

Designing an Assessment Strategy

Workshop Presented by the
U.S. Office of Personnel Management



Course Objectives

- Provide a broad overview of assessment goals
- Outline current and emerging assessment options and models
- Identify steps and variables to consider when developing an assessment strategy
- Discuss implementation issues and considerations



Agenda

- Background and Context
- Assessment Models and Options
- Building an Assessment Strategy
- Implementation Considerations
- Summary and Conclusion



Introductions

Who is our audience?...

- HR professionals?
- HR managers?
- Hiring managers?
- Agency executives?
- Other?





Background & Context



Assessment: Defining the Terms

- **Assessment:** a systematic approach to gathering information about individuals; this information is used to make employment or career-related decisions about applicants and employees
- **Assessment Tool:** any test or procedure (for example, ability test, structured interview, work sample) used to measure an individual's employment or career-related qualifications and interests

U.S. Department of Labor, *Testing and Assessment: An Employer's Guide to Good Practices*, 2000

Assessment: Defining the Terms

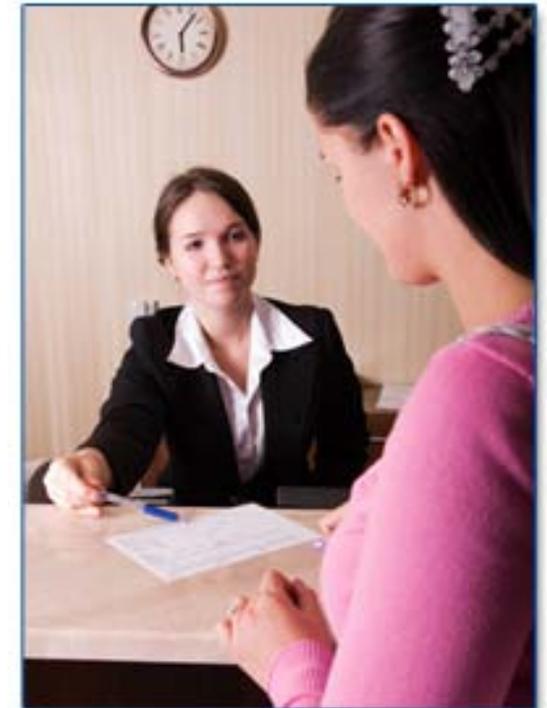
Assessment Strategy: an established plan for designing and implementing one or more assessment tools for an organization, occupation, or a specific situation.



Goal of Assessment in Federal Hiring

To make consistent, accurate, and merit-based distinctions among candidates

U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, Identifying Talent through Technology: Automated Hiring Systems in Federal Agencies, 2004





Hiring Reform

- Presidential Memorandum issued May 11, 2010
 - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/presidential-memorandum-improving-federal-recruitment-and-hiring-process>
- Overarching objectives:
 - Recruit and hire highly qualified employees in a timely and efficient manner
 - Make public service a career of choice for the most talented Americans



Hiring Reform & Assessment

Departments/Agencies will by November 1, 2010...

- Eliminate written essay-style questions (KSAs) at the time of application
- Allow individuals to apply by submitting resumes and cover letters or completing simple, plain language applications, and **assess applicants using valid, reliable tools**





Hiring Reform & Assessment

Departments/Agencies will by November 1, 2010...

- Provide for selection among a larger number of qualified applicants by using “category rating”
- More fully involve managers and supervisors with responsibility for hiring in workforce planning, job analysis, recruitment, and assessment

State of Assessment

“...Assessment is the weakest link in the government’s problematic hiring chain...”

- Partnership for Public Service & PDRI, A PreVisor Company (August 2010). *The Weakest Link: How Strengthening Assessment Leads to Better Federal Hiring* (p. i).



Barriers to Effective Assessment

- Key players in the federal hiring process— hiring managers, HR professionals, agency leaders and OPM—often do not work together
- Lack of assessment expertise
- Narrow perception of assessment
- Information technology systems may not easily support a range of assessment options
- Lack of meaningful data to evaluate effectiveness of assessments

The Importance of Effective Assessment

- Increases the likelihood of hiring employees who possess the right competencies and will contribute to agency success
- Results in hiring, placing, and promoting greater numbers of superior performers
- Results in reduced turnover
- Allows veterans' preference to work as intended



The Importance of Effective Assessment

- Results in cost savings to the organization
 - Poor hire estimated to cost 2-3 X salary in year one
 - Lower training and performance management costs
- Decreases the likelihood of a bad hire and associated consequences
 - Poor work quality
 - Dissatisfied customers
 - Lowered morale among fellow employees

Assessment: The Way Ahead

“Devoting resources and attention to assessment is a key element needed to make federal hiring reforms work ...”

-Partnership for Public Service & PDRI, A PreVisor Company (August 2010). *The Weakest Link: How Strengthening Assessment Leads to Better Federal Hiring* (p. iii).



Assessment: The Way Ahead

“Senior agency leaders, not just the heads of HR, must elevate the importance of assessment in the hiring process by:

- investing sufficient staff time and resources,
- outlining reasonable goals for agency success,
- promoting ownership among key agency staff and
- holding appropriate people accountable for results.”

-Partnership for Public Service & PDRI, A PreVisor Company (August 2010). *The Weakest Link: How Strengthening Assessment Leads to Better Federal Hiring* (p. ii).

Action Step

Use the form provided to..

- Identify topics for strategic assessment discussions at your agency
- Identify specific ideas and action steps for improving assessments at your agency





Assessment Models & Options



Topics Covered

- Broad assessment considerations
- Assessment options
- Multiple hurdles approach
- Case studies
- Discussion



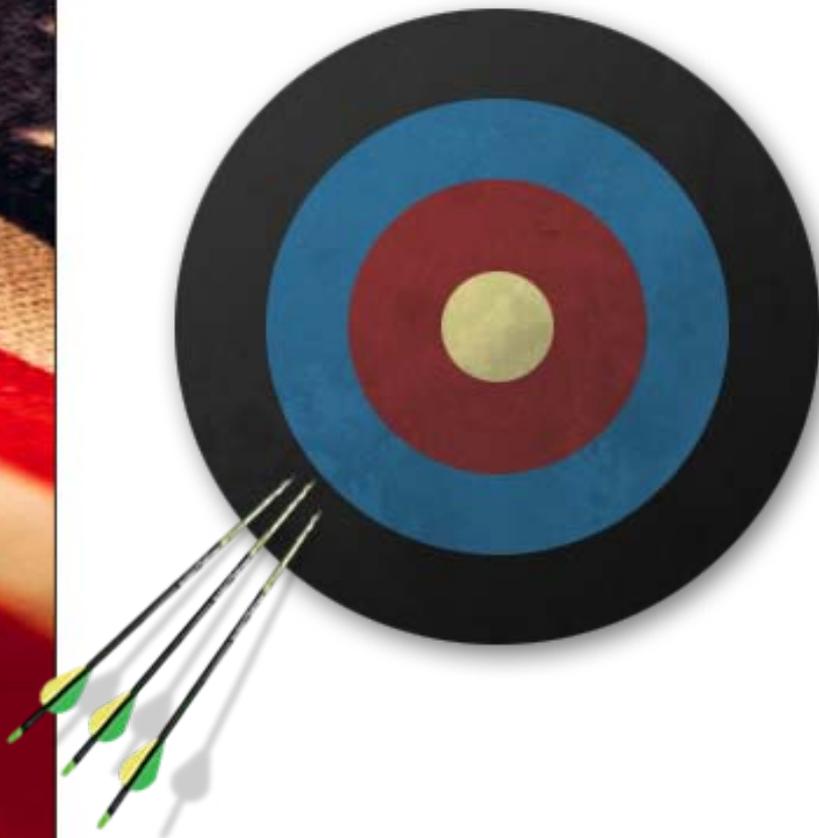
Assessment Considerations

- Development and implementation costs
- Time and expertise required
- Applicant acceptance/face validity
- Potential for adverse impact
- Reliability and validity evidence

Reliability and Validity: An Example

High reliability is a necessary condition for high validity, but high reliability does not ensure validity.

