



*A New Day for the Civil Service*

**The Senior Executive Service**  
*and*  
**The Executive Core Qualifications**  
*Preparing for the SES*

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



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# Topics

- **Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) and leadership competencies**
- **CCAR – Challenge, Context, Action, Result**
- **Do's and Don'ts**

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# ECQs

## What are they?

- The ECQs describe the leadership skills needed to succeed in the SES and reinforce the concept of an “SES corporate culture”.

## How are they used?

- The ECQs are designed to assess executive experience and potential not technical expertise. They measure whether an individual has the broad executive skills needed to succeed in a variety of SES positions. The ECQs are not focused on technical expertise.

## How were they determined?

- A collaboration, reflecting the best thinking of many senior executives, thought leaders, and associations, as well as human resources professionals conducting research of the attributes of successful executives in both the private and public sectors (1992 Leadership Effectiveness Survey and 2005 ECQs Update Study).

# Executive Core Qualification & Competencies



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# Leading Change

Involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals.

- Inherent is the ability to:
  - establish an organizational vision
  - implement it in a continuously changing environment.



# Competencies

## Creativity and Innovation

- New insights, encourages new ideas and innovations

## External Awareness

- Up to date on local, national and international policies and trends

## Flexibility

- Open to change and adapts to changing conditions or unexpected obstacles

## Resilience

- Deals effectively with pressure

## Strategic Thinking

- Formulates objectives and priorities and implements plans

## Vision

- Acts as catalyst for organizational change and translates vision into action

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# What should the focus be?

Questions  
to ask  
yourself  
when  
describing  
your  
experience

- What was my organizational vision?
- How did I transcend my vision into action? What initiative did I take?
- Did I strategically initiate and implement transformational change?
- How did I deal with unexpected organizational changes/obstacles (to internal/external pressures)?
- Did my vision achieve measurable results that impacted the organization?

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# Leading People

Involves the ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals

- Inherent is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that:
  - fosters the development of others
  - facilitates cooperation and teamwork
  - and supports constructive resolution of conflicts.





# Competencies

## Team Building

- Inspires and fosters team commitment. Facilitates cooperation and motivates to accomplish goals

## Conflict Management

- Anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations

## Developing Others

- Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization

## Leveraging Diversity

- Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and differences are valued

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# What should the focus be?

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- What is the largest staff size I have led? What challenges did leading a large staff present?
- Was I leading versus managing?
- How did I lead my team through a challenge? How did I motivate them to achieve set goals?
- How did I contribute to the professional development of my employees (individually or as a team)
- How did I deal with conflicts that arose within my team?
- How did I leverage diversity amongst my team? (age, cultural, race, skill levels, perspectives)



# Results Driven

Involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations

- Inherent is the ability to:
  - make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying
  - technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks.



# Competencies

## Accountability

- Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely and cost-effective results

## Customer Service

- Anticipates and meets the needs of both internal and external customers

## Decisiveness

- Makes well-informed, effective, timely decisions with limited data

## Entrepreneurship

- Positions the organization for success by identifying new opportunities

## Problem Solving

- Identifies and analyzes problems

## Technical Credibility

- Appropriately applies principles, procedures, regulations related to specialized expertise

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# What should the focus be?

Questions  
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- How did the priorities and objectives I set lead to high quality/quantity results?
- How did I address the needs of customers and stakeholders (internal and external)?
- How did my decisions and actions impact results?
- Did I identify problems and implement solutions that resulted in improving services?



# Business Acumen

**Involves the ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically**

- Inherent is the ability to:
  - Manage human, financial, and information resources strategically



# Competencies

## Financial Management

- Prepares, justifies, and administers program budget. Oversees procurement and contracting

## Human Capital Management

- Recruits, builds, and manages multi-sector workforce and manages a variety of work situations

## Technology Management

- Makes effective use of technology to achieve results

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# What should the focus be?

