USA Staffing

Senior Executive Service (SES) Quick Reference Guide

OFFICIAL USE NOTICE: This material is intended exclusively for use by USA Staffing customers and is not to be distributed without approval from the USA Staffing Program Office. This communication may contain information that is proprietary, privileged or confidential or otherwise legally exempt from disclosure. If you have received this document in error, please notify the USA Staffing Program Office immediately and delete all copies of the presentation.

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20415

Contents

Overview 2
Tasks and Workflows 2
Vacancy Options 2
Supporting Documents 3
Eligibilities 3
Assessment Options 4
No Assessment Required 4
Screen-Out Only Assessment 4
Manual Assessment 6
Categories 7
Announcement and Notification Templates 8
Reviewing Applicant Records 8
Panel Reviews 9

Overview

This document serves as a reference when recruiting for Senior Executive Service (SES) positions in the USA Staffing system. Throughout this guide, we provide examples of assessment and referral options, but the system provides flexibility, and agencies may wish to develop and use other appropriate methods for rating and referring applicants for SES positions or SES Candidate Development Programs.

Tasks and Workflows

The staffing process used in filling senior executive positions may differ from the process used for other positions. As a result, agencies may wish to create custom tasks and workflows for SES positions to allow for accurate tracking and reporting of each step in the process. For example, an SES staffing workflow may include tasks for HR review of minimum qualifications, candidate rating and ranking by a panel, and structured interviews. An onboarding workflow may include a task for the submission of the appropriate materials to the Qualification Review Board for certification.

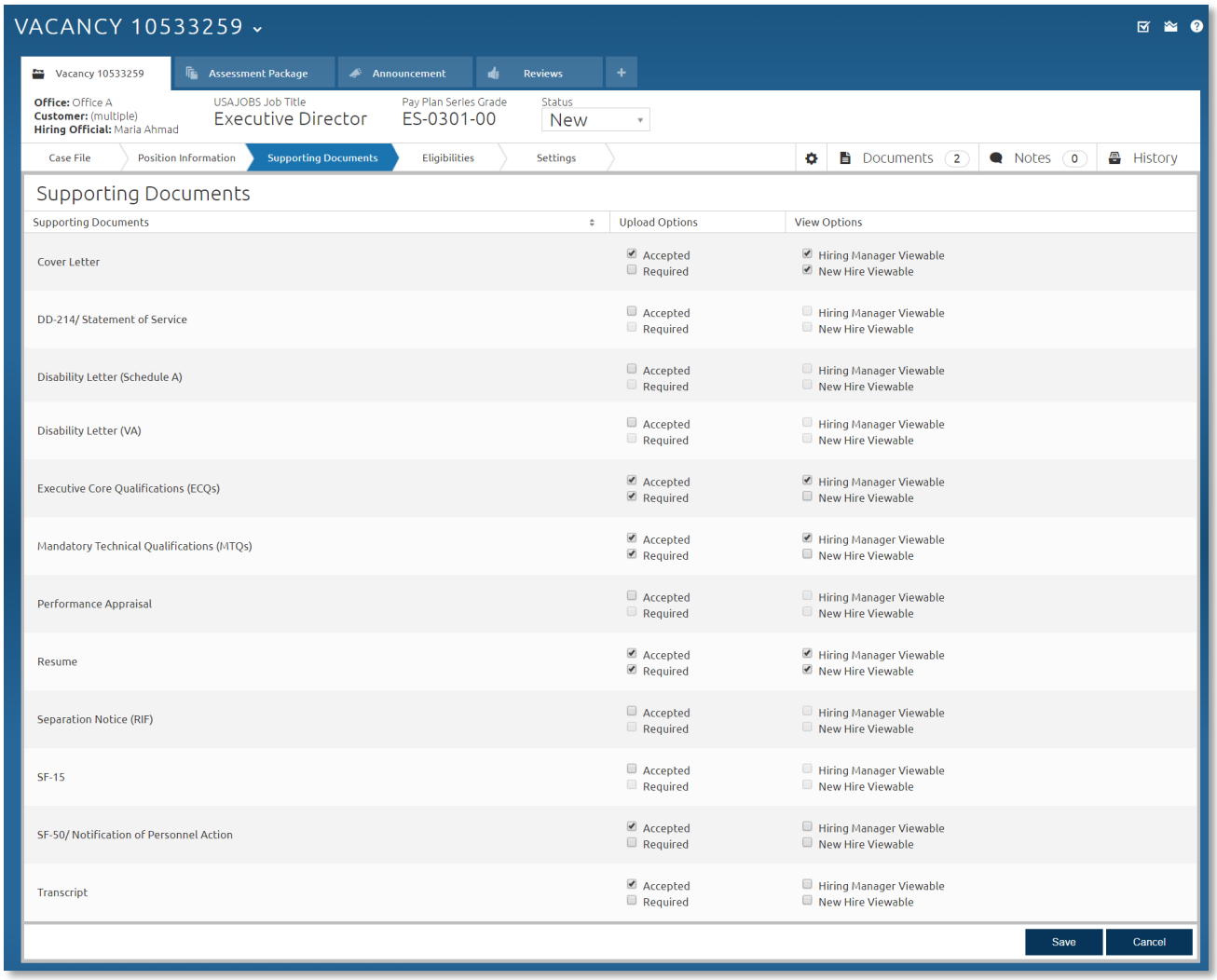
If a task and/or workflow you need for use in SES recruitments is not available or needs to be modified, you may create or update it in the Admin area if your permission profile allows, or contact your office administrator to do so. For additional information, please see the Creating Tasks and Workflows Quick Reference Guide.

Vacancy Options

The process for completing the Vacancy section of an SES recruitment is very similar to that of other positions. In this section we'll review a couple of Vacancy areas where customization may be needed.

