

HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS

FAQs

Criminal Investigator GL-1811-7/9
Entry-Level Hiring



HONOR | SERVICE | INTEGRITY

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1. Delegated Examining Authority

1.1 What is Delegated Examining Authority?

Delegated examining (DE) authority is an authority OPM delegates to agencies to fill competitive civil service jobs through a competitive process open to all U.S. citizens, including current Federal employees. Appointments made by agencies through delegated examining authority are subject to civil service laws and regulations.

1.2 What's the difference between Delegated Examining and Direct Hire Authority?

Both are used to post external, public announcements to fill competitive service jobs; however, Direct Hire Authority (DHA) enables an agency to hire any qualified applicant without regard to 5 U.S.C. 3309-3318, 5 CFR part 211, or 5 CFR part 337, subpart A. DHA eliminates competitive rating and ranking, veterans' preference, and category rating; whereas, those procedures would apply under a DE announcement.

1.3 Will the female only announcement (DAL-INV-11091872-DE-ETH) be DE or DHA?

It will be a DE announcement.

1.4 Can offices submit preferred applicants under a DE announcement?

No, preferred applicants cannot be submitted under a DE announcement.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Who is eligible to apply to the female only announcement?

Those who identify as female may apply to this announcement. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) approved an exception to 5 CFR 332.407, Restriction of consideration to one sex, for this announcement in an effort to successfully recruit females to help execute the agency's mission and conduct gender-based functions such as performing body searches of adult and minor female suspects; assisting in the transport and escort of female suspects; conducting undercover operations; and assisting with women and children victims.

2.2 When is an applicant eligible to test if they did not pass an assessment from the last announcement?

Applicants may retest when 12 months have elapsed from the beginning of the prior testing period in which they received a non-passing result.

2.3 When is an applicant eligible for consideration if they failed the Pre-Employment Physical Fitness Test (PFT-P)?

Applicants are eligible for consideration when 12 months have elapsed from the closing date of the announcement in which they did not pass the PFT-P.

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2.4 When is an applicant eligible for consideration if they failed to successfully complete the polygraph examination?

If an applicant previously had an unsuccessful ICE administered polygraph examination within the last 365 days, ICE will use those results which would eliminate the applicant from continuing in the hiring process.

2.5 What is the age cut-off for Criminal Investigator applicants?

Applicants must be referred for selection prior to their 37th birthday, however, age restriction may not apply to individuals who are qualified preference-eligible veterans or who are currently or have previously served in a federal civilian (not military) law enforcement position covered by 5 U.S.C. 8336(c) or 5 U.S.C. § 8412(d).

2.6 How can an applicant submit a “waiver” for the age requirement?

If an applicant has prior or current Federal law enforcement service, they must submit a copy of their SF-50 reflecting the beginning and end dates of creditable law enforcement civilian (not military) service under 5 U.S.C. 8336(c) or 5 U.S.C. §8412(d) as well as the Retirement Codes (Block 30). If claiming veterans’ preference, applicants must provide acceptable documentation of their preference or appointment eligibility. The member 4 copy of their DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, is preferable. Applicants claiming 10-point preference will need to submit Form SF-15, or other acceptable documentation. See the “Required Documents” section on the job announcement for further details.

3. Minimum Qualifications

3.1 Do applicants need a college degree related to law enforcement to be considered?

No, all degrees in any field of study will be considered.

3.2 Is law enforcement experience required to be considered?

If qualifying based on specialized experience or a combination of specialized experience and education, then law enforcement experience is required. Please refer to the qualifications section on the job announcement for further details.

3.3 Do all qualification requirements (specialized experience and/or education) need to be met at the time of the announcement?

No, all qualification requirements must be met no later than 90 days from the closing date of the announcement. Qualification claims will be subject to verification. Failure to provide the required documentation within the 90-day timeframe may affect the assessment of qualifications or result in the removal of the applicant from the hiring process.

3.4 If an applicant has previous or current law enforcement experience, do they need to include specific details of their experience on their résumé or will their SF-50 suffice?

Applicants must submit a detailed résumé showing how their experience relates to the experience defined in the announcement. HROC will only be able to rely on the information submitted in their online application to assess their qualifications for the position. If qualifying based on specialized experience, detailed 3-5-page résumés are recommended by HROC. Applicants should be encouraged to read the announcement in its entirety and upload any applicable supporting documents as outlined in the Required Documents section of the announcement. Information on how to prepare a résumé is available at the link below:

<https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/faq/application/documents/resume/what-to-include/>.

