

Border Patrol Competency-Based Assessments for Supervisory/Managerial Promotion

Overview

- The Border Patrol competency-based assessments for supervisory/managerial promotion measure critical job-related skills that have been shown to be essential for effective performance in supervisory, managerial, and staff officer positions. The components that candidates must complete to participate in the promotion process for supervisory/managerial Border Patrol positions are:
 - ◆ The *Border Patrol Career Experience Inventory (CEI)*, which candidates complete online in USAJOBS, is a task-based inventory that assesses the quantity and quality of specific experiences important for effective performance as a supervisor or manager in the Border Patrol. **This assessment is required for all candidates.**
 - ◆ The *Critical Thinking Skills Exercise* in which candidates read real-world scenarios and evaluate conclusions based on information presented in the scenarios. **This assessment is required for all candidates.**
 - ◆ The *Managerial Writing Skills Exercise* in which candidates review and edit documents collected from the field to ensure that information is presented in a well-organized, clear, coherent, and grammatically correct manner. **This assessment is required for all candidates.**
 - ◆ The *In-Basket Job Simulation* in which candidates play the role of a Supervisory Border Patrol Agent at a fictitious Border Patrol station. Candidates first review documents (e.g., voicemail messages, e-mail messages, reports) that deal with the personnel, operational, budgetary, and administrative issues supervisors and managers handle every day. Candidates then answer questions dealing with how they would delegate, prioritize, make decisions, and solve the problems presented in the documents. **This assessment is optional for GS-11 and GS-12 candidates and is not used as part of the final score to select individuals into GS-13 first-line Supervisory Border Patrol positions. However, this assessment is used for all other GS-13 positions and so it is recommended that GS-12 candidates take it in the event that they are eligible to compete for a position that requires it. This assessment is required for all GS-13 and GS-14 candidates. First-line supervisors in particular who have not yet taken this assessment are reminded to do so to compete for higher-level positions.**
 - ◆ The *Job Knowledge Assessment* in which candidates respond to questions about regulations, laws, procedures, and processes related to the requirements of a first-line

supervisor in the Border Patrol. The assessment covers five content areas: (1) operations, (2) administrative/criminal prosecutions, (3) resources management, (4) personnel management, and (5) policy development and implementation. **This assessment is used only in the calculation of the first-line supervisory score. Therefore, it is required for GS-11 and GS-12 candidates. Candidates at the GS-13 and GS-14 level do not take this assessment.**

- The goals of competency-based assessments are to:
 - ◆ Measure job-related competencies fairly and objectively
 - ◆ Identify top quality candidates for supervisory and managerial positions
 - ◆ Provide diagnostic feedback on training needs
- The promotional assessment score is used as the evaluation method for GS-1896-13 through 15 supervisory and managerial vacancies that include, but are not limited to:

Office of Border Patrol

Supervisory Border Patrol Agent (SBPA)
Supervisory BPA (Canine Instructor)
Supervisory BPA (BORSTAR)
Supervisory BPA (Sector BORTAC)
Supervisory BPA (Tactical Leader, Special Response Team)
Field Operations Supervisor (FOS)
Field Operations Supervisor (FOS—BORSTAR/BORTAC)
Border Patrol Agent (Tactical Leader/Instructor)
Supervisory BPA (BORSTAR Unit Leader/Instructor)
Patrol Agent in Charge (PAIC)
Deputy Patrol Agent in Charge (DPAIC)
Assistant Patrol Agent in Charge (APAIC)
Special Operations Supervisor (SOS)
Special Operations Supervisor (SOS—BORSTAR/BORTAC)
Special Operations Supervisor (SOS—Canine Coordinator)
Supervisory BPA (PAIC—Intel/SOD)
Supervisory BPA (Commander, SRT)
Supervisory BPA (Commander, BORSTAR/BORTAC)
Supervisory BPA (Deputy Commander, SRT)
Supervisory BPA (Deputy Commander, BORSTAR/BORTAC)
Supervisory BPA (MRT Coordinator)
Border Patrol Agent (Operations Officer)
Assistant Chief Patrol Agent (ACPA)
Assistant Chief—HQ
Associate Chief
Executive Officer for Operations
Special Operations Group Director
Deputy Division Chief
Division Chief
Deputy Chief Patrol Agent (DCPA)
Chief Patrol Agent (CPA)

