

Introduction to Suitability Adjudications for the DoD SPeD Practice Test (Sample)

Study Guide



Everything you need from our exam experts!

Copyright © 2026 by Examzify - A Kaluba Technologies Inc. product.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transferred in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, web distribution, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the author.

Notice: Examzify makes every reasonable effort to obtain accurate, complete, and timely information about this product from reliable sources.

SAMPLE

Table of Contents

Copyright	1
Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
How to Use This Guide	4
Questions	5
Answers	8
Explanations	10
Next Steps	16

SAMPLE

Introduction

Preparing for a certification exam can feel overwhelming, but with the right tools, it becomes an opportunity to build confidence, sharpen your skills, and move one step closer to your goals. At Examzify, we believe that effective exam preparation isn't just about memorization, it's about understanding the material, identifying knowledge gaps, and building the test-taking strategies that lead to success.

This guide was designed to help you do exactly that.

Whether you're preparing for a licensing exam, professional certification, or entry-level qualification, this book offers structured practice to reinforce key concepts. You'll find a wide range of multiple-choice questions, each followed by clear explanations to help you understand not just the right answer, but why it's correct.

The content in this guide is based on real-world exam objectives and aligned with the types of questions and topics commonly found on official tests. It's ideal for learners who want to:

- Practice answering questions under realistic conditions,
- Improve accuracy and speed,
- Review explanations to strengthen weak areas, and
- Approach the exam with greater confidence.

We recommend using this book not as a stand-alone study tool, but alongside other resources like flashcards, textbooks, or hands-on training. For best results, we recommend working through each question, reflecting on the explanation provided, and revisiting the topics that challenge you most.

Remember: successful test preparation isn't about getting every question right the first time, it's about learning from your mistakes and improving over time. Stay focused, trust the process, and know that every page you turn brings you closer to success.

Let's begin.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help you study more effectively and approach your exam with confidence. Whether you're reviewing for the first time or doing a final refresh, here's how to get the most out of your Examzify study guide:

1. Start with a Diagnostic Review

Skim through the questions to get a sense of what you know and what you need to focus on. Your goal is to identify knowledge gaps early.

2. Study in Short, Focused Sessions

Break your study time into manageable blocks (e.g. 30 - 45 minutes). Review a handful of questions, reflect on the explanations.

3. Learn from the Explanations

After answering a question, always read the explanation, even if you got it right. It reinforces key points, corrects misunderstandings, and teaches subtle distinctions between similar answers.

4. Track Your Progress

Use bookmarks or notes (if reading digitally) to mark difficult questions. Revisit these regularly and track improvements over time.

5. Simulate the Real Exam

Once you're comfortable, try taking a full set of questions without pausing. Set a timer and simulate test-day conditions to build confidence and time management skills.

6. Repeat and Review

Don't just study once, repetition builds retention. Re-attempt questions after a few days and revisit explanations to reinforce learning. Pair this guide with other Examzify tools like flashcards, and digital practice tests to strengthen your preparation across formats.

There's no single right way to study, but consistent, thoughtful effort always wins. Use this guide flexibly, adapt the tips above to fit your pace and learning style. You've got this!

Questions

SAMPLE

- 1. Which phase adjudicates the subject's investigation based on suitability criteria?**
 - A. Adjudication phase**
 - B. Investigation phase**
 - C. Preinvestigation phase**
 - D. Reinvestigation phase**

- 2. What is the primary purpose of the Position Designation Automated Tool (PDT)?**
 - A. To simplify and automate the position designation process across agencies for greater efficiency**
 - B. To store personnel files**
 - C. To automatically assign security clearances**
 - D. To calculate pay and benefits**

- 3. SAC stands for which term?**
 - A. Surveillance and Compliance**
 - B. Safety Assessment Criteria**
 - C. Special Access Control**
 - D. Special Agreement Checks**

- 4. What is the Joint Verification System (JVS)?**
 - A. A payroll system**
 - B. A training portal**
 - C. A medical records system**
 - D. A future centralized database that the DoD will adopt as part of its Defense Information System for Security**

- 5. Which statement best describes NACI?**
 - A. It is used for high risk positions**
 - B. It replaces a full background investigation for all federal employees**
 - C. It is the minimum investigation required for all new federal employees and is used for low risk positions with no position sensitivity**
 - D. It excludes employment verification**

- 6. A suitability decision can establish a precedent when appealed beyond the initial decision to which bodies?**
- A. Merit Systems Protection Board**
 - B. The President**
 - C. Federal court system**
 - D. Both MSPB and Federal court system**
- 7. Which database is used to determine what type of investigation is required based on the position's levels of risk and sensitivity?**
- A. PDT**
 - B. JPAS**
 - C. e-QIP**
 - D. CVS**
- 8. What are the four possible categories used to designate a position's sensitivity under the Position Designation System?**
- A. Nonsensitive, Noncritical Sensitive, Critical Sensitive, or Special Sensitive**
 - B. Nonsensitive, Sensitive, High Risk, Admin**
 - C. Public Trust, National Security, Nonsensitive, Sensitive**
 - D. None of the above**
- 9. The Questionnaire for Nonsensitive Positions is which form?**
- A. SF 86**
 - B. SF 85P**
 - C. SF 85**
 - D. SF 85C**
- 10. The first step in the suitability process is position designation. Which term describes this step?**
- A. Prescreening**
 - B. Position designation**
 - C. Background check**
 - D. Screening interview**

Answers

SAMPLE

1. A
2. A
3. D
4. D
5. C
6. D
7. A
8. A
9. C
10. B

SAMPLE

Explanations

SAMPLE

1. Which phase adjudicates the subject's investigation based on suitability criteria?

- A. Adjudication phase**
- B. Investigation phase**
- C. Preinvestigation phase**
- D. Reinvestigation phase**

Adjudication is the phase in which the compiled information is weighed against the defined suitability criteria to decide whether the subject meets the requirements. Investigation gathers and verifies facts, preinvestigation handles initial screening, and reinvestigation updates information; the actual decision about suitability is made during adjudication.

2. What is the primary purpose of the Position Designation Automated Tool (PDT)?

- A. To simplify and automate the position designation process across agencies for greater efficiency**
- B. To store personnel files**
- C. To automatically assign security clearances**
- D. To calculate pay and benefits**

The main idea is that the Position Designation Automated Tool is built to streamline and standardize how job positions are designated across agencies by automating that designation process. This reduces manual steps, lowers the chance of human error, and ensures consistent designation codes and criteria are applied everywhere, which in turn speeds up processing and improves oversight and reporting. It isn't meant for storing personnel files, automatically assigning security clearances, or calculating pay and benefits—the designated function of those systems is handled by separate tools and processes.

3. SAC stands for which term?

- A. Surveillance and Compliance**
- B. Safety Assessment Criteria**
- C. Special Access Control**
- D. Special Agreement Checks**

Special Agreement Checks are used when standard background checks need additional corroboration from outside parties under a formal agreement. This type of check brings in information from other agencies or organizations to verify details about an applicant that aren't fully captured in routine records, helping adjudicators assess risk more accurately. The acronym SAC in this context specifically matches Special Agreement Checks, whereas the other terms don't reflect a formal, cross-agency verification process used in suitability adjudications.

4. What is the Joint Verification System (JVS)?

- A. A payroll system
- B. A training portal
- C. A medical records system
- D. A future centralized database that the DoD will adopt as part of its Defense Information System for Security**

The Joint Verification System is about centralizing how the DoD verifies an individual's identity and suitability for security access. It's envisioned as a single, shared database that would be used within the Defense Information System for Security (DISS) to support security clearances and access determinations. By centralizing verification data, it streamlines background checks and reduces duplication across agencies, making the adjudication process more consistent and efficient. This is why the description of JVS as a future centralized database adopted as part of DISS best fits. It isn't about payroll, training, or medical records, which are outside the scope of security verification and access control.

5. Which statement best describes NACI?

- A. It is used for high risk positions
- B. It replaces a full background investigation for all federal employees
- C. It is the minimum investigation required for all new federal employees and is used for low risk positions with no position sensitivity**
- D. It excludes employment verification

NACI is the baseline background check used for new federal employees in low-risk, non-sensitive positions. It covers checks of national agency records and requires inquiries to prior employers and other references. Because its scope is limited, it is not used for high-risk or sensitive roles, which require more thorough investigations. It does not replace a full background investigation for all federal employees, and it does not exclude employment verification, which is typically part of the review process. This aligns with the described statement as the minimum investigation for all new federal employees in low-risk positions with no position sensitivity.

6. A suitability decision can establish a precedent when appealed beyond the initial decision to which bodies?

- A. Merit Systems Protection Board**
- B. The President**
- C. Federal court system**
- D. Both MSPB and Federal court system**

When an adverse suitability decision is appealed and reviewed, the decisions at the appellate level can create binding guidance for future cases. A suitability decision may be appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board, whose rulings interpret how civil service rules apply to similar situations; these MSPB decisions can become precedent within MSPB practice and for agency actions that follow. If the matter is pushed further to the federal court system, the court's interpretation of the law becomes binding precedent that guides all federal agencies and future cases. Because precedent can arise from both the MSPB and the federal courts, the best answer includes both paths. The President isn't a typical adjudicatory forum for establishing binding precedent in these administrative proceedings.

7. Which database is used to determine what type of investigation is required based on the position's levels of risk and sensitivity?

- A. PDT**
- B. JPAS**
- C. e-QIP**
- D. CVS**

In this process, the level of background investigation is set by the position's risk and sensitivity, and the database that determines the required investigation type is the PDT. This tool houses the position's risk/sensitivity codes and maps them to the appropriate investigation tier, guiding what type of background check to initiate. JPAS is used to view and track investigations and clearances, not to decide the tier. e-QIP is the online form used to collect applicant information, not to determine the required investigation type. CVS serves as a vetting system for ongoing checks, but it does not determine the initial investigation level based on risk and sensitivity.

8. What are the four possible categories used to designate a position's sensitivity under the Position Designation System?

A. Nonsensitive, Noncritical Sensitive, Critical Sensitive, or Special Sensitive

B. Nonsensitive, Sensitive, High Risk, Admin

C. Public Trust, National Security, Nonsensitive, Sensitive

D. None of the above

The main idea here is the four-tier framework used to designate how sensitive a position is under the Position Designation System. These categories—Nonsensitive, Noncritical Sensitive, Critical Sensitive, and Special Sensitive—describe how much protection the duties and the information involved require, which in turn guides the level of access, background checks, and ongoing security measures needed. Nonsensitive roles have no special safeguarding needs, while Noncritical Sensitive roles involve some controlled information but not the most restricted. Critical Sensitive positions handle information or duties that are highly important to national security or mission success, requiring stronger safeguards, and Special Sensitive is the top tier for the most sensitive roles, demanding the strictest personnel security controls. Other option wordings mix categories that belong to different frameworks (such as Public Trust, National Security, Admin, or High Risk), so they don't fit the established four-tier PD designation system as used in DoD practice.

9. The Questionnaire for Nonsensitive Positions is which form?

A. SF 86

B. SF 85P

C. SF 85

D. SF 85C

In background investigations, the level of scrutiny matches the job's sensitivity. For positions that are nonsensitive, the appropriate questionnaire collects essential personal and background information but requires less in-depth detail. This form is specifically designed for non-sensitive roles, making it the standard choice for that category. It's shorter and less invasive than forms used for higher levels of review, such as those for public trust or national security investigations. The other forms cover more involved checks: a form for national security clearance, a form for public trust positions, and a variant used in certain circumstances. Therefore, the Questionnaire for Nonsensitive Positions is SF 85.

10. The first step in the suitability process is position designation. Which term describes this step?

- A. Prescreening**
- B. Position designation**
- C. Background check**
- D. Screening interview**

The first step in suitability adjudications is to designate the position, which sets the required level of investigation and the scope of information needed. The term that describes this step is position designation because it labels the job and determines how deep the inquiry must go. Prescreening is an early filter of candidates, a background check follows designation to verify history, and a screening interview is another evaluation step—none of those describe the initial action of labeling the position itself.

SAMPLE

Next Steps

Congratulations on reaching the final section of this guide. You've taken a meaningful step toward passing your certification exam and advancing your career.

As you continue preparing, remember that consistent practice, review, and self-reflection are key to success. Make time to revisit difficult topics, simulate exam conditions, and track your progress along the way.

If you need help, have suggestions, or want to share feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Reach out to our team at hello@examzify.com.

Or visit your dedicated course page for more study tools and resources:

<https://introtosuitabilityadjudications.examzify.com>

We wish you the very best on your exam journey. You've got this!

SAMPLE