ADS Chapter 468

Foreign Service (FS) Personnel Recruitment

Functional Series 400 – Personnel
ADS 468 – Foreign Service (FS) Personnel Recruitment
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<mark>*This chapter has been revised in its entirety.*</mark>

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468.1   OVERVIEW
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

This chapter provides the policy directives and required procedures that govern the recruitment and selection of applicants for appointments as Foreign Service (FS) career candidates in USAID.

This chapter **does not apply** to recruitment conducted by the Office of the Inspector General, which has personnel authority under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-452). This chapter also **does not apply** to the recruitment of individuals for the Senior Foreign Service (SFS); Foreign Service National (FSN) positions; Civil Service (CS) to Foreign Service (FS) appointments; or to U.S. citizens hired abroad. Policy directives and required procedures for recruitment under those authorities are located in the following Automated Directives System (ADS) chapters:

- **ADS 422, Personnel Operations: Senior Foreign Service**;

- **ADS 495, Foreign Service National Personnel Administration**;

- **ADS 415, Civil Service to Foreign Service Appointment Program**; and

- **ADS 499, Overseas Employment Program**.

468.2   PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

a.   The **Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO)** is responsible for oversight and evaluation of all aspects of the Agency's personnel recruitment.

b.   The **Senior Deputy Director for Operations, Office of Human Resources (OHR/OD)** provides leadership and direction for all Foreign Service recruitment for USAID.

c.   The **Office of Human Resources, Policy, Planning, and Information Management Division (OHR/PPIM)** establishes workforce plans for USAID that articulate projected staffing requirements.

d.   The **Chief, Office of Human Resources, Foreign Service Personnel Division (OHR/FSP)** administers Foreign Service personnel policies and operations.

e.   The **Office of Human Resources, Foreign Service Personnel Division, Special Programs Branch (OHR/FSP/SP)** handles all operational aspects of the application and selection process.

f. The ₒₘₑₒₒfₕₘₐₙᵣₑₛₒᵤᵣₑ **Outreach and Marketing Team (OHR/O&M)** conducts targeted outreach and recruitment activities at sites where potential candidates for USAID jobs may be identified.

g. The ₒₘₑₒfₕₘₐₙᵣₑₛₒᵤᵣₑₛ,ₜᵣₐᵢₙᵢₙgₐₙdₑdᵤₐᵢₒₙᵢᵢₛᵢₒₙ ₒₕᵣₜₑ develops and administers new-employee orientation and other training for new entrants in coordination with OHR/FSP/SP.

h. **Bureaus and Independent Offices (B/IOs)** assist with recruitment plans and processes, including writing the selection criteria for positions in their occupational categories (backstops) and providing OHR/FSP with representatives for Technical Review Panels and Technical Selection Panels. Each primary Backstop B/IO designates a recruitment coordinator and alternate coordinator to work with OHR/FSP/SP.

i. The **Technical Review Panel (TRP)** reviews written applications submitted in response to Foreign Service vacancy announcements and determines which applicants are sufficiently well qualified to be invited for interviews.

j. The **Technical Selection Panel (TSP)** conducts the applicant on-site assessment and interviewing process for candidates recommended by the TRP and scores the candidates on each aspect of the assessment.

k. The **Special Review Panel (SRP)** reviews issues arising from a reference or other factors that may adversely affect a tentative offer of employment to a candidate.

l. The **Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD)** works with OHR and the TRPs and TSPs to ensure that the selection process is conducted fairly and equitably in compliance with applicable equal opportunity laws and contributes to a fully diverse Foreign Service workforce.

m. The **Office of Security (SEC)** conducts and adjudicates personnel security investigations to determine the security eligibility of USAID employees and employment candidates.

468.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

USAID endeavors to fill Foreign Service (FS) positions with the best-qualified applicants available who are willing to make a long-term career commitment to international development as USAID Foreign Service Officers (FSOs). USAID recruits from both within the Agency and outside the Agency. Applicants are considered 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, through the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD), in accordance with **section 101 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended**, fosters the development and vigorous implementation of policies and procedures that will facilitate and encourage entry into, and advancement in, the Foreign Service by people from all segments of American society, as well as equal opportunity and equitable treatment for all.

Pursuant to section **301(c) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended**, the fact that an applicant is a veteran or disabled veteran is considered an affirmative factor in the selection of Foreign Service Officer career candidates.

The Agency recruits entry-level career candidates for Junior Officer positions in selected technical and administrative areas (**backstops**) to address critical skill needs that arise at any given time. To fill vacancies in Critical Priority Countries and to meet emergencies or other critical staffing needs that have not been filled by career or career candidate FSOs, USAID may also recruit a limited number of mid-level candidates.

The vacancy announcement for each position specifies the salary range to be offered. Candidates start at the minimum salary for the range, based on having met the education and experience requirements set forth in the vacancy announcement. Applicants whose qualifications exceed the minimum may start at a higher step within the range based on their highest previous federal or non-federal earnings for equivalent work. For more information on how Foreign Service salaries are determined see **ADS 470.3.7, Salary Determination**.

468.3.1   Workforce Planning
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The Office of Human Resources, Policy, Planning, and Information Management Division (OHR/PPIM) defines and manages the USAID workforce planning process in support of the Agency's Strategic Plan. The process provides a data-driven model that enables decisions based on informed assumptions about projected staffing needs and future funding. As such, it increases the Agency's ability to respond deliberately and strategically to both anticipated and unanticipated changes and events that require workforce shifts.

The foundation of the process is the web-based Consolidated Workforce Planning Model ("the Model"). The Model underpins USAID's Foreign Service (FS) recruitment efforts. It projects staffing needs by number, type (Foreign Service, Civil Service, Foreign Service National, and others), location, and backstop and offers flexibility in response to changing circumstances. The Model's data enables the budget office to deliver a more accurate operating year staffing budget estimate by helping to determine

not only numbers of staff, but types and locations where staff are needed. The Model uses attrition and recruitment data to yield the gap analysis from which hiring plans are constructed.

468.3.2   The Recruitment Process
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The Office of Human Resources, Foreign Service Personnel Division, Special Programs Branch (OHR/FSP/SP) manages daily recruitment operations and processes from analyzing workforce data to issuing vacancy announcements and final selection and hiring of candidates. OHR/FSP/SP staff members manage the following steps in the recruitment process:

- Coordinating with Bureaus and Independent Offices (B/IOs) to identify officers to serve on Technical Review Panels (TRPs) and Technical Selection Panels (TSPs), which assess and select the candidates best suited to meet the Agency's Foreign Service (FS) personnel needs.

- Coordinating the establishment and oversight of all TRP/TSP activities, including review of applications and selection of candidates for interview who successfully match the technical qualifications and other standards established for the positions advertised;

- Arranging travel, when necessary and authorized, for applicants selected for interviews;

- Reviewing and requesting the TRPs/TSPs to update rating and ranking criteria, as necessary;

- Performing reference checks on candidates recommended for hire;

- Keeping systematic records of all recruitment processing events and dates from beginning to end of the application process;

- Negotiating salaries per guidance in **ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service** and initiating pre-employment clearance processes (for example, medical and security clearances);

- Keeping candidates informed of their status during the clearance process;

- Providing data to OCRD to enable staff to assess the effectiveness of recruitment materials and strategies to ensure a diverse pool of applicants for various skill areas; and

- Establishing the Entry on Duty (EOD) date and Phoenix Vendor Code for each new hire and processing travel authorizations as required.

468.3.3 General Requirements for Employment
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

In addition to meeting the educational and other requirements listed in the vacancy announcement for each position, all applicants must meet the following general requirements for employment consideration and/or appointment in the Foreign Service (FS):

a. **Age.** An applicant must be at least 21 years of age on the date of appointment as a Foreign Service Officer candidate. Chapter 2, Section 812(a) of the **Foreign Service Act** sets the mandatory retirement age at 65. Therefore, a career candidate's Entry on Duty (EOD) date must be before the individual reaches 60 years of age. The maximum age for appointment under these regulations is based on the requirement that all career candidates must be able to complete the requisite eligibility periods for tenure consideration and for receiving retirement benefits (five years) before reaching the mandatory retirement age.

b. **U.S. Citizenship.** Candidates must be U.S. citizens at the time of application (see **22 U.S.C. 3941**).

c. **Suitability Determination.** Following a background investigation by USAID's Office of Security (SEC), candidates must be determined to be suitable to be appointed to the Foreign Service (see **468.3.6.6**).

d. **Security Clearance.** Following a background investigation by SEC, candidates must be granted a Top Secret security clearance (see **468.3.6.6**) prior to appointment.

e. **Medical Clearance**. Prior to appointment, each candidate must have received from the Office of Medical Services (M/MED), Department of State, an unlimited (Class 1) medical clearance, qualifying him or her without limitation for worldwide assignment and service (see **16 FAM 100, Medical and Health Program**). All eligible family members who expect to accompany the candidate to the overseas post must also receive medical clearances or they will not be allowed to travel with the employee. Under certain circumstances a candidate who has been denied a Class 1 medical clearance may be granted a waiver by USAID's Chief Human Capital Officer per guidance in **ADS 414mab, Medical Clearances and Waivers at the Time of Appointment and at Tenuring in the USAID Foreign Service**.

f. **Drug testing.** All candidates selected for USAID positions are subject to drug testing (see **ADS 410, Drug Free Workplace Program**).

g. **Selective Service Registration.** Selected candidates must complete question 14 of the **SF-86, Questionnaire for National Security Positions**, pertaining to their Selective Service Record. The registration number will serve as proof of registration. Otherwise, candidates must consult the Selective Service System to get information on registration requirements. Information and online registration is also available on the Selective Service System Web site at **www.sss.gov**.

An individual cannot be appointed to a position in an Executive agency (see **5 U.S.C. 3328**) if that individual:

(1) Was born after December 31, 1959, and is or was required to register under section 3 of the Military Selective Service Act (**50 U.S.C. App. § 453**); and

(2) Is not registered or knowingly and willfully did not register before the requirement terminated or became inapplicable to the individual.

h. **Worldwide Availability.** Selected career candidates must certify their availability for worldwide assignment and service.

468.3.4 Position Advertisements and Initial Application Process
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

Prior to issuing a vacancy announcement, OHR/FSP and the relevant Bureau or Independent Office (B/IO) develop, review, and update, as necessary, the evaluation and selection (rating and ranking) criteria to be used in the announcement (and later in the applicant assessment process). The criteria include the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOCs) that must be demonstrated in an individual's application and resume. Once the criteria has been determined and a vacancy announcement has been written, the announcement will be posted on **USAJOBS**.

Applicants must apply online. If an applicant is unable to do so, he or she must request alternate application procedures by calling or writing to the contact information listed in the announcement. Applications are accepted only for the announcement posted and must be submitted, along with all the required documentation, by the deadline stated in the announcement.

The online system receives and screens applications to determine if the applicants meet the eligibility requirements and the minimum education and experience qualifications as defined in the vacancy announcement using applicants' online responses to standardized questions established for the particular backstop. Each applicant who meets the eligibility requirements (e.g., age, citizenship, selective service registration, worldwide availability) and the minimum qualifications for the position (e.g., academic degree and relevant work experience) as evidenced by the applicant's self-

assessment is assigned a numerical raw score between 70 and 100. Veterans' preference points are applied to the raw score, as applicable, to obtain the applicant's total score.

Applicants who, based on their applications, are either ineligible or fail to meet the minimum qualifications receive electronic notification from the online system that they do not qualify.

OHR/FSP and the B/IO Backstop Coordinator (or designee) determines the number of minimally qualified applicants who will receive further review by a Technical Review Panel (TRP) based upon the estimated size of the pool of applicants required to meet projected hiring needs. OHR/FSP and the B/IO Backstop Coordinator then establish a cut-off total score based on the total scores generated by the online application system to obtain that number of applicants. Applications above the cut-off score are referred to the TRP.

468.3.5 Technical Review Panels (TRPs)
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The Office of Human Resources, Foreign Service Personnel Division, Special Programs Branch (OHR/FSP/SP) works with the B/IO Backstop Coordinator (or designee) to initiate a Technical Review Panel (TRP) to assess the applications above the cut-off score referred by the online application system for positions in that backstop. The TRP members review the referred candidates' online applications to confirm that the information submitted by the applicants substantiates their self-assessments, and to determine the best qualified applicants who will be invited for an on-site assessment. This process is described further in section **468.3.5.2**.

