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# ADS Chapter 459

## USAID's Foreign Service Career Candidate Program

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 ADS Chapter 459 – USAID’s Foreign Service Career Candidate Program  
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*Text highlighted in yellow indicates that the adjacent material is new or substantively revised.*

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## ADS 459 – USAID’s Foreign Service Career Candidate Program

### 459.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

This ADS chapter outlines the mandatory policies and required procedures for newly hired employees entering USAID as Foreign Service (FS) Career Candidates. This chapter also applies to Career Candidates hired under the Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) recruitment effort from 2008-2012. The Career Candidate Program is intended to enable USAID to maintain a robust, highly qualified overseas workforce, especially in key technical areas.

Career Candidates include Junior Officers (JOs) and a limited number of Mid-level Officers (MLs). The program provides Career Candidates with an orientation to USAID, selected training courses on Agency operations, and any necessary language training, followed by a directed assignment overseas.

This ADS chapter incorporates the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#), which contains more detailed information on policies and procedures. Additional information can be found on the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM) Web site at <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>.

### 459.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

This section summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs) and Missions concerning new-entry Junior Officers (JOs) and new-entry Mid-level Officers (MLs). Please refer to the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#) for the specific responsibilities assigned to B/IO and Mission personnel, and to the **new entry officers** themselves.

a. The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM)** is responsible for overall management of the Foreign Service Career Candidate Program. The program’s smooth functioning and ultimate success, however, rests upon the cooperation of all USAID organizational units and personnel in carrying out their assigned responsibilities.

HCTM staff with responsibilities for the program include:

1. The **Senior Deputy Director for Operations (HCTM/SDOO)** oversees Foreign Service personnel policies and operations.
2. The **Director, Foreign Service Personnel Division (HCTM/FSP)**, has overall responsibility for administering Foreign Service personnel policies and operations.

3. **The Chief, Foreign Service Personnel Special Programs (HCTM/FSP/SP)**, oversees the organization and administration of Foreign Service recruitment and hiring, and acts as the Career Candidate Coordinator.
4. The **Foreign Service Personnel Special Programs Branch (HCTM/FSP/SP)** handles all administrative matters for new Career Candidates before and during orientation, including making travel arrangements as necessary; executing the necessary actions to bring the employees on board; and assigning each employee a coach.
5. **Foreign Service Personnel Staffing Branch Specialists (HCTM/FSP/FSS)** arrange new Career Candidates' transfers overseas and process administrative actions during their assignments.
6. **Coaches** advise Career Candidates as they prepare for their directed assignments and learn about the requirements for advancing in the Foreign Service.
7. The **Language Coordinator** advises Career Candidates on language studies and requirements and arranges language testing and training.
8. **Assignment and Performance Counselors (APCs)** counsel and guide new FS employees on career development. They also coordinate, and chair if required, the Technical Selection Panels that interview and select candidates.
9. The **Administrative Promotion Panel** reviews the performance of Career Candidates who are at levels FS-06 and FS-05 annually, based on their mandatory [AID 461-1 Annual Evaluation Form \(AEF\)](#), and makes administrative promotion recommendations to the HCTM/SDDO/OD.
10. The **Tenure Board** reviews the performance of Career Candidates to ensure they demonstrate aptitude and fitness for career service, as required by the standards of performance for tenured Foreign Service Officers (FSOs). For more information on Tenure Boards, see [ADS 414mad, Tenuring of Foreign Service Career Candidates](#).
11. **The Performance Boards** assess the performance of FS career and Career Candidate employees at FS-04 and above and make recommendations for possible promotion to the next higher class, as well as recommendations concerning performance. (For further elaboration of Performance Board responsibilities and promotion eligibility requirements, see [ADS 463, Foreign Service Boards](#).)

12. **The Performance Standards Board** reviews the files of employees whose performance is ranked least competitive among their class and decides whether the employees meet the standards of their class, marginally meet the standards of their class, or should be selected out for relative performance. (For further information about the Performance Standards Board, see [ADS 463](#).)
13. The **USAID Staff Care Program team** provides counseling, crisis referral, and workplace wellness services for all Agency employees.

