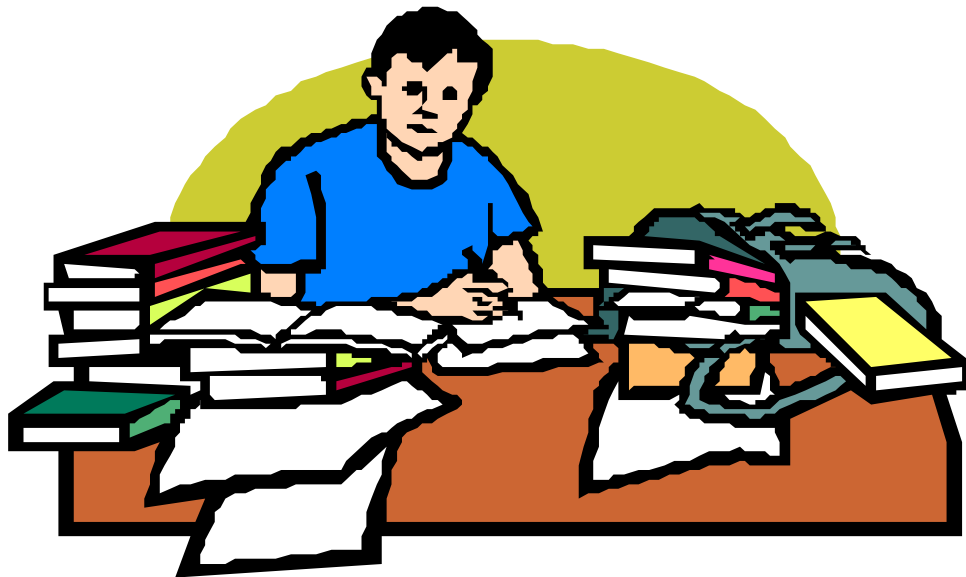


EMPLOYMENT SECURITY REPRESENTATIVE – 11408



HOW TO PREPARE BOOKLET

State of Alabama Personnel Department
64 North Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130
Phone: (334)242-3389
Fax: (334)242-1110

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction.....	3
II.	The Job.....	3
III.	The Examination.....	3
IV.	How The Written Examination Was Developed.....	4
V.	What To Do Before You Come To Take The Examination.....	5
	Test-taking Tips.....	6
VI.	How To Prepare Using This Guide.....	7
VII.	Sample Test Questions.....	8
	Section I. Knowledge of Basic Mathematics.....	8
	Section II. Knowledge of English/Ability to Communicate in Writing, Proofread Paperwork, and Organize Written Information.....	9
	Section III. Ability to Read and Comprehend.....	10
	Section IV. Ability to Plan, Organize, and Make Effective Decisions.....	11
	Section V. Knowledge of Appropriate Business Communication/Public Interaction.....	12
	Answers to Sample Questions.....	13
VIII.	Banded Scoring.....	14
IX.	Exam Contact.....	15
X.	Frequently Asked Questions.....	15
XI.	State Personnel Terminology.....	16

I. INTRODUCTION

A written examination is being given in order to establish a register for the classification of Employment Security Representative (11408). The purpose of this booklet is to help you prepare for the written exam. Since all the material you will need to take the exam will be provided at test administration, you will not be allowed to bring this booklet with you to the exam.

II. THE JOB

Employment Security Representative positions are with the Department of Labor (formerly the Department of Industrial Relations) at various locations statewide. This is technical employment security work at the entry level involving interviewing, assessing, and referring applicants to jobs and training, including applicants that meet local veterans' employment program criteria; processing unemployment compensation claims; auditing and adjusting employers' accounts; or determining employer tax rates. Employees in this class follow standard interviewing techniques in determining the occupational skills of job applicants and in obtaining factual information from claimants for unemployment compensation. Employees may also be responsible for maintaining account records, determining employer tax rates, adjusting tax rates as necessary, or reviewing proposals, contracts, and training records to ensure compliance with federal regulations. Duties require exercising some discretion and judgment in evaluating work histories, conducting interviews, and maintaining contacts with employers. Standard occupational guides are used in performing work, and recommendations are ordinarily reviewed by a superior for conformance with established procedures.

III. THE EXAMINATION

The examination for this classification is a multiple-choice exam. A multiple-choice exam is designed to measure specific knowledges and abilities. The test is divided into five sections with each section measuring different knowledges and/or abilities. Applicants are presented with a test question and four possible responses to that question. Applicants then select the BEST possible response to the question. Here are some points to remember when taking the examination:

- Some people get nervous when they take tests. There is nothing wrong with that. However, it is not good to be so nervous that you cannot concentrate. You need to keep your mind on the test questions and not on your feelings. To improve your ability to do this, you will find ideas in this booklet on how to study and prepare for the written exam. The more prepared you are, the more comfortable and less nervous you will feel during the exam.
- You will be given **3 hours to complete the exam**. Use your time efficiently. The exam is not a test of how quickly you can answer questions. However, it does not allow you the time you might like to have. In the parts of the test that require reading, try to keep a steady pace. Try to finish as much of the test as you can.
- While reading passages, you may want to take a few notes. Make your notes brief. You may also want to underline or highlight important information as you read.
- Don't give up. Many people give up too easily on tests. If the question or problem seems hard, they do not even try. Mark an answer on your answer sheet even if it is a guess. You will not be

penalized for guessing. On the other hand, do not spend too much time on any one question just because it is hard. This may not leave you enough time to answer questions that you know later in the test.

IV. HOW THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION WAS DEVELOPED

A study of the Employment Security Representative classification was conducted before developing the examination. Employees who work in this position and their supervisors participated in this study to determine the job duties performed by Employment Security Representatives as well as the knowledges and abilities Employment Security Representatives must possess in order to effectively perform the job duties of the position.

The study showed that the following knowledges and abilities are associated with the job duties of the position, and Employment Security Representatives must possess these knowledges and abilities on their first day of work before training. Therefore, these knowledges and abilities will be measured on the written, multiple-choice examination.

Knowledges

- Knowledge of the English language to include grammar, spelling, sentence structure, word usage, and punctuation as needed to present information effectively; compose and review reports; complete departmental forms; compose documents, letters, and memoranda; and/or assist applicants in composing résumés and job search correspondence.
- Knowledge of business etiquette, behavior, communication, and presentation as needed to promote a positive image for the department with others such as claimants, employers, and job seekers.
- Knowledge of basic math to include addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and working with decimals and percentages as needed to complete reports, determine eligibility, review financial information, and/or complete billing.

Abilities

- Ability to communicate in writing such as composing correspondence, memoranda, recommendations, claims summaries, fact summaries, and other technical documents to include arranging information in logical order; explaining information clearly and concisely; using proper spelling, grammar, language, punctuation, word usage, sentence structure, and paragraph construction; explaining technical concepts (i.e., laws, policies, instructions) in non-technical terms; remaining consistent with the purpose of the writing; and accomplishing the intended purpose of the writing as needed to document information, provide direction, and exchange information.
- Ability to proofread paperwork such as applications, résumés, unemployment compensation forms, and other DIR forms and reports to include identifying errors in spelling, grammar, word usage, sentence structure, and punctuation as needed to ensure accurate and timely completion of forms and/or reports by self and others.
- Ability to read and comprehend narrative information such as memoranda, letters, instructions, state and federal laws, policies and procedures, rules and regulations, and manuals to include determining relevant information; understanding the meaning; adjusting actions or decisions appropriately; applying information to job responsibilities or activities; asking follow-up questions; and doing research to clarify information as needed to gain

knowledge and understanding, explain information to others, review and make recommendations, and ensure compliance with guidelines.

- Ability to make effective decisions to include identifying when decisions need to be made, understanding the problem or situation, identifying when problems should be forwarded, determining when supervisory involvement is needed, fully analyzing available information, considering and understanding ramifications (i.e., pros and cons) of decisions and implications of actions or statements, anticipating reactions and responses, considering alternative methods of accomplishing a goal, reevaluating decisions that have already been made, applying policies and procedures to decisions, and adapting decisions as situations change or new information becomes available as needed to accomplish goals efficiently.
- Ability to organize information or ideas such as facts, laws, policies, findings, notes, and written communication to include arranging information into logical order and expressing information in a clear and concise manner orally and in writing as needed to present/provide information and communicate and explain information or ideas effectively.
- Ability to plan and organize to include setting priorities, formulating goals and objectives, time management, and monitoring of time spent on projects, applications, and cases as needed to meet minimum standards and achieve objectives.

V. WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU COME TO TAKE THE EXAMINATION

Here are some suggestions for what to do before the examination and for getting to the exam location on the correct day, on time, and with the proper materials that you will need to take the examination.

- **Get there early.** Give yourself plenty of extra time to get to the test center, park, and find the testing room. If you are rushed and late, you will be upset when you get there. Plan to get there before the scheduled exam time.
- **Do not bring this booklet or any study materials with you to the exam location.** This includes notes and any manuals and source documents that you may have used to prepare for the examination.
- **You must bring the test schedule card** that you received from the State of Alabama Personnel Department. This card lists the examination title, location of exam, and date, day, and time of examination.
- **You must bring two sharpened #2 lead pencils.** You may also bring a highlighter pen to use during the test if you wish.
- **You must also bring picture identification to the exam location.** This may be your driver license, a military identification card, or a passport.
- **You may bring a calculator to use on the Employment Security Representative examination. Small solar-powered or battery-operated calculators that perform basic functions such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square roots, or percentages are allowed. Calculators that plug-in, utilize tape, have word processing, spelling, thesauruses, or other storage and retrieval capabilities (except basic memory functions) are not allowed. Calculators that are a feature on a cell phone are not permitted. Calculators are subject to inspection by exam monitors. Applicants may not borrow or share calculators at the exam site.**

Test Taking Tips

- **Listen** to the test monitors and follow their instructions carefully.
- If you are not sure of an answer, **go with your first choice**.
- Work through the test **without spending too much time on any one item**.
- Use your watch or the clock in the room to **keep track of your time** during the test.
- If you cannot decide on the best answer to a question, **skip it and go back to it later**.
- It is to your advantage to **answer as many questions as possible**, even if you must guess.
- **Mark your answers on the Scantron answer sheet.** You may write in the test booklet, but only answers clearly marked on the Scantron answer sheet can be given credit.
- If you have a question at **any time before or during the exam, ask the monitor for assistance**.

VI. HOW TO PREPARE USING THIS GUIDE

This pretest booklet can be used as resource material. The questions contained in the booklet are representative of the types of questions that will be on the actual examination. Familiarize yourself with the sample questions that begin on the following page. The answers to each question are provided on page 13. You should read the instructions and answer each question carefully. Like the examination questions, the sample items are presented in the following categories:

Section I. Knowledge of Basic Mathematics

Section II. Knowledge of English/Ability to Communicate in Writing, Proofread Paperwork, and Organize Written Information

Section III. Ability to Read and Comprehend

Section IV. Ability to Plan, Organize, and Make Effective Decisions

Section V. Knowledge of Appropriate Business Communication/Public Interaction

VII. SAMPLE TEST QUESTIONS

Section I. Knowledge of Basic Mathematics

INSTRUCTIONS: Questions 1 through 3 are based on the information below. There are lettered spaces on the paycheck. You are to determine which information belongs in specific lettered spaces on this paycheck. Use only the information provided.

PAYROLL RECORD FOR EMPLOYEE No. 147-03-0991

Pay Rate: \$8.00/hour Work Hours: 8 hours (7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.), 40 hours per week

ADDRESS: 148 Manor Circle, Montgomery, AL 36116

ACCRUED TIME-BALANCE FORWARD FROM LAST YEAR: Sick (S): 48 hours
 Vacation (V): 4 days
 Personal (P): 0 days

STANDARD DEDUCTIONS

Withholding Tax: 15%
 FICA: 7.42%
 State Tax: 2.3%
 City Tax: 2.0%

VOLUNTARY DEDUCTIONS

Pension: 3.5%
 Garnishee: None
 Savings Plan: None
 Credit Union: \$15.00
 Life Insurance: None
 Bonds: \$6.25
 Health Insurance: \$3.25

Pay Period	Ending					<u>H</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>U</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>							Pay Period Total Hours
		S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
1	JAN 15	8	10	8	8	9	8	-	-	8	8	8	8	8	-		91
2	JAN 29	-	8	8	8	V	V	-	-	8	8	8	8	8	-		80

REDWOODS TREATMENT CENTER						
Cost Center 118		Employee SS. No. 147-03-0991		Hourly Rate (A)	Differential (N/A)	Overtime Rate 1.5
Period Ending January 29		CURRENT BALANCES OF TIME ACCRUED				
		Sick Time (B)	Vacation Time (C)	Holiday Time (D)	Personal Time (E)	
HOURS	PAY	DEDUCTIONS		AMOUNT	CURRENT PAY	YEAR TO DATE
Day (F)		Pension		(G)	Gross \$640.00	Gross (H)
Evening	(I)	Garnishee		(J)	Fed. W/H Tax (K)	Fed. W/H Tax
Night		Savings Plan		(M)	FICA (N)	FICA (O)
Overtime (P)	(Q)	Credit Union			State Tax (R)	State Tax (S)
Sick	(T)	Life Insurance		(U)		
Vacation	(V)	Bonds		(W)	Total DED-V (X)	
Personal		Health Insurance				FICA GROSS
					NET PAY	NET PAY
						CHECK # 88327

1. How much FICA tax has been withheld from this employee's paycheck for this pay period (Space N)?
 - A. \$34.69
 - B. \$37.99
 - C. \$47.49
 - D. \$49.89

2. How much was deducted from this employee's paycheck for his/her pension plan for this pay period (Space G)?
 - A. \$17.92
 - B. \$22.40
 - C. \$28.16
 - D. \$35.20

3. What are this employee's gross year-to-date earnings (Space H)?
 - A. \$ 640
 - B. \$ 728
 - C. \$1,368
 - D. \$1,412

Section II. Knowledge of English/Ability to Communicate in Writing, Proofread Paperwork, and Organize Written Information

INSTRUCTIONS: For **questions 4 and 5**, read each group of sentences and determine which sentence is organized in the most logical manner and contains no errors in English grammar, spelling, or punctuation.

4.
 - A. The supervisor and the aide, together with the rest of the office force, has unanimously agreed to send a representative.
 - B. The supervisor, together with the aide and the rest of the office force, have unanimously agreed to send a representative.
 - C. The entire office force, including the supervisor and the aide, have unanimously agreed to send a representative.
 - D. The entire office force, including the supervisor and the aide, has unanimously agreed to send a representative.

5.
 - A. Irregardless of your opinion, the policy don't matter.
 - B. The policy don't matter, regardless of your opinion.
 - C. Irregardless of your opinion, the policy doesn't matter.
 - D. The policy doesn't matter, regardless of your opinion.

INSTRUCTIONS: For **questions 6 through 8**, review each sentence and select the appropriate word to complete the sentence.

6. While numbering the report, I _____ one number.
- A. oमित
 - B. ommitted
 - C. omits
 - D. omitted
7. You should leave one hour of your day open for performing _____ job duties.
- A. mischellaneous
 - B. miscellaneous
 - C. misellaneous
 - D. misselaneous
8. My schedule _____ me from taking an early lunch break.
- A. prohibits
 - B. prohibets
 - C. prohebits
 - D. prohebets

Section III. Ability to Read and Comprehend

INSTRUCTIONS: **Questions 9 and 10** are based on the following reading selections and should be answered only on the basis of the information in each selection.

9. “Persons in the employ of a public agency generally come into contact with many people outside of working hours. In these contacts, the government employee represents to the public the quality, competence, and stature of public employees as a group.”

Of the following statements, the one that is the most valid implication of this quotation is that

- A. the responsibilities of a public employee cease after office hours.
- B. government employees who come into contact with the public during working hours should be more efficient than those who have no contact with the public.
- C. public employees, by their behavior during social activities, can raise the prestige of public employment.
- D. public employees, because they work so diligently serving the public, tend to party more than employees in the private sector.

10. “If, for any reason, the person being interviewed is unwilling to talk, the effectiveness of the entire procedure is jeopardized. It is too much to expect persons to always tell the truth, but even that is of secondary importance because, if a person talks enough, he is bound to reveal himself sooner or later.”

According to this statement, which of the following is most nearly correct?

- A. Interviewers should watch for signs of insincerity during interviews.
- B. The effectiveness of an interview is related to how much the person being interviewed talks.
- C. Few persons can conceal their shortcomings successfully during interviews.
- D. A person being interviewed will feel that his chances are jeopardized if he is not allowed to talk freely.

