



**SENIOR EXECUTIVE  
SERVICE (SES)  
FEDERAL CANDIDATE  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM  
(FED CDP)**

**APPLICANT GUIDE**

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



**June 2008**

# **Senior Executive Service (SES) Federal Candidate Development Program (Fed CDP) Applicant Guide**

## **Overview**

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), working in partnership with Federal agencies, has developed the Senior Executive Service (SES) Federal Candidate Development Program (Fed CDP) to identify and train effective executives to achieve our nation's goals.

Fed CDP will help Federal agencies meet their succession planning goals and contribute to the Government's effort to create a high-quality SES leadership corps. This Applicant Guide is a resource for potential applicants and provides answers to the commonly asked questions about the Program's application process. If you have a question about the Program's application process that is not addressed in this guide, please email your question to [fedcdp2@opm.gov](mailto:fedcdp2@opm.gov). Thank you for your interest in this prestigious program.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **What are the benefits of participating in Fed CDP?**

Fed CDP offers a unique experience for professional development. Upon acceptance into the program, candidates participate in a 12-month educational and developmental experience that includes training at the Federal Executive Institute, challenging assignments, mentoring, coaching, and self-development. During this program, candidates focus on learning and self-development while interacting with candidates from other Federal agencies.

### **What agencies are participating in Fed CDP?**

The agencies participating in Fed CDP are:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Department of Labor (Labor)
- U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

### **How many applicants will be invited to participate in the program?**

While the program is open to all Federal civil service employees at the GS-15 level (or equivalent) with one year of leadership experience at the GS-15 level (or equivalent), selection is in part demand driven. The number of selections per agency will depend upon the number of vacancies an agency wishes to fill through the Fed CDP.

### **If I applied for the program last January, do I have to reapply?**

If you applied to the SES Federal Candidate Development Program previously, you must reapply under this vacancy announcement to be considered for the program.

### **Does successful completion of the program guarantee placement in the Senior Executive Service?**

No. All Fed CDP graduates who are certified by the Qualifications Review Board (QRB) at the end of the program are eligible for appointment to the Senior Executive Service without further competition. However, no Fed CDP graduate is guaranteed placement in an SES position.

### **Do applicants leave their agency or job of record upon entry into Fed CDP?**

Applicants who are accepted into Fed CDP become employees of the agency that selected them for the program. For applicants selected by their employing agency, the applicants may be reassigned to a different position at the GS-15 level (or equivalent).

### **Will the participating agencies pay relocation costs for candidates accepted into Fed CDP?**

It is up to the agencies to decide whether or not to pay relocation costs. Such requests will be handled by the agency on a case-by-case basis.

### **What is the application period for this announcement?**

Applications will be accepted **from Friday, June 6, 2008 until 11:59 p.m. EST Thursday, June 26, 2008**. An application is considered complete when all the required documents are submitted. Incomplete applications will be disqualified from consideration for the program.

### **Qualification Requirements**

#### **What are the qualification requirements for the program?**

Applicants must:

- Be current civil service employees. This includes all appointive positions in the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative Branches of the United States Government, except for positions in the uniformed services,
- Be currently serving in a GS-15 (or equivalent) position,
- Possess at least one year of leadership experience equivalent to the GS-15 level in the Federal service. Your experience must demonstrate an applied knowledge of management principles, developments, trends, and generally accepted practices and techniques utilized in effective program planning and administration. The experience must demonstrate that you can plan, coordinate, and execute business functions necessary to support a large, complex organization, including those related to resource allocation, budget and finance, human capital management, organizational development, contracting, and information technology.
- Possess one year of supervisory experience, in which you were the supervisor of record.

**May individuals who are not currently in a GS-15 (or equivalent) position but previously held such a position apply?**

Applicants must currently be serving in a GS-15 (or equivalent) position. Applicants who are temporarily detailed to an SES position may apply if their position of record is a GS-15 (or equivalent) position. However, applicants must possess one year of leadership experience equivalent to the GS-15 level in Federal service. Applicants must also possess one year of supervisory experience, in which they were the supervisor of record.

**May individuals who are serving on a temporary promotion to the GS-15 (or equivalent) level apply?**

Yes. However, applicants must possess one year of leadership experience equivalent to the GS-15 level in Federal service, as described above.

**May individuals who are serving on temporary promotions to an SES (or equivalent) level apply?**

Yes. However, applicants must possess one year of leadership experience equivalent to the GS-15 level in Federal service, as described above.

**What does “GS-15 (or equivalent)” mean?**

Some agencies do not use the General Schedule (GS) pay system. If you are unsure if your grade/pay band is equivalent to a GS-15, please consult with your agency’s Human Resources Office. Alternatively, you may refer to the following website for more details on pay band equivalents: <http://www.opm.gov/demos/Demofact.asp>.

**What does “one year of leadership experience at the GS-15 (or equivalent) level” mean?**

As described in the leadership minimum qualification definition found in the vacancy announcement under the “Qualifications” section, you must clearly show you have at least one year of leadership experience equivalent to the GS-15 level in the Federal service.

Your experience must demonstrate an applied knowledge of management principles, developments, trends, and generally accepted practices and techniques utilized in effective program planning and administration. The experience must demonstrate you can plan, coordinate, and execute business functions necessary to support a large, complex organization, including those related to resource allocation, budget and finance, human capital management, organizational development, contracting, and information technology. The experience must also include at least one year of supervisory experience, in which you were the supervisor of record.

Your resume must specifically demonstrate how you meet the various aspects of this qualification. Applicants who do not provide specific, detailed examples in their resumes of how they meet this qualification will not be considered for the program.

### **What does “one year of supervisory experience” mean?**

Applicants must possess at least one year of experience as the supervisor of record. Project/team lead or other experience where the applicant was not the supervisor of record is not qualifying. Your resume should specifically detail your supervisory experience. Applicants who do not provide specific, detailed examples in their resumes of how they meet this qualification will not be considered for the program.

### **Does experience gained on a detail or temporary assignment count towards meeting the minimum qualifications?**

Yes. Experience gained on a detail is creditable towards meeting the minimum qualifications. Please remember, however, that you must currently hold a GS-15 level (or equivalent) position to apply for this program.

### **What is the difference between a “Status” and “Non-Status” applicant?**

Status Applicants are applicants serving under career or career-type appointments in the civil service. Status candidates are not entitled to veterans’ preference.

Non-Status Applicants are applicants who occupy other than career or career-type appointments within the civil service (e.g., temporary appointments).

Applicants may apply only as Status or Non-Status. They may not apply as both. Status applicants must apply as Status.

### **What if you are on an interchange agreement?**

Applicants on an interchange agreement should consult their Human Resources Office or their agency’s interchange agreement to determine if they are considered a Status or Non-Status applicant.

### **Will Status and Non-Status applicants be rated and referred in a similar manner?**

Status applicants will be referred using the merit staffing requirements in 5 CFR 317.501(c). If selected for Fed CDP, Status applicants will be noncompetitively placed in a position appropriately classified at the GS-15 level for the duration of the program.

Non-Status applicants will also be referred using the merit staffing requirements in 5 CFR 317.501(c) except that the principle of veterans’ preference will be applied in accordance with 5 CFR 412.203(b)(3). If selected for Fed CDP, Non-Status applicants will receive a Schedule B appointment to a position classified at the GS-15 level for the duration of the program.

Both Status and Non-Status applicants must follow the instructions outlined in the Fed CDP vacancy announcement regarding the submission of the application package. Both groups must also meet the same qualification requirements.

## **For Non-Status Applicants, what are the requirements for receiving Veterans' Preference?**

### Five-Point Preference:

Five-point preference is given to those honorably separated veterans (this means an honorable or general discharge) who served on active duty (not active duty for training) in the Armed Forces:

- during any war (this means a war declared by Congress, the last of which was World War II);
- during the period April 28, 1952, through July 1, 1955;
- for more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976;
- during the Gulf War period beginning August 2, 1990, and ending January 2, 1992; or for more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last day of Operation Iraqi Freedom; or
- in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized, such as El Salvador, Lebanon, Granada, Panama, Southwest Asia, Somalia, and Haiti;
- medal holders and Gulf War veterans who originally enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered on active duty on or after October 14, 1982, without having previously completed 24 months of continuous active duty; must have served continuously for 24 months or the full period called or ordered to active duty;
- effective October 1, 1980, military retirees at or above the rank of major or equivalent, are not entitled to preference unless they qualify as disabled veterans.

### Ten-Point Preference:

Ten-point preference is given to:

- those honorably separated veterans who (1) qualify as disabled veterans because they have served on active duty in the Armed Forces at any time and have a present service-connected disability or are receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs; or (2) are Purple Heart recipients;
- the spouse of a veteran unable to work because of a service-connected disability;
- the unmarried widow of certain deceased veterans; and
- the mother of a veteran who died in service or who is permanently and totally disabled.

When applying for Federal jobs, eligible veterans should claim preference on their application or resume. Applicants claiming 10-point preference must complete and submit Form SF 15, Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference, Form DD 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty), and a VA letter indicating your service-connected disability rating.

Veterans who are still in active duty status may be granted 5 points tentative preference on the basis of information contained in their applications, but they must produce a Form DD 214 prior to appointment to document entitlement to preference.

**Note:** Reservists who are retired from the Reserves but are not receiving retired pay are not considered "retired military" for purposes of veterans' preference.

For more information on veterans' preference, please visit <http://www.opm.gov/employ/veterans/html/vetsinfo.asp>.

## **The Application Process**

### **What is an Occupational Specialty Code?**

Each participating agency has identified one or more Occupational Specialties they would like to fill using Fed CDP. OPM has assigned each of these Occupational Specialties a code. Once you have identified the Occupational Specialties you want to apply for, you will need to note the Occupational Specialty code(s) assigned to those Occupational Specialties. You will need these codes to ensure you respond to the appropriate technical proficiency questions in the application. You will only be considered for the Occupational Specialties you select.

### **What is required in the application process?**

Applicants must submit the following documents:

- A resume that details your experience, including specific supporting evidence that you meet the leadership and supervisory minimum qualification requirements and any Occupational Specialty minimum qualification requirements for which you are applying
- The Occupational Questionnaire
- Accomplishment Record narratives with appropriate verification information
- A copy of a Notification of Personnel Action (SF 50), or equivalent document that shows you are a current Federal civil service employee serving in a GS-15 (or equivalent) position. The SF 50 or equivalent document must show your series, grade, tenure (Box 24), and position occupied (Box 34)
- Veterans' preference documentation, if you are a Non-Status applicant who is applying for veterans' preference
- Transcripts, if you are applying for an Occupational Specialty with a basic education requirement
- Proof of bar membership, if you are applying for the Environmental Protection Agency's Law Occupational Specialty

Applicants who do not provide all required documentation will not be considered for the program.

Applicants who do not submit the correct veterans' preference documentation will not receive any claimed veterans' preference points.

### **What is Application Manager?**

Application Manager (<https://applicationmanager.org>) is an online automated system powered by USA Staffing and is a robust tool for you to work on, submit, and track application packages you submit for jobs at Federal agencies.

Application Manager is the fastest and most efficient way to ensure your application is submitted. You can use Application Manager to complete the Occupational Questionnaire, upload your Accomplishment Record narratives and other documentation, and check on the status of your application.

## How Do I Submit an Application?

You may submit an application via Application Manager, mail, fax, or a combination of these methods.

Instructions on application submission are outlined in the vacancy announcement in the “How To Apply” section. It is important you follow these instructions exactly. Key points to remember are:

- All application materials must be received by the closing date of the announcement.
- Using Application Manager (<https://applicationmanager.org>) to complete the Occupational Questionnaire and to upload your documentation is the fastest way to ensure your materials are received.
- You may submit revised versions of documents up until the announcement closes. To do so, please log in to Application Manager, select the Fed CDP application package, and then select “Add Documents.” If you would like to view the documents you have already submitted, log in to Application Manager, select the Fed CDP application package, and then click on the “Details” tab. Please note the system will not allow you to delete documents once they are submitted. The most recently submitted version of each document will be used to complete the review process.
- Please do not fax or mail documents you have already uploaded through Application Manager.
- If you choose to fax documents, you must complete and submit the following cover sheet: <http://staffing.opm.gov/pdf/usascoversheet.pdf>. Applications will not be processed properly and will not be considered for the program if this cover sheet is not completely filled out and submitted.
- If you cannot complete the Occupational Questionnaire online, you will need to complete and fax or mail OPM Form 1203-FX-Form C.
- **Please be certain you click the “Submit My Answers” button after the “Upload Documentation” screen in Application Manager.** Your application is not received by the system until you click the “Submit My Answers” button. Applicants who do not click “Submit My Answers,” will not have their application sent for review and will not be considered for the program. You will receive an automatic email confirmation from Application Manager once your application is submitted successfully.