Please refer to the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#) for more detail on the specific responsibilities of HCTM/**FSP/SP** and HCTM/**FSP/FSS** staff.

**b. Bureaus and Independent Offices (B/IOs)** are responsible for informing HCTM of short and long term staffing needs, training capacity, and space availability, and for coordinating with HCTM on all other aspects of the program. B/IOs with new Career Candidates must assign specific staff to each employee as follows:

1. **Supervisors of Record/Rating Officials** are responsible for orienting the new employees to the B/IO; helping prepare Individual Development Plans (IDPs) and mandatory [AID 461-1, Annual Evaluation Form \(AEF\)](#) Work Plans; providing on-the-job training; providing performance feedback to the employees on a regular basis; addressing performance issues; and evaluating each employee at the mid-point and end of the rating cycle, in accordance with [ADS 461.3.1.3, Rating Officials](#).
2. **Backstop Coordinators** are responsible for coordinating technical training and all information related to the backstop.
3. **Rotation Supervisors** (when part of the B/IO's training plan for the new hires) are responsible for developing scopes of work for rotation assignments, providing performance feedback to the employee and addressing any performance issues during the assignment, and evaluating the employee at the end of each assignment, including preparing an [Appraisal Input Form \(AIF\)](#) for rotations lasting 30 or more calendar days.

Please refer to the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#) for a complete description of B/IO staff responsibilities.

**c. The Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget, and Performance (M/MPBP)** is responsible for reviewing and approving Mission budget requests for new hire staff costs.

d. The **Bureau for Management, Office of Management Services, Travel and Transportation Division (M/MS/TTD)** is responsible for processing the new Career Candidates' travel orders and arranging for packing and shipping their household effects overseas.

e. The **Office of Civil Rights (OCR)** is responsible for working with HCTM to ensure that Foreign Service **recruitment and hiring** contributes to a fully diverse workforce.

f. **USAID Missions** are responsible for implementing the program in country. Missions **are expected to** assign staff to **new hires** as follows:

1. **Supervisors of Record/Rating Officials** are responsible for helping new employees settle into the country; providing on-the-job training; preparing AEF Work Plans; guiding the employees in revising their IDPs; providing performance feedback to the employees on a regular basis; and rating the employees.
2. **Mentors** are responsible for advising employees on professional development. Mentors do not have to be the Career Candidate's supervisor; any USAID Mission employee with appropriate skills and experience may assume this role.

Please refer to the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#) for additional details on USAID Mission responsibilities.

g. **Career Candidates** are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of the program as found in this chapter, in the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#), and other **related policies and directives** on the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management Web site at <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>.

## 459.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

### 459.3.1 Recruitment and Selection

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

The Agency's policy is to recruit and select the best qualified Career Candidates, without regard to **race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, color, age** (except as indirectly limited by [Section 812 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#)), religion, national origin, genetic information, physical or mental disability (except when disqualified for overseas duty by the Medical Division of the Department of State), reprisal for participation in the EEO process, marital and family status, or **political affiliation**.

USAID considers the fact that an applicant for appointment as a Foreign Service Career Candidate is a veteran or disabled veteran (a preference eligible under [5 U.S.C. 2108\(3\), subparagraphs \(A\), \(B\), and \(C\)](#)) as an affirmative factor in the selection of applicants for initial appointment to the USAID Foreign Service (FS) (see [Section 301 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#)).

USAID recruits Career Candidates to fill positions in selected Foreign Service Occupational Categories or backstops (for example, BS-50 covers Health Officers). USAID uses a Consolidated Workforce Planning Model (CWPM), which is a management tool that uses strategic direction, development needs, and budget assumptions to estimate staffing requirements for Headquarters and Overseas components. Recruitment targets for each backstop are based on assessments of current and projected personnel resources and organizational and programmatic needs.

Prospective candidates submit applications in the Agency's electronic employment system in response to **vacancy** announcements of openings in **particular backstops**. The number of openings is based on Mission demand and the CWPM. Applications are accepted only for the **vacancy** announcement posted. Candidates whose applications pass HCTM's **initial** screening undergo a comprehensive interview and testing by Technical Selection Panels composed of senior officials who are expert in the technical specialties of the position.

In a competitive setting, the Agency must select applicants who have the most suitable or appropriate technical and managerial qualifications needed to perform the duties of the functional backstops under consideration. The **Chief, HCTM/FSP/SP** makes final selection decisions.

For detailed information about the recruitment and selection process for new FSOs, see [ADS 468, Foreign Service \(FS\) Personnel Recruitment](#).

### **459.3.2 Appointment Conditions**

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

The conditions and requirements of [ADS 414, Foreign Service Appointments](#) apply to new appointees participating in USAID's Foreign Service Career Candidate Program.

HCTM/FSP appoints newly-hired employees as Career Candidates for the USAID Foreign Service either as Junior Officers (JOs) or, **on a much more limited basis**, Mid-level Officers (MLs). HCTM assigns **newly-hired officers to vacant overseas positions that have not been filled after Career and Career-Candidate FSOs, already on board, have had sufficient opportunity to bid on them.**

**HCTM directs the first overseas tours for both JOs and MLs. HCTM chooses where to place the new hires** based on the Agency's needs and, to the extent possible, the **employee's** professional experience, language capability, and personal needs. **In**

certain rare cases, when there is an emergency requirement or a need in a Critical Priority Country (CPC), the Agency may place a newly-hired ML in an overseas position at any time. The Agency can place MLs in positions in non-CPC countries only after the positions have been advertised in USAID's Open Assignment Cycle system (the Major Listing and its subsequent Updates) and not filled by eligible bidders during the Assignment Cycle. MLs may be placed in these positions after HCTM certifies that the positions have not been bid on, or the Selecting Officials have justified, in writing, why no eligible bidders, interested in the positions, were qualified.

USAID appoints **all** Career Candidates to positions in a specific backstop. Since these positions are filled competitively in response to the Agency's needs in the technical area, Career Candidates must remain in the backstop in which they were hired until:

1. They obtain tenure; or
2. Their backstop is changed at the Agency's option (i.e., on rare occasions when management needs dictate, the Agency may assign a Career Candidate to a new backstop, or a Career Candidate who has been working on an assignment outside their backstop requests and receives HCTM's approval to be assigned to that backstop.)

This requirement to remain in the hiring backstop maintains the integrity of the competitive selection process. It also maintains workforce planning requirements and ensures that Career Candidates gain sufficient experience for tenure.

Career Candidate appointments are time-limited **and cannot** exceed five years. **These appointments cannot** be extended or renewed except as provided in [Section 309\(b\)\(3\) of the Foreign Service Act](#) and [38 U.S.C. 43](#), which pertains to employee rights under the [Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 \(USERRA\)](#). Career candidate appointments are converted to career appointments when the employee receives tenure. The tenuring process is described in [459.3.8](#) and in [ADS 414.3.6, Tenuring of Career Candidates](#).

### **459.3.3 Pay and Benefits** Effective Date: 01/06/2014

Policy directives and required procedures for Foreign Service pay are located in [ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service](#), and [Sections 307, 311, 403, 407, 408, and 503 of the Foreign Service Act, as amended](#). HCTM/FSP determines the appointment salary for all categories of Foreign Service employees, in accordance with the policy directives and required procedures established in [ADS 470](#).

The vacancy announcements define the salary range for each position. More information about Foreign Service pay and benefits, such as retirement coverage and



allowances and differentials to which Foreign Service employees are entitled, can be found in [ADS 414](#), as well as on the HCTM Web site at <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>.

#### **459.3.4 Training**

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

The Career Candidate Program training includes an orientation, four formal, instructor-led training courses on Agency operations, on-the-job training, language training, and e-learning. This training is held in Washington, D.C.

Throughout their careers, FSOs may take advantage of the full array of courses and professional development training offered to all USAID employees through [USAID University](#). The policies and requirements related to training and professional development are found in [ADS 458, Training and Career/Professional Development](#).

##### **459.3.4.1 Required Training for Career Candidates**

Effective Date: xx/xx/xxxx

The following trainings are mandatory for all Career Candidates and should be successfully completed before departure overseas (except for the Supervision course, which must be completed before the employee assumes supervisory duties):

- a. An orientation to the Agency, geared specifically for new Foreign Service employees (generally several weeks in length);
- b. Four Agency “core” courses, including Programming Foreign Assistance, Project Design and Management, Acquisition and Assistance 104, and Supervision Training;
- c. Language training, as needed, to meet tenure requirements (see [ADS 438, Foreign Language Program](#));
- d. Technical training determined by each Backstop Coordinator (an illustrative listing of required and recommended training for each backstop can be found on the HCTM Web site at <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>); and
- e. Serving Abroad for Families and Employees (SAFE) that includes the two-day Security Overseas Seminar and the online Working in an Embassy course.

In addition, employees assigned to critical and high-threat posts must complete mandatory personal security training targeted to these posts. Specific information about these courses is contained in [ADS 458](#) and in Agency Notices, issued as required.

After the Agency orientation, Career Candidates are assigned to a home office in a Regional or Pillar Bureau/Independent Office (B/IO) to complete the required courses and receive on-the-job training. The home offices may require their new officers to complete rotation assignments in other bureaus or offices. The goal is to equip the new Career Candidate with an understanding of the Agency and its procedures along with training and experience in the backstop.

Each Career Candidate's further professional development is based on an Individual Development Plan (IDP) created cooperatively by the employee and their Backstop Coordinator and supervisor. (See Section II.B of the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#) for more information on the IDP.)

#### **459.3.4.2 Language Training Requirements**

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

Career Candidates who enter the Agency without speaking a relevant foreign language must take language training to meet tenure requirements. This training takes place in Washington, D.C., at the [Foreign Service Institute \(FSI\)](#) or other USAID-contracted training facilities. Career Candidates with prior language ability may "test out" (i.e., achieve a required minimum test score from FSI) to be excused from this requirement. The list of languages that meet USAID's tenure requirements is found in [ADS 438maa, USAID Tenuring Languages](#).

USAID language training is intended to enable employees to meet the language proficiency requirement for tenure or assignment to a Language Designated Position. For tenure, the requirement is an FSI-tested proficiency of S-3/R-3 for French, Spanish, or Portuguese, or an FSI-tested proficiency of S-2/R-1 or S-2/R-0 in other languages on USAID's [language tenure list](#). The proficiency requirements for Language Designated Positions are provided on the Major Listing of Positions and its Updates during the Assignment Cycle (see Section **459.3.7**).

The language requirement for tenure is mandatory and cannot be waived. Failure to meet the language requirement is cause for not being tenured. **It is important to note also that appointments will not be extended beyond five years to assist Career Candidates in meeting their language requirement for tenure.**

USAID provides each Career Candidate a maximum of 40 weeks of language training to achieve the proficiency required for tenure or assignment to a Language Designated Position. Not all employees will receive the full 40 weeks; the training generally can be completed in 24-36 weeks or less, depending on the student's prior proficiency. FSI provides each student an estimate of the amount of training that they will need to achieve the required proficiency, based on FSI's standards for each language category (see page 157 of FSI's [course catalog](#) for the current standards). During language training, FSI conducts progress reviews at intervals of six weeks to determine whether the employee is on track for meeting the required proficiency level.

FSI prepares these progress reports regularly and the employee (student) signs them and receives copies from FSI. If FSI determines that the student may have difficulty reaching the required proficiency level by the end of 40 weeks, FSI will advise both the student and HCTM/FSP. Students may be allowed additional training up to 40 weeks; after 40 weeks HCTM/FSP will terminate training.

FSI performance standards and retention/termination criteria are applicable to all employees assigned to full-time language training at FSI. Similar periodic reviews are applied to employees trained in USAID-contracted training facilities to determine retention/termination for marginal students.

USAID will pay for a maximum of 40 weeks of language training for tenure (other than the Post Language Training Program) and for FSI **language testing** only. Any additional expenses (including but not limited to language instruction, travel costs, living expenses, and leave) must be paid by the employee.

Career Candidates who do not achieve the required language proficiency for tenure in 40 weeks must sign a Language Training Policy Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) confirming that additional language training for tenure purposes will be at their own expense. (However, all employees can and are encouraged to participate in the Post Language Training Program if it is available.)

Employees who have not achieved language proficiency for tenure cannot proceed to post without Mission approval and signature on the MOA. See <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide> for a sample Language Training Policy MOA.

On an exceptional basis, HCTM/FSP may authorize an employee an additional amount of USAID/W funded language training for a documented compelling personal or compassionate reason or for a critical foreign policy need of the Agency.

For more information on USAID's Foreign Language Program and the requirements and procedures for requesting an extension for compassionate reasons or for proceeding to post without language tenure proficiency, see Section II.C.5 of the of the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#) as well as [ADS 438, Foreign Language Program](#).

FS employees are eligible for language incentive payments if they have a current (within the last five years) FSI-tested proficiency of S-3/R-3 or higher in an incentive language of the post to which they are assigned. The current list of USAID Incentive Languages is available in [ADS 438mab, USAID Incentive Languages](#).

Additional information on Career Candidate training can be found in the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#) and on the HCTM Web site at <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>.

### 459.3.5 Performance Management and Evaluation

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

All Foreign Service Officers and **Career** Candidates are expected to maintain high standards of conduct and performance. Until JOs reach FS-04 their performance management is subject to an administrative review process described in this chapter and its accompanying [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#). While the policies and procedures in [ADS 461, Employee Evaluation Program, Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service](#) and the [Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook – Foreign Service](#) apply to Career Candidates' administrative performance reviews, the policies in [ADS 463](#) Performance Boards do not apply until the new employees reach FS-04.

Supervisors/Rating Officials are required to develop a performance plan including Work Objectives (WOs) and Performance Measures (PMs) for Career Candidates at the beginning of their assignments. Supervisors must use Section 4 of the mandatory AID [461-1 Annual Evaluation Form \(AEF\)](#) to describe the new employee's role in the organization and must record Work Objectives and Performance Measures in Section 5. Sections 1, 4, and 5 of the AEF must be completed within 45 days of the conclusion of the **employee's** orientation. A sample Career Candidate AEF can be found in Section IV.A. of the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#) and on the HCTM Web site at <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>.

The WO and PMs, along with the [Foreign Service Skills Matrix \(mandatory AID Form 461-4\)](#), and [the Foreign Service Skills Feedback Worksheet \(mandatory AID Form 461-3\)](#), serve as the basis for evaluating a Career Candidate's performance. The formal AEF review for all officers takes place at the mid-point and end of each rating cycle. Informal evaluation in the form of feedback should be ongoing between supervisors and employees throughout the rating cycle. Supervisors must follow the procedures in [ADS 461.3.3](#) to address any performance problems as they occur.

Supervisors/Rating Officials must use the Foreign Service Skills Matrix and the Skills Feedback Worksheet (SFW) to prepare the AEF. The Skill areas define the performance expertise the Agency expects of the employee according to their personal grade level. Rating officials must clearly describe in the AEF the impact and results of the employee's performance relative to the Skill areas, Work Objectives, and the employee's current grade level. [ADS 461.3.6.1](#) provides guidance on the use of the Skills Matrix.

The [SFW](#) is a tool that guides the Rating Official during the employee feedback session. The Rating Official uses the SFW to provide performance feedback to the employee on the Subskills in the Skills Matrix. It is mandatory to use at the end of the evaluation period and should be used as appropriate to provide feedback at other points during the rating cycle. The Appraisal Committee (AC) reviews the SFW only

when requested by the Rating Official or employee. However, it is not part of the official rating of record.

The AEF Rating cycles of Career Candidates who enter the Agency at the FS-06 or FS-05 level are tied to their entry-on-duty (EOD) date. Although a full evaluation rating period is 12 months, these Career Candidates receive their first rating 11 months after the EOD date of their class, and their second rating 12 months after that. (See <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>). Appraisal periods for Career Candidates who enter the Agency at FS-04 and above follow the regular Foreign Service evaluation cycle from April 1 through March 31.

The supervisor of record at the end of the rating period is responsible for completing the AEF. If the rating period includes a change of supervisors or rotations for periods lasting 30 or more calendar days, the initial supervisor or rotation supervisor must submit a mandatory [AID 400-1B, Appraisal Input Form \(AIF\)](#) to the next supervisor (for use by the person who is the supervisor/Rating Official at the end of the rating period). A complete AIF is especially necessary when a Washington supervisor is transferring responsibility to a supervisor at post shortly before the end of the rating period. For rotations lasting fewer than 30 days, rotation supervisors must use a rotation memo to document performance. (A sample Rotation Memo can be found at <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>.)

