

OPM Merit Hiring Learning Series

USA Hire Premium Assessments

September 2025

Created by the Office of Personnel
Management, USA Hire Program Office

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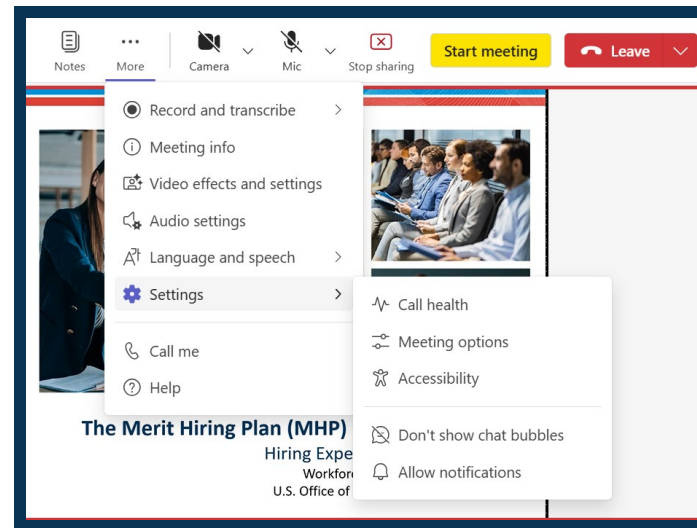
Enabling Live Captions (Closed Captioning)

A recording of this session with ASL interpreters will be posted at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/merit-hiring-plan-resources/#url=Training-Learning-Series>.

During a meeting: Go to your meeting controls (at the top of the screen) and:

1. Select "**More**"
2. Choose "**Language and speech**" to select "**Show live captions**"
3. Choose "**Settings**" and select "**Accessibility**" to toggle on the options

To stop using live captions, select "**Hide live captions**" under "**Language and speech**"



Meeting Tips

- A copy of this slide presentation is posted on OPM's Merit Hiring Plan Resources page.
- Ask questions in the Q&A, but please wait until a topic is covered so you're not posting a question that's already been answered.
- We'll respond to as many questions as we can; however, we cannot answer agency-specific or individual-specific questions.
- A recording of this webinar may be found on OPM's Merit Hiring Plan Resources page.

Agenda

- Assessments and the Chance to Compete Act/Merit Hiring Plan
 - Federal Supervisor Assessment (FSA)
 - Executive Assessment (EA)
 - Writing Skills Assessment (WSA)
 - Program and Project Management Assessment (PAPMA)
 - Data Skills Assessment (DSA)
-

USA Hire and the Chance to Compete Act, EO 14170 assessment requirements



“An examining agency shall preference the use of a technical assessment, to the maximum extent practicable, to assess the job-related skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies of an applicant for a position in the competitive service.”

USA Hire:

- Measures job-related competencies
- Is based on government-wide job analysis
- **Does not rely on an applicant's self-evaluation.**
- Uses professionally developed, **reliable, and valid government-wide assessments** that can be used off-the-shelf.
- **Offers assessments for:**
 - a) Occupational specific non-supervisory positions
 - b) Supervisory and Management positions
 - c) Executive positions
 - d) Writing ability
 - e) Program/project management
 - f) Custom assessments tailored for unique agency needs

Technical Assessment Definition

Technical Assessment definition (Section 2.a.9): A position-specific tool that is relevant to the position for which the tool is developed that –

- A. Allows for the demonstration of job-related skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies;
- B. Is based upon a job analysis; and
- C. Does not solely include or principally rely upon a self assessment from an automated examination.

USA Hire assessments meet the Chance to Compete Act's definition of technical assessment.

Four Key Elements of the Merit Hiring Plan

1. Reforming the Federal recruitment process to ensure that only the most talented, capable and patriotic Americans are hired to the Federal service.
2. Implementing skills-based hiring, eliminating unnecessary degree requirements, and requiring the use of rigorous, job-related assessments to ensure candidates are selected based on their merit and competence, not their skin color or academic pedigree
3. Streamlining and improving the job application process
4. Reducing time-to-hire to under 80 days by emphasizing the use of talent pools and shared certificates and streamlining the background check process.

