

**BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
INSTRUCTION 36-901**



12 JUNE 2024

Incorporating Change 1, 24 JULY 2025

Certified Current, 24 July 2025

Personnel

**CIVILIAN SENIOR EXECUTIVE
MANAGEMENT**

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY

ACCESSIBILITY: Publications and forms are available for downloading or ordering on the e-Publishing website at www.e-Publishing.af.mil.

RELEASABILITY: There are no releasability restrictions on this publication.

OPR: SAF/MRL

Certified by: SAF/MR
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Supersedes: AFI36-901, 23 January 2012

Pages: 55

This instruction implements Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 36-9, *Senior Executive Resource Management*. It provides requirements and procedures for the administration and management of Senior Executive Service (SES), Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES), Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL), Senior Level (SL), Scientific and Professional (ST), and Highly Qualified Expert (HQE) positions and personnel resources and applies to all Department of the Air Force (DAF) civilians. In collaboration with the Chief of the Air Force Reserve (AF/RE), the Director of the Air National Guard (NGB/CF), the Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capital (SF/S1), and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services (AF/A1) develops policy for the DAF Civilian Senior Executive Management. This publication may be supplemented at any level; all Major Command (MAJCOM) level supplements must be approved by the Human Resource Management Strategic Board prior to certification and approval. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route DAF Forms 847 from the field through the appropriate chain of command. The authorities to waive wing/delta/unit level requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier (“T-0, T- 1, T-2, T-3”) number following the compliance statement. See DAF Manual (DAFMAN) 90-161, *Publishing Processes and Procedures*, Attachment 10, for a description of the authorities associated with the Tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority, or alternately, to the Publication OPR for non-tiered compliance items. Ensure all records generated as a result of processes prescribed in this publication adhere to Air Force

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This interim change revises DAFI 36-901, *Civilian Senior Executive Management* to implement more objective language, replacing terms like "diversity," "equity," and "fairness" with measurable criteria and a focus on demonstrable skills, experience, and performance. The revisions promote a transparent, consistent, and legally sound framework for organizational processes. Updates made to paragraphs **1.4.8, 1.4.11, 3.2.2, 3.2.2.2, 8.2.2.6, and 9.5.3**. Deletions and updates to **Attachment 1** include the definition of Diversity was deleted and the definition of Performance Review Board (PRB) was updated. **A margin bar (|) indicates newly revised material.**

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Chapter 1

MANAGING CIVILIAN SENIOR EXECUTIVE RESOURCES

1.1. Overview. This instruction establishes guidance and procedures for the administration and management of the DAF Civilian Senior Executive (CSE) resources. The DAF centrally manages the CSE resources in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements under authorities granted by the Department of Defense (DoD). The CSE resources include: Senior Executive Service (SES - Career, Non-Career (NC) and Limited Term); Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES); Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL); Senior Level (SL); Scientific and Professional (ST); Presidential Appointee with Senate (PAS) confirmation and Highly Qualified Expert (HQE) positions assigned to the DAF. This instruction is to be used in conjunction with the policies and guidance issued by Office of Personnel Management (OPM), including related regulations, Department of Defense Instructions (DoDIs) and other DAF Instructions (DAFIs) in the Personnel series.

1.2. Retained Authority. Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR), with recommendations from the Talent Management Board, the Performance Review Board (PRB) and the Executive Review Board (ERB) establishes policies and procedures for lifecycle management of CSE positions and executives.

1.2.1. Non-Career (NC) Senior Executive Service (SES) Members. The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR), Senior Leader Management Office (SAF/MRL) administers classification and review, coordinates on compensation, and supervises performance management for NC SES members. All other NC SES administrative and management matters are managed by the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, Resources Directorate (SAF/AAR). SAF/AAR performs these processes through delegation from the Secretary of the Air Force (SECAF) and the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force (SAF/AA), in accordance with DoD Directive (DODD) 5105.76, *Transition of Administration Appointees and Other Officials*.

1.2.2. Presidential Appointee with Senate (PAS) confirmation. All PAS administrative and management matters are managed by SAF/AAR. SAF/AAR performs these processes through delegation from the SECAF and SAF/AA, in accordance with DoDD 5105.76.

1.3. Position Types.

1.3.1. Senior Executive Service (SES). The SES is comprised of the men and women charged with leading the Federal Government and producing results for the American people. The SES was designed to be a corps of executives selected for their leadership qualifications. There are two types of Career SES positions: General and Career Reserved.

1.3.1.1. A General position may be filled by a Career, NC, Limited Term or Limited Term Emergency appointee. A General position may be filled by a Career appointee at one time and by a NC, Limited Term or Limited Term Emergency appointee at another time. These positions are listed in the plum book published by the Office of Personnel Management. If a decision is made to fill an encumbered general position with a NC, Limited Term or Limited Term Emergency appointee, the Career members will be assigned to another position of similar stature and authority.

1.3.1.2. A Career Reserved position is always filled by a Career appointee. A position is designated Career Reserved when only a Career employee can fill the position to ensure impartiality or the public's confidence in the impartiality of the Government.

1.3.2. Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES). These managerial, supervisory and policy positions are equivalent to SES positions and are in the Excepted Service. These positions may be filled through permanent or nonpermanent appointments under the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System appointing authority.

1.3.3. Non-Career (NC) Senior Executive Service (SES). These appointments do not require merit staffing procedures, and appointees do not acquire SES career status. There is no time limit on an NC SES appointment, but the individual serves at the pleasure of the appointing official.

1.3.4. Senior Level (SL) and Scientific and Professionals (STs). This unique category of federal jobs covers positions classified above the GS-15 level that are not part of the Senior Executive Service and have managerial responsibilities that are less than twenty-five percent of their job. Senior Level positions have broad and complex duties. Scientific and Professional positions involve performance of high-level research and development in the physical, biological, medical, or engineering sciences, or a closely related field. SL positions are generally in the Competitive Service while ST positions can be in the Competitive Service or the Excepted Service.

1.3.5. Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL). This unique category is parallel to the SL/ST employee with duties covered under the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System. These positions are in the Excepted Service.

1.3.6. Highly Qualified Experts (HQEs). Senior-level Excepted Service employees. HQEs are individuals who possess expertise or recognized knowledge, skills, and experience in an occupational field. An HQE may have substantive experience or education in a variety of occupational fields such as soft and hard sciences, engineering, technology, human resources, business, transformation, education, medicine, languages, and logistics but is generally credentialed or has proven ability in a particular field or fields. HQEs may be hired to mentor, lead, oversee, direct, manage and/or consult on DoD programs and initiatives, including high profile and fast track assignments. HQE guidance is addressed separately in [Chapter 10](#) of this instruction.

1.4. Roles and Responsibilities.

1.4.1. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The OPM is responsible for leadership and oversight of the SES/SL/ST programs across the federal government. The OPM allocates SES/SL/ST authorizations to DoD, which, in turn, sub-allocates to the DAF.

1.4.2. Department of Defense (DoD). Establishes Department-wide executive management policies within the overall DoD policy framework. DoD allocates positions and provides the DAF with the authority, control and flexibility needed to accomplish the DAF strategic goals and mission.

1.4.3. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Intelligence [OUSDI]. The OUSDI establishes policy guidance regarding the DISES/DISL program and allocates DISES/DISL authorizations.

1.4.4. The SECAF is the appointing authority for DAF Senior Executive Service, Scientific and Professional, Senior Level, Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, Defense Intelligence Senior Level, and Highly Qualified Expert personnel; and charters, establishes, and appoints members to the Executive Resources Board, the Talent Management Board, and the Performance Review Board. The SECAF may delegate any of these responsibilities, except approval of the performance management results, to the Under Secretary of the Air Force or the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (SAF/MR).

1.4.5. The SAF/MR supervises the lifecycle management of career CSEs, approves all DAF CSE policies and procedures, and is responsible for execution of career CSE lifecycle management and personnel administration of Career CSEs.

1.4.6. The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, Senior Executive Management Office (SAF/MRL). SAF/MRL shall manage and execute the CSE lifecycle program and personnel management of career CSEs. SAF/MRL shall coordinate with the Space Force Senior Leader Management Office (SF/S1L) and the Air Force Senior Leader Management Offices (General Officer Management [AF/A1LG], Colonel Management [AF/A1LO], Chief Master Sergeant Management [AF/A1LE]).

1.4.7. The Space Force Senior Leader Management Office (SF/S1L) and the Air Force Senior Leader Management Offices (AF/A1LG, AF/A1LO, AF/A1LE) shall collaborate with SAF/MRL to identify and prioritize CSE actions and requirements. They shall provide direct input on behalf of the CSO and CSAF.

1.4.8. To ensure a breadth of experience and perspectives, at least half of the ERB members shall be career executives. The ERB composition will aim to represent a variety of backgrounds and areas of expertise. The ERB responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following actions. The ERB shall:

1.4.8.1. Conduct the merit staffing process for career SES positions.

1.4.8.2. Make written recommendations to the appointing authority on candidates for career SES positions.

1.4.8.3. Determine whether to certify to OPM that Presidential Management Fellows have completed the program.

1.4.9. Talent Management Committee (TMC). Strategic planning board appointed to support the Talent Management Board (TMB) as it provides recommendations regarding talent management policies, procedures and individual actions for all non-political civilian senior executives. This committee will conduct an annual assessment of members of the career SES and career SES positions to help determine future Executive resource needs, build initial succession plans and provide developmental feedback. The TMC also reviews and makes recommendations to the TMB on CSE allocation requests, tier upgrades, management reassignments and other talent management related matters.

1.4.10. Talent Management Board (TMB). A board that provides recommendations to SECAF or designee on all matters related to talent management policies, procedures and individual actions. This board finalizes and approves slates of reassignment candidates for positions projected to be vacant in the near future (generally 4-6 months). The TMB considers inputs from the position's supervisor as well as enterprise requirements.

1.4.11. Performance Review Board (PRB). The PRB provides recommendations regarding career CSE performance management policies, procedures, and individual end-of-cycle performance management actions for all CSEs. The PRB's primary objective is to ensure a rigorous, consistent, and impartial performance appraisal process across the DAF. This includes promoting accuracy in evaluations, meaningful differentiation between performance levels, and alignment with established DAF performance requirements.

1.4.12. Headquarters Air Force (HAF) 2-letter (ltr) Officials/Space Staff 2-ltr Officials/Major Command (MAJCOM)/Field Command/Combatant Command (COCOM) Commanders. Handle day-to-day issues, except disciplinary actions, regarding CSE matters within their organizations. Provide supervision and performance management. Officials and commanders shall coordinate with SAF/MRL on overall management of the CSE resources assigned to their organizations. SAF/MRL will provide additional guidance as appropriate.

Chapter 2

EXECUTIVE RESOURCE PLANNING, ALLOCATION MANAGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION

2.1. Executive Resource Planning. Executive resource planning begins with a strategic analysis of current and future executive resource needs, followed by on-going evaluations as vacancies become available and mission requirements change. This chapter does not apply to PAS members. The AF/A1 and SF/S1 will monitor CSE resources on a continuous basis to ensure CSE positions are used to respond effectively to changing conditions. In order to do this, the AF/A1 and SF/S1 will leverage input from DAF 2-ltr organizations, MAJCOM, Field Command and COCOM Commanders and solicit recommendations from the Talent Management Board (TMB). SAF/MRL will routinely reassess and reprioritize CSE positions, either on an ad hoc basis (as they become vacant) or as part of a comprehensive review, in order to:

- 2.1.1. Identify current and anticipated CSE position vacancies.
- 2.1.2. Analyze organizations to eliminate unnecessary management layers; considering all executive-level positions.
- 2.1.3. Review vacant and occupied positions in terms of mission, strategic plans and budget projections, and identify positions that will be abolished or restructured to reflect new priorities and goals.
- 2.1.4. Analyze positions to determine if the position is classifiable above the GS-15 level.
- 2.1.5. Prioritize supportable CSE positions.
- 2.1.6. Obtain SECAF approval of the Executive Resources plan. SECAF may delegate approval of this plan.

2.2. Allocation Management. OPM allocates SES/SL/ST spaces to the DoD, which in turn allocates positions to the DAF and DAF-serviced COCOMs. OUSD(I) allocates DISES/DISL positions to the DAF and DAF-serviced COCOMs. The SECAF, or designated official, retains authority to approve CSE positions requirements and requests for adjustments to the number of CSEs in an organization. SECAF, or designee, will approve requests for adjustments to the total number of CSE positions, including requests through OUSD(P&R) to the OPM for adjustments to the number of SES/SL/ST positions or to OUSD(I) for the number of DISES/DISL positions. (**Note:** This chapter does not apply to PAS members and HQEs.)

2.2.1. HAF 2-ltr officials/MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Commanders can submit requests for positions, on behalf of their organization to SAF/MRL, for TMB recommendation and SECAF, or SECAF's designated official approval.

2.2.1.1. New requirements for CSE allocations should be for positions of the highest priority that support the DAF's warfighting requirements or are due to Presidential mandate or legislative requirements.

2.2.1.2. Out-of-Cycle Requests. Organizations may request new CSE resources whenever the need arises through SAF/MRL. Periodically, the Talent Management Board reviews, validates and recommends disposition of out-of-cycle requests. Organizational requests should explain why the need was not addressed in the biennial survey. **(T-1)** CSE allocations may not be available to meet even high priority out-of-cycle requirements. The SECAF retains final approval authority.

2.2.2. SAF/MRL, through the TMB, establishes policies and procedures on CSE position management, requirements, and classification. Upon approval from SECAF or designated official, SAF/MRL authorizes the use of a position allocation. In addition, SAF/MRL evaluates current and projected uses of positions to assure proper use of resources. SAF/MRL also accounts for all CSE positions and manages CSE headspace to ensure the DAF does not exceed its total number of allocated CSEs.

2.3. Establishing Civilian Senior Executive (CSE) Positions. After a position allocation has been approved and organizations have provided the position description and justification criteria, SAF/MRL establishes the position in DAF and OPM systems of record. **(T-1)** The immediate supervisor of the position must be an SES/DISES, higher civilian or a GO. **(T-1)**

2.4. Maintaining a CSE Position. When a position becomes vacant, the PD and use of an allocation should be re-validated before recruitment. Additionally, if a position has been encumbered for more than 7 years, the PD should be revalidated.

2.5. Biennial Requirements Survey. Every other year, the DAF may request additional CSE requirements. SAF/MRL will administer this survey in a transparent and fair manner. The proposed list shall be reviewed and prioritized by the TMB and approved the SECAF or designated official.

2.6. Precedence Priority Codes and Position Tiers. Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) periodically publishes updates to the Order of Precedence list, which provides the relative protocol precedence for CSEs within DoD. In addition, for protocol purposes, DAF establishes the order of precedence through Distinguished Visitor (DV) codes.

2.6.1. Distinguished Visitor (DV) Codes. DV code designations are used to determine the order of precedence for official visits and activities, assignment of quarters, seating and travel status on Government aircraft and surface transportation for General Officer (GO) or staff of equivalent rank. DV code designations are based on placement and level of responsibility for the DAF position. The DV codes are assigned to positions, not people. The DV code for the position may be equal to, or lower than the DV code of the supervisor's position. In addition, each CSE position is placed in one of three tiers. Position tiers distinguish position levels. The relationship of the DV code to the GO hierarchy and the existing three tiers are as follows:

2.6.1.1. DV-4 /Tier 3 is equivalent to a three-star GO. A typical DV-4 is the Administrative Assistant, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, an Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Air Force Materiel Command Executive Director, or a Space Force Staff principal.

2.6.1.2. DV-5 /Tier 2 is equivalent to a two-star GO. A typical DV-5 is Deputy Assistant Secretary, Deputy General Counsel, or Secretariat, Air, or Space Force Staff principal deputy.

2.6.1.3. DV-6 /Tier 1 is equivalent to a one-star GO/FO. The minimum DV code for all CSEs is DV-6. For protocol purposes, SL/ST/DISL/HQEs are given a designation of DV-6. If the HQE is a retired Uniformed Service member, consideration is given to retired rank, whichever is higher. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will be extremely rare.

2.6.1.4. DV codes for CSEs above DV-4 are generally reserved for PAS officials (e.g., those in Executive Level (EX) pay plan positions). The DV-2/DV-3 is equivalent to a four star GO/FO. The DV-2 is the SECAF; and DV-3 includes the Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary to the SECAF, General Counsel and other Presidential appointments that require Senate confirmation.

Chapter 3

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

3.1. Recruitment Process. SAF/MRL typically conducts a systematic and competitive recruitment process for CSE appointments. The recruitment process will be in full compliance with merit principles and the requirements of 29 CFR Part 1607, *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures*. Moreover, the process will be free from any prohibited personnel practice or illegal discrimination. The recruitment process is outlined below. **Note:** This chapter does not address reassignments or non-career appointments such as appointment to PAS, NC SES, or HQE positions. In addition, ST positions are traditionally filled under non-competitive recruitment processes.

3.1.1. Vacancy Announcements. All DAF career CSE vacancies that are open to be filled with initial career appointment are listed on the OPM government-wide automated vacancy announcement system, USAJobs.gov.

3.1.2. Recruitment Area of Consideration. The recruitment area of consideration for those career vacancies that are open to be filled with initial career appointments includes all applicants, typically open to the public sector, who demonstrate the required qualifications. In addition to general recruitment efforts, targeted recruitment of candidates with specialized skills may be utilized for hard-to-fill positions.

3.1.3. Senior Executive Service (SES) and Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES) Qualifications. OPM has developed Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) that represent the critical leadership skills all SES members need in order to succeed. By policy, the DAF utilizes the ECQs to gauge leadership skills prior to appointment into both SES and DISES positions. Initial SES appointment selections require OPM Qualification Review Board (QRB) certification of ECQs unless:

3.1.3.1. The member previously was certified by OPM through a prior SES appointment or Candidate Development Program

3.1.3.2. The member is or was previously appointed under the National Defense Authorization Act authority for DoD to appoint into the Senior Executive Service

3.1.4. Senior Level (SL), Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL), Scientific and Professional (ST) Member qualifications. Candidates applying to SL and DISL positions must have at least one year of specialized experience at grade GS-14 (or equivalent), meet the specific technical qualifications and the senior professional qualifications, demonstrating significant contributions, stature and professional reputation.

3.2. Selection Process. SAF/MRL is responsible for facilitating the selection process, including: the Rating and Ranking Panel, interview process, the presentation of Best Qualified candidate(s) to the selecting official, the presentation of the case to the ERB and the staffing for SECAF approval and QRB approval (if applicable).

3.2.1. Rating and Ranking Panel. This panel meets to rate and rank the CSE applicants on the basis of the knowledge, skills, abilities and other job-related factors documented in the candidates' application materials. Candidates will be rated against the skills and requirements of the position to be filled using category ratings of Not Qualified, Qualified, or Best Qualified. The panel determines which applicants are potential "Best Qualified" to move forward to the interview panel.

3.2.2. Rating and Ranking Panel Membership Composition. When assembling a rating and ranking panel, the objective is to create a group with broad experience, skills, and perspectives relevant to the position being filled, ensuring a comprehensive and objective assessment of candidates' qualifications. For positions such as SL/ST/DISL, individuals with experience in these or similar roles should be considered for panel participation. Final panel member selections require approval from SAF/MRL, which will provide guidance and support to ensure panel composition aligns with the following criteria:

3.2.2.1. Panel Chair. Organizations designate a Panel Chair who is senior in position to the position being recruited, except in cases of Tier 3 recruitments where the Panel Chair will be equivalent in seniority. The Panel Chair must be a career member of the SES or DISES. **(T-1)** Organizations will normally designate an experienced Tier 3 SES/DISES (or civilian equivalent) member to serve in this role. Organizations will not select the immediate supervisor or Selecting Official to serve as the panel chair. **(T-1)**

3.2.2.2. Panel Membership. The selecting organization will identify panel members to ensure a range of relevant perspectives, experiences, and expertise are represented in the candidate evaluation process. Panels will consist of at least three members, and include:

3.2.2.2.1. An individual from the selecting organization. It is recommended that the supervisor of the position fill this role, unless the supervisor is also the selecting official. Additionally, this role should not be filled with the previous incumbent of the position unless the individual is also the supervisor.

3.2.2.2.2. At least one civilian executive with at least fifteen (15) years as a civilian employee.

3.2.2.2.3. At least one representative from outside of the organization.

3.2.2.2.4. All panel members must be equivalent or senior to the position being recruited.

3.2.2.2.5. Panel members must be employees of the DoD or service members.

3.2.2.2.6. Organizations shall coordinate panel membership with SAF/MRL. SAF/MRL will ensure compliance with the panel requirements.

3.2.3. Interview Panel. Generally, the rating/ranking panel will also serve as the Interview Panel. Prior to adjusting panel membership, organizations will coordinate through SAF/MRL. Changes to panel membership during the panel process should be rare based on unforeseen circumstances creating the need to replace members. If the panel is adjusted, it will meet the same requirements as the Rating and Ranking panel. The interview panel meets with candidate(s) determined to be potentially "Best Qualified" through the Rating and Ranking Panel process. The panel uses a structured interview process that allows them to further explore candidates' qualifications. After interviews conclude, this panel forwards recommendation(s) of "Best Qualified" candidates in rank order to the selecting official.

3.2.4. The Selecting Official. The selecting official for all CSE positions will be one of the following: four-star GO; DAF 2-ltr official; MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Commander; DRU/FOA commander/director. If the official is not a tier 3 SES/DISES, a three-star or four-star general, then the referral certificate is routed through the chain of command until it reaches the first three-star GO (or equivalent). The selecting official may interview and choose any one of the candidates referred.

3.2.5. The tentative selection of an SES/DISES/SL/DISL/ST is staffed by SAF/MRL. If the position is a new appointment to the SES, then SAF/MRL staffs the package through ERB to verify merit systems principals were followed. SAF/MRL conducts an adverse screening of all tentative selections then staffs the selection for approval by SECAF or SECAF's designee. If adverse information is identified, SAF/MRL will include input from the selecting official addressing the adverse information.

3.3. Appeals. There is no right of appeal for a non-selected individual on actions taken by the ERB, QRB or the SECAF. Other avenues afforded by law or regulation (e.g., prohibited personnel practice allegations or discrimination complaints) may be pursued if appropriate. Applicants may contact the Office of Special Counsel, Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) or the appropriate DAF Equal Opportunity Office, if they have complaints falling under their purview.

3.3.1. Department of the Air Force (DAF) employees are expected to use the DAF grievance procedures to resolve allegations of irregularities in recruitment and selection for CSE positions, other than those related to prohibited personnel practices or violations of equal opportunity law.

3.3.2. With General Counsel approval, CSE recruitment and selection procedures are made available for review to third parties or complainants.

3.4. Types of Senior Executive Service (SES) Appointments.

3.4.1. Career Appointment. SES applicants are selected for career appointment through the DAF senior executive merit staffing process. Members must have their executive core qualifications (ECQs) approved, generally by the OPM's qualifications review board, and they must complete a one-year probationary period. Career appointments can be made into General or Career Reserved positions. Career appointees are afforded specific due process protections.

3.4.2. Limited Appointment. Limited appointments may only be made to General positions. Generally, these appointments use non-competitive procedures. The SECAF must approve the use of the limited appointment, and often these appointments must be approved by the OPM. Appointments may be terminated at the discretion of the SECAF. When the limited appointment is terminated for reasons other than misconduct and the appointment is made for an individual who was serving on a career or career conditional appointment where there was no neglect of duty or malfeasance, the individual is entitled to be placed in his/her former position or a position of like status, tenure and grade. There are two types of limited appointments: Limited Term and Limited Emergency.

3.4.2.1. Limited Term Appointment (LTA). An LTA is a nonrenewable appointment for up to 36 months to a position that is abolished when the appointment expires.

3.4.2.2. Limited Emergency Appointment. A Limited Emergency appointment is a nonrenewable appointment for up to 18 months to a position established to meet a bona fide, unanticipated, urgent need.

3.4.2.3. Extensions. Limited appointments may be extended without prior OPM approval, if the initial appointment was for less than the maximum allowed period of time. An individual who held one or more limited appointments, for a total of 36 months in a 48-month period, cannot continue to serve in a limited appointment.

3.5. Other Appointment Types.

3.5.1. SL and ST may be career or non-career appointments.

3.5.2. HQE, DISES and DISL appointments are in the Excepted Service. HQE appointments may not exceed six total years. DISES and DISL appointments may be temporary or permanent.

3.5.3. Presidential Appointees. These appointees include personnel appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, NC SES members and Schedule C personnel approved by OPM.

3.6. Conditions of Employment.

3.6.1. Financial Disclosure. As a condition of employment, all CSEs, except non-senior mentor HQEs, shall file a United States Office of Government Ethics (OGE) Form 278, *Public Financial Disclosure Report*. **(T-1)** Non-senior mentor HQEs file an OGE Form 450, *Confidential Financial Disclosure Report, Executive Branch*. This form is filed with the Deputy General Counsel for Fiscal, Ethics and Administrative Law, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force General Counsel (SAF/GCA).

3.6.2. Mobility Agreements. All members appointed to the career SES/DISES are required to sign a Reassignment Rights and Obligations Agreement. **(T-1)** This agreement is maintained in the electronic official personnel file.

3.6.3. Drug Testing. Within five days of appointment to a CSE position, all CSEs are required to complete and pass drug urinalysis testing. **(T-0)** Once appointed, CSEs are required to undergo periodic random drug testing in accordance with Executive Order (EO) 12564, *Drug-Free Federal Workplace*. **(T-0)**

3.6.4. Conflict of Interest Prohibition. All CSEs are subject to the rules prohibiting participating “personally and substantially” in any agency matter that affects their financial interests (or that of a spouse, children, or organization whose interests are imputed to them). **(T-0)**

3.6.5. One Year Cooling Off Period. All CSEs whose basic rate of pay is over that amount designated for the appropriate year, are subject to a one year cooling off period after they leave the agency (DAF) and may not represent back to the agency during that year. **(T-0)**

3.6.6. Lifetime and Two Year Ban. All CSEs who are involved personally and substantially in agency matters are permanently barred from representing anyone back to any Federal Department, agency, or court on that same matter. If a matter was under the official responsibility of a CSE during the last year of Government service, then he/she is barred for two years after leaving Government service from representing anyone back to the Government on that same matter. **(T-0)**

3.7. Probationary Period for New Appointments. All new Career CSEs are required to serve a 12-month probationary period. **(T-0)**

3.7.1. At the time of appointment, SAF/MRL will provide the probationer, and his/her supervisor, an initial probation notification addressing the supervisor and CSE responsibilities.

3.7.2. At the six- and nine- month, a notification, from SAF/MRL, is provided for the supervisor to review and document performance.

3.7.3. At the 11-month, SAF/MRL will forward the signed Probationary Period Certification to the appointing authority, or designee, for review and final approval.

3.7.4. The Career appointment becomes final after the successful completion of the probationary period.

3.7.5. Unsuccessful performance is referred to SAF/MRL and SAF/MRL takes appropriate action.

3.7.5.1. A Career Status Civil Servant who does not successfully complete the probationary period is entitled to be placed in a vacant Civil Service position (other than an SES position) for which he or she is qualified, in any agency, that is a continuing position at the highest grade held in the competitive service prior to appointment. The position should last at least three months. The DAF is responsible for placing the appointee in an appropriate position within the agency, or for arranging a transfer to an appropriate position in another agency.

