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Federal Bureau of Investigation

Special Agent Selection Process Candidate Information Packet



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Chapter 1

General Information





Welcome.

Interviewing a subject for an ongoing investigation in the morning, testifying at court before lunch, planning an operation with intelligence analysts and partners in the afternoon, and speaking at a community event in the evening—that is just one day in the life of a Special Agent.

As a Special Agent, every day is different. In fact, every career path is different. It's a position that takes people with unique skills, lives, and backgrounds. The one thing every Special Agent shares is the drive to help keep our nation safe, and the pride of making a difference in the communities they serve.

FBI Special Agents are responsible for conducting sensitive national security investigations and enforcing over 300 federal statutes. As an FBI Special Agent you may work on matters including terrorism, counterintelligence, cyber crime, organized crime, white-collar crime, public corruption, civil rights violations, financial crime, bribery, bank robbery, extortion, kidnapping, air piracy, interstate criminal activity, fugitive and drug-trafficking matters, and other violations of federal statutes.

FBI Special Agents must:

1. Conform to the FBI's strict behavior standards while on and off duty (no DUI's, domestic violence abuse, drug abuse, etc.)
2. Be available 24/7, including weekends and holidays, and expect to work an average of 10 hours per day, five days per week
4. Carry a firearm at all times while on duty and at one's discretion while off duty
5. Qualify with a firearm 4 times per year
6. Be willing to use deadly force, involving close physical contact, if necessary
7. Be eligible to hold Top Secret/SCI Clearance
 - Entails polygraph(s) and a rigorous background investigation
 - Submit a yearly financial disclosure (SCI)
 - A TS Clearance is updated every five years
8. Be physically fit to endure training at Quantico and effectively respond to life-threatening situations in the field
 - In addition to passing the Physical Fitness Test (PFT) self-evaluation on the Special Agent application, applicants must take an official PFT after passing Phase II and attain a PFT score of 12 or more in order to receive a Conditional Appointment Offer (CAO)
 - Special Agents must pass the PFT on an annual basis
6. Pass a Medical Exam
 - Includes, but is not limited to, meeting Visual and Hearing Standards (see p. 7)



Mission. Priorities. Values.

The mission of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is to protect the American People, and uphold the Constitution of the United States.

The priorities of the Federal Bureau of Investigation are:

1. Protect the United States from terrorist attacks
2. Protect the United States against foreign intelligence operations and espionage
3. Protect the United States against cyber-based attacks and high-technology crimes
4. Combat public corruption at all levels
5. Protect civil rights
6. Combat transnational/national criminal organizations and enterprises
7. Combat major white-collar crime
8. Combat significant violent crime

The core values of the Federal Bureau of Investigation are:

- Rigorous obedience to the Constitution of the United States
- Respect for the dignity of all those we protect
- Compassion
- Fairness
- Uncompromising personal integrity and institutional integrity
- Accountability by accepting responsibility for our actions and decisions and the consequences of our actions and decisions
- Leadership, both personal and professional



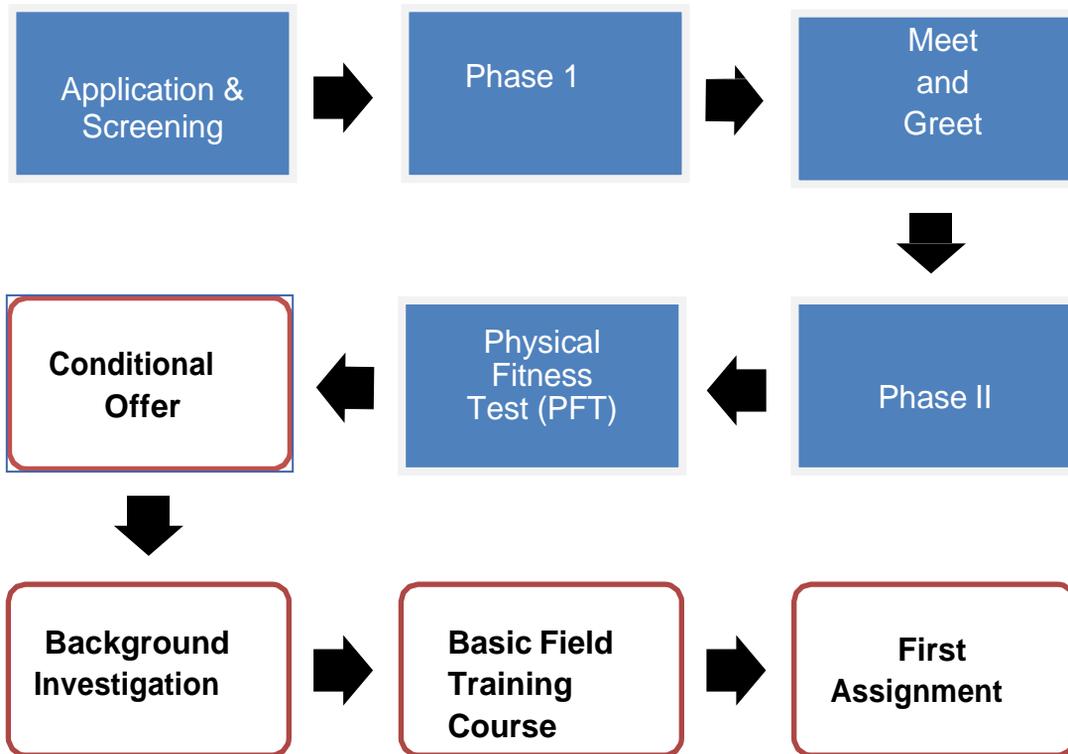
PLEASE NOTE:

Applicants **must not** post information about the application process on social media, message boards, chat rooms, blogs, internet forums, or any other public forum. Use discretion when discussing the process with family and friends. Applicants **must not** solicit help, tips, advice, or assistance of ANY kind on social media, message boards, blogs, internet forms, or from FBI employees.



The Big Picture.

The Special Agent Selection System (SASS) is a mentally and physically challenging process designed to find only the most capable applicants. However, those who make it through the process become part of an elite team that keeps our country safe. The SASS typically takes 1 year to complete, and often longer. An explanation of the steps in the process to becoming a Special Agent can be found on the next page.





Special Agent Selection System.

Step 1: Application & Screening

Applications must include a resume that follows the Federal Resume template provided in the application, a passing PFT self-evaluation, and all necessary forms (e.g. DD-214 for former members of the Armed Forces). Applications are screened for minimum qualifications and suitability.

Before proceeding, note that the following factors will automatically disqualify you from consideration as a Special Agent:

- Non-U.S. citizenship
- Conviction of a felony and/or domestic violence misdemeanor
- Having engaged in acts designed to overthrow the U.S. government
- Failure to pay court ordered child support or alimony payments
- Currently having a federally funded student loan in default
- Failed to file federal, state, or local income tax returns
- Being found in violation of the FBI Employment Drug Policy (see p.9)

Timeframe: The initial screening process varies greatly and is dependent upon completeness of application materials, overall application volume, and the current needs of the FBI as a whole. Applications received that have followed the resume template instructions and attached all necessary forms provide us the ability to process them faster.

Step 2: Phase I Test

Applicants who pass preliminary screening, as outlined in the job posting, will be invited to take the Phase I computerized test in a proctored environment. The test consists of three multiple choice sections: **BioData Inventory**, **Logical Reasoning**, and **Situational Judgment**, which are designed to assess the competencies successful Special Agents possess.

Timeframe: Candidates have 21 days to schedule their Phase I test once invited and will receive a pass/fail notification within one hour of completing the test.

Step 3: Meet and Greet

After passing Phase I, applicants will be scheduled to attend a Meet and Greet at their processing field office (PFO). During the Meet and Greet, your Applicant Coordinator will review your online applications and evaluate your qualifications in person. Those deemed **most competitive** by FBI HQ will be selected for Phase II testing.

Timeframe: The average timeframe for a candidate to move from passing Phase I to receiving an invitation to Phase II is 30 weeks.



Special Agent Selection System.

Step 4: Phase II Test

Phase II consists of a writing exercise and a structured interview conducted by a panel of three Special Agents. Phase II tests are held regionally and all travel expenses are paid.

Timeframe: Candidates receive their Phase II results within 6 weeks, on average, of completing the test.

Step 5: Official Physical Fitness Test (PFT)

Candidates who pass Phase II will be required to pass a PFT. The PFT assesses a candidate's physical fitness level relative to the essential tasks performed by FBI Special Agents. An official PFT will be conducted at your local Field Office by trained FBI personnel and scored in the same manner as the PFT self-assessment you submitted with your application.

Timeframe: Candidates have fourteen days after passing Phase II to take their PFT, with exceptions made for inclement weather. Because of this quick turnaround, PFOs often schedule tentatively candidates' PFTs before they take their Phase II.

Step 6: Conditional Appointment Offer (CAO)

Candidates who pass Phase II and an official PFT will receive a Conditional Appointment Offer (CAO). Actual hiring is contingent on the successful completion of the remaining SASS components (i.e. medical, background investigation, polygraph etc.).

Timeframe: Candidates will receive their CAO shortly after passing their PFT and will have 5 days to accept or reject.

Step 7: Background Investigation

Candidates who receive a CAO will need to obtain a Top Secret security clearance from the FBI in order to become a Special Agent.

The background investigation includes a Personnel Security Interview, Polygraph Examination, and Medical Examination, followed by credit and arrest checks, interviews with associates, references, past employers and neighbors, and verification of educational achievements.

Timeframe: The average background investigation takes approximately 6 months, but can take 18 months or more depending on where an applicant has lived, worked, or traveled.

Step 8: Basic Field Training Course (BFTC)

Candidates who successfully complete the steps as described above are eligible to be scheduled for



Special Agent Selection System.

the BFTC at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA. Assignment to the BFTC is based on the needs of the Bureau.

Though New Agent Trainees (NATs) are paid for their time at the FBI Academy, they must successfully complete all portions of the BFTC in order to be fully hired as FBI Special Agents. Candidates must pass a PFT no more than 60 days prior to arriving at the FBI Academy.

Timeframe: The BFTC lasts 21 weeks and candidates are typically notified two to four weeks in advance of their class date. Applicants are allowed to turn down one BFTC date, given sufficient reasoning.

Finish: Placement

Upon successful completion of the background investigation and BFTC, candidates officially join the FBI as Special Agents. New Special Agents are placed in a specific Field Office based on the posting applied for and/or the needs of the FBI. Placement is at the discretion of the FBI and based on Bureau needs at that time.



Physical Requirements.

Special Agents are often placed in situations that challenge their physical endurance. Heightened levels of strength, flexibility, and endurance are necessary to ensure survival in an arrest situation as well as to enhance the safety of fellow Agents, other law enforcement officers, and innocent civilians. To ensure Special Agents possess the necessary levels of fitness to best complete any duty required of them (e.g. using firearms accurately, participating in raids, and executing defensive tactics), the FBI requires that applicants be in excellent physical shape.

Applicants who pass the official Physical Fitness Test (PFT) are considered sufficiently fit to safely and successfully complete the physical training and defensive tactics portion of training at the FBI Academy and are prepared to effectively respond to life-threatening situations on the job.

All Special Agent applicants must be able to pass several physical tests to gain admittance to the FBI Academy. These include:

- Minimum of one official, field-administered Physical Fitness Test
- Vision Test
- Hearing Test
- Medical/Health Review

Vision Requirements

- Applicant's vision must be no worse than 20/100 (Snellen chart) in each eye, with correction to 20/20 in one eye and no worse than 20/40 in the other eye.
- Applicants with soft contact lenses need medical documentation of use for at least one year without significant problems or adverse effects.
- Applicants with laser corrective surgery must wait six months and complete an ophthalmologic clinical evaluation to demonstrate complete healing.
- Color-blind applicants may be considered if they successfully complete the Farnsworth D-15 color-vision test.

Hearing Requirements

- No applicant will be considered who has an average hearing loss of 25 decibels (ANSI standards) at 1,000, 2,000, and 3,000 Hertz.



Employment Disqualifiers.

The mission of the FBI is vital to the safety and security of our nation and its citizens. Often, our work is very sensitive in nature. Therefore, all FBI positions require at least a Top Secret security clearance. How do you obtain such a clearance? Once you have received and accepted a conditional offer of employment, the FBI will initiate an intensive background investigation that you must pass before you can join the FBI.

There are also certain employment requirements that all candidates must meet in order to be eligible for consideration for employment with the FBI. Before applying for any FBI position, please make sure that the FBI Employment Disqualifiers do not apply to you.

The FBI Employment Disqualifiers are:

- Non-U.S. citizenship
- Conviction of a felony
- Violation of the FBI Employment Drug Policy
- Default on a student loan insured by the U.S. Government
- Failure of a urinalysis drug test
- Failure to register with the Selective Service System (male applicants only – exceptions apply, visit FBIjobs.gov for more details)

Please note that if you are disqualified by any of the above criteria, you are not eligible for employment with the FBI. All of these disqualifiers are extensively researched during the FBI Background Investigation Process. Please make sure you can meet FBI employment requirements and pass all disqualifiers before you apply for an FBI position.



Important

You are not eligible for employment with the FBI if you meet any of the disqualifiers listed above.



Employment Drug Policy.

The FBI is firmly committed to a drug-free society and workplace. Applicants for employment with the FBI who are currently using illegal drugs, misusing or abusing legal drugs or other substances at the time of the application process will be found unsuitable for employment. While the FBI does not condone any prior unlawful drug use by applicants, the FBI realizes some otherwise qualified applicants may have used illegal drugs at some point in their past. The guidelines set forth in this policy should be followed for determining whether an applicant's prior drug use makes him or her unsuitable for employment, balancing the needs of the FBI to maintain a drug-free workplace and the public integrity necessary to accomplish its law enforcement and intelligence missions by hiring the most qualified candidates to fill the FBI's personnel needs.

A candidate will be found unsuitable for employment and automatically disqualified if he/she deliberately misrepresents his or her drug history in connection with his or her application for employment. Additionally, candidates are automatically disqualified under the following criteria:

Marijuana Usage

Candidates cannot have used marijuana within the three (3) years preceding the date of their application for employment, regardless of the location of use (even if marijuana usage is legal in the candidate's home state). The various forms of marijuana include cannabis, hashish, hash oil, and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), in both synthetic and natural forms.

A candidate's use of marijuana in its various forms for medical reasons, regardless of whether or not it was prescribed by a licensed practicing physician, cannot be used as a mitigating factor.

Illegal Drugs

Candidates cannot have used any illegal drug, other than marijuana, within the ten (10) years preceding the date of the application for employment.

Additionally, candidates cannot have been involved in the illegal purchase, manufacture, cultivation, trafficking, production, transfer, shipping, receiving, handling, or sale of any drug or controlled substance, to include prescription drugs.

Candidates cannot have used any illegal drug while employed in a position which carries with it a security clearance and/or a high level of responsibility or public trust.



Employment Drug Policy, Cont.

Prescription Drugs/Legally Obtainable Substances

Candidates cannot have used anabolic steroids without a prescription from a licensed practicing physician within the past ten (10) years preceding the date of the application for employment.

Candidates cannot have engaged in more than experimentation of, or extensively misused or abused, any prescription drug, over-the-counter substance, or other legally obtainable substances.

Candidates cannot have used any prescription drug or legally obtainable substance in a manner for which it was not intended, within the past three (3) years preceding the date of the application for employment.

Candidates cannot have used any prescription drug in its original intended manner, but without the proper prescription or legal justification for use, within one (1) year preceding the date of application for employment.

Candidates cannot have misused or abused legally obtainable substances while employed in any law enforcement or prosecutorial position, or while employed in a position which carries with it a security clearance and/or a high level of responsibility or public trust



Background Investigation.

After you receive a conditional FBI offer of employment, the next step is to begin the background investigation process. All candidates must receive an FBI Top Secret security clearance before they can begin employment with the FBI.

Once you have been instructed to do so by the local field office, you will initiate the FBI background investigation process.

As soon as the FBI receives a fully complete set of background investigation forms (your Local Field office point-of contact will provide you with an address), the FBI will commence with your background investigation.

The investigation includes:

- a polygraph examination
- urinalysis
- credit and records checks
- extensive interviews with former and current colleagues, neighbors, friends, professors, etc.

You will be contacted by the FBI office that is processing your background investigation to schedule your interview, urinalysis, and polygraph examination.

