



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

Merit System
Accountability and
Compliance

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Memorandum For Chief Human Capital Officers

From: Mark W. Lambert
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Subject: Delegated Examining Certification Checklists for Employees and Supervisors and Engagement After Failure

OPM is releasing two new checklists to aid HR Practitioners and their supervisors in preparing for the DE Certification Assessment. These checklists outline activities to strengthen and informally assess DE skills prior to any attempt of the DE Certification Assessment. We encourage all supervisors and HR Practitioners who are involved in DE but not yet DE-certified to use these tools. In certain instances, described below, the supervisory evaluation is required.

HR Practitioners pursuing Delegated Examining (DE) certification may need to take the DE Certification Assessment more than once to achieve a passing result. However, the occasion of any failure triggers a pause—or waiting period—between Assessment attempts, which is intended for the supervisor and employee to do something more to increase the employee’s understanding of the DE process. This includes taking a focused look at resources to obtain foundational knowledge through training and apply DE principles through on-the-job experience in identified competencies.

WAITING PERIODS	First Fail 30 days	Second Fail 6 months	Subsequent Fails 6 months
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Increased Supervisory Engagement Required After Two or More Failures

While supervisors should engage with their employees upon any failure of the Assessment, upon two or more failures, supervisors must take specific actions during the employee’s six-month waiting period to actively support their employee’s development of DE skills and assess their readiness to continue pursuing DE Certification. In these instances, supervisors must document actions taken by completing and submitting the supervisory evaluation before the employee schedules another attempt of the Assessment. Although required after two or more failures, the evaluation is recommended for all supervisors of HR Practitioners who are pursuing DE certification to help the employees prepare for the Assessment.

An individual's failure to pass the DE Certification Assessment on a second or subsequent attempt may be indicative of an employee lacking an understanding of key DE rules and processes and/or an inability to properly apply DE concepts. Because misapplication of DE rules can have adverse impacts, such as illegal appointments, it is critical HR Practitioners learn to apply them appropriately.

Please share this message and attachments widely. We will be reaching out to your agency's DE Program Manager directly to provide a list of individuals who have failed two or more times and further instructions for supervisory evaluation completion and submission. If you have any questions or need further information about the requirements established by this memorandum, please contact Ana A. Mazzi, Principal Deputy Associate Director, Merit System Accountability and Compliance, at (202) 606-4309 or Ana.Mazzi@opm.gov.

Attachments

Employee Checklist of Activities Recommended to Strengthen Skills in Delegated Examining

Supervisory Evaluation of Employee Readiness for the DE Certification Assessment

Sample DE Scenario Questions – Part 2

cc: Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers and Human Resources Directors

Employee Checklist of Activities Recommended to Strengthen Skills in Delegated Examining

- ☐ I am or will be conducting delegated examining work as part of a Federal agency DE unit

Training – Build a Foundation

- ☐ Have an honest discussion with your supervisor about your training and development needs
- ☐ Foundational Training (Recommended for staff new to DE, prior to DE Training and the Assessment)
 - ☐ Minimum of six months of on-the-job Federal staffing experience working in an operating HR office or in an accountability, staffing policy, or equivalent position **AND**
 - ☐ Federal basic staffing training
- ☐ DE Training

Review and Understand the Full DE Process

- ☐ Review the [OPM Delegated Examining Preparation Toolkit](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- ☐ NEW! Sample DE Scenario Questions – Part 2
- ☐ Attend training in specific competency areas (see Toolkit for training suggestions)

Delegated Examining Competency Areas (defined in the DE Certification Information Sheet)

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Agency Staffing Policies & Procedures | • Job Analysis |
| • Application Processing | • Merit System Accountability |
| • Assessment Methods & Tools | • Public Notice/Job Opportunity Announcements |
| • Category Rating | • Qualifications Determinations |
| • Certification & Selection | • Recruitment & Placement |
| • Hiring Authorities | • Technical Documentation |
| • Hiring Process Management | • Veterans' Preference |

- ☐ Understand how to find information and how to apply the rules within:
 - ☐ [Delegated Examining Operations Handbook \(DEOH\)](#)
 - ☐ [Appendix A of the VetGuide for HR Professionals](#) (only excerpt needed during the Assessment)
 - ☐ [OPM Operating Handbook, Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions](#)
Includes knowledge of overarching General Schedule Qualification Policies such as Application of Qualification Standards

