

Public Safety Civil Service Commission
Development Committee Selection Procedures, Criteria, and Responsibilities (Feb. 2026)

This procedural guideline describes the Civil Service Department and Public Safety Civil Service Commission's general approach to selecting exam development committee members, defining committee roles, and communicating expectations for participation. It is intended for guidance and operational consistency only. This guideline does not create and may not be relied upon to create any new civil service rights. The Public Safety Civil Service Commission and Civil Service Department staff retain full discretion over committee selection and retention, composition, structure, and exam development methods, consistent with applicable law and rule.

To develop and administer competitive civil service exams that are merit-based, job-related, defensible, and compliant with applicable laws, rules, and best practices, the Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC) convenes exam development committees. These committees assist with the creation of written exams, oral boards, and practical assessments. Committees are led by Civil Service Department (CIV) exam staff and supported by one or more professional exam consultants.

Committees generally include current and/or former incumbents who serve as subject matter experts (SMEs) for the rank being tested. The selection of SMEs is critical to ensuring exam quality, validity, and job relatedness.

This document provides an overview of how committee members are identified, selected, and supported throughout the development process.

Development committee SMEs are selected by and serve at the discretion of the Sr. Exams Analyst(s) assigned to the committee.

Application and Selection Procedures

Authority and Selection Oversight

The PSCSC Executive Director is responsible for establishing and overseeing policies and guidelines that govern committee selection and may modify them as needed. Committee member selection processes and individual decisions are made by CIV Exam staff as part of their regular work responsibilities.

Application Process

For each exam, the Executive Director issues a written invitation to apply for exam development committee service. This invitation is distributed to employees in the applicable department, and committee members are selected from applicants who complete the application process.

CIV Exam staff may directly encourage employees to apply when, in their professional judgment, additional expertise, perspectives, or representation are needed to ensure a balanced and effective committee.

Consultation with Departments

Civil Service Exam Analysts select exam development committee members. As part of this process, analysts may consult with:

- Seattle Fire Department (SFD) Development Committee Chairperson; and
- Seattle Police Department (SPD) leadership

Consultation does not confer selection authority on departments.

Participation Expectations and Limitations

Service on a development committee is voluntary and not an assignment by the Seattle Fire Department (SFD) or Seattle Police Department (SPD). Participation is compensated by the employee's department in accordance with union contracts or departmental agreements.

There is no civil service, contractual, or other right to be selected or participate on an exam development committee.

Development committee members may be removed if they fail to meet expectations related to participation, conduct, confidentiality, or professionalism, or if their continued participation is no longer necessary for the exam development process. Selection for, or removal from, a committee is not appealable or grievable.

Questions regarding the selection process may be directed to a Sr. Public Safety Exam Analyst or the Public Safety Exams Manager.

General Selection Criteria

To assemble qualified and diverse exam development committees, CIV exam staff may consider the following non-exclusive, job-related factors:

Job-Related Experience and Representation

- Subject-matter knowledge and job-related experience related to the classification or rank under examination
- Representation across divisions, units, and operational functions relevant to work performed at the rank
- Variety of job assignments and associated ranks
- Length of service to support informed subject matter input
- Diversity of perspectives, experience, and background, consistent with lawful selection principles and exam validity objectives.
- Participation in training and professional development activities relevant to the classification

Committee Service Competencies

In addition to job-related experience, CIV staff may also consider competencies relevant to effective and reliable committee service, including:

- Demonstrated ability to collaborate productively and respectfully as a member of a structured, cross-functional committee
- Prior experience participating in promotional exam development committees
- Demonstrated ability to follow instructions and adhere to standardized exam-development protocols
- Demonstrated impartiality and commitment to fairness and consistency
- Demonstrated ability to maintain confidentiality and security of exam-related discussions, materials, and content, without time limitation
- Demonstrated professionalism, integrity, and reliability
- Availability to participate fully in scheduled committee duties

Committee Composition

Development committees typically consist of 4–6 members, with alternates selected as needed from the pool of qualified applicants. Committee members of the incumbent rank are preferred; however, to achieve representation described under “Job Related Experience and Representation” (see above section called “General Selection Criteria”), an applicant from a higher rank may be selected.

Probationary employees may apply.

For exams with limited pools of qualified SMEs (such as Fireboat Pilot, Fireboat Engineer, or certain lateral-entry exams), the committee selection process may differ, to ensure that the committee includes employees with sufficient experience in the rank to develop the exam.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

Committee members are expected to actively contribute to exam creation, review, and, when assigned, exam administration. Responsibilities include:

Participation and Preparation

- Attend and meaningfully participate in all committee meetings
- Review materials thoroughly
- Complete assigned tasks on time
- Participate in person unless instructed otherwise by CIV staff

Objectivity and Fairness

- Provide unbiased input
- Ensure exam content reflects job-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities

Confidentiality and Security

- Maintain strict confidentiality of exam content, discussions, drafts, and scoring
- Adhere to all confidentiality agreements and security controls
- Do not share or disclose any exam materials outside of committee meetings

Collaboration

- Work cooperatively with other SMEs and CIV staff
- Respect diverse perspectives
- Contribute constructively and professionally

Professional Conduct

- Demonstrate integrity, professionalism, and respect for colleagues throughout the exam development process
- Avoid conduct that could undermine exam credibility, fairness, or defensibility

Compliance

- Follow all applicable CIV, PSCSC, SFD, and SPD policies, rules, and legal requirements related to civil service examinations

Additional Duties

Committee members may assist with in-person exam administration, including:

- Assessor training
- Escorting candidates
- Other assigned support tasks

Authorizing Policies

- PSCSC Rules of Practice and Procedure 9.29, Prohibited Employee Conduct in Examinations
- Seattle Municipal Code Section 4.08.160 and 4.08.210
- Revised Code of Washington 41.08, Civil Service for City Firefighters
- Revised Code of Washington 41.12, Civil Service for City Police