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HANDBOOK 28

CHAPTER 11

THE CAREER ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM (CAP)

11A. Purpose

This chapter provides the policies, regulations and procedures governing the Career Advancement Program (CAP). The CAP is designed to identify current AID employees who possess the potential to succeed in professional Foreign Service occupations.

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11B. Applicability

The AID Career Advancement Program is designed to provide current AID employees opportunities to join and advance in the Foreign Service. Program entrance is limited to those employees who have at least one year of AID experience and who are qualified in meeting FS-06 and FS-07 entrance criteria.

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11C. Authorities and References

1. [Foreign Service Act of 1980](#), as amended (**Note: This page is only available to those with USAID intranet access.**)
2. HB 25, Ch. 35, "Foreign Service Appointments"
3. HB 28, Ch. 4, "Foreign Language Program"
4. HB 29, Ch. 5, "AID Awards Program"

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11D. Definitions

1. Career Advancement Program (CAP). A program that identifies potential career FS employees within the Agency and provides training in a wide range of specialty areas. The program may take up to three years to complete, including AID/Washington and overseas assignments, plus language training.
2. CAP Screening Committee. A committee convened by the Director, PM/RS, whose members include a non-voting representative of the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP), PM/FSP/CD members and other appointees made by the Director, PM/R. Committee members review an applicant's file to determine if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements and the qualification standards for the CAP and entrance level criteria (i.e. FS-06 and/or FS-07) for the foreign service. They review CAP applicant's technical qualifications, interview applicants and recommend to The Director, PM/FSP applicants eligible for CAP selection.
3. CAP Pre-Departure Review Panel. A panel convened by the Director, FSP, to review CAP employee's Performance Evaluation File (PEF) and determine if they have successfully completed the required AID/W training and are ready for overseas assignment. The panel consists of the following members: the Director, FSP; the appropriate CDO; the Director of the parent office for the occupational category being reviewed; and/or the Director of the Technical Office in the Regional Bureau where the employee is assigned. The EOP representative will serve as a nonvoting member.
4. CAP Training Plan. A training plan will be prepared by PM/FSP/CD for each CAP employee, at the beginning of their Washington training. The plan establishes the objectives, length and composition of training based on the selected employee's background, experience and the targeted occupational category.
5. CAP Graduation Panel. A panel convened by the Director, Office of Personnel Management (PM/OD), to review the files of CAP employees who have completed one year of training overseas to determine if they have successfully completed the required training necessary for graduation. The panel consists of the Director, PM/OD, the Director, PM/FSP, the appropriate CDO; the representative of the parent office for the occupational category being reviewed; and/or a representative of the Technical Office in the Regional Bureau where the employee is assigned. The EOP representative will serve as a nonvoting member.

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11E. Policies

1. The CAP program may not be used to recruit specialists for whom the Agency has short-term needs.
2. Contingent upon the availability of FTE, participants in the CAP will be carried on the Personnel Management (PM) complement while in AID/W, then charged to the CAP participating mission upon arrival at post. The participating mission will be provided with a FTE ceiling and OE to accommodate the CAP employee for the first year of training at post. Missions will then be expected to pick up the position ceiling and FTE costs for the CAP employee after the successful completion of the employee's training program.
3. Employees will be appointed at the FS-06 and FS-07 levels, dependent upon grade eligibility criteria.
4. Consistent with Agency needs, qualified employees selected for the CAP will be trained in specific occupational categories and will receive both on-the-job and formal training in Washington and overseas. Training in Washington may last up to two years. Overseas on-the-job training will require one additional year, for a total of up to three years in the CAP.
5. All CAP employees must have an FSI tested S2/R2 proficiency in an AID useful language prior to being posted overseas. No deferrals will be permitted.
6. All CAP employees converting to the Foreign Service from Civil Service are appointed as career candidates on their date of entry to the program, and will have five years from the date of entry as FS career candidates to satisfy the requirements for tenure. CAP employees with CS reemployment rights may revert to the CS at their former grade at any time prior to tenure.
7. Foreign Service members selected for participation in CAP will continue under the conditions of their ongoing appointments, with the addition of the standard tenure language proficiency requirement.
8. Appointment for CAP employees as Career Candidate Foreign Service Officers is governed by the regulations contained in HB 25, Supp. 35A. Once candidates are selected and medical and security clearances are received, Civil Service applicants will be offered the opportunity to convert to a Foreign Service appointment.

9. An employee appointed under authority of the FSA of 1980 is entitled to reinstatement to his/her former position, or a comparable position unless terminated for misconduct or delinquency.

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11F. Responsibilities

1. Director, Office of Personnel Management (PM/OD)

The Director, PM, is responsible for the overall management of AID's Career Advancement Program, and performs the following specific functions:

- a. Determines the number of CAP employees and occupational composition for each fiscal year.
 - b. Reviews selections for the CAP to ensure compliance with affirmative action and Agency employment and programmatic goals.
 - c. Approves promotions, MSI's and cash awards.
- ##### 2. Deputy Director, Office of Personnel Management (PM/OD)
- a. Convenes the CAP Graduation Panel after overseas training, and approves/disapproves panel recommendations.
 - b. Serves as CAP Graduation Panel Chairperson.
- ##### 3. Chief, Foreign Service Personnel Division (PM/FSP)
- a. Approves and disseminates information about the program.
 - b. Makes final selections for the CAP from among the most qualified applicants recommended by the CAP Screening Committee.
 - c. Serves as Chairperson of the CAP Pre-departure Review Panel to determine each employee's readiness for the overseas portion of the training.
 - d. Serves as a member of the CAP Graduation Panel.
 - e. Provides opportunities to employees to apply for the program.

4. Chief, Career Development Branch (PM/FSP/CD)

The Chief, PFM/PM/FSP/CD, is responsible for the management of the CAP, and through the appropriate CDOs is responsible for the following specific CAP activities:

- a. Develops information on the CAP.
 - b. Recommends to the Director, PM/FSP, in consultation with the appropriate geographic bureau, the initial overseas assignment of a CAP employee.
 - c. Provides career and performance counseling. Monitors individual CAP participant performance and overall results of the CAP program.
 - d. Assists supervisors and employees in developing individual Washington training plans.
 - e. Monitors training programs to ensure compliance with CAP program requirements and objectives.
 - f. Ensures that evaluations for all phases of a CAP training program are prepared and placed in the CAP employees PEF.
 - g. Serves as liaison with the post of assignment, advising the post of employees progress in meeting the Washington training objectives.
 - h. Serves as a member of the CAP Screening Committee and of the appropriate CAP Pre-departure Review and Graduation Panels.
5. Chief, Recruitment Division (PM/RS)
- a. Maintains records of all applications. Screens applications for minimum requirements and forwards eligible employees to CAP Screening Committee.
 - b. Convenes and acts as Chairperson of the CAP Screening Committee for selections. Forwards CAP selection recommendations to Director, PM/FSP for final approval.
 - c. Determines appropriate linkage for CS employees converting to the FS pay scale.
 - d. Initiates and follows up on requests for medical and security clearances.
6. Training Division (PM/TD)

- a. Coordinates in-house classroom training.
 - b. Approves/disapproves, in collaboration with PFM/PM/FSP/CD, all CAP training requests.
7. Director, Overseas Post of Assignment
- a. Designs and submits to PM/FSP/CD the CAP employee's specific training plan. The training plan should be in collaboration and agreement with the appropriate CDO.
 - b. Prepares and submits to PM/FSP/CD the required performance evaluations.
 - c. Provides performance counseling in coordination with the CDO.
8. Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP)
- a. Advises PFM/FSP/CD on affirmative action and equal employment opportunity matters related to selection, training, assignment, evaluation and retention of minorities and women.
 - b. Serves as a nonvoting member on the CAP Screening Committee, CAP Review Panel and the Graduation Panel.
9. CAP Employee
- a. Participates with CDO and supervisor in developing, submitting and achieving the objectives of his/her training plan in a thorough, substantial and timely manner.
 - b. Provides information on training activities to help his/her supervisor evaluate his/her performance within prescribed deadlines.

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11G. Procedures

1. Application

- a. Applicants for the CAP must submit to PM/RS a:

- (1) Standard Form 171, Application for Federal Employment;

(2) Narrative statement describing the basis for interest in the Foreign Service and highlighting skills which would indicate probability for a successful Foreign Service career. Applicants must also certify that they are available for worldwide assignment.

b. The Chief, PM/RS, or designee, maintains a file for each applicant which contains submitted documents and forms. c. The applicant's file is reviewed by PM/RS staff and appropriate members of the CAP Screening Committee to determine if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements and the qualification standards for the CAP. If the applicant does not meet the qualifications, the Chief, PM/RS, so notifies the applicant. If the applicant does meet the qualifications, the file is further reviewed by the CAP Screening Committee.

2. Selection

a. After the initial screening in PM/RS, the CAP Screening Committee reviews applicants' technical qualifications and establishes a rank-order list of the most highly qualified for interviews. Interviews are then held to assess the applicant's competence to perform the work of a Foreign Service Officer, potential for growth in AID's Foreign Service, and appropriateness to serve abroad as a representative of the United States.

b. Based on the interviews and background documentation, the CAP Screening Committee identifies and submits a rank ordered list of the most highly qualified applicants to the Director, PM/FSP for final selection decisions.

c. All selectees must have a current medical and security clearance prior to participation in the CAP.

d. The Director, PM/FSP, issues a letter to selected candidates establishing the date of entry into the program, the conditions of Foreign Service employment, and any other relevant data deemed necessary for satisfactory completion of the training program.

3. Grade Determination

a. CAP selectees are appointed to Foreign Service classes based on the below criteria. Grade determinations are made by the Chief, PFM/PM/R.

Grade	Criteria
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7/1	All candidates, except those meeting the higher qualifications for grade FS-06 and above; B.A. degree with at least one year of AID experience.
6/1	B.A. degree with three years of relevant

experience, one of which must have been with AID; M.A. degree with one year of AID experience.

b. All salary offers and grade determinations are final.

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11H. Training

Training consists of new-entry training, off-site academic training, Agency classroom instruction (short training courses appropriate to occupational category, including technical, managerial and supervisory skills), on-the-job training (OJT) and language training, as determined necessary by PM/FSP/CD.

1. AID/W Training:

a. CAP employee's who do not have a Foreign Service Institute-tested S2/R2 or above in a foreign language will be assigned to language training during Washington training to achieve a minimum of S2/R2 proficiency, required for tenure; or, in the case of a CAP employee assigned to a language designated post, the level of proficiency required by the overseas assignment.

b. CAP employees are assigned to AID/W bureaus or offices to receive technical training appropriate to their occupational category.

c. The length and type of training is determined by the CDO and supervisor and indicated in the training plan, which may be modified. The plan is included in the CAP employee's PEF.

d. As early as possible, the CDO in collaboration with the appropriate bureau or office identifies the post to which the CAP employee will be assigned for overseas training.

e. When the CAP employee completes Washington training, the CAP Pre-Departure Review Panel reviews his/her PEF and may recommend to the Director, PM/FSP:

(1) for FS-07 employees - promotion and transfer overseas to complete training;

(2) for FS-06 employees -transfer overseas to complete training;

(3) extension of Washington training for up to six months based on documentation that improved skills and/or work exposure are necessary for a successful overseas training experience;

(4) separation from the program if evaluations indicate the employee is unlikely, even with further training, to meet program requirements. Recommendation for separation requires written justification.

2. Overseas Training:

a. Upon successful completion of Washington training, the CAP employee is assigned to a post where an ongoing assignment, which may include an additional year of training, has been identified.

b. The post supervisor submits a training plan to the CDO. This training plan will be reviewed for appropriateness to the individual CAP employee's needs, modified as necessary, and approved by the CDO.

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11I. Assignment

1. The following criteria is used by the CDO to determine whether a post is appropriate to provide CAP employee training:

a. a broad, representative post portfolio;

b. post interest in and support for a CAP employee's overseas training;

c. presence at post of a senior officer in the CAP employee's targeted backstop who is committed to and cable of providing the necessary training;

d. a dedicated position in the employee's backstop at an appropriate level for a CAP employee to assume at the end of overseas training.

2. Upon graduation, a CAP employee will be assigned to the position identified upon his/her assignment to post.

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11J. Evaluation

General

1. CAP employees are formally evaluated twice a year, including a review prior to departing for post and when they have completed one year at post. Mid-year evaluations may be a brief narrative on the employee's performance. During Washington training, an CAP employee is evaluated by on-the-job training assignment supervisors using Form AID 460-7, IDI Performance Evaluation Report. After a CAP employee goes overseas, Form AID 420-4, Employee Evaluation Report - Foreign Service EER is used, and the CAP employee is subject to the same requirements of the FS evaluation program as all other FS employees, except that the CAP employee's EER is reviewed by the CAP Graduation Panel rather than the annual FS Selection Boards.
2. FS-07 CAP employees are considered for two promotions during the program (one prior to departure of assignment overseas and one at graduation), and FS-06 CAP employees are considered for one promotion during the course of the program (at graduation).
3. In Washington
 - a. Form AID 460-7 is used by the on-the-job training supervisor to evaluate CAP employees who have been in a specific on-the-job training assignment for more than two months; for training of less than two months, the evaluation is by memorandum, signed by the supervisor and the CAP employee. Both evaluation memos and IDI Performance Evaluation Reports should include an assessment of the CAP employee's potential to complete the program and advance in the FS.
 - b. To be approved for departure for post by the CAP Pre-Departure Review Panel, a CAP employee must meet the objectives of his/her AID/W training plan and demonstrate the performance characteristics, skills and abilities required for a successful overseas training experience.
4. Overseas Post
 - a. An interim EER is required prior to graduation unless graduation occurs within 30 days of the required EER submission date.
 - b. To be graduated (certified as having successfully completed overseas training), a CAP employee must demonstrate sustained positive performance in meeting the objectives of his/her training plan, and should

demonstrate an interpersonal and managerial effectiveness and potential for growth that indicates he/she has the potential for a successful career in AID.

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11K. CAP Graduation

1. Upon receipt of the EER covering the complete overseas training period, the CAP Graduation Panel will be convened to review the employee's PEF and recommend to the Director, PM/OD:
 - a. graduation and/or promotion based on sustained successful performance during the CAP;
 - b. graduation and/or a Meritorious Step Increase (MSI) based on sustained successful performance during the CAP, or a cash award when a CAP employee is not eligible for a step increase;
 - c. graduation;
 - d. a counselling letter for less competitive performance indicating areas that need improvement;
 - e. or separation from program when performance is less than satisfactory.

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11L. Awards

1. Cash awards are funded by a separate fund managed by PM/OD.
2. CAP employee's may be nominated for Special Act cash awards, as appropriate.