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RECRUITING, HIRING, AND RETAINING HIGH-QUALITY TECHNICAL STAFF

A MANAGER'S GUIDE TO ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES



U.S. Department of Energy

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MEETING THE TECHNICAL WORKFORCE CHALLENGE

The Department of Energy is undergoing major changes in mission and priorities due to the end of the cold war. The Department's new mission focus is on environmental restoration and protection, safety and health, technology transfer, and nuclear weapons stewardship. In accomplishing our new mission we will have to make the maximum use of all available administrative flexibilities in our attempts to recruit, reward, and retain the high-quality individuals necessary for technical excellence.

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-3 states that "...The most important and far reaching problem affecting the safety of DOE defense nuclear facilities is the difficulty in attracting and retaining personnel who are adequately qualified by technical education and experience to provide the kind of management, direction and guidance essential to safe operation of DOE's defense nuclear facilities." In the Revised Implementation Plan for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-3, the Department response to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, the Department committed to achieving the highest standards of scientific, engineering, and technical excellence.

Consistent with achieving technical excellence, we must be mindful of our commitment to the workforce diversity objectives of the Department in order to increase the representation of and opportunities for women, minorities, and people with disabilities in the Department. Fulfilling these objectives will enable us to improve our human resources program and better accomplish our mission.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide Department of Energy managers with information on available administrative flexibilities that can be utilized in day-to-day human resource management activities—especially those bearing on the recruitment and retention of high-quality technical staff. The administrative flexibilities listed in this Guide are not exhaustive, and the descriptive material provided has been written to be "user-friendly." In using any of these flexibilities, managers should consult with their Servicing Personnel Office. The Personnel staff can provide details on the use of these and other human resource programs and tools for improving technical workforce excellence, as well as advice on site specific considerations that might affect managerial decisions.

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DOE P 426.1, FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY POLICY FOR DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES

U.S. Department of Energy
Washington, D.C.

POLICY

DOE P 426.1

12-10-98

**SUBJECT: FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY POLICY FOR
DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES**

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Federal Technical Capability Program provides for the recruitment, deployment, development, and retention of Federal personnel with the demonstrated technical capability to safely accomplish the Department's missions and responsibilities. The Federal Technical Capability Program is institutionalized through Department of Energy (DOE) directives to establish the program's objective, guiding principles, and functions.

The program is specifically applicable to those offices and organizations performing functions related to the safe operation of defense nuclear facilities. It is applied to all aspects of recruitment, deployment, development, and retention of Federal employees in these organizations. The objective of this policy is achieved by other means for Naval Reactors (Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program).

Other organizations within the Department may also apply elements of the program on an optional basis. There are a number of DOE offices and organizations that must ensure their Federal employees are appropriately trained and technically capable when carrying out their responsibilities. While these offices and organizations fall outside the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board jurisdiction, DOE is committed to ensuring that responsible employees are trained and technically capable when performing their duties.

POLICY

The Department of Energy is committed to developing and maintaining a technically competent workforce to accomplish its missions in a safe and efficient manner through the Federal Technical Capability Program. It is Department policy that the program and functions described herein shall be used to recruit, deploy, develop and retain a workforce that can ensure this occurs. The Department will strive to recruit and hire technically capable personnel, continuously develop the technical expertise of its existing workforce and, within the limitations of executive policy and Federal law, retain critical technical capabilities within the Department at all times. Although specifically relating to the safe operation of defense nuclear facilities, the principles and intent of

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the Federal Technical Capability Program may be applied to organizations that fall outside the purview of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board. The Department is determined to continue making improvements in the capabilities of the Federal workforce and to fully utilize all of the tools at its disposal.

The principles of the Federal Technical Capability Program are the following:

As stated in the Department's Integrated Safety Management Guiding Principles: Federal personnel possess the experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary to discharge their safety responsibilities;

Line managers are accountable and have the responsibility, authority, and flexibility to achieve and maintain technical excellence;

Supporting organizations (personnel, training, contracts, finance, etc.) recognize line managers as customers and effectively support them in achieving and maintaining technical capabilities; and,

An integrated corporate approach is required to assure that necessary technical capabilities and resources are available to meet the overall needs of the Department's defense nuclear facility missions.

The Federal Technical Capability Program consists of the four elements described below. These elements are interrelated and use of only one or two of the elements will not ensure that an organization achieves its technical capability goals. For the Federal Technical Capability Program to succeed, *all* elements must be effectively implemented.

Executive Commitment and Line Management Ownership: This function includes establishing policies and procedures, accountability, program direction, monitoring, and continuous improvement.

- The Department will establish a Federal Technical Capability Panel consisting of Senior Technical Safety Managers to oversee the implementation of the Federal Technical Capability Program.
- The effectiveness of the Federal Technical Capability Program will be periodically assessed using both internal and external experts.
- The Federal Technical Capability Program will be institutionalized through directives, standards, procedures, and guidance documents.

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3 (and 4)

Recruiting and Deploying Technically Capable Personnel: This function includes career path planning, succession planning, defining position responsibilities, and filling technical positions with high-quality technical personnel.

