



# **Delegated Examining Certification Program Guide**

**U.S. Office of Personnel Management**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Federal agencies strive to maintain a workforce of qualified individuals drawn from all segments of American society to serve the needs of the American people. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is the agency responsible for the competitive examinations required for admission to the competitive service. OPM, however, has largely decentralized the examining process by delegating OPM's examining authority to the agencies that will be employing the candidates selected. Delegated examining authority permits agencies to conduct their own examining processes to fill civil service jobs in the competitive service. Appointments made by agencies through their delegated examining authority are subject to civil service laws and regulations. Delegated examining procedures are designed to further an agency's compliance with civil service laws and regulations, fair and open competition, recruitment of qualified candidates from across all segments of society, and selection on the basis of the applicants' relative degree of competencies or knowledge, skills, and abilities, subject to the requirements of veterans' preference.

Together, OPM and Federal agencies have a vested interest in training employees who can perform examining functions well and in a manner that is defensible. To do that, they must be fully knowledgeable about competitive examining procedures and requirements. Toward that end, OPM provides a comprehensive Delegated Examining Certification Program for all human resources (HR) practitioners who are involved in delegated examining activities (5 U.S.C. § 1104 (b)(1)). The certification requirement administered through the Delegated Examining Certification Program applies to (i) Federal employees performing their own competitive examining; (ii) employees of Government contractors working on behalf of Federal agencies to deliver examining services; and (iii) individuals employed on the basis of personal services contracts with an agency. For contractors, the Program is available only to those individuals who are employed by firms that already have contracts with Federal agencies for the delivery of examining services or to those who are employed on the basis of personal service contracts with an agency. The Federal agency must sponsor the contractor and document the contractual relationship at the time of registration.

This Program Guide outlines the Delegated Examining Certification Program requirements, which will be implemented effective June 2019. Program costs are provided on page 7. Registration information can be found on page 8.

## **DELEGATED EXAMINING CERTIFICATION**

To be certified in delegated examining, you must pass the new Delegated Examining Certification Assessment, available beginning in August 2019. The assessment tests your knowledge and application of key concepts, rules, and process steps. The assessment is web-based and administered in a proctored (in-person) setting at an independent testing facility (locations throughout the U.S. and abroad). Upon passing the assessment you will receive Delegated Examining Certification, which is valid for three years.

If you fail the assessment, you may re-take the assessment after 90 days. If you fail the assessment a second time, you must wait 6 months before you may re-take the assessment.

## **ASSESSMENT PREPARATION**

Experience shows that staff identified to conduct delegated examining must have some prior knowledge or experience of the Federal staffing process in order to be successful. As a first step to attaining Delegated Examining Certification, it is recommended that you have formal classroom and on-the-job training in Federal staffing and placement and delegated examining procedures.

### **Delegated Examining Training**

It is recommended that you attend formal classroom training in delegated examining. This may be a course offered at OPM, your agency, or another source.

OPM's Delegated Examining Training is three full days and covers topics such as conducting a job analysis; accepting and processing applications; adjudicating veterans' preference; rating and ranking candidates; applying category rating procedures; and issuing and auditing certificates of eligibles. The training content has been updated to include more scenario-based exercises and activities. See cost and registration information starting on page 7.

### **On-the-Job Training**

To fully prepare for the Delegated Examining Certification Assessment, it is recommended that you complete the following on-the-job activities, under the oversight of a specialist or supervisor certified in delegated examining.

#### **Recommended Supervised On-the-Job Activities:**

- Developing delegated examining job opportunity announcements;
- Developing minimum qualifications requirements (including defining specialized experience);
- Making qualifications determinations for a variety of occupations including clerical and administrative support, technical and medical, administrative and management, and professional and scientific positions;
- Adjudicating veterans' preference claims; and
- Preparing certificates of eligibles under category rating rules.

### **Additional Classroom Training and On-the-Job Activities**

Additionally, you are encouraged to complete the recommended trainings and activities identified below to better prepare for the Delegated Examining Certification Assessment.

#### **Additional Recommended Classroom/Online Training:**

- Category Rating
- Veterans' Preference

- Job Analysis
- Qualifications Analysis
- Introduction to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)
- Hiring Flexibilities/Staffing Programs for Special Populations

**Additional Recommended Supervised On-the-Job Activities:**

- Conducting job analyses to identify critical competencies/knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) for selection
- Developing occupational questionnaires and/or crediting plans for rating applicants
- Auditing certificates of eligibles issued under category rating rules
- Consulting with hiring managers on recruitment options
- Developing justification for use of selective factors and quality ranking factors

**OPM Training Course Offerings:**

OPM offers the following training to help HR practitioners understand the Federal staffing and placement process:

- *Basic Staffing*, OPM/HRS/Staff Acquisition (3 days, classroom)
- *The Federal Hiring Process for Staffing Specialists*, OPM Federal HR Institute, Course Number SS004 (3 hours, web-based)
- *Introduction to Staff Acquisition Activities in the Merit Promotion Process*, OPM Federal HR Institute, Course Number SS120 (8 hours, web-based, plus OJT)
- *Introduction to Selection Activities in the Merit Promotion Process*, OPM Federal HR Institute, Course Number SS122 (5 hours, web-based)
- *Category Rating*, OPM/HRS/Staff Acquisition (1 day, classroom)
- *Adjudicating and Applying Veterans' Preference*, OPM/HRS/Staff Acquisition (1 day, classroom)

## **DELEGATED EXAMINING RECERTIFICATION**

Delegated Examining Certification is good for three years. When your Delegated Examining Certification is coming up for renewal, you must register to take the Delegated Examining Recertification Assessment. You may sit for the Recertification Assessment when your Delegated Examining Certification is within 6 months of expiring. **You must be actively conducting delegated examining activities (or be in a policy or oversight role to delegated examining) to be eligible for recertification.** Your supervisor will document, using the online registration system, that this requirement is met.

