

position in which he was employed immediately before his entrance into the military service, or (ii) on the basis of actual duties performed in the military service, or (iii) as a combination of both methods. OPM shall credit time spent in the military service according to the method that will be of most benefit to the preference eligible.

(2) All valuable experience, including experience gained in religious, civic, welfare, service, and organizational activities, regardless of whether pay was received therefor.

[33 FR 12423, Sept. 4, 1968]

**§ 337.102 Evaluating qualifications for employees who are in a retained grade.**

(a) Employees who are in a retained grade must have the experience they gain subsequent to the downgrading action that placed them in a retained grade considered in the following manner. For placements during the period the employee is in a retained grade, agencies must consider the experience subsequent to the downgrading action to be either:

(1) At the level of the retained grade and in the series of the position which he or she occupied at the time of the downgrading; or

(2) At the grade and in the series of the position to which the employee is downgraded.

(b) Agencies must determine which experience to consider on the basis of which will most likely result in placement. For placements or promotions after the retained grade period, the experience is considered only at the grade level and in the series of the position to which the employee was downgraded.

[45 FR 18365, Mar. 21, 1980]

**Subpart B—Direct-Hire Authority**

SOURCE: 68 FR 35268, June 13, 2003, unless otherwise noted.

**§ 337.201 Coverage and purpose.**

OPM will permit an agency with delegated examining authority under 5 U.S.C. 1104(a) (2) to use direct-hire authority under 5 U.S.C. 3304 for a position or group of positions if OPM deter-

mines that there is either a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for such positions.

**§ 337.202 Definitions.**

In this subpart:

(a) A *direct-hire authority* permits hiring without regard to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 3309 through 3318, and parts 211 and 337, subpart A of this chapter.

(b) A *severe shortage of candidates* for a particular position or group of positions means that an agency is unable to identify candidates possessing the competencies required to perform the job requirements despite extensive recruitment, extended announcement periods, and the use, as applicable, of hiring flexibilities such as recruitment and relocation incentives.

(c) A *critical hiring need* for a particular position or group of positions means that an agency has a need to fill the position(s) to meet mission requirements brought about by an emergency, potential threat, or unanticipated or unusual mission requirement, or to conform to the requirements of law, a Presidential directive or Administration initiative, or an unexpected event outside of an agency's control.

**§ 337.203 Public notice requirements.**

Agencies must comply with public notice requirements, as prescribed in 5 U.S.C. 3327 and 3330, and part 330, subpart G of this chapter with respect to any position that an agency seeks to fill using direct-hire authority.

**§ 337.204 Severe shortage of candidates.**

(a) OPM will determine when a severe shortage of candidates exists for particular occupations, grades (or equivalent), and/or geographic locations. OPM may decide on its own that such a shortage exists, or may make this decision in response to a written request from an agency.

(b) In a request for direct-hire authority under this section, an agency must identify the position(s) it is unable to fill and must include supporting evidence that demonstrates the existence of a severe shortage of candidates with respect to the position(s). The evidence should include, as applicable, information about: