

- **HUMAN RESOURCES, BUREAU OF (HR)**
 - **Board of Examiners, Office of the (HR/REE/BEX)**

HR-005 Industrial Psychologist (HR/REE/BEX)

Synopsis: The Fellow will evaluate issues concerning the selection of candidates to become Foreign Service employees, who then represent the United States to foreign governments and international organizations, and support U.S. foreign policy at home and abroad.

Experience/Expertise:

- Advanced degree in industrial psychology or related field.
- Familiarity with screening, testing, and selecting employees for a major organization/ corporation, as well as training assessors.
- Familiarity with evaluating hiring systems, and ability to recommend improvements.
- Familiarity with diversity writ large in selection procedures.

Duties/Activities:

- Suggest methods to increase diversity and innovation through the assessment procedures for hiring Foreign Service employees. The Foreign Service is the diplomatic face of America to the world, and so employees should represent the diversity of America in all ways (e.g., race, gender, background, education, class, etc.). The project would involve evaluating hiring procedures and policies, and then developing realistic suggestions to increase diversity in the population hired. The project will affect tens of thousands of candidates per year and the composition of the Foreign Service.
- Review the training of Foreign Service employees who serve as assessors on the Board of Examiners. Hiring at the Department of State is conducted primarily by Foreign Service Officers serving as assessors on the Board of Examiners. Assessors are usually officers serving in rotational assignments, and so there are new inexperienced assessors each year to train, as well as a large number of existing and temporary assessors to keep trained. Assessors may be subject matter experts (SMEs). Training includes orientation training, program-specific training, SME training, and the process for addressing on-going training needs throughout the year. The project will directly concern the training of about 80 assessors and an equal number of SMEs. Training affects more than 20,000 hiring decisions per year.
- Participate in revising the Biographical Information Questionnaire (BIQ). The BIQ is a component of the Foreign Service Officer Test. It needs updating and perhaps refocusing. The project would involve analyzing data on the current BIQ, researching topics and question types to include in a revision, writing potential new items, pilot-testing them, implementing the revised BIQ, and working with testing experts and BEX staff throughout the process. The project will contribute to improving a large-scale, high-stakes hiring system that is recognized as one of the best in the world and critical to the high quality performance of the diplomatic mission of the U.S.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Diplomacy Fellows Program and recommend improvements. The Department uses fellowship programs to increase diversity in new hires and to attract candidates with special knowledge and skills. This project would study those programs, including their selection procedures and policies. The project will shape the future of these programs and the composition of the Foreign Service.
- Conduct research on candidate reactions to the hiring procedures of the Foreign Service and determine if changes are necessary to improve candidate reactions. With hiring rates of about 4%, more than 20,000 candidates a year pass through highly selective screening. Most will be unsuccessful, but their views of the Department contribute to its reputation.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the new Limited Non-Career Appointment (LNA) hiring program and recommend changes as appropriate. The project would include surveys of the supervisors and incumbents, as well as other research approaches to acquire data on program functionality. The results could improve the program and better inform the Department's expansion of this program to other functions.

Mission of the Office:

The officers and staff of HR/REE/BEX select the best qualified candidates to become members of the Foreign Service of the United States, in accordance with the Foreign Service Act of 1980. Utilizing industry approved best practices, BEX assesses candidates' skills against clearly defined dimensions and job-related skills which analyses show are essential prerequisites for success in the Foreign Service. BEX uses a complex battery of tests to judge behaviors in these dimensions, and then score those behaviors against well established anchors. BEX personnel review the files of successful candidates to ensure their conduct conforms with specific legal and regulatory standards before final appointment decisions are made. Comprehensive and ongoing training, pooling and reconciliation of scores by multiple assessors, and standardized testing methods help to ensure the fairness, validity, and reliability of our results. BEX ensures all work is done in full compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and with Equal Employment Opportunity standards. BEX personnel also perform a wide range of tasks in support of this core mission. Working with industrial psychologists and other experts, BEX regularly reviews and revises its testing materials and methods to ensure their job relevancy. With these experts, BEX monitors its performance and the validity of its processes. BEX ensures its testing procedures and methods are respectful and transparent to candidates.