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Assessing and Setting Qualifications

A guide to setting qualifications, resume review, and interviewing at the State of Minnesota.

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Guidance Overview

This document provides guidance on a few critical areas:

1. How to develop effective minimum and preferred qualifications for positions
2. How to develop effective screening questions that assess the qualifications you develop
3. How to credit diverse types of experience, education, and training
4. How to use interviews and assessments to select the best candidates

This guide is not exhaustive but outlines the practices that state agencies are expected to follow when developing qualifications, posting positions, and selecting applicants. The goal of this guide is to promote consistency, equity, and transparency in the selection and hiring process to ensure applicants are given the opportunity to be considered for any position that they are able to perform.

This guide does not cover the full selection or hiring process but provides formal guidance on areas that are not covered by existing law, rule, or policy.

If your agency adopts additional practices beyond those outlined in this guidance, they must be job related and supportable. You must document any practice and the rationale that supports them and store them in the selection file for the position.

Writing Position Qualifications

What types of qualifications should I use?

There are several types of qualifications that can be set for a position. When deciding to use each as a qualification, consider how useful each will be for determining skills at the time of hire and the type of impact the qualification might have on diverse recruitment. Ultimately, you should use qualifications that will help you make decisions and will distinguish applicants from each other in a meaningful way.

Be sure that the qualifications you set consider cultural competency considerations as well. For more information, please reference the [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Processes in Selection: Guidance Document](#).

Keep in mind that the qualifications you use are intended to screen out applicants who do not have the skills, education, and experience necessary to be successful in the position. Later steps in the selection process, such as assessments and the interview, will be more helpful in finding the best candidate for your position.

For that reason, the qualifications that you set should be targeted, specific, and clearly tied to job responsibilities. Avoid using vague phrases such as, “Experience in accounting” or “Bachelor’s degree in any field.”

The table on page 5 provides some guidance on using these types of qualifications.

Education	<p>Degrees should not be the only way to qualify for a position unless it is closely tied to licensure, certification, or other skill sets that can only be obtained through a specific degree in accordance with Executive Order 23-14. This is because educational requirements can be restrictive¹ and, while education has predictive value of how well an applicant may perform on the job, it is generally not considered to be a strong predictor for most types of performance (such as supervisor-rated performance).^{2,3,4}</p> <p>Education can be used as a substitution for experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities. When determining how much experience a degree will replace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider the level of the degree and the type of experience it can substitute for (remember, it should be equivalent), and • identify what fields qualify as “related” when substituting for experience and why.
Experience	<p>Focus on the type and level of experience you need. Experience may include internships, fellowships, volunteering, and work experience. In general, prior experience predicts job performance, although this relationship is not very strong^{5,6}. Additionally, more is not necessarily better. Three years of experience may be better than no experience, but 10 years of experience may not be significantly better than 7 years of experience⁷.</p>
Licensure and Certification	<p>Licensure or certification may be required for certain positions (e.g., LPN, RN, etc.). Only licenses and certifications that are necessary to perform the duties of the position may be required. Any other licenses or certifications may only be used as preferred qualifications.</p>

¹ <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/compensation/pages/college-degree-requirements-hinder-black-workers-earnings-advancement.aspx>

² Ng, T. W., & Feldman, D. C. (2009). How broadly does education contribute to job performance?. *Personnel psychology*, 62(1), 89-134.

³ Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological bulletin*, 124(2), 262.

⁴ <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/other-assessment-methods/training-and-experience-evaluations/>

⁵ Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological bulletin*, 124(2), 262.

⁶ Van Iddekinge, C. H., Arnold, J. D., Frieder, R. E., & Roth, P. L. (2019). A meta-analysis of the criterion-related validity of prehire work experience. *Personnel Psychology*, 72(4), 571-598.

⁷ McDaniel, M. A., Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1988). Job experience correlates of job performance. *Journal of applied psychology*, 73(2), 327.