The polygraph will check the truthfulness of all of your responses on the FBI Background Investigation Forms. In the next phase of the process, the FBI will perform extensive records checks (e.g., credit checks, police records checks, etc.), and FBI investigators will interview current and former colleagues, neighbors, friends, professors, etc.

Please note that because of the thoroughness of the background investigation process, it can take several months or more to receive your FBI Top Secret security clearance.



Chapter 2

The Application Process





Application.

Because the application times out after thirty minutes of inactivity, please be sure to have the following ready before beginning:

- A **resume** that follows the Federal Resume template – applications with resumes that do not follow this template will be automatically rejected or put on hold until you upload a resume in the proper format
 - Full-time/part-time information and hours per week for each job
 - Address the Special Agent Core Competencies
 - Leadership
 - Oral Communication
 - Initiative and Motivation
 - Adaptability and Flexibility
 - Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Evaluating Information and Making Decisions
 - Writing
- Completed **Personal Fitness Test (PFT) self-assessment** form (see Chapter 3 for more on the PFT)
- **College Transcripts** for completed degrees
- Any additional **applicable forms** (see below)

Depending on your work history, education history, and Veterans' Preference eligibility, you may need to upload any or all of the following forms before

- **DD-214, Member 4 copy** – Discharged members of the Armed Forces
- **Form SF-50**
 - Federal employees
 - Applicants with current or former 1811 service
- **SF-15** – Applicants claiming 10pt Veterans' Preference
- **VA letter** – Applicants claiming 10pt Veterans' Preference
- **Foreign Equivalency Certificate**
 - Applicants with degrees from foreign institutions
 - The certificate must substantiate your degree(s) equates to the standards of U.S. institutions



Minimum Qualifications.

All applications will be screened for minimum qualifications. If you are unable to meet these minimum qualifications it is unlikely you will be able to pass later Phases, which heavily rely on a candidate's life experiences, so it is in your best interest to wait until you exceed the minimum qualifications.

Minimum Qualifications:

- U.S. citizenship
- Be 23 to 36 ½* years old
- Meet the Special Agent Physical Fitness standards
- Possess a minimum of U.S. accredited Bachelor's degree
- Have at least 3 years of full-time, professional work experience
 - **THIS DOES NOT include** summer jobs, internships, seasonal positions, temporary employment, and/or volunteer work (unless you are a preference-eligible veteran)
 - **Cyber degree, CPA, JD ,PhD, and/or Master degrees** applicants require 2 years of professional work experience
- Possess a valid U.S. driver's license allowing for the unrestricted operation of a motor vehicle day or night and have at least six months of driving experience
- Be completely available for assignment anywhere in the FBI's jurisdiction

*FBI Special Agents must be appointed prior to their 37th birthday. Because of the lengthy application and hiring process, the FBI does not normally accept applications from applicants older than 36 ½. Although we accept applicants up to age 36 ½, the hiring process can take a year or more. If, at any point during the hiring process, it becomes apparent that an applicant cannot be appointed prior to their 37th birthday, an age waiver will be required. Waivers are not routinely granted.



Chapter 3

The Physical Fitness Test (PFT)





Overview.

The FBI Special Agent position requires a commitment to physical fitness as part of daily life. Applicants will take a self-administered Self-PFT (prior to submitting their Special Agent application) and take an official PFT at least two times during the application period and/or at the FBI academy, specifically:

1. At your processing FBI field office shortly after passing Phase II
2. No more than 60 days prior to reporting to the Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) at the FBI Academy
 - In the case that an applicant is scheduled to report to a BFTC within 60 days of passing their Phase II PFT, an additional PFT is not required
3. At least once while at the FBI Academy, during the first week of the BFTC
 - The test, scoring scale, and protocol are exactly the same, except a fifth event is added: standard pull-ups
 - The score on pull-ups is not used for pass/fail purposes but is considered for fitness awards at the Academy

The PFT consists of four mandatory events, chosen because they accurately measure an individual's overall fitness level relative to the essential tasks performed by FBI Special Agents, which are administered in the following order with *no more than* five minutes of rest in between each event. Each event must be performed precisely according to the strictly defined protocol in order to be scored.

1. **Maximum number of continuous sit-ups in one minute**
2. **Timed 300-meter sprint**
3. **Maximum number of continuous push-ups (untimed)**
4. **Timed one and one half mile (1.5 mile) run**

In order to pass the PFT, applicants must achieve a minimum cumulative score of twelve points, with at least one point in each of the four events, therefore it is possible for an applicant to receive a score of 12 (or more) and still fail the PFT because they failed one of the individual events.

Scoring scales and testing instructions are located in our PFT Guide, available on [FBIjobs.gov](https://www.fbijobs.gov).



Reasonable Accommodations.

According to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, applicants may demonstrate proficiency on essential job tasks with or without reasonable accommodations. To ensure that the PFT is consistent with this legislation, a section is included on the FD-876 “Special Agent Applicant Liability Waiver” form that asks applicants to indicate whether or not they require reasonable accommodations to complete the PFT.

Applicants requesting a reasonable accommodation during the PFT must submit written medical documentation to their Applicant Coordinator from a certified medical provider, describing the medical disability and the need for reasonable accommodation during the PFT. The applicant or the health care professional should propose the specific accommodation needed by the applicant to take the PFT.

All reasonable accommodation requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Additional information is located in our PFT Guide, available on [FBIjobs.gov](https://www.fbi.gov/jobs).



Tactical Recruitment Program.

Special Agent applicants with tactical experience interested in pursuing a position with the Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) are considered tactical applicants through the Tactical Recruitment Program and should be fully prepared to pass an enhanced Physical Fitness Test (PFT).

To qualify for the TRP applicants must:

- Posses at least three years of law enforcement or military experience
- Pass an interview with Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG) personnel
- Perform at an enhanced level on the PFT

The TRP's enhanced PFT consists of five mandatory events that are administered in the following order:

1. Maximum number of continuous sit-ups in one minute
2. Timed 300-meter sprint
3. Maximum number of continuous push-ups (untimed)
4. Timed one and one-half mile (1.5 mile) run
5. Pull-ups (untimed)

There is a strictly defined scoring scale and protocol for each event. In order to pass the enhanced PFT, tactical applicants must have a minimum cumulative score of twenty points with at least one point in each of the five events. If a TRP applicant fails to achieve 20 points, but achieves 12 or more points with at least one point in each of the four mandatory events, the applicant will remain in the process. HRT personnel will determine whether the applicant is eligible to remain in the TRP.

Applicants are reminded that minimum performance is just that—the minimum. Competitive performance at the HRT selection course will require physical fitness well in excess of these minimums.

[Additional information is located in our PFT Guide, available on FBIjobs.gov.](#)



Failure and Retest Policies.

Throughout the application process, applicants will only be offered *three* cumulative opportunities to pass the PFT. Upon the third failure, the candidate's application will be terminated and they will not be allowed to apply for the Special Agent position ever again. Use the three opportunities wisely. An applicant should not test unless they know they are feeling well, in the best possible shape, and capable of surpassing minimum standards.

After passing Phase II, applicants have one year to pass a PFT administered by a trained FBI Personal Fitness Advisor (PFA) before being discontinued from the SASS. A candidate's first PFT will be administered by their Field Office for within 14 days of the candidate receiving official notification that they passed Phase II. Often, dates are assigned prior to Phase II in the event that the candidate passes the test.

There is no mandatory waiting time between post-Phase II PFT attempts, but applicants must work with their processing Field Office to schedule retests according to the PFA's schedule and facility availability. In contrast, applicants who fail their pre-Quantico PFT must wait a minimum of 30 days before scheduling another attempt.

[Additional information is located in our PFT Guide, available on FBIjobs.gov.](#)



Medical Exceptions.

Given the rigorous and demanding requirements associated with training for and taking a PFT, the FBI will excuse an applicant from their PFT if sufficient medical documentation is provided to support the veracity of the applicant's claim.

Illness or injury that occurs "before" the PFT, which prohibits the applicant from showing up for the test, must be supported by medical documentation 72 hours before the scheduled PFT date/time.

Example: A candidate fractures her ankle two weeks before a scheduled PFT. The candidate must provide her Field Office with medical documentation clearly stating that she cannot physically complete the PFT. This document must be received seventy-two (72) hours prior to the PFT. The candidate will be deactivated if acceptable medical documentation is not provided.

Illness/injury that occurs "during" the PFT, which prevents the candidate from completing the test, must be supported by medical documentation obtained within 72 hours after the PFT.

Example: A candidate hurts his wrist during the push-up event. He informs the PFT administrator that he cannot continue. The candidate is required to seek medical attention within 72 hours and provide supporting documentation. If the candidate does not submit acceptable documentation to the Field Office, the PFT will be recorded as a failure.

In the event an applicant arrives at the PFT and is sick, the PFT will not be administered. The candidate will then have to provide documentation proving that the candidate sought medical attention within 72 hours for that specific injury or illness. If acceptable documentation is not provided, the PFT will be recorded as a failure.

[Additional information is located in our PFT Guide, available on FBIjobs.gov.](#)



Chapter 4

Preparing for Phase I and II Tests





Testing Guidelines.

When and Where

Phase I is administered at various locations throughout the United States. The FBI has partnered with *pan, A TALX Company*, to administer the Special Agent Phase I at local testing sites for the convenience of applicants.

Phase II tests are held at one of eight regional testing sites, located in near airports in major US cities. The FBI books and pays for each applicant to spend the night prior to their test date at a hotel near the test site

Scheduling

For Phase I, applicants will receive an invitation from *pan*, on behalf of the FBI, to schedule themselves for Phase I. Applicants will have up to 21 days **from the date of invitation** to schedule and complete the test.

Phase II tests are scheduled a few weeks prior to the test date by the applicant's processing Field Office based on the space available at the testing site and the needs of the FBI.

What to Bring

Candidates must bring a driver's license to the assessment. If your driver's license does not have a photo, you must provide an additional form of photo identification. Candidates are not permitted to participate in the testing process without proper photo identification.

What NOT to Bring

- Reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, textbooks, etc.)
- Pens and/or pencils (these will be provided)
- Reading materials (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Work-related materials
- Briefcases, backpacks, and purses
- Papers (e.g., resumes, notification letters, notes, blank paper, etc.)
- Cellular phones (Alarms on watches must be turned off)
- Other electronic devices (e.g., calculators, tape recorders, cameras, radios, etc.)
- Firearms (i.e., if you are currently in a law enforcement position you may not bring your firearm into FBI space or the testing facility)

What to Wear

- **Phase I** – Wear casual, comfortable clothing that is suitable for an office environment.



- **Phase II** – Dress in a professional manner. Business attire is recommended.

How Long the Phases Take to Complete

- **Phase I** – Approximately 210
- **Phase II** – An hour long interview followed by a 90 minutes written exam

Basic Testing Rules

Tardiness – Please arrive on time. If you are late, you will not be permitted to participate in the testing process

Eating/Drinking – Eating and drinking is not allowed during testing

Smoking – Neither smoking nor chewing tobacco will be permitted during testing

Restroom Use – You may not use the restroom during administration of the tests

Telephone Use – You are not permitted to use a telephone during the testing process

Time Limits – Time limits are strictly enforced. When time has elapsed, you must immediately stop what you are doing and await further instructions. Failure to comply will result in your being disqualified from the process

Talking – There will be no talking to other applicants once testing has begun

Cheating – Any attempt to see another applicant's answers; obtain assistance verbally or in writing; or record, document, or otherwise retain/discuss the questions/answers to the assessments is considered cheating. Those caught cheating are discontinued from further consideration for the Intelligence Analyst position

Discussing the Tests – Candidates are not permitted to discuss any part of the tests and interview questions with anyone during or after the testing process. We discourage discussing your prospective FBI employment on any social media or social networking sites. You should remain discreet including all interview and testing information during the entire FBI hiring process. This ensures other potential applicants are not given an unfair advantage or disadvantage in the selection process. Applicants are required to sign a nondisclosure form at the assessment. If an applicant is found to have violated this agreement, he or she will be disqualified

Leaving the Premises – Candidates are not permitted to leave the testing premises during testing



Test-taking Tips.

Before the Test Session

- Plan ahead so you are well rested before the test session.
- Make sure you know the exact location and time of the test session. Allow plenty of time to get to the test site, use the restroom, and relax.
- Wear something comfortable. Test sites may be slightly warm or cool so dress for a range of temperatures.
- Reduce test anxiety and tension by breathing deeply and stretching before the test.
- Start the test session with a positive attitude, determined to do your best. Focus on what you do know, not on what you do not know.

During the Test Session

- Read all of the test instructions carefully and follow them exactly.
- Be sure you understand the test instructions before you start. If you need to ask questions, do so.
- Read each question and all of the response options completely, before choosing your answer.
- Be careful not to add or skip any words in the question or response choices.
- Pay attention to words like NOT and EXCEPT.
- Do not over-interpret questions or try to find hidden meanings. The questions are not designed to be tricky.
- If you have time remaining at the end of a test, proofread your answers.
- Try to stay relaxed. If you have trouble concentrating or become tense, pause and take a few deep breaths.



Chapter 5

Phase I





Overview.

The Phase I test is a computerized test taken in a proctored environment offered by Performance Assessment Network (**PAN**). **PAN**'s web-based registration and scheduling solution allows you the flexibility to select the date, time, and a test center near you. Be sure to read all **PAN** emails carefully.

Your test will be proctored by **PAN**'s trained proctors. Proctors and testing centers are not affiliated with the FBI.

Proctors will not answer position or test related questions. Contact your local Field Office Applicant Coordinator or Recruiter with any questions about the Special Agent position.

Before leaving for your scheduled appointment check the [Test Center Closures](#) site to verify your center is open.

You need to arrive at the test center fifteen minutes prior to the beginning of your Phase I test appointment. In most cases, you will not be allowed to enter the center until fifteen minutes prior to your appointment.

You may only cancel or reschedule your appointment, without penalty, up to forty-eight hours before your scheduled appointment.

If there is a major test disturbance (i.e. power or internet outage, fire drill, etc.) declared by **PAN**, you may be given the option to reschedule. If you have any concerns, you should contact your local Field Office Applicant Coordinator or Recruiter immediately.

The Phase I testing will take approximately **210 minutes** to complete. Candidates will take three different multiple choice tests that will measure the kind of thinking and reasoning skills required to perform the Special Agent job, as well as background experiences that indicate whether or not the Special Agent work environment would be a good fit.

There are 3 different tests:

1. **Biodata Inventory** – 30 minutes
2. **Logical Reasoning** – 90 minutes
3. **Situational Judgment** – 45 minutes



Applicants who do not pass Phase I are eligible to retest one additional time one year after their final test session. Two failures will result in the deactivation of your application for the remainder of your life.

Overview, Cont.

Although procedures are in place to eliminate technical problems with the online testing process; occasional technical disruptions may occur. If you experience any technical disruptions during your testing session, the testing proctor will attempt to mitigate the issue as quickly as possible to minimize the impact on your test session.

If your test is interrupted for 30 or more minutes due to a technical problem, you will be provided the option to continue testing or you may choose to reschedule. If you choose to proceed and complete this testing session, your assessment result will stand, and you will not be allowed to retake this assessment. If you elect to continue and this is your first testing opportunity, you will be allowed to retest after the mandatory wait period. If this is your second testing opportunity and you fail, you will be disqualified from further consideration for the Special Agent position.



Sample Questions.

BioData Inventory

Preparation:

- Think about how you interact with others in the workplace, in school, or in other work-like activities. Think about the way you worked with others on group projects or on teams, and how you worked with supervisors or professors.
- Think about how you have typically handled assignments, your approach to completing them and how you handled problems or obstacles.
- Think about the way you typically communicate with co-workers, professors, supervisors, fellow students, or fellow volunteers. Think about the way you tried to explain things to others or how you persuaded them to do something.



CAUTION:

Do not attempt to “beat the test” by claiming qualities or experiences that you do not really have. Clearly, the FBI does not wish to hire candidates who provide unrealistic or false responses. If, during later portions of the hiring process, such as a background check, the FBI determines that you falsified your responses at any point in the Special Agent Selection System, you may be permanently barred from employment.



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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

SPECIAL AGENT – SAMPLE PHASE I TESTS



BIODATA INVENTORY DIRECTIONS

This inventory contains 40 questions about yourself. You are to read each question and select the answer that best describes you from the choices provided. Answer the questions honestly; doing otherwise will negatively affect your score.

Look at the example questions below.

How did you typically prepare for final exams in college?