Supporting Documents

Recruitments for SES positions generally require applicants to address Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) and Mandatory Technical Qualifications (MTQs). We recommend that you require applicants to provide these as a separate supporting documents rather than collecting them as Narrative responses within an assessment. By requiring the ECQs and MTQs as specific supporting document types, HR users and hiring managers will be able to easily review/print these documents as needed.



Note: It is important to have the Accepted/Required options selected correctly prior to releasing the announcement on USAJOBS. Once the announcement is released and open on USAJOBS, even if applications have not yet been received, these settings will be locked. Similarly, the Hiring Manager Viewable/New Hire Viewable settings will also be locked, but they can later be changed at the individual applicant/document level if needed.

Eligibilities

Eligibilities may not be needed if the announcement is open to all groups of qualified individuals. However, based on the area of consideration and your agency's review and referral process, you may want to select the appropriate eligibilities. For example, including status/non-status or competitive/non-competitive eligibilities can allow applicants to be placed on separate referral lists later in the process. Eligibilities can also be used as a screen-out in the Announcement Questionnaire when the area of consideration is limited to those who answer "Yes" to at least one of the eligibility questions (see Adding an Eligibility Screen-Out).

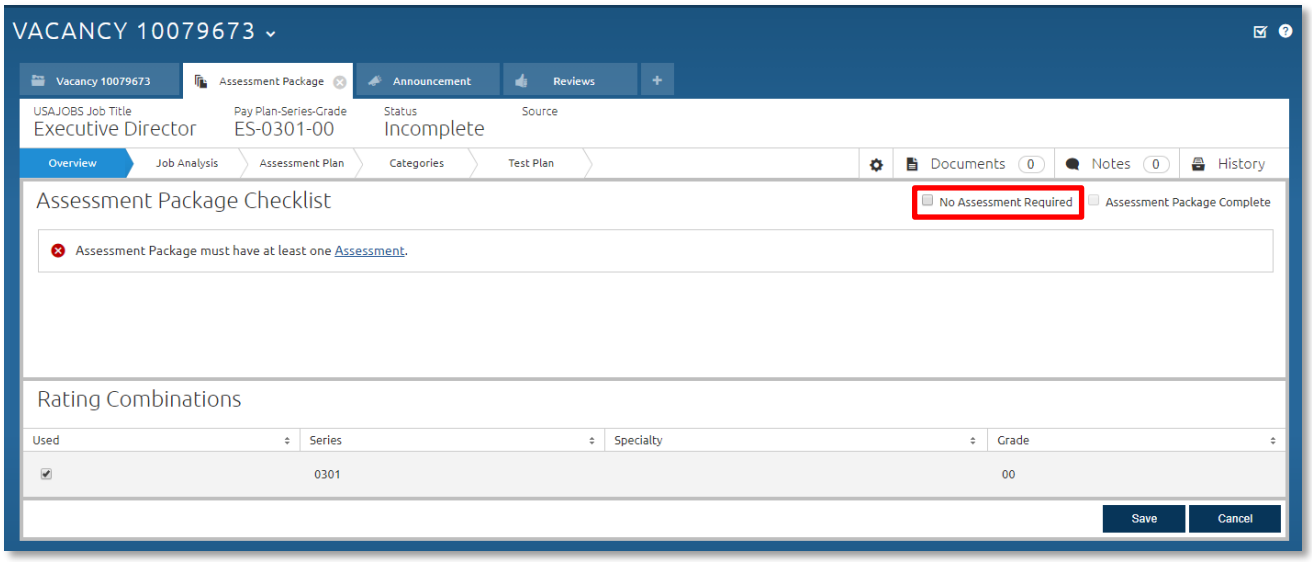
If an eligibility question you need is not available or needs to be modified for use in SES recruitments, you may create or update it in the Admin area if your permission profile allows, or contact your office administrator to do so. For additional information, please see Creating an eligibility item.

Assessment Options

In this section we'll discuss several options for assessments that may be appropriate for SES positions depending on the type of position, the information you want to collect during the assessment process, and your agency's candidate review and rating process. These options are not exhaustive, and other assessment methods may be also be used, such as rated assessment questionnaires or USA Hire assessments.

No Assessment Required

Certificates for SES positions may include all eligible candidates, and generally require an in depth review of applicant documentation to determine qualifications and eligibility. As a result, you may decide not to utilize the assessment options in USA Staffing, since each application will be manually reviewed. To complete the assessment package without assessment content, select the **No Assessment Required** checkbox.

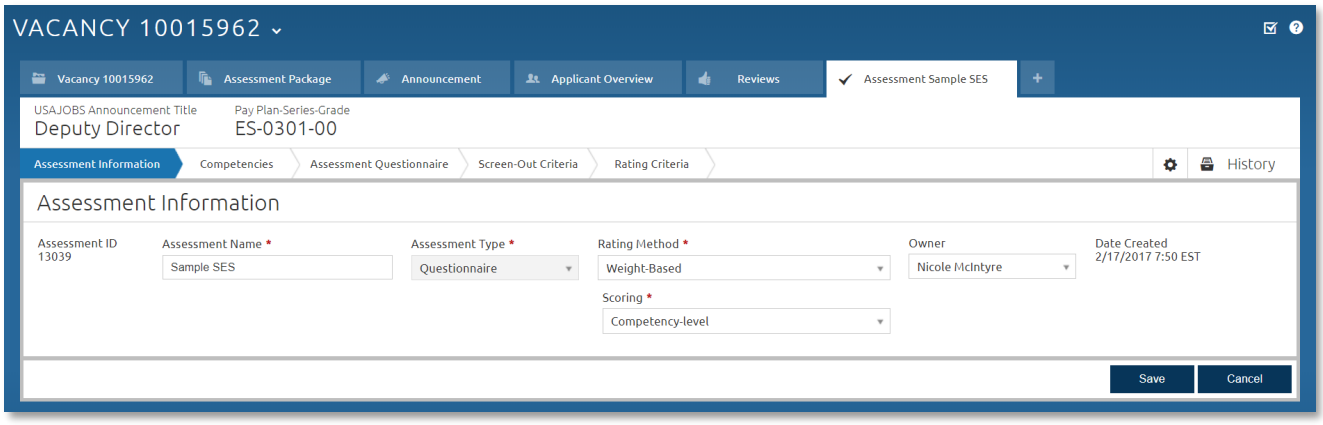


Note that choosing this **No Assessment Required** option only removes the need for applicants to answer an assessment. Applicants will still need to answer the Announcement Questionnaire including providing their biographical information, and answers to any eligibilities and/or references questions as applicable.

