



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Release
1-1685

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MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET -1

Subject 1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: As a supplement to the DOI Merit Promotion Plan, this release transmits the changes to the BLM Manual Section covering Promotion and Internal Placement. The new section focuses on changes that allow more flexibility in BLM's hiring process.
2. Reports Required: None.
3. Material Superseded: None.
4. Filing Instructions: File as directed below.

REMOVE:

Page .01 (Rel. 1-1670)
 Page .2 (Rel. 1-1670)
 Page .3 (Rel. 1-1670)
 Page .4 (Rel. 1-1670)
 Page .6 (Rel. 1-1670)
 Page .7 (Rel. 1-1670)
 Glossary, Page 3 (Rel. 1-1670)

(Total: 7 Sheets)

INSERT:

Page .01
 Page .2
 Page .3
 Page .4
 Page .6
 Page .7
 Glossary, Page 3

(Total: 7 Sheets)

Marilyn H. Johnson
Assistant Director, Human Resources Management



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANUAL TRANSMITTAL SHEET

Release

1-1670

Date

1/17/01

Subject

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

1. Explanation of Material Transmitted: As a supplement to the DOI Merit Promotion Plan, this release transmits the new BLM Manual Section covering Promotion and Internal Placement. The new section focuses on the merit promotion program, including exceptions. This section includes the changes required by 370 DM 335, Promotion and Internal Placement.
2. Reports Required: None.
3. Material Superseded: None.
4. Filing Instructions: File as directed below.

REMOVE:

None

INSERT:

1400-355

(Total: 14 Sheets)

Warren Johnson, Jr.
Assistant Director, Human Resources Management

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENTTable of Contents

- .01 Purpose
- .02 Objective
- .03 Authority
- .04 Responsibility
- .05 Reference
- .06 Policy
- .07 Files and Records Maintenance

- .1 Vacancy Announcements
 - .11 Area of Consideration
 - .12 Payment of Relocation Expenses
 - .13 Preparation of Vacancy Announcement
 - .14 Distribution of Vacancy Announcements

- .2 Applicant Information
 - .21 Materials to be Submitted
 - .22 Accepting Applications

- .3 Evaluating Candidates
 - .31 Job Analysis
 - .32 Minimum Qualifications
 - .33 Rating and Ranking

- .4 Referral and Selection
 - .41 Referrals
 - .42 Interviews
 - .43 Reference Checks
 - .44 Selections
 - .45 Non-Selections

- .5 Corrective Actions and Release of Information
 - .51 Corrective Actions
 - .52 Release of Information

- .6 Accretion of Duties Promotions
 - .61 Position Management
 - .62 Criteria
 - .63 Documentation Procedures
 - .64 Reviewing

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

Table of Contents

.7 Grievances

Glossary of Terms

Appendices

1. The Competitive Process
2. Format for Justification of Promotion Action Based on Accretion of Duties

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

.01 Purpose. This manual supplements the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Merit Promotion Plan with the establishment of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Merit Promotion Plan for filling positions covered by the merit promotion program and implements 5 U.S.C. Chapter 33, 5 CFR 335, and 370 DM 335. This manual does not pertain to promotion and internal placement for Senior Executive Service (SES) positions.

.02 Objective. To ensure employees receive appropriate and fair consideration for advancement and developmental opportunities.

.03 Authority.

- A. 5 CFR 300, Employment (General)
- B. 5 CFR 307, Veterans Readjustment
- C. 5 CFR 310, Employment of Relatives
- D. 5 CFR 315, Career and Career-Conditional Employment
- E. 5 CFR 330, Recruitment, Selection, and Placement
- F. 5 CFR 335, Promotion and Internal Placement
- G. 5 CFR 720, Affirmative Employment Programs
- H. Privacy Act of 1974
- I. Freedom of Information Act
- J. 370 DM 335, Promotion and Internal Placement

.04 Responsibility.

A. The Bureau Director is responsible for implementing the DOI Merit Promotion Plan, which in turn is delegated to the Assistant Director, Human Resources Management for execution and further refinement.

B. All Bureau Managers are accountable for ensuring the selection process follows the DOI and BLM plans, the National Personnel Management Committee (NPMC) requirements, merit principles, and other applicable laws, policies and procedures. Management has the right to select from among properly ranked and certified candidates, or not select and instead elect to select from a variety of other appropriate sources, such as reassignment eligibles, reinstatement eligibles, Veterans Readjustment Act (VRA) candidates, Certificate of Eligibles obtained through OPM, student career experience applicants, etc. Management must ensure employment barriers which preclude consideration of under-represented groups are addressed and eliminated when not critically essential to the job.

.04C

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

C. All Bureau Supervisors are responsible for making every reasonable effort to ensure that employees under their direct supervision receive appropriate consideration for vacancies which occur under the supervisor's immediate jurisdiction while the employee is on an approved, extended absence.

D. Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) Employees are accountable for implementing the DOI and the BLM plans. The SPO is responsible for advising managers and selecting officials on the personnel processes and the best manner in which to produce a quality workforce to accomplish the mission, and for providing periodic training to management and employees on current merit promotion practices and selection procedures. The DOI Merit Promotion Plan and other corresponding policy and direction continue to apply and take precedence where there is variance.

E. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program Employees are generally responsible for assisting in the identification of recruitment sources for under-represented groups, providing selecting officials and the SPO the under-represented groups according to the Civilian Labor Force Data, and advising and assisting management, as appropriate, in identifying artificial barriers to representation.

F. Employees are responsible for submitting the required application materials for placement opportunities in a timely manner; becoming familiar with the DOI and BLM plans and policies; and taking advantage of self-development and job training opportunities.

.05 References.

- A. 370 DM 300, Employment (General)
- B. 370 DM 338, Qualification Requirements
- C. 370 DM 339, Qualification Requirements (Medical)
- D. BLM Diversity Plan
- E. DOI Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) Plan
6. Service First Agreements

.06 Policy. Recruitment methods and selection procedures will be based solely on merit after fair and open competition, and will be made without regard to political, religious, or labor organization affiliation or nonaffiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, national origin, nondisqualifying physical disability, sexual orientation, or age.

.07 Files and Records Maintenance. Filing requirements are found in the GRS/BLM Combined Records Schedule (Schedule 1/32).

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

.1 Vacancy Announcements.

.11 Area of Consideration.

A. Selecting officials, in consultation with their SPO, determine the area of consideration and the length of time a vacancy announcement will remain open. The BLM Diversity Plan and CTAP may affect the area of consideration and the open period of the vacancy announcement. Service First Agreements must also be considered when making this determination.

B. Selecting officials, in consultation with their EEO Office or SPO, will develop an outreach plan, recruitment strategy, or equivalent documentation for each vacancy that identifies methods and approaches for encouraging under-represented candidates to apply. As a minimum, the plan must:

1. Identify the under-represented groups according to Civilian Labor Force Data and,
2. Identify specific organizations/individuals contacted to reach under-represented groups.

C. Appropriate areas of consideration, for example, may be an individual office, the local commuting area, or as wide as all Government agencies.

.12 Payment of Relocation Expenses.

A. The decision to pay or not pay moving and related expenses is made prior to issuing the vacancy announcement. Decisions regarding payment of relocation costs should consider the effect on attaining quality candidates, past practices, and opportunities to diversify the workforce.

B. A statement addressing the payment or nonpayment of Relocation Expenses must be included in the vacancy announcement. If Relocation Expenses will not be paid, the following statement is included: "Travel, transportation and relocation expenses will not be paid by the Department of the Interior. Any travel, transportation and relocation expenses associated with reporting for duty in this position will be the responsibility of the selected employee."

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT**13 Preparation of Vacancy Announcement.**

A. As a minimum, the following information is included for candidates: vacancy announcement number; issuing office, opening and closing dates, address of office receiving applications; position title, series, and grade; entrance pay; duty location; duties of the job; required qualifications, including selective placement and ranking factors; the knowledges, skills, abilities (KSAs), and other required characteristics; evaluation methods to be used; full performance level of the job; area of consideration; instructions on how to apply; equal employment opportunity nondiscrimination statement; veterans preference information, reasonable accommodation statement, and other special requirements.

B. The following definition of CTAP must be included in the vacancy announcement:

“Individuals who have special priority selection rights under the DOI Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) or the Interagency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) must be well-qualified for the position to receive consideration for special priority selection. CTAP and ICTAP eligibles will be considered well-qualified if (insert Servicing Personnel Office definition of well-qualified for the particular vacancy).”

