

CD10-OWI-006

BASELINE

EFFECTIVE DATE: NOVEMBER 1, 2001

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# ORGANIZATIONAL WORK INSTRUCTION

CD10

## DELEGATED EXAMINING PROCEDURES

APPROVING  
AUTHORITY

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<b>Organizational Issuance</b> OPR		
<b>Title: Delegated Examining Procedures</b>	<b>CD10-OWI-006</b>	<b>Revision: Baseline</b>
	<b>Date: 11/01/01</b>	<b>Page 2 of 21</b>

**DOCUMENT HISTORY LOG**

<b>Status (Baseline/ Revision/ Canceled)</b>	<b>Document Revision</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
Baseline	N/A	11/01/01	Baseline
		05/28/03	Document Review
		09/9/03	Document Review

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 3 of 21

## 1. PURPOSE

To establish a standard operating procedure for the Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) operated by the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) Human Resources Department (HRD). The provisions of this procedure apply to all MSFC DEU operations, regardless of the location of the vacancy.

## 2. APPLICABILITY

This procedure applies to competitive examining used to fill civil service positions with candidates applying from outside the Federal workforce. Competitive examining is also used to enable employees who do not have civil service status to compete for a permanent appointment and to enable employees with civil service status to compete for other positions. There is a substantial difference between delegated competitive examining and internal merit promotion. Unlike merit promotion, competitive examining requires the application of veterans' preference, the rule of three, pass over and objection procedures, and public notice.

## 3. APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

The Delegated Examining Operations Handbook issued by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) serves as the primary procedure for Delegated Examining Unit (DEU) operations conducted by MSFC. Most procedural and operational issues are fully addressed in the OPM Handbook. This procedure provides additional guidance on areas of local discretion and areas not fully addressed in the primary guidelines.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

See Glossary in Delegated Examining Operations Handbook.

## 5. INSTRUCTIONS

The MSFC Human Resources Department will conduct Delegated Examining in accordance with the Interagency

<b>Organizational Issuance</b>		
<b>OPR</b>		
<b>Title: Delegated Examining Procedures</b>	<b>CD10-OWI-006</b>	<b>Revision: Baseline</b>
	<b>Date: 11/01/01</b>	<b>Page 4 of 21</b>

Delegated Examining Agreement (NASA 1) between OPM and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. At this time, MSFC will use case examining procedures as described in Part D.

The Delegated Examining Operations Handbook and the following detailed operating procedures will be used in operating the Delegated Examining Unit.

- PART A - Initiating the Examining Process
- PART B - Public Notice and Recruitment
- PART C - Accepting Applications and Adjudicating Veterans' Preference
- PART D - Rating and Ranking Candidates for General Schedule (GS) Positions
- PART E - Certification and Auditing Procedures
- PART F - Conducting Internal Reviews
- PART G - Miscellaneous Information and Instructions

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 5 of 21

**PART A**  
**INITIATING THE EXAMINING PROCESS**

1. Hiring Options Available. For each vacancy, a decision must be made as to whether a competitive process, such as delegated examining, should be used or whether an internal placement process such as merit promotion, reinstatement, or transfer authority would be most appropriate. If a decision is made to announce a position under both merit promotion and delegated examining procedures, status candidates will only be considered under merit promotion.
2. Request for Referral of Eligibles. Once a decision has been made to use the delegated examining process, the organization with the vacancy provides a Standard Form 52, Request for Personnel Action, and a position description documenting the significant facts about the job to be filled. A review is made to ensure that the request contains all the information necessary to issue an announcement. An SF-52 is submitted for each vacancy and logged with the date of receipt. A Work Folder may be established. The Case File will be available, for audit purposes, through NASA STARS, NASA's Staffing and Recruiting System.
3. Temporary and Term Appointments. Delegated examining authority may be used to fill Temporary and Term positions.
4. Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP) and the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP). When vacancies are to be filled using the delegated examining process, special referral/selection priority is given to eligible well-qualified surplus or displaced employees for vacancies in the local commuting area. Well-qualified CTAP and ICTAP candidates are those who are rated in the top level of the three quality levels to which qualified candidates are assigned.
5. There is no provision for filing an objection to a CTAP or ICTAP eligible.

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 6 of 21

**PART B**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE AND RECRUITMENT**

1. The Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) has implemented an automated recruiting system, NASA STARS. Those positions announced using Delegated Examining procedures are listed in the USAJOBS government-wide automated employment information system at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>. The normal open period for competitive announcements is 10 workdays. However, if an early consideration date is used, it will not be earlier than 5 workdays from the opening date of the announcement.
  
2. Announcement numbers will be assigned using the following example:
  - MS Marshall Space Flight Center
  - 02 Fiscal Year
  - D One letter indicating type of announcement:
    - D - Delegated Examining
    - C - Competitive Placement
    - B - Both DE and CPP (combined announcement)
    - N - Notice (Reassignment Bulletin)
  - 0001 Sequential numbers beginning with 0001
  - Example: MS02D0001
  
3. Minimum Requirements for Vacancy Announcements Provided to Database
  - a. Title, series, pay plan, grade, and potential;
  - b. Duty location;
  - c. Opening and closing dates, plus any other information dealing with how application receipt will be controlled, such as the use of early cut-off dates;
  - d. Name of issuing office and announcement number;
  - e. Qualification requirements;
  - f. Who may apply (generally, any U.S. citizen may apply unless the position is restricted to veterans and/or CTAP/ICTAP eligibles);
  - g. Type of appointment (permanent, term, temporary, including not-to-exceed dates, if applicable);
  - h. Beginning salary;

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 7 of 21

- i. Brief description of duties;
  - j. Basis of rating;
  - k. What to file;
  - l. Instructions on how to apply;
  - m. Equal employment opportunity statement;
  - n. Reasonable accommodation statement;
  - o. Information about filing as a CTAP/ICTAP eligible, including the definition of "well-qualified"; and
  - p. Additional items when appropriate (i.e., number of vacancies).
4. **Appendix 1** contains a sample of a MSFC vacancy announcement. This shows the standard format and language to be used in the standard paragraphs.
  5. After posting to the Federal Jobs Database, a copy may be printed and maintained in the Work Folder. A copy should be kept in the Master File. (A Master File of all announcements should be maintained for easy reference).
  6. Any time a closing date is modified or an announcement is cancelled, the Federal Jobs Database must be updated. Applicants who have applied for the announcement are notified of a cancellation. Sample letter to the applicant is at **Appendix 2**.
  7. Recruiting is an effort to attract the best candidates available to support hiring goals. There are a variety of tools available under Delegated Examining authority. These may include:
    - a. Paid advertising
    - b. Special Internet-based Recruiting Websites
    - c. Recruiting support from other Federal agencies
    - d. Recruitment bonuses
    - e. College campus visits
  8. Paid advertising requires special approval from the Human Resources Department Manager and the management staff in the organization with the vacancy. Arrangements must be made in advance to assure adequate funds are available and can be used for paid advertising.

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 8 of 21

**PART C**  
**ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS AND**  
**ADJUDICATING VETERANS' PREFERENCE**

1. Applicants will normally apply electronically via NASA STARS. All mailed applications must be received in the DEU by 11:00 p.m. CST on the closing date of the announcement. Applications dropped off must be received by the closing date. Extensions will not be granted for applicants who become aware of DEU announcements late in the open period. As applications are received, the applicant is mailed an acknowledgement of receipt.
2. Applications will be rated based on the information furnished by the applicant. If selected, the selectee will be asked to provide any required supporting documentation within 5 work days of the employment offer.
3. Experience and education can only be credited up to the closing date of the announcement. Applicants still in college can be rated provisionally eligible if they are expected to receive their degree within 9 months.
4. Veterans' preference will be granted in accordance with OPM's Federal Employment Policy Handbook: Veterans and the Civil Service (VetGuide).
5. When applications have been rated and an appointment has been made from the certificate, applicants will be notified of their referral status. A sample of the Notice of Rating is at **Appendix 3**.
6. There are certain valid exceptions to the general rule prohibiting late applications. The exceptions are shown in Chapter 6 of the OPM DEU Manual. One of the exceptions is a 10-point veterans' preference eligible, who can file an application at any time for any position for which a non-temporary appointment has been made from a competitive list of eligibles in the preceding 3 years.
7. NASA STARS maintains a 10-point veterans' file. All unsolicited applications from 10-point veterans will be

<b>Organizational Issuance</b>		
<b>OPR</b>		
<b>Title: Delegated Examining Procedures</b>	<b>CD10-OWI-006</b>	<b>Revision: Baseline</b>
	<b>Date: 11/01/01</b>	<b>Page 9 of 21</b>

accepted at any time. These applications will be reviewed for each DEU vacancy to determine if any qualify.

