

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

Subject:	Hiring Process-Delegated Examining
Purpose:	This Directive and Standard (D&S) establishes procedures for competitive examining hiring process. The benefits of this D&S are to standardize the Bureau of Reclamation's systematic means of recruitment using Delegated Examining processes and establish a collaborative process between human resources professionals and hiring officials with open communications and shared accountability toward achieving hiring initiatives.
Authority:	5 United States Code (USC) 1104, <i>Delegation of Authority for Personnel Management</i> ; 5 U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 332, <i>Recruitment and Selection through Competitive Examination</i> ; Federal Register, Vol. 75, No. 93, pp. 27157-27159, Improving the Federal Recruitment and Hiring Process ; the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Delegated Examining Operations Handbook (DEOH): A Guide for Federal Agency Examining Offices , June 2019; Department of the Interior (DOI) Personnel Bulletin (PB) No. 20-17, Delegated Examining (DE) Shared Certificates Policy , November 18, 2020; DOI PB No. 10-10, Departmental Policy on Category Rating , October 4, 2010; DOI PB No. 13-01, DOI DE Policy , February 13, 2013; Interagency Delegated Examining Agreement (DOI-1), December 10, 2010.
Approving Official:	Deputy Commissioner – Policy, Administration and Budget (PAB)
Contact:	Human Resources Division, Human Resources Policy Office (84-12100)

1. **Introduction.** This D&S, together with procedures outlined in the Delegated Examining Operating Handbook (DEOH) and DOI policy, cover operational procedures and requirements for Delegated Examining Units (DEUs) applicable to competitive examining and selection. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Servicing Human Resources Offices (SHROs) are designated as Reclamation DEUs and exercise Delegated Examining (DE) activities under the authority and procedures outlined in the Interagency DE Agreement Number DOI-1 between DOI and OPM. SHROs (i.e., DEUs) will advise and provide training to hiring officials and employees on DE practices and selection procedures as needed. The Human Resources Policy Office (HRPO) will provide clarifying guidance, implementation procedures, and determine appropriate action for DE procedural best practices and corrective actions. Any changes in regulation, law, or OPM instruction (e.g., DEOH) will supersede instruction in this D&S or DOI policy therein.
2. **Applicability.** This D&S applies to Human Resources (HR) professionals and hiring officials filling positions with hires from inside and outside the Federal Government into the competitive service under the agency's DE authority 5 USC 1104(a)(2). This D&S does not apply to Senior Executive Service employees.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

3. **DE Authority.** SHROs, as DEUs, are authorized to exercise DE authority during the hiring process when competitive examining is determined to be an effective part of the recruitment strategy, as determined during the *Pre-Recruitment Consultation (PRC) and Strategic Recruitment Discussion* (refer to Reclamation Manual (RM) D&S, [HRM 04-04](#)). SHROs will obtain training and maintain certification requirements for appropriate HR professionals as required by the DEOH. Each DEU is responsible for providing current data of DE certifications to HRPO as status changes and upon request. HRPO will provide subject matter expertise to DEUs and liaise with DOI or OPM to obtain any request for policy clarification, procedural guidance, and additional training.
4. **DE Hiring.** HR professionals are responsible for advising and collaborating with hiring officials regarding DE hiring options and providing training to hiring officials on efficient, timely ways to recruit and hire highly skilled individuals. Hiring officials are responsible for being fully involved in the hiring process, including planning current and future workforce requirements, identifying skills required for the job, identifying whether recruitment and/or relocation incentives will be paid for selectees (in accordance with RM D&S, [HRM 04-06](#), *Flexibilities Related to Creditable Service for Leave Accrual and Recruitment, Relocation, and Retention Incentives*), and engaging actively in the recruitment and interviewing process. Hiring officials are responsible for hiring employees that contribute substantially to a high-performance work culture and will support their successful transition into the Federal service. Hiring officials must ensure the recruitment and selection processes are carried out in a timely manner by utilizing HR systems to their maximum capabilities, considering all strategic hiring flexibilities, and ensuring that all actions are consistent with merit system principles and applicable laws and regulations. HR professionals will utilize the appropriate tools within USA Staffing for tracking all hiring actions, notifying applicants of their application status, and onboarding new employees.
5. **Pre-Recruitment Activities.** During the PRC, DEUs and hiring officials will establish a strategic plan of action for meeting vacancy hiring objectives to include identifying expectations and timelines for recruitment activities, including (but not limited to) submitting the Request for Eligibles (RFE) personnel action in the Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS); conducting the job analysis; determining assessment criteria; identifying necessary Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for assessment panels; publicizing the vacancy; evaluating applications and referring candidates; scheduling interviews; and conducting interviews and reference checks. HR professionals and hiring officials will work together to shorten the hiring process with the goal to achieve OPM's 80-day hiring model. Equal employment opportunity (EEO) staff, civil rights, and/or diversity & inclusion specialists will consult with HR professionals and hiring officials to identify outreach and recruitment sources for underserved communities, providing information to hiring officials, as appropriate, in identifying ways to remove barriers to diversity, and providing specific data on their organization's parity needs, ([HRM 04-04](#)).
 - A. **Clearance Process for Positions Graded GS-14 and Higher.** Request prior approval for filling positions graded GS-14 and higher, or with full performance level at GS-14 or higher in accordance with RM D&S, *Clearance Process for Positions Graded GS-14*