Reliable, but not Valid



Both Reliable and Valid



Validity of Various Assessment Tools

Validity coefficients quantify the relationship between scores on a selection device and job performance. The higher the coefficient, the better we can predict job performance.

Work Sample Tests	.54	} Validity Coefficients
Structured Interviews	.51	
Job Knowledge Tests	.48	
Assessment Centers	.37	
Biodata Instruments	.35	
Reference Checks	.26	
Training & Experience Point Method	.11	

Schmidt, F., & Hunter, J. (1998). The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Psychology: Practical and Theoretical Implications of 85 Years of Research Findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124, 262-274.



Assessment Options



Occupational Questionnaire

Task- and competency-based self-report questionnaires used to screen and rank applicants based on their job-related training and experience

Strengths	Considerations
Can be administered and scored electronically in a non-proctored setting	Requires subject matter expert (SME) involvement to develop
High face validity and convenience for applicants	Applicant response inflation must be addressed
Wide variety of competencies can be assessed	Less suitable for entry-level and unspecialized positions
Low adverse impact	Low validity; potential for lack of discrimination among applicants

Occupational Questionnaire: Example

Indicate the extent to which you have communicated orally with various levels of employees to obtain and provide information.

- A. I have had no experience in performing this task.
- B. I have communicated orally with others to obtain or verify information or to provide routine information.
- C. I have communicated orally with supervisors, managers, or office personnel to notify them of decisions, problems, or further actions needed, or to explain the organization's programs or services.
- D. I have given short oral presentations at departmental or organizational briefings and meetings to convey information on program activities or to describe the impact of new organizational policies on operational responsibilities.
- E. I have led briefings or taught courses on highly technical or complex material to audiences such as high-level managers or executives.

Occupational Questionnaire: Example

Manage a financial management information system that supports accounting, budgeting, procurement, disbursing, and/or statistical reporting.

A....

B....

C....

D....

E.....

If you rated yourself D or E, in the text box below, please write in the name of the financial management system you managed and the relevant position(s) you held.

Biographical Data Questionnaire (Biodata)

- Items about past events and behaviors that predict overall performance for a given occupation
- Items scored using a research-based scoring key

Strengths	Considerations
Can be administered and scored electronically in a non-proctored setting	Requires SME involvement and measurement expertise to develop
High validity	Somewhat low face validity for applicants
Low adverse impact	

Biodata: Example

This questionnaire asks you to describe your educational, work, and other experiences in specific areas which relate to successful job performance...

My peers would probably describe me as being:

- A. much more confident than most
- B. somewhat more confident than most
- C. about as confident as anyone else
- D. somewhat less confident than most
- E. much less confident than most

During high school (grades 9-12) I made the semester honor roll:

- A. never
- B. once or twice
- C. three or four times
- D. five or six times
- E. seven or eight times

Cognitive Ability Test

Applicants are asked to solve questions to estimate their potential to use mental processes to solve job-related problems or acquire job knowledge; can also measure aptitude for job-related skills

Strengths	Considerations
Can be administered and scored electronically	Security of test materials
High validity	Can adversely impact minority groups
	Requires measurement expertise to develop

Cognitive Ability Test: Example

The bus fare is increasing by 10%. The old bus fare was \$20. What will the new fare be?

- A. \$20
- B. \$21
- C. \$22
- D. \$23



Personality Test

Multiple choice questions used to generate a profile of traits which can predict job performance or satisfaction with certain aspects of work

Strengths	Considerations
High validity	Must be linked to job-relevant information
Can be administered and scored electronically in a non-proctored setting	Requires measurement expertise to develop and interpret results

Personality Test: Example

I find it easy to see things from someone else's point of view.

- A. Strongly agree
- B. Somewhat agree
- C. Neither agree or disagree
- D. Somewhat disagree
- E. Strongly disagree



Situational Judgment Test

Presents applicants with a description of a work problem or critical situation, and asks them to identify how they would deal with it (can be paper, computerized, or video-based format)

Strengths	Considerations
High validity and face validity for applicants	Requires SME involvement and measurement expertise to develop
Can be administered and scored electronically	Security of test materials

Situational Judgment Test: Example

No special training or experience is required to answer these questions. Identify from the response options the one that best represents *how you would handle the situation*.

You are a member of a project team. Another member of the team gives you a task that you do not feel qualified or trained to handle. What would you do?

- A. Complete the task as best you can.
- B. Consult with your supervisor.
- C. Ask someone in the office who knows how to do the task to help you.
- D. Ask the staff member to reassign the task to a more qualified team member.

Job Knowledge Test

Comprised of specific questions developed to determine how much the candidate knows about particular job tasks or responsibilities

Strengths	Considerations
High validity and face validity for applicants	Requires SME involvement and measurement expertise to develop
Can be administered and scored electronically	Security of test materials
	Most appropriate for specialized or technical jobs

Job Knowledge Test: Example

A corporation repurchased some of their own stock purchase warrants. The price that they paid exceeded the amount that was assigned to the warrants at issuance. How should the excess paid be treated?

- A. expensed
- B. charged to capital stock
- C. charged to additional paid-in capital
- D. charged to retained earnings
- E. capitalized and amortized

Writing Assessment

- Presents applicants with exercises similar to the writing that they would be required to perform on the job
- Scored by raters using professionally-developed benchmarks or by complex automated protocols

Strengths	Considerations
High validity and face validity for applicants	Requires SME involvement and measurement expertise to develop
Multiple ratings/consensus leads to increased reliability	Resource intensive rating process
Can be administered electronically	Security of test materials

Writing Assessment: Example

You are the supervisor in charge. You have been provided a list of information gathered by one of your team members during an investigation; this list of facts is in no particular order. You will need to prepare an Incident Report to document the situation. When generating your Incident Report, use the information provided as the basis for your document. Additional analysis of the facts provided is not required.

- suspect: male
- occurred 3:30pm
- Sergeant Smith on scene saw everything
- found near east entrance - white powder
-

Work Sample/Simulation

- Requires applicants to perform tasks/ activities that are identical or highly similar to tasks/activities performed on the job
- Generally rated by assessors using professionally-developed benchmarks

Strengths	Considerations
High validity and face validity for applicants	Requires SME involvement and measurement expertise to develop
Multiple ratings/consensus leads to increased reliability	Resource intensive rating process
Can be administered electronically	Security of test materials

Work Sample/Simulation: Example

- For the purposes of this exercise, you are to assume the role of a new analyst with OA Consultants (OAC). OAC is a small consulting firm that evaluates various organizational processes for public and private sector clients. Your supervisor, Chris Carpenter, has asked you to review the attached materials and respond, in writing, to the request found in the memo from the customer.
- The purpose of this exercise is to evaluate your Reasoning, Customer Service, and Writing skills. Please be sure to state the request and discuss your findings and conclusions in your report. You will have one hour to review the materials and write your report.