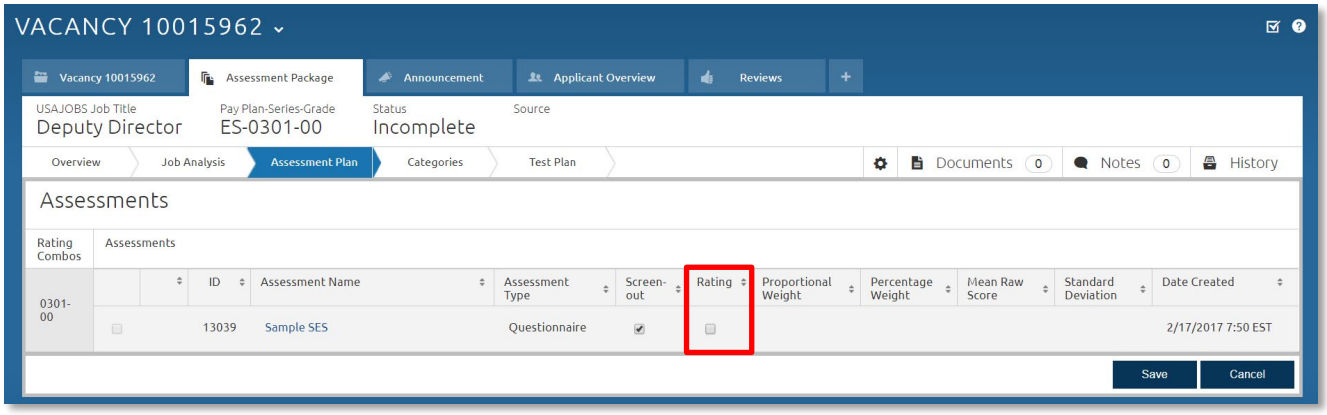
Screen-Out Only Assessment

For SES positions it is often not necessary to build assessment questionnaires that include rating items used to determine an applicant's score. Instead, you can create a screen-out only assessment tool that simply addresses the minimum requirements and/or conditions of employment by following the steps below.

1. Create a new Assessment Package or Assessment Package Template. From the Assessment Plan page, click **New Assessment**, and you will automatically be taken to the Assessment Information page of a new assessment tool.
2. Enter an Assessment Name in accordance with your agency's procedures. You can use the default Weight-Based rating method with Competency-level scoring. Click **Save**.

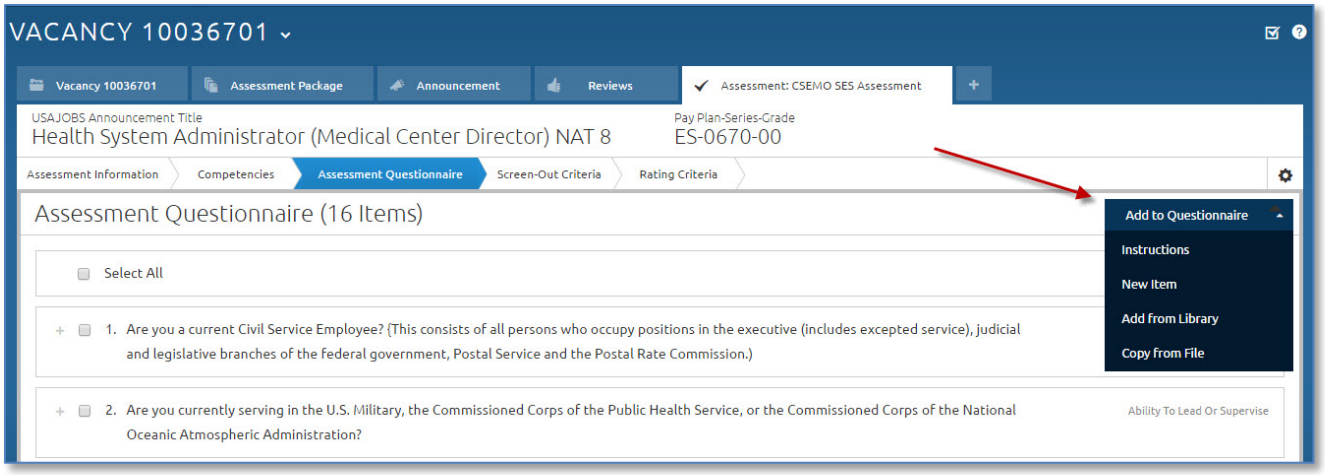


3. Return to the Assessment Package tab to view the Assessment Plan page, and uncheck the Rating checkbox in order to designate the assessment tool as being used for screen-out only and **Save**.

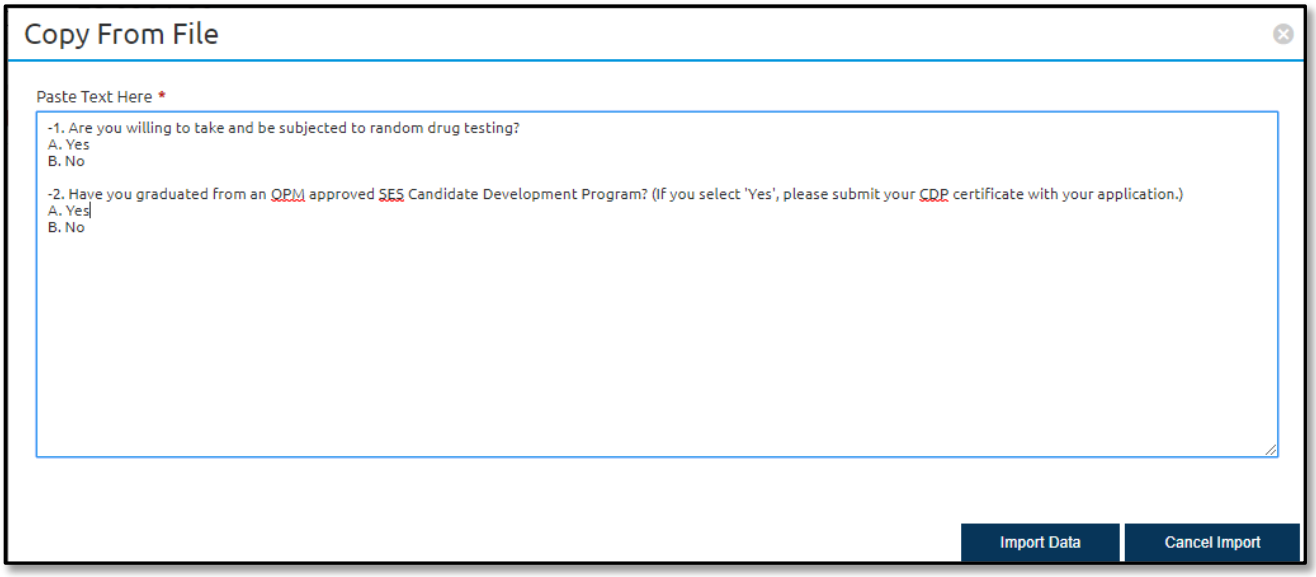


4. Navigate back to the assessment questionnaire and continue working through the assessment building process. Since the assessment tool will not be used to rate applicants, you can skip the Competencies tab, and proceed to the Assessment Questionnaire page.

5. You can add assessment questions by selecting the **Add to Questionnaire** button and using the drop-down menu to add Instructions, New Item, Add from Library, or import text using Copy from File.



6. Add any applicable questions required for the position. The Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ's) and specific technical qualifications required may be addressed by creating a screen out question for each ECQ and technical area, or can be summarized in one question that addresses the minimum qualifying experience. An example **Copy from File** is included below.



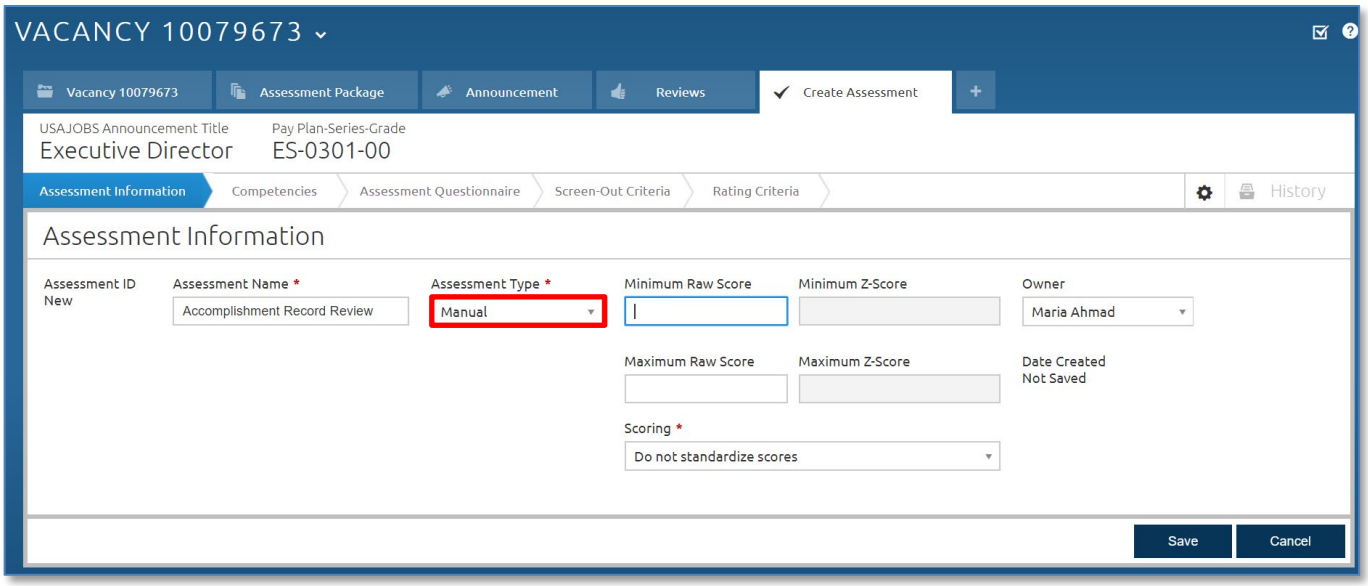
7. Complete the Assessment Package by setting up the appropriate Screen-Out Criteria and testing applicant scenarios to ensure each screen-out question is generating the correct outcome.

Manual Assessment

If your agency's rating and ranking process for SES positions includes assigning scores or categories to each candidate, it is helpful to include a manual assessment in your assessment package. A manual assessment is a placeholder for an assessment conducted outside of USA Staffing (e.g., accomplishment record review or structured interview) that allows HR users to key enter the score for each applicant or import them from an Excel file. Manual assessments can be used alone, in combination, or in conjunction with a different assessment type (e.g., assessment questionnaire).

To create a manual assessment, follow the steps below.

1. On the Assessment Plan page, click **New Assessment**.
2. Enter the Assessment Name and select **Manual** from the Assessment Type drop-down list.



