

Prepare for the Interactive APC Knowledge Test:

Welcome! This non-interactive version of the Adjudicator Professional Certification (APC) Knowledge Test is provided to you in advance. The interactive version is under construction and coming soon. This tool aims to provide you with information that will increase your span of knowledge of what adjudicators should know and be able to do to prepare for the formal APC assessment. Although you will not interact with this version of the test, information is available to you in a “print friendly” pdf version. Once the interactive version is ready, you may practice as many times as you would like.

Failure to pass the formal assessment invokes a 45-day waiting period after the first unsuccessful testing event. If you do not achieve a passing score on your second attempt and any ensuing attempts, you will have to wait 90 days until you are eligible to test again.

As a reminder, the information provided is intended to be a preparation tool and is not a guarantee of a successful testing outcome.

Good luck!

1. Describe the purpose of the Personnel Security Program (PSP) and the role of the adjudicator within the program.

- The purpose of the Personnel Security Program (PSP) is to ensure that giving access to classified information or allowing individuals to perform sensitive duties is clearly consistent with the interests of national security.
- The role of the adjudicator is to ensure that all doubts concerning personnel being granted eligibility for access to classified information shall be resolved in favor of national security. Access to classified information is a privilege, not a right.
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

2. Describe the importance of analyzing potential risk factors during the adjudication process.

- Many employees become disloyal after gaining a security clearance. Thus, the applicant clearance process must focus on risk factors that indicate a potential for future betrayal as well as current loyalty.
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

3. What is the system of record for the Department of Defense adjudicative decisions?

- The Department of Defense Joint Personnel Adjudication System (JPAS).
[A sub-system includes the Joint Adjudication Management Systems (JAMS)]
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

4. What is the system of record for Intelligence Community adjudicative decisions?

- The Director of National Intelligence Scattered Castles Database
 - Source: ICPG 704.5 Intelligence Community Personnel Security Database Scattered Castles, October 02, 2008

5. Identify the federal agency database that provides important financial information about an individual – including financial information of a criminal nature.

- The Department of Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN)
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

6. How are security threats and vulnerabilities related in the context of national security?

- A high likelihood that a vulnerability can be exploited and a high level of threat posed by an adversary greatly increases the probability of compromise to our national security.
 - Source: Department of Defense Operations Security Program Manual 5205.02-M, November 3, 2008

7. Define espionage and list at least one activity/behavior that may indicate potential espionage.

- Defined: Spying, or gathering and communicating protected information that will benefit a foreign country or group, usually to the detriment of the United States.
- Unnecessary overtime or working late/coming in early
- Unexplained affluence
- Foreign influence/preference
- Unusual travel patterns
- Antisocial behavior
- Asking about programs that they don't have a need to know
- Attempts to entice co-workers into criminal situations that could lead to blackmail or extortion
- Theft due to greed (not financial need)
- *NOTE: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all activities/behaviors.*
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

8. List at least four investigative requirements that are required for a Single Scope Background Investigation that are not required for a National Agency Check with Law and Credit (NACLC).

- National Agency Check for the Spouse or Cohabitant
- Citizenship
- Education
- Employment
- References
- Former Spouse
- Neighborhoods
- Public Records
- Subject Interview
- Polygraph (only agencies with approved personnel security polygraph programs)
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

9. What is the role of the Reimbursable Suitability Investigation (RSI)?

- The Reimbursable Suitability Investigation (RSI) is an issue-resolution investigation with no minimum investigative requirements and that is scoped to cover all leads

necessary to resolve the outstanding issues after the initial Personnel Security Investigation (PSI) is conducted and adjudicated. Reimbursable Suitability Investigations (RSI's) are conducted by request of the adjudicating agency when additional work is needed that falls outside the scope or coverage of an investigation product.

- Source: Federal Investigation Notice No. 13-08 dated August 30, 2013

10. What investigation is used for initial access to SECRET or CONFIDENTIAL information for either military service members or contractor employees?