Section IV. Ability to Plan, Organize, and Make Effective Decisions

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following situation and then answer **question 11**. Base your response on the situation only. Do not base your response on previous experience. Select the **MOST APPROPRIATE** choice.

Assume you are an Employment Security Representative working in Montgomery. Your supervisor is out of the office today. You arrive at work at 7:55 a.m. You have an appointment today at 11:00 a.m. with your family doctor who has advised you that the appointment should not be rescheduled. You need to leave by 10:30 a.m. and will be unable to return to the office later today. Sue Beck, a clerical aide and office receptionist, is the only other employee in the office today. However, she does not type. Your supervisor left a note listing the following tasks that must be done today.

- Type the Zicker report (2 hours to complete).
 - Respond to e-mails (30 minutes to complete).
 - Call Virginia Hall about incomplete paperwork (10 minutes to complete).
 - Set up the conference room for the next day’s 8:00 a.m. meeting (20 minutes to complete).
 - File completed paperwork (2 hours to complete).
11. Which of the following schedules shown below would be the most appropriate use of your time today?
- A. file completed paperwork and set up the conference room
 - B. set up the conference room, respond to e-mails, and call Virginia Hall
 - C. type the Zicker report and call Virginia Hall
 - D. respond to e-mails and type the Zicker report

Section V. Knowledge of Appropriate Business Communication/Public Interaction

INSTRUCTIONS: For **questions 12 through 14**, read each question and select the most appropriate answer from the choices provided.

12. Of the following, which would be the best way to approach handling customer complaints?
- A. Always respond in a manner designed to satisfy the complainant.
 - B. Acknowledge the complaint, and give it prompt, courteous, and careful attention.
 - C. Courteously acknowledge the complaint, file it, and act on it whenever your work schedule permits.
 - D. Acknowledge the complaint, and bring it to the attention of your supervisor when you have received a minimum of three complaints on the same topic.
13. When a customer is upset and reacts in a resentful manner, your best approach would be to
- A. attempt to respond in an unemotional and objective manner.
 - B. behave in the same way.
 - C. tactfully suggest that the person be more courteous.
 - D. avoid responding to the person until he/she calms down.
14. When a caller asks you for information which you cannot accurately furnish, you should
- A. answer to the best of the ability, but explain that your answer may be wrong.
 - B. explain that you cannot provide that information because it is not part of your job.
 - C. provide the person with the contact information of someone who can assist them.
 - D. tell the person you are not permitted to give out that information.

Answers to Sample Questions

Section I. Knowledge of Basic Mathematics

1. C
2. B
3. D

Section II. Knowledge of English/Ability to Communicate in Writing, Proofread Paperwork, and Organize Written Information

4. D
5. D
6. D
7. B
8. A

Section III. Ability to Read and Comprehend

9. C
10. B

Section IV. Ability to Plan, Organize, and Make Effective Decisions

11. D

Section V. Knowledge of Appropriate Business Communication/Public Interaction

12. B
13. A
14. C

VIII. BANDED SCORING

When the written exam for Employment Security Representative is graded, the scores will be grouped into bands. When you receive notification of your score on the exam, you will not be given a numerical score (e.g., you will not receive a score of 95 out of 100.). Rather, you will be informed into which band your score fell. The following information is to help you understand the banding procedure.

What is banding?

Banding is one way to reduce the impact of fluctuations in test scores that do not provide meaningful information about differences in the ability to do the job. One important purpose of testing is to identify the differences in test scores that reflect real differences among candidates. Banded scoring is a statistical procedure for grouping raw test scores that statistically are not meaningfully different from one another. In banded scoring, bands are set objectively and mathematically. They are not manipulated arbitrarily.

Misconceptions about banding

There are many misconceptions about banding and the use of banded scores. Some of the most common misconceptions are listed below. Each misconception is followed by a clarification.

