Superior Qualifications and Special Agency Needs Authority Scorecard

DEMOGRAPHIC AND POSITION INFORMATION

Special Instructions: The **demographic and position information** segment of this form should be completed by a **human resources staffing specialist** from the Office of Human Resources Management. This information is taken from the vacancy announcement, basic job application data and the official position description.

CAUTIONARY NOTE: The civil service regulations for superior qualifications pay setting in the Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR § 531.212) require that **before this authority is used** that the hiring manager and the human resources officer carefully consider an individual or group **recruitment** incentive (5 CFR Part 575, Subpart A). At GSA, the superior qualifications authority is almost always used in lieu of (rather than in addition to) a recruitment incentive. This is because the superior qualifications authority entails higher personnel costs.

☐ (Check this box) I certify that a **recruitment bonus** has been carefully considered.

1. Candidate (Last Name, First Name, Middle Initial)	Date:

2. Vacancy Announcement Number:	General Schedule (GS) Grade

3. Job Title:	Job Series (xxxx):

4. Duty Station Location (City, State):

5. First Federal Appointment or Re-Appointment

☐ First Federal Appointment ☐ Re-Appointment (including competitive service reinstatement).

If re-appointment, answer Question 6 below.

6. If re-appointment, was there an immediate, prior appointment, with no break in service?

☐ YES

- ☐ A temp, term, or time-limited appointment (ex: Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA), etc.):
- ☐ District of Columbia (DC) Government;
- ☐ An expert or consultant;
- ☐ Provisional appointment;
- ☐ Pathways Internship; or
- ☐ Senior Executive Service (SES) Limited Term or Emergency appointee

☐ NO, none of the above

☐ NOT APPLICABLE, because it is a first federal appointment

- If **Yes**, the candidate can be considered for superior qualifications or special agency needs authority.
- If **No**, then the candidate is not eligible for superior qualifications or special agency needs authority **WITHOUT** a 90-day break in service.

SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS
(5 CFR § 531.212(b)(1))

Special Instructions: The **education and experience** segment of this form should be completed by the hiring manager **(i.e., Requesting Official or designee)**. This information is taken from the candidate's resume.

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (check one)

Total Number of Points: __

- ☐ High School Diploma (0 points)
- ☐ Some college but no college degree (5 points)
- ☐ Associate's degree (10 points)
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree (15 points)
- ☐ Master's Degree (20 points)
- ☐ Professional Degree (J.D., etc.) (25 points)

Is the degree in the field, or a related or complementary field, of the advertised position?

- ☐ YES - Add 10 points
- ☐ NO - Add 0 points

POSITION-RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

How many years of work experience in the specific field advertised in the vacancy announcement? (Exclude schooling)

Total Number of Points: __

- ☐ Less than 5 years (Add 5 points)
- ☐ 6 to 10 years (Add 10 points)
- ☐ 11 to 15 years (Add 15 points)
- ☐ 16 to 20 years (Add 20 points)
- ☐ 21 or more years (Add 25 points)

COMPETENCIES

Special Instructions: The hiring manager (i.e. **Requesting Official or designee**) should use information known about the candidate (the resume, structured interview, assessment tool, etc.,) to identify superior competencies. Guidelines, including benchmarks, by GS grade, are found in the **Appendix**.

GS Grade of Position

- ☐ GS-5 to 9
- ☐ GS-11 to 13
- ☐ GS-14 to 15

1. Technical Ability	☐ On-Level	☐ Superior
2. Customer Service	☐ On-Level	☐ Superior
3. Communication	☐ On-Level	☐ Superior
4. Strategic Thinking	☐ On-Level	☐ Superior
5. Problem Solving	☐ On-Level	☐ Superior

Number of Superior Competencies: __

Total Number of Points: (multiply by 20): ____

SUPERIOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Special Instructions: In this section, the **Requesting Official or designee** can write about the candidate's superior accomplishments.

A "superior accomplishment" generally refers to a specific act, service, or a sustained period of high performance that contributes significantly to the efficiency, economy, or operational effectiveness of an organization. Discuss any superior accomplishments below. If no easily-identifiable superior accomplishments, leave blank. (Information used to complete the space below is typically found in the employee's resume, structured interview notes, and/or the assessment tool responses).

