

Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook

Chapter 176

Exam Development

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Sec. 176.010 Introduction

Developing an effective examination is key to hiring skilled people for Wisconsin civil service positions. There are a wide variety of tools available to evaluate job applicants. This chapter outlines the steps in examination development, describes the various types of exams and assessment options available, and provides guidelines for developing exam/assessment questions and answers.

In order to fully utilize the information contained in this handbook chapter, human resources staffing professionals should attend training to develop skills in civil service examination development, as well as learn the practical application of exam methodologies using tools such as Wisc.Jobs.

Sec. 176.020 Statutory and Rule Authority

Section 230.16, Wis. Stats., and ch. ER-MRS 6, Wis. Adm. Code, authorize the Administrator of the Division of Merit Recruitment and Selection (DMRS) to establish criteria for evaluating applicant qualifications as provided in the law and rules.

1. The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures, jointly adopted by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Civil Service Commission, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Department of Justice, provide the basis for State of Wisconsin job analysis and exam validity procedures. (See [29 CFR § 1607.](#))

2. “In advertising openings in the classified civil service, the state may not require as a condition of application that an applicant be a college graduate unless the opening must be filled by an incumbent holding a credential, as defined in s. 440.01(2)(a), or other license, permit, certificate or registration in an occupation regulated by law and college graduation is required to obtain the occupational credential, license, permit, certificate or registration.” s. 230.14(3m), Wis. Stats.
3. “The administrator may appoint boards of examiners of at least 2 persons for the purpose of conducting oral examinations as a part of the examination procedure for certain positions. All board members shall be well-qualified and impartial. All questions asked and answers made in any examination of applicants shall be recorded and made a part of the records of the applicants.” s. 230.16(3), Wis. Stats.
4. “All examinations, including minimum training and experience requirements, for positions in the classified service shall be job-related in compliance with appropriate validation standards and shall be subject to the approval of the administrator. All relevant experience, whether paid or unpaid, shall satisfy experience requirements.” s. 230.16(4), Wis. Stats.
5. “In the interest of sound personnel management, consideration of applicants and service to agencies, the administrator may set a standard for proceeding to subsequent steps in an examination, provided that all applicants are fairly treated and due notice has been given. The standard may be at or above the passing point set by the administrator for any portion of the examination. The administrator shall utilize appropriate scientific techniques and procedures in administering the selection process, in rating the results of examinations and in determining the relative ratings of the competitors.” s. 230.16(5), Wis. Stats.
6. “Every reasonable precaution shall be taken to prevent any unauthorized person from gaining any knowledge of the nature or content of the examinations that is not available to every applicant.” s. 230.16(10), Wis. Stats.
7. “Records of examinations, including a transcript or recorded tape of oral examinations, given under this subchapter shall be retained for at least one year. Inspection of such records shall be regulated by the rules of the administrator.” s. 230.16(11), Wis. Stats.
8. The administrator shall establish criteria for evaluating applicant qualifications and shall require the same or equivalent examination for all applicants competing for eligibility on a register except as may be provided in ch. ER-MRS 27.” s. ER-MRS 6.05(1), Wis. Adm. Code. (See also s. 230.213, Wis. Stats. regarding special recruitment and ch. ER-MRS 8, Subchapter 1, section 8.04, Wis. Adm. Code, regarding assessment for corrections positions.)
9. “Examination may include any technique or techniques which the administrator deems appropriate to evaluate applicants.” s. ER-MRS 6.05(2), Wis. Adm. Code.
10. “All examinations shall be:
 - a. Based on information from job analysis, position analysis or other equivalent information documenting actual job tasks to be performed or skills and knowledges required to perform job tasks, or both;
 - b. Developed in such a manner as to establish the relationship between skills and knowledges required for successful performance on the test and skills and knowledges required for successful performance on the job;
 - c. Supported by data documenting that the skills and knowledges required for successful performance on the test are related to skills and knowledges which differentiate among levels of job performance if the examination results are to be used as a basis for ranking candidates;
 - d. Sufficiently reliable to comply with appropriate standards for test validation; and
 - e. Objectively rated or scored.”s. ER-MRS 6.05(3), Wis. Adm. Code.

Sec. 176.030 Definitions

The following are definitions of terms used in this handbook chapter.

1. **Appointing Authority:** The chief administrative officer of an agency unless another person is authorized to appoint subordinate staff in the agency.
2. **Benchmark:** A scoring guide for a narrative examination question which is developed by the subject matter experts (SMEs), in cooperation with human resources staff. A benchmark serves as a grading standard and enables the raters to systematically (either qualitatively or quantitatively) evaluate each applicant's response. The benchmark is set by SMEs and typically incorporates the minimum acceptable response or grading standard as well as anchors at the high and low end of the scale.
3. **Content Validity:** The content of an examination is consistent with the content of the position.
4. **Essay Examination:** Written examination that includes open-ended questions requiring a narrative response and has structured rating criteria used to evaluate responses.
5. **High Importance Job Content (HIJC):** The identification of the tasks and knowledge that are important to successful job performance.
6. **Job Analysis:** A systematic process used to identify the tasks, duties, responsibilities, and working conditions associated with a job and the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics required to perform that job.
7. **Knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs):** Common job specifications. Knowledge refers to acquired mental information necessary to do the job (e.g., principles of nuclear physics), skills refers to acquired manual measurable behaviors (e.g., lathe operation), and abilities, to natural talents or acquired dexterity (e.g., capacity to lift 50 pounds).
8. **Mandatory Job Content:** Position tasks, knowledge, skills and abilities that have a rating of "Y" in the rated PD indicating that the items are necessary upon appointment.
9. **Minimum Requirements Exam:** An examination method that requires applicants to provide proof of certifications or licensures that are mandatory, minimum qualifications for appointment to certain positions. (e.g., engineering certifications, medical licenses, etc.).
10. **Multiple-Choice Examination (MC):** An examination containing questions that have multiple answers listed but only one correct answer.
11. **Objective Inventory Questionnaire (OIQ):** Examination method using an inventory to evaluate applicants on the basis of their training, education, and experience with specific job tasks, tools, technologies, or equipment.
12. **Oral Examination:** An examination using a set of standard questions that an applicant answers in the presence of a rating panel consisting of subject matter experts. The oral examination must be recorded as indicated in s. 230.16(3), Wis. Stats.
13. **Passing Point:** The minimally acceptable score for an item or part. If the item or part is not identified as mandatory, the value will only be used to calculate the system generated passing point at a higher level. If the item or part is identified as mandatory, an applicant must attain that score or higher on that portion of the exam to pass the exam.

14. **Register:** A list of names and scores of those individuals who have taken an examination and received a passing score or met the minimum eligibility requirements.
15. **Reliability:** The extent to which the assessment device or instrument produces a consistent, repeatable, trustworthy, dependable result. Reliability is necessary, but not sufficient, to produce validity and may be calculated in a variety of ways including rater reliability or agreement coefficients or coefficient Alpha.
16. **Subject Matter Expert (SME):** An individual who knows the critical aspects of the job. This is often the supervisor of the position to be filled, another supervisor in the agency, senior incumbents, program partners, former employee of position, faculty or technical school instructors, or people with similar positions in other organizations or organizational units.
17. **Training and Experience Assessment (T&E):** Examination method that requires applicants to describe, in narrative fashion, their experience, education and training in several critical job-related areas.
18. **Validity:** The quality of a measuring device that refers to its accuracy (i.e., is the device actually measuring what it is intended to measure?), as distinguished from reliability which is a measure of consistency. The ultimate purpose of any assessment is validity or accuracy of measurement. This quality is extremely important for job analysis and job evaluation measures as well as for performance appraisal devices and employee selection.

Sec. 176.040 Examination Security

Everyone involved in filling a classified vacancy is responsible for exam security. The staffing specialist, whether at the agency or in the Division of Merit Recruitment and Selection, or both, is responsible, along with agency Human Resources Managers and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), for the security and confidentiality of all exam materials. Anyone with access to exam materials (including support staff) must sign an [Exam Security Agreement](#) (OSER-DMRS-196); in addition, SMEs must sign the *Job Expert Certificate* portion of the form. Computerized exam material files must be secured to limit access only to authorized persons. If exam security is compromised, the examination is considered invalid and a new version must be developed. See [Chapter 192](#)—Examination Security of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.

Sec. 176.050 Job or Position Analysis

The United States Supreme Court, the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission, and Wisconsin Statutes require that an exam must demonstrate content validity to be considered a proper and appropriate exam. In Wisconsin civil service we most often use content validity. Content validity is established when the content of the exam is consistent with the content of the position (i.e., you are evaluating candidates based on criteria that are related to the position). If an exam does not establish content validity (or appears unrelated to the duties of a position), the exam and selection process is vulnerable to appeal and could lead to the selection of a less qualified or unqualified applicant. Content validity can only be established through a formal job analysis.

The State of Wisconsin currently has a system in place for conducting an adequate level of job analysis based on the ratings of job experts, along with the position description or identification of tasks and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). At a minimum, this form of job analysis, position description with KSAs and High Importance Job Content Ratings (HIJC), needs to be completed for every recruitment and staffing activity. This is one of the most important steps of developing an effective examination.

The position analysis includes a review and, if needed, an update of the [Position Description \(OSER-DCLR 10\)](#) to ensure that the tasks and goals of the job are accurately described.

1. The supervisor or SME identifies the knowledge and skills required to perform the job tasks. Most completed Position Descriptions (PDs) contain a separate section at the end that lists required knowledge, skills, and

abilities (KSAs). This section should be complete and up to date before beginning exam development. Human resources staff may assist supervisors in developing KSA statements.

2. The supervisor, SME or group of SMEs completes the HIJC rating. (See [Chapter 168](#)—High Importance Job Content Ratings of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.) HIJC ratings are **absolutely essential** for identifying the relative importance of the tasks and knowledge that are key to successful performance within the position.

Note: All minimum requirements, mandatory items and any exam components not equally weighted must be communicated to examinees as part of exam instructions/explanation. These ratings are used to identify exam dimensions and to create the exam content. HIJC ratings are typically transcribed onto a copy of the PD form by the supervisor, with the guidance of the Human Resources Specialist or Manager.

The HIJC rating enables the supervisor or SME to indicate the extent to which particular tasks separate experienced and more qualified employees from experienced but less qualified employees. The supervisor also indicates whether or not training will be provided to the new hire. This information is used as a basis for the content of the examination.

Additional job analysis techniques and activities may be utilized if deemed appropriate to establish content validity. Examples include: observation of job performance to record tasks and responsibilities, interviewing incumbents or former incumbents about job tasks, development of critical incidents to identify successful and unsuccessful task performance, etc.

3. When preparing for a recruitment, the agency may identify multiple positions in the same or similar classifications which share job content. In such cases, it may be most efficient to conduct a multiple position job analysis in which similar job content of two or more positions descriptions are combined to develop a single examination. A single recruitment may be conducted then, utilizing a single exam, to qualify applicants for a register from which to certify for multiple positions. Contact your DMRS Agency Services Consultant for assistance in conducting job analysis for multiple positions.

Sec. 176.060 Examination Dimensions

Prepare an [Exam Plan Checklist \(OSER-MRS-98\)](#) after completing the position analysis. The exam plan combines critical tasks, knowledge, skill, and ability areas identified in the HIJC ratings into several distinct, measurable groupings referred to as dimensions. The most important mandatory job content may help to identify critical job dimensions to be examined. Exam dimensions should be clear, concise, and distinct job functions. An individual should be able to read an exam dimension and determine exactly what is needed and what is being measured. Exam dimensions may stem from position goals as written in the PD but should not represent combinations of unrelated goals or combination of goals into a vague category. For example, a manager may need to know how to supervise employees, plan programs and manage budgets. While these three goals are related, they do not make one dimension such as management experience because management experience is too hard to describe and to measure as a single concept. Instead, clear and distinct dimensions should be created such as supervisory principles, budget development, change management and program evaluation. Each dimension created from a position goal is achieved by the performance of certain tasks and associated knowledge, skills, or abilities that will become the focus of the exam development. This evidence and categorization is supporting documentation of the validity of the test and is generally referred to as content validity evidence. See [Chapter 202](#)—Statistical and Reliability Analysis of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.

The exam plan is the single document that defines your exam strategies and methods. Any use of pass-fail questions, minimum score requirements or differentially weighted questions must be identified there. At a minimum this includes the scoring method to be used. A narrative justification should be developed for any methods that do not have fairly obvious reasons.

In addition, when any of these techniques are used in an exam, the applicants must be given an explanation prior to answering the specific questions. This will allow the applicants to spend more time preparing their answers on the more important questions which tends to increase the reliability and validity of the question and the exam in general. (Please note: regardless of your agency's delegation status, when incorporating this policy to an exam—particularly an OIQ—you are encouraged to contact your DMRS Agency Services Consultant for more guidance.)

