

Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook

Chapter 192

Examination Security

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Sec. 192.010 Introduction

It is important that examinations remain secure during every stage of the examination process: (1) development; (2) administration; (3) scoring; and (4) exam materials retention. This handbook chapter outlines the necessary steps to take during each stage to ensure that examinations remain under the highest level of security.

Sec. 192.020 Statutory and Rule Authority

1. “Every reasonable precaution shall be taken to prevent any unauthorized person from gaining any knowledge of the nature or content of the examinations that is not available to every applicant.” s. 230.16(10), Wis. Stats.
2. “Any person who willfully, alone or in cooperation with one or more persons, defeats, deceives or obstructs any person in respect of the rights of examination or registration under this subchapter or any rules prescribed pursuant, thereto, or” s. 230.43(1)(a), Wis. Stats.
3. “Who willfully, or corruptly, falsely marks, grades, estimates or reports upon the examination or proper standing of any person examined, registered or certified, pursuant to this subchapter, or aids in so doing, or” s. 230.43(1)(b), Wis. Stats.
4. “Who willfully or corruptly makes any false representations concerning the same, or concerning the person examined, or” s. 230.43(1)(c), Wis. Stats.
5. “Who willfully or corruptly furnishes any person any special or secret information for the purpose of either improving or injuring the prospects or chances of any persons so examined, registered or certified, being appointed, employed or promoted, or” s. 230.43(1)(d), Wis. Stats.
6. “Who personates any other person, or permits or aids in any manner any other person to personate him or her in connection with any examination, registration, application or request to be examined or registered, shall for each offense be guilty of a misdemeanor.” s. 230.43(1)(e), Wis. Stats.
7. “Except as provided in sub. (3) and s. 103.13, the director and the administrator may keep records of the following personnel matters closed to the public:

- (a) Examination scores and ranks and other evaluations of applicants.” s. 230.13(1)(a), Wis. Stats.
8. “The following examination information may be released to an examinee:
- (a) The composition of the examination;
 - (b) The weight of, the total possible score of, and the examinee’s score on, each separately scored component of the examination; and
 - (c) Information as to whether veterans preference was included in his or her final grade.”
- s. ER-MRS 6.08(1), Wis. Adm. Code
9. “. . . examination information which may not be released includes but is not limited to the following:
- (a) copies of examination booklets, rating guides and scoring keys;
 - (b) copies of written comments of examination raters including oral board members;
 - (c) tapes of oral examinations;
 - (d) results of medical examinations except through the examinee’s designated physician;
 - (e) scores of candidates identified by name; and
 - (f) answers to specific items on written examinations.”
- s. ER-MRS 6.08(2), Wis. Adm. Code
10. “The administrator shall delete the names of the examinees from written examination papers that will be scored by raters and instruct raters who nonetheless recognize the identity of examinees to disqualify themselves from rating any examinee whom they cannot objectively evaluate.” s. ER-MRS 6.09(1), Wis. Adm. Code
11. “The administrator shall provide appropriate security for all examination materials.” s. ER-MRS 6.09(2), Wis. Adm. Code.

Sec. 192.030 Definitions

The following are definitions of terms used in this Chapter.

1. **Administrator:** The Administrator of the Division of Merit Recruitment and Selection.
2. **Benchmark:** A response to an examination question which is developed by the subject matter experts, in cooperation with human resources staff. A benchmark serves as a grading standard and enables the raters to systematically (either qualitatively or quantitatively) evaluate each applicant’s response.
3. **Proctor:** Person designated to administer an examination to an applicant and who is responsible for ensuring that the examination materials remain secure.
4. **Subject matter expert:** An individual who knows the critical aspects of the job. This is often the supervisor of the position to be filled, faculty or technical school instructors, or people with similar positions in other organizations.

Sec. 192.040 Transmitting Exam Materials

Transmittal of exam materials should be kept to a minimum and handled with diligence and security. Hand delivery of exam materials is the most secure means. Other means of transferring exam materials are outlined below.

1. **Sending applicant exam responses and related materials to and from a rating or scoring panel:**

When sending exam materials via U.S. Mail or inter-departmental mail, send the exam under separate cover from the ratings, scoring keys, or benchmarks. Applicant responses sent via U.S. Mail or inter-departmental mail should be sent in a double envelope, marked in red “CONFIDENTIAL—TO BE OPENED BY ADDRESSEE ONLY.” Seal the inside envelope, containing the materials, with tape and sign directly on the tape. Including a signature on the tape will make it easy to identify if someone has tampered with the package. Sending exam materials by FAX is acceptable only if access to the recipient FAX machine location is secure. The receipt of any FAX of exam material is to be followed up by a phone call to verify the recipient received the FAX in its entirety.