Total Points: (0 to 60): ___

Guideline: For each identifiable superior accomplishment, assign 20 points. Three (3) or more superior accomplishments are credited with 60 points (as a maximum ceiling).

SPECIAL AGENCY NEEDS
(5 CFR § 531.212(b)(1))

Special Instructions: The hiring manager (i.e. **Requesting Official or designee**) should use information known about the **position**, the **organization**, and the strategic **reason(s) for establishing the position** to clarify the agency's special hiring need. Special agency needs are usually common to all selected candidates who apply to the same vacancy announcement.

Total Number of Points: __

Has this type of position, in this organization or overall GSA component, been **objectively "difficult to fill"**? For example, are there macroeconomic factors, such as: limited labor market supply, unusual or unique skills needed, or historically high turnover?

☐ YES - Add 20 points

☐ NO - Add 0 points

Is this position in one of the following occupations or job families? (These are governed by agency special rate pay tables and/or direct-hire authority and therefore are considered highly needed).

0800 - Engineering (All)
1101 / 1102 - Contracting and Purchasing
1170 / 1171 / 1176 - Real Estate and Appraisal
1500 - Mathematics (All)
2210 - Information Technology

☐ YES - Add 20 points

☐ NO - Add 0 points

Is this position essential for accomplishing an important agency mission, goal, program or special initiative? (For example, a special cohort hiring initiative for Super Intelligence, etc.)

☐ YES - Add 20 points

☐ NO - Add 0 points

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATION FACTORS
(5 CFR § 531.212(c)(2))

Special Instructions: The hiring manager (i.e. **Requesting Official or designee**) may complete the questions below. These questions, based on the civil service regulations, deal with labor market or recent organizational change considerations, as well as the importance of the position to the agency. These considerations are usually common to all selected candidates who apply to the same vacancy announcement.

Total Number of Points: ___

Is there evidence that Government salaries for this position are paid under-market? (For example, compare the locality-adjusted GS salary range for Washington, DC to the private sector pay range found within the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) Profiles)

☐ YES - Add 10 points

☐ NO - Add 0 points

Is the unemployment rate for this occupation lower than the overall national average? (See most recent BLS monthly unemployment report, Current Population Survey, Unemployment, by Occupation)

☐ YES - Add 10 points

☐ NO - Add 0 points

During the most recent 1-year period, does the number of agency separations from this job series exceed the number of new hires or agency transfers? (Requesting officials should consult their assigned human resources staffing specialist).

☐ YES - Add 10 points

☐ NO - Add 0 points

Have prior similar vacancy announcements during the most recent 1-year period yielded fewer new hires than originally anticipated? (Requesting officials should consult their assigned human resources staffing specialist).

☐ YES - Add 10 points

☐ NO - Add 0 points

Is the geographic location, duties, or work environment associated with the position considered an impeding factor affecting the agency's ability to recruit candidates? (For example, if the position is in a U,S. territory or foreign country.)

☐ YES - Add 10 points

☐ NO - Add 0 points

Total Number of Points Across All Categories

☐ Education ____ ☐ Experience ____ ☐ Competency Matrix ____

☐ Accomplishments ____ ☐ Special Agency Needs ____ ☐ Additional Factors ____

OVERALL TOTAL: ____

Check Appropriate Pay Step Based on Overall Points Total **Pay Step Assigned:** _____

☐ 0 to 74: Step 1 ☐ 75 to 104: Step 2 ☐ 105 to 134: Step 3

☐ 135 to 164: Step 4 ☐ 165 to 194: Step 5 ☐ 195 to 224: Step 6

☐ 225 to 254: Step 7 ☐ 255 to 284: Step 8 ☐ 285 to 314: Step 9

☐ 315 and above: Step 10

Reason(s) for using the Superior Qualifications Authority (SQA)

Civil service regulation (5 CFR § 531.212(e)(2)) requires the hiring manager (i.e., Requesting Official) to identify why the superior qualifications authority is being used, almost always in lieu of an individual (or group) recruitment incentive bonus. Check all that apply and/or provide additional information:

☐ Candidate would likely resign once the recruitment incentive has expired (usually in 1 to 4 years) rather than experience a drop in compensation;

☐ Candidate prefers basic pay, due to its beneficial effect on future retirement earnings and/or life insurance coverage;

☐ Candidate does not want to sign a service agreement;

☐ Candidate does not want to remain in a single position covered by a recruitment incentive, limiting the opportunity for promotion or reassignment;