<p>Driver's License</p>	<p>A driver's license should only be included as a qualification for positions where it would be impractical for an employee to not have a license, such as a State Patrol Trooper. Consider that some candidates may have other means of reliable transportation even if the position requires travel. An example of a qualification could be:</p> <p>Incumbent must maintain valid driver's license, and insurance, OR have other reliable transportation</p>
<p>Training Courses or Continuing Education</p>	<p>Unless a description of the course is provided or it is a well-established licensure/certification course, it may be difficult to tell what an applicant gained from this experience. Training courses should not be used as a substitute for experience or education, but may be applied to knowledge, skills, and abilities or for position-specific requirements such as licensure or certification.</p>
<p>Knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)</p>	<p>KSAs⁸ are commonly used as qualifications. When including KSAs, determine how you will assess these qualifications. There should be a plan to measure KSAs through resume/application review, screening questions, interview, assessments, or another component of the hiring process.</p>
<p>Physical Requirements</p>	<p>Check with the manager or supervisor to determine if there are any physical requirements for your position. These requirements communicate to applicants what type of physical requirements the position has and how often they might be expected to perform that work. Be sure to reference the physical requirements language guide⁹ to determine the most appropriate way to phrase the requirement.</p>

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge,_Skills,_and_Abilities

⁹ <https://mmb.extranet.mn.gov/mmb-extranet/hr-toolbox/recruitment-and-retention/retention/job-descriptions.jsp>

Criteria Assessment Best Practices

Type of qualification	Typical evaluation methods
Licensure, certification, education	Screening question, resume review
Years of experience	Screening question, resume review
Ability (e.g., writing, communication, analysis, data)	Written assessment, interview
Knowledge	Written assessment, interview
Skill	Screening question, written assessment, interview

Note: The screening questions you use must directly tie to a qualification that you can assess easily. If it requires more time and detail to evaluate, an interview or assessment may be better.

Screening questions are available at four levels: Prequalification, Online, Preliminary, and Final. Refer to the [Developing Minimum and Preferred Qualification Screening Questions: A Technical Guide](#) for guidance on when to use each level of screening.

Minimum Qualifications

Good selection begins with well-written qualifications that are tied to specific responsibilities and tasks in the position description. Minimum qualifications are the primary method used by state agencies to review and select applicants for further consideration. Because applicants who do not pass initial minimum qualification screening are not considered further, it is important to be thoughtful and deliberate when determining which qualifications are most important for the position.

Start by evaluating the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position. The minimum qualifications establish the line between candidates who will be successful and those who will not be successful. Is the qualification you want to use essential or just helpful? For example, an attorney position might require a law degree and current licensure to practice law. The law degree and licensure would be a minimum qualification because the incumbent would provide legal advice on behalf of the agency. On the other hand, a bachelor's degree in Communications might be helpful for a public relations position, but a successful applicant may have a degree in something completely unrelated and qualify with experience.

How do you determine which qualifications are critical to the position? Generally, minimum qualifications must:

- Directly relate to job duties.

- Be measurable.
- Include alternatives, equivalencies, and substitutions where appropriate.
- Be essential at the time of hire.
- Be consistent with the qualifications set for positions at similar levels throughout the state.
- Include an appropriate amount of experience or education for the level of the position.
- Fit appropriately between the qualifications set for classifications above and below the position, especially within the classification series.
- Limit the number of minimum qualifications to 7 or fewer. Using large numbers of minimum qualifications are not only difficult to screen for the recruiter, but they are also difficult for an applicant to understand.
- Avoid language indicating terms like, 'professional', 'technical', 'clerical', and other words that have a meaning at the State but may have a different meaning to applicants.
- Use plain language.

Be clear about minimum qualifications. If you are not sure how to determine what is or is not a minimum qualification, consider what a new employee needs to have on the first day reporting to work in the position. If a minimum qualification is trainable or something you would reasonably expect an applicant to learn or acquire in the first few weeks or months of employment, it should not be used as a minimum qualification.

Establish how you will evaluate minimum qualifications. During the selection process, consider *how* you would evaluate minimum qualifications. Will they be measured through the resume/application review, through screening questions, and/or during an interview? Having a clear process for evaluating minimum qualifications will ensure they are appropriately rigorous; that is, they are more rigorous than positions below it and less rigorous than positions classified above.

Practice consistency within your agency's minimum qualifications. Consistency is important within your agency and across the state. Positions at the same level may not have identical qualifications, but the type and level of experience and education required should be comparable.

Preferred Qualifications

Minimum qualifications set the standard for the candidate who will be able to successfully perform the job, but preferred qualifications provide an opportunity to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities, and other qualifications that would allow a candidate to learn the job more quickly and reduce training time.

Creating a long list of preferred qualifications might be tempting, but it is important to be equally as thoughtful about preferred qualifications as minimum qualifications. Preferred qualifications can help narrow down large applicant pools and communicate to candidates what experience they should highlight in resume and applications.

Preferred qualifications also send a message to applicants about the type of experience you are hoping to see. Too many preferred qualifications or using preferred qualifications that are too restrictive may dissuade candidates from applying and reduce the diversity of your applicant pool. It is best to focus preferred qualifications on experience or education that would benefit an applicant starting in the role and not just a laundry list of every possible or potential qualification your ideal candidate might have.

Be sure to follow the [same guidelines](#) that you would use for minimum qualifications.

Best Practices

Qualifications should be listed in order of importance. This helps the recruiter focus on the most important elements and helps applicants focus on the most critical qualifications. It should be easy for applicants to review the qualifications you set and understand what experience, education and training they will need to qualify for the job.

How much experience should I require?

There are some bargaining units that have standardized qualifications. Positions in the 206 bargaining unit, for example, must use qualifications from the [206 standard menu](#). Other positions, such as service, skilled labor, or health treatment professionals may not have contractually required qualifications but may have standard licensure or certification requirements and no specified experience requirement.

Even if the class series does not typically require years of experience, such as clerical positions, consider the level of the position. Although amount of experience cannot be required, recruiters should consider the type of experience. Higher-level positions should require more complex experience.

Avoid modifiers on experience like, “professional”, “technical”, “clerical”, and other words that have a meaning at the State but may have a different meaning to applicants. These terms are helpful in job classification and job analysis (and have a statutory definition in [PELRA](#)) but are confusing to external applicants. This also applies to terms such as “advanced”, “journey-level” and other designations that are difficult for applicants to interpret. **It is clearer to simply say that the position requires “Experience in....” a particular area.**

General Experience Requirements

AFSCME-level positions

Clerical, Technical, Paraprofessional, Skilled Trades

These positions should not have an educational requirement. Some positions (such as skilled trades) may require licensure or certification, but any educational requirements for these types of positions must be confirmed with your AAS representative before posting.

Positions in AFSCME-level classifications generally require less training to perform. For this reason, classifications that fall under the 64 salary range should never require a certain number of years of experience. Positions that fall below this threshold tend to have routine and standardized tasks and follow prescribed instructions to perform job responsibilities. Qualifications for these types of positions should focus on specific knowledge, skills, or abilities needed to perform the work. The hiring manager should always be able to tie the qualification to a specific task.

Positions at or above range 64 may require experience if allowed by contract or plan, but the experience should be minimal and should not exceed two years of experience without consultation from MMB. The experience required for these positions should be appropriate for the type and level of work. For example, a call center position may require experience in customer service. However, the amount of experience required for these positions should be consistent with equivalent-level professional positions. For example, a 65M in unit 207 is roughly equivalent to a 5L in MAPE, so the years of experience required for these two levels should be similar.