3.7.5.2. If the CSE was not a Career Civil Servant prior to appointment, then the incumbent will be removed from federal service.

Chapter 4

OTHER STAFFING ACTIONS

4.1. Reassignments. DoD encourages functional and geographical mobility in order to achieve a mobile cadre of SES/DISES who may be reassigned to meet shifting agency priorities. Mobility is a condition of employment for SES/DISES appointments. The DAF uses succession planning and career development to ensure all SES/DISES incumbents are provided assignments to advance their career and meet the DAF quality and operational performance objectives. **Note:** This chapter does not apply to non-career appointees such as PAS, NC SES members, SL, ST and HQEs.

4.1.1. The DAF may reassign a Career SES/DISES member to any SES/DISES position in the agency for which they are qualified. (DISES members may only be assigned to SES positions if they have been certified as members of the SES and completed the SES probationary period.) Failure to accept a directed reassignment subjects the individual to removal under adverse action procedures.

4.1.2. Career SES/DISES members cannot be involuntarily reassigned within 120 days after the appointment of the SECAF.

4.1.3. Career SES/DISES members cannot be involuntarily reassigned within 120 days after the appointment of the Career appointee's most immediate supervisor, if the supervisor is a NC appointee (PAS or NC SES) and has the authority to make an initial appraisal of the Career appointee's performance.

4.2. Reassignment Action. SAF/MRL is the OPR to fill all SES/DISES vacancies. The process is outlined below.

4.2.1. All Tier 2 and Tier 3 SES positions will be filled through reassignment unless the slate is insufficient (e.g., has fewer than three qualified candidates). The selecting official will provide notice of the insufficiency of a slate to SAF/MRL. This will form the basis of feedback to the slated candidates. (**Note:** Organizations may elect to fill Tier 1 positions through reassignment.)

4.2.2. SAF/MRL provides the organization a slate of candidates based on the position requirements, leveraging the TMC slate and augmenting with reassignment volunteers as necessary.

4.2.3. Once the slate is issued, candidates may not remove themselves from the slate.

4.2.4. Selecting officials may select any person from the slate. In making the selection, hiring panels are optional for Tier 2s. If using a panel, the panel will be established consistent with requirements in [paragraph 3.2.2](#). If the slate is not sufficient, the organization will contact SAF/MRL.

4.2.5. Once a selection is made, SAF/MRL will then staff the package for final approval.

4.2.6. Notice to Senior Executive Service (SES)/Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES) Member. For involuntary moves, career members of the SES/DISES must receive 15 days advance written notice for a reassignment in the same commuting area and 60 days advance written notice for reassignments to a new geographic area.

4.2.6.1. Reconsideration. SES/DISES members unwilling to accept a reassignment may request reconsideration, with written reasons and/or description of hardships. Appeals are submitted through SAF/MRL for SECAF or SECAF's designee's decision.

4.2.6.2. Failure to Accept a Directed Reassignment. SES/DISES members who do not accept a directed reassignment are subject to removal. If removal is for failure to accept directed reassignment to a different commuting area, the individual may be entitled to discontinued service retirement (if eligible) or severance pay, unless a memorandum of understanding or other written agreement provides for such geographic reassignments. Removal under these circumstances can be appealed to the MSPB.

4.2.6.3. Reassignment to a Lower Tier and Non-Executive Positions. SES/DISES members may be reassigned to a lower tier at the discretion of the Authorizing Official or for personal reasons. If a member so requests, he or she may be reassigned to a lower grade.

4.3. Details. A detail is the temporary movement of an employee within, into, or out of the SES/DISES for a specified period, usually with the expectation that the employee returns to his/her regular position at the end of the period. Administratively, for purposes of pay and benefits, the employee continues to be an incumbent of their position of record (the position from which he/she is detailed). Details will be coordinated with SAF/MRL. If the detail exceeds 90 days, approval from SECAF, or his/her designee, may be required. Details will be awarded in a fair, consistent and transparent manner.

4.3.1. Details will be filled in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. Non-competitive details of non-SES/DISES employees should not be used as a means of providing a specific employee the opportunity to acquire the qualifications required for entry into the SES.

4.3.2. Details of SES/DISES members to non-SES/DISES positions below the SES level are generally considered to be an inappropriate use of executive talent.

4.3.3. Conditions. Initial details and extensions are to be made in accordance with Title 5 United States Code (USC) Section 3341, *Details; within Executive or Military Departments*, and 5 CFR § 317.903(b)(1), *Details*, which authorizes details in increments of no more than 120 days. SAF/MRL will work with organizations to use Competitive Service merit promotion procedures when details exceed 240 days.

4.4. Reduction-in-Force (RIF)/Adjustment in Force (AIF). This applies to Career SES members only. For SL/ST members, follow the regulatory provisions applicable to DAF employees at grades GS-15 (or equivalent) and below. For DISES/DISL members, contact SAF/MRL for Adjustment in Force (AIF) procedure guidance.

4.4.1. The RIF procedures are only used when the elimination or modification of an SES position is due to reorganization, a lack of funds, or a curtailment of work that results in the need to separate an SES member.

4.4.2. The RIF option is only used after all other options for placement, including reassignment to positions outside of the commuting area, of SES members have been exhausted.

4.4.3. DAF career SES members who have completed probation can be assigned to any vacant DAF SES position for which he/she qualifies. If no vacant positions exist within the DAF, then DAF will look for placement elsewhere in DoD, and other agencies, in that order. If no vacancy exists, OPM has 45 days to try to place the SES member elsewhere in the Government. If the SES member cannot be placed in the SES, the SES member is entitled to placement in the agency at a grade GS-15 (or equivalent) position with saved pay.

4.4.4. If an SES member declines a reasonable offer of placement to another SES position, or if no placement offer can be made, the member is separated from the SES following a 45-day written notice. A second notice, one day in advance of the termination date, is also required. If RIF procedures are invoked, contact SAF/MRL for further guidance.

4.4.5. A Career SES employee separated by RIF may appeal to the MSPB on the competitive procedures taken under a RIF.

4.5. Resignations. The CSE, or the CSE's supervisor (or designated representative), coordinates the resignation with SAF/MRL. After coordination, the CSE or CSE's supervisor (or designated representative), must contact the servicing Civilian Personnel Flight and request a resignation action be processed. **(T-1)**

Chapter 5

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

5.1. Employees and Actions Covered by This Instruction and Specific Exclusions. This chapter applies to Senior Executive Service (SES), Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES) and Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL) employees. **Exclusions:** Senior Level (SL) and Scientific (ST).

5.2. Governing Requirements. Supervisors and managers must respect employees' rights established by law, regulation, or policy and take disciplinary actions by:

- 5.2.1. Notifying employees of the proposed action. **(T-0)**
- 5.2.2. Giving employees an opportunity to respond to proposed actions. **(T-0)**
- 5.2.3. Notifying employees of the final decision. **(T-0)**
- 5.2.4. Informing employees of their access to appellate procedures. **(T-0)**

5.3. Senior Officials Designated to Serve as Proposing and Deciding Officials. Will be designated in writing and must accomplish disciplinary actions through written documents that meet specified criteria.

5.4. Burden of Proof. In order to meet the standard for taking an action, managers and supervisors must: clearly specify the charges or reasons upon which the action is based; be able to prove the specific charges or reasons that form the basis for the action by a preponderance of the evidence; and be able to show that the penalty is appropriate under the circumstances.

5.5. Disciplinary Actions. Disciplinary action is generally the result of an Inspector General (IG), Commander Directed (CD) and/or Equal Opportunity (EO) investigation. As a result of the investigation, the following steps should take place in the disciplinary process (5 CFR Parts 359, *Removal from the Senior Executive Service; Guaranteed Placement in other Personnel Systems*, and 752, *Adverse Actions*). Managers may not take unilateral action against an executive.

- 5.5.1. The office of the IG will notify the SECAF, the Chief of Staff of the AF or SF, and SAF/MRL of any substantiated IG claims against CSEs.
- 5.5.2. The supervisory chain will be tasked to notify the executive member of results of the investigation.
- 5.5.3. The SECAF reserves all authority to administer discipline to him/herself and/or the person appointed by SECAF in writing. The SECAF, or SECAF's designee, shall appoint, in writing, a proposing and deciding official after consulting SAF/GCA, AF/JA and SAF/MR through SAF/MRL. Generally, proposing and deciding officials will be from outside the chain of command. Proposing and deciding officials shall solicit input from the chain of command.
- 5.5.4. With support from SAF/GCA and AF/JA, the proposing official recommends appropriate action and issues a written proposal to the executive.
- 5.5.5. Deciding official makes decision on final penalty based on case evidence, including any reply the executive may have submitted and issues a written final decision notice to the executive.
- 5.5.6. The SAF/AA will serve as the Designated Grievance Receiver.

5.6. Reprimand.

5.6.1. Purpose and Use. Reprimands are used to correct significant misconduct and repeated lesser offenses. It is a severe disciplinary action that may be adequate for many disciplinary situations requiring an action. The proposing official may decide a reprimand is appropriate; in these cases, the proposing official signs out the reprimand and the supervisor issues the reprimand.

5.7. Suspension.

5.7.1. Career SES Appointees and Certain Limited Appointees. May be suspended for disciplinary reasons defined as misconduct, neglect of duty or malfeasance. Suspensions must be 15 days or more. In most cases, the executive must receive 30 days advance notice of a proposed suspension and has the right to reply to the proposed suspension.

5.7.2. Career SES have the right to appeal a suspension to the MSPB.

5.7.3. Non-Career SES Suspensions. The law does not specify procedural requirements for suspending non-career appointees; most limited term appointees, limited emergency appointees, and reemployed annuitants for disciplinary reasons. Thus, if required, such appointees will be suspended under the established DAF procedures contained within this instruction.

5.7.3.1. Suspension of a non-career appointee is not subject to the 120-day moratorium.

5.7.3.2. Suspension of a non-career appointee under these circumstances does not grant appeal rights to the MSPB.

5.8. Removal.

5.8.1. Removal During Probationary Period. Career SES may be removed during the probationary period for a variety of reasons such as unacceptable performance, misconduct, conditions arising before appointment, and reduction in force (RIF). The member must be notified in writing before the effective date of the action. The notice shall state, at a minimum, the basis for the action and the effective date. If a career SES held a career or career-conditional status in the competitive service prior to appointment to the Executive service and is removed during the probationary period for performance reasons, he or she is entitled to placement in a position at the same level held prior to entry into the Executive service.

5.8.2. Performance Removal. Post-probation career SES may be removed from the SES based on poor performance. The member must be notified in writing at least 30 calendar days before the effective date of the action. The action may be optional or mandatory.

5.8.2.1. Optional Removal. A career executive who receives an unsatisfactory performance rating will: either be removed from the SES, or be reassigned to another SES position for which he or she qualifies.

5.8.2.2. Mandatory Removal. A career executive must be removed from the SES for two unsatisfactory ratings in five consecutive years, for two less than fully successful ratings in three consecutive years, or for one unsatisfactory and one minimally satisfactory rating within three consecutive years.

5.8.2.3. A member may not formally appeal removal for performance to the MSPB but is entitled to request an MSPB informal hearing.

5.8.2.4. A career executive removed from SES for performance reasons shall be placed into a continuing position at the GS-15 or equivalent grade that will last at least three months. This applies to those executives with prior non-SES career civil service.

5.9. Removal of Non-Career SES (NC) and Limited Term SES (LTA).

5.9.1. These members serve at the pleasure of the SECAF and may be removed at any time. The Executive should be given written notice at least one day before the effective date of the action, but this is not legally required. Members are not entitled to placement rights and have no grievance or appeal rights. However, an SES member who received a limited appointment without a break in service from a career appointment in the DAF is usually entitled to be placed in his or her former position, or one of like status, tenure, and grade. The agency may include a statement of the reason for the action, but it is not required.

5.9.2. Removal of a non-career appointee is not subject to the 120-day moratorium.

5.10. Disciplinary Removal. The reason for action must be misconduct, neglect of duty, malfeasance, or failure to accept a directed reassignment or to accompany a position in a transfer of function. The executive must receive 30 days' notice of a proposed removal, has the right to reply, and may appeal to the MSPB.

5.11. Restrictions on Removal. Career SES appointees cannot be removed for performance reasons during 120 days after appointment of a new SECAF or new non-career supervisor with removal authority, except removals based on a rating(s) prior to appointment. This restriction does not apply to RIF removals.

Chapter 6

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

6.1. Performance Management. The Air Force performance management system makes meaningful distinctions in performance and holds CSEs accountable for their individual and organizational performance by linking results to an agency's strategic planning initiatives as an effective means of achieving this goal. **Note:** This chapter does not apply to PAS members and HQEs. HQE performance management guidance is addressed separately in **Chapter 10** of this instruction.

6.1.1. Performance Appraisal Tool. All CSE appraisals are accomplished in the executive performance appraisal tool (EPAT), the mandated web-based DoD enterprise tool. **(T-1)** The CSEs rating and reviewing official will also have an account established in the system, even if that rating and reviewing official is from another Federal agency or a different DoD component, a NC CSE, a PAS, or an active duty GO. It is the responsibility of the CSE to ensure their information is accurate. **(T-1)**

6.2. Performance Plan. The performance plan sets forth the performance requirements to be accomplished during the performance appraisal period (1 October to 30 September). Each performance plan includes the mandatory Performance Elements (PEs) with associated results-driven performance requirements that are aligned with their organizational goals. CSEs will include tailored requirements in each element even if there are mandatory requirements.