Depending on the type of exam materials, use of email may be acceptable. Email correspondence sent between individuals with email addresses in the state global address book are encrypted and protected for security. In some cases, using an email encryption tool or password-protecting attachments may afford added security if appropriate.

2. **Sending multiple-choice, “centered” exams:**

All centered exams must be sent via an insured carrier (e.g. United Parcel Service, Federal Express, US Certified Postal Mail, or a bonded and licensed courier service), and require the recipient to sign for the package before it is released. The sender is responsible to verify that each centered exam reaches its destination, and should report any lost or erroneously delivered centered exams to OSER immediately. It is never permissible to FAX or email the scoring key to any multiple choice centered exam.

3. **Sending exam materials under development:**

Depending on the type of exam materials, use of email may be acceptable. Email correspondence sent between individuals with email addresses in the state global address book are encrypted and protected for security. In some cases, using an email encryption tool or password-protecting attachments may afford added security if appropriate.

When sending an individual item or list of potential items under development, encrypted email, double-sealed U.S. mail, or double-sealed inter-departmental mail may be used. However, extra security must be used once the exam is close to being finalized, or is finalized. In these cases, limited use of encrypted email, or the use of insured carriers (i.e., United Parcel Service, Federal Express, US Certified Postal Mail, or a bonded and licensed courier service) are the methods of transmission that should be used.

Sec. 192.050 Examination Development

Many people will come in contact with exam materials throughout the development phase. The following points identify steps to take to help maintain security.

1. Ensure that all human resources staff who are working with an exam have signed an *Exam Security Agreement/Job Expert Certificate* ([OSER-MRS-196](#)). (This form is posted on the OSER website and is also included for reference as Attachment #1 to this handbook chapter.) For item reviewers and developers of objective tests (e.g., multiple choice and objective inventory exams), use job incumbents, persons in higher-level civil service classifications, and supervisors. For subject matter experts (SMEs) for evaluating applicant responses for rated exams (e.g., oral and essay exams and training & experience assessments), use faculty or technical school instructors, or people with similar positions in other organizations. (See Chapter 176 of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook* regarding exam development and exam rating procedures.)
2. Have all SMEs sign an *Exam Security Agreement/Job Expert Certificate* before having any involvement in the exam process. This form provides information about the confidentiality of examination materials and the need

to maintain examination security. It also documents the SMEs' qualifications for developing the examination.

3. Keep examination materials or potential examination materials in a secure and locked location (locked desks, locked file, or locked room) when the human resources specialist or SMEs are not actively working with them. Electronic exam materials should be restricted and stored on a limited access or a secure drive on the computer.
4. Inform the SME that no other person may be invited to review or provide items unless the human resources specialist responsible for the examination approves this in advance. SMEs recommended to the staffing specialist must sign an *Exam Security Agreement/Job Expert Certificate*.
5. If transmittal of exam materials is necessary during exam development, follow the instructions in section 192.040 of this handbook chapter.
6. Inform persons who assist in typing, duplicating, printing, or handling examination materials that the materials are confidential. Require them to sign an *Exam Security Agreement*.
7. Instruct SMEs to not provide any examination information to potential applicants. Refer all requests for information, other than questions about the job itself, to the appropriate human resources representative.
8. Follow the guidelines listed in the *Public Disclosure Policy* (see Attachment #2) when responding to requests for information. All requests and responses must be made in writing.
9. Return all examination materials to the human resources specialist after SMEs finish their work. Treat any material, such as notes or extra copies of items that are not retained for the examination file, as confidential and destroy appropriately.

