

1 June 2017

Assessment Process Frequently Asked Questions: Applicant Guide

This document outlines information relevant to the assessment process when applying for positions at the CFPB. It includes an overview of the exercise process, minimum system requirements, and answers to other commonly asked questions. Information in this FAQ is important in helping you complete your assessment to the best of your abilities.

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Assessment Process Overview

Thank you for your interest in the CFPB! At this point in the process, your application has been reviewed and was found to meet all initial requirements for the position, including the education and/or experience required for the position. If you are deemed eligible by Subject Matter Experts, you will continue on in the process. This document describes the next steps that you can expect as part of the CFPB selection process.

An assessment coordinator will reach out to you by email to schedule a time to complete the assessment. At the scheduled time, the assessment coordinator will send you instructions and materials for you to use to complete the assessment electronically. Shortly thereafter, the assessment coordinator will confirm receipt of your assessment materials.

The completed assessment will then be assessed by Subject Matter Experts. If you are among the top qualified candidates, your application will be referred to a selecting official for consideration and possible interview.

Please read the Frequently Asked Questions section on the following pages to best prepare for the application process.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I qualify to take the assessment for a position?

You must meet the minimum qualifications for the job as shown by your resume. If you meet the qualifications and score in the top tier on the online questionnaire, you may be invited to take the assessment.

2. How do I schedule an assessment?

If you are invited to take the assessment, an assessment coordinator will reach out to you via email to schedule a time to complete the assessment. The scheduling email will typically include a list of available options from which you can choose. Please note you may be asked to respond with your availability via an online survey, as this simplifies the scheduling process for the CFPB team. You must respond as instructed in the email from the assessment coordinator within 3 business days of the email.

3. What email address will the Assessment Coordinator use to contact me?

You will be contacted using the email address with which you registered your application. If you would like to change the contact email for a particular assessment process you are currently completing, reply to the assessment coordinator after you receive your initial contact. Please note, the assessment coordinator cannot modify the email registered with your application. Important communication about your application status will be sent to the email address on file with your application. Be sure to check your spam or junk email folder regularly during the application process to ensure that you do not miss any important emails.

4. What if none of the assessment times work for me?

Assessment times are designed to include a number of options over several days. Under certain circumstances, the assessment coordinator is able to schedule an alternative time within the established assessment window that works for the both of you. Other times, an assessment coordinator s only able to schedule a limited number of make-up sessions. It is best to try to make one of the original times work.

5. What if I forget to schedule a time for the assessment?

You will be contacted twice to schedule an assessment time: first, via the assessment specialist's initial email and then with a single reminder email. However, if you do not respond within 3 business days of the initial request for scheduling, you will be removed from consideration.

6. How will I receive the assessment materials?

Once your assessment appointment has been confirmed, the assessment coordinator will email you the assessment materials at the start of that period of time. That email will specify the amount of time you have to complete the assessment.

7. What happens if I need to reschedule my appointment?

Under certain circumstances, it may be possible to reschedule your appointment. Please contact your assessment specialist, as soon as you become aware of the need to reschedule (preferably within the 3 business day scheduling window).

8. What if I have questions about something or I have technical difficulties during my assessment?

Please contact your assessment coordinator through the CFPB_Assessments email address for information or guidance on technical difficulties or other questions. The assessment coordinator cannot answer questions about the assessment content at any time. However, if you have more general or process related questions, you may reach out to your assessment coordinator at any time during the assessment process. Keep in mind that the assessment is timed, and you must complete it within the stated timeframe.

9. Can you provide a phone number or direct email to contact the assessment specialist?

No, unless it is necessary for technology reasons, the CFPB_Assessments email address is the best way to contact your assessment specialist. Several specialists monitor email traffic to this inbox, and your questions will receive more efficient service from this strategy.

10. What computer or other technology do I need to complete the assessments?

You must have access to a personal computer or notebook style computer to take the assessments. You may do so on your own computer, a rental computer, a library computer, or another computer you are able to use. If you are taking the assessment on a computer that you are not familiar with, if possible, we recommend getting to the computer before the assessment time begins in order to make sure you are comfortable operating the machine.

11. Can I take the assessment on a tablet/iPad/smartphone?

Though it may be possible on some smartphone or tablet devices, it is not recommended that you take your assessment on a smartphone or tablet. Many smartphones and tablets do not have the appropriate word or spreadsheet processing software needed to take the assessments.

12. Are there any system or software requirements?

You must have the software necessary to open a PDF (portable document format) file in order to access and read the assessment instructions. You must also have either a word processing or spreadsheet processing software system available to you, depending on whichever options your specific assessment instructions indicate. Though you do not need Microsoft Office Software, the software you do use must be compatible with Microsoft Office Software. Read the email that invites you to take the assessment carefully to ensure that you have the necessary software for your assessment.

13. Can you send the assessment in a Word document instead of a PDF?

To help ensure consistent communication and prevent word processing program interactions, the assessments are generally provided in a single form as a portable document file (PDF). If you are unable to view a pdf document, a free reader is available at this website: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

14. Where should I take the assessment?

It is recommended that you complete the assessment in a quiet location where you will not be disrupted.

15. What is the time limit for completing the assessments?

Time limits for the assessment vary by announcement. When the assessment coordinator emails you to schedule a time to complete the assessment, the time limit will be stated. It will also be restated in the instructions you receive at the start of your assessment. It is important that you adhere to the stated time limit for the assessment.

16. I noticed that some assessments will be anonymously reviewed, what does that mean?

If it is noted in the vacancy announcement or the assessment instructions that the assessment materials will be reviewed and rated anonymously, then it means that your assessment is being submitted for what is called a blind review. This means that your identity will not be known by the Subject Matter Experts that review your assessment materials at the time of evaluation, to help ensure impartial evaluation of your responses.

17. Are there any general assessment instructions I can view to prepare for what to expect?

You will need to read and follow the instructions for your particular assessment very closely when you receive them in order to ensure your assessment materials are eligible for consideration. Remember that the actual assessment used varies widely across announcements and you will not know what your assessment will be until you are emailed to begin.

18. What if I need Reasonable Accommodations to complete the assessment?

If you think you may need Reasonable Accommodations, please contact your assessment coordinator no later than 24 hours before the assessment to request reasonable accommodations. Your assessment coordinator and/or another CFPB specialist will work with you to determine what accommodations may be required and granted.

19. Is there anything else I can do to help prepare for an assessment?

It is recommended that you become familiar with the vacancy announcement and the major duties listed there describing the position for which you are applying, including

the competencies required for the job. In some cases, it may be helpful to read through the CFPB website (www.consumerfinance.gov) to become familiar with our agency, our policies, and procedures.

20. Will everyone receive the exact same assessment within a vacancy announcement?

Our written assessments are designed to help ensure comparable measurement for all applicants. Where differences in written assessment content are used, the different versions are designed for equivalence to ensure that you understand the specific requirements.

21. Can I get feedback on my assessment results?

Unfortunately we are unable to provide feedback on assessment results or have further discussion with applicants about their results. Please do not contact your assessment coordinator or others at CFPB to discuss the results of your assessment once you have been notified of the results.

22. What are category scores?

Category rating procedures will be used to rank and refer eligible candidates. Based on your responses to the online questionnaire and the assessment, you will be assigned a score. Your score will determine in which of the three categories you will be placed: Categories A, B, or C. For service postings, veterans will be assigned to the appropriate category and then placed at the top of their category.

23. How do I find out about the status of my application?

All applicants will receive notification from the online application system as to their application status. You may also login to view application status through USAJobs. If you are among the top qualified candidates, your application will be referred to a selecting official for consideration and possible interview. Your assessment coordinator does not know the status of your application and will not be able to find that out for you. If you are qualified and able to move forward in the process, the selecting official will reach out to you.

24. When will I hear back about my application?

The timeline for informing an applicant of their status varies widely across positions. If you have questions about your application, the CFPB, or the hiring process, contact CFPBINQUIRIES@BPD.treas.gov. A selecting official cannot make any decisions until all applicants for a particular opening have completed the assessment and been rated. Sometimes this may take only a few weeks, while other times it may take longer. Once all assessment materials have been rated and if you are in the top tier of applicants, you may be contacted.

25. I applied to another job at CFPB and was not asked to complete a written assessment. Are all jobs at the CFPB using this approach now?

The selection process for different jobs can vary widely depending on a number of factors related to the job and the recruitment or hiring effort. Please read each vacancy announcement carefully to ensure that you understand the specific requirements.

26. I applied and took an assessment for a job. I see another announcement for a job that sounds the same. Are you reposting the job?

Many of the jobs within CFPB have similar sounding titles and may perform some similar responsibilities. Each vacancy announcement will describe the major duties and responsibilities and will describe the application and assessment process. Please read each vacancy announcement carefully.

27. If I have applied to the same position in the past and taken an assessment will I need to take the assessment again?

Yes, you will need to take the assessment again. Over time the assessments change and your older scores may not be valid. This also allows provides you with an opportunity to potentially earn a high score on the assessment.

28. What can I do to better prepare myself so that next time I apply I do better on the assessment?

It is always helpful to go back and look at the competencies that were being assessed and your response to the assessment to do a self-evaluation. We cannot share any feedback with you on how you performed.