6.2.1. The rating official and the CSE jointly develop the performance plan and performance requirements. If they cannot reach agreement, the rating official's requirements stand. **(T-1)** The rating official must clearly set the performance expectations. **(T-1)**

6.2.2. The performance plan is completed within 30 days after a CSE is appointed to the DAF or within the start of a new performance cycle.

6.2.2.1. A change in position or rating official during the performance appraisal period may necessitate a modification or a complete revision of the performance plan. If a change occurs, the new performance plan is completed within 30 days.

6.2.2.2. A CSE must have at least 90 days under the new performance plan, as of the end of the performance appraisal period, to be eligible to receive an Initial Summary Rating (ISR). **(T-1)** The ISR provides the preliminary performance assessment of the CSE.

6.2.3. SES/DISES Performance Elements (PEs). Each performance plan includes the mandatory PEs, with associated results-driven performance requirements that are aligned to organizational goals. Each performance element must include at least one tailored sub-element.

6.2.4. SL/ST/DISL Performance Elements (PEs). Each performance plan includes the mandatory PEs, with associated results-driven performance requirements that are aligned to organizational goals. Each performance element must include at least one tailored sub-element.

6.2.5. Performance Element (PE) Weight Distribution. The DAF assigns weights to the mandatory and optional PEs contained in the performance plan. The weight distributions are pre-set in EPAT in the performance plan template.

6.3. Performance Requirements. The rating official will provide mid-term feedback to CSEs and will assess the annual performance appraisal using performance requirements. **(T-1)** The requirements should represent the most important and/or time-consuming portion of the CSE's duties. The performance requirements do not represent all duties.

6.3.1. Performance requirements show alignment to specific goals and objectives in an appropriate strategic planning documents (e.g., the Air Force Strategic Plan, National Security Strategy). Performance requirements may link to non-Air Force strategic guidance documents (e.g., President's Management Agenda, National Intelligence Strategy, DoD Organizational Assessment, etc.). However, the first linkage for DAF CSEs should be the Air Force or COCOM Strategic Plan.

6.3.2. The rating official determines the expected results and level of accomplishment for each performance requirement. All performance requirements are written at the "Fully Successful" level.

6.3.3. Performance requirements are results-oriented and have an outcome stated, with an appropriate type(s) of measurements identified to determine success. They are written in the SMART-Q format:

6.3.3.1. S - Specific (define results to be accomplished within the scope of the job).

6.3.3.2. M - Measurable (define quality, quantity, cost and/or effectiveness).

6.3.3.3. A - Aligned (support specific strategic goals).

6.3.3.4. R - Realistic/Relevant (requirements are achievable yet challenging).

6.3.3.5. T - Timely (define a timeframe for achieving the requirements).

6.3.3.6. Q - Quality (identify the degree of excellence expected).

6.3.4. Performance requirements will follow guidelines from DoD and DAF or the COCOM.

6.4. Performance Appraisal Period. The CSE annual performance appraisal period is 1 October through 30 September. CSEs must serve a minimum of 90 days in a CSE position in order to be rated and evaluated. **(T-1)** The following exceptions apply:

6.4.1. When the member becomes a new DAF CSE (i.e., transfers from an outside agency other than DoD or receives a promotion into the CSE after the start of the annual performance appraisal period (through appointment, reinstatement, reassignment or transfer)).

6.4.2. When other circumstances occur to reduce the performance appraisal period to less than 12 months (e.g., rating official departs before the end of the performance appraisal period). Exceptions to this rule occur within the last 90 days of the performance period and are as follows:

6.4.2.1. Movement within DoD. The rating official of record will provide an ISR (i.e., early annual rating) appraisal to DAF CSEs who change jobs to a position in the same or different DoD Component with a different pay pool and who served all but the last 90 days of the performance appraisal period before reassignment, provided there is an adequate basis on which to appraise and rate the CSE's performance. **(T-1)**

6.4.2.1.1. The CSE is included in the gaining DoD Component Pay Pool at the end of the regular performance cycle.

6.4.2.1.2. DAF CSEs who transfer to other agencies within DoD in last 90 days receive a rating and performance score from their departing rating official. The CSE is included and evaluated in the gaining organization's pay pool and PRB.

6.4.2.2. Movement Outside of DoD or new appointment to a CSE position. Members who are new DAF CSEs and did not transfer from another DoD agency are eligible to receive their performance rating and evaluation at the end of the next performance appraisal period, after 2 July. They are granted an extended performance appraisal period not longer than 15 months.

6.4.2.3. DAF CSEs who change jobs within the DAF in the last 90 days must complete a new performance plan at the start of the next performance cycle. **(T-1)** CSEs are evaluated in the DAF Pay Pool Panel based on their old plan (provided the CSE had 90 days under the old performance plan).

6.4.3. Movement After the Last Day of the Performance Appraisal Period (1 October) through the first pay period in the next calendar year. The rating and reviewing officials of record shall provide an ISR to CSEs who change jobs to a position in the same or different DoD Component with a different pay pool, on the last day of the appraisal period. **(T-1)** The CSE's salary is included in the departing pay pool. The authorizing official in the departing Pay Pool will evaluate their performance and assign the ISR. **(T-1)** CSE performance payout is calculated and paid based on the pay pool Funding Factor of the gaining pay pool.

6.5. Progress Reviews. Feedback between the rating official and CSE is a fundamental part of the performance cycle process. Feedback may serve as the basis for discussing developmental needs. The reviewing official is not involved in the progress reviews. At least one documented progress review is completed during the cycle and recorded in EPAT.

6.5.1. After the CSE has been under performance standards for a minimum of 90 days a closeout/interim feedback is conducted when either the CSE or rating official leaves their position before the end of the performance appraisal period. Rating officials will provide comments and a score regarding the performance to the individual who succeeds them as the rating official for their consideration when completing the ISR. **(T-1)** CSEs do not provide comments.

6.6. Initial Summary Rating (ISR).

6.6.1. The reviewing official completes a second-level review of the CSE's ISR assigned by the rating official. Reviewers may not change the rating official's ISR. However, reviewers may non-concur with the rating official's ISR and provide appropriate rationale within their comment block on the appraisal form prior to the PRB.

6.6.2. The CSE must acknowledge receipt of the ISR within EPAT. **(T-1)** The CSE's acknowledgement of receipt does not indicate concurrence with the ISR or comments. CSEs express non-concurrence through a request for a higher level review (HLR) within seven working days of receipt of the ISR from the rating official.

6.7. Annual Performance Appraisal. The annual performance appraisal is a mandatory requirement in the performance management cycle. It provides meaningful distinction in performance and aligns performance pay increases and/or performance bonuses, if warranted.

6.7.1. On an annual basis, SAF/MRL will identify the time and date when performance appraisals are to be submitted to prepare for pay pools and the Performance Review Board (PRB).

6.7.2. The CSE initiates his/her own annual performance appraisal by providing specific comments on accomplishments achieved throughout the year.

6.7.3. Rating officials are required to evaluate a CSE's performance at the end of the appraisal period and provide an ISR. **(T-1)** The ISR provides the preliminary performance assessment of the CSE (both a recommended performance score and rating, from level 1 - 5). The ISR is evaluated by the pay pool and the PRB to provide DAF-wide meaningful distinction. Therefore the pay pool and/or PRB may recommend adjustments. In addition, the PRB recommends a performance-based pay increase and/or bonus strategy to the Authorizing Official, the SECAF.

6.7.3.1. Level 5 – Exceptional. Demonstrates exceptional top-level performance; represents the highest level of executive performance, as evidenced by the extraordinary impact on the mission.

6.7.3.2. Level 4 – Exceeds Expectations. Demonstrates a very high level of performance beyond that required; consistently exceeds established performance expectations, timelines, or targets.

6.7.3.3. Level 3 – Achieved Expectations. Demonstrates the high level of performance expected; actions/leadership contribute positively toward the achievement of strategic goals and meaningful results; meets and often exceeds challenging performance expectations.

6.7.3.4. Level 2 – Minimally Satisfactory. Contributions to the organization are acceptable in the short term but do not appreciably advance the organization towards achievement of its goals/objectives.

6.7.3.5. Level 1 – Unsatisfactory. Repeated instances of performance that does not meet established expectations/timelines/targets; produces unacceptable work products/services.

6.7.3.6. If the CSE received an interim/closeout appraisal from a previous rating official(s) any time during the annual appraisal period (in cases where the CSE served under more than one rating official), then the current rating official must also review any previous materials to use in consideration during his/her evaluation of the CSE. **(T-1)**

6.7.3.7. Both individual and organizational performance should be evaluated against the successful completion of the performance requirements in the CSE's performance plan (i.e. results achieved). In cases where the rating official is also the reviewer, no additional reviewer comments are permitted.

6.7.4. Performance Management Roles.

6.7.4.1. Rating Official. Rating officials are typically the immediate supervisor and are responsible for approving and conducting mandatory mid-term feedback and accomplishing annual performance appraisals for assigned CSEs. Rating officials must discuss their CSE's individual performance and contribution to the mission, as well as ratings. **(T-1)**

6.7.4.2. Reviewing Official. The reviewer is a DAF 2-ltr official/MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Commander. Reviewers provide additional comments for the CSE during the appraisal stage, but do not provide additional comments during the mid-term feedback or performance plan creation. Reviewers cannot change the rating official's ISR but may provide their own comments.

6.7.4.3. Higher Level Review (HLR). If the CSE has compelling reason to believe the ISR is not an adequate reflection of his/her performance, the CSE may request an HLR.

6.8. Higher level reviews. CSEs have seven working days (from receipt of the ISR or from notification a pay pool lowered his/her performance level) to request the HLR. An executive is entitled to one (1) HLR, either after receiving their Rating Official's Initial Summary Rating (ISR) OR after receiving the Pay Pool Manager's (PPM) recommendation. All requests are forwarded to SAF/MRL.

6.8.1. The Higher Level Reviewing Official (HLRO) will review the CSE's ISR as documented, and any justification provided by the CSE, rating official and/or reviewer. **(T-1)**

6.8.2. The HLRO is typically either another higher-ranking CSE or an active duty GO in the Air Force/Space Force. The HLRO is appointed by the SECAF.

6.8.3. The HLRO may not change the ISR. He/she makes recommendations which are provided along with all supporting documentation to the pay pool, PRB and/or SECAF to include comments and/or a score adjustment.

6.8.4. Copies of the HLRO's findings and recommendations are provided to the CSE, the rating official, the reviewing official, the PRB and the authorizing official. The HLR is the final process by which a CSE may request review of the assigned ISR. A CSE may not grieve any performance plan, adjustment in basic pay, the non-receipt of a performance bonus or the amount of a performance bonus.

6.9. Pay pools and Performance Review Board (PRB). The pay pool and PRB are composed of members representing a combination of organizations, functions, and tiers. More than half of the pay pool and PRB will be career members of the SES. The pay pool and PRB are charged with making recommendations to the SECAF about individual performance that results in meaningful distinctions in performance and performance-based pay outs. They are appointed by the SECAF in writing.

6.9.1. The pay pool is the first step in the review process to ensure performance standards are applied consistently across the organization and to ensure there is meaningful distinction in performance. They may observe where they see significant differences in performances that should be considered when the PRB makes recommendations about the strategy for aligning performance-based pay increases and/or performance-based bonuses. Pay pools are charged with reviewing the written narrative and the scores and recommending adjustments to ensure consistency.

6.9.1.1. The pay pool may adjust up or down a CSE's ISR based on applying the performance standards in a fair and consistent manner.

6.9.1.2. The pay pool must offer rating officials a chance to reclamation any proposed rating level change prior to finalizing deliberations.

6.9.1.3. Rating officials should be prepared to provide reclama requests within 48 hours, unless extenuating circumstances exist. Reclama requests may include additional evidence to substantiate the CSE's ISR (if applicable).

6.9.1.4. If the rater does not reclama, and if the CSE previously did not request a HLR, then the CSE will be provided an opportunity to request a higher level review. (See [paragraph 6.8.](#))

6.9.1.5. Reclama results and HLR recommendations will be visible to the PRB and SECAF. SECAF will make a final score and payout determinations.

6.9.2. The PRB is charged with ensuring pay pools operated consistently and made meaningful distinction. The PRB also is charged with recommending to the SECAF a strategy to align performance with performance-based payouts.

6.9.3. Members of the pay pool and PRB cannot participate in the rating or scoring of their own appraisal, the appraisal of their supervisor, or the appraisals of peers within their same position tier.

6.9.4. The PRB is established in a manner that precludes conflicts of interest.

6.9.5. Authorizing Official. The SECAF has final approving authority for the DAF and leverages recommendations of the pay pools and PRB to drive meaningful distinctions in compensation based on relative performance. The SECAF approves performance pay increases and performance bonuses in a way that recognizes individual performance and contributions to the DAF, the Air Force, the Space Force and/or the COCOM mission. The SECAF will establish the Annual Summary Rating (ASR) and will seek OSD validation that the Department of Air Force performance management process meaningfully distinguished performance and aligned compensation based on those distinctions. The authorizing official is the only one who can approve a Total Performance Payout Adjustment (e.g., performance based pay raise, performance based bonus, a performance based time off award).

6.9.6. Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). Office of Secretary of Defense validates the DAF's performance process complied with law and policy, differentiated performance and aligned compensation decisions based on performance.

6.9.7. Notification of Results. After SECAF approval of ASR, SAF/MRL will provide initial disclosure to the CSE. (This may happen before OSD validation.) MRL notification normally will route through reviewing officials in advance of notification to individual CSEs. After OSD validation, SAF/MRL will provide final disclosure to the CSE, rating official and reviewing officials. SAF/MRL also shall work with the Air Force Personnel Center and Defense Financial Accounting Service to process all performance-based payout for all CSEs. In addition, SAF/MRL will provide aggregate results to CSEs.

