

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

DIRECTIVE TRANSMITTAL

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To: NRC Management Directives Custodians

Subject: Transmittal of Management Directive 10.145, "Senior Level System"

Purpose: Directive and Handbook 10.145 are being issued in their entirety. The Senior Level Review Panel operating practices have been revised to incorporate minor changes; Exhibits 1 and 2 have been deleted in their entirety; and references have been updated to reflect changes in leave regulations.

These changes are identified by black vertical bars in the margin alongside the revision. Each change page also indicates the revised date in the footer.

Office of Origin: Office of Personnel

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Part: 6 Senior Executive Service, Senior Level Positions, and Judges

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Senior Level System

Directive
10.145

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U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Volume: 10 Personnel Management

Part: 6 Senior Executive Service, Senior Level
Positions, and Judges

OP

Senior Level System Directive 10.145

Policy

(10.145-01)

It is the policy of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to recruit, promote, compensate, award, and appraise NRC senior-level employees by applying merit staffing, performance management, and compensation principles equitable with those applied to other Federal employees in non-supervisory positions above the GG-15 grade level.

Objectives

(10.145-02)

- To recruit, promote, and retain the highest quality advisors and experts for the agency. (021)
- To compensate NRC senior-level employees in a manner consistent with pay practices established by the Commission and equitable with pay of other senior Federal employees, including employees of the Senior Executive Service, the NRC Administrative Judge system, and the Administrative Law Judge system. (022)

Organizational Responsibilities and Delegations of Authority

(10.145-03)

Chairman

(031)

- Appoints members, in coordination with the Executive Director for Operations (EDO), to the Senior Level Review Panel in proportion to the number of career employees in the Senior Level System (SLS) that are assigned to Commission-level and EDO staff offices. (a)

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Chairman

(031) (continued)

- Serves as the deciding official for performance-based and other pay actions for SLS members in Commission-level offices. (b)
- Serves as the deciding official for actions involving appointments, promotions, position changes, position establishments, and performance appraisals for career SLS employees in the Office of Public Affairs and the Office of Congressional Affairs. (c)
- Serves as the deciding official for actions involving position changes and position establishments for career SLS positions in Commission-level offices. (d)

Commissioners

(032)

- Serve as the deciding officials for actions involving appointments, performance appraisals, awards, and performance-based pay adjustments for immediate members of their staff who are in the NRC SLS. (a)
- Approve, as a group, performance awards when the awards combined with annual raises exceed 10 percent but do not exceed 15 percent of the individual's annual salary. (b)

Inspector General (IG)

(033)

- Appoints the Chairman and members of the IG Senior Level Review Panel to review actions affecting career SLS members in the Office of the Inspector General. (a)
- Serves as the deciding official for the appointment, promotion, performance appraisal, pay, position establishment, and other actions for career SLS employees in the Office of the Inspector General. (b)

Directors, Commission-Level Offices

(034)

With the exception of the Directors, Office of Public Affairs and Office of Congressional Affairs, serve as the deciding officials for appointment, promotions, and performance appraisal actions for career SLS members of their immediate offices.

**Executive Director for Operations (EDO)
(035)**

- Appoints members, in coordination with the Chairman, to the Senior Level Review Panel in proportion to the number of career employees in the Senior Level System that are assigned to Commission-level and EDO staff offices. (a)
- Informs the Commission of the implementation plans for any cost-of-living pay increases applicable to SLS employees in the NRC. (b)
- Acts as the deciding official for actions involving appointments, promotions, position changes, position establishments, performance appraisals, awards, and performance-based and other pay actions for SLS employees in EDO staff offices. (c)

**Director, Office of Personnel (OP)
(036)**

- 0 Administers staffing, compensation, performance management, and other personnel-related activities for SLS employees on a day-to-day basis. (a)
- Provides advice and guidance to individual Commissioners on performance appraisal ratings and pay adjustments proposed for members of their immediate staffs. (b)
- o Provides staff support to the Senior Level Review Panel for actions involving SLS employees. (c)

**Senior Level Review Panel
(037)**

The regular NRC Senior Level Review Panel is composed of representatives appointed by the Chairman and the EDO in proportion to the number of career SLS employees assigned to Commission-level and EDO staff offices. The panel performs the following functions: (1)

- Reviews and makes recommendations to the deciding official on actions involving position establishment, promotion, selection, performance-based pay, performance appraisal ratings, and awards for SLS employees with NRC excepted career appointments. (a)

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Senior Level Review Panel

(037) (continued)

- May review and make recommendations on actions applicable to SLS employees in a Commissioner's immediate office if requested to do so by the Commissioner. (b)
- Approves requests by office directors and regional administrators to repost vacancies for existing SLS positions. (c)

The Inspector General appoints the Chair and members of the Senior Level Review Panel for the Office of the Inspector General. This panel will perform the same duties as the regular NRC Senior Level Review Panel for actions affecting establishment of positions, pay actions, staffing actions, performance appraisals, and other actions for SLS positions/individuals in the Office of the Inspector General. (2)

Applicability
(10.145-04)

This program applies to all NRC employees above the GG-15 level except executive-level appointees, members of the Senior Executive Service, Administrative Judges, and Administrative Law Judges.

Handbook
(10.145-05)

Detailed guidelines for the administration of the NRC SLS are contained in Handbook 10.145.

References
(10.145-06)

Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).

Energy Reorganization Act of 1974, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5801 et seq.).

Pub. L. 101-509, 104 Stat. 1427, Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (November 5, 1990).

SECY-91-274, "Establishment of NRC Position and Pay System for NRC Administrative Judges and Staff at General Grade (GG) 16, 17, and 18 or Equivalent Pay Levels."

Senior Level System

Handbook
10.145

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Part I

Compensation

Alignment With Other NRC Executive Systems (A)

The pay schedule for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Senior Level System (SLS) is aligned with the Senior Executive Service (SES) pay schedule. (1)

Pay is divided into three bands: (2)

- Band SL-1 extends from 120 percent of GG-15/1 to ES-2 in the SES schedule. This band is divided into three pay levels: (a)
 - SL-1A and SL-1B is a pay continuum that extends from 120 percent of GG-15/1 to \$1.00 below ES-1. (i)
 - SL-1A extends from 120 percent of GG-15/1 to the midpoint of this pay continuum. (ii)
 - The SL-1B pay level extends from \$1.00 more than the top of the SL-1A range to \$1.00 below the rate for ES-1. (iii)
 - The SL-1C pay level extends from ES-1 to ES-2. (iv)
- Band SL-2 extends from ES-3 to ES-4. (b)
- Band SL-3 extends from ES-5 to ES-6. (c)

Waiting Periods in Band SL-1 (B)

There is a 1-year waiting period between SL-1A and SL-1B. (1)

There is a 2-year waiting period between SL-1B and SL-1C. (2)

Waiting Periods in Band SL-1 (B) (continued)

Office directors or regional administrators, in consultation with the Chairman or the Executive Director for Operations (EDO), as appropriate, may shorten the waiting period at their discretion when equity, performance, or other factors apply. The Inspector General (IG) may shorten the waiting period for SLS employees in the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). For SLS employees in NRC excepted career appointments, such actions should be forwarded to the Director, Office of Personnel (OP), for technical review. The Director, OP, will then coordinate review of the action by the Senior Level Review Panel before a final decision is made by the Chairman, the IG, or the EDO to ensure equity among agency organizations. (3)

Pay-Setting at the Initial Appointment (c)

The setting of pay at the initial appointment depends upon the pay band assigned to the position being filled. (1)

NRC or comparable Federal employees at the GG-15 pay level who are competitively selected for an SLS position would normally receive the equivalent of the bottom step of SL-1A, that is, a two-step or 6-percent increase, whichever is higher. The pay must not exceed the top of the pay band to which the position is assigned, however. (2)

Appointees selected or reassigned from other comparable executive pay systems would have pay set in accordance with standard pay practices and labor market conditions. Such pay, however, cannot exceed the top of the pay band to which the position is assigned. (3)

Pay can be set no lower than 120 percent of GG-15/1 or higher than Executive Level IV (ES-6). (4)

NRC SES members who convert to the SLS will retain their SES pay. If their SES pay is higher than the top of the pay band to which their position is assigned, they will be in a saved pay status and will receive 50 percent of any subsequent annual pay adjustment and be limited to one-time lump-sum performance cash awards until basic pay adjustments can be accommodated within the assigned pay band. (5)

Annual General Pay Adjustments (D)

Annual general pay adjustments are directly tied to performance. A rating of fully successful during the last performance appraisal rating period must receive the full adjustment. A rating of minimally satisfactory would result in 50 percent of the adjustment. No adjustment would be paid in the event of an unsatisfactory rating. (1)

Normally, NRC SLS employees will receive the same annual general pay adjustment as that provided to members of the SES, as shown on new SES pay level charts. The pay scale will be revised to reflect the new entry level rate of 120 percent of GG-15/1 and the new SES pay equivalents for the lower and upper ranges of the SL bands. However, for SES members who convert to the SLS, see Part I, (C)(5). (2)

SLS employees who are paid at a rate below SL-1C may be paid the same percentage increase as that provided to general grade employees at the GG-15 and below pay levels. (3)

Within-Band Performance-Based Pay Increases (E)

Increases to base salary within a pay band are based on performance. (1)

Office directors or regional administrators will initiate a performance-based increase to basic pay by annotating the recommendation on the appraisal form. (2)

The normal range for performance-based increases is 3-5 percent. Any recommendation above 5 percent or below 3 percent must have a written justification attached to the appraisal. (3)

Performance-based increases *are not* across-the-board increases; they should be recommended only for those employees whose performance warrants a performance-based increase. (4)

A performance-based increase to basic pay cannot exceed the top of the pay band to which the position is assigned. (5)

Within-Band Performance-Based Pay Increases (E) (continued)

The appropriate Senior Level Review Panel will review both performance appraisal ratings and recommendations for performance-based increases to pay (in accordance with Part III of this handbook) and make a recommendation concerning increases in pay to the deciding official (as specified in Management Directive 10.145 (03)). (6)

The Senior Level Review Panel can also recommend a lump-sum cash performance award, for example, when an employee is at the top of the pay band. (7)

Individual adjustments to base pay that are based on performance can be made only once for each appraisal period as noted in Part III, Section (A). (8)

Movement Between Pay Bands (F)

When an NRC SLS member moves to a higher or a lower pay band through reevaluation of duties or as a result of a competitive selection, pay will be adjusted. If the movement is to a higher band, pay will be adjusted to reflect a 6-percent increase or the bottom of the new pay band, whichever is higher. (1)

A pay adjustment resulting from a movement between pay bands does not affect the award of a performance-based increase. However, such a pay increase should normally be based on the performance of duties in effect at the end of the rating period. Also, the individual should have been in the position for at least 120 days before the end of the rating period. (2)

Performance-Based Awards (G)

SLS employees are eligible for performance-based awards, such as sustained superior performance awards, time off for superior performance, or special act or service awards in accordance with the criteria described in Management Directive 10.72, "Incentive Awards" and Management Directive 10.73, "Time Off From Duty as an Incentive Award."

Bonuses and Allowances (H)

NRC SLS employees are eligible for recruitment or relocation bonuses and retention allowances. (1)

SLS employees who are also law enforcement officers are also eligible for any special pay adjustments for law enforcement officers that have been adopted and implemented by the Commission. (2)

Bonuses and Allowances (H) (continued)

SLS employees are not currently eligible for the 8-percent interim geographic adjustment for employees in Los Angeles, San Francisco, or New York. (3)

Aggregate Limitation on Pay (I)

Compensation under the SLS is subject to the aggregate limitation on pay that applies to payments that would otherwise cause an employee's total pay to exceed the annual rate of basic pay payable for Executive Level I as of the end of the calendar year. (1)

SLS employees may receive lump-sum payments at the beginning of the following calendar year for performance-based cash awards, recruitment and relocation bonuses, and retention allowances that otherwise would cause the employee's aggregate compensation to exceed the rate for Executive Level I during the calendar year in which these payments were awarded or authorized. (2)

If the continuing and noncontinuing payments to which an employee is entitled or has received during a calendar year exceed the rate payable for Executive Level I, any discretionary continuing payments (for example, a retention allowance) that would cause the employee's aggregate compensation to exceed the limitation must be discontinued. These discontinued discretionary payments normally will become payable at the beginning of the next calendar year and will be included in the computation of the employee's aggregate compensation for the year in which they were paid. (3)

Part II

Recruitment and Staffing

Initial Entry (A)

Initial entry or appointment to an NRC SLS career position from a GG-15 or comparable position must be through competitive action. A 1-year probationary period is required for these individuals. (1)

NRC SES members who move into the SLS will do so through conversion actions and will retain their SES pay. No probationary period is required for these individuals. (2)

Individuals who are in Federal executive systems (above the grade-15 level) outside the NRC may be selected and appointed through competitive or noncompetitive procedures, depending on requirements defined by management for filling the position. Individuals from outside the Federal service must compete for initial permanent appointment to an NRC SLS position. A 1-year probationary period is required for these individuals. (3)

Reinstatement (B)

Individuals who formerly held GG or GS-16, 17, or 18 positions, or comparable positions in the NRC or other Federal agencies, and who had completed the probationary period are eligible for reinstatement in the NRC SLS. (1)

NRC employees who leave the NRC SLS for reasons other than malfeasance, misconduct, or performance and who have successfully completed the probationary period are eligible for reinstatement. (2)

Recruitment (c)

Recruitment for NRC career SLS positions that are announced competitively should be conducted on an extensive nationwide basis in order to obtain the broadest range of candidates. (1)

Recruitment (c) (continued)

Normally the area of competition will either be restricted to the Federal Government or open to all sources. However, a smaller area of competition, but no smaller than agency-wide, may be used if approved by the Chairman, the IG, or the EDO, as appropriate, upon a recommendation from the appropriate Senior Level Review Panel. (2)

Vacancy announcements will clearly identify the position as an NRC SLS position and will specify the pay band to which the position is assigned and the qualifications required. Any other special compensation factors that may apply (for example, special law enforcement officer rates) should also be specified. Probationary requirements should be specified. (3)

Applications for competitive actions should include either Optional Form (OF) 612 or Standard Form (SF) 171, and where applicable, a supplemental qualifications statement addressing the specific qualifications factors of the position. Application requirements should be stated in the announcement or other documents advertising the position. (4)

Applicants will be considered without regard to race, religion, age, color, national origin, sex, handicap, political affiliations, or any other nonmerit factor. (5)

The office director or the regional administrator, or his or her designee, will advise the Office of Personnel of appropriate recruiting sources, including professional societies, trade and professional journals, and so forth. (6)

Veteran's preference is applicable. (7)

Merit Competitive Selection (D)

The Senior Level Review Panel may serve as the rating panel for all competitive selections for NRC career SLS positions or may appoint a subpanel whose preliminary ratings will be affirmed or modified by the panel. (1)

To maintain parity with the Senior Executive Service competitive staffing procedures, a crediting plan for evaluating candidate qualifications will be developed, in writing, before candidates are rated. A copy of the crediting plan will be maintained in the permanent merit competitive selection case file. The crediting plan should be

Merit Competitive Selection (D) (continued)

developed by the office possessing the vacancy in consultation with the Office of Personnel. (2)

The Senior Level Review Panel or its subpanel will rate candidates against the crediting plan and present a list of the best qualified candidates to the deciding official. (3)

Interviews must be conducted by either the Senior Level Review Panel or by the deciding official, or both. Although interviews should be conducted in person, telephone interviews may be conducted under circumstances documented by the Senior Level Review Panel. (4)

The Office of Personnel (OP) will provide any personnel and administrative support to the Senior Level Review Panel. (5)

Due consideration should be given to meeting agency goals relating to the selection of women, minorities, and candidates with disabilities. (6)

Submitting Best Qualified Lists (E)

The panel will forward the list of best qualified candidates to the deciding official. (1)

Once the candidate has been selected, the list (with the selectee noted) will be forwarded to OP so that OP can make the formal offer of employment in the SLS and initiate appropriate preemployment processing procedures. (2)

Pay will be set in accordance with Part I of this handbook. (3)

Any offer of employment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of preemployment processing and the granting of an NRC security clearance. (4)

NRC SES Conversions to the SLS (F)

An NRC SES member may voluntarily request conversion to the NRC SLS. This action would be an exception to the competition requirement for initial entry into the NRC career SLS. (1)

As a result of a reduction-in-force or an outplacement based on performance, the Chairman of the NRC Executive Resources Board may direct the conversion of an employee in the SES to the SLS. (2)

NRC SES Conversions to the SLS (F) (continued)

In an SES conversion to the SLS, the SES pay level would be retained without restriction and the individual would be eligible for any applicable general pay increases or performance-based pay increases when the SES pay corresponds to the SLS pay band assigned to the position. (3)

If an SES member is placed in a position evaluated as having a pay range lower than the SES pay, the individual will be in a saved-pay category. The individual will then receive 50 percent of each subsequent annual general pay increase until the time that base pay falls into the assigned SLS pay level. (4)

An SES member who is converted to the SLS retains a personal leave ceiling equal to the accumulated annual leave credited to the individual at the time of conversion, or 240 hours, whichever is greater. That personal leave ceiling would not be reduced unless, at the end of any leave year, the amount of annual leave to the individual's credit has fallen below that ceiling. In that event, the amount of annual leave to the individual's credit at that time will become the new personal leave ceiling, unless it is less than 240 hours. (5)

The 1-year probationary period is waived upon initial entry to the SLS. (6)

Conversion requests are not subject to review by the Senior Level Review Panel. The EDO may consult with the Executive Resources Board on individual conversion requests. (7)

Selection of Individuals From Other Executive Systems Outside the NRC (G)

Individuals who are members of executive systems (in positions above the grade-15 or equivalent level) from other Federal agencies may be selected through competitive or noncompetitive procedures. Individuals who are members of executive systems in the private sector may be selected competitively for permanent appointments or noncompetitively for other-than-permanent appointments. (1)

Individuals who apply for a position as a result of a competitive position vacancy announcement would be evaluated along with GG-15 or equivalent applicants. (2)

Selection of Individuals From Other Executive Systems Outside the NRC (G) (continued)

Management may choose to fill a new or a vacant position with an individual from another executive system using noncompetitive measures. This course of action would be most applicable when highly specialized skills were required and the number of individuals who would be qualified was clearly known. An OF-612 or SF-171 must be submitted. (3)

Selections of individuals from other executive systems are subject to review by the Senior Level Review Panel. The EDO may consult the Executive Resources Board on individual appointments to the SLS from other executive systems. (4)

Selection of Individuals for Limited-Need SLS Positions (H)

Certain categories of SLS positions may be needed for limited periods or may be restricted in number. Recruitment and staffing for these positions would normally follow the procedures specified for the program. (1)

SLS positions that are established as part of the Distinguished Engineers and Scientists program are restricted in total number and are identified as Band SL-3 positions. Recruitment and staffing procedures are described in Management Directive 10.146, "Distinguished Engineers and Scientists Program." (2)

SLS positions established under the Visiting Fellows Program are time restricted and are staffed by term appointments, Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments, or reimbursable details. Positions may be identified in any SLS pay band, depending on the application of the benchmarks to positions. Recruitment and staffing procedures are described in Management Directive 10.11, "Visiting Fellows Program." (3)

Part III

Performance Management

Appraisal Period (A)

The appraisal period for SLS employees extends from July 1 through June 30.

Appraisal System (B)

SLS employees are covered under the appraisal system described in Management Directive 10.148, "Senior Level Performance Appraisal System."