Federal employees seeking CTAP/ICTAP eligibility must submit proof that they meet the requirements of 5 CFR 330.605(a) for CTAP and 5 CFR 330.704 for ICTAP. This includes a copy of the agency notice, a copy of their most recent Performance Rating and a copy of their most recent SF-50 noting current position, grade level, and duty location. Applications should be annotated by the applicants to denote they are CTAP or ICTAP eligible.

.14 Distribution of Vacancy Announcements. For limited areas of consideration, local methods of announcing vacancies may be used. Otherwise, announcements will be listed in USAJOBS, on the Internet at www.usajobs.opm.gov. Announcements will also be distributed to organizations and individuals identified in the outreach plan.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

.2 Applicant Information

.21 Materials to be Submitted.

A. The only required submission is an application. An application may consist of a general resume or other written format (with information identified in OF-510, Applying for a Federal Job); Optional Application for Federal Employment, OF-612; or Application for Federal Employment, SF-171). Additionally, candidates are encouraged to submit a current Notification of Personnel Action form, SF-50 (if the vacancy is open to Federal employees only), an Applicant Background Survey, DI-1935; and an Armed Forces of the United States Report of Transfer or Discharge, DD-214, for applicants claiming veterans' preference; a narrative response to the KSAs, as well as documentation regarding education, training, awards, outside activities, self-development, and supervisory appraisals. Submission of this additional information may enhance the candidates prospects for inclusion in the best qualified group from which the selection may be made. Upon request, applicants must provide an SF-50, DD-214, and transcripts, when applying through an automated system.

B. BLM employees are authorized to use government equipment to prepare and print applications for government vacancies. Employees may use this equipment on their own time, before or after work or during their lunch break to the extent that such equipment is not otherwise needed for pressing government business.

.22 Accepting Applications.

A. Applications postmarked by the closing date of the vacancy announcement, and received in the office within five working days will be accepted.

B. All applicants will receive notification of the status of their application within two weeks of receipt.

C. Offices must allow applicants to submit their applications electronically or by fax if 12 pages or less.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

.3 Evaluating Candidates.

.31 Job Analysis. In accordance with Federal regulations, job analysis must be conducted. Methodology for conducting and documenting the job analysis is left to the individual SPO.

.32 Minimum Qualifications. Applicants must meet the basic experience and/or education requirements as outlined in the pertinent qualification standards, plus all selective placement factors, and time-in-grade requirements within 30 days after the closing date of the vacancy announcement. Applications not containing sufficient information to determine qualifications will not receive consideration for vacancies.

.33 Rating and Ranking.

A. The SPO, in consultation with the selecting official, determines who will evaluate and rate candidates. Factors in making this decision include the complexity and organizational level of the vacant position, any controversy surrounding the vacancy, and the number of applicants who apply or are expected to apply. Options for who might evaluate and rate candidates include a subject matter expert, a personnel specialist, or a panel. If a panel is convened, it will consist of at least one subject matter expert at an equivalent or higher grade than the full performance level of the position being filled (refer to the Glossary of Terms for additional information on panels). The rating official or panel will determine which applicants will be referred as the best qualified. Rating panels should include a member of one of the under-represented groups whenever possible.

B. Crediting plans or other appropriate methods are to be used to rate and rank applications meeting minimum qualifications, including any selective placement factors, against the KSAs identified through the job analysis. Applicants' experience, education, training, awards, outside activities, self-development, and supervisory appraisals will be reviewed and evaluated.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

.4 Referral and Selection.

.41 Referrals. Best qualified applicants are referred to the selecting official on a referral certificate. The certificate is valid for six months from the date of issue. Selections may be made at any time within this period.

.42 Interviews.

A. Selecting officials will ensure that all referred applicants are treated fairly and equitably. The selecting official is responsible for ensuring that interviews are properly conducted, that all questions are job-related, and that every effort is made to obtain the same information from each candidate. Interview panels may be used at the discretion of the selecting official.

B. Interviewers may not ask about or discuss a candidate's race or ethnic background, color, sex, age, disability, religious beliefs, marital or family status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or labor organization affiliation or activity.

C. Normally, if one candidate is interviewed, all other candidates must be interviewed. However, if only certain candidates are chosen to be interviewed, the choice must be based on job-related criteria and documented in the Merit Promotion case file.

