



ADS 421

Senior Executive Service (SES)
Performance Management System

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Functional Series 400 – Personnel
 Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Management System
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**Text highlighted in yellow indicates that the adjacent material is new or substantively revised.*

ADS 421 – Senior Executive Service (SES) Performance Management System

421.1

OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

This ADS chapter details the policy directives and required procedures of USAID's performance management system for members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). USAID designed this system to ensure accountability for individual and organizational performance and improve overall Agency performance. This performance management system

- a. Promotes excellence in Senior Executive performance;
- b. Holds executives accountable for business results by linking executive performance to the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) showing results-oriented measures, as established through the Agency's strategic planning initiatives and the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010;
- c. Holds executives accountable for (1) aligning subordinate performance plans with organizational goals, and (2) rigorously completing performance plans and appraisals of subordinates by the due dates set by the Office of Human Resources (OHR);
- d. Establishes and communicates individual and organizational performance goals and expectations, standards, and accomplishments;
- e. Appraises executive performance using measures that balance organizational results with customer, employee, or other perspectives; and
- f. Uses performance results as the primary basis for determining SES pay, awards, development, retention, removal, and other employment decisions.

421.2

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

- a. The **Administrator** (or designee) serves as the appointing authority for the Senior Executive Service (SES). As appointing authority, he or she
 - (1) Approves annual summary ratings, bonuses, and pay adjustments based on each executive's performance, after giving due consideration to the recommendations of the Performance Review Board (PRB) (see **421.2 (d)**); and
 - (2) Authorizes pay above Level III of the Executive Schedule and increases in an executive's pay more than once during a 12-month period.

b. The Office of Human Resources, Civil Service Personnel Division (OHR/CSP), is responsible for

- (1) Administering the SES performance management system;
- (2) Explaining the appraisal process and requirements in law, regulations, policies, and procedures to executives and their supervisors;
- (3) Providing formal training and guidance on the proper preparation and completion of SES performance plans; and
- (4) Coordinating and disseminating information on organizational performance and results (see **421.3.4(a)**).

c. Rating Officials (immediate supervisors) are responsible for

- (1) **Establishing performance plans, in consultation with the executive;**
- (2) Monitoring and communicating progress to the executive throughout the appraisal period, and modifying performance elements and requirements/standards, as needed;
- (3) Conducting a progress review at least once during the appraisal period;
- (4) **Soliciting and receiving customer and employee perspective through the use of 360 degree feedback for the end-of-year appraisal; and**
- (5) Proposing appropriate actions for executives whose performance is less than “Fully Successful.”

d. Higher Level Reviewers (second-line supervisors) are responsible for

- (1) **Reviewing documentation presented by the executive; and**
- (2) **Making a recommendation to the Performance Review Board (PRB) and appointing authority, but may not change the initial rating.**

e. The Performance Review Board (PRB) is responsible for

- (1) Approving all SES performance plans at the beginning of the rating period to ensure they are clear, results-oriented, equitable, and establish the relationship between organizational goals and the executive’s expected results and achievements;
- (2) Evaluating initial summary ratings from supervisors and written documentation provided by executives to ensure that only those

executives whose performance merits a “Fully Successful” or higher rating receive them;

- (3) Providing support and oversight to supervisors in dealing with problematic performers; and
- (4) Providing written recommendations to the Administrator on all rated executives concerning their initial summary ratings, bonuses, pay adjustments, and nominations for Presidential rank awards.

f. The **Office of Management, Policy, Budget, and Performance, Budget Division (M/MPBP/BUD)** is responsible for collaborating with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) staff to recommend the level of funding for the SES Performance Management and Pay Administration Plan, prior to PRB consideration of individual pay adjustments for executives (see **421.3.9**).

421.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

Effective Date: 01/03/2011

This section provides the mandatory policies and required procedures of USAID’s Senior Executive Service Performance Management System.