Pay and Performance (c)

Within-band pay adjustments and annual general pay adjustments are directly linked to performance. (1)

Threshold eligibility for both within-band and full annual general pay adjustments is based on receipt of no less than a "Fully Successful" performance appraisal rating. (2)

Office directors and regional administrators must annotate the appraisal form to indicate whether they are recommending the individual for a performance-based increase and the percentage amount of any increase being recommended. (3)

The normal range for performance-based increases, not including awards, is 3-5 percent. A narrative justification must accompany the appraisal for any recommendation outside the normal range. (4)

Pay and Performance (c) (continued)

It is not expected that every SLS employee will receive a performance-based increase each year. These increases are not employee entitlements and should be provided **only** for those employees whose performance warrants a performance-based increase, just as performance-based bonuses are awarded in the SES. (5)

If an SLS member moves from one band to another during the appraisal period and the supervisor recommends recognition of the employee's performance in the previous (lower) band, a one-time cash award would generally be appropriate rather than a performance-based increase to base pay. (6)

A performance-based increase to base pay should be considered if the increase recognizes performance in the new position and the individual has been in the position for at least 120 days before the end of the appraisal period. (7)

Senior Level Review Panel (D)

All appraisals for career SLS employees will be reviewed by the appropriate Senior Level Review Panel using procedures similar to those used by the SES Performance Review Board. (1)

The panel will review the appraisals for soundness in application of elements and standards across agency lines and will recommend the following to the deciding official: (2)

- Whether or not a performance-based pay increase should be approved and the percentage amount to be awarded. (a)
- Whether or not there has been equity in rating recommendations for comparable types of positions within organizations and across agency lines. (b)
- o Whether to pay a one-time cash award to employees who are ineligible for all or part of any performance-based pay increase because they are at the top of their pay band. (c)

Senior Level Review Panel (D) (continued)

The panel is also responsible for reviewing any requests for other performance-based awards for SLS employees such as a special act or service award or a sustained superior performance award. The panel does not have to review requests for “time off for superior performance” awards. (3)

Deciding Officials (E)

Final appraisal ratings for career NRC SLS employees will be made by the Chairman for OCA and OPA, the office director for other Commission-level offices, the IG for OIG, and the EDO for EDO staff offices. Final performance-based pay actions will be made by the Chairman, the IG, or the EDO, as appropriate. (1)

The Senior Level Review Panel’s recommendations for other performance-based awards are forwarded to the deciding officials specified in Management Directive 10.72, “Incentive Awards.” (2)

Part IV

Position Management and Oversight

Executive Resources Board (A)

The NRC Executive Resources Board (ERB) will be responsible for general oversight of the SLS and for the activities of the Senior Level Review Panel to ensure equity and parity between the SES and the SLS. (1)

The EDO and the Chairman will determine the total number of career SLS positions authorized for the NRC. (2)

The ERB Chairman will review and approve or disapprove use of resources for SLS positions. The review will ensure effective management of the dual-track career management system and appropriate expenditure of total executive resources. FTEs for new SLS positions will come from existing FTE allocations. (3)

New Position Requests (B)

Office directors and regional administrators should submit preliminary requests to the EDO, through the Director, Office of Personnel (OP), for ERB review. Preliminary requests do not require a draft position description but should include sufficient information for the ERB to act. When the ERB completes the review, the request will be returned to the office director or the regional administrator to initiate action to establish a position. (1)

Requests for new career positions in the SLS should be submitted by office directors or regional administrators to the Director, OP. (2)

New Position Requests (B) (continued)

Requests should include the following information: (3)

- Justification for establishing the position. (a)
- Verification that the position will be within the established FTE ceiling guidelines. (b)
- Position description in the benchmark format with a preliminary recommendation for pay band assignment. (c)

The Director, OP, is responsible for making a preliminary technical review of the material and arranging for a meeting of the Senior Level Review Panel to review the request and recommend establishment of the new position. (5)

Once the panel has made a recommendation, the request will be forwarded to the Chairman, the Inspector General (IG), or the EDO as the deciding official for final approval of establishment of the position. (6)

If approved, the Director, OP, will work with the requester to initiate appropriate action to fill the position. If disapproved, the Director, OP, will so advise the requester. (7)

Redescribing Positions (c)

Office directors and regional administrators should advise the Director, OP, when the duties or professional stature requirements of a current career SLS position have changed so that the position can be redescribed and reevaluated. (1)

Once OP has completed its review, the action is forwarded to the appropriate Senior Level Review Panel for review and recommendation. (3)

The recommendation of the panel is forwarded to the Chairman, the IG, or the EDO for a final decision. (4)

Once the decision is made, the request is forwarded to the Director, OP, to initiate appropriate implementing action. (5)

Refilling Existing Positions (D)

When an established SLS position becomes vacant and an office director or regional administrator wishes to refill the position without change, the request must be submitted to the Senior Level Review Panel for review and recommendation to the Chairman, EDO, or IG, as appropriate. (1)

Refill requests should be submitted through the Director, OP, for appropriate coordination. (2)

Part V

Variations for Limited-Appointment Commissioner Assistants

Pay Increases Within a Band (A)

Commissioner assistants in the SLS are eligible to receive up to a 6-percent adjustment each year based on performance. (1)

If salary reaches the top of an SL pay band, the Commissioner will determine whether the individual's performance and the complexity of the position merit progression to the next band. (2)

Review by the Senior Level Review Panel is not required unless specifically requested by the Commissioner. (3)

Performance Appraisal and Pay Adjustments (B)

The Director, OP, will review the performance appraisal ratings of Commissioner Assistants and the pay adjustments proposed by the Commissioner and advise the Commissioner on these issues. The Commissioner will then determine the final performance appraisal rating and pay adjustment.

Initial Entry to the SLS (c)

Under the SLS, limited Commissioner Assistant appointments are exceptions to competitive requirements. (1)

These actions do not have to be reviewed by the Senior Level Review Panel unless a Commissioner requests this review. (2)

Awards (D)

Exceptional performance will normally be recognized by an annual incentive increase in base pay as described in Section (A)(1) of this part. In addition, a cash award may be approved by an individual Commissioner as noted below: (1)

- If the Commissioner determines that the individual's performance has exceeded the high level expected of a Commissioner Assistant, the Commissioner may make an additional cash award. The combined base pay raise and cash award should not exceed 10 percent of the individual's base pay. (a)
- If the Commissioner determines that the individual's performance was of such caliber as to warrant more than a 10-percent combined annual raise and cash award, the Commissioner may seek collegial Commission approval of a cash award of up to 15 percent of base pay. (b)

Any agency cash award exceeding \$10,000 requires the approval of the Office of Personnel Management. (2)

Position Establishment (E)

Requests to establish or revise positions should be forwarded to the Director, OP, for technical review. Proposed position descriptions should follow the benchmark format in Part VI of this handbook. (1)

The Director, OP, will provide a pay band and position classification recommendation and forward the position to the appropriate Commissioner for final action. (2)

Part VI

SLS Position Benchmarks

Nature of the Benchmarks (A)

Benchmarks are generic descriptions of levels of duties and responsibilities within the SLS. They do not describe every position situation within the NRC. (1)

There are four broad categories of SLS positions within the NRC. These are -(2)

- Engineering and Scientific (a)
- Legal (b)
- Professional and Administrative (c)
- Commissioner Assistants (d)

Position Description Format (B)

Position descriptions for the SLS should be prepared using the format described in the “Benchmark Descriptions” that are contained in this part and that include-

0 Purpose of Position

- Major Duties and Functions
- Knowledge and Skill Requirements
- Contacts and Commitments
- Discretion and Responsibility

Evaluation of NRC Senior Level (SL) Positions (c)

Descriptions of duties should first be evaluated using the criteria described in Management Directive 10.37, "Benchmarking," to ensure the duties exceed those for the GG-15 level. (1)

Once it is determined that the duties exceed those for the GG-15 level, the SLS benchmarks should be used to identify the SLS level most applicable to the described duties. (2)

Since there will not be a benchmark to describe every individual type of situation or pay level, the lack of a benchmark does not preclude evaluating a position at a specific pay level. In such cases, the following procedures would be used. (3)

- Once the position is determined to be above the GG-15 level, the duties and responsibilities should be evaluated using the most closely related benchmark. For example, although positions at the SL-3 level will be rare, any proposed position should have duties of the complexity and professional stature described by the SL-3 benchmark for engineering and scientific positions. (a)
- Reference should also be made to the closest related benchmarks above and/or below the level being proposed. (b)
- Cross-referencing of other already established positions at, above, and below the proposed position should be considered as part of the overall evaluation. (c)

Titles for SLS positions should reflect the technical program or discipline and the professional stature required by the incumbent of the position. (4)

Benchmark: SL-1, Engineering and Scientific

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides authoritative technical assistance, consultation, and support to assigned office management and staff as either: (1) a senior technical advisor for a complex, specialized subject matter or functional area of expertise or (2) a senior staff assistant with broad responsibility for high-level issues and initiatives related to the assigned organization's overall mission and responsibilities. Functions as the office and/or the Commission expert for a specified scientific or engineering area or as the senior staff technical assistant to the assigned office director.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Serves as the office or Commission staff technical expert for a complex, specialized scientific or engineering subject or functional area; or as the senior assistant/advisor to the assigned office director with broad responsibility for office-level technical oversight, coordination, and staff support. Provides authoritative consultation, guidance, assistance, and recommendations in the area of specialization or responsibility to office management and staff, other NRC offices and personnel, and Commission members and their staffs.
2. Coordinates crucial agency interactions with external entities, both Government and industry, relating to the area of specialization or responsibility and presents and defends NRC technical positions, concerns, objectives, and requirements. Represents the office or Commission at Government, academic, and industry conferences, seminars, and meetings.
3. Reviews proposed regulations, policies, reports, memoranda, and other agency documentation relating to or potentially impacting activities in the specialty or responsibility area and provides comments, analysis, or suggestions as appropriate. Counsels office and agency management regarding the likely effect of regulatory or policy actions in or related to the area of specialization or responsibility.

Benchmark: SL-1, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

Illustration:

Reviews NRC technical issuances, for example, regulations, information notices, research studies, and so forth, on behalf of the office director and identifies those with potential for significant impact on the organization's responsibilities, based on broad knowledge and in-depth understanding of the office's mission, functions, technical resources, and capabilities. Independently consults with senior engineering management and staff in both assigned and originating organizations regarding issues identified, develops authoritative analyses and recommendations, and counsels the office director regarding needed changes in office-level technical activities, priorities, or resource allocations.

4. Reviews related work produced by assigned office staff for technical merit and accuracy and suggests or directs revisions or additional analysis as needed to ensure technical quality of output. Serves as a technical trainer and mentor for subordinate level staff, providing guidance regarding methodology, information sources, or scientific or engineering approaches to problems or issues.
5. Identifies requirements and opportunities for research, analysis, or data development or acquisition relating to problems or issues associated with the specialty discipline. Independently plans, coordinates, and initiates these activities based on personal assessment of the value and relevance of potential lines of inquiry to programmatic and functional needs and overall NRC mission responsibilities.
6. Functions as a research, analysis, or evaluation group or team leader for both assigned and self-generated technical, regulatory, or policy development and review projects. Coordinates efforts of group members within and/or external to the assigned organization, integrates findings and recommendations, develops reports, memoranda, or other documentation as appropriate, and presents project results and products to office or agency management.

Benchmark: SL-1, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

Illustration:

Leads and directs interdisciplinary analysis teams charged with developing and performing sensitivity studies involving the application of potential or proposed new rules and/or experimental concepts to alternative operational and environmental scenarios. Conducts individual inquiry and evaluation, provides technical advice and support to team leaders and members, compares and synthesizes study team findings with current external research and scholarship, and develops and presents comprehensive analytical findings, impact assessments, and recommendations regarding required regulatory or policy development initiatives for office director(s) and/or Commission consideration and action.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Expert knowledge of the principles, concepts, theories, and methods of an established scientific or engineering discipline and their relationship to specific technological issues, problems, and applications associated with the nuclear industry.
- Stature as an acknowledged expert in the field or discipline of specialization as demonstrated by contribution to the technical literature, external peer recognition and awards, presentation of technical papers, and participation on panels at professional meetings and conferences.
- Broad knowledge of the NRC's mission, functions, organization, and regulatory philosophy and practices, as well as in-depth understanding of the relationship between the NRC and other Federal agencies, industry organizations, professional societies, and interest groups.
- Demonstrated ability to independently identify requirements for advanced technical research, analysis, or evaluation activities in the area of specialization, ability to oversee and coordinate the work of contractors in carrying out these activities, and skill in achieving cooperation and consensus among parties engaged in joint or parallel efforts.

Benchmark: SL-1, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a technical and/or policy nature to colleagues, peers, senior office and agency management, and representatives of other institutions, agencies, or organizations.
- Demonstrated ability to apply specialized knowledge and skills to the examination, evaluation, or resolution of complex technical, regulatory, or policy issues associated with the regulation of nuclear materials and facilities, to establish new lines of inquiry, and to contribute to the advancement of the field of specialization.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- Senior management and technical staff in the assigned office as well as in other NRC offices and organizations for the purpose of providing technical advice, guidance, review, and assistance.
- Commission members and their personal staffs for the purpose of providing information, briefings, technical comments or review, or advice regarding the area of specialization.
- Senior technical staff and officials of other Government agencies and industry organizations for the purpose of conducting project activities, responding to inquiries, or presenting NRC views or requirements regarding technical matters.
- Management and technical staff of contractors associated with the assigned organization for the purpose of reviewing activities, proposed initiatives, or project results and recommendations.

Independently represents the office and/or the Commission as the organization's designated technical expert for the area of specialization, or as the personal staff representative of the office director, with full latitude to speak and act authoritatively on behalf of the organization in the assigned area of responsibility.

Benchmark: SL-1, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Discretion and Responsibility

Senior Technical Advisor-Assigned to an appropriate subject or functional area organization reporting directly to a branch chief or a higher echelon manager, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding incumbent activities.

Senior Staff Assistant-Assigned to the office-level staff of the organization of assignment reporting directly to the office director or the deputy director, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding incumbent activities.

Senior technical advisors and senior staff assistants continually exercise independent responsibility for refining and redirecting the specific emphasis and focus of position activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise, interaction and collaboration with NRC and external technical specialists and managers, and comprehensive understanding of the needs and requirements of the office and/or the Commission in the area of specialization.

Benchmark: SL-2, Engineering and Scientific

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides authoritative technical assistance, consultation, and support to assigned office management and staff as either (1) a senior technical advisor for a complex, specialized subject or functional area of exceptionally high priority and/or criticality or (2) a senior staff assistant with broad, independent responsibility for critical high-level issues, new initiatives, or all advanced technical matters associated with the assigned office's overall mission and responsibilities. Functions as the office and/or the Commission expert for a specified scientific or engineering area or as the senior staff technical assistant to the assigned office director.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Serves as the office or Commission staff technical expert for a complex, specialized scientific or engineering subject or functional area; or as the senior assistant/advisor to the assigned office director with broad responsibility for office-level technical oversight, coordination, and staff support. Provides authoritative advice, guidance, assistance, and recommendations in the area of specialization or responsibility to office management and staff, other NRC offices and personnel, and Commission members and their staffs.
2. Coordinates crucial agency interactions with external entities, both Government and industry, relating to the area of specialization or responsibility and presents and defends NRC technical positions, concerns, objectives, and requirements. Represents the office or Commission at Government, academic, and industry conferences, seminars, and meetings.
3. Reviews proposed regulations, policies, reports, memoranda, and other agency documentation relating to or potentially impacting activities in the specialty or responsibility area, and provides comments, analysis, or suggestions as appropriate. Counsels office and agency management regarding the likely effect of regulatory or policy actions in or related to the area of specialization or responsibility.

Benchmark: SL-2, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

4. Reviews related work produced by assigned office staff for technical merit and accuracy and suggests or directs revisions or additional analysis as needed to ensure technical quality of output. Serves as a technical trainer and mentor for subordinate level staff, providing guidance regarding methodology, information sources, or scientific or engineering approaches to problems or issues.
5. Identifies requirements and opportunities for research, analysis, or data development or acquisition relating to problems or issues associated with the specialty discipline. Independently plans, coordinates, and initiates these activities based on personal assessment of the value and relevance of potential lines of inquiry to programmatic and functional needs and overall NRC mission responsibilities.
6. Functions as a research, analysis, or evaluation group or team leader for both assigned and self-generated technical, regulatory, or policy development and review projects. Coordinates efforts of group members within and/or external to the assigned organization, integrates findings and recommendations, develops reports, memoranda, or other documentation as appropriate, and presents project results and products to office or agency management.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Expert knowledge of the principles, concepts, theories, and methods of an established scientific or engineering discipline and their relationship to specific technological issues, problems, and applications associated with the nuclear industry.
- Stature as an acknowledged expert in the field or discipline of specialization as demonstrated by contribution to the technical literature, external peer recognition and awards, presentation of technical papers, and participation on panels at professional meetings and conferences.
- Substantial record of outstanding performance and significant professional accomplishment at the SL-1 level within the agency or at a comparable level externally, as well as extensive high-level

Benchmark: SL-2, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

experience in the field or discipline of specialization as characterized by length and/or nature of service, such as experience in a variety of organizations or environments.

- Broad knowledge of the NRC's mission, functions, organization, and regulatory philosophy and practices, as well as in-depth understanding of the relationship between the NRC and other Federal agencies, industry organizations, professional societies, and interest groups.
- Demonstrated ability to independently identify requirements for advanced technical research, analysis, or evaluation activities in the area of specialization, ability to oversee and coordinate the work of contractors in carrying out these activities, and skill in achieving cooperation and consensus among parties engaged in joint or parallel efforts.
- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a technical or policy nature to colleagues, peers, senior office and agency management, and representatives of other institutions, agencies, or organizations.
- Demonstrated ability to apply specialized knowledge and skills to the examination of new or unknown areas or phenomena; to develop novel approaches for addressing complex technical, regulatory, or policy issues associated with the regulation of nuclear materials and facilities; and to establish new lines of inquiry that contribute to the advancement of the field of specialization and influence industry practices and standards.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- Senior management and technical staff in the assigned office as well as in other NRC offices and organizations for the purpose of providing technical consultation, guidance, review, and assistance.
- Commission members and their personal staffs for the purpose of providing information, briefings, technical comments or review, or advice regarding the area of specialization.

Benchmark: SL-2, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

- Senior technical staff and officials of other Government agencies and industry organizations for the purpose of conducting project activities, responding to inquiries, or presenting NRC views or requirements regarding technical matters.
- Management and technical staff of contractors associated with the assigned organization for the purpose of reviewing activities, proposed initiatives, or project results and recommendations.

Independently represents the office and/or the Commission as the organization's designated technical expert for the area of specialization, or as the personal staff representative of the office director, with full latitude to speak and act authoritatively on behalf of the organization in the assigned area of responsibility.

Discretion and Responsibility

Senior Technical Advisor-Assigned to an appropriate subject or functional area organization reporting directly to a branch chief or a higher echelon manager, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding incumbent activities.

Senior Staff Assistant-Assigned to the office-level staff of the organization of assignment reporting directly to the office director or the deputy director, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding incumbent activities.

Senior technical advisors and senior staff assistants continually exercise independent responsibility for refining and redirecting the specific emphasis and focus of position activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise, interaction and collaboration with NRC and external technical specialists and managers, and comprehensive understanding of the needs and requirements of the office and/or the Commission in the area of specialization.

Benchmark SL-3, Engineering and Scientific

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides definitive scientific and engineering consultation, technical leadership, concept development, and research analysis, and evaluation support to Commission members, senior agency management, and staff for a highly specialized subject or functional area of critical and far-reaching importance to the successful accomplishment of broad NRC mission objectives. Establishes within the agency a resource of national or international stature in a technical discipline characterized by either exceptional **depth and complexity** or extraordinary **breadth and scope**, applicable to multiple NRC organizational activities, functional responsibilities, or high-priority problems and issues.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Serves as an in-house expert consultant to senior agency management and staff and, as needed, as an advisor to the Commission chairman and members and the EDO for all matters and issues relating to the highly specialized, mission-critical subject or functional area requiring the services of an individual of national or international professional stature. Provides definitive scientific or engineering expertise and input to NRC activities and mission responsibilities involving or related to the area of specialization, both directly in support of the assigned office as well as other NRC offices and staffs, Federal agencies, or external organizations and groups.
2. Represents the agency in all interactions with external entities, including Government, industry, legislative, and interest groups relating to the area of technical expertise and establishes, presents, and defends NRC scientific or engineering positions, concerns, objectives, and requirements. Represents the Commission as a featured speaker or event chairman at Government, academic, and industry conferences, seminars, and meetings.

Benchmark: SL-3, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

3. Reviews proposed regulations, policies, reports, memoranda, and other agency documentation associated directly or indirectly with the area of expertise, and provides comments, analysis, or revisions and modifications as required. Develops definitive technical, regulatory, or policy recommendations related to the specialty area and advises the Chairman, the Commissioners, and senior agency management regarding the scientific or engineering implications of these recommendations.

4. Serves as an advisor and mentor for agency technical staff at all levels, providing guidance regarding methodology, information sources, or scientific or engineering approaches to complex or novel problems or issues. Periodically conducts lectures and seminars for NRC staff on topics or technological developments relating to the area of specialization and arranges and chairs symposia or conferences that bring external researchers and experts to meet with agency staff to exchange information, share ideas, or address specific issues and problems.

5. Conceptualizes, plans, implements, and oversees long-term research, analysis, or evaluation studies relating to high-priority problems or issues associated with the scientific or engineering area of expertise and critical NRC mission responsibilities. Regularly publishes significant research or analytical findings in academic, industry, and agency journals and reports and presents papers before major academic and professional society meetings and conferences.

6. Functions as an agency resource for research, analysis, or evaluation group team activities in or related to the principal field of expertise and provides technical leadership for senior scientific and engineering staff engaged in parallel or complementary activities. Personally assesses new or emerging technologies in the specialty area for impact on and applicability to agency mission responsibilities and recommends new or revised regulations, national or international standards, statutory changes, or other significant actions as required to respond appropriately to developments in the field of expertise.

Benchmark: SL-3, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Acknowledged stature and national or international reputation as an expert in the scientific or engineering field or discipline of specialization as demonstrated by extensive publication of books, articles, or research papers; leadership of academic and professional societies and organizations; receipt of major fellowships, awards, or academic and professional honors; or chairmanship of editorial review boards, award committees, or major national/international advisory groups and commissions.
- Broad knowledge of the principles, concepts, theories, and methods of a variety of scientific and/or engineering disciplines related to the principal field of specialization, the interrelationships between and among these associated areas and the primary discipline, and the relevance of these related areas to application of the principal specialization to complex technological issues and problems associated with the nuclear industry.
- Knowledge of the NRC's overall mission, functions, organization, and regulatory philosophy and practices; in-depth understanding of the relationship between the NRC and other Federal agencies, professional societies, and interest groups; and knowledge of broad issues, developments, and trends associated with the nuclear industry in both the United States and foreign countries.
- o Demonstrated ability to independently conceptualize, plan, and oversee critical, long-term technical research, analysis, or evaluation activities in and related to the area of expertise; ability to integrate and synthesize the work of diverse groups and organizations; and exceptional skill in achieving technical consensus between and among various U.S. Government agencies, industry organizations, professional and interest groups, and other parties involved in the examination and resolution of complex issues.

Benchmark: SL-3, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively present highly complex information of a technical or policy nature to Commission members, senior agency management and staff, and representatives of other institutions and agencies, as well as to influence actions or decisions on the part of industry organizations, legislative bodies, or foreign Governments.
- Demonstrated ability to apply advanced subject matter expertise to the definition, assessment, and resolution of complex technical, regulatory, or policy issues associated with the regulation of nuclear materials and facilities; to establish new methods, theories, and approaches; and to carry out original work that advances the state-of-the-art and influences both theory and practice in the discipline of specialization.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- The Chairman, the Commissioners, and members of their personal staffs for the purpose of providing definitive technical guidance and advice regarding the principal area of specialization, as well as related problems or issues.
- Senior management and technical staff in the assigned office and throughout other NRC offices and organizations for the purpose of providing technical leadership, consultation, guidance, review, and recommendations.
- Senior technical staff and officials of other U.S. and foreign government agencies, industry organizations, and academic and professional societies for the purpose of coordinating and conducting project activities, responding to requests for consultation or assistance, or presenting NRC views or requirements regarding the area of specialization.
- Members of Congress and their senior staffs for the purpose of providing high-level technical briefings and presenting agency recommendations, proposals, or positions relating to the scientific or engineering area of expertise.

Benchmark: SL-3, Engineering and Scientific (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

Independently represents the agency as the organization's designated expert for the subject matter or functional area of specialization, and as the personal technical representative of the Commission, with full authority to speak and act definitively on behalf of the organization with regard to all technical matters associated with the scientific or engineering discipline.

Discretion and Responsibility

Attached to the office-level staff of the appropriate subject matter or functional NRC organization, reporting for administrative purposes to the office director or the regional administrator.

Continually exercises full independent authority for defining, establishing, and carrying out position responsibilities based on (1) personal stature within the field or discipline of specialization; (2) responsibilities as a senior technical advisor to the Chairman, the Commissioners, and senior agency management; and (3) comprehensive understanding of the needs, requirements, obligations, and objectives of the NRC and the nuclear industry.

Benchmark: SL-1, Legal

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides authoritative advice, assistance, and support to the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) or a designated office utilizing attorneys; and to agency management and staff for a complex specialized legal area of major importance to the successful conduct of the OGC or a designated office and overall NRC mission activities and responsibilities. Serves as the designated agency Special Counsel for the assigned area, operating as the OGC and/or the Commission legal expert in the particular topical or functional discipline of responsibility.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Serves as the principal legal advisor to a designated office director or the General Counsel and other senior OGC officials for a complex specialized topical or functional area. Provides authoritative legal analysis, research, advice, and counsel in the area of specialization or responsibility to these individuals and represents official OGC positions and recommendations in the assigned area both within the NRC and in contacts with external parties and in dealings with subject-matter agencies.

Illustration:

Functions as the designated agency Special Counsel for Labor, Personnel, and Civil Rights. Develops and maintains comprehensive, in-depth expertise in specialized statutory and regulatory requirements governing NRC actions with regard to these areas, providing definitive legal analysis and counsel to Commission members, the General Counsel, senior managers, and external industry and Government officials whose activities are influenced or affected by these requirements. Independently develops agency regulations addressing NRC and industry activities and obligations in these areas and provides authoritative interpretation and guidance regarding implementation and ongoing compliance.

Benchmark: SL-1, Legal (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

2. Reviews proposed agency rules, regulations, and related documentation related to the specialty area for legal implications or issues and provides comments, analysis, or alternative language as required. Counsels the designated office director or OGC and agency management regarding the potential policy or legal impact of regulatory actions and provides guidance regarding alternative approaches as appropriate.
3. Provides guidance and assistance to designated office or OGC staff attorneys at all levels regarding issues, concepts, or requirements associated with the area of specialization or expertise. Reviews related work produced by staff attorneys for accuracy, consistency, and adherence to specialized legal principles or factual requirements and suggests or directs revisions or additional analysis as needed to ensure quality of output.
4. Conducts or attends meetings with NRC managers and staff at all levels concerning issues or problems in the area of responsibility and provides authoritative advocacy and counseling of NRC staff as required by particular facts or circumstances. Represents NRC officials or organizations before the Commission or other bodies in all matters relating to the field of specialization.
5. Assists Commission members as well as senior agency managers and technical staff in preparing for public, congressional, and other high visibility external appearances involving issues or problems associated with the area of topical or functional expertise. Appears with and attends these events, in conjunction with NRC officials, to provide counsel and assistance as required.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Broad knowledge and in-depth understanding of both general and NRC-specific legal principles and practices, including original and revised agency basic legislation, related Federal statutes and regulations, applicable precedents, and other legal instruments or concepts associated with the agency's regulatory and policy environment.

Benchmark: SL-1, Legal (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

- Stature as an acknowledged expert in the topical or functional area of specialization as demonstrated by frequent consultation by peers, senior management officials, and external parties for authoritative guidance and interpretation; independent authorship of significant agency regulations and policies; receipt of major awards and professional honors; or contributions to the body of legal scholarship.
- Broad knowledge and understanding of the agency's overall mission, functions, and organization, as well as comprehensive understanding of the roles and responsibilities of independent regulatory agencies, and of relationships between the NRC and Congress, other Federal, State, and local organizations, and the nuclear industry.
- General understanding of basic principles, terms, and concepts associated with nuclear technology and its various forms and applications and the ability to absorb, integrate, and synthesize complex technical and legal information in providing effective counsel, guidance, and support to agency activities.
- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a legal or policy nature to colleagues, peers, senior office and agency management, and representatives of other institutions, agencies, or regulatory and adjudicative bodies.
- Demonstrated ability to independently identify complex legal and policy issues associated with the topical or functional area of expertise, skill in analysis and evaluation of actual or potential legal problems or conflicts arising from such matters, and the ability to obtain balanced resolution of issues consistent with NRC technical requirements and statutory obligations.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- The General Counsel, other OGC management officials, senior legal staff, and the designated office director for the purpose of

Benchmark: SL-1, Legal (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

providing expert consultation, guidance, analysis, and assistance in the area of specialization.

- Commission members and their personal staffs for the purpose of providing assistance in preparing for meetings or testimony, specialized briefings or legal analysis, or advice and counsel.
- Senior management and legal officials of other Government agencies, adjudicatory bodies, or industry organizations for the purpose of representing the Commission, responding to inquiries, or presenting NRC views or requirements regarding legal or policy issues.
- The Executive Director for Operations, agency office and division directors, and individual NRC staff members as appropriate for the purpose of providing assistance, counsel, or guidance regarding projects or issues related to the area of specialization.

Independently represents the General Counsel and/or the Commission as the organization's designated Special Counsel for the topical or functional area of expertise, with full latitude to speak and act authoritatively on behalf of the agency regarding legal matters in the assigned area of responsibility.

Discretion and Responsibility

Assigned to the staff of the designated office director, the appropriate Assistant General Counsel, or a higher echelon official, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding the incumbent's activities.

Continually exercises independent responsibility for refining and redirecting the specific emphasis and focus of position activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise, interaction with and representation of senior NRC management and legal officials, and comprehensive understanding of the legal and policy objectives and authorities of the Commission relating to the area of specialization.

Benchmark: SL-2, Legal

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides authoritative advice, assistance, and support to the Office of the General Counsel or other NRC offices utilizing attorneys, such as the Office of the Inspector General, and to agency management and staff for a specialized legal area of exceptionally high priority and criticality for the successful conduct of the office, OGC, and overall NRC mission activities and responsibilities. Serves as the designated agency Special Counsel for a highly specialized, hard-to-find topical, or functional expertise, by operating as the OGC and Commission legal expert in the area of responsibility or serving in a comparable legal position in designated offices outside of OGC.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Serves as the principal legal advisor to the General Counsel and other senior OGC officials, or to the designated office director, for a complex, highly specialized topical or specialized area of expertise. Provides authoritative legal analysis, research, advice, and counsel in the area of specialization or responsibility to these individuals and represents official OGC positions and recommendations in the assigned area, both within the NRC and in contacts with external parties.
2. Reviews proposed agency rules, regulations, and related documentation associated with the specialty area for legal implications or issues and provides comments, analysis, or alternative language as required. Counsels senior OGC and agency management regarding the potential policy or legal impact of regulatory actions and provides guidance regarding alternative approaches or mechanisms as appropriate.
3. Provides guidance and assistance to designated office or OGC staff attorneys at all levels regarding issues, concepts, or requirements associated with the area of specialization or expertise. Reviews related work produced by staff attorneys for accuracy, consistency, and adherence to specialized legal principles or factual requirements and suggests or directs revisions or additional analysis as needed to ensure quality of output.

Benchmark: SL-2, Legal (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

4. Conducts or attends meetings with NRC managers and staff at all levels concerning issues or problems in the area of responsibility and provides authoritative advocacy and counseling of NRC staff as required by particular facts or circumstances. Represents NRC officials or organizations before the Commission or other bodies in all matters relating to the field of specialization.
5. Assists Commission members as well as senior agency managers and technical staff in preparing for public, Congressional, and other external appearances of high visibility involving issues or problems associated with the area of topical or functional expertise. Attends such events in conjunction with NRC officials to provide counsel and assistance as required.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Broad knowledge and in-depth understanding of both general and NRC-specific legal principles and practices, to include original and revised agency basic legislation, related Federal statutes and regulations, applicable precedents, and other legal instruments or concepts associated with the agency's regulatory and policy environment.
- Stature as an acknowledged expert in the topical or functional area of specialization as demonstrated by frequent consultation by peers, senior management officials, and external parties for authoritative guidance and interpretation; independent authorship of significant agency regulations and policies; receipt of major awards and professional honors; or contributions to the body of legal scholarship.
- o Substantial record of outstanding performance and significant professional accomplishment at the SL-1 level within the agency or at a comparable level externally, as well as extensive high-level experience in the field or discipline of specialization as characterized by length and nature of service, such as experience in a variety of organizations or environments.

Benchmark: SL-2, Legal (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

- In-depth knowledge and understanding of the overall NRC organization and of the agency's broad mission, functional, and regulatory priorities and practices; comprehensive understanding of the roles and responsibilities of independent regulatory agencies; and in-depth knowledge of the NRC's operational environment and relationships with Congress, other Federal, State, and local organizations, the nuclear industry, and professional and interest groups.
- General understanding of basic principles, terms, and concepts associated with nuclear technology and its various forms and applications and the ability to absorb, integrate, and synthesize complex technical and legal information in providing effective counsel, guidance, and support to agency activities.
- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a legal and/or policy nature to colleagues, peers, senior office and agency management, and representatives of other institutions, agencies, or regulatory or adjudicative bodies.
- Demonstrated ability to independently identify complex legal and policy issues associated with the topical or functional area of expertise, skill in analysis and evaluation of actual or potential legal problems or conflicts arising from such matters, and the ability to obtain balanced resolution of issues consistent with NRC technical requirements and statutory obligations.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- The General Counsel, other OGC management officials, and senior legal staff for the purpose of providing expert consultation, guidance, analysis, and assistance in the area of specialization.
- Commission members and their personal staffs for the purpose of providing assistance in preparing for meetings or testimony, specialized briefings or legal analysis, or advice and counsel.

Benchmark: SL-2, Legal (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

- Senior management and legal officials of other Government agencies, adjudicatory bodies, or industry organizations for the purpose of representing the Commission, responding to inquiries, or presenting NRC views or requirements regarding legal or policy issues.
- The Executive Director for Operations, office and division directors, and individual NRC staff members, as appropriate, for the purpose of providing assistance, counsel, or guidance regarding projects or issues related to the area of specialization.

Independently represents the General Counsel and/or the Commission as the organization's designated Special Counsel for the topical or functional area of expertise, with full latitude to speak and act authoritatively on behalf of the agency regarding legal matters in the assigned area of responsibility.

Discretion and Responsibility

Assigned to the designated office director, the staff of the appropriate Assistant General Counsel, or a higher echelon official, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding the incumbent's activities.

Continually exercises independent responsibility for refining and redirecting the specific emphasis and focus of position activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise, interaction with and representation of senior NRC management and legal officials, and comprehensive understanding of the legal and policy objectives and authorities of the Commission relating to the area of specialization

Benchmark: SL-1, Professional and Administrative

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides authoritative assistance, consultation, and guidance to senior agency management in a specialized professional or administrative field or discipline of major importance to the support and facilitation of major NRC functions and mission activities. Serves as an office level expert and Commission-wide resource for major policy, program, or operational initiatives associated with the area of specialization and acts as the agency's principal liaison with external groups and organizations for all related matters.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Serves as the Commission staff expert for a complex, discrete professional or administrative area or subdiscipline with agency-wide impact and importance. Provides lead staff support and coordination in identifying, developing, and establishing requirements for new or enhanced programs, policy initiatives, or resource allocations in the assigned area of specialization. Develops new programmatic and/or regulatory approaches for meeting NRC needs and requirements and advises senior agency officials regarding issues or management considerations involved in pursuing alternative options. Provides authoritative consultation, guidance, assistance, and recommendations in the area of specialization or responsibility to office management and staff, other NRC offices and personnel, and Commission members and their staffs.

2. Functions as the lead agency point of contact and liaison with external Government agencies, industry organizations, academia, and professional societies with influence over or interest in NRC activities or initiatives in the professional or administrative specialty area. Represents the NRC as a member of interagency working groups and task forces, as well as professional association committees, advisory panels, or study groups.

**Benchmark: SL-1, Professional and
Administrative** (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

Illustration:

Serves as a member of a Government-wide interagency advisory group charged with developing recommendations regarding the future strategic direction of Federal human resource development and training initiatives and programs for consideration by the Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Represents agency interests and concerns with regard to Government-wide technical and managerial training, consults and coordinates with senior managers and human resource officials both within NRC as well as in associated technical and/or regulatory agencies, and ensures that unique agency requirements are adequately addressed in final advisory group recommendations.

3. Coordinates and facilitates the work of internal management committees or task forces established to examine specific issues or problems in the area of expertise. Develops and provides authoritative background briefings and source documentation and researches and evaluates external sources of support or assistance for resolution of problems or implementation of committee recommendations.

4. Independently authors or significantly contributes relevant expertise to the development of agency policies and regulations governing requirements and programs in the specialty area. Consults with the Office of the General Counsel regarding compatibility of policy and program initiatives with agency statutory obligations and interacts at the policy level with officials of central management agencies regarding NRC authorities and flexibilities in the professional or administrative area.

5. Serves as an in-house consultant to office and division directors, support staffs, and other entities and individuals for all problems or questions relevant to the specialty discipline. Contributes to the development of host office operational strategies and work plans to ensure consistency of day-to-day activities with long-term policy goals and objectives in the area of expertise.

**Benchmark: SL-1, Professional and
Administrative** (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

6. Reviews related work produced by assigned office staff for administrative and professional merit and accuracy and suggests or directs revisions or additional analysis as needed to ensure the professional quality of the output. Serves as a trainer and mentor for subordinate-level staff, providing guidance regarding methodology, information sources, or administrative/professional approaches to problems or issues.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Expert knowledge of the principles, concepts, theories, and methods of an established professional or administrative discipline and their relationship to specific issues, problems, and applications associated with the administration and management of a complex regulatory and technical policy organization.
- Stature as an acknowledged expert in the field or discipline of specialization as demonstrated by authorship of significant agency regulations and policies, receipt of major awards and professional honors, publication of articles or studies, or participation on panels at professional meetings and conferences, or contributions to Government-wide regulations.
- Broad knowledge of the NRC's mission, functions, organization, and basic regulatory philosophy and practices, as well as understanding of the relationship between the NRC and Congress, central management agencies, industry organizations, professional societies, and interest groups.
- General understanding of basic principles, terms, and concepts associated with nuclear technology and its various forms and applications, and ability to absorb, integrate, and synthesize complex technical information in developing effective operational or management support programs and policies.

**Benchmark: SL-1, Professional and
Administrative** (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements(continued)

- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a programmatic and/or policy nature to colleagues, peers, senior office and agency management, and representatives of other institutions, agencies, or organizations.
- Demonstrated ability to apply specialized knowledge and skills to the examination, evaluation, or resolution of complex programmatic, organizational, or policy issues; to establish new programs or approaches to difficult problems; and to contribute to the effective fulfillment of the agency's mission.
- Demonstrated ability to independently identify requirements for advanced research, analysis, or evaluation activities in the area of expertise or specialization, ability to oversee and coordinate the work of contractors, when required, in carrying out such activities, and skill in achieving cooperation and consensus among parties engaged in joint or parallel efforts.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- Senior management in the assigned office and in related support or staff functional organizations for the purpose of providing information, consultation, guidance, and assistance.
- Commission members and their personal staffs for the purpose of providing information, briefings, subject-matter comments or review, or consultation regarding the area of specialization.
- Senior technical staff and officials of other Government agencies or professional organizations for the purpose of coordinating activities, responding to inquiries, or presenting NRC views or requirements regarding programmatic or regulatory matters.
- Management and staff of contractors associated with the assigned organization for the purpose of reviewing activities, proposed initiatives, or project results and recommendations.

**Benchmark: SL-1, Professional and
Administrative** (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

- The Executive Director for Operations, agency office and division directors, and others, as appropriate, for the purpose of providing information, assistance, or support regarding projects or issues related to the area of specialization.

Independently represents the office and the Commission as the organization's designated senior staff specialist for the area of expertise, with full latitude to speak and act authoritatively on behalf of the organization in the assigned area of responsibility.

Discretion and Responsibility

Assigned to the office-level staff of an appropriate functional organization reporting directly to the office director or the deputy director, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding the incumbent's activities.

Continually exercises independent responsibility for refining and redirecting the specific emphasis and focus of position activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise, interaction with NRC managers, consultation and coordination with external organizations, and comprehensive understanding of the goals and objectives of the Commission in the area of specialization.

Benchmark: SL-2, Professional and Administrative

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides authoritative assistance, advice, and guidance to senior agency management in a specialized professional or administrative field or discipline in assignments of exceptionally high priority or criticality to the support and facilitation of major NRC functions and mission activities. Serves as a Commission-wide resource for significant policy, program, or operational initiatives associated with a complex area of specialization having broad impact on a variety of organizational elements and acts as the agency's principal liaison with external groups and organizations for all related matters. Provides authoritative consultation, guidance, assistance, and recommendations in the area of expertise or responsibility to office management and staff, other NRC offices and personnel, and Commission members and their staffs.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Serves as the Commission staff expert for a complex, discrete professional or administrative area or subdiscipline with agency-wide impact and importance in assignments of exceptionally high priority and/or criticality. Provides lead staff support and coordination in identifying, developing, and establishing requirements for new or enhanced programs, policy initiatives, or resource allocations in the assigned area of specialization. Develops new programmatic and/or regulatory approaches for meeting NRC needs and requirements and advises senior agency officials regarding issues or management considerations involved in pursuing alternative options.
2. Functions as the lead agency point of contact and liaison with external Government agencies, industry organizations, and professional societies with influence over or interest in NRC activities or initiatives in the professional or administrative specialty area. Represents the NRC as a member of interagency working groups and task forces, as well as professional association committees, advisory panels, or study groups.

**Benchmark: SL-2, Professional and
Administrative** (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

3. Coordinates and facilitates the work of internal management committees or task forces established to examine specific issues or problems in the area of expertise. Develops and provides authoritative background briefings and source documentation and researches and evaluates external sources of support or assistance for resolution of problems or implementation of committee recommendations.
4. Independently authors or significantly contributes relevant subject-matter expertise to the development of agency policies and regulations governing requirements and programs in the specialty area. Consults with the Office of the General Counsel regarding compatibility of policy and program initiatives with agency statutory obligations and interacts at the policy level with officials of central management agencies regarding NRC authorities and flexibilities in the professional or administrative area.
5. Serves as an in-house consultant to office and division directors, support staffs, and other entities and individuals for all problems or questions relevant to the specialty discipline. Contributes to the development of host office operational strategies and work plans to ensure consistency of day-to-day activities with long-term policy goals and objectives in the area of expertise.
6. Reviews related work produced by assigned office staff for functional merit, accuracy, and rigor, and suggests or directs revisions or additional analysis as needed to ensure substantive quality of output. Serves as the subject-matter trainer and mentor in the area of expertise for subordinate-level staff, providing guidance regarding methodology, information sources, or subject-matter approaches to problems or issues.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Expert knowledge of the principles, concepts, theories, and methods of an established professional or administrative discipline and their relationship to specific issues, problems, and applications associated with the administration and management of a complex regulatory and technical policy organization.

**Benchmark: SL-2, Professional and
Administrative** (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

- Stature as an acknowledged expert in the field or discipline of specialization as demonstrated by authorship of significant agency regulations and policies, receipt of major awards and professional honors, publication of articles or studies, participation on panels at professional meetings and conferences, or contributions to Government-wide regulations.
- Substantial record of outstanding performance and significant professional accomplishment at the SL-1 level within the agency or at a comparable level externally, as well as extensive high-level experience in the field or discipline of specialization as characterized by the length or nature of service, such as experience in a variety of organizations or environments.
- In-depth knowledge and understanding of the overall NRC organization and of the agency's broad mission, functional and regulatory priorities and practices, as well as comprehensive understanding of its operational environment and statutory authority in areas of expertise and relationships with Congress, central management agencies, industry organizations, professional societies, and interest groups.
- Highly developed interpersonal and negotiation skills, ability to meet and deal effectively with a broad range of individuals and organizations, and exceptional skill in achieving cooperation and consensus among parties or entities with diverse and often conflicting views or objectives.
- General understanding of basic principles, terms, and concepts associated with nuclear technology and its various forms and applications and ability to absorb, integrate, and synthesize complex technical information in developing effective operational or management support programs and policies.
- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a programmatic and/or policy nature to colleagues, peers, senior office and agency management, and representatives of other institutions, agencies, or organizations.

**Benchmark: SL-2, Professional and
Administrative** (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

- Demonstrated ability to apply specialized knowledge and skills to the examination, evaluation, or resolution of complex programmatic, organizational, or policy issues to establish new programs or approaches to difficult problems and to contribute to the effective fulfillment of the agency's mission.
- Demonstrated ability to independently identify requirements for advanced subject-matter research, analysis, or evaluation activities in the area of expertise or specialization, ability to oversee and coordinate the work of contractors in carrying out such activities, and skill in achieving cooperation and consensus among parties engaged in joint or parallel efforts.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction frequently concerning matters of great sensitivity and importance with the following:

- The Chairman and Commissioners for the purpose of providing expert consultation, guidance and advice regarding all matters and issues in the area of responsibility.
- Senior management in the assigned office and in related support or staff functional organizations for the purpose of providing information, consultation, guidance, and assistance.
- Senior technical staff and officials of other Government agencies or professional organizations for the purpose of coordinating activities, responding to inquiries, or presenting NRC views or requirements regarding programmatic or regulatory matters.
- Management and staff of contractors associated with the assigned organization for the purpose of reviewing activities, proposed initiatives, or project results and recommendations.
- The Executive Director for Operations, office and division directors, and others, as appropriate, for the purpose of providing information, assistance, or support regarding projects or issues related to the area of specialization.

**Benchmark: SL-2, Professional and
Administrative** (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

Independently represents the office or the Commission as the organization's designated senior staff specialist for the area of expertise, with full latitude to speak and act authoritatively on behalf of the organization in the assigned area of responsibility.

Discretion and Responsibility

Assigned to the office-level staff of an appropriate functional organization reporting directly to the office director or the deputy director, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding the incumbent's activities.

Continually exercises independent responsibility for refining and redirecting the specific emphasis and focus of position activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise, interaction with NRC managers, advice and coordination with external organizations, and comprehensive understanding of the goals and objectives of the Commission in the area of specialization.

Benchmark SL-1, Commissioner Staff

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides confidential policy, technical, and administrative advice, counsel, and assistance to one of five Commissioners appointed by the President, with exceptionally wide-ranging responsibility for all matters associated with a highly complex, broadly defined functional area. Serves as the Commissioner's principal advisor and personal representative regarding a diverse range of sensitive and/or controversial technical, regulatory, and management issues in or related to the assigned area of responsibility.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Functions as the Commissioner's staff assistant in at least one broad functional area, such as reactors, fuel cycle, material, waste, regulations, administrative, or legal, of critical importance to the accomplishment of the NRC's mission. Provides authoritative guidance, analyses, and policy support to the Commissioner, based on personal knowledge and expertise, extensive advice and coordination with internal and external specialists and experts, and thorough understanding of the Commissioner's views and perspective.
2. Reviews and evaluates all staff papers, memoranda, correspondence, and other items or materials in the specialized area(s) requiring action or approval by the Commissioner, and consults with the Commissioner regarding issues or implications associated with such items. Develops or obtains additional or supplemental information as required to ensure that recommendations made and decisions rendered are based on full consideration and comprehension of all facts and materials relevant to the issue.
3. Maintains continuous, open communication and coordination with staff assistants to each of the other four Commissioners, ensuring that these individuals and their superiors are fully aware of and understand the Commissioner's position on all matters and issues in the assigned area of responsibility. Assumes principal responsibility for presenting, explaining, and defending the Commissioner's views and for facilitating collegial decisionmaking and consultation between and among Commissioners and their staffs.

Benchmark: SL-1, Commissioner Staff (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

4. Assists the Commissioner to stay abreast of all technical, regulatory, and managerial trends, issues, and developments in the assigned area of responsibility. Continually monitors, reviews, evaluates, and synthesizes a large volume of diverse information and presents to the Commissioner those elements or aspects critical to the effective performance of his or her responsibilities.
5. Represents the Commissioner in interactions with NRC managers at the level of office director and above, as well as with subordinate managers and staff, in obtaining information, guidance, or cooperation and coordination. Ensures that requests made and actions taken avoid the appearance or reality of undue interference with operational activities or staff prerogatives.
6. Drafts speeches, statements, and other documents reflecting the Commissioner's positions on a wide range of issues, problems, or related topics. Accompanies the Commissioner on site and international visits, public and congressional appearances, and to conferences or meetings.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Thorough knowledge of the principles, concepts, theories, and methods of an established discipline or profession relevant to the assigned area and their relationship to specific technical, regulatory, management issues, and problems associated with the nuclear industry.
- o Comprehensive knowledge of the NRC's mission, functions, organization, and regulatory philosophy and practices, as well as broad knowledge of the organization and functions of related Federal regulatory agencies, executive and legislative oversight bodies, and industry and interest group organizations.
- Highly developed interpersonal and negotiation skills, ability to meet and deal effectively with a broad range of individuals and organizations, and exceptional skill in achieving cooperation and consensus among parties or entities with diverse and often conflicting views or objectives.

Benchmark: SL-1, Commissioner Staff (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

- Ability to absorb, analyze, and synthesize a large volume of complex information, to identify and isolate relevant concepts and facts essential to Commission-level consideration and decisionmaking, and to maintain comprehensive knowledge and awareness of issues and trends in the assigned area.
- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a technical and/or policy nature to Commission members and staff, senior agency management, and representatives of other institutions, agencies, or organizations.
- Demonstrated ability to assume staff responsibility for an exceptionally broad range of issues and problems, to carry out multiple diverse functions and activities, and to perform effectively in an operational environment characterized by short deadlines, high visibility, and independent action.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- Commissioners and their staffs for the purpose of representing a superior's views and positions, exchanging information, and achieving cooperation and consensus on significant issues.
- Senior agency management and technical staff throughout the NRC at all levels for the purpose of obtaining information, advice, guidance, or cooperation.
- Senior policy and management officials of other Government agencies and organizations for the purpose of obtaining information, coordinating activities or policy approaches, and representing positions of a Commissioner or the agency.
- Management and technical staff of contractors, senior industry officials, and representatives of public interest groups for the purpose of presenting or defending policy, or eliciting opinions or views regarding significant issues.

Benchmark: SL-1, Commissioner Staff (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

Independently represents the Commissioner as his or her designated staff advisor for the broad functional area assigned, with full authority to obtain information or present positions on behalf of the Commissioner in the designated area of responsibility.

Discretion and Responsibility

Assigned to the personal staff of and reporting directly to the Commissioner, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding the incumbent's activities.

Continually exercises independent responsibility for identifying necessary and appropriate position functions and activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise, close and continuing interaction and consultation with the Commissioner, and a comprehensive understanding of the Commissioner's views, perspective, and objectives in relation to the assigned area of specialization.