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

and Higher, [HRM 04-03](#). HRM 04-03 does not amend or replace any approval process requirements for specific positions such as public affairs (RM D&S, *Positions in Professional Public Affairs Positions and Other Related Positions*, [ADM 03-03](#)), information resources management (RM D&S, *Information Management and Technology Position Hiring Controls*, [IRM 05-01](#)), senior executives, and others which require Departmental approval.

- B. **Position Description (PD).** PDs must be classified and certified (verified/confirmed/etc.) as current and accurate by the hiring official before submitting an RFE personnel action in FPPS when ready to fill a vacancy. Hiring officials will refer to RM D&S, *Position Classification and Position Management*, [HRM 15-02](#), to ensure position classification and position management principles are applied prior to beginning DE hiring efforts.
 - C. **Job Analysis.** Hiring officials provide the necessary job analysis information for the vacancy which will align with the PD and assessment criteria. HR professionals will conduct a job analysis with hiring officials for each vacancy recruitment following OPM's Job Analysis Methodology as described in the *DEOH*, Appendix D. The job analysis process is documented and identifies objective, assessable knowledge, skills, abilities (KSA) and competencies related to important job duties, work outcomes, or work behaviors necessary for successful performance in the job being filled. The job analysis is signed by the hiring official and the HR professional and filed in the USA Staffing recruitment case file. Specialized experience requirements and any selective placement factors must align with job analysis.
 - D. **Assessment Criteria.** Assessment criteria (e.g., occupational questionnaires, rating schedules, proficiency levels, passing scores, written tests, work samples, structured interviews) must align with job analyses, make clear distinctions between creditable levels of qualifications, contain appropriate measures, and be uniformly applied among applicants. Assessment tools must be developed and selected prior to recruiting for a vacancy.
6. **Public Notice and Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs).** DE JOAs must be advertised on USAJOBS and provide adequate public notice for competitive service vacancies expected to last for 121 days or longer. HR professionals will prepare JOAs using the Reclamation USA Staffing vacancy templates for streamlined JOAs and consistent messaging to potential applicants. Boilerplate language applying to all positions shall not be changed. JOAs will be as concise as possible and written in plain language explaining application instructions, assessment information, incentive offerings, and provide meaningful distinctions between required specialized experience specific to each grade level advertised.
- A. **Career Assistance Transition Programs.** Prior to posting a DE JOA, priority consideration must be given to any surplus/displaced DOI employee in the local commuting area (LCA) by clearing the department Career Transition Assistant Plan

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

(CTAP) special selection priority (SSP) list and reemployment priority list (RPL). The provisions for granting special selection priority for those eligible under the CTAP and Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) are described in 5 CFR part 330, Subpart F and G and DOI [PB No. 11-06](#). Receiving SHROs are responsible for adhering to proper clearance procedures when receiving a Shared Certificate from an Originating SHRO.