**Recommended:**

- Complete suggested training course(s) that may cover a new law, regulation, or policy (online or classroom) during the previous three year period.
- Individuals will be informed of these courses via an email from the Delegated Examining Certification Information System at the time of registration.

The Recertification Assessment must be taken before the expiration of Certification. Similar to the initial Certification Assessment, the Recertification Assessment tests your knowledge and application of key concepts, rules, and process steps. The assessment is web-based and administered in a proctored (in-person) setting at an independent testing facility (locations throughout the U.S. and abroad).

Upon passing the Recertification Assessment, your Delegated Examining Certification will be renewed for an additional 3 years. You may continue the recertification process, in 3-year increments, as long as you are actively engaged in delegated examining activities.

If you fail the Recertification Assessment, you may re-take the assessment after 60 days. If you fail the Recertification Assessment a second time, your Delegated Examining Certification ends (even if you are still within your 3-year certification period). Any delegated examining work activities you perform must be under the close supervision of an individual certified in delegated examining. You must wait 6 months before you may re-take the assessment.

## EMPLOYEE MOVEMENT

When a Federal employee or contractor transfers from one agency to another, Delegated Examining Certification transfers with the individual as long as the Certification is still current. When such a transfer occurs, the employee and receiving agency or delegated examining unit must notify OPM through the Delegated Examining Certification Information System and provide the employee's (or contractor's) new work email address, new supervisor's name and work email address, and Delegated Examining Unit Identification Number.

Once an employee separates from Federal service, the Delegated Examining Certification terminates. There are exceptions, however, in the case of a former employee who returns to Federal service, becomes an employee of a Government contractor performing examining services on behalf of an agency or is engaged to work with an agency under a personal services contract with that agency, **prior** to what would have been the expiration date of the last Delegated Examining Certification had the employee never left Federal employment (i.e., within the 3-year window). In such a case, Delegated Examining Certification requirements are as follows:

- If the former employee returns to Federal service, or begins performing services under a contract, within 1 year of separation, **and** the most recent Certification is still within the 3-year window, no additional requirements are needed. Use the date of the last Delegated Examining Certification to determine when Certification expires (3 years).
- If more than 1 year has elapsed between separation from and return to Federal service, **and** the most recent Certification is still within the three-year window, the employee must complete the Recertification Assessment to reestablish Delegated Examining Certification **before** being assigned delegated examining work. Use the date of the last Delegated Examining Certification to determine when Certification expires (3 years).

Should a former Federal employee return to Federal service after the Delegated Examining Certification would have expired (i.e., outside the 3-year window), the former employee must pass the Certification Assessment to reestablish Delegated Examining Certification **before** being assigned delegated examining work.

## AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

Agencies must ensure their delegated examining staffs maintain current Certification by monitoring Certification expiration dates through the Delegated Examining Certification Information System and arranging for the timely registration and completion of the required Recertification Assessment. If, at the end of the 3-year period, a staff member’s Delegated Examining Certification expires, the individual is not allowed to perform delegated examining functions until the Certification Assessment is passed.

Requests for extensions of time to complete the Recertification Assessment are considered on a case-by-case basis and will generally be granted for a period of up to 90 days if requested prior to the Certification expiration date. Such requests must be submitted by the supervisor of the delegated examining unit by email to [DE.Recertification@opm.gov](mailto:DE.Recertification@opm.gov).

## PROGRAM COSTS

Delegated Examining Certification Program FY19 Costs	
<b>Delegated Examining Certification Assessment</b>	
In-person, proctored exam at an independent testing facility (locations throughout the U.S. and abroad) (If an individual fails the assessment, each additional attempt cost is \$200.)	\$200 per person
<b>Delegated Examining Training</b>	
Three-day Delegated Examining Training (participants must bring a copy of the Delegated Examining Training Participant Guide and the <i>Delegated Examining Operations Handbook</i> or a device to access these materials during class)	\$942 per person
On-site, single agency session, minimum of 15 participants and up to 25 (participants must bring a copy of the Delegated Examining Training Participant Guide and the <i>Delegated Examining Operations Handbook</i> or a device to access these materials during class) <b>AND</b> In-person, proctored Delegated Examining Certification Assessment at an independent testing facility (locations throughout the U.S. and abroad)	\$15,130 per session for up to 15 students; plus \$200 for each additional student up to the maximum of 25 (includes the Certification Assessment for each participant)

Delegated Examining Recertification Assessment	
In-person, proctored exam at an independent testing facility (locations throughout the U.S. and abroad) (If an individual fails the assessment, each additional attempt cost is \$200.)	\$200 per person

## HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE DELEGATED EXAMINING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Registration instructions for the Delegated Examining Certification Program may be found at <https://DE.usalearning.gov>. If you are currently certified, then you may register for the Recertification Assessment when your Certification is within 6 months of expiring. If you are not currently certified, you may register for Delegated Examining Training or the Certification Assessment.

You must have a valid work email address and, in addition to your information, you must also include the name, title, and work email address of your supervisor. Your supervisor will have access to update your registration information and receive updates as you progress through the Program. Contactors must also provide information on the Federal agency, and Federal supervisor, for which they are working.

## POINTS OF CONTACT

For questions or more information, please see the following contacts by topic:

Delegated Examining Certification requirements – [ESEmploy.Internet@opm.gov](mailto:ESEmploy.Internet@opm.gov).

Delegated Examining registration process - Help Desk available at [https://de.usalearning.gov/blocks/help\\_desk/newticket.php](https://de.usalearning.gov/blocks/help_desk/newticket.php) and toll-free at (833) 200-0035.