USA Hire is fully integrated with USA Staffing and may be used in combination with other assessments.



Standard

- 135 Job Series
- Non-Supervisory
- General competencies
- Off-the-shelf
- Specific to series/grade



Premium

- **Leadership**
 - Federal Supervisor Assessment
 - Supervisory Situational Judgment Test
 - Executive Assessment
- **Critical Skills**
 - Writing
 - Program/Project Management
- **1801/1802 Job Series**



Custom

- Agency-specific
- Mission critical
- New content



USA Hire Interview

- Conduct virtual structured interviews
- Raters' notes, rating, and consensus recorded on the platform
- Applicant self-scheduling available

Agency Resource Center:

<https://resourcecenter-usahire.opm.gov/hc/en-us>

**Today's sessions will not cover specific pricing for any assessments.
Below are some general pricing guidelines.**

- **Premium Assessments** – 2 parts to pricing:
 - Initial set-up cost
 - Volume cost (per applicant or per JOA)
-



USA Hire Premium Assessments



Federal Supervisor Assessment (FSA)

Sandra Alexander



Federal Supervisor Assessment (FSA)

- An online assessment battery for Government-wide use in evaluating applicants to supervisor positions.
- Off-the-shelf assessment administered via OPM's USA Hire system through integration with USA Staffing.
- Includes two assessment components:

Situational Inventory

Applicants are presented realistic work problems or scenarios common to supervisory positions in the Federal Government and asked to evaluate the effectiveness of possible responses.

Behavioral Index

Applicants are presented questions about their personal experiences as they relate to supervisor positions in the Government.

FSA

- Situational Inventory
 - Applicants evaluate the effectiveness of possible options to handle realistic situations applicants would encounter in Federal supervisory jobs
- Behavioral Index
 - Presents brief questions on previous experiences to measure patterns of leadership behavior



Competencies Measured

Accountability
Customer Service
Decisiveness
Flexibility
Interpersonal Skills
Problem Solving
Resilience



Time to Complete

Max Time: 2.75 Hours
Average Time: 1.5 Hours



Evidence

Supported by
content and criterion
validation



Executive Assessment (EA)

Alix Autrey



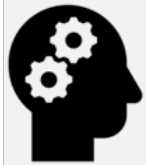
Executive Assessment

- Appropriate for Executive (SES) selection, Candidate Development Program (CDP) selection, and other types of executive positions.
- Delivered via OPM's USA Hire system, through integration with USA Staffing.
- Assessment battery measuring competencies underlying the ECQs.
- Included in the battery are:

Work Simulation	Engaging, integrated narrative unfolding through related and realistic on-the-job scenarios.
Situational Judgment Test	Realistic on-the-job scenarios presenting multiple options to handle the situation.
Leadership Behavioral Index	Questions about preferences and previous experience related to being an SES.

Work Simulation

- Presents an engaging, integrated narrative that unfolds through related and realistic on-the-job scenarios
- Presents items and information in a variety of stimuli, including emails, videos, and documents



**Measured ECQ
Competencies
(to be updated)**

Results Driven
Business Acumen
Building Coalitions



**Time to
Complete**

Max Time: 4 Hours
Average Time: 2 Hours

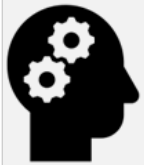


Evidence

Supported by
content validation

Situational Judgment Test

- Presents realistic situations applicants would encounter in Federal executive jobs
- Applicants evaluate the effectiveness of possible options to handle the situation



**Measured ECQ
Competencies
(to be updated)**

Leading Change
Leading People



**Time to
Complete**

Max Time: 3 Hours
Average Time: less than 1
hour

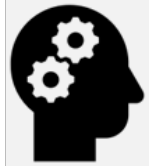


Evidence

Supported by
content and criterion
validation

Leadership Behavioral Index

- Presents brief questions on previous experiences and favorability of leader behaviors
- Measures patterns of leadership behavior as they relate to the ECQ competencies



