

CIVIL SERVICE 101 - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Exam Information

Must I be a resident of New York to be eligible for employment with the City?

- *Some City positions require New York City residency while other positions do not. Be sure to check the Notice of Examination or job description for information concerning residency requirements.*

Do I have to be a citizen of the United States to obtain a job with the City of New York?

- *Any citizenship requirement will be set forth in the Notice of Examination or job description. When citizenship is not required, non-citizens must be able to establish at the time of appointment and throughout the period of their employment that they are legally permitted to work in the United States under the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Each candidate must be able to prove his/her identity and his/her right to obtain employment in the United States prior to employment with the City of New York.*

I was convicted of a crime. Can I still obtain employment with the City of New York?

- *Unfair discrimination against persons previously convicted of one or more criminal offenses is prohibited UNLESS there is a direct relationship between the offense(s) and the employment sought. The granting of the employment would involve an unreasonable risk to property or the safety or welfare of specific individuals or the general public.*

How do I determine if an exam is right for me?

- *To determine if an exam is right for you it is important to read the “What the Job Involves” and “How to Qualify” sections of the Notice of Exam carefully prior to applying for an exam. Candidates will need to meet the minimum requirements for the position in order to be hired into the position.*

What is the difference between applying for a job on nyc.gov/jobs and applying for an exam on nyc.gov/dcas?

- *City agencies post positions that are available for immediate hire on nyc.gov/jobs. Candidates can apply for these positions using their resume and cover letter and are hired through the typical interview process. Some of these positions may fall into the “competitive class”, which means a civil service exam is required for that title, either before or after being hired. These exams are posted on nyc.gov/dcas. Candidates apply for and take civil service exam titles that are often used by multiple agencies across a four-year period. While positions posted on nyc.gov/jobs are more immediate, obtaining a position through the civil service exam process provides more option to be considered for positions and provides more job security.*

Can I apply for a civil service exam and an open position at the same time?

- *Yes. You can apply for a civil service exam (**you are highly encouraged to**) and an open position at the same time. However, please be aware that these are separate processes. Taking an exam is part of the civil*

service journey as most positions are filled by taking and passing an exam and being called off an eligible list. The City is always looking for new talent, so you are encouraged to apply for an open position for which you meet the requirements, but please do your research first. Ask yourself: Is this a competitive class position? Will I need to take a test at some point? Is there job security with this position? Am I looking for career with the City? What is the duration of this position? If you are looking for an immediate position, applying for an open position is advantageous as it is a relatively quicker process.

How can I find out if there are any specific requirements for a job?

- *Candidates should be advised of any minimum education, work experience, licenses, registrations and/or any other specialized qualifications that they must possess in order to be found Qualified for the examination. Before applying to an exam, please reference the Minimum Qualification Requirements in the Notice of Examination (NOE). If applying for a specific job on nyc.gov/jobs, please ensure that you thoroughly read the job notice in its entirety, including all sections pertaining to requirements and qualifications.*

Is there study material for exams?

- *DCAS does not endorse any study guides or test prep material, including material prepared by and distributed by Unions. Instead, each NOE provides information related to the areas being tested on the exam. Refer to the "Test" section of the NOE.*

If I fail an exam, can I retake the exam?

- *Yes, just not the same exam #. You may only take each exam number once. If you take a test with the same exam number more than once, only your first test will be rated and your additional filing fee will not be refunded. For example: You take Police Officer, Exam 1000 but did not pass the exam. You cannot retake Police Officer, Exam 1000, but can take Police Officer, Exam 1001.*

Is there a limit to the number of exams I can take?

- *No. We encourage you to apply for as many City exams for which you qualify. Candidates should be advised of any minimum education, work experience, licenses, registrations, and/or any other specialized qualifications that they must possess in order to be found Qualified for the examination. Before applying to an exam, please reference the Minimum Qualification Requirements in the Notice of Examination (NOE). If you are found Not Qualified, your application fee is non-refundable.*

How can I learn about fee waivers?

- *If you are a Veteran of the United States Armed Forces or if you receive certain forms of public assistance, unemployment insurance benefit payments and other similar benefits, you may have the application fee waived by submitting documentation of your fee waiver type. For additional information about fee waivers, please view the following: <https://a856-exams.nyc.gov/OASysWeb/Home/FAQ>.*

Can I request a refund for an exam?

- *As per the NYC DCAS General Examination Regulations, an applicant who was unable to take or complete an examination may apply for refund of the application fee by submitting a written request to the Examining Service Section of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services within 30 days of the date of the first*

test in the examination at which he or she was unable to appear with verification that such absence was due to: compulsory attendance before a court or other public body or official having the power to compel attendance; hospitalization; a clear error or mistake for which the Department of Citywide Administrative Services is responsible.

What is the 55-a Program?

- *The City of New York encourages employment of persons with disabilities. Most positions in City government require taking a written competitive civil service exam. Section 55-a of the New York Civil Service Law allows qualified persons with disabilities to be appointed to such competitive civil service positions without having to take the exam. That individual, if appointed, would be appointed as a non-competitive employee. The New York State Office of the Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) certifies persons as having a physical or mental disability and makes determinations as to whether the individuals are qualified to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position sought. There is no guarantee of receiving an interview or a position. Appointments through the 55-a Program are discretionary for each City agency. The law limits the number of 55-a positions in the City to 700.*

Exam Scoring

What is the passing grade for an exam?

- *Most tests require a passing score of 70%.*

How long will it take to get my score?

- *Eligible lists are established, on average, within 6-12 months after the examination date.*

How will I be notified of my exam score?

- *You will be notified by mail and email of your test results. It is critical that you promptly notify DCAS of any change to your mailing address and/or email address. If we do not have your correct mailing and/or email address, you will not receive information about your exam(s), consideration for appointment and/or important information that may require a response by a specified deadline. Change of mailing and/or email address requests submitted to any agency other than DCAS, such as to the United States Postal Service, will NOT update your records with DCAS. To update your mailing and/or email address with DCAS, you must submit the change request by mail or in person. Your request must include your full name, social security number, exam title(s), exam number(s), previous mailing and/or email address, and your new mailing and/or email address. Your request can be mailed to DCAS Records Room, 1 Centre Street, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10007 or brought in person to the same address Monday through Friday from 9AM to 5PM.*

Can a list expire before I am hired?

- *Yes. Being on an eligible list does not guarantee employment. All appointments are based on the hiring needs of a City agency or agencies. Your eligible list number may not be reached and therefore, you may not be appointed from the eligible list.*

Definitions

What is a Notice of Examination (NOE)?

- *The Notice of Examination (NOE) is a legal document that explains the specific details of an examination. This includes test date, qualifications required to take the examination and topics the exam will cover. Read the NOE carefully before registering for an examination. If you are found not qualified as part of the civil service exam process, your application fee is non-refundable.*

What is Selective Certification?

- *Selective Certification is a method by which exam applicants who possess a particular specialized skill (ex: specific work experience, language proficiency, license or certification) for which a City agency may have an immediate need are given preference for being appointed/promoted from the eligible list over other candidates who do not possess that particular specialized skill. If Selective Certification is being offered for an exam, it will be announced in the Notice of Examination (NOE), including instructions on how to claim Selective Certification.*

What are Special Accommodations?

- *If you have a medically documented disability (need more time to take an exam, an audio recording of an exam, a large print exam booklet, etc.) or need to take an exam on a different date for religious reasons, you can request a special accommodation. Please refer to the Special Circumstances Guide.*

What is the Education and Experience Exam?

- *Education and Experience Exams are used to fill positions in which specific education, experience and/or licenses and/or professional certifications are better indicators than just using a multiple-choice test to determine a candidate's qualification for a particular position. Candidates are scored based on their education and experience.*

What is an Eligible List?

- *A listing of all candidates who passed the examination ranked in descending score order (i.e., highest score at the top and lowest score at the bottom of the eligible list) and who are eligible for appointment off the eligible list.*

What is a Call Letter?

- *Once an exam's rating is completed, a ranked order list of test passers is created which is used by agencies to fill their vacancies in that specific exam title. Upon publication or establishment of a list, the City notifies all candidates of their official score and list number. Those agencies with existing vacancies proceed to send candidates in the respective eligible list a Call Letter (or Notice of Hiring Pool) which provides information about the position, including salary and work site. Candidates participate in an individual interview or hiring pool. **Please note that ignoring a Call Letter can result in the removal of your name from an eligible list***

What is the 1-in-3 rule?

- *In order to fill one vacancy (or replace one provisional), DCAS will “certify” to an Agency the names of the three highest scoring people still on an eligible list. An Agency may consider all three candidates, and can select any one of them, even the third-highest scorer (the “1-in-3” Rule).*

What are Veterans’ Credits?

- *In accordance with NYS Civil Service Law, veterans of the U.S. Armed forces are entitled to additional points to be added to a passing score. Candidates may use Veterans’ or Disabled Veterans’ Credit only once for appointment or promotion. Veterans’ or Disabled Veterans’ credit will be added only to the final score of those candidates who pass all parts of the examination.*

What are legacy credits?

- *Legacy credits allows 10 additional points to be added to the final score of any applicant with a parent who has died while in discharge of his or her duties as a Police Officer or Firefighter; and a candidate who is the sibling of a Police Officer or Firefighter who was killed in service of New York City as a result of the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001, or a candidate who is the child of an FDNY EMS member who was killed in the service of New York City as a result of the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001.*

Notifications

How do I find out when an exam will be offered?

- *The Annual Civil Service Exam Schedule is published every July. It lists the exams that will be taking applications in the upcoming months. The Monthly Application Schedule shows a list of each month's open exams. To find out about the upcoming civil service exams, you can subscribe to our mailing list and select “City Jobs and Civil Service Announcements” to receive announcements for upcoming exams. The Exam Schedule is updated every month as exam offerings and dates are subject to change. For additional information, please visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dcas/employment/how-can-you-find-upcoming-exams.page>*

What happens after I pass an exam?

- *When you pass an exam, your name will be placed in final score order on an eligible list and you will be given a list number. You will be notified by mail of your test results. If you meet all requirements and conditions, you will be considered for appointment when your name is reached on the eligible list. After an exam is administered, it generally takes 6-12 months for an eligible list of passers to be established from which agencies can hire.*