



ADS Chapter 418

Promotion and Internal Placement Program for Civil Service (CS) Employees

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**Functional Series 400 – Personnel
ADS 418 – Promotion and Internal Placement Program for Civil Service (CS)
Employees**

**This chapter has been substantively modified in its entirety.*

Table of Contents

<u>418.1</u>	<u>OVERVIEW</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>418.2</u>	<u>PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>418.3</u>	<u>POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>418.3.1</u>	<u>Hiring the Right Person for the Job</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>418.3.1.1</u>	<u>Measuring Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>418.3.1.2</u>	<u>Neptism - Employment of Relatives</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>418.3.1.3</u>	<u>Non-Discrimination</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>418.3.1.4</u>	<u>Requirement for Promotion</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>418.3.1.5</u>	<u>Position Change</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>418.3.1.6</u>	<u>Drug Testing</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>418.3.2</u>	<u>The Merit Promotion Program</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>418.3.2.1</u>	<u>Actions Subject to Competitive Procedures</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>418.3.2.2</u>	<u>Exceptions to Competitive Requirements</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>418.3.3</u>	<u>Procedures for Noncompetitive Promotion Actions</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>418.3.3.1</u>	<u>Time-Limited Promotions</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>418.3.3.2</u>	<u>Priority Consideration</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>418.3.3.3</u>	<u>Repromotion Consideration</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>418.3.3.4</u>	<u>Career Ladder Promotion</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>418.3.3.5</u>	<u>Promotion Based on Impact of the Person on the Job</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>418.3.4</u>	<u>The Agency’s Use of the Merit Promotion Program</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>418.3.4.1</u>	<u>Streamlined Recruitment Process</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>418.3.4.2</u>	<u>Position Management/Classification and Recruitment and Staffing Modules Linkages</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>418.3.4.3</u>	<u>Vacancy Announcements</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>418.3.4.4</u>	<u>Areas of Consideration</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>418.3.4.5</u>	<u>Posting Periods</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>418.3.4.6</u>	<u>Amendments and Corrections</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>418.3.4.7</u>	<u>Open Continuous Announcements</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>418.3.4.8</u>	<u>Announcements Covering Multiple Grades</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>418.3.4.9</u>	<u>Accessing Announcements</u>	<u>18</u>

<u>418.3.4.10</u>	<u>Circulation of Announcements</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>418.3.4.11</u>	<u>Additional Publicity</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>418.3.4.12</u>	<u>Who may apply?</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>418.3.4.13</u>	<u>Application Procedures</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>418.3.4.14</u>	<u>Eligibility and Qualifications</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>418.3.4.15</u>	<u>Evaluation Methodology</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>418.3.4.16</u>	<u>Rating and Ranking</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>418.3.4.17</u>	<u>Referral of Best Qualified Candidates</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>418.3.4.18</u>	<u>Selection</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>418.3.4.19</u>	<u>Office of Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) Clearance</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>418.3.4.20</u>	<u>Release of Employees for New Assignment</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>418.3.4.21</u>	<u>Additional Referrals</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>418.3.4.22</u>	<u>Recordkeeping</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>418.3.4.23</u>	<u>Program Evaluation</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>418.3.4.24</u>	<u>Grievances</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>418.4</u>	<u>MANDATORY REFERENCES</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>418.4.1</u>	<u>External Mandatory References</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>418.4.2</u>	<u>Internal Mandatory References</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>418.5</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL HELP</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>418.6</u>	<u>DEFINITIONS</u>	<u>27</u>

ADS 418 – Promotion and Internal Placement Program for Civil Service (CS) Employees

418.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

This chapter provides the policies and procedures for managing the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Promotion and Internal Placement Program for Civil Service employees. The objectives of the program are to ensure compliance with applicable regulations and to provide the Agency with the best-qualified candidates to fill competitive service positions.

This chapter also introduces and implements a human resources system that automates the recruitment, assessment, referral, and selection processes associated with the merit promotion program.

The provisions of this chapter may be applied to program and internal placement actions within the excepted service at the discretion of the Agency.

418.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

- a. The Deputy Administrator (DA/AID) **adjudicates formal appeals of selection decisions that may adversely affect equal opportunity and affirmative action goals.**
- b. **The Bureau for Management, Director, Office of Human Resources (M/HR/OD)** is responsible for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's Civil Service Promotion and Internal Placement Program; ensuring that deficiencies are corrected; ensuring that processes are in compliance with applicable legal requirements; and approving exceptions to merit promotion policy as described in this chapter.
- c. **The Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources, Policy, Planning, and Information Management Division (M/HR/PPIM)** is responsible for making changes to the program as new Government-wide policies are issued.
- d. **The Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources, Labor and Employee Relations and Benefits Division (M/HR/LERB)** is responsible for:
 - Negotiating with the local labor organization as required and/or appropriate under the provisions of the Federal Labor-Management Relations Program; and
 - Informing the local labor organization about regulatory and administrative requirements that have an impact on the way in which vacancies are filled.

e. **The Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources, Chief, Personnel Operations Division (M/HR/POD)** is responsible for:

- Administering the Agency's Promotion and Internal Placement Program for Civil Service Employees and ensuring that it conforms to the policies and requirements of
 - a. [5 CFR Part 300](#), Employment General;
 - b. [5 CFR 330](#), Recruitment, Selection and Placement;
 - c. [5 CFR 335](#), Promotion and Internal Placement;
 - d. **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, other statutes and Executive Orders in the areas of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and affirmative employment;**
 - e. [5 U.S.C. Section 2301](#), Merit Systems Principles;
 - f. [5 U.S.C. Section 2302](#), Prohibited personnel practices; and
 - g. The requirements of this chapter.
- Approving exceptions to merit promotion policy and procedures as described in this chapter.

f. **The Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources, Personnel Operations Division, Civil Service Staffing Team,** is responsible for:

- Providing technical advice and guidance as necessary to Bureau and Independent Offices' (B/IOs) management staffs selecting officials and employees on the use of automation in the merit promotion process;
- Working with B/IO management staffs and selecting officials to develop assessment tools and vacancy announcements using special features of the automated system;
- Partnering with B/IO technical and service staffs and the Office of Equal Opportunity (EOP) to develop a comprehensive database of recruitment resources to obtain a reasonable number of diverse and well qualified candidates for vacancy announcements;
- Overseeing the automated merit promotion process, from announcement to selection, to ensure the integrity of the system; and
- Advising employees scheduled to be temporarily absent for legitimate reasons (e.g., on detail, on leave, at military training courses in the military service, or serving in Public International Organizations) to stay alert for promotional opportunities announced under the merit promotion program by reviewing the M/HR website periodically and applying for positions for which they are interested and qualified.