☐ Candidate does not want an incentive that can be unilaterally terminated by the agency, based upon annual budgeting or other management concerns;

☐ Other, such as if this authority is being used ***in addition to*** a recruitment incentive (Explain):

SIGNATURES

Name of GSA Component

Name of Requesting Official (or designee)

Signature	Date:

Name of Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer (or designee)

Signature	Date:

APPENDIX

Competency Matrix

GS-5 to GS-9 (Entry to Journey Level)

Competency	Standard	Superior
Technical Ability	Applies basic, foundational principles to routine, well defined tasks; requires regular guidance.	Independently executes complex, multi-step technical assignments; adapts methods to non-routine tasks.
Customer Service	Resolves standard, recurring inquiries politely using established agency procedures.	Anticipates customer needs; handles difficult or escalated interactions with minimal supervision.
Communication	Clearly exchanges routine info; drafts standard correspondence using templates.	Structures complex concepts into clear briefings or technical summaries for various audiences.
Strategic Thinking	Understands how immediate tasks support local team goals.	Identifies process bottlenecks and proposes workflows that optimize team milestones.
Problem Solving	Solves problems by choosing from a few clear, established alternatives.	Analyzes data gaps or minor system anomalies to determine the best path forward.

GS-11 to GS-13 (Full Performance / Mid-Level)

Competency	Standard	Superior
Technical Ability	Fully independent; applies comprehensive technical knowledge to intricate program areas.	Serves as a technical authority; masterfully addresses novel and unprecedented problems
Customer Service	Manages ongoing stakeholder relationships; negotiates solutions to competing demands.	Partners across organizational lines to design customer service practices or frameworks that dramatically improve satisfaction.
Communication	Defends technical positions, leads programmatic discussions, and drafts final policies or standard operating procedures.	Influences senior executive stakeholders; distills volatile, multifaceted issues into unified messaging.
Strategic Thinking	Aligns program initiatives with mid-term division, branch and/or agency missions.	Proactively anticipates future legislative or macro-level impacts; shapes long-range program strategies, goals and resource planning.
Problem Solving	Interprets vague regulations or complex guidelines to resolve systemic workflow issues.	Formulates unique change methodologies to solve deep-seated, systemic, long-term and/or institutional challenges.

GS-14 to GS-15 (Expert / Senior Leadership)

Competency	Standard	Superior
Technical Ability	Serves as a recognized subject matter expert (SME); directs broad technical programs.	Defines agency-wide technical architecture; leads national or international technical initiatives.
Customer Service	Champions customer-centric policies; ensures agency divisions align with stakeholder needs.	Spearheads enterprise-wide transformation strategies that redefine service delivery models.
Communication	Represents the agency to external bodies, oversight committees, and high-level officials.	Delivers high-stakes testimony, leads or supports multi-agency user groups or committees, and conducts agency-beneficial public diplomacy that may establish future precedent.
Strategic Thinking	Designs and directs multi-year strategies that integrate large, multi-faceted, cross-functional programs.	Creates and advocates a long-term vision; anticipates future public-sector shifts in order to steer agency positioning.
Problem Solving	Resolves unprecedented, highly controversial issues with broad national or agency-wide Impact.	Orchestrates creative solutions to complex, multi-agency crises under extreme conditions or time constraints.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

How to use this form. This form is meant to be a tool to objectively evaluate a candidate's application materials in order to determine an appropriate rate of pay for entrance upon duty for appointment or re-employment following a 90-day or longer break in service.

This form must be completed based on the selected candidate's individual qualifications, the requirements of the position, and the applicable regulatory considerations. Points must be supported by information contained in the appropriate documentation.

To determine the appropriate answer to each question, and the appropriate point value, the human resources specialist and the Requesting Official should review the following:

1. The **candidate's resume**. The resume will yield information such as the overall education and the number of years of experience in the recruited specialized field.
2. The **assessment tool**. The assessment tool responses may take the form of answers to multiple choice, yes/no questions, essay questions, or responses during a structured interview.
3. **DD-214**, *Certification of Release of Discharge for Active Duty*. This form, when made available by veteran applicants, often contains detailed information on the number of years of specialized service, as well as training, such as Advanced Individual Training or Officer Training School. The DD-214 may also contain additional information, such as awards, ribbons, service medals and special achievements.