**PART D**  
**RATING AND RANKING CANDIDATES FOR**  
**GENERAL SCHEDULE (GS) POSITIONS**

1. Applicants will be rated using NASA STARS. The NASA STARS (STaffing And Recruitment System) is an automated staffing and recruitment process that uses a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software system called Resumix. The Resumix will conduct the rating procedure using a Web-based tool called the Weighting and Referral Tool. Applicants will be assigned a quality level point value (70, 80, 90) that best reflects the level of their experience and education. Veterans' preference points are added after the assignment of quality level and additional points, if applicable. Where the application of veterans' preference points raises the applicant to a higher quality level, the applicant will be placed in the higher level.
  
2. An applicant's request for reconsideration of an ineligible rating or numerical score must be in writing and must be based on the information originally supplied in his/her application. Upon receipt, the DEU Specialist will do a complete review and prepare a written response to the applicant. A team leader will review the response. Generally, the Human Resources Department Manager signs the response. Because this process will automatically constitute a two-level review, the decision is final. There is no further appeal. Normally, responses will be sent to the applicant within 8 calendar days after receipt of the request.

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 10 of 21

**PART E**  
**CERTIFICATION AND AUDITING PROCEDURES**

1. After the rating and ranking process has been completed, a register is established for the Case File. The register is a list of all eligible applicants in score order including veterans' preference. A certificate consisting of the top 3 applicants is then issued for one vacancy, with an additional name for each additional vacancy if applicable (i.e., for 3 vacancies, 5 names would be issued on the certificate).
  
2. Certificates are numbered as follows:
  - MSFC - Marshall Space Flight Center
  - 02 - Fiscal Year
  - 01 - Sequential (This would be the first certificate issued in the fiscal year 2002)
  
3. The certificate must contain the following:
  - a) Certificate number
  - b) Type of appointment
  - c) Position title/series/grade
  - d) Duty location
  - e) Issue date
  - f) The eligibles' names, addresses, phone numbers and Social Security numbers
  - g) The rating of each eligible certified, including their veterans' preference, and the appropriate preference symbol of each eligible (CPS, CP, XP, TP, or NV)
  - h) The number of vacancies
  - i) Selecting official's signature and date
  
4. All eligibles listed on the Certificate of Eligibles are listed in score and veterans' preference order. The order of certification for Professional and Scientific Positions at GS-9 and above is different than the regular order of certification. Refer to the OPM Delegated Examining Operations Handbook, Chapter 8.4, for "Order of Certification." The certificate is sent to the organization and a copy is placed in the Work Folder.

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 11 of 21

5. Tied numerical ratings (within the same veterans' preference category) will be broken in the following order:
  - a) Name request
  - b) Random number (set each day)
6. Applications received from applicants with status will be rated and ranked and certified in score order. Any applicant that is eligible to be considered without competition will be issued on a separate non-competitive list along with the certificate. The selecting official can select from either list.
7. The organization is asked to return the certificate within 10 business days. Verbal extensions are granted. Extensions must be documented on the Work Folder copy of the certificate.
8. The certificate may be used for 90 days from the date of issuance to fill additional vacancies (same title, series, and grade) without re-advertising the vacancies. If a selection has not been made within 90 days, MSFC is required to re-advertise for CTAP/ICTAP. The same list of qualified and available candidates may be used to issue a new certificate for identical positions without re-announcing at any time during those 90 days.
9. A selected candidate should normally be appointed to the position within a reasonable amount of time (30 days from the date of selection). However, to accommodate special situations, such as the completion of education, a geographical move, obligations to current employers, temporary agency hiring restrictions, and processing of security clearances, an agency may delay appointment up to 6 months from date of selection. If a selected candidate cannot be appointed to the position within 6 months, the position would have to be re-advertised to clear CTAP/ICTAP.
10. Selecting officials will occasionally object to candidates referred, based on factors such as qualifications, suitability, or medical considerations. When the selecting official objects to a candidate or proposes to

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 12 of 21

pass over a preference eligible, he/she will forward to HRD written justification for the requested action. In all cases of objections/pass overs, the request will be in the form of a SF-62, Agency Request to Pass Over a Preference Eligible or Object to an Eligible, or other comparable documents with full supporting documentation. The DEU Specialist who issued the certificate will review the request and take action as indicated below:

- a) Objections based on Suitability or Medical Disqualification. The DEU Specialist will prepare a packet (including all relevant information and a recommendation) for review by the HRD Team Leader. If the decision is to sustain the request, the DEU Specialist will prepare the documentation to send to OPM for review and final approval.
  
