

Human Resources Support Center – Northwest (HRSC-NW)

Overview of Hiring Process

November 2008



Why must we evaluate applicants?

- To be in compliance with laws, rules, and regulations
 - Merit System Principles
 - Prohibited Personnel Practices
 - Uniform Guidelines On Employee Selection Procedures
 - Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, as amended



Uniform Guidelines

- In 1978, the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures were issued. The guidelines are intended to establish a uniform basis of selection procedure criteria in the Federal sector.
- This guide imposes employers with the criteria by which the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission would evaluate hiring practices to ensure adherence to merit principles.
- A selection procedure is any measure, combination of measures, or procedures used as a basis for an employment decision.
- In Defense components and agencies, this would apply, but not be limited to, job analysis, crediting (ranking) plan, interviews, and the selection process itself.



Uniform Guidelines

- To prevent any selection procedure from having an adverse impact on the hiring, promotion, or other employment or membership opportunities of members of any race, sex, or ethnic group.
- Elements used in a selection process must be job-related, requiring criteria used to determine the candidates referred and selected be related to the job to be filled.
- Guidelines apply to both internal placement actions and external hiring practices.



MERIT PRINCIPLES

- The guiding principles of recruitment is that it be fair and determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after fair and open competition, should be from qualified individuals from all segments of society, and which assures that all receive equal opportunity ability



Merit Principle or Law

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



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- Manage employees efficiently and effectively.
 - Retain and separate employees on the basis of their performance.
 - Educate and train employees when it will result in better organizational or individual performance.
 - Protect employees from arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion for partisan
 - Protect employees against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information in "whistleblower" situation (i.e., protecting people who report things like illegal and/or wasteful activities).



What is Job Analysis

- A job analysis is the examination of a position to determine the relationship between the basic duties and responsibilities of the position and the knowledge, skills and abilities required to perform those duties and responsibilities.
 - Compliance with Uniform Guidelines
 - Requires the analysis be documented



What are KSAs

- Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)
 - Job elements or factors that are used for the objective, competitive evaluation of best-qualified applicants from the total pool of eligible applicants for advertised vacancies.
 - Directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the position being filled and are predictors of successful performance.



Knowledge

- **Knowledge** - A body of information applied directly to the performance of a function. It includes information about persons, places, facts, events, systems, ideas, theories, methods, procedures, principles, concepts, or cases. Knowledge includes academic knowledge, knowledge of regulations, and information gained through work experience, training or personal experience.
 - Examples of Knowledge:
 - Knowledge of laws on import/export of fruits.
 - Knowledge of science lab safety.
 - Knowledge of budgeting principles and procedures.

Skills

- **Skill** - A present, observable competence to perform a task with ease and proficiency. It often requires the use of equipment, machinery, or tools and implies measurable performance. Skills include know-how acquired through practice.
 - Examples of Skills:
 - Skills in horseback riding.
 - Skills in typing.
 - Skills in using a microscope.



Abilities

- **Ability** - A present competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that results in an observable product. It is often broader and more abstract than skills or knowledge.
 - Examples of Abilities:
 - Ability to write reports.
 - Ability to communicate verbally.
 - Ability to plan and organize work.



Basic Guidelines

- KSA's should
 - Be ratable from a written resume.
 - Be performed in a minimum amount of time (usually within 90 days of entering a job).
 - Distinguish the best-qualified applicants from the basically qualified applicants within a pool of candidates.
 - Not require a qualitative assessment of how well an applicant performed a function or duty (can it be determined from a resume).
 - Not reflect non-work-related qualities or traits.



The Steps

- First, job elements that are key to the successful performance of the position's duties and responsibilities are identified.
- KSAs are developed through detailed analysis of the duties and requirements of the position (i.e., the position description, performance elements, competency statements, etc.).
- After fine tuning KSAs, a rating or crediting plan is established to rank candidates as to the quality of their experience, education, training, or other job-related factors.



Rating Procedures

- The HRSC Northwest uses A-C-E or Quality Level Rating procedures which combines an applicant's total qualifying experience and education/training into a single quality level rating. There are three quality levels used in this procedure:
 - A = Exceptional or best qualified experience for the position for which the applicant is being considered. Rating of 90 points is typically assigned at this level.



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- C = Good or well qualified experience for the position for which the applicant is being considered. Rating of 80 points is typically assigned at this level.
 - E = Minimally qualifying experience for the position for which the applicant is being considered. Rating of 70 points is typically assigned at this level.
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- Provision for assigning additional points on the basis of an evaluation of the applicant in terms of specific knowledge, abilities or skills that are important for successful performance of the duties of the position.
 - Needs to be identified in announcement.



Writing a Crediting Plan

- Each level definition should address each of the KSAs.
- There need to be clear distinctions between the levels, and these distinctions must be measurable.
- Avoid qualifiers, such as “thorough, expert, or working” knowledge – these are not measurable.



What to Consider

- When writing the crediting plan consider the following:
 - Do not make it so restrictive as to confuse the rater (provide guidance to permit valid and reliable judgments.)
 - Do not limit competition which will favor a single candidate.
 - Do not write credit levels that impose education or experience which differs from the Qualifications Handbook.



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- Do not write credit level definitions which eliminate applicants who meet the qualification requirements for the position.
 - Do not write definitions based upon an idea which good sense suggest will not be found among the applicant pool.
 - Does the experience or possession of the KSA distinguish the difference between a superior employee from an acceptable employee?
 - Provide information regarding what type of 'evidence' should be credited at various levels.



Help in Defining Quality Levels

- There should be a progression as you develop the quality levels of the crediting plan. This progression may revolve around an action, an object, a purpose, or any combination thereof.
 - Action
 - **Applying** regulatory material (70)
 - **Interpreting** regulatory material (80)
 - **Developing** regulatory material (90)



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- Object
 - Writing **standard letters** (70)
 - Writing **technical reports** (80)
 - Writing **regulations** (90)
 - Purpose
 - Preparing budget materials for **the office** (70)
 - Preparing budget materials for a **major program in the agency** (80)
 - Preparing budget materials for the **whole agency** (90)