



*Using Competencies to Select and Promote  
The Best and the Brightest*

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# *Using Competencies to Select and Promote The Best and the Brightest*

## ■ *Research and Development Branch*

- *Responsible for enhancing the quality of the workforce through the development, validation, and implementation of assessments that measure critical employee competencies*
- *Located organizationally in the Office of Human Resources and Development*
- *Total of 21 staff members*
  - *Sixteen staff members hold a Ph.D. or Master's degree in Industrial/Organizational psychology*

# *Using Competencies to Select and Promote The Best and the Brightest*

## ■ *Three Primary Assessment Systems*

- *Entry-Level Selection into the Officer Corps*
- *Promotion into Supervisory and Managerial Officer Corps Positions*
- *Executive Selection*

## ■ *Career Paths*

# *Entry-Level Selection into the Officer Corps*

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- *Entry-Level Assessments are Used to Select Officers in BCBP, BCIS, and BICE*
- *Assessment Systems are Tailored to the Occupation, but Include*
  - *Tests of Cognitive Skills*
  - *Biographical Data Instruments*
  - *Other assessments (e.g., Language Tests), as appropriate*

# *Entry-Level Selection into the Officer Corps*

## ■ *Entry-Level Assessments*

- *All assessment systems have been thoroughly validated and meet all legal and professional requirements*
- *The assessments have a significant and demonstrated relationship with how well trainees perform at the Academy and with how well officers perform on the job*
- *R&D psychologists implement new forms of the assessments on a regular basis to ensure test security. They also monitor the tests to ensure that they maintain their effectiveness over time*

# *Promotion into Supervisory and Managerial Officer Corps Positions*

## ■ *Assessments*

- *Decision Making Situational Assessment -- assesses reasoning, decision making, and problem solving*
- *Managerial Writing Skills Exercise -- assesses writing at the level required on the job*
- *In-Basket Job Simulation -- assesses decision making, planning, self-management, and managing information*
- *Job Knowledge Assessment for Border Patrol first-line supervisors -- assesses knowledge of laws, rules, regs*
- *Job Experience Measure -- assesses competencies acquired through on-the-job experience*

# *Promotion into Supervisory and Managerial Officer Corps Positions*

## ■ *Implementation*

- *Candidates complete the assessments near their work locations*
- *Candidates receive their assessment scores, detailed diagnostic feedback, and developmental recommendations*
- *Candidates use their assessment scores to compete for vacancies*
- *The highest-scoring candidates of those who have applied for a specific vacancy are referred to the selecting official*
- *The selecting official selects the best candidate*

# *Executive Selection*

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## ■ *Background*

- *The Executive Assessments are used for filling all SES and GS-15 “office head” vacancies*
- *Candidates complete a full day of assessments the day before participating in a competency-based structured interview with the Executive Resources Board (ERB)*

# *Executive Selection*

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## ■ *The Assessments*

- *The Executive Assessments measure the Thinking Skills, Leadership Skills, Communication Skills, and Management Skills critical for agency leadership positions*
- *The Executive Thinking Skills Exercise presents candidates with written materials encountered on the job and asks them to draw conclusions about the materials. It assesses Thinking Skills (reasoning, critical thinking, strategic thinking)*
- *The Executive Judgment Exercise places candidates in the role of an executive in three different organizations. It assesses Thinking Skills, Leadership Skills, Communication Skills, and Management Skills.*

# *Executive Selection*

## ■ *Assessment Feedback*

- *The Executive Resources Board receives a one page summary of each finalist's strengths and weaknesses as identified in the assessment process*
- *The ERB uses all available information (i.e., background and experience, performance in the interview, strengths and weaknesses identified in the assessments) to make a selection*
- *Each participant receives a confidential, individualized feedback report that provides extensive narrative on strengths and weaknesses as well as recommended developmental activities*

# *Career Paths*

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## ■ *Career Path Project*

- *Key objective under Strategic Plan for Training*
- *Project will define career paths and associated training for all occupations by defining*
  - *progression within each occupation*
  - *transition points between occupations*
  - *competencies and training requirements for each occupation and level*
- *Will guide training design and employees' career development plans*