

7 June 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Medical Services

FROM : [REDACTED], Ph.D.
Chief, Psychological Services Staff
Office of Medical Services

SUBJECT : Comments on Reference

REFERENCE : Memo to DCI from Chairman, EEO Advisory Panel, 17 December 75, "Use of Professional Aptitude Tests and Review of Applicant Folders", with subsequent memoranda offering commentary on same from C/PSS (30 December 75), DMS (6 January 76), and D/Pers. (14 January 76).

STATINTL

1. Some clarification of points discussed earlier has occurred. There is indeed some clear evidence of mis-use of test reports. However, whatever opposition some members of the Panel may have had to the use of tests, it is clear that the Panel as a whole endorses their utility. It also appears that the seeming contradiction between the recommendation in para 2 that "tests be used as tools for placement-in-the Agency rather than as tools for acceptance" and the recommendation in para 3 linking the tests with the security and medical procedures (which are used for acceptance) may have arisen in part from different viewpoints within the Panel as to just how and when they should be used. This continues to be the point at issue, and the earlier comments from PSS and D/MS on this subject remain germane.

STATINTL

2. The Director of Personnel joins this discussion with a proposal which brings up a much broader set of issues. [REDACTED] has examined the implications of this proposal in detail, and spells them out clearly in a memo (attached).

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In so doing, he observes quite rightly that the changes proposed can be examined most appropriately in the context of a general review of Agency personnel selection/assignment decision-making processes, and suggests that PSS offer its services in support of such a review: I endorse this idea, and would be pleased to make PSS resources available for this purpose.



Attachment

Memo from Chief, Assessment & Testing Branch

STATINTL

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7 June 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Medical Services 25X1A

FROM : Ph.D.
Chief, Assessment and Testing Branch
Office of Medical Services

VIA : Ph.D.
Chief, Psychological Services Staff
Office of Medical Services 25X1A

SUBJECT : Selection Processing of Agency Professional Level Applicants

REFERENCE : Memorandum from Director of Personnel dated 14 January 1976: "Comments on Memo to the DCI by the EEO Advisory Panel", dtd 17 December 1975

1. In light of D/Pers. observations regarding possible courses of action to "streamline" and render more effective the Agency's current selection-processing strategy and techniques, it appears desirable for Psychological Services Staff (PSS) to proffer its scientific expertise and experience in support of a possible review of Agency personnel decision-making procedures. Such a review seems particularly appropriate now when PSS is actively involved with the Operations Directorate in developing new pre-screening procedures for all applicants evidencing potential for careers in Operations. Before addressing the general topic of Agency selection-processing, a factual/actuarial base regarding PSS input to selection-processing must be laid for clarifying several points raised in the referenced D/Pers. Memorandum.

2. The Professional Applicant Test Battery (PATB) is a multi-factor paper-and-pencil variety battery yielding information regarding applicants' general and special abilities, occupational interests; work attitudes; self-concepts; writing

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SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE
OF E. O. 11652, AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT
TWO YEAR INTERVALS AND DECLASSIFIED ON

7 June 1982
(Insert date or event)

SUBJECT: Selection Processing of Agency Professional Level Applicants

skills and; a wide range of self-report biographic data. PATB Part I, administered in the field [redacted] yields information regarding general ability; several specific abilities including aptitude for foreign language mastery; occupational interests and; limited archival/self-report biographic data.

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(a) Distance, money, inconvenience and time away from the job re PATB I.

There are a total of 82 centers spread throughout 42 states (including Hawaii). Selection of locations for the Centers has been made to maximize accessibility of the Centers to those areas of major applicant input to the Agency. Rather than too few Centers, recent data suggest a possible excess i.e., over the present Fiscal Year (FY 76), 12 of the established Centers have never been used by the Recruiters.

As to money, the cost of Center operations is borne by PSS (@ \$13 to \$14 per applicant tested). Field Testing has traditionally been perhaps the least costly element in selection processing. It should also be pointed out that the Agency does not authorize per diem or travel allowances for applicants during the Field Testing phase.

Finally, the schedule for Field Testing has customarily been set for weekend (Saturday) testing so as to minimize possible disruption of applicants' work-week routines.

Thus, distance, money, inconvenience and time away from the job all argue for continuance of the present Field Testing Program.

(b) Availability of PSS PATB Part I Reports.

PATB Part I results are integrated into report format for use by decision-makers by PSS. (No PATB raw test score data are released to consumers.) The time from Skills Bank (OP) notification to PSS that an AM PATB report is desired til completion and release of the PSS report typically covers a span of one work week.

