

**Major Functional Series 400: Personnel**  
**ADS Chapter 456 - PERSONNEL OPERATIONS: POSITION CLASSIFICATION**

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**Major Functional Series 400: Personnel**  
**ADS Chapter 456 - PERSONNEL OPERATIONS: POSITION CLASSIFICATION**

(THIS CHAPTER SUPERSEDES HANDBOOK 26, CHAPTER 1, AND HANDBOOK 33, CHAPTER 1, IN THEIR ENTIRETY. APPENDICES TO HANDBOOK 33 ARE APPENDED AS SUPPLEMENTARY REFERENCES TO THIS CHAPTER)

**456.1 Authority**

1. [Section 501 of the Foreign Service Act \(FSA\) of 1980, as amended, "Classification of Positions."](#)
2. Title 22, Sections 220, of the 1990 Code of Federal Regulations. This Section is commonly referred to as the "Obey Amendment."
3. [Chapter 51, Title 5, United States Code.](#)

**456.2 Objective**

This Chapter provides Agency policy on the [grade](#) -level classification of US Direct-Hire [positions](#) in USAID/Washington and in overseas USAID organizations.

**456.3 Responsibility**

1. The Administrator (A/AID) is responsible for:
  - a. Assuring that proper rules and procedures are promulgated and applied consistently throughout the Agency for Foreign Service, and related, positions.
  - b. Assuring, for Civil Service, and related, positions, compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, and rules relating to the application of [classification](#) and job grading standards published by the Office of Personnel Management (USOPM) and for insuring that the authority delegated within USAID for accurate position classification is carried out effectively.
2. The Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources (DAA/M/HR) is responsible for assuring that all position classification systems which apply to or are promulgated by USAID are administered in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, and/or rules and with integrity and without discrimination or prejudice.
3. The Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources, Personnel Operations Division, Position Management and Classification

Branch (M/HR/POD/PMC) is responsible for implementing USOPM and USAID regulations and rules in the designation and classification of positions to a proper series, title, and grade.

**456.4 Definitions (See [ADS GLOSSARY](#))**

CLASSIFICATION  
GRADE  
POSITION  
POSITION DESCRIPTION

**456.5 POLICY**

\* **The statements contained within the .5 section of this ADS chapter are the official Agency policies and corresponding essential procedures.**

**456.5.1 POSITION CLASSIFICATION -- FOREIGN SERVICE**

In accordance with Title 22, Section 220, of the 1990 Code of Federal Regulations, Foreign Service positions shall be classified in a manner consistent with the principles of [position classification](#) established in Chapter 51, Title 5, United States Code (the Classification Act). However, the classification of Foreign Service positions is not bound by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (USOPM) requirements that govern the classification of Civil Service positions.

**E456.5.1 Position Classification -- Foreign Service**

\* The Agency shall adhere to the essential procedures in the Foreign Service Position Classification System. **(See Mandatory References, [Position Titles, Codes and Classification Standards](#); [Guidelines for Titling Foreign Service Supervisory Positions](#); and [Grade Classification Guide for Staff Positions](#).)**

**456.5.1a POSITION DESCRIPTION ACCURACY AND CLASSIFICATION REVIEW**

An annual review of all established overseas Foreign Service positions shall be conducted by the Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources, Personnel Operations Division, Position Management and Classification Branch (M/HR/POD/PMC). Foreign Service positions in USAID/Washington are included in the Position Classification Survey and Position Management Review process described in E456.5.2e ([E456.5.2e](#)).

**E456.5.1a Position Description Accuracy and Classification Review**

The annual review of all established overseas Foreign Service positions shall consist of a paper review of items on file in M/HR/POD/PMC (Staffing Pattern Action Requests (SPARs), Overseas Position Evaluation Forms (OPEFs), Staffing Patterns, etc.) to identify positions that may have changed significantly in the previous year. Overseas organizations shall be required to certify to the accuracy of the positions identified or to provide updated OPEFs and SPARS. The review shall be conducted in a manner that places the least requirements on the overseas organization, consistent with the need to maintain position description accuracy.

**456.5.2 POSITION CLASSIFICATION -- CIVIL SERVICE**

The classification of Civil Service positions shall be maintained in a current manner and in accordance with U.S. Office of Personnel Management (USOPM) requirements.

**E456.2 Position Classification -- Civil Service - N/A**

**456.5.2a ESTABLISHMENT AND AVAILABILITY OF POSITIONS**

Within the framework of an approved functional statement, organizational structure, and position ceiling, supervisors shall assign duties to positions in order to provide for the orderly, efficient, and economical accomplishment of the functions assigned to the organization.

**E456.5.2a Establishment and Availability of Positions**

Only one employee may be assigned to a position. Before an employee is appointed, promoted, reassigned, demoted, or transferred, there must be a position available.

Effective position planning is based upon consideration of such factors as:

- Delegation of authority commensurate with assigned responsibilities;
- Establishing a reasonable supervisory span of control (number of people supervised);
- Establishing an appropriate balance of skills between the various professional or clerical requirements and between professional and clerical support positions;
- Distinguishing supervision from line work;

- Making effective use of employee skills; and,
- Impact of technological change, systems, and facilities on manpower requirements.

**456.5.2b DESCRIPTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF POSITIONS**

Assignment of duties and responsibilities must be made in writing and classified in accordance with USOPM Standards and Guides.

**E456.5.2b Description and Classification of Positions**

Duties and responsibilities assigned to a position must be officially documented on an Optional Form 8, Position Description, and evaluated and classified in accordance with USOPM position classification Standards and Guides by the Position Management and Classification Branch, M/HR/POD/PMC.

- 1) Supervisor must assure that a new or amended position description is prepared and reviewed by M/HR/POD/PMC (through the appropriate Bureau/Office Administrative Management Staff [AMS]) when the duties, responsibilities, or supervisory relationships of a position materially change. Supervisors are encouraged to discuss changes in positions with the appropriate Position Classification Specialist.

The Personnel Operations Division (M/HR/POD) shall provide copies of new and updated position descriptions to the employee, the employee's Official Personnel File, and the appropriate AMS.

- 2) Classification Concept. Under the Civil Service classification system, it is the position (e.g., the assigned duties and responsibilities) which is classified, and not the particular individual who is performing the work of the position. (There is provision for "impact of the person in the job," but such situations are rare.)

- By law, the Agency is required to classify all Civil Service positions in conformance with, and/or consistent with, USOPM position classification Standards and Guides.
- Official position titles authorized in published standards must be used for personnel, budget, and fiscal purposes. Where published standards are lacking, and where titles are not prescribed, position titles must be consistent with USOPM

practices. Organizational titles may be used for Executive Level positions.

- Prescribed standards must be taken as a whole and without undue emphasis on the presence or absence of any phrase, clause, or adjective. Typical work examples found in some standards are only illustrations and are not intended to be complete or exclusive. The proper application of standards in identifying the appropriate series and grade requires the use of judgment rather than a mechanical matching of specific elements, statistics, duties, or projects. This judgment is to be applied in determining the degree to which the specific position being classified meets the intent of the series and grade level definitions.

- 3) Employee Rights. An employee is free to discuss the duties and responsibilities of the position to which they are assigned with the immediate supervisor, to review position classification standards or other materials pertinent to the classification of the position, and to discuss the evaluation of the position as to series, title, and grade with a Position Classification Specialist. (Employee appeal rights are described in 456.5.2f)(See [456.5.2f](#))

**456.5.2c WRITING POSITION DESCRIPTIONS**

All position descriptions in USAID/Washington must be written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. See Guide to Writing Position Descriptions in the Factor Evaluation System, Supplemental Reference (See Supplementary Reference, Factor Evaluation System).

**E456.5.2c Writing Position Descriptions - N/A**

**456.5.2d NOTIFICATION OF CLASSIFICATION ACTION**

The Bureau or independent Office, and the official incumbent of the position, if appropriate, shall be informed of the result of any classification decision which differs from the requested action.

