



ADS Chapter 463

Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Promotion Eligibility Requirements and Procedures

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Requirements and Procedures
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This chapter has been revised in its entirety.

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ADS 463 - Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Promotion Eligibility Requirements and Procedures

463.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

This chapter establishes the policies and required procedures for USAID's Foreign Service (FS) and Senior Foreign Service (SFS) Promotion Boards. The FS Promotion Boards make promotion recommendations for FS career and career candidate employees from classes FS-04 to FS-01 who are eligible for promotion. The Consolidated SFS Performance Board (also known as the C/Board) assesses performance and makes promotion recommendations for those in the SFS. In addition, these Boards assign ratings based on the criteria in the precepts (see [ADS 463mai, Precepts for Foreign Service Promotion Boards](#) and [ADS 463mak, Precepts for the Senior Foreign Service Consolidated Performance Board](#)). Note: The policies and procedures are different for FS and SFS employees. In this ADS chapter, FS policies and procedures are covered first, followed by those for SFS employees.

This chapter applies to all career or career candidate FS and SFS employees of USAID appointed under Sections 302(a), 303, and 305 of the [Foreign Service Act of 1980](#), as amended, with the exception of FS/SFS employees assigned to Backstop 08 – Audits and Inspections, whose promotions are handled by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). This includes FS and SFS employees assigned outside of the Agency who have reemployment rights to USAID, and other USAID officials (including Civil Service [CS] employees) who rate or review FS employees' performance as rating officials.

This chapter is not applicable to:

- Non-career FS employees, including those appointed under Sections [Section 309 of the Foreign Service Act](#), Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs), or U.S. Personal Service Contractors (PSCs) unless the PSC supervises an FS employee pursuant to an exception from the Bureau for Management (see [USAID Acquisition Regulation \[AIDAR\]](#), Appendix D).
- FS-05 and FS-06 career candidates who are covered by the Administrative Review Process described in [ADS 459, USAID's Foreign Service Career Candidate Program](#).

Promotion Board review processes and decision criteria are included in [ADS 463mai](#). Processes and decision criteria for SFS are included in [ADS 463mak](#).

463.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The following responsibilities apply to the Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service.

- a. The **Administrator, or designee**, is responsible for:

1. Approving the number of promotions available by Board and class prior to the convening of the Promotion Boards;
 2. Approving Limited Career Extensions (LCEs) as recommended by the SFS C/Board and the Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM); and
 3. Approving SFS performance pay policy each year (see [ADS 470](#)).
- b. The Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO), or designee, is responsible for:**
1. Approving the SFS and FS performance management program, including changes to policies and precepts for the SFS C/Board and FS Promotion Boards;
 2. Overseeing administration of the SFS and FS evaluation and promotion programs;
 3. Establishing Appraisal Committees (AC) to review the Annual Evaluation Forms (AEFs) of SFS employees assigned to Ambassador, Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA), and Independent Office Director positions;
 4. Exercising authority to make exceptions to SFS and FS policies, except those prohibited by law and negotiated agreement, hold actions in abeyance, or waive actions based on the needs of the Agency and in accordance with this ADS chapter;
 5. Determining appropriate action for non-compliance with the provision of this ADS chapter; and
 6. Appointing SFS C/Board and FS Promotion Board members.
- c. The Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Officer (CDO) is responsible for collaborating with HCTM's leadership and managers to enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) within the Agency, as related to FS performance management and promotion, consistent with applicable law and merit system principles.**
- d. The Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Office of Employee and Labor Relations (HCTM/ELR) is responsible for:**
1. Fulfilling the Agency's labor obligations with the exclusive representative of FS and SFS employees (the American Foreign Service Association [AFSA]), concerning changes to the conditions of employment;
 2. Providing copies of all relevant disciplinary actions in accordance with [3 FAM 4300](#) to HCTM for SFS and FS promotion-eligible employees by March 31 annually and again immediately prior to the FS Promotion Boards convening; and
 3. Reviewing and vetting SFS/FS employees recommended for promotion and performance pay (see section **463.1.12**).
- e. The Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Center for Performance**

Excellence, Performance Management Division (HCTM/CPE/PMD) is responsible for:

1. Formulating policies and procedures for the SFS and FS employee evaluation program;
2. Managing and administering the SFS and FS performance management program, including the promotion process; and
3. Establishing and facilitating the work of the SFS C/Board and the FS Promotion Boards.

f. The Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Foreign Service Center (HCTM/FSC) is responsible for:

1. Working with SFS and FS employees to ensure Employee Data Records made available to the Boards are accurate; and
2. Processing the personnel actions, other than SFS performance pay and promotion actions, required to effect the determinations of the SFS C/Board (e.g., LCE actions).

g. The Office of Human Capital and Talent Management, Workforce Planning, Policy and Systems Management Office (HCTM/PPSM) is responsible for conducting analysis to determine the number of recommended SFS and FS promotion allocations, taking into consideration factors such as vacancies, availability of funds, estimated attrition, projected needs, and the need for retention of expertise and experience.

h. The Office of the General Counsel, Ethics and Administration Division (GC/EA) is responsible for:

1. Providing legal advice on all aspects of this ADS chapter; and
2. Reviewing and certifying that SFS/FS officers recommended for promotion and performance pay (see section **463.1.12**) are not under investigation or the subject of an investigation with a negative finding, engaged in a proceeding, or the subject of disciplinary action involving loyalty, security, misconduct, or malfeasance.

i. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR), the Office of Security (SEC), the Office of Inspector General (OIG), and HCTM/ELR are responsible for reviewing and certifying that SFS/FS officers recommended for promotion and performance pay (see section **463.1.12**) are not under investigation or the subject of an investigation with a negative finding, engaged in a proceeding, or the subject of disciplinary action involving loyalty, security, misconduct, or malfeasance.

j. The Principal Officer (PO) of an Operating Unit (OU) is responsible for:

1. Ensuring all employees and rating officials within their OU are informed of the requirement to submit performance and/or promotion documentation;

2. Ensuring the OU Context Statement is prepared and shared with Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) by established deadlines;
3. Establishing deadlines within the OU to ensure completed performance and/or promotion packages are submitted to HCTM in accordance with established deadlines; and
4. Establishing ACs to review SFS AEFs, except those of SFS employees who are assigned to Ambassador, Deputy Chief of Mission, Senior/DAA, and Independent Office Director positions.

k. Executive Officers (EXOs) and Administrative Management Services (AMS) Staff are responsible for:

1. Managing the performance review process at the OU level, per [ADS 527.3.1.e\(4\)](#);
2. Notifying employees and rating officials of the deadlines for completing all required forms;
3. Assisting employees who encounter difficulties in getting forms signed or submitted; and
4. Submitting any documents that cannot be submitted electronically to HCTM/CPE.

l. Reviewing Officials (Second-Level Reviewers) are responsible for reviewing and signing the completed promotion and performance documents when required to do so and for providing comments addressing their own perception of the accuracy of the information provided by both the employee and the rating official.

m. Rating Officials are responsible for:

1. Reviewing, writing a narrative, and/or signing all employees' promotion and performance documents in accordance with established deadlines;
2. Making the final determination about which individuals meet the rater selection criteria for multisource ratings (MSRs);
3. Soliciting MSRs from raters the rating official selects, when applicable; and
4. Completing supervisor MSRs for their subordinates, when applicable.

n. Foreign Service Employees are responsible for:

1. Completing their required sections of the Promotion Input Form (PIF) and the Annual Accomplishment Record (AAR) for inclusion in their promotion package and providing these documents to the rating official by the OU established deadline;

2. Ensuring required documents are completed and submitted to HCTM by established deadlines;
 3. Verifying the information contained in their Employee Data Record and Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) is accurate and current; and
 4. Providing input to their rating officials when assessing which potential MSR raters meet the criteria outlined in the MSR rater selection guidance and instructions published by HCTM.
- o. Senior Foreign Service Employees** are responsible for:
1. Verifying the information contained in their Employee Data Record and eOPF is accurate and current; and
 2. Ensuring required annual evaluation SFS documents are completed by established deadlines, and that documents submitted to HCTM fully comply with the requirements described in this ADS chapter, [ADS 461](#), and associated mandatory references for these chapters.
- p. Foreign Service Promotion Boards** are responsible for:
1. Reviewing and evaluating the FS Performance Evaluation Files (PEFs) submitted for their consideration; and
 2. Determining which employees are ready for immediate promotion (high-ranked), which employees are meeting the standards of performance of their class but are not ready for promotion (mid-ranked), and which employees are failing to meet the standards of performance of their class (low-ranked), in accordance with this ADS chapter and [ADS 463mai](#).
- q. The Consolidated Senior Foreign Service Performance Board (C/Board)** is responsible for:
1. Reviewing and evaluating the SFS PEFs submitted for their consideration;
 2. Assigning SFS employees to a performance tier;
 3. Determining which promotion-eligible SFS employees are ready for immediate promotion (high-ranked), which employees are meeting the standards of performance of their class but are not ready for promotion (mid-ranked), and which employees are failing to meet the standards of performance of their class (low-ranked), in accordance with this ADS chapter and [ADS 463mak](#); and
 4. Recommending SFS officers for Presidential Awards and LCEs.