Questions  
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- What is my experience in creating and administering budgets and resources?
- How did I procure and utilize resources? What obstacles did I face in doing this?
- What was the size of budget and resources I managed? How much money saved?
- What is my experience with a multi-sector workforce? Percentage of backlog eliminated/reduced? Length of processing time reduced?
- How did I utilize technology to create or improve programs?



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# Building Coalitions

**Involves the ability to build coalitions internally and with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, foreign governments, or international organizations to achieve common goals**

- Inherent is the ability to:
  - Develop networks through partnering and collaboration.



# Competencies

## Partnering

- Develops networks and builds alliances

## Political Savvy

- Perceives organizational and political realities and acts accordingly

## Influencing/Negotiating

- Persuades others and builds consensus through give and take. Gains cooperation from others to accomplish goals

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# What should the focus be?

Questions  
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experience

- What groups/networks (internal and external) did I partner with to achieve a goal?
- How did I bring groups together? What challenges did I face doing that?
- What did I do to build coalitions?

# Fundamental Competencies



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# Challenge-Context-Action-Result (CCAR) Model

- Results-oriented approach that requires focus on the leadership skills needed to manage programs, process, and people.
- Provides a more complete picture of:
  - Applicant's leadership competencies
  - Specific role played in an organization's success.
- Focus on the candidate's accomplishments, not the organization's.
- No more than **2 examples** per ECQ.

# CCAR Model

## Challenge

describe a specific problem or goal



## Context

describe individuals and groups you worked with and/or environment in which you worked to address a challenge



## Action

discuss specific actions you took to address the challenge



## Result

measures/outcomes that had some impact on the organization. This demonstrates the quality and effectiveness of leadership skills

# The Resume

## **Scope/Breadth of Impact (outcome/results)**

The number and position of people affected; the size of the problem addressed; track record of successful performance in a variety of agencies/departments/areas

## **Complexity**

Taking more things, people, data, concepts or completeness into account (i.e., size of staff, size of budget, size of organization)

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# The Resume

- Should show breadth and scope of experience, responsibility, and accomplishments, and a logical progression of jobs/ assignments (Information used to enhance and support ECQ narrative)
- Ensure accomplishments are relevant to, and focused on, demonstrated executive leadership, and show possession of the ECQs and match competencies
- Do not cut and paste position description into your resume
- Include grade and salary – keys to understanding your level of preparation



# Reviewing and Writing Tips

## DO

- Strictly adhere to 1 inch margins, 12pt font and 10 page narrative limit. (Number pages)
- Limit introductory summaries to 1 paragraphs (it counts towards 10 page narrative limit)
- Quantify achievements (numbers, percentages, and timelines)
- Use measurable results (whenever possible)
- Use action oriented verbs (active vs passive voice)
- Use transitions

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# Reviewing and Writing Tips

## DO

- Use experience in public or private sectors, and as volunteer
- Describe experience and accomplishments in a clear and organized manner. Tell the story and be succinct –use CCAR.
- Use personal “I” instead of the third person
- Write in Layman’s terms
- Proofread
- Spell out and limit the use of acronyms
- Accept feedback/critique from Executive Resources Specialists

# Reviewing and Writing Tips

## AVOID

- Using the same example for more than one ECQ
- Vague statements that leave open-ended questions
- Statements that describe personal beliefs, philosophies, or commitment to a social or political cause
- Grammatical errors and tips (spelling, syntax, punctuation)
- Referring to other parts of the ECQ narrative
- Overuse of bolding and underlining

# Reviewing and Writing Tips

## AVOID

- Making disparaging remarks about former managers
- Revealing information about political affiliation or activities
- Using bureaucratic words and expressions
- Including ECQ definitions

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# Resources

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## Guide to SES Qualifications

[www.opm.gov/ses/references/GuidetoSESQuals\\_2012.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/ses/references/GuidetoSESQuals_2012.pdf)

## OPM Website

[www.opm.gov/ses](http://www.opm.gov/ses)

<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/faqs/>

## Handouts Provided

# Questions



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