421.3.1 Performance Appraisal Period

Effective Date: 01/03/2011

- a. The annual performance appraisal period for executives begins on October 1 and ends on September 30 of the following year.
- b. The minimum period of performance for which an executive may receive a valid appraisal is 90 days (see [5 CFR 430.304](#)).
- c. If, as of September 30, an executive has not been under an established SES performance plan for the minimum appraisal period of 90 calendar days, USAID will extend the appraisal period for the amount of time necessary to meet the minimum appraisal period. At that time, the executive’s supervisor will prepare an initial summary rating.
- d. In addition, the supervisor must establish a performance plan each time an executive is assigned to a supervisor for at least 90 calendar days (for example, details or task forces) in the appraisal period (see **421.3.4(c)**).
- e. USAID will not appraise any career executive within 120 days of the beginning of a new Presidential administration. This moratorium delays the SES appraisal and rating; however, it does not extend the length of the annual performance period.

- f. The appraisal period may end any time after the minimum appraisal period is completed if there is an adequate basis on which to appraise and rate the Senior Executive's performance (for example, the executive's supervisor retires on September 10) (see [5 CFR 430, Subpart C](#)).

421.3.2 SES Performance Work Plans

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

- a. Supervisors must provide written performance work plans at the beginning of the appraisal period in consultation with the executive (all performance elements are critical). This must be done within 30 calendar days of the start of the appraisal period, or upon the executive's entry to a particular SES position (see section 421.3.2d).
- b. Each SES performance work plan will
- (1) Establish responsibility for the achievement of each critical element, individual, and organizational goals and objectives assigned to the executive, consistent with the Agency's strategic goals and objectives;
 - (2) Consist of the duties and responsibilities described in the executive's position description;
 - (3) Consist of duties and responsibilities that are critical to the implementation of recruitment and selection decisions, in accordance with the Agency's Merit Staffing Policy/hiring plans;
 - (4) Contain performance elements and requirements that are critical to achieving successful performance; and
 - (5) Be established in concert and alignment with subordinate performance plans, so that the organizational goals for which the executive is responsible are translated into specific, measurable results that their subordinates must accomplish.
- c. USAID requires that the following items be incorporated in the executive's performance plan:
- (1) All SES performance plans must contain five critical performance elements based on the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs), which are Leading Change, Leading People, Business Acumen, Building Coalitions, and Results-Driven.
 - (2) Each critical element must include Agency-specific performance requirements that state specific, expected accomplishments. It should not describe general tasks, activities, duties or responsibilities of an ongoing job. Performance elements must incorporate objectives, goals, program

plans or other similar means that account for strategic business results to be accomplished over the next year. If the timeframe is longer than one year, the supervisor should identify interim milestones.

- (3) The first four critical elements, Leading Change, Leading People, Business Acumen, and Building Coalitions are weighted at least 10%. The last critical element, Results-Driven, is weighted at 40% and must identify a clear, transparent alignment to relevant Agency or organizational goals/objectives, page numbers, from the Strategic Plan, Congressional Budget Justification/Annual Performance Plan, or other organizational planning document.
 - (4) Each executive is responsible for the achievement of all five critical performance elements (see [AID Form 410-10, SES Performance Management Program Executive Performance Agreement](#)).
 - (5) At a minimum, supervisors must write performance requirements at the “Fully Successful” level (Level III).
 - (6) For each critical performance element, the supervisor and executive must determine a specific timeframe for the accomplishment of performance requirements, expected results, and measures in the standards that demonstrate achievement. These standards must be objective, measurable, achievable, specific, and/or realistic descriptions of expected results. They may include measures related to quality, quantity, cost efficiency, and timeliness.
- d. Supervisors must prepare performance work plans in writing on [AID Form 410-10, SES Performance Management System Executive Performance Agreement](#), or in the ePerformance system and provide them to the executive within 30 days of the beginning of the appraisal period. The Rating Official (RO) and the executive must certify (sign and date) the performance plan upon completion and maintain a copy.

The executive’s signature indicates that his or her supervisor consulted with the individual in developing the performance plan. It also indicates that the supervisor discussed, with the executive, the critical performance elements and the Agency-specific performance requirements applicable to the individual’s position, and that these criteria will be the basis of any rating for the ensuing appraisal period.

If the supervisor and the executive cannot reach agreement on the plan, the Rating Official will decide what is expected and inform the executive.

Upon certification, the Rating Official sends the performance plan to OHR, who then submits the plan to the Performance Review Board (PRB) for approval.

421.3.3 Progress Reviews

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

- a. The Rating Official must conduct at least one formal progress review with the executive during the annual appraisal period. At the review, the official apprises the executive how well he or she is performing against established performance requirements. USAID strongly encourages frequent, informal communication between Rating Officials and executives to discuss the executive's progress in meeting established **critical** performance elements and **requirements** and to provide advice and assistance on performance improvement, as needed.
- b. At the progress review(s), the Rating Official should communicate to the executive any changes to the performance plan, if circumstances warrant them. The supervisor must document any such revisions in writing on the appraisal form/ in system.
- c. If progress on a particular performance element is less than "Fully Successful," the Rating Official must provide written documentation outlining the measures the employee must take to correct performance deficiencies. The supervisor **must** also prepare a **mandatory Executive Development Plan (EDP)** for the **executive**. The Rating Official provides a copy of this documentation to the executive and the PRB.
- d. Rating Officials **must use the mandatory [AID Form 421-2, The Executive Development Plan Template](#)**, to identify short and long-term developmental goals.
- e. Executives and Rating Officials must acknowledge, in writing, on the appraisal form that the Rating Official has conducted at least one formal progress review.

421.3.4 Appraisal of Performance

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

a. Annual Assessment of Agency Performance

Periodically, the SES Program **Manager**, **OHR**, will train Rating Officials and **executives** on performance management, including pay-for-performance criteria. **OHR** is available to provide end-of-year appraisal guidance to Rating Officials prior to their preparation of the executive's initial summary rating. **OHR** staff coordinates this guidance with other Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs), as appropriate, and instructs Rating Officials and the PRB to take various indicators of organizational performance into account in appraising and reviewing the executive's individual performance.

These indicators include annual assessments of each B/IO's efforts in accomplishing organizational goals, including:

- The Annual Performance Report (APR),
- Reports of the Agency's Government Performance and Results Modernization Act (GPRA) goals,
- Reviews conducted by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB),
- Annual performance plans and targets,
- Program performance measures, and
- Other appropriate indicators.

b. Appraisal/Rating Process

The Rating Official must obtain a written self-assessment of accomplishments from the executive regarding actual performance within 30 days after the end of the rating cycle. The Rating Official must provide written comments to support and document the initial summary rating. The Rating Official must also consider any appraisals related to a detail or transfer, when preparing the initial summary rating (see **421.3.4(c)**) at the end of the rating period.

The Rating Official must rate the executive's performance on success in meeting each performance element, unless there has been insufficient opportunity to demonstrate performance in that element. In doing so, the Rating Official must use an approach that balances organizational results with the perspectives of distinct groups, including customers and employees, and state how the executive accomplished organizational goals over the rating period. The supervisor rates the executive's performance on each **critical performance element and performance requirement in Part 5, and the derivation formula (see 421.3.4(f)) in Part 4 of AID Form 410-10/system**, and assigns one of the five summary rating levels set forth in section **421.3.4(d)**. The supervisor must then appraise the executive's overall performance by assigning one of the five summary ratings provided in section **421.3.4(e)**.

The Rating Official

- (1) Prepares and signs the initial summary rating;
- (2) Meets with the executive for a detailed discussion of goals and accomplishments, comments from employees, customers, and key stakeholders, and the significance of these factors in assessing the executive's actual performance over the rating period;

- (3) Gives the executive a copy of the signed appraisal form and notifies the executive of his or her right to prepare a written response and request a higher level review (see 421.3.4).