Professional, Supervisory, and Managerial positions¹⁰

The following chart presents a general guide for the amount and type of experience to require for each level within professional, supervisory, and managerial classification series. Keep in mind that higher-level positions should generally require more *specialized* experience. Generally, the qualifications you develop may vary slightly from these recommendations but be sure to document any experience requirements that vary more than one year from these requirements. Be sure to maintain this documentation in the selection file for the position.

¹⁰ These requirements may differ slightly from the SPA selection guide and the MA selection guide. Those guides are more specific to those classification series and still fall within the criteria established in this guide (i.e., experience within a year of the recommendations above. While those guides can still be used, it is a best practice to avoid using “advanced”, “journey-level”, “professional”, and other designations that are difficult for applicants to interpret.

Position	Supervisory	Managerial	General Requirements	Example
5L	9K		Two years of experience that supports an area of specialized knowledge or provides administrative support (e.g., call center, technical accounting, etc.)	Two years of experience providing administrative support duties for financial records, such as inputting and accessing data into accounting systems, approving and preparing invoices, and processing expenses.
7L	12K		One year of experience performing analysis, exercising judgment, and relying on knowledge in an area of specialized knowledge; OR Three years of experience in an area that supports an area of specialized knowledge	One year of experience developing budgets and spending plans, auditing fiscal processes, or interpreting financial data for audits and reports; OR Three years of experience providing administrative support duties for financial records, such as inputting and accessing data into accounting systems, approving and preparing invoices, and processing expenses.
10L	15K		Two years of experience performing analysis, exercising judgment, and relying on knowledge in an area of specialty	Two years of accounting experience developing budgets and spending plans, auditing fiscal processes, interpreting financial data for audits and reports, or assisting in the development and renewal of grants, or related work
14L	18K		Three years of experience performing analysis, exercising judgment, and relying on knowledge in an area of specialty	Three years of accounting experience developing biennial and operating budgets and spending plans, assisting in the development and renewal of grants, establishing and maintaining accounting systems, or related work

Position	Supervisory	Managerial	General Requirements	Example
18L	21K	13M	Four years of experience performing analysis, exercising judgment, and relying on knowledge in an area of specialty	Four years of accounting experience consulting with senior leadership to support effective financial management

*Doctorate degree may substitute for two years of experience; Master’s degree may substitute for 18 months of experience; Bachelor’s degree may substitute for one year of experience; Associate’s degree may substitute for six months of experience

****Supervisory and managerial positions may require previous supervisory, lead worker, or leadership experience which may include leadership development programs such as ELI and SLI. In general, do not require an amount of supervisory/lead worker/leadership experience, but instead specify the type of experience.**

Additional guidance for writing qualifications for managerial and supervisory positions

Some managerial and supervisory positions in state government require previous experience supervising employees. However, it is important to consider what knowledge, skills, and abilities the applicant needs to demonstrate how they might gain that experience. This could be acquired through managerial, supervisory, project management, lead work, and other positions that may require planning, oversight, and other leadership competencies. Include specific examples of the type of leadership or managerial responsibilities that the candidate needs to demonstrate instead of using general and vague statements such as, “experience supervising employees.” (Please also refer to the [Recommended Posting Language for Supervisory Positions](#).) The examples below provide some language that you could use as part of the qualifications for a managerial or supervisory experience to provide more detail and specific information about the needed experience. The [Enterprise Leader Competency Definition Guide](#) is also a helpful resources in developing qualifications.

- Engaging with legislative and stakeholder communities
- Coaching, mentoring, developing and/or staff while building relationships.
- Leading teams to meet the organization's expectations for productivity, quality, or goal accomplishment.
- Managing the preparation and maintenance of reports necessary to carry out the functions of the department.
- Understanding of staff development, supervision, and team building.
- Project management and coordination experience, including strategic planning and budgeting.
- Demonstrated planning skills sufficient to plan and organize large projects, prioritize, and make recommendations or decisions on the direction of a project.

