

## Revision History

Revision Date	Revision Summary
11-06-2012, 5:00pm (Eastern Time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarified instructions on completing the on-line essays during the application process on Page 4.</li> <li>Clarified definition of “fake good” on Page 4.</li> </ul>
11-09-2012, 3:45pm (Eastern Time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essays need to be 2,000 to 3,000 characters each, as referenced in the TIP on Page 4.</li> </ul>
12-21-2012, 3:45pm (Eastern Time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated information under the In-Person Assessment Process to clarify how the Written Exercise component will be collected via a laptop environment.</li> <li>Updated information on scheduling for an in-person assessment.</li> </ul>
02-07-2013, 9:00am (Eastern Time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarified instructions on participating in the in-person assessments.</li> </ul>

## Introduction

Congratulations on deciding to apply to the Presidential Management Fellows Program. This *Assessment Preparation Guide* (“Guide”) will help you prepare for the rigorous assessment process used by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to select a diverse PMF candidate pool. This guide is specific to the 2013 PMF Program assessment process and will familiarize you with its key features so that you know what to expect and are prepared to do your best. Some quick facts:

- There are two parts to the assessment. Phase One is an on-line assessment that all applicants must complete during the application process
- Phase Two is a half-day, in-person assessment for Semi-Finalists selected from the total applicant pool
- Finalists who are selected from the Semi-Finalist group are eligible for hire by Federal agencies into designated PMF positions
- Once a Finalist is hired by a Federal Agency, they officially become a Presidential Management Fellow (PMF; Fellow), joining an elite corps of the future leaders in public service

**Key Features of Phase One:** The on-line assessment includes three components: a video-based situational judgment assessment, a questionnaire designed to assesses specific work styles and work-related characteristics required for success and fit in the PMF Program, and essay questions. The essays are collected during the application process, but factored into the in-person assessment. The on-line assessment is administered in an un-proctored environment and is *not* timed.

**Key Features of Phase Two:** The in-person assessment is a half-day immersion experience that puts Semi-Finalists through a series of group and individual exercises designed to simulate “the day in the life” of a PMF. Candidates will interact with real issues and senior government leaders in four major components: Group Exercise, Press Conference, Behavioral Interview and a Written Exercise. Semi-Finalists will be observed and evaluated by a panel of assessors in each exercise.

Both phases of the assessment process are designed to uncover evidence of the following competencies that are critical to success on the job across all PMF occupations:

- Adaptability** - Learns quickly and readily adapts to changing circumstances and unexpected events; manages self effectively under pressure; aware of strengths and development needs and proactive in learning and self development.

2. **Personal Accountability** - Behaves in an honest, fair and ethical manner; holds self accountable for high quality, timely and cost effective results; takes responsibility and learns from mistakes.
3. **Motivation to Serve** - Demonstrates initiative, commitment and effort in working to serve the public; perseveres in the face of challenges and measures success by accomplishments, not status; demonstrates humility and respect for co-workers.
4. **Problem Solving** - Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives, and to make recommendations.
5. **Interpersonal Skills** - Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.
6. **Oral Communication** - Communicates information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (for example, technical, sensitive, controversial); makes clear and convincing oral presentations; listens to others, attends to nonverbal cues, and responds appropriately.
7. **Written Communication** - Recognizes or uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; expresses information (for example, facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner; produces written information, which may include technical material that is appropriate for the intended audience.

The PMF Program is deeply committed to building a fellowship that reflects the Nation's diverse population.

#### REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS:

Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations for either phase of the assessment process when applying to the PMF Program. The PMF Program Office will review each request the following business day during the application process and contact you directly to adjudicate your request. Remember that the on-line assessment is un-proctored and not timed, so requests for additional time are not necessary. During the application process, applicants are prompted on whether or not a reasonable accommodation is needed. If the applicant makes a request for the on-line assessment, he/she is instructed to not participate in the on-line assessment until the PMF Program Office can adjudicate their request; however, the applicant may continue with the rest of their application as long as he/she does not submit their final application until completing the on-line assessment. If an applicant makes such a request, the application system will prompt him/her to write a brief description of the accommodation needed. Under the "Documents" section of the application, the applicant can submit supporting documentation for any such requests (e.g., a physician's letter, a letter from an Occupational Therapist, etc.). Submitting supporting documentation will assist in the expedited adjudication of your request. If additional documentation is needed, we will contact you.