**E456.5.2d Notification of Classification Action**

Upon completion of a desk audit or other classification review, the Bureau or independent Office, and/or the official incumbent of the position, if appropriate, shall be informed of the result of any classification decision which differs from the requested action. This initial notification will be by E-mail or by telephone. If requested, the Position Classification Specialist shall provide a written report which must include an explanation of the

classification decision, a copy of the position description, a copy of the classifier's formal evaluation statement, and provide an opportunity for the organization and/or the affected employee to comment on or rebut the decision. The Position Classification Specialist shall respond to any comment or rebuttal in writing. Such response shall advise the organization and/or the employee of the final decision and of formal avenues of appeal or review, if appropriate.

**456.5.2e CLASSIFICATION ACCURACY AND MAINTENANCE REVIEWS**

The Agency shall assure the accuracy of position classification by reviewing the title, series, and grade of approximately one-third of all USAID/Washington positions each year.

**E456.5.2e Classification Accuracy and Maintenance Reviews**

The Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources (DAA/M/HR) shall announce an annual schedule of Position Classification Surveys and Position Management Reviews in order to meet the objective of reviewing the title, series, and grade of approximately one-third of all USAID/Washington positions each year. Schedules will be developed based on a review of current staffing patterns, length of time since last review, age of the preponderant number of position descriptions, and other objective factors considered appropriate at the time the schedule is developed. Schedules shall be coordinated with the organizations to be surveyed in advance. Survey schedules may be adjusted to accommodate individual personnel action requests, reorganizations, and other position actions which serve the purpose of meeting this requirement. In addition to an overall paper review of the organization subject to the Position Classification Survey and Position Management Review, ten percent of the positions in the organization shall be subject to individual position or desk audit and review.

**456.5.2f CLASSIFICATION APPEALS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS**

Any USAID Civil Service employee may appeal the classification of their official position description, either within USAID or directly to the USOPM. Further, the head of any Bureau or independent Office may request an administrative review of the classification of any position description in their subordinate organization.

**E456.5.2f Classification Appeals and Administrative Reviews**

Employees may appeal the classification of their official position description within USAID or they may appeal directly to the USOPM.

- Employees who wish to appeal the classification of their official position description within USAID must do so in writing, to the Chief, Position Management and Classification Branch (M/HR/POD/PMC). An employee who appeals the classification of their official position within USAID may still appeal to the USOPM.
- Employees who wish to appeal the classification of their official position description to the USOPM may contact the Position Management and Classification Branch (M/HR/POD/PMC) for current USOPM instructions on filing a classification appeal.
- Employees who appeal the classification of their official position description to the USOPM may not subsequently appeal the classification of their position within USAID.
- Employees may not appeal the classification of another USAID or non-USAID position. And, the designation of positions as either Civil Service or Foreign Service is a reserved management right, which employees may not appeal.

Heads of Bureaus or independent Offices may request an administrative review of the classification of any position description in their subordinate organization. The request must be in writing, to the Chief, Position Management and Classification Branch (M/HR/POD/PMC). The request must state the reason(s) for the request. If the head of the Bureau or independent Office does not agree with the result of the administrative review they may request the DAA/M/HR to seek an advisory opinion from the USOPM. (Only the official incumbent of a position may file an official classification appeal of a position with the USOPM.)

#### **456.5.2g THE OBEY AMENDMENT**

The Agency shall adhere to the policies and procedures as set forth in the Obey Amendment (**See Mandatory Reference, [The Obey Amendment](#)**)

#### **\*456.6 Supplementary Reference**

**Writing Position Descriptions in the Factor Evaluation System. Only available in hardcopy. Please contact M/HR for a copy of this document.**

#### **\*456.7 Mandatory References**

- \* [Position Titles, Codes and Classification Standards](#)
- \* [Guidelines for Titling Foreign Service supervisory Positions](#)



- \* [Grade Classification Guide for Staff Positions](#)
- \* [The Obey Amendment](#)

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