You may wish to use something like the following in the exam instructions:

- Weighted question: “This question constitutes X% of the examination.”
- Minimum requirement: “Only applicants who answer the following question correctly will be able to continue with the rest of the exam” or “The following question is a mandatory requirement for this position.”

Subject matter experts, generally senior incumbents or immediate supervisors, are an important resource to develop the exam plan because they have direct, recent, and firsthand contact with the job. The staffing specialist must ensure that the exam dimensions are directly related to the PD and that similar tasks and knowledge are grouped into logical statements.

All necessary job content must be accounted for when determining the dimensions to be examined and completing the Exam Plan Checklist. Task statements and KSAs that are rated as being necessary upon appointment to the position (i.e., “Y”) and screened for as part of the exam process must be identified in the relevant dimension on the Exam Plan. It is assumed that all task statements and KSAs that are rated as being necessary upon appointment to the position (i.e., “Y”) that are not being measured by the exam will be screened for elsewhere in the selection process (e.g., post-certification) or are not practical to measure. Job content that has not been deemed necessary upon appointment to the position should not be included on the Exam Plan Checklist. One or more subject matter experts should review the dimensions to make sure they are clearly relevant and not deficient in any way.

Sec. 176.070 Assessment Strategy or Examination Type

There are a variety of assessment and examination options to fill job vacancies. There is no one best procedure suitable for all circumstances. The staffing specialist must select the most appropriate approach and develop a strategy to provide the best service and results. The available assessment and examination options include written examinations of knowledge, skill, or proficiency (including multiple-choice and essay formats); structured oral exams; training and experience measures (including T&E and OIQ formats); and simulation/performance exams. See Attachment #1 for Choosing an Examination/Applicant Screening Methodology.

The following is an overview of the various assessment procedures/tools available:

1. **Random Rank** – Certain job classifications are filled from an applicant register that is generated by a computerized random ranking process. These classifications require applications only; no examination is given. See section 176.080 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding this examination method.
2. **Multiple-Choice Examination (MC)** – Written multiple-choice examinations are used to assess knowledge, basic skills or proficiencies, particularly for entry-level jobs that attract large numbers of applicants. Multiple-choice exams may also be used to promote employees to higher levels. These exams are administered in an in-person, monitored environment. The development and use of MC exams is limited to agencies with specific delegation for this activity. See section 176.100 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding this examination method.
3. **Objective Inventory Questionnaire (OIQ)** – OIQs, also called skills inventories, are used to evaluate applicants on the basis of their training and experience with specific job tasks, tools, technologies, or equipment. The typical objective inventory presents the applicants with a checklist of specific job statements (about skills, tasks, tools, equipment, etc.) and asks the applicant to use a scale to indicate their level of education or training (EOT) and practical work experience (PWE) with the specific statements. An OIQ

should be used only to test for job content that is specific and clearly understood. For particularly difficult recruitments such as highly technical positions, the OIQ is a fast and easy process for the applicants and encourages a high response rate. However, OIQs tend to have very low validity especially when used to measure non-technical skills. Therefore they should not be used for supervisory and managerial positions. Please note: The certification rule for OIQs is determined after the score analysis and prior to the creation of the register. A certification rule of at least one-third of the resulting register is highly recommended in order to offset the low validity of the exam. See section 176.110 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding this examination method.

4. Training and Experience Assessment (T&E) – This type of exam poses questions to applicants which require narrative replies to indicate specific accomplishments in work experience, education and training relevant to key job dimensions of the position. These examinations require applicants to describe observable behaviors (or tasks that they have performed which are related to the key job dimensions). Job experts develop benchmark screening criteria to evaluate qualifications that are acceptable, more than acceptable, and less than acceptable relative to desired KSAs. This exam may be administered online or offline, with other job experts serving as rating panel members. Questions and benchmarks may be more detailed for higher-level managerial and supervisory jobs, or advanced-level technicians (e.g., scientists, engineers, etc.). Exam questions may be combined with other application requirements such as submission of proof of a mandatory licensure or certification. See section 176.120 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding T&E methods.

A Résumé T & E Assessment does not require applicants to respond to specific questions; rather, benchmark screening criteria are applied to each applicant's cover letter and résumé. See section 176.120(10) of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding Résumé T & E Assessment, including when it is appropriate to use.

5. Essay Examination – Essay examinations use open-ended questions and require that the examinees compose the responses in writing or on the computer in a controlled setting. They are often used where a job requires a significant amount of writing and the employee will be required to analyze situations and organize and present written ideas or solutions. This type of examination is administered in an in-person, monitored environment. See section 176.130 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding this examination method.
6. Oral Examination – Oral examinations, also known as Oral Boards, consist of a set of standard questions (sometimes including pre-determined follow-up questions) presented to the candidate verbally by a three-person board and require the candidate to respond orally. They are especially well suited to jobs that involve a lot of interpersonal contacts and require good verbal communication skills. Oral examinations are timed and audio recorded. See section 176.150 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding this examination method.
7. Simulation or Performance Examination – This examination requires applicants to demonstrate their knowledge through the performance of actual job tasks under standardized conditions. For example, performance examinations include having applicants demonstrate keyboard skills for a position with word processing duties, or a behind-the-wheel-driving test for a position with truck driving duties. These exams are best used for vacancies with few applicants and where agencies have considerable time and resources for exam development. This type of examination is administered in a monitored environment. See section 176.160 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding this examination method.

These exam options may be used individually or as a combination depending on the circumstances. Other exam types can be considered. Contact DMRS to discuss options and alternatives.

Sec. 176.080 Random Rank

Certain job classifications with very little testable job content are filled from applicant registers that are generated by a random ranking process. These classifications require applications only; no examination is given. See [Chapter 160](#)—Random-Ranked Positions of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.

Sec. 176.090 Examination Questions and Scoring Criteria

After selecting the exam methodology, the next step is to develop questions. Regardless of the exam format, exam questions and benchmarks or scoring criteria must reflect the HIJC ratings of the specific skills and knowledge the employee needs to perform job tasks after being oriented to the position. Exam questions and answers or benchmarks are developed cooperatively by SMEs and human resources staff.

Subject matter experts play a major role in developing the questions and answers or benchmarks. They contribute concepts and information and very likely will be asked to actually draft exam questions and answers (after receiving some instruction). They provide information on the procedures and methods used to perform tasks, the technologies these tasks involve, the right and wrong ways to perform tasks, critical aspects of the work, and the tasks for which training is provided after a person is hired.

Subject matter experts have many sources to help them develop exam questions. Position descriptions and classification specifications are often a good place to start and are available from the agency or the assigned DMRS HR Consultant. Other sources of information include training, policy or procedure manuals, actual job situations, work products, critical incidents, and problems. The staffing specialist may also provide SMEs with questions and answers or benchmarks from other exams, which are also a good source of ideas.

Despite their critical role in developing exams, SMEs should not work alone in writing questions and answers or benchmarks. The DMRS HR Consultant or agency staffing specialist must gather information from the SMEs and work with them to create the exam. Staffing specialists are responsible for developing the final form of each exam question and answer or benchmark. They take the SMEs' concepts and ideas and transform them into final exam questions. Staffing specialists must ensure that exam questions are written in the appropriate formats and that questions do not give experienced exam-takers any advantages.

Note: It is important to keep in mind the standards for judging examination quality throughout the exam development process. See Attachment #2 for these standards.

Sec. 176.100 Multiple-Choice Examination

1. It is important to note, the development and use of multiple choice examinations are restricted to agencies with specific delegation from DMRS. Written multiple-choice exams are used to assess basic skills or proficiency, particularly for entry-level jobs that attract large numbers of applicants. Multiple-choice exams also may be job knowledge exams that are used to promote employees to higher level jobs. Variations in format include true-false items and matching questions. These exams are especially efficient for large numbers of applicants because they are easy to administer and can be rapidly scored by a computer. Each question has only one correct answer and all applicants are scored in the same objective manner. Additionally, this type of exam is familiar to most applicants. However, multiple-choice exams require more developmental effort and lead time than some of the other procedures. Multiple-choice exams may have higher incidents of adverse impact.
2. In general, a multiple-choice question consists of three parts:
 - a. The stem, which states the problem or asks the question.
 - b. The distracters, which are typically three or four incorrect alternatives.
 - c. The key, which is the correct or best answer.

3. Rules to follow when constructing multiple-choice items:
 - a. Examine useful rather than trivial knowledge.
 - b. Do not try to trick the examinees.
 - c. Write questions that involve only a single, clearly stated problem.
 - d. State the question as simply and specifically as possible.
 - e. Ensure that the stem is able to stand alone—it should not be a word or short phrase followed by a series of alternatives.
 - f. Make sure the stem and alternatives are grammatically consistent and correct.
 - g. Phrase the question in the positive—if you use negative statements, underline them to draw attention to this unusual format.
 - h. Avoid technical jargon unless the SME specifically indicates a need for it and there is clear indication that a qualified examinee will possess that knowledge.
 - i. Make each question independent of other questions. Avoid items that reveal answers to other items.
 - j. Avoid including unintended clues in the stem to the correct response. For example, don't repeat key words, alterations of key words, or phrases between the stem and the correct answer.
 - k. Keep the key and distracters as brief as possible and about equal in length.
 - l. Order the alternatives in some logical manner. For example, list them alphabetically or in order of numerical size. Then the choices are less confusing and less likely to indicate the correct answer.
 - m. Avoid using the following words as distracters: all, none, only, never, always, not, all of the above, and none of the above. The experienced exam-taker knows these choices are almost always wrong. Instead use qualifying or limiting phrases, such as: least important, most frequent, or major cause. However, "none of the above" is an acceptable alternative for math computations.
 - n. Use believable alternatives as distracters. However, make sure there is only one correct or best response among the four or five choices.
 - o. Vary the placement of the correct response randomly; avoid a regular, recurring pattern of correct responses.
 - p. Incorporate words or phrases that occur in all of the alternatives into the stem.
 - q. Avoid questions that require rote memorization, unless this information is critical to the job.
 - r. Avoid questions that simply require knowledge of facts that can be looked up easily in a textbook or manual. These questions tend to be superficial or "bookish." Instead, develop items that require the exam-taker to apply knowledge to practical job-related problems.
 - s. Write questions at a reading level appropriate to the reading level the job requires.
 - t. Develop enough questions. Good examination practices require 20-30 quality questions in each content area (dimension) being examined.
 - u. Ensure that the average test-taker is able to complete the exam within the designated timeframe; estimate one minute per question.
 - v. Use fewer distracters if additional reasonable distracters cannot be developed.
4. The final step in developing a multiple-choice examination is completing an item review. The SMEs who were not involved in drafting the exam questions may review the proposed questions. The SMEs verify that the questions and answers are phrased clearly, the key is accurate, and the questions relate to specific job dimensions. SMEs also determine the percentage of new minimally qualified applicants who will answer each question correctly. This information is used initially to help decide the tentative score a minimally qualified applicant will need to pass the exam. The staffing specialist will use this information to arrive at a preliminary passing point.
5. Proceed with scoring the examination, either by machine or hand score. See [Chapter 202](#)—Statistical and Reliability Analysis of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.

Sec. 176.110 Objective Inventory Questionnaire

1. Objective Inventory Questionnaires (OIQs) allow applicants to evaluate themselves on the basis of their impressions of their education, training (EOT) and practical work experience (PWE) with specific job tasks, tools, technologies, or equipment. The typical objective inventory presents the applicants with a checklist of specific job statements (about skills, tasks, tools, equipment, etc.) and asks the applicant to provide information on his/her training and experience in each area. OIQs should be used only to test for job content that is specific and clearly understood. For the applicant, the OIQ is a fast and easy process that encourages a high response rate. Objective Inventory Questionnaires can be scored quickly and provide broad content coverage (since more questions can be asked). Because applicants can falsify or embellish responses, an OIQ can be used as part of a more comprehensive assessment process, e.g., as a screen into an oral examination or along with a written, multiple-choice exam. Objective Inventory Questionnaires may require more time to develop than essays, orals, or T&Es. See Attachment #3 for a sample portion of an OIQ.
2. When drafting items for an OIQ, SMEs should concentrate on the concrete, observable aspects important in the job: equipment, tools, machinery, products, processes, tasks, and technologies. Applicants completing OIQs respond to a highly structured list of individual job tasks (equipment, tools, etc.) and indicate their level of experience, proficiency, or training for each item in the checklist. If the list is not structured and the items are open for applicant interpretation, the reliability of the exam is in jeopardy.
3. Guidelines for constructing Objective Inventory Questionnaires:
 - a. Task Statements
 - 1) Rely on detailed job analysis information and focus items on observable job elements: tasks, skill with tools, equipment processes, technologies, training, and courses completed, etc. If the position description has task statements that include verbs such as coordinate, manage, develop, organize, analyze, etc., an OIQ may not be the appropriate exam type because these are not observable job elements.
 - 2) Compose individual items or statements specifically and clearly. Avoid using vague verbs with more than one meaning, for example: assisted, participated, worked with, assumed, prepared, used, handled, performed, maintained, supported, was responsible for, etc. The following are examples of appropriate verbs: set up, loaded, compared, operated, tended, scheduled, driven, synthesized, compiled, observed, fed, computed, served, followed instructions.
 - 3) Develop distinct items that can separate, distinguish between, or spread applicants out along the scale being used. If applicants have very similar experiences and backgrounds, and/or the items are all very general, it may not be possible to distinguish between applicants.
 - 4) Avoid task statements with more than one verb.
 - 5) Ensure that verbs used in all task statements are past tense. This makes sense to the applicant, because they are describing past experience and training. Consistency in word tense makes it easier to read as well.
 - 6) Develop enough items to adequately measure the job duties being covered in the dimension. Each dimension should have the number of items, or appropriate weighting, such that the test is a representative sample of the content of the job. Therefore if you have a dimension that accounts for the largest percentage of job duties, that dimension should have a greater number of test questions, or be weighted greater than the other dimensions on the exam.
 - b. Scales
 - 1) Use two clear 2- to 5-point scales that applicants will understand and interpret in the same way to describe their experience and training.
 - 2) If using a scale for education or training (EOT), there should be a scale for PWE, and vice versa. Ensure that the scales are equivalent to each other, e.g., one year of school equals one year of work experience. It is important to offer both scales so that the best-qualified applicants can get the credit they deserve. Also, in many cases, it is discriminatory to screen on education alone.
 - 3) You can use scales other than EOT and PWE if they are job related and clearly documented. One example of a potential criterion is Task Frequency, e.g., performed a task X number of times in a week, a month, a year, etc.

