing of 3-5 examples of specialized experience equivalent to the lower grade level.	This information provides applicants with a better understanding of the type of specialized experience needed at each grade level to qualify.	HM/Staffing Specialist
4. Relocation Addendum		Certification of whether or not relocation expenses are necessary to recruit a sufficient applicant pool.	This document asks the hiring manager whether or not relocation expenses are authorized by the program.	HM
5. Signed Request for Personnel Action (SF-52)	SF-52	The SF-52 is the official request for personnel action. It initiates the hiring process.	First and second line managers' approval on this document authorizes HRO to process the hiring action.	Hiring Manager (HM) <i>*Do not submit until requested by Staffing Specialist</i>

Job Analysis

The rating criteria used by staffing to determine which applicants will be referred for selection are based on an in-depth analysis of the job. The staffing specialist will work closely with the hiring manager or the SME to determine the major job duties and identify the duties that are most important. Analysis of the job entails a review of the position description, classification standard, performance plan, qualification standard, etc., to ensure the duties are fully understood.

Once the major duties have been identified through the job analysis, the staffing specialist will work with you and/or an identified SME to identify the KSAs candidates need to successfully perform those major duties. Candidates who do not have the outlined KSAs may not be qualified for the position.

Question Library

Your staffing specialist will provide you with already developed assessment questions to select from or will work with you to develop new assessment questions, as necessary. You will select 10-20 questions from the question library that assess or measure the competencies of the applicants to determine if they match those needed for the position you are hiring for.

The question library is fillable, allowing you to easily fill in the necessary information to the KSA Table (used for weighting your library and assigning points to the answer choices). The KSA Table asks you to provide a brief explanation of the duties that support using that particular KSA and then you list the level of importance (VH (very high), H (high), M (medium), or L (low)) and the percentage of time that competency is typically performed in the position (percentage of time across all KSAs being used must equal 100 percent). Higher levels of importance and percentage of time will receive higher point values and lower levels of importance and percentage of time will receive less points.

For specific instructions for filling out your question library. [Question Library Instructions](#)

HR service provider list: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/contact_us/hrd/hrd

STEP 4 – Request Recruit SF-52 Personnel Action

The Recruit SF-52 (Request for Personnel Action) is the official request for recruitment. Your staffing specialist will verify when he or she has received all required recruitment material and is ready to have you submit your Recruit SF-52. First and second line managers' approval on this 52 form authorizes and confirms the position is funded.

Submit SF-52s to the MRP Human Resources Operations office via the [Personnel Action Tracking System \(PATS\)](#), an electronic system specific to USDA, Marketing & Regulatory Programs. Typically, office administrative support personnel complete and submit SF-52 forms. Please contact your administrative support personnel if you have additional questions about the PAT system.

STEP 5 – Vacancy Announcement/Review of Applications/Certificate Issuance

Vacancy Announcement

Based on the materials you supplied, your staffing assistant will create a vacancy announcement and forward a courtesy copy. This is a courtesy copy, the vacancy announcement will be posted on the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) USAJOBS website: <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

If employees or applicants ask about the application process or the status of their application.

- Advise them to contact the HR representative listed on the vacancy announcement. Applicants are able to view current status information for an application by logging into their USAJOBS account.

Qualification Determination

Based on their responses to the experience, training, and other assessment questions included in the vacancy announcement, the automated hiring system will assign each applicant a preliminary rating score.

HR uses the OPM Operating Manual: Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions to determine the basic qualifications of each applicant. HRO reviews applications for basic education requirements and minimum qualifications (related experience and/or education substitution).

Qualification standards outline the necessary basic eligibility requirements for occupations and for each grade in the occupation. They specify the minimum quality level and amount of experience required and often allow education as a substitute for experience. Qualification requirements for basic eligibility may include, but are not limited to any or a combination of the following:

- General and/or specialized work experience
- High school education
- Vocational/technical training
- College or university education
- Specific major fields or courses of study
- Specific registrations, licensure, or certifications
- Other selective placement factors

HR uses the standards to evaluate internal and external candidates' qualifications for positions. Using the minimum qualification standards, we will determine those persons who are eligible for consideration because they meet the “basic” requirements for the occupation.

Preparing for your certificate

Once the announcement closes, we will usually issue a certificate within 15- 20 calendar days. Depending on the size of the applicant pool or current recruitment workload, more time may be necessary.

The hiring manager is responsible for preparing for the certificate:

- Prepare interview questions
- Identify the members of your interview panel

For more specific information on preparing for your certificate: [Interviewing, Reference Checking, and Selection: A Guide for Selecting Officials](#)

Once we provide you with the certificate, you have 15 days to make a selection. Additional extensions of the certificate may be available and must be discussed with your staffing assistant on a case-by-case basis. For information on who is your servicing staffing assistant: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/contact_us/hrd/hrd

STEP 6 – Interviewing/Reference Checking/Making a Selection

Reviewing Resumes

Once you have received your certificate you, or your delegated panel of subject matter experts, must thoroughly review all candidate applications and determine which candidates will be interviewed.

Here are some questions you may want to consider as you review the applications:

- What are the strengths/weaknesses of this candidate?
- What are the candidate's relevant skills and job experience?
- Is there evidence of the ability to communicate with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds in a variety of situations?
- Is there evidence of the ability to lead and accomplish work through others (for supervisory, managerial, or lead positions)?

For information on using eRecruit when accessing certificates, and viewing applications, see:

[eRecruit Accessing Certificates and Viewing Applications.](#)

For instructions on how to give panel members access to online applications, see:

[eRecruit Adding Users to Certificates Certificates](#)

Interviewing Applicants

As the hiring official, you will be the one who usually conducts the interview. However, you may designate another person or a panel with knowledge of the position to be filled to conduct the interview. We strongly recommend that you incorporate diverse panel members when using interview panels.

We strongly encourage interviews because they are an opportunity to gather additional information from the applicant and verify the skills and competencies listed in their application. An interview may provide you with more information for determining and justifying your selection decision. The interview can be especially useful as you evaluate such skills as oral communication and interpersonal skills that are not otherwise easily measured in writing.

All members of the interview panel should be at or above the full performance level of the position being filled and typically include subject matter experts with extensive knowledge of the position. Facilitators and/or EEO observers are not required, however, your program may have internal policies requiring the use of these individuals during your interview process.

Numbers of interviews Required

Case Examination (public announcement) certificates do not require any particular number be interviewed. However, veteran's preference applies and those applicants listed at the top of your certificate with an identified veteran's preference (CPS, CP, XP, TP, etc.) must be considered before you can consider any non-veteran candidates listed below them on the certificate. Therefore, you may want to consider only contacting/interviewing the veterans initially, since you would need to either select them or receive a valid declination before you may legally consider the non-veterans on your certificate.

Merit promotion (internal status candidates, reinstatement eligibles, and special hiring authorities) certificates are covered by the USDA Merit Promotion Plan (MPP) and are subject to certain interview requirements. Your certificates will be listed as either competitive or noncompetitive. If

you will be interviewing from a competitive Merit Promotion certificate, then the USDA MPP requires you to interview at least five candidates (or all those referred, if fewer than five) from that same certificate. Noncompetitive merit promotion certificates do not require a minimum number of interviews.

Interviewing Techniques

Interview questions should always elicit job-related information relative to the KSAs of the position for which the candidate is applying. You should prepare questions in advance to ensure that all candidates are treated in the same manner. Generally, ask the same questions of each candidate. However, you or the panel may ask follow-up questions to obtain additional or clarifying information in order to assess an individual's specific qualifications for the position. Allot the same amount of interview time for each applicant, with time allowed for the applicant to ask questions of the interviewer(s).

In all cases, it is a good idea to record notes to eliminate the need to recall key points from memory. It is also helpful to note the date, time, place, and length of the interview. Keep a record of the interview questions, any notes made regarding their responses, and the name of individual(s) who conducted the interview on file. This information is very critical in the event that a candidate files an Equal Employment Opportunity complaint.

You may ask all candidates to bring writing samples, such as reports, publications, or technical articles to the interview. Asking applicants to take a writing or other work sample test at the time of interview must be documented upfront in the vacancy announcement. You should work with your staffing specialist to ensure any work samples and simulations (e.g., writing test, proofreading test, presentation) follow OPM's assessment decision guidance and do not create disparate impact for any of your applicants.

Please see the following link for the complete guidance on work sample assessments:
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/reference-materials/assessmentdecisionguide.pdf>

For supplemental guidance see our [Interviewing, Reference Checking, and Selection: A Guide for Selecting Officials](#).

If you are unable to reach an applicant by telephone and you have made several attempts at various times during the day and have also been unable to reach them through email, then you can mail them a certified letter and declare the applicant a declination if they do not respond in 7 mailing days. For specific instructions on this process and a sample letter, please contact your staffing assistant or specialist.