- National Agency Check with Law and Credit (NACLC)
 - Source: Federal Investigations Notice 13-07: Investigations Reimbursable Billing Rates for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, August 30, 2013

11. What types of programs are designed to control access, distribution, and protection of particularly sensitive information and may impose enhanced investigative requirements?

- Special Access Program (SAP) positions
 - Source: DOD 5200.2R Personnel Security Program, January 1987, as amended

12. What is proper justification for granting an employee with current SECRET eligibility temporary/one-time access to TOP SECRET information?

- When security personnel authorized by the agency head to make access eligibility determinations find that such access:
 - Is necessary to meet operational or contractual exigencies not expected to be of a recurring nature
 - Will not exceed 180 days
 - Is limited to specific, identifiable information that is made the subject of a written access record
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

13. The eligibility requirements for initial access to TOP SECRET information consist of what type of Personnel Security Investigation (PSI)?

- Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI)
 - Source: Federal Investigations Notice 13-07: Investigations Reimbursable Billing Rates for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, August 30, 2013

14. A National Agency Check with Written Inquiries (NACI) is used for which position designations?

- Non-sensitive position low risk
- HSPD-12 Credential (with no other designation)
 - Source: OPM Federal Investigative Services "Requesting OPM Personnel Investigations" April 2012

15. Define a Periodic Reinvestigation and answer the following question: “If no information of a security concern is developed during a TOP SECRET Periodic Reinvestigation, what investigative leads may be excluded from the Periodic Reinvestigation?”

- Periodic reinvestigations are investigations initiated no later than five years from the close-date of the previous investigation for TOP SECRET or sensitive compartmented information (SCI) access. They may also be initiated randomly or to resolve personnel security concerns.
- The neighborhood checks, and listed and developed character references requirements, may be excluded.
 - Source: ICPG 704.1 Personnel Security Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Sensitive Compartmented Information and Other Controlled Access Program Information, October 2, 2008

16. Which judicial body prosecutes in cases where a subject commits an ordinance violation, such as violation of local health codes and noise restrictions?

- Local or municipal court
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

17. Define “whole person concept” as it relates to the investigation and adjudication process.

- A balanced assessment of affirmative or positive qualities as well as potentially disqualifying behaviors
 - Source: DOD Adjudicative Desk Reference: Assisting Security Clearance Adjudicators, Investigators, and Security Managers in Implementing the U.S. Government Personnel Security Program, March 2014, v4

18. List two actions that harm the national security of the United States and that represent an allegiance concern.

- Espionage
- Sabotage
- Treason
- Sedition
- Terrorism
 - Source: ICPG 704.2 Personnel Security Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Sensitive Compartmented Information and Other Controlled Access Program Information, October 2, 2008

19. List three positive qualities that are associated with trustworthiness, reliability, and being an overall good security risk according to the Whole Person Concept.

- A strong sense of social responsibility (i.e., respect for authority, accepts ordinary rules and regulations, and deals fairly with others), self-control, and the ability to maintain personal or job commitments over time
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

20. List at least four factors that adjudicators should use when evaluating the relevance of an individual’s conduct according to the “whole person” concept.

- The nature, extent, and seriousness of the conduct
- The circumstances surrounding the conduct, to include knowledgeable participation
- The frequency and recency of the conduct
- The individual’s age and maturity at the time of the conduct
- The extent to which participation is voluntary
- The presence or absence of rehabilitation and other permanent behavioral changes
- The motivation for the conduct
- The potential for pressure, coercion, exploitation, or duress
- The likelihood of continuation or recurrence
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC); White House Memorandum: Revised Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information, December 29, 2005

21. What should an adjudicating agency issue to a subject when a subject’s investigation reveals issues that cannot be mitigated under the Adjudicative Guidelines?

- Written Statement of Reason (SOR)/Unfavorable Adjudication
 - Source: E.O. 12968, “Access to Classified Information,” August 4, 1995; E.O. 10865, “Safeguarding Classified Information Within Industry,” February 20, 1960

22. Both military and civilian personnel, as well as contractor employees, are afforded the right to reply in writing to a Statement of Reason (SOR)/Unfavorable Adjudication. What procedure is this right associated with?

- Procedures for Due Process
 - Source: E.O. 12968, “Access to Classified Information,” August 4, 1995; E.O. 10865, “Safeguarding Classified Information Within Industry,” February 20, 1960

23. According to Executive Order 12968, applicants and employees determined not to meet access to confidential information are provided a detailed explanation of denial or revocation. What additional information shall be provided?

- Any documents, records, and reports upon which a denial or revocation is based
- The applicant must be informed of his or her right to be represented by counsel or other representative at his or her own expense.

- Reasonable opportunity to reply in writing to, and to request review of, the determination
- Written notice of and reasons for the results of the review, the identity of the decided authority, and written notice of the right to appeal
- Opportunity to appeal in writing to a high-level panel appointed by the agency head, which shall be comprised of at least three members, two of whom shall be selected from outside the security field
- Provided opportunity to appear personally and to present relevant documents, materials, and information at some point in the process before an adjudicative or other authority, other than the investigating entity, as determined by the agency head
 - Source: E.O. 12968, “Access to Classified Information,” August 4, 1995; E.O. 10865

24. Who considers military and civilian appeals of unfavorable eligibility determinations?

- A high-level panel of at least three individuals appointed by the agency head. Two of the panelists must be outside of the security field.
 - Source: E.O. 12968, “Access to Classified Information,” August 4, 1995; E.O. 10865, “Safeguarding Classified Information Within Industry,” February 20, 1960

25. What requirement is established by Executive Order 10450?

- To designate civilian positions by sensitivity based on the potential for damage to the national security
 - Source: E.O. 10450, “Security Requirements for Government Employees,” April 27, 1953

26. According to Executive Order 10865, an applicant shall be afforded an opportunity to cross-examine persons who have made oral or written statements adverse to the applicant relating to a controversial issue except under what circumstances?

- The head of the department supplying the statement certifies that the person who furnished the information is a confidential informant and that disclosure of his identity would be substantially harmful to the national interest.
- The head of the department concerned or his/her special designee for that particular purpose has preliminarily determined the reliability of the person and the accuracy of the statement concerned, and has determined that failure to receive and consider such statement would, in view of the level of access sought, be substantially harmful to the national security.
- The person who furnished the information cannot appear to testify due to death, severe illness, or similar cause.
 - Source: Executive Order 10865, “Safeguarding Classified Information Within Industry,” February 20, 1960, as amended

27. Which regulatory document prohibits the federal government from granting or renewing eligibility for access to sensitive compartmented information (SCI),

Special Access Programs (SAP) information, and Restricted Data for anyone who has been convicted, sentenced, and incarcerated for a term exceeding one year for any crime?

- The Bond Amendment (50 U.S.C. 435b, Section 3002)
 - Source: Public Law 110-181 (The Bond Amendment)

28. Why might the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) database be queried during a personnel security investigation (PSI)?

- When an investigation is being conducted on an applicant who was born in a foreign country that became a U.S. citizen by naturalization, or when an applicant has a spouse, cohabitant, or immediate family members who were born in a foreign country and are naturalized U.S. citizens or reside in the U.S.
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

29. Fast reduction of debts and/or large debts being paid off with a relatively low salary may be identified by which source of financial information?

- The Credit Bureau Report
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

30. Provide an example of information that could raise a security concern and may be disqualifying under the Outside Activity Adjudicative Guideline.

- Employment or service with the government of a foreign country
- Employment or service with any foreign national, organization, or other entity
- Employment or service with a representative of any foreign interest
- Employment or service with any foreign, domestic, or international organization or person engaged in analysis, discussion, or publication of material on intelligence, defense, foreign affairs, or protected technology
 - Source: USD(I) Memorandum, "Implementation of Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information," December 29, 2005; White House Memorandum: Revised Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information, December 29, 2005

31. During the Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI) interview process, a coworker reported that she observed the subject copy information on a sensitive communications line without authorization, saw classified papers in the subject's personal locker, and knew the subject took classified materials home but believed he was doing it only to keep his work current. Which Adjudication Guideline would the adjudicator apply to evaluate the information reported by the coworker?

- Handling Protected Information
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of

32. Provide at least three examples of commonly observed clinical indicators of a possible mental health problem that should cause an adjudicator to cast doubt on an individual's judgment, reliability, or trustworthiness under the Psychological Conditions Adjudicative Guideline.

- Repetitive worrying or recurrent or persistent thoughts that cause anxiety or distress
- Recurrent nervousness, restlessness, or hyperactivity that impairs function or performance
- Incidents of explosive anger or sudden outbursts of temper that may result in serious acts of assault or destruction of property
- State of sadness or depressed mood that has advanced to the point of being disruptive to functioning
- Intense and unstable (dysfunctional) personal relationships
- Ongoing suspicions, without sufficient basis, that others are exploiting, harming, or deceiving oneself
- Grossly disorganized behavior and/or speech
- Delusions or false beliefs based on incorrect inferences about reality that are firmly sustained despite evidence to the contrary
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

33. Provide an example of information that might mitigate disqualifying information and potentially permit a favorable determination under the Sexual Behavior Adjudicative Guideline.

- The behavior occurred prior to or during adolescence and there is no evidence of subsequent conduct of a similar nature.
- The sexual behavior happened so long ago, so infrequently, or under such unusual circumstances, that it is unlikely to recur and does not cast doubt on the individual's current reliability, trustworthiness, or good judgment.
- The behavior no longer serves as a basis for coercion, exploitation, or duress.
- The sexual behavior is strictly private, consensual, and discreet.
 - Source: USD(I) Memorandum, "Implementation of Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information," December 29, 2005; White House Memorandum: Revised Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information, December 29, 2005

34. Which Adjudicative Guideline would an adjudicator apply when a personnel security investigation (PSI) reveals that a subject had been affiliated with a supremacy group?

- Allegiance

- Source: USD(I) Memorandum, “Implementation of Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information,” December 29, 2005; White House Memorandum: Revised Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information, December 29, 2005

35. Which clinical disorder is usually disqualifying based on the Adjudicative Guidelines and is defined as undesirable conduct characterized by hallucinations, delusions, or bizarre behavior?

- Schizophrenia
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

36. What are the three criteria for applying the Adjudicative Guidelines?

- Concern
- Disqualifying conditions
- Mitigating conditions
 - Source: USD(I) Memorandum, “Implementation of Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information,” December 29, 2005; White House Memorandum: Revised Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information, December 29, 2005

37. In regards to the Financial Considerations Adjudicative Guideline, what is the difference between a discharge of bankruptcy and a dismissal of bankruptcy?

- A discharge of bankruptcy means the petition has been approved and the subject is no longer responsible for the debts specified in the petition; a dismissal of a bankruptcy petition means the bankruptcy court has rejected the petition or the debtor has withdrawn it
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)

38. Define the term “nolo contendere” as it relates to the Criminal Conduct Adjudicative guideline.

- The term means “I will not contest it.” It is a plea to a criminal charge that has a similar effect to pleading guilty except that, because the person has not admitted guilt, the plea cannot be used against that person in any subsequent litigation. If the court accepts the plea, the person will be convicted and sentenced.
 - Source: Adjudicative Desk Reference: Background for Personnel Security Adjudicators, Investigators, and Managers, Version 4. Department of Defense Personnel Security Research Center (PERSEREC)