

Glossary of Terms

AG – The NYS Attorney General's Office.

Appeal – Term used loosely to refer to a candidate objection to a test item or a test / exam score submitted during a “pre-rating” review of test material or a “computational” review of scoring, authorized by Department regulation.

Applicant – A person who applies for an examination.

Background Material – Reference information included in test content that is used by candidates when answering an item (test question) or a related set of items (i.e., test questions). Background information can be presented in a variety of formats, such as tables, maps, graphs, memos, and narratives.

Best Value – The basis for awarding a contract for services to a responsible and responsive Bidder, who can best optimize quality, cost and efficiency.

Bid or Proposal – A response to the Request for Proposal submitted by a Bidder.

Bidder – Refers to any person or entity who submits a response to the Solicitation. At the time that a Bidder executes a Contract with the State, the Bidder shall become a “Contractor.”

Business Day – Refers to Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET, excluding New York State holidays.

Candidate – An applicant who meets the prescribed minimum qualifications and is approved to compete in an examination.

Choices – The part of a test item or a job simulation exercise section that presents candidates with possible answers or options. Choices may be scored dichotomously (i.e., 1 for a correct answer, 0 for a wrong answer) or using a range of positive and/or negative values based on the relative quality of the choice.

Classification Code – A unique identifier used for a test, subtest, item, macro, or other test content assigned within a defined classification scheme or hierarchy. Codes may be made up of several components such as the test or subtest title, related competency or subject area, the type of test content (e.g., subtest, direction, macro, item, etc.), level of test material, or other content-related factors.

Cloning – The practice of copying and modifying existing test items to create “new” test items which are assigned unique classification codes and therefore independent from the original set of test items from which they were created.

Comptroller or OSC – The Office of the State Comptroller of the State of New York.

Computer Based Testing (CBT) - Shall be used interchangeably with ‘online testing.’

Confidential Information – Information which Federal or State statute or regulation prohibits from disclosure.

Configuration – A configuration is where you use native tools in the system to change the system's behavior or features.

Continuous Recruitment – Examination type for which applications are accepted “continuously” and tests held “periodically.” As tests are scored, passing candidates are added to the eligible list and interfiled with other eligible on a continuous basis.

Contract – The writings that contain the agreement of the State and the Bidder/Contractor setting forth the total legal obligation between the parties as determined by applicable rules of law.

Contract Effective Date – The date that the Contract is approved by the New York State Comptroller. Or otherwise agreed to by the Parties after New York State Comptroller approval.

Contractor – The successful Bidder to whom a Contract has been awarded by the State.

Credits – See “Special Credits” listed below.

Customization – A customization is a feature or extension or modification of a software feature that requires custom coding and or some form of implementation.

Department or DCS – The New York State Department of Civil Service.

EEO – The Federal Equal Employment Opportunities Act.

Eligible List – A list of all passing candidate names and examination scores for an exam in descending final score order. The Eligible List is used by appointing authorities to hire and promote individuals to vacant positions in State and local government. New York State Department of Civil Service currently uses an Eligible List Management System (ELMS), a Microsoft Visual Basic application implemented using an Oracle database to manage eligible lists and list “certifications.”

Eligible List Certification – An extract of the eligible list based upon candidate rank which identifies the individuals qualified for appointment based upon test score (rank). The certification also incorporates criteria for the position to be filled as defined by the appointing (hiring) authority. These criteria typically include such factors as shift, location, type of appointment (permanent/temporary), and type of employment (full/part time).

Examination – A plan of evaluation used for employee selection for an appointment or promotion to a position in a State or local government agency. The evaluation or selection plan usually contains a number of components including, but not limited to minimum qualifications, job-related tests (written, oral, evaluation of training and experience, performance or other), job interview, reference check and probationary period.