- g. **Supervisors and Selecting Officials** are responsible for:
- Initiating actions to fill competitive service positions;
 - Establishing diversity goals and objectives and seeing that objectives are achieved for their organization;
 - Using the special features of the automated system, when necessary, to accomplish the range of activities associated with the merit promotion program;
 - Developing tools, i.e., knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) and Ranking Experience Questions, to assess applicants' qualifications and competitiveness for positions as required by the automated system to rate and rank applicants;
 - Giving full and fair consideration to the qualifications of each candidate referred for a vacancy; and
 - Selecting the candidate best able to perform the job as measured by job-related selection criteria.
- h. **B/IOs management staffs are responsible for:**
- Providing assistance and guidance to selecting officials and employees on basic merit staffing and other promotion policies and procedures;
 - Authorizing the submission of Personnel Action Requests (PARs), with appropriate documentation, to M/HR to fill vacant positions and coordinating the actions through to completion; and
 - Providing technical guidance to selecting officials and employees on the use of merit promotion automated processes.
- i. **The Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (EOP)** is responsible for:
- Reviewing selections to determine the adverse impact a selection might have on the Agency's Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Programs; and
 - Referring selection decisions to the DA/AID, when appropriate.
- j. **Employees** are responsible for:
- Complying with merit promotion policies and procedures as outlined in this chapter; and

- Assuming responsibility for their own self-development and remaining alert to and applying for promotional opportunities for which they are interested and qualified, including during periods when they are temporarily absent for legitimate reasons (e.g., on detail, on leave, at military training courses in the military service, or serving in public International Organizations).

418.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

The statements contained in this ADS chapter are the official Agency policy directives and required procedures relating to promotion and internal placement for Civil Service employees.

418.3.1 Hiring the Right Person for the Job

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

It is management's responsibility to seek the best-qualified individuals for vacant positions. In the exercise of this responsibility, managers may elect to fill positions from recruitment sources that best meet the needs of the organization in terms of productivity, short and long term staffing plans, and total objectives, including affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.

Recruitment through competitive merit staffing (merit promotion) is but one means to fill a position. When USAID can obtain qualified candidates for positions through other alternative recruitment sources, USAID can use these methods concurrently with or to the exclusion of the merit promotion process.

The merit promotion process may be cancelled any time management elects to fill a position(s) using another recruitment source, i.e., accommodation of an employee exercising reemployment rights or a displaced employee (See [ADS 469](#), **Civil Service Recruitment**).

When USAID uses the competitive process, the policy directives and required procedures outlined in **418.3.2** and **418.3.4** apply.

418.3.1.1 Measuring Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

USAID's merit promotion plan requires, in accordance with [5 CFR 335.103](#), Agency promotion programs, that USAID must make selections from among the best-qualified candidates who apply for announced vacancies. As a result, USAID must evaluate the basically eligible candidates to determine to what extent their qualifications exceed the minimum requirements. Evaluation criteria used must be reasonable, related to the job, and applied fairly to all candidates. To do this, the selecting official:

- a. Analyzes positions to identify the basic duties and responsibilities;
- b. Reviews system-generated knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) needed to perform the duties and responsibilities to determine appropriateness or additional requirements;
- c. Assigns weights to KSAs;
- d. Reviews the specialized experience questionnaire to determine appropriateness to the position; and
- e. Uses screen-out factors to define the experience an applicant must possess that exceeds basic qualification standards for the position.

418.3.1.2 Nepotism - Employment of Relatives

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

USAID adheres to all Federal requirements regarding employment of relatives contained in [5 CFR 310](#), **Restrictions on the Employment of Relatives**.

418.3.1.3 Non-Discrimination

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

USAID adheres to the policies and procedures regarding non-discrimination contained in [5 CFR 335.103](#).

418.3.1.4 Requirement for Promotion

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

In addition to completing one year in his or her current grade, to be eligible for promotion, an employee's most recent Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) must reflect a summary rating of "Fully Successful" or better.

418.3.1.5 Position Change

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

The Agency adheres to the following policies and procedures on position change:

- a. [5 CFR 330.501](#), General restriction on movement after competitive appointment.
- b. [5 CFR 335.101](#), Effect of position change on status and tenure.
- c. [5 CFR 335.102](#), Agency authority to promote, demote, or reassign.

M/HR/POD Specialists determine the effective date of any change in an employee's position. However, a change in position may not be made effective before:

- a. The position is classified (See [ADS 456](#), **Position Classification**);
- b. The employee meets all legal requirements for assignment and qualifications standards for the position;
- c. Applicable advance-notice requirements are met when the change in position involves reduction in grade or pay and time-limited actions (see the mandatory references, [5 CFR 511.701 \[a\] \[3\]](#), Effective dates generally and [5 CFR 335.102 \[f\] \[1\]](#), Agency authority to promote, demote or reassign); and
- d. The approval of the action by a designated HR representative.

418.3.1.6 Drug Testing

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Many USAID competitive service positions are subject to drug testing (See [ADS 410](#), **Drug Free Workplace**).

418.3.2 The Merit Promotion Program

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

The Merit Promotion Program, when used to fill competitive positions, provides for an open, systematic, and equitable assignment system that ensures management that positions are filled with the best qualified individuals available and ensures employees that they are being equitably considered, based solely on merit promotion principles established by law and regulation. Agency management determines when the use of the Merit Promotion Program is appropriate for filling vacant positions.

The Merit Promotion Program governs the staffing of Civil Service (CS) positions, grades 01 through 15 and Federal Wage System (FWS) in USAID. These procedures apply to all positions in the competitive service. USAID may also use the plan to fill excepted service positions at the discretion of the Agency.

USAID adheres to the policies and procedures regarding filling competitive positions contained in [5 CFR 335.103](#).

USAID also adheres to all the policies and procedures outlined in [5 CFR 330, Subpart F and G](#), Career Transition Assistance Plans (CTAP) for local Surplus and Displaced Federal Employees and Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) for Displaced Employees, when filling competitive positions. The Agency's Career Transition Assistance Plan, which covers both CTAP and ICTAP, is linked to [ADS 452](#), (see [ADS 452](#), **Civil Service Reduction in Force (RIF)**).

418.3.2.1 Actions Subject to Competitive Procedures

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Unless specifically described in 418.3.2.2 of this chapter, the following actions must follow competitive procedures as required by [5 CFR 335.103](#):

- a. Time-limited promotions for more than 120 days to higher graded positions (prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive time-limited promotions and noncompetitive details to higher graded positions count toward the 120-day total). A temporary promotion may be made permanent without further competition, provided the temporary promotion was originally made under competitive procedures and the fact that the temporary promotion might lead to a permanent promotion was made known to all potential candidates;
- b. Details for more than 120 days to a higher-grade position or to a position with known promotion potential. (Prior service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive details to higher graded positions and noncompetitive time-limited promotions count toward the 120-day total). (See [ADS 432](#) and [ADS 434](#), for more information on details);
- c. Selection for training that is part of an authorized training agreement, part of a promotion program, or required before an employee may be considered for a promotion (See the **mandatory reference**, [5 CFR 410.306](#));
- d. Reassignment or demotion to a position with greater promotion potential than a position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (except as permitted by reduction in force (RIF) regulations (see [ADS 452](#) for information on RIF));
- e. Transfer to a position at the same grade, (see the **mandatory reference** [5 CFR 330.705](#), Order of selection in filling vacancies from outside the Agency's workforce) at a higher grade or to a position with more promotion potential than the position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service;
- f. Reinstatement of an employee to a permanent or temporary position at a higher grade than that last held in the competitive service;
- g. Appointment of a career Foreign Service Officer into the competitive service, under **Executive Order 12292** and [5 CFR 315.606](#) to a position higher than the last equivalent Foreign Service grade held by the employee, or to positions that will offer promotion potential;
- h. Appointment of Peace Corps personnel with noncompetitive eligibility to a competitive service position, under [5 CFR 315.607](#), when the position grade is higher than the last grade held by the employee, or to a position that will offer promotion potential;

- i. Appointment of certain former overseas employees with noncompetitive eligibility to a competitive position, under **Executive Order 12721** and [5 CFR 315.608](#), when the position grade is higher than the last grade held by the employee, or to a position that will offer promotion potential; and
- j. Appointment of other candidates with noncompetitive eligibility under authorities regulated by OPM, under interchange agreements with other merit systems, and under miscellaneous authorities not regulated by OPM (statutes and court orders), to positions higher than the last equivalent grades held by the employees or to positions which would offer promotion potential. (See the **mandatory references**, [5 CFR 315](#), Career and Career Conditional Employment and [5 CFR 6.7](#), Movement of Persons between the Civil Service System and Other Merit Systems.)

418.3.2.2 Exceptions to Competitive Requirements

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

According to [5 CFR 335.103](#), Agency promotion programs, competitive procedures do not apply to certain actions and the regulation gives agencies discretion with others. In USAID, the following actions are not subject to competition:

- a. A promotion resulting from the upgrading of a position without significant change in the duties and responsibilities, due to issuance of a new classification standard or the correction of an initial classification error;
- b. A position change permitted by Reduction in Force (RIF) procedures as set forth in [5 CFR 351](#);
- c. A promotion without current competition of an employee who was appointed in the competitive service from a civil service register, by direct hire, by noncompetitive appointment or noncompetitive conversion, or under competitive promotion procedures for an assignment intended to prepare the employee for the position being filled (the intent must be made a matter of record and career ladders must be documented in the promotion plan and on the initial position description or personnel action as set forth in **418.3.3.4**);
- d. A promotion resulting from an employee's position being classified at a higher grade because of additional duties and responsibilities as set forth in section **418.3.3.5**;
- e. A temporary promotion, or detail to a higher graded position or a position with known promotion potential of 120 days or less;
- f. Promotion to a grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (or in another merit system with which OPM has an approved

interchange agreement from which an employee was separated or demoted for other than performance or conduct reasons) as set forth in section **418.3.3.3**;

g. Promotion, reassignment, demotion, transfer, reinstatement, or detail to a position having promotion potential no greater than the potential of a position an employee currently holds or previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service, unless required by [5 CFR 330.705](#), Order of selection in filling vacancies from outside the agency's workforce (or in another merit system with which OPM has an approved interchange agreement) and which the employee did not lose because of performance or conduct reasons;

h. Consideration of a candidate not given proper consideration in a previous competitive promotion action as set forth in section **418.3.3.2**;

i. Selection of employees from the Agency's Reemployment Priority Lists for positions at a grade previously held in the competitive service (See [ADS 452](#) , CS Reduction in Force);

j. Promotions required as a remedy in grievance procedures;

k. Successful completion of OPM-approved training agreements, such as executive development training, when the agreement specifically provides for promotion; and

l. Conversions to the competitive service under various authorities (see [ADS 469](#), Civil Service Recruitment).

418.3.3 Procedures for Noncompetitive Promotion Actions

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

418.3.3.1 Time-Limited Promotions

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

A time-limited promotion is an appropriate mechanism for managers to use to fill temporary positions, to accomplish project work; to fill positions temporarily pending reorganization or downsizing; or to meet other temporary needs for a specified period of not more than five years. OPM approves extensions beyond five years. M/HR/POD Specialists provide employees advance written notice of the conditions of a temporary promotion either before or within 30 days after the promotion is effected. (See **5 CFR 335.102(f)**).

418.3.3.2 Priority Consideration

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

If an employee failed to receive proper consideration in a previous competitive promotion action(s), USAID gives priority consideration for any position the employee elects to be considered before the position is filled by competitive means. (See

418.3.4.24 for information on how to file a grievance.) In these cases, the employee is entitled to one priority consideration for a vacancy for each instance of lost or improper consideration. The employee receives priority consideration under this section for a period of one year from the date of the grievance approval.

If an employee feels that his/her priority consideration was not handled properly, s/he may appeal to the Chief, M/HR/POD or designee, who will have the final authority within M/HR to decide the case.

418.3.3.3 Repromotion Consideration

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

An employee demoted without personal cause, e.g., Reduction in Force (RIF), receives special consideration for vacancies at or below the grade level from which the employee was demoted and, if selected, is promoted without competition to the grade formerly held. USAID's policy is to minimize the impact involuntary actions, such as RIF, have on employee careers.

Under this section, M/HR/POD establishes a roster of employees eligible for repromotion. The names of eligible employees remain on the roster for a period of three years unless they are selected for repromotion to their original grades or receive promotions to grades higher than those from which they were demoted.

418.3.3.4 Career Ladder Promotion

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Some positions are announced and filled as career ladders. A career ladder is a series of developmental positions of increasing difficulty in the same line of work, through which an employee may receive promotions to the full performance level of his or her position based on his or her personal development and performance in that series.

If USAID selects an employee for a career ladder position, the following procedures apply:

- a. B/IO management staff notifies supervisors, in writing, of the effective date of the employee's entrance on duty in the position and their responsibility at the time of the assignment.
- b. The supervisor:
 - Develops and provides the employee a clear description of benchmark performance criteria required at each level of the career ladder; e.g., for a Contract Specialist to be promoted from a GS-09 to GS 11, the employee must, along with other substantive duties, participate in procurement planning, including setting schedules, developing formal procurement plans, and reviewing and analyzing technical documentation in support of potential requirements for contractibility.

- Ensures that an individual development plan (IDP) is developed specific to the employee's needs;
- Assigns the employee some developmental work and/or projects of sufficient complexity and responsibility to allow the employee to demonstrate capability to perform satisfactorily at the next higher level;
- Provides feedback on the employee's performance during and at the completion of any developmental assignment; and
- Provides timely evaluation of the employee's overall performance at the end of the rating cycle.

c. Entrance into a career-ladder position does not guarantee promotion. To be eligible for promotion to each level of the career ladder the employee must meet the following requirements:

- Have progressed steadily within the terms of his or her IDP or program;
- Have a supervisory certification in writing to M/HR/POD that the employee demonstrates the ability to perform at the next highest level, that the work continues to exist, and that s/he recommends the employee for promotion to the next higher grade;
- Have a current rating of record of "Fully Successful" (level 3) or higher. An employee may not receive a career-ladder promotion if his or her rating is below "Fully Successful" on a critical work objective that is also critical to performance at the next higher grade of the career ladder. (see the **mandatory reference**, [5 CFR 335.104](#), Eligibility for Career-ladder Promotion); and
- Meet the one year time-in-grade and qualification requirements for the higher grade of the position.

d. If the employee's supervisor has not submitted a request for the employee's promotion by the anniversary date of the employee's last promotion, s/he may ask the supervisor whether s/he is prepared to recommend a promotion. The supervisor provides the employee a written response within 10 work days of the employee's request. If the employee is dissatisfied with the response from the supervisor, the employee may contact the B/IO management staff to seek further guidance.

e. If the supervisor recommends the employee for promotion, he or she submits the required paperwork to the responsible B/IO management staff to

submit action request documents to Human Resources Specialist in M/HR/POD for action.

f. The HR Specialist makes the employee's promotion effective the beginning of the first pay period after approval by M/HR/POD.

418.3.3.5 Promotion Based on Impact of the Person on the Job

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

The duties and responsibilities of a position may change over time. For the most part these changes result from reorganizations, new or revised organizational responsibilities or Missions, and changes in technology. Sometimes, however, the unique capabilities, experience, or knowledge a particular employee brings to the job can also have an effect on the work performed and therefore on the classification of the position. While it is the position which is classified, the relationship of the employee to the position can be recognized when the performance of the incumbent broadens the nature or scope and effect of the work being performed. For example, exceptional ability of the employee may lead to the attraction of especially difficult work assignments, unusual freedom from supervision, special authority to speak for and commit the agency, continuing contribution to organizational efficiency and economy, recognition as an "expert" sought by peers, or similar considerations. Such changes affect the difficulty of work or responsibility and authority given the employee and can be recognized in a position classification decision to upgrade the position. This concept is called "impact of the person on the job" (see the [mandatory reference, U.S. Classification Handbook, Introduction to the Position Classification Standards](#)).

When determining grade level based on this concept, it is essential that management recognizes and endorses the duties and that the work environment allows continuing performance at a different level. The job description, prepared by the supervisor, must clearly state the higher level duties and responsibilities. The position's final classification must be based on grade level criteria in appropriate standards. An audit by the assigned HR Classifier may be conducted if further justification is needed to support the classification decision.

A noncompetitive promotion cannot result from the addition of supervisory duties and responsibilities to a classified non-supervisory position.

If a position is upgraded due to impact of the person on the job, the incumbent is promoted noncompetitively. However, the employee must meet all qualification and legal requirements before the promotion is effected.

M/HR/POD Specialists make eligibility and qualifications determinations and provide appropriate remarks and effective dates on the Personnel Action Requests (PARs) received and approved for promotion actions. Promotions are effective the first pay period following approval by M/HR/POD.

418.3.4 The Agency's Use of the Merit Promotion Program

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

When the merit promotion program is used, the policy directives and required procedures in sections **418.3.4.1** through **418.3.4.20** apply.

418.3.4.1 Streamlined Recruitment Process

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

In 2002, USAID recognized the need to enhance and expedite its recruitment processes. To achieve this, it chose to implement a state of the art human resources web-based application that automates recruitment, assessment, referral, and communications and facilitates the selection process. It takes the current Federal hiring process content and uses the power of the Internet to build and post vacancies. Interested applicants can review vacancy announcements and answer position-specific questions on-line. The system also allows applicants to create, edit, and archive electronic resumes. After the vacancy announcement closes, the HR Specialist in M/HR/POD reviews the system's automated rating and ranking of the candidates according to pre-established criteria. The highest ranked candidates are identified as best qualified and forwarded to selecting officials on system generated referral lists for selection of a candidate(s).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) posted on M/HR's website provide general information about the automated system and information for users of the system.

418.3.4.2 Position Management/Classification and Recruitment and Staffing Modules Linkages

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

USAID uses two modules of the automated system, Position Management/Classification and Recruitment and Staffing. The system automates these two processes and eliminates many time consuming steps. Managers can create a document package that includes a position description, vacancy announcement, evaluation statement and interview guide, which are fully integrated. Guidance for managers and HR Specialists are contained in Quick Reference Guides developed for both modules. The Guides are reviewed periodically for currency and responsiveness to client users.

418.3.4.3 Vacancy Announcements

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Before announcing a position, HR Specialists coordinate the system's product with the selecting official. It is critical that selecting officials give considerable thought when identifying the breadth and depth of the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required for successful performance in the position. Before approving the vacancy announcement, the selecting official can add, delete or edit Ranking Experience Questions, KSAs and their corresponding questions and screen-out questions. Screen-

out questions are optional. If screen out questions are used, they must be added to the applicant questionnaire.

KSAs are listed on vacancy announcements and used to evaluate all eligible and qualified candidates. Although there is no limit on the number of KSAs permitted to be listed on the announcement, no more than four or five KSAs are recommended. Ranking Experience Questions should be limited to only the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are critical in the position and that will distinguish the best qualified candidates from average candidates.

Reasonable accommodation language, similar to the statement below, as required by **Executive Order 13078**, and USAID's plan to increase the representation of adults with disabilities in the Federal workforce, must be included in the announcement:

This agency provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please notify the person listed on the vacancy announcement. The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis.

418.3.4.4 Areas of Consideration

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Areas of consideration are established to ensure that an adequate supply of qualified candidates can be located in order for the selecting official to be able to choose from among a reasonable number of well-qualified individuals. An area of consideration balances such needs as open and fair competition, adequate numbers of qualified applicants, timely response to the needs of selecting officials, and equal employment objectives.

The primary area of consideration in USAID is Washington.

The area of consideration may be expanded if the minimum area of consideration fails to yield sufficient candidates. Concurrent consideration of individuals outside the agency may be offered on any vacancy announcement by adding the appropriate statement to the area of consideration as follows:

- Commuting area,
- Government-wide (Status); or
- Nationwide (All U.S. Citizens)

The payment of new appointee's travel and transportation or relocation of current Federal employees outside the commuting area is discretionary by the Agency. When it is known in advance these expenses will or will not be paid for a particular position,

M/HR/POD Specialists must include a statement to this effect on the Merit Promotion vacancy announcement to facilitate recruitment efforts.

418.3.4.5 Posting Periods

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Employees must stay alert to opening and closing dates of announcements so they can apply in time to be considered. Closing dates include only workdays. If a recognized Federal holiday falls within the open period, M/HR/POD adds one additional day to the closing date of the announcement. All announcements are open for a minimum of ten (10) workdays.

418.3.4.6 Amendments and Corrections

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

M/HR/POD Specialists follow the system's requirements for amending and correcting announcements. Incorrect announcements will be reissued with new opening and closing dates. Information for applicants will be included in announcements issued under this section.

418.3.4.7 Open Continuous Announcements

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

In occupational categories where there is frequent turnover, M/HR/POD may keep an announcement open continuously to respond quickly to an office's need to fill an additional vacancy. Information on how to apply for positions will be included in each announcement issued under this section.

418.3.4.8 Announcements Covering Multiple Grades

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

M/HR/POD may issue announcements covering multiple grades, e.g., GS-07, GS-09, or GS-11, with potential to GS-12. The system generates KSAs for all levels. The system requires applicants to choose what grade level they are applying for so they will receive proper consideration. HR Specialists may or may not issue referral lists for all grade levels advertised under the vacancy announcement.

418.3.4.9 Accessing Announcements

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Each announcement will be accessible through the HR Website and the Agency's external Website. USAID employees and other applicants can go directly into the application process by going into the system.

418.3.4.10 Circulation of Announcements

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Announcements will be distributed to appropriate resources as necessary to recruit and hire a diverse and talented workforce.

418.3.4.11 Additional Publicity

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Occasionally, USAID posts job vacancies in magazines, newspapers, and professional publications that target specialized areas.

418.3.4.12 Who may apply?

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Employees in the competitive service or candidates with eligibility for competitive service positions can apply for announcements open in USAID. If announcements are identified for USAID/Washington only, USAID direct-hire employees can apply. If the position is advertised All US Citizens, candidates from both the private sector and other Federal Government agencies are eligible to apply.

Also, when the Agency is recruiting to the outside, eligible veterans are allowed to apply for positions announced under merit promotion procedures using the authority extended to them by the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) of 1998, as amended.

If employees or applicants are uncertain about their eligibility to apply, they need to consult with the contact person listed on the announcement.

418.3.4.13 Application Procedures

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Applicants are encouraged to apply on-line through the automated human resources system. That system can be accessed through the USAID Intranet or the Internet. On-line applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. eastern standard time on the closing date of the announcement. Applicants may contact the HR Specialist about the process for submitting paper applications prior to the closing date (see **418.3.4.1**, Frequently Asked Questions, for additional information on the system and the application process).

418.3.4.14 Eligibility and Qualifications

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

An applicant must meet both eligibility and qualification requirements for the position s/he is seeking. The qualification standards state the minimum requirements essential for successful job performance. All applicants who meet these standards and other legal requirements (for example, the time-in-grade or time-after-competitive-appointment requirements) are eligible for promotion. Specific information on eligibility and qualification requirements is indicated below:

- Applicants must meet time-in-grade requirements as highlighted in [5 CFR 300, Subpart F](#), Time-in-Grade Restrictions.
- Applicants must be willing to accept the terms and requirements of the advertised position and must be within the area of consideration as announced.
- Applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the U.S. OPM's Operating Manual: Qualifications Standards for General Schedule Positions.
- Screen out factors (selective factors) may be used in the automated process. Screen out factors are knowledge, skills, abilities, or special qualifications that are in addition to or more specific than minimum requirements in a qualification standard, but which are determined to be essential to perform the duties and responsibilities of a particular position. If a screen out factor appears in an announcement, applicants must meet it to be considered for that particular announcement. Not meeting one screen out factor will make the applicant ineligible for further consideration.

