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ADS Chapter 459

USAID's Foreign Service Career Candidate Program

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

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**An asterisk and yellow highlight indicate that the adjacent material is new for this chapter or substantively revised. 2*

ADS 459 – USAID’s Foreign Service Career Candidate Program

*459.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

*This ADS chapter outlines the mandatory policies and required procedures for USAID’s Foreign Service Career Candidate Program. This chapter covers new Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) hired to replenish USAID’s Foreign Service (FS) workforce, as well as officers hired under the Development Leadership Initiative (DLI) recruitment effort from 2008-2012. This program is intended to enable USAID to maintain a robust, highly qualified overseas workforce, particularly in key technical areas.

*The Career Candidates include Junior Officers (JOs) and a limited number of Mid-Career Officers (MCOs). The program provides the JOs with individually adapted training that includes time in Washington followed by a two-year directed assignment overseas. The MCOs receive only orientation and any USAID-specific, gap-filling training needed, after which they proceed directly to assigned posts for periods ranging from one to four years depending on the post’s normal tour length.

*This ADS chapter incorporates the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)**, which contains detailed information on the policies and procedures applicable to the DLI and the Foreign Service Career Candidate Program that has evolved from the DLI. Additional information can be found on the Office of Human Resources (OHR) Web site at <http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm>. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

459.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 07/21/2012

This section summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs) and Missions concerning new-entry Junior Officers (JOs) and new-entry Mid-Career Officers (MCOs). Please refer to the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** for the specific responsibilities assigned to B/IO and Mission personnel, and to the Officers themselves.

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

OHR staff with responsibilities for the program include:

1. The **Agency DLI/Career Candidate Coordinator** is responsible for organizing and administering the program. The Coordinator reports directly to the **Deputy Assistant Administrator for Human Resources**

- (DAA/OHR), who has primary responsibility for all aspects of human resources management for the Agency.
2. The **Foreign Service Personnel Special Programs Team (OHR/FSP/SP)** is responsible for handling administrative matters for new Career Candidates before and during orientation, and for assigning a coach to each of the new employees.
 3. **Foreign Service Personnel Staffing Branch (OHR/FSP/FSS) Specialists** are responsible for arranging new Career Candidates' transfers overseas and for processing administrative actions related to their assignments.
 4. **Coaches** are responsible for advising Career Candidates as they prepare for their directed assignments and learn about the requirements for advancing in the Foreign Service.
 5. **Training Advisors** are responsible for coordinating formal, on-the-job, language, and professional development training for the new Career Candidates.
 6. **Assignment and Performance Counselors** are responsible for coordinating, and chairing if required, the Technical Selection Panels that interview and select candidates, as well as counseling and guiding new FS employees on career development.
 7. The **Administrative Promotion Panel** is responsible for reviewing Junior Officers' performance annually, based on their mandatory AID [461-1 Annual Evaluation Form \(AEF\)](#), and for making administrative promotion recommendations to the DAA/OHR.
 8. The **Tenure Board** is responsible for reviewing the performance of Career Candidates to ensure they demonstrate aptitude and fitness for career service, as required by the standards of performance for tenured Foreign Service Officers (FSOs). See Mandatory Reference, [414mad, Tenuring of Foreign Service Career Candidates](#), for information on Tenure Boards.
 9. **Performance Boards** are responsible for considering Foreign Service employees at FS-04 and above for possible promotion to the next higher class, as well as other matters. (For further elaboration of performance board responsibilities, see [ADS 414.2.e](#), and [ADS 463](#) for promotion eligibility requirements.)

10. The **Agency Social Worker** is responsible for providing counseling, crisis referral, and workplace wellness information to all Agency employees.

Please refer to the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** for specific responsibilities of OHR staff.

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

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

Please refer to the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** for a complete description of B/IO staff responsibilities.

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

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

e. The Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD) is responsible for working with OHR to ensure that the Foreign Service Career Candidate Program contributes to a fully diverse workforce.

f. USAID Missions are responsible for implementing the program in country in accordance with the guidance in this chapter and other related directives.

USAID Missions must assign staff to the program as follows:

1. A **DLI/New Career Candidate Coordinator** responsible for overseeing the program, including preparing Mission Orders, Memoranda of Agreement and budget requests, and ensuring all logistical arrangements are in place for the Career Candidates to successfully complete their first directed assignments. If a dedicated Coordinator position is not possible or necessary, this function may be assigned to the Deputy Director or other senior staff.
2. **Supervisors of Record/Rating Officials** responsible for helping new employees settle into the country; providing on-the-job training; preparing AEF Work Plans; guiding the employees in revising their IDPs; providing performance feedback to the employees on a regular basis; and rating the employees.
3. **Mentors** are responsible for advising employees on professional development. Mentors do not have to be the Career Candidate's supervisor; any USAID Mission employee with appropriate skills and experience may assume this role.

Please refer to the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** for additional details on USAID Mission responsibilities.

f. **Career Candidates** are responsible for adhering to the policies and procedures of the program as found in this chapter and in the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** and other Mandatory References and also on the Office of Human Resources Web site at <http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm>.
[Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

***459.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES**

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

***459.3.1 Recruitment and Selection**

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

The Agency's policy is to recruit and select the best qualified Career Candidates, without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, color, age, (except as limited by [Section 812 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended](#)) religion, ethnic origin, marital status, political affiliation, or physical disability.

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

Prospective candidates submit applications in the Agency's electronic employment system in response to announcements of openings in each skill category, based on Mission demand and the Agency workforce planning model. Candidates who pass OHR's screening undergo a comprehensive interview and testing by technical selection panels composed of senior officials who are expert in the technical specialties of the position. The Agency DLI/Career Candidate Coordinator makes final selection decisions. For detailed information about the recruitment and selection process for FSOs, see [ADS 468, Foreign Service \(FS\) Personnel Recruitment](#).

***459.3.2 Appointment Conditions**

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

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

OHR/FSP appoints newly-hired employees as Career Candidates for the USAID Foreign Service either as Junior Officers (JOs) or Mid-Career Officers (MCOs). OHR assigns JOs to their first tour assignments based on the Agency's needs and, to the extent possible, the JO's professional experience, language capability, and personal needs.

*MCOs' first postings are also directed by Agency management; however, they are not training assignments. MCOs go for their initial overseas assignments into unfilled, appropriately graded positions (sometimes in Critical Priority Countries or countries experiencing emergencies or critical needs). **MCOs may be directed to advertised positions under the following guidelines:**

- *To Critical Priority Country positions at any time, as needed.
- *During the Major Listing round and subsequent Updates, when no eligible career or career candidate FSO bidder has bid on the position, is technically unqualified for such a position, or has been selected for a higher priority bid.
- *Selecting officials must justify in writing why eligible bidders who are not selected do not meet the advertised criteria for the position.

***MCO assignments may be at one-year, one-tour, or two-tour posts.**

Career candidate appointments are time-limited, must not exceed five years, and may not be extended or renewed except as provided in [Section 309\(b\)\(3\) of the Foreign](#)

[Service Act](#) and [38 U.S.C. 43](#), which pertains to employee rights under the [Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 \(USERRA\)](#).

*459.3.3 Pay and Benefits

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

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

*Although the guidance in [Section 307 of the Foreign Service Act, as amended](#), and in [ADS 470](#) allows new entry appointments up to FS-04, USAID's policy is to appoint JO Career Candidates to salary classes FS-06 or FS-05 at various steps, depending on the candidate's qualifications; education; relevant experience as defined in the vacancy announcements for JO positions in each backstop; and highest previous salary as documented by payroll or tax records. MCO Career Candidates are generally appointed to salary classes FS-03 and FS-02, based on the same criteria. Please refer to [ADS 414.3.7-11](#) and its references for detailed information on Foreign Service pay and benefits, such as retirement coverage and allowances and differentials to which Foreign Service employees are entitled.

Additional information on benefits, such as health and life insurance, annual and sick leave, can also be found at <http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/benefits/index.cfm>. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

*459.3.4 Training

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

The Career Candidate Program training includes formal, instructor-led training courses, on-the-job training, language training, and e-learning. Each Career Candidate's training is based on an Individual Development Plan (IDP) created cooperatively by the employee and his or her supervisor with input from OHR training staff. (See Section II.B of the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** for more information on the IDP.)

The Junior Officer training program is carried out in two stages:

- *a. **Stage One** takes place at USAID/W and consists of a five-week orientation program and language training. After orientation the new JO is assigned to a home office in a Regional or Pillar Bureau/Independent Office (B/IO). These B/IOs provide a series of:
 - Technical trainings,
 - Rotational assignments, and

- Relevant on-the-job training across technical skill areas.

*An illustrative listing of required and recommended training for each backstop, as well as information about rotations, can be found at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm#CP_JUMP_32897. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.] The goal is to provide the new Career Candidate a broad foundation and understanding of the Agency and its procedures.

*The Washington training period also includes language instruction in coordination with training and rotations in B/IOs. This training takes place at the [Foreign Service Institute](#) (FSI) or other USAID-contracted training facilities.

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

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

*USAID provides each Career Candidate a maximum of 40 weeks of language training to achieve the proficiency required for tenure or assignment to a Language Designated Position. Not all employees will receive the full 40 weeks; the training generally can be completed in 24-36 weeks or less, depending on the student's prior proficiency. FSI provides each student an estimate of the amount of training that he or she will need to achieve the required proficiency, based on FSI's standards for each language category (see page 157 of FSI's [course catalog](#) for the current standards).

*During language training, FSI conducts progress reviews at intervals of six weeks to determine whether the employee is on track for meeting the required proficiency level. FSI prepares these progress reports regularly and the employee (student) signs them and receives copies from FSI. If FSI determines that the student may have difficulty reaching the required proficiency level by the end of 40 weeks, FSI will advise both the student

and OHR/FSP. Students may be allowed additional training up to 40 weeks; after 40 weeks OHR/FSP will terminate training.

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

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

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

*Employees who have not achieved language proficiency for tenure cannot proceed to post without Mission approval and signature on the MOA. See http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm#CP_JUMP_32897 [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet] for a sample Language Training Policy MOA.

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

*For more information on USAID's Foreign Language Program and the requirements and procedures for requesting an extension for compassionate reasons or for proceeding to post without language tenure proficiency, see Section II.C.5 of the of the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** as well as Mandatory Reference **[459mae, Responsibilities for USAID's Foreign Language Program](#)**. [Note: 459mae will soon be replaced by a new ADS Chapter 438, Foreign Language Program.]

*FS employees are eligible for language incentive payments if they have a current (within the last five years) FSI-tested proficiency of S-3/R-3 or higher in an incentive language of the post to which they are assigned.

The current list of USAID Incentive Languages is available at <http://notices.usaid.gov/notice/22376>. [Note: This document is only available on the USAID intranet.]

*The Washington training period can also include short-term travel (TDY) to a USAID Mission, but only when the travel represents a unique opportunity for learning that cannot be gained in Washington or at the first directed assignment. Such TDYs are considered exceptional and approval is based on a strong justification that the specific FS Skills and competencies the employee will gain cannot be provided by the B/IO. The policies and procedures for approval of such travel are contained in Section II.C.4 of the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)**.

- *b. **Stage Two** is a 24-month directed assignment at a USAID/Mission. During the 24 months, the Career Candidate completes trainings and rotations geared toward gaining on-the-job experience in field operations and Mission policies. The **work** assignments during this period should build a foundation in the employee's own skill areas and the competencies needed to function successfully as a journeyman FSO in the next overseas assignment.

*Rotations during the Mission training period can provide the JO with a variety of experiences, including temporary assignments with other USG agencies, and organizations outside the USG, such as host government agencies, legislative bodies, USAID implementing partners, other donor agencies, and private sector partners. Rotations to organizations outside the USG must be approved by the employee's supervisor, the Mission Director or designee, and must be cleared by GC (either RLA or AID/W, as appropriate). The Regional Security Office should also be consulted to determine whether security implications or concerns exist.

Additional information about rotations and a sample rotation memo can be found on the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfcfm#CP_JUMP_32897. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

*The overseas directed assignment training period can also include short-term travel (TDY) to a different USAID Mission, but only when the travel represents a unique learning opportunity that cannot be gained at the DLI's first directed assignment Mission. Such TDYs are considered exceptional, and the USAID Mission Director's (or designee's) approval is based on a strong justification that the specific FS Skills and competencies the employee will gain cannot be provided by the Mission. These opportunities should be combined with other training opportunities

for cost-effective purposes and the use of alternative lodging accessed whenever possible.

*Mid-Career Officers (MCOs) are not considered trainees; therefore, they do not have a training program as outlined above. MCOs attend the five-week orientation program, after which they may receive language training and some additional training to fill gaps in the knowledge and skills necessary for them to perform effectively in their USAID positions. Short-term travel to USAID Missions for MCO training is generally not approved, but may be considered in cases of exceptional learning opportunities that cannot be provided any other way. See Section II.C.4 of the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** for the policies and procedures related to MCO travel while in Washington.

Additional information on Career Candidate training can be found in the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** and on the DLI Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm#CP_JUMP_32897. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

***459.3.5 Performance Management and Evaluation**

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

*All Foreign Service Officers and Candidates are expected to maintain high standards of conduct and performance. Until JOs reach FS-04 their performance management is subject to an administrative review process described in this chapter and its accompanying **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)**.

While the policies and procedures in [ADS 461](#) and the [Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook – Foreign Service](#) apply to Career Candidates' administrative performance reviews, the policies in [ADS 463](#) Performance Boards do not apply until the new employees reach FS-04.

*Supervisors/Rating Officials are required to develop a performance plan including Work Objectives (WOs) and Performance Measures (PMs) for Career Candidates at the beginning of their assignments. Supervisors must use Section 4 of the mandatory [AID 461-1 Annual Evaluation Form \(AEF\)](#) to describe the new employee's role in the organization and must record Work Objectives and Performance Measures in Section 5. Sections 1, 4, and 5 of the AEF must be completed within 45 days of the conclusion of the five-week orientation. A sample Career Candidate AEF can be found in Section IV.A. of the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** and on the OHR Web site at <http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm>. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

*Junior Officers have a Mandatory WO and corresponding PMs for their first AEF, as follows:

***Mandated Work Objective:** Demonstrate understanding and working knowledge of USAID programming processes and [list backstop] technical areas through completion of formal and informal trainings, e-learning opportunities, and rotations.

***Performance Measures:** (1) Participate in formal and informal training, including required Agency training; and (2) Complete [list backstop] technical training and demonstrate understanding of key backstop programming priorities.

*If relevant, Mission-specific WOs and PMs may be added to the Mandatory Work Objective within 45 calendar days following the employee's arrival at post. Please consult Section IV.A. of the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers (459mad)** for additional information on setting WOs and corresponding PMs for JOs' first and second rating cycles.

*This Mandatory Work Objective is not used for the second AEF. Rather, for the second rating cycle JOs should have a professional development-related WO, and must also have at least one other WO and PM.

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

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

*The [SFW](#) is a tool that guides the Rating Official during the employee feedback session. The Rating Official uses the SFW to provide performance feedback to the employee on the Subskills in the Skills Matrix. It is mandatory to use at the end of the evaluation period and should be used as appropriate to provide feedback at other points during the rating cycle. The Appraisal Committee (AC) reviews the SFW only when requested by the Rating Official or employee. However, it is not part of the official rating of record.

JOs' rating cycles are tied to the entry-on-duty (EOD) date of their new entry class. Although a full evaluation rating period is 12 months, JOs receive their first rating 11 months after the EOD date of their class, and their second rating 12 months after that.

(See http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm#CP_JUMP_32900.) [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.] MCOs' appraisal periods follow the regular Foreign Service evaluation cycle from April 1 through March 31.

The supervisor of record at the end of the rating period is responsible for completing the AEF. If the rating period includes a change of supervisors or rotations for periods lasting more than 30 days, the initial supervisor or rotation supervisor must submit a mandatory AID [400-1B, Appraisal Input Form \(AIF\)](#) to the next supervisor (for use by the person who is the supervisor/Rating Official at the end of the rating period). A complete AIF is especially necessary when a Washington supervisor is transferring responsibility to a supervisor at post shortly before the end of the rating period. For rotations lasting fewer than 30 days, rotation supervisors must use a rotation memo to document performance. (A sample Rotation Memo can be found at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm#CP_JUMP_32900. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

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

Additional information on evaluation policy for Foreign Service employees is contained in Sections IV and V of the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers** ([459mad](#)). The complete requirements of the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Program are set forth in [ADS 461, Employee Evaluation Program, Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service](#), and [ADS 414](#). Additional information about the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Program is contained in the Mandatory Reference [461maa, Employee Evaluation Program \(EEP\) Guidebook Part 1, Foreign Service](#).

***459.3.6 Performance Assessment and Promotion** Effective Date: 02/10/2012

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

*As noted in Section **459.3.5** above, the administrative review process for JOs is separate from the performance assessment and promotion system for Career Candidate MCOs and Career Candidate JOs who have attained FS-04.

During their training period, career candidate JOs are eligible for administrative promotion up to level FS-04. Promotion is contingent upon a satisfactory AEF rating and is only granted if the officer is judged by OHR's Administrative Promotion Panel to

have met all the skill standards of his or her class, as well as the AEF work objectives and performance measures. For further discussion of administrative promotion policies, see Section IV.G and Section V of the **Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers** ([459mad](#)).

*Once JOs have attained promotion to FS-04, their performance appraisal and promotion requirements switch to the Agency's April through March Foreign Service Performance Evaluation System (the same process as for MCO promotions – see [ADS 461](#) and [ADS 463](#)). **Under this system**, the annual Foreign Service Performance Boards (convened each summer) evaluate the performance of all **eligible** career and career candidate FSOs and make promotion determinations. **(Eligibility for review by the Performance Board** assumes that a JO has served at the FS-04 level for at least 120 calendar days by the 31st of March preceding the Performance Boards.)

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

*The promotion process is highly competitive, as Performance Boards consider all candidates in all backstops against the Foreign Service Skills Matrix and performance objectives. **The Performance Boards consider for promotion those career or career candidate employees whose performance over the last five rating cycles, including the most recent rating cycle, demonstrates the potential to meet the standards of the class at the next higher level (see [ADS 463.5.1](#)).** For a promotion, an employee must meet the eligibility criteria in [ADS 463.3.4](#). (overseas service, worldwide availability, time-in-grade, etc.), have a recommendation by a board for promotion, and rank highly enough for inclusion within the number of individuals that the Agency will promote in each class.

OHR/FSP bases actual promotions on the Career Candidate's rank on a promotion list and the number of positions available. OHR/FSP recommends further review and possible separation for Career Candidates who fail to meet work objectives or perform poorly in accord with skills expectations. For those employees who exceed the standards of their class, OHR/FSP recommends and rank-orders them for possible promotion.

***459.3.7 Assignments** Effective Date: 02/10/2012

JOs' first overseas postings are directed assignments, that is, determined by the Agency DLI/Career Candidate Coordinator in consultation with B/IOs and Missions. While the Agency makes these assignments based on programming priorities and the training capacity of the Missions, the employee's background, language capabilities, and personal situation are taken into account as much as possible.

*MCOs' first postings are also directed by Agency management; however, they are not training assignments. MCOs go for their initial overseas assignments into unfilled, appropriately graded positions (sometimes in Critical Priority Countries) that have been available for bid but not filled by career or career-candidate eligible bidder FSOs on the Major Listing or any subsequent updates. These assignments may be at one-year, one-tour, or two-tour posts.

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

1. OHR/FSP issues an Assignment Calendar listing important FS Assignment Cycle deadlines and events;
2. Bureaus/Independent Offices (B/IOs) and Missions validate positions that will be open;
3. OHR/FSP issues a Major Listing of Positions for employee bidding;
4. Eligible bidders submit an Employee Bidding Form, an automated Web form in the Employee Information Management System (EIMS/FSAS) available at <http://uxapprd001.usaid.gov/EIMS/>. **[Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]**
5. OHR/FSP issues Position Certificates of Eligible Bidders (CERTs) to Selecting Officials for selection consideration and decision;
6. Operating Units select bidders;
7. The Assignment Team, which includes the Chief, OHR/FSP, B/IO management and technical staff, and the Foreign Service exclusive bargaining unit, makes assignment recommendations;
8. The Chief, OHR/FSP, approves assignments; OHR/FSP notifies bidders of their assignments in a General Notice of assignment decisions; and
9. OHR/FSP issues Update Listings of Available Positions and Bidding Instructions by General Notices throughout the year as unfilled or other positions become available.

Bidding takes place throughout the year based on the Assignment Calendar and the steps above. Additional information and helpful tools on the assignment and bidding process, including tips for first-time bidders, can be found at

http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/foreign_service_assignments.cfm. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

*Since arrival at the first directed assignment occurs at various times that may not coincide with the assignment and bidding cycle, employees may have to curtail or extend the directed assignment to meet the regular summer/fall transition from post. In these cases, the employees must request an extension or curtailment from OHR, following the procedures in Section VII of the Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers ([459mad](#)).

*459.3.8 Tenure

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

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

Career Candidates are eligible for tenure if they:

1. Attain class FS-04;
2. Complete 36 months of continuous service in USAID as a Foreign Service Career Candidate;
3. Serve a minimum of 18 months overseas as a U.S. direct hire Career Candidate in USAID (Temporary duty for continuous and consecutive periods of at least six months or more may count toward the 18-month requirement if the work being performed directly relates to the employee’s occupational specialty);
4. Satisfy foreign language proficiency requirements as stated in ADS [414.3.4](#) and Mandatory Reference [459mae, Responsibilities for USAID’s Foreign Language Program](#). (Note: 459mae will soon be replaced by a new ADS Chapter 438, Foreign Language Program), and
5. Satisfy other conditions regarding tenure eligibility, for example, medical and security clearances, the absence of any unresolved administrative or Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigations, and completed certification as to availability for worldwide service (see [ADS 463](#)).

All requirements must be fully satisfied prior to the date that the Tenure Board convenes. Except in certain limited circumstances described in the references to [ADS](#)

[414.3.2.1](#), tenuring must occur within the employee's five-year career-candidate appointment.

*The Tenure Board has three options for its recommendations: to grant or deny tenure or recommend that tenure be deferred for up to 12 months. Career Candidates whose tenure is deferred have a second opportunity to be tenured. Those who are not recommended for tenure are subject to the Agency's separation procedures. The sole criterion for a positive tenuring recommendation is the Career Candidate's satisfactory work performance and demonstrated potential, assuming typical career growth and development, to serve effectively as a USAID career Foreign Service Officer over a normal career span, extending to and including class FS-01. The standard is individualized rather than comparative (that is, the candidates are not rank-ordered with others of their class as they are when being considered for promotion by the Performance Boards).

For further discussion of tenure policies and eligibility requirements, see [ADS 414.3.6, Tenuring of Career Candidates](#), Mandatory Reference [414mad, Tenuring of Foreign Service Career Candidates](#), and Mandatory Reference [414mac, Precepts for USAID's Tenure Board](#).

459.3.9 Termination

Effective Date: 07/21/2011

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

In some cases, however, a Career Candidate may prove unable to perform assigned duties at a satisfactory level or fail to meet the standards for a career FSO. In these cases, it serves the interest of neither the Agency nor the individual to retain the candidate. Employees who fail to meet the requirements after opportunity for corrective action will be separated from the Agency. USAID's termination policies and procedures are discussed in Section 450.3.5.1 of [ADS 450, Termination of Time-Limited Appointments - Foreign Service \(FS\)](#), [ADS 463, Foreign Service Boards](#), [ADS 414.3.10](#) and its mandatory references, and also in Section IV. G of the [Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers \(459mad\)](#).

***459.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES**

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

459.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 07/21/2011

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

***459.4.2 Internal Mandatory References**

Effective Date: 02/10/2012

- a. [ADS 414, Foreign Service \(FS\) Appointments](#)
- b. [414mab, Medical Clearances and Waivers at the Time of Appointment and at Tenuring in the USAID Foreign Service](#)
- c. [414mac, Precepts for USAID's Tenure Board](#)
- d. [414mad, Tenuring of Foreign Service Career Candidates](#)
- e. [414mae, List of Employment Forms](#)
- f. [414maf, USAID Tenuring Languages](#)
- g. [ADS 436, Foreign Service Assignments and Tours of Duty](#)
- h. [ADS 450, Termination of Time-Limited Appointments - Foreign Service \(FS\)](#)
- *i.** [459mad, Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers](#)
- j. [459mae, Responsibilities for USAID's Foreign Language Program](#)
- k. [ADS 461, Employee Evaluation Program, Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service](#)

- l. [ADS 463, Foreign Service Boards](#)
- m. [ADS 468, Foreign Service \(FS\) Personnel Recruitment](#)
- n. [ADS 470, Pay Under the Foreign Service](#)
- o. [ADS 476, Benefits](#)
- p. [ADS 477, Allowances and Differentials](#)

459.4.3 Mandatory Forms
Effective Date: 07/21/2011

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

459.5 ADDITIONAL HELP
Effective Date: 07/21/2011

- a. [459sap, Development Leadership Initiative \(DLI\) Implementation Guidance](#)
- b. [Employee Bidding Form Access](#)
- c. **Sample DLI Officer Rotation Memo** (See http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm#CP_JUMP_32900. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]
- d. **Tips for All First Time Bidders** (See: http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/foreign_service_assignments.cfm. [Note: This Web site is only available on the USAID intranet.]

459.6 DEFINITIONS
Effective Date: 07/21/2011

Annual Evaluation Form (AEF)

The form used to evaluate employees under the Employee Evaluation Program (EEP). (Chapters [415](#), [461](#), [462](#), [463](#))

appointment - limited

An appointment of a specified duration from one to five years. (Chapter [414](#))

Appraisal Input Form (AIF)

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

backstop

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

career candidate appointment

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

career appointment

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

tenure

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

Tenure Board

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

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