Career Candidates are encouraged, though not required, to provide the [AID 461-2, Employee Statement Form](#) on their AEFs. The Employee Statement allows the employee to augment statements made in the AEF, as well as add other supporting information, such as accomplishments the Rating Official may not have included.

Additional information on evaluation policy for Foreign Service employees is contained in Sections IV and V of the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#). The complete requirements of the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Program are set forth in [ADS 461](#) and [ADS 414](#). Additional information about the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Program is contained in [ADS 461maa, Employee Evaluation Program \(EEP\) Guidebook Part 1, Foreign Service](#).

### **459.3.6 Performance Assessment and Promotion**

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

Performance assessment in the USAID Foreign Service is a rigorous process and does not always result in an officer's promotion to the next level. Promotion for Career Candidates below FS-04 occurs through administrative review based on the AEF process. Career Candidates at FS-04 and above fall under the regular Foreign Service evaluation and promotion system described in the links above.

As noted in Section **459.3.5**, the administrative review process for **Career Candidates below FS-04** is separate from the performance assessment and promotion system for Career Candidate MLs and Career Candidate JOs who are at FS-04.

Promotion is contingent upon a satisfactory AEF rating and is only granted if the officer is judged by HCTM's Administrative Promotion Panel to have met all the skill standards of their class, as well as the AEF work objectives and performance measures. For further discussion of administrative promotion policies, see Section IV.G and Section V of the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#).

Once **Career Candidates** are at FS-04, their performance appraisal and promotion requirements switch to the Agency's April through March Foreign Service Performance Evaluation System— see [ADS 461](#) and [ADS 463](#)). Under this system, the annual Foreign Service Performance Boards (convened each summer) evaluate the performance of all eligible Career and Career Candidate FSOs and make promotion determinations. FS employees at grades FS-04 or above must meet promotion eligibility requirements by March 31st of the rating cycle for which the Performance Boards are convened.

The Foreign Service Performance Board policies, procedures, and eligibility criteria are found in [ADS 463](#). For details on the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Program, see [ADS 461](#) and [ADS 461maa, Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook \(EEP\), Part 1, Foreign Service](#).

The promotion process is highly competitive, as Performance Boards consider all candidates in all backstops against the Foreign Service Skills Matrix and performance objectives. The Performance Boards **review employees' performance evaluation files for the last five rating cycles (or as many as exist)**, including the most recent rating cycle. **The Performance Boards consider those Career or Career Candidate employees**, whose performance demonstrates the potential to meet the standards of the class at the next higher level, **for promotion** (see [ADS 463.3.1](#)).

To receive a promotion, an employee must meet the eligibility criteria in [ADS 463.3.4](#) (overseas service, worldwide availability, time-in-class, etc.), have a recommendation by a Board for promotion, and rank highly enough for inclusion within **the number of** individuals that the Agency will promote in each class. The Agency bases the number of promotions on **the amount of funds available**. **The Performance Boards** recommend further review and possible separation for **employees** who fail to meet work objectives or **are judged not to have met the skill standards of their class**.

### **459.3.7 Assignments**

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

**Career Candidates'** first overseas postings are directed assignments, that is, determined by **HCTM/FSP** in consultation with B/IOs and Missions. While the Agency

makes these assignments based on programming priorities and **the need to fill vacant positions**, the employee's background, language capabilities, and personal situation are taken into account, to the extent possible. **Overseas assignments range from one to four years depending on the post's normal tour length.**

The onward assignment process for Career Candidates is covered in [ADS 436, Foreign Service Assignments and Tours of Duty](#). The Open Assignment Cycle runs from January 1 to December 31 each year. The assignment and bidding process generally begins in May of the year preceding the current assignment cycle. The process includes the following key steps:

1. HCTM/FSP issues an Assignment Calendar listing important FS Assignment Cycle deadlines and events;
2. Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs) and Missions validate positions that will be open;
3. HCTM/FSP issues a Major Listing of Positions for employee bidding;
4. Eligible bidders submit an Employee Bidding Form, an automated Web form in the Employee Information Management System (EIMS/FSAS) available at <http://auslnxbsep01.usaid.gov/EIMS/>.
5. HCTM/FSP issues Position Certificates of Eligible Bidders (CERTs) to Selecting Officials for selection consideration and decision;
6. Operating Units select bidders;
7. The Assignment Team, which includes the Chief, HCTM/FSP, B/IO management and technical staff, and the Foreign Service exclusive bargaining unit, makes assignment recommendations;
8. The Chief, HCTM/FSP, approves assignments; HCTM/FSP notifies bidders of their assignments in a General Notice of assignment decisions; and
9. HCTM/FSP issues Update Listings of Available Positions and Bidding Instructions by General Notices throughout the year as unfilled or other positions become available.

Bidding takes place throughout the year based on the Assignment Calendar and the steps above. Additional information and helpful tools on the assignment and bidding process, including tips for first-time bidders, can be found at <https://pages.usaid.gov/HCTM/what-we-provide>.

**459.3.8 Tenure**

Effective Date: 09/01/2013

Foreign Service Career Candidate appointments are converted to career appointments through the Foreign Service “tenuring” process. That process changes a Career Candidate from limited to career status after a successful trial period with the Agency. Tenure decisions in USAID are based on recommendations by the Foreign Service Tenure Board, which meets twice each year.

Career Candidates are eligible for consideration by the Tenure Board if they:

1. Attain class FS-04;
2. Complete 36 months of continuous service in USAID as a Foreign Service Career Candidate in the backstop for which they were hired (unless changed at Agency initiative via approval of assignment to a new backstop);
3. Serve a minimum of 18 months overseas as a U.S. direct hire Career Candidate in USAID (Temporary duty for continuous and consecutive periods of at least six months or more may count toward the 18-month requirement if the work being performed directly relates to the employee’s backstop);
4. Satisfy foreign language proficiency requirements as stated in [ADS 414.3.4](#) and [ADS 438, Foreign Language Program](#); and
5. Satisfy other conditions regarding tenure eligibility, for example, medical and security clearances, the absence of any unresolved administrative or Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigations, and completed certification as to availability for worldwide service (see [ADS 463](#)).

All requirements must be fully satisfied prior to the date that the Tenure Board convenes (by March 31<sup>st</sup> for the summer Tenure Board review and by September 30<sup>th</sup> for the winter Tenure Board review). Except in certain limited circumstances described in the references to [ADS 414.3.2.1](#), tenuring must occur within the employee’s five-year Career-Candidate appointment.

The Agency’s tenure policies and eligibility requirements are discussed in, see [ADS 414.3.6, Tenuring of Career Candidates](#), [ADS 414mad, Tenuring of Foreign Service Career Candidates](#), and [ADS 414mac, Precepts for USAID’s Tenure Board](#).

**459.3.9 Termination**

Effective Date: 07/21/2011



The Career Candidate Program is a comprehensive program of training and evaluation intended to enable candidates for career status as FSOs to demonstrate through on-the-job experience that they have the potential to serve successfully across the normal career span of a USAID Foreign Service Officer. Career Candidates must meet their work objectives and the skill standards associated with their class (FS-05, FS-04, etc.), as well as meet all the other requirements necessary for careers in the Foreign Service.

In some cases, however, a Career Candidate may prove unable to perform assigned duties at a satisfactory level or fail to meet the standards for a career FSO. In these cases, it serves the interest of neither the Agency nor the individual to retain the candidate. Employees who fail to meet the requirements after opportunity for corrective action will be separated from the Agency. USAID's termination policies and procedures are discussed in [ADS 450.3.5.1](#), [ADS 463](#), [ADS 414.3.10](#), and Section IV. G of the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#).