- 4) Develop a single, logical continuum of proficiency when dealing with a response scale containing more than two points.
 - 5) Avoid using crude indicators such as job titles, degrees, length of service, years of education, or credentials. These indicators may not reflect actual job or training content. See Attachment #4 for examples of common OIQ scales.
- c. General Instructions
- 1) Clearly define key terms such as “lead work,” “training,” “performed independently,” etc.
 - 2) Develop detailed instructions and include penalties for falsifying information. See Attachment #5 for a sample certification statement.
4. The SMEs should review the OIQ and determine the acceptable minimum standard using the scale for each item. This minimum standard should reflect the HJC ratings. Any “N” rated content must have a passing point of zero “0” if included in the OIQ. “N” rated content may be used to help differentiate between “acceptable” and “more than acceptable” examinees. This standard can be recorded on the drafted OIQ. See Attachment #6 for an example of a format which includes all the necessary information. This exercise should take place prior to administering the OIQ. The standards are summed by the staffing specialist to arrive at an overall, preliminary passing point. See section 176.100(4) of this handbook chapter regarding the item review.
5. When the OIQs are completed, the staffing specialist will make the required statistical checks for reliability and other indicators of examination quality. See [Chapter 202](#)—Statistical and Reliability Analysis of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*. Contact DMRS if consultation or special assistance is needed resolving problems.

Sec. 176.120 Training and Experience Assessment (T&E)

1. Past behavior and experience are reliable predictors of future behavior. Past behavior and experience captured by T&E Assessments include job-relevant tasks, job performance, training, and overall KSAs that an individual may have gained from previous jobs, education, or training. Typically T&E Assessments ask applicants to provide written information on educational preparation, training, and job experience. Because applicants may include such information on their résumés, it may seem unnecessary or redundant to request this information in the examination. However, by requesting specific information from applicants, the employers rather than the applicants dictate what information is evaluated. As a result, information critical to job success is less likely to be omitted by the applicant or overlooked by the review committee. In contrast, holistic judgments like simple résumé reviews lack structure and objectivity and therefore applicant résumés are not adequate substitutes for narrative replies to T&E items.
2. Generally, three or four exam questions may be developed to specifically address the job dimensions identified in job analysis. The written questions should elicit the desired response that will reflect the applicants’ training and experience relative to the job dimension. The SMEs collaborate with the staffing analysts to compose benchmark responses for each question that are deemed to be at acceptable, more than acceptable and less than acceptable levels of qualification for that dimension. Benchmarks measure observable tasks and should not rely on crude indicators of achievement such as job title, grade point average, awards or commendations, length of service, salary, promotions, etc. Crude indicators do not add value in determining applicant qualifications. Additionally, because T&E Assessments are not administered in a controlled environment, aspects such as spelling and grammar are not to be evaluated unless applicants are notified and appropriate benchmarks are developed.

For example, if an applicant indicated experience as an accountant for ten years, we do not have adequate information on what he or she did during the ten years. Instead, we are looking for the observable behaviors or tasks that were performed while in that position (e.g., completed training in Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, performed audits, etc.).

3. A 0-9 point scale is recommended for T&E Assessments. A 0-9 point scale provides the raters greater latitude in rating candidates than a 0-3 point scale and tends to have greater reliability. Candidates for most positions do not fit neatly into 0-3 point benchmarks. Providing raters the ability to score an applicant within a range of scores (i.e., 0 points for no scoreable response, 1-3 points at the less than acceptable level, 4-6 points at the acceptable level, and 7-9 points at the more than acceptable level) accounts for more of the variation in experience/education that usually exists within the dimensions of the exam. In addition, an often unintended consequence of 0-3 point scales for compensatory exams is that they have a significantly greater effect on whether applicants pass or fail than a 0-9 point scale would. Candidates who receive a low rating on one question of a 0-3 point scale need to get into the highest point level on one of the other questions so that their average comes out to a passing score.
4. The process of polling for specific qualifications may be applied post certification to further screen for training or experience that is essential to the job. For example, mandatory job content not included in the exam may be used for post certification screening.
5. Develop specific examination instructions containing key information for the applicants:
 - a. Completion and submission of the specified application materials/examination questions constitutes the civil service examination for this position.
 - b. An explanation of basic exam content, such as provide documentation of certification plus provide training and experience testimony in response to specific job related questions.
 - c. An identification of the job dimensions or content that their application materials must address.
 - d. A statement that some qualified or best-qualified applicants may be asked to participate further in the selection process after the initial screen.
 - e. Any specific guidelines for the completion of an acceptable exam, such as paper size, font, page limit overall or per question (usually two to five pages), etc.

6. T&E guidelines:

See Attachments #7 and #8 for T&E exam question samples, information and other related documents.

- a. Write questions to determine precisely what an applicant did, how well he/she did it, and what results he/she produced, for example specific duties, responsibilities, etc.
- b. Define the direction and scope of the answers desired.
- c. Develop questions that are unambiguous and incorporate instructions on the amount of detail desired.
- d. Avoid questions that simply require a knowledge of facts which can easily be looked up in a textbook or manual.
- e. Request information relating to areas such as:
 - 1) Complexity: Breadth and diversity of experience including scope, level, and complexity.
 - 2) Role: Degree to which the applicant exercised control and decision-making, functioned independently, or shared authority with others.
 - 3) Impact: Impact of job accomplishments and the degree of success in implementing new programs or projects (which can be attributed to the applicants' efforts, ability, and skills).
- f. Give applicants specific format and presentation guidelines on completing the exam, such as paper size, font, page limit per question (usually two to five pages), etc. It is important to provide these details; without them, raters will have to evaluate all the materials provided by the applicants. If an applicant submits more pages than the designated limit, the rating panel will rate only those pages within the limit and disregard the remaining pages.
- g. Require applicants to complete a certifying statement. (Note: A certifying statement is already included with examinations that are conducted online in Wisc.Jobs). See Attachment #5 for a sample statement.
- h. Develop benchmark criteria for a more than acceptable or model answer, an acceptable answer, and a less than acceptable answer. The State of Wisconsin typically uses a 0-9 point scale where:

- 0 = no scoreable response
- 1-3 points = less than acceptable
- 4-6 points = acceptable
- 7-9 points = more than acceptable

While the 0-9 point scale is most commonly used with State of Wisconsin civil service exams, other scales may be appropriate based on the position and the questions. If a 0-9 point scale does not seem to address all that the question is trying to measure, or does not provide the efficiency, clarity, or flexibility needed to assess applicant qualifications, contact DMRS for assistance in considering an alternative scoring system or scale.

Note: A high school diploma cannot be required unless the diploma is a legal or validated requirement. Additionally, s.230.14(3m), Wis. Stats., prohibits the requirement of college degrees as a condition of application, unless it is mandated by law and the degree is required to obtain the occupational credential, license, permit, certificate or registration for the position (e.g., requirement for a doctor to possess a license to practice medicine).

7. Subject matter experts should be scheduled to serve as rating panel members by the time the announcement is published. The date to convene the rating panel should be set soon after the deadline set for return of completed exams. See section 176.140 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding rating the exam. It is important to establish a timeline and schedule to accomplish scoring the exams, creating the register, and scheduling interviews to keep as many of the candidates as possible in the process.
8. Upon completion of the ratings and dismissal of the panel, tabulate the final scores (or evaluations if not numeric) for each candidate and perform the required statistical analysis for reliability, rater consistency, and other indicators of examination quality. (See [Chapter 202](#)—Statistical and Reliability Analysis of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.) Contact DMRS if consultation or special assistance is needed resolving problems.

Note: For detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to create exams in Wisc.Jobs, refer to the training materials posted on the Wisc.Jobs Help Desk.

9. In some circumstances a Résumé T&E Assessment may be used. The purpose of using a Résumé T&E is to streamline the application process for certain classifications, without compromising the statutory requirements that govern the civil service process. This type of assessment requires detailed instructions that direct the applicant to describe specific accomplishments in work experience, education and training relevant to key job dimensions of the position. Applicant accomplishments are submitted in a cover letter supplemented with a résumé. From a professional human resources standpoint, however, it is necessary for a Résumé T & E to function in a similar manner to a typical T&E Assessment in that it must serve as a vehicle for measuring the relative merit of applicants. Because the Résumé T & E exam is not as structured as a typical T & E, it is crucial that there is careful consideration of what factors are *most important* for success in the position and that the benchmarks are extremely clear with regard to how those factors will be measured.

There are two questions that must be asked to determine if a Résumé T&E Assessment can be used:

- a. Is the position technical in nature (e.g., IS Technical Services Specialist, IS Business Automation Consultant or Curator) or is the position in the Career Executive program with duties such that the job analysis reflects the need for highly specialized knowledge upon appointment which can be ascertained by evaluating application materials for a limited number of criteria (e.g., Human Resources Manager or Financial Management Supervisor)?
- b. What is the estimated number of qualified applicants? If the estimated qualified applicant pool would be considered small (approximately 15 or fewer), and the certification rule of “all qualified” would typically be used, the Résumé T&E may be the right option.

Depending on the number of candidates and the complexity of the job content, a 9-point scale is likely to be the most effective for this exam, although a pass/fail or 3-point scale may also be used. See Attachment #9 for Résumé T&E Benchmark examples to determine which type of scale is appropriate.

It is advisable to use multiple benchmarks to evaluate the cover letter and supplemental résumé. A rating panel is needed to rate the material, as anytime applicants are disqualified (i.e. they do not meet the minimum requirements of the job and will not be placed on the register), the statistical analysis of the test and scores must be shown. (See section 176.140 of this handbook chapter for detailed information regarding rating the exam, including instructions for blinding the cover letter and résumé.)

Following are situations where it is not advisable to use a Résumé T & E Assessment:

- a. When the position is not technical in nature or has many tasks rated as very important and necessary upon appointment, which would require more information to be provided by applicants and more in-depth benchmarks to adequately screen qualifications.
- b. When a significantly sized qualified applicant pool is anticipated.
- c. When a licensure is statutorily required (e.g., RN, Engineer, etc.) and verifying that license is the only requirement needed to be minimally qualified for the position.
- d. When the position requires general management skills, but not a specialized knowledge, making it difficult to develop effective rating criteria (e.g., Policy Initiatives Advisor).

Agencies with staffing delegation may use the Résumé T & E Assessment in accordance with the guidelines set forth in this chapter. Agencies without staffing delegation must refer to their DMRS HR Consultant for guidance and approval when using this exam type.

Note: For detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to create Résumé T&E in Wisc.Jobs, refer to the training materials posted on the Wisc.Jobs Help Desk.

Sec. 176.130 Essay Examination

1. Essay examinations are highly structured written examinations. They use standard open-ended questions and structured rating criteria to grade responses. They often are used where a job requires a significant amount of writing and the employee will be required to analyze situations and organize and present written ideas or solutions. Applicants may be asked to evaluate hypothetical situations, events or problems they might encounter in the job and then design alternate courses of action, solutions, or recommendations. Essay exams sometimes include questions based on past applicant experiences or accomplishments. Essays are expensive and time-consuming to administer and score and therefore work best with smaller groups of applicants.
2. While not strictly an essay, the short answer and fill-in-the-blank formats (also known as completion items) are a variation of the essay question. They differ from essay in the degree of structure placed on the applicant and length of the response. Neither format can be machine or computer scored like a multiple-choice exam, but they can be scored by a well-trained person. Caution is in order, however. Completion items often represent superficial measures of job knowledge, for instance, familiarity with key technical terms in the field, absent the opportunity to apply that technical knowledge to practical problems.
3. Essay exams have two parts: the question itself and the benchmark or guideline that is used by SMEs to evaluate the answers. When drafting questions, SMEs should think of specific illustrations or “critical incidents” of especially effective or ineffective employee job performance. These incidents include particularly good or bad ways of handling a problem or examples of when subordinates have been very successful or unsuccessful on the job.