Checking References

After reviewing the resume and conducting an interview, the interviewer should have a clear indication of the top applicants for further selection consideration. The next step is to check references. It is best to use prior supervisors over personal references since these individuals have knowledge of the candidate's work performance. Only contact the current supervisors if the candidate has given permission to do so (this should be indicated on the resume). It is also advisable to obtain more than one reference for each candidate.

Verify performance and other pertinent aspects of the candidate's employment. The questions should focus on the candidate's overall qualifications for the position and how the reference

assessed the candidate's fitness for the job. Be sure to ask follow-up questions or ask for additional information about something that is not clear.

It is advisable to verify the candidate's current employment including position(s) held and dates employed. The hiring official may also ask the reference about the following about the applicant:

- Work relationships
- Interpersonal skills
- Quality of work product
- Strengths and weaknesses

You may also want to ask:

- If the applicant should be recommend for the position
- If the applicant would be rehired

It is a good idea to keep documentation of these questions and notes for future reference.

Note that reference checks are not only a good idea, they may be required. The USDA Merit Promotion Plan requires selecting officials to complete reference checks prior to making a final selection from a merit promotion certificate. For case examination certificates, we also highly recommended (but do not require) reference checks.

As a selecting official, you should prepare a reference check form in advance and write notes on it while completing the reference checks. This way you ensure that you are asking each reference the same questions and that you have a consistent record of the answers. We recommend that you keep a copy of each form in your records in case you need to provide information to investigators or information requests inquiring about the selection process.

Extending Certificates and Making a Selection

Submitting a certificate extension request in eRecruit:

If the extension date will still allow meeting the 80 day time-to-hire goal, see:

[eRecruit Extending Certificates](#)

If you have already passed the previously established expiration date and can no longer access your certificates in eRecruit, you must send an email to your staffing service provider requesting the extension. If the extension would put you beyond the 80 day time-to-hire goal, then you must submit a request for extension through your Deputy Administrator. The written request and approval from your DA should then be submitted to your staffing specialist for review and further action.

Submitting a tentative selection

Email your selection to your staffing assistant and return the certificate in eRecruit. The tentative selection email should include the name of the selectee, grade level, and announcement/certificate number from which you are selecting the candidate. Also, before we will verify a selection is legal and allow a tentative offer, USDA Office of Human Resource Management requires you to certify completion of the Office of Personnel Management's Hiring Survey in eRecruit for the position being filled. This is a brief survey and should be completed by you, the hiring manager.

For specific instructions on returning your certificate and certifying your completion of the OPM survey, see: [eRecruit Returning a Certificate](#)

Please note that 5 CFR 330.502 restricts movement of employees (e.g., promotion, transfer, reinstatement, reassignment, or detail to a different position or different geographical area) within the first 90 days of competitive appointment to protect competitive principles. This applies to competitive hiring under Case Examination/Delegated Examining. We strongly recommend using the same 90 day window for appointments made through Merit Promotion to ensure there is no perceived or actual adverse impact on any other candidates.

STEP 7 – Tentative Job Offer

Please contact your servicing Staffing Specialist in HRO with the name of your selectee. We will review your selection and respond to you verifying your selection is legal.

After we verify your selection, we will send an email to you verifying the grade for the selectee and identifying the additional paperwork required before an effective date can be finalized. After you receive this email, please contact the selectee to make a tentative job offer.

What if a candidate declines a tentative offer?

[Verbal Declination Record Form](#)

Recruitment Incentives

If it becomes necessary for you to offer a recruitment incentive to attract best qualified applicants or to have your tentative offer accepted, then you will want to consider the following available incentives:

Superior Qualifications and Special Needs Pay Setting Authority

The superior qualifications appointment (SQA) authority allows you to appoint a new hire above the minimum rate (step) and is designed to help agencies compete with the private sector to attract applicants with superior or unique qualifications. Although this is a beneficial and effective authority, SQA is not simply intended to match a candidate's existing rate of pay (current salary or competing job offer); it is a tool to help USDA appoint the best talent. Agencies have a fiscal responsibility to offer the lowest salary necessary to attract a candidate.

- Eligibility – this must be the first federal appointment for a prospective employee, or he/she must be returning from a break in federal service of at least 90 consecutive calendar days;
- SQA should only be considered when the candidate otherwise might decline the position. The candidate must first decline a valid job offer at the step 1 of the grade or pay band. The declination of the original job offer at the step 1 must be documented in the file;
- The written request for SQA must be approved prior to the applicant entering on duty; and
- SQA appointments are for journeyman level (e.g., career ladder position is a GS-9-12 with GS-12 as the journeyman/Full Performance Level) or senior level positions (e.g., experts, chiefs, etc. usually GS-13-15). Director, OHRM, must approve any request for exceptions.

Departmental Regulation – [Superior Qualifications and Special Needs Pay Setting Authority](#)

Recruitment Incentive A recruitment incentive, of up to 25 percent, may be paid to a newly appointed employee (or group of employees) when a written determination has been made that the position is likely to be difficult to fill with a high quality candidate without the use of the incentive. It may be paid to a candidate who:

- Has received a written job offer and
- Has signed a written service agreement.

For the purposes of paying a recruitment incentive, newly appointed means:

- The first appointment to the Federal service (regardless of tenure),
- An appointment of a former employee following a break in service of at least 90 days (5 CFR 575.102), or
- An appointment as an employee of the Federal government when the employee's Federal service during the 90-day period immediately preceding the appointment was limited to one or more of the following:
 - A time-limited or non-permanent appointment in the competitive or excepted service;
 - A non-permanent appointment (excluding schedule C's under 5 CFR 213) in the competitive or excepted service;
 - Employment with the District of Columbia (DC) government if the first appointment by the DC government was on or after October 1, 1987;
 - An appointment as an expert or consultant under 5 USC 3109 and 5 CFR 304;
 - Employment under a provisional appointment designated under 5 CFR 316.403; or

The employee must sign a service agreement agreeing to work for the agency for a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of 4 years. If you offer an incentive for a temporary position, the appointment must be for at least 6 months (Departmental Manual [DM] 4050 - 575- 001 dtd 6/21/10).

For specific information on developing your written justification and request for a recruitment incentive, please visit the HR Desk Guide: [HRDG 4500 - Recruitment and Retention Incentives](#)

Relocation Incentive

A relocation incentive, of up to 25 percent of annual basic pay, may be paid when a written determination has been made that, in the absence of such an incentive, difficulty would be encountered in filling the position with a high quality employee. It may be paid to a current employee who must relocate to accept a position:

- In a different commuting or geographic area, or
- Whose duty station has changed permanently or temporarily to a different commuting area (Departmental Manual [DM] 4050 - 575 - 001 dtd 06-21-2010).

A position is considered to be in a different geographic area if the worksite of the new position is 50 or more miles from the worksite of the position held immediately before the move. If the worksite of the new position is less than 50 miles from the worksite of the position held immediately before the move but the employee must relocate (i.e. establish a new residence) to accept the position, a waiver may be granted by the Agency.

NOTE: When determining the percentage level of incentive (dollar amount), ensure that it complies with any Division, Program, Agency, and/or OPM limits. **ALL** paperwork must be completed and submitted to HRO for review/processing **PRIOR to** the employee entering on duty.

For specific information on developing your written justification and request for a relocation incentive, please visit the HR Desk Guide: [HRDG 4500 - Relocation Incentives](#)

Annual Leave Service Credit for Prior Employment

Employees receiving his or her first appointment (regardless of tenure) or an employee being reappointed (following a break in service of at least 90 calendar days after the last period of federal employment) may be given service credit towards determining the annual leave accrual rate for prior work experience.

Your Staffing Specialist will review the employee's prior work experience and determine what, if any, service is creditable for an increased annual leave category.

In order to grant the service credit, the skills and experience gained from the prior employment:

- Must be essential to the new position;
- Directly related to the duties of the position to which being appointed; and
- Must make a written determination that the use of this authority is necessary in order to achieve an important agency mission or performance goal.

This incentive must be requested and approved prior to the employee's enter on duty date. For more information on developing your written justification and request for an annual leave service credit, please visit the HR Desk Guide: [HRDG 4500 - Annual Leave Service Credit](#)

Repayment of Student Loans

Federal agencies are permitted to repay all or part of outstanding federally issued student loans as an incentive to recruit or retain highly qualified employees in difficult to fill positions. As the direct supervisor, you must determine, in writing, that without offering the loan repayment incentive, you will encounter difficulty in either filling the position with a highly qualified candidate (written determination must be made before the employee enters on duty in the position) or retaining a highly qualified employee.

To use this incentive consider:

- The difficulty experienced or expected in filling the position if this incentive is not offered, and
- The unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or the existence of a special need of the agency, or
- If the employee is likely to leave the Federal government,
- The extent to which the employee's departure would affect the agency, and
- If EEO goals will be met or improved by your determination.

For specific information on developing your written justification and request for the repayment of student loans, please visit the HR Desk Guide: [HRDG 4537 - Repayment of Student Loans](#)

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact your servicing staffing specialist. https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/contact_us/hrd/hrd

STEP 8 – Entry On Duty (EOD) or Onboarding

Onboarding is the process of integrating employees into their new work environment. It starts before their first day, goes beyond the orientation process and follows the employee through their first year of employment.

