



DATE: December 12, 2008

TO: Personnel Officers

SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE FORM 511B (APPLICATION REVIEW STANDARDS)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide departments with clarification and direction on the appropriate use of the Form 511B (Application Review Standards), hereinafter referred to as 511B. Following decentralization of the examination function, the 511B has been used to ensure that the minimum qualifications are appropriately and consistently applied during application review. This pinkie will focus solely on Application Review Standards.

While SPB no longer requires the preparation and use of a 511B, the use of the document is considered a best practice as well as a valuable tool in reviewing candidates' minimum qualifications. When a department elects to use a 511B for a specific examination, the department's exam staff should review the department's exam history to determine if a 511B already exists for the classification. In reviewing an existing 511B for accuracy, department personnel staff should:

1. Ensure that the minimum qualifications listed on the existing 511B match the minimum qualification patterns listed on the current class specification and make changes as necessary to bring the 511B current.
2. Definitions should be provided on the 511B form for all quantitative references such as "substantially the same", "equivalent to", "recent", etc. Technical terms, and license and educational requirements should be clearly explained and defined. The subject matter experts and exam analysts will utilize their knowledge of the classification as well as the class specification to revise, update, and/or draft the 511B. Examples should be included to clarify definitions and technical terms.
3. Verify that each item listed as "Approved Experience" is still accurate and applicable. In order for experience to be designated as "Approved Experience", it must be supported by language in one or more of the minimum qualification patterns for the classification, and it must be validated by a review with the appropriate subject matter experts.

4. Verify that each item listed as “Unapproved Experience” is still accurate and applicable. In order for experience to be designated as “Unapproved Experience”, it must be supported by language in one or more of the minimum qualification patterns for the classification, and it must be validated by a review with the appropriate subject matter experts. Precautions must be taken to ensure that experience which may be qualifying under certain circumstances is not listed without noting the differentiating circumstances.

If there is no existing 511B, within the department, and the department would like to utilize a 511B in administering an examination, the department should:

1. Obtain a blank 511B form and copy the minimum qualification patterns directly from the class specification onto the 511B. SPB technicians will have a blank 511B form available soon for those departments who do not have one.
2. Definitions should be provided on the 511B form for all quantitative references such as “substantially the same”, “equivalent to”, “recent”, etc. Technical terms, and license and educational requirements should be clearly explained and defined. The subject matter experts and exam analysts will utilize their knowledge of the classification as well as the class specification to revise, update, and/or draft the 511B. Examples should be included to clarify definitions and technical terms.
3. Consult with subject matter experts to identify State classifications and non-State experience that would, and would not, meet the established minimum qualifications. This information should be listed in the appropriate section of the 511B (“Approved Experience” or “Unapproved Experience”). In order for experience to be designated as “Approved Experience”, it must be supported by language in one or more of the minimum qualification patterns for the classification.

Not all experience will be identified during the development or revision of a 511B document. Therefore, exam personnel must keep in mind that when a candidate’s application lists experience which may not be specifically listed on the 511B, the experience must be evaluated on a case by case basis with consistent application of the minimum qualifications. The 511B should be revised if any changes are made as the result of case-by-case evaluations.

Once a department has a current 511B, the exam staff can utilize it as a guide for application review purposes to determine if candidates meet the required minimum qualifications. It is important to recognize that the 511B is only a tool and not a legal document for accepting and rejecting applicants from an examination. Rejected applications must have clear notations describing the reason(s) why the minimum qualifications were not met.

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For further information on how to develop a 511B and apply minimum qualifications, you can review the Selection Manual Sections 5510 and 6200. If you have questions regarding the preparation or use of the 511B, please contact Gina McCann-Forman at (916) 651-6718 or TTY (916) 654-6336.

/S/ SUZANNE M. AMBROSE

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