



California Department of Human Resources Selection Division, Merit System Services **Subject Matter Expert Participation Requirements**

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to outline the policy and requirements for subject matter expert (SME) participation in the job analysis and examination development process for Merit System Services (MSS) classifications used to fill program positions within Interagency Merit System (IMS) county department.

POLICY

Consistent with legal and professional standards for merit systems, valid job analyses as the foundation for the development of examinations for all job classifications are required by MSS. All examinations for program positions must adhere to MSS selection standards of validity and job-relatedness, and must link directly to a valid job analysis. Examinations designed to establish eligible lists must be competitive and effectively assess the qualifications and relative knowledge, skills, and abilities of candidates for the position they seek.

County departments are required to provide SMEs to actively participate in the job analysis and examination development for all allocated MSS classifications within their classification plan.

This participation ensures comprehensive representation and valuable feedback from all user-county departments, resulting in a more reliable and valid examination process. The contribution of SMEs is vital for maintaining the relevance and accuracy of the job content and developing robust, job-related testing instruments.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT REQUIREMENTS

When selecting SMEs to participate in the job analysis or exam development process, counties must ensure they meet the following criteria:

- SMEs are expert-level incumbents, supervisors, or individuals with in-depth knowledge of the job duties and requirements.
- They should be top performers in the role, first-level supervisors or hiring managers.
- SMEs must have direct experience/knowledge of the job and understand what is required to succeed in the role.

- They must have successfully completed their probationary period.

JOB ANALYSIS PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

The level of county involvement in the job analysis process is determined by the total classification size (defined as the total number of positions allocated across all counties utilizing the classification) and the extent to which counties use that classification. For classifications widely used across many counties, participating in any phase of the job analysis process will satisfy the county participation requirement. Conversely, if a classification is utilized by only a few counties, participation in multiple phases becomes essential.

Participation in the job analysis survey is guided by the classification size, as outlined in the table below. The required percentage of job analysis respondents varies based on the number of incumbents in the classification. For example, if the classification size is 25, an 80% response rate is necessary to ensure sufficient data collection. MSS will communicate the specific number of complete surveys required from each county.

Number of Incumbents (Classification)	Job Analysis Survey Respondents
1-10	100%
11-20	85%
21-30	80%
31-50	75%
51-200	50%
201 & over	25 %-50% (more is better)

FAILURE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE JOB ANALYSIS PROCESS

County departments that do not provide SMEs or fail to participate in the job analysis process will be prohibited from using MSS examinations. As a result, counties that opt not to participate may encounter significant challenges in recruiting for program positions.

Should a county department that has not participated in the job analysis process wish to utilize the MSS examination in the future, the county will be required to submit a valid job analysis that demonstrates a direct linkage to the MSS job analysis prior to being granted the ability to use the examination.

EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

The extent of county involvement in the examination development process depends on the classification size and type of examination. MSS may request participation from four to ten SMEs across various counties. It's important for counties to provide SMEs when requested. The

examination development process is where the testing items, rating criteria, and passing score are developed. This process directly affects county candidate pools. The inclusion of a diverse group of SMEs brings a range of perspectives, enhancing the fairness and comprehensiveness of the exam content. Counties and other parties will not be permitted to review examinations or provide input outside of the examination development process.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS CHART

Job Analysis/Exam Phase	Description	Participation Requirements
Archival/Literature Review	Online research is conducted, and written resources are reviewed (e.g., previous job analysis, class specification, and O*NET, etc.) to comprehend the classification.	County participation is not required.
Job Audits Interviews (If applicable)	Job audits/interviews are conducted to collect detailed information on how a job is performed. This information will contribute to the development of the task and KSAO statements.	County participation is required. Maximum two (2) hours.
Task/KSAO Statement Development	Information gathered in the previous steps will be used to develop statements outlining the primary job functions.	County participation is not required.
Job Analysis Meeting (Task/KSAO Review)	A meeting is scheduled with a representative sample of SMEs to review, add and finalize the task and KSAO statements.	County participation is required. Maximum four (4) hours.
Linkage Meeting	A meeting is scheduled with a representative sample of SMEs to link the task to the KSAOs, showing the relations between each KSAO and important tasks.	County participation is required. Maximum four (4) hours.
Job Analysis Survey	The finalized task/KSAO statements are distributed to SMEs through a survey to obtain ratings for the statements.	County participation is required. Maximum two (2) hours.
Data Analysis (Analyze Survey Results)	The survey ratings are analyzed to determine which task/KSAO statements are retained or dropped based on the cutoff rating.	County participation is not required.
Documenting the Job Analysis Study	The job analysis report is produced to document the process and methodology, including background information, SMEs involved, and task/KSAO results.	County participation is not required.
Examination Development Meetings /	A meeting is scheduled with a representative sample of SMEs to develop, review, and refine test items	County participation is required. The length and time of these meetings depends

511B Development	and to establish the passing score for the exam based on the results of the job analysis. Additionally, the 511B is developed to interpret the classification MQs to simplify the evaluation of applicants' qualifications.	on the classification and testing modality.
Develop the Validation Report	The validation report is produced to detail the methods and data collected during the test development process.	County participation is not required.

**The extent of county involvement in the job analysis process is determined by the number of counties that are using a specific classification. If a classification is used by only a few counties, they will need to participate in multiple phases of the job analysis process. Conversely, if a classification is used by many counties, they will be required to participate in any phase of the job analysis process to fulfill the participation requirement.*

**Job Analysis Survey: Participation in the survey is contingent on the classification size in each county. For instance, if the total classification size (sum of SMEs across all counties using the classifications) is 25, then an 80% response rate is necessary to gather sufficient data. MSS will send an email specifying the number of completed surveys required for each county.*

AUTHORITIES

- [California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 17033](#)
- [Government Code, Section 19800](#)
- [Government Code, Section 19801](#)

RESOURCES

Related Policies

[Selection Process Requirements for MSS Program Positions](#)

Forms

None.

Additional Resources

[Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures](#)

CONTACT

Merit System Services Program
 Selection Division, CalHR
 Phone: 916-909-3701
 Email: mssprogram@calhr.ca.gov