

# Competency-Based Hiring: What Hiring Managers Need to Know

## Your Role is Central, Not Secondary

Competency-based hiring only works when hiring managers actively partner with HR to define, assess, and select the talent needed to achieve mission outcomes.

### Step 1 — Define the Work and Required Competencies

You are the subject-matter expert on what success looks like.

Your actions:

- Confirm the tasks and duties identified by HR
- Confirm Day-One competencies
- Specify what “good,” “acceptable,” and “insufficient” performance looks like
- Identify job-specific technical skill requirements

This enables HR to supplement governmentwide models with agency-specific job requirements.

### Step 2 — Shape the Hiring Strategy

Your insights drive the assessment approach:

- Share operational deadlines, staffing urgency, and typical workload
- Clarify whether the position requires reskilling or cross-series movement
- Help balance assessment burden with mission needs

A hiring strategy built without your input is incomplete.

### Step 3 — Select the Right Assessment Tools

OPM policy now emphasizes demonstration skills, and you help identify what those demonstrations should be.

Your actions:

- Advise on realistic work samples, scenarios, and technical tasks
- Participate in selecting structured interview questions
- Help ensure tools measure job-relevant competencies
- Help ensure the assessment approach accurately identifies high performers

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### Step 4 — Participate Actively in Scoring & Selection

You are a required partner in competency-based selection.

Your responsibilities:

- Ensure SMEs participate in assessment administration and ratings either by selecting SMEs or participating as one
- Apply standardized, competency-aligned scoring guides
- Document the rationale for advancing or eliminating candidates
- Partner with HR to ensure fairness and transparency

Your input directly shapes ranking, not just HR's.

### Step 5 — Improve the Process Over Time

Competency-based hiring is iterative.

Your responsibilities:

- Monitor whether selected candidates actually perform as expected
- Provide input on parts of the hiring process that may be misaligned or burdensome
- Suggest changes to tools as technologies or mission needs evolve

HR uses your insights to refine the system.

### Why Your Voice Matters

Your involvement helps ensure hiring is:

- Skills-driven
- Mission-aligned
- Merit-based
- Legally defensible
- Effective in selecting real talent