Examination Score – The final score that is computed for an examination based on the announced tests and their relative weights plus any special credit (e.g., veteran, seniority credits to which a candidate may be entitled). The examination score is used to determine the rank of passing candidates on the associated eligible list. When the exam includes a single test, the final score is usually computed by computing the candidate’s raw score (total score points before conversion) and any special credit (e.g. seniority credit) to which a candidate may be entitled, and converting the sum using a scoring plan. When the exam includes multiple tests, test scores are usually converted first and then a weighted average of the test scores is calculated as announced to obtain the final score. Other methods of calculating final examination scores are also possible.

Examination Series – A cluster of examinations, usually related by occupational area or by similar job requirements, using common tests or test materials that are grouped together for efficiencies in test administration.

Examination / Test Scope - An examination scope describes the overall selection plan, including the tests and their relative weights and the subject areas to be assessed in each test. A test scope describes the subject areas to be tested in that test; information on item format may also be included.

Examination Type – The recruitment approach designated for the exam competition. Typical examination types, which are frequently used, include:

- Open-competitive – open to all individuals (any person) who meet(s) the minimum qualifications
- Promotion – open only to permanent employees of the jurisdiction (i.e., State or local government) who have served in qualifying titles as described in the minimum qualifications; may be inter-departmental or limited to a specific department or agency
- Transition – open only to State employees who meet the minimum qualifications; this option provides an opportunity to move across occupational fields or organizational levels (such as from clerical to professional traineeship)
- Continuous recruitment – allows applications to be accepted continuously and tests held periodically; can be used with open-competitive, promotion, and/or transition examinations

Final Score – The candidate’s converted score reported on a scale in which 70 represents the minimum passing score and 100 represents the highest score attainable. (See also Score Conversion.)

Go Live – The system has been accepted by ITS, becomes fully operational in a production environment, and is available for end user use.

Item – a test question.

Item Score – The value of the choice(s) selected by a candidate for a specific item. Most multiple-choice items are assigned a score of 1.0 if the candidate selects the correct answer choice and 0 if the candidate selects an incorrect answer choice. In some cases, all multiple-choice items in a subtest have a weight other than 1. Choices in job simulation exercises may be assigned a range of positive and/or negative values, based on the quality of the answer or option presented.

ITS – The Office of Information Technology Services.

Job Simulation – A multi-section test problem or “exercise” that simulates real-world situations by presenting candidates with complex scenarios and many possible answer choices. Candidates must select the best choice(s) to effectively address the problem or situation. Candidates may make one or more choices, and the score for each choice is based on its relative value in addressing the problem. Choices typically cover a range of values, and sometimes both negative and positive values are used for different choices.

Macro – Stimulus material, such as a table, chart, or narrative, that is required to answer an item or set of items; may also be used to refer to the stimulus and associated set of items linked to that stimulus.

Monitor – See Testing Administrator.

Multiple-choice Item – An item type that presents candidates with a question, problem, or incomplete statement in the “stem” and two or more answer options or “choices.”

MWBE – Refers to a business certified with NYS Empire State Development (“ESD”) as a Minority- and/or Women-owned Business Enterprise.

NYS – New York State.

NYS Holidays – Refers to the legal holidays for State employees in the classified service of the executive branch, as more particularly specified on the website of the NYS Department of Civil Service. This includes the following: New Year’s Day; Martin Luther King Day; Washington’s Birthday (observed); Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veteran’s Day; Thanksgiving Day; and Christmas Day.

NYS Vendor ID – Refers to the ten-character identifier issued by New York State when a vendor is registered on the Vendor File.

OCOMA – Office of Commission Operations and Municipal Assistance within the Department of Civil Service.

Offeror – Any responsible and eligible entity submitting a responsive Proposal to this RFP. It shall be understood that references in the RFP to “Offeror” shall include said entity’s proposed subcontractor, if any. Offeror may be used interchangeably with Bidder.

Paper and Pencil (P&P) Pre-Approved (Status) – Test questions with this status are open for candidate review and may be appealed. Candidates may review these test questions at a scheduled review session after the test is held - usually one week afterwards. They may submit a written objection along with supporting documentation as to why they feel that the correct answer (key answer) is incorrect, or that another choice should be considered as good as or better than the correct (key) answer.

Party/Parties – ITS, and the winning bidder for this RFP, shall respectively individually be known as a "Party" to the contract resulting from the winning bidder's bid, and collectively as the "Parties" thereto.

Post Go-Live – The period of time beginning with and following Go-Live.

Prior Approved (Status) – Test questions with this status are NOT open for candidate review. These test questions cannot be appealed.

Performance Test – An assessment technique that requires a candidate to demonstrate the ability to perform a specific skill or ability at a predetermined level of proficiency, e.g., typing test.

Pre-Approved (Status) – Test questions with this status are open for candidate review and may be appealed. Candidates may review these test questions at a scheduled review session after the test is held - usually one week afterwards. They may submit a written objection along with supporting documentation as to why they feel that the correct answer (key answer) is incorrect, or that another choice should be considered as good as or better than the correct (key) answer.

Pricing – The Bidder’s Pricing Schedules set forth in the Bidder’s *Financial Proposal*.

Prior Approved (Status) – Test questions with this status are NOT open for candidate review. These test questions cannot be appealed. The justification for putting a test question in Prior Approved status could be any of the following:

Proctor – See Testing Administrator.

Product – Generally, except where this definition is modified or expanded upon in the RFP, when used in the RFP the term:

"Product" or "Products" means a deliverable under any Bid or Contract which may include commodities, services and/or technology. The term "Product" includes Licensed Software.

"Existing Product" or "Existing Products" means licensed tangible and intangible Products that exist prior to the commencement of work under the Contract resulting from the RFP. Contractor bears the burden of proving that a particular product was in existence prior to the commencement of the TMS project.

"Custom Products" or "Custom Products" means Products, preliminary, final or otherwise, which are created or developed by Contractor, its Subcontractors, partners, employees or agents for ITS under the Contract resulting from the RFP.

Proposal – A Bidder's Administrative, Technical and Financial Proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

Raw Score – The total number of score points, which a candidate has earned in a subtest or test. Raw test scores are based on the sum of all subtest scores. The subtest scores used in the computation of raw test scores may be raw, weighted, or scaled.

Responsible Bidder – A Bidder that is determined to have financial and organizational capacity, legal authority, satisfactory previous performance, skill, judgment and integrity, and that is found to be competent, reliable and experienced, as determined by the State. For purposes of being deemed responsible, a Bidder must also be determined to be in compliance with Sections 139-j and 139-k of the State Finance Law relative to restrictions on contacts during the procurement process and prior findings of non-responsibility under these statutes.

Responsive Bidder – A Bidder meeting the specifications or requirements prescribed in the Request for Proposal, as determined by the State.

Responses – the candidate's answers to be rated for the test; the choice(s) selected by a candidate (for a selected response test) or the information entered by a candidate in a field (for a constructed response or training and experience format test).

Roster – A record of the applicants or candidates for an examination and their final disposition, including their test and/or pass/fail examination score and such factors as application review status (e.g., approved, disapproved), and additional credits (e.g., veterans, seniority). Rosters are used by the appropriate civil service agency (i.e., State or local) to create eligible lists.

Scoring Plan – The passing standard (i.e., passpoint) and score conversion formula, bands, or other conversion method to be used to transform weighted raw scores to final scores on a test or examination. For examinations with multiple tests, the scoring plan also includes the manner in which weighted test scores will be combined to compute the final examination score.

Score Conversion – Department regulations require that Final Scores of passing candidates be reported on a scale in which a score of 70 represents the minimum performance needed to qualify and a score of 100 equals the best possible performance (expected or attained). Actual tests contain varying numbers of test items and the range of total attainable score points, or Raw Score, is not the same as

the range of reportable Final Scores. As a result, Raw Scores must be converted to Final Scores using a scoring plan, unique to the examination or test plan.