## What is the fastest and most efficient method for submitting an application?

The fastest and most efficient method for submitting a Fed CDP application is online using Application Manager (<https://applicationmanager.org>). You can use Application Manager to complete the Occupational Questionnaire, upload your Accomplishment Record narratives and other documentation, and check on the status of your application.

Only complete applications received by OPM by June 26, 2008 will be considered for the program. Applications submitted by mail or fax take longer to receive and to process. Applicants who submit their applications by mail should use a delivery method that will ensure the application is received by the deadline.



## **How do I upload my documents using Application Manager?**

After the Occupational Questionnaire is submitted, you may upload your resume, Accomplishment Record narratives, and other application materials. To upload your documents, follow the instructions that appear on the screen after you receive an acknowledgment that the Occupational Questionnaire was successfully submitted. If you do not have all the requested documents in electronic format you may use one of the alternative methods listed below to submit your documents.

**Note:** Please make sure you upload your documents under the correct headings. At the Document Upload screen, select the type of document you are attaching for upload from the drop down menu on the left side of the screen (i.e., Resume, Qualifications, Transcripts, Miscellaneous, and Veterans' Preference)

- Submit your resume using the Resume option in the drop down menu.
- Submit your Accomplishment Record narratives using the Qualifications option in the drop down menu.
- Submit your Notice of Personnel Action (SF 50) or equivalent document using the Miscellaneous option in the drop down menu.
- Submit veterans' preference documentation (if applicable) using the Veterans' Documentation option in the drop down menu.
- Submit your transcripts (if required) using the Transcripts option in the drop down menu.
- Submit your proof of bar membership (if required) using the Transcripts option in the drop down menu.

Please be certain you hit the “Submit My Answers” button after the “Upload Documentation” screen in Application Manager. Your application is not received by the system until you click the “Submit My Answers” button. Applicants who do not click the “Submit My Answers” button will not be considered for the program.

## **Can I update my application materials after my application has been submitted?**

You may submit revised versions of documents up until the announcement closes. The most recently submitted version of each document will be used to complete the review process.

## **What do I do if I want to update the documents I submitted through Application Manager?**

You may log in to Application Manager at any point during the open period to review or update your application. You may submit revised versions of documents up until the announcement closes. To submit revised versions of documents after you have already selected the “Submit My Answers” button, use the “Add Documents” button on the Application Status screen.

## **I have several degrees. Which transcripts should I submit?**

Applicants should review the basic education qualification(s) for the Occupational Specialties for which they are applying (<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/index.asp>). Transcripts that show the applicant meets the qualification requirement(s) should be submitted to support the application.

### **What if my education was obtained at a foreign institution?**

If your education was obtained at a foreign institution, you must show proof the education credentials have been submitted to a private organization that specializes in the interpretation of foreign educational credentials and that such education has been deemed to be at least equivalent to that gained in conventional U.S. education programs or that an accredited U.S. state university reports the other institution as one whose transcript is given full value, or full value is given in subject areas applicable to the curricula at the state university.

For more information on the acceptance of foreign educational credentials, please visit:

<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/S2-e4.asp>

### **What constitutes proof of bar membership?**

OPM will accept various forms of documentation, including but not limited to a bar membership card, a letter from the state bar association, a certificate of membership or appointment to the state bar, receipts from payment of annual dues, or confirmation of completion of the annual *pro bono* work requirements.

### **How do I make sure my documentation was received?**

The easiest way to ensure your documentation was received is to log in to Application Manager (<https://applicationmanager.org/>). From there, you may review your submitted documents for this announcement. Please allow at least one business day for any faxed documentation to be uploaded into the system.

### **If something is missing from my application, will I be notified?**

No. Applicants are responsible for ensuring all required documentation is submitted before the closing date. You may check to see if your documents were received by logging in to Application Manager (<https://applicationmanager.org/>), selecting the Fed CDP application package, and then clicking on the “Details” tab. You may open and view your submitted documents from that tab.