6.10. Total Performance Payout. Under a DoD certified performance management system, CSE annual compensation changes (e.g., pay adjustments, bonuses, and/or time off awards) are linked to performance. Payouts are subject to the availability of funds.

6.10.1. Annual Closeout Guidance. OSD issues annual closeout guidance for the performance management system to ensure consistency across the department. The guidance covers Pay Pool Funding, compensation rules, organizational assessment and evaluation procedures.

6.10.1.1. Pay Pool Funding Factor. OSD determines the Pay Pool Funding Factor which is the sum of three variables: President's Adjustment to Executive Pay (PAEP); Pay Progression Budget (pay increases); and Performance Bonus Budget (bonuses).

6.10.1.2. Pay Pool Funding. The Pay Pool Funding is determined by the sum of all CSE's salaries (including NC and LTA members) on the rolls as of 30 September and then multiplied by the Pay Pool Funding Factor. It may not exceed the OSD guidance or 10 percent of the total aggregate basic pay of CSEs. Pay Pool Funding Factors are defined for each pay pool.

6.10.1.3. Payouts will be based on performance and will not be authorized in addition to compensation changes that were affected during the performance cycle upon appointment, reassignment or transfer.

6.10.1.4. Total Payouts will not exceed the aggregate Pay Pool Funding limits imposed by statute, regulation or DoD.

6.10.1.5. Members of the SES/DISES will either receive zero bonus or a bonus that is at least five percent but not more than twenty percent of the member's salary.

6.10.2. Members serving on Limited Term Appointment (LTA). Members serving on an LTA are not eligible for performance-based bonuses but are eligible for performance-based pay raises. Salaries for those serving on Limited Term Appointments are included in the pay pool.

6.10.3. Pay Rules for Less Than a Full Cycle. The DAF prorates Total Performance Payout for members with less than a full year of service (12 months), regardless of agency, as a CSE. CSEs with less than 90 days on a performance plan (appointment 2 July or later) are not rated, do not meet the Pay Pool Panel or PRB and are not eligible for a total performance payout until the following year. However, the CSE's salary is included in the pay pool.

Chapter 7

PAY AND OTHER COMPENSATION

7.1. Background. CSE pay and compensation is based on performance and level of responsibility. Annually, CSEs will be eligible for performance-based pay adjustments, bonuses and/or time off awards. In addition, CSEs may be eligible for pay increases during initial appointment or reassignment to a position of greater responsibility. **Note:** This chapter does not apply to PAS members, NC SES members and HQEs. HQE pay and other compensation guidance is addressed separately in **Chapter 10** of this instruction.

7.2. Pay Ranges. The minimum rate of basic pay for DAF CSEs is equal to 120 percent of the basic pay rate for grade GS-15 (step 1). Under a certified performance management system, the maximum rate of basic pay is the basic pay rate for Level II of Executive Schedule (EX-II). These change annually.

7.2.1. Tier Levels. The DAF SES/DISES positions are designated, based on scope of responsibility, in a three-tier structure that is applied across the Department of Defense. This provides comparability and transparency in SES/DISES positions. Generally pay will be aligned to the level of responsibility, which is to say aligned to the Tier. In order to recognize superior performance, those executives who earn a level 5 rating may receive performance-based pay raises above the maximum rate of pay for the Tier.

7.2.1.1. Tier 1. The maximum rate is equivalent to EX-III.

7.2.1.2. Tier 2. Under a certified performance management system, the maximum rate of basic pay for Tier 2 is equivalent to the midpoint between EX III and EX II (rounded up to the nearest thousand).

7.2.1.3. Tier 3. Under a certified performance management system, the maximum rate of basic pay is equivalent to EX-II.

7.2.2. The DISL/SL/ST positions are not assigned to tiers, but have a maximum rate of basic pay of EX-II under a certified performance system. However, DAF typically limits pay to EX-III.

7.2.3. The SECAF approves initial pay rates, changes to pay based on increases in responsibility and performance-based pay adjustments. He or she may delegate initial pay setting and changes to pay based on increased responsibility to the appointing official. He or she may not delegate performance based pay adjustments.

7.2.4. Aggregate Limitation on Pay. Aggregate pay cannot exceed limits established in 5 USC § 5307, *Limitation on Certain Payments*, for CSEs paid under 5 USC § 5383, *Setting Individual Senior Executive Pay*. The aggregate limit applies to basic pay, awards (e.g., rank, performance, and stipend incentive), recruitment and relocation bonuses, retention allowances and other similar payments. Under a certified performance management system, total compensation paid to a CSE during a calendar year may not exceed the Vice President's salary at the end of the calendar year, based on a current AF certified performance management system, pursuant to 5 CFR Subpart D, *Pay and Performance Awards under the Senior Executive Service*. If the performance management system is not certified, the aggregate limit is EX-I in accordance with 5 CFR Part 530 § 201(b), *Aggregate Limitation on Pay*.

7.3. Setting Pay. Pay is set based upon: individual and organizational performance results; the complexity and scope of work; the breadth of responsibility; the CSE's experience, pay history and qualifications.

7.3.1. CSE basic pay is exclusive of bonuses, incentives, differentials, and allowances. DAF may adjust the rate of basic pay of a CSE not more than once during any 12-month period, except as provided by 5 CFR § 534.404, *Setting and Adjusting Pay for Senior Executives*.

7.3.2. SES/DISES/DISL/SL/ST are not eligible for locality pay.

7.3.3. New Accession. Pay for new career CSEs will be set to ensure the member is at or above the tier floor.

7.3.3.1. The TMB will recommend pay setting guidelines for SECAF approval. SAF/MRL shall recommend an appropriate starting salary for new CSEs, consistent with the SECAF approved pay setting guidelines. The appointing official will finalize the initial salary offer.

7.3.3.2. In making a recommendation consistent with the SECAF-approved pay setting guidance, SAF/MRL shall consider prior salary and shall not consider other monetary compensation such as bonuses, allowances, awards, stock options, company car, etc.

7.3.3.3. Organizations may submit justification for increases above the recommended percent. Exceptions to policy will be approved by SECAF, or SECAF's designee.

7.3.4. Reinstatement of former SES.

7.3.4.1. SES reinstated after a break in SES service **less than** 30 days, may have pay set at any rate above the tier minimum and up to the former SES rate of pay unless otherwise approved by SECAF, or SECAF's designee.

7.3.4.2. SES reinstated after a break in SES service **more than** 30 days, may have pay set anywhere in the appropriate Tier range.

7.3.4.3. If a reinstatement SES is employed with a salary higher than the maximum rate of pay for the tier of the CSE position to which they will be reinstated, then pay should be capped at the position Tier level. Exceptions may be requested for SECAF, or SECAF's designee, approval.

7.3.5. Transfer. When members of the SES/DISES transfer into the DAF from a different agency, pay recommendations will be made on a case-by-case basis and recommend approval/disapproval to the SECAF, subject to the limitation on the maximum rate of basic pay. Generally, these recommendations will be made by comparing the position held at the losing agency to the proposed position within the DAF. If the movement is determined to be to a higher level or responsibility, a pay increase may be appropriate.

7.3.5.1. If pay is set at the same SES rate the SES/DISES member received in his/her former agency, the action is not considered a pay adjustment for the purpose of applying the 12-month rule.

7.3.5.2. The SES/DISES member's rate of pay is not considered a retained rate of pay for the purpose of applying 5 USC § 3594, *Guaranteed Placement In Other Personnel Systems* and 5 CFR Part 359, Subpart G, *Guaranteed Placement*, or 5 USC § 5363, *Grade and Pay Retention*, and 5 CFR Part 536, Subpart C, *Pay Retention*.

7.3.6. Reassignment to positions of increased responsibility. Pay increases are permitted when an executive assumes greater levels of responsibility such as when an executive moves to a higher tier or takes on significant additional responsibility through a reassignment within tier. These pay increases will be approved/disapproved by the SECAF or the SECAF's designee. The increase generally will not exceed five percent and should not result in the executive exceeding the maximum rate of pay for the Tier of the position into which he or she is being reassigned. In cases where SAF/MRL identifies a significant pay disparity, an increase in excess of five percent may be considered. **(T-1)** SECAF, or SECAF's designee, will make final decisions regarding rates of pay. **(T-0)**

7.3.7. Movement to a Lower Tier.

7.3.7.1. When movement to a lower tier is at the discretion of the authorizing official to meet organizational needs, such as executive development, the SES/DISES member retains his/her salary/DV code. **(T-0)**

7.3.7.2. When movement to a lower tier is at the request of the SES/DISES member (i.e., applied for the vacancy), the member retains his/her salary, assumes the DV code of the new position, and may receive only 50 percent of future pay increases (exceptions may be applied with approval from SECAF or his/her designee). **(T-1)**

7.3.7.3. When movement to a lower tier is for cause, a decrease in pay for the SES/DISES member is considered. Examples of being moved to a lower tier for cause include upon receipt of a minimally successful or unsatisfactory ASR, failure to meet a critical performance element, and/or disciplinary action. **(T-0)**

7.3.8. Maximum Payable Rate. If a CSE takes a position in the GS at the member's request and is not eligible for saved pay, the individual may be paid under the "maximum payable rate" rule, as determined by the agency. An individual serving on an LTA who returns to the GS is not eligible for retained pay, nor will they retain their DV code, but may have his/her pay set under the "maximum payable rate" rule, as determined by the agency. **(T-1)** It does not matter whether the return to GS is voluntary, or the result of a management decision. In determining the GS rate, agencies may take into account such factors as how long the individual served under the LTA and what the individual's pay would have been had the individual remained in the GS.

7.4. Pay Flexibility. The DAF has discretionary authority to provide additional compensation to meet pre-employment interview expenses, travel and moving costs for new appointees. The DAF may advance pay for new appointees up to two pay periods (unless the appointee is the agency head).

7.4.1. Recruitment and Relocation. The DAF may pay a recruitment or relocation incentive to a newly appointed CSE if the agency has determined that the position is likely to be difficult to fill in the absence of an incentive.

7.4.1.1. The TMB may recommend a policy for use of recruitment and relocation incentives to SECAF or SECAF's designee for approval. SAF/MRL may provide recruitment or retention incentives consistent with the SECAF approved policy. Exceptions to the policy shall be approved by SECAF or SECAF's designee. Requests for exceptions must articulate a compelling reason why an incentive is needed. **(T-0)**

7.4.1.2. To receive these incentives, an employee must sign an agreement to complete a period of service with the agency. **(T-1)** Failure to complete the service agreement requires repayment on a pro rata basis. These payments are not considered a part of basic pay but are included in the calculation on the limitation of aggregate basic pay.

7.4.1.3. A relocation incentive may be paid only when the CSE's last ASR under an official performance appraisal or evaluation system is at least "Fully Successful" or equivalent. The relocation incentive is included for the limitation of aggregate basic pay.

7.4.2. Retention Payments.

7.4.2.1. The DAF may pay a retention allowance of up to 25 percent of basic pay to a CSE with unusually high or unique qualifications, or based upon the special need of the DAF, if it is determined the CSE's skills makes it essential to retain the CSE in their current position during a period of time before the closure or relocation of the CSEs office, facility, activity or organization.

7.4.2.2. Retention payments may be provided if the DAF determines that without the allowance, the CSE would be likely to leave the Federal Government or for another Federal Government agency in the absence of a retention incentive, whether or not other employment is planned. These payments are not considered a part of basic pay but are included in the calculation on the limitation of aggregate basic pay.

7.4.2.3. A retention incentive may be paid only when the CSE's last ASR is at least "Fully Successful" or equivalent.

Chapter 8

AWARDS AND OTHER RECOGNITION

8.1. Background. The law authorizes agencies to grant special recognition, awards and incentive payments to CSEs to help attract, retain, recognize, reward, and motivate highly competent CSE members. Monetary forms of recognition include performance awards (bonuses) and Presidential Rank Awards. Only Career appointees are eligible for performance awards and the PRA. Non-monetary forms of recognition include Campaign and Service awards. Approval authority is outlined in DoDI1400.25V451_DAFI36-1004, *Department of the Air Force Civilian Recognition Program*. **Note:** This chapter does not apply to PAS, NC SES members and HQEs.

8.2. Monetary Awards. These awards are recognized with compensation subject to the aggregate limitation on pay. Total compensation paid to a CSE member during a calendar year, to include allowances, differentials, bonuses, awards or other similar cash payments may not exceed EX-I, or the Vice President's salary, at the end of the calendar year, under a certified performance management system.

8.2.1. Performance-Based Bonus. The SECAF, as the authorizing official, determines performance awards for all DAF CSEs based on recommendations from the PRB in accordance with [Chapter 6](#), Performance Management for eligibility and [Chapter 7](#), Pay and Other Compensation for monetary compensation amounts.

8.2.2. Presidential Rank Award (PRA). The PRA is the most prestigious recognition awarded to CSEs. It is restricted to those in Career status only and recognizes exceptional performance over an extended period of time. They should have a record of exceptional performance over the previous three to five years. CSEs serving in NC appointments, LTAs, and PAS are not eligible for a PRA.

8.2.2.1. The Distinguished PRA recognizes sustained extraordinary accomplishment. Distinguished recipients receive a lump-sum payment of 35 percent of their rate of annual basic pay, a gold pin, and a framed certificate signed by the President. The Distinguished rank is awarded to one percent or less of Career CSEs Government-wide for sustained extraordinary accomplishments.

8.2.2.2. The Meritorious PRA recognizes sustained accomplishment. Meritorious recipients receive a lump-sum payment of 20 percent of their rate of annual basic pay, a silver pin, and a framed certificate signed by the President. The Meritorious rank is awarded to five percent or less of Career CSEs Government-wide for sustained accomplishments.

8.2.2.3. There is no requirement to receive a meritorious award before receiving a distinguished award. OPM policy states a CSE may not receive the same category of award again during the four fiscal years following the one for which the award is given.

8.2.2.4. CSEs are eligible to receive a PRA and a performance bonus in the same calendar year. Performance award will not be reduced or denied on the basis of receiving a PRA during the same year.

8.2.2.5. SAF/MRL annually issues calls for nominations. Two separate nomination processes occur: one for Career SES/SL/ST and one for Career DISES/DISL.

8.2.2.5.1. Only HAF 2-ltr officials/MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Commanders may submit nominations. Nominations are submitted to SAF/MRL. Specific guidance for content of award packages is provided when the call for nominations occurs.

8.2.2.5.2. There are no limits on the number of nominees a HAF 2-ltr official/MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Commander can submit; however, there should be no more than one distinguished nominee for every five meritorious nominees submitted.

8.2.2.6. Annually, SECAF establishes a Presidential Rank Award Panel (PRAP). The PRAP is chaired at the 3-star or higher level by a GO, SES, or political appointee. Board members are typically selected from previous PRA winners. To ensure a breadth of experience and perspectives, at least half of the PRAP will be career members, and the panel composition will aim to represent the array of backgrounds and expertise found within the DAF and DAF-serviced organizations.

8.2.2.7. SAF/MRL notifies appropriate authorities of PRA recipients. The SECAF hosts a ceremony and reception honoring the DAF PRA recipients.

8.2.2.8. Public release of PRA recipients (e.g., website, newsletter, newspaper) is not authorized until the President officially announces the winners and SAF/MRL receives OPM and OSD authorization.

8.3. Non-Monetary Awards. Non-monetary awards are appropriate for special acts or service. Non-government organizations may present non-monetary awards to recognize outstanding executive achievements. Non-monetary awards, eligibility requirements and nomination procedures are found in DoDI1400.25V451_DAFI36-1004. These awards are not presented in lieu of a performance-based bonus or in addition to a performance-based bonus for the same accomplishment.

Chapter 9

TALENT MANAGEMENT AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

9.1. Talent Management. Talent management is a deliberate process used to manage the career lifecycle of Executives. Talent management builds a leadership talent pool to ensure continuity to execute the DAF mission without interruptions that may be created by extensive position vacancies. **Note:** This chapter only applies to career members of the SES.

9.2. Talent Pool. The talent pool consists of all career members of the SES.

9.2.1. Self-Assessment/Executive Profile. Annually, Executives validate their Executive Profile and complete a self-assessment as part of the overall talent management process using the Defense Talent Management System (DTMS).

9.2.2. The self-assessment/executive profile is reviewed by the Rater and Endorser of the executive to provide input to the TMC and TMB. MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Commanders and DAF 2-ltrs serve as the Endorsers for all of their Executives in DTMS in order to provide an enterprise view of executive potential within their organization.

9.2.3. SAF/MRL is the OPR for DTMS.

9.3. Talent Management Board (TMB) and Talent Management Committee (TMC). The chair and members are appointed by the SECAF. The committee reviews available materials to assign readiness ratings, identify potential candidates for future vacancies and develop succession management plans. TMC inputs are reviewed by the TMB. All TMC and TMB deliberations are confidential.

9.3.1. Eligibility. An Executive must have a completed executive-level performance appraisal to meet the TMC and TMB.

9.3.2. Readiness Rating. The TMC reviews available information and collaborates to assign one of four possible readiness ratings:

9.3.2.1. Ready for Increased Challenge. Member is ready now for a position of greater scope, impact, complexity, responsibility of institutional importance.

9.3.2.2. Ready for Career Broadening. Member is ready now to move into a position of equivalent scope, impact, complexity, responsibility, and authority that offers different challenges, growth, and/or broadening opportunities.

9.3.2.3. Build Tenure/Experience. Member is on track or recently assigned.

9.3.2.4. Contribute In-Place. Member occupies a highly specialized, unique or niche position creating a need for continuity.

9.3.3. Transferability. The TMB is used to identify and understand the skills and competencies available within the Executive community to ensure visibility of talent; and promote career opportunities within the DAF and across DoD to maximize transferability. The DAF requires its corps of Executives to be mobile; executives may be reassigned to meet shifting DAF priorities. Upon SECAF approval of the TMB results, Executives and their Rater, and/or Endorser are notified that a readiness rating of “ready for increased challenge” or “ready for career broadening” may result in a referral for opportunities enterprise-wide within the next 12 months.

9.3.4. The SECAF, as the final authorizing official, shall approve the outcome of TMB deliberations. SAF/MR will ensure compliance with succession management policies issued by DoD.

9.3.5. Talent Management Board (TMB) Feedback. SAF/MRL ensures notification of TMB results via a signed memorandum from the TMB or TMC. At minimum, the memorandum details the readiness rating and recommendations for executive development (e.g., short courses). Endorsing officials are provided access to the readiness ratings of members within their command. Feedback regarding a readiness rating or succession plan cannot be challenged, but Executives may solicit clarification of the assessment through the chain of command and/or TMB or TMC chair(s).

9.4. Succession Planning. DAF uses succession planning to ensure the continuity of Executive talent and develop the Executive talent pool. As a result of succession planning, DAF will better understand which positions have strong or insufficient sets of candidates; this enables DAF to focus development and recruitment efforts to ensure leadership capacity now and for the future.

9.4.1. Position Planning. This phase of succession planning identifies the current and projected requirements for each enduring SES position and identifies the preferred strategy to fill the position: competitive recruitment to promote someone into the SES; or reassignment of a current member of the SES.

9.4.2. Talent Pool Review. This phase of succession planning assesses each eligible executive. The assessment includes recommending a readiness rating (combination of readiness to move to a new assignment today and future potential). It also includes an assessment of executive development. It results in a feedback letter, provided to each executive.

9.4.3. Slating. This phase of succession planning identifies specific executives who should be considered for each reassignment position using the position requirements identified in the position planning phase. Readiness ratings are considered in creating that slate of candidates who should be considered. Candidates must be non-retired members of the SES in good standing.

9.4.3.1. At the conclusion of the slating phase, the TMB identifies gaps in the talent pool and makes recommendations to address gaps, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, as needed.

9.4.3.2. Slates are created or refreshed at least annually.

9.5. Career Development. The DAF provides career members of the SES/DISES targeted and specialized development opportunities focused on current and future corporate needs as identified by annual succession planning. Owing organizations have an inherent responsibility for providing functional or development training for their CSE members. **Note:** The DISL/SL/ST members receive leadership development training on a space available basis.

9.5.1. Executive Development Plans (EDPs). All SESs establish EDPs. EDP detail development activities such as short-term and long-term experiences that will meet DAF and organizational needs for leadership, managerial improvement and results. DISL/SL/ST members are considered to possess the requisite skills associated with the level and position for which they were hired, so development should focus on maintaining and improving the skills for which they were selected.

9.5.2. Centrally-Managed Development Opportunities. SAF/MRL executes the Senior Leader Development Portfolio.

9.5.2.1. Selection Methodology. SES/DISES members are identified as potential candidates for developmental opportunities during the annual TMB process. This strategic approach is applied to maximize the DAF's return on investment, rather than using a nominative or self-identification process.

9.5.2.1.1. General Selection Criteria. TMB annually reviews the records of all career SES/DISES members to make development recommendations. Supervisors review records for career members of the DISL/SL/ST to make developmental recommendations. Generally, funding for DISL/SL/ST development comes from the organization to which the individual is assigned.

9.5.2.1.2. Budgetary constraints may limit the availability of course allocations. Primary and alternate candidates are identified based on outcomes from the TMB and the available number of allocations.

9.5.2.2. External Courses. Each year, SAF/MRL receives a limited number of external opportunities from DoD, other Components or Federal agencies to provide attendees for specialized programs or courses not contained in the Senior Leader Development Portfolio. The courses are specific to a functional area or provide a general level of executive development. These courses may be filled deliberately from the outcomes of the TMB or may allow for self-nomination. As appropriate, SAF/MRL will advertise these opportunities and accept nominations. SAF/MRL will select candidates in a way that closes developmental gaps, avoids duplication, and is fair and transparent.

9.5.2.3. Funding. Central funding of development opportunities is available for SES/DISES members, and SL/ST/DISL if resources permit.

9.5.2.4. Cancellation/Withdrawal Policy. Once an SES/DISES member is confirmed and notified for a specific course, per senior leader policy, the MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Deputy/Vice Commander or DAF 2-ltr equivalent official must provide a written justification for any cancellation or withdrawal from the course. Requests for withdrawal are forwarded though SAF/MR for final decision. SAF/MR retains authority to remove executives from courses.

9.5.2.5. Executive Orientation. To assist in the transition to both the Executive Corps and the DAF, mandatory courses are identified for newly appointed SES/DISES members. SES/ DISES members who transfer to the DAF are admitted to the courses on a space available basis. The target window for completion of these courses is within the first 18 months of initial appointment to the SES/DISES.

9.5.3. Mentorship. Mentoring plays a vital role in developing Airmen into effective leaders and enabling them to reach their full potential. Through mentorship, we cultivate a professional environment where Airmen of all ranks can benefit from guidance, support, and shared experience, ultimately strengthening the DAF. All newly appointed CSEs will be required to establish a mentoring partnership with an experienced executive who can provide timely advice and support during the initial 12 months of their initial executive appointment. All CSEs will mentor civilian employees.

9.5.4. Sabbaticals. The SECAF may approve a sabbatical for up to 11 months to career members of the SES for full-time study or uncompensated work experience which contributes to their development and effectiveness. A member may have only one sabbatical in any 10-year period. To be eligible for a sabbatical, the member requires seven years of Federal Civil Service at the SES (or equivalent) level; cannot be eligible for optional retirement as of the time the sabbatical begins; must have a rating of at least “exceeds expected results” on latest performance appraisal; and agrees to remain in Federal Civil Service for two consecutive years after completion of the sabbatical.

9.5.5. Retirement. Generally, DAF CSE members should submit their retirement requests at least 90 days prior to final date of retirement to allow appropriate time for processing and transition. SAF/MRL and SF/S1L will coordinate the actual request for personnel action with the Air Force Personnel Center who processes all CSE retirements.

9.5.5.1. Outprocessing and Leave. Civilians are not given “terminal leave” but are allowed to take reasonable periods of leave as they prepare to transition into retirement.

9.5.5.2. Last Move Home. A Career SES appointee is entitled to moving expenses upon retirement if the individual was moved geographically and at the time of relocation, is eligible or within 5 years of optional retirement, or was eligible for discontinued service retirement, at the time of the Federal Government directed move.

Chapter 10

HIGHLY QUALIFIED EXPERTS (HQE)

10.1. Background. In accordance with DoDI 1400.25, v922, *DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Employment of Highly Qualified Experts (HQEs)*, HQEs are at-will, temporary, senior-level Excepted Service Government employees who possess expert knowledge or uncommon level of expertise not available within DoD. They are utilized to provide a temporary infusion of talent and non-permanent support for a short-term requirement.

10.2. HQE Pre-Appointment Staffing Review Requirements. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy) (DASD/ CPP) will conduct pre-appointment staffing reviews of appointments involving HQEs whose positions fall into the following categories:

10.2.1. Appointment of a former political appointee converted noncompetitively using the Schedule A appointing authority or a former political appointee noncompetitively converted using any appointing authority or Schedule C Executive Branch employee who held the position within the last five years to a HQE position.

10.2.2. Appointment of a former non-career SES Executive Branch employee who held the position within the last five years to a HQE position.

10.2.3. Appointment to a HQE position of an individual who has already served on a HQE appointment or is currently serving in a HQE position without at least a 30-day intervening break in service.

10.3. HQE Appointment. In accordance with 5 USC § 9903 (d), *Attracting Highly Qualified Experts*, HQEs can be appointed for a period of up to five years. Generally, initial HQE appointments are for three years or less. Appointments may be extended. The initial appointment and extensions in total will not exceed six years.

10.3.1. HQE-Senior Mentors (SM) shall be appointed to provide expert experience-based mentoring, teaching, training, advice, and recommendations to senior military officers, staffs, and students as they participate in war games, warfighting courses, operational planning, operational exercises, and decision-making exercises.

10.3.2. HQE appointments may not be used to appoint any person to a position as the Head of a DoD Component; replace a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES) in a continuing DoD function, or to bypass or undermine the hiring of a career member of the SES for a permanent position; provide any person temporary employment in anticipation of a permanent appointment; provide employment to any personnel formerly within the civil service or uniformed services without at least a 30-day break in such service and without the qualifying credentials; or provide employment to a Federal annuitant when such employment would be more appropriate under the provisions of Volume 300 of DoDI 1400.25, *DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Employment of Federal Civilian Annuitants in the Department of Defense*.

10.3.3. HQE allocations are managed by SAF/MRL. Initial requests with justifications will be submitted to SAF/MRL for initial review and final approval.

10.4. Highly Qualified Expert (HQE) Duties. HQEs are appointed to mentor, lead, oversee, direct, manage and consult on DoD programs and initiatives. If an HQE's responsibilities include supervisory or managerial duties, these duties require approval by the TMB.

10.5. Precedence Priority Codes and Position Tiers. OSD periodically publishes updates to the Order of Precedence list, which provides the relative protocol precedence for members within DoD. CSEs are not stratified by grade; therefore, position and pay structure distinctions for CSEs necessitates some order of precedence. For protocol purposes, due to the level of duties and responsibilities of an HQE, they warrant recognition at the DV Code 6 level. **(T-1)**

10.6. Recruitment and Selection. The hiring organization conducts a recruitment search and identifies potential HQE candidate(s). At a minimum, candidates must possess an uncommon level of expertise with substantive knowledge, skills, experience, and/or education along coupled with a proven ability in the particular occupational field.

10.6.1. SAF/MRL will provide the requesting organizations with the required template package for the establishment of an HQE position.

10.6.2. Classification: SAF/MRL is responsible for the classification of HQE and HQE-SM positions.

10.7. Former Civil or Uniformed Service Employees.

10.7.1. Intervening Period of Service. Former Civil or Uniformed Service employees are required to have a minimum 30-day break in service prior to an appointment as an HQE (see [paragraph 10.2.3.](#)). These types of appointments should occur only in exceptionally compelling instances, and are subject to a Pre-Appointment Staffing Review. This review does not apply to HQE-SM appointments.

10.7.2. Retired Federal Civil Service Employees. Retired Federal Civil Service employees who possess an uncommon level of expertise and recognition required for an HQE appointment are appointed as Reemployed Annuitants under the provisions of DoDI 1400.25, Volume 300. Circumstances in which it may be appropriate to reemploy an annuitant include but are not limited to:

10.7.2.1. A position is hard to fill as evidenced by historically high turnover, a severe shortage of candidates, or other significant recruiting difficulty.

10.7.2.2. A position is critical to accomplish the organization's mission or to complete a specific project or initiative.

10.7.2.3. An annuitant has unique or specialized skills or unusual qualifications not generally available.

10.7.2.4. An appointment is for not more than 2087 hours (e.g., one year full time or two years part time) to mentor less experienced employees and/or to provide continuity during critical organizational transitions.

10.8. Funding and Manpower. The gaining unit's organization must fund the HQE position. Any HQE salary drawn from civilian pay accounts is reimbursed from Operations and Maintenance accounts as chosen by the hiring MAJCOM in accordance with standard financial regulations and policies. The DAF does not require manpower or billet numbers for HQE positions, as they are temporary. This does not preclude an organization from assigning a manpower or billet number.

10.9. Compensation. Compensation for an HQE or HQE-SM shall reflect the salary paid in the labor market for comparable positions, taking into account such factors as applicant's skills, professional and educational accomplishments, and the complexity of the work the applicant is asked to perform. In addition to basic pay, HQE employees may receive additional compensation to include locality pay, recruitment, relocation and retention incentives, subject to limitations established under 5 USC § 9903 (d).

10.9.1. Basic Pay. Basic pay for an HQE or HQE-SM typically will be within the range from GS-15, step 1 (or equivalent) up to the statutory limit of Level IV of the Executive Schedule. Executive Level IV is the maximum basic pay allowed under section 9903 of Reference (c) as limited by section 2 of Public Law 110-372, *The Senior Professional Performance Act of 2008*.

10.9.2. Locality Pay. The DAF may pay locality pay: however, the HQE's total pay (basic rate of pay plus locality pay) cannot exceed the statutory limit of EX-III. Since the total pay cannot exceed these limits, when the HQE is eligible for locality-based pay, basic pay is adjusted to ensure it is within the statutory caps.

10.9.3. Aggregate Limitation on Pay. Under a certified performance management system, in any calendar year, the aggregate annual compensation (basic pay, locality, and bonus pay) cannot exceed the salary of the Vice President. If the performance management system is not certified, the aggregate statutory limit is EX-I in accordance with 5 CFR Part 530 § 201.

10.9.4. Premium Pay. In accordance with DoDI 1400.25, v922, HQEs and HQE-SMs are not eligible for premium pay (e.g., overtime, compensatory time, credit hours, and compensatory time for travel) or time-off awards.

10.9.5. Travel Time. Pay while in travel status may be authorized depending on whether the HQE's work schedule is full-time, part-time, or intermittent. Pay is authorized for full-time and part-time HQEs when travel occurs during a regularly scheduled work week or while performing work while traveling to or from business. Travel pay is authorized for intermittent HQEs only when performing work, since there is no regularly scheduled work week. Pay may be authorized during travel in rare instances when carried out under arduous conditions or is not scheduled/controlled by the Agency.

10.10. Performance Management. HQEs and HQE-SMs shall be subject to a performance management process that establishes performance requirements and provides for additional compensation, if applicable, for extraordinary results. HQEs are not subject to the requirements set forth under [Chapter 6](#), in this instruction.

10.10.1. Performance Plan. In accordance with DoDI 1400.25, v922, HQEs and HQE-SMs shall not be subject to the requirements of a DoD formal performance management system, such as the Senior Executive Service and Senior Professional Performance Management System. Instead, HQEs and HQE-SMs will be covered by an appointment-specific performance plan. The “HQE appointment-specific performance plan” template is provided by SAF/MRL and is used for all HQE performance plans. All HQEs must be on approved performance plans within 30 days of appointment or within 30 days from the start of the performance appraisal period.

10.10.1.1. The performance plan is developed and discussed in consultation with the rating official and reflects the duties and expected outcomes of the position.

10.10.1.2. A revalidation of the performance requirements are yearly and typically occur on the fiscal year performance cycle.

10.10.2. Performance Factor. There is only one performance factor: “*Mission Accomplishment*” on which an HQE can be assessed. Mission Accomplishment is defined as: Executes the position’s assigned duties in a manner that contributes to the successful outcome of strategic goals and objectives; ensures the accomplishments of the organization or program managed can be directly tied to mission need and specifies the results or commitments to be achieved during the rating period.

10.10.3. Performance Requirements. Three mandatory performance requirements are necessary for the *Mission Accomplishment* performance factor. All performance requirements are written at the “*In Good Standing*” level. They are results-focused and written in the SMART-Q format. Each performance requirement shows alignment to a specific goal in either the DAF’s strategic plan, the MAJCOM specific strategic plan or DoD Organizational Assessment. In accordance with DoDI 1400.25, Vol 922, the PAEP increases may be used to recognize superior performance.

10.10.4. Performance Rating Level. The HQE performance management process is a pass-fail system. There are only two performance rating level: “*In Good Standing*” or “*Not In Good Standing*.” To receive a performance rating of “*In Good Standing*,” results and accomplishments achieved by the HQE during the performance appraisal period are characterized as:

10.10.4.1. Uncommon, Proficient, Exceptional, Outstanding and;

10.10.4.2. Demonstrate efficiencies and cost savings.

10.10.4.3. HQEs serve at the will of the appointing official. If an HQE does not achieve results expected at the “*In Good Standing*” level, the HQE must be terminated.

10.10.5. Performance Appraisal Period. In accordance with DoDI 1400.25, v922, the periods of performance and appraisal can be for any length of time at or over 90 days as long as the time is deemed sufficient to deliver and review the expected results, e.g., 90 days, annually, or multi-year. The performance plan shall be reviewed by the rating official at least once during the period of performance to ensure it is current and relevant. The performance plan shall be changed or updated based upon job requirements and organizational needs.

10.10.5.1. HQEs must be on a performance plan for a minimum of 90 days in order to be eligible to receive a performance rating.

10.10.5.2. Rating officials are responsible for assessing and monitoring performance during the performance appraisal period and ensuring on-going feedback as necessary. On-going feedback should address expectations and progress on the HQE's accomplishments towards meeting the performance requirements set forth in the performance plan. The Rating Official must conduct a mandatory mid-cycle performance review.

10.10.5.3. At the beginning of the appointment and at the conclusion of the performance cycle, all HQE performance plans are provided to SAF/MRL. SAF/MRL retains final HQE performance plans for a minimum of three years after expiration of the appointment.

10.10.6. Additional Compensation. In rare circumstances, accomplishments achieved by an HQE during the performance appraisal period may be considered "*Extraordinary Results*." The "*Extraordinary Results*" are a high bar standard and are characterized as significantly advancing the DAF's or DoD's mission or program objectives (e.g., game changing);

10.10.7. Additional Payments. SECAF may authorize an additional payment, to include a recruitment, relocation or retention incentive, subject to the following limitations.

10.10.7.1. The total of all additional payments made under these provisions during any 12-month period may not exceed the lesser of (1) \$50,125, which may be adjusted annually thereafter by the Secretary of Defense; or (2) the amount equal to 50 percent of the employee's annual rate of basic pay.

10.10.7.2. Funds to cover pay increases and/or additional payments are not centrally funded by the DAF. Each MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM is required to provide funds to cover the additional increases/payments.

10.10.7.3. Organizations that wish to use these additional payments must maintain justification documentation, consistent with the use of these incentives for non-executive personnel.

10.11. Work Schedule. Employment may be full-time, part-time or intermittent. The work schedule is set and pre-approved by the supervisor, depending on organizational mission, with the flexibility to change on a daily basis.

10.12. Conditions of Employment.

10.12.1. Conflict of Interest Prohibition. HQEs will receive a full ethics briefing on reemployment restrictions and conflict of interest. **(T-1)** This briefing is provided by SAF/GCA or AF/JA as appropriate.

10.12.2. Financial Disclosure. All non-HQE-SMs regardless of basic rate of pay or schedule shall file with SAF/GCA an OGE Form 278, and all other HQEs will file an OGE Form 450. **(T-1)** Contact SAF/MRL for specific guidance on this requirement.

10.12.3. Drug Testing. Prior to appointment, HQEs are required to complete and pass drug urinalysis testing. **(T-1)** Once appointed, HQEs are required to undergo periodic random drug testing in accordance with EO 12564. **(T-1)**

10.13. Suspensions, Removals and Terminations. HQEs serve at the will of the appointing official and may be terminated at any time without cause. When practicable, HQEs should be provided advance notice of termination. Prior to any formal notification to an HQE, contact SAF/MRL for procedural guidance for any proposed suspensions, terminations and removal actions.

GWENDOLYN R. DeFILIPPI, SES, DAF
Acting Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for
Manpower and Reserve Affairs

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

EO 12564, *Drug-Free Federal Workplace*

Public Law 110-372, *The Senior Professional Performance Act of 2008*

5 USC, Chapter 45, *Incentive Awards*

5 USC § 3341, *Details; within Executive or Military Departments*

5 USC § 3594, *Guaranteed Placement in other Personnel Systems*

5 USC § 5307, *Limitation on Certain Payments*

5 USC § 5363, *Grade and Pay Retention*

5 USC § 5376, *Pay for Certain Senior-Level Positions*

5 USC § 5383, *Setting Individual Senior Executive Pay*

5 USC § 9903 (d), *Attracting Highly Qualified Experts*

5 CFR Subpart C, *Managing Senior Executive Performance*

5 CFR § 317.903(b)(1), *Details*

5 CFR Part 359, *Removal from the Senior Executive Service; Guaranteed Placement in other Personnel Systems*

5 CFR Part 359, Subpart G, *Guaranteed Placement*

5 CFR Part 530 § 201, *Aggregate limitation on Pay*

5 CFR § 534.404, *Setting and Adjusting Pay for Senior Executives*

5 CFR Part 536, Subpart C, *Pay Retention*

5 CFR § 575.208(b), *Ineligible Categories of Employees, Approval Criteria and Written Determination*

5 CFR Part 752, *Adverse Actions*

5 CFR Subpart D, *Pay and Performance Awards under the Senior Executive Service*

29 CFR Part 1607, *Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures*

DoDD 5105.76, *Transition of Administration Appointees and Other Officials*,

30 August 2022

DoDI 1400.25, Volume 300, *DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Employment of Federal Civilian Annuitants in the Department of Defense*, 17 January 2025

DoDI 1400.25, Volume 920, *DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Senior Executive Service Performance Management System and Compensation Policy*, 29 March 2017

DoDI 1400.25, Volume 922, *DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Employment of Highly Qualified Experts (HQEs)*, 3 April 2013

DODI1400.25V451_DAFI36-1004, *Department of the Civilian Recognition Program*, 18 December 2023

DAFPD 36-9, *Senior Executive Resource Management*, 26 July 2024

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 23 March 2020

DAFMAN 90-161, *Publishing Processes and Procedures*, 18 October 2023

Prescribed Forms

None

Adopted Forms

DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

OGE Form 278, *Public Financial Disclosure Report*

OGE Form 450, *Confidential Financial Disclosure Report, Executive Branch*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFI—Department of the Air Force Instruction

AIF—Adjustment in Force

ASR—Annual Summary Rating

CD—Commander Directed

CFR—Code of Federal Regulations

COCOM—Combatant Commander

CSE—Civilian Senior Executive

DAF—Department of the Air Force

DAFI—Department of the Air Force Instruction

DAFMAN—Department of the Air Force Manual

DISES—Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service

DISL—Defense Intelligence Senior Level

DoD—Department of Defense

DTMS—Defense Talent Management System

DV—Distinguished Visitor

ECQ—Executive Core Qualification

EDP—Executive Development Plan

EO—Equal Opportunity

EPAT—Executive Performance Appraisal Tool

ERB—Executive Resources Board

ES—Executive Schedule
EX—Executive Level
FO—Flag Officer
FY—Fiscal Year
GC—General Council
GO—General Officer
GS—General Schedule
HAF—Headquarters Air Force
HLR—Higher Level Review
HLRO—Higher Level Reviewing Official
HQE—Highly Qualified Expert
IG—Inspector General
ISR—Initial Summary Rating
LTA—Limited Term Appointment
LTR—Letter
MAJCOM—Major Command
MSPB—Merit Systems Protection Board
NC—Non-Career
OGE—United States Office of Government Ethics
OPM—Office of Personnel Management
OPR—Office of Primary Responsibility
OSD—Office of the Secretary of Defense
OUSD(I)—Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Intelligence
PAEP—Presidential Adjustment of Executives’ Pay
PAS—Presidential Appointee with Senate confirmation
PD—Position Description
PE—Performance Elements
PRA—Presidential Rank Award
PRAP—Presidential Rank Award Panel
PRB—Performance Review Board
QRB—Qualifications Review Board
RIF—Reduction in Force

SAF—Secretary of the Department of the Air Force
SECAF—Secretary of the Department of the Air Force
SES—Senior Executive Service
SL—Senior Level
SM—Senior Members
ST—Scientific and Professional
TMB—Talent Management Board
TJAG—The Judge Advocate General
TMC—Talent Management Committee
USC—United States Code

Office Symbols

AF/A1—Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services
AF/JA—Office of The Judge Advocate General
AF/JAC—Civil Law & Litigation Directorate
AF/RE—Chief of the Air Force Reserve
DASD/PPP—Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Civilian Personnel Policy)
NGB/CF—Director of the Air National Guard
SAF/AA—Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force
SAF/AAR—Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force, Resources Directorate
SAF/GCA—Deputy General Counsel for Fiscal, Ethics and Administrative Law, Office of the Secretary of the Air Force General Counsel
SAF/MR—Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
SAF/MRL—Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Senior Leader Management Office
SF/S1L—Space Force Senior Leader Management Office

Terms

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Senior Executive Management Office (SAF/MRL)—This office is responsible for recruitment, development, performance management, and assignment policies for DAF CSEs.

