ADS Chapter 456

Personnel Operations: Position Classification

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ADS Chapter 456 – Personnel Operations: Position Classification

456.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

This chapter provides the mandatory policies and procedures for the classification of USAID Foreign Service and Civil Service positions. The Civil Service includes the Senior Executive Service (SES), General Schedule (GS), Senior Level (SL), and Scientific or Professional (ST) positions. Positions in other pay plans (e.g., AD) are also included, unless specifically excluded by law, Executive Order, or regulation. The classification of Foreign Service National and Third Country National positions is covered in **ADS 495, Foreign Service National Personnel Administration**.

456.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

a. The **Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM)**, as delegated by the Administrator:

1. Ensures that all position classification systems that apply to, or are promulgated by, USAID are administered in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, and/or rules and with integrity and without discrimination or prejudice.

2. Ensures, for Foreign Service positions, that proper rules and procedures are promulgated and applied consistently throughout the Agency.

3. Ensures, for Civil Service positions, compliance with regulations and rules relating to the application of classification and job grading standards published by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

b. The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Human Capital Services Center, Classification Division (HCTM/HCSC/C)**:

1. Implements OPM regulations and USAID policies and procedures in the designation and classification of Civil Service positions.

2. Implements USAID policies and procedures in the designation and classification of Foreign Service positions located in Washington to a proper series, title, and grade.

3. Designates a USAID/Washington (USAID/W) position as Foreign Service or General Schedule (see part 220(D) of **ADS 456maa, Policies and Procedures for Position Management**).

4. Approves the re-designation of a USAID/W position between Foreign Service and General Schedule (see part 220(D) of **ADS 456maa, Policies and Procedures for Position Management**).

c. The **Director, Human Capital and Talent Management, Foreign Service Center (HCTM/FSC)**, in coordination with HCTM/HCSC and Human Capital and Talent Management, Employee and Labor Relations (HCTM/ELR), authorizes the assignment of Foreign Service/Senior Foreign Service employees to GS designated positions and the assignment of Civil Service employees to FS designated positions (see part 220(D) of **ADS 456maa, Policies and Procedures for Position Management**).

d. The **Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Foreign Service Center, Foreign Service Staffing Division (HCTM/FSC/FSS)** implements proper rules and procedures in the designation and classification of Foreign Service positions that are located overseas.

e. **Human Capital and Talent Management, Overseas Human Capital Initiatives (HCTM/OHCI)** consults with Missions on the implementation of proper rules and procedures in the designation and classification of Foreign Service National and Third Country National positions (see **ADS 495, Foreign Service National Personnel Administration**).

f. **Mission Executive Officers (EXOs)**, in consultation with the supervisor for the position and HCTM/FSC/FSS, review the appropriateness and classification of **AID Form 430-4, Overseas Position Evaluation Form (OPEF)** when a Foreign Service position located overseas becomes vacant and when the duties, responsibilities, or supervisory relationships of a position materially change.

g. **Bureau and Independent Office (B/IO) Administrative Management Staff (AMS)**, in consultation with the supervisor and HCTM/HCSC/C, reviews the appropriateness and classification of a position description when a Civil Service position or a Foreign Service position located in USAID/W becomes vacant and when the duties, responsibilities, or supervisory relationships of a position materially change.

h. **Managers** and **Supervisors** must fully participate in the classification process, in consultation with AMS or EXOs and with HCTM/HCSC/C or HCTM/FSC/FSS. When recommending a sensitivity level for a position, managers should review **ADS Chapter 566, Personnel Security Investigations and Clearances**.

456.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

The following Agency policies and procedures pertain to Civil Service and Foreign Service positions.

a. Based on an approved functional statement (see **ADS 101, Agency Programs and Functions**), organizational structure, and position ceiling, supervisors must assign duties to positions in a manner that provides for the effective, efficient, and economical accomplishment of the functions assigned to the organization.

There must be a classified position on file before a Civil Service employee is appointed, promoted, reassigned, demoted, or transferred, and before a Foreign Service employee is appointed, assigned, or transferred.

b. The Agency must adhere to **ADS 456maa, Policies and Procedures for Position Management**. These policies and procedures establish a unified personnel system for all USAID employees, including identifying when a position should be designated as Foreign Service or General Schedule and when a Foreign Service designated position can be filled by a non-Foreign Service employee.

c. The appropriate official, generally the supervisor or EXO in a Mission, signs the **OF-8, Position Description** or **AID Form 430-4, Overseas Position Evaluation Form (OPEF)**, certifying that the document is accurate, with the position properly described.

d. HCTM/HCSC/C and HCTM/HCSC/FSC/FSS maintain:

(1) Original copies of all classified position descriptions and OPEFs;

(2) The original classification evaluation; and

(3) All records, files, and other materials incidental to the classification of each position.

These documents must be maintained until two years after the position has been abolished (see **section 7(b), Position Descriptions, in the National Archives and Records Administration General Records Schedule 1, Civilian Personnel Records**). The documents must be made available for review upon request by the B/IO, Mission, OPM, or HCTM.

Abolishment of position means the actual termination of the job, with the duties being eliminated entirely or combined with the duties of another position or positions (see section 44A2.1-4(A) of **Chapter 44 of the CSRS/FERS Handbook**).

Further record-keeping requirements are in sections **456.3.3.4** and **456.3.3.5** and in **Section 7, Position Classification Files, of the National Archives and Records Administration General Records Schedule 1**.

456.3.1 Position Classification – Foreign Service Positions Located Overseas

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

In accordance with **ADS 456maa, Policies and Procedures for Position Management**, Foreign Service positions must be classified in a manner consistent with the principles of position classification established in **Chapter 51, Title 5, United States Code (USC)** (the Classification Act). Section 501 of the **Foreign Service Act of 1980**, as amended, authorizes the Administrator to classify positions in the Foreign Service.

The Agency must follow the essential procedures in the Foreign Service Classification System, contained in **ADS 456mab, Position Titles, Series, Backstops and Position Classification Standards**. To use a position title that is not in these standards, the B/IO or Mission must gain approval from the Chief, HCTM/FSC/FSS, who coordinates with the appropriate backstop technical coordinator.

456.3.1.1 Description and Classification – Foreign Service Positions Located Overseas

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

The supervisor, in consultation with the EXO, officially documents a position's duties and responsibilities on an **AID Form 430-4, OPEF**, and the HCTM/FSC/FSS specialist evaluates and classifies the position in accordance with **ADS 456mab, Position Titles, Series, Backstops and Position Classification Standards** and section **456.3.1.2**.

Supervisors must ensure that, through the EXO, a new or amended OPEF is prepared and reviewed by HCTM/FSC/FSS when the duties, responsibilities, or supervisory relationships of a position materially change. Supervisors are encouraged to discuss changes in positions with the appropriate specialist in HCTM/FSC/FSS.

Missions must assess the applicability of the **National Security Decision Directive 38 (NSDD-38)** for FS positions located overseas. As part of this requirement, Missions and HCTM/FSC/FSS must coordinate to ensure that an NSDD-38 is in place before HCTM/FSC/FSS establishes a position.

HCTM/FSC/FSS must provide copies of new and updated position descriptions to the appropriate EXO. The EXO must then provide a copy to the employee.

456.3.1.2 Guidelines for Titling Foreign Service Supervisory Positions Located Overseas

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

Supervisory duties always include responsibility for ensuring timely performance of a satisfactory amount and quality of work, reviewing work products of subordinates, and accepting, amending, or rejecting work. In addition, a supervisor is involved in most of

the following duties, and may be involved in managerial assignments as well. The following is a non-exhaustive illustrative list of supervisory duties:

(1) Planning work for subordinates and setting priorities and preparing schedules for completion of work;

(2) Assigning work to subordinates based on priorities, selective consideration of the difficulty and the requirements of the assignments, and the capabilities of employees;

(3) Evaluating performance of subordinates;

(4) Giving advice, counsel, or instruction to individual employees on both work and administrative matters;

(5) Interviewing candidates for positions in the unit and making recommendations for appointment, promotion, or reassignment in such positions (as appropriate);

(6) Hearing and resolving complaints from employees, referring group grievances and unresolved serious complaints to higher level supervisors;

(7) Carrying out minor disciplinary measures such as warnings and reprimands, and recommending action in more serious cases; and

(8) Identifying developmental and training needs of employees, and providing or making provision for this training and development.

456.3.1.3 Classification Appeals – Foreign Service Positions Located Overseas

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

Foreign Service (FS) employees are compensated based on their personal rank, also known as rank-in-person, unlike Civil Service employees who are compensated based on the rank of their position, also know as rank-in-position. FS employees may be assigned to positions higher or lower than their personal rank (see **ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service** and **ADS 436, Foreign Service Assignments and Tours of Duty**). The employee bids on advertised positions so he/she would have the responsibility to know the parameters of the position. Even if a directed assignment takes place, the rank-in-person principle applies. The employee does not have the right to appeal position classifications. However, if the Mission is creating a new position or amending an existing position, and the requested classification is disapproved, then the Mission Director can appeal the decision. The Mission can appeal to the Chief of HCTM/FSC/FSS. A second level of appeal to the Director of HCTM/FSC can occur if the first appeal is denied. There are no appeals to OPM for Foreign Service classifications.

456.3.2 Position Classification – Foreign Service Positions Located in Washington

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

In accordance with the **ADS 456maa, Policies and Procedures for Position Management**, Foreign Service positions must be classified in a manner consistent with the principles of position classification established in **Chapter 51, Title 5, United States Code (USC)** (the Classification Act). Section 501 of the **Foreign Service Act of 1980**, as amended, authorizes the Administrator to classify positions in the Foreign Service.

The Agency must follow the essential procedures in the Foreign Service Classification System, contained in **ADS 456mab, Position Titles, Series, Backstops and Position Classification Standards**. To use a position title that is not in these standards, the B/IO or Mission must gain approval from the Chief, HCTM/HCSC/C, who coordinates with the appropriate backstop technical coordinator.

456.3.2.1 Description and Classification – Foreign Service Positions Located in Washington

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

The supervisor officially documents a position's duties and responsibilities on an **OF-8, Position Description**, and HCTM/HCSC/C evaluates and classifies the position in accordance with USAID policies and procedures.

Supervisors must ensure that, through the AMS, a new or amended **OF-8** is prepared and reviewed by HCTM/HCSC/C when the duties, responsibilities, or supervisory relationships of a position materially change. Supervisors are encouraged to discuss changes in positions with the appropriate Classification Specialist in HCTM/HCSC/C.

HCTM/HCSC/C must provide copies of new and updated position descriptions to the appropriate AMS. The AMS must then provide a copy to the employee. The approved position descriptions must be retained in HCTM/HCSC/C's official files.

456.3.2.2 Classification Appeals – Foreign Service Positions Located in USAID/Washington

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

Foreign Service employees are compensated based on their personal rank, also known as rank-in-person, unlike Civil Service employees who are compensated based on the rank of their position, also know as rank-in-position. FS employees may be assigned to positions higher or lower than their personal rank (see **ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service** and **ADS 436, Foreign Service Assignments and Tours of Duty**). The employee bids on advertised positions so he/she would have the responsibility to know the parameters of the position. Even if a directed assignment takes place, the rank-in-person principle applies. The employee does not have the right to appeal

position classifications. However, if the B/IO is creating a new position or amending an existing position, and the requested classification is disapproved, then the head of the B/IO can appeal the decision. The B/IO can appeal to the Chief of HCTM/HCSC/C. A second level of appeal to the Director of HCTM/HCSC can occur if the first appeal is denied. There are no appeals to OPM for Foreign Service classifications.

456.3.2.3 Classification Accuracy and Maintenance Reviews – Foreign Service Positions Located in USAID/Washington

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

HCTM/HCSC/C ensures the accuracy of classification of all established Foreign Service positions in USAID/W by reviewing the title, series, and grade of all positions every three years. Foreign Service positions in USAID/W are included in the position classification survey and position management review process described in section **456.3.3.4**.

The review of all established Foreign Service positions in USAID/W consists of a paper review of items on file in HCTM/HCSC/C, including the SF-52s (Requests for Personnel Action), **OF-8** (Position Description), and Staffing Patterns to identify positions that may have changed significantly in the previous year. HCTM/HCSC/C notifies the B/IOs on which positions are identified, and then B/IOs must certify in section 23 of the **OF-8** the accuracy of the positions identified or provide updated **OF-8s** and SF-52s. HCTM/HCSC/C must conduct the review in a manner that places the least requirements on the B/IO, consistent with the need to maintain position description accuracy.

456.3.3 Position Classification – Civil Service

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

HCTM/HCSC/C must maintain the classification of Civil Service positions in an up-to-date manner and in accordance with the Office of Personnel Management requirements found in **5 USC Chapter 51** and **5 CFR Part 511**.

456.3.3.1 Description and Classification of Positions – Civil Service

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

HCTM/HCSC/C must officially document duties and responsibilities assigned to a position on an **OF-8, Position Description**, and evaluated and classified by HCTM/HCSC/C in accordance with **OPM Position Classification Standards and Guides**.

Supervisors must ensure that, through the AMS, a new or amended position description is prepared and reviewed by HCTM/HCSC/C when the duties, responsibilities, or supervisory relationships of a position materially change. Supervisors are encouraged to discuss changes in positions with the appropriate Position Classification Specialist.

HCTM/HCSC/C must provide copies of new and updated position descriptions to the appropriate AMS. The AMS must then provide a copy to the employee.

Under the Civil Service classification system, it is the position (i.e., the assigned duties and responsibilities) that is classified, not the particular employee who is performing the work of the position. There is provision for "impact of the person on the job," but such situations are rare (see **OPM's Introduction to the Position Classification Standards, Section III(K)**, for "impact of the person on the job").

Classification requirements include the following:

(1) The Agency must classify all Civil Service positions in conformance with, and/or consistent with, **OPM position classification standards and functional guides**.

(2) Official position titles authorized in published standards must be used for personnel, budget, and fiscal purposes. Where published standards are lacking, and where titles are not prescribed, position titles must be consistent with OPM practices.

(3) Prescribed standards must be taken as a whole and without undue emphasis on the presence or absence of any phrase, clause, or adjective. Typical work examples found in some standards are only illustrations and are not intended to be complete or exclusive. The proper application of standards in identifying the appropriate series and grade requires the use of judgment rather than a mechanical matching of specific elements, statistics, duties, or projects. This judgment is to be applied in determining the degree to which the specific position being classified meets the intent of the series and grade level definitions.

An employee is free to discuss the duties and responsibilities of the position to which they are assigned with their immediate supervisor; to review position classification standards or other materials pertinent to the classification of the position; and to discuss the evaluation of the position as to series, title, and grade with a Classification Specialist.

456.3.3.2 Writing Position Descriptions – Civil Service Positions

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

All non-supervisory position descriptions up to the GS-15 grade level in USAID/W must be written in the Factor Evaluation System (FES) format. The FES is described in Chapter 2 of **OPM's Classifier's Handbook**.

The FES is used to assign grade levels and includes nine factors common to most nonsupervisory positions in GS occupations. These factors are:

1. Knowledge required by the position,

2. Supervisory controls,
3. Guidelines,
4. Complexity,
5. Scope and effect,
6. Personal contacts,
7. Purpose of contact,
8. Physical demands, and
9. Work environment.

GS supervisory positions in USAID/W are evaluated according to the criteria in **OPM's General Schedule Supervisory Guide**. Other **OPM functional guides**, including the **General Schedule Leader Evaluation Guide**, are used to determine the grade of broad categories of work that fall under the GS.

456.3.3.3 Classification Appeals and Administrative Reviews – Civil Service Positions

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

Any USAID Civil Service employee may appeal the classification of their official position description, either within USAID or directly to OPM. Employees are encouraged to appeal within USAID before appealing to OPM, to seek an internal resolution first. A decision by OPM is binding on the employee and the Agency, regardless of whether it is to upgrade the position, downgrade the position, or leave the position as currently classified. Further, the head of any B/IO may request an administrative review of the classification of any position description in their organization.

The following are instructions for employees who wish to appeal the classification of a position:

(1) Employees who wish to appeal the classification of their official position description within USAID must do so in writing to the Chief, HCTM/HCSC/C. The written request, through either email or memorandum, must include: a) requested title, series, and grade; b) reasons why the position is believed to be incorrectly classified, together with reasons supporting the classification the employee considers correct; and c) any relevant information, or reference to any position classification standards and/or guides, which may impact the appeal. An employee who appeals the classification of their official position within USAID may still appeal to OPM.

(2) Employees who wish to appeal the classification of their official position description to OPM may contact the Director, HCTM/HCSC, who will assign the request to HCTM/HCSC/C. HCTM/HCSC/C then provides the employee with current OPM instructions on filing a classification appeal (see Appendix 4 of **OPM's Introduction to the Position Classification Standards**).

(3) Employees who appeal the classification of their official position description to OPM may not subsequently appeal the classification of their position within USAID.

(4) Employees may not appeal the classification of another USAID or non-USAID position. The designation of positions as either Civil Service or Foreign Service is a reserved management right, which employees may not appeal.

Heads of B/IOs may request an administrative review of the classification of any position description in their organization. The request must be in writing to the Chief, HCTM/HCSC/C. The request must state the reason(s) for the request. If the head of the B/IO does not agree with the result of the administrative review, he or she may request the CHCO/HCTM to seek an advisory opinion from OPM. Only the official incumbent of a position may file an official classification appeal of a position with OPM.

HCTM/HCSC/C maintains classification appeals files in accordance with **Section 7(d), Appeals Files, of the National Archives and Records Administration General Records Schedule 1**.

456.3.3.4 Notification of Classification Action – Civil Service Positions

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

Upon completion of a desk audit or other classification review, the Classification Specialist notifies the B/IO, and/or the official incumbent of the position if appropriate, of the result of any classification decision that differs from the requested action. The Classification Specialist must provide a written report that includes an explanation of the classification decision, a copy of the position description, and a copy of the classifier's formal evaluation statement. The B/IO and/or the affected employee may comment on or rebut the decision in writing. The Classification Specialist must respond to any comment or rebuttal in writing. This response advises the B/IO and/or the employee of the final decision and of formal avenues of appeal or review, if appropriate (see **456.3.3.5**).

A GS employee whose position is reduced in grade as a result of a reclassification is entitled to retain the grade held immediately before the reduction for a period of two years (see OPM's **Fact Sheet: Grade Retention**). At the end of this two-year period, the employee is entitled to retain his or her rate of basic pay (see OPM's **Fact Sheet: Pay Retention**).

456.3.3.5 Classification Accuracy and Maintenance Reviews – Civil Service Positions

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

HCTM/HCSC/C ensures the accuracy of position classification by reviewing the title, series, and grade of all USAID/W positions every three years. Annually, HCTM/HCSC/C announces a schedule of position classification surveys and position management reviews in order to meet the objective of reviewing the title, series, and grade of all USAID/W positions within a three year period. Schedules are developed based on a review of current staffing patterns, length of time since last review, age of the position descriptions, and other objective factors considered appropriate at the time the schedule is developed. Schedules are coordinated with the organizations to be surveyed in advance. Survey schedules may be adjusted to accommodate individual personnel action requests and other position actions that serve the purpose of meeting this requirement. In addition to an overall review of the organization subject to the position classification survey and position management review, 10 percent of the positions in the organization are subject to individual position or desk audit and review.

HCTM/HCSC/C maintains classification review materials in accordance with **Section 7(c), Survey Files, of the National Archives and Records Administration General Records Schedule 1**.

456.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

456.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

a. **5 USC Chapter 51, Classification**

b. **5 CFR Part 511, Classification Under the General Schedule**

c. **FSA of 1980, as amended, Section 501, Classification of Positions**

d. **National Security Decision Directive 38 (NSDD-38), "Staffing at Diplomatic Missions and Their Constituent Posts," June 2, 1982**

e. **OPM position classification standards and guides**

f. **Section 7, Position Classification Files, of the National Archives and Records Administration General Records Schedule 1**

456.4.2 Internal Mandatory References

Effective Date: 11/02/2016

a. **ADS 101, Agency Programs and Functions**

b. **ADS 436, Foreign Service Assignments and Tours of Duty**

c. **ADS 456maa, Policies and Procedures for Position Management**

d. **ADS 456mab, Position Titles, Series, Backstops and Position Classification Standards**

c. **ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service**

d. **ADS 495, Foreign Service National Personnel Administration**

456.4.3 Mandatory Forms
Effective Date: 11/02/2016

a. **AID Form 430-4, Overseas Position Evaluation Form**

b. **OF-8, Position Description**

456.5 ADDITIONAL HELP
Effective Date: 11/02/2016

a. **Office of Personnel Management's Fact Sheet: Grade Retention**

b. **Office of Personnel Management's Fact Sheet: Pay Retention**

456.6 DEFINITIONS
Effective Date: 11/02/2016

See the **ADS Glossary** for all ADS terms and definitions.

abolishment of position
The actual termination of the job, with the duties being eliminated entirely or combined with the duties of another position or positions. (**Chapter 456**)

classification
The orderly assignment of positions to a series, title, and grade. Such classification is in accordance with published classification and job grading standards or guides promulgated by the Agency (for Foreign Service positions) or by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (for Civil Service positions). (**Chapter 456**)

evaluation statement
The written support for a position's placement in a particular series and grade level, as well as for the position title. (**Chapter 456**)

factor evaluation system

Method of determining a position's grade level, which assigns points to each of the nine factors in a position description. (**Chapter 456**)

general schedule
The broadest subdivision of the classification system covered by title 5. It includes a range of levels of difficulty and responsibility for covered positions from grades GS−1 to GS−15. (**Chapter 456**)

grade
The numerical designation that identifies the level of difficulty and responsibility, and level of qualification requirements of positions included in the General Schedule and Foreign Service. (**Chapter 456**)

NSDD-38 (National Security Decision Directive 38)
Ambassadorial approval for all Foreign Affairs Agency positions overseas. (**Chapter 456**)

position
The duties and responsibilities that make up the work of one employee. (**Chapter 456**)

position description
The official description of management's assignment of duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships to a position. (**Chapter 456**)

series
A subdivision consisting of positions similar to a specialized line of work and qualification requirements. Series are designated by a title and number such as the Accounting Series, GS−510; the Secretary Series, GS−318; and the Microbiology Series, GS−403. (**Chapter 456**)

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