

What is an ECQ ?

When you apply for a job with the federal government – particularly when submitting a Senior Executive Service (SES) application – you may be required to answer Executive Core Qualification (ECQ) statements. The ECQ statements address, in 10 pages or less, five core skill areas. Each question is presented in a Context/Challenge/Action/Result format. The questions are evaluated as a group, with the applicant submitting two or three separate examples of leadership for each question. The examples must show how an applicant took a leadership position at a senior executive level.

Merely doing an excellent job of following direction isn't enough. The ECQ statements are designed to determine your skills as a leader, not a follower. So to complete a successful SES application, you'll need to write about 10 to 15 different situations in which you led others, took initiative and accomplished goals on a leadership level. You'll be required to recount times when you communicated ideas effectively, exhibited inspired decision making, created effective business plans, and inspired your team to accomplish their goals for the benefit of the organization.

The five ECQ skill areas covered are:

1. Leading Change

Leading Change - This ECQ encompasses the ability to develop and implement an organizational vision integrating key national and program goals, priorities, values, and other factors. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to balance change and continuity; to continually strive to improve customer service and program performance within the basic government framework; to create a work environment encouraging creative thinking; and to maintain focus, intensity and persistence, under adversity.

Leading People - This ECQ involves the ability to design and implement strategies that maximize employee potential and foster high ethical standards in meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals

Results Driven - This ECQ stresses accountability and continuous improvement. It includes the ability to make timely and effective decisions and produce results through strategic planning and the implementation and evaluation of programs and policies.

Business Acumen - This ECQ involves the ability to acquire and administer human, financial, material, and information resources in a manner that instills public trust and accomplishes the organization's mission, and the ability to use new technology to enhance decision making.

Building Coalitions/Communication - This ECQ involves the ability to explain, advocate, and express facts and ideas in a convincing manner and to negotiate with individuals and groups internally and externally. It also involves the ability to develop an expansive professional network with other organizations and to identify the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization.