



FINANCIAL INSTITUTION SPECIALIST

APPLICANT PREPARATION GUIDE



IN THIS GUIDE

STEP 1

Application

STEP 2

Writing Assessment

STEP 3

Structured Panel Interview

PREPARING FOR THE HIRING PROCESS





STEP 1: APPLICATION

Financial Institution Specialists analyze financial data, records, and policies to evaluate the safety, soundness, and compliance status of banks as part of an examination team.

Applicants must complete a [USAJOBS.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) application which includes:

- questions about qualifications,
- a detailed resume of up to 2 pages,
- contact information for references, and
- transcripts (when qualifying based on education).

Applicant resumes, references, and transcripts are evaluated as part of the hiring process. Because only the top candidates continue in the hiring process, applicants should review the announcement carefully to ensure that their resume, references, and transcript provide information that supports their application responses.

Taking the time to tailor resume content to the job and coordinate with individuals who can serve as references is strongly recommended.

Visit the links* below for tips on applying to Federal jobs and creating a Federal resume:

[**FIS Reference Tips**](#)

[**OPM: YouTube Tutorial**](#)

[**OPM: How to create a Federal resume**](#)

[**OPM: What to include in a Federal resume**](#)

* Links are provided for informational use only.

Honesty and integrity are expected of applicants in all phases of the assessment process. The application questions and writing assessments are part of the assessment process. Dishonest conduct, such as obtaining help from others, providing inaccurate/false information, or submitting a response that is not your own original work, may lead to your disqualification from the application process and from Federal employment in the future (5 CFR part 731).

STEP 2: WRITING ASSESSMENT

Only top applicants will receive a time-sensitive email with a link to take a virtual writing assessment - ***it must be completed within the time frame specified in the email.***

The writing assessment is designed to measure the ability to plan, write, review, and submit a response to a prompt. It is completed on a personal computer through a virtual testing platform. A standard time limit is allotted.

The response submitted **must be an original composition created by the applicant** – using the work of others or Artificial Intelligence tools is prohibited.

Responses are scored based on:

- Clarity of ideas
- Support for ideas
- Response structure
- Tone and style
- English mechanics (e.g., grammar, punctuation)

The assessment must be completed in a single, continuous session – it cannot be paused.

Applicants **must pass the writing assessment** to continue in the hiring process; however, a passing score does not guarantee selection.

The links* below provide general tips on organizing and writing essays:

[**EBSCO: Writing an Essay: EBSCO Graphic Organizer**](#)

[**Khan Academy: Essay Tutorial**](#)

[**Purdue University: Online Writing Lab**](#)

* Links are provided for informational use only. Resources do not exactly mirror the FDIC writing assessment or guarantee a passing score.





STEP 3: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Top applicants who pass the writing assessment may be invited to a structured interview, conducted during the dates listed in the job announcement.

Structured interview questions assess skills linked to success in the Financial Institution Specialist role. For example, applicants may be asked to describe how they have applied skills such as adaptability, analytical skills, and interpersonal relationship skills.

A panel of experienced employees conducts the interviews. The interview process consists of a brief introduction, a series of standardized questions, and a brief closing. All applicants are provided with the same maximum amount of time.

Visit the links* below for tips on how to enhance structured interview performance:

[**FIS Structured Interview Tips**](#)

[**The VA: Performance Based Interview- How to Prepare**](#)

[**Partnership for Public Service: Interviewing - Federal Jobs**](#)

[**Partnership for Public Service: Interview Process**](#)

* Links are provided for informational use only. Resources do not exactly mirror the FDIC structured interview or guarantee successful performance.

Visit
[**www.fdic.gov/about/careers**](http://www.fdic.gov/about/careers)
to learn more about
opportunities at
FDIC.



PREPARING FOR THE HIRING PROCESS

Applicants should follow the instructions in the job announcement and application carefully. Each question in the application should be answered accurately, and supported by resume details.

Next, applicants should identify a quiet location where they can take the assessments on a personal computer free of distractions and interruptions. A private location with a hardwired connection to the internet or strong Wi-Fi connectivity is recommended for both the writing assessment and the structured interview.

Applicants who set aside time to prepare for the writing assessment and structured interview may improve their performance. It is worthwhile to practice responding to a writing prompt under time pressure, research the duties and functions of bank examiners/financial institution specialists, and recruit a friend or family member for interview practice.

To identify additional practice resources, example essay prompts, and interview strategies, applicants can augment the links in this guide with internet research using a combination of keywords “free practice essay writing prompts” or “free practice structured interview questions”.

The FDIC is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants are considered without regard to their race, religion, color, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, retaliation, parental status, or other non-merit factors.

Requests for accommodations must be submitted prior to the closing date of the job announcement. Applicants who require reasonable accommodations must adhere to the instructions in the vacancy announcement to submit their request and supporting documents ***no later than the closing date of the announcement***. Requests for reasonable accommodations are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

