# Hiring Assessments – A Cheat Sheet for Hiring Managers

Having a strong assessment strategy will ensure you are able to identify high-performing candidates when filling vacancies, and as a hiring manager, *you are a key part of the process*! The hiring manager is responsible for describing the work performed and competencies needed as part of the job analysis, and also for choosing an assessment and hiring strategy that fits each hiring scenario.  An effective assessment strategy helps to ensure:

> 1) a positive applicant experience,

> 2) a fair and objective hiring process supportive of a diverse and inclusive workplace,

> 3) a timely hiring process that does not bog managers down with interviewing several underqualified candidates.

There are several assessment options available, and your HR specialist can help advise on which tool(s) are most effective given your unique hiring scenario. The following are examples of assessments that can be used currently across DOI:

- **USA Hire:**  Candidates complete an online assessment battery that has been professionally developed and validated by OPM. Measures general competencies identified for the occupation by job analysis.
  - *Pro – Can be automated within staffing system, has been professionally developed to evaluate job-related competencies, effective when expecting high volume of applicants*
  - *Con – Potential time-constraint concerns for applicants (average time for completion is 90 minutes), does not measure technical competencies*
- **Structured Resume Reviews**: Eligible and qualified candidate's resumes are reviewed and rated by a SME panel using an established scoring matrix that is based on the competencies and task statements in the job analysis for the position.
  - *Pro – Leverages SME expertise, good for evaluating technical expertise*
  - *Con – Subject to SME availability*
- **Structured Interviews**: All applicants are asked the exact same questions and evaluated using an established rubric.
  - *Pro – One of the most highly valid assessment options available, favorable candidate reactions*
  - *Con – Logistics of scheduling interviews, can be resource-intensive if many candidates*
- **Writing Assessments**: A work sample test which require applicants to submit a writing sample; useful when writing is a critical aspect of the position.
  - *Pro – Great option if writing is a required skill for the job, helpful in evaluating technical expertise or asking questions similar to structured interviews*
  - *Con – Requires SMEs to invest time in creating scoring rubric and evaluating responses, less options for automation in staffing systems*

- **Questionnaires that measure applicants' technical expertise**:  Technical questions designed to measure components of applicant's technical knowledge that will be displayed on the job.
  - *Pro – Can be incorporated into automated questionnaires in staffing system*
  - *Con – Requires great attention to detail in developing technical questions and response options, benefits from review by experienced test developers*

Other assessment options are available if procured from a vendor. These types of assessments are highly specialized and need to be validated prior to use. If an assessment will be used repeatedly or in high stakes hiring, the cost associated with procurement may be a worthwhile investment.

- Job Knowledge Test: Assess technical or professional expertise in specific subject matter; Licensure and certification exams are examples.
- Biographical Data: Useful for entry level positions to measure characteristics related to successful performance where applicants would not be expected to have much work experience. Applicants' past behavior predicts future behavior.
- Cognitive Ability Tests: Measure competencies related to thinking and processing information.
- Personality Inventories: Elicit information about applicants' motivations, interests, and work styles.
- Situational Judgement Tests: Present applicants with a work-related scenario and ask them to identify how they would handle the situation.

When is an assessment not needed?

The use of secondary assessments is generally a hiring best practice, however, there are situations in which a secondary assessment is not required. Work with your HR specialist to discuss hiring authorities that may be a good fit for your hiring needs.

- Direct Hire Authority
- Time-Limited Appointments (i.e., temporary and term positions)
- Positions in the Federal Wage Service/Wage Grade
- Lateral Detail Positions
- Intergovernmental Personnel Act
- Excepted Service Hiring, including:
  - Internships,
  - Recent graduates,
  - Presidential Management Fellows,
  - VRA
  - 30% or More Disabled Veteran Hiring

## Assessment Validity

Validity Coefficients* of Commonly Used Assessments (Sackett, P. R., Zhang, C., Berry, C. M., & Lievens, F. (2022)):

- Structured Interviews .42
- Job Knowledge Tests .40
- Biographical Data .38
- Work Samples .33
- Cognitive Ability Tests .31
- Situational Judgment Tests .26
- Personality Inventories .21
- Occupational Questionnaires .11
- Years of Experience .07

*Scale ranges from -1 to 1, with 1 being a perfect predictor of job-related outcomes.