To convert scores, a “pass-point” or “cut score” is identified in the Raw Score Distribution to equate to a Final Score of 70, which is the minimum passing test score. A Conversion formula or banding tables are then developed to convert the distribution of passing Raw Scores to a range of 70 – 100. . Failing scores may be grouped into a single range and reported to candidates as 60- or converted into multiple discrete scores or score bands. In most cases, the scoring plan involves score banding to report scores in intervals of 5 or 10 points. In a few cases, one or more arithmetic formulae are applied to report scores in discrete or single point intervals. Other methods of calculating converted scores are also possible.

SDVOB – Refers to a NYS-certified Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business.

Selective Certification – Procedures used to further refine/filter list eligibles to identify those who possess specific qualifications or characteristics needed for a position or group of positions in a job title. The names and final examination scores of candidates meeting identified criteria are reported (in score order) to agencies for their use in making appointments to positions. The names and scores of candidates not meeting the identified criteria are retained on the Eligible List for consideration for appointments in other agencies or for consideration in other selective certification profiles. See Appendix D for further information.

Special Credit – Points that are awarded to passing candidates based on law, regulation, and/or policy, such as veteran credits or seniority credits for promotion examinations.

SSD – The Department’s Staffing Services Division.

Stem – The part of a multiple-choice test item that presents candidates with the problem to be solved or the question to be answered; the stem may also contain instructions, information to be considered or references to be used in answering the item.

Subcontract – Test material that is provided to the test creator having overall responsibility for an examination (“prime contractor”) by another test content creator, whose role is to provide that test material (“subcontractor”). Typically, subcontracts assess general, cross-occupational competencies and knowledge, skills, and abilities that are used in a wide variety of tests, such as “reading comprehension,” or “supervisory practices.” Currently, prime contractors request subcontracts in a specific subject area for specific tests and/or exams to be administered on specific dates. Subcontractors typically receive a high volume of requests from a number of different test creators for a single date and must manage, fill, and track these requests through assignment, test content creation, and post-test scoring. This method of subcontracting supports the Department’s ability to efficiently test for job-related competencies, which are required in a wide variety of titles.

Subcontractor – Any individual or legal entity (including but not limited to sole proprietor, partnership, limited liability company, firm or corporation) who has entered into a contract, express or implied, for the performance of a portion of a Contract with a Contractor.

Subject Area – The domain covered by a set or collection of test questions associated with job-related competencies, or areas of knowledge, skill or ability to be tested; some examples would include: written communication; understanding and interpreting tabular material; basic surveying and drafting techniques; and principles and practices of accounting.

Submission – A Bidder’s Administrative, Technical and Financial Proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

Subtest – A subset of test content associated with a specific “subject area.” Subtests may include several test content elements, such as directions, background material, sections “macros,” and other elements along with test items/choices. Currently, multiple-choice subtests typically include questions in blocks of 10 or 15 equally weighted items.

Subtest Score – the score points a candidate has earned based on responses to items in that subtest. Most multiple-choice items are scored as 1 if correct and 0 if incorrect, and the subtest score is based on the sum of the item scores for that subtest. A subtest can also have a weight other than 1.0; in this case candidates must be informed of the weight of the items in the subtest (e.g., .5, 2.0, etc.), and the same weight must be used for all items in the subtest. For subtests consisting of job simulation exercises, most include several sections with many choices that are differentially weighted. The score range of the total possible positive and any negative choices is typically greater than the total number of score points assigned to the subtest. As result, the sum of the candidate’s responses is scaled to a range of scores that reflect the attainable score points for the subtest.