- Demonstrated ability to effectively work in a team environment by incorporation of multi-disciplined interests into decisions and actions.
- Experience in negotiation, conflict resolution and consensus building with diverse groups to solve difficult and sensitive problems.
- Ability to plan, organize, and direct technical and administrative activities of staff and partners.
- Strong leadership skills, including the ability to manage, guide, and communicate with staff and partners at all levels.
- Experience leading a new initiative that includes integration with numerous partners.

Using Recruiting Solutions Screening Questions

What are the guiding principles of online screening questions?

Online screening questions can be a helpful first step toward a broader strategic process for sourcing, screening, and selecting applicants. Online screening questions balance the need to obtain job-related applicant information with the desire creating an applicant-friendly process. These questions are a tool to screen out applicants who admit to lacking minimum qualifications because they focus on relevant job specific and verifiable skills and experience.

The goal is to *use the fewest number of online screening questions as possible*. Keep in mind that you must use the same screening questions for all applicants.

How should I score my screening questions?

Minimum qualification screening questions should be scored in a separate level of screening than preferred qualifications. There may be additional screening for any qualifications not assessed through a screening question.

Preferred qualification and responses to screening questions should be scored thoughtfully. Because these qualifications are preferred, each applicant who meets minimum qualifications may not have every preferred qualification. In addition, some preferred qualifications may be more important than others.

Before using preferred qualifications, have a discussion with the hiring manager on the best scoring method. For example, the preferred qualifications for a health care data analyst position may include an experience in statistics, mathematics, or related health care- field. Which area of expertise would be most helpful for a new hire to have? Why?

Depending on the number of questions that you use and the number of qualified applicants that you have, it may be helpful to group applicants into categories: minimally qualified, well qualified, top candidate, et cetera. This is helpful when using the qualifications to distinguish quickly between candidates to identify as the best group to refer to the hiring manager using standardized criteria. If you use this approach, be sure to determine how you will sort applicants based on the preferred qualifications to ensure you are consistent in routing candidates.

When you set screening questions, it is a good time to think about what qualifications you will evaluate using screening questions, what qualifications you will determine through reviewing the resume, and which need to be evaluated during the interview process.

Crediting Required Experience, Education, Training, and other relevant factors

Determining which candidates qualify for a position is critical for ensuring consistency in the hiring process. Your task is to determine whether the applicant meets the qualification for the position based on the information provided.

The qualifications should outline what type of experience, education and training are required for the position. You need to develop a consistent rubric and standard for evaluating qualifications prior to posting the position. The goal is to apply a consistent method of evaluation for all qualifications. If there are questions about how to interpret the qualifications, the determination that is made should be supportable and applied to all applicants. Remember, applicants must have ALL the minimum qualifications required for a position to be considered.¹¹

Licensure and Certifications

If a position requires licensure or certificates, consider including a screening question to verify licensure and to capture the license number. Licenses should be verified with appropriate board or licensing authority.

Education

Education from accredited¹² institutions should be counted. The accreditation should be verified by HR prior to referring an applicant. The highest related degree must be used as the basis for credit. If specific courses or training are needed, be sure to list in the minimum qualifications of the position and verify degrees and coursework following your agency's practice. Please note that education cannot be the only path to qualification unless it complies with [Executive Order 23-14](#).

Many agencies use related degrees as a way to qualify. When determining whether an applicant qualifies using the degree, the nature and focus of the degree should be substantively similar. This may mean significant overlap in coursework or degree requirements. You should determine what courses or types of courses would meet the critical components for a degree to count as a substitute based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired through the degree program. Though the term "related" is often meant to capture a wide variety of degrees that could be relevant, there should be some documented support for the rationale listed. You may need to request transcripts to determine if the coursework is related. There is no specific requirement about number of credits needed to be considered related, but it is important to develop a standard and evaluate all applicants against that standard.

¹¹ In limited situations, there may be qualifications (such as licensure) that is not needed until time of hire or even after hire. Be specific about when the qualification is needed. Otherwise, it is assumed that an applicant will have the needed qualifications when the posting closes.

