

What we would expect to find in an effective DEU: ☺

The job analysis process is documented and identifies objective, assessable knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA)/competencies related to important job duties, work outcomes, or work behaviors necessary for successful performance in the job being filled.

Assessment criteria (e.g., rating schedules, occupational questionnaires, tests, structured interviews) align with job analyses; make clear distinctions between creditable levels of qualifications; and contain appropriate measures.

What we find too often: ☹

Job analyses reflected some effort to identify job related competencies and knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) but did not fully document the complete process. Most case files documented the final outcome of job analysis, i.e., the KSAs/competencies on which applicants would be rated, but omitted the initial process of identifying the major duties of the position and linking them to the KSAs/competencies necessary to perform those duties.

Some case files contained emails outlining discussions with subject matter experts (SME) but contained no other documentation of the job analysis process. Other case files did not identify the human resource specialists and subject matter experts (SME) who participated in the job analysis. Fully documenting the job analysis process helps support the validity of the analysis by recording the experts who analyzed the position and the methodology used to develop the rating criteria.

In two cases reviewed, no justification was included in the case file regarding the use of the mandatory selective factors. Selective factors must be supported and documented during the job analysis process. Documentation must show the relevancy of the specific proficiency or factor as being essential for successful performance of the job through direct linkage demonstrated through the job analysis process.

The agency routinely uses selective placement factors. Since job analyses were missing from most of the case files, the justification for use of selective factors was unsupported. In some instances, the selective factors included references to agency-specific KSAs, which is inappropriate for competitive examining. The use of overly restrictive selective factors tends to compromise the merit system principle of fair and open competition.

While some agency HR staff indicated documentation for the position's job analysis is located in each electronic case file, auditors could not access such information.

Some case files indicated email exchanges between the HR specialist and subject matter expert had been made, but the emails were not copied to the case files, and the email documentation was lost when the HR specialist left the agency.

In one case the position description was reclassified after the job analysis had been conducted. There was no evidence in the file that the job analysis had been reviewed to ensure that it was still valid and appropriate after the reclassification. Existing job analyses should be reviewed to ensure they accurately reflect any changes in the duties of the position prior to recruiting.

In most cases, assessment questions appeared appropriate for the positions being filled. However, because the agency did not sufficiently document the job analysis process, we did not find a strong link between the job duties and the assessment questions. The agency should strengthen this linkage by establishing and documenting a clear relationship between the job duties, KSAs, and the assessment criteria used.

In two cases the same assessment criteria were used for multiple grade levels, i.e., GS-11/12/13 and GS-9/11/12. In the latter case, there was a job analysis for each grade level that differentiated job-related duties/tasks; however, the assessment and the specialized experience statement did not reflect these distinctions.

Occupational questionnaires did not make meaningful distinctions among levels of experience. For example, the level definitions for the Information Technology Specialist, GS-2210-14, asked applicants to select the number of years of experience they had performing certain tasks (e.g., “five or more years,” “between three and five years,” or “between one and three years”). Years of experience does not provide a valid basis for evaluating the depth and breadth of work performed.

Most assessments were missing documentation supporting the overall weight assigned to a rating factor. One assessment reviewed contained documentation from a SME demonstrating which factors were more important in identifying the best qualified candidates for the position, but these factors were not the factors weighted in the assessment. To support the validity of the assessment and that recruitment is targeted to the best candidates for the position, the justification for weighting assessment factors must be documented in the job analysis process and properly implemented in the assessment.

For career ladder positions announced at multiple grade levels, the same rating criteria were used to rate applicants at all grade levels. While it may at times be justifiable to use the same rating criteria for multiple grade levels, no justification for the rationale to do so was included in the job analysis.