Please note it takes approximately 1 hour for documents uploaded into the system to complete the virus scan. Please allow at least one business day for any documentation that was faxed in to be uploaded into the system.

## What are the required documents for each Occupational Specialty?

Each Occupational Specialty requires the Occupational Questionnaire, resume, Accomplishment Record, and Notice of Personnel Action (SF 50). Additional documents may be required for specific Occupational Specialties. Please see the chart below for more information.

Code	Occupational Specialties	Required Documents						
		Occupational Questionnaire	Resume	Accomplishment Record	SF 50	Transcript	Proof of Bar Membership	Veterans' Preference
001	EPA - Engineering	X	X	X	X	X		*
002	EPA - Environmental Science	X	X	X	X	X		*
003	EPA - Finance	X	X	X	X			*
004	EPA - Law	X	X	X	X	X	X	*
005	EPA - Program/Corporate Management	X	X	X	X			*
006	Labor - Program Management	X	X	X	X			*
007	NRC - Nuclear Engineering	X	X	X	X	X		*
008	OPM/CTS - Program Management	X	X	X	X			*
009	OPM/FISD - Program Management	X	X	X	X			*

*\* Please note supporting documents for veterans' preference are required for all Occupational Specialties if you are a Non-Status applicant claiming veterans' preference.*

## How will my application be reviewed?

The initial screening of applications is completed through the use of an automated system. Applicants who are found eligible after this initial screening will have their resumes and SF 50s (or equivalents) reviewed to ensure they meet the minimum qualifications stated in the vacancy announcement. For this reason, it is imperative applicants take time to read and consider the minimum qualifications for this program, including the leadership and supervisory experience qualifications and all Occupational Specialty minimum qualifications for the Occupational Specialty(s) for which they are applying. Submitted resumes must show specific, detailed examples of how the applicant meets the minimum qualifications stated in the vacancy announcement. Applicants who do not submit a resume that shows specific, detailed examples of how they meet the minimum qualifications outlined in the vacancy announcement will not be considered for the program.

If applicable, transcripts, proof of bar membership, and supporting documents for veterans' preference will also be reviewed at this time. Applicants who do not submit transcripts and/or proof of bar membership will not be considered for the Occupational Specialties that require these documents. Applicants who do not submit the correct veterans' preference documentation will not receive any claimed veterans' preference points.

Applicants who have submitted complete application packages and are found qualified for at least one Occupational Specialty will be referred on to the Accomplishment Record review.

## What should I include on my resume?

A resume or curriculum vitae, the Optional Application for Federal Employment (OF-612), or any other written format you choose to describe your job-related qualifications is required. Your resume should illustrate specific and appropriate examples of your experience. Your submission must also include the following information to receive full consideration for a position:

- Vacancy announcement number on each page
- Full name, mailing address, and day and evening telephone numbers
- Last four digits of your Social Security Number on each page
- Educational information, including the name, city and state of colleges or universities you attended, as well as the type and year of any degree received. Report only attendance and/or degrees from schools accredited by accrediting institutions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. For more information, you may refer to the following U. S. Department of Education website: <http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html>
- Information about your paid and non-paid work experience related to this position including:
  - Job title (include series and grade if Federal job)
  - Duties and accomplishments
  - Employer's name and address
  - Supervisor's name and phone number
  - Starting and ending dates of employment (month and year)
  - Full-time or part-time status
  - Salary
  - Information about honors, awards, and special accomplishments

Your resume will be evaluated specifically for:

- 1) Leadership and supervisory experience, and
- 2) Technical competence (if required).

To the extent possible, your resume must demonstrate how you meet the specific leadership and supervisory experience qualification as well as all technical requirements for the Occupational Specialties for which you are applying.

Applicants who do not provide specific examples of how they meet the qualification(s) as stated in the announcement will not be considered for the program. You are strongly encouraged to closely review your resume before submitting it to ensure you have provided complete and accurate descriptions of the duties you have performed as they relate to the leadership, supervisory, and technical requirements for each Occupational Specialty for which you are applying.

Be sure to indicate the vacancy announcement number and the last four digits of your Social Security Number on each page.

## What is an Accomplishment Record?

An Accomplishment Record includes written statements describing an applicant's accomplishments. As part of the Fed CDP process, applicants prepare and submit written statements describing accomplishments that reflect their capability in five competencies related to the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). Applicants also are asked to provide references to substantiate each accomplishment described. Applicants who do not provide a reference for each accomplishment will not be considered for the program.