Structured Interview

- Panel interview where all candidates are asked the same job-related questions (often competency-and behavioral-based)
- Interviewers use detailed rating scales, evaluating all candidates according to the same standards

Strengths	Considerations
High validity and face validity for applicants	Requires SME involvement to develop
Multiple ratings/consensus leads to increased reliability	Resource intensive administration and rating process
Legally defensible compared to unstructured, conventional interviews	Assessors must be trained in conducting and rating the interviews

Structured Interview: Example

Competency: Interpersonal Skills - Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.

Lead Question: Describe a situation in which you dealt with individuals who were difficult, hostile, or distressed.

Probing Questions: Who was involved? What specific actions did you take? What was the outcome?

Structured Interview: Example

Proficiency Level	1- Low	2	3-Average	4	5- Outstanding
Benchmark Definition	Handles interpersonal situations involving little or no tension or discomfort ...		Handles interpersonal situations involving a moderate degree of tension or discomfort ...		Handles interpersonal situations involving a high degree of tension or discomfort ...
	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4	Example 5
Behavioral Example	Refers employees to the appropriate staff member ...	Works with others on a cross-functional team ...	Establishes cooperative working relationships with managers ...	Facilitates an open forum to discuss employee concerns ...	Diffuses an emotionally charged meeting with external stakeholders ...

Accomplishment Record

- Applicants provide a written description of a situation to illustrate their proficiency in critical job-related competencies
- Evaluated by a panel of trained raters against competency-based benchmarks

Strengths	Considerations
High face validity for applicants	Somewhat burdensome for applicants as a prescreen
Multiple ratings/consensus leads to increased reliability	Resource intensive rating process
Can be administered electronically in a non-proctored setting	Results should be verified at a later stage in the assessment process

Accomplishment Record: Example

Analytical Reasoning is critical for the Program Analyst position. Analytical Reasoning is defined as...

Using the text box below, please describe **one specific instance** from your training and/or experience in which you demonstrated experience in Analytical Reasoning. In your response, please follow these important guidelines as you write your accomplishment:

- Describe the **situation** -- i.e., the challenge faced, the problem to be solved...
- Describe the specific **actions** you took...
- State the **outcome**, results, or long-term impact of your accomplishment...

Provide the name and a telephone number or email address or other method of contacting someone who can verify this information...

Assessment Center

- Consists of multiple assessments to evaluate small groups of applicants on a variety of job-related competencies
- Designed to resemble actual challenges that will be found in the job
- Applicant performance is observed and evaluated by multiple trained assessors

Strengths	Considerations
High validity and face validity for applicants	Requires SME involvement and measurement expertise to develop
Multiple ratings/consensus across multiple assessments leads to increased reliability	Resource intensive administration and rating process
Low adverse impact	

Assessment Center: Example

You are to assume the role of a new manager in *XYZ Fictitious Agency*. Today is your first day... Your schedule today will include:

- Orientation
- Individual in-basket exercise
- Role-play exercise
- Group interaction
- Writing exercise





Emerging Assessment Options



USAJOBS Assess

- A Federal platform for online, un-proctored assessments
- Will integrate with automated staffing systems through USAJOBS®
- Currently undergoing system validation
- Offers the flexibility to use assessment techniques not generally offered – or offered with less fidelity - in traditional staffing systems
- Can be supplemented by occupational questionnaires designed to measure technical competencies



USAJOBS Assess

USAJOBS Assess

- Computer adaptive testing
- Innovative assessments (e.g., animation)
- Cognitive and non-cognitive competencies
- Lower applicant burden
- Same/greater prediction
- Less concern around “the test” being “gamed” by applicants



USAJOBS Assess

USAJOBS Assess

Assessments for 12 occupational series:

- Accountant, GS-0510
- Budget Analyst, GS-0560
- Financial Management Specialist, GS-0501
- Contract Specialist, GS-1102
- Contact Representative, GS-0962
- Management and Program Analyst, GS-0343
- Human Resources Specialist, GS-0201
- Information Technology Specialist, GS-2210
- Security Specialist, GS-0080
- Secretary (Office Automation), GS-0318
- Miscellaneous Clerk and Assistant, GS-0303
- Human Resources Assistant, GS-0203

Sample Screen Shots

USAJOBS Assess

My Account
John Doe
Last login : 04/28/2010

Assessment Catalog

- OPM CAT Cognitive Math Assessment**
Measures aptitude in numerical reasoning.
[Take Now!](#)
- OPM CAT Cognitive Reasoning Assessment**
Measures aptitude in reasoning and problem solving.
[Take Now!](#)
- OPM Situational Judgment Test (SJT)**
Measures judgment and decision making in a variety of work situations.
[Take Now!](#)
- OPM Work Styles Assessment**
This assessment asks questions about your interests and preferences.

USAJOBS Assess

OPM Situational Judgment Test (SJT)

Scenario

Your customer has identified some items that she printed from the store's website that she would like to purchase at the store.

[Next >>](#)

OPM Situational Judgment Test (SJT), Question 1 of 3

USAJOBS Assess

OPM Situational Judgment Test (SJT)

Progress: 15 Min Remaining

Step 1: Scenario

Your customer has identified some items that she printed from the store's website that she would like to purchase at the store.

Watch the following video and choose the most and least effective course of action from the options below.

Step 2: Choose Most Effective Least Effective

Ask questions to help identify who the store associate was that talked with her. If the person is available, have him or her explain the miscommunication.

Apologize for the misinformation that was given to her. See whether you can order the exact stain she

USAJOBS Assess

OPM CAT Cognitive Reasoning Assessment

Progress: 30 Min Remaining

All unexcused absences result in disciplinary action. Some extended breaks are unexcused absences.

Based on the information above, which of the following statements MUST be true?

- Some disciplinary actions are not due to extended breaks.
- Some extended breaks do not result in disciplinary action.
- All extended breaks result in disciplinary action.
- Some disciplinary actions are due to extended breaks.
- No extended breaks result in disciplinary action.

[Reveal Answer](#) OPM CAT Cognitive Reasoning Assessment, Question 1 of 4
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Sample Screen Shots

Search Jobs My Account Info Center Welcome John! | Sign out

USAJOBS Assess

OPM Situational Judgment Test (SJT)

Progress: ■ 15 Min Remaining

Step 1: Scenario

Your customer has identified some items that she printed from the store's website that she would like to purchase at the store.

Watch the following video and choose the most and least effective course of action from the options below.

Step 2: Choose Most Effective Least Effective

Ask questions to help identify who the store associate was that talked with her. If the person is available, have him or her explain the miscommunication.

Apologize for the misinformation that was given to her. See whether you can order the exact stain she wants and check with your supervisor whether you are

Done Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

Other Assessment Strategy Tools

“Agencies view assessment too narrowly and miss out on good candidates”

- Partnership for Public Service & PDRI, A PreVisor Company (August 2010). *The Weakest Link: How Strengthening Assessment Leads to Better Federal Hiring* (p. 9).