¹² <https://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>

Related Internships

Related internships, fellowships, and other types of experience may be credited as experience if they meet the minimum qualifications even if the internship was completed as part of a degree requirement.

Experience

Both related paid and unpaid work may be credited as experience. This includes volunteer work, internships, fellowships, and other experience. The most important considerations are the type and level of experience. The type of experience credited should be consistent with the type of experience required in the job posting. Similarly, the level of experience should be consistent with the level of experience required.

Use the listed dates of experience to calculate the amount of experience. Use months as the smallest unit of measurement to determine if the applicant meets the experience requirement. For part-time positions, pro-rate experience based on the number of hours worked if the part-time position is necessary to meet the experience requirement. Assume that state positions are correctly classified. Work out of class experience should be credited at the higher level.

One of the challenges of evaluating experience is that positions outside of the state cannot be as easily tied to type and level of work. When reviewing external experience, use the general descriptions of type of work described below as a reference. Make sure you determine what types of experience will qualify and how to interpret experience consistently across applicants.

Appeals

Candidates may appeal a determination made on their qualifications for a position¹³. Appeals must be submitted within 30 calendar days of the notice of determination by the applicant and should include new information or challenge the interpretation of their experience, education, and training. Reviews of appeals should be considered in a timely manner, since hiring managers and supervisors may already be progressing through the hiring process. A change in determination will not impact an appointment that has already been made in good faith.

Appointing Authorities must notify candidates who do not meet qualifications immediately after resumes have been reviewed¹⁴. This allows candidates the opportunity to receive notice of appeal rights, appeal within the timeframe, and have the opportunity to be considered before significant progress has been made on the hiring decision.

All other candidates should be notified once a hiring decision has been made.

¹³ <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/3900.4700/>

¹⁴ [Administrative Procedure 10A](#)

Interviewing and Assessments

Interviewing

Interviewing is one of the most widely used and most effective methods for selection throughout the State. Because interviewing is a common practice, most applicants expect to be interviewed in the hiring process and have positive reactions to interviews. Further guidance on interviewing can be found in the [Interviewing: An Enterprise Guidance Document](#).

It is required to use *structured interviews* in the selection process. Structured interviews are interviews that use the same questions and rubric to evaluate all applicants. These interviews are designed to ensure consistency during the interview process. Questions are developed in advance with a scoring rubric that identifies how candidates will be evaluated. Interview questions are based on the KSAs needed for the position and the minimum qualifications. Questions are developed using multiple subject matter experts who know the position and required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Using a structured interview will ensure that the questions do not vary across applicants and retrieve different types of information. Structured interviews provide a consistent experience to applicants, which makes it easier to compare applicants to each other and provide well-supported reasons for a hiring decision¹⁵.

In addition to developing questions in advance, anticipated follow-up questions should also be developed. This ensures that applicants will have consistent opportunities to provide additional information and that questions will remain related to the job. A panel of diverse interviewers should be used, including an interviewer outside of the work unit or division. This allows multiple raters to evaluate applicants and ensures that relevant information from the interview is reviewed and considered appropriately.

When the interview process is complete, be sure to maintain the appropriate documentation following the State's record retention policy.¹⁶

Writing effective interview questions

Interview questions should be developed by multiple subject matter experts. Questions should be open-ended, have a method for evaluation, and be designed to call forth responses that enable applicants to describe behaviors or situations. Behavioral interviews ask candidate to provide examples of previous experience and behavior for competencies that are related to the job. These questions assume that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior. Job-related behavioral questions can give the interviewers an idea how a candidate will respond in a similar on-the-job situation.

¹⁵ U. S. Merit Systems Protection Board. (2003). *The federal selection interview: Unrealized potential*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy and Evaluation.

¹⁶ https://mn.gov/mmb/assets/sw-retention-fin_tcm1059-217571.pdf#False

Situational interview should be developed by identifying some key situations (known as critical incidents¹⁷) that are directly tied to key position competencies. Critical incidents are situations developed by subject matter experts that reflect real on-the-job situations. The purpose of this technique is to ask questions about situations that are realistic and similar to actual on-the-job scenarios and ask the applicant questions about how they would respond or react.

For either interview strategy, it is essential to develop a consistent rating scale for applicant responses. Typically, interviewers should use a 5-point scale with descriptions at the low, average, and high scores. Interviewers should review these scales in advance and develop a common understanding of what each rating means. For behavioral interviews, this should include the type of examples and level of detail expected. For situational interviews, this should include the quality and type of response expected.

In summary, make sure your interview:

- Is structured,
- Uses a diverse panel,
- Uses a rating method with descriptive anchors,
- Is tied to competencies of the job,
- Uses behavioral or situational questions,
- Limits jargon,
- Uses the same set of questions for all applicants, and
- Limits follow-up questions.

Assessments

Assessments can be used to gain information about a candidate without the typical time and resource constraints of an interview. The purpose of an assessment is to simulate a real-world work situation to evaluate how the candidate will perform¹⁸. Assessments are most useful when there are specific skills that need to be evaluated, such as technical skills or communication skills. These can include writing samples, technical analysis, or other sample job tasks an applicant is asked to perform.

Carefully consider when in the process an assessment would be appropriate and relevant. Although a well-developed assessment may be valuable, they should not be used at the beginning of the selection process. Asking candidates to complete an assessment when they apply can be a large time requirement before you know if the candidate qualifies. In addition, assessments that evaluate ability (such as writing samples and technical assessments) may have adverse impact¹⁹ and should only be used in the final stages of selection.

¹⁷ Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological bulletin*, 51(4), 327.

¹⁸ Assessment & Selection Other Assessment Methods. (n.d.). Retrieved December 11, 2017, from <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/assessment-and-selection/other-assessment-methods/work-samples-and-simulations/>

¹⁹ Roth, P., Bobko, P., McFarland, L., & Buster, M. (2008). Work sample tests in personnel selection: a meta-analysis of black–white differences in overall and exercise scores. *Personnel Psychology*, 61(3), 637-661.

Assessments can be useful in evaluating the performance of an applicant on exercises that closely mirror the work that will be performed on the job. They are usually well-received by applicants and can be effective tools in the selection process. However, there are several guidelines to consider when developing these additional tools. Assessments should be:

- Directly related to competencies needed for the job,
- Appropriate for someone starting in a position rather than a seasoned expert
- Developed and pilot tested before given to applicants,
- Evaluated using a clear scoring system, and
- Assessed by multiple raters.²⁰

It is important to develop assessments in advance and test them to ensure they measure the job-related competencies you want to measure. Assessments should be consistently used for similar or identical positions with a clear rationale for how they relate to the job.

Like the interview, assessments must have a scoring rubric that clearly indicates how applicants will be evaluated. Be sure to consider how important the assessment will be weighted in relation to the interview. Maintaining consistency across your raters' processes and your applicants' experiences is critical for a scoring strategy to be fair and effective.

Reference and Background Checks

Reference checks and background checks should be performed for applicants as outlined by statewide policy and procedure. Refer to the appropriate statewide policy for background and reference checks. In addition, refer to your agency's additional guidelines for reference and background checks.

[HR/LR Policy #1419, Driver's License and Record Checks](#)

[HR/LR Policy #1421, Background Checks](#)

[HR/LR Procedure #1421P, Employment Reference and Records Checks for Current and Former State Employees](#)

[HR/LR Policy #1404, Employment Authorization Verification and Form I-9](#)

[HR/LR Procedure #1404P, Employment Eligibility Verification: I-9 Audits](#)

²⁰ What is I-O? (n.d.). Retrieved December 11, 2017, from <http://www.siop.org/workplace/employment%20testing/testtypes.aspx#9>. Work Samples and Simulations