## What competencies are being evaluated in the Accomplishment Record?

The following competencies must be addressed in the Accomplishment Record:

- **Strategic Thinking** – Formulates objectives and priorities, and implements plans consistent with the long-term interests of the organization in a global environment. Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.
- **Team Building** – Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.
- **Accountability** – Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.
- **Human Capital Management** – Builds and manages workforce based on organizational goals, budget considerations, and staffing needs. Ensures employees are appropriately recruited, selected, appraised, and rewarded. Takes action to address performance problems. Manages a multi-sector workforce and a variety of work situations.
- **Influencing/Negotiating** – Persuades others. Builds consensus through give and take. Gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.

## How should I write my Accomplishment Record?

You must submit written statements (narratives) describing accomplishments that reflect your capability in five specific competencies related to the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). You may submit only one accomplishment for each competency. If you provide more than one accomplishment for a competency, only the first accomplishment listed will be evaluated.

You must provide a different Accomplishment Record narrative for each competency. Applicants who do not respond to all competencies and provide a different Accomplishment Record narrative for each competency will receive an incomplete for the Accomplishment Record portion of the application process and will not be considered for the program. Each Accomplishment Record narrative cannot exceed two pages. Any additional information beyond two pages will not be evaluated.

After each Accomplishment Record narrative, you must provide some form of objective verification of your capability and executive readiness in that competency area. This may include the name of an individual who can attest to your capability and readiness; an abstract of an article or book you authored; or URL links to other evidentiary material. If you include an individual as your verification source, you must provide her or his name, most current address, telephone number, and e-mail address. You must include verification information or your application will not be processed.

To ensure a fair rating of applicants during the Accomplishment Record review, please do not note your name and put only the last four digits of your social security number on your Accomplishment Record narratives.

The information below provides specific instructions on how you should write your Accomplishment Record narratives. You should consider and respond to the competencies one at a time.

**Step 1.** Review each competency for which you will write an Accomplishment Record narrative

Carefully read each competency definition to be sure you understand what is important. Reflect carefully on each competency and think about how past experiences and education relate to each competency. Your Accomplishment Record narrative should reflect your capability in the five competencies listed in the vacancy announcement. Each competency listed will be a subset of one of the five ECQs. If you address the ECQs instead of the competencies listed in the announcement, your score for the Accomplishment Record may be adversely affected.

**Step 2.** Decide what Accomplishment Record narrative you will provide for each competency

You will only be rated on the first accomplishment you submit for each competency. The one accomplishment you choose should best describe your capability with regard to that competency. You may describe paid or volunteer work experience, educational accomplishments, training or educational pursuits, hobbies, sports, or any other accomplishment reflecting your level of competence. The accomplishment may be specific, such as a challenging assignment, a specific instance of high performance, or a project you successfully completed. Alternately, the accomplishment may be a broader example of sustained high performance in your daily work.

Avoid the error of choosing an accomplishment that does not clearly reflect the intended competency. An accomplishment that is not closely representative of the appropriate competency tends to receive less credit than an accomplishment better representing the competency of interest.

**Step 3.** Provide the Accomplishment and Other Associated Information

Carefully and completely describe the accomplishment you have selected. Your response for each competency should clearly reflect your individual level of accomplishment related to that competency. Provide the facts of your accomplishment as clearly as possible so another person can understand and evaluate what happened. Your description must reflect the quality of your accomplishment including (a) how it relates to the specific competency and (b) its scope and impact. Your writing should be clear so others can understand your accomplishment. In your description, please emphasize the quality of the accomplishment and results you have achieved, rather than just the jobs you have held or tasks you have completed. Each accomplishment cannot exceed two pages. Any additional information beyond two pages will not be evaluated.