- b) Objections and pass over requests based on Qualifications. In the case of non-preference eligibles and preference eligibles less than 30% disabled, the DEU Specialist will prepare a packet (including all relevant information and a recommendation) for review and approval by the HRD Manager. In the case of compensable preference eligibles with 30% or more disability, the DEU Specialist will prepare a documentation (including a cover letter signed by the HRD Manager) for submission to OPM. Appropriate follow-up action will be based on OPM's decision.

IN ALL CASES LISTED ABOVE, THE SELECTING OFFICIAL MUST HOLD A VACANCY FOR THE APPLICANT UNTIL THE OBJECTION OR PASS OVER REQUEST IS SUSTAINED BY THE HRD MANAGER OR OPM.

NOTE: Before initiating action on an objection or pass over request, the DEU Specialist should carefully review the certificate to determine whether a formal objection/pass over action is necessary. In many cases, the candidate can simply be reported as "not selected."

11. When a certificate is returned, it must be audited to make sure the selection is in order. If actions on the returned list are not correct or there is an illegal

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 13 of 21

appointment, the certificate is immediately returned to the organization for correction.

12. An audit of the certificate consists of the following:

- a) "Rule of Three" is followed. Selections must be made from the top three available candidates on the list of eligibles. A veteran cannot be passed over and a non-veteran selected unless an objection based on qualifications is approved by the HRD Manager or an objection based on suitability or medical disqualification has been approved by OPM. An objection based on qualifications of a 10-pt veteran that has a disability at 30% or more must also be approved by OPM.
- b) Correct report action codes are on the certificate by each eligible's name. See **Appendix 4**.
- c) Entered on Duty (EOD) date of selectee is provided on the certificate.
- d) Records of declination and failure to reply are provided and properly documented.
- e) If certificate is not used, reason is provided on the certificate.
- f) Certificate is returned by suspense date or extension date (extension was granted and properly documented in file).

The returned copy of the Certificate of Eligibles must be signed and dated by the selecting official. When the audit is completed, the person auditing the certificate must sign and date the report copy as documentation for the Work Folder.

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 14 of 21

**PART F**  
**CONDUCTING INTERNAL REVIEWS**

1. An audit of delegated examining activities using staff not associated with delegated examining activities will be done annually. MSFC will certify completion of the audit to OPM and will maintain a list of all discrepancies and corrective actions for a period of three years after the audit.
  
2. A current MSFC employee(s) who is not involved with delegated examining activities, but is currently certified in delegated examining, will perform the audit. Certification to OPM that the audit has been completed will be accomplished at the time the Quarterly Workload Report is prepared (Item 13 on the form).
  
3. A Delegated Examining Audit Checklist (**Appendix 5**) is to be used by the auditor. This checklist consists of the points to be covered when conducting an internal review. One checklist is used for each Case Examining File. The checklist will be filed in the Work Folder. A written report of the auditor's findings will be forwarded to the OPM Service Center. The MSFC must maintain a list of all discrepancies and corrective actions for a period of three years after the audit.

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 15 of 21

**PART G**  
**MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

1. The Delegated Examining staff must be trained and certified by the Office of Personnel Management.
2. Delegated Examining staff members must notify their supervisor when they, a family member, or a member of his/her household intends to apply for a Delegated Examining announcement.
3. In accordance with the DEU Handbook, the Delegated Examining Unit staff will provide Quarterly Workload Reports to the servicing OPM Service Center. Quarterly reports are due 15 workdays after the end of the quarter (i.e., January 15, April 15, July 15, October 15). The workload reporting form and instructions for completing are in Appendix K of the DEU Operations Handbook.
4. SFC will develop and print any forms necessary for examining operations. Forms that collect information directly from the public must be cleared with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Refer to 2.q. of the Delegated Agreement between NASA and OPM. NASA and MSFC forms must be approved and numbered in accordance with current instructions.

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 16 of 21

**APPENDIX 2**

**LETTER TO APPLICANTS - ANNOUNCEMENT CANCELLED**

Dear Applicant:

This is in reference to your application for Recruiting Bulletin MS02D0001.

The vacancy announcement for this position has been cancelled. Any subsequent vacancies will be announced through the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). You may reapply for any vacancies for which you wish to be considered. Information on current job opportunities with the Marshall Space Flight Center and other Federal agencies is available from OPM's USAJOBS website. That electronic address is <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>.

I appreciate the opportunity to consider you for employment and regret that we are unable to respond favorably.

Sincerely,

Danny R. Hightower  
Manager  
Human Resources Department

Enclosure

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 17 of 21

**APPENDIX 3**

**NOTICE OF RATING**

(Date)

(Name of Applicant)  
(Address)

Dear (Name):

We appreciate your interest in our (Title of Position) position advertised under vacancy announcement (Number of Announcement) with NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center.

Although you were not selected for this particular position, we encourage you to pursue further opportunities with NASA by visiting [www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov). If you see other positions that interest you and for which you qualify, you can use NASA's Quick Apply at this site.

If you have any questions, please contact the Human Resources Department. Thank you again for your interest in employment with the Marshall Space Flight Center. We wish you success in your employment goals.

Sincerely,

(DEU Specialist)  
Human Resources Department

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 18 of 21

#### APPENDIX 4

#### ACTION CODES FOR DEU CERTIFICATES

1. DA - Declined Agency
2. DD - Declined until a Later Date - Can remove the candidate temporarily until date provided. Must be available in 6 months.
3. DG - Declined Grade
4. DL - Declined Location
5. DP - Declined for the Position Certified Only
6. DX - Declined Further Consideration for Federal Employment
7. A - Selected
8. CR - CRU -Communication Returned Unclaimed
9. FR - Failed to Reply - Failure to respond to e-mail is acceptable provided the person sending the e-mail documents with a copy of the e-mail and a signature that the person did not respond. Should also be used for anyone selected who fails to report.
10. CE - Career or Career-Conditional Employee
11. TE - Temporary (or Indefinite) Employee
12. NC - Appointed by Non-Competitive Action
13. NS - Not Selected

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 19 of 21

**APPENDIX 5**

**DELEGATED EXAMINING FILE**  
**AUDIT CHECKLIST - NON-DEU STAFF**

1. Information about the announcement.
  - a. Recruiting Bulletin Number \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Job Title, Series, and Grade \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Position Number \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Announcement Opening Date \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Announcement Closing Date \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Number of Applications \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Folder documents on left side:
  - a. Selection Sheet:
    - (1) Name of selected person \_\_\_\_\_
    - (2) Supervisor's signature \_\_\_\_\_
    - (3) Date of Selection \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - b. Certificates with referred candidates:
    - (1) The certificate is properly completed with the following information:
      - (a) Action information \_\_\_\_\_
      - (b) Rating score \_\_\_\_\_
      - (c) Veteran's preference \_\_\_\_\_
      - (d) Names of top scoring applicants \_\_\_\_\_
      - (e) Address \_\_\_\_\_
      - (f) Phone numbers \_\_\_\_\_
      - (g) Social Security number \_\_\_\_\_
  
    - (2) The Non-Competitive certificate when applicable is properly completed with the following information:
      - (a) Names of applicants \_\_\_\_\_
      - (b) Address \_\_\_\_\_
      - (c) Phone numbers \_\_\_\_\_
      - (d) Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Organizational Issuance OPR		
Title: Delegated Examining Procedures	CD10-OWI-006	Revision: Baseline
	Date: 11/01/01	Page 20 of 21

c. The competitive register is a list of eligible candidates in score order for referral on certificates. The following information is provided on each eligible candidate:

- (1) Action information \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Rating score \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Veteran's preference \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Names of eligible applicants \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Address \_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Phone numbers \_\_\_\_\_
- (7) Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

d. The Non-Competitive register is an alphabetical listing of names of eligible, qualified applicants based on current or prior Federal service who may be selected for placement in the competitive service. The following information is provided on each candidate:

- (1) Name of eligible applicant \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Address \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

e. Alphabetical list of applicants (eligible and ineligible) with name, address, social security number, phone number, rating, score, veteran's preference, and final score.

f. Pass over documents, if applicable  
\_\_\_\_\_

g. Copy of announcement  
MSFC Recruiting Bulletin

h. Request for Personnel Action (Standard Form 52)  
\_\_\_\_\_

i. Position Description (NASA Form 692)  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Folder documents on right side:

