



## UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Wednesday, July 24, 2019

### **MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS**

**FROM:** MARGARET M. WEICHERT, ACTING DIRECTOR

**Subject:** Launch of the Revitalized Delegated Examining Certification Program

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 (5 U.S.C. § 1104). Appointments made by agencies through their delegated examining authority are subject to civil service laws and regulations. This is to preserve and protect fair and open competition, foster recruitment of qualified candidates drawn from 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.

The Human Resources (HR) Specialist (0201) occupation was identified as a Government-wide mission critical occupation (MCO) in 2011 and re-validated in 2015 as one of six high-risk MCOs. OPM, with the assistance of the Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCO) Council, continues to implement strategies to close the skills gaps of Federal HR Specialists. 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 is launching a new comprehensive Delegated Examining Certification Program for all HR practitioners involved in delegated examining activities (5 U.S.C. § 1104 (b)(1)). OPM has identified the launch of the revitalized Delegated Examining Certification Program as a milestone to build capability within the HR Specialist occupation under the President's Management Agenda (PMA) Cross-Agency Priority Goal (CAP) to achieve a 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce and the OPM Agency Priority Goal on hiring. The redesigned Delegated Examining Certification Program supports the PMA by empowering HR Specialists who perform examining functions to be fully knowledgeable about competitive examining procedures and enable them to provide able candidates to Federal hiring managers to promote the hiring and retention of the right talent to meet agencies' missions.

The new Delegated Examining Certification Program, which will be effective immediately, requires all HR practitioners who are involved in delegated examining activities to pass a comprehensive Certification Assessment. Certification through the Delegated Examining Certification Program applies to Federal employees; employees of Government contractors that

supply examining services to agencies; and individuals employed on the basis of personal service contracts with an agency.

To aid HR practitioners in successfully passing the Delegated Examining Certification Assessment, the Delegated Examining Training course has been updated and more scenario-based exercises and activities, including a capstone exercise, have been added. However, the OPM Delegated Examining Training is no longer mandatory. OPM recognizes the importance of preparation and has developed the attached Delegated Examining Certification Program Guide to describe recommended preparation activities to best prepare HR practitioners for the assessment. Training is a big part of preparation and OPM strongly encourages HR practitioners to participate in classroom and on-the-job training in delegated examining.

The certification process will be the same for Federal employees and contractors. Federal employees currently certified in delegated examining will retain their certification through its expiration date. Similarly, contractors who possess a letter from OPM confirming they have successfully completed the Delegated Examining Certification Training course may continue to conduct delegated examining activities through the training letter's expiration date.

Starting with certification expiring in April 2019, when Delegated Examining Certification is coming up for renewal, Federal employees and contractors must register to take the Delegated Examining Recertification Assessment. The current Delegated Examining Recertification online course has been retired and replaced with the proctored, in-person assessment. Federal employees and contractors must be actively conducting delegated examining work (or be in a policy or oversight role to delegated examining) to be eligible for recertification. The Recertification Assessment tests knowledge and application of key delegated examining concepts, rules, and process steps. The assessment is web-based and administered in a proctored (in-person) setting at an independent testing facility with locations throughout the United States and abroad. Federal employees and contractors with Delegated Examining Certification expiring in April through August 2019 will be automatically extended until September 30, 2019. These individuals will have until September 30, 2019, to take the Recertification Assessment, which will be available in August.

Federal employees and contractors needing to be certified or recertified in delegated examining may begin registering for the assessment in July at <https://DE.usalearning.gov>. Information is also available at this site to register for Delegated Examining Training.

The Delegated Examining Certification Program Guide should answer most of your questions. However, if you have additional questions regarding the new Delegated Examining Certification requirements, you may contact:

- Linda Campbell, Merit System Accountability and Compliance, at (312) 886-5032 or by email at [Linda.Campbell@opm.gov](mailto:Linda.Campbell@opm.gov); or
- Roseanna Ciarlante, Hiring Policy, at (267) 932-8640 or by email at [Roseanna.Ciarlante@opm.gov](mailto:Roseanna.Ciarlante@opm.gov)

Questions about the registration process should be directed to the Help Desk available at [https://de.usalearning.gov/blocks/help\\_desk/newticket.php](https://de.usalearning.gov/blocks/help_desk/newticket.php).

Attachment: Delegated Examining Certification Program Guide July 2019 (See attached 508-conformant PDF below)

cc: Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers, and Human Resources Directors