




UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

November 7, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: MICHAEL W. HAGER   
Acting Director

Subject: Guidelines for Broadening the Senior Executive Service (SES)

As many leaders retire, the Federal Government faces a challenge – and opportunity – to improve the effectiveness of the leadership corps across Government. A recent U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) survey of Senior Executives highlighted concerns about the lack of development and career mobility among individuals in many agencies, in contrast to the broad careers envisioned by the creation of the SES. Recent history has also proven the disadvantages for national security and disaster preparedness when leaders lack a Government-wide perspective or are not experienced in working across agency lines to respond to national threats or issues.

Under OPM's authority to provide for the continuing development of Senior Executives or to require agencies to establish such programs which meet criteria prescribed by OPM (5 USC 3396), this memorandum encourages agencies to develop policies and take appropriate actions to ensure continuing development of Senior Executives, including meeting the guidelines listed below.

The purpose of this memorandum is to encourage agencies to:

- Promote continual learning in the context of agency missions
- Promote broader perspectives supporting a results-oriented, sustainable, high-performance culture across Government
- Increase collaboration within large departments and across departments and agencies
- Maximize leadership expertise

We ask agencies, through their policies and associated actions or programs, to ensure Senior Executives understand the roles, responsibilities, and cultures of other organizations and disciplines; exchange ideas and practices; build mutual trust and familiarity, especially among those with differing perspectives; minimize obstacles to coordination; and enhance strategic thinking in an interagency environment. Inter-office, interagency, and inter-governmental assignments, fellowships, and exchanges, to include those with appropriate non-governmental organizations, will provide Senior Executives with a wealth of information about the capabilities, missions, procedures and requirements of their counterparts across the government.

SES members are encouraged to participate in developmental opportunities and rotational assignments to gain a broad Government-wide perspective. For the long term, we hope to build a results-oriented, sustainable, high-performance culture across Government by broadening perspective through the establishment of enterprise-wide, cross-agency competencies, with Senior Executives serving as leaders and role models.

Ideally, all SES members, at least once every 3-5 years, should pursue developmental opportunities to broaden their perspective, including:

- Details, sabbaticals, Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments outside the Federal Government, or significant participation in interagency projects, or
- Rotations to a new executive position

### **Policy considerations**

In developing these programs, agencies should keep in mind developmental opportunities take many forms, including those outlined in the September 12, 2006 memorandum to Chief Human Capital Officers (“Guidelines for Managerial Development”). Developmental opportunities may also include:

- A detail or assignment to another major component within a large department (e.g., DOD, DHS, USDA)
- A detail or assignment to another agency or department
- Cross-agency projects which involve substantive participation where the SES member gains practical knowledge and understanding of other organizations
- Assignment to certain “liaison” positions which provide the individual significant inter-agency experience

In line with the National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals, agencies should place particular emphasis on rotations for SES members who are designated as National Security Professionals under Executive Order 13434, May 17, 2007.

Agencies may use current authorities to support development, including the information technology exchange authority, and the Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) that allows for exchange of personnel between the Federal Government and state, local, and Indian Tribal Governments, as well as non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and Federally funded research and development centers.

In addition, agencies may apply for temporary allocations for developmental purposes which allow a space to the “losing” agency when an SES member participates in a developmental detail (see the attached April 10, 2007 memo for Chief Human Capital Officers).

It should also be noted that mandating interagency rotations without exceptions is likely to be difficult and impractical, especially for small agencies and very specialized positions. As a practical matter, it would be prudent to promote or to provide incentives for mobility and rotational assignments rather than to require them unilaterally. There are alternatives, such as

interagency projects, that can also cultivate broad perspectives. Two current initiatives take this middle ground approach (Defense and ODNI Joint Duty programs), allowing some exceptions and/or restricting the requirement to certain categories of positions.

Agencies should consider using their Executive Resources Boards (ERB's) or similar corporate entity to manage this initiative and provide direction and oversight, including: 1) reviewing the development of each SES member annually, 2) determining opportunities that will broaden the individual's perspective, and 3) establishing metrics for assessing the implementation of the agency policy. It is also a good idea for all SES members to have Executive Development Plans (EDP's) that address developmental assignments and/or rotations, as well as other development. These EDP's should be updated on a periodic basis (OPM has developed a sample EDP—it is available on OPM's website at [http://www.opm.gov/ses/executive\\_development/index.asp](http://www.opm.gov/ses/executive_development/index.asp)).

The original concept of the Senior Executive Service (SES) was a cadre of mobile, interchangeable leaders. Agency policies may establish mobility agreements or contracts for each new SES to sign at the time of entry into the SES for ongoing development and mobility (OPM is developing a template for agencies to use for such agreements). Additionally, agencies may want to emphasize the importance of multiple agency experiences in hiring into senior level executive positions.

If you have questions about this memorandum, please contact Nancy Randa, Deputy Associate Director, Center for Learning, Executive Resources, and Policy Analysis at 202-606-1491, [Nancy.Randa@opm.gov](mailto:Nancy.Randa@opm.gov), or your agency Human Capital Officer.

Attachment

cc: Human Resource Directors



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

April 10, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: LINDA M. SPRINGER  
DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LMS", written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: Allocation of Temporary Senior Executive Service (SES), Senior Level (SL), or Scientific and Professional (ST) Spaces to Support Continuing Development of Career Senior Leaders

On September 12, 2006, I sent you a memorandum transmitting the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) *Guidelines for Managerial Development*. In that memorandum I stated that we believe the time is right to recommit the Federal Government to developing effective leaders. The purpose of the current memorandum is to tell you about an initiative by which OPM will promote your efforts in this regard.

One of the most effective ways to develop good leaders is by exposing them to new challenges. We want to encourage you to actively develop career senior leaders through strategic short-term assignments that will strengthen them for more effective service. When you evaluate the challenges your agency must meet, assess the capabilities and potential of your senior leaders, and choose to send them on temporary assignments that will prepare them for higher level service in your agency or elsewhere in Government, we intend to support that choice.

From time to time, OPM grants a temporary space to support an agency sending an executive or senior professional on a short-term assignment, e.g., an interagency detail, during which the individual will occupy an agency space even though he or she is not available for agency work. I want to remind you that OPM grants spaces for this purpose and to point out that this practice holds great potential for supporting continuing development of your career senior leaders.

When you determine that a carefully selected assignment ranging from 12 to 24 months will strengthen a career senior leader for higher level service but your agency cannot afford to lose the SES, SL or ST space encumbered by the individual during that period, I invite you to explore whether OPM can allocate a temporary space to support your plan. For example, we will make temporary spaces available to support certain intra-agency details, Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignments, short term transfers that involve a reemployment right (e.g., to an international organization), and short-term reassignments, if the position to which the individual would be reassigned cannot be established within the agency's current allocation.

We are developing a streamlined process for requesting these temporary spaces through the Executive and Schedule C System and will implement this as soon as possible. In the meantime,

you may submit your requests to Ms. Cathy Penn, Manager, Executive Resources Services Group by fax at (202) 606-2126 or by mail to the Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street NW, Room 6484, Washington, DC 20415. An outline of the information you should submit to enable us to efficiently assess and respond to your requests is attached.

We look forward to giving you the support you need to develop the best possible leaders for the future. If you have questions about this initiative, please contact Mr. Paul Thompson, Manager, Center for Learning, Executive Resources, and Policy Analysis at (202) 606-1429 or [paul.thompson@opm.gov](mailto:paul.thompson@opm.gov), or Ms. Penn at (202) 606-2671 or [cathy.penn@opm.gov](mailto:cathy.penn@opm.gov).

cc: Human Resources Directors

Attachment

## ATTACHMENT

Please include the following information in your request for a temporary space to support continuing development of an SES, SL or ST employee.

1. Identify who will be going on the developmental assignment. Provide the individual's name, position, organizational component, location, and current appointment type.
2. Describe the developmental assignment. Identify the position to which the individual will be assigned; the type of assignment, e.g., detail, transfer, reassignment, including any applicable statutory or regulatory authority, such as the Intergovernmental Personnel Act or Detail or Transfer to International Organizations; the agency, organizational component and location; and the planned duration of the assignment.
3. Identify the challenges or development opportunities that the assignment will provide that the individual has not had in previous positions.
4. Describe the agency's future plans for the individual, presuming the anticipated benefits of the developmental assignments are fully realized. What position or positions will this assignment prepare the individual to assume?

You may submit your requests to Ms. Cathy Penn, Manager, Executive Resources Services Group by fax at (202) 606-2126 or by mail to the Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street NW, Room 6484, Washington, DC 20415. If you have further questions about how to make your request, you may contact Ms. Penn on (202) 606-2671 or by email at [cathy.penn@opm.gov](mailto:cathy.penn@opm.gov).

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**Issue:** Developmental Assignments Space Allocation Policy

**Proposal:** We recommend that OPM announce its intention to readily provide temporary SES, SL or ST spaces to support intentional, strategic short-term deployment of senior leaders for continuing development where the intent and expected outcome is to develop them for higher levels of service and responsibility within the agency.

**Discussion:** To ensure that federal executive management is responsive to the needs, policies and goals of the Nation and is otherwise of the highest quality, 5 USC 3131 calls for the Senior Executive Service (SES) to be administered to "enable the head of an agency to reassign senior executives to best accomplish the agency's mission" and "provide for initial and continuing systematic development of highly competent senior executives." We recommend that OPM strategically use its authority to allocate temporary SES spaces to support continuing systematic development of senior executives for more effective support of agency missions.

Under 5 USC 3133, each agency requests and OPM allocates on a biennial basis the number of SES spaces available to establish SES positions in each agency. OPM can then adjust an agency's SES allocation up or down during the biennial cycle. From time to time, OPM uses this authority to grant an SES space to an agency that allows an executive to go on a detail or other temporary assignment outside the agency for continuing development. This may be needed because the executive continues to use one of the agency's SES spaces while on detail.

Two agencies have recently urged OPM to turn this occasional practice into a continuing strategic initiative. On November 7, 2006, Dr. Ronald Sanders, Assistant Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Management and Chief Human Capital Officer, Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), asked OPM to grant a temporary SES space to any agency that details an SES member to ODNI or other Intelligence Community (IC) elements duty under IC Directive (ICD) 601 – Joint Intelligence Community Duty Assignments (May 2006). This will help ODNI address a legislative mandate to "prescribe mechanisms to facilitate the rotation of [civilian] personnel of the intelligence community through various elements of the intelligence community [IC]."

In a recent OPM meeting, Roger Blanchard, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, described how Air Force agency leadership uses its Senior Civilian Assignment Process to develop executives through targeted assignments. He also asked OPM to examine SES utilization government-wide and consider reallocating some of the "float" (i.e., the average number of SES spaces allocated government-wide by OPM that, at any given time, are not being used for filled SES positions) to those agencies that would make better use of them to support strategic assignments of their best career executives in order to prepare them for higher levels of service.

**Issues:** We concur with these recommendations and see three basic issues to be addressed:

- 1) Must OPM recover spaces from some agencies in order to provide temporary spaces to other agencies to support continuing development of career leaders?
- 2) Should OPM provide the temporary spaces through the biennial allocation process or through interim adjustments during the biennial cycle?
- 3) Under what circumstances should OPM allocate a temporary space to support continuing development of an executive?
- 4) Should OPM restrict how the temporary spaces are to be used?

**Issue 1:** Must OPM recover spaces from some agencies in order to provide temporary spaces to other agencies to support continuing development of career leaders?

Under 5 USC 3133(c), OPM, with OMB concurrence, sets each agency's biennial allocation. 5 USC 3133(d) then provides:

“(d)(1) The Office of Personnel Management may, on a written request of an agency or on its own initiative, make an adjustment in the number of positions authorized for any agency. Each agency request under this paragraph shall be submitted in such form, and shall be based on such factors, as the Office shall prescribe.

(2) The total number of positions in the Senior Executive Service may not at any time during any fiscal year exceed 105 percent of positions authorized under subsection (c) of this section for such fiscal year.”

The following chart shows for the three most recent biennial cycles: 1) the government-wide initial biennial allocation; 2) the number of SES spaces OPM could have allocated during the biennial cycle within the 105 percent statutory ceiling; 3) the number of SES spaces OPM did allocate during the cycle; and 4) the number of additional spaces OPM could have allocated.

Biennial Cycle	Initial Allocation	Available w/in 105% Limit	End Allocation	Interim Adjustments	Unused Allocation Potential
FY 02/03	7731 (10/1/02) (7656 Perm)	386	7871 (9/30/03) (7786 Perm)	140	246
FY 04/05	7947 (5/26/04) (7868 Perm)	397	8009 (9/30/05) (7915 Perm)	62	335
FY 06/07	8084 (2/24/06) (7991 Perm)	404	8082 (11/21/06) (7991 Perm)	-2	406

For the FY 06/07 cycle, we are already 4 months into FY 07 and OPM has the potential to allocate up to 406 SES spaces without exceeding the limit imposed by 5 USC 3133(d)(2). It therefore appears that OPM would not need to take back SES spaces from some agencies in order to have enough to allocate to other agencies for continuing development purposes.

**Issue 2:** Should OPM provide the temporary spaces through the biennial allocation process or through interim adjustments during the biennial cycle?



Some agency representatives, including Mr. Blanchard have suggested that OPM grant an allotment of developmental spaces as part of the biennial review rather than on a case by case basis. We prefer the interim allocation adjustment approach for the following reasons.

These temporary SES spaces are for developmental purposes. No other issues should affect how many an agency receives. The biennial review typically includes many other considerations and requires consultation with OMB. In this context an agency's case for developmental allocations could be subordinated to other issues. Further, agencies and OPM have little experience in predicting the need for SES spaces to support developmental assignments. Both would benefit from a period of case by case allocation in which the need for and possible uses of these spaces can be explored.

If OPM invites agencies to request temporary SES spaces as developmental opportunities occur and makes them easy to obtain, OPM can promote effective use of this strategy while exercising only such minimal controls as are appropriate, e.g., no issuance of a SES space where there is no clear development purpose. Extraneous considerations would not intrude on issuance of the spaces and there would be no need to guess about projected levels of activity without an adequate basis of experience to do so. OPM would also be better positioned to demonstrate sustained support for continuing development of executives; to focus agencies on the benefits of continuing development; and to encourage greater use of continuing development strategies in more agencies. We therefore recommend allocating these spaces through interim adjustments during the biennial cycle.

**Issue 3:** Under what circumstances should OPM allocate a temporary space to support continuing development of an executive?

The questions to ask are: 1) what factors could keep an agency from releasing an executive for a developmental assignment, and 2) can a temporary allocation help?

An agency (i.e., the "home" agency) sending an executive on an interagency detail loses the executive's services. The home agency also loses an SES space because the executive continues to encumber one of the agency's SES spaces while on detail. The prospect of this twofold loss may keep an agency from permitting such a detail. OPM can ameliorate this circumstance by allocating a temporary SES space pending the executive's return. This may encourage the agency to pursue the detail.

Agencies can send executives on developmental assignment by detail, reassignment or transfer. Some assignments also involve special legislative authorities, e.g. Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignments, or Detail or Transfer to an international organization. Some assignments may involve placing an executive in leave without pay (LWOP) status. In any of these cases, an agency's consideration of whether to allow the assignment may be influenced by SES space implications but the issue may not be so clear cut.

In the case of an intra-agency detail, for example, the agency (as a whole) does not lose either the executive's services or the SES space. On the other hand, if top agency management details an

executive from one component to another, there may be "small p" political issues to solve, e.g., how to compensate the "home" component for the lost SES space, which continues to be encumbered by the detailed executive. Again, a temporary SES space may help.

Similarly, an agency that reassigns an executive does not lose the executive's services or an SES space. However, an agency might need to establish a new SES position or re-establish an old position for the reassignment that could not otherwise be accommodated due to priority agency SES position requirements. For example, Mr. Blanchard of Air Force suggests that a short term reassignment to an "understudy" position may be of great value in preparing an executive for a particularly demanding job.

A chart is attached to summarize various scenarios in which a temporary developmental space might be requested to support a developmental assignment. In each case, we state the basis upon which a temporary SES space might be granted under the proposed developmental assignment policy.

Since there are limitations on how many SES adjustments OPM can make (about 400) and some of those would need to be reserved for responding to other kinds of agency allocation requests occurring during the biennial cycle, OPM may at some need to restrict the circumstances in which a temporary SES space will be approved for continuing development purposes. We think, however, that the number of spaces available is large enough that OPM does not have to start out with a particularly conservative approach. Possible alternative approaches would include granting a developmental allocation for 12 to 24 months, depending upon the length of assignment:

- 1) Only when an executive is assigned outside the agency, e.g., detail, IPA, assignment to an international organization, (including commitment of a SES space for reemployment after a transfer to an international organization lasting less than 24 months);
- 2) All of the above, plus intra-agency details when an agency affirms that a SES space is needed to "make whole" the "home" component;
- 3) All of the above, plus short term reassignments when an agency reasonably supports that it cannot establish a proposed developmental position within current allocation;
- 4) All of the above, plus any detail or short term reassignment within the same component, if the agency states the primary purpose of the assignment is continuing development of the executive.

**We believe the third option above is to be preferred, unless experience demonstrates that there are insufficient spaces to reasonably accommodate the number of agency requests received. If OPM announces willingness to be this flexible in support of continuing development of executives, it should encourage agencies to think about the possibilities.**

This analysis has focused upon the issuance of temporary spaces to support continuing development of current executives. It is not for temporary assignment of non SES personnel (e.g., GS-15 or below) to SES positions by detail or by SES limited term or emergency appointment.

Issue 4: Should OPM restrict how agencies use the temporary SES spaces?

In general, we would not see a need to restrict how an agency uses a temporary developmental space allocation pending return of the executive. The space should be available to use as the agency determines will best support mission requirements. An exception would be the case in which OPM provides a space to enable the agency to establish a specific SES position to which a career appointee would be reassigned for development purposes.

We recommend that OPM specifically provide for the temporary SES space for the duration of the executive's developmental assignment with the expectation that when the executive returns to the home agency, the temporary SES space reverts to OPM. The reason is that at this point, the agency regains the services of the executive and the SES space encumbered by the executive. The basis for the temporary space is gone. Therefore, an agency must accept responsibility to use the space in such a way that it may freely be relinquished when the executive returns. It would not be a good idea for agencies, or OMB, to get the idea that these temporary allocations can be turned into a wedge for permanently increasing an agency's allocation. Return of the spaces should therefore be regularly enforced. Nevertheless, OPM is free to extend a temporary space either on its own initiative or at an agency's request, if unusual circumstances call for it.

**SL/ST:** The above analysis focuses on the SES but is not intended to exclude developmental allocations for senior level (SL) or scientific and professional (ST) employees. In general, the considerations described in the attached chart would apply to developmental SL and ST assignments. Observations concerning statutory limits on allocation of SES spaces do not apply to SL or ST categories.

**Recommendation:** OPM should announce a policy of making SES/SL/ST spaces available to support intentional, strategic, short-term deployment of executives and other senior personnel for continuing development where the intent and expected outcome is assignment at higher levels of service and responsibility. Spaces should be made readily available under circumstances described in option 3 above.

William Collins  
Center for Learning and Executive Resources Policy  
January 23, 2007

U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
**Executive Decision Summary**

**Handling:**  Urgent (Handcarry)  Regular **Type:**  Decision memo  Correspondence  
 Expedite (Time Sensitive)  Information memo  Clearance

**Due Date Information:** 10/31/2008 **Package ID:** SHRP2008.000013882

**Summary and Recommendations:**

Subject: CHCO memorandum on SES development

Due to OD by October 10, 2008.

Under OPM's authority to provide for the continuing development of senior executives or to require agencies to establish such programs which meet criteria prescribed by the Office (5 USC 3396), we have developed guidance requiring agencies to establish policies and take appropriate actions to ensure continuing development of senior executives.

This guidance stemmed from ongoing efforts with OMB on the National Security Professional. OMB wants this memorandum distributed by November 1, but the AD, SHRP wants it distributed prior to that date.

The April 10, 2007, memo to CHCOs (Doc ID 101213) is an attachment to the memo to CHCOs and should be included in the faxed and emailed document.

Submitted under PA I.6--first bullet: A-SHRP, C-DAD/CLERPA, AD/SHRP, C-HCL, OGC, OCPL, OD, S-Director. After package has cleared, I-OCR, HRLOB.

We recommend the Director approve and sign the memo to CHCO's.

Julie Brill, PA I.6, 606-5067

**Prepared by (Name and telephone number)**

**Decision**  Approved  Disapproved  Other

Acting Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Deputy Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Clearances**

X	Org.	Initials	Date	X	Org.	Initials	Date	X	Org.	Initials	Date	X	Org.	Initials	Date
X	SHRP	NK (5)	i: 09/09/08 o: 09/09/08		FISD		i: o:		MSD		i: o:		Executive Secretariat	(1)	i: 11/05/08 o:
	CTCP		i: o:		DS		i: o:		HCMS		i: o:		CFC		i: o:
X	CLERPA	NR (5)	i: 09/08/08 o: 09/08/08		DO		i: o:		CFAS		i: o:		White House Liaison		i: o:
	CPLA		i: o:	X	HCLMSA	KM (1)	i: 09/09/08 o: 09/17/08		PMG		i: o:		Exec. Director CHCO		i: o:
	CPPS		i: o:		CHCIA	(2)	i: 09/12/08 o:		CIS & CIO		i: o:		Senior Advisor RSM		i: o:
	CEFSP		i: o:		CHR		i: o:		PRA /PA		i: o:		Deputy Director		i: o:
	CWRAP		i: o:		CNR		i: o:		EEO		i: o:		Chief of Staff/ Dir External Operations		i: o:
	CWISR		i: o:		CNS		i: o:		CSEA		i: o:		Senior Advisor / CoS		i: o:
	HRPS		i: o:		CGG	(1)	i: 09/10/08 o:		HRLOB		i: o:				
	CTS		i: o:		CSA		i: o:	X	OGC	KW (6)	i: 09/17/08 o: 10/30/08				
	ECSG		i: o:		CMSC	(1)	i: 09/12/08 o:		OCR		i: o:				
	CLCS		i: o:		OCFO		i: o:	X	OC & PL	SB (2)	i: 10/31/08 o: 11/03/08				
	CRIS		i: o:		CFS		i: o:		OIG		i: o:				
	RSP		i: o:		CICRM		i: o:		FPRAC		i: o:				
	ISP		i: o:		CSPB/PMA		i: o:								
	SSP		i: o:		FMSO		i: o:								