- B. **Open Period.** In partnership, SHROs and hiring officials will establish an adequate open period based on the recruitment strategy developed during the *Pre-Recruitment Consultation and Strategic Recruitment Discussion* ([HRM 04-04](#)). An adequate open period may vary depending on a recruitment plan, the nature of the position, promotion potential, characteristics of the relevant labor market, and other considerations. An open period of less than five workdays must have a clearly documented rationale in the recruitment case file for reconstruction purposes. Reasons must be based on job-related factors, such as the number and type of jobs to be filled, labor market conditions, and recent experience filling similar positions.
- C. **Quality Categories.** In accordance with [PB No. 10-10](#), *Departmental Policy on Category Rating*, DE JOAs must be announced using Category Rating procedures. Each JOA must clearly define the categories each applicant will be assessed against based on the KSAs/competencies directly related to the job, as determined through job analysis. Quality categories will be labeled as Best Qualified (Category A), Well Qualified (Category B), and Qualified (Category C). The JOA must include how veterans' preference is applied under Category Rating procedures.
- D. **Shared Recruitments.** In accordance with the Competitive Service Act of 2015, hiring officials may share DE certificates when seeking external candidates for positions in the same occupational series, grade level (or equivalent), full performance level, and duty location during the 240-day period beginning on the date of issuance of the certificate of eligibles. Originating and Receiving SHROs will provide procedural guidance to hiring officials in order to coordinate with internal Reclamation offices or other government agencies for sharing DE certificates. Refer to [OPM Memorandum](#) dated January 11, 2018, *Implementing Policy Guidance for the Competitive Service Act (Shared Certificates)* and [PB No. 20-17](#), *Delegated Examining (DE) Shared Certificates Policy* for interim implementation guidance.
7. **Accepting Applications.** Candidates must comply with application procedures as outlined in the JOA to be considered under DE procedures. Application materials (resume and responses to the technical questionnaire (TQ)) must be submitted by the closing date of the JOA and by the method(s) specified in the JOA. Candidates must also meet all qualification requirements for consideration by the closing date of the announcement. Candidates who do not comply with required application procedures as indicated in the JOA will be considered ineligible for further consideration.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- A. **Positions with a Minimum Education Requirement.** Where certain positions require possession of a minimum education, applications will be accepted for candidates that cannot provide proof of degree completion by the close date of the JOA, but instead provide supporting documentation sufficient to support qualification based on education (e.g., unofficial transcripts, letter from University Registrar confirming degree completion date). This practice should also be applied consistently for applicants seeking to qualify by substituting education for experience and/or meeting individual occupational coursework requirements. Official transcripts must be received prior to sending any selectee an official job offer.
 - B. **Multiple Hurdle Assessments.** For those JOAs that include multiple hurdle assessments, applicants must comply with assessment procedures as outlined in the JOA and any follow-on instructions and deadlines provided to further evaluate candidate qualifications. This may require candidates to submit further supporting documentation to SHROs after the JOA open period.
 - C. **Late Applicant Filers.** Only applications submitted from persons that are entitled to file late will be considered after the closing date of a JOA. Late applicant filers will be directed to apply via USAJOBS under the same Vacancy Identifying Number (VIN) using the “Invite Late Applicant” function. SHROs will initiate the Late Applicant Filer procedures using the applicants’ name and email and accept and process the application up until the issuance of a certificate. Follow procedures outlined in the DEOH, Chapter 4 when accepting late applications and when handling requests to amend a certificate to include late applicant filers.
8. **Status Notification Requirements.**
- A. **Applicant Touchpoints.** To maintain transparency with applicants and to comply with [OPM Memorandum](#) dated April 3, 2018, *Keeping Applicants Informed Throughout the Federal Hiring Process*, HR professionals will utilize USA Staffing notifications to ensure applicants are notified of their status at the following major points in the hiring process:
 - (1) when the application received, no longer than five business days after submission;
 - (2) when the assessment of basic eligibility/minimum qualifications has concluded for all applications;
 - (3) when applications are referred (or not referred) to the hiring official; and;
 - (4) when a selection has been made or the vacancy has been canceled, no longer than ten business days after a selectee has accepted a final job offer or vacancy cancellation.
 - B. **Notifying Applicants Purposefully and Mindfully.** Reclamation standardized notification templates must be used for all status notification communications with