Office of Training and Development

Border Patrol Agent (Leadership Instructor)
Border Patrol Agent (Training Program Manager)
Border Patrol Agent (Firearms Program Specialist)
Training Operations Supervisor (TOS)
Training Operations Supervisor (Canine)
Supervisory BPA (Course Developer/Instructor)
Supervisory BPA (Training Program Manager)
Supervisory BPA (Firearms Program Specialist)
Supervisory BPA (Canine Course Developer/Instructor)
Supervisory BPA, *all training directors and deputy training directors*
Supervisory BPA (Harper's Ferry)
Border Patrol Agent (Canine Instructor)
Border Patrol Agent (Assistant Chief)
Supervisory BPA, Assistant Chief Patrol Agent (ACPA)

Office of Internal Affairs

Border Patrol Agent (OIA)

Office of Intelligence and Operations Coordination

Supervisory BPA (Deputy Director)
Supervisory BPA (Associate Chief)
Border Patrol Agent (Assistant Chief)

Frequently Asked Questions

Changes to the Career Experience Inventory (CEI)

- **I understand that the Border Patrol Career Experience Inventory (CEI) portion of the assessments has undergone some changes. Do I need to submit a new CEI at this time?**

If you did not submit a Border Patrol CEI in either of the two previous regular open periods (August 2011 and February 2012) or the special "CEI ONLY" opportunity in September 2011, you should do so during this open period. The Border Patrol CEI was updated last summer to reflect the current experiential requirements of GS-1896 supervisors and managers, and the last three open periods (August and September 2011 and February 2012) were opportunities to submit the new CEI. The update included the addition of several new questions and changes to some existing questions, including changes to the scoring key. All promotion candidates with prior Border Patrol CEI assessment scores that did not submit the new CEI in either August or September 2011 had their prior CEIs rescored on December 31, 2011, receiving no points on the new and changed questions, and their CEI and total scores decreased accordingly. If these candidates did not submit the new CEI in the next opportunity (February 2012), then those rescored CEIs are still their CEIs of record. For this reason, those candidates who have yet to submit the new CEI are strongly urged to do so at this time. As always, candidates who submitted their first-ever CEI during the full submission open period opportunities of August 2011 or February 2012 need to submit the

CEI again if they failed to complete the assessment process by ever taking the multiple-choice components, as CEIs are never retained for candidates who do not have multiple-choice assessments to combine with their CEI at the end of the assessment cycle.

Online Application for the Test Opportunity Announcement

- **If I am interested in competing for supervisory and managerial Border Patrol Agent positions, what do I need to do?**

You will need to apply online in USAJobs to the **Border Patrol Agent (GS-1896) test opportunity announcement** during the open period from **August 6–24, 2012**. When you complete your application in this announcement, you will also have the opportunity to complete the Border Patrol Agent CEI. You can access USAJobs at: <http://www.usajobs.gov/> OR: if applying outside of USAJobs go to <https://ApplicationManager.gov> to access or create your Application Manager account.

Selecting, Scheduling, and Taking the Assessment

- **How do I select a date, time, and place to complete the multiple-choice assessments?**

If you are eligible, you will receive an e-mail on **September 24, 2012**, with instructions to go to the online testing website to select your assessments and schedule yourself to complete the assessments. The website will offer testing locations that are nearest your location. The website will allow you to select a location, date, and time to complete the assessments. If you do not receive your scheduling e-mail by September 24, write an e-mail to prom.support@dhs.gov the next day or shortly thereafter to inquire as to the status of your scheduling e-mail.

The time period to schedule yourself for the assessments will be from September 24 – October 5, 2012. You must schedule yourself before the end of this scheduling period. Candidates who fail to schedule themselves before the end of the scheduling period will forfeit the opportunity to complete the multiple-choice assessments. The website will allow you to change your scheduled location, date, and time up to 48 hours in advance of your scheduled assessment time. Remember that you will only be able to do this if you first schedule yourself during the scheduling period.