Reasonable accommodations are provided to applicants with disabilities where appropriate, as qualified under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, or the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Semi-Finalists requesting an accommodation for the in-person assessment will be provided additional information on scheduling their in-person assessment. Please see additional information under the [Become A PMF\Eligibility\Equal Opportunity Employment](http://www.pmf.gov/become-a-pmf/eligibility/equal-opportunity-employment.aspx) (<http://www.pmf.gov/become-a-pmf/eligibility/equal-opportunity-employment.aspx>) section of the PMF website at [www.pmf.gov](http://www.pmf.gov).

**NOTE:** Current Finalists (e.g., Class of 2012) who choose to reapply to the PMF Program for the Class of 2013, if you initiate an application and the on-line assessment, you will forfeit your standing as a current Finalist (5 CFR 362.403).

We are delighted that you are interested in being appointed into the Federal Government as a Presidential Management Fellow. The opportunities available to PMFs are extraordinary as are the challenges facing our Nation today. The assessment process you are about to go through is rigorous, demanding, and highly

competitive, helping OPM find top talent with strong management potential for this elite program. We wish you well in the assessment process and hope to see you on the other side!

## Phase One: On-Line Assessment

The on-line assessment consists of three parts: Situational Judgment Test, Questionnaire, and Essay Questions. Each component of the on-line assessment is administered in an un-proctored environment and is *not* timed.

### Part I: Situational Judgment Assessment

In this section of the on-line assessment, you will watch a series of videos that reflect situations found in a typical office environment that illustrate interpersonal scenarios PMFs could encounter on the job. For each scenario, you will be asked to choose **the most effective** course of action *and* **the least effective** course of action out of four possible courses of action for that particular scenario. You should choose a particular course of action based on the experiences you may have had in your current or previous jobs, in school, or in social, athletic, or volunteer organizations. You should choose the course of action you consider the best for a particular scenario **AFTER** watching the video and reading through the four courses of action.



**TIP:** For each scenario, select the course of action you consider the best, not the course of action you think others might select, or the course of action you think is expected of you.



**PROCESS:** The videos can be viewed in closed captioning by clicking on the CLOSED CAPTIONING button on *each* video located below the screen. See a closed captioning example below.



The video to the left will automatically commence playing.

Use the video controls to play/pause and to enable/disable captioning.

If you cannot see the video content or hear the audio, please refer to the required settings for your operating system/browser and make sure your speakers/headset is plugged in and turned on.

select the captioning button to display closed captioning

### Part II: Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to assess the competencies required for success in professional, managerial, and leadership roles. It is based upon extensive research exploring the skills required to be successful in today's economy and business climate, and so is uniquely well suited for PMF candidates. In this assessment, you will be presented with short behavioral statements that ask about your interests and work preferences. You will be asked to rate each behavioral statement on a five-point scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. Read each statement carefully, decide which of the five possible responses most accurately describes you, and then click on that response.

**TIP:** Be sure you understand which end of the scale is "Agree" and which is "Disagree".

## Part III: Essay Questions

During the essay portion of the application process, you will answer three essay questions about your accomplishments and experiences. The essay questions will be factored into the in-person assessment process.

The essays are not timed; however, applicants must complete their application, on-line assessment, and the essays prior to the closing of the announcement.

Applicants may use a word processor to draft their responses and then cut-and-paste their responses into the text boxes provided. When doing so, please confirm your essays for formatting and spacing. You CANNOT answer one essay and later come back to answer the remaining two. All essays should be answered in one session.



---

**TIP:** Essays should be between 2,000 to 3,000 characters each.

---



**PROCESS:** You may use a word processor to draft your responses and then cut and paste into the text box provided in the application.