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

applicants, with the exception of status updates where templates do not apply (e.g., supplemental assessment hurdle notification). Custom notifications will be used to notify active applicants if a job posting is canceled and will be re-announced due to administrative error, or otherwise. Job cancellation and re-announcement custom notifications will include the new JOA number, new open period and specify the requirement to re-apply for consideration. Where appropriate, applicant touchpoint notifications will be combined in communications. HR professionals must be mindful of the number of notices sent out and what is sent to candidates to maintain clarity throughout the hiring process. Applicants will not be sent notifications that do not apply to their individual hiring situation (e.g., notification to submit assessment documentation if the documentation has already been received). Applicants will be notified of their application period of eligibility expiration for an open continuous announcement.

9. **Evaluating Candidates.** SHROs will conduct an initial eligibility and qualification determination for all candidates against predefined evaluation criteria (minimum qualifications, specialized experience, education, selective placement factors, etc.) SMEs may contribute to specialized experience qualification determinations; HR will review and finalize all determinations to ensure compliance with OPM qualification standards. SMEs will participate in assessment panels as needed to contribute to diverse and holistic evaluation practices when assessing the technical and general competencies of potential candidates and making selections for hire. Hiring officials must ensure interviews are consistent, structured, and that all questions are job-related. Reference checks must be timely, properly conducted, and strive to obtain the same information consistently of each candidate. All stakeholders involved in DE candidate evaluation will adhere to the requirements of Executive Order (EO) 13932. Refer to the DOI [Assessment Practices Guide](#) for procedural guidance in assessing candidate best practices.
 - A. **Self-Report TQ.** Preliminary assessment of job-related competencies based on self-reported answers to the TQ will differentiate candidates who are recommended to move forward in the selection process, except for those occupations that are an exception by policy to this requirement (i.e., direct hire authorities). Essay-style questions are not allowed in the initial application process but may be used as well as additional assessment tools after initial application if their use is identified in the JOA.
 - B. **Specialized Assessments.** Supplemental assessment of general competencies will further define Best Qualified candidates. In partnership, hiring officials and SHROs will determine appropriate assessments to holistically assess and rank candidates' technical and general competencies. Assessment tools will be selected and weighted based on job conditions such as occupation, grade, labor-market conditions, availability of candidates, geographic locations, previous recruitment efforts, etc. Off-the-shelf assessments available for use will be implemented as guided by vendor policy (e.g., OPM's USA Hire). General competency assessment tools will be implemented after ensuring validity and reliability (e.g., passing scores, situational judgement tests).

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

HRPO will assist and monitor the use of specialized assessments through implementation of EO 13932.

10. **Assessment and Ranking.** Candidates will be assessed against at least two defined quality categories, previously established and defined prior to announcing the job. After all assessment hurdles are complete and prior to issuing a certificate, assessed applicants will be placed in the appropriate category and ranked according to preference eligibility and non-preference eligibility (in accordance with the DEOH and PB No. 10-10). Refer to the DEOH, Chapter 5 for the administering appropriate application of veterans preference in multiple assessment hurdle scenarios.
 - A. **Veterans.** Preference eligible veterans receive absolute preference within their assessed quality category and must be listed ahead of non-preference eligibles when issuing certificates. Exceptions exist when hiring for scientific and professional positions at GS-09 level (equivalent or higher) and procedures will be followed as outlined in the DEOH, Chapter 5.
 - B. **Referring Veterans.** After they have been assessed, HR professionals determine whether to refer both veterans and non-veterans in the Best Qualified quality group based on a review of the number of veteran candidates in that group as compared to the number of vacancies to be filled.
 - C. **Veteran Pass-over.** Approvals to pass over a preference eligible candidate with a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more must be made by OPM. To request approval, the regional HR officer must send a completed [Standard Form 62, Agency Request to Pass Over a Preference Eligible or Object to an Eligible](#), with supporting documentation through the Manager, HRPO to the Reclamation Human Capital Officer (HCO). If the reasons submitted are sufficient and supported, the HCO will send the request and supporting documentation to the DOI, Office of Human Capital (OHC). If the DOI OHC finds the reasons are sufficient and supports the pass-over request, they will elevate the request to OPM for final adjudication.
 - D. **Merging Categories.** If there are fewer than three candidates in the Best Qualified category, HR professionals will consult with hiring officials to decide if the top two categories will be merged (merging categories is not mandatory). The option to merge can occur in two instances of the hiring process: (1) before issuing a certificate of eligibles, or (2) after working a certificate of eligibles and the number of remaining available eligibles is less than three. The number or times you can merge categories is restricted by the number of categories established. The decision to merge categories will be documented in the case file.
11. **Issuing a Certificate of Eligibles.** SHROs will issue certificates for 30 calendar days to hiring officials, allowing no more than two 30 calendar day extensions to make candidate selections.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- A. **Approval for Extensions Beyond 90 Days.** Effective January 29, 2019, an [amendment to PB No. 13-01](#) authorized certificates to be extended beyond 90 days with proper approval. Request for extensions beyond 90 calendar days (initial 30 days plus two 30 day extensions) must be approved by the HCO. Regional HR officers will submit a formal request in accordance with RM D&S, *Request for Waiver from a Reclamation Manual Requirement and Approval or Disapproval of the Request*, [RCD 03-03](#). Extensions beyond the 90 days, if approved by the HCO, will be granted in 30-day increments, not to exceed six months. All extension requests and approvals beyond the initial 90 days must be in writing and maintained in the USA Staffing vacancy case file.
- B. **Supplemental or New Certificates.** When additional vacancies materialize after the JOA has closed and the certificate has been issued, supplemental or new certificates may be issued upon request for identical positions for up to six months from the JOA closing date, as long as the JOA identified *multiple* vacancies or that additional vacancies may be filled using the job announcement. DEUs must consider the implications of any late filers or the option to newly merge categories when supplemental certificates are issued (DEOH, Chapter 6). Similar considerations are required when the need to amend a certificate exists. When the original certificate has been returned and audited, a request for more names requires the submission of a new FPPS personnel action and the issuance of a new certificate.
12. **Returning a Certificate of Eligibles.** Under category rating procedures, hiring officials must make a selection from among all of the eligibles in the highest quality category. A hiring official cannot pass over a preference eligible to select a lower-ranking non-preference eligible or a non-preference eligible in the same qualify category without the requisite approval (Section 10.C.). Hiring officials are responsible for returning certificate reviews to human resources to include a selection justification or non-selection explanation. This will be documented in the certificate review notes or in writing otherwise and filed as an official record in the recruitment case file as a key accountability mechanism. Referred candidates will be assigned the appropriate Audit Code on the certificate before returning to the SHRO. If a certificate is to be returned unused and the vacancy is filled through an alternate source, the non-selection explanation and Audit Code will be included and assigned appropriately for recordkeeping, quality review, and auditing purposes.
13. **Job Offers.** All final job offers are made by HR professionals.
14. **Security Investigations.** An e-QIP background investigation must be initiated and satisfactorily completed for all applicants selected for Federal employment. Reference RM D&S, *Personnel Security and Suitability*, [SLE 01-01](#), for the requirements and procedures for initiating and adjudicating background investigations. Only after a conditional offer of employment is given to a candidate can any information be gathered (e.g., OF-306, *Declaration of Federal Employment*) in order to conduct suitability determinations.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

15. **Time-to-Hire (T2H) Reporting Requirements.** Stakeholders will adhere to prescribed Reclamation and DOI T2H reporting requirements and collaborate to continually improve competitive examining to strengthen the hiring process. SHROs will ensure all data fields are key entered appropriately into USA Staffing for accurate data collection, to include the requirements for reporting on DOI Key Performance Indicators and any other data fields as directed by the HRPO to streamline efficiencies. Refer to [PB No. 20-09](#), *Time-to-Hire Reporting Requirements* and [PB No. 20-12](#), *Strengthening Departmental Hiring and Vetting Practices* for DOI requirements.
16. **Recordkeeping.** SHROs must maintain an electronic case file record for all DE hiring actions and personnel associated through maximum utilization of USA Staffing. Competitive hiring recruitment records will be maintained in the VIN case file documents. New Hire records must reflect a status of “Complete” within 60 days of a New Hire’s entrance on duty (EOD) date, to include any required documentation transmitted to the employee’s electronic Official Personnel File (eOPF). Records not authorized to be maintained in an appropriate personnel system or database will be filed and managed in accordance with the Information Management Handbook (RM D&S, *Information Management*, [RCD 05-01](#)).
17. **Corrective Actions.** SHROs must take immediate action to correct a violation or program deficiency (e.g., improper selection or removal from consideration). In order to ensure that actions are processed in accordance with regulatory and/or procedural requirements, corrections of errors will be made as soon as discovery is made. Case file documentation will include all relevant and sufficient historical data to enable a third-party reviewer to reconstruct a case file.
18. **Definitions.**
 - A. **Assessment Tools.** A device or method used to measure the degree to which an applicant possesses the competencies/KSAs necessary for successful job performance. Examples of assessment tools include occupational questionnaires, rating schedules, written tests, work samples, and structured interviews.
 - B. **Career Transition Assistance Plan.** A legally required Federal program that provides eligible displaced Federal employees with intra-agency selection priority and placement assistance for agency eligible employees who have been identified as surplus and/or displaced due to downsizing or restructuring.
 - C. **Category Rating.** A process of evaluating qualified eligibles by quality categories rather than by only assigning individual numeric scores. HR professionals assess candidates against job-related criteria and then place them into two or more distinct quality categories. Synonymous with alternative rating as described at 5 USC 3319.
 - D. **Certificate of Eligibles.** A certified document issued to a hiring official containing the names of referred qualified candidates eligible for selection in compliance with

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

competitive selection laws and regulations. Otherwise referred to as “certificate” or “referral list.”

- E. **Competency.** A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully. Competencies are typically required at different levels of proficiency depending on the specific work role or occupational function.
- F. **Competitive Status.** A person’s basic eligibility for assignment (for example, by transfer, promotion, reassignment, demotion, or reinstatement) to a position in the competitive service without having to compete with members of the general public in an open competitive examination. Once acquired, status belongs to the individual, not to the position [5 USC 3304(a)].
- G. **Delegated Examining Authority.** Authority to fill competitive civil service positions pursuant to a delegation agreement. Delegated examining authority must be exercised in accordance with civil service laws and regulations.
- H. **Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing (e-QIP).** e-QIP is a web-based automated system that allows applicants to electronically enter, update, and transmit their personal investigative data over a secure Internet connection to their employing agency for review and approval.
- I. **Eligible(s).** An applicant(s) or candidate(s) who satisfies the minimum qualifications requirements and passes an assessment(s) required for the position, and therefore is eligible for consideration.
- J. **Federal Personnel and Payroll System (FPPS).** DOI’s integrated, on-line, and real-time automated personnel and payroll system.
- K. **Hiring Officials.** Those individuals responsible for considering position management, strategic recruitment and making selections consistent with merit principles, MD-715, other applicable laws and regulations, as well as Presidential, Department, and/or Reclamation initiatives.
- L. **Hiring Process Roadmap.** OPM’s Hiring Process Roadmap illustrates the 80-day hiring process goals established for all agencies.
- M. **Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan.** A legally required Federal program that provides eligible displaced Federal employees who have been identified as surplus and/or displaced due to downsizing or restructuring with interagency selection priority and placement assistance when agencies are recruiting for vacancies outside their respective permanent competitive workforce.
- N. **Interview Panel.** One or more individuals tasked with interviewing applicants.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- O. **In Writing.** A form of communication that can be recorded and verified (i.e., email or electronic notification).
- P. **Job Analysis.** A systematic method for gathering, documenting, and analyzing information about the content, context, and requirements of the job. It demonstrates that there is a clear relationship between the tasks performed on the job and the competencies/KSAs required to perform the tasks. Job analysis information is used to develop employee selection procedures, identify training needs, define performance standards, and other uses.
- Q. **Job Opportunity Announcement.** Public notice of a vacancy that describes all requirements of the vacant position and instructs applicants how to apply to the position. JOAs must be posted on the USAJOBS website as a means of satisfying the competitive procedure requirement. Otherwise referred to as “vacancy announcement.”
- R. **Local Commuting Area.** The geographic area that usually constitutes one area for employment purposes. It includes any population center (or two or more neighboring ones) and the surrounding localities in which people live and can reasonably be expected to travel back and forth daily to their usual employment, (5 part CFR 351.203).
- S. **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.** The attributes required to perform a job which are generally demonstrated through qualifying experience, education, or training. Knowledge is a body of information applied directly to the performance of a function. Skill is a present, observable competence to perform a task with ease and proficiency. Ability is a present competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that results in an observable product.
- T. **Originating SHRO.** The SHRO or agency that initiated a hiring action of a shared recruitment/certificate.
- U. **Preference Eligible.** A veteran, spouse, widow/widower, or parent, who meets the definition provided in 5 U.S.C. 2108 and 2108(a).
- V. **Pre-Recruitment Consultation and Strategic Recruitment Discussion.** The holistic process for assessing a vacant position through the sharing of statistical workforce data, discussing strategic and targeted recruitment options, and developing assessment and selection strategies prior to a position being advertised. Stakeholders involved are HR, EEO, hiring officials, and budget (as applicable).
- W. **Priority Consideration.** The referral of candidates who are entitled to consideration (such as being affected by a reduction-in-force) before other candidates are referred.
- X. **Qualification Determination.** A decision regarding whether an individual is minimally qualified for a particular position.

