

(b) The standard must be specific enough to enable applicants to be rated and ranked according to their degree of qualifications when the position is being filled on a competitive basis.

(c) Each qualifications criterion in the standard must be job related. The standard may not emphasize agency-related experience, however, to the extent that it precludes otherwise well-qualified candidates from outside the agency from appointment consideration.

(d) The standard may not include—

(1) A minimum length of experience requirement beyond that authorized for similar positions in the General Schedule;

(2) A minimum education requirement beyond that authorized for similar positions in the General Schedule; or

(3) Any criterion prohibited by law or regulation.

§ 317.403 General positions.

An agency may apply the criteria in § 317.402 when developing qualifications standards for general positions. If it does not, OPM must be consulted before the agency develops the standard.

§ 317.404 Retention of qualifications standards.

If a qualifications standard is changed, or a position is cancelled, the former standard shall be retained for 2 years.

Subpart E—Career Appointments

SOURCE: 54 FR 9758, Mar. 8, 1989, unless otherwise noted.

§ 317.501 Recruitment and selection for initial SES career appointment be achieved from the brightest and most diverse pool possible.

(a) *Executive Resources Board (ERB)*. The head of each agency shall appoint one or more ERBs from among employees of the agency or commissioned officers of the uniformed services serving on active duty in the agency. The ERB shall, in accordance with the requirements of this section, conduct the merit staffing process for initial SES career appointment.

(b) *Recruitment*. (1) As a minimum, the source of recruitment to fill a SES position by career appointment must include all groups of qualified individuals within the civil service (as defined by 5 U.S.C. 2101). It may also include qualified individuals outside the civil service.

(2) Before an agency can fill an SES vacancy by career appointment, it must post a vacancy announcement in USAJOBS for at least 14 calendar days, including the date of publication. Each agency's SES vacancy announcement must comply with criteria in § 330.707 of subpart G of this chapter.

(c) *Merit staffing requirements*. As a minimum, agencies must—

(1) Provide that competition be fair and open, that all candidates compete and be rated and ranked on the same basis, and that selection be based solely on qualifications and not on political or other non-job-related factors. If a candidate is a current SES career appointee or an SES reinstatement eligible, an agency may consider the candidate either competitively or non-competitively.

(2) Provide that the ERB consider the executive and technical qualifications of each candidate, other than those found ineligible because they do not meet the requirements of the vacancy announcement. Preliminary qualifications screening, rating, and ranking of candidates may be delegated by the ERB.

(3) Provide that the rating procedures sufficiently differentiate among eligible candidates on the basis of the knowledges, skills, abilities, and other job-related factors in the qualifications standard for the position so as to enable the relative ranking of the candidates. For this purpose, eligible candidates may be grouped into broad categories, such as highly qualified, well qualified, and qualified. Numerical rating and ranking are not required.

(4) Provide that the record be adequately documented to show the basis of qualifications, rating, and ranking determinations.

(5) Provide that the ERB make written recommendations to the appointing authority on the eligible candidates and identify the best qualified candidates. Rating sheets may be used to

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satisfy the written recommendation requirement for individual candidates, but the ERB must certify in writing the list of candidates to the appointing authority.

(6) Provide that the appointing authority select from among the candidates identified as best qualified by the ERB and certify the candidate's executive and technical qualifications.

(7) Provide that the appointing authority or the ERB certify in writing that appropriate merit staffing procedures were followed.

(d) *Retention of documentation.* Agencies must keep such documentation as OPM prescribes for 2 years to permit reconstruction of merit staffing actions.

(e) *Applicant inquiries and appeals.* Individuals are entitled to obtain information from an agency regarding the process used to recruit and select candidates for career appointment to SES positions. Upon request, applicants must be told whether they were considered qualified for the position and whether they were referred for appointment consideration. Also, they may have access to questionnaires or other written material regarding their own qualifications, except for material that would identify a confidential source. There is no right of appeal by applicants to OPM on SES staffing actions taken by ERBs, Qualifications Review Boards, or appointing authorities.

(f) *OPM review.* OPM may review proposed career appointments to ensure that they comply with all merit staffing requirements and are free of any impropriety. An agency shall take such action as OPM may require to correct an action contrary to any law, rule, or regulation.

[54 FR 9758, Mar. 8, 1989, as amended at 58 FR 58261, Nov. 1, 1993; 60 FR 6385, Feb. 2, 1995; 65 FR 33740, May 25, 2000; 66 FR 63906, Dec. 11, 2001]

§ 317.502 Qualifications Review Board certification.

(a) A Qualification Review Board (QRB) convened by OPM must certify the executive/managerial qualifications of a candidate before initial career appointment may be made to an SES position. More than one-half of

the members of a QRB must be SES career appointees.

(b) Agency requests for certification of a candidate by a QRB must contain such information as prescribed by OPM, including evidence that merit staffing procedures were followed and that the appointing authority has certified the candidate's qualifications for the position.

(c) Qualifications Review Board certification of executive qualifications just be based on demonstrated executive experience; successful completion of an OPM-approved candidate development program; or possession of special or unique qualities that indicate a likelihood of executive success. Any existing time limit on a previously approved certification is removed.

(d) OPM may determine the disposition of agency QRB requests where the QRB has not yet acted if the agency head leaves office or announces an intention to leave office, if the President has nominated a new agency head, or if there is a Presidential transition.

(e) An action to convert a "non-career-type" employee to a career SES appointment in the employee's current position or a successor to that position will not be forwarded to a QRB. A "noncareer-type" employee includes a noncareer SES appointee, a Schedule C appointee, or equivalent.

(f) A new QRB certification is required for an individual to be reappointed as an SES career appointee following separation of the individual from an SES career appointment if:

(1) The individual was removed during the SES probationary period for performance or disciplinary reasons; or

(2) The individual completed an SES probationary period, or did not have to serve one, and was removed for a reason that made the individual ineligible for reinstatement to the SES under subpart G of this part.

[54 FR 9758, Mar. 8, 1989, as amended at 56 FR 170, Jan. 3, 1991; 60 FR 6385, Feb. 2, 1995; 61 FR 46533, Sept. 4, 1996; 65 FR 33740, May 25, 2000]

§ 317.503 Probationary period.

(a) An individual's initial appointment as an SES career appointee becomes final only after the individual has served a 1-year probationary period as a career appointee; there has been