c. Appraisals for Position Changes, Details, and Long-Term Training

- (1) When a Senior Executive changes positions within the Agency, or transfers to another agency after completing the minimum appraisal period, the losing supervisor must appraise the executive's performance in writing before the executive leaves. This appraisal will serve as one of the executive's appraisals. The gaining supervisor must consider this appraisal when developing the initial summary rating at the end of the appraisal period. The gaining supervisor must appraise the senior executive's performance in writing and this appraisal must be factored into the initial summary rating that the Rating Official prepares at the end of the rating period.
- (2) When USAID details, or temporarily reassigns an executive within the Agency for a period expected to last 120 days or longer, the gaining supervisor must provide the executive with written performance elements and requirements as soon as possible, but no later than 30 calendar days after the beginning of the detail or temporary reassignment. The gaining supervisor must appraise the executive's performance in writing, and this appraisal must be factored into the initial summary rating that the Rating Official prepares at the end of the rating period.
- (3) When USAID details an executive away from the Agency for 120 days or longer, the executive's Rating Official must make a reasonable effort to obtain appraisal information from the outside organization. The Rating Official must consider the information in developing the initial summary rating at the end of the appraisal period. USAID treats a long-term training assignment in the same way as a detail away from the Agency.
- (4) When an executive moves to another agency, the Rating Official must forward all appropriate performance-related documents five-years old or less in the Employee Performance Folder, along with the executive's Official Personnel Folder.

d. Benchmark Descriptions in Rating Individual Performance Elements

Rating Officials must consider the following Benchmark Descriptions when assigning ratings to each individual performance elements and standards:

- (1) **Outstanding (Level V)** – The executive demonstrates exceptional performance, fostering a climate that sustains excellence and optimizes results in the executive's organization, agency, department, or

government-wide. This represents the highest level of executive performance, as evidenced by the extraordinary impact on the achievement of the organization's mission. The executive is an inspirational leader and is considered a role model by agency leadership, peers, and employees. The executive continually contributes materially to or spearheads agency efforts that address or accomplish important agency goals, consistently achieves expectations at the highest level of quality possible, and consistently handles challenges, exceeds targets, and completes assignments ahead of schedule at every step along the way.

- (2) Exceeds Fully Successful (Level IV)** – The executive demonstrates a very high level of performance beyond that required for successful performance in the executive's position and scope of responsibilities. The executive is a proven, highly effective leader who builds trust and instills confidence in Agency leadership, peers, and employees. The executive consistently exceeds established performance expectations, timelines, or targets, as applicable.
- (3) Fully Successful (Level III)** – The executive demonstrates the high level of performance expected, and the executive's actions and leadership contribute positively toward the achievement of strategic goals and meaningful results. The executive is an effective, solid, and dependable leader who delivers high-quality results, based on measures of quality, quantity, efficiency, and/or effectiveness, within agreed upon timelines. The executive meets and often exceeds challenging performance expectations established for the position.
- (4) Minimally Successful (Level II)** – The executive's contributions to the organization are acceptable in the short-term, but do not appreciably advance the organization towards achievement of its goals and objectives. While the executive generally meets established performance expectations, timelines, and targets, there are occasional lapses that impair operations and/or cause concern from management. While showing basic ability to accomplish work through others, the executive may demonstrate limited ability to inspire subordinates to give their best efforts, or to marshal those efforts effectively to address problems characteristic of the organization and its work.
- (5) Unsatisfactory (Level I)** – In repeated instances, the executive demonstrates performance deficiencies that detract from mission goals and objectives. The executive generally is viewed as ineffectual by Agency leadership, peers, or employees. The executive does not meet established performance expectations/timelines/targets and fails to produce – or produces unacceptable – work products, services, or outcomes.

f. Annual Summary Ratings of Record

After the Rating Official appraises the executive's individual performance elements, the following point values will be assigned to the performance element ratings:

- Level 5 = 5 points
- Level 4 = 4 points
- Level 3 = 3 points
- Level 2 = 2 points
- Level 1 = 0 points

The derivation formula is calculated as follows:

- If any critical performance element is rated Level 1 (Unsatisfactory), the overall summary rating is Unsatisfactory.
- If no critical performance element is rated Level 1 (Unsatisfactory), continue to the next step.
- For each critical performance element, multiply the point value of the critical performance element rating by the weight assigned to that critical performance element.

Example of Deriving Initial Summary Rating:

Leading Change	10% x 4 =	40
Leading People	20% x 3 =	60
Business Acumen	15% x 5 =	75
Building Coalitions	15% x 4 =	60
Results-Driven	40% x 3 =	120
Total		355

Add the results from the previous step, for each of the five critical performance elements, to come to a total score.

Assign the initial summary rating using the ranges below:

- 475-500 = Level 5
- 400-474 = Level 4
- 300-399 = Level 3
- 200-299 = Level 2
- Any critical performance element rated Level 1 = Level 1

g. Review of Appraisal

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

The executive reviews the appraisal and has 10 workdays to provide a narrative statement regarding performance, or may request a higher-level review, or both. If the executive does not request a higher-level review, the Rating Official sends the performance plan directly to SES Performance Management Program Manager (PM), OHR, who then forwards it to the PRB.

An executive who disagrees with the initial summary rating may request a higher-level review as follows:

- (1) The executive must request a higher-level review, in writing, within 10 workdays of receipt of the initial summary rating. The request must be submitted to the SES PM, who will coordinate the review by an appropriate higher-level reviewing official.
- (2) The reviewing official must prepare a separate written finding and recommendation to the PRB within ten working days of receipt of the PM's request for his or her review of the initial summary rating. The reviewing official may not change the initial summary rating, but may recommend a rating other than the one the Rating Official assigned. The reviewing official must provide to the Senior Executive, the Rating Official, and the PRB a copy of his or her finding(s).
- (3) The PRB will consider the reviewing official's recommendation in determining a final rating. The PRB's re-consideration decision becomes the final recommendation.

421.3.5 Performance Review Board Review and Approval of Ratings

Effective Date: 01/03/2011

a. Composition of Performance Review Board (PRB)

The PRB consists of a minimum of three members. The OHR SES PM will recommend membership to the PRB annually or bi-annually, as circumstances necessitate. The Agency's Administrator, or designee, approves the final membership. The majority of PRB members must be career members of the SES. USAID must appoint at least one career member of the SES from another Federal agency.

The names of PRB members must be published annually in the Federal Register, as required by regulation.

USAID must appoint PRB members in such a manner as to ensure consistency, stability, and objectivity in recommending ratings, bonuses, and base pay adjustments.

b. PRB Review of Ratings of Records

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

The PRB reviews and evaluates the initial summary rating, the rated executive's written response, and the written recommendations prepared by the reviewing official, conducting any further review, as necessary. In reviewing each executive's individual performance, the PRB takes into account organizational performance, based on annual assessments of the Agency's performance with respect to each B/IO and the Agency's strategic planning initiatives.

The PRB must make a written recommendation to the Administrator concerning each executive's initial summary rating, ensuring that only those executives whose job performance exceeds normal expectations are rated at levels above "Fully Successful." If the board's recommendations differ from the recommendation of the Rating Official, the board must document, in writing, its rationale for the recommended change.

The primary product of the PRB is a unified set of recommendations for annual summary ratings, bonuses, performance-based pay adjustments, and nominations for Presidential rank awards. The PRB must base its recommendations on the extent to which the executive met organizational goals, with due consideration given to employee and customer perspectives. (See **421.3.9**, Performance Bonuses, Pay Adjustments, and Rank Awards.)

PRB members must not take part in any board deliberations involving their own appraisals, bonuses, or pay adjustments, or those of their immediate supervisor.

421.3.6 **Final Approval of Annual Summary Rating**
Effective Date: 05/21/2014

The Administrator assigns annual summary ratings, giving due consideration to the PRB's recommendations. The Administrator certifies that the results of the SES appraisal process make meaningful distinctions in pay, including base pay adjustments, performance awards, and performance ratings.

The annual summary rating is the official rating of record assigned by the appointing authority, after considering the recommendations of the PRB. The annual summary ratings are not appealable. However, under [5 U.S.C. 2302](#), the executive may appeal allegations of prohibited personnel practices related to the appraisal process to the Office of Special Counsel.

The Agency may not prescribe a forced or pre-established distribution of ratings.

421.3.7 **Use of Performance Appraisals**
Effective Date: 05/21/2014

- a. USAID uses annual summary ratings as a tool for managing executive performance. These ratings form the basis for the Agency's adjustment of base

pay, training, rewarding, reassigning, transferring, retaining or removing employees from the SES.

- b. An executive who receives one “**Level 1** - Unsatisfactory” annual summary rating must be reassigned, or transferred within the SES, or removed from it. An executive who receives two “Level 1 - Unsatisfactory” annual summary ratings in any five-year period must be removed from the SES; and an executive who receives less than a “Fully successful” annual summary rating twice in any three-year period must be removed from the SES.