- Realistic job preview (RJP)
- Reference checks
- Probationary period
- Intern programs



Multiple Hurdles Approach



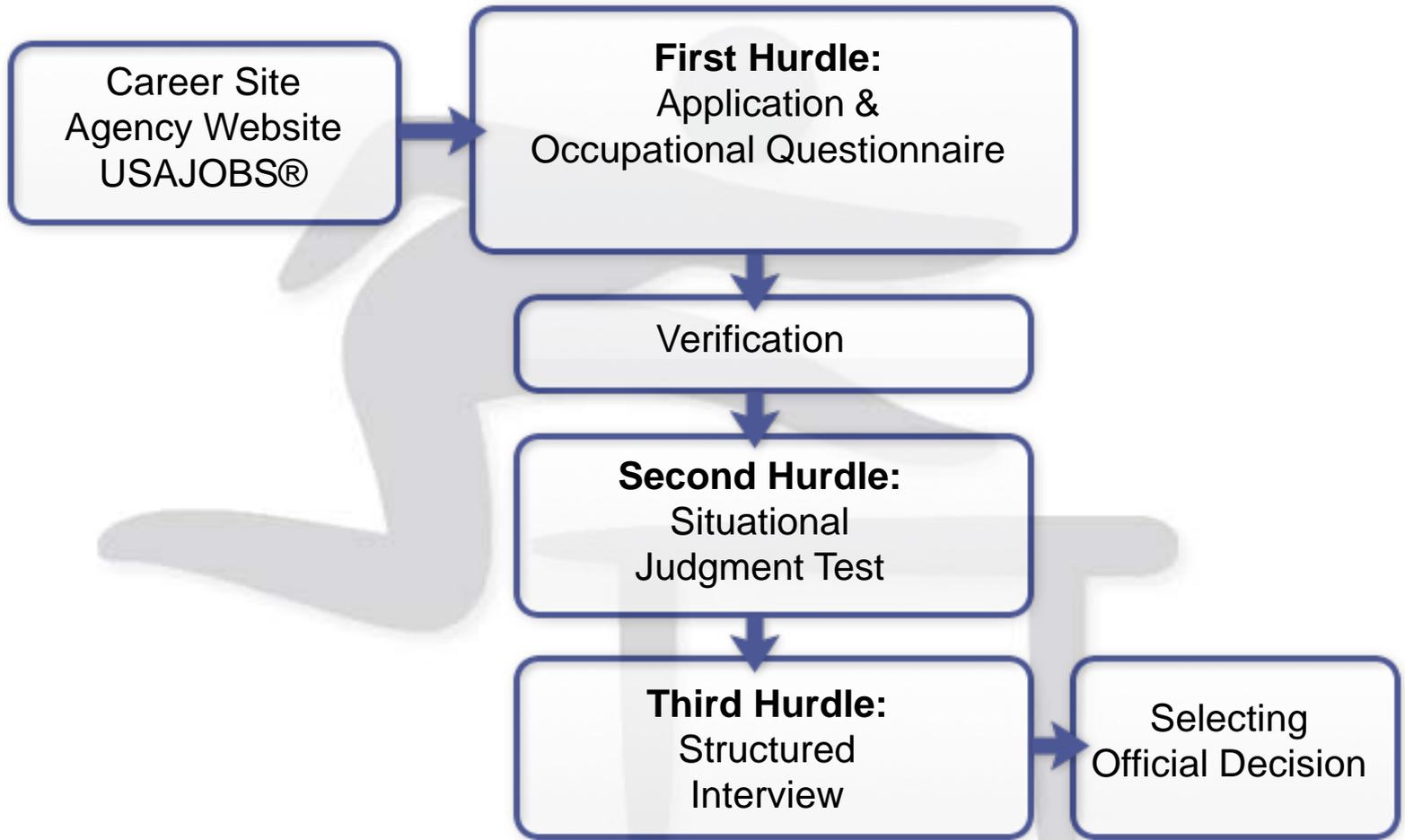
Common Assessment Strategy

Multiple Hurdles Approach

- When using multiple assessment tools, a hurdled approach helps narrow down the applicant pool
- Maximizes the efficiency of resources by utilizing the most time and cost intensive resources on the best qualified individuals



Multiple Hurdles Approach: An Example



Assessment Order

- Common first hurdles
 - Application and resume
 - Occupational questionnaire
 - Biodata
- Common second and/or third hurdles
 - Cognitive ability test
 - Personality test
 - Situational judgment test
 - Job knowledge test
 - Writing assessment
 - Work sample/ simulation
 - Accomplishment record
 - Structured interview
 - Assessment center

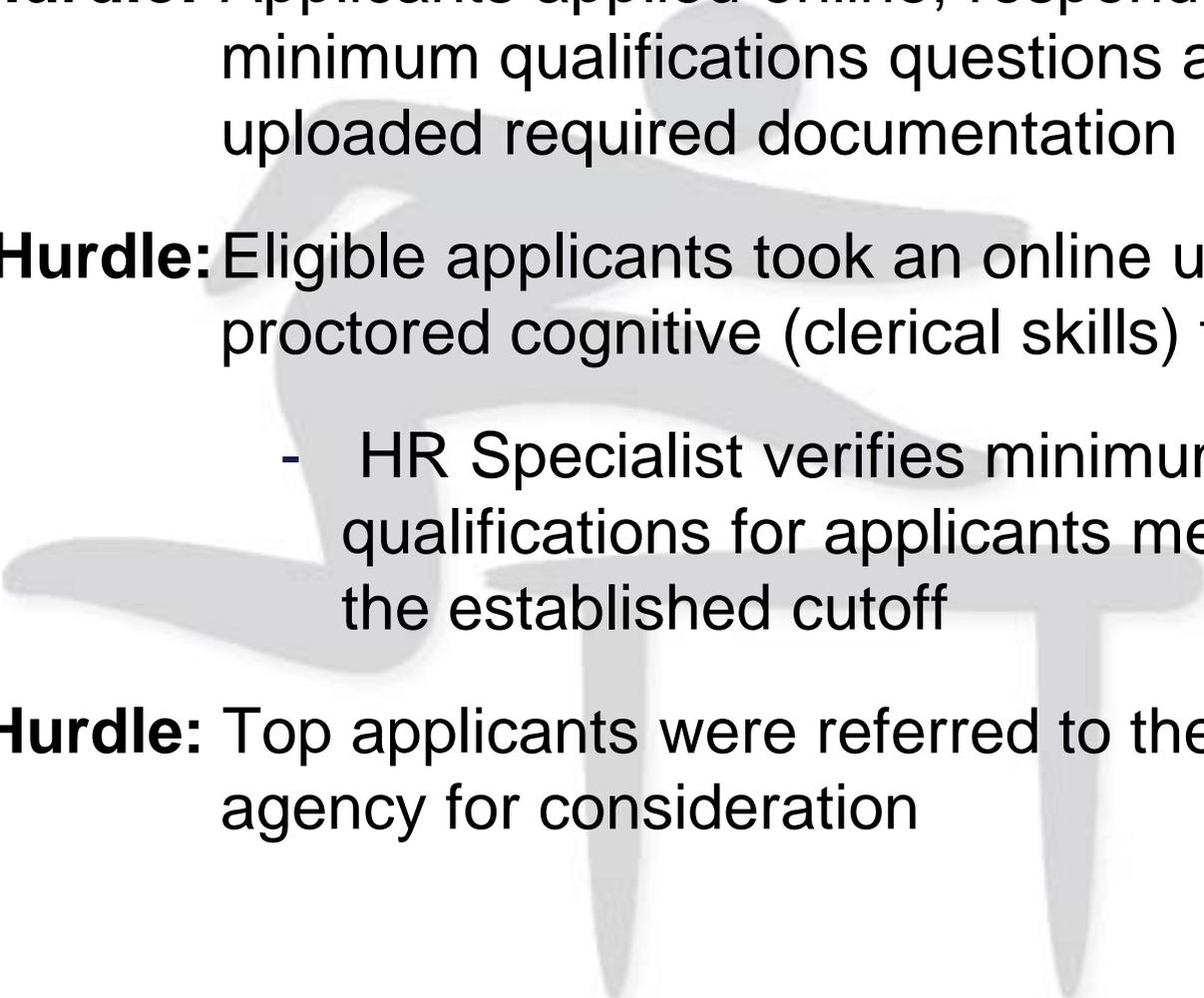


Case Studies



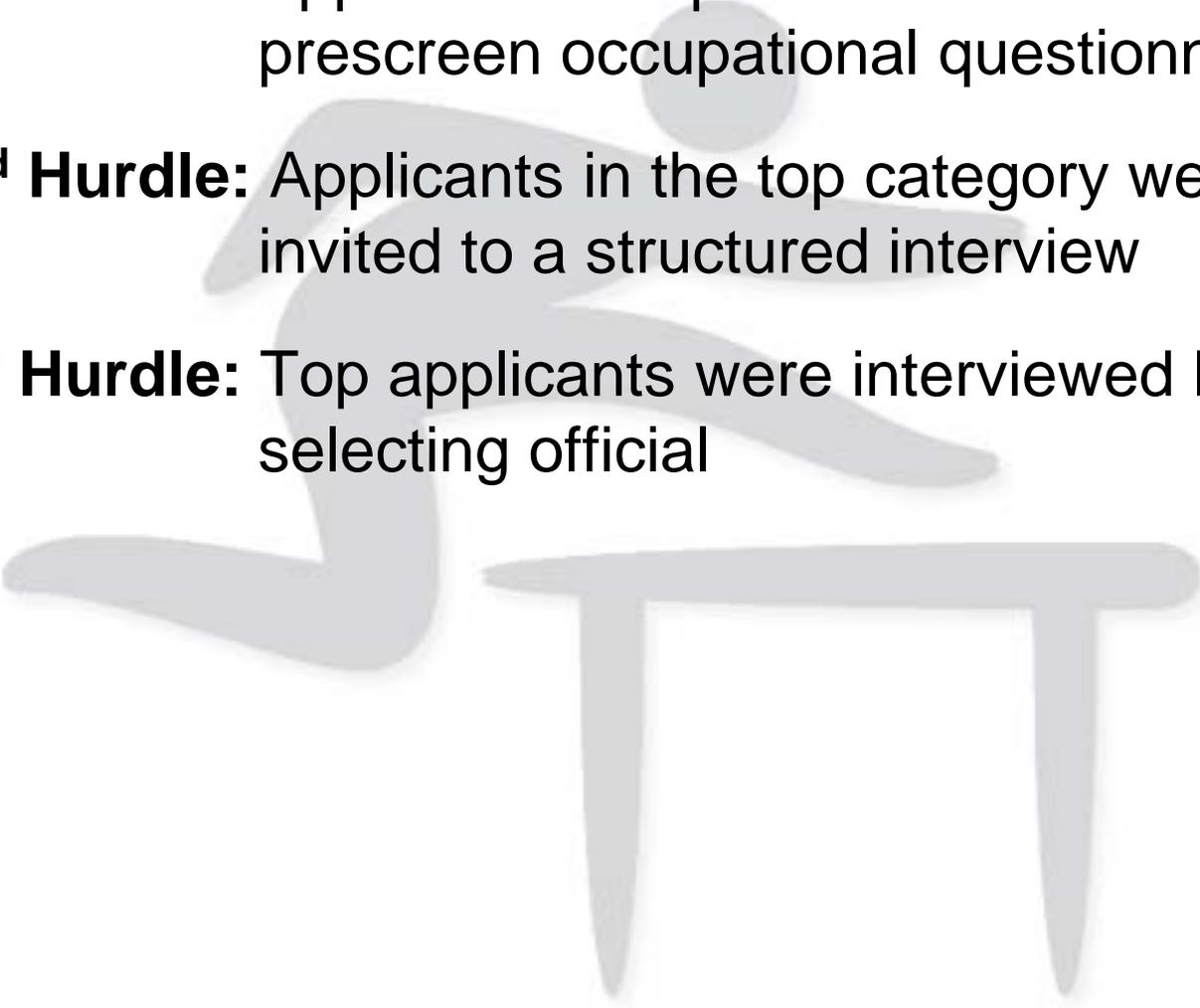


Case Study (2009): HR Assistant Shared Register

- 
- 1st Hurdle:** Applicants applied online, responded to minimum qualifications questions and uploaded required documentation
- 2nd Hurdle:** Eligible applicants took an online un-proctored cognitive (clerical skills) test
- HR Specialist verifies minimum qualifications for applicants meeting the established cutoff
- 3rd Hurdle:** Top applicants were referred to the agency for consideration



Case Study (2010): OPM Personnel Psychologist

- 
- 1st Hurdle:** Applicants completed an online prescreen occupational questionnaire
 - 2nd Hurdle:** Applicants in the top category were invited to a structured interview
 - 3rd Hurdle:** Top applicants were interviewed by the selecting official



Case Study (2010): Presidential Management Fellows (PMF)

1st Hurdle: Applicants completed a customized online application

2nd Hurdle: Eligible applicants completed computer-based proctored assessments: cognitive test, biodata test, and writing assessment

- Applicants ranked based on their combined score on the assessments

3rd Hurdle: Top applicants interviewed by interested agencies



Discussion

- How are you making decisions regarding assessment tools and strategies at your agency?
- What experience do you have using a multiple hurdles approach?
- How might you take advantage of a multiple hurdles approach at your agency?



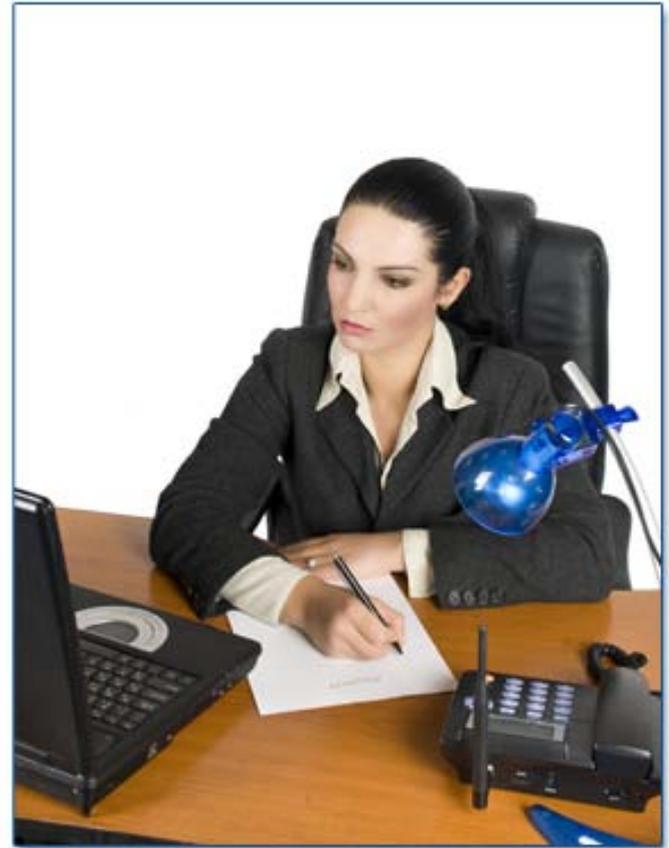


Building an Assessment Strategy



Topics Covered

- Questions to consider
- Resources available
- Group exercise



Questions to Consider

- How many job openings and applicants are expected?
 - If the ratio of job openings to applicants is high (e.g., few job openings and few applicants), you may not need an elaborate assessment strategy
 - If the ratio of job openings to applicants is low (e.g., few job openings and many applicants), a more elaborate assessment strategy will likely prove beneficial