Benchmark: SL-2, Commissioner Staff

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides confidential policy, technical, and administrative advice, counsel, and assistance to one of five Commissioners appointed by the President, with exceptionally wide-ranging responsibility for all matters associated with a highly complex, broadly defined functional area, as well as for additional coordinative or administrative functions defined by the Commissioner. Serves as the Commissioner's principal advisor and personal representative regarding a diverse range of sensitive or controversial technical, regulatory, and management issues in or related to both the assigned functional and administrative areas of responsibility.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Functions as the Commissioner's staff assistant in at least one broad functional area, such as reactors, waste, fuel cycle, material, regulations, administrative, or legal, of critical importance to the accomplishment of the NRC's mission. Provides authoritative guidance, analyses, and policy support to the Commissioner based on personal knowledge and expertise, extensive consultation and coordination with internal and external specialists and experts, and thorough understanding of the Commissioner's views and perspective.
2. Reviews and evaluates all staff papers, memoranda, correspondence, and other items or materials in the specialized area requiring action or approval by the Commissioner, and consults with the Commissioner regarding issues or implications associated with such items. Develops or obtains additional or supplemental information as required to ensure that recommendations made and decisions rendered are based on full consideration and comprehension of all facts and materials relevant to the issue.
3. Maintains continuous, open communication and coordination with staff assistants to each of the other four Commissioners ensuring that these individuals and their superiors are fully aware of and understand the Commissioner's position on all matters and issues in the assigned area of responsibility. Assumes principal responsibility for presenting, explaining, and defending the Commissioner's views

Benchmark: SL-2, Commissioner Staff (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

and for facilitating collegial decisionmaking and consultation between and among Commissioners and their staffs.

4. Assists the Commissioner to stay abreast of all technical, regulatory, and managerial trends, issues, and developments in the assigned area of responsibility. Continually monitors, reviews, evaluates, and synthesizes a large volume of diverse information and presents to the Commissioner those elements or aspects critical to the effective performance of his or her responsibilities.

5. Represents the Commissioner in interactions with NRC managers at the level of office director and above, as well as with subordinate managers and staff, in obtaining information, guidance, or cooperation and coordination. Ensures that requests made and actions taken avoid the appearance or reality of undue interference with operational activities or staff prerogatives.

6. Drafts speeches, statements, and other documents reflecting the Commissioner's positions on a wide range of issues, problems, or related topics. Accompanies the Commissioner on site and international visits, public and congressional appearances, and to conferences or meetings.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Thorough knowledge of the principles, concepts, theories, and methods of an established discipline or profession relevant to the area of assignment and their relationship to specific technical, regulatory, and management issues and problems associated with the nuclear industry.
- Substantial record of outstanding performance and significant professional accomplishment at the SL-1 level within the agency or at a comparable level externally, as well as extensive high-level experience in the field or discipline of specialization as characterized by the length and/or nature of service, such as experience in a variety of organizations or environments.

Benchmark: SL-2, Commissioner **Staff** (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements (continued)

- Comprehensive knowledge of the NRC's mission, functions, organization, and regulatory philosophy and practices, as well as broad knowledge of the organization and functions of related Federal regulatory agencies, executive and legislative oversight bodies, and industry and interest group organizations.
- Highly developed interpersonal and negotiation skills, ability to meet and deal effectively with a broad range of individuals and organizations, and exceptional skill in achieving cooperation and consensus among parties or entities with diverse and conflicting views or objectives.
- Ability to absorb, analyze, and synthesize a large volume of complex information, to identify and isolate relevant concepts and facts essential to Commission-level consideration and decisionmaking, and to maintain comprehensive knowledge and awareness of issues and trends in the assigned area.
- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a technical and/or policy nature to Commission members and staff, senior agency management, and representatives of other institutions, agencies, or organizations.
- Demonstrated ability to proactively assume staff responsibility for an exceptionally broad range of issues and problems, to continually identify new approaches and methods for carrying out multiple diverse functions and activities, and to exercise individual initiative in defining and accomplishing objectives in an operational environment characterized by short deadlines, high visibility, and significant risks.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- Commissioners and their staffs for the purpose of representing a superior's views and positions, exchanging information, and achieving cooperation and consensus on significant issues.

Benchmark: SL-2, Commissioner staff (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

- Senior agency management and technical staff throughout the NRC at all levels for the purpose of obtaining information, consultation, guidance, or cooperation.
- Senior policy and management officials of other Government agencies and organizations for the purpose of obtaining information, coordinating activities or policy approaches, and representing the positions of the Commissioner or the agency.
- Management and technical staff of contractors, senior industry officials, and representatives of public interest groups for the purpose of presenting or defending policy, or eliciting opinions or views regarding significant issues.

Independently represents the Commissioner as his or her designated staff advisor for the functional area assigned, with full authority to obtain information or present positions on behalf of the Commissioner in the designated area of responsibility.

Discretion and Responsibility

Assigned to the personal staff of and reporting directly to the Commissioner, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding the incumbent's activities.

Continually exercises independent responsibility for identifying necessary and appropriate position functions and activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise, close and continuing interaction and consultation with the Commissioner, and a comprehensive understanding of the Commissioner's views, perspective, and objectives in relation to the assigned area of specialization.

Benchmark: SL-3, Commissioner Staff

Benchmark Description

Purpose of Position

Provides confidential policy, technical, and administrative advice, counsel, and assistance to the Chairman, with exceptionally broad and complex staff responsibility for all matters or issues presented to the Chairman and the Commission. Serves as the Chairman's Executive Assistant, functioning as his or her principal advisor and personal representative regarding all aspects of the Commission's policy, regulatory, and managerial responsibilities and functions.

Major Duties and Functions

1. Functions as the Chairman's principal assistant and senior policy advisor, with lead responsibility for ensuring that all matters or issues brought before the Chairman and the Commissioners have been fully and properly reviewed, evaluated, and documented before formal or informal consideration and decisionmaking. Exercises independent and far-reaching authority to coordinate Commission and NRC staff activities, initiatives, and responses in support of requests or requirements established by the Chairman.
2. Reviews and evaluates all staff papers, memoranda, correspondence, and other items or materials requiring action or approval by the Chairman or the Commission, and consults with the Chairman, as appropriate, regarding issues or implications associated with such items. Facilitates or directs the development of additional or supplemental information as required to ensure that all Commission actions and decisions are based on full consideration and comprehension of all facts and materials relevant to the issue.
3. Serves as the Chairman's primary point of contact and communication with the other Commissioners, ensuring that all Commissioners are fully aware of and understand the Chairman's positions and objectives regarding current, pending, or long-term matters and issues. Concurrently elicits and represents to the Chairman the Commissioners' views and perspectives of assuming overall responsibility for fostering and maintaining a collegial consultative decisionmaking environment among all the Commissioners and their staffs.

Benchmark: SL-3, Commissioner Staff (continued)

Major Duties and Functions (continued)

4. Facilitates and provides technical oversight for all substantive staff support activities of the Office of the Chairman, ensuring effective staff coverage and analysis of all issues and matters within the Chairman's purview and personal responsibility. Coordinates actions required for appropriate implementation of and followthrough on all decisions made by the Chairman and the Commission, including presentation, monitoring, and enforcement of directives.
5. Represents the Chairman in high-level interactions with other Federal agencies, legislative and executive oversight bodies, industry organizations, and interest groups. Speaks authoritatively on behalf of the Chairman in meetings, conferences, or negotiations with senior officials of other regulatory agencies, members or senior staff of congressional committees, State and local officials, or executives of various business and industry organizations subject to NRC policy and regulatory determinations and actions.
6. Represents the Chairman in interactions with the Executive Director for Operations, other senior NRC managers, and with subordinate managers and staff, in obtaining information, guidance, cooperation, or in implementing policy and administrative decisions. Establishes and maintains appropriate and effective working relationships between the Office of the Chairman and all operational and staff organizations.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

- Expert knowledge of the principles, concepts, theories, and methods of an established technical, professional, or administrative discipline and their relationship to specific issues and problems associated with both the nuclear industry and with the direction and management of a complex regulatory and technical policy organization.
- o Expert knowledge of the NRC's mission, functions, organization, and regulatory philosophy and practices, as well as comprehensive understanding of the roles and responsibilities of independent regulatory agencies; relationships between the NRC and Congress, other Federal, State, and local organizations, and industry and professional groups; and of broad issues, developments, and trends

Benchmark: SL-3, Commissioner Staff (continued)

Knowledge and Skill Requirements

associated with the nuclear industry in the United States and foreign countries.

- Highly developed interpersonal, organizational, and negotiation skills; ability to meet and deal effectively at a policy level with a broad range of senior management and technical officials; and exceptional skill in establishing effective organizational and individual relationships and achieving cooperation and consensus among parties or entities with diverse and often conflicting views or objectives.
- Advanced skills in oral and written communication sufficient to effectively convey and represent complex, detailed information of a technical, managerial, or policy nature to the Chairman, the Commissioners, and their staffs; senior NRC managers and officials of other agencies; and representatives of oversight bodies, the nuclear industry, interest groups, and foreign governments.
- Demonstrated ability to assume lead staff responsibility for oversight and coordination of an exceptionally broad range of highly complex issues and problems, to facilitate and/or carry out multiple diverse responsibilities with significant policy implications, and to perform effectively in an operational environment characterized by high visibility, uncertainty, and substantial long-term impact of decisions.

Contacts and Commitments

The position requires ongoing contact and interaction with-

- The Chairman, the Commissioners, and their staffs for the purpose of providing advice and assistance, representing views and positions, exchanging information, and achieving cooperation and consensus on significant issues.
- Senior technical staff and officials of other U.S. Government and foreign government agencies, industry organizations, and interest groups for the purpose of obtaining or exchanging information, coordinating activities or policy approaches, or presenting positions or views of the Chairman and the Commission.

Benchmark: SL-3, Commissioner Staff (continued)

Contacts and Commitments (continued)

- o Senior agency management and technical staff throughout the NRC at all levels for the purpose of obtaining information, consultation, or assistance; representing the Chairman's views and objectives; and facilitating implementation of policy and administrative decisions.
- Members of Congress and their senior staffs for the purpose of providing high-level policy briefings, or presenting agency recommendations, proposals, or positions on a broad range of issues.

Independently represents the Chairman as his or her principal staff officer and assistant, with full authority to speak and act definitively on behalf of the Chairman in obtaining information, presenting policy, or eliciting cooperation or compliance.

Discretion and Responsibility

Assigned to the personal staff of and reporting directly to the Chairman, who provides administrative oversight and consultation regarding the incumbent's activities.

Continually exercises independent responsibility for identifying necessary and appropriate individual and office staff functions and activities, based on personal knowledge and expertise; close and continuing interaction and advice with the Chairman and other Commissioners; a comprehensive understanding of the views, perspective, and objectives of the Chairman; and in-depth understanding of the needs, requirements, and obligations of the NRC and the nuclear industry.