4. USAJOBS Application

4.1 At what grade level(s) will the female only announcement post?

GL-7/9 with no re-promotion or pay retention. All selections will need to serve 52 weeks at each grade level to be eligible for promotion. Applicants will be reviewed and assessed for both grade levels.

4.2 Can an applicant apply to or be in process for multiple HSI Criminal Investigator announcements?

Yes, while they can apply to or be in process for any announcement that they which they wish to be considered for, please note that once a new hire enters on duty under one HSI Criminal Investigator announcement, they will be removed from and be ineligible for all other HSI Criminal Investigator announcements.

4.3 Will applicants be able to choose their duty location?

For DAL-INV-11091872-DE-ETH, applicants will be able to choose up to three (3) location preferences on their USAJOBS application. However, it is important for applicants to know that these are preferences only. The duty location will be determined upon the final job offer and it will be based on the needs of the agency and availability of positions and funding. Applicants may be offered any geographic location that falls within the AOR for any of the 30 SAC offices. For example, if an applicant selects SAC Atlanta, they may be offered a position in the Birmingham, AL office.

4.4 What are some common mistakes applicants make on the USAJOBS application?

- Inadvertently screening themselves out on “ban the box” and self-certifying questions (e.g. selecting “Yes” to “Have you ever been convicted of a felony”, selecting the incorrect statement that best describes experience and/or education, etc.). *Applicants are strongly encouraged to review their applications thoroughly and more than once to ensure all questions are accurately answered.*
- Not uploading all required documentation (e.g. submitting a diploma instead of transcripts, not submitting a recent SF-50, etc.)

- Not having a detailed résumé. Even if an applicant has the specialized experience, they will not be found qualified if their résumé does not list specific duties that relate to the requirements of the Criminal Investigator position. HROC can only qualify applicants based on the details provided in their résumé (see question 3.4).

5. Assessments

5.1 What comprises the Entry-Level Criminal Investigator assessment process?

The hiring process for entry-level Criminal Investigators requires applicants to complete and pass two phases of assessments and a structured interview, designed to identify the applicants best suited to this entry-level special agent role.

Phase I Assessments

Assessments in Phase I can be taken at any time during the time frame specified in the USAJOBS posting and may be completed from any computer with Internet access.

- Situational Judgement Test (SJT)
- Automated Writing Assessment (AWA)

Applicants will be notified of Phase I assessment results (pass/not pass) via email; those who earn passing scores on both assessments are invited to advance to Phase II.

Phase II Assessments

The three Phase II assessments are taken together and completed under the supervision of a proctor at an ICE-designated testing center. This proctored testing is by appointment only; applicants who are advanced to Phase II will be emailed detailed information about the scheduling process.

- Writing Skills Test (WST)
- Logical Reasoning Assessment (LRA)
- Candidate Experience Record (CER)

Phase III Structured Interview

Applicants will be required to pass a structured interview for this role.

Applicants earning passing scores on all Phase I and II assessments and the Phase III structured interview will be placed into a pool for further review/consideration for the Criminal Investigator position and notified regarding next steps.

5.2 How will applicants be notified to complete assessments?

All communications associated with the Criminal Investigator application process will be sent to the email address the applicant has listed in his or her USAJOBS profile. It is critical for applicants to check (and if necessary, update) their USAJOBS profile prior to applying to ensure their email address is correct and up-to-date. It is the applicant's responsibility to proactively search for communications about testing, including in SPAM or junk mail folders.

Each USAJOBS posting contains specifications for a time frame during which applicants must complete any required assessments. **Failure to complete testing within this defined time frame will result in removal of the applicant from consideration for the current Criminal Investigator job announcement.**

If an applicant has not received an expected invitation to complete or schedule the assessments, they should contact the Strategic Initiatives Unit (SIU) at SAentry@ice.dhs.gov *before the testing window closes*. Any requests received after the test window has closed will not be considered.

5.3 Will previous scores be carried over to future announcements?

Assessments for the Entry-Level Criminal Investigator Assessment Process are either new or substantially updated, and thus, the vast majority of applicants will be required to retest on all assessments.

A very small number of applicants may have completed the AWA in the past 12 months, in which cases their scores will stand; passing scores will automatically be reused. Those who did not pass the AWA will not be eligible to retake the assessment under the current announcement and must wait until 12 months have elapsed.

5.4 Is there a preparation manual for the assessment process?

A Preparation Guide with more detailed information regarding the assessments and assessment process may be found on the ICE.gov website here:
<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/careers/pdf/ciPrepGuide.pdf>

6. Pre-Employment Requirements

6.1 What do the pre-employment requirements consist of?

Applicants are subject to rigorous pre-employment screening procedures. Applicants may be required to complete a drug test, medical examination, physical fitness test, and background investigation (with the possibility of a polygraph).

