

FAQ: Benefits of Shared Certificates

A shared certificate is a selection certificate (list of qualified candidates) that may be used by multiple hiring managers across agencies, to fill the same or similar positions. Instead of generating individual certificates for each vacancy, a single certificate is used to streamline the hiring process.

What are the key benefits of using shared certificates?

1. Increased Hiring Efficiency

- Shared certificates significantly reduce the time-to-hire by eliminating the need to create multiple certificates for similar positions. This leads to faster referrals and selections.

2. Cost Savings

- By consolidating job announcements and assessments, agencies save on administrative and testing costs. It eliminates duplicate efforts in creating and managing multiple hiring actions.

3. Broader Use of Quality Candidates

- Candidates identified as highly qualified on a shared certificate are eligible for consideration across multiple vacancies, improving their chances of selection and reducing the need for multiple applications.

4. Standardization and Fairness

- All candidates are assessed using the same criteria, ensuring consistency and fairness across selections. It helps to uphold merit system principles by treating all candidates equitably.

5. Supports Strategic Workforce Planning and the Merit Hiring Plan initiative

- A shared certificate provides flexibility for agencies to address evolving hiring needs. It gives hiring managers access to a pre-qualified talent pool for similar roles and supports section 1. D. of the Merit Hiring Plan joint memorandum of May 29, 2025 (<https://www.opm.gov/chcoc/transmittals/2025/Merit%20Hiring%20Plan%205-29-2025%20FINAL.pdf>).

6. Compliance and Transparency

- Proper documentation and use of shared certificates enhance transparency and audit readiness. This practice helps agencies meet Delegated Examining and merit system requirements.
- Agencies should consider shared certificates when multiple hiring managers or offices across agencies are seeking to fill positions that are:
 - In the same occupational series and grade
 - In the same geographic location or within interchangeable commuting areas
 - Have substantially similar duties, qualification requirements, and conditions of employment