Applicants are notified by a system generated e-mail if they are found ineligible, not qualified, or not selected for a position.

418.3.4.15 Evaluation Methodology

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

A basic principle of merit promotion is that selection must be from among the best qualified. In order to achieve this, the Agency's Merit Promotion Program requires that all eligible applicants be evaluated to determine to what extent their qualifications exceed the minimum requirements. The automated system evaluates eligibility, minimum qualifications, and rates applications according to defined criteria. M/HR/POD Human Resources Specialists review the rating and ranking of the applications according to pre-established criteria. The candidates are then ranked according to the scores they receive under the application process. Those with the highest scores rank at the top and are determined to be the best-qualified applicants. Their names are referred to the selecting official for selection consideration.

418.3.4.16 Rating and Ranking

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

The automated system evaluates each candidate's application based on his or her selection of the defined levels of Ranking Experience Questions that best describe his or her level of experience for the KSA listed. The points for each of the levels selected by the applicant are then totaled. Career Transition Assistance Plan/Interagency Career Transition Plan (CTAP/ICTAP) and Veteran Preference processes are

automatically applied when announcements are advertised Status or All U. S. Citizens, respectively. The best qualified applicants are listed in alphabetical order on a referral list.

418.3.4.17 Referral of Best Qualified Candidates

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

Referral lists are generated by the automated system from the results of the rating and ranking process. These lists may include:

- Candidates who are eligible for special selection consideration under CTAP/ICTAP regulations;
- Candidates eligible for promotion consideration;
- Employees who are interested in transferring from other Federal agencies or reassignment from another organization within USAID;
- Candidates who are eligible for consideration under other non-competitive authorities; and
- If recruiting All U. S. Citizens, candidates who have been examined under USAID's Delegated Examining Authority and are found eligible and well qualified for their first Federal appointment.

418.3.4.18 Selection

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

The selecting official has a maximum of 20 workdays to interview and make a selection from any one of the referral lists issued. USAID will grant extensions beyond 20 days only in exceptional cases. A written request for the extension must be submitted to the Chief, Personnel Operations Division for decision at least five work days before the initial referral listing expires.

Selecting officials must follow the instructions below for processing the referral lists:

- a. Promotion Candidate Interviews. All direct hire USAID employees (if any) on the promotion referral list must be interviewed if a selection is to be made from the list. USAID direct hire employees on the promotion list are not required to be interviewed if a selection is made from the reassignment listing. USAID staff may conduct telephone interviews when candidates are not located in the commuting area. If a candidate declines or misses an interview and does not call to reschedule, USAID staff must give no further consideration to the candidate's application. If a candidate cannot be contacted in a reasonable period, the selecting official must contact the HR Specialist for further guidance.

b. Conducting the Interview. Selecting officials or employees designated by the official may conduct interviews. It is important that applicants be given fair and equal consideration in the interview process. USAID staff must conduct interviews in essentially the same manner for all candidates in terms of questions asked. The selecting official or the employees designated by the official may not show or give preference to any candidate based on factors other than the candidate's qualifications for the job.

c. Responding to Referral Lists. If the selecting official chooses an applicant from the promotion referral lists, s/he completes the referral listing according to procedures in the Quick Reference Guide and forwards it electronically to the HR Specialist for transmittal to EOP for clearance and announcement closeout action.

If the selecting official returns the referral lists without any candidate(s) chosen, he or she must provide an explanation for his or her action. The selecting official may also:

- (1) Request that the area of consideration be extended to recruit additional candidates;
- (2) Fill the vacancy by other means (e.g., rotation, reassignment); or
- (3) Formally withdraw the request to fill the vacancy, specifying the reason. Upon receipt of a withdrawal, M/HR/POD may deny a subsequent request to fill the same or similar vacancy for at least 90 days or may grant such a request in a period of reorganization or in situations where there are severe shortages in a skill area, or where there is a critical need.

418.3.4.19 Office of Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) Clearance

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

It is the Agency's policy that the workforce in the Agency reflects the American population in terms of representation of minorities, women, and individuals with physical disabilities. EOP is charged with ensuring that this profile of America is achieved within the Agency.

To achieve this goal, EOP reviews completed referral list(s) issued under the merit promotion program to determine the effect of the selection. Based on this review, EOP will either clear or not clear the selection made from the referral list. The process for EOP's review is as follows:

- a. The Bureau/Office with the vacancy will submit the completed listing(s) to the HR Specialist in M/HR/POD for transmittal to EOP if a selection is made from it.

- b. EOP will have five workdays to examine the referral list(s) against the Agency's hiring patterns and make a decision.
- c. If EOP is satisfied with the selection, the referral listing(s) is returned to M/HR/POD for action.
- d. If EOP is not satisfied that reasonable efforts were made to consider minorities, women, or individuals with physical disabilities, and that there is a negative impact on the profile of the Bureau or Office, EOP will return the referral listing(s) within five days, with its findings to the selecting official. EOP will also send copies of their findings to the head of the Bureau or Office concerned and to M/HR/POD.
- e. The selecting official has five working days from receipt of EOP's findings to reconsider his or her proposed selection. After reconsideration, if the selecting official reaffirms the proposed selection, with the concurrence of the head of the Bureau/Officer concerned, the referral listing(s) with appropriate justification will be returned to EOP. If EOP accepts the selecting official's justification, EOP will clear and forward the referral listing(s) with the selection to M/HR/POD.
- f. If EOP does not agree with the selecting official's justification, EOP will, within five workdays, send the proposed selection and appropriate documentation and comments to the Director, Office of Human Resources (M/HR/OD) for review and decision.
- g. The procedures described in this section (418.3.4.19), which begin on the date EOP receives the referral listing(s) with selection made and end when a transmittal memorandum is sent to the Director, M/HR for decision, must be completed within fifteen workdays. The Director, M/HR advises EOP of his or her decision.
- h. If EOP is dissatisfied with the Director's decision, the office may, within five workdays, file a formal appeal with the Deputy Administrator for adjudication. Copies of EOP's submission must be sent to the Director, M/HR and M/HR/POD.