Sec. 192.060 Exam Administration

1. Multiple-choice and essay exams are supervised by proctors at regularly scheduled exam centers or by special arrangement with DMRS. (See *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook* Chapter 172—Exam Centers.) Examinees must return all examination materials to the exam proctor. Training and Experience Assessments (T&E) and Objective Inventory Questionnaires (OIQs) are generally administered online or through the mail.
2. Any person who proctors a state civil service examination must receive instruction on proper procedures from a DMRS Chief Proctor or an Exam Administration Unit staff person. Proctors must sign an *Exam Security Agreement* form.
3. Applicants who take examinations at times other than at a regularly scheduled exam center must sign a *Special Exam Certificate* form stating that they will keep examination content confidential. ([OSER-MRS-101](#)). (Also, see Attachment #3 for a copy of this form.)
4. The DMRS Exam Administration Unit will mail examination materials to special locations, such as out-of-state administration sites for military personnel, via Certified Mail or United Parcel Service. These materials will be marked "CONFIDENTIAL—TO BE OPENED BY ADDRESSEE ONLY." DMRS maintains records of material mailed and when it is returned.
5. Exam proctors must verify the identity of all candidates before allowing them to take exams. Each applicant must show a photo ID (preferred) or an ID with his/her signature on it.
6. Proctors must check as applicants return the examination materials to ensure that all materials are returned.
7. The examination proctor or coordinator must ensure that exam materials are not removed from the exam site. Exam materials must be stored in a secured place such as a locked file cabinet, locked desk, or locked

examination room when not being used.

8. The names of oral board members or rating panels are kept confidential until the exam is administered and scored. (See Attachment #2.)
9. Additional information on exam proctoring may be found in the *Wisconsin Civil Service Proctor Manual* available through the DMRS Exam Administration Unit.

Sec. 192.070 Breach of Examination Security at an Exam Center

1. Proctors have the authority to discipline and ultimately dismiss an examinee for misconduct or disruptive behavior. Dismissal may have grave consequences for an examinee and should be used only as a last resort. Proctors may dismiss when warranted and use best judgment in handling each situation. In most cases, a verbal warning will be sufficient to prevent further incidents. Dismissal action is warranted when, after being warned, an examinee continues to:
 - a. Cheat or copy from another examinee's work.
 - b. Use prohibited aids (e.g., books, dictionaries, programmable calculators, cell phones or mobile electronic device, etc.).
 - c. Eat, drink, or smoke in a room.
 - d. Cause disturbance in any way to other examinees in the room.
2. If dismissal is deemed necessary, the proctor should take the following steps:
 - a. Immediately collect all exam materials from the examinee.
 - b. Tell the examinee that his or her failure to abide by the first verbal warning has made dismissal necessary.
 - c. Dismiss the examinee.
 - d. Provide DMRS with a thorough written account of the incident, including the examinee's name, Wisc.Jobs Applicant I.D., exam title, date, exam city and the action taken. Be specific in reporting the incident, because the Exam Administration Specialist will need all available facts to follow up on the dismissal.

See the *Wisconsin Civil Service Proctor Manual* regarding procedures on handling security breaches at an examination center.

Sec. 192.080 Breach of Examination Security at the Agency

Agency human resources staff must stop immediately any selection process activity if there is an alleged breach of exam security. Immediately notify the DMRS Administrator and the DMRS HR Consultant assigned to the agency and provide details of the allegation. Do not discuss the allegation with anyone outside DMRS or OSER Legal Counsel, except to indicate that the examination process is being investigated.

DMRS staff will conduct a preliminary investigation of the alleged examination security breach in cooperation with agency human resource staff. After this preliminary investigation, the DMRS Administrator will determine whether a potential breach occurred, and if so, what action to take. The Administrator may refer the situation to the appropriate law enforcement agency for further investigation and possible prosecution.

Sec. 192.090 Exam Scoring

1. All raters or board members for written or oral examinations must sign the *Exam Security Agreement/Job Expert Certificate* form ([OSER-MRS-196](#)). This form provides information on exam material confidentiality

and the need to maintain examination security. It also documents the raters' or board members' qualifications to rate the examination.

2. SMEs must maintain proper security of examination materials during the rating or review process. If ratings are not completed in a central location, raters must keep all examination materials in a locked file or desk when materials are not being scored. Examination materials must not be left unattended or viewed by anyone not involved in the scoring process. Raters must closely monitor and account for all examination materials in their possession.
3. For instructions on returning exam materials, see section 192.040 of this handbook chapter.
4. SMEs or raters shall not keep copies of any examination materials.
5. Benchmarks, rating scales or criteria, or answers to objective items cannot be disclosed to applicants.
6. T&E and essay exam materials must be "blinded" by removing any identifying information, i.e., name, address, social security number, ethnicity, gender, etc. The blinding of personal information helps the rater focus on the applicant materials relative to the benchmarks rather than the identity of the applicant or other non-job related distractions. Blinded applicant materials should be assigned an identification number for organizational purposes. At the rating panel briefing, raters will review a list of names of the applicants and complete the Job Expert Certificate. Therefore, the sequence of printed applicant exams must be different from the sequence of applicant names on the list provided to the exam rating panel for review.

Sec. 192.100 Exam Materials Retention

1. Secure examination materials in locked files or in a secured vault. Keys to the locks should be unique to those files and should be maintained by a designated employee.
2. Develop and follow a checkout procedure for the examination files to ensure proper control and handling of the exam materials.
3. Keep examination materials in a central location. Staffing specialists should keep exam materials in their immediate work area only when they are developing specific examinations.
4. Procedures for examination materials held within any computer system must follow the same security precautions as with other written examination materials. If exam materials are maintained in electronic media (emails, computer drives) access and security of those materials should be restricted.
5. Agencies which have a staffing delegation agreement with DMRS are to maintain records of their own exams in a secure manner.
6. Examination materials and any related records must be maintained or disposed of appropriately following the [General Records Schedule: Human Resources and Related Records](#) (October 26, 2010).

Sec. 192.110 Confidentiality of Examination Materials in Appeals

When examination materials are the subject of a Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission appeal, maintain the security of the following materials which are considered closed records.

1. Examination scores
2. Ranks
3. Other evaluations of applicants

4. Names of applicants who are not certified for employment

Additional guidelines for disclosure of exam materials are listed in the *Public Disclosure Policy*. (See Attachment #2.)

These documents are to be submitted for an appeal only when the Commission so orders and agrees to maintain them on a sealed basis. Do not release any confidential information to the Commission until you have contacted the DMRS Administrator.

Sec. 192.120 Administrative Information

This chapter was originally published in November 1980 as Chapter 196 of the *Wisconsin Personnel Manual*. It was revised and renumbered to Chapter 192 of the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook* on October 28, 1992, with bulletin MRS-142, which is now obsolete.

The chapter was updated in June 2002. A new form, the Exam Security Agreement/Job Expert Certificate, was created to replace the Exam Security Agreement-Staffing, Test Security Agreement, and Job Expert Certificate forms. Additionally, minor content changes were made to the chapter, and it was reformatted.

In April 2003, further formatting changes were made and an administrative information section added.

The chapter was updated in September 2005 to correct some grammatical errors. Section 192.080 was revised to specify that names should be removed from resumes that are used as part of the evaluation process.

In June 2012 the chapter was edited to update information. Most notable were the addition of section 192.040 on transmitting exam materials and the renumbering of subsequent sections. With updates to section 192.040(1), regarding security of electronic transmittal of exam materials, Bulletin [MRS-197](#), dated February 22, 1999, is now obsolete. References to Application Materials Review and Achievement History Questionnaire were replaced with Training and Experience Assessment. The chart on Attachment #2 (Public Disclosure Policy) now includes a row to distinguish exam component weight. Attachment #3 was revised with the April 2012 updated version of the Special Exam Certificate.

State of Wisconsin
Office of State Employment Relations
Division of Merit Recruitment and Selection

EXAM SECURITY AGREEMENT

Name _____

Department or Agency _____

Work Location _____

Test Title (if applicable) _____

In the course of my work assignments, I have access to confidential examination information including but not limited to, examination questions, answers to examination questions, scoring guides and benchmarks for scoring responses to examination questions, examination plans, examination development resource materials and verbal information on the content or planned content of civil service examinations.

I understand that the above-listed documents and information, as well as other information to which I have access, is special or confidential information within the meaning of s. 230.43, Wis. Stats. I agree to keep this information confidential and not to copy the materials, discuss them with anyone not specifically authorized by the Human Resources Specialist, Manager, or Representative, or allow any unauthorized person access to them. Disclosing information to unauthorized persons is a violation of s. 230.43, Wis. Stats. This violation is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not less than \$50 nor more than \$1,000 or by imprisonment for not more than one year in the county jail or both.

I also recognize my continuing obligation to exercise all reasonable precautions to preserve the security of examination materials in my custody and to comply with the meaning and intent of § 230.16(10), Wis. Stats.

By signing below, I acknowledge that failure to adhere to the requirements set forth in this statement would be a violation both to the public trust and as a condition of my continued employment with the State of Wisconsin.

Signature

Date

Note: Please keep a copy of this signed document.

(Complete Other Side if You are Creating or Evaluating an Exam)

JOB EXPERT CERTIFICATE

Name of Evaluator/Rater _____

Title of Evaluator/Rater _____

Address of Evaluator/Rater _____

Civil Service Title of Position Being Evaluated/Rated _____

.....
Are you qualified to participate in this aspect of the selection process for this position or classification? Initial below all that apply.