- **How do I select which multiple-choice assessments I want to complete?**

When you enter the online testing website for scheduling, you will choose which assessments you want to complete prior to selecting a date/time. Note that if you have not taken the assessments before, you will be required to take all of the assessments necessary for you to have a complete score. If you have taken the assessments before, you will have the flexibility to choose any or all of the assessments to take again. When you show up at the testing center you will be given only those assessments that you selected. Note that this includes the In-Basket (GS-11 and GS-12 candidates need to decide at the time of scheduling whether to take the In-Basket or not).

- **When will the Border Patrol multiple-choice assessments be offered as part of this open period?**

The multiple-choice assessments will be administered **October 29 – November 16, 2012.**

- **I had valid multiple-choice assessment scores up to the last time they were offered (May 2012), and I did not retake them at that time. Are my previous multiple-choice assessment scores still valid?**

Yes, if you had valid multiple-choice assessment scores up to the last time they were offered (May 2012), those multiple-choice assessment scores are still valid. Multiple-choice scores do not expire. However, you do not have a total score to compete for vacancies unless you have also completed the Border Patrol Career Experience Inventory (CEI), which has been part of the assessment application process since 2004. **Also, if you had previously taken the Critical Thinking Skills Exercise and the Managerial Writing Skills Exercise and did not take the In-Basket Job Simulation, and you wish to apply to a second level supervisory or managerial position, you must take the In-Basket Job Simulation.**

- **How will I be notified about my scheduled location, date, and time to complete the assessments?**

All promotion test information will be sent to you via your e-mail address. When you first enter the testing website, you will be asked to enter an e-mail address. The e-mail address that you enter is **extremely** important. *We strongly suggest you enter your work email address; some candidates in the past who entered their personal email address found that their personal email service provider blocked their scheduling messages for various reasons.* It is important to check your e-mail regularly during the testing cycle to ensure that you do not miss important e-mail messages that move you on to the next step in the testing process.

- **Can I wear my firearm at the test site when I complete the multiple-choice assessments?**

Candidates are permitted to bring and wear a firearm to the test site. If you bring a firearm, you must either be wearing your official on-duty uniform or wear the firearm holstered with your badge attached to the holster.

Career Experience Inventory

- **How do I complete the Border Patrol Career Experience Inventory (CEI)?**

You complete the Border Patrol CEI as part of your application to the Border Patrol (GS-1896) test opportunity announcement. You will be completing the CEI questions as part of that application in USAJobs at: <http://www.usajobs.gov/>.

- **If I completed the Border Patrol CEI during the last open period, do I need to complete it again in the next open period?**

No, you do not have to complete the Border Patrol CEI again if you completed it and received a total score combining the CEI and multiple-choice assessments. However, if you completed the CEI but did not take the multiple-choice assessments, and had no previous multiple-choice assessments that were still valid to combine with your CEI, then your responses to the Border Patrol CEI were not retained. Thus, if you have no valid multiple-choice assessment scores, you will need to complete the CEI again when you apply to take the assessments.

- **If the last time I completed the Border Patrol CEI was prior to the last regular open period (February 2012), do I need to complete it again in the next open period?**

Not if you submitted it during the regular August 2011 full-submission opportunity or the special “CEI-ONLY” September 2011 partial-submission opportunity. HOWEVER, if your last scored CEI submission was prior to August 2011, then you should submit a new CEI during this open period. The Border Patrol CEI was updated last summer to reflect the current experiential requirements of GS-1896 supervisors and managers, and the last three open periods (August and September 2011 and February 2012) were opportunities to submit the new CEI. The update included the addition of several new questions and changes to some existing questions, including changes to the scoring key. All promotion candidates with prior Border Patrol CEI assessment scores that did not submit the new CEI in either August or September 2011 had their prior CEIs rescored on December 31, 2011, receiving no points on the new and changed questions, and their CEI and total scores decreased accordingly. If these candidates did not submit the new CEI in the next opportunity (February 2012), then those rescored CEIs are still their CEIs of record. For this reason, those candidates who have yet to submit the new CEI are strongly urged to do so at this time.