For each accomplishment, you **MUST** include the following information:

- **SITUATION** – a general statement of the situation or circumstances surrounding what you accomplished/achieved.
- **ACTION** – a precise description of what you did (activities you performed, duties and responsibilities).
- **OUTCOMES** – a description of the outcomes (the direct or indirect results or long-term impact of your accomplishment).
- **The start and end dates** of the time period during which the activities were performed. Please be specific and provide the month and year for the start and end dates (e.g., June 2006 to November 2006).
- **The name, telephone number, email address, and mailing address of an individual who can verify the information you provide.** Be sure to indicate whether this person was your supervisor, co-worker, friend, instructor, chairman of a committee, etc. If you do not want your current employer contacted, do not list your employer as a verifying person. Instead, provide the name of another person who can verify your accomplishment. Do not use a spouse or a close relative (father, mother, etc.) or a person who is presently a direct subordinate as a verifier. The verifier must be reachable within a reasonable period. Alternatively, if appropriate, you may provide another form of verification, such as an abstract of an article or book you authored or URL links to other evidentiary material.

**You are required to provide verification information for each competency. Applicants who do not provide verification information will not be considered for the program.**

#### **Step 4.** Check the Quality of Your Responses

Make sure you have provided a complete response for each competency and you have responded to every competency with a different narrative for each competency. Your application will be considered incomplete if you have not provided complete information for **ALL** of the competencies. Applicants who do not provide complete information in their application will not be considered for the program. Also, please note the following:

- In your response to a competency, do not cross-reference your response to another competency.
- Provide one accomplishment for each competency. If you provide more than one accomplishment per competency, only the first accomplishment listed will be evaluated.

#### **Example Accomplishment**

Below you will find an example of an Accomplishment Record narrative. This narrative describes an example of a specific project that was successfully completed. This example is for sample purposes only. It is related to the competency of Analytical Reasoning, which is not one of the competencies you will be asked to respond to in this part of the assessment process. Also, please note, this example is brief and generic. Your accomplishments may be longer (up to two pages), and should include more detailed information.

### *Sample Competency Assessed: Analytical Reasoning*

*Sample Competency Description: Leaders must analyze complex, technical data and other information, using logic and quantitative reasoning abilities. In doing this, they distinguish essential from nonessential information. What have you done that demonstrates your ability to analyze data using logic and quantitative reasoning?*

*Sample Competency Response: As a management analyst for Smythe-Jones, Inc. (April 2002 to July 2004), I established statistical formulas for new computer programs. These programs were used to provide statistical indices for measuring the schedule and cost effectiveness of various installations and contractors. Using available data elements, I developed formulas that provided indices showing schedule status in terms of dollars worth of work, cost status as a function of schedule status, and trend projections for anticipated costs at project completion based on performance to date.*

*These formulas were subsequently incorporated into the computer programs, which were provided to operating officials on a monthly basis. Based upon the indices produced, I was able to project significant cost overruns for a major contractor on its largest contract. The contractor denied the program would overrun but the next few months showed the indices to be correct. The contractor then admitted that there would be a significant overrun.*

*Verifier: Gary French, supervisor and project director at Smythe-Jones; Phone: (111) 555-3709; Address: 111 Main Street, Anytown, USA, 12345; e-mail: GFrench@example.gov*

### **May I submit the same accomplishment for more than one competency?**

No. You are required to respond to all competencies and to provide different narratives for each competency. Applicants who do not provide a different accomplishment for each competency will not be considered for the program.

### **May I submit more than one accomplishment for each competency?**

If you provide more than one accomplishment for each competency, only the first accomplishment will be evaluated.

### **Do I need to submit verifier information for my Accomplishment Record narratives?**

Yes. You must supply the name, telephone number, email address, and mailing address for an individual who can verify your accomplishments for **each** competency. Be sure to indicate whether this person was your supervisor, co-worker, friend, instructor, chairman of a committee, etc. If you do not want your current employer contacted, do not list your employer as a verifying person. Instead, provide the name of another person who can verify your accomplishment. Do not use a spouse or a close relative (father, mother, etc.) or a person who is presently a direct subordinate as a verifier. The verifier must be reachable within a reasonable period. Alternatively, if appropriate, you may provide another form of verification, such as an abstract of an article or book you authored or URL links to other evidentiary material.



## **Should I submit accomplishments that specifically address each of the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs)?**

No. Your accomplishments should reflect your capability in the five specific competencies listed in the Accomplishment Record instructions in the vacancy announcement. Each competency listed in this section of the vacancy announcement is a subset of one of the five ECQs. If you write to the ECQs instead of the competencies listed in the vacancy announcement, your score for the Accomplishment Record may be adversely affected.

## **Who will evaluate the Accomplishment Record?**

Trained rating teams from OPM and the participating agencies will rate the Accomplishment Record.