- r. The **Performance Standards Board (PSB)** is responsible for:
 1. Reviewing FS and SFS employees who have been referred to the PSB by HCTM for failing a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP); and
 2. Reviewing any career FS and SFS employees who have been rated as not meeting the standards of performance of their class by the SFS C/Board or FS Promotion Boards twice within five years.

- s. **Individuals selected to provide MSR feedback** are responsible for completing the required training and completing the requested MSR surveys by the published due date each year for inclusion in the promotion package.

463.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

463.3.1 Policy and Procedures for the Foreign Service

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

These policies and procedures apply to all USAID FS employees from the FS-04 level to FS-01 level who are appointed under [Sections 302\(a\) or 303 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#), whether in duty or non-duty status. A duly constituted Promotion Board reviews these employees when they are eligible for promotion unless they meet exceptions or receive a waiver, as outlined in section **463.3.1.2**.

463.3.1.1 Promotion Eligibility Requirements

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

FS career and career candidates must meet eligibility requirements established for their class to be eligible for promotion. Promotion eligibility calculations for time-in-class (TIC) start from the effective date of the last promotion or from the date of the career candidate appointment if there was no prior promotion. FS employees in classes FS-04 to FS-01 must meet promotion eligibility requirements by the last day of the performance appraisal cycle for which the Promotion Boards are convened to be eligible to compete for promotion that year. Eligibility requirements for employees in classes FS-05 and FS-06 are outlined in [ADS 459](#).

Promotion Eligibility Requirements are as follows:

For Promotion to:	Promotion Eligibility Requirements
Class FS-03	- One year at Class FS-04
Class FS-02	- Two years at Class FS-03, and - Four years of USAID direct hire overseas assignment experience.
Class FS-01	- Two years at Class FS-02, and - Four years of USAID direct hire overseas assignment experience.

For Promotion to:	Promotion Eligibility Requirements
Class FS-03	- One year at Class FS-04
Class FS-02	- Two years at Class FS-03, and - Four years of USAID direct hire overseas assignment experience.
SFS	- Two years at Class FS-01; and - Eight years of USAID direct hire overseas assignment experience as of March 31 of the year in which an FS-01 seeks to be first considered for SFS promotion.

Employees at the FS-01 level, who meet the TIC and overseas assignment experience requirements and are eligible for promotion, must submit a formal application for promotion into the SFS ([AID 463-3, Senior Foreign Service Promotion Application](#)) (*i.e.*, they must “open their window”) before they can be recommended for promotion into the SFS. Otherwise, the Board’s review does not result in a promotion recommendation, regardless of their final rating. Employees must submit this application to HCTM/CPE via the [automated system](#) no later than March 31st of the year in which they are eligible for promotion. If March 31 falls on a weekend, employees may submit their application no later than the next business day following March 31.

Employees at the FS-01 level who meet the TIC and overseas assignment experience requirements for SFS, but who do not wish to open their window, must still submit a promotion package by the due date to ensure the employee is meeting the standards of performance for their class (*i.e.*, does not warrant a low-ranked rating). The Senior Threshold Board (STB) must review and rate the employee and does not consider the employee for promotion.

CS employees, who are appointed as FS employees under the CS-to-FS Appointment Program, meet the TIC requirement for promotion eligibility after completing the number of years established for their class following their conversion to a career candidate appointment, provided other eligibility requirements have been met (see [ADS 415](#) for more information on the CS to FS Appointment Program).

Direct Hire overseas assignment experience is cumulative (temporary duty [TDY] assignments of Washington-based employees of any length do not count, but employees assigned overseas are able to count overseas TDY time during their overseas assignments). Overseas assignment service by a former USAID non-career FS employee does count towards the USAID direct hire assignment overseas service requirement established in section **463.3.1.1**, if appointed as a career candidate without a break in service.

463.3.1.2 Requirements and Exceptions or Waivers for Foreign Service Promotion Board Reviews

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

All promotion-eligible FS-04 to FS-01 career and career candidate employees are required to submit a promotion package and must be reviewed by the FS Promotion Board unless they meet one of the exceptions or waiver criteria listed below.

A. Exceptions

Employees who meet one of the following exceptions criteria are not eligible for promotion and are not required to submit a promotion package. A Promotion Board will not review or give a rating to these employees. Exceptions include:

1. Employees who remain on a PIP after the end of the performance appraisal cycle or who received an unsatisfactory APE for failing a PIP during the most recent performance appraisal cycle in accordance with [ADS 464, Foreign Service e4 Performance-Based Actions](#);
2. Career employees who have been recommended for separation by the CHCO, or designee, pursuant to [3 FAM 4364.3](#) and career candidate employees who have been recommended for separation by the CHCO, or designee, pursuant to [ADS 450, Termination of Time-Limited Appointments - Foreign Service \(FS\)](#);
3. Employees (FS-01 and below) who have been granted deferred retirement under [Section 607\(d\)\(2\) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#) (this is distinct from promotion availability under section 607(b));
4. Employees whose TIC expires before the date the Promotion Boards are convened;
5. Employees who have reached the Mandatory Retirement Age (MRA) and received an MRA waiver, extending their date of appointment; and
6. Employees who retire or resign before the end of the performance cycle.

B. Waivers

Employees, who do not meet the exceptions criteria above, may apply for a waiver of the requirement to submit a promotion package and be reviewed by the Promotion Boards by submitting [AID Form 463-6, Foreign Service Promotion Waiver Request](#) to HCTM via the [automated system](#). Employees must submit waiver requests by the second Thursday in February (with the exception of requests related to medical emergencies or unplanned leave under b and c below, which must be submitted by the rating official as soon as possible after the situation necessitating the request occurs) unless HCTM announces a different date via an Agency Notice. No employee is guaranteed a waiver, even if they meet one of the criteria below. HCTM may choose not to grant a waiver and instead permit the employee an extension of time to submit the promotion package (see [section 463.3.1.4](#) for more information about extension requests). An employee who was denied a waiver may appeal the decision to the HCTM Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator (HCTM/SDAA) within five business days of the denial. Waivers and extensions of time are determined solely at HCTM's direction.

HCTM may grant a waiver in the following circumstances:

- a. Employees who plan to retire or resign by the end of the calendar year in which the Board convenes, provided they have not been rated as not meeting the standards of performance of their class by a promotion board within a five-year period. Employees seeking a waiver in this circumstance must attest that they submitted a signed and completed application for retirement or a resignation letter;
- b. Employees on unplanned leave for a reason that qualifies the employee for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave or pursuant to an approved Reasonable Accommodation (see [ADS 111](#)), for a period of 30 days or more immediately prior to the date when promotion packages are due. However, employees whose absence for a medical reason is predictable should plan in advance to submit a promotion package prior to the start date of their leave;
- c. Employees on approved leave for a reason unrelated to a medical emergency for 60 days or more immediately prior to the date the promotion package is due;
- d. Employees who were on leave for more than eight months of the performance appraisal cycle;
- e. Class FS-02 and below employees who will reach the MRA within the same calendar year the Promotion Boards are convened (see section **463.3.1.12**); and
- f. Any other employee for whom the requirement to submit a promotion package would be unreasonable or against the public interest.

463.3.1.3 Promotion Package
Effective Date: 09/16/2024

An employee's current year promotion package, which becomes part of the PEF described in section **463.3.1.7**, includes the current year's AARs and associated OU Context Statements, APE, MSRs, and PIF.

- a. AARs provide an overall summary of an employee's key contributions to the work unit and are written by the employee in coordination with the supervisor, if needed. Up to five accomplishments or contributions may be recorded on a single record (see [ADS 461, Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Performance Management & Development Programs](#) for further guidance). AARs enable Promotion Boards to understand and assess the employee's understanding of and ability to advance the Agency's mission while also anchoring narratives included in the PIF designed to highlight skills demonstrated in the context of an accomplishment or contribution. The employee must submit AARs to the rating official at least ten business days prior to the end of the performance appraisal cycle. Principal Officers can require earlier internal deadlines as appropriate to meet OU needs. Employees and rating officials must finalize AARs in ePerformance no later than the first Thursday in April, unless

HCTM officially announces a different deadline through an Agency Notice.

