

Chapter 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1. Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR). Serves as an agent of the Secretary and provides guidance, direction, and oversight for all matters pertaining to the formulation, review, and execution of plans, policies, programs, and budgets addressing civilian recruitment and staffing.

1.2. Deputy Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Manpower, Personnel and Services (AF/A1). Develops, coordinates, and executes personnel policy and essential procedural guidance for the management of civilian recruitment and staffing.

1.3. Civilian Force Management Directorate (AF/A1C). Develops policy for civilian recruitment and staffing, and provides policy guidance on provisions of this Manual. Monitors programs and assesses implementation to ensure compliance with this Manual.

1.4. Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC), including Operating Locations, will: Provide operational guidance and assistance to major commands, combatant commands, direct reporting units, field operating agencies, and civilian personnel sections on the provisions of this Manual. **(T-1)**

1.5. Major Commands, Direct Reporting Units, and Field Operating Agencies. Provide guidance and support to hiring officials and subordinate civilian personnel sections. **(T-1)** Monitor and track programs for compliance with this Manual. **(T-1)**

1.6. Civilian Personnel Section. Provide hiring officials guidance and advisory services on civilian recruitment and staffing consistent with this Manual. **(T-1)**

1.6.1. Provides hiring officials guidance and advisory services for civilian recruitment and staffing consistent with this Manual. **(T-1)**

1.6.2. Ensures all Base Level Human Resources Specialists processing recruitment requests screen the Schedule A and Wounded Warrior repository and make referrals of available applicants to selecting officials, where appropriate, and after all mandatory placement priorities are satisfied in accordance with **paragraph 3.12** and **Table 3.3**. **(T-1)**

1.7. Commanders, Directors, and Supervisors at every level must:

1.7.1. Match civilian appointments (permanent, term, temporary) to the projected length of the workload and available funding. **(T-1)**

1.7.2. Assign duties and responsibilities to individual civilian positions. **(T-1)** Ensures that position descriptions are presented accurately and without misrepresentation. **(T-1)**

1.7.3. Analyze workforce to identify and plan for turnover projections. **(T-1)**

1.7.3.1. Study attrition rates and determine those with retirement eligibility. **(T-1)**

1.7.3.2. Determine current and projected staffing levels. **(T-1)**

1.7.3.3. Determine competencies required for future workforce objectives. **(T-1)**

1.7.3.4. Minimize adverse impact on the workforce. **(T-1)**

1.7.4. Evaluate applicants' records on merit, experience, education, functional and institutional competencies. **(T-1)**

1.7.5. Conduct Hiring Panel Interviews in accordance with this Manual. **(T-1)**

1.7.6. Require managers to interview at least one applicant who is either of these two categories (Schedule A or Wounded Warrior) referred to them, when one is registered at the hiring location, qualified for the position, and when doing so would not violate current collective bargaining agreements. **(T-1)**. **Note:** Not applicable to Air Reserve Technician positions.

Chapter 2

FILLING CIVILIAN POSITIONS CONSISTENT WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

2.1. Protecting Personally Identifiable Information: Vigilance should be taken to protect Privacy Act and personally identifiable information when submitting or sending nominations, applications or other documents to Department of Defense (DoD) agencies whether by postal methods, faxing or through government internet systems. At a minimum, review the following references that contain sensitive or For Official Use Only information: AFI 33-332, *Air Force Privacy and Civil Liberties Program*, Chapters 2 and 7, DoD regulation 5400.11-R, *Department of Defense Privacy Program*. All users are to properly Protect Privacy Act information per 5 USC, Chapter 552 and Personally Identifiable Information when transferring documents for review, whether by postal methods, faxing or through government internet systems. (T-0)

2.2. Principles for Filling Positions.

2.2.1. The Affirmative Employment Program should include analysis, conducted over a period of time, of civilian positions within each career field. The purpose of the analysis is to identify and eliminate barriers that hamper equal opportunity for advancement by any individual on the basis of any race or national origin, either sex, or an individual's disability status. Positions may be filled from any of the following sources consistent with the priorities established herein and subject to the requirements of other pertinent programs of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), DoD and AF or special employment programs. Positions must be filled in accordance with AFPD 36-27, *Equal Opportunity (EO)*; 5 USC, Section 2301, *Merit System Principles*; 5 USC, Section 2302, *Prohibited Personnel Practices*; 5 CFR, Part 335, *Promotion and Internal Placement*; and DAFI 36-2710, *Equal Opportunity Program* (that includes requirements of the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program). Sources of candidates include the following:

2.2.2. In-service placement of current permanent AF employees.

2.2.3. Transfer or appointment of employees from other DoD and non-DoD Federal agencies.

2.2.4. Reinstatement or reemployment of eligible former federal employees.

2.2.5. Other appointments, including those from the OPM Delegated Examining Office.

2.3. Equal Opportunity. In order to ensure that equal opportunity principles are followed in filling positions, equal opportunity directors and affirmative employment program managers shall be included in the strategic and resource planning processes at the base level. This includes but is not limited to the forecasting of HR needs and involvement with the development of relevant documents to support the forecasting process (for example: statistics, data, etc.). All supervisors shall receive training on Equal Opportunity policy, Merit System Principles (5 USC, Section 2301), and Prohibited Personnel Practices (5 USC, Section 2302). (T-0)

2.4. Availability. An available, vacant position may be restructured and filled at a different grade level. Eligible AF employees can be considered through merit promotion or other in-service placement procedures. Qualified and available candidates may be sought for appointment from outside of the AF.

2.5. Suitability of Candidates and Security Factors. Before finalizing a selection, the civilian personnel sections will make sufficient written and/or oral inquiries of former employers, fellow workers, and other knowledgeable sources to evaluate the candidate's qualifications and suitability. (T-1) The civilian personnel section initiates required security checks on the selected candidate in accordance with governing security regulations. (T-0) The civilian personnel sections ensure required investigations are requested prior to entrance-on-duty date to the maximum extent practicable. (T-0) The civilian personnel section will conduct initial suitability determinations before a firm job offer is issued. (T-0) The civilian personnel section will take suitability actions as necessary, in accordance with 5 CFR, Part 731, *Suitability* and DoDI 1400.25, Volume 731, *Suitability and Fitness Adjudication for Civilian Employees*. (T-0)

2.6. Qualification Requirements.

2.6.1. The OPM establishes or approves qualification requirements for positions in the competitive service. Qualification standards prescribe the minimum experience, training, education, and physical requirements, or otherwise specify required knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for successful performance in the position. Local determination of physical ability or accommodation is used for all positions that do not require a medical examination, for example, positions not covered by specific medical standards, physical requirements, or a medical evaluation program. Qualification standards are uniformly applied for like positions and maintained as a record for OPM, DoD and AF evaluation and quality assessment.

2.6.2. The civilian personnel section establishes qualification requirements for AF positions in the excepted service, subject to any applicable restrictions and conditions, as prescribed in OPM directives, AF supplements, and by DoD and AF Career Field Teams. The OPM competitive service requirements for similar type positions are used as a guide for establishing standards for excepted service positions.

2.6.2.1. Schedule A hiring authority, 5 CFR, Section 213.3102(u)) allows for the non-competitive appointment of qualified individuals with severe physical, psychiatric and intellectual disabilities. Posting and publicizing the position, obtaining clearance of priority placement, or going through the certificate process is not required. After two years of satisfactory service of an employee under Schedule A authority, management may non-competitively convert the employee to permanent status in the competitive service. Satisfactory service begins with a non-temporary appointment.

2.6.2.2. Thirty percent or more compensable Disabled Veterans may be appointed to a Provisional (temporary) appointment of at least 60 calendar days without an announcement or competition. Management may convert the employee without a break in service to a career or career-conditional appointment after at least 60 calendar days in the temporary appointment.

2.6.3. When an employee is affected by reduction-in-force (RIF), a waiver of qualifications or appropriate accommodation shall be considered and should be agreed to by civilian personnel sections and gaining supervisor before assignment to a vacancy. (T-0)

2.6.4. When an employee has a disability or becomes disabled while employed, the AF shall, when requested, provide a reasonable accommodation that permits the employee to perform the essential functions of the position, unless doing so will impose an undue hardship on the AF. (T-1)

2.6.4.1. The nature of the accommodation is determined through an interactive process as outlined in DAFI 36-2710.

2.6.4.2. Reassignment will be considered if no appropriate reasonable accommodation is available to enable the qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of his or her current position or if the only effective accommodation would cause undue hardship on the AF. Positions appropriate for consideration for reassignment of qualified individuals with a disability will include: (a) all vacant positions employee is qualified for at the same grade or lower grade, within the commuting area; and (b) any planned jobs/positions at the current location, that appropriate officials can reasonably assume will become available over a period of 60 business days, at the same pay, or lower rate of pay. **(T-1)**

2.7. Referral and Selection Priorities.

2.7.1. **Table 3.3** , Referral and Selection Priorities, establishes the order of priorities that are observed when filling competitive service and excepted service vacancies.

2.7.2. For this purpose, a vacancy does not exist when an occupied position is:

2.7.2.1. Reclassified because of a change in classification standards or to correct a classification error, provided the incumbent is retained in the position.

2.7.2.2. Cancelled and a successor position is immediately established that is filled by the incumbent through an authorized personnel action.

2.8. Referral and Selection of Candidates.

2.8.1. The office issuing the referral certificate must observe hiring priorities established by OPM and this manual to determine the eligibility of candidates for consideration and identifies those to be referred to the selecting supervisor. **(T-0)**

2.8.2. When contacting applicants for consideration, recruiting officials and selecting supervisors should provide complete information regarding duties, working conditions, availability of local community services, and all other matters needed for the prospective employee(s) to make a decision.

2.8.2.1. Supervisors must ensure that position descriptions (PDs) are presented accurately and without misrepresentation. **(T-0)** Positions may not be described in such a way as to discourage interest or solicit declinations. Unless absolutely required for the position, PDs, vacancy announcements and job assessments will not mandate specific military or MAJCOM attributes that can only be gained through uniformed service, but instead will emphasize the capabilities needed for the position. These documents should be reviewed prior to starting the recruitment process for a new fill or during development for a new position.

2.8.2.2. Selecting officials and supervisors may not make a letter of intent or implied commitment to any candidate without obtaining clearance from the AFPC, except when the position is a critical need position (for example, Expedited Hiring Authority (EHA)/Direct Hiring Authority (DHA)). Selecting officials may extend tentative job offers for "critical" need positions, conditional on final verification from the AFPC that eligibility, priority clearance, and all necessary hiring requirements are met.

2.8.3. The authority for personnel management is usually delegated to the lowest practicable level of supervision. However, when training, employment, or promotion patterns in an organization indicate the principle of equal employment opportunity may not have been fully observed, the commander may withdraw selection authority and assign it to the next higher-level supervisor(s) pending the outcome of an inquiry.

2.8.4. Selecting officials are to evaluate employees' records on merit, experience, education, functional and institutional competencies, and performance. **(T-1)** Prior geographic mobility will not be a selection factor for hiring and promotions. This does not prohibit the requirement to sign a mobility agreement as a condition of selection for future employment. Centrally funded Career Broadening, Civilian Strategic Leader Positions and Key Civilian Positions require the mobility agreement. **(T-1)**

2.8.5. Minimum Announcement Period. All civilian job announcements will be posted for a minimum of 5 business days on www.usajobs.gov. **(T-1)** In addition, for all General Schedule (GS)-14/15 and equivalents, the recommended announcement period is ten business days. Exceptions to the minimum announcement period may be granted based upon previous recruitment actions that show an overwhelming applicant response from previous announcements that are similar to the position being announced. **(T-1)**

2.8.6. No External-Only Recruitment. Managers will initiate and consider internal recruitment and placement actions for all civilian positions. **(T-1)** Management may initiate internal and external recruitment simultaneously or choose to consider external candidates after internal recruitment and consideration has been conducted. This does not apply to positions covered by the special EHA/DHA granted through the OPM and 30% or more compensable Disabled Veterans who may be appointed to a Provisional (temporary) appointment of at least 60 calendar days.

2.8.7. A hiring panel must be used for all supervisory GS-13 positions and must consist of at least three individuals, equal to or senior in grade to the advertised position. **(T-1)**. The panel composition must be diverse in accordance with the Air Force definition of diversity in AFI 36-7001, *Diversity and Inclusion*, and will include at least one career civilian (either an employee with no prior military experience or an employee who is not a military retiree and has a minimum of 10 years of federal civilian service). **(T-1)**. A military member at the grade of lieutenant colonel or higher may be used to fill a position on the panel in order to ensure the diversity requirement is met. However, the military member may not be substituted for the reserved career civilian slot; additionally, the panel must be limited to not more than one military member. **(T-1)**. If there are no career civilians in the unit, then a career civilian from outside the unit may be utilized. Video conferencing, set up through platforms such as Microsoft Teams® or ZOOM® for Government, may be considered to facilitate that process. The use of hiring panels will increase transparency to the selection process and provide hiring officials various perspectives and insights on the candidates. Additional hiring panel requirements apply to all positions at the GS-14/GS-15 and equivalent levels and are found in **paragraph 2.14. Note:** Hiring Managers should begin preparing for the hiring panel as soon as the announcement opens. Develop interview questions, identify hiring panel members and coordinate possible dates for interviews. This will allow for an expeditious panel process as soon as the referral certificate is received.

2.9. Prompt Release of Employees. An employee may accept a position offer from another AF activity, federal agency, or activity for which the employee is referred and selected. The supervisor releases an employee promptly to another position on the same installation, within 20 calendar days after receiving notice of the employee's selection. A supervisor may request an extension of up to 10 calendar days, to train a replacement if the delay does not jeopardize the employee's transfer or movement to another position (see [paragraph 3.18](#)).

2.10. Assisting the New Employee. The supervisor and civilian personnel section have joint responsibility for providing information and assistance to the new employee. An employee who is moved to a different geographical area should be given pertinent information about the new location, such as information on transportation, local community services, etc.

2.11. Special Employment Programs. Civilian personnel sections should work with hiring managers to develop special employment programs designed to supplement the merit promotion and in-service placement programs. These programs purposefully seek to enhance employment opportunities in such areas as the employment of veterans, employment of persons with disabilities and Pathways Student Intern programs. Merit System Principles must be followed in all selections to these programs. Many of these programs offer only temporary employment and may be used to the extent funds, facilities, and capability to provide supervision and training. Judgment is used to provide equitable and balanced consideration of candidates from all sources, depending on the circumstances that exist at the activity and in the employment area. Centrally managed positions are governed by AFMAN 36-606, *Civilian Career Field Management and Development*.

2.12. A spouse accompanying a transferring military or civilian sponsor and who is either in leave without pay status, has competitive status, or is otherwise eligible for immediate appointment is entitled to compete for available positions in the new geographic area. Consideration is given up to and including the highest grade for which qualified and eligible (reference Priority Placement Program (PPP) Handbook for Executive Order (E.O.) 13473 eligibility). The PPP Handbook is available at: <https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Content/Documents/PPPHandbook20Oct2015.pdf>. The civilian personnel office at the gaining installation will counsel the spouse and afford appropriate consideration for positions for which the spouse is qualified. (T-2)

2.13. Employees on Retained Grade. Table 3.3 provides for the priority referral of employees affected by RIF, transfer of function, or reclassification of position, who are placed on retained grade.

2.14. Filling Positions at the GS-14/GS-15 and equivalent levels.

2.14.1. Except for positions covered by the Career Field Teams that have received specific authority to use an alternate method of identifying candidates, all GS-14/15 and equivalent level position vacancies in the competitive service, including those overseas, require competition and the use of a hiring panel (see 2.14.6 below), unless the position is covered by one of the exceptions below in section 2.14.9. (T-1)

2.14.2. Hiring Managers will initiate and consider internal recruitment and placement actions (through the use of an announcement and hiring panel) for all GS-14/15 level or equivalent civilian positions. (T-1) External only recruitment and by-name requests are prohibited at the GS-14/15 level or equivalent unless the position is covered by a non-competitive or special EHA/DHA granted by statute. For positions not covered by an exemption, management may

initiate internal or external recruitment and all United States (US) citizens' recruitment simultaneously. Management may choose to consider external and all US citizens after internal recruitment and consideration has been conducted. **Note:** Managers may use external only recruitment when filling temporary or term positions at any grade level.

2.14.3. Non-competitive assignments within the DoD at the GS-14 and above or equivalent require vacancy announcements and the use of a hiring panel. **(T-1)** These non-competitive assignments include the following: reassignments, changes-to-lower-grade, transfers (same or lower grade), reinstatements and re-promotions. Exceptions regarding a hiring panel must be approved by AF/A1C. **(T-1) Note:** A Hiring Panel is not required for non-competitive reassignments within the AF or from a Combatant Command.