- **Misconception: Each band should have the same number of people.**
The people in a band are similar to each other in that statistically there is no meaningful difference in their scores. Sometimes Band 1 may be very large and at other times it may be small. We do not force bands to be a certain size. The size of the bands is based on the scores people make.
- **Misconception: Band numbers have no meaning. I don't have a score.**
Think of a band as a group of tied scores that statistically are not meaningfully different. In school, two students with average grades of 94.5 and 94.3 would both be grouped into a band called "A" because the teacher cannot be sure that .2 of a point is a real difference in achievement. Think of scores on achievement tests children take in school. The fine print on the tests always cautions you not to focus on the numerical score but rather on the comparative score which uses some grouping technique such as percentiles, stanines, standard deviations, grade levels, etc. These grouping techniques are considered forms of banding.
- **Misconception: Band numbers are the same as letter grades.**
Band 1 does not equate to an "A," Band 2 to a "B," etc. In school, a predetermined numerical score (e.g., 90-100) equals an A. In banding, scores are banded only in relation to one another. Unlike grade school bands, the width of bands is not set in advance. You compete against your peers only. Your scores are set in relation to your peers only.
- **Misconception: A band score on one test has the same value as a band score on another test.**
Banded scores are test specific and cannot be compared to banded scores on other tests.

- **Misconception: Banding replaced the “Rule of 10.”**
Banding did not replace the “Rule of 10.” The “Rule of 10” determines the number of bands to be certified. In the past, tied scores referred to an actual numerical score (e.g., two candidates with a score of 98.98 were considered tied) while now all of the scores within a band are considered tied.
- **Misconception: People in a band do not differ.**
When several people are placed in the same band, it does not mean that those people do not differ. Instead, it means that their scores on the exam do not differ enough to be separate scores.

IX. EXAM CONTACT

The contact person for the Employment Security Representative examination is Julie Carden, a Personnel Analyst with the State Personnel Department. If you have questions about the contents of this document, please call her at (334) 242-3389.

X. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How are vacancies filled for the Employment Security Representative?

The top ten applicants on each register are sent to the requesting agency for consideration. Since the banded scoring process is used, all of the scores within a band are considered tied. **Therefore, all names within a band are certified out to an agency, which may include more than 10 names.** The names of people not selected stay on the register to be considered for future jobs. Employees are usually hired at the minimum of the pay range.

How long will I remain eligible for appointment?

Your name will remain on the employment register for two years from the date you were placed on the register. You will be notified by mail when to reapply.

When will I receive my test results?

Four to six weeks after completing the exam, you will receive a Notice of Examination Results postcard in the mail. This postcard will identify your score, or band placement, for the written exam. If you have not received your score within four to six weeks, you should call the State Personnel Department.

In addition to your band placement, you may also obtain your standing, or rank on the register, online at www.personnel.alabama.gov. From the home page, you should click on “Applicants” and then “Register Standings,” and follow the instructions. For security purposes, you must now create an online profile in order to access your standing.

What if I need to request reasonable accommodations?

If you would like to request special testing accommodations or have any questions concerning the test site or testing conditions, please contact the State Personnel Department at (334)242-3389.

What if I need to reschedule the written examination?

If there is a conflict in your schedule, and you are unable to attend the written exam at the time and date for which you have been scheduled, you must resubmit your Application for Examination. The State Personnel Department will schedule you for the next available administration of this written test.

XI. STATE PERSONNEL TERMINOLOGY

The following are terms that are used by State Personnel regarding test scores and employment that results from those scores. This section is provided to help you understand State Personnel terminology and procedures.

Register: A register is a list of all individuals who have successfully completed the selection procedure for a State Merit System job. The register is a complete list of individuals who are eligible for employment in a certain job classification.

Certification: A certification is a list of the top ten individuals on an employment register. These are the individuals who are immediately appointable to positions. A register that uses banded scoring may produce a certification with more than ten names. If Band 1 contains 15 names, then all 15 individuals will be on the Certification. Likewise, if Band 1 contains 3 people and Band 2 contains 25 people, then all individuals in both Bands 1 and 2 would be on the certification. Since individuals within a band are considered to be tied, the certification cannot split up a band. Certifications may be statewide or specific to a county within the state.

Test Failure: Some multiple-choice tests administered by the state use a Pass/Fail point to identify individuals who failed the test.

Subject Matter Experts: These are individuals who have detailed first-hand knowledge of a job. These individuals assist State Personnel in conducting thorough job studies and in many cases assist in developing specific exam components.