4. Essay question guidelines:
 - a. Precisely define the extent and scope of the answers desired. That is, each question should be unambiguous and specific. Though some examinees may not know the answer, all should clearly understand the question.
 - b. Avoid questions which require rote memorization.
 - c. Avoid questions that simply require a knowledge of facts which can easily be looked up in a textbook or manual.
 - d. Avoid questions that involve minor details.
 - e. You may use questions which have multiple parts, especially for complex job content.
 - f. Develop questions that enable the applicant to apply what he or she knows to practical problems. Any ancillary or accompanying materials should be complete, clear, and precise.
 - g. Allow enough time for a competent applicant to answer the question(s).
 - h. Develop benchmarks or guidelines which raters use to evaluate the answers. Develop model responses and benchmarks when the questions are first written. This can minimize scoring delays and helps refine the questions to ensure they focus on essential information.
 - i. Develop benchmark criteria for a more than acceptable or model answer, an acceptable answer, and a less than acceptable answer. The State of Wisconsin typically uses a 0-9 point scale where:

7-9 points = more than acceptable
4-6 points = acceptable
1-3 points = less than acceptable
0 = no scoreable response
5. Administer the examination in an equivalent fashion to all applicants. The most appropriate setting for an essay examination is a controlled setting; in most cases, the examination will be given at DMRS' exam centers. See [Chapter 172](#)—Exam Centers of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook* for information on scheduling and administering the examination at an exam center.
6. Convene a rating panel to rate the exam. See section 176.140 of this handbook chapter for information on rating the exam.
7. Tabulate the final scores (or evaluations if not numeric) for each candidate and make the required statistical checks for reliability, rater consistency, and other indicators of examination quality. See [Chapter 202](#)—Statistical and Reliability Analysis of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*. Contact DMRS for consultation or assistance if needed.

Sec. 176.140 Rating the Written Exam

1. Rating panels consist of well-qualified and impartial SMEs. Ensure that no potential panel member candidate is interested in competing for the vacancy if asked to commit to serving on the rating panel. Current or former employees, such as retirees, who have held the position or one comparable may be considered to serve as raters. Consider also job experts outside state service such as Federal government or private sector counterparts, if appropriate.

Note: As a general rule, human resources staff should be exam raters only for human resources recruitments. An exception may be made for an HR staff member who has expertise from previous work experience. HR staff who serve as raters may not be involved in any other aspects of that recruitment, so as to maintain the integrity of the process.

2. Section ER-MRS 6.05(3)(d), Wis. Adm. Code, states that all examinations shall be sufficiently reliable to comply with appropriate standards for test validation. A minimum of two raters is required; however, to accomplish maximum exam reliability, panels of three or more raters are recommended. Having three or more panel members ensures more consistent evaluation of examinees through rater opinion and background diversity.

If the panel initially consists of only two members and one is unable to evaluate an examinee, DMRS will evaluate, on a case-by-case basis, whether the use of a single rater score for that examinee can be approved. Exams must show high reliability in order to be considered for approval of a single rater score.

3. Exam rating panel members must be in a position equal to or at a higher level than the vacancy. An exception may be made in extraordinary circumstances where no qualified raters are available at or above the level of the position being rated. Contact DMRS for an exception to this policy.
4. The immediate supervisor of the position and other officials involved in the post-certification final hiring decision may not serve as an exam rating panel member. Except as provided by ER-MRS 6.08, Wis. Adm. Code, examination scores and ranks and other evaluations of applicants are closed to all persons except authorized Human Resources staff.

Note: As a general rule, subject matter or job experts should not be involved in two consecutive stages of the recruitment process. For example, a SME involved in developing the exam should not serve as a member on the exam rating panel. Having different SMEs involved in different parts of the recruitment process helps avoid any potential biases that may otherwise occur.

5. “Balanced” rating panels are encouraged, but not required.
6. Agencies may be able to give an honorarium to rating panel members who are from outside state service, i.e., non-state employees. The honorarium is given as a “thank you” for the panel member’s service. The standard payment is \$50 per day. Expenses for travel, lodging, meals, and parking also may be reimbursed. (State employees may be reimbursed for these expenses if traveling outside their normal area of employment.) Agencies should process payments following agency guidelines. The [Exam Rating Board Member Travel Expense Sheet \(OSER-DMRS-134\)](#) is available for this use.
7. One available option to expedite the process is to have the agency Human Resources staff perform an initial screen of application materials and forward to the raters only materials that are considered “complete” because the applicants followed all instructions. This HR review for completeness must be applied consistently to all applications for the recruitment, and the applications requirements, including a requirement to submit supplemental documentation, need to be clearly stated in the How to Apply section of the job announcement. Examples of reasons applications can be considered incomplete:
 - a. If a mandatory exam question is not responded to at all or a ‘non-response’ was entered (e.g., “See resume,” “Ready,” “I can learn this”).
 - b. If a ‘non-response’ (e.g., “See resume,” “Ready,” “I can learn this”) is entered to a majority of the questions.
 - c. If a ‘non-response’ (e.g., “See resume,” “Ready,” “I can learn this”) is entered to just one question and the agency has chosen to require a response to every question and clearly indicated that requirement in the job announcement.
 - d. If an applicant does not submit required supplemental documents as instructed (e.g., résumé, copy of license, etc.).

In these situations, the application materials are not assigned a score and should be marked incomplete and filed in accordance with record retention guidelines. An agency may choose to follow up with candidates to obtain the missing required documentation, as long as this approach is consistently followed within the recruitment.

Additionally, the agency Human Resources staff may screen applicants in cases where there are criteria that leave no room for interpretation (e.g., possession of specific licensure or certification).

Note: Caution must be exercised with using Human Resources staff for this function. Because it is unlikely they have subject matter expertise in the job duties, there can be no subjectivity involved in any initial screen being done by HR staff.

8. Each exam forwarded to the raters should be “blinded” by removing any identifying information such as name, address, social security number, ethnicity, gender, etc. The blinding of personal information helps the rater focus on the applicant materials relative to the benchmarks rather than the identity of the applicant or other non-job related distractions. Blinded applicant materials should be assigned an identification number for organizational purposes. Therefore, the sequence of printed applicant exams must be different from the sequence of applicant names on the list provided to the exam rating panel for review.

Note: For detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to blind and prepare application/exam materials for rating panels using Wisc.Jobs, refer to the training materials posted on the Wisc.Jobs Help Desk.

9. Schedule a rating panel briefing in which to provide the rating panel members with all the necessary materials and instructions to complete the exam ratings. See Attachment #11 for a sample checklist of rating panel materials and detailed briefing instructions. This includes providing the rating panel with a copy of the job announcement, position description, Job Expert Certificate/Exam Security Agreement, a copy of the questions and benchmarks, a scoring sheet, and the blinded applicant exam materials.
10. At the rating panel briefing, have rating panel members review the list of candidates’ names. If a panel member feels he or she cannot be impartial and objective, or may have a conflict of interest in evaluating an applicant have the member withdraw from rating that applicant’s exam. Each rater must indicate completion of this review as part of filling out the Job Expert Certificate/Exam Security Agreement form.
11. Brief the raters on the procedures to be followed in the evaluation of applicants. Have the hiring manager/SME available at the rating panel briefing in order to answer questions that may come up during the conduct of the rating panel. Serve as a facilitator for all rating, exam security and discussion activities.
12. Thorough preparation and proper discussion with the rating panel should ensure that each panel member understands the exam questions, screening benchmarks and how to apply the benchmarks to the application materials to be rated. Before concluding the meeting and sending the panel to conduct their ratings, a brief practice such as rating a few applicants is advisable to ensure that all the raters understand the benchmarks. After the meeting has ended and the panel has been sent to complete their ratings, the rating panel members should not discuss or comment on applicants or ratings. The practice of having panel members compare scores and collaborate on scoring invalidates inter-rater statistical reliability and nullifies the effectiveness of having multiple raters evaluate candidates. If raters have questions while conducting their evaluations, they should direct them only to HR staff, who in turn may consult the hiring manager/SME for clarification.
13. For recruitments with extraordinarily high numbers of applicants or high volume of materials to be graded, agencies may consider using multiple panels to evaluate separate portions of exams. At a minimum, two raters must be used to evaluate each question. For example, two raters can grade Question #1 for all applicants, and a different set of two raters can grade Question #2 for all applicants, and so on. Do not have one rater grade Question #1 for applicants 1-30, and a different rater grade Question #1 for applicants 31-60, and so on. Be sure to see the Wisc.Jobs Help Desk for instructions on how to properly set this up in Wisc.Jobs.
14. Ensure that a complete set of evaluations is obtained from each rater, except in cases where a rater excuses him or herself or is excused from the evaluation of a particular candidate because of potential bias either for or against the candidate. Ensure that all scoring is complete for each candidate and all exam packets and confidential materials are collected and accounted for, prior to dismissing the rating panel members. See [Chapter 204](#)—Examination Scoring and Register Establishment of the *Wisconsin Human Resources*

Handbook. Remind rating panel members of the confidential nature of the ratings. The identities of the rating panel members are open records after completion of scoring. If raters are contacted by anyone regarding the rating panel, the inquirers should be referred to Human Resources without further disclosure.

Sec. 176.150 Oral Examination

1. Oral examinations are especially well suited to jobs that involve a lot of interpersonal contacts and require good verbal communication skills. For this reason, they are particularly well suited for supervisory positions. Oral exams are timed and consist of a set of standard questions that measure important abilities and knowledge identified in the job analysis. Oral questions may vary in content and can include factual knowledge questions, hypothetical situation questions (e.g., what would you do in a particular situation?), questions based on past applicant experiences or accomplishments, or even role-playing exercises. Clearly understood questions are essential, although the use of follow-up questions during the examination to clarify applicant answers may be needed (e.g., to elicit more than just a brief response or to redirect an applicant who has misunderstood the question). It can be effective to precede the structured oral exam with an OIQ or a T&E Assessment to ensure that the oral board evaluates only qualified applicants. (See sections 176.110 and 176.120 of this handbook chapter for information regarding these exams.) This enables the board members to invest their valuable time and resources in doing a more thorough evaluation of the best-qualified applicants.
2. Oral exams have two parts: the question itself and the benchmark or guideline that is used by SMEs to evaluate the answers. When drafting questions, SMEs should think of specific illustrations or “critical incidents” likely to be encountered on the job; life history questions dealing with past experience, training, and accomplishments; or questions directed at determining the extent of candidates’ job-related knowledge.
3. Guidelines for oral exam questions:
 - a. Define the extent and scope of the answers desired. That is, each question should be unambiguous and specific. Though some examinees may not know the answer, all should clearly understand the question.
 - b. Avoid questions which require rote memorization.
 - c. Avoid questions that simply require a knowledge of facts which can easily be looked up in a textbook or manual.
 - d. Avoid questions that involve minor details.
 - e. It is acceptable to use questions which have multiple parts, especially for complex job content.
 - f. Develop questions that enable the applicant to apply what he or she knows to practical problems.
 - g. Allow enough time for a competent applicant to answer the question(s).
 - h. Have accompanying benchmarks or guidelines, which raters use to evaluate the answers. Develop model responses and benchmarks when the questions are developed. This can minimize scoring delays and help refine the questions to ensure they focus on essential information.
 - i. Indicate the benchmark criteria for a more than acceptable or model answer, an acceptable answer, and a less than acceptable answer. The State of Wisconsin has adopted the use of a 0-9 point scale where:

0 = no scoreable response

1-3 points = less than acceptable

4-6 points = acceptable

7-9 points = more than acceptable

See Attachment #12 for a sample oral examination question and rating scale.

4. Choose your oral board members and schedule the date(s) for the oral exam before publishing the announcement. This limits the amount of time spent between announcement and the administration of the exam.

Scheduling the oral exam:

- a. Select a date on which all raters can serve.
- b. Select a location most convenient for most applicants and board members. Arrange for a room that is quiet and free from outside noises. If applicable, arrange to have a room available nearby for applicants to review the exam questions prior to their scheduled exam time.
- c. Invite applicants to participate in the examination. Be sure to emphasize that this is an examination and not an interview and that it will be recorded. This can be done via email, telephone, with a letter as confirmation, or by sending a letter of invitation to qualified applicants. See Attachment #13 for a sample oral exam letter. Give the applicants sufficient notice of when and where to appear. If appropriate, include the position description, organizational chart, a map and parking instructions.
- d. In answering applicants' questions prior to the exam, do not release names of board members (until they appear for the exam) or the names of the other examinees.
- e. As indicated in s. 230.16(3), Wis. Stats., oral exam boards consist of at least two well-qualified, impartial persons. Three board members are preferred.
- f. As a matter of policy, every effort must be made to provide a balanced board including well-qualified women, ethnic minorities, and/or persons with disabilities, particularly when examining for job titles in underutilized job groups and when protected group members are among the applicants.
- g. Board members should be in a position equal to or at a higher level than the vacancy. The immediate supervisor of the position cannot serve as a board member.
- h. Prepare and send a confirmation letter or e-mail to each board member. Include the position description, organizational chart, and job announcement to help the board member prepare for the exam. Include a map and/or parking permit, if appropriate.

5. Administering the exam:

- a. Section 230.16(3), Wis. Stats., requires that all oral exams be recorded. Ensure that an audio or video recorder is set up to record the briefing and each oral exam.
- b. Brief the rating panel on the position to be filled and procedures to follow.
- c. Have each oral board member review and sign the [Exam Security Agreement/Job Expert Certificate](#).
- d. Have the panel review the list of candidates. If a panel member feels he/she cannot be impartial and objective in evaluating an applicant, have the individual withdraw from rating that applicant's exam.
- e. If questions are available for candidate review prior to appearing before the board, advise each candidate as to the number of minutes he/she has to prepare and whether or not notes will be permitted during the exam. Provide a quiet location for review of exam questions, and ensure that the candidate does not have materials available to help in preparation during this review time.
- f. When the board and applicant are ready, bring applicant into exam room, make introductions, and begin recording. A selected board member explains the procedure to be followed and indicates how much time is available to respond.
- g. When an applicant spends too much time or deviates from the topic, a board member should interrupt the candidate and redirect the candidate back to the question, unless the exam is a job simulation measuring specific presentation skills.
- h. Follow-up questions are permissible and recommended if they are relevant to the dimension being measured. Panel members must be consistent from one examinee to the next in their willingness to use follow-up questions. They must not do for one person something they are unwilling to do for others. In addition, it is important for the panel members to be cognizant of the time restraints on the applicant and not ask too many follow-up questions, thereby limiting the time remaining for the applicant to answer other questions.
- i. Each candidate should be rated at the conclusion of each oral exam: (1) each panel member should make independent evaluations prior to discussion or any interchange of information; (2) panel members should discuss examinee responses, exchange facts and information as an aid to determining evaluations; (3) each panel member makes a final evaluation.
- j. At the end of the examination process, remind the panel members that oral exam proceedings are confidential.

6. Tabulate the final scores for each candidate and make the required statistical checks for reliability, rater consistency, and other indicators of examination quality. See the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook Chapter 202*—Statistical and Reliability Analysis and *Chapter 204*—Scoring and Register Establishment. Contact DMRS for consultation or assistance if needed.

Note: Section 20.916(2), Wis. Stats., authorizes reimbursement for all or part of reasonable and necessary travel expenses actually incurred in connection with oral examination and employment interviews. See *Chapter 764*—Reimbursement for Applicant’s Travel Expense of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.

Sec. 176.160 Simulation or Performance Examination

Simulation or performance examinations, also called work samples, require applicants to perform an actual job task under standardized conditions and allow one to measure behaviors not readily observable through other assessment procedures. As a result, this exam method is favored by many for being a valid predictor of job success. Examples include:

1. Speed and accuracy keyboard test for administrative support staff.
2. Driver’s test for truck drivers.
3. Sign painting test for painters.
4. Map reading test for police communications operators.
5. In-basket exercise for managers and supervisors.
6. Mock mediation and dispute resolution for mediators.

To effectively administer any of the above tests, close approximations of real life situations should be used. This may involve the following: using realistic equipment, developing realistic job performance conditions, supplying actual tools of the job, using realistic scenarios, and simulating actual job tasks. In order to administer a simulation, a great deal of time and resources are required. As a result, these exams are best used for vacancies with few applicants and typically administered as a second step of a two-step exam process. Contact DMRS for consultation or assistance if needed.

Sec. 176.170 Examination Scoring

Section 230.16 (4), Wis. Stats., requires that applicant examinations be job-related and valid. Compliance with these legal requirements is determined, in part, through the use of statistics. Upon administration of the examination, it is important to review the statistical data obtained from the results of the examination. See *Chapter 202*—Statistical and Reliability Analysis and *Chapter 204*—Scoring and Register Establishment of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.

Sec. 176.180 Records Retention

Except as noted elsewhere, follow the current General Records Schedule for information regarding the retention and management of records generated by the staffing process:
<http://publicrecordsboard.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=20705&locid=165>.

While staffing vacancies, agencies may have varying degrees of involvement with OSER/DMRS, depending on the level of delegation or type of recruitment and examination. The hiring agency is responsible for maintaining all the records as well as copies of any relevant documents created as part of the staffing process, including those created by DMRS (e.g., class approvals, exam plan signatures, statistical analysis, etc.). Note: OSER serves as the custodian of certain records created during the staffing of professional-level human resources positions for agencies.

Agencies should retain the following paper or online records and documents including, but not limited to: rated Position Description/HIJC, copy of the examination, exam plan, answer sheets/applicant exam responses, scoring

keys, benchmarks, rater evaluation sheets, statistical analysis, exam security agreements for the exam developers, along with any correspondence related to selecting rating panel members and other appropriate documentation. Also include recruitment activity plans, job announcements, newspaper advertisements, correspondence to applicants, list of oral board members, oral board tapes, and other related materials. Agencies also should include any post certification records, as well as requests and approvals from OSER.

Sec. 176.190 Administrative Information

The subject matter in this chapter was originally published in three chapters of the *Wisconsin Personnel Manual*. They were Chapters 208—Oral Examinations, 220—Achievement History Questionnaire, and 230—Essay Examinations. The information from these chapters has been incorporated into one chapter to allow the user to see all the options available when developing an examination.

The chapter was revised in August 2003 to include information regarding reimbursing applicants for oral examination expenses; added two factors to the *How to Best Perform the Evaluation Job in a Selection Context* document; and included information regarding awarding honorariums to non-state employee rating panel members.

In August 2004, the chapter was updated to further define who may be eligible to serve as a rating panel member.

In June 2009, the chapter was revised to reflect changes in records retention, specifically agency responsibility for maintaining all documents pertinent to staffing.

In November of 2010, the chapter was revised to remove references to narrative response exam types Achievement History Questionnaire (AHQ) and Application Materials Review (AMR), and replace them with the Training and Experience Assessment (T&E) examination type, described in sections 176.030, 176.070 and 176.120 and in associated attachments. The definition of Minimum Requirements Exam was added. Also, modifications were made to section 176.140 regarding rating panel procedures, and associated attachments. Other sections of the chapter were updated as appropriate.

In July 2013, Chapter 176 underwent a comprehensive review and update. Included were some reformatting and renumbering of attachments. Major modifications include the following:

- Added citation s. 230.14(3m), Wis. Stats to section 176.020.
- Alphabetized definitions in section 176.030.
- Updated job analysis instruction regarding disclosure of exam minimum requirements, mandatory items and weighting differences to section 176.050.
- Updated exam plan instructions regarding treatment of job content identified as mandatory upon appointment or not in section 176.060.
- Updated exam type explanations in section 176.070.
- Updated Multiple Choice exam section 176.100, and removed corresponding MC exam development attachments.
- Updated Objective Inventory Questionnaire section to refer to practical (vice Professional) work experience (PWE) in section 176.110, and updated corresponding attachments.
- Added instructions for Résumé T&E to section 176.120 and new corresponding attachments.
- Added instructions for managing ratings for recruitments with high numbers of applicants to section 176.140.
- Added chart of typical exam types to Attachment #1.
- Modified sample letter for offline application packet attachment.
- Replaced written communications rating scales for Essay Exam attachment.
- Expanded rater tendencies to rating panel briefing instructions.

In October 2014, Chapter 176 was revised to:

- Simplify exam plan requirements.
- Provide information on expanded use of the Résumé T & E Assessment.
- Clarify the requirement for a minimum of two raters for T & E Assessments.
- Provide options for application pre-screening by Human Resources staff.

Attachment #1

CHOOSING AN EXAMINATION/APPLICANT SCREENING METHODOLOGY

Factor	Multiple Choice	Essay	Oral Exam	T&E*	OIQ**	Simulation Exercise	Resume T & E
Overall Ability to Predict Success on the Job	High	High	High	High	Lowest	Highest	Low
Development Cost/Time	Higher	Lower	Lower	Lower	Higher	Higher	Lower
Administrative/ Scoring Cost	Lower	Higher	Higher	Higher	Lower	Higher	Lower
Job Content Coverage	Thorough	Less Thorough	Varies	Less Thorough	Thorough	Varies	Lowest
Candidate Convenience & Activity	Exam Center/ Special Site/Exam Kiosks	Exam Center/ Special Site	Special Site	Applicant's Home	Applicant's Home	Special Site	Applicant's Home
Quality of Exam Controlled By	Test Development Team	Test Development Team & Raters	Test Development Team & Raters	Test Development Team, Raters & Applicants	Test Development Team & Applicants	Test Development Team, Raters & Applicants	Test Development Team, Raters & Applicants
Applicant Pool Size	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	Flexible	Expected 15 or fewer

DEFINITIONS

<p>Overall Ability to Predict Success on the Job The higher the prediction ability of the exam, the better the chance that the selected candidate will be able to successfully perform the duties of the position.</p>	<p>Content Coverage Thorough: Measures more of the job requirements, measure may be more precise, may include more job-performance dimensions, more questions, etc. Less Thorough: Measures fewer job requirements, measurement may be less precise, may include fewer job-performance dimensions, fewer questions, etc.</p>
<p>Development Cost Higher: Requires more lead time and larger investment Lower: Requires less lead time and smaller investment</p>	<p>Quality of Exam Controlled By Test Development Team: Agency HR Specialists, OSER DMRS HR Consultants, Hiring Supervisor, and other Subject Matter Experts Applicants: Self-Report Bias (may under- or over-state qualifications)</p>
<p>Administrative and Scoring Costs Higher: Rater driven (consider raters' time and salary or honoraria) Lower: Machine (e.g., "scantron" machine or "hand scored")</p>	<p>Candidate Volume/Dispersion Large or Small Group: Number of applicants Nationwide or Statewide: Primary applicant area</p>

*Training and Experience Assessment

**Objective Inventory Questionnaire

Typical Exam Types for Testing for Various Types of Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

Dimension Type	Exam Type	Considerations
Behavioral	Oral	Need follow-up questions to flesh out and identify bluffing. Customer service orientation. Adaptability. Oral communications. Personal style. Teamwork.
Complex experience	T&E or Oral	Full presentation of thoughts, processes, accomplishments. Authority, accountability, responsibility
Customer service	Multiple choice, Essay, Oral, T&E	Scenarios in MC. Customer service problems in essay.
Job Knowledge – Conceptual	Essay	Benchmarks - Synthesis, analysis, evaluation.
Job Knowledge – Technical, Factual, Comprehension, Application of knowledge to solve a problem.	Multiple Choice	Right and wrong answers. General mental ability. Good measures for technical competence.
Licensure	T&E	Simple in/out screen.
Management ability	Simulation	In-basket, role-play, leadership style, negotiation skills.
Oral Communications skills	Oral or Simulation	More formal than an interview setting. Might ask the applicant to discuss a topic, present a training piece.
Problem-solving	Essay or Oral	Controlled environment. You want to know who wrote it, whose ideas these are.
Task Experience	OIQ	Discrete, observable, tangible activities.
Topical	OIQ	Specific courses, training or equivalent work experience
Written Communications skills	Essay	Or Pre-interview writing sample. Controlled environment. You want to know who wrote it.

STANDARDS FOR JUDGING EXAMINATION QUALITY

Relevance and Importance

Each examination question (item) must relate directly to relevant and important job content required at the time of appointment. It is not necessary to measure details or skills that will be trained for after appointment. Each question should tie directly to an important examination dimension or knowledge, skill, or ability (KSA) that significantly impacts job performance.

Difficulty and Differentiation

The difficulty level of the questions (items, problems, etc.) must match the difficulty level required on the job in order to obtain a dependable grouping or ranking of job applicants on the dimensions of KSAs. The questions should be designed to spread people out or differentiate between them in terms of their knowledge, skills, or abilities. Questions that are answered equally well by everyone do not differentiate among applicants and thus provide no useful information.

Balance and Coverage

Questions must adequately sample or cover the mandatory job content areas. More important job areas may receive more emphasis or be covered by a larger number of questions. It is generally possible to measure a larger part of the job with more questions and objective procedures (such as multiple-choice exams) than with fewer questions and judgmental procedures involving raters (such as oral and essay exams).

Objectivity

The problem presented by the exam question (item, problem, etc.) must be clear and unambiguous. Its scope must be well defined so that all applicants understand the question or problem. Directions and related materials (if any) should be clear and precise. Developing a model answer or response can help improve or clarify the question and reveal flaws that can be corrected before administering the exam.

Scoring guidelines, benchmarks, or rating standards are developed with the help of subject matter experts and agreed upon prior to use. Raters are trained and briefed in the proper use of scoring guidelines. Benchmarks or scoring guidelines are based on observable behavior, results, or performance incidents rather than traits (such as dependability, initiative, attitude, loyalty, etc.). The role of selection is to identify individuals who will perform well on the job, not to identify those with desirable personality traits. Trait ratings are notoriously error-prone and are usually not even measured reliably.

Points along the rating scale must be anchored with specific observable behavioral examples, results, or performance incidents rather than adjectives (unsatisfactory, average, superior, excellent, etc.). Raters often disagree as to what a “superior” level of response is or what is required for a “9” rating (on a 0-9 point scale) without explicit guidance and concrete examples beyond those anchored by adjectives.

Specificity

Questions and scoring guides must measure the person for the job rather than the person in the abstract. This means that we target the performance dimension or KSA to be measured in a precise way and avoid questions that are philosophical, vague, general, or that can be misinterpreted. Avoid questions that will allow applicants to bluff their way into the job. Focus questions on practical problems, results, accomplishments, or solutions that enable the best-qualified person (the one who has the desirable KSAs) to outperform the less-qualified or unqualified person.

Reliability

Reliability is how dependable, consistent, and repeatable a measurement is. Consistency and repeatability is necessary for accurate and valid selection. Without reliability, an exam procedure cannot be valid because it is not measuring anything. While the methods of determining exam reliability can be complicated, the H R Specialist can use a variety of approaches to accomplish this step. Where judgmental procedures and raters are involved, it generally means the HR Specialist compares the consistency between their scores for the applicants. Multiple raters are used to help counter any individual rater biases and determine how objective the raters' assessments are. Standard computer programs are available to aid the staffing specialist in making the necessary statistical calculations.

Efficiency

Efficiency has to do with the cost and logistics of developing, administering, and scoring exams. Some of the variables that influence the selection of an assessment and testing option include:

- The specific nature of the job (tasks performed, level of responsibility, etc.).
- The number, characteristics, and locations of the applicants.
- The costs to develop, administer, and score the examination. (For example, objective procedures such as multiple-choice exams permit broader content coverage and inexpensive computer scoring but are more time-consuming and costly to develop than orals or essays.)
- The resources available (time, money, job experts).

Speed Versus Power Exams

Written state civil service exams are generally not speeded or tightly timed. They are intended to give everyone enough time to at least attempt to answer each question. Not everyone will know each answer but time limits are set liberally so that everyone, or almost everyone, can at least attempt to answer each question.

Fairness

A score on an exam should have the same meaning for every person who obtained that score, regardless of ethnicity, sex, age, or disability. One way to help ensure exam fairness is to use panels of subject matter experts that include qualified members with diverse backgrounds to help develop and score the exam. Using qualified minorities, females, and persons with disabilities for exam development and scoring panels is an established practice in Wisconsin civil service.

EXAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR OIQ

Dear Applicant:

You may want to print these instructions before beginning the exam.

Thank you for your interest in the [CLASSIFICATION TITLE] position. All interested candidates are required to complete the following Objective Inventory Questionnaire (OIQ). This questionnaire constitutes the examination for this recruitment. You will be presented with questions designed to evaluate the level of education, training and practical work experience you have with job tasks and activities associated with the job duties of an [CLASSIFICATION TITLE]. The questionnaire will be evaluated and the results will be provided to you. The most qualified candidates will be invited to an interview.

The questions will contain scales on either level of education or training (EOT) or level of practical work experience (PWE). Each question will appear twice. The first time you will respond with the level of EOT you possess for that task/activity. The second time you will respond with your PWE for that task/activity. Please read each task or activity item carefully and select the response criteria which best describe your experience with that particular task or activity. Select **ONE** letter only for each question. Valid work experience may include part-time or full-time employment as well as internships.

The scales that you will be using are as follows.

EDUCATION OR TRAINING (EOT)	
A	
B	
C	
D	

PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE (PWE)	
A	
B	
C	
D	

Please note the definitions below for the terminology applied in the two sets of response criteria.

[THESE ARE EXAMPLES.]

1. Informal training refers to on the job instruction, or self-taught.
2. Formal education or training refers to employer in-service training (on-the-job training), college or technical college credit, apprenticeship or vendor training. This training usually produces documentation such as a certificate of completion or college credit.

After you have answered the questions on a page, click the "Save & Continue" button to save your responses and take you to the next page of questions. Note, if all questions on a page have been answered, the page number will be red. You may go back to review or change your answers on any page by clicking on the page numbers or clicking on "Next" and/or "Previous" to scroll through the pages. When you are finished with the exam click "Save and Finalize" and then the "Finalize" button on the next window to finalize the exam.

After you have successfully completed and finalized your exam, you will receive an e-mail confirmation (if you provided an e-mail address on your personal information page). If you do not receive an email, you may not have finished all of the steps correctly. **Incomplete application materials, including incomplete exams, will not receive further consideration.** You will be able to return to your exam and review or edit your answers at any time before the deadline date.

If you have questions on the exam content, or questions or problems with the online exam functions, please contact **[YOUR NAME]** at **[YOUR EMAIL]**, or **[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]**.

Attachment #4

SAMPLE FORMAT
COMMON OIQ SCALES

Training/Education/Work Experience Scales:

Education or Training (EOT)	Practical Work Experience (PWE)
A. I have <u>no</u> training/education on this task.	A. I have <u>not</u> performed this task.
B. I am self-taught on this task.	B. I have assisted others in performing this task.
C. I have informal training on this task (on-the-job training, OJT).	C. I have performed this task independently without assistance.
D. I have formal training or education on this task (in-service, vendor training, or formal academic education).	D. I have led and trained others in the performance of this task.

Education or Training (EOT)	Practical Work Experience (PWE)
A. I have not been trained to perform this task or activity.	A. I have not performed this task or activity.
B. I have formal academic classroom or employee development preparation on performing this task or activity (i.e., college, university, employee in-service or OJT).	B. I have performed this task or activity with assistance.
C. I have earned academic credit for an internship or practicum where the primary focus was practical application of academic preparation relating to this task or activity.	C. I have performed this task or activity independently (without assistance).
	D. I have trained or led others to perform this task or activity.

Education or Training (EOT)	Practical Work Experience (PWE)
A. I have no specific training for this task.	A. I have not performed this task.
B. I am self-taught with no formal training for this task.	B. I have performed this task with someone else's assistance.
C. I have received OJT for this task.	C. I have performed this task independently (without assistance) at least once.
D. I have received workshop training for this task (defined as two or more days of instruction from an educational institution or vendor in this specific task).	D. I am very skilled at this task, having performed it routinely.
E. I have received formal training on this task (defined as two or more weeks of instruction from an educational institution or vendor in this specific task that resulted in recognition of participation, e.g., diploma, certificate of completion, course grade).	E. I am recognized by my current or past employer as an expert in this task and have trained and/or supervised others performing this task.

COMMON SCALES (cont.)

Education or Training (EOT)	Practical Work Experience (PWE)
A. I have not been trained to perform this task or activity.	A. I have not performed this task or activity.
B. I have formal academic classroom or employee development preparation on performing this task or activity (i.e., generally college, university, employer in-service or OJT).	B. I have performed this task or activity with assistance.
C. I have earned academic credit for an internship or practicum where the primary focus was practical application of academic preparation relating to this task or activity.	C. I have performed this task or activity independently (without assistance).
D. I have taught or trained others to perform this task or activity as part of an accredited academic program.	D. I have trained or led others to perform this task or activity.
	E. I have supervised others in the performance of this task or activity.

If you're having trouble finding a scale that meets your needs, contact your DMRS HR Consultant.

Attachment #5

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please read the following statements, sign below, fill out the information requested and return this form attached to your completed examination materials.

I understand that this exam is a screening device used prior to the interview and that the practice or attempt to practice any deception or fraud will result in my application being withdrawn or that I will be removed from the position if I am hired.

WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

Section ER-MRS 6.10, Wis. Adm. Code, states “. . . the administrator may refuse to examine or certify an applicant, or may remove an applicant from a certification:

- (5) Who has made a false statement of any material fact in any part of the selection process;
- (7) Who practices, or attempts to practice, any deception or fraud in his or her application, certification, examination or in securing eligibility or appointment;
- (10) Who has in any manner gained access to special or secret information regarding the content of an examination.”

WISCONSIN STATUTES

Section 230.43, Wis. Stats., “Misdemeanors; how punished. (1) Obstruction or falsification of examinations. Any person . . . (c) who willfully or corruptly makes any false representations concerning the same [examination] . . . or (d) who willfully or corruptly furnishes any person any special or secret information . . . shall for each offense be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(3) Penalty. Misdemeanors under this section are punishable by a fine of not less than \$50, nor more than \$1,000, or by imprisonment for not more than one year or both.”

I certify that I have read and acknowledge that I understand the preceding two excerpts from the Wisconsin Administrative Code, ER-MRS 6.10, and Wisconsin Statutes, s. 230.43 which relate to security of examination information and falsification of information in any part of the selection process. I also certify that my responses to the questions on this exam are true to the best of my recollection and that I can document these experiences if required to do so at some future date.

SIGNATURE	_____	DATE:	_____
NAME (PRINT)	_____	DAYTIME:	() _____
ADDRESS	_____	EVENING:	() _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP	_____	OTHER:	() _____

Merit Recruitment and Selection
Issue Date: July 2003
Revision Date: October 2014

Attachment #6

TEMPLATE FOR HR USE – PASSING POINT DETERMINATION

The scales that will be used are as follows:

EDUCATION OR TRAINING (EOT)	
A	
B	
C	
D	

PRACTICAL WORK EXPERIENCE (PWE)	
A	
B	
C	
D	

[CLASSIFICATION TITLE] – Objective Inventory Questionnaire					
[DATE]					
[DIMENSION NAME] QUESTIONS [#-#] LIST THE TASKS & KSA'S FROM EXAM PLAN					
<i>TASK(s) / KSA(s) RELATED TO THIS STATEMENT</i>	<i>TASK OR ACTIVITY STATEMENT</i>	Item #	EOT Passing Point	Item #	PWE Passing Point
		1		2	
		3		4	
		5		6	
		7		8	
		9		10	
[DIMENSION NAME] QUESTIONS [#-#] LIST THE TASKS & KSA'S FROM EXAM PLAN RELATING TO THIS DIMENSION					
<i>TASK(s) / KSA(s) RELATED TO THIS STATEMENT</i>	<i>TASK OR ACTIVITY STATEMENT</i>	Item #	EOT Passing Point	Item #	PWE Passing Point
		11		12	
		13		14	
		15		16	
		17		18	
		19		20	

SAMPLE FORMAT

TRAINING & EXPERIENCE ASSESSMENT

How to Apply (Online Instructions)

[See also [Wisc.Jobs website Help Desk.](#)]

You must apply online. (If you are unable to complete the materials due to a disability or system problem contact us at XXXXXX.)

If you have a Wisc.Jobs account:

1. Click “Log In to Apply” at the top of the job announcement and log into your account. When you have logged in, find and view job announcement <JAC XX-XXXX>.
2. Click “Apply Now” at the top of the job announcement.
3. Review your Job Application, make any necessary updates and click “Continue.”
4. Complete the Job Preferences screen and click “Continue.”
5. A résumé is required to apply for this position. Follow the prompts to create a résumé or to upload an existing résumé and click “Continue.”
6. You will be taken to the first page of the exam. Follow the exam instructions and click “save and continue” at the bottom of every page. When you have answered all of the questions, click “Finalize Exam” to submit your application for this job. Your responses to the questions are considered an examination and will be used to determine the eligibility for this vacancy.

If you do not have a Wisc.Jobs account:

1. Click “Log In” at the top of the webpage.
2. Click the “Create New Account” button and follow the steps to create a new account.
3. Click “Apply Now” at the top of screen and complete steps 3 – 6 from above.

If you need assistance with the online application process, call (HR Specialist) at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Your exam responses will be evaluated and the most qualified candidates will be invited to participate in the next phase of the recruitment process.

How to Apply (Offline Instructions)

Insurance Program Officer

APPLICATION INFORMATION: Apply with the Application for State Employment form (OSER-DMRS-38) which can be obtained on the Internet at <http://oser.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=1121>, a resume (not to exceed two typed pages), and a paper limited to two double-spaced, typed pages describing your experience in: (1) managing program(s), including financial operations and reports and communicating with oversight committees (be sure to include your role and level of responsibility); (2) managing contracted administrative services including automated claims processing systems, bid specification preparation, complexity and dollar amount of contract, and role in implementing/evaluating contract(s); and (3) developing and presenting technical, complex or controversial information to individuals and groups, and your role in effective problem solving, conflict resolution, and negotiations. Please organize your responses according to the three categories listed above and include the length, depth, scope, and complexity of experience in each area. Your responses are considered an examination and will be used to determine your eligibility for this vacancy. Information provided in a format other than double-spaced and/or exceeding the maximum pages allowed will not be scored. Send application materials to [**Agency name, agency address**]. Completed application materials must be received by 4:30 p.m., [**date**]. Your exam responses will be evaluated and the most qualified candidates will be invited to participate in the next step of the selection process.