- A. Studied a few hours every day across several weeks
- B. Studied many hours over a few days
- C. Studied the entire night before each exam
- D. Did not study

How often are your library books overdue?

- A. Always
- B. Often
- C. Rarely
- D. Never
- E. I never take books out of the library

To what extent have you enjoyed being given a surprise party?

- A. Not at all
- B. To a slight extent
- C. To a moderate extent
- D. To a great extent
- E. I have never been given a surprise party

In the past year, how many times have you thrown something when you were angry?

- A. 0 times
- B. 1 - 2 times
- C. 3 - 4 times
- D. 5 - 6 times
- E. 7 or more

Which of the following strategies do you typically use to complete a large project at work or school?

- A. Develop a systematic plan for completing each portion of the project
- B. Create a general strategy for completing the project that doesn't focus on the specific details
- C. Address project issues as they occur without creating a strategy
- D. Seek input from others on the best way to approach the project

In each of these examples, you would select the answer that best describes what you honestly take pride in with regard to your work. You would completely blacken the oval corresponding to your answer selection (A, B, C, D, or E).

You will record your answer to each question on the separate machine readable answer sheet in the section marked Biodata Inventory. Be sure to fill in the circles you select completely with dark marks. As you are completing this inventory, please do not write in the test booklet.

You will have 30 minutes to complete this inventory.



Logical Reasoning

LOGICAL REASONING TEST DIRECTIONS

To answer each question on the logic-based reasoning test, select the answer representing the only valid statement that can be made from the information contained in the paragraph. To identify the correct conclusion, it is essential that you use **ONLY** the information provided in the content paragraph.

Record your answer to each question on the machine-readable answer sheet. Make sure to completely fill in the circle that corresponds with your answer. You should provide only one answer for each question. Please **do not** write in the test booklet.

You have 90 minutes to read the questions and provide your responses. Do not start until I have instructed you to do so. I will give you a warning when you have one hour, 30 minutes, and 5 minutes remaining to complete the logical based reasoning test questions.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Question 1

Eventually, most citizens are summoned to serve on jury duty. If a government employee is asked to serve on a jury, official court leave is authorized with no charge to leave or loss of pay. Also, official court leave is always granted if the employee is summoned to appear as a witness in a judicial proceeding in which the government is a party. No fees rendered for service can be retained by the employee. Rather, they must be turned in to the agency in which he or she is employed. However, some payments designated as expenses by the courts, such as travel reimbursements, may be kept.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that official court leave

- A) is not granted to individuals other than government employees who are summoned to serve as jurors or to appear as witnesses in judicial proceedings in which the government is a party
- B) sometimes entails retention by government employees of fees received from the court for services rendered as jurors
- C) is never accompanied by reimbursement for expenses incurred by government employees while serving as witnesses in judicial proceedings in which the government is a party
- D) never entails loss of pay by government employees who are summoned to serve as jurors or to appear as witnesses in judicial proceedings in which the government is a party
- E) is not always granted to government employees who are summoned to appear as witnesses in judicial proceedings in which the government is a party

The correct response is D. The information in the passage establishes two conditions under which court leave is authorized for government employees without charge to leave or loss of pay: (1) if the employee is asked to serve on a jury and (2) if the employee is summoned to appear as a witness in a judicial proceeding in which the government is a party. Response D reiterates this statement in negative form: *Official court leave never entails loss of pay by government employees who are summoned to serve as jurors or to appear as witnesses in judicial proceedings in which the government is a party.*

Response A is incorrect because the passage gives no information about court leave policies for non-government employees.

Response B is incorrect because it contradicts the information in the passage, which states that no fees rendered for service as a juror can be retained by a government employee.

Response C is incorrect because it contradicts the information in the passage, which states that some payments designated as expenses by the courts, such as travel reimbursements, may be kept by a government employee.

Response E is incorrect because it is contrary to the information in the passage, which establishes that official court leave is always granted to government employees if they are asked to serve on a jury or if they are summoned as a witness in a judicial proceeding in which the government is a party.



Question # 1 is an example of an easy question in which three of the incorrect response choices contradict the information in the passage, while one incorrect response (response A) is based on unwarranted assumptions about a set of individuals that is not discussed in the passage. More difficult errors of reasoning are illustrated in the next two sample questions.

Question 2

Whenever an investigator is involved in an intelligence operation, he or she is required to examine multiple hypotheses, thus avoiding the quick pursuit of only one path, which could turn out to be incorrect. In a recent terrorism case, which thus far has proved to be exceptionally complex and remains unresolved, several hypotheses were initially generated about the suspects, conspirators, motives, and implementation of the terrorist act. Most of these hypotheses have been disproved.

From the information given above, it can be validly concluded that

- A) in any intelligence operation, an investigator who generates more than one hypothesis is more likely than not to succeed
- B) at least one of the hypotheses generated for the terrorism case mentioned above is not likely to be disproved
- C) if an investigator is not required to examine multiple hypotheses about a case, then he or she is not involved in an intelligence operation
- D) whenever an investigator fails to solve a case, it can be assumed that, most probably, he/she failed to generate more than one hypothesis about the case
- E) there are at least some investigative operations, other than those concerned with intelligence, that do not require the investigator to form more than one hypothesis

This question presents two aspects. One is the mandate to generate multiple hypotheses whenever an investigator conducts an intelligence operation. The second aspect is the interplay of possibilities and probabilities relative to the forming of hypotheses. The correct response, C, deals with the first aspect, while three of the four incorrect response choices deal with the second aspect. In the correct response, C, the inference (formally called a *contra positive inference*) represents a negative equivalent of the mandate found in the first sentence of the passage. The first sentence states an antecedent condition ("whenever an investigator is involved in an intelligence operation") from which follows a consequent condition ("he or she is required to examine multiple hypotheses"). If we transpose and negate these two conditions, as is done in C, we obtain an equivalent statement, in which the truth value of the original statement is retained.

Responses A, B, and D are based on unwarranted probabilistic inferences about (1) the likelihood that an investigator who generates more than one hypothesis will succeed (response A), the likelihood that at least one hypothesis will not be disproved in the terrorism case (response B), and the likelihood that an investigator who fails to solve a case will have failed to generate more than one hypothesis about it (response D). The passage provides no quantifying information from which such probabilistic inferences can be made. It only alludes to the *possibility* that a single hypothesis may be incorrect, which cannot be extrapolated into probabilities. In the context of probabilities, you should note that this test will not contain quantitative problems. You need to be alert only to verbal quantifying expressions such as "more likely than not," "unlikely," "most probably," etc.

Finally, in the case of response E, it is incorrect because the passage provides no information at all about investigative operations that may fall outside the set of intelligence operations.

Question 3

All forensic soil examiners compare the color, texture, and composition of two or more soils to determine if they share a common origin. Suppose, for example, that the suspect in a murder claims that soil recovered from her shovel—which actually came from a grave that she dug—was from her garden. The garden will be eliminated as the source of the soil on the shovel if and only if this soil is found to be dissimilar to soil samples taken from the garden.

From the information given above, it CANNOT be validly concluded that

- A) upon analysis and comparison, the soil samples taken from the shovel and the garden of the above-mentioned suspect will be dissimilar if the grave was



- not dug in the garden
- B) analysts who are not involved in the comparison of soil samples are not forensic soil examiners
- C) if, as a result of analysis and comparison, the suspect's garden is confirmed as the source of the soil on the shovel, then the soil samples taken from the garden and the shovel were found to be similar
- D) if an analyst is involved in the comparison of soil samples, then he or she will be classified as a forensic soil examiner
- E) if the soil samples taken from the shovel and the garden of the above-mentioned suspect are similar, then it can be assumed that the grave was dug in the garden

This question is an example of a difficult question. In the first place, it asks you to identify the only response choice that *does not* follow from the given information, which in and of itself makes the question slightly more difficult to analyze. Nonetheless, the difficulty of the question stems primarily from the logical complexity of its response choices. (If you are asking yourself why such complex reasoning must be included in the test, please bear in mind that the reason is, exclusively, relevance to the job. The information you will have to analyze on the job, including that found in legal manuals, will be generally as complex as this question, and frequently more so.)