Put It Together - Apply Your Knowledge and Target Specific Areas

- ☐ Minimum of 90 days experience on-the-job
- ☐ Determine which competencies you need to strengthen (in Assessment results or areas you identify)
- ☐ Identify activities that will help you build skills in that area, for example:
 - ☐ Formal training
 - ☐ On-the-job activities in specific competency areas
 - ☐ Find an experienced DE-certified colleague to shadow and give you feedback on activities you are performing such as adjudicating veterans' preference or creating a certificate

Supervisory Evaluation of Employee Readiness for the DE Certification Assessment

Instructions: This checklist is required when an employee you supervise has failed the DE Certification Assessment two or more times. Please take specific actions below during the employee's six-month waiting period and respond to each of the following statements, including the assessment of the employee's readiness to continue pursuing DE certification.

Completed checklists must be submitted to DE.Recertification@opm.gov. The checklist can be submitted as early as 30 days prior to the expiration of the six-month waiting period or when the employee is ready to register for the Assessment.

Agency:		Sub-Agency/Component:
Employee name:		Employee Email:
Most Recent Failure of DE Certification Assessment (Date):		
<input type="checkbox"/> Form Not Applicable (e.g., employee not performing DE activities, employee not part of a DE unit). Skip the activity statements but provide your information on the second page and sign the form.		
Comments (if any):		
Yes	No	Activity Statement
		I received an OPM email notification concerning the employee's most recent DE Certification Assessment failure results including any identified competencies to review.
		I am aware the employee has taken the DE Certification Assessment more than once and failed each attempt.
		I have reviewed the employee's DE Certification Assessment results from each failed attempt.
		I have met with the employee to discuss their DE Certification Assessment results including any identified competencies needing review.
		A plan of action has been developed to strengthen the employee's knowledge and skills in any competencies identified in their DE Certification Assessment results.
		The employee is currently shadowing a colleague to help improve specific competencies, give thorough explanations of DE concepts, and provide feedback on work products.
		Since the latest DE Certification Assessment results, the employee has received formal training (e.g., a training class or agency-developed session) in delegated examining activities.
		Since the latest DE Certification Assessment results, the employee has received informal development (e.g., observed and asked questions of a senior colleague, participated in a study group) and/or on-the-job experiences focused on the competencies identified.
		<i>Answer only if the employee is currently involved in DE activities (e.g., posting a JOA, making qualifications determinations and veterans' preference adjudications, issuing a cert, etc.):</i> The employee's work is reviewed and validated by a DE certified staff member (as required).
		My agency's DE Program Manager or equivalent is aware this employee is currently not certified.

More detail or comments related to items above, including explanation of any “no” responses and any further description of activities the employee has completed following their most recent failure:

What other information related to the employee’s development is important for OPM to know?

Readiness to Pursue DE Certification: Based on my observations, I have evaluated the employee’s skills and abilities related to DE activities and:

- ☐ Attest to their readiness to continue pursuing DE certification
- ☐ Have determined the employee should not be performing DE work

I am the named employee’s first line supervisor and have responded to the above statements to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:

Name:

Title:

Email:

Phone Number:

Sample DE Scenario Questions – Part 2

Instructions:

The three sample scenarios (A, B, and C) are provided to illustrate the content of the DE Certification Assessment.

Please note that on the actual DE Certification Assessment, detailed background information is provided for some questions and electronic reference materials are available to look up information that may be important to consider when answering some questions.

You may need to reference the ***Delegated Examining Operations Handbook, Appendix A of VetGuide***, and the appropriate OPM qualifications standard to answer the sample questions.

Use Scenario A to answer questions 1 and 2.

Scenario A: Your agency has posted an Economist, GS-0110-09, vacancy. The vacancy announcement defines the specialized experience as "experience applying methods and principles of economics and their application to research projects or experience developing, analyzing, and presenting statistical information."

1) For the economics 0110 series, the OPM qualification standards is covered by a group standard and has individual occupational requirements (IOR). Which OPM qualifications group standard is used for an Economist position?

