

(vii) Appointments of career SES appointees with competitive service reinstatement eligibility to any position for which they qualify in the competitive service at any grade or salary level, including Senior-Level positions established under 5 CFR Part 319—Employment in Senior-Level and Scientific and Professional positions.

(d) *Grievances.* Employees have the right to file a complaint relating to a promotion action. Such complaints shall be resolved under appropriate grievance procedures. The standards for adjudicating complaints are set forth in part 300, subpart A, of this chapter. While the procedures used by an agency to identify and rank qualified candidates may be proper subjects for formal complaints or grievances, nonselection from among a group of properly ranked and certified candidates is not an appropriate basis for a formal complaint or grievance. There is no right of appeal of OPM, but OPM may conduct investigations of substantial violations of OPM requirements.

[59 FR 67121, Dec. 29, 1994, as amended at 63 FR 34258, June 24, 1998; 70 FR 72067, Dec. 1, 2005]

§ 335.104 Eligibility for career ladder promotion.

No employee shall receive a career ladder promotion unless his or her current rating of record under part 430 of this chapter is “Fully Successful” (level 3) or higher. In addition, no employee may receive a career ladder promotion who has a rating below “Fully Successful” on a critical element that is also critical to performance at the next higher grade of the career ladder.

[51 FR 8411, Mar. 11, 1986]

§ 335.105 Notice of job announcements to OPM.

Under 5 U.S.C. 3330, agencies are required to report job announcements to OPM for vacancies for which an agency will accept applications from outside the agency’s work force. This requirement is implemented through § 330.707 of subpart G of this chapter.

[66 FR 63906, Dec. 11, 2001]

§ 335.106 Special selection procedures for certain veterans under merit promotion.

Preference eligibles or veterans who have been separated under honorable conditions from the armed forces after completing (as determined by the agency) 3 or more years of continuous active military service may compete for vacancies under merit promotion when an agency accepts applications from individuals outside its own workforce. Those veterans selected will be given career or career conditional appointments under § 315.611 of this chapter.

[65 FR 14432, Mar. 17, 2000]

PART 337—EXAMINING SYSTEM

Subpart A—General Provisions

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 1104(a), 1302, 2302, 3301, 3302, 3304, 3319, 5364; E.O. 10577, 3 CFR 1954–1958 Comp., p. 218; 33 FR 12423, Sept. 4, 1968; and 45 FR 18365, Mar. 21, 1980; 116 Stat. 2135, 2290; and 117 Stat 1392, 1665.

Subpart A—General Provisions

§ 337.101 Rating applicants.

(a) OPM shall prescribe the relative weights to be given subjects in an examination, and shall assign numerical ratings on a scale of 100. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, each applicant who meets the minimum requirements for entrance to an examination and is rated 70 or more in the

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examination is eligible for appointment.

(b) OPM shall add to the earned numerical ratings of applicants who make a passing grade:

(1) Five points for applicants who are preference eligibles under section 2108(3)(A) and (B) of title 5, United States Code; and

(2) Ten points for applicants who are preference eligibles under section 2108(3)(C)-(G) of that title.

(c) When experience is a factor in determining eligibility, OPM shall credit a preference eligible with:

(1) Time spent in the military service (i) as an extension of time spent in the position in which he was employed immediately before his entrance into the military service, or (ii) on the basis of actual duties performed in the military service, or (iii) as a combination of both methods. OPM shall credit time spent in the military service according to the method that will be of most benefit to the preference eligible.

(2) All valuable experience, including experience gained in religious, civic, welfare, service, and organizational activities, regardless of whether pay was received therefor.

[33 FR 12423, Sept. 4, 1968, as amended at 72 FR 12954, Mar. 20, 2007]

§ 337.102 Evaluating qualifications for employees who are in a retained grade.

(a) Employees who are in a retained grade must have the experience they gain subsequent to the downgrading action that placed them in a retained grade considered in the following manner. For placements during the period the employee is in a retained grade, agencies must consider the experience subsequent to the downgrading action to be either:

(1) At the level of the retained grade and in the series of the position which he or she occupied at the time of the downgrading; or

(2) At the grade and in the series of the position to which the employee is downgraded.

(b) Agencies must determine which experience to consider on the basis of which will most likely result in placement. For placements or promotions after the retained grade period, the ex-

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perience is considered only at the grade level and in the series of the position to which the employee was downgraded.

[45 FR 18365, Mar. 21, 1980]

Subpart B—Direct-Hire Authority

SOURCE: 69 FR 33275, June 15, 2004, unless otherwise noted.

§ 337.201 Coverage and purpose.

OPM will permit an agency with delegated examining authority under 5 U.S.C. 1104(a)(2) to use direct-hire authority under 5 U.S.C. 3304(a)(3) for a permanent or nonpermanent position or group of positions in the competitive service at GS-15 (or equivalent) and below, if OPM determines that there is either a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for such positions. It is not required that this direct-hire authority be exercised by a delegated examining unit. Requests for direct-hire authority must be submitted by the agency's Chief Human Capital Officer (or equivalent) at the agency headquarters level. OPM will determine the length of the direct-hire authority based on the justification.

§ 337.202 Definitions.

In this subpart:

(a) A *direct-hire authority* permits hiring without regard to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 3309 through 3318; part 211 of this chapter; and subpart A of part 337 of this chapter.

(b) A *severe shortage of candidates* for a particular position or group of positions means that an agency is having difficulty identifying candidates possessing the competencies or the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the job requirements despite extensive recruitment, extended announcement periods, and the use, as applicable, of hiring flexibilities such as recruitment or relocation incentives or special salary rates.

(c) A *critical hiring need* for a particular position or group of positions means that an agency has a need to fill the position(s) to meet mission requirements brought about by circumstances such as, but not limited to,

a national emergency, threat, potential threat, environmental disaster, or unanticipated or unusual event or mission requirement, or to conform to the requirements of law, a Presidential directive or Administration initiative.

§ 337.203 Public notice requirements.

Agencies must comply with public notice requirements as prescribed in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330, and subpart G of part 330 of this chapter with respect to any position that an agency seeks to fill using direct-hire authority.

§ 337.204 Severe shortage of candidates.

(a) OPM will determine when a severe shortage of candidates exists for particular occupations, grades (or equivalent), and/or geographic locations. OPM may decide independently that such a shortage exists, or may make this decision in response to a written request from an agency.

(b) An agency when requesting direct-hire authority under this section, or OPM when deciding independently, must identify the position or positions that are difficult to fill and must provide supporting evidence that demonstrates the existence of a severe shortage of candidates with respect to the position(s). The evidence should include, as applicable, information about:

- (1) The results of workforce planning and analysis;
- (2) Employment trends including the local or national labor market;
- (3) The existence of nationwide or geographic skills shortages;
- (4) Agency efforts, including recruitment initiatives, use of other appointing authorities (e.g., schedule A, schedule B) and flexibilities, training and development programs tailored to the position(s), and an explanation of why these recruitment and training efforts have not been sufficient;
- (5) The availability and quality of candidates;
- (6) The desirability of the geographic location of the position(s);
- (7) The desirability of the duties and/or work environment associated with the position(s); and
- (8) Other pertinent information such as selective placement factors or other

special requirements of the position, as well as agency use of hiring flexibilities such as recruitment or retention allowances or special salary rates.

(c) A department or agency head (other than the Secretary of Defense) may determine, pursuant to section 1413 of Public Law 108-136, that a shortage of highly qualified candidates exists for certain Federal acquisition positions (covered under section 433(g)(1)(A) of title 41, United States Code). To make such a determination, the deciding agency official must use the supporting evidence prescribed in 5 CFR 337.204(b)(1)–(8) and must maintain a file of the supporting evidence for documentation and reporting purposes.

[69 FR 33275, June 15, 2004, as amended at 70 FR 44847, Aug. 4, 2005]

§ 337.205 Critical hiring needs.

(a) OPM will determine when there is a critical hiring need for particular occupations, grades (or equivalent) and/or geographic locations. OPM may decide independently that such a need exists or may make this decision in response to a written request from an agency.

(b) An agency when requesting direct-hire authority under this section, or OPM when deciding on its own, must:

- (1) Identify the position(s) that must be filled;
- (2) Describe the event or circumstance that has created the need to fill the position(s);
- (3) Specify the duration for which the critical need is expected to exist; and
- (4) Include supporting evidence that demonstrates why the use of other hiring authorities is impracticable or ineffective.

§ 337.206 Terminations, modifications, extensions, and reporting.

(a) *Termination and modification.* On a periodic basis, for each direct-hire authority, OPM will review agency use of the authority to ensure proper administration and to determine if continued use of the authority is supportable. OPM will terminate or modify a direct-hire authority if it determines that there is no longer a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need. Likewise, when an agency finds there

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are adequate numbers of qualified candidates for positions previously filled under direct-hire authorities, based on severe shortage of candidates, the agency is required to report this change of events to OPM. OPM may also terminate an agency's authority when the agency has used an authority improperly.

(b) *Extension.* OPM may extend direct-hire authority if OPM determines, based on relevant, recent, and supportable data, that there is or will continue to be a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for particular positions as of the date the authority is due to expire. In their requests for extensions of direct-hire authorities, agencies must include an update of the supporting evidence that demonstrated the need for the original authority.

(c) *Reporting requirement.* On a periodic basis, OPM may request information from agencies regarding their use of these direct-hire authorities. The requested information may include numbers of positions, title, series, and grade of positions advertised under the direct-hire authority, the number of qualified applicants, the specific qualification criteria, and the number of applicants appointed under the authority.

(d) No new appointments may be made under the provisions of section 1413 of Public Law 108-136 after September 30, 2007; and

(e) Those departments and agencies, excluding the Department of Defense, that use the direct-hire authority provided in § 337.204(c) must submit to OPM a report on their implementation of section 1413 of Public Law 108-136 no later than December 31, 2006. The report must include:

(1) A description of how the agency's implementation satisfied each of the elements laid out in §§ 337.203 and 337.204(b)(1)-(8), as applicable;

(2) An assessment of the effectiveness of the authority in attracting employees with unusually high qualifications to the acquisition workforce; and

(3) Any recommendations on whether the authority should be extended.

[69 FR 33275, June 15, 2004, as amended at 70 FR 44847, Aug. 4, 2005]

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Subpart C—Alternative Rating and Selection Procedures

SOURCE: 69 FR 33276, June 15, 2004, unless otherwise noted.

§ 337.301 Coverage and purpose.

This subpart implements the category rating and selection procedures at 5 U.S.C. 3319. This law authorizes agencies with delegated examining authority under 5 U.S.C. 1104(a)(2) to develop a category rating method as an alternative process to assess applicants for jobs filled through competitive examining.

§ 337.302 Definitions.

In this subpart:

(a) *Category rating* is synonymous with alternative rating as described at 5 U.S.C. 3319, and is a process of evaluating qualified eligibles by quality categories rather than by assigning individual numeric scores. The agency assesses candidates against job-related criteria and then places them into two or more pre-defined categories.

(b) *Quality categories* are groupings of individuals with similar levels of job-related competencies or similar levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

§ 337.303 Agency responsibilities.

To use a category rating procedure, agencies must:

(a) Establish a system for evaluating applicants that provides for two or more quality categories;

(b) Define each quality category through job analysis conducted in accordance with the "*Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures*" at 29 CFR part 1607 and part 300 of this chapter. Each category must have a clear definition that distinguishes it from other categories;

(c) Describe each quality category in the job announcement and apply the provisions of part 330, subparts B, F, and G of this chapter;

(d) Place applicants into categories based upon their job-related competencies or their knowledge, skills, and abilities; and

(e) Establish documentation and record keeping procedures for reconstruction purposes.

§ 337.304 Veterans' preference.

In this subpart:

(a) Veterans' preference must be applied as prescribed in 5 U.S.C. 3319(b) and (c)(2);

(b) Veterans' preference points as prescribed in section 337.101 of this part are not applied in category rating; and

(c) Sections 3319(b) and 3319(c)(2) of title 5, U.S.C. constitute veterans' preference requirements for purposes of 5 U.S.C. 2302(b)(11)(A) and (B).

[71 FR 3409, Jan. 23, 2006]

§ 337.305 Reporting requirements.

Any agency that uses category rating must forward to OPM a copy of the annual report that it must submit to Congress pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 3319(d). Agencies must send their annual reports to the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. The report must include the following information:

(a) The number of employees hired under the system;

(b) The impact that system has had on the hiring of veterans and minorities, including those who are American Indian or Alaska Natives, Asian, Black or African American, and native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders; and

(c) The way managers were trained in the administration of category rating.

PART 338—QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS (GENERAL)

Subpart A—Citizenship Requirements

Sec.

338.101 Citizenship.

Subpart B [Reserved]

Subpart C—Consideration for Appointment

338.301 Competitive service appointment.

Subparts D–E [Reserved]

Subpart F—Age Requirements

338.601 Prohibition of maximum-age requirements.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 3301, 3302, 3304; E.O. 10577, 3 CFR, 1954–1958 comp., p. 218.

Subpart A—Citizenship Requirements

§ 338.101 Citizenship.

(a) A person may be admitted to competitive examination only if he is a citizen of or owes permanent allegiance to the United States.

(b) A person may be given an appointment in the competitive service only if he or she is a citizen of or owes permanent allegiance to the United States. However, a noncitizen may be given an appointment in rare cases under §316.601 of this chapter, unless the appointment is prohibited by statute.

(c) Paragraph (b) of this section applies to reinstatement and transfer as well as to other noncompetitive appointments, and to conversion to career or career-conditional employment.

[33 FR 12429, Sept. 4, 1968, as amended at 57 FR 10124, Mar. 24, 1992]

Subpart B [Reserved]

Subpart C—Consideration for Appointment

§ 338.301 Competitive service appointment.

Agencies must ensure that employees who are given competitive service appointments meet the requirements included in the Office of Personnel Management's Operating Manual: Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions. The Operating Manual is available to the public for review at agency personnel offices and Federal depository libraries, and for purchase from the Government Printing Office.

[62 FR 44535, Aug. 22, 1997]

Subparts D–E [Reserved]

Subpart F—Age Requirements

§ 338.601 Prohibition of maximum-age requirements.

A maximum-age requirement may not be applied in either competitive or noncompetitive examinations for positions in the competitive service except as provided by: