

# Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook

## Chapter 204

### Examination Scoring and Register Establishment

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#### Sec. 204.010 Introduction

The purpose of this handbook chapter is to provide guidance to human resources staff who score examinations and establish registers. The chapter includes procedures for computing civil service scores, breaking ties in test scores, and ranking eligible candidates, establishing registers, and maintaining registers.

For traditional multiple choice examinations and for other types of examinations such as achievement history questionnaires, application materials reviews, objective inventory questionnaires, oral examinations, and essays, civil service scores are determined by following the procedures outlined in section 204.050 of this handbook chapter, Computing Civil Service Scores.

#### Sec. 204.020 Statutory and Rule Authority

1. “Appointments to, and promotions in, the classified service shall be made only according to merit and fitness, which shall be ascertained so far as practicable by competitive examination.” s. 230.15(1), Wis. Stats.
2. “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 examination and in determining the relative ratings of the competitors.” s. 230.16(5), Wis. Stats.
3. Section 230.16(7)(a), Wis. Stats., requires that 10, 15, or 20 points be added to the civil service score of veterans, disabled veterans, or disabled veterans with at least 30 percent disability, respectively. The legislative intent is to add veterans preference points to scores converted to a civil service scale where 70 is passing and 100 is maximum.
4. “The administrator may establish a new and separate register for a specific position or class only when in the administrator’s judgment there is no appropriate existing register from which appointments may be made.” s. 230.26(4)(a), Wis. Stats.
5. “For every position to be filled by promotion from a promotional register, the administrator shall, after certifying names under sub. (1), additionally certify the name of the highest ranked disabled veteran whose

disability is at least 70%.” s. 230.25(1g), Wis. Stats. “The administrator shall make available to each examinee the final results of his or her examinations through such methods as written notice, public posting or any other means deemed appropriate by the administrator.” s. ER-MRS 6.07, Wis. Adm. Code.

6. “Eligibility on a register continues for 6 months from the date the register was established or, on an integrated register, 6 months from the date the individual is placed on the register. The administrator may allow a register to expire after 3 months, but only after considering the impact of such an action on the policy of this state to provide for equal employment opportunity and to take affirmative action, as specified in s. 230.01(2), Stats.” s. ER-MRS 11.03(1), Wis. Adm. Code.
7. “The administrator may reactivate a register up to 3 years from the date it was established. Names on the reactivated register may be integrated with those on a subsequently established register.” s. ER-MRS 11.03(2), Wis. Adm. Code.
8. “Lacking a complete certification from a register, the appointing authority may request additional names to complete the certification from another appropriate register as determined by the administrator.” s. ER-MRS 12.04(1), Wis. Adm. Code.
9. “The administrator may certify additional names from registers of related classes in the same, counterpart or higher pay ranges to fill out an incomplete certification, or may make a certification from registers of classes in the same, counterpart or higher pay ranges when no register exists for the class for which certification is requested. Such decisions shall include a determination by the administrator that the examinations for the same or higher classes or classes in counterpart pay ranges are job related for the work of the position for which certification is to be made.” s. ER-MRS 12.04(2), Wis. Adm. Code.

### Sec. 204.030 Definitions

The following are definitions of terms used in this chapter:

1. **Civil service score:** A score that is converted from the raw score to a civil service scale, with a passing point of 70 and a maximum of 100.
2. **Eligibles:** Those applicants for employment who have achieved a passing grade (numeric or eligible) and are therefore eligible for further consideration at the next step of the hiring process.
3. **Examination component:** A separate and distinct part of an examination or examination process used as an assessment device. Examinations may be made up of a single component (for example, achievement history questionnaire) or multiple components (for example, multiple choice and objective inventory questionnaire).
4. **Final grade rank:** The position an eligible applicant holds on a register, based on his or her final numerical grade in comparison to other applicants. No rank will exist for non-numerical results (i.e., eligible/ineligible).
5. **Passing point:** A minimum acceptable standard, which may be a numerical score, a letter grade, or a determination of eligibility (e.g., a license requirement), determined to be the point at which an applicant has passed an examination.
6. **Raw score:** The unadjusted score on a test, often determined by counting the number of correct answers, but more generally a sum or other combination of item or question scores.
7. **Reciprocal conversion:** A formula which converts raw scores on one scale to a civil service scale score of 70 or more, using a 30-point-passing spread (i.e., 70 - 100).

8. **Successive hurdles:** A method of examination whereby an applicant must pass or meet some predetermined standard on a given component of a multiple-component exam before he or she may compete in the next component of the exam.
9. **Tie breaker:** A method used to rank applicants with tied scores (for example, comparing scores on the most important test parts of the exam until a distinction is made).
10. **Veterans preference points:** Those points which are added to the scores of non-civil service applicants who have achieved a score of 70 or above. The points may be either 10, 15, or 20, depending on what criteria are met in s. 230.16(7) and (7m), Wis. Stats.

#### Sec. 204.040 Combining Examination Components

When more than one examination type is used as a selection device, it will be necessary to combine the scores of all the components. (See [Chapter 176](#)—Examination Development of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook*.) The examination plan must indicate how the different components will be combined. Two different approaches may be used when using multiple examination components.

1. **Successive hurdles:** The first method of combining scores of multiple exam components is by administering each component consecutively and allowing only those who pass or meet some standard on a given component to compete in the next stage or component. The final grade and ranking are generally based on the score of the final component.

The variation is administering all the components at the same time (e.g., including an Objective Inventory questionnaire [OIQ] with a multiple-choice exam). Generally when using this method, the applicant must pass one component in order to have the second component scored, for example, scoring the OIQ portion if the applicant passed the multiple-choice component. The final grade and ranking are based on the score of both components.

The successive hurdles approach should be used when the possession of a specific knowledge or skill can be identified as being mandatory or critical for successful performance of the work (i.e., absence or weakness cannot be compensated for by strength in other areas).

2. **Compensatory model:** The second method of combining scores of multiple components—the compensatory model—allows all applicants to compete in all examination parts, components, or stages, with the final score based on the combination of the scores for all components.

**Note:** In this approach, an applicant may fail or do poorly on one or more examination parts, components, or stages, but attain a passing civil service score of 70 or more.

When combining scores from multiple test components or stages, it is sometimes desirable to transform the scores from each component to the same or equivalent scales. Consult with the appropriate DMRS Human Resources Consultant or agency psychometric expert prior to transferring scores to a common scale, if you are unfamiliar with this conversion.

#### Sec. 204.050 Computing Civil Service Scores

To convert raw scores to civil service scores, it is necessary to establish a passing point for the examination. (If you have multiple test components, see section 204.040, Combining Examination Components, of this handbook chapter, and consult with the appropriate DMRS Human Resources Consultant or your agency passing point approval authority, if staffing is delegated.) Generally, for such examinations as training and experience assessments and oral examinations, the passing point should be set at an average of four on a nine-point scale, or adjusted following

established procedures. Any deviation from this practice should be approved by the appropriate DMRS Human Resources Consultant or your agency passing point approval authority, if staffing is delegated.

1. **Procedure for calculating the reciprocal:**

- a. Subtract the raw score passing point from the maximum score possible on the test. A score less than the maximum possible score *may* be used, when necessary.

**Example:** Suppose you have an oral examination with five questions, with each question being rated on a nine-point scale by three raters. The maximum score is 135 (five questions x nine high x three raters). The passing score is set at an average of four, or a total of 60 (five questions x four pass x three raters).  
 $135 - 60 = 75$

- b. Divide the number 30 (100 – 70) by the result of the subtraction in (a), above. This result is the reciprocal and will be used in the actual computation of a civil service score.

$$30 \text{ divided by } 75 = .40, \text{ or the reciprocal (R)}$$

2. **Procedure for converting raw scores to civil service scores:**

Two examples are provided in this section, detailing the conversion of a raw score *above* the passing point and the conversion of a raw score *below* the passing point:

$$\text{Civil service score} = R (\text{raw score} - \text{passing point}) + 70$$

- a. Subtract the raw score passing point from the individual's total raw score.

**Example:** Using the previous information, suppose you have two scores: a. 30 being a failing score and b. 90 being a passing score. Recall that 60 is the passing point.

- a.  $30 - 60 = -30$   
b.  $90 - 60 = 30$

- b. Multiply this result by the reciprocal, or R. Recall that R is .4.

- a.  $.4 \times (-30) = -12$   
b.  $.4 \times (30) = 12$

- c. Add the result of this multiplication to 70.

- a.  $-12 + 70 = 58^*$   
b.  $12 + 70 = 82$

\*In the case of a failing score, you are in reality *subtracting* the result of step (b) from 70.

- d. The result of step (c) is the civil service score, without veterans preference points.

- |                |
|----------------|
| a. 58<br>b. 82 |
|----------------|

### Sec. 204.060 Establishing the Register

1. Complete the *Exam Score Analysis* form (OSER-MRS-198, located on the OSER web site at <http://oser.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=4606>) to document the steps taken to set the passing point and establish the register. (See [Chapter 202](#)—Statistical and Reliability Analysis of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook* for information regarding determining the passing point and completing the form.)
2. Establish the register in Wisc.Jobs or the system deemed appropriate. (See the *Wisc.Jobs Training Guide* for detailed instructions on creating a register within that system.) Wisc.Jobs will recognize applicant veterans preference points and tie breakers and will assign final grade ranks accordingly. (See sections 204.060 through 204.080 of this handbook chapter regarding these areas.)

### Sec. 204.070 Veterans Preference

Qualifying veterans and certain spouses of veterans can be granted preference points on civil service examinations. Veterans preference points are added only to scores at or above 70 *and* only for persons who do not hold a permanent appointment or have mandatory restoration rights to a permanent appointment to any position in state classified civil service. Either 10, 15, or 20 points may be added to the civil service score for those individuals who are eligible. See ss. 230.16(7) and (7m), Wis. Stats., and form OSER-MRS-38L; <http://oser.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=1240>.

For positions being filled by promotion, certify the name of the highest-ranked disabled veteran whose disability is at least 70 percent. See s. 230.25(1g), Wis. Stats.

### Sec. 204.080 Tie Breaking

Tie breaking is seldom necessary under the current flexible certification provisions of s. 230.25, Wis. Stats., except where necessary to comply with the provisions of expanded certification limiting certification to no more than three names *each* for ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

When a tie in a test score exists, the following steps shall be applied to comply with the provisions of s. 230.25, Wis. Stats.:

1. Use the most important test parts or examination components to break ties. Tie breakers must be shown in the examination plan, along with the order in which they will be applied.
2. If ties still remain after exhausting all tie breakers, ties shall be broken by randomization. Consult with the appropriate DMRS Human Resources Consultant or your agency psychometric expert for assistance, if staffing is delegated.

### Sec. 204.090 Final Grade Rank

When a ranked register is established, eligibles should be ranked according to their final numerical grade (without veterans preference points) and tie-breaking suffix, when applicable. The highest grade without veterans preference points is the number one eligible. No rank is given for applicants who are not eligible or when an integrated register is established. In addition, no rank is given for registers established without numerical scores.

### Sec. 204.100 Examination Results

All applicants examined must be notified of their examination results. This can be done by written notice, public posting, or any other means deemed appropriate by the administrator. When establishing the register in Wisc.Jobs, examination results notices can be generated.

**Notification:** The former practice has been to mail a paper exam results notice, a printed copy of the notice generated in Wisc.Jobs, to each applicant and to retain a paper copy of each notice in the recruitment file. Wisc.Jobs allows the agency/campus to elect to “push” the exam information to the applicant’s online job cart and utilize the automatic email notification to applicants. A paper copy does not need to be sent in this case. In the event the sender receives a “failure to deliver” electronic notice or the applicant did not provide an email address, a paper copy must be sent. Detailed instructions on this function in Wisc.Jobs are available on the online helpdesk.

### Sec. 204.110 Register Maintenance

Registers are active for a period of three to twelve months from the date they are established but may be extended or reactivated for up to three years from the date of establishment as provided in s. 230.25(3), Wis. Stats. The decision to extend or reactivate a register is based on consideration of factors such as the number of candidates remaining on the register, the potential for attracting new applicants of equal or greater qualifications, and the state’s interest in the efficient and timely staffing of positions. Effective October 2, 2006, agencies (both delegated and non-delegated) no longer need to request approval from DMRS to reactivate or extend registers that were created by their agency.

### Sec. 204.120 Related Registers

In order to expedite the hiring process, agencies may choose to use a related register. The Administrative Code (ER-MRS 12.04) permits the use of a related register for positions where the examination that was used to create the register is job-related to the vacant position.

Agencies with formal staffing delegation will approve their own agency-held registers as related registers using the general principles outlined on the *Request to Use Related Register* form (OSER-MRS-194, located at <http://oser.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=1277>). Agencies may complete the form or document the factors outlined on the form in a memo.

Agencies with formal staffing delegation wishing to use a register created by another agency and agencies without formal staffing delegation must submit their request to DMRS. The request must include the *Request to Use Related Register* form (OSER-MRS-194), in addition to the High Importance Job Content (HIJC)-rated position descriptions (PDs) for both the original and the vacant positions, along with the exam plan and the exam (including benchmarks and scoring criteria) for the filled position.

In the past, DMRS denied the use of Career Executive registers to fill non-Career Executive vacancies even when the positions were quite similar in terms of job content or applicant pool. The reason for the denial was the certification rules which were in place at that time. Due to changes in the statutes effective in July 1998, those limitations are no

longer a factor. Requests to use Career Executive registers to fill non-Career Executive vacancies will be reviewed in accordance with the factors outlined on the *Request to Use Related Register* form (OSER-MRS-194).

### Sec. 204.130 Removals

1. An appointing authority may request to remove an applicant from a register for sound human resources management reasons. The Administrative Code specifies two categories of removals: (1) disqualification or “for cause” removals and (2) administrative removals. A removal request must be submitted to a DMRS Human Resources Consultant for disqualification and some administrative removals. Administrative removals under s. ER-MRS 11.04(a), (b), and (c), Wis. Adm. Code, are automatically handled in Wisc.Jobs.
  - a. Removal for Cause - Section ER-MRS 6.10, Wis. Adm. Code, lists reasons for the DMRS Administrator to remove an applicant from a register. These reasons include failure to meet the position’s preliminary requirements, falsifying application materials, gaining access to information regarding the content of the examination, etc.
  - b. Administrative Removals - Section ER-MRS 11.04, Wis. Adm. Code, specifies seven reasons to remove an applicant from an employment register. Generally, when an applicant is removed for any of these reasons, he or she is removed from the employment register, not just from one certification. In some instances, the removal is automatic, such as when an applicant is appointed to a position. In other cases an appointing authority must justify the removal, e.g., by entering a report of action in Wisc.Jobs indicating that the applicant failed to respond to a request to interview after being given enough time to respond.
2. Removal requests submitted to a DMRS Human Resources Consultant must include the following information:
  - a. The applicant’s full name, appropriate job classification, register number, and certification number, if applicable.
  - b. The specific provision of the Administrative Code on which the removal request is based.
  - c. The specific reasons for the removal and any documents supporting the request.

The request should be sent to the DMRS Human Resources Consultant responsible for that classification title. If the request is approved, DMRS will notify the applicant of the removal action, unless otherwise coordinated with the requesting agency. Requests to restore an applicant’s name should be sent to the DMRS Human Resources Consultant responsible for that classification title.

3. Wisc.Jobs will generate a suspension letter for some administrative removals (see 1b of this section), i.e., if a candidate cannot be located, failed to respond to three requests to interview for the same classification title, or was not interested in interviewing for the same classification on three occasions. The suspension letter notifies the applicant that he/she has 17 calendar days to return the letter if interested in remaining on the register. The person will be removed automatically from the register if the letter has not been returned and the applicant status updated within 21 days from the date of the suspension letter. (See Attachment #1 for a sample suspension letter.)

**Note:** If the applicant misses the deadline indicated on a suspension letter, he/she may be put back on the register as “active” if the register and applicant’s score are still current. The request can be in writing, by e-mail or by telephone. In situations where the request is by telephone, verify the applicant’s social security number or birth date and mother’s maiden name or another name/word that will serve as an additional identifier to make the applicant record unique. Document the request in Wisc.Jobs HR Communication.

## Sec. 204.140 Records Retention

Except as noted elsewhere, follow the General Records Schedule: Personnel and Related Records for retention and management of records generated by the staffing process. (See the Department of Administration General Records Schedule at [http://doa.wi.gov/docs\\_view2.asp?docid=190](http://doa.wi.gov/docs_view2.asp?docid=190).) Register folders may contain: recruitment activity plans, position descriptions, job announcements, newspaper advertisements, correspondence to applicants, list of oral board members, *Exam Plan Checklist* (OSER-MRS-98; <http://oser.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=1197>), and other related materials. The folder may also include agency requests and OSER responses to use related registers or reactivate or extend the use of register.

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.

When exam result notices are created in Wisc.Jobs, a PDF (Adobe) file is created. Agencies are responsible for ensuring secure storage of these records and may elect to save this file to a secure and confidential electronic medium and retain it as required per the record retention policy in lieu of printing and retaining individual paper notices. The electronic file may be utilized for documentation. The agency may also elect to maintain a printed paper copy of each exam results notice in the recruitment files.

A recommended method of record tracking is to include the job announcement code and the date exam results notices were sent (e.g., 0800233 Notices-03-28-2008) with the file name.

## Sec. 204.150 Delegation

An agency may be delegated the authority to score examinations and establish a register. (See *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook Chapter 248*—Delegation-Staffing, for information on how to request delegation, the potential scope of delegation, and related information.)

## Sec. 204.160 Administrative Information

This chapter was originally issued in May 2002.

It was revised in August 2002 because the areas of employment were changed from geographic sections of the state to counties. The Administrative Information section was added at that time.

It was revised in January 2003 to reflect the conversion from the Shared Human Resource System (SHRS) to Wisc.Jobs and the revision of the *Veterans Preference Supplement*.

The chapter was revised in June 2003 to include the policy which allows an applicant to request, via telephone, to be placed back on a register.

In March 2005, the chapter was updated to change the *Staffing Plan Summary & Approval* form to the *Exam Score Analysis* form. The chapter also was updated to remove the reference to MRS-149 on register extensions and reactivations. Policy Bulletin MRS-149, dated January 21, 1994, is now obsolete. Lastly, references to *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook* chapter 248: Delegation – Staffing were removed because the chapter is not published yet.

The chapter was revised in August 2005 to include a section (204.120) on Related Registers. Information from Policy Bulletin MRS-199, dated June 24, 1999, was incorporated into the chapter and the policy bulletin is now

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Merit Recruitment and Selection

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obsolete. As a result of adding the Related Register section, three additional Statutory and Rule Authority definitions were added (204.020(4), (8), and (9)). Further, the *Request to Use Related Register* form (OSER-MRS-194) was updated.

In October 2006, section 204.110 of this chapter was updated to delegate the ability for all agencies to reactivate or extend registers created by their agency. In addition, agencies are no longer required to complete the Request to Extend or Reactivate a Register form (OSER-MRS-136). This form is now obsolete.

In June 2009, sections 204.100 and 204.140 were updated to include details of exam results notices and the related recordkeeping guidance. With these additions, Policy Bulletin OSER 0193-MRS (June 20, 2008) is now obsolete and may be discarded. Section 204.150 was updated to include a reference to *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook* Chapter 248—Staffing – Delegation.

The list of Wisconsin county codes and the state map in Attachment #1 were changed in July 2010 to coincide with the coding system used by the State’s central payroll office.

In October 2014, the phrase “or another name/word that will serve as an additional identifier to make the applicant record unique” was added as an identifier in section 204.130.

Attachment #1

SAMPLE SUSPENSION LETTER

[date]

[name]

[address]

Dear [name]:

The [agency name] has referred your name for [title], Job Announcement Code: [code]. We want to verify your interest in remaining on this register and to verify other contact information.

If you wish to remain on the register for the above position, return this letter by the date indicated below. If you wish to make changes to your record, complete the areas on the back of this form. Indicate any changes you wish to make on this form and return it to the following address, no later than [date].

[address]

Please contact me at [telephone number], E-mail [e-mail address] or FAX [FAX number], if you have questions. Thank you for your continuing interest in employment with Wisconsin State Government.

NOTE: This letter will be sent to you again if you turn down the opportunity to interview for three or more vacancies for this or another job title in the future. Please continue to view our Bulletins for an announcement on testing for this title again. If you tested more than six months ago and have not reused your score within the last six months, you must retest when this title is announced in order to remain eligible. You cannot use this form as a reuse application.

If you are no longer interested in staying on this employment register, or if you've been hired for this position, disregard this letter. Your name will be removed from the employment list for this title only. (The authority to remove names from registers can be found in s. ER-MRS 11.04(1), Wis. Adm. Code.) When you are removed from a register, you may be placed back on the register if it is still active by submitting a written request to the address listed above. (Active means the original register you were placed on is still current.) Most registers are current for six to twelve months from the register date shown on your Notice of Examination Results. If the register expires before we receive this form, your status will not be reactivated. We will, however, update any address and/or phone number changes. This action does not prevent you from testing again in the future.

Sincerely,

[name]

[title]

(over)

**TO UPDATE ADDRESS AND/OR PHONE NUMBERS, PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:**

ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBERS

Street \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening. Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

State & Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check type(s) of employment you will accept:**

- Full-time (FT)                       Part-time (PT)                       Evening Hours (EH)  
 Seasonal (SE)                       Night 3<sup>rd</sup> shift (NT) (11 pm to 7 am or similar)

**Circle all areas in which you will accept employment (see map below):**

<u>Code</u>	<u>County</u>								
00	All Counties	15	Door	30	Kenosha	44	Outagamie	59	Sheboygan
01	Adams	16	Douglas	31	Kewaunee	45	Ozaukee	60	Taylor
02	Ashland	17	Dunn	32	La Crosse	46	Pepin	61	Trempealeau
03	Barron	18	Eau Claire	33	Lafayette	47	Pierce	62	Vernon
04	Bayfield	19	Florence	34	Langlade	48	Polk	63	Vilas
05	Brown	20	Fond du Lac	35	Lincoln	49	Portage	64	Walworth
06	Buffalo	21	Forest	36	Manitowoc	50	Price	65	Washburn
07	Burnett	22	Grant	37	Marathon	51	Racine	66	Washington
08	Calumet	23	Green	38	Marinette	52	Richland	67	Waukesha
09	Chippewa	24	Green Lake	39	Marquette	53	Rock	68	Waupaca
10	Clark	25	Iowa	40	Milwaukee	54	Rusk	69	Waushara
11	Columbia	26	Iron	41	Monroe	55	St. Croix	70	Winnebago
12	Crawford	27	Jackson	42	Oconto	56	Sauk	71	Wood
13	Dane	28	Jefferson	43	Oneida	57	Sawyer	99	Outside Wisconsin
14	Dodge	29	Juneau			58	Shawano		

