

07—08—83

EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS, 3230

SENIOR EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS, 3231

Summary of Duties: Receives intensive on-the-job and formal training in questioned documents work; or examines and identifies handwriting and mechanical impressions on questioned documents in connection with the investigation of crimes; obtains handwriting exemplars from suspects and compares them with the writing on questioned documents; gives expert testimony in court; or supervises such work; and does related work.

Distinguishing Features: Incumbents are initially employed as trainees within the class of Examiner of Questioned Documents. As “Questioned Document Trainees”, such individuals are taught the techniques used to examine and identify handwriting and mechanical impression on questioned documents. While undergoing such training, the trainee will be gaining the experience and knowledge necessary to advance to journey-level status. As individuals employed as trainees under the provisions of Civil Service Rule 5.30, incumbents must successfully complete the training program within three years after employment.

A journey-level Examiner of Questioned Documents normally receives assignments in terms of proving or disproving a suspect wrote the document in question. However, the methods and procedures are left to the discretion of the Examiner of Questioned Documents. An employee in this class is required to exercise care and thoroughness in analysis and is responsible for reaching accurate conclusions. An Examiner of Questioned Documents testifies in court as an expert witness. The work is highly specialized and performance is judged by the results obtained and quality of testimony in court.

A Senior Examiner of Questioned Documents is responsible for the administration of the questioned document examination unit and acts as the Police Department expert on questioned documents. An employee in this class is a working supervisor who directs the work of questioned document examining personnel while personally performing the more difficult assignments. The supervision exercised by a Senior Examiner of Questioned Documents involves both the technical methods used and evaluation on results.

Examples of Duties: As a trainee, receives training in all aspects of the techniques used to examine and identify handwriting and mechanical impressions on questioned documents;

As a journey-level Examiner of Questioned Documents, obtains handwriting exemplars from suspects and compares them with the handwriting in question to determine if the same person wrote both documents; makes visual and microscopic examinations of handwriting, typewriting, check protector indentations, and other mechanical impressions to detect alterations, censored materials, chemical and mechanical erasures, hand-printing, overwriting, and evidences of tracings; makes microscopic examinations of paper, ink, typewriting, check protector indentations, and other mechanical impressions, to determine the approximate date the writing was produced, the make and model of the machine or instrument used, and the condition of the ribbon; makes microscopic examinations of questioned documents to determine types of ink and paper *used*; uses ultraviolet light to detect writing which has been eradicated or altered; measures the degree of slant and spacing of handwriting or typewriting with protractors; maintains files of handwriting specimens, typewriting indentations, and other specimens;

Obtains, mounts, and labels photographs or makes and labels graphic representations of questioned document evidence for presentation in court; testifies and presents evidence in court concerning the results of questioned document investigations; consults with defense experts on matters pertaining to the analysis, comparison and identification of questioned documents; gives advice on questioned document matters; prepares narrative reports describing the techniques used in and findings of questioned document investigations; and may occasionally be assigned to other duties for training purposes or to meet technological changes or emergencies.

Senior Examiner of Questioned Documents: In addition to the above, *supervises*, trains, assigns and participates in the work of questioned document examining personnel; acts as a technical advisor to the Police Department, other agencies and the courts on questioned document examination; prepares and reviews administrative, statistical and investigative reports, studies and Surveys; establishes- and conducts a formalized training program for trainees; teaches material on examination of questioned documents at departmental training schools; and may occasionally be assigned to other duties for training purposes or to meet technological changes or emergencies⁴

Qualifications: Examiner of questioned Documents: The ability to learn new or different work methods and procedures concerning questioned document investigations; the ability to read and comprehend technical materials; the ability to listen effectively in order to report on what one has heard; the ability to communicate orally; the ability to analyze problems and reach accurate solutions; the ability to discern minute consistencies, inconsistencies, variations or differences in similar appearing visual patterns; the ability to work accurately when dealing with small details and subtle differences; and the ability to work effectively as a member of a team.

Senior Examiner of questioned Documents: A good knowledge of scientific methods and techniques need in examining, comparing and identifying handwriting, typewriting, check protector indentations, and other mechanical impressions and documents; a good knowledge of styles of writing commonly employed and the principal physiological and mechanical characteristics of handwriting; a good knowledge of significant features of typewriting, check protector indentations, and Other mechanical impressions; a good knowledge of safety principles and practices; a working knowledge of common types of inks and paper; a working knowledge of laboratory methods for determining the components and types of inks and papers; a working knowledge of the rules of evidence and court procedures in cases involving questioned documents; a working knowledge of the laws and regulations related to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action; a general knowledge of City personnel rules, policies, and procedures; a general knowledge of memoranda of understanding as they apply to subordinate personnel; the ability to skillfully operate various types of microscopes and light equipment used in examinations of questioned documents; the ability to recognize, detect and identify errors, inconsistencies, and departures from normal writing and awkward peculiarities of letter formation in individual writings and in mechanical impressions; the ability to arrive at independent, impartial and technically correct conclusions regarding the identity of compared writings and determine the degree of reliance which can be placed upon the conclusions; the ability to maintain records and prepare reports; the ability to deal tactfully and effectively with others; the ability to plan, layout, coordinate, direct and review the work of subordinates; and the ability to establish and conduct training programs on questioned documents.

High school graduation and experience in questioned document work are desired but not required for Examiner of Questioned Documents.

Three years of experience in examining, comparing and identifying handwriting and mechanical impressions on questioned documents in a law enforcement agency or a federal or state investigation and identification agency, two years of which were at the level of Examiner of Questioned Documents is required for Senior Examiner of Questioned Documents

License: Both Classes: A valid California driver's license is required.

Physical Requirements: Both Classes: Strength to perform average lifting of less than five pounds and occasionally over fifteen pounds; good speaking and hearing ability; and good eyesight.

Persons with medical limitations may, with reasonable accommodations, be capable of performing the duties of some of the positions in these classes. Such determination must be made on an individual basis in light of the person's limitations, the requirements of the position, and the appointing authority's ability to effect reasonable accommodations to the limitations.

As provided in Civil Service Commission Rule 2.5 and Section 4.55 of the Administrative Code, this specification *is* descriptive, explanatory, and not restrictive. It is not intended to declare what the duties and responsibilities of any position shall be.