#### **459.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES**

##### **459.4.1 External Mandatory References**

Effective Date: 07/21/2011

- a. [5 U.S.C. 2108, Veterans; Disabled Veteran; Preference Eligible](#)
- b. [5 U.S.C. 3328, Selective Service Registration](#)
- c. [5 U.S.C. 3597, Reemployment Following Limited Appointment in the Foreign Service](#)
- d. [38 U.S.C. 43, Employment and Reemployment Rights of Members of the Uniformed Service](#)
- e. [Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended; sections 301, 302, 303, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 403, 404, 406, 610, 612, 702, 805, 806, 812, 815, 816, 823, 824, 825, and 904](#)
- f. [Foreign Service Institute](#)
- g. [Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994](#)

##### **459.4.2 Internal Mandatory References**

Effective Date: 01/06/2014

- a. [ADS 414, Foreign Service \(FS\) Appointments](#)
- b. [ADS 414mab, Medical Clearances and Waivers at the Time of Appointment and at Tenuring in the USAID Foreign Service](#)

- c. [ADS 414mac, Precepts for USAID's Tenure Board](#)
- d. [ADS 414mad, Tenuring of Foreign Service Career Candidates](#)
- e. [ADS 414mae, List of Employment Forms](#)
- f. [ADS 436, Foreign Service Assignments and Tours of Duty](#)
- g. [ADS 438, Foreign Language Program](#)
- h. [ADS 450, Termination of Time-Limited Appointments - Foreign Service \(FS\)](#)
- i. [ADS 459mad, Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#)
- j. [ADS 461, Employee Evaluation Program, Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service](#)
- k. [ADS 463, Foreign Service Boards](#)
- l. [ADS 468, Foreign Service \(FS\) Personnel Recruitment](#)
- m. [ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service](#)
- n. [ADS 476, Benefits](#)
- o. [ADS 477, Allowances and Differentials](#)

**459.4.3 Mandatory Forms**  
Effective Date: 07/21/2011

- a. [AID 400-1B, Appraisal Input Form \(AIF\)](#)
- b. [AID 461-1, Annual Evaluation Form](#)
- c. [AID 461-2, Employee Statement](#)
- d. [AID 461-4, Foreign Service Skills Matrix](#)

**459.5 ADDITIONAL HELP**  
Effective Date: 07/21/2011

- a. [ADS 459sab, Process for Arranging Official Travel and Hotels Guide](#)
- b. [ADS 459sac, Backstop Training Summary Sheets](#)

*Text highlighted in yellow indicates that the adjacent material is new or substantively revised.*

- c. [ADS 459sad, DLI Program Required and Recommended Training](#)
- d. [ADS 459saf, Getting to Post Checklist](#)
- e. [ADS 459sag, A helpful guide to your move from Office of Logistics Management Logistics Management Operations Transportation Division U.S. Department of State](#)
- f. [Employee Bidding Form Access](#)
- g. [Sample Rotation Memo](#)
- h. [Tips for All First Time Bidders](#)

#### 459.6 DEFINITIONS

Effective Date: 07/21/2011

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

#### **Annual Evaluation Form (AEF)**

The form used for evaluating performance under the Employee Evaluation Program (EEP). ([Chapter 415](#), 459)

#### **appointment - limited**

An appointment of a specified duration from one to five years. (**Chapters [414](#) and [459](#)**)

#### **Appraisal Input Form (AIF)**

An evaluation form covering a period of performance that is long enough to require written documentation of performance against an established performance plan but not long enough to be considered representative of the employee's performance for the entire annual rating cycle. (**Chapters [459](#), [461](#), [462](#)**)

#### **backstop**

Numeric code used to identify the skill category of a particular position. (**Chapters [414](#), [415](#), [459](#)**)

#### **career appointment**

A career appointment is an appointment given to tenured employees. Individuals appointed or converted to career appointments are subject to Time-in Class (TIC) limitations and mandatory retirement rules. (**Chapters [412](#), [414](#), [459](#)**)

#### **career candidate appointment**

An employee hired for a time-limited appointment that is intended to lead to a full career with the Agency following successful completion of tenure requirements. (Chapters [412](#), [414](#), [415](#), [459](#))

**tenure**

A process that changes a career candidate from limited or conditional to career status. (Chapters [414](#), [459](#), [463](#))

**tenure board**

A Board established by the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, to review all career candidates who meet eligibility for conversion to career status. In USAID, the Tenure Board also reviews career candidates, not eligible for tenure review, who are identified by Performance Boards as employees who appear to be failing to meet the standards of their class. (Chapters [414](#), [459](#), [463](#))

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