A few notes to keep in mind during the on-line assessment process:

- When reading the questions on the assessments, you may wonder how they are related to your potential as a PMF. We know from extensive research that these characteristics are essential to success in the PMF Program, which is why they are measured during the selection process.
- Do not get hung up on one or two questions – it is not the individual items that are important, it is the whole person represented by measured characteristics that the assessment evaluates.
- When reading the questions on the assessments, you may not be able to tell what characteristics they are measuring, which is by design to discourage applicants from guessing what the desired response is versus answering according to their personal characteristics; this ensures a person cannot “fake good” on the assessment. Also, some of the questions may be related to multiple characteristics.
  - “Fake good” means that you should not respond in such a way as to try to “fake” the system, but rather respond in the way you would actually respond to the situation presented.
- It is important that you are candid and honest in your responses to all assessment questions. Attempts to distort your answers or try to make a positive impression by answering in what you think is the “best” way are likely to lead to invalid or inconsistent responses.
- It is best to complete the entire on-line assessment in one sitting, if possible.

### General Assessment-Taking Tips

1. Allow yourself plenty of time. Do not wait until the last few hours to take the on-line assessment as it will take between 1 and 2 hours to complete in addition to any time needed to complete the rest of your application and essays.
2. Get a good night’s sleep before you take the assessment.
3. Eat a light, nutritious meal to increase your energy level.
4. Read all instructions carefully before beginning.
5. Review the system requirements below.
6. For each question, read the entire question and all response options carefully before choosing an answer.
7. Ensure you can access the Internet from a distraction-free environment.
8. Turn on the speakers on your computer or use headphones before you begin the assessment.
9. Try to complete the on-line assessment in one sitting. However, if you have to stop and come back, your previous answers will be saved.
10. The assessment requires thoughtful consideration, and it is important for you to complete it during a time in which you can give it your full attention and effort.

## System Requirements for the On-Line Assessment

Please check your computer for the following requirements BEFORE you begin the on-line assessment. These settings may be different than the system requirements needed to complete your application. System and browser requirements for the application process can be found under the [Become a PMF\Application Process \(http://www.pmf.gov/become-a-pmf/application-process.aspx\)](http://www.pmf.gov/become-a-pmf/application-process.aspx) section on the PMF website.

If you need technical assistance or have any questions about accessing the on-line application and on-line assessment, technical assistance will be provided during the application period, including a self-service knowledge base, live chat, and phone support. Applicants can access a link to the *Help* options directly from the on-line application.

All technical assistance should be addressed via the *Help* options presented during the application process. Non-technical and general questions about the PMF Program should be sent to [pmfapplication@opm.gov](mailto:pmfapplication@opm.gov). Please do not call the PMF Program Office directly as dedicated staff trained to address applicant inquiries can be reached most effectively via the email box.

### Operating System

We highly recommend that you complete the on-line assessment on one of the following **Windows-based** operating systems:

- ✓ Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2)
- ✓ Windows XP Service Pack 3 (SP3)
- ✓ Windows Server 2003 Service Pack 2 (SP2)
- ✓ Windows Server 2003 R2
- ✓ Windows Vista
- ✓ Windows 7
- ✓ Windows Server 2008

The on-line assessment is **not** supported on the following Windows-based operating systems:

- ✓ Any version prior to Windows XP Service Pack 2 (released in August 2004)
- ✓ Windows 2003 (prior to Service Pack 2 or R2) (released in March 2007)

The on-line assessment is **not** supported on any mobile devices, such as hand-held devices (e.g., devices with touch screen input).

NOTE: The Safari browser is not fully compatible because it did not pass our tests for proper functionality. The same applies for many smart phone and tablet applications.

The on-line assessment can be completed on a **dual boot Mac machine**, if the assessment is completed in a Windows environment (virtual machine) using **Internet Explorer versions 7 or 8**. If you attempt to complete the assessment on any other browser, including **Internet Explorer version 6, AOL, or Firefox**, you may experience technical difficulties. To check which version you are using, click the **Help** button on your Internet Explorer menu bar and select **About Internet Explorer**.

### Monitor Size/Screen Resolution

The on-line assessment is best viewed on a **17"** monitor with a screen resolution of **1024 x 768 pixels or higher**. To check your screen resolution, right click anywhere on your desktop, click on **Properties**, and select the **Settings** tab. If using Windows 7, right click anywhere on your desktop and click on Screen resolution. If the screen resolution is smaller than 1024 x 768 pixels, increase the resolution and then click OK.

### Internet Explorer Settings

The following settings in Internet Explorer should be checked PRIOR TO completing the on-line assessment.



---

**TIP:** *If you need to change any of these settings, you will want to make note of the original settings so you can change them back to your preferred settings after you finish the on-line assessment.*

---

- ✓ **Active Scripting (JavaScript)** must be enabled. To confirm this setting, click on **Tools** on your Internet Explorer menu bar, click on **Internet Options**, select the **Security** tab, click on the **Custom level** button, and scroll to **Scripting**, select **Enable** for **Active Scripting**, and then click **OK**.
- ✓ **ActiveX Controls** must be enabled. To confirm this setting, click on **Tools** on your Internet Explorer menu bar, click on **Internet Options**, select the **Security** tab, click on the **Custom level** button, scroll to **Internet ActiveX Controls and Plugins**, select **Enable** for **Run ActiveX Controls and Plugins** and **Script ActiveX Controls Marked Safe for Scripting**, then click **OK**.
- ✓ **Cookies** must be enabled. To confirm this setting, click on **Tools** on your Internet Explorer menu bar, select **Internet Options**, click on the **Privacy** tab, click on the **Advanced** button, check the **Override automatic cookie handling** box and the **Always allow session cookies** box, then click **OK**.  
*\*Please Note: Cookies are used by the on-line assessment site, but will not be stored on your computer. They will be deleted when you finish your on-line assessment.*
- ✓ **SSL encryption** must be enabled. To confirm this setting, click on **Tools** on your Internet Explorer menu bar, click **Internet Options**, select the **Advanced** tab, scroll to the **Security** section, make sure the **Use SSL 3.0** and **Use TLS 1.0** options are checked, then click **OK**.
- ✓ **Your Internet browser text display size** must be set to **Medium** or **Smaller**. To confirm this setting, click on **View** on your Internet Explorer menu bar, point to **Text Size**, and select either **Medium** or **Smaller**.
- ✓ Your **Zoom Level** should be set at **100%**. To confirm this setting, click on the zoom feature in the lower right hand corner of your Internet Explorer window and select **100%**.  
*\*Please Note: If you have any difficulties viewing the "Start" or "Continue" buttons when completing your on-line assessment, the zoom setting may need to be decreased to 90%.*

## Pop-up Blockers

Please check to see if you have pop-up blocking software installed on your computer. If so, please **disable the pop-up blocking software until the on-line assessment is complete** because this software may prevent the on-line assessment from opening correctly.

Pop-up blocking software is included and turned on by default in some anti-virus, Internet security, personal firewall, browsers, and many of the free toolbars available, including the toolbars supplied by Google, MSN, and Yahoo. The instructions on how to uninstall or disable each particular pop-up blocker will vary depending on that particular software.

The places that pop-up blocking software can exist are too numerous to name; however, here is a list of the most common areas to find pop-up blockers:

**Internet Explorer:** Includes a pop-up blocker that is enabled by default. To disable this, click on **Tools** on your Internet Explorer menu bar, point to **Pop-up Blocker**, and select **Turn Off Pop-up Blocker**.

**Toolbars:** Look at your browser's toolbar for **Google**, **MSN**, or **Yahoo** toolbars. Most, if not all, of these toolbars include a pop-up blocker. To temporarily disable these pop-up blockers, click on the "**blocked**" button on the toolbar.

Bypassing pop-up blockers can often be accomplished by holding down the **Ctrl** key on your keyboard while clicking on the link that you will be accessing to complete your testing.

## System Requirement Check

An automatic system check is performed prior to launching the on-line assessment. ***If the local system does not meet the requirements a warning message is displayed to the user. Although a warning is displayed, you are permitted to continue on to the assessment; however, the assessment may not perform as expected. You may also check the local browser settings. If your local system meets all requirements, you will be taken directly into the on-line assessment.***

Below are screen shots of the system check:

### Browser Requirements

**WARNING:** The browser you are using is not supported. Continuing may result in unexpected performance or incorrect results.

We recommend that you verify the system requirements and install a supported browser or utilize an alternate machine.

[View Browser Info](#)

[Click to Continue](#)

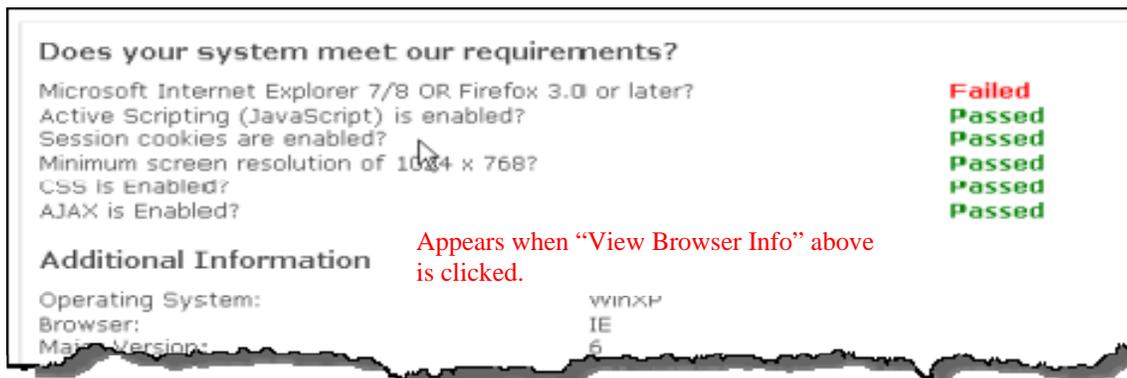
### Does your system meet our requirements?

Microsoft Internet Explorer 7/8 OR Firefox 3.0 or later?	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Passed Passed Passed Passed Passed</div>
Active Scripting (JavaScript) is enabled?	
Session cookies are enabled?	
Minimum screen resolution of 1024 x 768?	
CSS is Enabled?	
AJAX is Enabled?	

#### Additional Information

Operating System:	WinNT
Browser:	IE
Major Version:	8
Minor Version:	0
ECMA Version:	3.0
JScript Version:	6.0
Screen Resolution:	1280 X 800
.NET Framework Version:	3.5.30729
Supports ActiveX?	Yes
Is Web Crawler?	No
Supports Frames?	Yes
Is Beta?	No
Supports Java Applets?	Yes
W3C DOM Version:	1.0
MS DOM Version:	8.0
Is AOL?	No
Is Mobile Device?	No

## Browser Compatibility Warning



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Please do NOT share any emails and/or links provided to you during the application and assessment process with anyone else. The emails and links are personalized for you as the applicant.

## Notification of the On-Line Assessment Results

All applicants will be notified whether or not they are selected as Semi-Finalists. Semi-Finalists will be invited to participate in the in-person assessment and given information on how to schedule their in-person assessment.

## Phase Two: In-Person Assessment

The in-person assessment is an immersion experience that simulates a day in the life of a PMF. You will participate in a series of 4 timed exercises structured around issues relevant to the Federal Government today: Group Exercise, Press Conference, Behavioral Interview, and a Written Exercise. A panel of trained Federal employees will evaluate the degree to which you demonstrate the PMF critical competencies assessed in each exercise. The in-person assessment will last *approximately five hours* and is designed to be a challenging, highly engaging experience. While the schedule includes two short breaks, you should be prepared to have very little "downtime". All Semi-Finalists must participate in the "in-person" assessment to be considered for selection as a Finalist.

All in-person assessment centers will have accessible restrooms, food and beverages within walking distance and access to public transportation.

Semi-Finalists will be invited to one of the six locations listed below. Applicants will be asked to identify their preferred location during the application process. **You are responsible for all travel expenses necessary for you to attend the in-person assessment.**

- Atlanta, GA
- Chicago, IL

- Houston, TX
- Los Angeles, CA
- Miami, FL
- Washington, DC, Metro Area

Semi-Finalists will receive a personalized email with instructions on how to schedule their in-person assessment center location and date. The assessment center schedules are all different. The Washington, DC, Metro Area is the largest center location and has the longest schedule. **Please note that registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis.** We encourage you to register without delay as sessions fill up quickly and will close 48 hours prior to that session's date.



**PROCESS:** All scheduling notices will be sent from the same email address ([pmfapplication@opm.gov](mailto:pmfapplication@opm.gov)) you received your Semi-Finalists' notice from. If you did not receive the email, check your SPAM folder.

Each location will have make-up sessions built into the schedule; however, once a location fills up, the Semi-Finalist may need to select a different location with availability at their expense. The Washington, DC, location will serve as the nationwide make-up location. All in-person assessments must take place during the advertised timeline on the PMF website.

The Written Exercise will be collected via a laptop provided at the in-person assessment. The essay will be collected during the in-person assessment and is scored at a later date by a different set of assessors. If you need to request a reasonable accommodation for using a laptop for the written exercise, please send an email to [pmfapplication@opm.gov](mailto:pmfapplication@opm.gov) by January 4, 2013. If your request is the same from what you submitted during the application process, there is no need to send a separate request.

Please select your appointment carefully as appointments will only be rescheduled in cases of emergencies by contacting [pmfapplication@opm.gov](mailto:pmfapplication@opm.gov). Rescheduling of appointments will be based on each location's availability. Once a location's schedule is full, you may either be wait listed for that location or provided a make-up session option if and when such an opening occurs. Please note that any "no shows" will be withdrawn from further consideration.

### In-Person Assessment Admission Rules

- ✓ For those locations prone to inclement weather, Semi-Finalists should check the PMF website's "News & Events" (on the homepage) for any notices on delays or closures.
- ✓ You must bring a copy of your invitation or confirmation email, which will be used to confirm your in-person assessment location, date, and time.
- ✓ You must report to the assessment center at the scheduled time. Some locations are Federal Government facilities and may require additional time to clear security. If you are late, you may **not** be allowed to participate in the in-person assessment.
- ✓ You must bring valid government-issued State or Federal photo identification, such as a driver's license or a passport.
- ✓ You are not allowed to store any prohibited items on the desk/table surfaces of the assessment rooms, such as food, drinks, purses, briefcases, backpacks, notebooks, books, cell phones, or any other electronic devices. You may store any such personal belongings in the staging room or under the table. We are not responsible for your personal belongings so please use best judgment with items you elect to bring.
- ✓ You must return all assessment materials, including scratch paper, provided to you by the Site Coordinators and/or Test Administrators when you have finished your in-person assessment.



**TIP:** Use the internet to map your assessment location; plan to arrive early; search for local restaurants, lodging, and parking garages, if applicable; and get plenty of rest before your scheduled assessment.

---

## **Inclement Weather/Emergencies**

If the Federal Government is closed due to inclement weather or other unforeseen events, the in-person assessments impacted will also be cancelled. If the in-person assessment closes on the day of your scheduled assessment, you will need to reschedule; we will contact those participants impacted. *You are responsible for monitoring your email for all notices regarding the in-person assessment.* The PMF Program Office will do its best to monitor such situations and post any news worthy events to the [News & Events](#) (<http://www.pmf.gov/news-events.aspx>) section on the PMF website at [www.pmf.gov](http://www.pmf.gov). In-person assessments are not conducted on Federal holidays or weekends.

## **Notification of the In-Person Assessment Results**

Semi-Finalists will be notified whether or not they are selected as Finalists via email. Assessment results are not provided and there is no appeal process.

Please refer to the timelines provided on the PMF website for notification schedules and the PMF Class of 2013 Finalists Job Fair. Additional information about the Job Fair will be posted on the PMF website at [www.pmf.gov](http://www.pmf.gov) prior to selection of Finalists. Please note that dates are subject to change. All applicants should regularly check the [News & Events](#) (<http://www.pmf.gov/news-events.aspx>) section for any updates on the PMF website at [www.pmf.gov](http://www.pmf.gov).

NOTE: Please check the Become a PMF\Assessment Process webpage for any updates to posted information or updates to this Guide as indicated by the date in the footer.