T&E (Evaluation of Training & Experience) item – An item used to solicit specific information from a candidate relating to the candidate’s training, education, or work experience. T&E items typically require candidates to enter information regarding their training, education, or experience in designated fields. The information is then scored against a pre-defined rating scale which specifies the specific credit to be associated with each T&E item and the maximum limits of possible credit that can be gained for each item or subgrouping of T&E items. T&E items have no “correct” answer. T&E tests are administered without proctors and can be taken from home.

Test – a test is one component of an examination or evaluation plan used for employee selection for a position in State or local government. Competitive tests are designed to rank candidates based on their job-related qualifications, knowledge, skills, and abilities; non-competitive tests are pass/fail.

Test Administration Materials – Documents and forms required to administer a test in a standardized manner. In addition to general instructions, special forms, and test booklets, test administration materials include Candidate Directions and Monitor Instructions as described below:

- **Candidate Directions** – Standardized test administration instructions developed for each examination series and provided to candidates on the day of the test. The Directions list the procedures the candidates must follow and identify the specific questions to be answered for each examination in the series.
- **Monitor Instructions** – Directions for monitors to follow to ensure that the same procedures are used in each test administration session. Complete, step-by-step directions and a script for monitors to read to the candidates are provided. Monitors may also refer to a Monitor’s Handbook for more detailed information on test administration procedures.

Testing Administrator – Staff in charge of administering the assembled written or computer-based test(s) held on a given test date at a specific test site. Test administration staff typically include the following roles:

- **Test Center Supervisor** – person in charge of all test administration at the test site for that test date.

- Assistant Test Center Supervisor(s) – person responsible for overseeing test administration for a group of testing rooms or area of the test site. The Assistant Test Center Supervisor reports to the Test Center Supervisor and supervises Proctors/ Monitors in an assigned area.
- Proctor(s) / Monitor(s) – person responsible for administering the test(s) to candidates assigned to one testing room (i.e., room monitor) or supervising candidate movement in an assigned area (hall monitor). The term monitor is commonly associated with written test administration, and the term proctor is used with computer-based test administration (to distinguish the person administering the test from the computer monitor).

Test Booklet – Used in paper and pencil test administration to present candidates with test content – background material, directions, test items, etc. One or more subtests of test material may be presented to candidates taking a variety of examinations and test plans. Candidates may be required to answer questions presented in more than one Test Booklet for a specific examination.

Test Center / Test Site – Test Center refers to a geographic area (e.g., Albany) where test sites are located; Test Sites are the actual buildings (e.g., Albany High School) where tests are held.

Test Date – the day (or days) scheduled for test administration. Paper and pencil tests administered State-wide are commonly scheduled for Saturday test dates (along with a Sunday alternate test date) or a Saturday/Sunday testing weekend. Computer-administered tests may utilize a “testing window” or period of testing due to the limited number of proctored test sites available for test administration. On occasion, some examinations may be held on two different test dates to control for test material exposure or due to the number of test items included within an examination.

Test Plan – A list of the specific subjects and the associated subtests to be included within the test.

Test Plan Number – A number identified within the Candidate Directions which links each examination to the specific test questions to be answered as identified within the test and question chart portion of the Candidate Directions. Examinations are listed within the Candidate Directions next to the Test Plan number assigned to the test plan for that examination. Using the Test Plan Number and Test and Question Chart, candidates can determine which test questions to answer for their exam.

Test and Question Chart – The portion of the Candidate Directions containing columns associated with Test Questions within Test Booklets and Test Plan Numbers. The rows within the chart for each Test Plan Number identifies the questions to be answered within each test booklet as indicated by an “x” within the corresponding test question column.

Test Score – The total score points a candidate has earned for all subtests in the test, weighted and converted according to a scoring plan.

Test Type - The test format used to assess job-related competencies or areas of knowledge, skill, and ability. Typical test types include written (multiple-choice, job simulation exercise, essay, or other), oral, evaluation of training and experience, and performance tests.

TSD – The Department’s Testing Services Division.