

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Hiring Process-Delegated Examining
Purpose:	This Directive and Standard (D&S) establishes procedures for the hiring process that address barriers to achieving Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) hiring reform initiatives and the 80-day hiring process model. The benefit of this D&S is to establish a collaborative process between human resources (HR) professionals and hiring officials with open communications and shared accountability toward achieving hiring reform.
Authority:	Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR 332); Federal Register, Vol. 75, No. 93, pp. 27157-27159, <i>Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process</i>
Approving Official:	Director, Policy and Administration
Contact:	Human Resources Policy and Programs Division, 84-58000

- 1. Introduction.** This D&S is intended to establish hiring process procedures to reform the Bureau of Reclamation's hiring system and to further strengthen its workforce. On May 11, 2010, the President issued a memorandum providing direction to agencies to overhaul the recruitment and hiring of civilian employees. Hiring reform will enable agencies to select high-quality candidates efficiently and quickly and also require hiring officials to take a leadership role in recruiting and selecting employees from all segments of society. This D&S will identify components of Reclamation's hiring process and will implement hiring reform with the goal of establishing and reducing the hiring process to 80-calendar days.
- 2. Applicability.** This D&S applies to HR professionals and hiring officials filling positions with hires from inside and outside the Federal Government into the competitive service under the agency's delegated examining authority 5 United States Code (USC) 1104(a)(2). This D&S does not apply to Senior Executive Service employees.
- 3. Definitions.**
 - A. Assessment Tools.** Measurement tools used to screen, rate, and rank candidates; and to make consistent, accurate, and merit-based distinctions among candidates.
 - B. Category Rating.** A process of evaluating qualified eligibles by quality categories rather than by assigning individual numeric scores. HR professionals assess candidates against job-related criteria and then place them into two or more quality categories. Synonymous with alternative rating as described at 5 USC 3319. As of November 1, 2010, the Department established the requirement that all job opportunity announcements filled through competitive procedures must be announced using category rating procedures.

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- C. **Certificate of Eligibles.** A list of the highest-ranked eligible candidates who applied for a vacancy announcement, in score and veterans' preference order that is submitted to a selecting official for appointment consideration in accordance with the competitive selection laws and regulations.
- D. **Competency.** A combination of measurable or observable skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that contribute to and are critical for successful performance in a particular job.
- E. **Competitive Status.** A person's basic eligibility for assignment (for example, by transfer, promotion, reassignment, demotion, or reinstatement) to a position in the competitive service without having to compete with members of the general public in an open competitive examination. Once acquired, status belongs to the individual, not to the position [5 USC 3304(a)].
- F. **Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing (e-QIP).** e-QIP is a web-based automated system that allows applicants to electronically enter, update, and transmit their personal investigative data over a secure Internet connection to their employing agency for review and approval.
- G. **Eligible or Eligibles.** An individual or individuals who have applied to be considered for a vacancy announcement that have met the qualification requirements for and are otherwise eligible to be considered for the position advertised.
- H. **Federal Personnel/Payroll System (FPPS).** The Department of the Interior's automated system used for personnel record keeping and payroll.
- I. **Hiring Management System (HireMe).** Automated recruitment/staffing tool used by Reclamation.
- J. **Hiring Official.** A person having the authority, by law or by duly delegated authority, to appoint, employ, or promote individuals to positions.
- K. **Hiring Process Roadmap.** OPM's Hiring Process Roadmap illustrates the 80-day hiring process goals established for all agencies.
- L. **Interview Panel.** One or more individuals tasked with interviewing applicants.
- M. **Job Analysis.** Identifies the competencies/knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) directly related to performance in a specific position. It is a systematic procedure for gathering, documenting, and analyzing information about the content, context, and requirements of the job. It demonstrates that there is a clear relationship between the tasks performed on the job and the competencies/KSAs required to perform the tasks.
- N. **Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs).** Vacancy announcements.

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- O. **Manager Satisfaction Survey.** Online survey used to gauge managers' satisfaction with the hiring process each time they complete an action on a certificate of eligibles.
 - P. **Preference Eligible.** A veteran, spouse, widow/widower, or mother, who meets the definition provided in 5 USC 2108.
 - Q. **Public Status Codes.** A feature within the HireMe system that displays the applicant status in USAJOBS, the Federal Government's official source for Federal jobs and employment information online at <http://www.usajobs.gov/>.
 - R. **Quality Categories.** Groupings of eligible, within category rating, with similar levels of competencies, for example, "Best Qualified," "Well Qualified," and "Qualified".
 - R. **Recruitment Incentive.** A payment made to a potential employee as an incentive to accept a Federal job in situations where Reclamation would otherwise have difficulty filling a position (or group of positions).
 - S. **Relocation Incentive.** A payment made to a current employee or group of employees to accept a position or positions that would require the employee(s) to move to a new commuting area or different geographical area. Relocation incentives are for situations in which Reclamation would otherwise have difficulty filling a position (or group of positions).
 - T. **Request for Eligibles.** A request to recruit for a single position in Workforce Transformation and Tracking System which generates a Request for Personnel Action (RPA), also called a Personnel Action Request or Standard Form 52.
 - U. **Workforce Transformation and Tracking System (WTTS).** The Department's automated system that provides the ability for managers and HR staff to track and monitor hiring activities through the various stages of the hiring process.
4. **Responsibilities.**
- A. **Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, and Directors.** The Commissioner, deputy commissioners, and directors are responsible for implementing hiring reform initiatives and for ensuring recruitment and hiring are based on merit after fair and open competition.
 - B. **Hiring Officials.** Hiring officials are responsible for being fully involved in the hiring process, including planning current and future workforce requirements, identifying skills required for the job, identifying whether recruitment and/or relocation incentives will be paid for selectees (after requesting and receiving approval from higher management), and engaging actively in the recruitment and interviewing process. Hiring officials are responsible for hiring highly-qualified employees and supporting their successful transition into the Federal service. Hiring officials must ensure the

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recruitment and selection processes are carried out in a timely manner by utilizing appropriate tools, such as WTTS, and ensure that all actions are consistent with merit system principals and applicable laws and regulations.

- C. **HR Professionals.** HR professionals are responsible for advising and collaborating with hiring officials during the hiring process and providing training to hiring officials on efficient, timely ways to recruit and hire well-qualified individuals. HR professionals will utilize the appropriate tools within WTTS and the HireMe system for tracking each hiring action and will notify applicants of their application status.

5. Hiring Process Procedures.

- A. **Clearance Process for Positions Graded GS-14 and Higher.** Request prior approval for filling positions graded GS-14 and higher, or with full performance level at GS-14 or higher in accordance with Reclamation Manual (RM) D&S, *Clearance Process for Positions Graded GS-14 and Higher*, [HRM 04-03](#). HRM 04-03 does not amend or replace any approval process requirements for specific positions such as public affairs, senior executives, and others which require Departmental approval.
- B. **Position Descriptions.** Position descriptions must be classified before submission of the “Request for Eligibles” personnel action in FPPS and will be included with the RPA to fill a vacancy. Requests for position descriptions to be classified will be submitted to HR using an RPA for “Position Action Only” or other means for tracking classification workload.
- C. **Recruitment.** A “Request for Eligibles” personnel action will be submitted after the position description is classified. To track accountability toward OPM’s 80-day hiring goal, the request must be generated WTTS to create a “Request for Eligibles” in FPPS for the requesting official to authorize and send to the servicing personnel office.
- D. **Job Analysis.**
 - (1) **JOAs/Vacancy Announcements.** Hiring officials provide the necessary job analysis information for the vacancy. HR professionals will prepare vacancy announcements using the vacancy template for streamlined JOAs. Boilerplate language applying to all positions shall not be changed. Vacancy announcements will be as concise as possible and will include language to explain when recruitment or relocation incentives may or will be offered for recruitment actions, if applicable.
 - (2) **Open Period.** Hiring officials in consultation with HR professionals will determine the open period for each vacancy announcement. There is no minimum open period for vacancy announcements. An adequate open period may vary depending on a recruitment plan, the nature of the position, promotion potential, available labor market, and other considerations. An open period of

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less than 5 workdays must have clearly documented reasons in the HR vacancy announcement case file for reconstruction purposes. Reasons must be based on job-related factors, such as the number and type of jobs to be filled, labor market conditions, and recent experience filling similar positions.

- (3) **Quality Categories.** Hiring officials in consultation with HR professionals must determine the quality categories that will be used in the vacancy announcement, through job analysis. The categories must be written to reflect the requirements to perform the job successfully and to distinguish differences in the quality of candidates' job-related competencies or KSAs.
- (4) **Assessment Tools.** Assessment tools must be developed prior to posting the JOA.
 - (a) **Regular Assessments.** Preliminary assessment of qualities and competencies will differentiate candidates who are recommended to move forward in the selection process. Essay-style questions are not allowed in the initial application process but may be used as well as additional assessment tools after initial application if their use is identified in the JOA.
 - (b) **Specialized Assessment, Administrative Careers with America (ACWA).** The ACWA assessment must be used when hiring individuals who do not have competitive status into positions graded GS-5 or GS-7 (with a full performance level of GS-9 or above) in professional and administrative series positions as listed in Appendix D of The Delegated Examining Operations Handbook, 2007 (Chapter 2, Section C). Where required, the HR professional will work with OPM to administer the exam to qualified applicants.
- (5) **Pre-Recruitment Activities.** Hiring officials and HR professionals will develop an agreed-upon timeline for each RPA to fill a vacancy. Hiring officials and HR professionals will schedule dates for issuing the JOA, reviewing applications, issuing the certificate of eligibles, scheduling interviews, interviewing, conducting reference checks, and other selection activities as deemed necessary. HR professionals and hiring officials will work together to shorten the hiring process with the goal to achieve OPM's 80-day hiring model. Equal employment opportunity staff, civil rights, and/or diversity specialists will consult with HR professionals and hiring officials to identify outreach and recruitment sources for under-represented groups, providing information to hiring officials, as appropriate, in identifying ways to remove barriers to diversity, and providing specific data on their organization's parity needs, see RM D&S, *Pre-Recruitment Consultation*, [HRM 04-04](#).

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- E. **Status Notification.** HR professionals will establish Public Status Codes to ensure applicants are notified of their status at the following major points in the hiring process:
- (1) application received complete/incomplete;
 - (2) minimum qualification met/not met;
 - (3) eligible-referred/not referred; and
 - (4) selected/not selected.
- F. **Assessment and Ranking.** Candidates will be assessed against at least two previously defined quality categories. Assessed applicants will be placed in the appropriate category and ranked according to preference eligibility and non-preference eligibility.
- (1) **Veterans.** Preference eligible veterans receive absolute preference within their assessed quality category and must be listed ahead of non-preference eligibles when issuing certificates.
 - (2) **Referring Veterans.** After they have been assessed, HR professionals determine whether to refer both veterans and non-veterans in the highest quality group based on a review of the number of highly-qualified veteran candidates in that group as compared to the number of vacancies to be filled. Please see Personnel Bulletin [No. 10-10](#), dated October 4, 2010.
 - (3) **Veteran Passover.** Approvals to pass over a preference eligible candidate with a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more must be made by OPM. To request approval, the regional HR officer must send a completed Standard Form 62 (Agency Request to Pass Over a Preference Eligible or Object to an Eligible), with supporting documentation to the Manager, Human Resources Policy and Programs (HRP&P) Division, 84-58000. If the reasons submitted are sufficient and supported, the Manager, HRP&P Division will send the request and supporting documentation to the Department. If the Department finds the reasons are sufficient and supports the Passover, the Department will send the request to OPM for final adjudication.
- G. **Life of Certificate of Eligibles.**
- (1) **Initial Issuance.** Certificates will initially be issued for 30 calendar days. These initial certificates may be extended once, for no more than 30 calendar-days.
 - (2) **Approval for Extensions Beyond 60 Days.** Approvals for extension beyond 60 calendar days (initial 30 days plus one 30-day extension) may be made by the regional HR officer for those regions who have achieved an 80-day average hiring time based on the last two quarters of hiring activity. Regions with longer

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average hiring time must submit a formal request for the second extension to the Director, Policy and Administration in accordance with RM D&S, *Request for Waiver from a Reclamation Manual Requirement and Approval or Disapproval of the Request*, [RCD 03-03](#).

- (3) **Reissuing Certificates.** Certificates may be reissued to make additional selections for identical positions, for up to 120 days after the closing date of an announcement.

 - H. **Manager Satisfaction Survey.** Hiring officials are required to complete an online Manager Satisfaction Survey for each certificate of eligibles. A link to the survey is provided in the instructions that accompany each email containing the certificate of eligibles.

 - I. **Job Offers.** All final job offers are made by HR professionals. Hiring officials may make tentative job offers only with prior approval by HR.

 - J. **Security Investigations.** An e-QIP background investigation must be initiated and satisfactorily completed for all applicants selected for Federal employment. Reference RM D&S, *Personnel Security and Suitability*, [SLE 01-01](#), for the requirements and procedures for initiating and adjudicating background investigations.
6. **Resources.** Additional information related to recruitment is located in the HR Toolbox for Supervisors/Managers on Reclamation's HR Intranet Web site.

Reclamation Manual Transmittal Sheet

Effective Date: _____

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Please ensure that all employees who need this information are forwarded a copy of this release.

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