



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

Strategic Human
Resources Policy
Division

Friday, March 6, 2009
DEO 2009-05

MEMORANDUM FOR: Human Resources Directors

FROM: Nancy H. Kichak Associate Director, SHRP

Subject: Use of Validated Assessment Tools When Filling Positions in the Competitive Service

This is a reminder that agencies are required to use validated (i.e., job-related) assessment tools when examining applicants for competitive service positions. These assessment tools must comply with the requirements in 5 CFR part 300, and the *Delegated Examining Operations Handbook, 2007 (DEOH, 2007)* (Chapter 2, Section C), and be consistent with the technical standards in the *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (Uniform Guidelines)* (see 29 CFR part 1607). Examples of assessment tools include:

- job knowledge tests
- rating schedules
- ability tests
- work samples
- situational judgment tests
- structured interviews

The Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) written tests and the ACWA rating schedules are two assessment tools that comply with the requirements above, and are validated for use with the professional and administrative positions found at Appendix D in the DEOH, 2007. Agencies are not required to use ACWA and may use an alternative assessment tool, as long as that alternative(s) complies with the requirements above, with respect to the position(s) for which it is being used. If an agency has not developed alternative procedures for those positions identified in Appendix D, DEOH, 2007, OPM recommends continued use of ACWA.

Agencies may not replace validated assessments with education requirements because they do not constitute an assessment tool. Rather, they are part of the qualification standard and do not comply with the applicable requirements for a valid assessment tool. If an agency chooses to develop its own assessment tool, we recommend the agency consult with its legal counsel regarding whether the tool complies with all applicable requirements.

In addition, we note that although the ACWA rating schedules were recently updated and substantially streamlined, some agencies appear to continue to use the older, and lengthier,

versions of these schedules. If an agency chooses to use ACWA, the agency should use the streamlined, and more current, versions, where available.

We are in the process of updating both the DEOH and our Qualifications Operating Manual to reflect the information contained above. Please contact Angela Bailey, Deputy Associate Director for the Center for Talent and Capacity Policy, if you have questions regarding the development of alternative assessment tools. Ms. Bailey can be reached at (202) 606-0388 or by email at angela.bailey@opm.gov.