3. Enter the **Minimum Raw Score** – the lowest point value an applicant may receive on that particular assessment. If your agency's review process places applicants into categories instead of assigning numerical scores, a score of 70 can be used as the Minimum Raw Score.
4. Enter the **Maximum Raw Score** – the highest point value an applicant may receive on that assessment. If your agency's review process places applicants into categories instead of assigning numerical scores, a score of 100 can be used as the Maximum Raw Score. Please see the Categories section below for additional information.
5. Select the **Scoring** method from the drop-down list. The default scoring method is **Do Not Standardize Scores**. Selecting a different scoring method should only be done in consultation with an assessment professional or your USA Staffing Account Manager.
6. Update the assessment owner if needed, and click **Save**. Test and complete your assessment package as usual.

For additional instructions related to the use of manual assessments, please see the following topics from the USA Staffing online help:

- Creating a saved list for a manual assessment
- Exporting applicant data for manual rating
- Importing applicant ratings for manual assessment
- Manually entering an applicant rating

Categories

If your agency's rating and ranking process includes placing applicants into categories, remember to enter the name and appropriate final rating cutpoint for each on the Assessment Plan – Categories page.

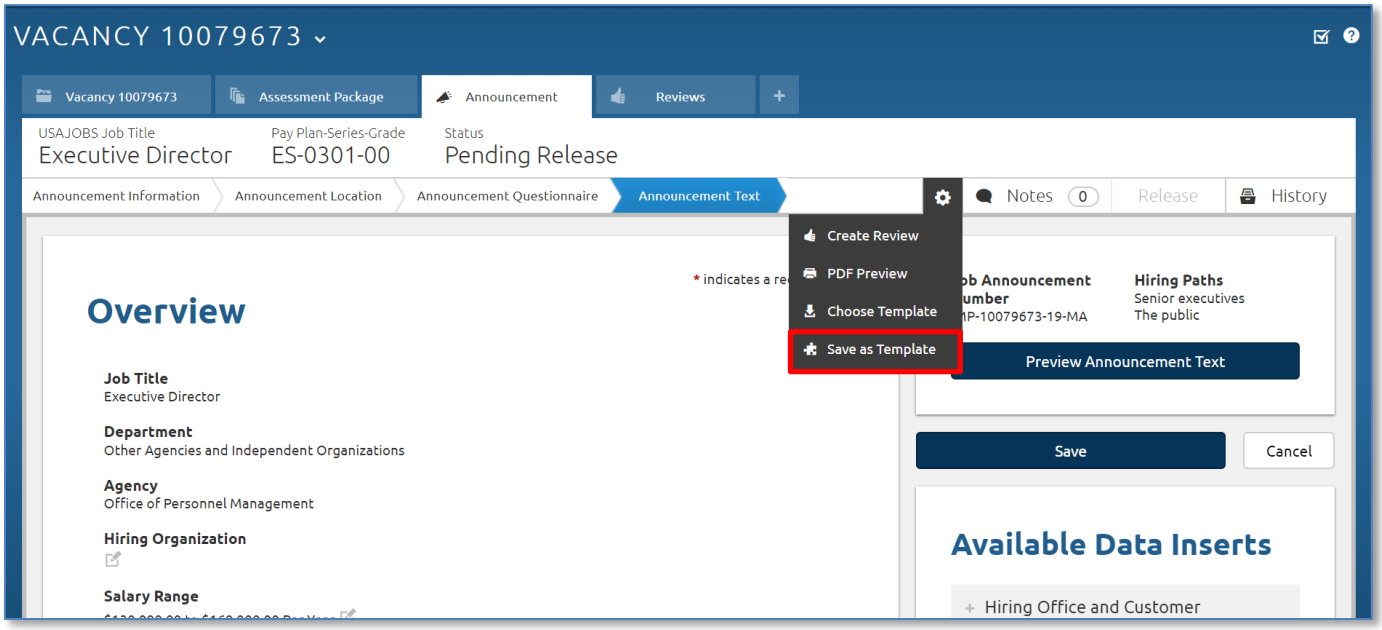
Some agencies do not assign numerical scores per se, but in order to use the category ranking and filtering options in USA Staffing, a point value should be assigned to each category. These can then be entered as final score cutpoints on a scale of 70 to 100 on the Categories page (e.g., Best Qualified: 100, Well Qualified: 85, Qualified: 70). In addition, a manual assessment can be used with corresponding raw score values (e.g., Min score: 70, Max Score: 100) which will allow for easier import of applicant ratings from an Excel file.

Announcement and Notification Templates

In order to facilitate the reuse of information across multiple announcements, it may be beneficial to create custom templates for the SES announcement text and applicant notifications.

If an announcement or notification template you need is not available or needs to be modified for use in SES recruitments, you may create or update it in the Admin area if your permission profile allows, or contact your office administrator to do so. For additional information, please see Creating an announcement template and Creating a notification template.