Measured ECQ Competencies (to be updated)

Leading Change
Leading People
Results Driven
Building Coalitions
Fundamental Competencies



Time to Complete

Max Time: Unlimited
Average Time: 30 minutes



Evidence

Supported by
content and criterion
validation



Chloe Segal
Senior Staff Accountant
Information for your trip

9/24 11:27 AM



Serika Vo
Manager
For your awareness

9/24 11:26 AM

29:43

Information for your trip

9/24 11:27 AM



Chloe Segal Senior Staff Accountant
To: Jordan Doe



[Preferred Airlines and Hotels](#)

Hello,

Serika let me know that you will be attending your first conference since starting at The Gradison Group. We have a list of preferred airlines and hotels to use (and those to avoid) when traveling. Please review the attached table and book your flights and hotel using the preferred list.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Chloe

Question(s)

After reviewing the preferred airline and hotels table that Chloe sent, you have a few questions. Unfortunately, Chloe is out of the office for two days. What should you do? Please rate the effectiveness of each of the following options.

1. Ineffective
2. Slightly Effective
3. Moderately Effective
4. Very Effective
5. Highly Effective

Contact Serika, your manager.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Wait until Chloe returns to the office to ask your question.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Contact another employee in the Accounting department.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Forget about your questions and book your flights and hotel.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Next



Email



Chat



Wiki



FAQs



Acronyms



Diego Alvarez

Junior Staff Accountant

9/26 12:36 PM

Expense Report Information



Chloe Segal

Senior Staff Accountant

9/26 12:35 PM

Information for your trip



Serika Vo

Manager

9/26 12:35 PM

For your awareness

27:07

Information for your trip

9/26 12:35 PM



Chloe Segal Senior Staff Accountant

To: Jordan Doe



Preferred Airlines and Hotels

Attachment

[Close](#)

	Preferred	Avoid
Airline	• Destination Airlines • Transnational Airways • Worldwide Air	• Atlantic to Pacific Airway • Blue Jay Airlines • Clear Sky Airlines
Hotel	• Restful Hotels • Quiet Lodge Hotels • Voyager Hotels	• Colorful Hotels • Night and Day Hotels • Great Escape Hotels

Hello,

Serika let me know that you will be attending your first conference since starting at The Gradison Group. We have a list of preferred airlines and hotels to use (and those to avoid) when traveling. Please review the attached table and book your flights and hotel using the preferred list.

Let me know if you have any questions,

Chloe



USA HireSM

Transforming Government One Hire At A Time

60%

27:59



Email



Chat



Wiki



FAQs



Acronyms



Question(s)

You made several purchases during your trip. Which expenses are personal expenses, and which are company expenses? Select a response for each item.

Plane ticket to Boston

Personal Expense

Company Expense

Hotel in Boston

Personal Expense

Company Expense

Lunch at the conference



Writing Skills Assessment (WSA)

Noel Jones

- 
- Off-the-shelf and ready to use.*
 - Online assessment of writing skills including:

Applying correct
grammar, usage,
and mechanics

Applying general
writing principles
(e.g., introduction,
body, conclusion)

Applying logic
and analysis

- Applicants have 25 minutes to write a free text response.
- Agencies can choose from one of three standard prompts.
- Responses automatically scored by a sophisticated scoring engine that employs methods used in automatic speech recognition and computational linguistics.

Scoring rubrics
are specific to
the prompt

Algorithm was
trained and cross-
validated using
human raters

Algorithm
understands text
meaning, much like
that of a human
rater

*OPM can develop custom prompts and scoring rubrics, as well as cut-scores, for agencies with unique/ specific needs.

Writing Skills Assessment (WSA)

WSA Interface



USA HireSM
Transforming Government One Hire At A Time

24:35

OPM Essay Test A

You are applying for a position in the Federal Government.

Please Note: You must type your response into the text box below. Pasting into this text box from another application is disabled.

Word Count: 0, 150 - 500 words are required.

Record answer



Program and Project Management Assessment (PAPMA)

Noel Jones



Program/Project Management Assessment (PAPMA)

- Off-the-shelf and ready to use.
- Measures critical competencies, including Accountability, Decision Making, Information Management, Planning & Evaluating, Problem Solving, Interpersonal Skills, Teamwork, and Administration & Management.
- Designed to simulate a day in the life.
- Developed by OPM personnel research psychologists using a content validation strategy.
- Includes three assessment components.

In-Basket Exercise	Applicants prioritize and respond to emails, documents, etc.
Branching Role Play	Applicants “interact” with avatars in common workplace situations. Scenarios branch based on applicant responses and actions.
Business Case Analysis	Applicants analyze financial and operational data. Applicants recommend actions to improve organizational outcomes.

PAPMA Interface 1

**USA HireSM**
Transforming Government One Hire At A Time

Progress

13%

01:24:08

Email

Relevant Documents

AL

Amy Linn
Special Projects Coordinator
Issues with Collecting Contractor Workload Data

7/30 3:37 PM

KJ

Kathy Jordan
Director of Project Management
Meeting Notes

7/30 3:37 PM

KJ

Kathy Jordan
Director of Project Management
Recommendations Emails

7/30 3:37 PM

AL

Amy Linn
Special Projects Coordinator
Internal Communications Survey

7/30 3:37 PM

KJ

Kathy Jordan
Director of Project Management
Welcome!

7/30 3:37 PM

Welcome!

7/30 3:37 PM

KJ

Kathy Jordan
Director of Project Management

Welcome to the team, !

I'm really glad you've joined our team. I think you'll really be an asset to the Project Management team! You'll be reporting directly to me, as do the other Project Management Specialists.

As we discussed before, you'll be working on three projects – [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Each of these projects are just getting started so it should be relatively easy for you to jump in on them. We are still working on the project plans for these projects. The following is an overview of each project:

[REDACTED]

PAPMA Interface 2



USA HireSM
Transforming Government One Hire At A Time

Progress

0%

01:28:46

Email

Relevant Documents

Relevant Documents

- [Assessment Instructions](#)
- [Organization Chart](#)
- [Northview Park Fact Sheet](#)
- [Northview Park Annual Visitor Survey Data](#)
- [Northernview Park Workforce Information](#)
- [Northernview Park Use Revenue and Park Comparison Information](#)

Welcome

Please read the below background and instructions carefully. The timer will not start until you begin the assessment, so please take your time to read this information. A copy of this document will be available to you in the assessment by selecting the Assessment Instructions link in the Relevant Documents tab.

You are on your honor to complete this assessment without help from anyone else. If you make an intentional false statement, or commit deception or fraud during the assessment process, you may be fined or imprisoned (18 U.S.C. 1001), your eligibilities may be cancelled, you may be denied an appointment, or you may be removed and debarred from the Federal service (5 CFR. part 731). Any information you provide during the assessment process is subject to verification.

This assessment includes graphics and videos. **It should not be taken if you are connected to the Internet through a low bandwidth or unstable connection.** Your testing experience depends on the quality of your connection.

Parts of this assessment require you to watch, listen, and respond to interactions between employees in a simulated office setting. **Please be sure you are testing in a location with limited background noise and have access to audio on your computer.** Closed captioning is available for all audio in the assessment.

Background

PAPMA Example Item 1

Question

Question: [REDACTED]

Actions (rate each of the following)

Ineffective

Moderately
Effective

Highly
Effective

1

2

3

4

5

[REDACTED]

Select a Rating ⇅

[REDACTED]

Select a Rating ⇅

[REDACTED]

Select a Rating ⇅

[REDACTED]

Select a Rating ⇅

Next

PAPMA Example Item 2

The screenshot displays a digital interface for a Psychological Assessment Practice Module (PAPMA) example item. On the left, there is a solid blue vertical bar. The main content area is a white rectangular box with a thin grey border. At the top left of this box, the word "Question" is written in blue. In the top right corner, there is a black button labeled "Reset" with a small circular arrow icon below it. The first instruction reads: "Please choose the most effective action for dealing with the situation." Below this is a single horizontal text input field with a black bar obscuring the text. The second instruction reads: "Please choose the least effective action for dealing with the situation." Below this are three stacked horizontal text input fields, each with a black bar obscuring the text. At the bottom left of the white box, there is a red button labeled "Next".