.43 Reference Checks. Selecting officials may elect to conduct reference checks.

.44 Selections. Selecting officials may make or not make the selection from any of the applicants on the certificate based on their judgment of how well the applicant is likely to perform in the position being filled. Selecting officials also have the right to select from other appropriate sources, such as reemployment priority lists; reinstatement eligibles, transfers, people with disabilities, VRA, or Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Certificate eligibles. Selecting officials may also choose to fill a vacancy noncompetitively whenever such action is consistent with approved exceptions to merit promotion procedures and CTAP requirements.

.45 Non-Selections. All non-selected applicants will receive a letter of non-selection and thanks for taking an interest and applying for a position with the Bureau of Land Management.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT**.5 Corrective Actions and Release of Information.**

.51 Corrective Actions. When procedural violations or administrative errors occur, priority consideration will be granted for the same position in the same duty location for a period of two years or until the applicant has received priority consideration for the next equivalent vacancy within the Bureau of Land Management under the authority of the SPO where the procedural violation occurred, whichever comes first.

.52 Release of Information. Applicants or their designees are entitled to information pertaining to a position to which they applied. Such information can only pertain to whether the applicant was qualified and/or referred for selection, who was selected, the applicant's own supervisory appraisal and rating on the ranking elements, procedures used to arrive at the final scores, and cutoff scores. No employee or applicant will be given the name of a tentatively selected employee until such time as the entire promotion and internal placement process is complete, and cleared by the SPO.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

.6 Accretion of Duties Promotions. An accretion of duties promotion is a noncompetitive promotion that occurs due to the addition of substantive new and higher graded duties and responsibilities to an existing position. The HR Specialist shall conduct a mandatory desk audit, analyze the position, evaluate the changes, and prepare an evaluation statement indicating that the changes did or did not result in a position which is a clear successor to the incumbent's prior position and to what extent the prior position was absorbed by the new one.

.61 Position Management.

A. Sound position management is essential in actions associated with controlling salary costs and efficiently managing the work of the BLM. Position management principles and techniques concerning the assignment of duties and the utilization of positions and skills must be applied in a continuing and integrated fashion with the express purpose of achieving maximum utilization of human resources in an organization structure designed for optimum efficiency and economy. Higher grade level work should not be distributed among multiple positions with the result of upgrading several positions when the higher graded work can be effectively performed in fewer or just one such position. Higher grade level work should be assigned to existing higher graded positions whenever possible. Managers, with the assistance of the SPO and other locally designated staff, are responsible for sound position management and consideration of alternative options.

.62 Criteria. The following criteria will be met in absolute terms whenever an accretion of duties promotion is proposed:

A. The new position retains the major duties of the old position and the old position is abolished.

B. The new position is in the same work unit of the organization and retains the same supervisor or leader as the old position being abolished.

C. The new position does not involve the addition of project leader, group leader, team leader, or supervisory duties to a formerly nonsupervisory or nonleader type position.

D. There is no other employee in the work unit in a similar position and to which those added duties could have been assigned and satisfactorily performed within a reasonable timeframe.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

.63 Documentation Procedure. The following documents will be included in each promotion record that is based on the addition of higher graded duties:

- A. The original position description,
- B. The "accreted" position description,
- C. The evaluation statement for the new position, and
- D. The supervisor's written justification indicating how the position came to be accreted as well as assurances that the major duties of the original position are included in the accreted position and that the original position will be abolished.

.64 Reviewing. The following procedures will be followed when reviewing the appropriateness of a specific action proposed for an accretion of duties:

- A. Sufficient justification is submitted that addresses the criteria in .62A, B, C, and D above. The reviewing office will ensure there is a requisite amount (25 percent or more) of higher level work being added to the new position.
- B. Accretion of duty promotions may not be based on projected duties, but rather on the identified existence of higher level continuing duties as performed in an existing position.
- C. Potentially grade enhancing work within a work unit must be competitively assigned if there is more than one employee assigned to the same position description, or if another employee(s) is performing essentially the same duties.
- D. The Justification for Promotion Action Based on Accretion of Duties, Appendix 2, can serve as a useful tool in providing properly completed documentation of position management considerations associated with determining the basis for accretion of duties promotions.
- E. Although employee job performance is not an inherent criteria for reclassification of a position to a higher grade level, managers and supervisors must ensure that an employee has demonstrated satisfactory performance of higher level duties prior to consideration of a promotion action.

1400-335 – PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

.7 Grievances. The SPO will promptly respond to questions about the merit promotion program or about a specific selection action. A BLM employee may submit a grievance concerning merit promotion matters under the DOI's grievance program (370 DM 771) or under a locally negotiated grievance procedure as appropriate, unless otherwise excluded from either process. If bargaining unit employees desire to grieve a merit action, they will use the negotiated grievance procedures rather than the DOI grievance procedures. Where this Promotion and Internal Placement Plan conflicts with a negotiated agreement, the agreement prevails. However, nonselection from a list of properly ranked and certified applicants is not grievable under either process. Further, an employee cannot use the formal grievance procedures and the EEO complaint process at the same time for the same merit promotion issues.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

Glossary of Terms

-A-

Agency: Agency refers to the Department of the Interior.

Area of Consideration: The organizational and/or geographic boundaries within which a search is made for eligible candidates to be considered for a specific merit promotion and placement action. All areas of consideration must be set to promote fair and open competition and to maintain a diverse workforce. Appropriate areas of consideration may be as small as an individual office, a local commuting area, or as large as all Government agencies.

-B-

Best Qualified Candidates: Those applicants who are determined by the rating and ranking process to possess the job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities required or desired for a particular position to a greater degree than other qualified applicants being considered and who are subsequently referred to the selecting official.

-C-

Career Promotion: Promotions without current competition when the employee competed earlier for an assignment intended to prepare the employee for the position being filled, and the intent was made a matter of record and made known to all potential candidates. Supervisors are responsible for initiating career ladder promotion requests for personnel actions.

Crediting Plan: A plan used to rate and rank qualified candidates for a position. It consists of the quality ranking factors developed through the process of job analysis.

-D-

Detail: A temporary assignment of an employee to a different position for a specified period, and returning to regular duties at the end of the assignment. While on detail, the employee continues to hold the official position from which detailed with no change in status and pay. An employee need not be qualified for the detailed assignment, though the employee must possess the minimum education required for any professional position. Additionally, the employee's background should demonstrate their ability to do the work of the position or duties assigned.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

-J-

Job Analysis: The analysis of a position to identify the basic duties and responsibilities; the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the duties and responsibilities; and the factors that are important in evaluating candidates for the position.

-K-

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs): The attributes required to perform a job; they are generally demonstrated through qualifying experience, education, or training. Knowledge is a body of information applied directly to the performance of a function. Skill is a present, observable competence to perform a task with ease and proficiency. Ability is a present competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that results in an observable product.

-P-

Panels: There are three types of panels which can be used in the merit promotion process: (1) rating and ranking or evaluation panel, (2) selection recommendation panel, and (3) selection panel. Panels consist of a minimum of three members. At least one panel member must be a subject matter expert. One panel member should be designated as an EEO representative, with responsibility to ensure that merit principles and nondiscriminatory provisions are adhered to. In lieu of designating an EEO representative, an EEO specialist can serve as an EEO advisor. Every effort should be made to ensure that the panel is made up of diverse individuals.

-R-

Rating and Ranking: The determination of best qualified candidates based on the degree to which each candidate meets the quality ranking factors (KSAs) of the position. This process is completed by a personnel specialist, subject matter expert, or an evaluation panel.

Reassignment: A change of an employee from one position to another in the same grade in the same agency.

Reinstatement: The reemployment of a former employee with competitive status.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

-S-

Selective Placement Factor: Knowledge, skills, and/or abilities that, in addition to the basic qualifications outlined in OPM's Qualification Standards handbook, are mandatory for successful performance in the position to be filled.

Service First: In 1997, Congress authorized the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to make reciprocal delegations of their respective authorities, duties, and responsibilities in support of joint pilot programs to promote customer service and efficiency in the management of public lands and national forests. This initiative is jointly referred to by the U.S. Forest Service and BLM as Service First.

Subject Matter Expert: A person with thorough, first-hand knowledge about what it takes to do a particular job. First-level supervisors are normally good SME's. Superior incumbents in the same or very similar positions and other individuals can also be used as SME's if they have current and thorough knowledge of the job's requirements.

-T-

Temporary Promotion: A promotion to a higher graded position for a specific period of time.

