

“Need to Know” Info about Federal Government Competitions

Most candidates in or outside government “don’t know what they don’t know” about Public Service competitions generally—or about application screening, multiple-choice testing and competency-based evaluation specifically. External candidates need to understand that federal recruitment is more complex than recruitment for other jobs, so one-size-fits-all training doesn’t work.

Government information—whether online, in emails, or given verbally by phone or at job fairs—is opaque at best. Worse, anecdotal chit-chat online is rife but largely misinformed. To become an informed candidate, **look over the value-added cautions below** about Post-Secondary Recruitment.

- With rare exceptions, there is no personal review of candidate application material, as **only test scores count**—degrees, where obtained, scholarships, marks, experience or languages cannot be quantified and used in early stages of evaluation as the sheer volume of applications precludes individual attention.
- Age is not a factor in hiring despite the Post-Secondary Recruitment designation for the annual competition which can deter from applying candidates who are not recent university or college graduates.
- **Common multiple-choice tests** in competitions—the online and supervised, in-person PSEEs **are the same for all jobs** for which they are used as initial screening tools.
- **Test scores can be used as-is or manipulated by the government:** scores can be weighted equally or weighted differently; a high cut-off can be applied for one test once the other test pass score has been met; scores can be circumvented by using an exclusion order to promote employment equity; scores can be adjusted using a z-score formula to factor in regional differences; scores can be downplayed by using targeted computer-screening for certain attributes or random selection to advance some candidates.
- **“Passing” the tests doesn’t mean that you get an interview**, or even to the interview pool from which the candidates finally interviewed are drawn.
- **You need to protect your candidacy throughout competitions.** Application system breakdowns during competitions; incorrect info posted about test dates, times and locations; score-retrieval problems; and misdirected emails or emails addressed to you from government consultants that go into spam have happened before.
- Despite glib statements to the contrary by the government, **you can prepare for the tests.** You need **the right instructions, the right sample questions, and the right knowledge and insights** that apply specifically to federal government officer-level multiple-choice tests. Our study materials provide this.

Click here to return to the **webpage** to see our test descriptions and pop-ups with sample questions. Then **think about how best to prepare yourself for taking the tests for your competition.**