- I am the immediate supervisor of persons employed in this position or classification.
- I have performed all or most of the duties of this position or classification. (List where you performed these duties, your title, and dates.)

I was directly involved in the development of the position description or the job analysis (e.g., I helped define the duties and responsibilities of this position or classification).

I currently hold, or have held in the past, a position closely related to this classification that is at the same pay range or higher.

Other (please explain) _____

.....
Read the following questions and initial only those statements that apply to this situation. Please sign below.

1. Are you reviewing exam materials as part of the exam development process?
 I reviewed or will review the position description, exam dimensions, and other applicable examination materials.
 I reviewed the job dimensions for this position and the examination, and I certify that the examination is representative, necessary, and is appropriate for this position or level.
2. Are you a rating panel member? Please review the list of candidate's names.
 I reviewed the names of candidates whom I have been asked to rate for this part of the examination process. I am either not acquainted with any of the candidates, or my acquaintance with one or more candidates whom I will rate will not affect my ability to provide objective ratings. The names of any candidates whom I will not rate are listed below or indicated on the attached sheet.

Signature Date

(Complete Other Side)

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE POLICY			
DOCUMENT/INFORMATION	PUBLIC	CLOSED	COMMENTS
Certified List of Candidates	X		Names only; in alpha order.
Completed T&E/OIQ		X	Applicants may view their own responses. Narrative responses may be shared with appointing authorities (see note below).
Examination Plan		X	
High Importance Job Content Questionnaire (HIJC)		X	
Names of Oral Board Members or Other Raters	X		Available to public <u>after scoring</u> is completed.
Names of Transfer Candidates	X		Names of non-certified candidates may be closed upon request under s.19.36(7)(b), Wis. Stats., but are public once they have been referred to the appointing authority as a finalist.
Non-Certified Names, Scores and/or Ranks		X	Only human resources staff may see this information.
Oral and Written Exam Questions, Benchmarks, Scoring Guides, and/or Answers		X	Any material <u>containing this information in any form</u> is not public. NOTE: T&E and OIQ questions are public <u>after</u> they are sent out in the mail.

Note:

ER-MRS 6.08(3) For certified individuals, the administrator may release to the appointing authority the following examination information, but only after the employment interview questions have been finalized:

- (a) Narrative responses to open-ended examination questions such as essay or achievement history.
- (b) Tapes of oral examinations.
- (c) Resumes, letters of interest, and other narrative examination material provided by the certified candidates as long as the materials released do not contain scores, comments, ratings, or other evaluations.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE POLICY			
DOCUMENT/INFORMATION	PUBLIC	CLOSED	COMMENTS
Passing Point		X	May be released with DMRS approval.
Position Description (PD)	X		
Scores of Examinees		X	Applicant's score may be released to applicant only.
Statistical Information Including Reliability and Validity Information		X	May be released with DMRS approval.
Exam component weight	X		If exam components aren't equally weighted, must be released to examinees as part of exam instructions/explanation.
Total Possible Score, and Examinee's Score on Each Examination Component		X	May be released to applicant only.

State of Wisconsin
Office of State Employment Relations
Division of Merit Recruitment and Selection

SPECIAL EXAM CERTIFICATE

I, _____, hereby declare that I have been granted
(print or type full name)
special permission to take the examination for the position of _____;
that I have not discussed any aspect of the examination for this position with any person who
recently took this examination; that I will not discuss the examination with any person; that the
reasons for the "special" examination date stated below are true; that I understand that any
misstatements of material fact on my part will disqualify me from this examination; and that I
have read the note below regarding criminal penalties for violating this test confidentiality.

**Please indicate your reason for taking this exam on a date other than the monthly
Saturday examination date:**

- I was not available to take this exam during the regular monthly
Saturday exam administration, so I elected to take this exam during the
alternate exam administration offered this weekday evening.**
- I am a client of a Madison or Milwaukee Job Center and am taking this
exam at a weekday exam administration offered at my Job Center.**
- Other:** _____

Signature of Examinee

Date

Test City

Signature of Proctor

Approved by

NOTE: There is a criminal penalty for violating the confidentiality of State of Wisconsin Civil Service examinations as described in s. 230.43(1), Wis. Stats.

OSER-MRS-101 (R 12/12)
s. 230.43, Wis. Stats.