Question

Reset

Please choose the most effective action for dealing with the situation.

Please choose the least effective action for dealing with the situation.

Next

PAPMA Example Item 3

Relevant Documents

!

Step 1. Scenario

Scenario 1: Video 1

Background Information:

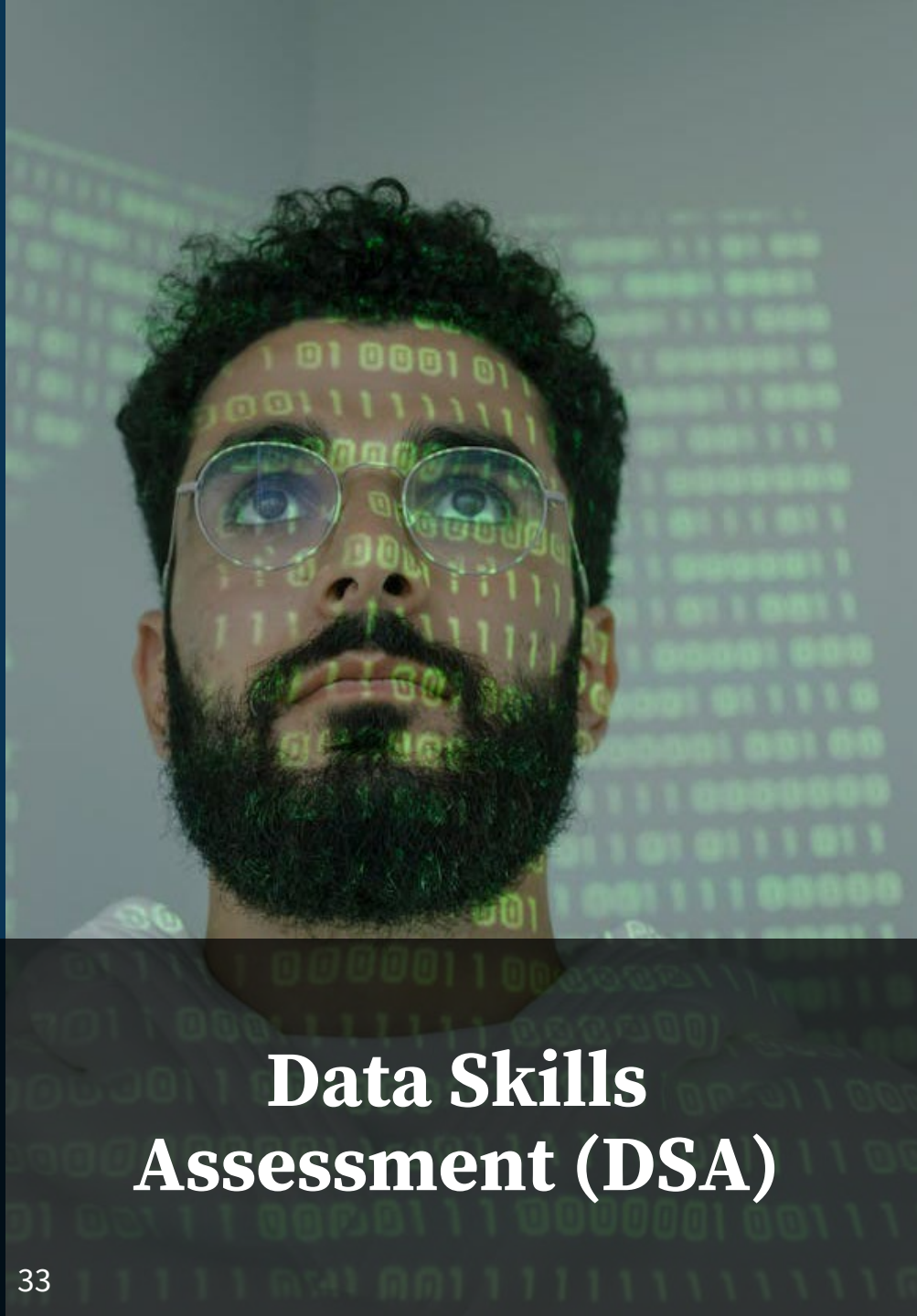


A video player interface showing a scene with four people (three men and one woman) seated around a conference table in a meeting room. The video player includes a play button, a progress bar, a timestamp of 01:04, a volume icon, and a settings gear icon.



Data Skills Assessment (DSA)

Andrew DeCesare



Data Skills Assessment (DSA)

- Designed for “data” role in Federal government
 - Applicable series:
 - IT Specialist (2210); grades 7, 9, & 11
 - Management & Program Analyst (0343); 7, 9, & 11
 - Other series and grades as validated
- Measures applicants’ ability to manage, analyze, and interpret data
- Applicants are provided three data files and instructed to complete various tasks
- Applicants are told to report the results of their calculations and interpret the outcome of their analysis
 - Test questions are multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank

Work Sample/ Simulation

Places applicants in a work-like scenario (e.g., communications from a fictitious coworker)

Requires applicants to demonstrate knowledge or skills by approximating job-related activities

Data Skills Assessment – Data Files

Application Performance

Day	Active Version	Active Users	Avg. Response Time (ms)	Server Responses
1/1	1.0	146	983	428
1/2	1.0	246	1,569	698
1/3	1.0	364	1,288	564
1/4	1.0	214	1,642	482
1/5	1.0	189	1,198	512

Total file: 365 rows; 9 columns

User Experience (HD Tickets)

HD Ticket Date	Ticket Reason	Job Title	Survey Q1	Survey Q2
1/2	App Slow	Mgmt. Analyst	3	5
1/2	Help Using App	Attorney	4	2