418.3.4.20 Release of Employees for New Assignment

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

M/HR/POD Specialists arrange release dates for candidates selected immediately after job offers are made. The release date for promotion will be two weeks from the beginning of the pay period nearest the date the candidate accepts the job offer. The release date for reassignment will be thirty days from the date the candidate accepts the job offer.

418.3.4.21 Additional Referrals

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

If the selected individual (1) declines after being contacted by the Specialist, (2) once appointed, submits separation papers (i.e., letter of resignation, retirement papers), (3) or separates (i.e., dies, transfers) from the Agency within 120 calendar days of the initial selection, the referral list(s) used to select that individual may be used again by the selecting official to make a subsequent selection.

418.3.4.22 Recordkeeping

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

USAID must adhere to the policies and procedures regarding recordkeeping contained in [5 CFR 335.103](#), Agency promotion programs, b. 5, Requirement 5.

418.3.4.23 Program Evaluation

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

USAID must adhere to the policy regarding Government accountability for merit system principles and workforce information contained in [Executive Order 13197](#), Governmentwide Accountability for Merit System Principles; Workforce Information.

In this regard, USAID will periodically evaluate the Merit Promotion Program to measure its effectiveness in meeting the policies and procedures established for it. If weaknesses are identified following the program evaluation, M/HR/POD will take the necessary measures to improve guidelines and to ensure full understanding of the promotion system by Agency employees and supervisory/managerial officials.

418.3.4.24 Grievances

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

USAID must adhere to the policies and procedures regarding grievances contained in [5 CFR 335.103 section \(d\)](#), [5 CFR 300, Subpart A](#), and the procedures outlined below in this section.

Before an employee initiates a grievance under the Agency's negotiated or administrative grievance procedures located in [ADS 490](#) the employee is encouraged to follow the procedures indicated below:

- a. Schedule an appointment with the relevant M/HR/POD Specialist to have questions or concerns about aspects of the merit promotion process in general and/or a specific announcement explained.
- b. Ask, in writing, to have the case reviewed by the Civil Service Staffing Team Leader, if he or she is dissatisfied with the explanation given by the relevant M/HR/POD Specialist. At that time, s/he must also specify the relief requested.

c. Ask, in writing, that the Chief, M/HR/POD, review the promotion action if s/he is dissatisfied with the explanation or decision of the Civil Service Staffing Team Leader.

d. Initiate a grievance under the Agency grievance procedures if s/he remains dissatisfied with the explanation or decision by the Chief, M/HR/POD (see [ADS 490](#), **Agency Administrative Grievance Procedure**).

418.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

418.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

- a. [5 CFR 6.7, Movement of persons between the civil service and other merit systems](#)
- b. [5 CFR 300, Employment \(General\)](#)
- c. [5 CFR 310, Employment of Relatives](#)
- d. [5 CFR 315, Career and Career Conditional Employment](#)
- e. [5 CFR 330, Recruitment, Selection and Placement \(General\)](#)
- f. [5 CFR 335, Promotion and Internal Placement](#)
- g. [5 CFR 351, Reduction in Force](#)
- h. [5 CFR 410.306, Selection and assignment of trainees](#)
- i. [5 CFR 330.501, General restriction on movement after competitive appointment](#)
- j. [5 CFR 511.701, Effective dates generally](#)
- k. **Executive Order 12292, Eligibility of Foreign Service Officers for Noncompetitive Appointments**
- l. **Executive Order 12721, Eligibility of Overseas Employees for Noncompetitive Appointments**
- m. **Executive Order 13078, Plan to increase the representation of adults with disabilities in the Federal workforce**

- n. [Executive Order 13197, Governmentwide Accountability for Merit Systems Principles; Workforce Information](#)
- o. [5 U.S.C. Sec 2301, Merit Systems Principles](#)
- p. [5. U. S. C. Sec 2302, Prohibited Personnel Practices](#)
- q. [U.S. Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\) Operating Manual: Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions](#)
- r. [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended](#)
- s. [Veteran's Employment Act of 1998 codified as 5 U.S.C. 3304, Competitive service; examination](#)

418.4.2 Internal Mandatory References

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

- a. [ADS 410, Drug Free Workplace](#)
- b. [ADS 432, Details – Civil and Foreign Service](#)
- c. [ADS 434, Details and Transfers to International Organizations](#)
- d. [ADS 452, Reduction in Force – Civil Service](#)
- e. [ADS 456, Personnel Operations: Position Classification](#)
- f. [ADS 469, Civil Service Recruitment](#)
- g. [ADS 490, Agency Administrative Grievance Procedure](#)
- h. [Agency's Career Transition Assistance Plan](#)
- i. [USAID Plan for Increasing Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities](#)

418.5 ADDITIONAL HELP

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

- *a. [Use of AVUE in USAID: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

418.6 DEFINITIONS

Effective Date: 12/07/2005

The terms and definitions listed below have been incorporated into the [ADS Glossary](#). See the ADS Glossary for all ADS terms and definitions.

Agency employees

Direct hire employees with competitive or noncompetitive status for appointment or promotion. (Chapter 418)

All U.S. Citizens

Applicants who are currently working for the Federal Government and those outside of Government in the private sector (Chapter 418)

area of consideration

The area in which Agency management makes a search for eligible candidates in a specific promotion action. The primary area of consideration is USAID/Washington. (Chapter 418)

best qualified candidates

Best qualified candidates are those candidates who rank at the top when compared with other eligible candidates for a position. (Chapter 418)

career ladder position

A position of increasing difficulty in the same line of work through which an employee may progress from a lower or entry level to the level of full performance.