6.2 What is the overall pre-employment processing time?

The pre-employment process is lengthy due to the thorough screening procedures outlined above. Assuming no issues arise during the process from the point of selection to final employment offer, pre-employment screening takes approximately 3 months. However, because of stringent pre-employment requirements for this position, it is not uncommon for medical or suitability issues to arise during the pre-appointment process. Although most issues are favorably resolved, no applicant can be authorized to enter on duty until all potentially disqualifying issues are addressed and resolved. In cases where issues do arise, the issue resolution process will take longer, generally an additional 4 to 8 months and longer in severe cases. If disqualifying issues are found, applicants are provided with a full and fair opportunity to respond to the potentially disqualifying information prior to a final decision on suitability or medical qualifications.

6.3 How are applicants flagged for a polygraph examination?

Polygraphs are conducted on a risk-based approach based on responses on their SF-86 security form and/or background investigation findings.

6.4 What are the medical requirements such as vision or hearing?

The medical standards for law enforcement personnel can be found here:

<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/careers/pdf/medicalStandardsLePersonnel.pdf>

Details on the medical review process can be found here:

<https://www.ice.gov/careers/what-should-i-provide-during-medical-examination>

6.5 What does the PFT-P consist of?

The PFT-P consists of four individual timed events, performed correctly, in the order listed below, with no more than 5 minutes between exercises, and requires a minimum score for each:

1. 32 sit-ups in 1 minute or less.
2. 220-yard sprint in 47.73 seconds or less.
3. 22 push-ups in 1 minute or less.
4. 1.5-mile run in 14 minutes 25 seconds or less.

6.6 When are applicants scheduled for their PFT-P?

Applicants must clear security (background investigation and polygraph, if applicable), medical, and drug test to move forward to the PFT-P. The PFT-P is the last pre-employment requirement prior to EOD.

6.7 What happens if an applicant fails the PFT-P?

Applicants have two attempts to complete and pass the PFT-P. They will have 45 days to retest if they fail the first attempt. If they fail the retest, they are removed from the process and are ineligible for consideration for 12 months from the closing date of the announcement.

7. Entry on Duty

7.1 When is an applicant cleared to EOD?

Applicants must clear all pre-employment requirements; background investigation, polygraph (if applicable), medical exam, drug test, and PFT-P. All clearances must be valid and have not reached expiration.

7.2 When will an applicant receive the final job offer call?

Once the SF-52 is submitted, it may take a few weeks for applicants to receive a final job offer call. An EOD date will be established at this time.

7.3 When are EOD letters issued to applicants?

After the EOD date has been established, HROC will begin processing the steps required for issuing the EOD letter. The letters will be emailed as soon as all steps are complete.

7.4 Can an applicant temporarily report to a different office until they attend FLETC?

Both offices (permanent and temporary) would have to concur with the request. Temporary duty locations are not guaranteed, and offices have the discretion to approve or not approve based on office needs, availability of resources, and other factors.

7.5 Who is responsible for sending reporting instructions to applicants?

The HSI field office is responsible for sending report instructions, unless a temporary duty location is approved. Only temporary reporting instructions will be provided by HROC.

8. LEAP (Law Enforcement Availability Pay)

8.1 When do new hires receive LEAP?

If Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP) is required, new hires receive LEAP the pay period that they arrive at FLETC. If training is waived, new hires receive LEAP upon EOD.

9. FLETC (Federal Law Enforcement Training Center)

9.1 How long is FLETC training?

A mandatory component of continued employment is the successful completion of Basic Training, which consists of the FLETC Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP) and the HSI Special Agent Training Program (HSISAT). The training is approximately 22 weeks in total.

9.2 How can applicants submit a CITP and/or HSISAT waiver request?

Applicants must provide HROC with their FLETC transcript, FLETC certificate (if available), and current résumé reflecting CITP and/or HSISAT completion. The request will be processed. If the CITP waiver is approved, the applicant/new hire will be placed on the HSISAT waitlist for the next available class. If both CITP and HSISAT waivers are approved, the applicant/new hire will be waived from both trainings.

9.3 When will email confirmations be sent for FLETC class dates?

Final rosters are due to FLETC at least 30 days prior to the class start date. In advance of the due date, WFM will confirm availability with each tentatively rostered employee. Registration emails will be sent to employees after final rosters are submitted to FLETC.

For more information regarding the HSI Criminal Investigator position, please visit the Careers page on the ICE.gov website: <https://www.ice.gov/careers/criminal-investigator>