1/2	Installing App	IT Specialist	5	5
1/4	App Crashed	Attorney	4	4
1/4	Help Using App	HR Specialist	2	1

Total file: 10,341 rows; 11 columns

Labor Costs

Month	App Prob Res	New Functionality	Updating User Info	HD Ticket Responses
Jan	\$117,309	\$64,534	\$252,902	\$17,345
Feb	\$215,096	\$43,056	\$12,504	\$36,340
Mar	\$241,357	\$174,456	\$24,432	\$92,256
Apr	\$362,679	\$263,690	\$164,092	\$65,406
May	\$289,523	\$71,345	\$63,245	\$163,936

Total file: 12 rows; 5 columns

Example DSA Questions – Reporting Results

- What was the lowest rated Help Desk survey question during application version 1.4?
 - a) Survey Question 1 (Communication)
 - b) Survey Question 2 (Technical Knowledge)
 - c) Survey Question 3 (Professionalism)
 - d) Survey Question 4 (Timeliness of Response)
- What was the average Timeliness survey rating for Help Desk tickets associated with the application crashing?

Average Rating:

Example DSA Question – Interpreting Results

- Which statement best characterizes the monthly labor costs for handling Help Desk tickets across the year?
 - a) The cost per ticket increased gradually throughout the year
 - b) The cost per ticket decreased gradually throughout the year
 - c) The cost per ticket increased initially, then decreased for the rest of the year
 - d) The cost per ticket decreased initially, then increased for the rest of the year
 - e) There was no discernable pattern by which the cost per ticket changed throughout the year

Questions?

Sharon Wilborn

Customer Outreach, USA Hire

Sharon.Wilborn@opm.gov

(202) 936-2068

Email us at: USAHire@opm.gov

or visit <https://www.opm.gov/usahire>



Thank You

Please take a moment to complete a short survey to provide your feedback on today's session:

<https://surveys.opm.gov/se/5B5534D46C623157>



The Merit Hiring Learning Series
Hiring Experience (HX) Group

HX@opm.gov