2.14.4. The vacancy announcement will contain sufficient information to provide the potential applicant with the following: adequate knowledge of the position; responsibilities; important knowledge, skills, and abilities; training requirements; application instructions; Joint Travel Regulation (JTR) information; and other pertinent job information. **(T-0)** The recommended announcement period for all GS-14/15 and equivalent level positions is ten business days.

2.14.5. The servicing activity for the position first screens the qualifications of the applicants against the qualification standard and other basic eligibility criteria. Candidates may be tentatively ranked or grouped in broad qualification categories against the job analysis or promotion plan.

2.14.6. A hiring panel must be used and consist of at least three individuals, equal to or senior in grade to the advertised position. **(T-1)**. The panel composition must be diverse in accordance with the Air Force definition of diversity in AFI 36-7001 and will include at least one career civilian (either an employee with no prior military experience or an employee who is not a military retiree and has a minimum of 10 years of federal civilian service). **(T-1)**. A military member at the grade of colonel or higher may be used to fill a position on the panel in order to ensure the diversity requirement is met. However, the military member may not be substituted for the reserved career civilian slot; additionally, the panel must be limited to not more than one military member. **(T-1)**. If there are no career civilians in the unit, then a career civilian from outside the unit may be utilized. Video conferencing, set up through platforms such as Microsoft Teams® or ZOOM® for Government, may be considered to facilitate that process. The use of hiring panels will increase transparency to the selection process and provide hiring officials various perspectives and insights on the candidates. **Note:** Hiring Managers should begin preparing for the hiring panel as soon as the announcement opens. Develop interview questions, identify hiring panel members and coordinate possible dates for interviews. This will allow for an expeditious panel process as soon as the referral certificate is received.

2.14.7. The panel will screen the records of all candidates, interview the most qualified as appropriate, and make recommendations to the selecting official. **(T-1)** The criteria must permit evaluation of the overall qualifications of each candidate in relation to the total requirements of the position. The panel may consider factors such as education, training, experience, appraisals, and evaluations, job-related awards and honors, and relevant outside activities to identify the top-ranking candidates. The panel will also evaluate the qualifications of re-promotion eligible candidates previously referred who have further consideration entitlement against the ranking criteria in the promotion plan. **(T-1)** When necessary,

temporary duty travel may be authorized to attend an interview for AF and other federal employees as provided in the JTRs. **(T-0)** The use of hiring panels is not required for the placement of career broadeners or of individuals returning from a boarded civilian developmental education program.

2.14.8. Commanders of MAJCOMs and comparable organizations and other staff offices may make the selection personally, request higher authority to make the selection, or authorize supervisors at any level over the position to make the selection (after the panel convenes). **(T-1)** In the Office of the SAF, selections may be made by officials designated by the Secretary. **(T-1)** In HQ USAF, selections may be made by directors or heads of comparable or higher organizations, or they may request higher authority to make the selection. **(T-1)** SAF/AA Deputy is the Appointing Authority for HQ USAF.

2.14.9. The specified requirements for publication of the vacancy, consideration of candidates, and panel evaluation of candidates do not apply, or are modified when: **(T-1)**

2.14.9.1. Filling a temporary position for one year or less by an authorized non-competitive personnel action. If the position is made permanent, the position must be re-advertised and panel interviews will have to be conducted. **(T-1)**

2.14.9.2. Filling a temporary position for one year or less through competitive promotion procedures or when the upgrading of a permanent, occupied position requires competition, provided the panel identifies and ranks all employees within the authorized special area of consideration.

2.14.9.3. A position is upgraded under circumstances permitting non-competitive promotion of the incumbent (see [Chapter 3](#)).

2.14.9.4. Management selects a previously downgraded employee eligible for non-competitive in-service consideration.

2.14.9.5. Filling positions using EHA or DHA.

2.14.9.6. Filling positions using Schedule A hiring authority to staff certain positions for a cybersecurity workforce.

2.14.9.7. Filling positions using Schedule A hiring authority for selection of individuals with an intellectual disability, a severe physical disability, or a psychiatric disability under 5 CFR, Section 213.3102(u).

2.14.9.8. Filling positions under a Term appointment. If the position is made permanent, the position must be re-advertised and panel interviews will be conducted. **(T-1)**

2.14.9.9. Positions filled using the special EHA granted to the Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratories by statute.

2.14.9.10. Filling positions for temporary non-competitive appointments (Provisional Appointments) of 30 percent or more compensable Disabled Veterans without an announcement or competition. **Note:** For permanent positions, 30% Disabled Veterans appointments/hiring are not exempt and must follow the full requirements outlined in **paragraph 2.8.7** for all GS-13 (supervisory positions only) and **paragraph 2.14** for all GS-14/GS-15 positions.

2.14.9.11. Administratively Determined positions (Professors, Deans, Instructors, etc.) at Air University and the AF Academy are not subject to the prohibition on external only recruitment. However, all other policies under this section apply, as appropriate. **(T-1)**

2.14.9.12. Filling positions under Delegating Examining Authority or Special Examining Unit. (See [Attachment 1](#), Terms section below)

2.14.9.13. Filling Criminal Investigators, GS-1811s, as long as they are selected through a competitive process.

2.14.9.14. Key Civilian Positions that were previously vectored through the competitive Development Team process. See AFMAN 36-606 for further guidance.

2.14.9.15. Filling Air Reserve Technician positions. These positions are filled based on military qualification requirements.

2.14.10. External by-name requests are permitted by exception only. An exception may be granted by MAJCOM/CD/CA (or equivalent) or by the SAF/AA for the HQ USAF. Exceptions may only be granted based upon mission criticality. **(T-1)**

2.14.10.1. Records and documents regarding approved exceptions must be retained for a minimum of 5 years, for reporting to/audit by HQ AF/A1 upon request. **(T-1)**

2.14.10.2. The Career Field Team or Career Field Manager will coordinate and provide a recommendation for approval/disapproval of an external by-name request for centrally managed positions. Requests will be submitted to the appropriate Career Field Team/Career Field Manager. **(T-1)**

2.14.11. At least quarterly, all Civilian Personnel Section (CPSs) or equivalents, through their respective chain of command, and in coordination with the local diversity representative or office, will prepare a comprehensive report listing how many panels occurred, and any instance in which the applicable unit did not comply with the requirements of **paragraph 2.14** or when an exception to policy was granted, including information on the ultimate selectee. **(T-1)**. CPSs should develop local procedures to ensure reporting requirements may be completed.

2.14.11.1. This report will be sent to Vice Commanders, AF/A1, SF/S1, Diversity Officers, and Barrier Analysis Working Groups at each MAJCOM/A1s, Field Command/S1s, Field Operating Agency or Direct Reporting Unit or equivalent. **(T-1)**. The A1/S1 will, in turn, collect, consolidate, and transmit the results to AF/A1C and SF/S1C.

2.14.11.2. This report will be shared by AF/A1C and SF/S1C with the Department of the Air Force Barrier Analysis Working Group and the SAF Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

2.15. Installation Affirmative Employment Program Manager. (See DAFI 36-2710)

2.15.1. Works closely with the equal opportunity office and civilian personnel sections in areas of mutual concern.

2.15.2. Establishes processing procedures for hiring individuals with disabilities, in coordination with the Disability Program Manager. **(T-1)**

2.15.2.1. On some installations, the AFPC has this responsibility.

2.15.2.2. Utilizes the Workforce Recruitment Program, whose website is located at: <https://wrp.gov>.

2.15.3. Together with the Disability Program Manager, encourages managers and supervisors to use the non-competitive Schedule A, 5 CFR, Section 213.3102(u) appointing authority. This authority is used to hire qualified individuals with an intellectual disability, a severe physical disability, or a psychiatric disability. The authority also includes the non-competitive appointment of 30 percent or more compensable qualified Disabled Veterans. **Note:** There is no mandatory placement of persons with disabilities using the Schedule A, 5 CFR, Section 213.3102(u) appointing authority.

2.15.4. Supervises the Special Emphasis Program managers' outreach efforts and recruitment activities (see DAFI 36-2710).

2.15.5. The Affirmative Employment Program reports (see DAFI 36-2710).

2.16. The DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP).

2.16.1. The PPP is an automated mandatory placement program used to match eligible well-qualified registrants, most of whom are subject to displacement, with vacant DoD positions. It enables the DoD to maintain a relatively stable work force during base realignment and closure, RIF, and other displacement actions, and minimizes the adverse effects of these actions on employees.

2.16.2. The PPP consists of several sub-programs with the primary purpose of placing DoD employees who have been adversely affected through no fault of their own.

2.16.3. The DoD PPP Automated Stopper and Referral System is a centralized automated system used to match eligible, well-qualified registrants with vacant DoD positions and can be used as a recruitment source when the automatic stopper is cleared.

2.16.4. Commanders or heads of activities organizationally responsible for the civilian personnel sections at each installation will issue to all subordinate supervisors, managers, and staff officials a written statement of support for the DoD PPP. **(T-0)** The written statement will be issued upon arrival and not later than every three years thereafter. **(T-0)** Commanders or heads of activities will ensure all recipients comply with the spirit, letter and intent of this program (see DoDI 1400-25, Volume 1800, *DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP)*). **(T-0)** HR Officers may obtain additional statements of support from the heads of other serviced organizations. Commander Support Statements will be maintained by the AFPC/PPP Oversight Office.

2.16.5. Refer to the PPP Handbook for specific information and guidance at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil>.

Chapter 3

THE AIR FORCE MERIT PROMOTION PLAN

3.1. Policy Objectives.

3.1.1. The merit promotion and placement plan provides a uniform and equitable means of referral and selection for all placement actions according to merit principles under merit promotion procedures. A sound program, administered and fully supported by managers and employees at all levels, is essential to the staffing of an effective and highly motivated civilian work force. Identifying, qualifying, evaluating and selecting candidates is made without regard to lawful political affiliation, race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, marital status, prior Equal Opportunity activity, or any other non-merit factors prohibited by statute, regulation, or E.O. (T-0) Failure to adhere to equal opportunity or merit principles may compel a commander or designee to withdraw selecting authority from a supervisor and elevate the selection process to the next level of supervision. The plan is directed toward:

3.1.2. Accomplishing mission goals by staffing positions with high quality employees.

3.1.3. Providing career opportunities for employees and making sure all employees have access to information about these opportunities.

3.1.4. Ensuring management is aware of high-quality employees who have the capacity to perform in more responsible assignments.

3.1.5. Encouraging employees to broaden their experience and enhance their qualifications.

3.1.6. Ensuring employees are placed in positions for which they are qualified.

3.1.7. Ensuring the skills, qualifications, achievements, and promotion potential of employees are recognized and fairly considered in the staffing process.

3.1.8. Encouraging employees to improve their performance and to develop their skills.

3.1.9. Utilizing an automated staffing tool in support of the AF Merit Promotion Plan. This process involves the use of one public announcement, a single staffing tool for evaluating candidate resumes for qualifications, and the production of one referral list with selecting officials receiving resumes for all referred candidates. Key to the program is the OPM website for USAJOBS: www.usajobs.gov. The goal is to support the OPM initiatives to streamline the hiring process and recruit top talent.

3.2. Key Principles.

3.2.1. All applicants within the designated area of consideration who meet the qualification standards and any legal or regulatory requirements imposed by the OPM, or other authority, may be considered and placed on a referral list.

3.2.2. The recruitment Area of Consideration will include all available external and internal eligibility sources, except Delegated Examining Office and Special Examining Unit due to the competitive examining requirements. (T-01) **Note:** When filling Air Reserve Technician positions, hiring officials are authorized to recruit internal and competitive external, Special

Examining Unit at the same time (based on local Master Labor Agreement). Exceptions to the minimum Area of Consideration may include the following: **(T-1)**

3.2.2.1. Positions subject to the Developmental Team process.

3.2.2.2. Career broadener/intern outplacements.

3.2.2.3. Placements to minimize adverse action (displaced employees).

3.2.3. Appropriate job-related criteria are applied with fairness in evaluating candidates to differentiate among their qualifications and to identify those qualified for consideration.

3.2.4. Selections are made without discrimination for any non-merit reason and without favoritism based on personal relationships or patronage.

3.2.5. Consideration is given to input from employees, employee groups, and recognized labor organizations in developing and establishing merit promotion procedures, consistent with statutory and regulatory requirements. Promotions and placements into positions with known promotion potential are usually competitive. Promotions without competition in accordance with **Table 3.1** are authorized with due consideration to recognized merit principles. Employees are kept informed about the promotion plan, the provisions and procedures for promotion plans affecting them, and eligibility requirements. They are given full access to information about advancement opportunities and how to take advantage of them.

3.3. The Right to Select or Non-Select from a Group of Qualified Candidates. Provided there are no higher mandatory placement priorities available, managers have the right and the responsibility to select from other appropriate sources, determine which candidates are most likely to meet mission objectives, and contribute new ideas and viewpoints. These sources include, but are not limited to, promotion eligible candidates.

3.4. General Coverage.

3.4.1. The Merit Promotion Plan applies to the following categories of employees, who must apply to be considered for a job listed under a vacancy announcement:

3.4.1.1. Any appropriated fund employee occupying a permanent or indefinite position in the competitive service. **Exception:** When a candidate is available who is otherwise qualified, currently holds or has previously held a grade on a permanent basis in the competitive service that is no greater than the potential of a position being filled, the candidate may be considered for the position without competition. The exception includes any employee under a competitive or excepted service appointment absent in military service for less than 31 calendar days.

3.4.1.2. Any employee on an Overseas Limited Appointment of indefinite duration or not to exceed five years duration because of the DoD mandatory requirement to rotate from the overseas area;

3.4.1.3. Any employee serving under an excepted service appointment with competitive status;

3.4.1.4. Any employee currently serving under a Veterans' Recruitment Appointment;

3.4.1.5. Any employee who is a family member and is serving under a Schedule A 213.3106(b)(6) appointment whose position is temporarily converted to the excepted service;

3.4.1.6. Any employee under a competitive or excepted service appointment absent due to military service for more 31 calendar days or more; or, serving with an international organization; or, in Leave Without Pay status while in receipt of injury compensation.

3.4.2. This plan applies to all status applicants applying from external sources, including: DoD and non-DoD transfer eligible, reinstatement eligible, those eligible for appointment under any non-competitive appointing authority and candidates eligible under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998. **Note:** When filling positions through competitive examining, the requirement to allow Veterans Employment Opportunities Act candidates to apply when applications are received from outside an agency's own workforce does not apply since the competitive examining process is open to the public and anyone can apply.

3.4.2.1. When candidates are considered from outside the AF for competitive service vacancies lasting more than 120 calendar days, the AFPC and Operating Locations must post these vacancies on USAJOBS as required by 5 CFR, Section 330.102, *Methods of Filling Vacancies* and 5 CFR, Section 330.707(a). **(T-0)**

3.4.2.1.1. DoDI 1327.06, *Leave and Liberty Policy and Procedures*, provides that service members may be in a terminal leave status prior to retirement, separation or release from active duty. The Veterans Opportunity to Work to Hire Heroes Act (codified at 5 USC, Section 2108, *Veteran; disabled veteran; preference eligible*) requires federal agencies to treat service members as veterans, disabled veterans, and preference eligibles when they submit, at the time they apply for a Federal job, a certification stating they are expected to be honorably discharged or released from active duty within 120 calendar days after the date of submission of the certificate.

3.4.2.1.2. Within 120 calendar days from the date of submission of the certification, service members must retire or separate from military service in order to comply with the Veterans Opportunity to Work and associated laws. If a military member starts terminal leave but is not retired or separated within 120 calendar days from the date of submission of the certification, they are not eligible under Veterans Opportunity to Work. The first day of terminal leave status is not to be confused with the separation date. The service member's last day of leave coincides with the last day of active duty. Refer to [Chapter 7](#) of this Instruction, for possible 180 day waiver requirements.

3.4.3. The Merit Promotion Plan applies to internal placement for positions in the competitive service, career field centrally managed positions and specifically designated positions in the excepted service. The following are exclusions:

3.4.3.1. Positions above GS-15, Scientific and Professional positions, Senior Executive Service positions, and other equivalent positions at the senior level.

3.4.3.2. Positions covered by OPM-approved personnel demonstration projects.

3.4.4. Applicants will be excluded from consideration when:

3.4.4.1. They have not applied by the closing date of the vacancy announcement.

3.4.4.2. They have not completed 90 calendar days of Federal service after appointment from an OPM or Delegated Examining Office competitive certificate (applies to consideration for: reassignment or change-to-lower-grade to a different line of work, reassignment or change-to-lower-grade to a different geographical area, or promotion).

3.4.4.3. They are on Leave Without Pay and are not expected to return to duty or are on sick leave pending disability retirement.

3.4.4.4. They occupy a formal developmental position with a target grade equivalent to or higher than the target grade of the position being filled. (See [paragraph 2.5](#))

3.4.4.5. They have a current unacceptable appraisal.

3.4.4.6. The position requires access to sensitive information and they have an open security incident, an open Security Information File, their security clearance has been revoked or denied, or they are in an action pending status in the security clearance system of record.

3.4.4.7. They do not meet time-in-grade requirements when such requirements apply or are within 90 calendar days from meeting the requirement.

3.4.5. This guidance applies to career field centrally managed positions established by HQ USAF for specific occupation groupings and grade levels developed in consonance with governing merit promotion principles.

3.4.6. Candidates referred on an OPM, Delegated Examining Office, or Special Examining Unit Certificate. A current AF employee referred on any of these certificates, who is referred concurrently from an in-service referral certificate, may be selected from the certificate that offers the candidate the best opportunity.

3.4.7. Details of more than 30 but less than 120 calendar days to a different higher graded position or with promotion potential must be documented with a Standard Form (SF) 52, *Request for Personnel Action*, showing the organization and position to which detailed, the effective date of the detail and the not-to-exceed-date. **(T-0)** Details may be made non-competitively; however, successive details to a higher grade beyond 120 calendar days must be made using competitive procedures ([Table 3.1](#)). **(T-0)** Refer to the OPM *Guide To Processing Personnel Actions*, Chapter 14. The Guide is located at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/data-analysis-documentation/personnel-documentation/#url=Processing-Personnel-Actions>

3.4.7.1. Details of more than 30 calendar days but less than 120 calendar days to a different position at the same or lower grade that do not have promotion potential, do not require documentation.

3.4.7.2. Employees are responsible for updating their resumes to document any detail not covered by an official personnel action.

3.4.7.3. The AF Career Field Teams do not approve requests to process competitive details for centrally managed positions except for when the detail is part of a formal developmental program. Refer to AFMAN 36-606 for further guidance.

3.4.7.4. Time spent on temporary promotion or detail to higher graded position(s) during the preceding 12 month period is counted toward the 120 calendar day limitation.

3.5. Formal Trainee and Apprentice-Type Positions. An employee in a formal trainee or apprentice-type training program, to include Developmental Opportunity Program, PALACE Acquire or Copper Cap interns, are not eligible to be considered for other positions at a grade up to and including the target grade of their current training position. They must be informed in writing by the civilian personnel section at the time of their enrollment in their training program. **(T-2)** The primary reason is they could already be in the same line of work of the targeted grade, that equals the target grade of their current position. The associated training program must be successfully completed. **(T-2)** However, when the grade of the position being filled exceeds the grade of the current training position of the employee, if otherwise qualified, the employee may be considered for the higher graded position.

3.6. Applicability to Positions Outside the Competitive Service.

3.6.1. When all or a majority of the positions at an activity are in the excepted service and are under the same appointment authority, a Merit Promotion Plan must be created to provide a systematic and equitable method of identifying employees for consideration. **(T-1)** The policies and procedures of this manual should be followed to the extent practicable.

3.6.2. An AF employee in the excepted service who has competitive status by virtue of having held a previous competitive appointment is eligible to be considered for a competitive service position according to this program. Likewise, an AF employee who is serving on an excepted appointment (for example: VRA, Schedule A, or Pathways Intern) that conveys competitive status is also eligible to be considered for a competitive service position. These employees are afforded the same consideration provided to competitive service employees in terms of career progression and merit principles.

3.7. Applying Competitive Promotion Procedures.

3.7.1. Use of competition in filling certain positions is based on the requirements of 5 CFR, Part 335 and AFD 36-1. Determination of the use of competitive procedures will be made by the AFPC in accordance with merit systems principles and in coordination with local management's desire to consider specific resources. **(T-0)**

3.7.2. **Table 3.1** lists personnel actions that are subject to competition and those that are not subject to competition. Merit promotion processing procedures are outlined in **Table 3.2**. The civilian personnel officer or designee is responsible for determining whether an action will be subject to competition and the extent of that competition. When a proposed action is not specifically covered by the table, basic merit principles should be applied in deciding whether to require competition. When the table exempts an action from the requirement for competition, the civilian personnel officer may choose to apply the competitive process. The use of competitive procedures must be consistent with merit principles and in the best interest of management. **(T-3)**

3.8. Actions Not Subject to Competition.

3.8.1. When a position is excepted from the competitive process, annotate the rule and paragraph of the Merit Promotion Plan that supports the exception in the Remarks section (Part D) of the SF 52, used to process the action. Actions involving centrally managed positions must be approved by the appropriate Career Field Team functional manager prior to effecting the action and the SF 52 must be annotated to reflect the approval of the respective Career Field Team. **(T-1)**

3.8.2. After all mandatory placement priorities are satisfied, an employee may be promoted up to and including a grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service or other merit system from which separated or change-to-lower-grade for other than performance or conduct reasons.

3.8.3. An employee initially selected under competitive procedures for a position with known promotion potential, may be non-competitively promoted to an intervening targeted grade at management's request. However, the employee must meet eligibility requirements for promotion to the intervening grades, as well as any additional qualifying criteria, such as satisfactory completion of all training required (on-the-job training or formal) at the current grade level. **(T-0)**

3.8.4. A position change at the same grade from a position with known promotion potential to a position with no known higher potential may be accomplished without further competition.

3.8.5. Upon exercise of restoration rights following military duty or service with an international organization, a former employee may be placed in any position for which qualified, which is no higher in grade than the position to which they were promoted in absentia, or because their former position was re-graded during their absence.

3.8.6. An employee must be non-competitively promoted following reclassification of their position to a higher grade due to application of new classification standards or following correction of classification error, provided they meet all qualification and legal requirements for advancement to the position. **(T-0)** (See [Tables 3.1](#) and [3.4](#) for appropriate action to place incumbent.)

3.8.7. If a position is upgraded due to the accretion/assignment of additional higher grade duties and responsibilities, the incumbent may be non-competitively promoted. There has to be clear evidence the employee continues to perform the same basic functions as in the former position and the duties could not be assigned to similar or identical positions. The employee has to meet all qualification and legal requirements for advancement to the higher grade of the position. In this case, there must be clear evidence the newly classified position is a clear successor to the former position and the higher-graded position has absorbed the major duties of the former position. Included in this provision are employees returning from overseas, exercising return rights to obligated positions that have been upgraded during their absence. (See [Tables 3.1](#) and [3.4](#) for appropriate action to place incumbent.)

3.8.8. Employees on grade retention will be referred for positions at grades up to and including their retained grade within the same pay system from which demoted according to the priorities and policies specified in [Table 3.3](#) and in accordance with procedures in the DoD PPP Handbook, Chapter 15, *DoD Retained Grade Placement Program (Program R)*.

3.8.9. Interns and Recent Graduates under the Pathways program may be non-competitively converted to a competitive service appointment upon successful completion of all experience, education requirements and training requirements when applicable. For more information, refer to Department of the AF Pathways Program Guide located on myPers.

3.9. Re-Promotion of Previously Downgraded Employees on Pay Retention. Employees entitled to pay retention, except those in formal development programs or developmental opportunity positions, may be re-promoted non-competitively up to and including the grade in the

same pay system from which downgraded. Re-promotion may occur as a planned management action or when determined to be within reach on a referral certificate.

3.10. Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel Allowances.

3.10.1. Travel and relocation expenses (PCS costs) may be paid when filling a centrally managed position in accordance with AFMAN 36-606. However, only certain centrally funded positions are eligible to use the DoD National Relocation Program to sell their home. For more information on the category of centrally funded positions, refer to AFMAN 36-606. **Note:** PCS will not be funded for temporary positions or temporary promotions. **(T-1)**

3.10.2. Job Announcements. The appropriate official (funds approving official) should determine, prior to advertising the vacancy, whether or not it is in the Government's interest to pay PCS allowances. Therefore, the job announcement must include one of the following:

3.10.2.1. "TRAVEL AND RELOCATION EXPENSES WILL BE PAID in accordance with the JTR AND AFMAN 36-606." **(T-1)**

3.10.2.2. "TRAVEL AND RELOCATION EXPENSES WILL NOT BE PAID". Refer to AFMAN 36-606 for guidance regarding centrally managed positions to determine PCS allowances. **(T-1)**

3.10.3. Factors in determining PCS allowances as being in the government's interest are generally based on recruitment sources that would cause movement of a Federal employee from one Permanent Duty Station to another or when "first duty station" moves are authorized. Other factors such as cost effectiveness, labor market conditions and difficulty in filling the vacancy must be considered. **(T-1)** The JTRs, chapter 5, part F, section 0537, paragraph 053705 is clear that budget constraints do not justify denial of PCS allowances when other factors indicate the allowances would be in the Government's interest. When an employee pursues, solicits or requests (not in response to a vacancy announcement) a position change resulting in a geographic move from one Permanent Duty Station to another, the transfer is considered to be for the employee's convenience and benefit and not in the Government's interest. See the JTR at: <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/travelreg.cfm>

3.10.3.1. When management decides to not pay PCS allowances, the reason(s) and name of the selecting official must be documented in Part D of the Request for Personnel Action and clearly show the paid move is not in the Government's interest. **(T-0)** The selecting official must notify all applicants selected for an interview of the decision to pay or not to pay for PCS in the official selection/non-selection notification as required by JTR, paragraph 053705-D. **(T-0)** If no interviews are conducted, the selecting official must inform the selected applicant, in writing, as to whether PCS allowances will be paid. **(T-0)**

3.10.3.2. When management decides to pay PCS allowances and the statement "Travel and Relocation Expenses will be Paid in accordance with JTRs and AFMAN 36-606" is included in the vacancy announcement, the final determination regarding payment/non-payment of PCS allowances may be made after applicants have been referred to the selecting official. **(T-0)** The final determination is usually based on the candidate(s) selected. For example, if a candidate from the local commuting area (with-in 49 miles) of the vacancy is selected, there would be no need to authorize PCS allowances; however, if someone outside the commuting area was selected, PCS allowances should be authorized.

3.11. Identifying Candidates for Referral.

3.11.1. The evaluation of applicants for eligibility, qualifications and ranking will be accomplished through an automated system to identify those eligible for promotion, reassignment, and voluntary change-to-lower-grade.

3.11.2. Applicants may obtain job announcements from the OPM's USAJOBS website. This is the same website they may subscribe to receive automatic notification of vacancies. 3.11.3. Applicants must apply for consideration for positions, including centrally managed positions. Application must be made by the closing date of the announcement.

3.11.3. Applicants who apply are considered through a resume review process that identifies competing applicants. Each competitive applicant will be rated and ranked and placed into one of three quality groups based on a rating assessment: "Best Qualified - rating assessment score of 90 or above; Fully Qualified - rating assessment score of 80-89; and Basically Qualified - rating assessment score of 70-79" as validated by the respective Job Analysis.

3.11.4. The AF Reserve Command may refer Air Reserve Technician officers for Air Reserve Technician vacancies regardless of whether or not those officer applied for an Air Reserve Technician vacancy.

3.12. Priority Referral. The order of special placement consideration and referral in filling vacant positions will be in accordance with [Table 3.3. \(T-1\)](#) Centrally funded PALACE Acquire/Copper Cap positions are not considered local positions for the purpose of clearing local priorities. Local priorities will be cleared at the time the PALACE Acquire/Copper Cap completes their training program and is placed on a locally funded permanent position. **(T-1) Note:** Centrally funded AF Wounded Warrior positions are not local positions for the purpose of clearing local priorities. Like PALACE Acquire/Copper Cap positions, local priorities will be cleared at the time the AF Wounded Warrior is placed onto a locally funded permanent position. **(T-1)**

3.13. Job Analysis/Promotion Plan/Assessment.

3.13.1. A job analysis identifies specific job-related criteria, knowledge, skills and abilities, and other characteristics necessary to determine which candidates are eligible for referral to a position being filled. A core personnel document or PD is used as the basis for the job analysis. Unless absolutely required for the position, job assessments will not mandate specific military or MAJCOM attributes that can only be gained through uniformed service, but instead will emphasize the capabilities needed for the position. All assessments should be reviewed by the Career Field Team, hiring official, or staffing specialist prior to posting a job announcement for a new vacancy or during development for a new position.

3.13.2. The job analysis is accomplished by the personnel staffing specialist and functional subject matter expert for the occupational series of the position being filled. The job analysis identifies major job requirements and essential knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully perform the duties of the position.

3.13.3. The promotion plan is developed based on the job analysis. The analysis shows, at a minimum, the position(s) covered by the plan, the minimum qualification requirements, appropriate qualifying factors, selective placement factors (if used) and applicable ranking factors. Validated job-related evaluation criteria that extend beyond the minimum requirements specified by the qualification standard may be used to permit meaningful ranking

of eligible candidates. Candidates are evaluated utilizing the ranking criteria. The end result is a documented promotion plan.

3.13.4. Career field development teams or equivalent, composed of functional representatives assisted by the AFPC, are responsible for developing standard AF-wide promotion plan assessments. An assessment that is developed from the job analysis, measures characteristics or competencies that are important for job performance. The Job Analysis Developmental Team, or equivalent, and the personnel specialist ensure plans are validated and approved according to OPM requirements and AF guidelines. **(T-0)** Approval of a promotion plan may be accomplished by the Career Field Functional Manager, Job Analysis Panel Chair, or Career Field Team Chief. Acquisition related Career Field Team/Functional Development Team will determine the extent to which their assessments/promotion plans will include Acquisition Corps membership and certification level requirements. **(T-1)**

3.14. Certification for Referral.

3.14.1. When using category rating and ranking, the referral certificates will contain the names of all eligible candidates in the Best Qualified group. **(T-1)** If less than 5 candidates are rated as Best Qualified, candidates from the next lower quality group(s) can be referred. **Note:** Candidates are ranked using the job analysis and assessment.

3.14.2. The following directives address occupational unique criteria applicable to individual career fields: AFD 36-1, AFI 36-601, *Air Force Civilian Career Program Management*; and AFMAN 36-606.

3.14.3. Competitive Details. Detailed employees are not required to meet OPM qualification requirements for experience, but must meet any education, certification or licensing requirements of the position. Job analysis will be used to determine which candidates will be referred for selection for competitive details. **(T-3)** Paragraph 2.4.7 describes when a detail may be made non-competitively and when a detail requires competition. AF Career Field Teams do not process competitive details.

3.14.4. Alternate Certification. An employee may be selected, absent full certification, if after the full competitive process has been accomplished, the employee has been determined to be among the group of best qualified candidates who would have been referred on a certificate. This provision applies only to in-service placements. Candidates for centrally managed positions will not be referred by the alternate certification process. **(T-1)**

3.14.5. The AF requires candidates be listed alphabetically on a referral certificate. **Note:** Local collective bargaining agreements may specify other methods of presenting candidates on a referral certificate. The collective bargaining agreement takes precedence.

3.14.6. Candidates selected for Air Reserve Technician positions must meet the military and civilian requirements of the new position. Military qualifications will be determined by the servicing Military Personnel Section. **(T-1)**

3.15. Referral Registers/Certificates.

3.15.1. One-Time Referral Registers. These registers may be established and used on a one-time basis only to certify candidates to a selecting official when a position has unique requirements or there are multiple identical vacancies with the same grade and series to be filled at the same time. Otherwise, a 120 calendar day register may be established.

3.15.1.1. All candidates must meet the eligibility requirements for the position prior to being placed on a referral certificate. **(T-0)** A candidate may be referred within 30 calendar days of qualifying for hard to fill positions. Locally managed positions will be identified by the servicing civilian personnel sections or by the appropriate Career Field Team, for centrally managed positions based on prior experience of filling the same or similar positions. **(T-2)**

3.15.1.2. All referral certificates will be issued to the selecting official for 25 calendar days. Managers are encouraged to make selections and return the certificate to the issuing office within 15 calendar days. Any request for extension beyond the original 25 calendar days is discouraged. In those instances where an extension is necessary, it must be requested prior to the expiration date of the certificate with the servicing staffing specialist and will be limited to 25 calendar days. **(T-2)**

3.15.1.3. 120 Calendar Day Registers may be established when it is anticipated that several positions with the same title, series, grade, job specialty, and location will be vacant in a 120 calendar day period. Announcements for these registers may be open in 120 calendar day increments to allow multiple selections from the existing applicant pool. In addition, standard announcements that are open for five business days, will be valid for 120 calendar days after the closing date of the announcement. The applicant pool will be valid for additional referral to the hiring manager for up to 120 calendar days after the closing date of the announcement. Candidates within 120 calendar days of attaining full eligibility for placement in the position will be entered on the register. However, these candidates may not be certified for placement consideration until they are fully qualified and meet all eligibility requirements. However, a candidate may be referred within 30 calendar days of qualifying for hard to fill positions.

3.15.2. AF Reserve Command may establish Air Reserve Technician referral registers for one-time referral or for indefinite use because of the difficulty of locating and attracting eligible candidates. If used for a prolonged period, the register must be open at least every 120 calendar days to consider new candidates and employees who have become eligible since the register was previously opened. **(T-1)**

3.16. The Selection Process.

3.16.1. When a referral certificate is issued, the selecting official must review the application package of all candidates referred. **(T-0)**

3.16.2. If the selecting official chooses to interview, the official may interview one or more of the candidates on the certificate, with the exception of military spouse preference candidates (see note below). **(T-0)** Candidates do not have to be interviewed but for those who are, the same interview questions must be used for each candidate. **(T-0)** Refer to [paragraph 2.13](#) for information on GS-14/GS-15 and equivalent levels. **Note:** PPP military spouse matches are not to be interviewed; however, the spouse's package should be reviewed by the panel. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by HQ AF/AIC. **(T-1)** Military spouses overseas and those not registered and matching through the PPP may all be interviewed.

3.16.2.1. It is recommended that three to five questions be developed for use in the interview process. The questions should be reviewed for appropriate job relatedness by the personnel office or the respective Career Field Team. Each question used must be job-

related and tied to the knowledge, skills, and abilities identified on the core personnel document or to the job analysis for the position being filled. **(T-1)** Each question should be structured with three to four descriptive anchors with points allocated to each anchor. This will assist the interviewer in categorizing the responses of the person being interviewed and indicate the degree to which the response meets the essence of the question. In the end, the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate will be documented to assist the supervisor in making the selection. **(T-2)**

3.16.2.2. When a candidate is not interviewed, the selecting official must document the reasons for not interviewing and the method used to evaluate the remaining candidates. For example, supervisor inquiries or past working knowledge of the employee. **(T-1)** The documentation, interview questions and responses are maintained by the selecting official, as described in [paragraph 3.22.4](#) below.

3.16.2.3. The AFPC or Operating Location will make tentative/firm job offers after audit of selections from referral certificates. **(T-2)** Selecting official must not make tentative or firm job offers to selectees, except when the position is a critical need position (for example: EHA/DHA). **(T-1)** For the purpose of negotiating salary, selecting officials may extend tentative job offers for critical need positions, conditional on final verification from the AFPC of eligibility, priority clearance, and all necessary hiring requirements having been met.

3.17. Notifying Applicants.

3.17.1. Applicants will receive an e-mail acknowledging when their application package is received by the AFPC. This is automated through USA Staffing and does not require any manual intervention from the HR Specialist.

3.17.2. Once an applicant's initial eligibility and/or qualification determination has been made, the HR Specialist posting the vacancy announcement must request the Notice of Results be sent from USA Staffing to the applicant no later than two business days after the closing date of the vacancy announcement. **(T-2)** The Notice of Results identifies the status of the applicant's record to the effect that they are qualified and referred, qualified but not within reach for referral, or not qualified based upon specific reasons (for example: lack of specialized experience). If the closing date of the vacancy announcement is extended for any reason, the HR Specialist must request the Notice of Results be sent from USA Staffing to the applicants no later than two business days after the new closing date. **(T-2)**

3.17.3. Upon issuance of a referral certificate, the HR Specialist must immediately initiate a Notice of Results notifying the applicant of their status (for example: referred, not referred, or ineligible for referral). **(T-2)**

3.17.4. Immediately upon receipt of a returned, unused referral certificate or upon the selection and acceptance of a job offer by a referred candidate, the HR Specialist issuing the referral certificate must also send a Notice of Results to each non-selected candidate advising them they were considered but not selected. **(T-2)**

3.18. Releasing Employees.

3.18.1. The AFPC or Operating Location will establish a tentative entrance-on-duty date based on the following criteria:

3.18.1.1. When the selection is made of a candidate from the same installation as the vacant position the losing/gaining supervisors will coordinate the release date with the AFPC or Operating Location. **(T-3)**

3.18.1.2. When the selection is made of a candidate from a different location than the vacancy, the gaining and losing civilian personnel sections will coordinate the effective date with the losing and gaining supervisors and the office issuing the referral certificate. **(T-3)** When possible, the reporting date will be within 45 calendar days of selection if a PCS is involved. Reporting to overseas locations may take longer than 45 calendar days.

3.18.2. Promotion. Employees selected for promotion at the same installation as the vacancy will be released by the losing organization so the promotion action may be processed at the beginning of a pay period. The promotion action should be effective the next full pay period after acceptance of a firm offer. The action may be delayed for administrative reasons related to the placement (for example: physical examination, security clearance, pending within grade increase within two pay periods, etc.) or at the employee's request if approved by both the gaining and losing supervisors.

3.18.3. Reassignment and Employee-Requested Change-to-Lower-Grade. The effective date for these actions, not requiring a PCS, will normally be the beginning of a pay period within 20 calendar days of selection. No employee may be retained in their current position for more than 20 calendar days if such retention would adversely impact their selection.

3.19. Temporary Promotions.

3.19.1. The area of consideration for temporary promotions is normally limited to an organization but may be further expanded to include the installation where the vacancy exists, as necessary. If the area of consideration is expanded outside the installation, an employee selected may be temporarily promoted upon agreement between the gaining and losing organizations. **Table 3.5** lists the instances when temporary promotions are authorized and specifies the conditions and limitations that apply to each condition.

3.19.2. Temporary promotions for 120 calendar days or less may be processed non-competitively. Competitive procedures apply when the promotion is expected to exceed 120 days, be extended beyond 120 calendar days, or be made permanent without further competition. Supervisors are responsible for timely submission of extension/termination requests of the temporary promotion. The total period of the temporary promotion may not exceed five years. Time spent on temporary promotion or detail to higher graded position(s) during the preceding 12 month period is counted toward the 120 calendar day limitation.

3.19.2.1. For centrally managed positions, the civilian personnel section does not need to notify the appropriate Career Field Team of temporary promotions for up to 120 calendar days (review/coordination by Career Field Team will be done through the request for personnel action process). Actions beyond 120 calendar days, including extensions, require prior coordination and approval by the respective Career Field Team.

3.19.2.2. Refer to AFMAN 36-606 for filling career broadening positions by temporary promotion.

3.19.2.3. Temporary promotions of a civilian deputy to a military chief position may be made non-competitively for up to one year. Beyond that period, the position must be filled using the competitive process. (**Table 3.5**, Rule 3). (**T-0**)

3.19.2.4. Prior to the effective date of the action, an employee selected for a temporary promotion must be informed in writing of the following:

3.19.2.4.1. Temporary nature of the promotion.

3.19.2.4.2. The reason for time limit.

3.19.2.4.3. The requirement for competition beyond 120 calendar days where applicable.

3.19.2.4.4. The temporary promotion may be terminated at any time and that the employee may be returned to the position from which temporarily promoted or to a different position of equivalent grade and pay and the return is not subject to the procedures in 5 CFR, Parts 351, 432, 752 or 771.

3.19.2.4.5. If the employee is receiving a retained rate of pay at the time of the temporary promotion, the employee will be informed by the civilian personnel section of the effect of the temporary promotion on the retained pay at the time of promotion and upon return to their former grade.

3.19.3. Terminating Temporary Promotion. **Table 3.6** lists the placement actions that may be taken when terminating a temporary promotion and the conditions under which they may be made. Refer to AFMAN 36-606 for filling career broadening and Civilian Strategic Leader Program positions.

3.20. Reassignments, Change-to-Lower-Grade and Re-Promotions absent an Announcement. Refer to AFMAN 36-606 for centrally managed positions.

3.20.1. Reassignments within the DoD may be accomplished without a vacancy announcement and/or hiring panel for GS-13 and below positions. **Note:** GS-14 and above positions require a vacancy announcement and hiring panel. Reassignments may be processed non-competitively within the DoD to a position with no known promotion potential beyond that of the employee's current position or the grade of a position that the employee has previously held on a permanent basis. A review will be made of the employee's resume against the core document for the position being filled. (**T-0**) An employee eligible for reassignment must meet basic and statutory qualification requirements for the position to which they are being reassigned or meet the requirements of an approved modification of qualifications. (**T-0**) **Note:** Most non-competitive reassignments of current or former federal employees who are outside of DoD will require an announcement to clear Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP). Reference DoDI 1400.25, Volume 330, *DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Reemployment Priority List (RPL)*. (**T-0**)

3.20.1.1. Management-Initiated Reassignments. A management official may request the reassignment of an employee not under their supervision with the concurrence of the losing organization and supervisor, in coordination with the personnel office. The employee has to meet basic eligibility requirements or the requirements of an approved modification of qualifications and the position has no known promotion potential beyond the employee's current grade or highest grade previously held on a permanent basis.

3.20.1.2. Management-Directed Reassignments. Management officials may direct the reassignment of an employee to a position within their organization or their line of command without referral of other candidates. The employee has to meet basic eligibility requirements or the requirements of an approved modification of qualifications and the position has no known promotion potential beyond the employee's current grade or highest grade previously held on a permanent basis.

3.20.1.3. A reassignment will be considered if no appropriate reasonable accommodation is available to enable the qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of his or her current job/position or if the only effective accommodation would cause undue hardship on the AF.

3.20.2. A voluntary change-to-lower-grade at the employee's request and with management coordination may be non-competitively processed provided the employee meets basic eligibility requirements or the requirements of an approved modification of qualifications and the position has no known promotion potential beyond the employee's current grade or highest grade previously held on a permanent basis. The employee must acknowledge in writing that the change-to-lower-grade is at the employee's request. **(T-3)**

3.20.3. Re-promotion to a grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (or in another merit system with which the OPM has an interchange agreement) from which an employee was separated or demoted for other than performance or conduct reasons is permitted absent a vacancy announcement. The PPP may need to be cleared. Refer to the PPP Handbook for approved exceptions.

3.21. Employees Entitled to Non-Competitive Priority Consideration as Corrective Action. Refer to [Table 3.3](#). When a procedural violation, regulatory violation, or program violation is identified, corrective action must be taken. **(T-0)** If the corrective action does not include a requirement to vacate the position, an employee who was not given proper consideration because of the violation will be given priority consideration for any position similar to that for which proper consideration was omitted (for example: same grade and/or target grade) and provided the employee is otherwise qualified. The employee will be given one priority consideration for each instance of omission. The employee will be referred to the selecting supervisor before referral of candidates from other sources who are not entitled to a higher priority consideration. Management retains the right to select or non-select the employee. Since selection of these employees is optional, supervisors may request additional candidates before making a final selection.

3.22. Promotion/Referral Records.

3.22.1. Promotion Plan. All AF organizations must maintain a copy of the Merit Promotion Plan (AFMAN 36-203, Chapter 2) and any applicable local supplements and make them available to their employees and management officials. **(T-0)**

3.22.2. Safeguarding Promotion/Referral Materials. Information contained in automated data products and referral certificates may not be disclosed to unauthorized personnel. Referral certificates are electronically transmitted to selecting officials and returned to the issuing office in the same manner. Caution must be taken when transmitting and receiving promotion materials to ensure unauthorized personnel do not inadvertently gain access. Employees may

not be informed of another employee's rank order on a certificate or assessment of qualifications against eligibility or ranking criteria.

3.22.3. Records of referral actions taken under this plan will be maintained and disposed of according to AFI 33-364, *Records Disposition –Procedures and Responsibilities*. (T-1)

3.22.4. Selecting officials will maintain all substantive records/documentation related to the consideration of competing candidates for a period of five years from the date of notification of selection or non-selection or until an audit is completed by OPM. (T-1)

3.23. Promotion Information to Employees.

3.23.1. All employees covered by this plan will have access to a copy of the plan and any local supplements by requesting it from their organization.

3.23.2. The employee or applicant, or designated representative, is entitled to be informed of their qualifications for a specific vacancy, and whether they were within the group referred. (T-0) However, the employee or applicant, or their designated representative, may not be informed of the assessment of another employee's qualifications without that employee's written permission. (T-0)

3.23.3. Employees considered under this Merit Promotion Plan are also entitled, upon request, to full disclosure of the specific criteria in the job analysis/promotion plan.

3.23.4. Upon request, the selecting supervisor must inform the non-selected candidates of the reasons for non-selection. (T-1) The supervisor must adhere to the provisions of the Privacy Act and may not discuss the rank order or assessment of qualifications against eligibility or criteria of the candidate selected or any other candidate referred. (T-0)

3.24. Keeping Employees Informed. Employees will be informed annually by their local installation, through published articles, of the principles and procedures outlined in this plan and of OPM and AF directives dealing with the subject of promotion. (T-0)

3.25. Employee Complaints.

3.25.1. An employee who believes their application package was incorrectly evaluated, incorrectly ranked, or the terms of the promotion plan were not otherwise followed, thereby depriving them of referral consideration, is encouraged to discuss their concern informally with the servicing personnel office. If the issue concerns the ranking and referral process, the personnel office may contact the AFPC or Operating Location servicing team. If the concern deals with the selection process, the matter should be resolved locally. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the employee may submit a formal grievance in accordance with the installation's negotiated or agency grievance procedures. The other option is for an employee to contact the Equal Opportunity Office, if they believe discrimination has occurred. The aggrieved person must initiate contact with the Equal Opportunity Office within 45 calendar days of the date of the alleged discriminatory act or, in the case of a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action.

3.25.2. Personnel offices must keep the appropriate Career Field Team informed of complaints concerning centrally managed positions. (T-1) Any corrective action involving centrally managed positions must receive the coordination and approval of the respective Developmental Team Chair prior to final action. (T-1)

3.26. Evaluation. The Merit Promotion Plan and merit system operations under the plan will be evaluated annually as part of the AF/A1C internal program review. **(T-1)** In addition, employee selection procedures will be continually evaluated in accordance with 5 CFR, Part 335 and appropriate action taken when necessary. **(T-0)**

Table 3.1. Application of the Competitive Process (Refer to AFMAN 36-606 for centrally managed positions).

RULE	When the proposed action is	to a position	and	then competition is required (Note 1)
1	Promotion without time limitation	of higher grade under the same pay schedule	the action is not covered by rules 12 thru 21	YES
2	Reassignment	at the same grade under the same pay schedule	the position is one with known promotion potential and employee will gain eligibility for non-competitive career promotion	YES
3			position is not one with known promotion potential	NO
4	Change-to-Lower-Grade	of lower grade under the same pay schedule	the position is one with known promotion potential and employees will gain eligibility for non-competitive career promotion to grade higher than previously held	YES
5			position is not one with known promotion potential	NO
6	Assignment from one pay schedule	with a higher representative rate under a different pay schedule		YES
7		of the same or lower representative rate under a different pay schedule	the position is one with known promotion potential	YES
8			the position is not one with known promotion potential	NO

9	Reinstatement or transfer	at a higher grade than previously held on a permanent basis or for more than one year		YES
10		at the same or lower grade than previously held on a permanent basis or for more than one year	the position is one with known promotion potential to a grade higher than previously held	YES
11			position is not one with known promotion potential	NO
12	A detail	at the same or lower grade with no known growth or promotion potential	the detail is for any length	NO
13		at a higher grade or to position of same grade with known promotion potential	the detail is for 120 calendar days or less (Note 2)	NO
14			the detail is for more than 120 calendar days (Note 2)	YES (Notes 3 and 4)
15	A temporary promotion or extension of temporary promotion	a. at higher grade under same pay schedule or, b. under different pay schedule when action is processed as a promotion or represents a promotion		See Table 3.5
16	A conversion of temporary promotion to permanent promotion (removal of temporary restriction)			See Table 3.6

17	A placement following temporary promotion by reassignment or change-to-lower-grade without time limitation	a. under same pay schedule at a grade higher than the position from which temporarily promoted <i>or</i> , b. under different pay schedule at higher grade (or level) than position from which temporarily promoted		See Table 3.6
18	Selection for training	N/A	training or development would enhance employee's qualifications	Civilian Personnel Officer or Career Field Team Chief (for centrally managed positions) determination
19	Promotion	upgraded by classification	reason for upgrading of incumbent's position without significant change in duties and responsibilities (classification error or new or revised standards)	NO (Note 5) Classification must identify the applicable rule (19, 20, 21) and document this in Part D of the Request for Personnel Action
20			reason for upgrading is reconstitution of incumbent's position into successor position with clearly and solely identifiable duties of former position and there are no other employees serving in similar or identical positions to whom the duties could be assigned	NO (Note 5) Classification must identify the applicable rule (19, 20, 21) and document this in Part D of the Request for Personnel Action

21			reason for upgrading is reconstitution of incumbent's position into successor position and position is not a clear successor or there are other employees serving in similar or identical positions to whom these duties could have been assigned	YES (Notes 4 and 5) Classification must identify the applicable rule (19, 20, 21) and document this in Part D of the Request for Personnel Action
22	Promotion from position of known promotion potential	a. originally identified as the target position to which employee would advance without competition <i>or</i> , b. which represents the full performance level of a career ladder	competitive procedures were fully applied at the time of placement into position of known promotion potential and all competitors were informed selection for the entry position could lead to promotion without further competition	NO

NOTES:

1. "Yes" entries do not apply when:
 - a. Candidate is eligible for non-competitive promotion because full competition was applied earlier, or,
 - b. Candidate is eligible for non-competitive appointment based on 30 percent or more Disabled Veteran eligibility, or,
 - c. Candidate may have non-competitive promotion eligibility as a previously downgraded employee, or,
 - d. Candidate is entitled by RIF regulations to the position under the representative rate rules, or,
 - e. Candidate is administratively assigned in place of a RIF action, to a position of higher representative rate without an increase in the rate of pay; or candidate is reassigned as a reasonable accommodation for a disability to a position of comparable (or lesser) pay.
2. Time spent on temporary promotion or detail to higher graded position(s) during the preceding 12 month period is counted toward the 120 calendar day limitation.
3. Competition is not required when detail is for purpose of qualifying employee whose position has been upgraded under situations described in rules 19 and 20.
4. Area of consideration may be limited to employees serving in identical or similar positions or organizations to which the duties could have been assigned.
5. Assure qualification and legal requirements are met.

Table 3.2. Merit Promotion Procedures.

STEP	Required Actions	Consideration, Determinations, and Actions
1.	Determine the applicability of competitive procedures.	Assuming there are no mandatory placements, review nature of action proposed and length of assignment. Apply Table 3.1 to determine if exempt from competition. Screen local priorities for non-competitive referral (See Note). If competition is required, proceed to Step 2.
2.	Conduct job analysis and develop the promotion plan.	Based on job analysis, determine qualifications requirements, selective placement factors (if any), screening factors, and ranking factors. Review established promotion plans to determine whether appropriate or if new plan is justified because of new or unique factors associated with the position. Consider nature of action, type of position, probable availability of candidates, etc.
3.	Refer employees entitled to priority consideration under competitive procedures.	Refer to Table 3.3. If no candidates are identified for priority placement or referral, or if all requirements for non-selection have been met, proceed to Step 4.
4.	Identify competing candidates.	Certify from an existing register; otherwise, issue an announcement. Under merit promotion procedures and in applying the competitive process, consider employees entitled to priority consideration serviced by the same personnel office.
5.	Rank competing candidates.	All employees in the prescribed area of consideration are screened against initial and basic eligibility criteria. Those meeting basic eligibility are then ranked and sorted by best qualified criteria as documented on the job analysis/promotion plan and paragraph 3.14 .
6.	Certify eligible candidates.	Determine number to be certified. Refer allowable number of qualified candidates from the applicant pool including non-temporary employees from other federal agencies and all other candidates eligible for non-competitive appointment. Candidates on OPM certificates are forwarded for consideration on a separate certificate.

NOTE: The civilian personnel section determines eligible local priority candidates who will be referred non-competitively prior to applying the full competitive process.

Table 3.3. Referral and Selection Priorities.

Priority Order	Category of Candidate	Must be Selected	Must be Considered & May be Selected	Conditions to be Observed	Remarks	DCPDS Code
A	Assignment Rights (Applicant or employee with enforceable assignment rights or to be mandatorily placed as a corrective or remedial action)	YES	Not applicable	Not applicable	None	A1
	Mandatory placement of an applicant or employee discriminated against or under terms of an informal settlement made under the criteria of 29 CFR, Vol 4, 1614.501	YES	Not applicable	Not applicable		
	Manager or supervisor who fails to satisfactorily complete required probationary period	YES	Not applicable	Not applicable	Includes subsequent placement of any employee to relieve coverage caused by earlier return to non-manager or non-supervisory position created for such return	
A (Cont)	Mandatory restoration after military service	YES	Not applicable	Not applicable	Establish on local table until DoD establishes program code in Automated	

					Stopper and Referral System	
	Mandatory placement of fully recovered employees from workers compensation within one year from the date compensation began (5 CFR 353-301)	YES	Not applicable	Not applicable	Employees fully recovered after more than one year from the date compensation was payable will be eligible for Registration in the RPL (5 CFR 330.204)	
	Exercise of return rights after overseas service	YES	Not applicable	Not applicable	Accorded under the priorities outlined in AFMAN 36-204	R1
B	Applicant or employee found to have been discriminated against & entitled to priority consideration for employment or promotion under the criteria of 29 CFR, Vol 4, 1614.501	NO	YES	If not selected, document reasons for non-selection	Entitlement restricted to only the next suitable vacancy	B1
C	AF installation employee affected by RIF action. Includes administrative reassignments to vacancy, within or outside competitive level of employee whose position is abolished, and who is within reach for release from competitive level: and reassignments	YES, for same or lower grade, when necessary to satisfy RIF assignment rights	Not applicable	Not applicable	Includes employees identified with incoming transfer of function as result of preliminary offer to transfer	C1

	under general authority to reassign					
D	AF employee or former employee who has partially recovered from a compensable injury and will be restored to duty	YES, at current or lower grade	Not applicable	Not applicable	Activity commander or designee may approve exception to mandatory selection. Reasons must be documented. (Availability of a better qualified candidate is not an acceptable reason.)	G4
E	AF installation employee serving a lower grade with grade retention entitlements	Yes, at retained grade or intermediate grade in the same pay system from which downgraded	Not applicable	Not applicable	Activity commander or designee may approve exception to mandatory selection. Reason must be documented. Employee declination at intermediate grade results in termination of consideration at grade level declined and below.	
F	Employee with permanent mental or physical disability no longer able to perform full range of duties of current position. (Do not confuse with recovered employees being restored from compensation roles. Reasonable	YES (Employee must be counseled that voluntary acceptance of a position at a lower grade or pay level terminates consideration for disability retirement)	Not applicable	Reassignment may be directed; employee failure to report will result in separation for failure to accept reassignment	Activity commander or designee may approve exception to mandatory selection and document reasons. (Availability of better qualified candidate is not an acceptable reason)	E1

	accommodation must be considered)					
G	Reserved.					

Table 3.4. Upgrading a Position by Classification

RULE	If an occupied position is upgraded under situation described (Note 1)	and the incumbent	then action is usually taken	alternative actions permitted are	Remarks
1.	Promotion (Table 3.1, Rules 19 and 20)	is qualified and eligible	promote the incumbent without competition	None	The employee may be taken out of the position only under adverse action procedures for reasons related to the upgrading decision. (Note 2) RIF procedures may not be used to place employee
2.		does not meet minimum OPM qualification standards or legal requirement for promotion	a. consider use of flexibilities and/or waivers OR, b. detail incumbent without competition, if appropriate	a. delete or redistribute duties to keep position at present grade level OR b. administratively reassign incumbent to vacant position without loss of grade and salary	The incumbent may be demoted or separated only if cause exists and charges justify the proposed action. RIF procedures may be used to place employee
3.		meets minimum OPM qualifications, but does not meet time-in-grade restrictions for promotion	consider waiver if appropriate or retain the incumbent in position in status quo as on detail until eligible for promotion		

RULE	If an occupied position is upgraded under situation described (Note 1)	and the incumbent	then action is usually taken	alternative actions permitted are	Remarks
4.	Promotion (Table 3.1, Rule 21)	is qualified and eligible for promotion and is within reach for selection under competitive procedures	promote incumbent under competitive procedures	delete or redistribute duties to keep position at present grade	The employee may be demoted or separated only if cause exists and charges justify the proposed action
5.		does not meet minimum OPM requirements for promotion or is not within reach for selection under competitive procedures (Note 2)	administratively assign incumbent to a vacant position without loss of grade or salary		RIF procedures may not be used to place employee

NOTES:

1. If the position is obligated to an employee absent in military service, they must be considered for and may be promoted in absentia if selected. **(T-0)**
2. Employee may not be detailed and promotion process delayed until employee qualifies or is within reach for promotion to permit selection.

Table 3.5. Temporary Promotion.

RULE	If the reason for temporary promotion is	and the period authorized is	competitive selection required (Note 1)	promotion may be extended (Note2)	the temporary limitation may be removed (Note 3)
1.	To provide temporary services: a. During employee's absence on approved leave	up to 120 calendar days	NO	Not-to-exceed overall period of 120 calendar days (Note 4)	NO

2.	<p>b. During employee's absence at management's request, For Example: Temporary duty travel, detail, training, etc.</p> <p>c. When required by special project or emergency workload</p> <p>d. If position vacated by temporary promotion</p>	more than 120 calendar days	YES	YES	
3.	To assign civilian deputy chief to a military chief's position, classifiable to higher grade pending replacement of military chief	Up to one year	NO	YES	NO
4.	<p>To promote:</p> <p>a. Employee whose position is scheduled to be abolished within 18 months because of base closure, major reduction or Transfer of Function</p> <p>b. Employee at continuing activity in function involved in transfer or merger</p>	Up to 120 calendar days	NO	Not-to-exceed overall period of 120 calendar days (Note 4)	NO

5.	To promote: (Table 3.5 4a and 4b)	more than 120 calendar days	YES	YES	YES, after the major reduction or transfer has been completed, provided the area of consideration established locally under paragraph 3.2.2. has been observed
6.	To fill continuing positions held in reserve (stock-piled) for placement of employees affected by base closure or transfer of function	Up to 120 calendar days	NO	Not-to-exceed overall of 120 days (Note 4)	NO
7.	To fill continuing positions held in reserve (stock-piled) for placement of employees affected by base closure or transfer of function	More than 120 calendar days	YES	YES	Yes, when the area of consideration established under paragraph 3.2.2. has been observed

RULE	If the reason for temporary promotion is	and the period authorized is	competitive selection required (Note 1)	promotion may be extended (Note2)	the temporary limitation may be removed (Note 3)
8.	To promote to a continuing position an overseas employee registered for placement assistance in Overseas PPP or overseas employee within 6 months of established rotation date	Up to 120 calendar days	NO	Not-to-exceed overall period of 120 calendar days (Note 4)	No

9.		More than 120 calendar days	YES	YES	YES, when the area of consideration paragraph 3.2.2. has been observed
10.	To promote to continuing position obligated to an overseas employees who will be exercising return rights within 6 months	Up to 120 calendar days	NO	Not-to-exceed overall period of 120 calendar days (Note 4)	NO
11.		More than 120 calendar days	YES	YES	YES, when the area of consideration established under paragraph 3.2.2. has been observed

NOTES:

1. Explanation of “YES” and “NO” entries:

a. “YES” entries do not apply when candidates are eligible for non-competitive promotion for any of the reasons shown in Note 1, [Table 3.1](#)

b. “NO” entries in this column do not prevent the use of competitive procedures when it is expected the promotion will extend beyond 120 calendar days.

c. “NO” entries are changed to “YES” when, at the completion of the temporary promotion, the employee will have spent more than 120 calendar days in the preceding 12 months, on temporary promotions or details to higher grades positions during the preceding year (not applicable to Rule 3).

2. The total period of temporary promotion may not exceed 5 years.

3. “NO” entries in this column do not prevent removal of temporary limitation when conditions in [Table 3.6](#) are met.

4. Extension is subject to competition when the employee will have spent more than 120 calendar days on temporary promotion and or detail to higher graded position during the preceding 12 months (not applicable to Rule 3).

Table 3.6. Terminating Temporary Promotion and Placement of Employees.

RULE	If the proposed placement is	Temporary promotion was initially for 1 year or pending permanent promotion and full competitive procedures were used (Note 1)	Employee is currently within reach under competitive procedures for permanent promotion	Notification and documentation were properly followed at the time of temporary promotion (Note 2)	Employee consent to the placement	These actions may be taken
1.	a. Permanent retention in position (Note 2) b. Reassignment (without time limitation) to position of same grade	YES	Not required	Not applicable	Not required	YES
2.		NO	YES	Not applicable	Not applicable	NO
3.			NO	Not applicable	Not applicable	
4.	Return to former position	Not applicable	Not applicable	YES	Not required	YES
5.	Change-to-Lower-Grade position at same grade as former position	Not applicable	Not applicable	YES	Not required	YES
6.	Change-to-Lower-Grade at intermediate grade	YES	Not required	YES	YES (Note 3)	YES

7.		NO	NO	Not applicable	Not applicable	NO
8.	Promotion (from grade held on temporary promotion)	Not applicable	YES	Not applicable	Not applicable	YES
9.		Not applicable	NO	Not applicable	Not applicable	NO

NOTES:

1. The conditions in this column are met only when:

a. The temporary promotion was initially made for 1 year, or was made for a shorter period but it was known at the outset the temporary promotion could be converted to permanent (for example, at the completion of extended sick leave of an employee scheduled for disability retirement).

b. Full competitive procedures were used, including application of the standard area of consideration and its extension when required; application of the provisions in [paragraph 2.10](#) for selection of downgraded employees referred for consideration; and notification to all eligible competitors that the temporary promotion could, or would, lead to permanent promotion without further competition.

2. Notification to employee not provided in advance of temporary action should be provided as soon as possible after promotion is made. Absent notification, termination of temporary promotion may be subject to procedures covered under of 5 CFR, Section 752.401.

3. If the reason for the temporary promotion ceases to exist and the conditions of Rules 1, 2, or 3 are met, the promotion may be made permanent by removing the limitation according to the instructions in OPM's *Guide to Processing Personnel Actions*.

Chapter 4

DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

4.1. Advancement Opportunities. The AF will design, administer, and support advancement opportunities for lower grade-level civilian employees throughout the Developmental Opportunity Program. **(T-1)** This program is designed to help each employee reach his or her full potential and productivity. Employees with potential, but who lack qualifications, can be assisted in becoming qualified for current or projected positions through competitive selection.

If selected, the employee would be afforded mission-supportive job experience and job-related training and education. The guidance provided in this chapter is to be implemented in concert with the Merit Promotion Plan.

4.2. Objectives. The goals of the Developmental Opportunity Program are established according to mission and organizational needs as follows:

- 4.2.1. To provide the means by which the capabilities of employees are increased to the fullest extent possible.
- 4.2.2. To provide employees with an opportunity to competitively enter bridge or career positions and receive planned on-the-job and/or formal training.
- 4.2.3. To increase employee morale through these educational and training opportunities.

4.3. Relationship with Affirmative Employment. The Developmental Opportunity Program is an integral part of Affirmative Employment Program and can encourage career progression to ensure a diverse applicant pool for supervisory and managerial positions.

4.4. General. Execution of the Developmental Opportunity Program requires the full commitment of commanders, functional managers, supervisors, civilian personnel officers and participants to ensure success. **(T-1)** It requires each to strive to apply full use of all aspects of the program in evaluating employee performance, work history, interests, education and potential with developmental opportunities.

4.5. Responsibilities of Commanders.

- 4.5.1. Ensure implementation in conjunction with the Merit Promotion Plan. **(T-0)**
- 4.5.2. Ensure managers and supervisors are knowledgeable, trained and committed to the identification of developmental opportunities and employees with potential.
- 4.5.3. Express verbal and written support and commitment to the program.
- 4.5.4. Demonstrate program support by providing adequate resources based on the availability of funds.

4.6. Responsibilities of Functional Managers and Supervisors.

- 4.6.1. Identify positions that may be restructured for fill through the program consistent with the needs and mission of the organization.
- 4.6.2. Identify knowledge, skills, and abilities required for each step of the structured position.
- 4.6.3. Restructure positions to provide developmental opportunities.

- 4.6.4. Counsel and encourage employees to apply for positions under the program.
- 4.6.5. Identify cost-effective training needs.
- 4.6.6. Provide periodic evaluation of trainee performance and progression.
- 4.6.7. Identify unsatisfactory progress and discuss with the personnel office appropriate action to be taken.

4.7. Responsibilities of the Civilian Personnel Officer.

- 4.7.1. Assist with the design and implementation of the program.
- 4.7.2. Serve as coordinator of the program.
- 4.7.3. Assist functional managers and supervisors in identifying positions to be filled through the program.
- 4.7.4. Publicize program availability.
- 4.7.5. Counsel employees on the opportunities available through program participation.
- 4.7.6. Develop and apply appropriate selection procedures.

4.8. Eligibility. This program applies to all US citizen employees at GS-1 through GS-8 and Wage Grade (WG)-1 through WG-7 who are not serving under a time-limited appointment or in a position targeted to GS-9/WG-8 or above. Employees serving under excepted appointing authorities may be considered and selected only if their appointment to the target position can be made under the same appointing authority or if the appointing authority provides for conversion into a competitive appointment.

4.9. Identification of Positions.

- 4.9.1. The identification of target positions is critical to the success of the program. It may be necessary to analyze the skills of current employees, review current and anticipated position vacancies, and determine which positions may lend themselves to restructuring in support of the program.
- 4.9.2. Positions that can be restructured, do not need to be included in the program. Whether or not a position can be committed to the program, is the sole responsibility of the respective supervisor. The decision should be predicated upon available training opportunities and organizational workforce capability for overseeing training on the job.
- 4.9.3. Once a specific position for which the employee is to be trained has been identified, the normal line of progression or career ladders should be established. Target positions should be restructured to the lowest practical entry or intermediate grade levels with an identified final target position to accommodate the skills of the selected participant.
- 4.9.4. Target positions are normally classified as either career or bridge positions. Career positions are either positions that extend to GS-9 or above (usually two-grade interval series) or WG positions with journeyman grades of WG-8 or above. Bridge positions are lead-in positions and provide qualifying experience for career positions. Developmental opportunity may encompass movement from support positions that normally do not provide any opportunity for advancement to the GS-9/WG-8 or above or the experience needed to progress

from other positions into bridge or career positions, or movement from bridge positions into career positions.

4.10. Implementation.

4.10.1. Selection for placement into a developmental opportunity position is accomplished through competitive methods as required by AFD 36-1 and the Merit Promotion Plan. Individuals may be selected for competitive promotions, reassignments, or change-to-lower-grade. Candidates are identified through self-nomination under a vacancy announcement in conjunction with any number of competitive methods: job analysis followed by self-assessment, panel interviews, assessment centers or other job-related performance exercises, or any combination of methods (for example: locally developed self-evaluation criteria). The job analysis provides the basis for any other assessment tool used for identification and selection of candidates.

4.10.2. Candidates must meet basic eligibility requirements, unless OPM qualifications are modified as authorized under General Policies of the OPM Qualification Standards. OPM General Schedule Qualifications Policies and Federal Wage System Qualifications are available at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-policies/>. (T-0) Any minimum education, license, or certification requirements must be met and cannot be waived.

4.10.3. Employees selected for positions identified under the program are entitled to pay retention in accordance with AFI 36-802, *Pay Setting*.

4.11. Training Agreements.

4.11.1. Training agreements are required when training to be provided is used as a substitute for all or part of the qualifying experience (but not education, licensing, certification, or other specific credentials) required by the OPM qualification standard for the position series.

4.11.2. Bases will develop training agreements including modification of qualification requirements (where appropriate), time-in-grade exclusions, and not more than two accelerated promotions. (T-1) All agreements are submitted to and approved by the installation commander or designee and must be reviewed annually. (T-1) Each training agreement must describe: (T-1)

4.11.2.1. Reason for the agreement.

4.11.2.2. Position(s) covered.

4.11.2.3. Selection procedures.

4.11.2.4. Length of training for each grade level as required.

4.11.2.5. Each phase of training required, the expected learning outcome, and the means for measuring the success of the trainee.

4.11.2.6. Flexibility provision for the length and intensity of training.

4.12. Formal Training Plan.

4.12.1. A formal training plan is required for each employee on a training agreement. (T-1) In all other cases, a formal training plan may be used. The plan delineates the training and

developmental activities required to qualify for the target position. The plan should include the following:

4.12.2. The knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for successful performance in the target position.

4.12.3. Objectives and sub-objectives related to the knowledge, skills, and abilities.

4.12.4. Specific training and developmental activities required to meet objectives including on the job training and formal training.

4.12.5. Flexibility provisions for the length and intensity of training.

4.12.6. Target dates for completion of objectives/sub-objectives.

4.12.7. Provisions for periodic evaluations (daily, weekly, monthly) with a requirement for a written evaluation at the end of each quarter.

4.12.8. Promotion phase points predicated on plan completion and requisite time as appropriate.

4.12.9. Adjustments that may be made prior to and during the training process. An inventory of skills and abilities of a participant against each phase of the plan, may permit a phase to be skipped when the participant already possesses the required knowledge.

4.13. Counseling. The personnel office, along with the supervisor, is responsible for providing counseling to assist employees in identifying their career goals and qualifications, and matching these with organizational needs and developmental opportunities. **(T-1)** Counseling may be supported by the servicing employee development specialist, affirmative employment specialist, or individuals knowledgeable of staffing procedures and the Merit Promotion Plan.

Chapter 5

MILITARY SPOUSE PREFERENCE PROGRAM

5.1. Authority. The authority for the military spouse preference program is DoDI 1400.25-M, Volume 315, *DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Employment of Spouses of Active Duty Military*. AF policy and procedures for military spouse preference employment in non-appropriated fund positions are addressed in AFMAN 34-310, *Non-Appropriated Fund Personnel Program Management and Administration Procedures*.

5.2. Military Spouse Preference Eligible. Eligibility for military spouse preference is not warranted to dual military couples where one spouse is discharged and to seek civil service employment at the current duty station. Eligibility as a military spouse preference applicant is established when one of the following conditions is met. The applicant is the spouse of a:

5.2.1. Military member who entered into marriage with the military member prior to relocating because of military service under a statutory tour. Eligibility for preference does not extend to the military spouse unless the marriage occurred prior to the relocation of the military member to the new duty station area.

5.2.2. New recruit to active duty in the Armed Forces (including US Coast Guard and full-time National Guard or Reserves) who is relocating to a new and permanent duty station after completing basic and/or advanced training at one or several temporary duty stations.

5.2.3. New recruit who has received a permanent assignment at the same duty station where the initial entry training was received.

5.2.4. Former military member who re-enlists and is placed directly within the permanent unit of assignment without undergoing initial entry training.

5.2.5. Military member assigned by PCS to a service school regardless of the duration of the training at the service school.

5.2.6. Member of the Reserve Forces (Reserve or National Guard) who has been called to active duty under a provision of 10 USC. In this instance, military spouse preference applies only if the spouse has relocated as a result of the activation of the Reserve Forces military member sponsor under 10 USC.

5.3. Applicability. Military Spouse Preference is not applicable when filling the following kinds of positions or in specific instances:

5.3.1. Positions in the National Security Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, or other organizations in the DoD Components that have a primary function of intelligence, counterintelligence, or national security.

5.3.2. Professional educator positions with the Department of Defense Dependent Schools. Spouse applicants for Department of Defense Dependent Schools educator positions with this system are given preference according to Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) Regulation 1400.13, *Salaries and Personnel Practices Applicable to Teachers and Other Employees of the Department of Defense Dependent Schools*.

5.3.3. Full performance level competitive or excepted service positions covered by mandatory mobility agreements.

5.3.4. Situations involving statutory or regulatory entitlements such as placement entitlements stemming from reemployment rights, grade retention rights, or rights conferred by a court and administrative decisions.

5.3.5. Filling of positions when statutes or regulations on veteran's preference or nepotism would be violated.

5.3.6. Filling of positions when a placement would result in the displacement or change-to-lower-grade of a current employee of the activity.

5.3.7. Filling of positions that would prevent the placement of a DoD PPP Priority 1 or 2 registrant.

5.3.8. When a military sponsor makes a PCS in conjunction with retirement or separation.

5.3.9. When a military spouse is placed in a DoD appropriated or NAF permanent position, whether or not preference was applied, Military Spouse Preference is no longer an eligible option for the spouse.

5.3.10. DoD employment following non-DoD employment in a permanent position at the new duty location.

5.3.11. When applying to a vacancy announcement for a position, series, or grade for which they are not registered under the PPP, preference does not apply.

5.4. Scope of the Program.

5.4.1. The Military Spouse Preference program is applied worldwide for spouses of active duty military members, including the US Coast Guard and full-time National Guard or Reserves, for certain appropriated fund positions in the excepted and competitive services. In DoD Components, applies for all GS and Federal Wage System positions.

5.4.2. Reciprocally, across DoD Component lines for positions in the same commuting area as that of the new duty station of the military member sponsor.

5.4.3. Spouses eligible for preference must be considered when positions are filled through competitive procedures. **(T-1)**

5.4.4. Placement of military spouses through this program does not entitle the spouse to relocation expenses or retained grade or pay, unless otherwise entitled.

5.5. Employment Information and Assistance. Employment information and assistance will be made available for spouses seeking employment. This includes information provided as part of a coordinated effort with the Individual Newcomer Treatment and Orientation program and the Airman and Family Readiness Center spouse employment assistance section. As a minimum, lists of currently established positions should be readily available for review by spouses as an indicator of employment possibilities or recruiting requirements. Military spouses who wish to register in the PPP must report to the local civilian personnel sections for instructions on registration and program requirements. **(T-0)**

5.6. Claim for Preference.

5.6.1. The military spouse must be advised of their entitlement to claim spouse preference for DoD established positions. **(T-0)** Military spouses must be advised of various application procedures and encouraged to submit required documents under all appropriate options. **(T-0)**

In advising the military spouse, the following information should be conveyed so there is no doubt as to the intent of the program:

5.6.2. Spouse preference shall be limited to the specific position(s) for which registered in the PPP. This limitation does not apply to positions in foreign areas. **(T-0)**

5.6.3. Spouse employment preference may be used one time for each permanent relocation of the sponsor to a new duty location not within the same commuting area.

5.6.4. Declination of a continuing position for which the spouse has requested preference will serve as reason to remove the spouse's claim for preference for DoD positions in the commuting area of the sponsor's duty location. **(T-0)**

5.6.5. Military spouse preference applies when the spouse has been determined to be among the "best qualified" for the position to which referred. "Best qualified" for preference purposes, means as qualified as the lowest ranking referable candidate.

5.6.6. Except for those military spouses reached for placement under DHA or from an OPM register, including OPM registers maintained under a Delegated Examining Unit or Specialized Examining Unit, military spouses may be considered as preference eligible only if the grade of the position to which referred is no higher than a grade previously held on a permanent basis.

5.6.7. The military spouse desiring consideration at the new AF location or other DoD activity within the area of the new AF location may claim preference through the procedures established in DoDI 1400.25, Volume 315.

5.6.7.1. Military spouses should be advised to claim preference according to personal employment eligibility as follows:

5.6.7.1.1. Current AF employed military spouse.

5.6.7.1.2. Current military spouse employed by another Federal agency.

5.6.7.1.3. Competitive service reinstatement eligibility.

5.6.7.1.4. Appointment under 5 CFR, section 315.608, *Non-competitive Appointment of Certain Former Overseas Employees*.

5.6.7.1.5. Appointment under 5 CFR, section 315.612, *Non-competitive Appointing Authority of Certain Military Spouses*.

5.6.7.1.6. Required documentation must include an up-to-date employment resume, a copy of the military sponsor's PCS orders, and documentation confirming appointment eligibility. **(T-0)**

5.6.7.2. A military spouse may also be eligible for preference without civil service status or eligibility under either of the Executive Orders based on derived preference. Derived preference is a method where the spouse of a veteran may be eligible to claim veterans' preference when the veteran is unable to use it. An available veteran may not be passed over to select a non-veteran, nor may an available military spouse preference eligible be passed over to select a non-spouse preference eligible. **(T-0)** Military spouses should be advised of the following:

5.6.7.2.1. If certification of eligibility will be from OPM, from an AF Delegated Examining Office, a Special Examining Unit, or under a DHA. The military spouse must submit proof of appointment and preference eligibility through the application process. **(T-1)** A copy of an up-to-date employment resume, a notice of rating, and the military sponsor's PCS orders confirming relocation to the new active duty station are the basic documents necessary to make the military spouse preference determination.

5.6.7.2.2. In foreign areas, the employment of spouses is governed by DoDI 1400.25, Volume 315; and DoDI 1400.25, Volume 1232, *Employment of Family Members in Foreign Areas*. Spouses may exercise preference through procedures as a competitive service eligible or an eligible under DoDI 1400.25, Volume 1232, for Schedule A appointments. The military spouse must claim preference eligibility when submitting documents for consideration under the appropriate vacancy announcement. **(T-0)** Overseas commands may establish procedures including documentation requirements to facilitate the consideration of spouse preference candidates. Spouse preference may be exercised only once per permanent relocation of the sponsor.

5.7. Preference Determinations. The personnel office makes preference determinations as follows: **(T-0)**

5.7.1. Verification of Spouse Status. Military spouses who entered into marriage prior to relocating to the sponsor's new active duty location must be identified as the spouse of a military member relocating under a statutory tour.

5.7.2. Time Period for Preference.

5.7.2.1. Military spouse preference eligibility may be used 30 calendar days before the military sponsor's reporting date to the new duty location. **Note:** Spouses seeking preference with less than six months remaining in the area of the new duty station will not be afforded military spouse preference. **(T-0)**

5.7.2.2. In foreign areas, the military spouse preference candidate may file an application for employment 30 calendar days before their anticipated arrival date; however, spouses may not receive preference until actually reporting to the foreign area personnel office.

5.7.3. Qualification Determination. The military spouse preference eligible must meet the minimum OPM qualification standards for the position and other basic eligibility criteria. The military spouse preference eligible must be in the best-qualified group for a specific position, before being referred as a military spouse preference candidate. **(T-0)** OPM General Schedule Qualifications Policies and Federal Wage System Qualifications are available at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-policies/>.

5.8. Documenting Preference. When the military spouse is employed based on spouse preference, the SF 50, *Notification of Personnel Action*, will cite the second authority code and authority according to the applicable chapter of the OPM Guide to Processing Personnel Actions for the appointment. **(T-0)**

5.9. Applying Preference.

5.9.1. Non-competitive Referrals. Non-competitive selections and placements may be made without application of military spouse preference; for example:

5.9.1.1. Reassignment, change to lower grade, transfer, appointment of a 30 percent or more Disabled Veteran, or Veterans Recruitment Appointment.

5.9.1.2. Non-competitive re-promotion, placement based on Reemployment Priority List (RPL) entitlement or ICTAP requirement, or placement to satisfy ongoing Equal Employment Opportunity programs according to [paragraph 5.3.4](#).

5.9.2. Competitive Referrals. Veterans' preference eligibles are considered first. Military spouse preference eligibles registered in the DoD PPP, will submit required documents and complete the assessment questionnaire, against vacancy announcements for consideration under Military Spouse Preference. Those who are not registered in the DoD PPP will not receive preference and will be considered under the applicable eligibility for which applying under the vacancy announcement.

5.9.3. Targeted Positions. When filling targeted positions, preference applies only to the permanent target grade of the position being filled. When spouse preference eligibility is based on prior civil service employment, the target grade for consideration cannot be any higher than the highest grade previously held in the Federal service by the spouse preference eligible (except for those applying under 5 CFR, Section 315.612).

5.9.4. Applicant Rating and Referral. The spouse preference eligible is rated in relation to competitive candidates for the position. A spouse preference eligible who ranks equal to or higher than the lowest ranking referable candidate is considered to be in the best qualified group of candidates and as such they will be referred to the selecting supervisor in advance of other competitive candidates. If the personnel office is unable to contact the spouse after reasonable documented attempts have been made to verify availability, and the spouse has matched against the vacancy via PPP, a request to code out (bypass) the match in Automated Stopper and Referral System must be submitted to the AFPC PPP Oversight Office to request permission to bypass the Military Spouse Preference match. **(T-1)** If more than one spouse preference candidate is in the best qualified group, the selecting official may select any of the spouse preference candidates based upon the number of positions being filled. **(T-1)**

5.9.5. Military Spouse Interviews. If a best qualified determination has been made prior to issuance of the referral list, interviews are not permitted, regardless of how many spouse preference eligible are on the referral certificate.

5.9.5.1. The only time a military spouse may be interviewed is when the results of the interviews are factored into the qualification determination process, prior to the issuance of a referral certificate. Since AF does not use personal interviews as an integral part of the rating and ranking process, Best Qualified spouses may not be interviewed. This policy does not apply to interviewing spouses in foreign areas. Reference Chapter 14 of the PPP Handbook. For positions in foreign locations only, the supervisor may interview spouses if more than one spouse is determined to be among the Best Qualified by AFPC.

5.10. Spouse Preference Registration and Documentation Requirements (not applicable in foreign areas).

5.10.1. The losing and gaining personnel offices are jointly responsible for managing the registration of the military spouse in the DoD PPP "S", The Military Spouse Preference Program. The military spouse may register at either the losing or gaining personnel office.

5.10.2. The following documents must be provided to and maintained by the registering personnel office and the office performing file maintenance: **(T-1)**

5.10.2.1. An employment resume.

5.10.2.2. A copy of the most recent appraisal, if applicable.

5.10.2.3. A copy of the official PCS order authorizing the preference eligible spouse to relocate with the military member sponsor (and marriage license if Military Spouse Preference not listed on PCS orders) under a statutory active duty tour.

5.10.2.4. A copy of the program “S” registration form and all documentation of any file maintenance performed on the military spouse preference candidate’s program “S” registration.

5.10.2.5. Any other documentation necessary to support a claim for military spouse preference. The registration record must be retained for a two-year period following placement or deletion as a military spouse preference eligible for that duty location assignment. **(T-1)**

Chapter 6

EMPLOYMENT OF EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS

6.1. Authority. Policies and procedures for requesting, approving and employing experts and consultants in the AF, by appointment with or without compensation are based on 5 USC, Section 3109, *Employment of Experts and Consultants; Temporary or Intermittent*.

6.2. Mission Statement.

6.2.1. The use of experts and consultants is a means of availing the AF of temporary and intermittent services of highly specialized individuals to accomplish mission requirements that cannot be obtained from in-house personnel or by other appointments.

6.2.2. When essential to the mission, services of a consultant may be obtained to secure specialized opinions or professional or technical advice that does not exist or is not available within the AF or the DoD; outside points of view to avoid a limited judgment of critical issues; knowledge of developments in industry, university, or foundation research; opinion of noted experts whose national or international prestige can contribute to the success of important projects; or citizen advisory participation in developing or implementing government programs that, by their nature or statutory provision, call for such participation. AF officials should assign a consultant only in rare and unusual cases when it is the only means to obtain information needed to formulate specific advice or recommendations.

6.2.3. Expert and consultant services may be obtained for a temporary or intermittent period. An expert possesses superior qualifications and a high degree of attainment and standing in a professional, scientific, technical, or other field. Their attainment is such that they usually are regarded as an authority or a practitioner of unusual competence and skill by other persons in the profession, occupation, or activity.

6.3. Authority to Employ by Appointment. Many appointments and reappointments must be approved by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. **(T-0)** Requests must be submitted through MAJCOM channels to SAF/AARC for consideration of approval. **(T-0)**

6.4. Conditions of Employment.

6.4.1. An appointment is limited to the specific period for which the need for the employee's services exists. It cannot extend beyond 365 calendar days (a service year) from the date of the initial appointment; however, a new appointment may be made at the expiration of 365 calendar days. An appointment initially made for less than 365 calendar days may be extended to the end of that period. **(T-0)**

6.4.2. Actual Workdays. The maximum number of workdays that may be authorized within 365 consecutive calendar days by initial appointment or reappointment is 130. If less than 130 workdays is initially authorized, additional workdays may be authorized by extending the initial appointment. Reappointment for one additional year may be authorized.

6.4.3. With Compensation. Compensation for experts and consultants cannot exceed the daily rate for the maximum payable rate of the GS-15 grade. The rate of compensation is set by the selecting official with assistance from the servicing personnel office. The rate of compensation is based on: the value and importance of the services performed; the person's experience and attainments; and the rate of compensation that may be set on an hourly or daily basis as a

precondition of employment. If a daily rate is established, the expert or consultant is paid that rate regardless of the number of hours worked during the day. If an hourly rate is established, the expert or consultant is paid only for the hours worked; however, the actual compensation paid cannot exceed the maximum authorized daily rate of the GS-15 grade. Overtime, night differential, holiday, or premium pay benefits are not authorized to be paid to experts or consultants.

6.4.4. Without Compensation. An expert or consultant may be employed without compensation. Each expert or consultant must sign a waiver of compensation to protect the Government against future claims for services rendered. The waiver must be executed before the services are rendered and is retained as a permanent record in the e-OPF. (T-1)

6.4.5. Security Requirements. An expert or consultant is subject to the investigative and clearance requirements under DoDI 5200.2, *Department of Defense Personnel Security Program*.

6.5. Concurrent Use by Other Air Force Activities. The services of an expert or consultant may be needed and used by several AF activities. One AF activity may use these services of another AF activity without making a new appointment as long as the nature of the duties performed, the compensation being paid, and the conditions of the employment are similar. In these circumstances arrangements may be made with the appointing AF activity so that the additional service is reflected in the person's appointment documents and records of service rendered, and the funds for compensation paid can be transferred between activities.

6.6. Responsibilities. The Directorate of Civilian Force Management Policy (AF/A1C) and the Directors of Manpower, Personnel, and Services (A1) at the MAJCOMs are responsible for assuring each request meets the requirements of 5 CFR, Section 304, *Expert and Consultant Appointments*.

6.7. Employment Procedures.

6.7.1. When a selecting official determines the need and propriety of using an expert or consultant's services they will submit the following documents to the servicing manpower, budget, and legal offices for determinations required by DoDD 5500.07, *Standards of Conduct*.

6.7.1.1. A DoD Form 2292, *Request for Appointment or Renewal of Appointment of Consultant or Expert*.

6.7.1.2. A detailed statement of work indicating the appointee will only be assigned the duties for which the appointment is made. The statement of work must describe the work to be accomplished in sufficient detail to determine that establishing a regular civil service position is not practical to meet the need. (T-1)

6.7.1.3. A description of the circumstances substantiating the impossibility or impracticability of obtaining equally qualified candidates to accomplish the required work through other methods such as detail, promotion, reassignment of personnel (civilian or military) within the organization or activity concerned or recruitment of someone under civil service procedures.

6.7.1.4. A resume or similar personal qualification statement, that is normally procured by the supervisor from the individual whose services have been solicited to meet the specific need of the organization requiring an expert or consultant.

6.7.1.5. A statement of employment and financial interests and other determinations required by DoD 5500.07-R, *Joint Ethics Regulation*, such as completion of an Office of Government Ethics (OGE) Form 450, *Confidential Financial Disclosure Report* or OGE Form 278, *Public Financial Disclosure Report*.

6.7.2. Upon receipt of approval to employ the expert or consultant from the offices identified in [paragraph 5.7.1](#) above, prepare a SF 52 and forward all documentation to the personnel office.

6.7.3. The personnel office will accomplish the required employment procedures to procure the expert or consultant for the position. **(T-1)**

6.8. Recording Days of Work. The selecting official will maintain a current record of the days and hours worked by each expert or consultant and provide to the personnel office when the employee terminates. **(T-1)** This is not required if payroll records provide this information.

6.9. Termination/Extension of Appointment. When the work of an expert or consultant is completed, the selecting official requests termination of the appointment using a SF 52. Offices using such services must make sure the appointee does not work more than the total number of days authorized by the appointment. Before the appointment expires, the management official determines whether to terminate the appointment or to request an extension or reappointment. Each request for reappointment must be submitted to SAF/AAR a minimum of 120 calendar days prior to expiration of the appointment. **(T-1)**

6.10. Annual Communication Requirement. 5 CFR, Part 304 requires an agency to comply with the statutory requirements of 5 USC, Section 3109 and guard against violations and inappropriate use of the appointing authority. AF/A1C will communicate this caution at least annually through electronic mail or by memorandum. **(T-1)** Public Law 102-378 amended 5 USC, Section 3109 to require each agency to report to OPM annually the number of days worked and the amount paid to each expert or consultant employed during the year. Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) will be used to generate supporting data for the management of the employment of experts and consultants program.

Chapter 7

EMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES

7.1. Authorities. This chapter implements Department of Defense Instruction 1402.01, Employment of Retired Members of the Armed Forces and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, which amended section 3326(b) of title 5, U.S. Code, by deleting the national emergency waiver exception for the appointment of retired members of the armed forces to civil service positions in or under the Department of Defense, within 180 days of retirement.

7.2. Delegation of Approval Authority. In accordance with HAF Mission Directive 1-24 and paragraph 5 of DoDI 1402.01, the authority to approve waivers to hire retired service members within 180 days of retirement is re-delegated by SAF/MR and AF/A1, through command channels, as identified below. The authority re-delegated herein cannot be further re-delegated. Senior-level commanders may choose to retain authority at a higher level.

7.2.1. For the selection of Civilian Senior Executives, to the Executive Resource Board (ERB) Case Processing Chair.

7.2.2. For the selection of GS-15/14/13 employees and all equivalents:

7.2.2.1. For COCOM and MAJCOM employees, to the owning COCOM/CV/CA or MAJCOM/CV/CA, as applicable.

7.2.2.2. For HAF-level positions, to SAF/AA.

7.2.2.3. For Direct Reporting Unit (DRU) positions, to the DRU Commander, or to the CV/CA provided he/she is at least an O-7 or equivalent.

7.2.2.4. For positions managed under the Central Salary Account, to AF/A1.

7.2.3. For the selection of GS-12 and below employees and all equivalents, and all Federal Wage System employees:

7.2.3.1. For COCOM and MAJCOM employees, to the respective owning COCOM/J1 or MAJCOM/A1, at the O-6 or civilian equivalent level.

7.2.3.2. For HAF-level positions, to SAF/AAR.

7.2.3.3. For DRU positions, to the owning DRU/A1 provided he/she is at the O-6 or civilian equivalent level. If the A1 is not of that rank, to an O-6 or civilian equivalent designated by the DRU Commander.

7.2.3.4. For positions managed under the Central Salary Account, to the Director of Personnel Operations, AFPC.

7.2.4. For the selection of Non-Appropriated Fund positions, NF-V and below and equivalent, to AFSVA/CC or CA.

7.2.5. With respect to positions described in [paragraphs 7.2.2](#) and [7.2.3](#) above, for positions that are a direct report to the designated approval authority and/or the approval authority is the selecting official, approval authority will be elevated to the next level within the chain of command.

7.3. Requests for Approval.

7.3.1. The minimum information that must be assessed and documented is contained in Enclosure 2 (E2. 1. through E2.4.3) of DoDI 1402.01. Requests must at a minimum, provide all of the following information supported by official documents. **(T-1)** Any additional documentation may provide support for the requested waiver.

7.3.1.1. Information about the retired service member.

7.3.1.1.1. The effective date (year-month-date) of the member's retirement from the Armed Forces.

7.3.1.1.2. Grade or rank at time of retirement.

7.3.1.1.2.1. Uniformed service from which retired and whether regular or non-regular.

7.3.1.1.2.1.1. A current resume completed by the proposed appointee.

7.3.1.2. Information about the position to which appointment is being considered.

7.3.1.2.1. Date (year-month-date) position established.

7.3.1.2.2. Date (year-month-date) position last occupied.

7.3.1.2.3. Whether the position was converted from military to civilian status.

7.3.1.2.4. If converted from military to civilian date (year-month-date) position converted.

7.3.1.2.5. Reason for converting the position.

7.3.1.2.6. Whether the proposed appointee was the last military occupant of the converted position.

7.3.1.2.7. A copy of the current position description.

7.3.1.2.8. Whether the position is continuing or temporary.

7.3.1.2.9. A copy of the qualification standard(s) covering the position. (Reference may be made to the applicable Office of Personnel Management Qualifications Operating Manual, when it is being applied without modification).

7.3.1.2.10. Whether efforts to fill the position have been continuous since it became vacant; if not, the reason for the delay in recruitment efforts.

7.3.1.3. Consideration of Agency Career Employees. To ensure full consideration was provided eligible career employees, the following information must be provided: **(T-0)**

7.3.1.3.1. A copy of any and all notices used to publicize the vacancy to interested career employees. **(T-0)**

7.3.1.3.2. Identify how the proposed retired military appointee is better qualified than all persons given consideration. **(T-0)** Provide a comparative analysis of the qualification of the three best qualified candidates for the position and include copies of the resume for each candidate.

- 7.3.1.3.3. A statement of certification whether the applicable placement and promotion procedures were followed. **(T-0)** If these procedures were not followed, provide full explanation behind not following them. **(T-0)**
- 7.3.1.3.4. A copy of the certificate, register, or list of eligible candidates referred to the selecting official for consideration. **(T-0)**
- 7.3.1.4. Appointment Resulting From Competitive Examining. When the proposed retired military member possesses eligibility resulting from competitive examining and has been reached for appointment, provide the following additional information: **(T-0)**
- 7.3.1.4.1. A copy of the certificate of eligible candidates on which the proposed appointee's name appears. **(T-0)** A copy of the examination announcement under which the proposed appointee filed if it is not included as part of the certificate. **(T-0)**
- 7.3.1.4.2. A copy of the request for certificate (Standard Form 39, Request for Referral of Eligibles, or equivalent form), including selective placement factors and names of nominees if selective certification or name request was involved. **(T-0)** If the retired military candidates name was requested, identify the reason(s) for using a name request. **(T-0)**
- 7.3.1.4.3. A statement as to how the proposed retired military member's experience is superior to any eligibles in the top category. **(T-0)**
- 7.3.1.5. Appointment Resulting From Other Than Competitive Examining. When it is proposed to appoint a retired member resulting from other than competitive examining, the following additional information shall be provided: **(T-0)**
- 7.3.1.5.1. The authority (Office of Personnel Management Regulation) under which the retired member will be appointed.
- 7.3.1.5.2. Recruiting efforts made to seek out applicants for the position, the methods used (specific dates and places), copies of any notices publicizing the vacancy, and any contacts with recruiting sources.
- 7.3.2. Requests must be self-explanatory and easily followed so reviewing officials can easily understand without the necessity of cross-referencing the information provided with the specific provisions of this chapter. **(T-0)**
- 7.3.3. Documentation of compliance with the Veterans Opportunity to Work Act must accompany all 180-day waiver requests. This Act requires that in order to apply for a competitive service civilian position, a military member must have an established retirement date within 120 days of his or her application for the vacancy.
- 7.3.4. The Air Force Business process/template for submitting waiver packages can be on the myPers website at: https://mypers.af.mil/app/answers/detail/a_id/33391/p/3/c/2621.

7.4. The Required Comparative Analysis.

- 7.4.1. A comparative analysis shall be part of the waiver package indicating how the selectee is better qualified over other qualified candidates. In order for a waiver of the 180-day rule to be granted, DoDI 1402.01, Employment of Retired Members of the Armed Forces, requires that the retired military member be "better qualified than all other applicants given consideration."

7.4.2. “Better qualified than all other applicants” means better qualified with respect to the experience and/or education criteria found in the Position Description and Office of Personnel Management Qualification Standards. The Position Description, along with the corresponding Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) listed in the Position Description, must be used to assess a candidate's qualifications. The OPM General Schedule Qualifications Policies and Federal Wage System Qualifications are available at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-policies/>.

7.4.3. Hiring officials will only use criteria reflected in the Position Description and/or KSAs to determine a candidate's qualifications. Experience unique to military members, such as command experience, does not make a candidate “better qualified” for civilian appointment. Similarly, serving in the same organization while in a military status does not make a candidate “better qualified” than a current civilian candidate.

7.4.4. Where two candidates, one a recently retired military member and one a current civilian have roughly equal qualifications, a 180-day waiver is inappropriate and the civilian should be selected.

7.5. Accountability and Legal Requirements.

7.5.1. Approval authorities identified in [paragraph 7.2](#) must establish accountability measures and ensure consistency in application of the exception authority.

7.5.2. All entities exercising this waiver authority must comply with all merit selection, competition, and documentation requirements of DoDI 1402.01.

7.5.3. Under no circumstances will any job offer be delayed to prevent the accomplishment of required waiver packages. Any such delay makes the appointment illegal, and any such action mandates disapproval of the proposed appointment, or cancellation of the appointment if discovered at a later date, and may also subject the hiring official to disciplinary action.

7.6. Announcement Requirement.

7.6.1. Regardless of what hiring authority is used to recruit candidates (e.g., Direct Hiring Authority, 30 Percent Disabled Veterans), public announcements are required to support the hiring and appointment of any military retiree who has not met the required 180-day waiting period.

7.6.2. Staffing specialists must either post a new announcement or use announcements that have been posted within 90 days of the vacancy to be filled.

7.7. The 180-Day Waiting Period.

7.7.1. The 180-day waiting period begins the day following the official date of the service member's retirement. A retired military member's terminal leave time does not count towards the 180 day time period.

7.7.2. The 180-day waiting period applies to active/retiring/retired members of the Armed Forces (to include Guard and Reserve retirees) and to those who have medically retired and are entitled to retired, retirement, or retainer pay.

7.7.3. The retired military selectee must have completed the required 180-day waiting period as of the date of the tentative job offer acceptance, or a waiver must be accomplished.

7.8. Maintaining Data at the Installation Level.

7.8.1. The personnel office will maintain a record of all approved or disapproved requests. Where there is no Major Command, the requesting office will maintain a record of all requests requiring higher level approval. **(T-2)** These records must be disposed of according to Records Disposition Schedule in the Air Force Records Information Management System. **(T-2)**

7.8.2. Approval requests and supporting documents are made a part of the application that was the basis for the appointment. They become a part of the employee's permanent personnel record and are filed in the Official Personnel Folder (Standard Form 66). This will require scanning and emailing the documents to Air Force Personnel Center. **(T-3)**

JOHN A. FEDRIGO
Acting Assistant Secretary,
(Manpower and Reserve Affairs)

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

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- AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 23 March 2020
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- AFI 36-130, *Civilian Career and Developmental Programs*, 27 September 2019
- AFI 36-128, *Pay Setting and Allowances*, 17 May 2019
- AFI 36-1101, *Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System*, 20 March 2019
- AFI 36-7001, *Diversity and Inclusion*, 19 February 2019
- AFMAN 34-310, *Non-appropriated Fund Personnel Program Management and Administrative Procedures*, 28 September 2011
- AFMAN 36-606, *Civilian Career Field Management and Force Development*, 14 November 2019
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DoD Priority Placement Program Handbook, November 2019

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OPM General Schedule Qualifications Policies and Federal Wage System Qualifications (Online continuously updated)

E.O. 11348, *Providing for the Further Training of Government Employees*, April 20, 1967

E.O. 12107, *Relating to the Civil Service Commission and Labor-Management in the Federal Service*, December 28, 1978

E.O. 13171, *Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government*, October 12, 2000

5 USC, Chapter 552, *Public Information; Agency Rules, Opinions, Orders, Records, and Proceedings*

5 USC, Section 1104, *Delegation of Authority for Personnel Management*

5 USC, Section 2108, *Veteran; Disabled Veteran; Preference Eligible*

5 USC, Section 2301, *Merit System Principles*

5 USC, Section 2302, *Prohibited Personnel Practices*

5 USC, Section 3109, *Employment of Experts and Consultants; Temporary or Intermittent*

5 USC, Chapter 33, *Examination, Selection, and Placement*, Sections 3309 through 3318

5 USC, Section 5305, *Special Pay Authority*

5 CFR, Part 211, *Veteran Preference*

5 CFR, Section 213.3102(u), *Appointment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, Severe Physical Disabilities, or Psychiatric Disabilities*

5 CFR, Section 304, *Expert and Consultant Appointments*

5 CFR, Section 315.608, *Non-competitive Appointment of Certain Former Overseas Employees*

5 CFR, Section 315.612, *Noncompetitive Appointment of Certain Military Spouses*

5 CFR, Section 316.702, *Excepted Positions Brought into the Competitive Service*

5 CFR, Section 330.102, *Methods of Filling Vacancies*

5 CFR, Section 330.204, *Agency Requirements and Responsibilities*

5 CFR, Section 330.707, *Exceptions to ICTAP Selection Priority*

5 CFR, Part 335, *Promotion and Internal Placement*

5 CFR, Part 337, *Examining System*

5 CFR, Part 351, *Reduction in Force*

5 CFR, Section 353.301, *Restoration Rights*

5 CFR, Part 432, *Performance Based Reduction in Grade and Removal Actions*

5 CFR, Section 536.201, *Mandatory Grade Retention*

5 CFR, Part 731, *Suitability*

5 CFR, Part 752, *Adverse Actions*

5 CFR, Part 771, *Agency Administrative Grievance System*

29 CFR, Volume 4, Section 1614, *Remedies and Relief*

Joint Travel Regulations, *Uniformed Service Members and DoD Civilian Employees*, Chapter 5, Part F, Section 0537, Paragraph 053705

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF/A1—Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel and Services

AF—Air Force

AFB—Air Force Base

AFI—Air Force Instruction

AFMAN—Air Force Manual

AFPC—Air Force Personnel Center

AFPD—Air Force Policy Directive

CFR—Code of Federal Regulations

CPS—Civilian Personnel Section

DAFMAN—Department of Air Force Manual

DCPDS—Defense Civilian Personnel Data System

DHA—Direct Hiring Authority

DoD—Department of Defense

DoDD—Department of Defense Directive

DoDEA—Department of Defense Education Activity

DoDI—Department of Defense Instruction

EHA—Expedited Hiring Authority

eOPF—Electronic Official Personnel File

E.O.—Executive Order

GS—General Schedule

HR—Human Resources

HQE—Highly Qualified Expert

HQ USAF—Headquarters United States Air Force

ICTAP—Inter-Agency Career Transition Assistance Program

JTR—Joint Travel Regulations

MAJCOM—Major Command

NAF—Non-Appropriated Fund

NGB/CF—Director, Air National Guard

OGE—Office of Government Ethics

OPM—Office of Personnel Management

PCS—Permanent Change of Station

PD—Position Description

PPP—Priority Placement Program

RIF—Reduction in Force

RPL—Reemployment Priority List

SF/S1—Chief Human Capital Officer

SAF/AA—Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force

SF—Standard Form

US—United States

USC—United States Code

WG—Wage Grade

Terms

Ability—Demonstrated competency to perform an observable behavior/activity supported by experience, education, or training and not to be confused with “potential.”

Air Force Single Staffing Tool—A standardized process involving the use of one public announcement, for evaluating candidate resumes for qualifications, and the production of one candidate referral list with resumes of qualified applicants issued to the selecting official.

Affirmative Employment Program (AEP)—Each federal agency is required to maintain a continuing affirmative employment program to promote equal opportunity and to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and policies. 29 CFR, Section 1614.102. EEOC MD-715 requires agencies to take proactive steps to ensure equal employment opportunity for all their employees and applicants for employment by regularly evaluating their employment practices to identify and eliminate barriers that hamper the advancement of any individual on the basis of race, national origin, sex or disability.

Best Qualified—Applicant has a rating assessment score of 90 or above as validated by the respective Job Analysis. This category will be used for those candidates who possess the type and quality of experience that substantially exceeds the minimum qualifications of the position, including all selective placement factors and appropriate quality ranking factor(s) as determined by the job analysis. To be Best-Qualified, the candidates are considered by the HR Office and the

subject matter expert (selecting official) as being highly proficient in all the requirements of the job and can perform effectively in the position almost immediately or with a minimum amount of training and/or orientation.

Basically Qualified—Applicant has a rating assessment score of 70-79 as validated by the respective Job Analysis.

Career Field Team—The group of career field specialists, Human Resource Specialists, and/or support personnel at the AFPC who are responsible for day-to-day operation of the Career Field Management Program(s). They conduct all Force Development processes for the career field, in compliance with AF personnel policies issued by AF/A1 and career field management policies issued by their functional leaders.

Centrally Managed Positions—Positions that are filled from an AF-wide pool of eligibles and administered by an AF career field management program. The positions are of prime importance to the AF mission and are usually filled by career field management program participants.

Certificate—A document used to refer a listing of ranked candidates, in alphabetical order, to the selecting official for consideration for a position.

Change to Lower Grade—The change of an employee to a lower grade when both the old and new positions are under the same pay system, or to a position with a lower representative rate of basic pay when the old and new positions are under different pay systems.

Commuting Area—A geographic area in which the employee is willing to bear the moving expense or pay travel costs.

Core Personnel Document—A single document that integrates the PD; performance work plan; knowledge, skills, and abilities for recruitment; and basic training competencies for a position.

Defense Civilian Personnel Data System—An automated personnel data system for civilian employees that captures and stores key position, work history, and other vital information needed to support civilian personnel management.

Delegated Examining Authority—Delegated examining authority is an authority OPM grants to agencies to fill competitive civil service jobs. Appointments made by agencies through delegated examining authority are subject to civil service laws and regulations. This is to ensure fair and open competition, recruitment from all segments of society, and selection based on the applicants' competencies or knowledge, skills, and abilities (see 5 USC, section 2301).

Developmental Opportunity Program—AF career enhancing program with objectives for providing means by which participants' capabilities are increased to their fullest extent. This program allows an employee the opportunity to enter career positions through on-the-job or formal training; and increase morale.

Direct Hire Authority—DHA is an appointing (hiring) authority that the OPM can delegate to Federal agencies for filling vacancies when a critical hiring need or severe shortage of candidates exists. DHA enables an agency to hire, after public notice is given, any qualified applicant without regard to 5 USC, Chapter 33, Examination, Selection, and Placement, Sections 3309 through 3318; 5 CFR, Part 211; or 5 CFR, Part 337. DHA expedites hiring by eliminating competitive rating and ranking, veterans' preference, and "rule of three" procedures.

Discrimination (Civilian Equal Opportunity)—An unlawful employment practice that occurs when an employer fails or refuses to hire or promote, discharges, or otherwise discriminates against any individual with respect to compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or reprisal; limits, segregates or classifies employees or applicants for employment in any way that deprives or tends to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affects his/her status as an employee because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or reprisal

Electronic Official Personnel Folder—An E-Government initiative developed for all Executive Branch federal agencies by the OPM to manage and administer the Official Personnel Folder process and to provide employees access to their individual file through a secure Internet connection.

Equal Employment Opportunity—The right of all employees and applicants for employment to be recruited, selected, work and advance in a manner that is free from unlawful discrimination because of their race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or reprisal.

Excepted Service—Positions in the federal civil service not subject to the appointment requirements of the competitive service. Exceptions to the normal, competitive requirements are authorized by law, E.O. or regulation.

Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program—A federal recruitment program targeting minority, female, and disabled individuals to establish diverse pools of applicants for referral to selecting officials.

Federal Wage System—Wage system covering employees in trades, crafts, or labor occupations, whose pay is fixed and adjusted periodically in accordance with prevailing rates.

Fully Qualified—Applicant has a rating assessment score of 80-89 as validated by the respective Job Analysis.

Grade Retention—Under circumstances outlined in 5 CFR, Section 536.201, employees are entitled to retain their higher grade when moved to lower-graded positions.

Identical Vacancy—A vacancy having the same pay plan, series, grade, PD/core document number, geographical location and organization and personnel accounting symbol/organizational structure.

In-service Placement—Includes a non-competitive action in which a position is filled with a current or former competitive service employee through promotion, reassignment, change-to-lower-grade, transfer, reinstatement, reemployment or restoration. This also includes non-competitive conversion of appointees whose Federal excepted positions are brought into the competitive service under 5 CFR, Section 316.702 and DoD/NAF employees whose positions are brought into the competitive service.

Interagency Career Placement Program (ICTAP)—Priority placement program administered by OPM. ICTAP provides for priority consideration of well-qualified displaced employees from other Federal agencies who apply for vacancies in the local commuting area and within the time frames indicated on the vacancy announcement. The employee must be determined to be well-

qualified for the position. (T-0) ICTAP is applied when filling vacancies from outside the Department.

Job Analysis/Promotion Plan—A detailed statement of work behaviors or activities (such as, duties and tasks) and worker characteristics needed for successful job performance. Valid job-related evaluation criteria that extend beyond the minimum requirements specified by the qualification standard must be used to permit meaningful ranking of eligible candidates to include appropriate best qualified factors; selective placement factors (if used); and applicable ranking factors. (T-1)

Job Analysis/Promotion Plan Template—A tool used to establish and document the tasks and competencies associated with a particular position and to identify the job-relatedness of the tasks and competencies to perform successfully in the required occupation.

Knowledge—Information possessed by a candidate and applied directly to the performance of a function.

Leave Without Pay—Temporary non-pay status and an authorized absence from duty granted upon the employee's request, or when the employee has insufficient annual leave, sick leave, or compensatory time available to cover an approved absence. The employee does not have to exhaust annual leave before requesting Leave Without Pay.

Management—The authority vested in some positions to hire, assign, promote, and transfer employees/candidates. Management officials direct the work of an organizational unit, are held accountable for the success of specific line or staff functions, monitor and evaluate the progress of the organization toward meeting goals, and make adjustments in objectives, work plans, schedules, and commitment of resources.

Merit Promotion Plan—A document that communicates the AF promotion policy with merit principles specified in 5 CFR, Part 335, *Promotion and Internal Placement*, that provides a uniform and equitable means of referral and selection for all placement actions.

Merit System Principles—(1) Recruitment should be from qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a work force from all segments of society, and selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after fair and open competition which assures that all receive equal opportunity. (2) All employees and applicants for employment should receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel management without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or handicapping condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights. (3) Equal pay should be provided for work of equal value, with appropriate consideration of both national and local rates paid by employers in the private sector, and appropriate incentives and recognition should be provided for excellence in performance. (4) All employees should maintain high standards of integrity, conduct, and concern for the public interest. (5) The Federal work force should be used efficiently and effectively. (6) Employees should be retained on the basis of the adequacy of their performance, inadequate performance should be corrected, and employees should be separated who cannot or will not improve their performance to meet required standards.

(7) Employees should be provided effective education and training in cases in which such education and training would result in better organizational and individual performance.

(8) Employees should be—(A) protected against arbitrary action, personal favoritism, or coercion

for partisan political purposes, and (B) prohibited from using their official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for election. (9) Employees should be protected against reprisal for the lawful disclosure of information which the employees reasonably believe evidences—(A) a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or (B) mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety. **(T-0)** See 5 USC, Section 2301, *Merit System Principles*.

Notice of Results—The Notice of Record identifies the status of the applicant's record to the effect that they are qualified and referred, qualified but not within reach for referral, or not qualified/eligible based upon specific reasons (for example: lack of specialized experience

Official Personnel Folder—The official repository of documents resulting from personnel actions during an employee's federal civilian service employment.

Operating Location—A large civilian center located at each of the following installations: Robins Air Force Base (AFB), GA; Tinker AFB, OK; Hill AFB, UT; Wright-Patterson AFB, OH; and HQ USAF, Washington, DC. These locations are responsible for issuing job referral certificates, extending job offers, and providing staffing advice to managers.

Operating Manual for Qualifications Standards for GS Positions—The official manual issued by the OPM that documents qualification requirements for positions in the GS.

Office of Personnel Management Register—A list of candidates compiled in order of their relative standing for referral to federal jobs, after having been determined qualified under the appropriate OPM qualification standard. They are referred to an agency on an OPM Certificate for a given occupational series.

Pathways Programs—Programs that offer clear paths to Federal internships for students from high school through post-graduate school and to careers for recent graduates, and provide meaningful training and career development opportunities for individuals who are at the beginning of their Federal career. The AF programs include: Pathways Internship program, Pathways Summer Internship program, Recent Graduates program and the Presidential Management Fellows program.

Pay Retention—Pay retention is provided to employees when the grade retention period ends or under other circumstances when an employee's pay would otherwise be reduced.

Pay System—The designated name of a pay plan such as the GS or Federal Wage System, etc., under which an employee is paid.

Priority Placement Program—A DoD-wide placement system used to promote the stability of employment for civilian employees affected by changing manpower requirements and to provide maximum opportunity for placement in other DoD positions. Seeks to minimize the adverse effects on employees caused by actions required for the effective management of the DoD, such as RIF, base closures, consolidations, realignments, position classification decisions, overseas rotations and transfers of function.

Promotion—The change of an employee to a position at a higher grade level when both the old and new positions are under the GS or under the same WG grade schedule, or to a position with a higher rate of basic pay when both the old and new positions are under different pay systems.

Qualified Candidates—Those who meet established qualification requirements for the position to be filled.

Ranking Factors—Job-related evaluation criteria that go beyond the minimum requirements specified by the basic qualification standard used to permit meaningful ranking of eligible candidates. Factors to be considered include knowledge, skills, and abilities and personal characteristics that are the best predictors of future job success.

Reassignment—The movement of an employee from one position to another at the same grade level.

Reduction-in-Force—A personnel action that may be required due to lack of work or funds, changes resulting from reorganization, downward reclassification of a position, or the need to make room for an employee with reemployment/restoration rights. Involves releasing an employee from his/her competitive level but does not necessarily result in separation or downgrading.

Reemployment Priority List—Career and career-conditional employees, separated by RIF who are identified, in priority order, for reemployment to competitive positions in the agency within the commuting area where the separations occurred.

Restoration Rights—Employees who enter military service or sustain a compensable job-related injury or disability, are entitled to be restored to the same or higher employment status held prior to their absence.

Rule of Three—When selecting from a certificate of eligibles, an appointing officer must, with sole reference to merit and fitness, make a selection for the first vacancy from the highest three eligibles available for appointment on the certificate.

Screening Factors—Initial position requirements against which means competitors are evaluated; normally, these are mandatory requirements, the absence of which the candidate cannot successfully perform in the position.

Skill—Proficiency, facility, or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training or experience

Special Examining Unit—The delegation of 5 USC, Chapter 11, Section 1104, authorizing recruiting, examining, establishing competitor inventory, and issuing certificates of eligible candidates for all ART positions in the GS and WG series nationwide.

Subject Matter Expert—Individual(s) knowledgeable in the detailed requirements of a job; usually the supervisor of the work being accomplished in the position or past supervisor or past incumbent(s) of the position(s) or very similar position(s).

Transfer—Movement of an employee between agencies without a break in service.