Effective employee onboarding serves three purposes. First, it ensures that the employee feels welcome, comfortable, prepared and supported. Second, effective onboarding increases the new employee's ability to be productive and successful, both immediately and over time. Finally, this employee success leads to satisfaction and retention, which allows the Agency to continue to fulfill its mission.

The supervisor's roles in this process is to welcome new employees, introduce them to the culture and values of the Agency, explain what is expected of them, and supervise their employment and experience. Supervisors play a vital role in making their transition and employment as smooth and successful as possible.

We have included a supervisory checklist (form AD-3020) in the attachments to this handbook. The checklist will help coach you through your role in the employee's first 90 days. It is your responsibility to ensure that you or a designee covers each of these items with your new employee. By attending to the items on the checklist, you will create a stronger bond with your employee and ensure a faster path to productivity and inclusion. We have also included a [supervisory guide](#) for your reference.

One the employee's first day, please ensure their participation in New Employee Orientation (NEO.) In addition to providing further employment information and instructions, the NEO facilitator and/or you as the supervisor will assist the employee in completing their 'First Day' forms. You can find the Facilitator Checklist, required forms and instructions at the following link: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/new_employee_orientation/facilitator_checklist/facilitator_checklist. Upon completion of the Day 1 forms, please ensure those forms are forwarded to the servicing processing associate in Human Resources Operations. To identify your service provider or for questions, please visit the following link: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/business-services/contact_us/hrd/hrd

Strategic Conversation with Hiring Officials

Topics to discuss during pre-recruitment consultation Organization's Mission and Goals

- Have there been, or will there be any changes to the organization's mission or goals which could impact recruitment (new skill sets needed?)
- What are the critical challenges facing the organization in the short-term and long-term?

Position and Role

- What is the position?
- What are the major responsibilities, duties, and tasks this person will perform?
- Approximately what portion of the person's time would be spent on each of these key duties?
- How does this position contribute to the mission of the organization?
- What is the professional development potential for this position? (career progression to which this position may lead?)

Skills, Competencies and Experience

- What skills and competencies are needed to be successful on the job?
- How do these skills rank in terms of critical importance for success in this position?
- What does a candidate need to know to be successful in this position?
 - What level of knowledge is required? (rank each area basic, intermediate, expert)
 - What questions might the hiring official ask to gauge a candidate's knowledge in these key areas?
- What kind of professional experience is required and preferred for the position?
- What degrees/certifications/clearances are required and preferred?
- Who are the SME(s) in the hiring official's organization who might be helpful in the job analysis, resume screening and interviewing processes?

Personal Characteristics

- What personal qualities would the hiring official like to see in an applicant?
 - Of the qualities elicited above, which are essential and which are desirable?

Other Requirements

- Are there specific requirements that candidates should know to evaluate this job, including: travel requirements, overtime, seasonal peaks, and so forth?

Recruitment Strategies

- Is the position difficult to recruit? If so, determine possible recruitment strategies.
- Was the hiring official satisfied with prior recruitment efforts? If not, why?
- Were there sufficient candidates in prior recruitment efforts? If not, why?
- Where would you find the best candidates?
- How can the diversity of the organization be improved and enhanced?
- For what other organizations might potential candidates currently work?
 - Where have good candidates been found in the past?
 - To what associations might good candidates belong?
 - Who are the contractors who have the desired talent?
- What flexibilities should be used in this hiring process?
 - Is there a recruitment bonus?
 - Are relocation expenses paid?
 - Is there student loan repayment?
 - Other issues?
- Are there special considerations or processes that must be considered in this hiring process?
 - Budget concerns
 - Special approvals
 - Other

Hiring Manager Checklist

- Validate position to be filled against workforce, succession and recruitment plan

- Develop new or update current position description
 - Consult with your Classification Specialist

- Develop or update job analysis and assessment tool
 - Focus on the key competencies, training, education, experience

- Develop recruitment strategy - Discuss with your Staffing Specialist:
 - Talent pool and recruitment activity
 - Recruitment method: Case Exam, Merit Promotion, Recruitment Alternatives (see Staffing Alternatives)
 - Choose assessment model
 - Timeframes (announcement duration)
 - Grade levels to recruit
 - Recruitment incentives

- Initiate the Request for Personnel Action (SF-52) through the Personnel Action Tracking System (PATS)

- Develop or review interview questions

- Review instructions for hiring managers, sent by Human Resources
 - Schedule and conduct interviews
 - Check references

- Complete the OPM Satisfaction Survey: <http://study.opm.gov/mss/>

- Notify Human Resources (Staffing) of your selection

Sample Interview Questions

When the candidate arrives for the interview, immediately meet and greet him or her, thank the candidate for coming, and chat informally for a few minutes (try to keep your topics limited to commuting, weather or traffic). You can build rapport by giving the candidate an idea of how the interview process will unfold.