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- Y. **Quality Categories.** Groupings of individuals with similar levels of job-related competencies/KSAs developed under category rating procedures.
- Z. **Receiving SHRO.** The SHRO or agency that requests a Certificate of Eligibles (i.e., a shared certificate) from an Originating SHRO or agency.
- AA. **Recruitment Incentive.** A payment made to a potential employee as an incentive to accept a Federal job in situations where Reclamation would otherwise have difficulty filling a position (or group of positions).
- BB. **Relocation Incentive.** A payment made to a current employee or group of employees to accept a position or positions that would require the employee(s) to move to a new commuting area or different geographical area. Relocation incentives are for situations in which Reclamation would otherwise have difficulty filling a position (or group of positions).
- CC. **Request For Eligibles.** A request to recruit for a single position in FPPS which generates a Request for Personnel Action (RPA), also called a Personnel Action Request or Standard Form 52.
- DD. **Shared Recruitments.** A process allowing multiple hiring managers across different organizational functions to select candidates from one (shared) recruitment source if a vacancy recruitment meets eligibility criteria to be shared. Otherwise referred to as “Shared Certificates.”
- EE. **Special Selection Priority Programs.** Career transition services to assist employees whose positions have been adversely impacted due to government-wide or DOI management initiatives. Refer to [PB No. 11-06](#), *Department of the Interior Career Transition Assistance Plan*, for proper clearance procedures of CTAP and ICTAP during recruitment.
- FF. **Subject Matter Expert.** A person with bona fide expert knowledge about what it takes to do a particular job. Former and current first-level supervisors are normally good SMEs. Superior incumbents in the same or very similar positions and other individuals may also be used as SMEs if they have current and thorough knowledge of the job's requirements. An SME may provide input on qualifications determinations if they are not the Selecting Official and if all applicant identifying information has been removed. An SME who provides input on qualification determinations should not be a panel member.
- GG. **Technical Questionnaire.** An assessment method used to screen and rate job applicants' technical capabilities through self-ratings of training and experience. The TQ is also used to screen-out candidates that self-report to lack eligibility or minimally qualifying experience requirements; otherwise referred to as “Occupational Questionnaire” or “Assessment Questionnaire.”

Reclamation Manual

Directives and Standards

- HH. **Time-to-Hire.** A term for the data metrics used to track the time it takes to recruit and hire vacancies, measure the quality and speed of hiring, and report results to OPM annually.
- II. **USA Staffing.** Reclamation's talent acquisition system used to recruit, evaluate, assess, certify, select, and onboard talent.
19. **Review Period.** The originating office will review this release every four years.

RECLAMATION MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Effective Date: _____

Release No. _____

Ensure all employees needing this information are provided a copy of this release.

Reclamation Manual Release Number and Subject

Summary of Changes

NOTE: This Reclamation Manual release applies to all Reclamation employees. When an exclusive bargaining unit exists, changes to this release may be subject to the provisions of collective bargaining agreements.

Filing instructions

Remove Sheets

Insert Sheets

All Reclamation Manual releases are available at <http://www.usbr.gov/recman/>

Filed by: _____

Date: _____