

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 9, 2021

TO: Personnel Officers

FROM: /s/ LORI GILLIHAN
Lori Gillihan
Chief, Policy Division

**SUBJECT: IMPROPER ADMINISTRATION OF CAREER EXECUTIVE ASSIGNMENT
(CEA) EXAMINATIONS**

Recently, the State Personnel Board (SPB) has discovered that numerous candidates are being denied the opportunity to fully and fairly participate in Career Executive Assignment (CEA) examinations because several appointing powers have organized their CEA examinations into two or more distinct phases where, if a candidate fails one phase of the examination, they cannot proceed to the next examination phase. In other words, several appointing powers have organized and administrated a bifurcated CEA examination. The act of bifurcating a CEA examination and not allowing a candidate to move to another phase of the examination if they fail to pass a preceding phase, is prohibited and violates the specific provisions of California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.40, subdivision (c).

In those cases where the CEA examination includes two or more phases, such as a Statement of Qualification (SOQ) and a Qualifications Appraisal Panel (QAP), (or any other examination method), **all candidates who meet the minimum qualifications for appointment to the position must be allowed to complete all phases of the examination.** At the conclusion of the examination, each candidate who passes the examination shall be placed in a rank on an employment list. Any examination that fails to comply with the provisions of Section 548.40, subdivision (c), shall be deemed invalid, and any appointments made pursuant to any such invalid examination are subject to being voided by the SPB.

As with other civil service positions, the appointing authority can select which candidates on the eligible list move into the hiring phase. While it is permissible to conduct a multi-phase CEA examination, in most cases, a single component examination consisting of a Statement of Qualifications is an effective and efficient test method. The appointing

authority can then select which candidates on the eligible list to move into the hiring process (i.e. job interview).

Authorities

California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.40

Government Code section 19889

Government Code section 19889.3