1. Entry Level - The lowest grade level in a career ladder.
2. Full-Performance Level - The last grade reached in a career-ladder position as a result of the original merit promotion action, or as a result of original competitive appointment. (Chapter 418)

Career Transition Assistance Plans (CTAP) for Local Surplus and Displaced Employees

Presidential memorandum dated September 12, 1995 entitled "Career Transition Assistance for Federal Employees" sets policy by the U.S. Government to provide services to help surplus and displaced Federal employees affected by downsizing and restructuring to take charge of their own careers and find other job offers either within the Federal Government or in the private sector. When filling a vacancy, an agency must select an employee eligible under these regulations before selecting any other candidate from within or outside the agency; unless the agency can show that another employee would otherwise be separated by reduction in force. (Chapter 418)

competitive service

Federal positions normally filled through open competitive examination under civil service rules and regulations. About 60 percent of all Federal positions are in the competitive service. (Chapter 418)

competitive status

Basic eligibility of a person to be selected to fill a position in the competitive service without open competitive examination. Competitive status may be acquired by career-conditional or career appointment through open competitive examination, or may be granted by statute, executive order, or civil service rules without competitive examination. A person with competitive status may be promoted, transferred, reassigned, reinstated, or demoted subject to the conditions prescribed by civil service rules and regulations. (Chapter 413 and 418)

demotion

A change of an employee to a lower grade or to a position with a lower rate of pay. (Chapter 418 and 487)

detail

The temporary assignment or loan of a direct-hire employee to an outside organization, or within USAID, without change of position from that held in USAID and/or the temporary assignment of non-USAID personnel to USAID, with the expectation that the employee will return to the official position of record upon the expiration of the detail. (Chapter 418, 432 and 434)

eligible candidates

Candidates who meet the Office of Personnel Management or USAID qualification standards for the position, including appropriate selective placement factors and any time-in-grade requirements by the closing date of the announcement. (Chapter 418)

evaluation criteria

Weighted criteria used to measure the value of a candidate's qualifications (e.g., experience and education) against the knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs) and other characteristics required by the vacant or new position. (Chapter 418)

Impact of the person on the job

The policy for classifying positions based on "impact of the person on the job" is based on the premise that the special knowledge, skills, abilities, talents, or achievements of an individual may have an important effect on the duties responsibilities, and expectation of the job held. (Chapter 418)

Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan for Displaced Employees (ICTAP)

Presidential memorandum dated September 12, 1996 entitled "Career Transition Assistance for Federal Employees" established a special interagency career transition assistance program for Federal employees during a period of severe Federal downsizing. The regulation established the order of selection in filling vacancies,

expected to last over 121 days, from outside the agency's workforce to include in this order, employees eligible under the Agency's Reemployment Priority List, other employees displaced by the agency, displaced employees from other Federal agencies, from the District of Columbia Department of Corrections or displaced employees from the Panama Canal Zone. (Chapter 418)

job analysis

The process of identifying the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics essential to a position in order to provide a job related basis for evaluation and selection for the position (Chapter 418)

local commuting area

The geographic area that usually constitutes one area for employment purposes. It includes any population center (or two or more neighboring ones) and the surrounding localities, in which people live and can reasonably be expected to travel, to their place of employment on a daily basis. (Chapters 418 and 452)

position change

A promotion, demotion, or reassignment made during an employee's continuous service (within the same Federal agency) that establishes the employee's eligibility for grade retention (5 U.S.C. 5362). A position change may also involve a change of official headquarters or post of duty within the Agency. (Chapter 418)

priority consideration

A noncompetitive opportunity for selection to a new or vacant position granted to a qualified employee who failed to receive proper consideration for selection for an equivalent position under another vacancy announcement. (Chapter 418)

promotion

The change of an employee to a position at a higher grade level within the same job classification system and pay schedule or to a position with a higher rate of basic pay in a different job classification system and pay schedule. (Chapter 418)

promotion potential

The promotion potential of any position is the highest grade to which a person may be promoted without additional competition for the position. There are ordinarily two situations where positions have promotion potential. One is any position within an established career ladder below the full performance level. The other is any position filled below the established grade (not necessarily in a career ladder) for training or developmental purposes, e.g., trainee and understudy. (Chapter 418)

qualification requirements

Education, experience, and other prerequisites to employment or placement in a position. The Office of Personnel Management's Operating Manual for Qualifications Standards for General Schedule Positions or modified Agency standards is used to determine basic qualifications of applicants for a specific position. (Chapter 418)

qualified candidates

Qualified candidates are those being considered for any competitive placement action who meet all established minimum eligibility and qualification requirements for the position. (Chapter 418)

quality ranking factors

Quality ranking factors are knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), identified on the vacancy announcement for the positions to be filled, that could be expected to significantly enhance performance in a position, but unlike selective factors, are not essential for satisfactory performance. (For example, skill in public speaking might be used as a quality-ranking factor for a position in an organization where policy changes are communicated to the public in several ways and oral communication is one of the ways.) (Chapter 418)

reassignment

The change of an employee from one position to another without promotion or demotion. (Chapter 418)

Reemployment rights

Rehire rights granted to a former Agency employee(s) when hired by another executive agency without a break in service of a full workday by transfer, reinstatement, or by excepted appointment, in a position which the agency is currently authorized to fill with reemployment rights. (Chapters 412 and 418)

referral list

The form used to send the names of the best-qualified candidates being considered for promotion or subject to competitive selection procedures to the selecting official for consideration and to document his or her selection decisions. (Chapter 418)

Reinstatement eligibility

Eligibility of a person who previously was employed under a career or career-conditional appointment to be reappointed to a competitive service position. (Chapters 413 and 418)

selecting official

The individual responsible for making a careful analysis of the qualifications of each candidate certified for a vacancy and judging which candidate on the referral list(s) could perform best in the job to be filled. (Chapter 418)

Selective or Screen Out Factors

Specific knowledge, skills, and abilities essential for satisfactory performance on the job and which represent an addition to the basic qualification standards for a position. (Chapter 418)

special selection priority referral list

A list used to refer candidates qualified under the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan to selecting officials. (Chapter 418)

temporary promotion

The Agency makes time-limited promotions to fill temporary positions, accomplish project work, fill positions temporarily pending reorganization or downsizing, or meet other temporary needs for a specified period of not more than five years. Longer periods may be authorized by Office of Personnel Management. (Chapter 418)

trainee position

A position involving a well-defined training program established for a career or career conditional employee of a definite duration. The training may be on-the-job or formal training. Assigned tasks are performed on a rotating or non-rotating basis and under close guidance and instruction, with promotion scheduled upon satisfactory completion of the training period. A trainee who does not satisfactorily complete the training period will be reassigned to a different position. (Chapter 418)

transfer

The employment of a career or career-conditional employee, when the employee moves from one agency to another (with or without promotion) without a break in service of one full workday. (Chapter 418)

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