- **If I have gained additional experience since last completing the Border Patrol CEI or if I made in error in completing the Border Patrol CEI during the last open period, can I complete the CEI again?**

Yes, if you have gained additional experiences or if you feel that you made an error the last time you completed the Border Patrol CEI, you can complete it again during the next open period. If you complete the CEI questions again, you must answer all of the questions in the inventory. **Your new responses to the CEI questions will replace all of your previous responses, and you will receive a new total score after testing is completed for that open period.**

Applying to Vacancy Announcements

➤ What are the steps involved in applying for a vacancy?

The majority of supervisory/managerial Border Patrol vacancies covered by the promotional assessments are posted in USAJobs as long-term announcements. Instead of posting individual announcements as vacancies occur, long-term announcements are posted to create standing applicant inventories. There are different announcements posted corresponding to the four types of scores that you can receive on your score report depending on your grade level. **The scores from this testing period will become effective for vacancies that open on or after December 31, 2012; they will not be used for vacancy announcements that opened prior to this date.**

There will also be a need for some individual vacancy announcements. You should apply for any specific vacancies in USAJobs that interest you and that you are eligible for as the positions are announced, following all procedures required in the vacancy announcement. Your score will be pulled from a secure database and used for determining the best qualified list.

Preparation Materials

➤ Are there any study materials to help me prepare for the assessments?

Yes, there are study guides for all of the assessments available on the CBPNet Intranet site under HRM, Career Center, Study Guides and Training Materials and on the CBP Internet site at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/careers/study_guides/guides_bp/promotion_guide/. These study guides are useful in familiarizing you with the format of the assessments and provide sample questions for you to take in preparation for the assessments. In addition, candidates taking the Job Knowledge Assessment should review the Job Knowledge preparation guide because it gives valuable information about the content areas covered by this assessment and the reference materials that can be studied prior to taking the assessment.

Assessment Feedback

➤ What kind of feedback will I receive after taking the assessments?

All candidates who complete the assessments will receive a confidential feedback score report about their performance in each of the competency areas assessed. This feedback score report will be available on your online testing website account. You will be notified that your feedback is posted on your account toward the end of December 2012. A *Candidate Feedback Guide* can be accessed by clicking on the link at the top of your score report. This guide explains how to interpret the scores as well as each of the sections for the CEI and the multiple-choice components.

In addition, you may want to access the *Developmental Resource Guide* available on the Intranet and Internet sites referenced above. The *Developmental Resource Guide* contains

“general tips” and recommended readings for improving your abilities in the general competency skill areas of the assessment process. Another resource available for developmental purposes on the Intranet site is the *Manual of Job-Related Thinking Skills*. The *Manual of Job-Related Thinking Skills* is a comprehensive self-administered training manual in job-related reasoning and critical thinking.

Effective Date of Test Scores

➤ **When will the scores from this test opportunity open period become effective?**

Scores from this test opportunity open period will be effective for vacancy announcements that **open on or after December 31, 2012**. Your scores from this test opportunity open period will be available for review in your online account in late-December 2012.

Contacts and Important Dates to Remember

For Questions About...	Contact...
Applying to complete the assessments or the USAJobs Test Opportunity Bulletin	Minneapolis Hiring Center at (952) 857-2916
The assessments or assessment scores Scheduling to complete the assessments All other assessment-related inquiries	Personnel Research and Assessment Division (PRAD) by e-mail at PROM.support@dhs.gov
Problems accessing the test scheduling website – cannot access account	PAN Technical Support (877) 449-8378
IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER	
Test Opportunity Announcement Open Period	August 6–24, 2012
Scheduling Notices E-mailed to Candidates	September 24, 2012
Schedule Assessments	September 24 – October 5, 2012
Complete Assessments/Test Administration	October 29 – November 16, 2012
Scores are effective for vacancies that open on or after	December 31, 2012