The correct response is D. It represents the only fallacy found among the response choices. The fallacy is formally called a converse fallacy. The passage states that *all forensic soil examiners compare the color, texture, and composition of two or more soils*. From this information nothing can be concluded about whether or not there are analysts other than forensic soil examiners who carry out such comparisons. The information in the passage tells us only that the set of *forensic soil examiners* is entirely included in the set of *analysts who carry out soil comparisons* but tells us nothing about the composition or extension of the second set.

Response A is not a fallacy. The passage states (1) that the suspect's garden will be eliminated as the source of soil on the shovel if and only if this soil is found to be dissimilar to soil samples taken from the garden and (2) that the soil on the shovel came from a grave that the suspect dug. It follows that the soil samples will be dissimilar if the grave was not dug in the garden.

In the context of this question and this response, it is pertinent to note the use of the biconditional *if and only if*. A biconditional statement is defined as one in which the conditions included in the statement are interchangeable without affecting the truth value of the statement. Thus, to say that *the suspect's garden will be eliminated as the source of soil on the shovel if and only if this soil is found to be dissimilar to soil samples taken from the garden* is the same as saying that *the soil on the shovel will be found to be dissimilar to soil samples taken from the garden if and only if the garden is eliminated as the source of soil on the shovel*. This interchangeability of conditions permits the inference in response C: The statement in the passage establishes that *the suspect's garden will be eliminated as the source of soil on the shovel if and only if this soil is found to be dissimilar to soil samples taken from the garden*. It follows that *if the garden is confirmed as the source of the soil on the shovel, then this soil must be similar to soil samples taken from the garden*. In symbols, when we say *p if and only if q*, we are saying both that *if p then q* and *if q then p*. Hence, if we negate *p*, the negation of *q* must follow.

Both response B and response E illustrate the same type of inference that was illustrated before in question # 2 (Response C) except that, in question # 3, response B illustrates the inference (formally called a contra positive) in the context of sets, while response E illustrates it in the context of a conditional statement. These are discussed immediately below.

Relative to response B, the passage states that all forensic soil examiners analyze and compare soil samples. The transposed negative equivalent of this statement follows necessarily: analysts who are not involved in the comparison of soil samples are not forensic soil examiners.

Relative to response E, it represents the transposed negative equivalent of the statement in response A and hence retains the same truth value. Response A states that *if the grave was not dug in the garden then the soil samples taken from the shovel and the garden will be dissimilar*. Response E transposes and negates these conditions: *if the soil samples taken from the shovel and the garden are similar, then it can be assumed that the grave was dug in the garden*.



Situational Judgment



SITUATIONAL JUDGMENT TEST DIRECTIONS

Directions for the Situational Judgment Test are as follows:

This test is called the Situational Judgment Test. Each question consists of a description of a problem situation and a list of actions that a person might take in that situation.

Your task is to rate the effectiveness of each of these actions using a 1-7 rating scale, where 7 is highly effective and 1 is completely ineffective. Imagine that you are in the situation and use the scale to indicate how effective or ineffective you believe each action to be.

Look at the example question below. Notice that the question consists of the description of a problem situation followed by a list of four potential actions.

Example:

Your direct subordinate, who is returning to school full-time in three weeks, has a very negative attitude toward the company. She was counseled about it before, but her negative attitude continues. She is now beginning to be late for work and is showing disrespect to you and other staff. How effective is each of the following actions you could take?

- Tell her that she is still an employee for three more weeks and can still be fired.
- Dock some of her pay.
- Try to get to the bottom of her bad attitude; find out if there are any problems that can be dealt with.
- Counsel her one last time but ensure her that next time serious actions will be taken.

Indicate each action's level of effectiveness according to the scale below:

Effectiveness of the Action		
Ineffective action	Moderately effective action	Very effective action
The action is likely to lead to a bad outcome.	The action is likely to lead to a passable or mixed outcome.	The action is likely to lead to a good outcome.
-- Low --	-- Moderate --	-- High --
1 2	3 4 5	6 7

Indicate your effectiveness rating on the scannable answer sheet provided. See the instructions below for filling in the circles on the answer form. As you are taking the test, please **do not** write in the test booklet. Be sure to fill in the circles you select completely with dark black marks.

Make your ratings carefully. But don't take too long on any question. Make sure that you fill in each rating for the correct question **number** and action **letter**.

You will have 45 minutes to complete this test.



How to Fill in the Circles on the Answer Form

In the example below, exactly one circle has been filled in for each action:

- a. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Action a has been rated as extremely effective.
- b. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Action b has been rated as completely ineffective.
- c. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Action c has been rated as being low-to-moderate in effectiveness.
- d. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Action d has been rated as completely ineffective.

You may use the same rating value for more than one action. In the example above, actions **b** and **d** have the same rating value.

Sample Questions

5. You are a first-line supervisor at a manufacturing firm. Your department has suffered significant employee theft. A subordinate becomes emotional, to the point of crying, while you are interviewing her regarding the thefts. How effective is each of the following actions you could take?
- a. Inform the employee that I am her friend and will help her through this situation.
 - b. Ask the employee if she would like to take a break before continuing with the interview.
 - c. Ask the employee if she has any information regarding the thefts.
 - d. Tell the employee that it's in her best interests to confess now.
6. You are assigned as the manager of a complex project coordinating the work of eight different teams. Four of the teams are on schedule to meet their deadlines. The other four have fallen behind and are in danger of missing their deadlines due to cutbacks in staffing levels. It is important that the work products from the eight teams stay on schedule. How effective is each of the following actions you could take?
- Reassign the team leaders to help the project get back on track.
 - a. Talk to the teams that have fallen behind and find out what I can do to help.
 - b. Request overtime for the four teams that have fallen behind.
 - c. Inform upper management that the staffing cutbacks are causing setbacks in my project.
7. A new employee joined your advertising agency as a highly qualified research analyst. During a very important meeting with a group of clients, your supervisor asked this person to take meeting notes. After the meeting, the employee approaches you visibly upset and angry because he feels he has better things to do than take meeting notes. He then makes inappropriate comments about the supervisor. How effective is each of the following actions you could take?
- Reassure the analyst that the supervisor and company value him as an employee.
 - a. Apologize to the new employee on behalf of my supervisor.
 - b. Advise the employee to do as directed by the supervisor.
 - c. Explain to the employee that his comments are inappropriate and unprofessional.
8. You have been assigned to a major company project. Part of your responsibility includes identifying two workers who have specific skills important to the project. John has an aggressive and combative personality but comes highly recommended. Jill is also highly competent, but will not work with John. You believe that convincing both John and Jill to work on the project is essential for its success. How effective is each of the following actions you could take?
- Entice John and Jill with an incentive upon successful completion of the project.
 - a. Meet separately with each individual and explain why they are needed for the successful completion of the project.
 - b. Have both individuals work on their specific tasks without getting involved with each other.
 - c. Assign one person to the job and find a replacement for the other.



9. You are asked to manage a task force for a special project. The plan lists all tasks that must be completed in 3 months. Although you have a large budget and are extremely experienced in this type of work, the 10 people assigned to the task force do not have much experience. How effective is each of the following actions you could take?

Handle all of the critical tasks myself and minimize the participation of the 10 members.

- a. Quickly arrange for training in the skills necessary for them to be successful in this project.
- b. Meet with the task force and determine the strengths and weaknesses of each member. Assign each member a task. Schedule periodic reviews to determine if the project is on schedule.
- c. Because of the time constraints, immediately break the task force into groups and tell everyone to get to work, evaluating progress as I go.

10. You just promoted your boss's niece, because she was most qualified, to a position that many people wanted. Three of these people complain to you that you showed favoritism. They threaten to report you to the corporate office unless you change your mind. You are scheduled for a promotion, but it will be postponed for at least four months if there is an official inquiry. How effective is each of the following actions you could take?

Stick by my decision. Explain to the group that the best person was selected for the promotion.

- a. Talk to my supervisor about the situation and seek his guidance on how to handle the complainants given my upcoming promotion. Do not change my selection.
- b. Have individual meetings with the complainants to discuss my different perceptions of the promotion and explain the reasons for my selection.
- c. File a complaint against the complainants for threatening to interfere with the promotion.

In each of these examples, you would rate the how effective or ineffective you believe each action to be if you are that person in that situation.

SAMPLE



Meet and Greet.

Applicants who successfully pass the Phase I test will be invited to a Meet and Greet, which is sponsored by and held at your processing field office. During the Meet and Greet, applicants will be able to speak directly to an FBI Special Agent, learn about Bureau policy requirements, verify and expand on the information they provided in their résumé, and ask questions about the position and/or process.

