

Frequently Asked Questions - Exams

- **How are Exams Scored?**
 - All exams are scored based on rating criteria determined during the exam development process.
 - *Performance and Oral Exams:* Applicants are scored/rated, based on the predetermined criteria, by Subject Matter Experts, as candidates respond to questions and/or perform exam tasks.
 - *Training & Experience and Multiple-choice/online:* For both exam types, a single answer is selected by the applicant. The answer the applicant selects is scored/rated against the predetermined answers and/or rating criteria determined during exam development.
- **What is a Passing score for an exam?**
 - Pass points for all exams are determined during the exam development process. The exam components and the exam development process is confidential. As such, the pass point for examinations cannot be released.
- **What is a Rank?**
 - Ranks are determined by an applicant's final score. More than one individual can hold the same rank. The candidates' scores are put in order from highest to lowest. The higher you score on the examination, the lower your rank will be (i.e. a high passing exam score would likely be in Rank 1). Only those candidates in the top three ranks are considered reachable and ready for certification. As the ranks are cleared, the next lower rank becomes reachable.
- **Can I know my score?**
 - Applicant's scores are considered confidential. As such, the City does not release applicant score. Instead, applicant's receive their rank on the eligible list.
- **What is an Eligible List?**
 - **Eligible List** as defined by CSB, is a "a list of persons who have passed all components within the examination process and are entitled to certification for employment." In simpler terms, eligible lists are a list of every individual that passed the examination for a given classification, for a set duration of time.
 - At the City, eligible lists are valid for one year; and at the discretion of Human Resources can be extended on an annual basis up to three years.
- **What is Certification?**
 - To be certified on an eligible list a candidate's application must meet the minimum qualifications and have taken and passed a civil service examination as stated in the selection procedures on the job posting. The certification process advises candidates who are eligible for an interview of specific reasons under CSB Rules in which their names may be removed from the eligible list and informs them of the process to schedule an interview with the department.
- **How can I prepare for an exam?**
 - Exams are created based on the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities listed in the Qualifications Section of a [classification specification](#). To prepare for the examination, it is advisable to review this section of the classification specification.
- **Why didn't I get invited to the examination?**
 - Performance exam
 - Did not complete an application. A completed application is required to be considered for a performance exam.
 - Did not meet the Minimum Qualifications. To be invited for a performance exam, applicants must meet the minimum qualifications as listed on the job announcement. Learn more about how to meet minimum qualifications in the [City's Application Screen Instructions](#).

- Screened to Most Qualified
 - Human Resources has the option to screen an applicant pool down to the most qualified applicants to offer the opportunity to take an exam. This is typically used to narrow the applicant pool for performance exams in which testing a large number of applicants may impact City operations. Candidates who are City employees on the closing date of the examination announcement shall be exempt from this process.
- Oral exams
 - Did not complete an application. A completed application is required to be considered for an oral exam.
 - Did not meet the Minimum Qualifications. To be invited for an oral exam, applicants must meet the minimum qualifications as listed on the job announcement. Learn more about how to meet minimum qualifications in the [City's Application Screen Instructions](#).
- Training & Experience exam
 - The exam is a part of the application process. If the applicant completes and submits an application, they will have completed the exam, as it is a series of required supplemental questions in the application.
- Multiple-choice/Online Exam –
 - If a multiple-choice/online exam is required. It is available on the City's website 24 hours a day. It is the applicant's responsibility to take the exam prior to the closing date of the job posting. Information on how and where to take the exam is located on the Job Announcement.
- **What is the City's process for developing examinations?**
 - Exams are created through an exam development process that is a collaborative effort between Human Resources and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). Subject Matter Experts are individuals with a deep understanding of a particular process or at performing a specialized job, task or skill as it relates to the classification the exam is for.
 - The exam development process happens in two phases, Job Analysis and Exam Content Development.
 - Job Analysis – A purposeful, systematic process for collecting information on the important, work-related aspect of a job. Using SMEs, Human Resources follows a systematic process to evaluate the essential duties, knowledge, skills, and abilities required in a classification.
 - Exam Content Development – Exam content is developed based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities rated highest during the job analysis process and in alignment with the minimum qualifications.
- **Can I take the examination again if I do not obtain a passing score?**
 - You cannot take the examination again for the same recruitment (application). However, if there is another job posting for the classification, you can apply to that recruitment, and if eligible, take the examination again through that recruitment.
 - The exception to this is multiple-choice/online exams. When this exam type is offered online, any applicant can take the exam until they receive a passing score.
- **Is there a waiting period to retake an examination?**
 - No.
- **How do I know if an examination is required for the position I'm applying for?**
 - The Selection Procedures listed on the Job Announcement will include if an exam is required and what type of examination will be administered.
 - The other way you can determine if an exam is required is by reviewing the [City of Sacramento Civil Service Classification List](#). This list identifies civil service classifications. Only positions covered by the Civil Service Board require an examination.

- **Should/can I take the examination before, after and or simultaneous when completing my application?**
 - Performance Exam, Oral Exam – These exams cannot be taken ahead of time. Applicants will be invited to the examination if they meet the minimum qualifications as stated on the job posting.
 - Training & Experience Exam – This exam is taken during the application process only.
 - Multiple-choice/Online Exam – This exam can be taken at any time if the exam is listed on the City’s website. If an applicant has applied to a position with this exam type, then they must obtain a passing score prior to the closing date on the Job Announcement for further consideration.
- **I passed the exam and my application was referred to the department, what happens next?**
 - There is no further action needed from you at this time, if the department would like to select your application to move forward in the recruitment process, you will be notified via email with an invitation to interview. Please continue to monitor your email for any future notifications as the City’s preferred method of communication is via email.
- **I am on an eligible list do I still have to apply for jobs or will the department call me since I passed the exam and I am on Eligible List.**
 - At any point from the date of establishment of an eligible list until the eligible list expiration date; if the department has a vacancy arise, the department has the option to select from the applications in the top three reachable ranks on an eligible list for that classification
 - Should another position become vacant in the classification in which you applied for, the department can request to fill the vacant position by reviewing applications on the eligible list. The top three reachable rankings would then be referred to the hiring department for further consideration.