

# Probation Department Selection Process Study

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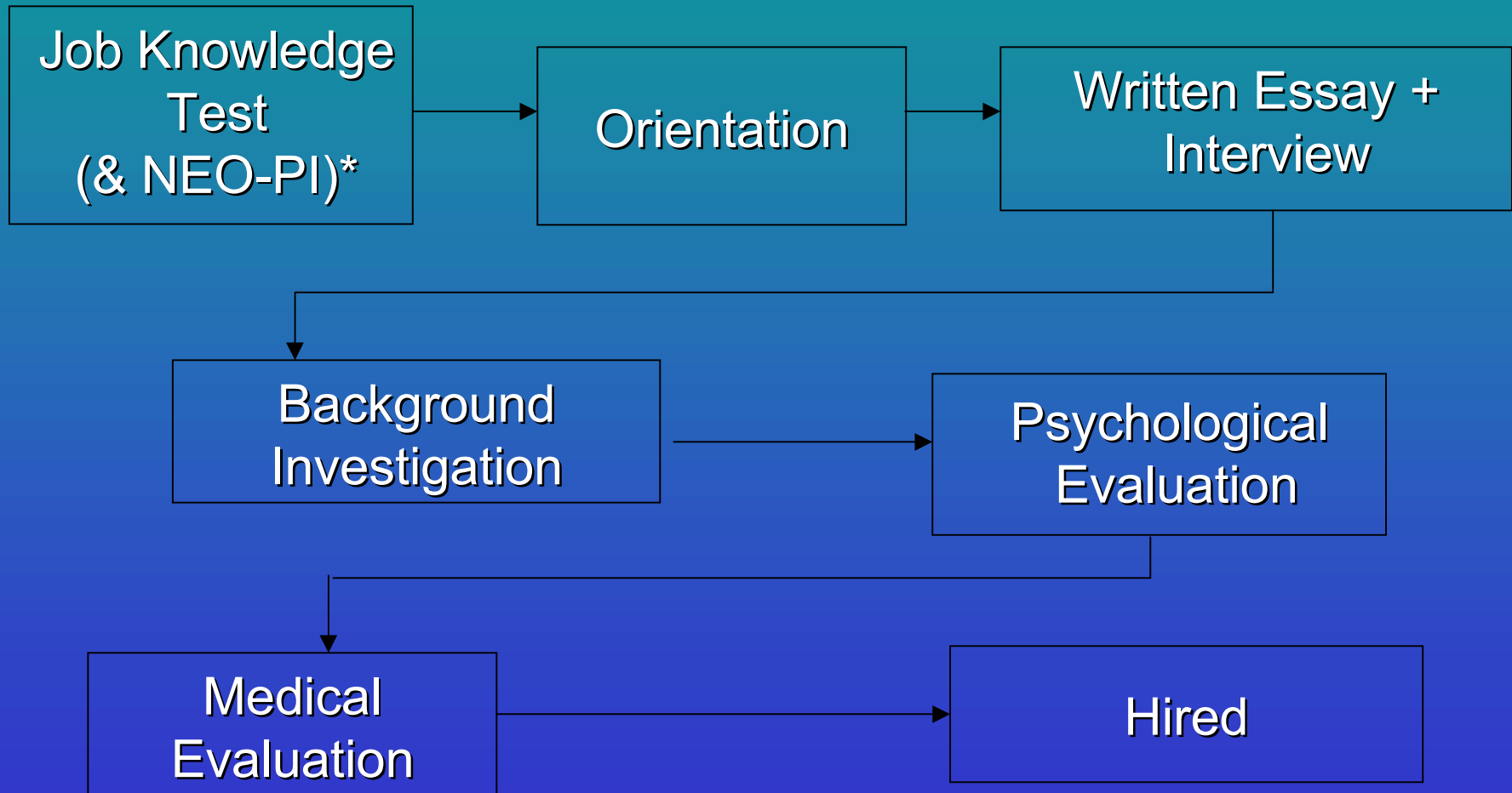
# Project Description

A practical and statistical examination of the selection process for Deputy Probation Officers and Correctional Deputy Probation Officers

# Probation Department

- Employs approximately 300 entry-level Correctional Deputy Probation Officers (CDPOs) and 350 Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs).
- CDPOs perform care, custody, and control activities.
- DPOs perform casework, remedial, and preventative services.

# Current Selection Process for CDPO and DPO Candidates



\* *Experimental--not used for selection.*

# Issues with Current Process:

- Time consuming
- Cumbersome/redundant
- Costly
- Unknown validity

# What is the NEO-PI?

- 240 items on a 5-point scale.
- Five major domains:

Neuroticism: Negative affectivity and nervousness.

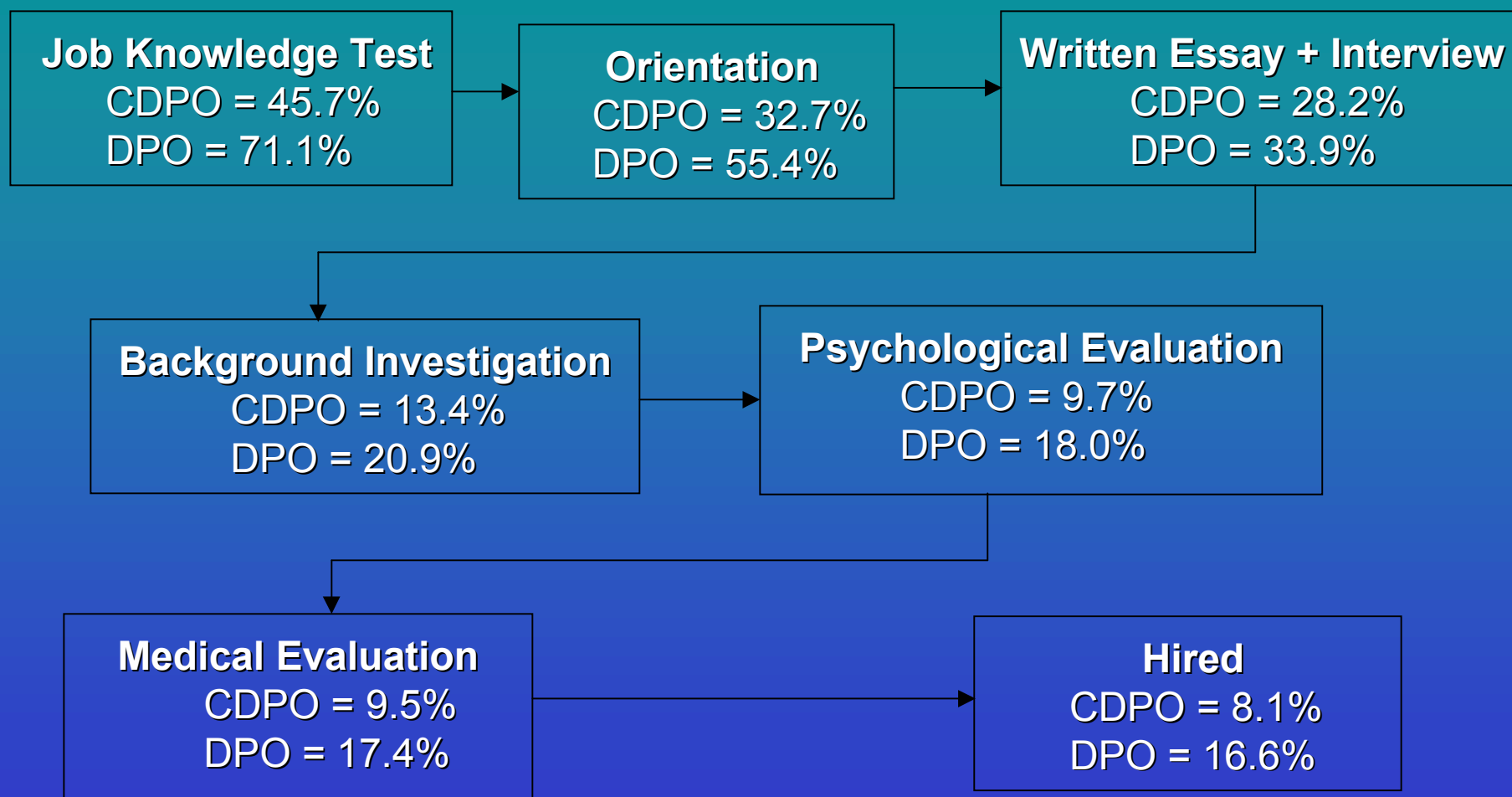
Extraversion: Sociability, energy, and enthusiasm.

Openness: Originality and open-mindedness.

Agreeableness: Altruism, affection, helpfulness, and trust.

Conscientiousness: Impulse control, goal orientation, acts of planning and organizing.

# Progression of Cohorts Through Selection Screens



CDPO original N = 2813; DPO original N = 868

Percent at each phase represents those passing (out of the original N).

# Criterion Measure

- Supervisor performance appraisal ratings.
- Separate from formal appraisal process.
- Multi-dimensional Instrument
  - DPO: 36 items, 5 dimensions  
Dependability, Initiative, Job Competency, Quality of Work, Interpersonal Relations
  - CDPO: 38 items, 6 dimensions  
Same as above, plus Safety.
- Supervisors also provided one global score.



# Empirical Observations

- Job Knowledge Test:
  - Compensatory
  - Pass rate is high for DPOs
  - Some scales may be inappropriate as screens
- Value of Essay Exercise is questionable.
- Interview questions and ratings need structure.
- Medical Evaluation failures are due to physical fitness requirements.
- Order of Medical and Psychological Evaluations is based on scheduling availability.

# Statistical Findings: Job Knowledge Test with Other Screens

<u>Correlations</u>	<u>DPO</u>	<u>CDPO</u>	
Writing Subtests – Essay Exercise	.20**	.11*	<u>n</u> = 389, 870
Criminal Justice – Background	.40**	NA	<u>n</u> = 267
Total Test – Essay Exercise	.32**	.13*	<u>n</u> = 389, 870
Total Test – Background	.30**	.18**	<u>n</u> = 267, 717
Total Test – Medical	NS	.34**	<u>n</u> = 157, 283

\*  $p = .05$ , \*\*  $p = .01$ , NS = Not significant.

# Statistical Findings: Job Knowledge Test with Performance

<u>Correlations</u>	<u>DPO</u>	<u>CDPO</u>
Total Test – Global Performance	.48**	.26**
Total Test – Job Competency	.44**	.29**
Total Test – Quality of Work	.54**	.34**
Language Mech. – Global Perf.	.29**	.22*
Criminal Justice – Global Perf.	.28**	NA
Report Writing – Global Perf.	.26**	NA

*DPO  $\underline{n}$  = 115; CDPO  $\underline{n}$  = 135.*

*\* $p$  = .05, \*\*  $p$  = .01.*

# Statistical Findings: NEO-PI with Performance

- Factors did not correlate significantly with performance dimensions, or global ratings.
- Openness was the only factor found to correlate with the Background Screen ( $-.24, p < .01$  for DPO).
- Relationships were found between some facets and performance:
  - CDPO with Impulsiveness (negative correlation)
  - DPO with Modesty and Activity (positive correlation)

# Conclusions

- Job Knowledge Test is a valid predictor of performance for DPO and CDPO.
- Job Knowledge Test is associated with a successful background check.
- Writing Skills subtests duplicate Essay Exercise.
- NEO-PI is not a significant predictor of performance for DPO and CDPO.

# Recommendations to Department

- Use separate pass points for Job Knowledge Test.
- Raise Job Knowledge pass points for DPO.
- Revise the DPO Job Knowledge Test.
- Eliminate Essay Exercise.
- Notify applicants up front of main causes of Medical Evaluation failure.
- Screen candidates through the Psychological, then the Medical Evaluation.