The TRP evaluates the applications fairly and consistently. Panel members recuse themselves from the review of any applicant for whom they have a conflict of interest. To that end, before beginning their review, the TRP members are provided guidance by OHR on the rules for reviewing the applications.

468.3.5.1 Composition of TRPs
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The Office of Human Resources, Foreign Service Personnel Division, Special Programs Branch (OHR/FSP/SP) asks the appropriate B/IO technical and management staff to propose qualified and responsible representatives to serve as TRP members and alternates. OHR reviews the B/IO recommendations and determines the final composition of the panels.

Each TRP consists of at least two Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), one of whom currently is or has been a career Foreign Service Officer (FSO) and serves as the Panel chair. All TRP members must be qualified in the technical area for which the position was advertised and must be at least two grades above the level at which the position

was advertised (at least one grade above for mid-level applicants). Civil Service employees and employees in other categories (PASAs, PSCs, CASU, STAR, FSN, etc…) may serve as TRP members provided that:

- Their equivalent position grade exceeds the FS grade levels under recruitment by at least two grades for junior officer candidates and one grade for mid-level officer candidates (Note: these grade requirements do not apply to FSN panel members); and

- Their participation is recommended by the Assistant Administrator/Deputy Assistant Administrator or Independent Office Head for the B/IO for which the position is being recruited.

When there is a need to supplement the USAID direct-hire SME pool, OHR will contract with technically-qualified individuals recommended by BS Coordinators. These contracted TRP members can make recommendations, but the final selection of applicants to be interviewed must be made by FSOs from the B/IO and/or OHR.

All TRP members must sign an Oath of Office form and a SME Background form to receive access to the applications that will be reviewed. To ensure that appropriate steps are taken to avoid any appearance of loss of impartiality in the performance of official duties, panel members should recuse themselves from the review of any applicant for whom they have a potential conflict of interest. OHR/FSP/SP provides guidance on recusals to panel members prior to the reviews. In cases where a TRP member has a conflict of interest, OHR has the authority to remove him or her from the panel.

468.3.5.2   The TRP Review Process
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The TRP uses a four-step process to determine which applicants will be invited for the on-site assessment.

(1)   First, the panel members review a random sample of applications and discuss their review of each applicant in the sample to confirm that they are reviewing the applications consistently. The TRP members agree on the specific factors they will utilize to determine whether an applicant is best qualified. Factors may include, but are not limited to, relevance of the applicant's work experience, level of education, and amount and relevance of overseas experience.

(2)   Second, the TRP members look at each applicant's complete application package to verify that the applicant does in fact meet the minimum qualifications in the vacancy announcement. This verification ensures that the numerical scores assigned to each applicant by the online application system based on the applicant's self-assessment are accurate. If an

applicant's documented experience and education does not support the score assigned by the online system, the applicant is removed from the pool.

(3) Third, the TRP determines the best qualified candidates who will be invited for the on-site assessment. The panel members independently review the academic and experience qualifications of the applicants against the criteria, including the KSAOCs, specified in the vacancy announcement, focusing on the specific factors initially established by the panel.

(4) Fourth, panel members compare their determinations and discuss any discrepancies until a consensus is reached on each applicant. The panel then develops a list of all the candidates reviewed with a written explanation of why each applicant was found best qualified or not. OHR/FSP reviews the list to ensure that the explanations are adequately documented. The candidates deemed not best qualified are notified and that outcome is reflected in the online application system. The best qualified candidates are invited for the on-site assessment.

468.3.6 Technical Selection Panels (TSPs)
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The Technical Selection Panels (TSPs), which are organized by backstop, conduct the on-site assessment of the best qualified candidates approved by OHR/FSP based upon the Technical Review Panel's (TRP's) recommendations.

468.3.6.1 Composition of TSPs
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The Technical Selection Panels (TSPs) consist of a Chairperson, who must be or have been a career Foreign Service Officer (FSO), and two other members, one of whom may be an experienced Foreign Service National (FSN) employee, from the technical area of the specific position being filled. The Chief, OHR/FSP, designates staff to serve as Chairpersons and alternates, if needed, and approves the final selection of TSP members. The composition of the TSP is based on the same criteria for the TRP (see **468.3.5.1**). Any TSP member who was not on the TRP for the position must sign an Oath of Office form and a SME Background form.

To ensure that appropriate steps are taken to avoid any appearance of loss of impartiality in the performance of official duties, TSP members should recuse themselves from the assessment of any applicant for whom they have a potential conflict of interest. OHR/FSP/SP provides guidance on recusals to panel members prior to the reviews.

The Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD) may be invited to send a representative to attend the proceedings to help ensure that the selection process occurs without discrimination, inequity, or prejudice.

468.3.6.2   On-Site Candidate Assessment
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The purpose of the on-site assessment is to gain supplemental information from the applicant to assist the TSP in determining if the applicant is best qualified to perform the duties stipulated in the job description.

The on-site assessment consists of:

   a. A written exercise;

   b. A group discussion exercise; and

   c. An individual interview, conducted by members of the TSP.

In addition, candidates who demonstrate a predefined level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and understanding certain foreign languages that are useful in countries where USAID operates will be given the opportunity to test for bonus points that will be added to their final interview score. Testing will be conducted via telephone and/or in person. (Note: Foreign language ability has no effect on whether or not a candidate is selected for an interview.)

This assessment methodology was designed especially for USAID by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Center for Talent Services. USAID's Bureaus and Independent Offices (B/IOs) prepare for this assessment process by developing case studies that are used in the written exercise and group exercise, and by assisting OHR with the development of Standard Interview Questions and related scoring sheets.

No career candidate applicant can be hired by the Agency without this pre-employment on-site assessment. In the assessment process, the TSP will consider those characteristics and requirements necessary to succeed under USAID's Foreign Service appointment, tenure, and performance evaluation system, focusing on the technical and managerial qualifications needed for the relevant backstop.

Written Exercise

For the written exercise, the TSP provides the candidates with a scenario or case study outlining a particular issue. Each candidate must take a position on the issue and prepare a written response describing the candidate's recommendation for addressing the issue. The time limit for the written response varies according to the complexity of the exercise.

Group Discussion Exercise

The group discussion exercise allows the TSP members to evaluate the general competencies of applicants in the key areas of oral communications and teamwork. This exercise augments the writing exercise and individual interview.

The group discussion includes three to five candidates, depending on the number of candidates being assessed on a given day. In the group discussion exercise, candidates must address the same issue as in their written response; decide on a recommendation regarding how the issue should be resolved; and present the group's recommendation to the TSP members.

During the group discussion, each panel member observes and takes notes on the performance of the candidates. The TSP members then rate the candidates on four dimensions: (1) Oral Communications; (2) Problem Solving; (3) Teamwork and Interpersonal Skills; and (4) Leadership.

c.   Interviews

The TSP conducts an individual interview with each applicant.

468.3.6.3   TSP Scoring
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

Panel members numerically score each applicant separately on each phase of the assessment. The TSP Chair submits the scores, along with written comments, to the OHR/FSP/SP staff member assigned as the point of contact for the panel. The staff member then tabulates the scores for all applicants who were assessed by the panel for that backstop and prepares a list of candidates ranked from highest to lowest total score. The ranked list is provided to the OHR/FSP/SP recruitment coordinator and the B/IO Backstop Coordinator to be checked for mathematical, typographical, or other errors.

Once the list has been determined to be accurate, the OHR/FSP/SP recruitment coordinator and the B/IO Backstop Coordinator meet to determine a cut-off total score, based on the number of vacancies derived from the Consolidated Workforce Planning Model and the number of applicants on the list. Those applicants with a total score above the cut-off are notified that they have passed the assessment and advance to reference checks. Applicants with a total score below the cut-off are notified of their non-selection.

468.3.6.4   Reference Checks
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

To receive an offer of employment, a candidate must have a minimum of three completed positive references. OHR/FSP/SP staff members check references for each candidate with a total score above the cut-off, utilizing the prescribed reference check questionnaire or other approved means. OHR/FSP/SP sends the completed reference checks to the B/IO Backstop Coordinator, who reviews them and determines whether each candidate will advance to the pre-employment clearance process.

If significantly negative information (e.g., information that pertains to the individual's technical or communication skills, character, attitude, interpersonal skills, adaptability, or tolerance) is uncovered in a candidate's reference checks, the B/IO Backstop Coordinator may recommend that the candidate be non-selected. OHR/FSP/SP may also make such a recommendation.

Upon such a recommendation by the B/IO Backstop Coordinator or OHR/FSP/SP, OHR/FSP/SP convenes a Special Review Panel (SRP), consisting of senior OHR officials, who determine whether the reference checks contain significantly negative information sufficient to support non-selection. Based on that determination, the SRP concludes whether the candidate should remain in the group of candidates with a total score above the cut-off or be non-selected.

468.3.6.5   Pre-employment Process
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

At the completion of the reference check process, OHR/FSP/SP finalizes the list of the candidates recommended for employment (those above the cut-off score who have positive references or a positive SRP determination). The final list includes each panel member's scores with written comments and the completed reference check questionnaires as supporting documentation. The candidates on the final list advance to the pre-employment process.

OHR/FSP/SP sends each of the candidates on the final list a pre-employment letter that explains the requirements related to each step of the pre-employment clearance process, as follows:

- Acceptance of the Pre-employment selection;

- Receipt of a Top Secret security clearance (see **468.3.6.6**);

- Receipt of a Class 1 medical clearance (i.e., you are medically fit for service in any country where USAID works);

- Acceptance of starting salary;

- Submission of information for retirement and annual leave credit for prior federal and/or non-federal service; and

- Receipt by OHR of official transcripts from your university/institution.

The letter states that an appointment into USAID's Foreign Service is not guaranteed and is contingent upon successful completion of these requirements within one year of the date of the letter.

The candidate must indicate acceptance or rejection of pre-employment selection by signing and returning the letter within 48 hours. Once the candidate has submitted the required salary history information, OHR/FSP/SP determines the starting salary that will be offered, in accordance with the policy directives and required procedures outlined in **ADS 470**.

OHR/FSP/SP maintains close contact with the selected candidates to ensure they have met all the requirements for employment. If a candidate fails to successfully complete any of the requirements, OHR/FSP/SP will withdraw the pre-employment offer.

468.3.6.6 Suitability Determination and Security Clearance
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

Each selected candidate must undergo a personnel security investigation by USAID's Office of Security (SEC) to determine his or her suitability to be appointed to the Foreign Service and his or her eligibility for a security clearance. Further information about suitability determinations and security clearances can also be found in **ADS 566, US Direct-Hire and PASA/RSSA Personnel Security Program**.

a. Suitability Determination

To assess a candidate's suitability, USAID uses the criteria in **3 FAM 4130** and the Office of Personnel Management's Suitability Processing Handbook. Factors that may constitute grounds for disqualifying an applicant include, but are not limited to, issues such as misconduct in prior employment; criminal activity; dishonesty; false statements, deception, or fraud in the application process; and trafficking in or abuse of narcotics, drugs, or controlled substances.

If SEC's personnel security investigation reveals adverse information potentially affecting a candidate's suitability for employment, SEC refers the matter to The Office of Human Resources, Employee and Labor Relations Division (OHR/ELR). If OHR/ELR agrees the information impacts suitability, they notify the candidate, in writing, of the information uncovered during SEC's investigation. The candidate has 30 days to respond to the charges and provide supporting documentation. Following the 30-day period, OHR/ELR reviews the information provided, if any, and makes a decision on the candidate's suitability. A candidate who is determined to be unsuitable will have his or her pre-employment offer withdrawn.

b. Security Clearance

SEC's personnel security investigations are designed to develop information that is utilized in determining an individual's eligibility for access to classified national security information. The investigation seeks to obtain verifiable information (whether positive or negative) about the subject of the investigation.

SEC conducts personnel security background investigations in accordance with the Federal Investigative Standards pursuant to guidance from the Security Executive Agent (Director of National Intelligence) and the Suitability Executive Agent (Office of Personnel Management) under **EO 10450** and **EO 12968**. The scope of background investigations is based on the security clearance requirements, the public trust designation of the position, the National Security sensitivity level, and the requirement for access to federal facilities and/or information systems.