- A. Clerical and Administrative Support Positions
- B. Technical and Medical Support Positions
- C. Administrative and Management Positions
- D. Professional and Scientific Positions

2) Maria applies to this Economist, GS-0110-09, vacancy. She possesses a bachelor's degree from an accredited university. She submits a copy of her college transcripts which list a major in economics with 24 completed semester hours in economics and 6 completed semester hours in calculus. Maria's resume notes 18 months of experience as an Economist Assistant, GS-0119-5. As the HR Specialist reviewing Maria's qualifications, what is the correct qualifications determination?

- A. Maria meets the minimum qualification requirements and the individual occupational requirements
- B. Maria meets the individual occupational requirements but does not meet the minimum qualification requirements
- C. Maria does not meet the individual occupational requirements
- D. Maria does not meet time-in-grade

Use Scenario B to answer questions 3-6.

Scenario B: Your agency has posted a Statistician, GS-1530-11, vacancy. The quality categories are: Gold (95 and above), Silver (80–94), and Bronze (70–79). Twenty-one (21) applicants applied and 7 are qualified. (see Table 1)

Table 1

Name	Score	Veterans' Preference
Maria	94	CPS
Jason	85	XP
Ken	72	CP
Lauren	100	NV
John	70	NV
Nina	80	TP
Teresa	95	CP

3) From the qualified candidates listed in Table 1, who should be placed in the Gold category?

- A. Maria, Ken, Lauren, Teresa
- B. Lauren
- C. Lauren and Teresa
- D. Maria, Jason, Ken, Nina, Teresa

5) Merge the top two categories. Who are the eligibles in the newly merged highest quality category for the Statistician, GS-1530-11, position?

- A. Maria, Jason, Ken, Lauren, John, Nina, Teresa
- B. Maria, Jason, Lauren, Nina
- C. Maria, Jason, Ken, Nina, Teresa
- D. Maria, Jason, Lauren, Nina, Teresa

4) The HR Specialist is preparing to issue the certificate of eligibles for the Statistician, GS-1531-11, position to the hiring manager. The agency policy allows the HR Specialist to merge categories. The hiring official would like to merge, if possible. Can the Gold and Silver categories be merged?

- A. Yes, merging is allowable because there are fewer than 3 eligibles in the Gold category
- B. No, merging is not allowable because there is a preference eligible in the Gold category
- C. No, merging is only allowable after selections have been made
- D. Yes, merging is allowable because there are preference eligibles in the Silver category

6) Based on the newly merged highest quality category, who is within reach for selection for the Statistician, GS-1530-11, position?

- A. Lauren
- B. Maria, Jason, Nina, and Teresa
- C. Maria, Jason, and Teresa
- D. Maria and Teresa

Use Scenario C to answer questions 7-9.

Scenario C: Your agency has posted an Industrial Hygienist, GS-0690-12, vacancy. There are three candidates in the highest quality category who claimed veterans' preference: Stephanie, Rachel, and Mark.

7) Stephanie served in the military on active duty from August 3, 2003, to June 3, 2005. Her DD-214 shows she received the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Purple Heart, and an Honorable discharge. How should you adjudicate Stephanie's claimed veterans' status?

- A. As a TP preference eligible, because Stephanie served on active duty for more than 120 days during a qualifying period of time
- B. As a TP preference eligible, because the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal is qualifying for veterans' preference
- C. As a CP preference eligible, because Stephanie was awarded the Purple Heart
- D. As an XP preference eligible, because Stephanie was awarded the Purple Heart

8) Rachel served in the military on active duty from March 3, 2015, to March 3, 2018. Her DD-214 shows she received the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and an Honorable discharge. She also submitted a letter from the VA stating she had a service-connected disability that was 0% disabling. How should you adjudicate Rachel's claimed veterans' status?

- A. As a NV, because her service is not qualifying for veterans' preference
- B. As a TP preference eligible, because Rachel received the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- C. As a XP preference eligible, because Rachel has a service-connected disability
- D. As a CP preference eligible, because Rachel has a service-connected disability

9) Mark served in the military on active duty from September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2021. His DD-214 shows he received the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and an Honorable discharge. How should you adjudicate Mark's claimed veterans' status?

- A. As a NV, because his service is not qualifying for veterans' preference
- B. As a TP preference eligible, because Mark served during a qualifying period of time
- C. As a TP preference eligible, because he received the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
- D. As a CP preference eligible, because he served in a campaign or expedition