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Receipt of test results from the Field Centers covers a range up to two work weeks. Machine/computer processing of the test results typically requires one work week. Thus by the fourth week after Field Testing, PATB Part I results are available for write up. Skills Bank requests for PSS reports typically are received some five work-weeks after Field Testing. There is, practically speaking, no "delay" in dispatch of PSS reports to decision makers as a function of Field Testing or test processing by PSS. Apparent delays are potentially a function of time elapsed between recruiter contact and Recruiter scheduling of testing at a Field Center.

3. Implications and consequences of conducting all PATB testing at Headquarters must be grasped in the contexts both of: (a) additional costs incurred and; (b) impact upon Agency selection strategies.

(a) Recruiters typically refer for Field Testing those applicants who present a "good file" and a "good recruiter interview report". During FY 75 some 1580 such applicants were scheduled for Field Testing. Of these, only 324 were later brought into the Headquarters area for administration of PATB Part II. With continuation of present Recruiter Screening standards (a "good" file plus "good" Recruiter interview) it is reasonable to assume that Headquarters testing facilities would have to absorb the total numbers now included in Field Testing (based on FY 75 figures, a nearly 400% increase). The implications of this increase for only the PSS segment of Applicant processing is as follows (using FY 75 data):

(1) An overall increase of 1580 PATB Part I testing units at Headquarters.

(2) An overall increase of 1256 PATB Part II testing units at Headquarters (1580 PATB Part I minus the present 324 PATB Part II). Since the Agency will have already funded travel and per diem for the Applicant's travel to Headquarters, it is not cost effective to administer only the PATB Part I at the time of this Headquarters visit.

(3) Given the present 518 Full PATB's (Part I and Part II) already administered at Headquarters, the total Headquarters testing load will amount to

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2098 persons. To respond simply to the increased test administration load will require a minimum of two (2) additional Psychometrists (GS-07).

(4) The addition of PATB Part II will increase the number of data-machine processing work units from 5 to 11 and add two additional test data units which require hand processing. To respond to this aspect of the increase will require a minimum of one (1) additional Data Machine Operator (GS-05).

(5) Finally, the professional time required for integration of PATB data and reporting will increase from 12-15 minutes (PATB Part I) to 30-40 minutes (Full PATB). To respond to this aspect of the increase will require a minimum of (1) additional MA level psychologist (GS-09).

(6) The minimum costs (personnel only) to PSS in transferring the Field Testing Program to Headquarters is estimated as \$44,449.00 as contrasted with the FY 75 costs of \$21,670.00

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(b) The utility of the PATB, whether Part I or Part II can be elucidated only within the context of the Agency Selection Processing system of which it is a part. As treated in the referenced Memorandum, the PATB is depicted as some monolithic criterion to be employed by decision-makers in a "Pass-Fail" mode i.e., "Mr. So-and-so 'passed' ('failed') his PATB so now we can (cannot) hire him".

Instead, the PATB affords the decision-maker to view the Applicant he/she compares with standards for on-board Agency Professional Employees across a wide range of possible Agency placements. Beyond this perspective, PATB also often raises questions (not answered by testing) which the decision-maker can and usually does pursue during his/her own contacts with the Applicant. To insert PATB input to Selection Processing into the final stage of the Agency selection strategy would destroy its utility as an inexpensive early screening device and render it ineffective as a means of surfacing questions which need early resolution.

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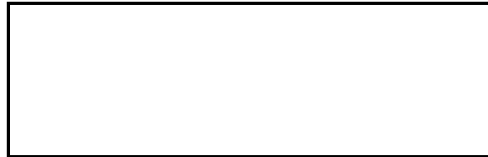
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4. In reviewing the present selection-processing strategy, it must be pointed out that only the PATB element has regularly been subjected to rigorous evaluation and review in order to determine its practical significance for identifying performance-related potential among applicants. The PATB has consistently been found valid for selection purposes. Those elements cited in the referenced Memorandum ("good file...good Recruiter interview") have not been systematically studied in an effort to determine their actual contribution to the strategy. It may well be that these elements do, or could, make a unique contribution. To suggest at this time that these unevaluated elements can be regarded as an adequate substitute for the established utility of the PATB (particularly when the increased funding necessary to support this substitution is considered) does not appear to be either supported by the facts in evidence or an economical change in the Agency selection processing system.

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