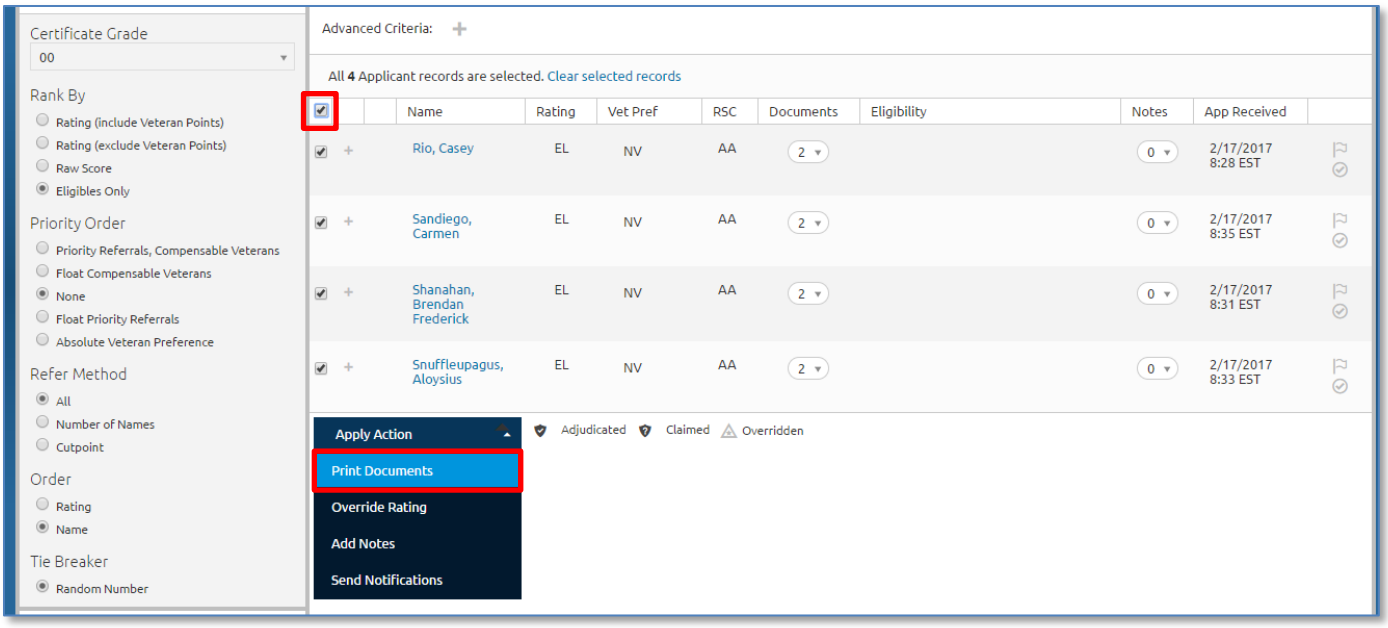
You can also promote an individual vacancy announcement text to a template if your permission profile allows. To so do, once you have completed entering your announcement text, select the **Gear Icon** and click **Save as Template**.



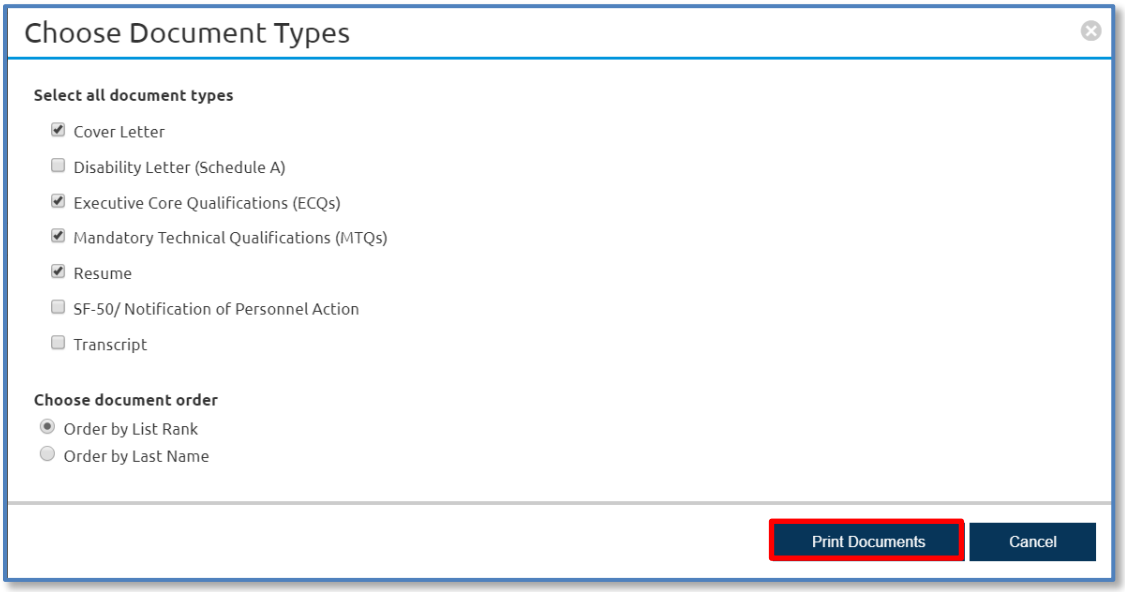
Reviewing Applicant Records

Applicant documents can be reviewed for eligibility and minimum qualifications by following the steps below.

1. From the Applicant Overview tab, click the **Create List** button.
2. Apply filters to display all eligible applicants, e.g., Certificate Type: Ranking List, Rank By: Eligibles Only.
3. Click **Save** and enter a name for the stored list in order to be able to access it later from the Saved List page in the Applicant Overview tab.
4. If desired, supporting documents for all applicants on the list can be printed in a single PDF by selecting the gray checkbox for all applicants and selecting the **Print Documents** button from the **Apply Action** drop-down list.



5. Select the documents to be printed, choose the document order, and click **Print Documents**.



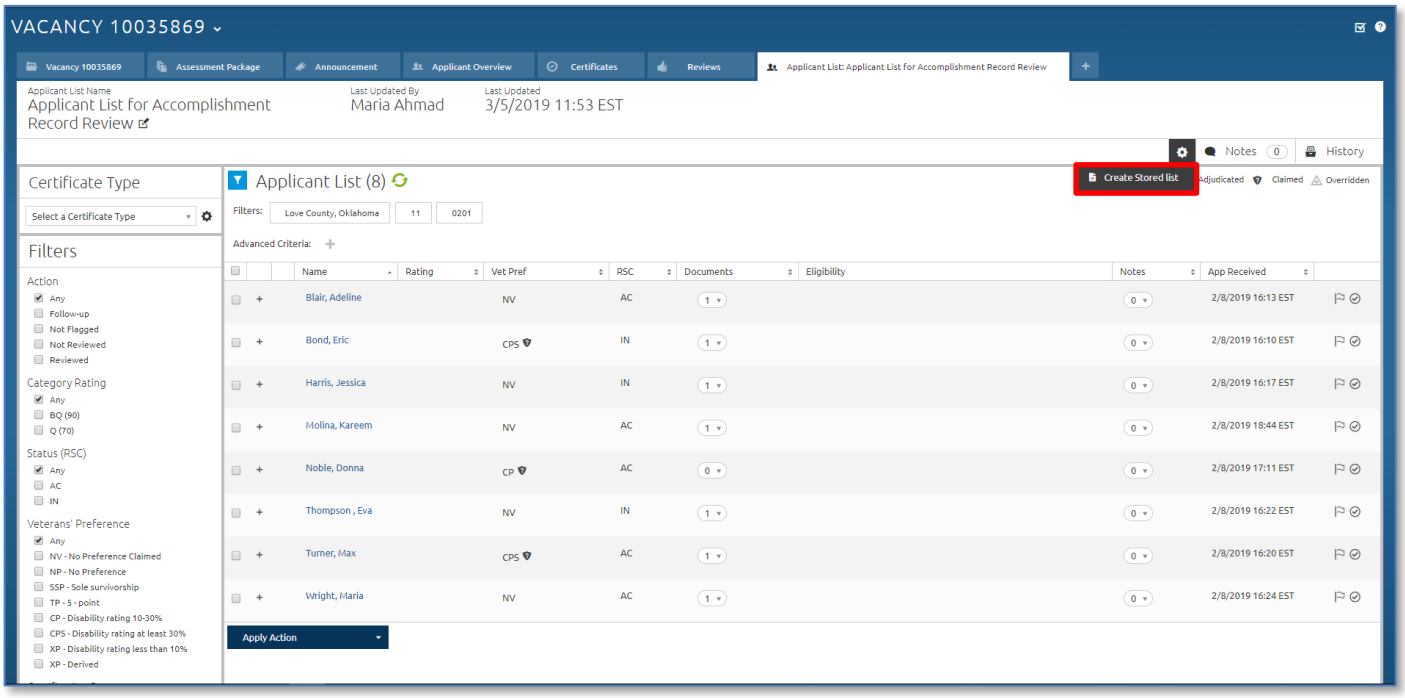
6. The following confirmation message displays: "Batch printing in progress. When complete, you will receive an alert, click the alert to download the file." Click **OK**.
7. Once available, the PDF of the applicant documents can be downloaded from the Alerts envelope icon in the top right corner of the page. It can then be shared with the review panel outside the USA Staffing system.

Panel Reviews

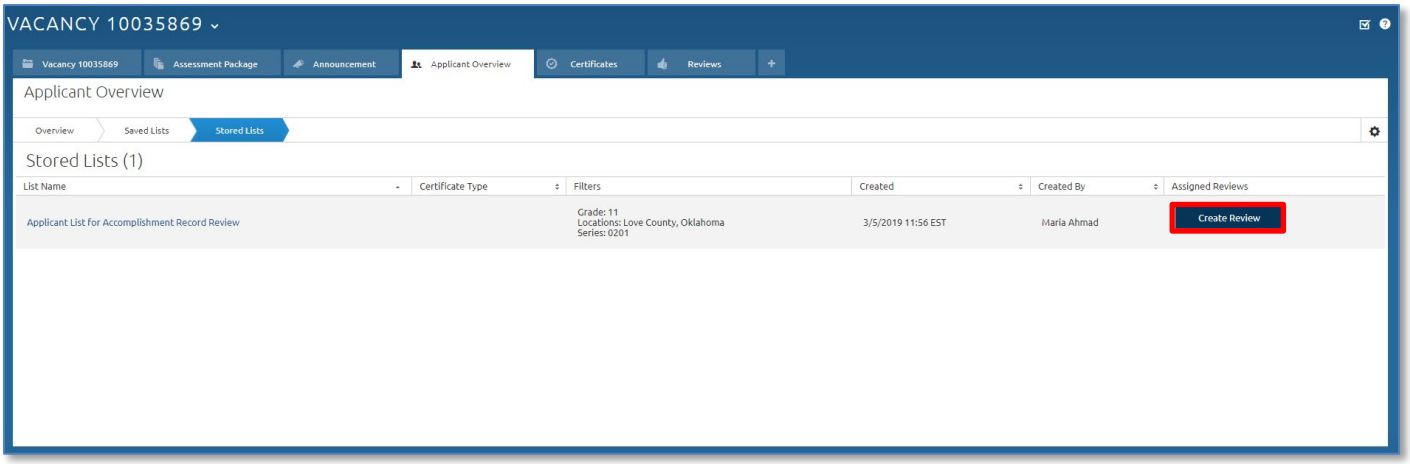
Applicant stored lists can to be shared through a review with panel members involved in the rating and ranking process for SES candidates. Through a Panel Review, reviewers are able to enter scores and provide feedback to the HR team on applicant qualifications and ratings. The panel review functionality is often used in conjunction with a manual assessment, although this is not required.

You may use a panel review by following the steps below.

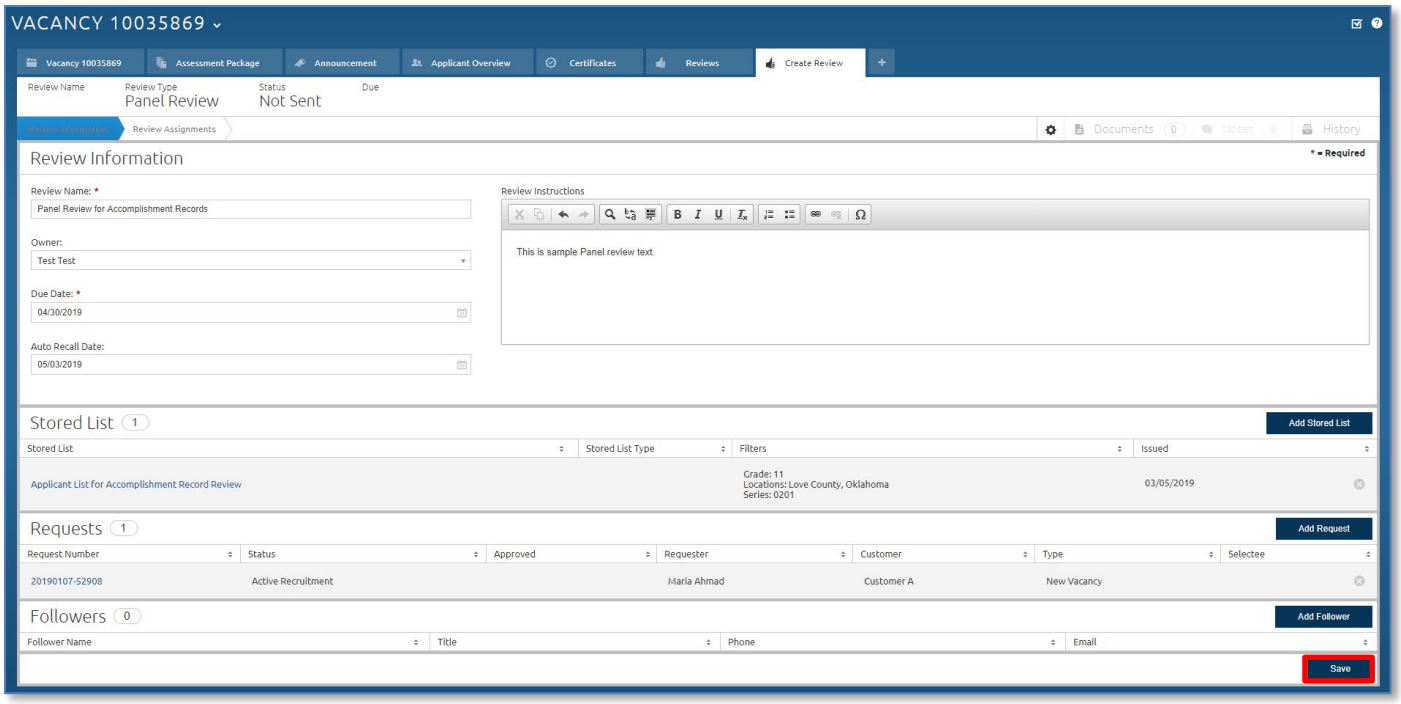
1. From the Applicant Overview tab, click **Create List**.
2. Select the appropriate filters to order applicants on your list. You may also choose to click **Save List** in order to give it a custom name, e.g., Applicant List for Accomplishment Record Review.
3. Select the **Gear Icon** and click **Create Stored List**.



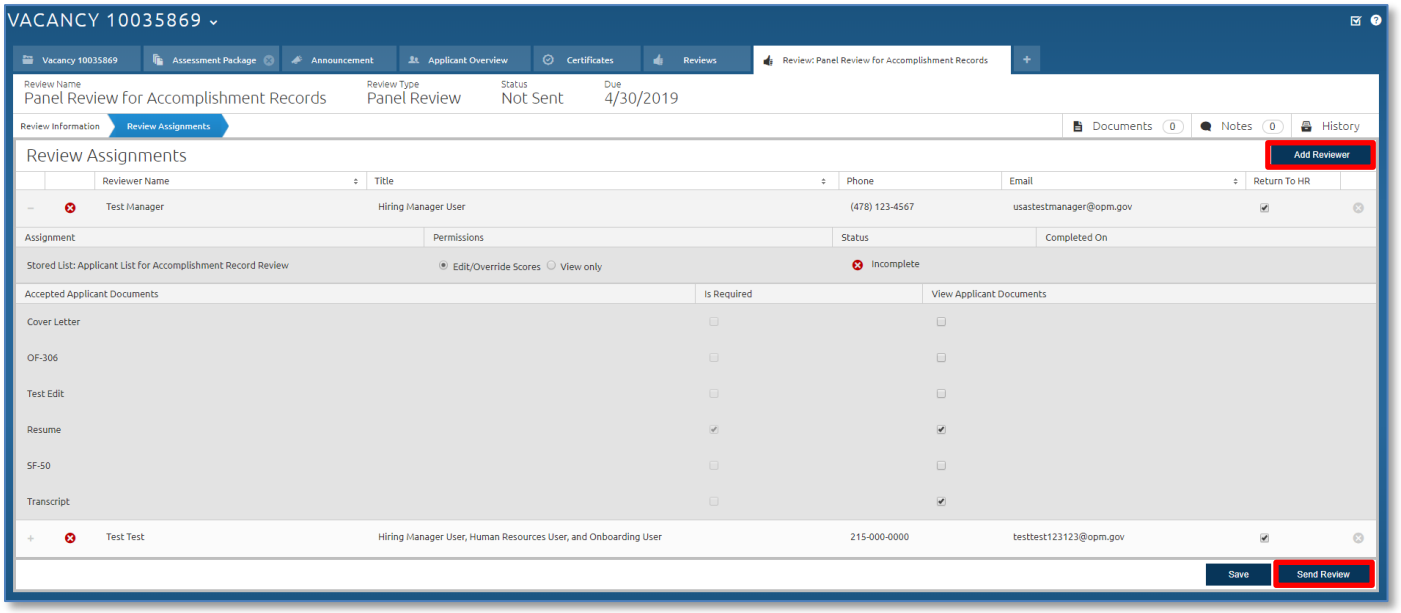
4. Once the stored list is processed, select the **Create Review** button.



5. On the Review Information page, enter the review name, due date, and add appropriate instructions or select the Gear Icon to select instructions from a template.
6. Add any additional stored lists, requests, and followers as needed, and click **Save**.



7. On the Review Assignments page, click the **Add Reviewer** button to add the appropriate panel reviewers. You may also modify their permissions from the **+** icon as needed to enable a reviewer to Edit/Override Scores, have View only access, or indicate the types of applicant documents they will be able to view. Once complete, click **Send Review**.



Once the panel review is returned, you can override the applicant final ratings to match the rating determined by the panel. If a manual assessment was included in the Assessment Package, you can enter the assessment level ratings either manually or by using an Excel spreadsheet. For more information on the steps for the Excel export/import process, please see Exporting applicant data for manual rating and Importing applicant ratings for manual assessment.