Questions to Consider

- What is the nature and level of jobs to be filled?
 - If the job is more general in nature and/or the job level is lower, you may not need an elaborate assessment strategy
 - If the job is specialized in nature and/or the job level is higher, a more elaborate assessment strategy may prove beneficial



Questions to Consider

- What resources are available to **develop** and **implement** assessments?
 - Time
 - Budget
 - People



Questions to Consider

- What competencies need to be assessed?
 - Determined via job analysis
 - See OPM's Delegated Examining Operations Handbook (Chapter 2, Section B and Appendix G)
http://www.opm.gov/deu/Handbook_2007/DEO_Handbook.pdf
 - See also <http://opm.gov/hiringtoolkit/docs/jobanalysis.pdf>
 - Identified with input of job experts
 - Not all competencies can be assessed
 - Identify most important competencies that are linked to the job and are required at entry and focus on these

Questions to Consider

- Have you evaluated each assessment option?
 - Reliability and validity
 - Potential for subgroup differences (adverse impact)
 - Competencies assessed
 - How the assessments interrelate
 - Prior experience with assessments

Questions to Consider

- How will the assessments be scored?
 - Formula used to combine scores?
 - Setting of passing/cut-off scores?



Questions to Consider

- In what order will the assessments be administered?
 - Is there a single hurdle, or screen?
 - Is there more than one hurdle (i.e., multiple hurdles approach)?



Questions to Consider

- Are there any other factors we need to consider in filling this position?
 - Satisfaction with previous applicants and hires
 - Cost of a hiring error
 - Union involvement
 - Prior litigation
 - High turnover



Resources for Assistance

- OPM's Assessment Decision Tool (ADT):
 - An interactive system for developing customized assessment strategies
 - Presents assessment methods based on competencies targeted for assessment and situational factors relevant to the hiring situation
- OPM's Assessment Decision Guide:
 - Contains additional information on assessment options and considerations

<http://apps.opm.gov/ADT>



How Does the ADT Work?

- A user identifies his or her particular hiring situation, for example:
 - Projected number of applicants
 - Resources available (time, money, staff)
 - Competencies targeted for assessment
- The ADT presents the assessment methods most appropriate for the hiring situation

Sample ADT Output

Competency by Method Matrix

COMPETENCIES	Accomplishment Records	Assessment Centers	Biographical Data (Biodata) Tests	Job Knowledge Tests	Reference Checking
Human Capital Management	Preferred	Potential	Potential	Preferred	Preferred
Oral Communication	Preferred	Preferred	Potential	-	Potential
Partnering	Preferred	-	Preferred	-	Preferred
Strategic Thinking	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	-	Preferred

Competency by Method Matrix (Cont.)

COMPETENCIES	Situational Judgment Tests	Structured Interviews	Training and Experience (T & E) Evaluations	Work Samples and Simulations
Human Capital Management	Potential	Preferred	Potential	Preferred
Oral Communication	-	Preferred	Potential	Preferred
Partnering	Potential	Preferred	Potential	-
Strategic Thinking	Potential	Preferred	Potential	Preferred

View description of

Show

Assessment Strategy Exercise

- Independently review the exercise handouts
- Divide into groups and discuss what your assessment strategy should be, given the information available and questions to consider
- Flip chart your assessment strategy and the competencies measured, for example:

1st Hurdle: Assessment(s) measuring Competencies A, B, etc.

2nd Hurdle: Assessment(s) measuring Competencies B, C, etc.

3rd Hurdle: Assessment(s) measuring Competencies A, X, Y, etc.



- Be prepared to discuss what your group considered in developing a strategy



Implementation Considerations



Topics Covered

- What is a defensible process for establishing cut-off scores for use with a multiple hurdles strategy and/or category rating?
- How does a multiple hurdles strategy work with category rating?
- How is veterans' preference applied with a multiple hurdles strategy?
- What are some broad considerations when implementing a new assessment process?

Cut-off Scores

Q: What is a cut-off score?

A: A minimum score used to make decisions regarding an applicant's next steps in the assessment or hiring process.

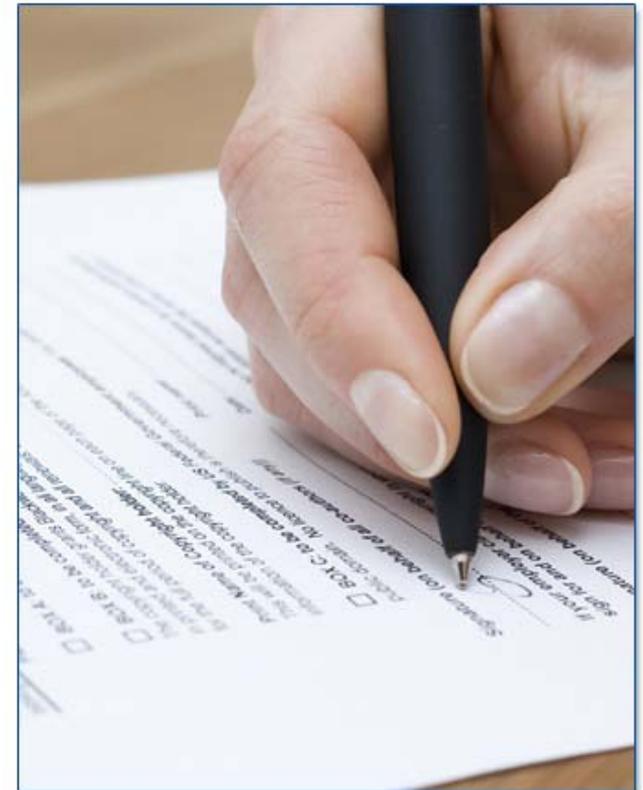


How Are Cut-Off Scores Used?

- Minimum qualifications requirements – to determine eligibility only when the occupation has a written test requirement or competency-based minimum qualification standards
- Multiple hurdles – to determine which applicants move to the next assessment hurdle
- Category rating – to determine the quality category into which applicant is placed

Establishing Cut-Off Scores

- Legal and professional standards
 - Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures
 - The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing
 - The Principles for the Validation and Use of Personnel Selection Procedures
 - Court cases



Establishing Cut-Off Scores

- Various methodologies can be used depending on assessment goals, tools and strategies
- A systematic process and sound professional judgment is required; in some cases assessment experts and General Counsel are needed
- Documentation of how cut-off scores are established is critical



Establishing Cut-Off Scores

- Potential sources of information used to develop cut-off scores include:
 - Judgments of level of proficiency required
 - Number of vacancies relative to anticipated number of applicants
 - Business rules
 - Statistical evidence





One Possible Method for Use with Category Rating

- Identify group of subject matter experts (SMEs)
- Establish frame of reference by discussing the quality category definitions, as well as what a minimally proficient employee and candidate would look like with regard to each quality category and competency being assessed
- For each assessment item or competency, instruct SMEs to independently identify minimum rating or response needed to be placed into each quality category
- Average ratings across SMEs; discuss and come to consensus where there are differences among ratings
- Sum average ratings (across items) as appropriate to determine overall cut-off score (if needed)
- Document rationale and process used

Sample: Category Rating

Sample Scoring #1

Category	Cut-off Scores
Best Qualified	Applicant must receive a total score of 95 or higher.
Highly Qualified	Applicant must receive a total score of 88 or higher.
Qualified	Applicants whose ratings do not meet the criteria to be placed in the Best Qualified or Highly Qualified categories.