- b. OU Context Statements complement AARs and PIFs by providing Promotion Boards with an understanding of the country context, strategic priorities, program focus, and office size within which the employee has been working. A template for the OU Context Statement can be found in [AID Form 463-5, Operating Unit Context Statement Template](#), and a sample Context Statement in [ADS 463saa, Operating Unit Context Statement Sample](#). At least 75 calendar days prior to the end of the performance appraisal cycle, POs must ensure OU Context Statements are written, cleared by the PO and provided to employees who have worked in the OU during that performance appraisal cycle. Individual FS employees may not submit their own OU Context Statements, unless they are the PO of a OU.
- c. The rating official and second-level reviewer (if required) must complete APEs no later than the first Thursday in April as part of the annual evaluation, unless HCTM announces a different date through an Agency Notice. Rating officials should leave adequate time for the second-level reviewer's comments if the rating is unsatisfactory.
- d. MSR are designed to obtain input on behavior reflecting the core skills defined in the [FS/SFS Skills Framework](#). MSR are solicited from supervisors, peers, and, when applicable, subordinates, according to the rater selection criteria described in the instructions provided annually and posted on the HCTM intranet pages. The employee and the rating official must review the MSR guidance and follow the rater selection criteria. They must review potential raters against the selection criteria outlined in the published MSR Rater Selection Guidelines (see [Multisource Ratings page](#)) to determine eligibility to serve as peer/other or subordinate MSR raters. The rating official determines the final list of eligible raters no later than April 1, unless HCTM announces a different deadline through an Agency Notice. If April 1 falls on a weekend, employees may submit their application no later than the next business day following April 1.
- e. The rating official must send out all MSR requests by established deadlines. HCTM may remove MSR surveys that were sent to individuals who do not meet the criteria outlined in the MSR rater selection guidance.

Ratings provided by all MSR participants, except rating officials, are strictly confidential. Attempts by anyone at USAID to learn how an individual rated someone on the MSRs or improperly influence an individual's MSR ratings must be immediately reported to HCTM/ELR, which may result in disciplinary action.

HCTM must provide summaries of the MSR results to the Promotion Boards and individuals being rated. Employees must share their results with their rating officials. To preserve the confidentiality of individual responses, results for peer or subordinate groups with fewer than three respondents must not be included in the reports that employees and rating officials receive.

HCTM must also provide class summary reports to the Boards and the workforce to

provide a context for interpreting individual MSR reports.

- f. The PIF is primarily written by the employee to demonstrate proficiency in the promotion factors. It is also used by the rating official to convey additional information related to promotion factors to the Promotion Boards and the rating official's assessment of the employee's readiness for promotion. The PIF is only completed when an employee is eligible for promotion, and only the current year PIF is included in the promotion package. If an employee was not selected for promotion, the employee may update their PIF from the previous year or prepare a completely new PIF in the following year.

In most cases, the rating official is the employee's direct supervisor at the end of the performance appraisal cycle. However, if the employee is in long-term training or language training at the end of the performance appraisal cycle, or the supervisor at the end of the cycle will not have supervised the FSO for at least 120 calendar days, the most recent rating official that the employee had for 120 calendar days assumes the responsibility for completing the PIF, completing the supervisor MSR, and ensuring all MSR raters meet the criteria. For rare cases not covered by these exceptions, HCTM must approve the substitute rater; otherwise, the PIF cannot be accepted. The employee's current rating official must submit requests for approval of a substitute rater to HCTM, via the [automated system](#), no later than 15 calendar days before the end of the performance appraisal cycle or include a compelling reason the request could not be submitted by the deadline.

The employee must provide the rating official a draft PIF no later than 15 calendar days before the PIF is due. The rating official is required to return the PIF to the employee with the rating official's input at least seven calendar days before the PIF is due. If the employee chooses to request a second-level review, the employee must request it within two business days of receipt of the rating official's input. Principal Officers can require earlier internal deadlines as appropriate to meet OU needs.

The above deadlines reflect the minimum time both employees and rating officials must allow for the PIF review prior to submission. Employees and rating officials are strongly encouraged to plan ahead and allow sufficient time to discuss and complete the PIF prior to its due date.

The final PIF, signed by all required parties, is due to HCTM no later than the last Thursday in April, unless HCTM approves an extension before the last Thursday in April or announces a different deadline through an Agency Notice.

463.3.1.4 Requests for Deadline Extensions

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All deadline extension requests must be submitted to HCTM via the [automated system](#) using the subject line: Foreign Service Performance Management. HCTM must determine the length of the extension granted. However, in no case may an extension be granted that would result in any component of the promotion package being submitted less than three full

business days before the start of the Promotion Boards. Extension requests may be submitted in the following circumstances:

- a. A Mission Director/PO may request an extension for FSOs assigned to their OU if the Unit was subject to an emergency that would significantly disadvantage employees in the timely completion of their Promotion Package, such as a recent authorized or ordered departure; and/or
- b. An employee may directly request an extension if a medical or family emergency significantly disadvantages the employee in the timely completion of their promotion package (see Waivers in section **463.3.1.2**).

463.3.1.5 Failure to Meet Established Deadlines

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

HCTM issues USAID guidance (via Agency Notices) in advance of the end of each performance appraisal cycle, which informs Agency employees of due dates and submission procedures. Employees eligible for promotion are responsible for ensuring their promotion documentation meets the interim and final deadlines specified in this chapter or via Agency Notices for the promotion year.

If final documents for the promotion package (*i.e.*, PIF, AARs, OU Context Statements, and APEs) are not submitted or are submitted to HCTM after the established due date(s) without a previously approved exception, waiver, or extension request:

1. HCTM must contact the promotion-eligible employee and their OU PO requesting the documents and an explanatory statement for any missing or late documents to the extent feasible.
2. Any documentation submitted to HCTM after the deadline must be accompanied by an explanatory statement. HCTM must review the explanatory statement to determine whether late submissions are justified.
 - a. If HCTM determines the delay was justified and the materials are submitted no later than three working days prior to the commencement of the Promotion Board, the materials must be added to the employee's PEF. Documents submitted less than three working days prior to the commencement of the Promotion Board cannot be included in the PEF. HCTM has the discretion to determine if it must form a Reconstituted Board at a later date for the employee.
 - b. If HCTM determines there is no adequate justification for one or more late or missing promotion documents due to the fault of the employee, HCTM must inform the Promotion Board that the employee is ineligible to receive a promotion recommendation (high-ranked rating) in this promotion year. The Board may consider failure to meet these requirements along with the totality of the employee's five-year PEF (see section **463.3.1.7**) when deciding to assign

this employee a rating.

- c. If HCTM determines there is no adequate justification for one or more late or missing promotion documents due to the OU PO or rating official, HCTM must inform the Promotion Board that the employee is eligible to be recommended for promotion (high-ranked) in this promotion year. The Board may consider the totality of the employee's five-year PEF (see section **463.3.1.7**) when deciding to assign this employee a rating. HCTM must also refer the matter to HCTM/ELR for potential PO/rating official disciplinary action.
3. HCTM/CPE must refer the case to HCTM/ELR for investigation, potentially leading to disciplinary or other corrective action for the employee, rating official, or any other party deemed responsible for the failure to meet promotion package submission requirements. Such actions may include critical letter, disciplinary action, denial of awards or bonuses or other actions the CHCO, or designee, deems appropriate.

463.3.1.6 Organization of Promotion Boards

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

Promotion Boards are organized by class level and backstop. The Promotion Boards are organized as follows:

- a. The Senior Threshold Board evaluates employees in class FS-01.
- b. Cluster Boards evaluate employees in classes FS-02 through FS-04, as follows:

PROGRAM DIRECTION AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Backstop 01 – Senior Leadership Group, Mission Directors, Deputy, and Comparable Executive Level Positions

Backstop 02 - Program Analysis and Project Development

Backstop 85 - Legal

PROGRAM OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT BOARD

(This board has three sections, grouped by class: Section A – FS 02; Section B – FS 03; Section C – FS 04)

Backstop 10 - Agriculture

Backstop 11 - Economics

Backstop 12 – Program Management (multi-sectoral)

Backstop 21 - Business, Industry, and Private Enterprise

Backstop 25 - Engineering

Backstop 40 - Environment

Backstop 50 - Health, Population, and Nutrition

Backstop 60 – Human Resources, Education

Backstop 70 - Humanitarian Assistance

Backstop 76 - Crisis, Stabilization, and Governance

PROGRAM SUPPORT BOARD

Backstop 03 - Administrative Management
 Backstop 04 - Financial Management
 Backstop 93 - Contract Management

- c. OIG evaluates employees assigned to Backstop 08 – Audit and Inspections.

The Board must review employees for the backstop of the position they are currently serving, unless they request and are approved to be reviewed by a different board. HCTM issues an Agency Notice annually with guidance for employees who wish to request to be reviewed by a different Board.

463.3.1.7 Composition of the Promotion Boards

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

USAID's FS Promotion Boards are composed primarily of career FS employees. Composition is as follows:

- a. FS Senior Threshold Board (FS-01s), which is composed of two panels, Panel A and Panel B:
- One FE-Minister-Counselor (MC) or FE-Career Minister (CM) USAID career employee.
 - Five USAID FS career employees at the FE-Counselor (OC) level or above.
 - Two public members.
- b. Other FS Promotion Boards (FS-02 and below):
- Three USAID FS career employees at least one personal class rank higher than the highest class rank evaluated.
 - One public member.

The Chairperson of all Promotion Boards must be the most senior USAID career employee on the Board.

The Agency strives to ensure diverse representation on the Promotion Boards in terms of backstops, background, and experience, in Washington and in the field, in addition to demographics such as race, color, ethnicity/national origin, sex, and disability pursuant to [Section 602\(b\) of the Foreign Service Act](#).

HCTM directs employees to serve on Promotion Boards. HCTM appoints Board members from among FSOs who demonstrate strong performance as reflected by ratings from recent

promotion boards. Candidates for membership must not be the subject of an ongoing inquiry, or completed inquiry with a negative finding from SEC, OCR, OIG, HCTM, or GC within the past five years absent an extenuating circumstance. The HCTM/SDAA, in consultation with GC/EA, determines whether an extenuating circumstance exists. Candidates must be disqualified if they have been disciplined (e.g., reprimand, suspension, removal) or were on a PIP during the five years immediately preceding the convening of the Boards.

463.3.1.8 Promotion Board Materials

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

Promotion Boards must base their determinations on their review of the employee's performance evaluation file and the processes and factors described in [ADS 463mai](#).

HCTM must provide Promotion Boards the following materials to carry out their responsibilities:

1. [ADS 461](#);
2. [ADS 463, Foreign Service Promotion Boards and Consolidated Senior Foreign Service Performance Board: Promotion Eligibility Requirements and Procedures](#);
3. [ADS 463mai](#);
4. [FS/SFS Skills Framework](#);
5. Instructions provided to employees on how to complete components of the promotion package;
6. Standard rating scales and score sheets to guide assessments;
7. A list of promotion-eligible employees to be reviewed; and
8. Each employee's five-year performance evaluation file.

463.3.1.9 Performance Evaluation File (PEF)

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The five-year PEF is used for promotion and relative performance reviews. The PEF consists of the current year promotion package as outlined in section **463.3.1.3** plus performance information from four previous years. Prior-year information includes AARs and associated OU Context Statements, APEs, and AEFs from past years until they are no longer needed to complete the required five years' worth of performance data. Additional information included in the five-year PEF includes: the employee's training record, awards, assignment history, disciplinary actions (decision letters), and language scores.

463.3.1.10 Promotion Boards' Process

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

Promotion Boards are convened annually to review the PEFs of promotion-eligible career and career candidate FSOs and accomplish the following:

- Evaluate and rate employees on the promotion decision factors outlined in [ADS 463mai](#);
- Rank order employees recommended for promotion;
- Identify employees not meeting the standards of performance of their class (i.e., low-ranked) as demonstrated by relative performance compared to other class members; and
- Write and deliver a memo to HCTM for each low-ranked FSO documenting the basis for their decision.

These functions are undertaken pursuant to the requirements of the [Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#) to ensure FSOs are promoted based on merit, and separated from the service when they are failing to meet the standards of performance of their class.

The Promotion Boards assign employees to one of the following three rating categories:

- 1) High-Ranked: Recommended for promotion;
- 2) Mid-Ranked: Meeting the standards of performance of the class; and
- 3) Low-Ranked: Not meeting the standards of performance of the class.

Each Promotion Board must provide a preliminary rank-ordered list of the high-ranked candidates to HCTM, and HCTM must provide Boards with the three previous years' high-ranked lists from each Board. The Promotion Boards then have the opportunity to adjust the numerical rank ordering of employees recommended for promotion (high-ranked). The Promotion Board cannot remove or add FSOs to the high-ranked list based on prior-year rankings. Promotion Boards must make recommendations for promotion without regard to the number of promotion allocations set by the Administrator.

463.3.1.11 Promotion Board Findings and Recommendations

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

Promotion Boards must provide their findings to the CHCO, or designee, by way of a Board Memorandum signed by each board member.

- a. Unless instructed otherwise by the CHCO, or designee, all Promotion Boards must

prepare the following reports by class:

- A preliminary and final rank order list of employees who are high-ranked.
- An alphabetical list of employees who are mid-ranked.
- As appropriate, decision memoranda to outline their rationale for low-ranking any candidate (see [ADS 463mai](#) for procedures and criteria).

b. Boards may prepare the following as directed by the CHCO, or designee:

- Recommendations concerning the assignment, training, counseling, or other personnel considerations with respect to any employee or group of employees reviewed.
- Recommendations concerning policies and procedures for subsequent Boards and improvements to the promotion system.

463.3.1.12 Promotion Boards' Recommendation for High-Ranked Employees

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

HCTM forwards the Promotion Boards' high-ranked lists for vetting to OCR, SEC, OIG, GC/EA, and HCTM/ELR. These offices must certify an employee who was recommended for promotion is not under investigation, engaged in a proceeding, or is the subject of disciplinary action involving loyalty, security, misconduct, or malfeasance.

Following these certifications, promotions are made based on an employee's confirmed eligibility, the Promotion Boards' final rank-ordered high-ranked lists, and the number of promotion opportunities set by the Administrator. HCTM convenes the CHCO, or designee, and AFSA as the exclusive representative for FS employees to establish the final number of promotions on each rank order high-ranked list. In certain infrequent cases, when there are extenuating circumstances the Board did not have access to during its deliberations, the CHCO, or designee, may disregard a recommendation of a Board. In such cases, employees named on the promotion list may be deferred or denied promotion under the following circumstances:

- a. The employee's promotion must be denied if the employee is ineligible for promotion according to the promotion requirements in this ADS chapter;
- b. An employee's promotion must be deferred if the employee is the subject of an investigation, proceeding, or discipline involving loyalty, security, misconduct, or malfeasance. HCTM/CPE must notify the employee whose promotion is deferred in writing of the reasons if not inimical to the investigation or proceedings (which are to be determined solely at the Agency's discretion). Upon favorable termination of the

investigation, proceeding, or disciplinary action, the promotion must be retroactive to the date others on the list were promoted. If the results are unfavorable, the employee's promotion must be denied for that promotion cycle and the employee next in the rank order must be promoted;

- c. An employee's promotion must be denied if the employee retires, resigns, is terminated, reaches the MRA, or dies before the date the Agency and the exclusive representative meet to determine the number of available promotions and who on the promotion list will be promoted; or
- d. An employee must be promoted regardless of inclusion or placement on the promotion list if the employee's promotion is made pursuant to a recommendation of the Foreign Service Grievance Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or the Merit Systems Protection Board, in accordance with [Section 606 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#).
- e. FS promotions are effective on the first day of the pay period following the completion of required Agency vetting.

463.3.1.13 Promotion Boards' Recommendation for Mid-Ranked Employees

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The Promotion Boards prepare an alphabetical list of employees who receive a mid-ranked rating and enter the ratings in the system of record.

463.3.1.14 Retention Consideration for Low-Ranked Employees

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

Based on the review of the PEF, Promotion Boards must identify any candidates whose performance does not meet the standards of performance for their class and assign those employees a low-ranked rating. Promotion Boards must make assessments based on criteria described in [ADS 463mai](#) and cite the reason(s) for their determination in a memorandum. The Promotion Board must submit this memorandum to HCTM, who must then provide a copy to the HCTM/FSC's Assignment Career Counselor (ACC) who must share the memorandum with the employee.

HCTM must refer career employees who receive two low-ranked ratings within a five-year period to a PSB (see [ADS 464](#)).

463.3.1.15 Reconstitution of a Board

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

HCTM reviews the findings and recommendations of the Boards to determine whether they were made in accordance with the precepts and the policy in this ADS chapter. If questions of procedure or conformity arise with respect to any employee, HCTM reviews the question to determine if further review for reconsideration by a reconstituted Promotion Board is warranted. A reconstituted Board reviews the FSO's performance file and a representative

sample of files of other employees from the original Board for each FSO under review. The FSO is rated and ranked based on the same criteria and factors used by the original Board. Ratings of files used for comparison purposes must not replace the original Board's ratings of those files.

The Reconstituted Board must be organized by class and backstop, and HCTM must strive to convene a board composition as close to the original board membership (e.g., gender, diversity, and grade class) as practicable.

463.3.1.16 Promotion Board Operations: Recusals

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

Promotion Board members must recuse themselves and not participate in Promotion Board deliberations regarding an employee's file in the following situations: (1) Promotion Board members who, in the last five years, rated, served as second-level reviewer for, or reported to an employee whose promotion package is being reviewed; (2) Promotion Board members who have been the subject of an Agency investigation for whom the member is aware an employee participated as a witness; (3) Promotion Board members who are aware an employee has advised management or HCTM on a matter involving the performance or conduct of the Board member (e.g., an EXO or Resident Legal Officer (RLO) who advises management on a PIP or HCTM/ELR on a disciplinary matter); (4) Promotion Board members who have any familial relationship with a candidate being reviewed for promotion by their assigned board; and/or (5) Promotion Board members who know they cannot provide a neutral review of an employee's file for a reason not otherwise outlined herein.

463.3.1.17 Information to be Considered in Promotion Board Reviews

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

- a. Promotion Boards must make rating decisions based only on material contained in an employee's five-year PEF.
- b. Promotion Boards must ignore any information in the PEF that is inadmissible (see [ADS 463mai](#)). Such information must not be the basis for the Board's recommendation concerning an employee.
- c. Promotion Boards must neither seek nor receive from any outside source any information on any employee under consideration, such as for example, about health, suitability, assignability, or reputation. If any unauthorized communications of this nature come to the attention of any Board member, the Board member must immediately (*i.e.*, within 24 hours) report this to HCTM.

463.3.1.18 Promotion Board Operations: Actions Based on Inadmissible Comments and Violations of this Policy

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

Boards must identify employees or rating officials who include inadmissible comments (see [ADS 463mai](#)) in promotion package materials. HCTM must review the Board's

recommendations and if HCTM agrees a statement is inadmissible, must refer the matter to HCTM/ELR for potential disciplinary action. HCTM also has the authority to refer matters to HCTM/ELR for potential disciplinary action when individuals violate other aspects of this policy.

463.3.1.19 Facilitating the Work of the FS Promotion Board

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

HCTM/CPE is responsible for establishing and facilitating the work of the FS Promotion Boards. HCTM/CPE must complete the following:

- a. Recommending Board members to the CHCO for appointment to the the FS Promotion Boards;
- b. Executing the process for obtaining FS MSR and compiling AARs, PIFs, APEs, MSR class summary and individual reports, and the other elements of each FSOs' promotion package for the Boards;
- c. Monitoring the operations of assigned Boards and providing advice and staff assistance to Board activities and members;
- d. Determining and publishing FS employee eligibility for promotion;
- e. Establishing MSR class summary reports available to the workforce;
- f. Providing FS employees with Promotion Board Review Summaries;
- g. Communicating Promotion Board results to promotion eligible employees;
- h. Ensuring all vetting for FS employees recommended for promotion is completed;
- i. Processing the personnel actions required to affect the determinations of the FS Promotion Boards.

463.3.1.20 Oath of Office - Promotion Boards

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

When Promotion Boards are convened but before the beginning of their deliberations, each Board member must sign the following oath of office and adhere to the precepts and procedures in this ADS chapter and its references.

"I, [_____] , do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I shall, without prejudice or partiality, perform faithfully and to the best of my ability, the duties as a member of the [_____] USAID Foreign Service Promotion and Performance Board; that I shall preserve the confidential character of the personnel records used by the Board; that I shall adhere to the Precepts for Employee Evaluation and other such guidance as appropriate for the discharge of these duties; and that I shall not reveal to any unauthorized person information concerning the

deliberations, findings, and recommendations of the Board [so help me God]."

Failure to observe these instructions may result in disciplinary action or penalties as prescribed by the Privacy Act. Board members must report to HCTM any attempt to provide them information not authorized by the precepts.

463.3.2 Policy and Procedures for the Senior Foreign Service

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

These policies and procedures apply to all SFS appointed to USAID under [Sections 302\(a\) or 303 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#), whether in duty or non-duty status. Such employees are reviewed annually by a duly constituted Performance Board.

463.3.2.1 Consolidated Senior Foreign Service Performance Board (C/Board) – Coverage

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

All SFS officers are reviewed annually by a duly constituted Performance Board and must submit a completed and signed AEF by the published due date, unless they meet one of the following exceptions. The C/Board does not review the following classes of SFS employees:

1. Non-career SFS employees, including those appointed under sections [301\(d\)\(1\) and 303 of the Foreign Service Act](#);
2. Career and career candidate SFS employees who have been recommended for separation by the CHCO, or designee;
3. SFS officers who retire, resign, or die before the date the Performance Board is convened;
4. SFS officers whose TIC expires before the date the Promotion Boards are convened;
5. SFS officers who have reached the MRA before the date the Promotion Boards are convened and who have not received an MRA waiver extending their date of appointment;
6. SFS officers who remain on a PIP after the end of the performance appraisal cycle or failed a PIP during the most recent performance appraisal cycle in accordance with [ADS 464](#);
7. SFS officers who plan to retire or resign by the end of the calendar year in which the Board is meeting, provided they have not received a low-ranked rating within a five-year period and have submitted a request to the CHCO, requesting an AEF not be prepared for the performance appraisal cycle ending during that calendar year; and
8. If a SFS Officer plans to resign or retire after the end of the rating cycle but before the Performance Boards convene, they are exempt from submitting an AEF but should

submit an AEF waiver request to HCTM to confirm their situation.

SFS officers may apply for a waiver of the requirement to submit an AEF by submitting [AID Form 461-1a, Senior Foreign Service AEF Waiver](#) to HCTM by the second Thursday in February (with the exception of requests related to medical emergencies or unplanned leave under **b** and **c** below, which must be submitted by the rating official as soon as possible after the situation necessitating the request occurs) unless HCTM announces a different date via an Agency Notice. HCTM must respond to all waiver requests by March 15, unless HCTM announces a different date. No SFS officer is guaranteed a waiver. HCTM may choose not to grant a waiver and instead permit the employee an extension of time to submit the promotion package. A SFS officer who was denied a waiver may appeal the decision to the HCTM/SDAA, or their designee, within five business days of the denial. Waivers must be determined solely at HCTM's discretion. SFS officers who do not submit an AEF are not reviewed for promotion and are not eligible for performance pay bonuses or Presidential Rank Award nominations for that performance appraisal cycle pursuant to [ADS 463mad, Senior Foreign Service Performance Pay](#).

HCTM may grant a waiver in the following circumstances:

- a. SFS officers who plan to retire or resign by the end of the calendar year in which the Board is meeting, provided they have not received a low-ranked rating within a five-year period. A written statement expressing intent to retire must accompany the AID Form 461-1a;
- b. SFS officers on unplanned leave for a reason that qualifies the employee for FMLA leave or pursuant to an approved Reasonable Accommodation (see [ADS 111](#)), for a period of 30 days or more immediately prior to the date when promotion packages are due to HCTM. However, employees whose absence for a medical reason is predictable should plan in advance to submit a promotion package prior to the start date of their leave;
- c. SFS officers on approved leave for a reason unrelated to a medical emergency for 60 days or more immediately prior to the date the promotion package is due. However, employees whose absence is predictable should plan in advance to submit a promotion package prior to the start date of their leave;
- d. SFS officers who were on leave for more than eight months of the performance appraisal cycle;
- e. SFS officers who will reach the MRA within the same calendar year the Boards are convened;
- f. SFS officers who spend the majority of the rating cycle in language training and less than 120 days at any assigned post; and

- g. Any other SFS officer for whom the requirement to submit a promotion package would be unreasonable or against the public interest.

Note: If a SFS officer retires or resigns before the end of the current cycle, they are automatically exempt from Board review and do not need to submit an AEF or a waiver for the upcoming Boards. SFS officers must provide notification of their intention to retire or resign to HCTM/CPE prior to the due date of the waivers in order to be exempt.

SFS officers who meet the exceptions criteria and do not submit an AEF package are considered to have met the standards of their class. HCTM/CPE must refer any SFS officer who does not meet one of the exception criteria to HCTM/ELR for potential disciplinary or other corrective action (see section **463.3.2.3**).

463.3.2.2 Failure to Submit AEF by Established Deadlines

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

HCTM issues Agency Notices in advance of the end of each performance appraisal cycle informing Agency employees, rating officials, and Appraisal Committees of due dates and submission procedures. Employees must submit their AEF by the deadlines specified in this ADS chapter or via Agency Notices for the promotion year.

If the AEF is not submitted or is submitted to HCTM after the established due date(s) without a previously approved exception, waiver, or extension request:

- h. HCTM must contact the employee and rater, if appropriate, to the extent feasible requesting the AEF and an explanatory statement for any missing or late document.
- i. Any document submitted to HCTM after the deadline must be accompanied by an explanatory statement. HCTM must review the explanatory statement to determine whether the delay was justified.
 - a. If HCTM determines the delay was justified and the AEF is submitted no later than three working days prior to the commencement of the Performance Board, the AEF must be added to the employee's PEF. Documents submitted less than three working days prior to the commencement of the Performance Board must not be included in the PEF. HCTM has the discretion to determine if it must form a Reconstituted Board at a later date for the employee.
 - b. If HCTM determines there is no adequate justification for the late or missing AEF documents, the following statement must be added to the PEF: "This employee promotion file is missing the AEF because the employee failed to meet required deadlines without an approved exception, waiver, or extension. The SFS Officer is ineligible to receive performance pay in this cycle, including a performance-based annual salary increase. If promotion-eligible, the SFS Officer must not be reviewed for promotion by the C/Board due to the incomplete file."

- c. HCTM/CPE must refer the case to HCTM/ELR for investigation, potentially leading to disciplinary or other corrective action for the employee, rating official, or any other party deemed responsible for the failure to meet submission requirements. Such action may include critical letter, disciplinary action, denial of awards or bonuses or other action the CHCO, or designee, deems appropriate.

463.3.2.3 Composition of the C/Board

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

USAID's C/Board is composed primarily of career and retired SFS officers. Composition is as follows:

1. One USAID career SFS officer at or above the level of those under review or a career SFS employee from another foreign affairs agency;
2. One retired USAID career SFS officer or equivalent from another foreign affairs agency;
3. One public member;
4. At the option of the CHCO, or designee, one additional member from a. or b. above.

HCTM directs employees to serve on Promotion Boards. HCTM appoints Board members from among SFS officers who demonstrate strong performance. Board members must not be the subject of an ongoing inquiry, or completed inquiry with a negative finding from SEC, OCR, OIG, HCTM, or GC within the past five years absent an extenuating circumstance. The decision about whether an extenuating circumstance exists is determined at the SDAA's discretion, in consultation with GC/EA. Candidates must be disqualified if they have been disciplined (*e.g.*, reprimand, suspension, removal) or were on a PIP during the five years immediately preceding the convening of the Boards.

USAID strives to ensure diverse representation on the C/Board in terms of current/former backstops, background and experience, in addition to race, color, ethnicity/national origin, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.

The Chairperson of the C/Board must be the senior-level USAID career employee on the Board.

463.3.2.4 C/Board Recusals

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

C/Board members must recuse themselves and not participate in deliberations regarding the employee's file (performance, ranking/rating, recommendations for awards and recommendations for LCEs) if they:

1. Rated, served as second-level reviewer for, or directly reported to an employee whose promotion package is being reviewed in the past five years;
2. Have been the subject of an Agency investigation for whom the member is aware an employee participated as a witness;
3. Are aware an employee being reviewed has advised management or HCTM on a matter involving the performance or conduct of the Board member (*i.e.*, an EXO or RLO who advises management on a PIP or HCTM/ELR on a disciplinary matter);
4. Have any familial relationship with a candidate being reviewed for promotion by their assigned board; or
5. Know they cannot provide a neutral review of an employee's file for a reason not otherwise outlined herein.

463.3.2.5 The C/Board Evaluation Considerations and Review Process

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The C/Board is convened annually to accomplish the following:

- Review the current-year performance of all SFS employees, other than those for whom submission of an AEF was waived;
- Based on the current-year PEF, recommend SFS officers for performance pay bonuses, and provide a tier ranking (Tier 1 through 4) as a factor to determine their annual SFS salary increase (see [ADS 463mal, Senior Foreign Service Performance Pay](#));
- Recommend promotion-eligible SFS employees for promotion through a review of their five-year PEFs and assigning each employee a high-ranked, mid-ranked, or low-ranked rating; and
- Recommend eligible SFS officers for Presidential Awards, LCEs as discussed in [ADS 440, Time-in-Class \(TIC\) Limitations and Limited Career Extensions \(LCEs\)](#), and other personnel actions identified in this ADS chapter.

The C/Board must review the PEFs of career and career candidate SFS employees using the Precepts for SFS Performance Boards outlined in [ADS 463mak](#).

The current-year PEF includes the current-year AEF and any disciplinary actions (decision letters) for the associated cycle.

The five-year PEF for promotion-eligible SFS officers includes the current year AEF plus four additional years of AEFs and AARs (as applicable), the employee's training record, awards,

assignment history, and disciplinary actions (decision letters) with an active disposition.

463.3.2.6 Current-Year Performance Review for the Senior Foreign Service

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The C/Board reviews the current-year PEF for all SFS officers who have submitted AEFs, applying and scoring the files based on the precepts contained in [ADS 463mak](#).

The C/Board reviews the following employees for performance pay and awards only:

1. SFS officers who are not promotion-eligible must not be reviewed by the Performance Board for promotion but must be reviewed for performance pay;
2. SFS officers who have been granted temporary extensions in accordance with [Section 607\(d\)\(2\) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980](#), as amended; and
3. SFS officers who have received a MRA waiver extending their date of appointment.

The C/Board, based on its review, evaluation, and scoring, must make the following recommendations:

- Tier 1: Based on its review and scoring of the current rating cycle, the C/Board must recommend its top-scoring SFS employees for Performance Awards (“bonuses”). The allowed maximum number of Performance Awards that may be provided is determined by the Foreign Service Act, as amended, as described in [ADS 463mal](#), [Senior Foreign Service Performance Pay](#), and HCTM provides this information to the C/Board. SFS employees recommended for Performance Awards are assigned to Tier 1, the top-ranked current-year SFS performance tier.
- Tier 2: SFS employees determined to have exceeded the standards of their class in the current rating cycle, but who are not recommended for Performance Awards are assigned to Tier 2.
- Tier 3: SFS employees who are determined to have met the standards of their class during the current-year rating cycle are assigned to Tier 3.
- Tier 4: SFS employees who are determined NOT to meet the standards of their class during the current-year rating cycle are assigned to Tier 4. Tier 4 is equivalent to being low-ranked by the promotion board or to receipt of a C grade by prior year boards.

The C/Board must also recommend candidates to be nominated for the Presidential Rank Award. The President approves Presidential Rank Awards based on the recommendations of the Interagency Selection Board, which reviews employees nominated by foreign affairs agencies. The C/Board is guided by [ADS 463mal](#), [Senior Foreign Service Performance Pay](#) (see [Section 405 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980](#), as amended, as well as the criteria established by HCTM for performance awards under sections [5384](#) and [4507](#) of the United States Code).

The current-year review of SFS PEFs and the results of the C/Board must also serve as factors that are considered in determining SFS annual salary increases which are approved by the Administrator, or their designee, as part of the Annual SFS Performance Pay Policy as described in [ADS 463mal, Senior Foreign Service Performance Pay](#).

463.3.2.7 Promotion Eligibility Requirements for the Senior Foreign Service

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

SFS career and career candidates must meet eligibility requirements established for their class in order to be recommended to the President for promotion. Promotions to the next higher class are recommended to the President only if the employee has met all eligibility requirements for promotion.

SFS employees must meet promotion eligibility requirements by March 31 of the performance appraisal cycle for which the Performance Board is convened. Note: Promotion eligibility starts from the effective date of the promotion to the previous level or from the date of the career candidate appointment if there was no prior promotion.

Promotion Eligibility Requirements are as follows:

- a. For promotion to Career Minister (FE-CM) – One year at class FE-MC.
- b. For promotion to Minister-Counselor (FE-MC) – One year at class FE-OC.

The C/Board must review the PEFs of all promotion-eligible SFS employees for competitive ranking for promotion, unless they have an approved waiver.

463.3.2.8 Promotion Consideration and Recommendation

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The C/Board must consider for promotion eligible career or career candidate SFS employees whose performance over the five most recent USAID-approved evaluations demonstrates the potential to meet the standards of the class at the next higher level. The C/Board must identify SFS employees for promotion without regard to the number of promotion opportunities set by management. The board bases their decisions solely on merit.

The Board assigns promotion-eligible career and career candidate SFS employees into one of the following three categories:

1. High-Ranked: SFS employee's performance demonstrates potential to meet the standards of the class at the next higher level and the employee is recommended for promotion. The C/Board must numerically rank order employees with a high-ranked rating.
2. Mid-Ranked: SFS employee's performance is meeting the standards of their class.

3. Low-Ranked: SFS employee's performance is not meeting the standards of their class.

After the C/Board develops a preliminary numerically rank-ordered list of high-ranked promotion-eligible SFS officers a copy of the list is provided to HCTM/CPE. HCTM/CPE must provide the Board, by class, with the high-ranked (or A) lists from the previous three Performance Boards. The C/Board must then have the opportunity to adjust the numerical rank order of SFS employees recommended for promotion. SFS employees cannot be removed from or added to the preliminary rank-ordered high-ranked list.

SFS employees who do not have an AEF for the most recent USAID performance appraisal cycle for an approved reason are not reviewed for promotion.

The C/Board must prepare Rating Reports on SFS employees and may provide advice on how to improve the SFS employee's competitiveness. For SFS employees who are low-ranked because their performance does not meet the standards of performance for their class, the C/Board must cite the reason(s) for their determination in a memorandum which HCTM/CPE must share with the employee, their Assignments and Career Counselor, and HCTM/ELR. If this is the second low-ranked rating within a five-year period, the SFS employee must be referred by HCTM/CPE to the Performance Standards Board (see [ADS 464](#)).

The C/Board's list of high-ranked SFS employees must be reviewed by:

1. The CHCO, or designee, and the exclusive representative (AFSA) before promotion decisions are finalized; and
2. SEC, OIG's Office of Investigations, OCR, GC/EA, and HCTM/ELR must certify a FSO recommended for promotion is not under investigation, engaged in a proceeding, or is the subject of disciplinary action involving loyalty, security, misconduct, or malfeasance. In the event a FSO is flagged, HCTM must consult with GC/EA to determine whether the FSO should continue to be considered, the decision should be delayed, or the employee should be withheld from further consideration due to a vetting issue. If the issue flagged is subsequently resolved, HCTM/CPE must resume the processing of the action or another corrective action must be taken, when appropriate.

USAID's recommendations to the President for promotions within the SFS must be made based on an employee's eligibility for promotion, the Performance Board's rank order list, and the number of promotions authorized by the USAID Administrator.

In certain infrequent cases, when there are extenuating circumstances the Board did not have access to during its deliberations, the CHCO, or designee, may disregard a decision of a C/Board. In such cases, SFS employees named on the promotion list may be deferred or denied promotion under the following circumstances:

- a. The SFS employee's promotion must be denied if the employee is ineligible for

promotion according to the promotion requirements in this ADS chapter;

- b. The SFS employee's promotion must be deferred if the employee is the subject of an investigation, proceeding, or discipline involving loyalty, security, misconduct, or malfeasance. HCTM/CPE must notify the SFS employee whose promotion is deferred in writing of the reasons if not inimical to the investigation or proceedings. After favorable termination of the investigation, proceeding, or disciplinary action, HCTM/CPE must refer the SFS employee's promotion recommendation to the Department of State for consideration by the President and Senate pursuant to [Section 302 of the Foreign Service Act](#). The effective date of promotion must be the first day of the pay period immediately following appointment by the President, unless the President authorizes a retroactive effective date. If the results are unfavorable, the SFS employee's promotion must be denied and the SFS employee next in the rank order must be promoted.
- c. The employee's promotion must be denied if the employee retires, resigns, is terminated, or dies any time after the Board completes its work and before the President signs the appointment.
- d. The employee must be recommended to the President for promotion regardless of inclusion or placement on the promotion list if the employee's promotion is made pursuant to a recommendation of the Foreign Service Grievance Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, or the Merit Systems Protection Board, in accordance with Section 606 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended (see [Section 606 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980](#), as amended).

Once the Agency has verified recommended candidates' eligibility for promotion, HCTM must obtain the Administrator's approval to submit a final list of those recommended for promotion to the State Department for onward submission to the White House for approval and the Senate for confirmation. Promotions are only affected after the Senate has confirmed the list and the President has signed the appointments pursuant to Section 302 of the FSA. This process often takes up to a year.

463.3.2.9 C/Board Operations and Materials

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The C/Board must strictly follow the provisions of [ADS 463mak](#) when assessing an employee's performance, and base their determinations on their consideration of the employee's PEF and the Precepts. HCTM provides the Performance Board the following briefing and other materials to carry out their responsibilities:

1. [ADS 461](#);
2. [ADS 461mad](#);
3. [ADS 463](#);

4. [ADS 463mae](#) (C/Board only);
5. [ADS 463mak](#);
6. A listing of SFS employees to be reviewed;
7. The PEF on each SFS employee being reviewed; and
8. USAID Priority Goals.

463.3.2.10 Information to be Considered in C/Board Reviews

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

- a. The C/Board must make rating decisions based only on material contained in SFS employees' PEFs.
- b. The C/Board must ignore any information in the file that is inadmissible (see [ADS 463mak](#)). Such information must not be the basis for the Board's recommendation concerning an employee.
- c. The C/Board must neither seek nor receive, from any source, any information on (for example, health, suitability, assignability, or reputation of) any SFS employee under consideration. If any unauthorized communications of this nature come to the attention of a Board member, the Board member must report this in writing to HCTM/CPE within 24 hours.

463.3.2.11 Limited Career Extensions (LCEs)

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The C/Board must consider LCEs for career employees of the SFS who will reach their maximum TIC/or current LCE expiration, if appropriate, during the following calendar year, applying the criteria and procedures in [ADS 463mae](#) and [ADS 440](#) (see [Section 607 \(b\)\(2\) of the Foreign Service Act of 1980](#)).

463.3.2.12 The C/Board Findings and Recommendations

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

The C/Board must provide their findings to the CHCO, or designee, by way of a Board memorandum signed by each Board member.

- a. Unless instructed otherwise by the CHCO, or designee, the C/Board must prepare the following reports by class:
 - 1) A numerically rank-ordered list of employees who are high-ranked.
 - 2) An alphabetical list of employees who are mid-ranked.

- 3) Decision memoranda to outline their rationale for providing low-ranked ratings (see [ADS 463mak](#) for procedures and criteria).
- b. The C/Board must also prepare the following lists of career employees:
- 1) Those who will reach their maximum TIC/current LCE the following calendar year and are being recommended/not recommended for LCEs.
 - 2) Those who are being recommended for Performance Pay and Presidential Awards, including any scoring or ranking information related to such decisions.
- c. The C/Board may prepare the following recommendations, as directed by the CHCO, or designee:
- 1) Recommendations concerning the assignment, training, counseling, or other personnel considerations with respect to any employee or group of employees reviewed.
 - 2) Recommendations concerning policies and procedures for subsequent Boards and improvements to the performance evaluation system.

463.3.2.13 Decision Rule for Employees Not Meeting the Standards of Their Class

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

SFS career employees who fail to meet the standards of their class (either from a low-ranked rating resulting from a promotion review or a Tier 4 determination resulting from a current year performance review) twice in a five-year period must be separated from the Service unless a Performance Standards Board determines there are extenuating circumstances that would merit retention, and the recommendation for retention is approved by the CHCO, or designee, (see [ADS 464](#)). Precepts prescribing the procedures and criteria to be used by the C/Board for determining ratings, including for retention, are described in [ADS 463mak](#).

463.3.2.14 Facilitation of the C/Board and Implementation of Recommendations

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

HCTM/CPE is responsible for establishing and facilitating the work of the SFS C/Board. HCTM/CPE must:

- a. Recommend Board members to the CHCO for appointment to the the SFS C/Board;
- b. Obtain and compile SFS AEFs and the other elements of each SFS employee's performance package for the C/Board;
- c. Monitor the operations of the SFS C/Board and provide advice and staff assistance to Board activities and members;
- d. Determine SFS eligibility for promotion and performance pay;

- e. Provide SFS employees with Promotion and Performance Board Review Summaries;
- f. Communicate Board results;
- g. Ensure all vetting for SFS officers recommended for promotion and performance pay is completed;
- h. Process the personnel actions required to affect the determinations of the SFS C/Board;
- i. Process SFS performance pay personnel actions; and
- j. Propose Agency policy on SFS annual salary increases.

463.3.2.15 Reconstitution of a C/Board

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

HCTM reviews the findings and recommendations of the C/Board to determine whether they were made in accordance with the precepts and the policy in this ADS chapter. If questions of procedure or conformity arise with respect to any employee, HCTM reviews the question to determine if further review for reconsideration by a reconstituted C/Board is warranted. A reconstituted C/Board reviews the SFS employee's performance file and a representative sample of files of other employees from the original Board for each SFS employee under review. The SFS employee is rated and ranked based on the same criteria and factors used by the original Board. Ratings of files used for comparison purposes must not replace the original Board's ratings of those files.

The Reconstituted Board must be organized by class, when applicable, and HCTM must strive to convene a board composition as close to the original board membership (e.g., gender, diversity, and grade class) as practicable.

463.3.2.16 Oath of Office - C/Board

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

When the C/Board is convened but before the beginning of their deliberations, each Board member must sign the following oath of office and adhere to the precepts and procedures in this ADS chapter and its references.

"I, [_____] , do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I shall, without prejudice or partiality, perform faithfully and to the best of my ability, the duties as a member of the USAID Foreign Service Promotion and Performance Board; that I shall preserve the confidential character of the personnel records used by the Board; that I shall adhere to the Precepts for Employee Evaluation and other such guidance as appropriate for the discharge of these duties; and that I shall not reveal to any unauthorized person information concerning the deliberations, findings, and recommendations of the Board [so help me God]."

Failure to observe the instructions contained in the oath of office may result in disciplinary action or penalties as prescribed by the Privacy Act. Board members must report to the CHCO, or designee, any attempt to provide them information not authorized by the Precepts.

463.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

463.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

- a. [3 FAM 4361, General, Separation for Cause](#)
- b. [3 FAM 4364.3, Action by the Proposing Official](#)
- c. [3 FAM 4410, Foreign Service Grievance System](#)
- d. [Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#) (Sections 301(d)(1), 302(a), 303, 405, 406, 601-608, and 612 are authorities for this ADS chapter)

463.4.2 Internal Mandatory References

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

- a. [ADS 111, Procedures for Providing Reasonable Accommodation](#)
- b. [ADS 414, Foreign Service \(FS\) Appointments](#)
- c. [ADS 459, USAID's Foreign Service Career Candidate Program](#)
- d. [ADS 461, Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Performance Management & Development Programs](#)
- e. [ADS 461mab, USAID Employee Performance and Development Process: Guidebook for Supervisors](#)
- f. [ADS 461mad, FS/SFS Skills Framework](#)
- g. [ADS 463mae, Precepts for Limited Career Extensions for Senior Foreign Service](#)
- h. [ADS 463mai, Precepts for Foreign Service Promotion Boards](#)
- i. [ADS 463mak, Precepts for Senior Foreign Service Performance Boards](#)
- j. [ADS 463mal, Senior Foreign Service Performance Pay](#)
- k. [ADS 464, Foreign Service Performance-Based Actions](#)
- l. [USAID Acquisition Regulation \(AIDAR\)](#)

463.4.3 **Mandatory Forms**

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

- a. [AID Form 461-1, Foreign Service Annual Performance Evaluation Form](#)
- b. [AID Form 461-5, Foreign Service Annual Accomplishment Record](#)
- c. [AID Form 461-6, AEF Senior Foreign Service Form](#)
- d. [AID Form 461-1a, Senior Foreign Service Annual Evaluation Form Waiver](#)
- e. [AID Form 463-3, Senior Foreign Service Promotion Application](#)
- f. [AID Form 463-4, Foreign Service Promotion Input Form \(PIF\)](#)
- g. [AID Form 463-5, Operating Unit Context Statement Template](#)
- h. [AID Form 463-6, Foreign Service Promotion Waiver Request](#)

463.5 **ADDITIONAL HELP**

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

There are no additional help documents for this chapter.

463.6 **DEFINITIONS**

Effective Date: 09/16/2024

See the [ADS Glossary](#) for all ADS terms and definitions.

Advisory Letter (SFS only)

Advisory letters are issued to rating officials and Appraisal Committee members by C/Boards when a current evaluation is deficient in some manner, but the deficiency does not adversely affect the employee's competitive standing. These letters are not placed in an employee's Performance Evaluation File. (**Chapter 463**)

Annual Accomplishment Record (AAR) (FS Only)

The form completed by Foreign Service Officers at the end of the performance cycle, or prior to changing assignments or supervisors, to document key accomplishments and any special challenges or circumstances that affected performance during the period. (**Chapter 461** and **463**)

Annual Performance Appraisal Cycle (FS and SFS)

A one-year evaluation cycle, also known as the performance cycle, which is April 1 – March 31. (**Chapters 461, 463, 464**)

Annual Performance Evaluation (APE) (FS Only)

The form used to evaluate (on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory scale) FS employee

performance for the performance appraisal cycle. Instructions and guidance on the preparation of the Annual Performance Evaluation are found in [ADS 461](#), the Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook, and on the USAID Forms website. (**Chapter [461](#)** and **463**)

Appraisal Committee (SFS Only)

A committee composed of three to five Mission/Office officials, knowledgeable in the work of the unit, who review and provide management input into employee evaluations. (**Chapter [463](#)**)

Career Appointment

A career appointment is an appointment given to tenured employees. Individuals appointed or converted to career appointments are subject to time-in-class (TIC) limitations and mandatory retirement rules. (**Chapter [414](#)** and **463**)

Career Candidate Appointment

An employee hired for a time-limited appointment that is intended to lead to a full career with the Agency following successful completion of tenure requirements. (**Chapter [414](#)** and **463**)

Core Skills

The core skills required for all Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service Officers. (**Chapter [461](#)** and **463**)

Critical Letter (SFS Only)

Critical letters are issued to rating officials and employees by the C/Boards when a current evaluation is so deficient that the Promotion Board's ability to make confident judgments on the employee's competitive standing has been affected, disadvantaging the employee. Critical letters are placed in the Rating Official's and Employee's Performance Evaluation File for two years. (**Chapter [463](#)**)

Mandatory Retirement Based on Relative Performance

When two FS Promotion Boards or three C/Boards in a five-year period find a career employee has not met the standards of performance established for their class ([Section 608, Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#)), the employee referred to a PSB to determine if there are extenuating circumstances that would warrant retaining the officer. If there are not, the PSB must recommend the employee be involuntarily retired based on relative performance. (**Chapter [463](#)** and [464](#))

Performance Awards (SFS Only)

Cash payments based on an employee's Annual Evaluation Form for the current performance appraisal cycle. (**Chapter [463](#)**)

Performance Evaluation File (PEF)

The performance evaluation file contains the documents used to evaluate an employee's readiness for promotion against the promotion decision criteria. The FS performance evaluation file consists of the current year promotion package (PIF, AAR(s) with associated Operating Unit Context Statement(s), APE, and MSR(s)) and the prior four years' performance

documentation (AARs, Operating Unit Context Statements, APEs and/or AEFs), training, awards, assignments history, disciplinary actions, and language scores. The SFS performance evaluation file contains AEFs and other FS performance documentation as described in the previous sentence for the current and prior four years, as well as training, award, assignment history, disciplinary actions and language scores. (**Chapter [461](#) and [463](#)**)

Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

A PIP is a formal written plan provided to an employee whose performance in one or more work objectives, job requirements, technical backstop competencies, and/or FS skill areas is determined to be unsatisfactory. (**Chapter [461](#) and [463](#)**)

Principal Officer

The most senior officer in a USAID Operating Unit who is responsible for ensuring all employees are contributing to the Operating Unit's work and supervisors are maximizing employee performance, and also charged with overseeing the implementation of the performance management program in the unit, including, where appropriate, establishing an Appraisal Committee, e.g., Assistant Administrator, Independent USAID/W Office Director, or Mission Director. (**Chapters [461](#), [462](#), [463](#)**)

Promotion Boards

Review the FS performance evaluation files submitted for their consideration and determine which candidates are ready for immediate promotion (A rating), which candidates are meeting the standards of performance of their class but are not ready for promotion (B rating), and which candidates are failing to meet the standards of performance of their class (C rating), in accordance with this ADS chapter and [ADS 463mai, Precepts for Foreign Service Promotion Boards](#). (**Chapter [463](#)**)

Promotion Input Form (PIF)

The form used to document employees' contributions and accomplishments since their last promotion, highlighting the examples that best demonstrate an employee's readiness for promotion. Instructions and guidance on the preparation of the PIF are found in **ADS 463**, the Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook, and on the USAID Forms website. (**Chapter [463](#)**)

Rating Official

The employee's immediate supervisor, team leader or other official as designated by the Principal Officer. (**Chapter [461](#) and [463](#)**)

Reasonable Accommodation

Any change in the work environment or application process that enables a person with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities. (**Chapter [111](#) and [463](#)**)

Skills Framework

A chart that provides the core skill area and subskill definitions as well as proficiency indicators that describe the requirements across the FS class levels and SFS. (**Chapter [461](#) and [463](#)**)

Tenure

A process that changes a career candidate from limited or conditional to career status. **(Chapter 463)**

Within Class Increase

A periodic increase in an employee's rate of basic pay from one step of the class of their position to the next higher step of that class. **(Chapter 463)**

Work Objectives (FS Only)

Expectations for the work an employee accomplishes, as established through discussions between the supervisor and employee. Work objectives may be short- or long- term (e.g., annual) and updated as needed throughout the performance cycle. While employee participation in the development of work objectives is encouraged, the rating official maintains the final authority to set work objectives. **(Chapter [461](#) and 463)**

Work Objectives (SFS Only)

Expectations for an employee established by discussions between the supervisor and/or Agency leadership and employee for a particular rating period. **(Chapters [450](#), [461](#), 463)**

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