

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

# DHS Cybersecurity Service Assessment Guide

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
**CYBERSECURITY  
SERVICE**



# DHS Cybersecurity Service Assessment Guide

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# DHS Cybersecurity Service Assessment Guide

The DHS Cybersecurity Service Assessment Guide provides information on what to expect during the assessment process and answers to common questions. The multi-phase assessment process varies by career track.

You can visit our [application portal](#) to learn more about our career tracks to help you determine which track best reflects your expertise and experience (note: Benefits, Apply, and Resources all contain relevant information).

If you are applying for a specific opportunity, a career track and associated assessment process will be noted in the announcement.

You can read more about the process for each career track below.

## [Entry Track](#)

## [Developmental Track](#)

## [Technical Track](#)

## [Leadership Track](#)

## [Executive Track](#)

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## Entry Track

For this career track, applicants participate in a two-phase assessment process.

- You must successfully complete Phase I to advance to Phase II.
- The total time commitment for both phases is approximately 2.5 hours (many applicants require less time!).
- Before each phase, DHS will e-mail you instructions and information to help you prepare.
- Assessments are time sensitive, so monitor your e-mail to ensure you have plenty of time to complete them prior to any deadlines.

### PHASE I: ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

- Unproctored – you choose the time and location
- Includes three assessments: (1) a work styles inventory that will take about 40 minutes to complete; (2) a reasoning assessment that you will have up to 40 minutes to complete; and (3) a writing assessment that you will have up to 25 minutes to complete
- Requires a computer with audio (speakers or headphones) and a reliable internet connection
- No knowledge of DHS or cybersecurity is required for these assessments, which measure non-technical areas important for success in the DHS Cybersecurity Service. This includes how you communicate, analyze information, and collaborate with others:
  - The work styles inventory presents you with questions about your work-related interests and preferences.
  - The reasoning assessment asks you to draw logical conclusions, analyze scenarios, and evaluate arguments based on information provided.
  - The writing assessment asks you to provide a written response to an open-ended prompt; grammar/spelling, organization, and content will be evaluated.

### PHASE II: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- Online, recorded video interview – you choose the time and location
- 45 minutes to complete
- Record and review your responses to interview questions

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- Requires a computer, phone, or tablet with a reliable internet connection, webcam, and audio
- No knowledge of DHS or cybersecurity is required for this assessment, which measures non-technical capabilities that are important for professional success in the DHS Cybersecurity Service:
  - You will be asked to verbally respond to a series of questions focused on your previous experience and hypothetical work situations or scenarios.

## Developmental Track

For this career track, applicants participate in a three-phase assessment process.

- You must successfully complete each phase to advance to the next phase.
- The total time commitment for all three phases is approximately 3 hours (many applicants require less time!).
- Before each phase, DHS will e-mail you instructions and information to help you prepare.
- Assessments are time sensitive, so monitor your e-mail to ensure you have plenty of time to complete them prior to any deadlines.

### PHASE I: ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

- Unproctored – you choose the time and location
- Includes two assessments: (1) a work styles inventory that will take about 30 minutes to complete; (2) a work simulation that you will have up to 2 hours to complete
- The two assessments take about 90 minutes (on average) to complete
- Requires a computer with audio (speakers or headphones) and a reliable internet connection
- No knowledge of DHS or cybersecurity is required for these assessments, which measure non-technical areas important for success in the DHS Cybersecurity Service. This includes how you communicate, analyze information, and collaborate with others:
  - The work styles inventory presents you with questions about your work-related interests and preferences.
  - The work simulation presents you with realistic, work-related scenarios and asks you to respond to them.

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## PHASE II: TECHNICAL CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

- Proctored – must be scheduled in advance and completed at a designated assessment center
  - Note: you will be contacted about scheduling by our contracting partner, PSI (USAHIRE\_Support@panpowered.com); you may want to check your spam or junk mail folder
- DHS Cybersecurity jobs are structured around cybersecurity specializations – called technical capabilities. There is a different assessment for each technical capability (visit [Jobs](#) to learn more about the technical capabilities)
- Most individuals only have a primary technical capability and complete only one Technical Capability Assessment, but in limited circumstances, you may complete a second Technical Capability Assessment
- If you are applying for a specific opportunity, the relevant technical capability you should possess—and will be assessed on—will be noted
- You will have up to 2.5 hours to complete each Technical Capability Assessment; each takes about 90 minutes (on average) to complete
- Assessments present realistic, work-related cybersecurity scenarios and questions to assess technical skills
- Cybersecurity knowledge is assessed, but no knowledge of DHS is required

## PHASE III: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- Online, recorded video interview – you choose the time and location
- 45 minutes to complete
- Record and review your responses to interview questions
- Requires a computer, phone, or tablet with a reliable internet connection, webcam, and audio
- No knowledge of DHS or cybersecurity is required for this assessment, which measures non-technical capabilities that are important for professional success in the DHS Cybersecurity Service:
  - You will be asked to verbally respond to a series of questions focused on your previous experience and hypothetical work situations or scenarios.

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## Technical Track

For this career track, applicants participate in a three-phase assessment process.

- Before each phase, DHS will e-mail you instructions and information to help you prepare.
- You must successfully complete each phase to advance to the next phase.
- The total time commitment for all three phases is approximately 5-6 hours (many applicants require less time!).
- Assessments are time sensitive, so monitor your e-mail to ensure you have plenty of time to complete them prior to any deadlines.

### PHASE I: ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

- Unproctored – you choose the time and location
- Includes two assessments: (1) a work styles inventory that will take about 30 minutes to complete; (2) a work simulation that you will have up to 2 hours to complete
- The two assessments take about 90 minutes (on average) to complete
- Requires a computer with audio (speakers or headphones) and a reliable internet connection
- No knowledge of DHS or cybersecurity is required for these assessments, which measure non-technical areas important for success in the DHS Cybersecurity Service. This includes how you communicate, analyze information, and collaborate with others:
  - The work styles inventory presents you with questions about your work-related interests and preferences.
  - The work simulation presents you with realistic, work-related scenarios and asks you to respond to them.

### PHASE II: TECHNICAL CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

- Proctored – must be scheduled in advance and completed at a designated assessment center
  - Note: you will be contacted about scheduling by our contracting partner, PSI (USAHIRE\_Support@panpowered.com); you may want to check your spam or junk mail folder
- DHS Cybersecurity jobs are structured around cybersecurity specializations – called technical capabilities. There is a different assessment for each technical capability (visit [Jobs](#) to learn more about the technical capabilities)

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- Most individuals only have a primary technical capability and complete only one Technical Capability Assessment, but in limited circumstances, you may complete a second Technical Capability Assessment
- If you are applying for a specific opportunity, the relevant technical capability you should possess—and will be assessed on—will be noted
- You will have up to 2.5 hours to complete each Technical Capability Assessment; each takes about 90 minutes (on average) to complete
- Assessments present realistic, work-related cybersecurity scenarios and questions to assess technical skills
- Cybersecurity knowledge is assessed, but no knowledge of DHS is required

## PHASE III: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW\*

- Online, recorded video interview – you choose the time and location
- 45 minutes to complete
- Record and review your responses to interview questions
- Requires a computer, phone, or tablet with a reliable internet connection, webcam, and audio
- No knowledge of DHS or cybersecurity is required for this assessment, which measures non-technical capabilities that are important for professional success in the DHS Cybersecurity Service:
  - You will be asked to verbally respond to a series of questions focused on your previous experience and hypothetical work situations or scenarios.

\*Some applicants who successfully complete Phase III may be asked to participate in a Phase IV: Advanced Technical Interview. This scenario-based interview is used to further assess an applicant's proficiency in a technical capability. More information will be provided to such applicants as they progress through the application process.



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## Leadership Track

For this career track, applicants participate in a three-phase assessment process.

- You must successfully complete each phase to advance to the next phase.
- The total time commitment for all three phases is approximately 5-6 hours (many applicants require less time!).
- Before each phase, DHS will e-mail you instructions and information to help you prepare.
- Assessments are time sensitive, so monitor your e-mail to ensure you have plenty of time to complete them prior to any deadlines.

### PHASE I: ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

- Unproctored – you choose the time and location
- Includes three assessments: (1) a work styles inventory that will take about 30 minutes to complete; (2) a work simulation that you will have up to 2 hours to complete; and (3) a leadership simulation that you will have up to 2.5 hours to complete
- The three assessments take about 3 hours (on average) to complete
- Requires a computer with audio (speakers or headphones) and a reliable internet connection
- No knowledge of DHS or cybersecurity is required for these assessments, which measure non-technical areas important for success in the DHS Cybersecurity Service. This includes how you communicate, analyze information, and collaborate with others:
  - The work styles inventory presents you with questions about your work-related interests and preferences.
  - The work simulation presents you with realistic, work-related scenarios and asks you to respond to them.

### PHASE II: TECHNICAL CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

- Proctored – must be scheduled in advance and completed at a designated assessment center
  - Note: you will be contacted about scheduling by our contracting partner, PSI (USAHIRE\_Support@panpowered.com); you may want to check your spam or junk mail folder
- DHS Cybersecurity jobs are structured around cybersecurity specializations –called technical capabilities. There is a different assessment for each technical capability (visit [Jobs](#) to learn more about the technical capabilities)

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- Most individuals only have a primary technical capability and complete only one Technical Capability Assessment, but in limited circumstances, you may complete a second Technical Capability Assessment
- If you are applying for a specific opportunity, the relevant technical capability you should possess—and will be assessed on—will be noted
- You will have up to 2.5 hours to complete each Technical Capability Assessment; each takes about 90 minutes (on average) to complete
- Assessments present realistic, work-related cybersecurity scenarios/questions to assess technical skills
- Cybersecurity knowledge is assessed, but no knowledge of DHS is required

## PHASE III: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW\*

- Online, recorded video interview – you choose the time and location
- 45 minutes to complete
- Record and review your responses to interview questions
- Requires a computer, phone, or tablet with a reliable internet connection, webcam, and audio (speakers or headphones)
- No knowledge of DHS or cybersecurity is required for this assessment, which measures non-technical capabilities that are important for professional success in the DHS Cybersecurity Service:
  - You will be asked to verbally respond to a series of questions focused on your previous experience and hypothetical work situations or scenarios.

\*Some applicants who successfully complete Phase III may be asked to participate in a Phase IV: Advanced Technical Interview. This scenario-based interview is used to further assess an applicant's proficiency in a technical capability. More information will be provided to such applicants as they progress through the application process.

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## Executive Track

For this career track, applicants participate in a two-phase assessment process.

- You must successfully complete each phase to advance to the next phase.
- The total time commitment for both all phases is approximately 4 hours (many applicants require less time!).
- Before each phase, DHS will e-mail you instructions and information to help you prepare.
- Assessments are time sensitive, so monitor your e-mail to ensure you have plenty of time to complete them prior to any deadlines.

### PHASE I: STRUCTURED RESUME REVIEW

- DHS will review your answers to initial questions about your expertise and experience as well as the resume you submit
- Answering initial questions and submitting your resume takes 10 minutes (on average) to complete
- This phase focuses on your cybersecurity work experience and leadership experience, including in the two positions you identify that most closely match the level of responsibility individuals have in Executive Track positions

### PHASE II: ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

- Unproctored – you choose the time and location
- Includes two assessments: (1) an executive work simulation that you will have up to 2.5 hours to complete; and (2) an executive situational judgement test that you will have up to 1 hour to complete
- The two assessments take about 3 hours (on average) to complete
- No knowledge of DHS is required for these assessments
- Requires a computer with audio (speakers or headphones) and a reliable internet connection

### PHASE III: STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- In-person or online live video interview – DHS will reach out to you to schedule
- 1 hour to complete
- Discuss your cybersecurity career journey, including the cybersecurity specializations (called technical capabilities in the DHS Cybersecurity Service; visit [Jobs](#) to learn more about the technical capabilities) in which you have the most expertise and experience
- Provide your responses to interview questions, including work-related scenarios to assess your capability to lead technical cybersecurity talent and cybersecurity-focused organizations
- No knowledge of DHS is required

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## Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I complete all assessments for a career track at one time?

No - You must first successfully complete the assessments in a phase to advance to the next phase.

2. How will I know if I am moving on to the next phase?

After each phase, you will receive an email from the DHS about the status of your application and any steps you need to take.

3. What if I am unable to begin an online assessment or interview on time or need to reschedule?

Before starting each phase, you will receive instructions and information about what to do if you need to reschedule or if something comes up. Please follow the instructions provided in the e-mail.

4. What should I do if I have a technical problem during an assessment?

Before starting each phase, you will receive instructions and information about who to contact in the event of a technical problem. Please follow the instructions provided in the e-mail.

5. How are the assessments scored? Who scores the assessments?

All assessments are scored using a standard set of scoring procedures. Most are scored by computer; interviews are scored by trained evaluators.

6. Will I receive performance feedback on specific assessments, such as the online assessments, technical capability simulation, or interviews?

No – the only feedback you will receive will be concerning the status of your application, along with information about progression to the next phase and any required steps.

7. Whom can I contact with questions about assessments?

[Contact](#) our recruiting team with questions.