As you begin the formal interview, provide the candidate with a brief overview of the job and the mission of the agency. Next, you can begin asking the candidate the questions you have prepared for the interview. You may want to begin the interview with a few warm-up questions to put the candidate at ease before working up to more substantial, behavioral questions. A few opening questions are:

- What interests you most about this position?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?

The following are sample questions only and should be modified as they apply to the particular requirements of the position. You should not limit yourself to these questions or to these categories of questions.

- **Attention to detail:** Describe a project or task that required your exacting attention to small points and issues in order to keep the project on track and produce a quality project. How did these matters come to your attention? How did you handle them?
- **Change management:** We often face many changes in the workplace. Describe a specific situation in which you feel you were especially effective in adapting to an unanticipated change.
- **Clerical skills:** Describe the type of routine office procedures that you have had to follow. What volume of paperwork have you been responsible for? What experience have you had in handling confidential records? How do you ensure the confidentiality and security of information and records maintained in the office?
- **Skill areas:** Please describe the skills, abilities and experience you have that qualify you for this position.
- **Customer service:** In this job you will be interacting with a variety of individuals both within and outside the agency. Occasionally, you will interact with individuals who are dissatisfied with the service they received. Describe a difficult customer situation you have encountered and how you solved it.
- **Decision-making:** Describe some examples of decisions or recommendations you are called upon to make in your current or past position? What has been a stubborn or recurring problem area you would like to solve in your current job? How would you solve it?
- **Interpersonal skills:** How would you describe your relationship with your most recent supervisor and coworkers? If I were to contact them today, what would they say about you?
- **Teamwork:** Provide me with an example of when you worked very effectively as a member of a team. What was the task? How many people were involved? What was your role?

After you have finished asking the candidate questions, allow the candidate time to ask questions of you. This is an excellent opportunity for you to elaborate on the agency, your work unit, and details of the specific job. You should be prepared to answer a variety of questions from the candidate.

Inform the candidate of your anticipated time frame for decision making.

Remember, always ask questions that are:

- a. Related to the job.
- b. Designed to build rapport with the candidate: "So, how do you like living in Baltimore?"

Avoid asking questions that are:

- a. A potential violation of the rights of a protected group: "What kinds of organizations do you belong to?" (The candidate's answer may lead to topics involving religious or ethnic background.)
- b. Never ask questions that are a clear violation of the rights of a protected group: "How old are you?"

For additional information: [Interviewing, Reference Checking, and Selection: A Guide for Selecting Officials](#)

STRUCTURED INTERVIEWING: INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWERS

CONDUCTING THE STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Step: Responsibility/Consideration

1 Welcome the Candidate and Introduce Each Panel Member

2 Briefly Describe the Job and the Agency/Organization

3 Explain the Interview Process

4 Ask the Candidate if She/He Has Any Questions

5 Begin the Formal Interview

Take Notes

	Notes Should:	Notes Should Not:
6	Be specific; include quotations and observations	Be evaluative statements about the candidate, his/her responses, or personality
	Summarize <i>actual</i> responses	Refer to demographic characteristics
	Be professional and non-judgmental	
	Support rating decisions	

Wrap-Up the Interview

After the candidate answers all of the questions, conclude the interview by:

- 7**
- Thanking the candidate
 - Asking the candidate to keep the details confidential
 - Explaining the next steps in the hiring process

Rate Each Candidate

Immediately following the interview, the interviewer should review his or her notes and then independently rate the candidate using a structured rating form. After all candidates have been rated, each interviewer should:

- 8**
- Review the ratings given to each candidate,
 - Ensure the total performance of each candidate has been fully considered,
 - Ensure ratings are tied to specific behavioral examples, and
 - Complete, sign and date each rating form.

If the interview was conducted by a panel (more than one interviewer), transfer each interviewer's ratings onto a Group Rating Form. The interviewers must have a consensus discussion to allow each panel member to justify his or her rating. Any changes to the individual ratings during consensus discussion must be initialed by the panel members. A final group consensus rating must be entered for each competency.

9 Document the Interview Process

Retention of Records

- 10**
- Include all signed forms and notes
 - The panel chairperson/hiring manager retains a copy of all documents in a secure place

INTERVIEWING “DO’S AND DON’TS”

DO:

- Be prepared and organized; review the job tasks and responsibilities.
- Review the competencies necessary to perform the tasks and responsibilities, including those required upon entry.
- Determine how many SME interviewers will participate on the interview panel (HR recommends 2-3 SMEs per panel).
- Consider diversity in panel participants.
- Follow the structured interview format, and treat all candidates equally.
- Take comprehensive notes; be specific, document quotations and observations.
- Be honest and realistic without emphasizing negative aspect of the job or facility.
- Keep the interview under control. If the interviewee becomes verbose or drifts off the subject, it is your job to get back on track.
- Note the kind of questions asked by the candidate. Do they express concern for opportunities for self-improvement and increased responsibilities or only pay and fringe benefits?
- Relax and enjoy the interview.

DON’T:

- Consider any non-performance related factors – be objective, know yourself and your biases.
- Focus so much on note taking that you are unable to observe nonverbal cues and/or responses or maintain the flow of the conversation.
- Allow ratings of performance in one competency to influence ratings for other competencies.
- Rate all competencies in the same rating scale; either at the middle scale by rating all competencies the same, at the high scale due to leniency, or at the low range by being too strict.
- Give a higher than deserved rating to candidates who appear similar to you.
- Make commitments you may regret or are not authorized to make.
- Hide the demands of the job; a good candidate will react favorably.
- Raise candidates’ hopes when they are not likely to be selected.
- Be aggressive, evasive, or talk too much.
- Rely entirely on first impressions.

Sample Reference Verification Questions

Basic Reference Check Sample Questions

Below are types of basic questions that may be asked. The phrasing of each question is just an example, but the idea is typical.

- What were the beginning and ending employment dates for this individual?
- What was this individual's beginning and ending salary?
- What positions did the individual hold?
- Did this individual earn promotions?
- What were the individual's most-recent job duties?
- Why did the individual leave your company?
- Is there any reason why your company would not rehire this individual?
- Would you recommend this individual for a position at another company? Why or why not?
- How did this individual's performance compare to other employees with similar job duties?
- In your opinion, what are the individual's strengths? Weaknesses?
- Did this individual get along well with management and peers?
- Was this individual a team player?
- Was this individual a motivated self-starter?
- Did any personal problems affect this individual's work performance?
- Do you think this individual will perform well as a [job title]?
- What kind of job is best suited for this individual's abilities?
- How would you describe the individual's overall performance?
- Is there anything of significance you'd like to add?

Additional Reference Check Sample Questions

Below are samples of the types of questions that reference checkers might ask for professionals, managers and executives, in addition to the basic questions above. As with the basic questions, the phrasing is just an example, but the gist is typical.

- How would you describe the individual's leadership, managerial or supervisory skills?
- Does the individual communicate well orally and in writing?
- How do you rate the individual's ability to plan short-term? Long-term?
- Did the individual make sound and timely decisions?
- Did the individual get along well with management, subordinates and peers?
- Did the individual plan, administer and make budget well?
- How would you describe the individual's technical skills?
- Did the individual demonstrate honesty and integrity?
- How well did the individual manage crisis, pressure or stress?
- Describe the individual's ability to attract and counsel top talent.

Legal and Policy Requirements

Elements used in a selection process must be job related and must use legal and consistent criteria to determine the best qualified candidates for referral and selection. Merit principles and job relatedness have been long-standing requirements in the Federal government.

In 1978 the Civil Service Reform Act, Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (UGESP), was issued. The guidelines are intended to establish a uniform basis of selection procedure criteria in the Federal sector. This guide imposes on employers the criteria by which the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission evaluates hiring practices to ensure adherence to merit principles. The UGESP applies to both in-service placement actions and external hiring practices.

A selection procedure is any measure, combination of measures, or procedures used as a basis for an employment decision. This applies, but is not be limited to, job analyses, crediting (ranking) plans, interviews, and the selection process itself.

All documents and the processes that develop these documents, which support the referral and selection of candidates, must contain only job-related criteria. The documents become part of the overall record supporting selection procedures used.

Merit System Principles

Personnel management is based on and embodies the Merit System Principles. The Merit System Principles are the public's expectations of a system that is efficient, effective, fair, open to all, free from political interference, and staffed by honest, competent and dedicated employees. As MRP experiences continued change in the management of human resources (centralization, deregulation, delegation, etc.), it becomes increasingly important that line supervisors and managers incorporate the Merit System Principles into every decision process they use.

The Merit System Principles are:

1. Recruit qualified individuals from all segments of society and select and promote employees on the basis of merit after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity.
2. Treat employees and applicants fairly and equitably, without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights.
3. Provide equal pay for equal work and recognize excellent performance.
4. Maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest.
5. Manage employees efficiently and effectively.
6. Retain and separate employees on the basis of their performance.

7. Educate and train employees when it will result in better organizational or individual performance.
8. Protect employees from arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan political purposes.
9. Protect employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information in "whistleblower" situations (i.e., protecting people who report things such as illegal and/or wasteful activities).

Prohibited Personnel Practices

Prohibited personnel practices are those things an employee with personnel authority may not do. An employee has personnel authority if he or she can take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action. This includes appointments, promotions, discipline, details, transfers, reassignments, reinstatements, or any decisions concerning pay, benefits, training, and any decision to order psychiatric testing or examination. A personnel action now also includes any significant change in duties, responsibilities, or working conditions which is inconsistent with the employee's salary or grade. People with personnel authority are charged with avoiding prohibited personnel practices. Prohibited personnel practices are:

- **Discriminating** on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status, or political affiliation.
- **Soliciting or Considering** any personnel recommendation or statement not based on personal knowledge or records of performance, ability, aptitude, general qualifications, character, loyalty, or suitability.
- **Coercing** an employee's political activity.
- **Deceiving or obstructing** any person with respect to such person's right to compete for employment.
- **Influencing** a person to withdraw from competition for the purpose of improving or injuring the prospects of another person for employment.
- **Granting** any preference or advantage not authorized by law, regulation, or rule to any [employee or applicant for the purpose of improving or injuring the prospects of another person for employment].
- **Employing , promoting or advocating** a relative.
- **Retaliating** against a Whistleblower, whether an employee or an applicant.
- **Retaliating** against employees or applicants who exercise their appeal rights, testify, or cooperate with an Inspector General or the Special Counsel, or refuse to break the law.
- **Discriminating** based on actions not adversely affecting performance.
- **Violating** any law, rule, or regulation implementing or directly concerning the Merit Principles.
- **Violating** Veteran's Preference by taking or failure to take a personnel action. (National Defense Authorization Act for FY97)

Avoiding prohibited personnel practices will not guarantee that you will never have to defend a decision or action, but it will give you a firm basis from which to start.

Onboarding Checklist

For Supervisors – Complete and Keep for Reference



EMPLOYEE NAME: _____

Prior to New Employee's Arrival	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Make a welcome call the week prior to arrival to welcome and arrange meeting	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Assign a sponsor and notify all parties (Sponsor Name: _____)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Assign and prepare workspace; provide standard office supply package	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure IT and communications essentials (e.g., computer, phone, e-mail, training accounts, network access (requires completion of IT Security Awareness course) are set up	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare staff for new employee's arrival, e.g. provide bio, arrange meetings for first week	_____
Day 1: Orientation	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce new employee to fellow team members and sponsor	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange a tour of your facility	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide information about the organization and its culture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all necessary forms are completed and submitted to HR	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Explain policies and procedures (to include, but not limited to):	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Workplace safety (include injury reporting, health clinic info, etc.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Work policies (tour of duty, overtime, comp time, telework, schedules, WebTA, inclement weather, use of equipment, etc.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Building access for employee and visitors – include reminder to respond to HSPD12 emails for LincPass	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> What's prohibited (e.g., weapons, recording devices, etc.)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Ethics, FOIA, EAP, dress code, wellness services, work-life programs, etc.)	_____
Week 1	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure job roles and responsibilities are clearly communicated to new employee	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Review training program and AgLearn (www.aglearn.usda.gov) with new employee (include required training and how to request training)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Review organizational structure and key staff (provide contact info)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide Ethics Office contact info (www.usda.gov/ethics)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce new employee to other relevant work teams and senior staff (provide contact info)	_____
Week 2 through first 90 Days	Date Completed
<input type="checkbox"/> Review performance expectations and issue Performance Plan (<i>Mandatory Requirement Day 15</i>)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for new employees to meet stakeholders of other departments	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss, explain and issue the Individual Development Plan (<i>Mandatory Requirement Day 90</i>)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> REMINDER: Give performance feedback early and often and check in regularly to ensure new employee continues to build knowledge to perform their work	(Ongoing)
<input type="checkbox"/> REMINDER: Provide training, as needed, to help the new employee understand internal systems and operating practices and obtain information & skills required for performance of their job	(Ongoing)

I have been briefed on the above items. Employee Initials _____ Date _____