Annual Summary Rating (ASR)—The final rating approved by the authorizing official at the end of the performance appraisal period. This includes the summary performance rating, total performance score and approved number of shares. This is also the rating of record, the official rating or the final summary rating.

Appraisal—The annual process, under which results-driven performance requirements are established, reviewed, evaluated, assigned a summary rating, and documented in writing. The results of performance appraisals and ratings are used as a basis to adjust pay, grant bonuses and make other personnel decisions.

Authorizing Official—The head of a DoD Component, or an official who is delegated authority in writing to act on behalf of the head of the DoD Component, is defined as an authorizing official for the purpose of this policy.

Basic Pay—The annual rate of compensation exclusive of awards, bonuses and differentials. The rate of basic pay may not exceed the applicable maximum rates under law and regulation, including 5 USC § 5307(d).

Civilian Senior Executive (CSE)—All SES/DISES/DISL/SL/ST/HQE appointees.

Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs)—The codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the United States Federal Government.

Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES)—Managerial, supervisory and policy positions in the intelligence community are equivalent to the SES positions.

Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL)—A functional/technical expert who is a recognized leader and authority in a specialist field or functional in the intelligence community.

Defense Talent Management System (DTMS)—The official DOD web-based tool used for the lifecycle management of SES/DISES members.

Distinguished Visitor (DV)—Code designations used to determine the order of precedence for official visits and during activities, assignment of quarters, seating and travel status on Government aircraft and surface transportation for GO/Flag Officer (FO) or staff of equivalent rank. DV code designations are based on placement and level of responsibility of an DAF position. The DV codes are assigned to positions, not people.

(DELETED) Diversity—Broadly defined as a composite of individual characteristics, experiences, and abilities consistent with the DAF Core Values and the DAF Mission. DAF diversity includes but is not limited to personal life experiences, geographic background, socioeconomic background, cultural knowledge, educational background, work background, language abilities, physical abilities, philosophical/spiritual perspectives, age, race, ethnicity, and gender. The concept of diversity is to be tailored as specific circumstances and the law require.

Executive and Senior Professional Pay and Performance System—Policies, requirements, and parameters governing the performance of CSEs (excluding PAS), which includes the appraisal programs under the CFR and the USC. This includes policies, practices, and procedures for planning, monitoring, developing, evaluating, and rewarding performance.

This includes establishing meaningful and measurable performance plans that allow CSEs to achieve results, which advance DoD and DAF missions.

Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs)—Describe the leadership skills needed for individuals to succeed in the SES. They are designed to measure executive experience and potential, not technical expertise.

Executive Development Plan (EDP)—A mandatory, detailed guide of development activities for SES/DISES members. The EDP includes both short-term and long-term experiences, designed to meet organizational needs for leadership, managerial improvement and results. It addresses enhancement of executive competencies and outlines developmental opportunities/assignments that allow the individual to develop a broader perspective in the agency as well as enterprise wide.

Executive (EX) Level—A series of five pay tiers within the Executive Schedule.

Executive Performance Appraisal Tool (EPAT)—A web-based Executive Performance Appraisal Tool used to aid CSEs, rating and reviewing officials with individual/organizational performance management responsibilities.

Executive Schedule (ES)—An Executive pay scale used within the United States Civil Service.

Executive Resources Board (ERB)—Appointed by the SECAF to fulfill Title 5, CFR statutory and regulatory requirements.

Federal Register—The official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other Presidential documents.

Flag Officer (FO)—An officer in the Navy holding the rank of Rear Admiral, Vice Admiral or Admiral.

General Officer (GO)—An officer in the DAF, Army or Marine Corps holding the rank of Brigadier General, Major General, Lieutenant General or General.

General Schedule (GS)—One of the pay scales used within the United States Civil Service.

Higher Level Reviewing Official (HLRO)—Presidential Appointee with Senate (PAS) confirmation or higher-level official, outside the CSEs chain of command who was not involved in the initial rating process.

Highly Qualified Expert (HQE)—Senior-level Excepted Service Government employees. These individuals are experts possessing specialized knowledge or skills not readily available within the government.

Incentive Award—Recognition or incentive granted for a suggestion, invention, superior accomplishment, or other meritorious effort under the authority of 5 USC, Chapter 45, *Incentive Awards*.

Initial Summary Rating (ISR)—A proposed performance rating of record for CSEs.

Interim Rating—A written assessment provided when either the rating official or CSE leaves his/her position before the end of the performance appraisal 2 July. The member must have been under performance standards for a minimum of 90 days.

Merit System Protection Board (MSPB)—An independent, quasi-judicial agency in the Executive branch that serves as the guardian of Federal merit systems. The Board's mission is to protect Federal merit systems and the rights of individuals within those systems.

Minimum Performance Appraisal Period—The minimum period (90 days) that a CSE must serve under a performance plan to be rated.

MyVector—The DAF’s web-based mentoring program and enterprise solution that enables Airmen to be actively involved in their personal development and career management.

Office of Personnel Management (OPM)—A United States Government independent agency that manages the Federal Government Civil Service.

Pay Pool—A combination of organizational elements, (e.g., divisions, branches, functional communities, etc.) and/or tier structures, that is defined for purposes of determining performance payouts under the Executive and Senior Professional Pay and Performance Appraisal System.

Pay Pool Funding Factor—The formula used to calculate a performance payout.

Pay Pool Value—The amount of money available for performance payouts in a pay pool. It is calculated by multiplying the pay pool Funding Factor by the total salaries of all covered CSEs in the pay pool.

Pay Progression Budget—One of three variables in the equation that determines the pay pool Funding Factor. It is a percentage of the payroll budget set aside for performance-based pay increases and is determined and published annually by the head of the Component.

Performance Appraisal Period/Performance Cycle—The established period of time for which a CSE’s performance will be appraised and rated. There is a standard performance appraisal period in DoD. The performance appraisal period begins 1 October of each year and ends on

30 September of the following year. The performance appraisal period is also called the performance cycle.

Performance Award/Bonus—A one-time, lump-sum payment paid to CSEs in recognition of performance during the performance appraisal period. A performance-based bonus is not part of basic pay.

Performance Bonus Budget—One of three variables in the equation that determines the pay pool Funding Factor. It is a percentage of the payroll budget set aside for performance awards and is determined and published annually by the head of the Component.

Performance Elements (PEs)—The critical Components of a CSE’s work that contribute to organizational goals and results and are so important that unsatisfactory performance of any one of the PEs would make the CSE’s overall job performance unsatisfactory.

Performance Payout—The total monetary value of a basic pay increase and performance bonus.

Performance Plan—The document that describes the individual and organizational expectations for the performance appraisal period and establishes the elements and performance requirements against which performance will be evaluated.

Performance Rating—The rating level determination for each performance element based on the relationship of the CSE’s accomplishment to the performance requirements, as established in the plan, for his/her position. There are five rating levels for SES and DISES: Outstanding; Exceeds Fully Successful; Fully Successful; Minimally Satisfactory; and Unsatisfactory. There are also five rating levels for SL/ST/DISL-Exceptional; Exceeds Expectations; Achieved Expectations; Minimally Satisfactory; and Unsatisfactory.

Performance Requirements—Written statements of, measurable results expected to be achieved during the performance appraisal period.

Performance Review Board (PRB)—A panel of individuals established to provide oversight to ensure consistency, accuracy, and meaningful distinction in the evaluation and scoring process under the performance appraisal system and to ensure there are meaningful distinctions in relative performance reflected in the performance requirements. The PRBs are used for the CSE review processes.

Performance Score—The numeric value between 0 and 100 associated with a performance rating for ISR and 500 for SES/DISES. The performance rating, performance score and shares comprise the ISR and (once approved by the authorizing official) the ASR.

Position Slate—A pre-approved list of individuals that meet the experience, education and skill level required to fill identified positions.

Precedence Priority—Protocol precedence for CSEs established through distinguished visitor (DV) codes. DV-6 indicates equivalence with Brigadier General for protocol purposes. DV-5 indicates equivalence with Major General, and DV-4 indicates equivalence with Lieutenant General.

Presidential Adjustment of Executives' Pay (PAEP)—An annually determined adjustment to the rate of the pay scales for CSE members. **Note**, HQEs can receive a PAEP only at the discretion of the SECAF or delegated approving authority.

Presidential Rank Award (PRA)—The most prestigious recognition awarded to CSEs. It is restricted to those in Career status only.

Presidential Rank Award Panel (PRAP)—An ad hoc panel appointed by the SECAF to review and recommend final DAF action on PRA nominations.

Qualifications Review Board (QRB)—A board established to review and certify the ECQs of selectees for initial Career appointment to the SES.

Rating Official—The supervisor who is responsible for assessing a CSE's performance as part of the annual performance appraisal process and develops the ISR for a CSE performance appraisal.

Rating and Ranking Panel—The Rating and Ranking Panel is composed of three to five SES/GO (or equivalent) members who rate and rank candidate applications for CSE positions.

Reduction in Force (RIF)—When an agency must abolish positions, the RIF regulations determine whether an employee keeps his/her present position, or whether the employee has a right to a different position.

Reviewing Official—Four-star GO, HAF 2-ltr official/MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Commander.

Rigorous Appraisal of Subordinates—The supervisors' deliberate engagement in the full spectrum of performance management (planning, monitoring, rating, and rewarding) of subordinate employees.

Scientific and Professional (ST) Position—A civilian position above grade GS-15 (or equivalent) that does not meet the managerial criteria for SES and is a Scientific and Professional position engaged in research and development functions.

Selecting Official—Four-star GO, HAF 2-ltr official/MAJCOM/Field Command/COCOM Commander.

Senior Executive Service (SES)—The SES is comprised of the men and women charged with leading the continuing transformation of Government. These leaders possess well-honed executive skills and share a broad perspective of Government and a public service commitment which is grounded in the Constitution.

Senior Executive Service (SES) Career Appointee—An employee with a Career appointment who was selected through the SES merit staffing process and whose ECQs have been approved by the QRB; or a member who was converted to the SES from a GS-16/17/18 position when the SES became effective in 1979.

Senior Executive Service (SES) Career Reserved Position—An SES position with duties and responsibilities that require the position be filled by a Career appointee to assure the public's confidence in the impartiality of Government.

Senior Executive Service (SES) General Position—These positions can be filled by Career and Non-Career SES members.

Senior Executive Service (SES) Limited Emergency Appointee—An employee with a nonrenewable appointment for up to 18 months to a position established to meet a bona fide, unanticipated, urgent need. Appointments are made only to General positions.

Senior Executive Service (SES) Limited Term Appointee—An employee with a nonrenewable appointment for up to 36 months to a position that will not be continued beyond that time. Appointments are made only to General positions.

Senior Executive Service (SES) Non-Career (NC) Appointee—The Secretary of Defense approves all NC appointees, subject to receipt of appropriate NC appointment authorizations from OPM. Appointments are made only to "General" positions. Appointments do not require merit staffing procedures and appointees do not acquire SES Career status. Appointments may be terminated at any time by the SECAF or his/her designee after concurrence by the Secretary of Defense.

Senior Level (SL)—A civilian position above grade GS-15 (or equivalent) that meets neither the managerial criteria for the SES nor the research and development criteria for the ST.

Senior Professional—Those employees in appropriated fund positions classified SL/ST/DISL under 5 USC § 5376, *Pay for certain senior-level positions*.

SMART-Q—A framework used for developing measurable results-driven performance requirements. The acronym stands for Specific (define results to be accomplished within the scope of the job), Measurable (define quality, quantity, and/or effectiveness), Aligned (support specific strategic goals), Realistic/Relevant (requirements are achievable yet challenging), Timely (define a deadline/timeframe for achieving the requirements), and Quality (identify the degree of excellence expected).

Talent Management Board (TMB)—A comprehensive multi-year succession management team that provides an annual corporate assessment of the leadership potential of DAF SES/DISES members. The TMB develop "Ready Now" slates and build out-year benches to select SES/DISES members for reassignment, developmental opportunities and joint/interagency assignments.

Total Performance Payout Adjustment—An increase or decrease to the proposed basic pay increase and/or performance-based bonus as calculated by the performance payout formula determined by the authorizing official.

United States Code (USC)—A consolidation and codification by subject matter of the general and permanent laws of the United States Government.