Applicants are expected wear professional, business attire to the Meet and Greet.

Applicants who indicate foreign language proficiency on their online application will also be scheduled for language testing.



Chapter 6

Phase II





The Oral and Written Test.

Overview

Upon passage of Phase I testing and successful completion of the Meet-and-Greet, applicants will be assessed by an internal FBI hiring board on their ability to meet the current needs of the FBI. After passing this assessment, candidates will be invited to take the Phase II assessment. Phase II testing may occur locally or applicants may be flown to a regional testing site.

Applicants who fail Phase II testing may be eligible for one retest at least one year after their initial test date. Not all applicants will be invited to retest.

Due to the overwhelming volume of Special Agent applicants, the FBI will only retest those applicants who meet the Bureau's current needs. Applicants who will exceed the age limit or who cannot be processed prior to their 37th birthday will not be retested.

Applicants interested in retesting for Phase II should contact their Applicant Coordinator.

Oral Interview

The oral interview is one-hour long and is administered by a panel of three Special Agents.

The panel will use standardized scoring criteria to measure the Special Agent Core Competencies (see p. 13) as well as your honesty and integrity.

Writing

A 90-minute, written exam meant to test applicants' ability to analyze data and prepare a comprehensive report. At the start of the exercise, applicants will be given a set of background materials to use for this exercise.

Please be detailed and thorough in the written report required in this exercise.

There is no preparation manual available for the Writing Exercise, but we suggest applicants:

- Read instructions carefully and make sure you understand what the exercise requires
- Be detailed and thorough in your report
- Use only the fact provided—do not make up additional facts
- Follow grammatical rules and spell words correctly
- Write legibly—responses cannot be evaluated if they cannot be read



Tips.

- Be yourself
- The evaluators will be taking notes during the interview to assist them in documenting the results. Do not let this distract you.
- Provide detailed information when answering the interview questions. Do not be modest in your responses. To provide the best examples of your skills and abilities, draw from all of your life's experiences (not just the most recent ones).
- Remember that the interview panel knows no information about you beyond your name.
- Keep your answers concise and specific—answers that are too lengthy will detract from your ability to complete the interview within the required timeframe.
- Do not make assumptions about what the evaluators are seeking. The interview instructions are straightforward. There are no "trick" questions.
- Study your resume and be able to speak about how your experiences match with the Special Agent Core Competencies.



CAUTION:

An applicant will be deactivated for receiving advice beyond what is provided by the applicant coordinator and/or what is available at www.fbijobs.gov. (This includes information gathered from online sources or FBI employees)



Conditional Appointment Offer (CAO).

After passing Phase I, Phase II, and the official Physical Fitness Test (PFT), qualified candidates will receive a CAO. This letter makes a conditional job offer to the candidate and provides details on the FBI background investigation, salary, and next steps. Actual hiring is contingent on the successful completion of the remaining SASS components (i.e. medical, background investigation, graduation from the FBI Academy, etc.).

Before accepting your CAO, Special Agent candidates should consider the following:

- New Agents are required to sign a three year service agreement
- All FBI Special Agents must sign and adhere to a mobility agreement, under which they are subject to transfer at any time to meet the organizational and program needs of the FBI



Chapter 7

Basic Field Training Course (BFTC)





Overview.

After receiving a final job offer, candidates will report to the FBI Academy, where New Agents in Training (NATs) and New Intelligence Analysts in Training (NIATs) have the opportunity to train together. The NIAT curriculum lasts 12 weeks, and the NAT curriculum lasts 21.

Other NATs and NIATs will include people from a variety of diverse backgrounds, such as servicemen and women, teachers, chemists, accountants, lawyers, artists, doctors, engineers and more. Throughout training, NATs and NIATs are highly integrated and collaborative. Unlike NIATs, however, NATs are expected to maintain their physical rigor throughout their time at the Academy – physical fitness doesn't stop with the PFT.

All trainees live *On-Campus*, in *Dorm-Style Rooms*, with a *Roommate*.

All Special Agent training progressively increases in terms of intensity, rigor, knowledge, time/physical demands and practical application of training. The FBI does not recommend family members move to areas near the Academy as trainees must be able to focus fully on training during the entire time assigned to the FBI Academy and the FBI will only cover relocation costs from an applicant's processing field office to their first office assignment.



Curriculum.

Trainees' time at the FBI Academy will include lessons in a variety of areas, from firearms, defensive tactics, defensive driving, evidence and intelligence collection and analysis, to interviewing and negotiation techniques, and much more.

Learning at the Academy is divided into two main segments:

Weeks 1-12: Academic Training

The first 12 weeks of training includes a highly integrated learning environment where NATs and NIATs learn the threat-based, intelligence-driven, and operationally-focused approach the FBI takes to all investigations. This includes developing threat-based assessments, collecting intelligence and conducting investigations, and planning operations throughout a variety of collaborative exercises. Candidates are expected to own their learning, and work together to apply this learning to their future careers.

At the end of week 12, candidates attend the graduation of their NIAT classmates.

Weeks 13-20: Tactical Training

Weeks 13-20 are NAT-only training designed to hone tactical skills and precision. This training is physically demanding and intellectually challenging, and will include lessons in firearms, defensive tactics, defensive driving, and more.

NAT graduation takes place in week 21.



Academy Tips.

Packing and Arrival

Candidates should pack for the appropriate length of time for which they will stay at the Academy. The first four days include the FBI's Onboarding New Employees (ONE) orientation program, before NATs and NIATs begin the BFTC. Candidates should pack according to the following dress code:

- ONE program and some field trips: business attire
- Night and weekend dress: casual; however, no tank tops or flip flops are allowed on Academy grounds
- Uniforms for use during work hours (0800-1700) are provided when candidates arrive at the Academy
- Candidates should bring workout gear as appropriate
- Candidates with visible tattoos must wear dark blue or black long-sleeved undershirts

Prohibited Items

Candidates may not bring any of the following items to the Academy:

- Personal weapons
- Knives longer than 3 inches
- Thumb drives
- Personal computers or laptops

Candidates are able to bring their personal vehicles; however, parking at the Academy is limited and may not be available.

Scheduling and Leave

Most of the training takes place Monday through Friday, 0800-1700; however, there are requirements to attend instruction outside of these hours. Trainees are required to reside on campus for the entirety of the first 3 weeks of training and a curfew of midnight is in effect. Beginning with the third weekend, Trainees may travel off campus and the curfew is midnight from Sunday through Thursday. In addition, the Trainees may leave the campus during the weekends as long as they return by midnight on Sunday.



Trainees may request leave or time off, though this is subject to approval and will be reviewed against the class schedule and any other mitigating factors.

For additional questions related to the FBI Academy or BFTC, please contact your Applicant Coordinator.

Suitability.

Just because a NAT or NIAT passes the coursework does not necessarily mean he or she will graduate. Candidates should view the BFTC as a 21-week interview in which they are continually assessed for their fitness to join the FBI. Candidates are assessed on six dimensions of suitability, including:

- Judgment
- Conscientiousness
- Integrity
- Emotional Maturity
- Initiative
- Cooperation



Placement.

New Agent Trainees (NATs) are asked to rank Field Office Assignments in order of preference, one to fifty-six.

NATs receive their First Office Assignments to one of the FBI's 56 field offices throughout the U.S. and territories including Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico during the 4th week of the BFTC, based upon the staffing needs of the FBI. Some Agents will be assigned to an office high on their list, while others will receive their 56th choice.

All FBI Special Agents are subject to transfer at any time to meet the organizational and program needs of the FBI and accept the possibility of transfer as a condition of their employment.



Chapter 8

Special Agent Salary



Special Agent Salary.

The FBI adheres to the General Schedule (GS) pay scale of the United States Civil Service which is administered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

All new FBI Special Agents will earn salaries at the **GL-10** [General Schedule plan code for Law Enforcement Officers] pay grade, plus availability pay and the locality pay that applies to their first offices of assignment. **Locality Pay** is additional compensation on top of a base pay rate to account for differences in the labor market and cost of living in different areas of the United States. **Availability Pay** is the approximate 25% increase new Special Agents receive to their base salary for their requisite 50 hour work weeks.