SAMPLE FORMAT

TRAINING & EXPERIENCE ASSESSMENT

EXAM QUESTION

Veterans Assistance Program Specialist

Question 1: Grants Administration

In the administration of the Veterans Assistance Program, it will be necessary for the Veterans Assistance Program Specialist to develop, write, and submit grant proposals. Moreover, the Veterans Assistance Program Specialist will coordinate, administer, and track grant-funded projects.

Describe your experience in grants administration. Be sure to include your role and responsibility in the performance of:

- Soliciting funds
- Developing and writing proposals
- Formulating fiscal estimated/budgets
- Coordinating a grant-funded project
- Reviewing requests from others for funds
- Allocating funds to achieve program goals
- Tracking expenditures
- Monitoring projects implemented by others

Specifically describe the purpose of the grant-funded projects, the sources of funding, dollars involved, role (e.g., assistant, team member, manager, coordinator, etc.) and authority in grants administration.

PLEASE LIMIT YOUR RESPONSE TO ONE DOUBLE-SPACED TYPEWRITTEN PAGE.

SAMPLE FORMAT

TRAINING & EXPERIENCE ASSESSMENT

BENCHMARK FOR VETERANS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SPECIALIST

Question 1: Grants Administration

<p>MORE THAN ACCEPTABLE</p>	<p>9 8 7</p>	<p>Response indicates that the candidate has had experience in grant administration. Candidate has had experience in six of the areas below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soliciting funds • Developing and writing proposals • Formulating fiscal estimates/budgets • Coordinating a grant-funded project • Reviewing requests from others for funds • Allocating funds to achieve program goals • Tracking expenditures • Monitoring projects implemented by others <p>The purpose of the grants was for homeless or veteran services, the source of funding was from federal and state sources, the amount was in excess of \$250,000, and the candidate has had a managerial role in grants administration.</p>
<p>ACCEPTABLE</p>	<p>6 5 4</p>	<p>Response indicates that the candidate has had experience in grants administration. Candidate has had experience in five of the above areas. The purpose of the grants was for social services, the source of funding was from an outside agency/organization, the amount was between \$50,000 and \$250,000, and the candidate has been involved in applying for grants but was not responsible for the application.</p>
<p>LESS THAN ACCEPTABLE</p>	<p>3 2 1</p>	<p>Response indicates that the candidate has had limited or minimal experience in grants administration and the process for applying for grants. Candidate has experience in fewer than five of the above areas. The amount of the grants was less than \$50,000.</p>
	<p>0</p>	<p>No scoreable response.</p>

Attachment #8

**SAMPLE COVER LETTER AND INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR OFFLINE APPLICATION AND
EXAMINATION PACKET**

[date]

Dear Applicant:

Re: **[title]**
 [department name]
 Job Announcement Code: **[#]**

Thank you for your expression of interest in the position of **[title]**. The special application and examination materials for the above position are enclosed. The selection procedures used in filling this position will be as follows:

1. All interested applicants will be required to complete the enclosed examination. Please read the instructions carefully.
2. A review panel consisting of two or more people who know the requirements of the job will be convened to review and evaluate all examinations.
3. NOTE: Your responses are considered an examination and will be used to determine your eligibility for this vacancy. You will receive a civil service score based on your responses. The most qualified applicants from among those who receive passing civil service scores will be invited to compete further in the selection process.
4. Your qualifications at this phase of the examination process will be judged only on the basis of the answers you provide to the questions that follow. Do NOT send in résumés or letters of reference or introduction at this time. You should answer all questions fully and in as much detail as possible.

It is the State's policy to provide applicants with written guidelines for describing their proficiencies, achievements, and accomplishments in light of the duties of the job to be filled. The purpose of this is to solicit more complete information about each candidate and to minimize obtaining irrelevant or extraneous content.

The deadline for receipt of the completed application and examination materials at the office of Human Resources in the **[department name]** is **4:30 p.m. on [date]**. It is our policy to not accept applications and questionnaires received after the deadline.

Should you have any general questions regarding these selection procedures, please call me. Thank you for your interest in this position.

Sincerely,
[name]
Staffing Specialist
Enclosures [include DEC and Vet form]

[EXAM NAME]
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT TITLE: [title]
JOB ANNOUNCEMENT CODE: [#]

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE APPLICANT

1. Please answer each question of this examination according to the instructions that accompany it. **Do NOT attach a résumé, letters of reference or other materials in lieu of your exam responses.** Your eligibility on the employment register will be based on the answers you provide to the questions on the succeeding pages. Résumés are not a substitute for answering the exam questions.
2. Since the answers to each question will be scored separately, be sure to provide a separate and complete answer for each question. **Do NOT reference your response to one question as the answer for part of any other question.**
3. Achievements may include or be drawn from any life experiences: full- or part-time work, internships, course work, volunteer or self-development activities, military service or other life experiences. The questions include some guidelines as to relevancy. You should, however, feel free to include other related information that you feel might be appropriate.
4. Responses should be typewritten on 8 1/2 x 11" white paper. If your responses cannot be typewritten, use a black ink pen and be sure to write or print legibly. Evaluators of your responses cannot give credit for responses which cannot be read.
5. Responses must be limited to [#] pages per question. Any response over [#] pages per question will not be evaluated.
6. Complete the enclosed Application for State Employment (Form OSER-DMRS-38) and, if appropriate, the Veterans Preference Supplement (Form OSER-MRS-38L) and the Disabled Expanded Certification Verification form (OSER-MRS-159). Also complete and return the Certification Statement.
7. **The deadline date for receipt of the following completed materials is NO LATER THAN 4:30 p.m. on [date]:**
 - Application for State Employment
 - Your responses to the examination questions
 - Certification Statement
 - Veterans Preference Supplement form (if appropriate)
 - Disabled Expanded Certification Verification form (if appropriate)

Return the above materials to:

[name]
[department]
[address]

Résumé T&E Benchmark Examples

Exam Plan Dimension	Coordination and performance of application testing: Coordinate and perform all phases of application testing (e.g. acceptance, system, integration, load, volume, regression, accessibility and usability) with programming staff, business users and agency management. Create and execute test plans based on information from business users and programming staff using SQL and other data-related tools. Analyze the results of application tests. Analyze application and data quality issues and proposing new means to prevent them. Determine the priority of reported bugs. Coordinate the business experts in the preparation, execution and analysis of acceptance testing. Knowledge of application testing methodologies, tools and procedures; relational database concepts; SQL programming; ability to analyze and transform business requirements into system specifications.		
Scale Type	Extremely Simple (Pass/Fail)	Simple	Complex
Points	0 – 1, Passing Point = 1	0 -3, Passing Point = 2	0-9, Passing Point = 4
Job Content Type	An elemental part of a job, clearly evident in a short response.	An activity that has several levels of achievement that are clearly described and have very distinct borders.	Typical T&E content covering an exam dimension with many tasks and KSAs.
Question Example	Relate your experience listed on your resume to your background in using SQL to create and execute test scenarios as part of working on application testing (e.g. acceptance, system, integration, load, volume, regression, accessibility and usability).	Relate your experience listed on your resume to your background in coordinating and performing the phases of application testing, creating and executing test plans, and analyzing test results. Include your experience with the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on the phases of application testing (e.g. acceptance, system, integration, load, volume, regression, accessibility and usability). • Coordinating the development, execution and analysis of test 	Relate your experience listed on your resume to your background in coordinating and performing all phases of application testing, creating and executing test plans, and analyzing test results. Include the type of organization (e.g. insurance, employee benefits administration, government, private sector, etc.) and applications (e.g., accounting, case management, customer relationship management, etc.) with which you have worked and your experience with the following tasks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on all phases of application testing (e.g. acceptance, system, integration, load, volume, regression, accessibility and usability). • Leading the development and implementation of testing practices, policies, and procedures • Using SQL and other data-related tools to create test scenarios.

		plans with business experts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing application and data quality issues and proposing new means to prevent them. Determining the priority of reported bugs. Coordinating the work of business staff in preparation and execution of acceptance testing.
Benchmark Example	<p>Passing (Score = 1):</p> <p>The candidate has used SQL to create application test scenarios.</p> <p>Failing (Score = 0):</p> <p>The candidate may have experience with SQL outside of application testing or has worked in application testing but without using SQL.</p>	<p>More than Acceptable (Score = 3):</p> <p>In addition to meeting the Acceptable benchmark, the candidate has experience with at least <u>one</u> of the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working on the following phases of application testing: load, volume, regression, accessibility and usability. Assisting business staff in preparation and execution of acceptance testing. <p>Acceptable (Score = 2):</p> <p>At the Acceptable level, the candidate has experience coordinating and performing phases of application testing, creating and executing test plans, and analyzing test results. The candidate has experience with at least <u>two</u> of the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working on the following phases of application testing: acceptance, system, and integration. Using SQL and other data-related tools to create test 	<p>More than Acceptable (Score = 7, 8, or 9):</p> <p>In addition to meeting the Acceptable benchmark, the candidate has experience with at least <u>one</u> of the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working on the following phases of application testing: load, volume, regression, accessibility and usability. Coordinating the work of business staff in preparation and execution of acceptance testing. <p>A higher score may be warranted for a candidate with experience in organizations similar to Agency XXX (insurance, employee benefits administration, government, etc.) or with applications similar to those used at Agency XXX (e.g., accounting, case management, customer relationship management, etc.). Scoring within this category may also be determined by the number of duties listed in the More than Acceptable category with which the candidate has experience.</p> <p>Acceptable (Score = 4, 5, or 6):</p> <p>At the Acceptable level, the candidate has experience coordinating and performing all phases of application testing, creating and executing test plans, and analyzing test results. The candidate has experience with at least <u>two</u> of the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Working on the following phases of application testing: acceptance, system, and integration. Using SQL and other data-related tools to create test scenarios. Analyzing application and data quality issues and

		<p>scenarios.</p> <p>3. Analyzing application and data quality issues and proposing new means to prevent them.</p> <p>Less Than Acceptable (Score = 1):</p> <p>The candidate has little experience coordinating and performing all phases of application testing, creating and executing test plans, and analyzing test results. The candidate has experience with less than two tasks listed in the Acceptable category or the candidate has been involved in various phases of application testing but was not responsible for coordinating the process.</p> <p>No Scoreable Response (Score = 0)</p>	<p>proposing new means to prevent them.</p> <p>4. Determining the priority of reported bugs.</p> <p>A higher score may be warranted for a candidate with experience in organizations similar to Agency XXX (insurance, employee benefits administration, government, etc.) or with applications similar to those used at Agency XXX (e.g., accounting, case management, customer relationship management, etc.). Scoring within this category may also be determined by the number of duties listed in the Acceptable category with which the candidate has experience.</p> <p>Less Than Acceptable (Score 1, 2, or 3):</p> <p>The candidate has little experience coordinating and performing all phases of application testing, creating and executing test plans, and analyzing test results. The candidate has experience with less than two tasks listed in the Acceptable category or the candidate has been involved in various phases of application testing but was not responsible for coordinating the process.</p> <p>No Scoreable Response (Score = 0)</p>
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Attachment #10
(three pages)

ESSAY QUESTION & RATING CRITERIA

SAMPLE 0-9 RATING BENCHMARK FOR ESSAY QUESTION

Question: Assume that you are developing an examination that requires each candidate to demonstrate that he or she can design, letter, and paint a sign competently. Describe how you would develop reliable scoring guides, benchmarks, or grading standards for this exam.

Model Answer: The ideal answer would include the following considerations.

Work with job experts to develop the scoring standards; make sure both the questions and scoring standards are specific and that the exam will elicit the desired behavior or answer; make sure elements in the questions or exam material match or parallel elements in the desired answer or response; observe the behavior to be measured; draft/review/redraft the standards with job experts before final approval. To specifically address reliability, take account of the following factors:

To be reliable, benchmarks or rating standards must be specific, observable results, not qualitative judgments, e.g., “each piece of specific information is included in the sign, borders are uniform, the most important information is most prominently displayed, lines are straight, letter spacing is uniform, letter sizing is uniform,” not “sign was well done and looked good.”

Often, breaking the performance to be measured into small segments can improve reliability. An example of this would be a checklist, with each behavior or item in the checklist worth one point.

All raters must agree on the meaning of the words used in the evaluation standards; briefing, review, and discussion in advance to develop a common understanding of their meaning and practical application is essential.

Further training of raters through trial runs or practice rating is desirable.

Formatting of the scoring sheets for clarity and ease of use reduces rater errors.

Reliability can be assessed and monitored by using multiple raters—two or more for each candidate.

Raters should record their individual judgments; they should not try to reach consensus.

RATING CRITERIA

<p>MORE THAN ACCEPTABLE</p>	9	<p>Response covers all or most all of the model answer, including general test development methods (work with job experts, focus on the observable) and the concepts related to reliability and how to enhance it (the need for specificity, correspondence between elements in the question and elements in the benchmarks, use of multiple raters). A very knowledgeable candidate who definitely knows the details of developing and using reliable benchmarks.</p>
	8	
	7	
ACCEPTABLE	6 5 4	<p>Response covers general test development and at least the need for observable results and advance review or briefing of raters. Addresses at least one-half of the elements in the model answer in reasonably convincing detail.</p>
<p>LESS THAN ACCEPTABLE</p>	3	<p>Response shows superficial knowledge of general test development (may work alone without job expert input, for example) or offers general textbook definition or reliability without reference to specific steps in obtaining or measuring it. A poorly informed candidate at best who knows little or nothing about developing and using reliable scoring guides.</p>
	2	
	1	
	0	<p>No scoreable response.</p>

Written Communications Rating Scales

		Organization and Clarity (Organization and Ideas)		Recognition of Audience (Voice and Word Choice)		Language Usage (Conventions and Sentence Fluency)
More Than Acceptable	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response is well-organized such that the reader moves through the text without confusion The main point is clear. 	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response is written at a level that is neither too bureaucratic nor too informal but is at a level of formality that is appropriate to the target audience. 	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g. grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, paragraphing, etc.) that enhance understanding.
	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant, accurate details support the main point. The information is presented clearly and in logical order. 	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The technical terminology is presented at an appropriate level for the audience. 	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences are complete and structured to enhance meaning.
	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitions between the major ideas are smooth and integrated within the paragraph. 	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choice is precise and does not overuse words/phrases or use trite words/phrases. The tone is compelling and illustrates sincere respect for the purpose and audience. 	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence length and variety contribute to an easy flow and cadence for the reader.
Acceptable	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response is organized well enough to move the reader through the text with little confusion. The main point is discernible but somewhat broad or general. 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response is written at a level that, at times, borders on either too bureaucratic or too informal for the target audience. 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response shows reasonable control over standard writing conventions (e.g. grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, paragraphing, etc.) such that errors do not impede understanding.
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is enough support for the main point to be convincing, but some details are irrelevant, unclear, or weak. 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The technical terminology is mostly at the correct level for the audience but some wording could have been chosen more carefully. 	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences and their structure are functional but somewhat routine or inconsequential.
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sequence of information shows some logic, but it takes some attention away from the content. Transitions may be somewhat abrupt. 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choice is functional but not always precise, so some overuse or triteness may be present. The tone lacks some energy but is pleasant and illustrates diplomacy for the purpose and audience. 	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentence variety emerges occasionally to support an easy flow, but some parts are stiff.
Less Than Acceptable	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response lacks a clear main point or any clear sense of direction/order, causing confusion when reading. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response, in general, and the use of technical terminology are at a level that is either too bureaucratic or complex or too simple or informal for the audience. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The response shows a struggle with standard writing conventions such that errors seriously detract from comprehension.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reader must make inferences based on unreliable or missing details. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Word choice shows a limited vocabulary and/or misuse of words/phrases. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences are incomplete, run-on, or awkwardly worded, causing the reader the need to decode in order to understand the content.
	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitions between ideas are choppy or confusing. 	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tone is indifferent and illustrates a lack of concern for the topic/audience. 	1	

SAMPLE

CHECKLIST OF RATING PANEL MATERIALS

- Exam Security Agreement/Job Expert Certificate
- List of applicants (listed in different order than the blinded exam materials)
- Job announcement
- Position description (non-HIJC) with supporting documents (e.g., Supervisory Analysis Form, organizational chart)
- Exam questions and benchmarks
- Scoring sheet
- Copies of blinded exam materials
- Expense sheet for reimbursement, honorarium (if applicable)
- Self-addressed, stamped envelope for return of materials (if applicable)
- Extra pens, pencils, post-it notes, highlighters, etc. (if applicable)

SAMPLE

RATING PANEL BRIEFING INSTRUCTIONS

(In attendance: HR Specialist, exam raters, hiring manager/SME)

1. Review and complete Job Expert Certificate/Exam Security Agreement

Raters must complete and sign these at the beginning of the evaluation session in your presence.

Have the raters review the list of applicants to identify any candidates about whom they feel they could not be objective or recognize a conflict of interest and ask to be excused from rating such candidates. All raters must be informed that bias for or against any candidate is a violation of state law.

2. Review the job announcement and position description

The job announcement may be useful to consider the point of view of the applicants. Look over the announcement to get an idea of the information that was made available to potential applicants.

The position description will give the rater a better idea of the duties and responsibilities of the position. In order to develop the civil service exam, job experts analyzed these job duties and identified essential areas of knowledge and skill required upon appointment.

Have the raters review the position description. With the hiring manager/SME present for consultation, answer any questions the raters may have.

3. Review the exam questions and benchmarks.

In particular, ensure that the raters understand how to read and apply the benchmarks as written, assign scores for each candidate and ensure that the score sheet is completed accurately.

Raters are provided a copy of the exam benchmarks for each question. The exam benchmarks contain a rating scale which defines the range of scores you will use to evaluate the responses. Example: The rating scale has three categories of scores: MORE THAN ACCEPTABLE (9, 8, 7), ACCEPTABLE (6, 5, 4), and LESS THAN ACCEPTABLE (3, 2, 1, 0). A “9” is the highest score possible. The minimum passing score (or acceptable rating) for each question is “4.” A “0” should be used only when an applicant has not provided anything in response to a question.

The benchmarks contain evaluation criteria for the raters to determine in which of the three categories the applicant’s responses belong. The criteria are intended to be a guideline or benchmark and are not necessarily all-inclusive. An applicant’s response may demonstrate a comparable level of training or experience that is not listed within the criteria. The range of scores within each category allows the raters flexibility in rating more or less elaborate responses for relative differences in depth or breadth of experience. For example, one applicant may provide a response which meets the criteria for the acceptable category but earns a score of “5” or “6.” Rater expertise comes into play when comparing each of the responses with the pertinent rating criteria and determining the appropriate credit to give for each response.

Remind the panel of some common rater errors:

- **Avoid making overall judgments.** In general, make separate and distinct evaluations in each of the questions. **Halo Effect:** The undesirable effect that an overall impression (or the impression from the

first few questions) may have upon raters' judgments of answers to different questions. This occurs when forming a general impression of an applicant by letting one area of their attribute influence and bias the rater's impression of other areas. **Horns Effect:** allowing a negative impression to influence judgment. **First Impression Error:** make determination within first few minutes of evaluation.

- **Avoid comparing applicants with one another when evaluating them.** To help avoid a **contrast effects error**, evaluate each applicant against the exam benchmarks rather than against other applicants.
 - **Avoid sole reliance on crude indicators of past achievements** such as grades, degrees, job titles, years of experience, and salary progress. Such indices, taken in isolation, are minimally useful measurements of achievement and accomplishment at best. In general, do not assign scores based on crude factors, but rather the applicant information reflective of the content and relevance of past achievement and accomplishments for the job in question.
 - **Avoid making evaluations on the basis of personal information.** While personal information will be blinded from the application materials, raters may detect or suspect personal information such as race, gender, national origin, age, etc. It is essential that raters focus on job related qualifications and guard against letting any personal information influence the ratings.
 - **Avoid similar-to-me error.** Raters must be aware of tendency to favorably evaluate applicants who are similar to themselves.
 - **Avoid leniency, stringency and central tendency errors.** Raters may be tempted to be an "easy", "hard", or "in the middle" rater. Raters should be consistent, but not strive to have a predisposed rating pattern approach to evaluation.
4. **Practice with the panel.** When you have finished your orientation briefing, before letting the raters go, have them complete the ratings for one or two of the candidates in your presence. This will help identify any difficulties that the raters may have in interpreting or applying the benchmarks. Consult the SME if needed.
 5. **Conclude the panel orientation and separate panel members to conduct their independent ratings of the applicants.** After the meeting has ended and the panel has been sent to complete their ratings, the rating panel members should not discuss or comment on applicants or ratings. The practice of having panel members compare scores and collaborate on scoring invalidates inter-rater statistical reliability and nullifies the effectiveness of having multiple raters evaluate candidates. If raters have questions while conducting their evaluations, they should direct them only to HR staff, who in turn may consult the hiring manager/SME for clarification.

Reminder, per ER-MRS 6.08, Wis. Adm. Code, exam scores are closed records. Scoring decisions are not to be shared with the hiring manager or anyone else outside of the panel. The identities of the rating panel members are open records after completion of scoring. If raters are contacted by anyone regarding the rating panel, the inquirers should be referred to Human Resources without further disclosure.

SAMPLE RATING PANEL MEMBER THANK YOU LETTER

[date]

[name]
[address]

Dear **[name]**:

Thank you very much for the time and effort you devoted to serving as a member of the exam rating panel for the **[title]** position. Your service with the merit-based selection process helps to ensure and maintain a qualified work force in Wisconsin civil service.

As a reminder, please do not discuss any information regarding the rating panel. Feel free to contact me with any questions. And if you are asked by others to discuss this recruitment, please direct those persons to me.

Thank you again for taking the time from your schedule to participate in this important process.

Sincerely,

[name]
[title]

Sample Rating Score Sheet

CONFIDENTIAL

Exam Name: _____

Date: _____

Name of Rater: _____

Signature of Rater: _____

Applicant ID	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Total
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

SAMPLE ORAL EXAMINATION QUESTION AND RATING CRITERIA

Handling an unusual situation or crisis in a maximum security correctional institution

Dimension Description:

Perceives suspicious persons and activities; recognizes potential crisis situations, investigates suspicious activities by conducting searches, surveying visitors, checking out leads, etc.; takes appropriate action in unusual or emergency situations (e.g., sick or injured officers or inmates, arguments between inmates, escapes, etc.); adapts to unfamiliar situations; reports actions to supervisor or other appropriate persons.

Question – You turn a blind corner in a hallway and come upon four inmates physically fighting and brawling. One is apparently seriously injured and lying unconscious on the floor. You are alone and no other officers are visible. What action do you take and why?

Rating Criteria:

MORE THAN ACCEPTABLE	9	Response indicates behavior in unexpected or crisis situations would be so skillful and insightful that it not only deals with the situation but prevents such situations from occurring in the future. Response indicates the ability to quickly recognize potentially troublesome or unusual situations, and take appropriate action when such occurrences arise. Responses are in complete compliance with the letter and spirit of all policies and procedures governing crisis situations.
	8	
	7	
ACCEPTABLE	6	Response indicates when unusual or emergency situations arise behavior is such that it does not complicate or aggravate the problem. In such situations, this person could be expected to step in and quiet the situation before it gets too far out of hand; response indicates the ability to recognize obvious crisis situations and take suitable action.
	5	
	4	
LESS THAN ACCEPTABLE	3	Response indicates behavior in unusual or crisis situations that tends to complicate or even create more serious problems. Response indicates a failure to recognize even obvious crisis situations and the failure to take any appropriate action that might help the situation. Response is contrary to established policy and procedure for handling crisis situations.
	2	
	1	
	0	No scoreable response.

SAMPLE CANDIDATE ORAL EXAM LETTER

[date]

[candidate's name]
[address]

Dear [name]:

You are invited to participate in an oral examination for the position of [title]. Please report promptly at:

[date]
[time]
[location]

In order to become eligible for consideration for this position, you must take this examination at the time and place shown. (Please allow approximately one hour to participate in the exam process.) A special rating panel for this examination will be made up of persons who know the requirements of the job and have volunteered their time to conduct the examination. For this reason, we cannot arrange an alternate examination date. The names of the rating panel members will be kept confidential until you appear for the examination.

The format of the oral examination is different from the traditional interview. When you arrive for the examination, you will be given a few minutes to review the job areas the rating panel will be covering in their evaluations and/or the list of core questions to be used in each area. Once you have completed your preparation, you will be escorted into the oral exam room and introduced to the rating panel members. The exam will begin immediately. You are encouraged to do your best in responding fully to each question. While it is impossible to prepare for specific questions, I suggest you study the qualifications identified in the published job announcement. The questions asked will be related to those qualifications and may deal with your degree of knowledge or your job experience, skills, or education. Your oral examination results are determined by evaluating your responses to the questions and with the qualifications required for the job.

Enclosed is a copy of the position description, organizational chart, and the job announcement. These materials are intended to help you focus on relevant applicant information at the time of examination.

Please call or e-mail me by 4:00 p.m., [date], to confirm your examination date and time. I can be reached at [telephone number] or [e-mail address]. If you require any special accommodations for this examination, please let me know when confirming your examination date and time.

Sincerely,

[name]
[title]

Enclosures