SEC will adjudicate the personnel security investigation for award or denial of a security clearance consistent with **ADS 566**. A Top Secret security clearance is required for all Foreign Service Officers. A candidate who is determined to be ineligible for a Top Secret security clearance will have his or her pre-employment offer withdrawn.

SEC will hold in abeyance a security clearance decision on a candidate whom SEC has referred to OHR/ELR for a suitability determination during the pendency of that determination.

468.3.7 Employment Offer and Entry on Duty
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

Upon successful completion of all pre-employment clearance processes, OHR/FSP/SP sends each candidate an appointment letter with the effective date of the appointment and instructions for reporting for duty. An appointment as a Foreign Service career candidate is effective on the date the employee begins duty and is available to perform a federal function. When it is possible to bring on a group of career candidates, they generally begin duty as a class on the same effective date. All candidates begin duty at the beginning of a pay period.

The appointments are limited to five years during which the career candidate must achieve tenure as a career Foreign Service Officer (FSO). Since career candidates are competitively appointed in a specific backstop in response to the Agency's needs in the technical area, they are expected to remain in the backstop for which they were selected until they are tenured. Further information about tenure and conversion to the career Foreign Service can be found in **ADS 414.3.6, Tenuring of Career Candidates**.

468.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

468.4.1 External Mandatory References
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

a. **3 FAM 4130, Standards for Appointment and Continued Employment**

b. **5 U.S.C. 2108(3), Definitions, preference eligible [Veterans]**

c. **5 U.S.C. 3328, Selective service registration**

d. **16 FAM 100, Medical and Health Program**

e.   **22 U.S.C. 3941, General Provisions [U.S. Citizenship]**

f.   **EO 10450, Security Requirements for Government Employment**

g.   **EO 12968, Access to Classified Information**

h.   **Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended, sections 101, 301 and 812**

468.4.2   Internal Mandatory References
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

a.   **ADS 410, Drug Free Workplace Program**

b.   **ADS 412, Reemployment Rights**

c.   **ADS 414, Foreign Service Appointments**

d.   **ADS 414mab, Medical Clearances and Waivers at the Time of Appointment and at Tenuring in the USAID Foreign Service**

e.   **ADS 415, Civil Service to Foreign Service Appointment Program**

f.   **ADS 422, Personnel Operations: Senior Foreign Service**

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

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

i.   **ADS 499, Overseas Employment Program**

468.5   ADDITIONAL HELP
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

a.   **ADS 468saa, Illustrative List of Backstops**

468.6   DEFINITIONS
Effective Date: 02/07/2014

The terms and definitions listed below have been incorporated into the ADS Glossary. See the **ADS Glossary** for all ADS terms and definitions.

Career Candidate
A Career Candidate is an employee hired for a time-limited appointment (not to exceed five years) that is intended to lead to a full career with the Agency. Appointments are appropriate for persons who aspire to a long-term USAID Foreign Service career and whose qualifications meet a continuing requirement. (**Chapters 412**, **415**, **459**, **468**)

Career Candidate Program

The Career Candidate program is USAID's mechanism for recruiting entry and a limited number of mid-level career candidates into the FS. The program seeks the best qualified junior professional candidates who are willing to make a long-term commitment to the Foreign Service and international development. (**Chapters 459** and **468**)

Special Review Panel (SRP)

An SRP consists of senior-level officials in the Office of Human Resources (OHR) who convene to review issues arising from a reference or other factors that may adversely affect a tentative offer of employment to a candidate. (**Chapter 468**)

Technical Review Panel (TRP)

A Technical Review Panel (TRP) is a technically competent decision-making group gathered from the Agency's Foreign Service (FS) ranks that reviews written applications for Foreign Service career candidate vacancy announcements and recommends those applicants who should be brought in for interviews. (**Chapter 468**)

Technical Selection Panel (TSP)

A Technical Selection Panel is a technically competent decision-making group whose members ideally are the same as the TRP. The TSP completes the on-site assessment and interview of candidates recommended by the TRP and prepares a list of those candidates they are recommending for hiring by the Office of Human Resources (OHR). (**Chapter 468**)

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