## **What is the next step after the Accomplishment Record?**

Applicants with the highest Accomplishment Record scores for each occupational specialty will be invited to participate in a Structured Interview and an Assessment Center. Structured Interviews are tentatively scheduled for August 4, 2008 through August 15, 2008. Participating agencies will conduct the structured interviews. Requests to complete the Structured Interview by phone will be considered on a case-by-case basis by participating agencies. The Assessment Center is tentatively scheduled for August 13, 2008 through August 22, 2008. Successful applicants must be available to attend a one-day Assessment Center in Washington, DC during that time frame. Applicants will be responsible for paying for any travel related to the Assessment Center. Applicants who are unavailable to participate during these scheduled time periods will not be considered for the program.

You must be available to participate in these stages of the selection process during the dates specified. If you are identified as a top applicant for Occupational Specialties in more than one agency, you will be required to participate in a Structured Interview at each agency. If you are identified as a top applicant for multiple Occupational Specialties within an agency, you will only be required to participate in one Structured Interview per agency for which you are a top applicant. You will only participate in one day of Assessment Center exercises regardless of the number of agencies to which you are referred.

## **What is a Structured Interview?**

In a Structured Interview, applicants are asked a set of standardized, job-related questions and their responses are evaluated based on competency-based criteria. You will be required to participate in multiple interviews if you are referred for Occupational Specialties in multiple agencies. Please respond to all requests to schedule interviews that you receive. Applicants who are unavailable to participate during the scheduled time period will not be considered for the program.

## **Where is the Structured Interview held?**

The participating agencies conduct the Structured Interviews. Most Structured Interviews will be held in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Applicants may be responsible for paying for travel related to the Structured Interview. Requests to complete the Structured Interview by phone will be considered on a case-by-case basis by participating agencies.

## **Why are Structured Interviews part of the selection process?**

Using the same questions for all applicants and comparing their responses to predetermined, job-related criteria increases the objectivity, validity, and reliability of the interview.

## **How was the Structured Interview designed?**

OPM, along with the participating agencies, selected the most critical competencies to be evaluated. Job-related questions have been developed for each competency. OPM trained agencies on how to conduct the interviews.

## **What is an Assessment Center?**

An Assessment Center is a standardized assessment process in which applicants participate in a variety of exercises or simulations. These exercises are designed to resemble real-world work situations and are used to assess many of the targeted leadership competencies through a variety of activities. Applicant performance is observed and evaluated by multiple assessors over a one-day period. Applicants who are unavailable to participate during the scheduled time period will not be considered for the program.

## **Where is the Assessment Center held?**

The Assessment Center is held in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The Assessment Center is tentatively scheduled for August 13, 2008 through August 22, 2008. Successful applicants must be available to attend a one-day Assessment Center in Washington, DC during that time frame. Applicants will be responsible for paying for any travel related to the Assessment Center. Applicants who are unavailable to participate during the scheduled time period will not be considered for the program.

## **Who will evaluate applicants' performance in the Assessment Center?**

Trained OPM assessors will evaluate applicants' performance in the Assessment Center.

## **What is the next step after the Structured Interview and Assessment Center?**

The results of the Accomplishment Record review, the Structured Interview, and the Assessment Center will be forwarded to each participating agency's Executive Resources Board (ERB) along with the qualifying applicants' resumes, SF 50s, and, if applicable, transcripts, proof of bar membership, and veterans' preference documentation. At the ERB stage, applicants may be invited to additional job-related interviews. The ERB stage is tentatively scheduled for September 8, 2008 through October 3, 2008. Applicants who are unavailable to participate in additional interviews during the scheduled time period will not be considered for the program. Applicants may be responsible for paying for any travel related to the additional interviews during the ERB stage. Requests to complete additional interviews by phone will be considered on a case-by-case basis by participating agencies.

**Who makes the final decision on who is accepted into the program?**

The participating agencies will make the final selections of program participants in accordance with merit system principles.

**Will applicants to the program receive feedback on their assessments?**

To protect the validity and confidentiality of the testing process, we cannot provide applicant specific feedback.

**If you have additional questions about this vacancy announcement, please submit your inquiries by email to [fedcdp2@opm.gov](mailto:fedcdp2@opm.gov).**