Removal of a career executive may not occur within 120 days after the appointment of a non-career executive in the supervisory chain of command who has authority to remove the executive.

- c. If the annual summary rating is below the “Fully Successful” level, and the Agency retains the executive in the SES, the Agency must provide the executive with a formal improvement plan. This plan describes what efforts both the executive and the supervisor will undertake to improve the executive’s performance to the “Fully Successful” level, including, but not limited to formal or on-the-job training, counseling, closer supervision, and mentorship.
- d. The Agency will advise the executive if it is taking any personnel action and the effect of another less than “Fully Successful” rating.

421.3.8 Notice Requirements and Placement Rights

Effective Date: 01/03/2011

- a. USAID must notify a Senior Executive in advance of reassignment, removal or reduction in pay for performance reasons.
 - (1) A career executive must receive a 15 calendar day advance written notice before USAID reassigns him or her (within a commuting area) for performance reasons.
 - (2) A career executive must receive a 15 calendar day advance written notice before receiving a reduction in pay.
 - (3) A career executive post-probationer must receive a 30 calendar day advance written notice before the effective date of removal from the SES. The executive is entitled, upon request, to an informal hearing before an official designated by the Merit Systems Protection Board at least 15 calendar days before the effective date of the action.

An executive who is removed for performance may not appeal the decision to the Merit Systems Protection Board under [5 U.S.C. 7701](#). The conduct of an informal hearing does not delay the effective date of removal.

- b.** Career executives are afforded placement rights if the Agency removes them from an SES position for performance reasons.
- (1)** An executive is entitled to be placed in a vacant position (other than an SES position) in any agency, that is
- A continuing position at GS-15 or above or equivalent that will last at least three months; and
 - A position for which the executive meets the qualification requirements.
- (2)** A probationary appointee or a non-probationary appointee, who at the time of appointment to the SES held a career or career-conditional appointment (or equivalent), is entitled to be placed in a position of tenure equivalent to that of the appointment held at the time of appointment to the SES.
- (3)** A career executive the Agency removes from an SES position because of performance is entitled to receive basic pay at the highest of the following:
- The rate of basic pay in effect for the position in which he or she is placed;
 - The rate of basic pay currently in effect for the position the executive held in the Civil Service immediately before being appointed to the SES; or
 - The rate of basic pay in effect for the executive immediately before removal from the SES.

421.3.9 Performance Bonuses, Pay Adjustments, and Rank Awards

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

a. Annual Performance Management and Pay Administration Plan

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) updates the Performance Management and Pay Administration Plan annually. This Plan has guidelines for SES pay actions, including performance-based pay adjustments and bonuses that are subject to available funding. OHR and the Office of Management Policy, Budget, and Performance (M/MPBP) prepare joint recommendations on the level of funding for the Plan. USAID must provide the Plan to the PRB to guide its deliberations and recommendations on SES performance ratings and performance-based pay adjustments and bonuses.

b. Performance Bonuses

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

The Agency distributes bonuses in accordance with its annual Performance Management and Pay Administration Plan guidelines and regulations in [5 CFR Part 534, Subpart D](#). The total amount of performance awards paid during a fiscal year by USAID may not exceed the greater of:

- (1) Ten percent of the aggregate career SES rates of basic pay for the agency as of the end of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the award payments are made; or
- (2) Twenty percent of the average annual rates of basic pay for career SES appointees of the agency as of the end of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the award payments are made.

USAID may consider for appropriate recognition executives whose annual summary rating is at least “Fully Successful,” based on the relative value of their achievement to the accomplishment of organizational goals, the degree of difficulty inherent in successful achievement by the executive, and other factors that the PRB deems appropriate.

The amount of a performance award paid to an individual career appointee may not be less than 5 percent or more than 20 percent of the appointee's SES rate of basic pay as of the end of the performance appraisal period.

c. Pay Adjustments

USAID makes performance-based pay adjustments consistent with its annual Performance Management and Pay Administration Plan and the regulations in [5 CFR Part 534, Subpart D](#). In administering pay adjustments, the Agency adheres to the following regulatory and policy guidance:

- (1) USAID bases pay adjustments on individual performance and/or contribution to the Agency's performance, as determined under the Agency's performance management system. In assessing an executive's performance, the PRB may consider such factors as unique skills, qualifications, or competencies that the individual possesses, and their significance to the Agency's performance, as well as the executive's current responsibilities.
- (2) Executives who demonstrate the highest levels of individual performance and make the greatest contributions to the Agency's performance receive the highest pay adjustments.
- (3) A Senior Executive who receives a summary performance rating of “Outstanding” must be considered for an annual pay adjustment.

- (4) The maximum rate of basic pay any executive may receive is Level II of the Executive Schedule. However, in accordance with the limitations in [5 CFR 534.403\(a\)\(2\)](#) for setting an executive's rate of basic pay higher than Level III of the Executive Schedule, USAID reserves those higher rates for those executives who have demonstrated the highest levels of individual performance and/or made the greatest contributions to the Agency's performance (see [5 U.S.C. 5383](#)).
- (5) An executive who receives an annual summary rating below "Fully Successful" may not receive an annual pay adjustment. Executives who are rated less than "Fully Successful" may have their rate of pay reduced by no more than 10 percent. However, prior to reducing an executive's rate of basic pay, the Agency must provide him or her with written notice and an opportunity to respond, as set forth in [5 CFR 534.404\(j\)](#) (see section [421.3.8\(a\)](#)). Any pay reduction requires the final approval of the Administrator, who makes a final determination with respect to an executive's request for reconsideration.
- (6) Individual base pay adjustments must reflect meaningful distinctions within a single performance rating level and between performance rating levels.
- (7) Executives may not receive more than one pay adjustment in any 12-month period (see [5 U.S.C. 5383](#)). The following actions are considered pay adjustments:
- a. The setting of an executive's rate of basic pay upon initial appointment or reappointment to the SES; and
 - b. Any pay adjustment (increase or reduction) including pay increases resulting from a waiver of the 12 month rule.
 - c. The Administrator or designee may authorize exceptions to the 12 month rule (see [5 CFR 534.404\(c\)\(4\)](#)). Exceptions include:
 - Recruitment,
 - Retention,
 - Exceptionally meritorious accomplishment,
 - Reassignment to a position with substantially greater scope and responsibility, and
 - Realignment of an executive with the Agency's appraisal or pay adjustment cycle.

d. Rank Awards

The selection of nominees for Presidential rank awards is based on a record of sustained superior executive performance over multiple annual performance cycles.

e. Superior Accomplishment Award for Special Acts

This award recognizes superior accomplishments for a one-time special act or service that is beyond or outside normal job responsibilities as covered by the employee's job description and/or as set forth in the executive's annual evaluation plan and performance standards.

f. Certificate of Appreciation

This award recognizes a contribution by an individual executive who performed a special assignment in an outstanding manner.

421.3.10 Records Management

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

The **Executive Performance Agreement** includes a summary rating of record that is approved by the Administrator. OHR files the **Executive Performance Agreement** in a separate Employee Performance Folder (EPF) that is maintained for each executive for a minimum of five years. Additionally, justifications and documentation of awards other than those based on the **Executive Performance Agreement** must be retained in the EPF.

Upon transfer of the executive to another Federal agency, the responsible OHR staff member will forward all appropriate performance-related documents five-years old or less to the gaining agency.

421.3.11 System Evaluation

Effective Date: 01/03/2011

In accordance with [5 CFR 430.311](#), the Executive Resources Board (ERB) may serve as the body that evaluates the USAID SES performance management system. After review, the ERB reports its findings and recommendations to the Administrator. This function is typically performed after the PRB's annual review of final ratings and recommendations for bonuses, base pay adjustments, and Presidential rank award nominations conducted at the end of year appraisal cycle.

421.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

421.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 01/03/2011

a. [5 CFR 430, Subpart C](#)

- b. [5 CFR Part 534, Subpart D](#)
- c. [5 U.S.C. 2302](#)
- d. [5 U.S.C 4312](#)
- e. [5 U.S.C. 4314](#)
- f. [5 U.S.C. 5383](#)
- g. [5 U.S.C. 7701](#)
- h. [Government Performance and Results Modernization Act \(GPRA\) of 2010](#)

421.4.2 Internal Mandatory References

Effective Date: 01/03/2011

There are no Internal Mandatory References for this chapter.

421.4.3 Mandatory Forms

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

- a. [AID Form 410-10, SES Performance Management System Executive Performance Agreement](#)
- b. [AID Form 421-2, Executive Development Plan Template](#)

421.5 ADDITIONAL HELP

Effective Date: 01/03/2011

There are no Additional Help documents for this chapter.

421.6 DEFINITIONS

Effective Date: 05/21/2014

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

annual appraisal period

USAID's official performance appraisal period for which an annual summary rating must be prepared. This period runs from October 1 through September 30 of the following year. (**Chapter 421**)

annual summary rating

The overall rating level that an appointing authority (the Administrator) assigns at the end of the appraisal period after considering the Performance Review Board's (PRB's) recommendations. This is the official rating of record. (**Chapter 421**)

appointing authority

The Agency Head or other official delegated authority to make appointments in the Senior Executive Service who assigns the official rating, approves bonuses, and pay adjustments. (Chapter 421)

appraisal period

The period of time for which a Senior Executive’s performance will be appraised and rated. This period must be a minimum of 90 days. (Chapter 421)

benchmark descriptions

An individual performance rating that is assigned to each performance element and standard for the purpose of deriving an annual summary rating. (Chapter 421)

critical or performance element

A key component of a Senior Executive’s work that contributes to the achievement of organizational goals and results and is so important that unsatisfactory performance of the element would make the executive’s overall job performance unsatisfactory. (Chapter 421)

executive

A member of the Senior Executive Service; also referred to as a “member” or a “senior executive.” (Chapter 421)

Executive Development Plan (EDP)

A formal document that specifically identifies short- and long-term learning and developmental goals. (Chapter 421)

Executive Performance Agreement

The completed USAID form (Form AID 410-10) used to document the Senior Executive’s performance plan, progress reviews, modifications, if any, interim ratings, and the annual summary rating. (Chapter 421)

higher-level reviewer

A supervising official at a higher level who was not involved in the initial rating process – normally the second-level supervisor. (Chapter 421)

initial summary rating

An overall summary rating level the Rating Official derives from appraising the Senior Executive’s performance during the appraisal period and forwards to the Performance Review Board. (Chapter 421)

pay adjustment

A change from one salary rate to another salary rate while employed in the Senior Executive Service. Pay may be adjusted once in any 12 month period. (Chapter 421)

performance

The accomplishment of assigned work described in the Senior Executive's performance plan. (**Chapter 421**)

performance appraisal

The review and evaluation of a Senior Executive's performance against established performance elements and standards established at the beginning of the appraisal period. (**Chapter 421**)

performance management system

A framework of policies/procedures established for planning, monitoring, developing, evaluating, and rewarding individual and organizational performance that uses personnel information as a basis for making other employment decisions. (**Chapter 421**)

performance plan

The written summary of work the Senior Executive is expected to accomplish during the appraisal period and the standards against which performance will be evaluated. The plan addresses all elements established for the Senior Executive. (**Chapter 421**)

performance requirements

A statement of the performance expected for a critical element. (**Chapter 421**)

Performance Review Board (PRB)

A group of executives appointed by the Administrator that provides recommendations regarding Senior Executive Service performance appraisals, bonuses, pay adjustments, and rank award nominations. (**Chapter 421**)

performance standard

A statement **containing** the level of performance expected for an element. (**Chapter 421**)

progress review

A review of the Senior Executive's progress in meeting established performance elements and standards. A progress review normally occurs midway through the appraisal period. (**Chapter 421**)

Rating Official

The Senior Executive's immediate supervisor who prepares the initial summary rating. (**Chapter 421**)

strategic planning initiatives

Agency strategic plans, annual performance plans, organizational work plans, and other related initiatives. (**Chapter 421**)

summary performance levels

USAID's Senior Executive Service performance management system has five summary performance levels: Outstanding, Exceeds Fully Successful, Fully Successful, Minimally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory. (**Chapter 421**)

summary rating

The overall rating assigned to a Senior Executive's job performance through the systematic assessment of individual element ratings. (**Chapter 421**)

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