FOLLOWING THE PATH TO THE RIGHT SELECTION

Case Examining

PEARS CERTIFICATE INSTRUCTIONS

We've e-mailed a link to your PEARS certificate. These downloaded instructions contain some general information about the "case examining" hiring process, procedures to follow, and guidance surrounding information sharing with applicants. Good luck with your selection process!

Please contact your customer service representative at the Human Resources Operations office with any questions about the information we have provided. (For the name of your customer service representative see the e-mail your certificate was attached to.)

- **"Case examining"** is an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) delegation of hiring authority which enables recruitment from outside of the federal workforce. The case examining process **differs** from the merit promotion hiring process as separate regulations apply to each.

- Generally, applicants are listed in score order on the certificate. However, there are exceptions. For example, qualified compensable disabled veterans are automatically listed at the top of the certificate - regardless of their score - except for scientific and professional positions at a GS-9 level or above.

- Selections must be made in accordance with the **"rule of three."** The "rule of three" requires that you choose from the top three available eligibles on the certificate. In addition, veterans' preference regulations stipulate that you may not pass over a veteran to hire a non-veteran. Veterans or preference eligibles are denoted by their preference code after their score on the certificate. All non-veterans are denoted by the code NV.

1. Consider the first three candidates at the top of your list when making your first (or only) selection. If making additional selections, the composition of the top three available candidates will change since you will not give additional considerations to applicants whom you have already selected.

2. Although interviews are not mandatory, they are recommended. If you choose not to interview the top three available candidates, be prepared to support your decision(s). It's a

good idea to make and retain personal notes regarding your decision(s) to interview and/or not interview candidates.

3. You may contact candidates by telephone or letter - a sample contact letter is available on this website. To access it use your back button or type this address in your web browser address line:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/employment_recruitment/case_exam_docs.html

4. However, before setting up an interview, please review the candidates' application materials carefully. **You may be required to obtain additional information from candidates before they can be selected.** In this case, a list of the needed information will be included within the email you received notifying you of how to access your PEARS certificate. Please ask the applicant to provide any additional required information at the interview. In addition, please ask the candidate(s) you intend to select to fill out the "Declaration of Federal Employment (OF-306) form. **The OF-306 must be cleared by Human Resources before a selection can be confirmed.**

5. Do not consider political recommendations - these are forbidden by the Hatch Act.

6. **Before offering a position to a candidate, please contact your Human Resources staffing customer service representative to ensure that your selection is legal.**

7. If a candidate declines your offer, document the reason(s) by using the "Record of Verbal Declination" form, also available on this website. To access it use your back button or type this address in your web browser address line:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/employment_recruitment/case_exam_docs.html

8. Declinations must be received directly from the candidate.

9. Please contact your customer service representative regarding your tentative selection and requested effective date after reviewing the applicants found on the PEARS certificate. ***All selections are tentative until cleared through Human Resources.***

10. If you do not make a selection from the certificate, send an e-mail to your customer service representative indicating the reason why (e.g. selection was made from another source).

11. After making your selection(s), send an e-mail to your customer service representative indicating the selectee's name and return the following items to your representative at Human Resources:

- Any hard copy applications you received (if applicable)
- Verbal declination sheet(s) and copies of letters sent to those who failed to respond (if applicable)
- The selectee's completed OF-306, Declaration for Federal Employment.
- NOT Letter (if applicable)

Information Sharing With Applicants

The following information ***cannot*** be shared with applicants:

- Information about other applicants (e.g., employment history, race, age, performance appraisal, application, or evaluation sheet); this information is considered confidential
- Rating plan information; this information is considered examining material by OPM
- Applicant(s) score(s)

The following information ***can*** be shared with applicants:

- Whether or not the applicant was considered
- The applicant's rank on the certificate
- Ways in which the applicant might improve future chances for future selection
- The reason(s) why the applicant was not selected