New Agent Trainees at the FBI Academy in Quantico, VA are paid at the GL-10, step 1 pay grade plus Washington, DC area locality pay for the 21 weeks of FBI Academy Training.

Applicants with prior civilian government service (including FBI professional staff) may be eligible to receive higher steps that are commensurate with their highest previous pay, but they will not enter at higher grades.

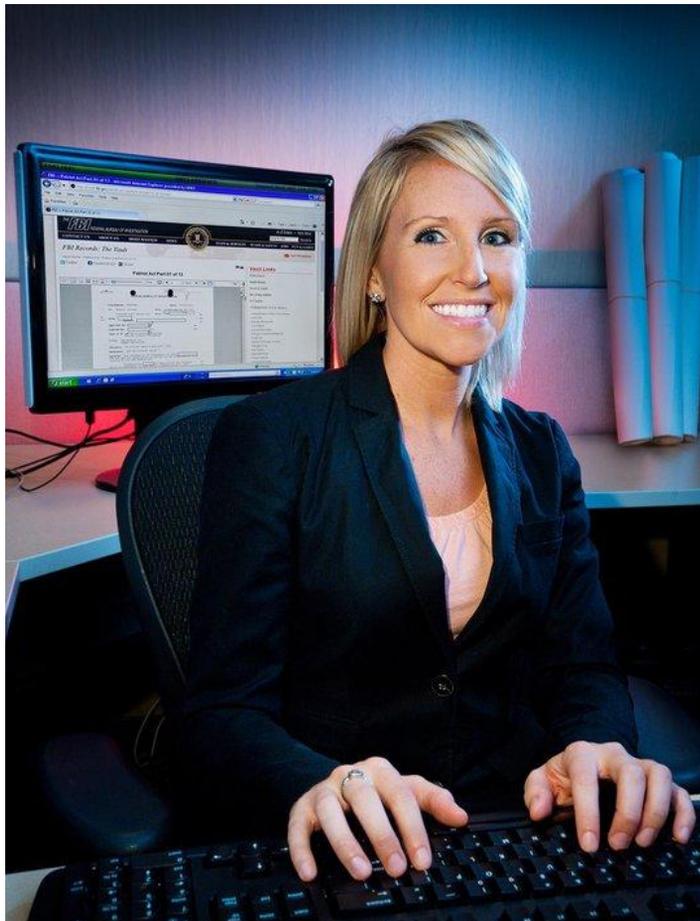
Special Agents switch over to the GS pay scale when their pay grade increases beyond GL-10 due to the GL pay scale topping out at the GL-10 pay grade. To determine potential maximum salaries, locality and availability pay, please refer to OPM's website at

<http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/index.asp>



Chapter 9

Frequently Asked Questions





Frequently Asked Questions.

1. Can I choose which office processes my application?

No. Your application must be processed by the FBI office covering your residence and/or place of employment.

2. Is there a waiver regarding the maximum age limit of 37?

Generally no. The maximum entrance age for Special Agents is 37 in order to complete 20 years of service by the mandatory retirement age of 57. New Agents must report to the Basic Field Training Course by the last day of the month in which their 37th birthday occurs. However, age waivers may be granted to preference-eligible veterans who are otherwise qualified.

3. Do certain degrees provide a more desirable educational background for the Special Agent position?

The FBI seeks applicants with a broad range of backgrounds to support our diverse and complex caseload. The FBI does not recommend particular courses, schools or degrees (although your college or university must be U.S. Department of Education accredited). Study a field you enjoy and thereafter, obtain experiences that will demonstrate your ability to master the Special Agent core competencies, specifically:

1. Leadership
2. Oral Communication
3. Initiative and Motivation
4. Adaptability and Flexibility
5. Organizing, Planning, and Prioritizing
6. Interpersonal Skills
7. Evaluating Information and Making Decisions
8. Writing

4. Do I have to know how to shoot a firearm to apply to be an FBI Special Agent?

No, it is not necessary to have prior experience with a firearm. All Special Agent trainees will receive extensive training in the use and maintenance of firearms and related equipment.

5. What is a typical day like for a Special Agent of the FBI?

There is no such thing as a typical day for an FBI Special Agent. Every day is different. One day you could be testifying in federal court and the next you could be executing a search warrant and gathering evidence. One day you could be meeting with a source to gather



intelligence on illegal activities, the next you could be making an arrest, and the next you could be back in the office meeting with your squad and catching up on paperwork. FBI Special Agents are always on call to protect their country. Although the work is challenging, Special Agents still have the opportunity to spend quality time with their families.

6. Will having uncorrected vision or laser surgery disqualify me from applying for the Special Agent position?

Special Agent candidates need to have at least 20/20 vision in one eye and not worse than 20/40 vision in the other eye. If an individual has a satisfactory history of soft contact lens wear for more than one year and is able to meet correction to 20/20 in one eye and no worse than 20/40 in the other eye, safety concerns are considered mitigated and applicant processing may continue.

If an applicant has had laser eye corrective surgery, a six-month waiting period is required prior to beginning New Agents' Training at the FBI Academy. The applicant must also provide evidence of complete healing by an ophthalmology clinical evaluation. Policy for color vision allows continuation of applicant processing if those who fail initial color vision screening are able to successfully complete the Farnsworth D-15 color vision test.

7. What kind of training do FBI Special Agents receive?

All Special Agents begin the first 21 weeks of their career at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, where they participate in intensive training. During their time at the FBI Academy, trainees live on-campus, participate in a variety of training activities, and study a wide variety of academic subjects. The FBI Academy curriculum also includes intensive training in physical fitness, defensive tactics, practical application exercises, and the use of firearms.

Over the course of an Agent's career, the FBI provides additional training opportunities to keep him/her updated on the latest developments in the respective specialty fields.

8. What are the employment benefits?

As an FBI employee, Special Agents are also entitled to a variety of benefits, including group health and life insurance programs, vacation and sick pay, and a full retirement plan.

9. What are the opportunities for promotions and pay increases?

As they gain more experience, Special Agents can qualify for promotion to a variety of managerial and executive positions. Special Agents enter as GS-10 employees on the law enforcement government pay scale and can advance to the GS-13 grade level in field, non-supervisory assignments. Promotions to supervisory, management, and executive positions are available in grades GS-14 and GS-15 as well as in the FBI Senior Executive Service. For more information on the government pay scale, please visit the Office of Personnel Management's "Salaries" page.



10. What is the FBI's drug policy?

See [page 10](#) for an explanation of the drug policy.

11. How are Special Agents assigned to offices and how often are Special Agents rotated in their assignments?

Newly appointed Special Agents are assigned to one of the FBI's 56 field offices or one of their respective resident agencies based on the Bureau's current staffing and/or critical specialty needs. New Agents are given the opportunity to rank their desired locations. While consideration is given to these preferences, first office assignment is based upon the staffing needs of the FBI. All Special Agents are subject to transfer at any time to meet the organizational and program needs of the FBI. Special Agents accept the possibility of transfer as a condition of their employment.

12. Do I need to have a law enforcement or military background to apply to become an FBI Special Agent?

No! Because of the breadth and scope of the FBI's mission, the FBI seeks candidates with a wide variety of backgrounds, not just law enforcement or military experience. The FBI seeks Special Agents with degrees/expertise in physical sciences, computer science, engineering, architecture, law, accounting, and other disciplines that require logical analysis and critical thinking. We are also actively seeking Special Agents who are fluent in critical foreign languages, as well as those with experience in intelligence and counterterrorism work.

13. How will having a family affect my career as an FBI Special Agent?

The FBI has several programs designed to help employees meet both their family and career goals. In addition to our normal annual and sick leave benefits, the federal Family and Medical Leave Act permits employees to take up to twelve weeks of leave without pay for medical exigencies, including the birth or adoption of a child.

14. I want to be an FBI "Profiler." Where do I begin the application process?

The FBI does not have a job called "Profiler." Supervisory Special Agents assigned to the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC) at Quantico, Virginia, perform the tasks commonly associated with "profiling." Despite popular depictions, these FBI Special Agents do not get "vibes" or experience "psychic flashes" while walking around fresh crime scenes. In reality, it is an exciting world of investigation and research; a world of inductive and deductive reasoning, crime-solving experience, and knowledge of criminal behavior, facts, and statistical probabilities.

For additional questions please contact your Local Field Office Applicant Coordinator.