

# United States of America



*Working for America*

## ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGNING AN ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

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### FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGNING AN ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

#### Introduction

The Purpose of this document is to provide you with information and guidance that will help you make decisions about what assessment tools will be most effective and efficient in your hiring situations. A good and high quality assessment process will provide information about a person's competencies and their ability to perform the job.

One or more assessment options can be used to determine a person's ability to successfully perform a job. The appropriate assessments for a given situation will depend on a number of factors, for example, the number and level of positions to be filled, the recruitment pool, and recent experience in announcing similar positions.

To use these tools properly, you must be aware of both the benefits and limitations of any assessment strategy. Agencies can develop some of these methods independently. However, some of the options require a high level of technical expertise to develop.

#### Steps in Making Assessment Decisions

##### Step 1: Identify Job-Relevant Competencies

##### Step 2: Design an Assessment Strategy

##### Step 3: Identify Assessment Tools

###### *Step 1: Identify Job-Relevant Competencies*

- What is the occupation?
- Do you have job analysis data or other information that identify the job-relevant competencies?

###### *Step 2: Design the Assessment Strategy*

What is the nature of the position?

- Number of applicants?
- Public Safety Impact?
- Diversity issues?
- Volume of hires?
- Degree of customer contact?
- Job stress?
- History of litigation?
- Union presence?
- Visibility?
- Volume of hires?
- Turnover?

What is the available budget for assessment?

- Differences in budget can make the difference between a simple, standardized solution and a complex, customized solution

How much time is available for development and implementation?

- A longer timeframe will allow for development of customized assessments

Which job-relevant competencies will you assess?

- The job analysis will have identified required competencies for the occupation, but a limited number of competencies can be assessed during the selection process

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What tools can be used to assess these competencies?

- Not all competencies can be effectively assessed by all methods

Not all competencies can be effectively assessed by all methods, for example:

Key: HR = Highly Recommended, A = Acceptable, Blank = Not Recommended

Competency/ Assesment Method	Assessment Center	Accomplishment Record	Biodata	Situational Judgement Test	Structured Interview
Writing	HR	A	A		A
Creative Thinking	HR	HR	HR	A	HR
Integrity/Honesty	A	A	A	HR	A
Customer Service	HR	HR	HR	HR	HR

Is the assessment tool reliable and valid?

The quality of an assessment tool can be determined by looking at these two characteristics:

- Reliability is the degree of consistency or stability of an assessment over time, in different situations, or across applicants and/or raters
- Validity is the degree to which an assessment tool measures a job-related characteristic and how well it is measuring that characteristic

Scoring considerations:

- Formula to combine assessment scores
  - ✓ Which competencies are more important than others or should they be equal?
- Setting of passing scores
  - ✓ What is the minimum score that a candidate could achieve and still be qualified?
- Veteran's preference
  - ✓ By law, veterans are entitled to certain preferences over non-veterans

What is the order applicants take the assessments?

When using multiple assessments a hurdled approach helps narrow down the applicant pool to the best qualified individuals, for example:

- Hurdle 1: Screening
- Hurdle 2: Performance-Based Assessment
- Hurdle 3: Interview

### *Step 3: Identify Assessment Tools*

Hurdle 1: Screening tools can be used to narrow down large candidate pools, for example:

- Accomplishment Record
- Biographical Data Questionnaire (biodata)
- Cognitive Ability Test
- Job Knowledge Test
- Personality Test
- Rating Schedule
- Situational Judgment Test (SJT)

**Hurdle 2: Performance-Based Assessments** measure an applicant's ability to perform job-related activities (best used when a limited number of applicants is expected), for example:

- Assessment Center
- Physical Ability Test
- Work Sample
- Writing Assessment

**Hurdle 3: A Structured Interview** can be used as a final assessment method or when the applicant pool is moderate or small in size

### Additional Sources of Guidance

The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection provide a set of principles for determining proper test use and selection procedures, covering topics such as test fairness and adverse impact. You can find the Guidelines at:

[www.uniformguidelines.com](http://www.uniformguidelines.com).

Another source of guidance is the Department of Labor's Testing and Assessment: An Employer's Guide to Good Practices. This publication is available at [www.doleta.gov](http://www.doleta.gov) or in hard copy from the Government Printing Office (GPO Order Desk 202/512-1800, Stock Number 029-014-00259-3).

There are several organizations that also publish guidance on the subject of testing standards, including the American Psychological Association (APA), the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), and the American Educational Research Association (AERA), which jointly developed The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. The Standards provide information on how to develop, evaluate, and use tests and other assessment procedures in employment settings.

The Delegated Examining Handbook ([www.opm.gov/deu](http://www.opm.gov/deu)) provides further considerations affecting an agency's choice of a particular assessment

### Additional Sources of Guidance

U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Competency Assessment Branch

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