Transfer: A change of an employee, without a break in service of one (1) full workday, from a position in one agency to a position in another agency.

-W-

Well Qualified: Well qualified applicant is an eligible, qualified applicant who possesses the KSAs which clearly exceed the minimum qualification requirements for the position. A well qualified employee will not necessarily meet the definition of best qualified when evaluated against other candidates who apply for a particular vacancy.

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT**The Competitive Process**

Proposed Action	Position	and	Competition Required
Reassignment	at same grade under same pay schedule	position is one with known promotion potential and employee will gain eligibility for noncompetitive career promotion to grade higher than previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service	yes
		position is not one with known promotion potential	no
Change to lower grade	lower grade under same pay schedule	position is one with known promotion potential and employee will gain eligibility for noncompetitive career promotion to grade higher than previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service	yes
		position is not one with known promotion potential	no
Reinstatement or transfer	at a higher grade than previously held on a permanent basis		yes
	at same or lower grade than previously held on a permanent basis	position is one with known promotion potential and employee will gain eligibility for noncompetitive career promotion to grade higher than previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service	yes
		position is not one with known promotion potential	no

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

Proposed Action	Position	and	Competition Required
Detail	same grade and is not one with known promotion potential	detail is for any length	no
	higher grade or to position of same grade with known promotion potential	the detail is for 120 days or less	no
		the detail is for more than 120 days	yes
Selection for training leading to promotion		successful completion of training is a condition of eligibility for promotion	yes
Promotion from position of known promotion potential	originally identified as the target position to which employee would advance without competition or full performance level or career ladder	competitive procedures were fully applied at the time of placement into position of known promotion potential and all competitors were informed that selection for the entry position could lead to promotion without further competition	no
Promotion	upgraded by classification	incumbent's position upgraded without significant change in duties and responsibilities because of classification error or new or revised standards	no

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

Proposed Action	Position	and	Competition Required
Promotion	upgraded by classification	incumbent's position reconstituted into a successor position with clearly and solely identifiable duties of the former position and there are no other employees serving in similar or identical positions within the same organization to whom the duties could have been assigned	no
		incumbent's position reconstituted into a successor position and position is not a clear successor or there are other employees serving in similar or identical positions within the same organization to whom the duties could have been assigned	yes
Promotion	to position to which employee was detailed for training or evaluation	the employee was selected for detail under full competitive procedures and all competitors were informed that the detail could lead to promotion without further competition	no
Temporary promotion or extension of temporary promotion	higher grade under same pay schedule or under a different pay schedule when action is processed as a promotion or represents a promotion under the rules above	the temporary promotion is for a total of 120 days or less within a 12-month period	no

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

Proposed Action	Position	and	Competition Required
Conversion of temporary promotion to permanent promotion		the employee was selected for temporary promotion under full competitive procedures and all competitors were informed in advance that temporary promotion could lead to permanent promotion without further competition	no
Promotion without time limitation	higher grade under same pay scale	is not covered by promotion rules above	yes

1400-335 - PROMOTION AND INTERNAL PLACEMENT

Format for Justification of Promotion Action Based on Accretion of Duties

(type information on a separate attachment)

This is to request a noncompetitive promotion for (Employee Name) from the position of (Title, Series, Grade, and Position Number) in support of this action as provided on this attachment.

1. State what changes have occurred in the employee's duties. Specifically, address each of the following:
 - a. What are the changes in the employee's duties and the reason(s) for each change?
 - b. What position included these duties in the past? If the duties were not performed in the past, what created the need for these duties to be performed now? (For example, further delegation of authority, new regulatory requirements., etc.).
 - c. What are the reasons for assigning these duties to the position?
2. Are there other employees in positions in the same series and grade as the employee being recommended for promotion who could have assumed these new duties? If so, why was the decision made to assign the duties to this instead of one of those positions?
3. What consideration was given, if any, to assigning these new duties to an already established higher graded position?
4. Does the new position absorb the major duties of the old position and will the old position be abolished?
5. State whether the new position is in the same organization as the old position and if it retains the same supervisor as the old position.
6. Does the new position involve the addition of project leader, group leader, or supervisory duties to a formerly non-supervisory position, or involve the addition of duties which identify the new position as a predecessor to a higher level supervisory position?

(Date) (Signature of First-Level Supervisor)