Sample: Category Rating

Sample Scoring #2

Category	Cut-off Scores
Best Qualified	Applicant must receive an average final rating of <i>at least</i> 4.0 for Statistics, Research Methods, and Written Communication AND <i>at least</i> 3.0 for each of the other competencies.
Highly Qualified	Applicant must receive an average final rating of <i>at least</i> 3.0 for each of the competencies.
Qualified	Applicants whose ratings do not meet the criteria to be placed in the Best Qualified or Highly Qualified categories.

Sample: Category Rating

Sample Scoring #3

Category	Cut-off Scores
Best Qualified	Applicant must receive a total score of 95 or higher on the occupational questionnaire; AND applicant must receive an average final rating of <i>at least</i> 4.0 for Statistics, Research Methods, and Written Communication AND <i>at least</i> 3.0 for each of the other competencies on the structured interview (SI).
Highly Qualified	Applicant must receive a total score of 95 or higher on the occupational questionnaire; AND applicant must receive an average final rating of <i>at least</i> 3.0 for each of the competencies on the SI.
Qualified	Applicants who do not meet the criteria to be placed in the Best Qualified or Highly Qualified categories.

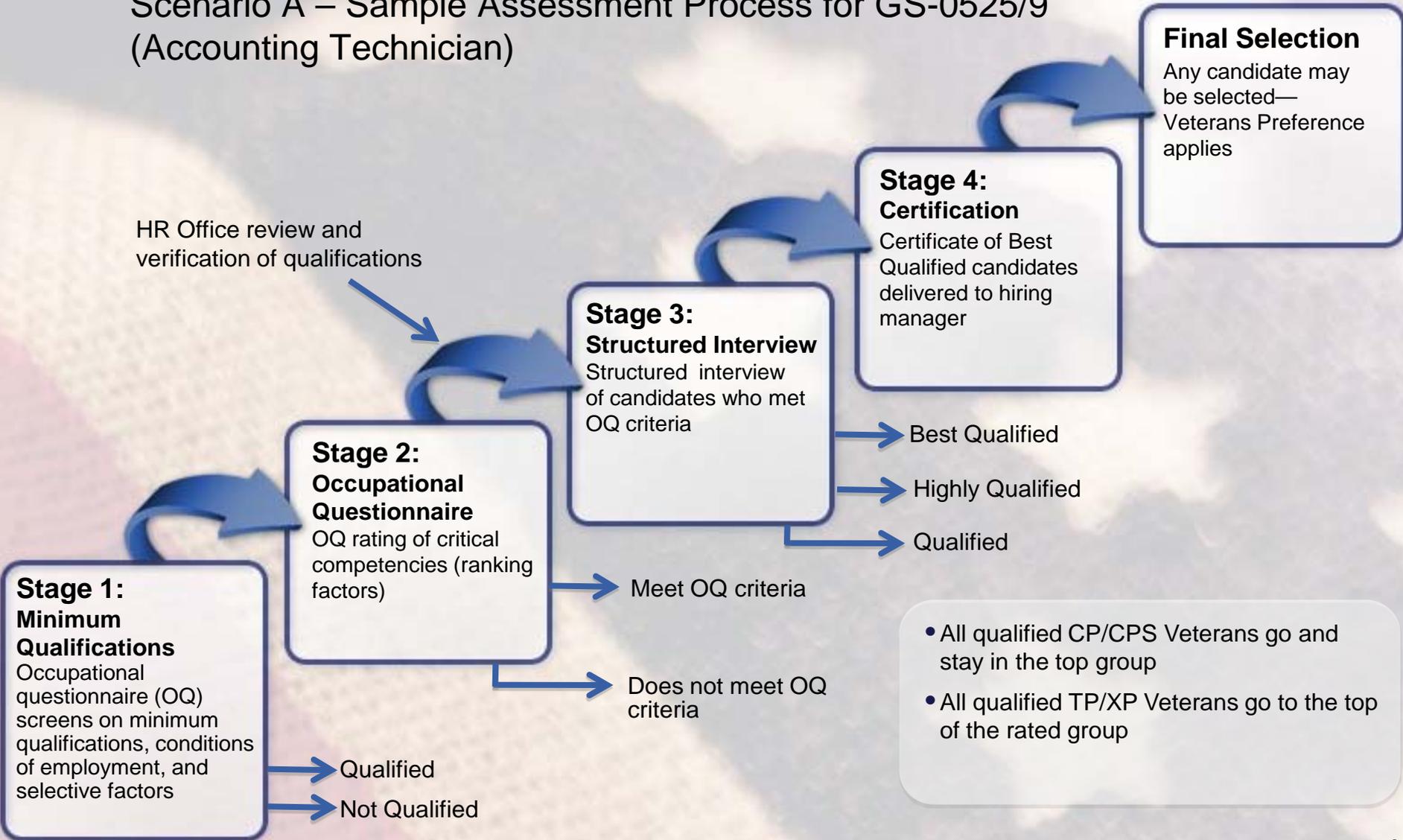
Multiple Hurdles & Category Rating

- Categories are assigned at time of certification
- Category assignment can be determined by a combination of the last formal assessment and one or more earlier assessments
- Additional assessments (e.g., structured interviews) can be used once applicants are assigned to quality categories; however, total scores are not computed and/ or used to rank applicants further
 - Individual competency scores, for example, can be used along with other information in making an overall judgment about whether to hire the candidate

Multiple Hurdles & Category Rating

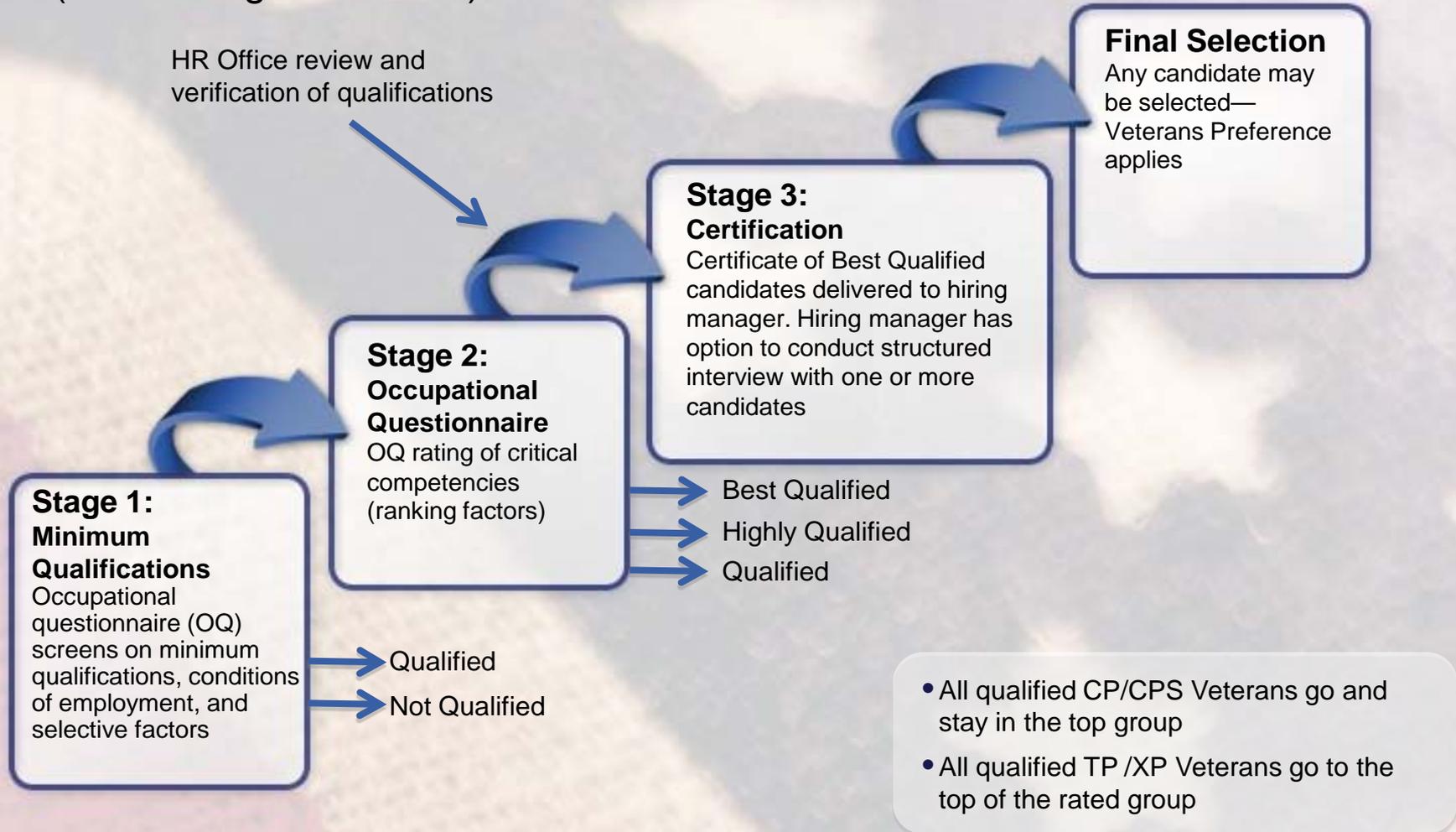
Scenario A – Sample Assessment Process for GS-0525/9 (Accounting Technician)

HR Office review and verification of qualifications



Multiple Hurdles & Category Rating

Scenario B – Sample Assessment Process for GS-0525/9 (Accounting Technician)



Implementing New Assessments

- Ensure ongoing coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders (HR, hiring managers)
- Develop implementation plan
 - Costs, timeline, resource needs
 - Logistics
 - Training
- Develop communication plan
- Develop operation and maintenance plan

Implementing New Assessments

- Develop evaluation plan
 - Define success and key metrics
 - Collect data on continuous basis
 - Determine effectiveness of assessments
 - Evaluate impact and return on investment
- Make it last
 - Ensure alignment of systems and infrastructure
 - Build in continuous mechanisms for improvement
 - Celebrate successes



Getting Technical Help

If your agency lacks assessment expertise, consider bringing in :

- Peer agencies with assessment expertise
- OPM
 - Employee Services (policy assistance and interpretation)
 - HR Solutions (fee-for-service)
 - Government consultants with assessment expertise
 - Access to vendors with assessment expertise
- Private consulting organizations specializing in assessment
- Hire your own assessment experts (e.g., industrial/organizational psychologists)



Summary & Conclusions





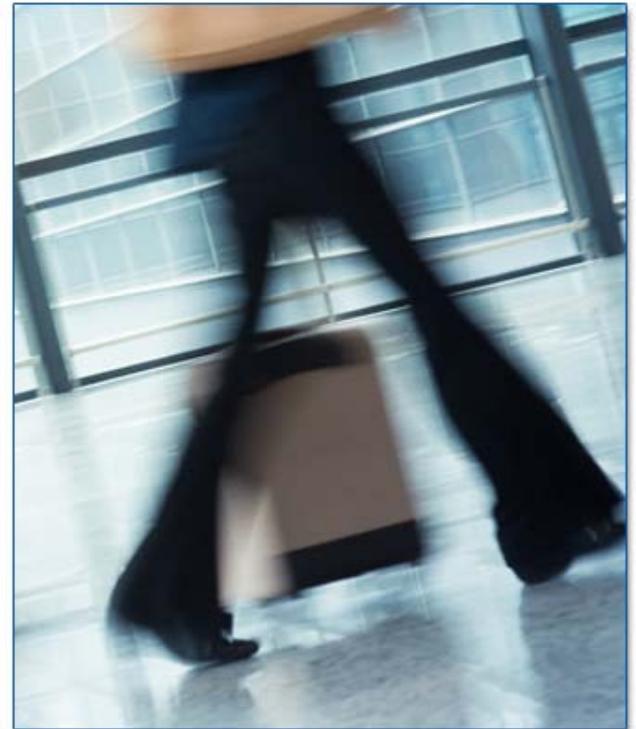
Review of Topics Covered

- Background and Context
- Assessment Models and Options
- Building an Assessment Strategy
- Implementation Considerations



Next Steps?

- Topics for strategic assessment discussions at your agency?
- Specific ideas and action steps for improving assessments at your agency?





Questions?





Hiring Reform Web Page



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1 2

Welcome to the Hiring Reform website, your source for Federal hiring reform information, news, and resources. It is intended for Federal HR professionals and hiring managers. If you are a job seeker, you can find more information in the [USAJOBS](#) website.

President's Requirements

- Elimination of Written Essays (KSAs)
- Resume & Cover Letter
- Category Rating
- Manager Accountability and Involvement
- Quality and Speed of Hiring

News

14 Jun Event: Assessment Workshops Developing Structured Interviews (June 14 - 18, 2010) [30 KB]

07 Jun Event: Assessment Workshops Developing Occupational Questionnaires (June 7 - 11, 2010) [30 KB]

[More News](#)

HR to HR

“ The Department of Veterans Affairs along with other Federal agencies worked jointly with OPM to reform the Federal recruitment and hiring systems. [more](#) ”

[More Entries](#)

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Last edited by ANDREA LEUNG(OMB) on Apr 06, 2010 11:12 AM (view change)

Agency Assessment Tools

Calendar of Events

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Guidance

Hiring Reform 2009

Hiring Reform Feedback (Formal and Informal)

Hiring Reform Implementation (Areas of Focus)

Implementation Mission and Vision

Implementation Points of Contact (POCs)

Latest News and Broadcast Emails

Media

Other Resources (Briefings, Other Information)

Register for Upcoming Events

Task Force (Restricted)

Hiring Reform-Highlights

If you have any questions about Hiring Reform '10 events please contact Ted Cuneo Edward.Cuneo@opm.gov. (Click [here to Watch](#) the Hiring Reform Highlights page to get notified of significant activities.)

Frequently Asked Questions

Eliminate written essay-style questions (KSAs)

Allow individuals to apply with resume/cover letters

Use Category Rating

Ensure manager responsibility/accountability for hiring

Improve quality and speed of hiring

<https://max.omb.gov/community/display/HumanCapital/Hiring+Reform+%2710>

One Final Thought

“The ultimate goal of staffing is to make good hires as efficiently as possible. It is not to make bad hires quickly.”

-Maximizing the Value of Your Investment
in Qualifications Screening Technology.
Rocket-Hire. Feb 2004.



Contact Information:
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