

## ECQ CCAR Writing Model

Challenge	Describe a specific problem or goal.
Context	Talk about the individuals and groups you worked with, and/or the environment in which you worked, to tackle the particular challenge described.
Action	Discuss the specific actions you took to address the challenge described.
Result	Give specific results in addressing the challenge described. These accomplishments demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of your leadership skills.

### Top 10 Reasons QRB Cases are Disapproved

1. Didn't describe what he/she did personally to achieve results.
2. Emphasis on technical rather than leadership skills.
3. Emphasis on process rather than results.
4. Didn't use the CCAR type model.
5. No evidence of leveraging diversity.
6. No evidence of strategic thinking, vision.
7. Vague statements or philosophy rather than facts.
8. No evidence of innovation/creativity.
9. Laundry list of actions without context or results.
10. No measurable results.

Plan Prepare Write

## Frequently Asked Questions

- Q: What happens after I submit my SES application?  
 A: The SES application is reviewed at the NASA Center where the position is located. An Executive Resources Panel may interview you. After the Center selects a candidate, the application is sent to NASA's Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) and to the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) for processing. NSSC personnel will contact the candidate to refine the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) and coordinate approval of the package within NASA. When the final package is approved by the Center and NASA HQ, it is forwarded to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for certification/approval of the candidate.
- Q: Are there deadlines associated with the SES application process?  
 A: There are deadlines throughout the application process, within NASA as well as OPM. From the date a position announcement closes, NASA has 90 business days to select a candidate and submit a completed SES candidate package to OPM. If this deadline is missed, the position must be readvertised and the entire application and selection process repeated.
- Q: How do I know which SES positions are currently vacant?  
 A: All NASA vacancies, including SES positions, are posted on the USAJobs Web site at: [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)
- Q: Where can I find information about preparing my SES package?  
 A: 1. NASA's OHCM provides additional information on the NASA People Web site at: <http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/ses/index.htm>  
 2. The OPM has an SES link at: <http://www.opm.gov/ses/index.asp>  
 3. The NASA STARS Applicant Guide is available at: [https://resume.nasa.gov/applicant\\_guide.html](https://resume.nasa.gov/applicant_guide.html)

Access an electronic version of this guide at: <https://www.nssc.nasa.gov/ses>.

Locate the link under the **References** heading.

[www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)

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National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration



## Guide to Effectively Preparing Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) at NASA

Quick Reference Guide for  
Senior Executive Service (SES) Applicants

September 2013

## Tips for Preparing to Write

- ◆ Download and carefully read the ECQ examples in the SES Qualifications Guide at: [http://www.opm.gov/ses/references/guidetoSESquals\\_2012.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/ses/references/guidetoSESquals_2012.pdf)
- ◆ Carefully read the Writing Executive Qualifications Narratives section of the SES Qualifications Guide, especially the Challenge-Context-Action-Result Model at: [http://www.opm.gov/ses/references/GuidetoSESquals\\_2012.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/ses/references/GuidetoSESquals_2012.pdf)
- ◆ Review the USAJobs Web site to become familiar with position application requirements at: [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)
- ◆ Review the OPM SES Web site at: <http://www.opm.gov/ses/>
- ◆ Review the OPM Web site regarding the selection process at: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/selection-process/>
- ◆ Gather all pertinent data before beginning.
- ◆ Compose a rough outline, ensuring you have identified all required elements.

## Tips for Writing ECQs

- ◆ Prepare brief executive summary as an introduction to the package.
- ◆ Follow the CCAR Model for writing your ECQs.
- ◆ Provide two different examples for each ECQ.
- ◆ Give specific information relating to your executive leadership experience.
- ◆ Avoid generalities or vague references and identify measurable results.
- ◆ Focus on leadership, not technical abilities.
- ◆ Focus on recent experience, education, and training (i.e., less than 10 years).
- ◆ Show measurable results, especially in terms of improved customer service, increased efficiency, productivity, or money saved — qualify and quantify your accomplishments.
- ◆ Know your audience. You are not writing for NASA management. The Qualifications Review Board (QRB) is comprised of current SES members from various Federal agencies.
- ◆ Spell out all acronyms and explain information specific to NASA.
- ◆ Ensure your ECQs do not exceed 10 pages of a standard font size and type.
- ◆ Adhere to all required guidelines, specifically addressing the ECQ competencies.

## ECQ Elements

- ◆ Address the following five ECQs:
  - **Leading Change** - Bringing about strategic change in a continuously changing environment.
  - **Leading People** - Fostering development of others while facilitating teamwork.
  - **Results Driven** - Meeting goals and expectations by using technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks.
  - **Business Acumen** - Managing human, financial, and information resources.
  - **Building Coalitions** - Developing alliances across agencies to achieve goals.
- ◆ Provide two good examples of your leadership skills for each ECQ addressed.
- ◆ Ensure each example is developed using the easy-to-follow outline provided by the CCAR Model. The CCAR Model elements are:
  - Challenge
  - Context
  - Action
  - Result
- ◆ Download the SES Qualifications Guide and review the Examples of Qualifications Statements section at: [http://www.opm.gov/ses/references/GuidetoSESquals\\_2012.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/ses/references/GuidetoSESquals_2012.pdf)

## Typical SES Approval Timeline

