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Reference Manual
for
New Entry Foreign Service Officers

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 459

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Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers

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Reference Manual for New Entry Foreign Service Officers

This Reference Manual provides important information for new employees entering USAID as Foreign Service Career Candidates. It provides detailed information on policies and procedures related to training, assignments, performance assessment, and promotion. It is designed for New Entry Junior Officers (JOs) and Mid-level Officers (MLs), as well as for individuals in Washington and USAID Missions who supervise, mentor, and train the new employees. The manual will be updated frequently as policies and procedures evolve to reflect current workforce needs.

Additional information can be found on the Office of Human Resources (OHR) Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm.

I. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities described below apply to both JOs and MLs.

A. OHR Career Candidate Coordinator

The Chief, Foreign Service Personnel, Special Programs Division acts as the Agency Career Candidate Coordinator and is responsible for organizing and administering the planning, recruiting, hiring, assigning, training, and coaching related to Foreign Service (FS) attrition hiring.

B. Supervisors

Each new employee is assigned a **Supervisor of Record.** The Supervisor of Record is responsible for:

1. **Office Support:** Ensuring that the assigned new employee has a work station, telephone, and computer **before** he or she completes orientation. When possible, new employees should be situated in close proximity to their supervisors. The supervisor is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Administrative Management Services (AMS) staff in his or her Bureau arranges this logistical support.

2. **Time & Attendance:** Introducing the new employee to the Time & Attendance (WebTA) system and to the office's timekeeper. The supervisor must ensure that the new employee is transferred from the OHR timekeeper to the office's timekeeper at the beginning of the first full pay period after orientation.

3. **Individual Development Plan (IDP):** Assisting the new employee in the formulation of an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The new employee and supervisor work closely with the assigned Coach and Backstop (BS) Coordinator to complete the IDP. Mission involvement in providing input

and feedback on the IDP is encouraged as early as possible. (See section II.B below for discussion of IDPs.)

4. **On-the-job Training:** Assigning work to the new employee. Tasks should contribute to the work of the Agency and help both JOs and MLs better understand how the Agency functions internally and with our partners. Work should include substantive matters such as writing briefings or contributing to plans, projects, budget preparation, program documentation, and other Agency functions.

5. **Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) Work Plan:** Putting in place the AEF with the Career Candidate within 45 calendar days of the conclusion of the employee's orientation class. The AEF must include the new employee's role in the organization, work objectives, and performance measures. (See JO Evaluation in **Section IV** and ML Evaluation in **Section V**)

6. **Evaluation:** Providing performance feedback to the new employee on a regular basis and preparing the formal AEF evaluation at the mid-point and end of the rating cycle. When the new employee transfers to an overseas assignment, the Supervisor of Record sends the appropriate evaluation form to the Supervisor of Record at post. (See JO Evaluation in **Section IV** and ML Evaluation in **Section V**)

7. **Orientation to USAID:** Helping the Career Candidate build professional networks and receive broad Agency exposure. This includes ensuring that the new employee arranges appropriate rotations and encouraging participation in a range of training opportunities (for example, technical briefings, brown bag sessions, and formal training courses).

8. **Delegating supervision whenever necessary:** Arranging for and preparing someone to take over the role of supervisor when on temporary duty or leave.

Depending on the length of stay in Washington and the needs of the Bureau or Independent Office to which assigned, the new employee may also have one or more **Rotation Supervisors.** The Rotation Supervisor is responsible for:

1. **Rotation Memo:** Working with the Supervisor of Record and the new employee to complete a memo that defines a scope of work for the rotation assignment; addresses specific skills or competency gaps in the IDP; records the supervisor/supervisee relationship; and specifies the timing of the rotation.

2. **Evaluation:** Evaluating the performance of the Career Candidate by completing a Rotation Evaluation Memorandum or, if the rotation exceeds 30 days, an **Appraisal Input Form (AIF), form a400-1B**.

C. Backstop Coordinators

Senior management for each Backstop (BS) designates an experienced career Foreign Service Officer (FSO) to serve as BS Coordinator. The BS Coordinator works with OHR and other B/IOs to provide support for Career Candidate recruitment, hiring, supervision, orientation, and guidance. New employees are informed of their BS Coordinators during orientation. BS Coordinators are responsible for:

1. Representing and supporting the Backstop in a variety of roles to recruit, select, and orient the new employees for their assignments. This includes:
   - Coordinating the preparation of technical selection materials (case studies, interview questions, etc.);
   - Ensuring appropriate Technical Selection Panel participation;
   - Participating in orientation sessions, as appropriate; and
   - Participating in workforce planning and first assignment meetings.
2. Ensuring that supervisors are assigned for all incoming new employees.
3. Coordinating supervisors' participation in the new employee orientation.
4. Providing support, guidance, and quality control to supervisors and new employees in developing Individual Development Plans (IDPs).
5. Working with the new employees' supervisors, various Bureau personnel, and Administrative Management Services (AMS) staff to ensure that new employees have necessary logistical support (such as work stations, computers, and telephones). BS Coordinators can be called upon as needed to make arrangements for this support.
6. Working with other technical employees to develop and implement necessary backstop training for the new employees.

E. Coaches

The Office of Human Resources, Foreign Service Personnel Division, Special Programs team (OHR/FSP/SP) Specialist assigns a coach to each new Career Candidate (JO and ML). The coach begins meeting with the new employee during orientation. Coaches are experienced Foreign Service Officers (generally retired FSOs) who advise new employees as they prepare for their directed assignments and navigate through the

USAID culture. Coaches work with the new employees' supervisors and others to ready the new hires for their Foreign Service careers. Coaches are responsible for:

1. Supporting outreach and recruitment efforts.

2. Attending designated orientation classes to help new employees acclimate to USAID.

3. Reviewing the USAID promotion and tenure precepts with each newly hired employee early in the orientation so that he or she is familiar with FSO requirements.

4. Assisting their assigned new employees in assessing their individual skills and competencies as they develop their IDPs. (Coaches are also a good source of information and guidance for supervisors regarding the IDP process.)

5. Assisting their assigned JOs to plan rotations and training courses in Washington.

6. Providing their assigned new employees with guidance on how to navigate and be successful in the USAID culture.

F. Language Training Coordinator advises Career Candidates on language studies and requirements and arranges language testing and training.

G. Office of Human Resources (OHR) Staffing Specialists

Staffing Specialists located in two branches of OHR support new employees on personnel matters. These OHR Staffing Specialists are in the Foreign Service Personnel Division in the Special Programs team (OHR/FSP/SP) and in the Foreign Service Staffing Branch (OHR/FSP/FSS).

During orientation, the specialist on the Foreign Service Personnel Division Special Programs Team provides the staffing support. After the new employee completes orientation and is notified of his or her first overseas assignment, a Staffing Specialist from the Foreign Service Staffing Branch supports the new employee's transfer to post.

Before and during the new employee's orientation, the OHR/FSP/SP Specialist is responsible for the following staff support functions:

1. Serving as the initial point of contact on personnel matters related to becoming a USAID employee;

2. Setting salaries within the range of the position applied for (based on the applicant's qualifications, education; relevant experience as defined in the

vacancy announcements for JO positions in each backstop, salary history and USAID's standard required procedures);

3. Extending the job offer;

4. Acting as point of contact for all administrative management (for example, matters regarding insurance, residency, and tax withholding).

5. Entering the new employee's data into the payroll (National Finance Center) and WebTA systems; and

6. Reviewing and deciding on prior service credit for leave accrual.

A list of OHR/FSP/SP Specialists can be found here: http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/upload/fs_hr_specialist_list.pdf.

Once the employee has received an overseas assignment, OHR assigns a Staffing Specialist from the Foreign Service Staffing Branch to support the new employee's transfer to his or her first overseas assignment. The OHR/FSP/FSS Specialist is assigned to the employee based on the country of assignment. After the new employee completes orientation and is notified of the Mission where he or she is assigned, the OHR/FSP/FSS Specialist who covers that country then becomes the point of contact for all administrative processing and logistical arrangements. The FSS Specialist has a Human Resources (HR) assistant who may be contacted in the absence of the specialist.

The OHR/FSP/FSS Specialist is responsible for the following staff support functions:

1. Sending out the official assignment cable to notify the new employee's Mission of the posting.

2. Counseling the new employee with regard to shipment of effects, passports, visas, allowances and benefits, travel authorization preparation and processing, medical clearance update, immunizations, and mandatory training.

3. Providing human resource advice and professional recommendations to FS employees throughout their careers.

The names and contact information for FSS Specialists can be found here: http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/services_a-z.cfm.

H. OHR Assignment and Performance Counselors (APCs)

OHR Assignment and Performance Counselors (APCs) are FSOs who provide counseling and guidance to other FSOs on career development. The APCs are

assigned responsibility for specific backstops. The FSS specialist advises each new employee of his or her APC. The names and contact information for the APCs can be found here: http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/services_a-z.cfm.

APCs are responsible for:

1. Coordinating and chairing, as required, the Technical Selection Panels for Career Candidate selection.

2. Providing new employees with information and direction concerning USAID Foreign Service policy directives and required procedures, including

   - Assignments;
   - Conduct and performance issues (employee and supervisor); and
   - Exceptions to Agency policy, tenure, promotion, and performance appraisals.

I. Agency Staff Care Program Team

The Staff Care Program Team provides a range of services to assist employees in navigating work place issues, including:

- Employee assistance and resiliency services,
- One-on-one and/or group supervisory,
- Managerial and executive coaching sessions,
- A child care subsidy and provider referral program, and
- Activities to enhance work-life balance and wellness.

J. USAID Missions

OHR recommends that USAID Missions have a designated USAID Mission Coordinator for new Career Candidates.

The Mission Director and Mission staff members (often the Coordinator, if there is one) are responsible for:

1. Making regular assessments of the Mission's short and long-term staffing needs,

2. Assigning USAID Mission supervisors and mentors during the new employee's overseas assignment to carry out the responsibilities outlined in I.B. above.

3. Performing tasks necessary for establishing new employees in their assignment country, including helping them and their eligible family members settle into housing (when required), and submitting a budget request to USAID/W for their overseas support costs.

4. Providing professional development opportunities for new employees, as appropriate, in keeping with Mission policies.

Some USAID Missions have developed Missions Orders, describing the onboarding process for new employees.

II. USAID/Washington-Based Activities

All new employees begin their employment with an orientation course (generally four or five weeks), followed by an assignment in their home Bureau, and language training as necessary (see **Section II.C.5** for language training requirements). New Career Candidates remain in USAID/W until they complete language training and have received assignments at the end of each bidding cycle. The home office assignment may include additional training, depending on the length of the employee's stay in Washington, and office needs.

A. Orientation

When possible, new Career Candidates join USAID in classes that provide an opportunity to bond and network as a group. During orientation, the Agency gives each new employee class a broad overview of Agency operations and programs that serves as the foundation for their upcoming training. Activities include:

- Swearing-in (induction) and benefits processing,
- Presentations on the USAID organizational structure, policies, programs, and operational issues;
- The Individual Development Plan;
- The Foreign Assistance Framework;
- The Agency's approach to strategic planning, programming, and performance accountability; and
- A seminar on interpersonal skills and business practices.

Orientation concludes with graduation and transition to home offices.

B. Individual Development Plans

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a written plan that lays out a two-year course of action so that each Career Candidate can develop or enhance essential skills to succeed as a journeyman FSO in their backstop. As per ADS 458.3.3.5, USAID requires that employees and supervisors develop an IDP and update it annually. The IDP is not an official OHR document and will not be part of the employee's official file; it is intended primarily for the employee's own use in guiding and tracking his or her development.

Toward the end of orientation, each new employee evaluates his or her past experience and training against a list of "competencies" established at the appropriate grade level (FS 06-05 for JOs and FS 03-02 for MLs). These competencies constitute the important skills that new employees should possess or otherwise acquire through practical experiences during training. The competencies relate to the Foreign Service (FS) Skills Matrix against which USAID evaluates FS employees. (See USAID form a461-4) The assessment of the new employee's existing skills, in relation to the Skills Matrix, shapes each employee's IDP. A listing of competencies required for each backstop can be found at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/university/upload/2013_Consolidated_CS_FS_FSN_Competency_Catalog.pdf.

Shortly after orientation has concluded, each new employee works with his or her supervisor and coach to develop an IDP that addresses competency gaps – areas that need to be developed or strengthened. The IDP should include Agency core skills and occupational/technical field (backstop)-specific training, either required or recommended. The initial draft of the IDP should be completed within four weeks after orientation ends. See the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm for samples and additional guidance on writing the IDP.

The supervisor's job is to help new employees assess their competencies and identify what they must do to develop them against the Skill areas listed in the FS Skills Matrix. The IDP is an evolving document dependent on the identified training needs and the intersection of training opportunities to meet those needs.

C. Training

All new employee training (on-the-job, formal, and e-training) should be focused on gaining proficiency in technical and Agency core skill sets required for the Career Candidates to be successful in their specific skill category (backstop).

1. Formal Training, Including Technical and Online Training

OHR is responsible for managing all core training requirements for career candidate employees. The responsible B/IOs manage backstop-specific technical training. Each employee is responsible for preparing the necessary enrollment documents for all training. New employees should consult their supervisors and AMS staff in their home office for information on the process for completing and approving training requests.

OHR has identified a curriculum of required and recommended courses for new employees. The current list of required courses with instructions for enrolling can be found on the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm.

Training plans are meant to meet the needs of the new employee and the assigned Mission.

Agency core courses and many Bureau technical courses can be found at the USAID University intranet at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/university/index.cfm. Note: Users need a password to log in to the USAID University. Instructions for obtaining a password and logging in are found at the bottom of the "Welcome to USAID University" link on the home page.

A link to course schedules can also be found on the USAID University homepage at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/university/courseSchedules.cfm. This information is updated on a regular basis.

When registering for courses at USAID University, note that supervisors must give online approval before registrants can take a course. For registration for overseas regional course offerings, the new employee must complete the online registration **no later than 45 calendar days prior to the course start date** to allow for finalization of arrangements, including shipment of course materials.

With respect to non-language, backstop-specific training, new employees should work with their supervisors, Backstop Coordinators, and Bureau technical offices to identify training. The current list of required and recommended training for all backstops may be found on the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm.

2. Language Training

USAID's Foreign Language Program strengthens the ability of employees to implement USAID's programs as mandated by Congress. The Agency DLI/Career Candidate Coordinator and respective Bureaus make every effort to ensure that Career Candidates meet language requirements prior to leaving for post.

The USAID Foreign Language Program objectives aim to ensure that:

a. Career candidate employees meet language requirements for tenure; and

b. Overseas Language Designated Positions (LDPs) are staffed with employees who meet position language requirements.

If OHR/FSP determines that a Career Candidate does not already meet one of these objectives, the employee must complete foreign language training prior to departing for the initial assignment. Language training is provided at the **Foreign Service Institute** or a USAID-contracted training facility. Language training for tenure for all Foreign Service Career Candidates should **not** be postponed, curtailed, or interrupted. Thus, USAID expects that the new employee will only take leave before language training begins or after language training has been completed, not during.

Should an exceptional or emergency circumstance occur during language training, a request for leave may be granted. The employee must obtain the approval of his or her supervisor/leave approving official, following the procedures in **ADS 480, Leave**. The Chief, OHR/FSP, must also approve.

Generally, the determination of which language is to be studied or whether a Career Candidate requires language training involves multiple factors:

a. Language designation of positions at post;

b. Languages the Career Candidate previously studied;

c. Self-Assessment of proficiency in languages; and

d. Language spoken in the country to which assigned.

To meet language tenure requirements, Career Candidates must achieve an FSI-tested proficiency of S-3/R-3 for French, Spanish, or Portuguese. For tenure qualification for other languages on USAID's **language tenure list**, Career Candidates must achieve an FSI-tested proficiency of S-2/R-1 or S-2/R-0, depending on the language. The proficiency requirements for Language Designated Positions are provided on the Major Listing of Positions and its Updates during the Foreign Service Assignment Cycle.

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

OHR/FSP staff will register employees for training and testing in a USAID-useful language until each employee:

a. Achieves the tenure requirement; or

b. Achieves the required level of proficiency in the designated language; or

c. Exhausts the allotted training time (**not to exceed 40 weeks**).

OHR/FSP staff schedule and provide funding for training in Washington. Employees must submit online an **SF-182, Request, Authority, and Certification of Training**. Please note that OHR/FSP schedules tests at FSI at least 3 weeks before a test date. Since the test schedule is normally full at FSI, a testing team will only wait 10 minutes past the scheduled time for an examinee to arrive. Employees must notify OHR/FSP of an appointment cancellation or an appointment that needs to be changed enough in advance to enable OHR/FSP to give FSI 24 hours' notice of the requested change; otherwise, USAID will be charged for the testing appointment.

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

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

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

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

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

Employees who have not achieved language proficiency for tenure cannot proceed to post without Mission approval and signature on the MOA. See http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm#CP_JUMP_32897 for a sample Language Training Policy MOA. The original of the MOA is retained by the FS Staffing Specialist with copy to the employee, the Mission, and the employee's work file. (Note that USAID's policy is that Candidates not go to post without having achieved language proficiency for tenure; Candidates should be carefully advised of the implications of a decision to go to post without the required language proficiency.)

On an exceptional basis, OHR/FSP may authorize an employee an additional amount of USAID/W funded language training (beyond the maximum of 40 weeks) for a documented compelling personal or compassionate reason or for a critical foreign policy need of the Agency. In such a circumstance (such as serious illness of the employee or immediate family member), the employee must notify his or her supervisor and the Chief, OHR/FSP, in writing if possible, of the emergency and need for additional language training. When the employee is ready to resume training, he or she must obtain from FSI or the USAID-contracted language facility, as appropriate, an estimate of the amount of additional time necessary to meet the language requirement. The employee then submits the estimate along with documentation of the reason for the request to the Chief,OHR/FSP, for approval.

Lastly, FS employees may receive language incentive payments if they have a current (within the last five years) FSI-tested proficiency of S-3/R-3 or higher in an incentive language of the post to which they are assigned. The current list of USAID Incentive Languages is available at http://notices.usaid.gov/notice/22376.

D. Assignments

OHR assigns newly-hired officers to vacant overseas positions that have not been filled after Career and Career-Candidate FSOs, already on board, have had sufficient opportunity to bid on them. OHR directs the first overseas tours for both JOs and MLs–that is, OHR chooses where to place the new hires based on the Agency's needs and, to the extent possible, the employee's professional experience, language capability, and personal needs. In certain rare cases, when there is an emergency requirement or a need in a Critical Priority Country (CPC), the Agency may place a newly-hired ML in an overseas position at any time. The Agency can place MLs in positions in non-CPC

countries only after the positions have been advertised in USAID' s Open Assignment Cycle system (the Major Listing and its subsequent Updates) and not filled by eligible bidders during the Assignment Cycle. MLs may be placed in these positions after OHR certifies that the positions have not been bid on or the Selecting Officials have justified, in writing, why no eligible bidders interested in the positions were qualified.

USAID appoints all Career Candidates to positions in a specific backstop. Since these positions are filled competitively in response to the Agency's needs in the technical area, Career Candidates must remain in the backstop in which they were hired until:

(1) They obtain tenure; or

(2) Their backstop is changed at the Agency's option (i.e., on rare occasions when management needs dictate, the Agency may assign a Career Candidate to a new backstop, or a Career Candidate who has been working on an assignment outside his or her backstop requests and receives OHR's approval to be assigned to that backstop.)

This requirement, to remain in the hiring backstop, maintains the integrity of the competitive selection process. It also maintains workforce planning requirements and ensures that Career Candidates gain sufficient experience for tenure.

1. Eligible Family Members (EFMs) and Members of Household (MOHs)

Information on Eligible Family Members can be found in the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) at 3 FAM 7121. Information on Members of Household can be found at 3 FAM 4180 and also at 12 FAM 442. See also ADS 436, Foreign Service Assignments and Tours of Duty, and Agency Notice 1070 at http://iapp1.usaid.gov/notices/notDetail.cfm?msgid=19433&currmo=10&curryr=2010&prevnext=no for information on assignment of Foreign Service couples (including both married and same-sex domestic partners).

3 FAM 4180 defines MOHs as "those persons who have accompanied or join an employee assigned abroad and who the employee has declared to the Chief of Mission are part of his or her household, who will reside at post with the employee, and who are other than legitimate domestic staff. MOHs do not include those persons who are 'family members' or 'eligible family members' within the meaning of the FAM." For additional information, see the MOH Resource Guide on the OHR Web site at **http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm**.

E. Departing for Post

New employees should communicate as closely as possible with their post of assignment prior to departure. Typically, the Executive Officer or Mission DLI/New

Entry FSO Coordinator at a post initiates contact with newly assigned staff to share critical information on

- Travel to post,
- Housing,
- Schooling for dependent children,
- Spousal employment opportunities, and
- Medical services and other relevant information.

If this does not happen, the new employee should initiate contact. New employees should also communicate with their supervisor at post to begin discussing their MOA, as noted in paragraph II.D.4.

PRIOR TO TRAVEL, THE NEW EMPLOYEE MUST ALLOW SUFFICIENT TIME TO UNDERTAKE AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STEPS NECESSARY FOR OBTAINING A TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION:

1. Once the country of assignment is determined, the new employee meets with his or her OHR staffer in the Foreign Service Personnel Division to discuss the timeline for departure to post.

The staffer will prepare the travel authorization (TA) and explain the range of benefits and allowances that are available when a Foreign Service employee transfers to an overseas assignment.

A TA is the official document that funds

- The travel to post,
- Diplomatic passports,
- Visas,
- Storage of household goods,
- Shipment of air and sea freight, and
- A personal vehicle for the posting.

OHR staffers usually prepare TAs approximately four to six weeks prior to departure.

2. OHR prepares TAs contingent on written Mission approval and assurance of funds availability to cover the travel and shipping arrangements. **The new employee should verify with the Mission that it has sent the required approval to OHR.**

3. After preparing the TA, the OHR staffer sends it to the USAID Travel Office for processing.

4. The new employee may begin making travel and shipping arrangements even while awaiting issuance of the TA. The new employee should contact USAID's contracted travel management center (TMC) to make tentative reservations. (Tickets will not be issued until the contracted TMC receives the approved TA – see #6 below). Information about booking travel may be found on the USAID intranet at: http://iapp1.usaid.gov/notices/notDetail.cfm?msgID=18243&currmo=3&curryr=2010&prevnext=no. For more information about arranging official travel see the guide "Arranging Official Travel and Hotel" on the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm.

5. New employees and any eligible U.S. citizen family members listed on the employee's travel orders must have a diplomatic passport. The new employee may want to initiate the process to obtain the diplomatic passport immediately upon receiving his or her post assignment. (See the **Classified VPS Web site** for guidance on obtaining diplomatic passports.) The passport process can take four to six weeks for routine requests (possibly longer during the heavy transfer season between May and October).

The employee must return the completed application(s) for processing by Classified Visa and Passport Services in the USAID Travel Management Center, located in room C1-7 on the concourse level of the Ronald Reagan Building. The transaction fee for passports and visas is a separate authorization included on the assignment-to-post TA.

Note: the new employee may be required to pay upfront for the cost of the passport (and visas, if there is a concern about the time required to obtain visas) and request reimbursement on the travel voucher if the TA will not be ready in sufficient time.

6. New employees must pick up the completed TA from their OHR staffer and deliver it to the USAID Travel Agent. The completed TA allows the USAID Travel Agent to issue the tickets.

7. New employees must work with the Office of Management Services/Travel and Transportation Division (M/MS/TTD) to arrange for packing of their household goods, shipping them to post, and storage of those goods left in the U.S.

The Travel Office will assign a moving contractor for these tasks and can provide guidance for employees on specific transportation related questions. A pack-out can be scheduled without a Travel Authorization (TA); however, the final TA must be provided **five days** prior to the actual pack-out date.

The employee is responsible for contacting and making the arrangements with the moving contractor. During the summer season (May 1st to September 30th),

employees need to make pack-out arrangements six to eight weeks in advance of their departure date.

Typically, employees pack one to two weeks prior to actual departure. USAID authorizes a per diem for employees and family members to cover up to 10 days of temporary lodging prior to departure to accommodate them once their household goods are packed.

Note that the authorized funding through the TA for lodging must be in place, and the packer must have all the necessary documents issued by the Travel Office to pack, store, and ship household goods.

Read the guide, "It's Your Move," prior to packing! The guide is available on the OHR Web site at **http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm**. **Please note that this booklet was created for Department of State employees; therefore, some of the information it contains, particularly on shipping allowances and transit times, does not apply to USAID employees.** Questions on Transportation Regulations should be referred to the respective USAID Transportation Specialist for further guidance/clarification.

8. The new employee should also contact his or her Transportation Specialist in M/MS/TTD to assist in scheduling the move. The names and contact information for USAID's Transportation Specialists can be found at **http://inside.usaid.gov/M/MS/TTD/whoswhointt.htm. Contact should be made at least four to five weeks before departure (six to eight weeks if the departure is between May 1 and September 30)**.

In most instances, employees may ship one personal vehicle to post as authorized by the TA. The new employee will need to coordinate arrangements with the Travel and Transportation Division to have the vehicle shipped to post.

9. Employees and dependents must have a valid medical clearance in order to depart for post. Employees should initiate the process for obtaining medical clearance for themselves and their families a full four months (at a minimum) before departing for post. Employees should have the State Department Medical Unit confirm their medical clearance and forward it to their OHR specialist. Answers to frequently asked questions about medical clearance can be found at **http://careers.state.gov/faqs/faqs-wiki?func=byKeyword;keyword=Medical%20Clearance**.

A comprehensive checklist of all the steps to be completed before leaving for post can be found at the "Getting to Post" guide on the OHR Web site at **http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm**.

III. Career Candidate Junior Officer (JO) Evaluation and Administrative Promotion

(The following guidelines do **not** apply to Career Candidate MLs, who fall under the regular Foreign Service Evaluation System as discussed in Section V.)

During their training period, Career Candidate JOs are eligible for administrative promotion up to level FS-04. Administrative promotion and assignment to the first non-directed posting are contingent on meeting all the requirements of the FS Career Candidate Program, including most importantly, meeting all the skill standards of the JO's FS class, as well as all Work Objectives and Performance Measures. Therefore, performance appraisal is an important factor in new employees' success in USAID. JOs' performance appraisal is accomplished through an administrative review based on the Agency's AEF process (see Section IV.E below).

The JOs' administrative review and promotion cycles are not linked to the career Foreign Service performance evaluation cycle, but are based on the Entry on Duty (EOD) date of their class. Consequently, each class will be on a different administrative review and promotion cycle. The different class cycles with the AEF due dates for both the administrative review cycles and regular FS cycles are listed on the OHR Web site at **http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm**.

OHR management will conduct an initial administrative review of the Junior Officer 11 months following the EOD date of the class so that a promotion (from FS-06 to FS-05 or FS-05 to FS-04) can be effective after 12 months in grade. The promotion is based on a determination that the DLI JO has met all work objectives and the skill standards of his or her FS class.

Management will conduct the second review 12 months after the initial review (23 months following the EOD date of the class) so that a second promotion (from FS-05 to FS-04) can be effective after 12 months in grade and 24 months after EOD for those JOs who entered on duty at FS-06 and have a satisfactory rating.

JOs who entered on duty at FS-05 and are promoted to FS-04 after the first administrative review switch to the normal April through March Foreign Service Performance Evaluation System (the same process as for ML promotions – see **ADS 461** and **ADS 463**). Under this system, the annual Foreign Service Performance Boards (convened each summer) evaluate the performance of all eligible career and career candidate FSOs and make promotion determinations. FS employees at grades FS-04 or above must meet promotion eligibility requirements by March 31st of the rating cycle for which the Performance Boards are convened.

Thus, assuming satisfactory performance appraisals and entry on duty at the FS-06 level, a Career Candidate JO would receive two administrative promotions (with corresponding grade/salary increases) in 24 months.

These promotions are not automatic; the JO must have met all the skill standards for his or her class and must have met all Work Objectives in order to receive an administrative promotion. (See further discussion of promotion criteria in the sections G and H, below.)

A. Work Objectives and Performance Measures

Work Objectives (WOs), Performance Measures (PMs), the Foreign Service Skills Matrix (mandatory AID Form 461-4), and the Foreign Service Skills Feedback Worksheet (mandatory AID Form 461-3) serve as the basis for evaluating a Foreign Service Officer's performance. Given the focus of time spent in USAID/W initially and the fact that most of this period is spent on familiarization with the Agency (to the extent needed) and on-the-job training, new JOs should have a training-related WO for the first performance cycle (from EOD through month 11 after EOD). Below is an example of a training-related WO with associated PMs.

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

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

The new employee should work with his or her USAID/W supervisor to insert WOs and PMs into Section 5 of his or her first Annual Evaluation Form (AEF). The AEF must also include Section 1 and Section 4, Role in the Organization. The AEF form must be completed within the first 45 calendar days following orientation. A sample JO initial AEF can be found on the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm.

The supervisor at post should establish Mission-specific WOs and PMs within 45 calendar days following the JO's arrival.

WOs and PMs should be outcome-focused and reflect the major competency requirements identified in the IDP (though the IDP cannot be included as a WO). Each WO will have corresponding PMs that are objective, measurable standards that the Agency expects the JO to meet. These are normally written in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness. There must be no more than three WOs at any one time, and no more than two corresponding PMs for each WO.

The Agency considers the development, maintenance, and accomplishment of the overall IDP as a JO's continuing responsibility. WOs and PMs should be directly tied to tasks and rotations carried out in both USAID/W and in Missions. While foreign

language proficiency acquisition does not qualify as a WO, it is appropriate to include time spent in language training under the "Role in the Organization" section of the AEF.

B. Appraisal Input Form (AIF)

The Rating Official uses an Appraisal Input Form (AIF) when there is an official change of Supervisor of Record for an employee within an evaluation period. The Rating Official uses an AIF whether this change is for a limited time period for a rotation or a permanent change of supervisor. (When required, the AIF is also used by current supervisors to document an employee's performance at the end of the 60-day notification period for corrective actions – see ADS 450.3.5.1)

The AIF conforms to the performance plan in the AEF and documents the employee's performance during the rating cycle for periods lasting 30 days or more, including rotations. The Rating Official forwards the AIF, with optional employee response, to the employee's next Rating Official (or Administrative Officer or Executive Officer). The next Rating Official will consider and incorporate AIF information into the final AEF at the end of the rating cycle.

New employees whose AEFs are due shortly after arrival at post should ensure that their Supervisor of Record in USAID/W sends a completed Appraisal Input Form and any rotation memos to the Mission supervisor for use in preparing the AEF.

C. Rotation Memoranda

When possible, the new Career Candidate's supervisor and home office leaders should encourage the employee to spend time at other Agency offices to learn about their sectors and operations. These rotations should align with the IDP and enable the new employee to gain the competencies and skills needed to be a successful career FSO in his or her backstop. The rotation memorandum sets out the responsibilities, deliverables, and skills to be addressed. All parties must agree to the scope of the assignment beforehand. For guidance on writing a rotation memo, see the sample new employee Rotation Memo on the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm.

Rotation assignments can range from days to months. For rotations exceeding 30 days, rotation supervisors must document JOs' performance on an AIF. For rotations lasting fewer than 30 days, rotation supervisors may use the rotation memo to document JOs' performance. Remember, **when a rotation exceeds 30 days, an AIF is required instead of a rotation memo.**

D. Mid-point Progress Review

The Supervisor of Record 180 days following the JO's Entry on Duty (EOD) date at USAID is responsible for completing a mid-point progress review (section 6 of the AEF

form). JOs are encouraged to take the lead as needed to schedule their mid-point progress reviews. The timing of the reviews will vary by EOD date.

If an employee will depart for post before the 180 days have passed, the USAID/W supervisor should provide to the supervisor at post an AIF two weeks before the JO's departure. The supervisor at post is then responsible for preparing the mid-point progress review.

If the employee is in language training at the 180 day mark, the Supervisor of Record will document this in Section 6 of the AEF and will use any other training activities, rotations, etc., as the basis for discussing the mid-point progress.

Because the new employees' rating cycles vary from class to class and include varying periods of language training, rotations, and different transfer to post dates, supervisors may opt to deviate more than a month from the actual mid-point of the rating cycle. Supervisors should only do so, however, for a benchmark such as the completion of language training or the transfer to post.

E. Annual Evaluation Form

USAID uses the **Annual Evaluation Form (AEF)** to determine an employee's performance, skills, and potential. OHR retains the first two JO AEFs in the employee's Evaluation file and they become a part of the documents used by the Foreign Service Tenure Board.

It is imperative that all new employees develop a strong understanding of the nuances of the AEF process during the training program. This training program allows new employees to develop critical skills and knowledge that will be greatly beneficial when they enter the regular evaluation system.

Though not required to prepare an **Employee Statement, form AID 461-2**, employees are strongly urged to do so and to submit one along with their AEF. Foreign Service Performance Boards place great value on the Employee Statement, and the administrative reviews (FS-06 and 05) provide a good opportunity for employees to get into the practice of preparing substantive and AEF-additive comments.

The Supervisor of Record will conduct the initial AEF administrative review of the JO at 11 months after the EOD date of the DLI class. The second review will be conducted 12 months after the initial review. The person who is the new employee's Supervisor of Record on the last day of the rating period is responsible for preparing the AEF. If the rating period includes a change of supervisors or rotations for periods lasting more than 30 days, the initial supervisor or rotation supervisor must submit a mandatory AID **400-1B, Appraisal Input Form (AIF)** to the next supervisor (for use by the person who is the supervisor/Rating Official at the end of the rating period). A complete AIF or even a draft AEF is especially necessary when a Washington supervisor is transferring responsibility to a supervisor at post shortly before the end of the rating period.

The supervisor will prepare a written appraisal of the JO's performance against Work Objectives and Performance Measures for the rating period. For this written appraisal, the supervisor uses:

- Comments from peers, supervisors, and subordinates (360-degree input),
- Rotation memos,
- The JO's self-assessment of performance,
- The mid-point mandatory Progress Review,
- Appraisal Input Forms, and
- His or her own independent assessment.

The supervisor must not include the JO's coach in the AEF process.

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

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

In preparing the AEF, Rating Officials

- Must not make recommendations for promotion or tenure;
- Should discuss all four Skill areas (Resource Management, Leadership, Technical and Analytical, and Teamwork and Professionalism) in relation to the employee's rank/grade;
- Should discuss comments from peers, supervisors, and subordinates (360-degree input); and

- Show how the employee made an impact on the overall office, Mission, or sector.

Rating Officials should also discuss the employee's willingness to be innovative, take on non-traditional or hardship assignments, and take calculated risks. Raters should consult **ADS 461.3.6.2, Skills Feedback Worksheet** and **ADS 461.3.7, Employee Feedback Sessions**.

JOs should receive an AEF at the end of each rating period. If a JO has not been performing under an AEF work plan for at least 120 consecutive calendar days during the rating period, he or she will receive an AIF for that period. This AIF will be used, along with any other AIFs and rotation memos, as the basis for the final AEF.

If a JO is enrolled in language training at the end of the rating period, the supervisor of record should prepare the AEF as stated above, noting that the employee was in language training for the balance of the rating period. The Mission Executive Officer or USAID/W Supervisor of Record will submit the final AEF in PDF format to OHR/FSP/SP.

Given that each new entry class is on a different AEF cycle for administrative promotions, some JOs will have gaps between their training period AEFs and their first regular FSO AEFs. Others will have a shortened period for their first regular Foreign Service performance cycle.

F. Appraisal Committees

All JO AEFs must be established, monitored, and reviewed with support from an Appraisal Committee (AC) either at the Mission or the home Bureau. ACs provide the final quality control review before the supervisor submits an AEF to the OHR JO Administrative Promotion Panels.

The three-or-more-member AC provides an organizational perspective to the JO AEF process and ensures accuracy and objectivity. The AC can recommend changes to the AEF, but if the AC and the Rating Official cannot agree on language, the Principal Officer of the Operating Unit (typically the Mission Director) must attempt to resolve differences. If the Rating Official and AC still do not agree, the AC may document its recommendations in the AEF, Section 8b.

The Principal Officer of the Operating Unit is responsible for establishing and determining the number of JO ACs for the unit, and the members and chairpersons of each AC. The Principal Officer is accountable for ensuring that the Operating Unit adheres to the Employee Evaluation Program (EEP) policies and procedures in relation to JO reviews and schedules.

Ideally, all AC members will have first-hand knowledge of the performance of every JO being reviewed by the committee. At least one member must be directly familiar with the

work of each JO under review. Full discussion of AC duties and responsibilities and criteria for selecting AC members is in ADS 461.3.1.4.

G. Administrative Promotions

To expedite the administrative process for promotion decisions, an OHR JO Administrative Promotion Panel will evaluate each JO's AEFs (prior to promotion to FS-04 when Career Candidates become subject to the Performance Boards).

OHR/FSP/SP establishes the JO Administrative Promotion Panel at appropriate intervals for each JO class prior to the first and second anniversaries of entry into the Foreign Service (see again Section IV above and to the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/fso/dli.cfm for information on JO evaluation cycles). The OHR/FSP designates the panel.

Promotions are based on the Career Candidate's success in meeting work objectives and demonstrated ability against the standards of the Skills Matrix. Promotions are only granted if the JO is judged to have met all the skill standards of his or her class, as well as the AEF Work Objectives and Performance Measures.

The JO Administrative Promotion Panel determines which candidates meet or exceed the standards of their current class and deserve promotion to the next Foreign Service class. The Panel's basis for determination may include periods of language training and/or time on overseas assignments as a JO in a field Mission.

Once JOs have attained promotion to FS-04, their performance appraisal and promotion requirements switch to the Agency's April through March Foreign Service Performance Evaluation System (the same process as for ML promotions as described in ADS 461 and ADS 463). Under this system, the annual Foreign Service Performance Boards (convened each summer) evaluate the performance of all eligible career and career candidate FSOs and make promotion determinations. FS employees at grades FS-04 or above must meet promotion eligibility requirements by March 31st of the rating cycle for which the Performance Boards are convened.

As per ADS 470.3.9.3, the DLI JO's salary level after administrative promotion will be at the lowest rate of the class to which promoted that exceeds the employee's existing rate by at least two within-class increases. If the employee is at the maximum rate of the current class, Step 14, the salary after promotion will increase by at least four percent of the current within-grade level pay. Pay cannot exceed the rate range of the class. (See the current salary charts on the OHR Web site at http://inside.usaid.gov/HR/regulations/payadmin.cfm#CP_JUMP_31847.

The Administrative Promotion Panel also determines which Career Candidate JOs fail to achieve the standards of their current class (based on the FS Skills Matrix and Work Objectives and Performance Measures discussed in the AEF). **In order to ensure fair and accurate reviews, JOs' raters must closely monitor and document**

performance during the training period. Supervisors and raters must strive to identify problems as early as possible in the rating period and attempt to resolve performance or conduct issues before the end of the rating cycle. All such actions must be clearly documented in keeping with ADS 461.

If a majority of the Administrative Promotion Panel votes that a JO does not meet the skill standards and that performance does not warrant a promotion, then the JO is not promoted to the next grade. Dissenting voices document their perspective for the file.

When a JO is judged by the Administrative Promotion Panel not to have performed satisfactorily, a Panel representative, in coordination with the employee's APC, documents the Panel's determination in a counseling letter to the JO with a copy to his or her supervisor. The supervisor must then counsel the employee and document in writing to the employee, with copy to the file, the corrective actions the employee must take to improve performance during the next rating period. The next opportunity for administrative promotion will be at the end of the next 12-month period.

JOs' supervisors must closely monitor and document performance (particularly in cases where corrective actions are needed) to ensure fair and accurate reviews.

In those instances when a JO is not promoted with his/her class, review of performance during the next rating period will take place at the end of the next 12-month period as indicated above. A JO must attain a satisfactory rating at class FS-06 and FS-05 in order to be promoted to class FS-04. If a JO fails to perform at an acceptable level after three administrative reviews, he or she will be subject to the Agency's separation process (see **ADS 414.3.10** and its mandatory references and **ADS 450, Termination of Time-Limited Appointments – Foreign Service (FS)** for discussion of termination policies and procedures).

The new employee's onward assignment to the first non-directed posting is based on USAID/W receipt of the required AEFs and corresponding satisfactory reviews and promotion to FS-04. At that point, all Career Candidates become subject to the Agency's April through March Foreign Service performance evaluation cycle.

The requirements of the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Program are set forth in **ADS 461, Employee Evaluation Program, Foreign Service and Senior Foreign Service** and **ADS 414, Foreign Service Appointments**. Additional information about the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Program is contained in the **Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook Part 1, Foreign Service.**

H. Subsequent Promotions

After reaching FS-04, Career Candidates' promotions occur through the Foreign Service performance evaluation system. Under this system, the annual Foreign Service Performance Boards (convened each summer) evaluate the performance of all eligible

career and career candidate FSOs and make promotion determinations. FS employees at grades FS-04 or above must meet promotion eligibility requirements by March 31st of the rating cycle for which the Performance Boards are convened.

The Performance Boards will review AEFs and provide ratings of record (that is, "report cards") for JOs who have been at FS-04 for at least 120 days; however, the Board will not recommend those JOs for promotion unless they have met the time-in-grade and are judged qualified for promotion. New employees need to demonstrate performance at the higher level for a sustained period in the Mission work environment– promotions are not automatic.

See ADS 414.3.5 and **414.3.6** for further discussion of Foreign Service Performance Evaluation and Promotion and Tenuring. (As noted in the introduction to Section IV., above, the requirements of the Foreign Service Employee Evaluation Program are contained in ADS 461 and in the **Employee Evaluation Program Guidebook, Part 1, Foreign Service**. The Foreign Service promotion eligibility requirements are contained in ADS 463.3.4.

V. Mid-Career Officer (ML) Evaluation and Promotion

Although MLs are Career Candidates rather than tenured FSOs, they fall under the regular Foreign Service Evaluation System. As such, they are evaluated on the same basis as other USAID Foreign Service Officers. (See links in Section IV.H, above for complete details.) Because MLs are ranked with other USAID Foreign Service Officers, MLs must:

- Have an Annual Evaluation Form (AEF) Performance Plan with Work Objectives and Performance Measures within 45 calendar days of the conclusion of their orientation;
- **Not** have a Work Objective that refers to training; and
- Ensure that the Work Objectives and Performance Measures contribute to the work of the organization.

In other words, gaps are identified in the employee's Individual Development Plan, not in the Performance Plan.

While required trainings and work assignments might be identified to help enhance the ML's competency, the initial Supervisor of Record and the ML should work closely to develop a Performance Plan that will allow the ML to gain knowledge and skills while performing his or her job. The Supervisor of Record should ensure that the Performance Plan is at a level that will allow the ML's performance to be ranked against others in his or her backstop and grade level.

If the ML is still in USAID/W when the end of the rating period occurs, and the individual has been working under the Performance Plan for at least 120 days, the Washington supervisor will complete an AEF.

Just as for other Foreign Service Employees, if the ML transfers to an overseas assignment before the end of the rating period, the initial supervisor forwards a completed **Appraisal Input, form a400-1B** to the supervisor at post for use in completing the ML's AEF at the end of the rating period.

While a Foreign Service employee is not required to have an AEF for a period of less than 120 days, USAID encourages documentation of performance through Appraisal Input Forms or other means during such periods. This is helpful in making Missions and others aware of the ML's performance; the ML may not be proficient in USAID procedures upon arrival at post and will need continued guidance. The promotion policies for MLs are contained in **ADS 463, Foreign Service Boards**.

VI. Extensions and Curtailments

The following are the procedures for requesting an extension or curtailment of the directed assignment. (See **ADS 436.3.11.5** and **436.3.11.6** for full discussion of the policy regarding overseas tours.)

1. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) must process all requests or notifications for an extension or curtailment of a JO's training tour. Requests should be referred to the appropriate Staffing Specialist within the Foreign Service Staffing Branch (OHR/FSP/FSS).

2. Consistent with **ADS 436.3.11.5b** a tour may be extended for up to three months by Mission management without OHR's approval. The Mission must notify OHR/FSP/FSS before such an extension so that the extension can be taken into consideration in planning for training and onward assignments.

3. Consistent with **ADS 436.3.11.6**, overseas tours may be shortened (curtailed) for programmatic reasons as identified by the Mission, or for personal, compassionate reasons of the employee. The Mission Director can approve employees' requests to shorten a tour by 30 calendar days or less. The Mission Director must notify OHR/FSP/FSS before such an action so that it can be considered in planning for training and onward assignments.

4. For extension requests that exceed three months but are less than one year and curtailment requests that exceed 30 days, the Chief of the Foreign Service Staffing Branch will schedule and present the request for discussion at the next meeting of the Exceptions Committee. As part of the discussion, the presenter indicates if the request is within the timeframe to allow for proper consideration in planning for training and onward assignments.

5. The Foreign Service Staffing Specialist will communicate to the Mission the decision of the Exceptions Committee.

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