- The Department will pursue renewal of Defense Act Excepted Service Authority as necessary to attract highly competent technical personnel.
- A Federal Technical Staffing Plan will be developed and maintained by each defense nuclear facility field and program element. This staffing plan will form the basis for the recruitment, development, and deployment of personnel.

Developing and Documenting Technically Capable Personnel: This function includes baselining existing technical capabilities as well as individual development planning and improvement.

- Technical Qualification Programs will form the basis for the development and assignment of personnel responsible for ensuring the safe operation of defense nuclear facilities.
- Fellowship programs and other continuing education processes will be utilized to enhance the continuous improvement of technical personnel.
- Personnel involvement with professional organizations, authoring of professional papers and pursuit of professional certifications will be encouraged.

Retaining Critical Technical Skills: This function includes career path planning, succession planning, performance reviews, promotions, and rewards.

- The Department will identify the critical technical positions which are essential for ensuring the safe operation of defense nuclear facilities, and establish programs and processes to ensure that those critical technical capabilities are maintained.
- Promotions, rewards, fellowships, industry exchange programs, rotational assignments and other related programs will be used to enhance the retention of personnel who continue to exhibit sustained superior performance in critical technical positions.



BILL RICHARDSON
Secretary of Energy

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ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Recruitment, hiring, and retention of high-quality staff are essential in performing the Department of Energy's mission. Hiring and retaining high-quality staff are often major challenges confronting line managers. A number of tools, collectively referred to as administrative flexibilities, are available to provide more flexibility in Federal employment actions.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide summaries of existing recruitment, hiring, and retention tools and flexibilities. The Guide is designed to serve as a reference for line managers. Your Servicing Personnel Office can provide further information on these and other administrative techniques available in your location.

Background

Challenges in national priorities and in the Department's mission and programmatic objectives are generating increased needs for high-quality, technical staff in positions such as environmental restoration, nuclear chemistry, contractor oversight, and facility representatives. Enhancing the technical competence of staff is fundamental to the Department's emphasis on quality assurance and continuous improvement as stated in the Department's mission, goals, and objectives. This emphasis on competent technical staff is also reflected in the Department's Implementation Plan and Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendations (such as 92-7, 93-3, 95-2, and 97-1).

Line managers are challenged to hire and retain staff with the knowledge and skills to promote competitive, productive, and efficient work practices based on sound environmental, health, and safety standards. To help meet this staffing challenge, a number of administrative techniques are available for use. The Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990: 5 U.S.C. 5301, et seq. (FEPCA) provides several of these administrative flexibilities in addition to a number that were already available.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

INTRODUCTION (continued)

Overview of Approvals and Type of Use

Approval for use of various administrative flexibilities may involve local supervisors and managers, the Servicing Personnel Office, Department Headquarters, or the Office of Personnel Management. Also, please note that some of the flexibilities are for use in recruiting and hiring new staff, others are for retaining, rewarding, or improving the technical skills of current staff, while others may be used in either situation (see Appendix A).

Use of Administrative Flexibilities

To most effectively use these administrative flexibilities in staff recruiting, hiring, and for retention, line managers should be aware of the various tools available, get actively involved in advanced planning and information gathering, and invite the active participation of their Servicing Personnel Offices. Information must be provided to support the need for the use of these tools and to support the selection of the particular technique or group of techniques that are to be used for the staff or staff positions in question. These tools are available to enhance the Federal Government's ability to compete more effectively in the labor market within the framework and spirit of Federal personnel procedures and regulations and as such can be approved for use only with proper justification. Administrative flexibilities are intended to enhance and supplement normal Federal personnel procedures and regulations.

This Guide provides basic information on the more common tools and techniques. For further information on the use of specific tools, contact the staff in your Servicing Personnel Office. In addition, Appendix E contains a description of several current "Best Practices" from around the Department in human resources programs that support technical excellence. These descriptions contain the names of contact persons for further information.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

EXCEPTED SERVICE APPOINTMENT AUTHORITIES

Overview

The Department of Energy has two Excepted Service appointment authorities that are available as important tools for Headquarters and Field organizations to recruit and retain high-quality technical staff. Use of the Excepted Service authorities can expedite the hiring process and provide pay flexibilities to enhance recruitment and retention of key technical staff. Furthermore, they are in line with the Secretary's strong commitment to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board to achieve the highest standards of scientific, engineering, and technical excellence.

Applicability

Authority to fill up to 200 scientific, engineering, and technical positions performing activities relating to the safety of the Department's defense nuclear facilities and operations was included in the National Defense Authorization Act for 1995. This authority can only be used for scientific, engineering, or technical defense nuclear facilities safety-related positions.

The Excepted Service appointment authority found in Section 621(d) of the Department of Energy Organization Act is available for use in hiring up to 200 high-quality individuals, that may otherwise be difficult to attract and retain under current competitive service rules and procedures. Although primarily intended for scientific, engineering, and technical positions, this authority may also be used for professional and administrative positions, as well as for positions in operations not related to defense nuclear facilities safety.

Pay under both excepted service personnel authorities may be established up to an amount provided for by Executive Level III. Pay administration in the excepted service is governed by broad salary bands in contrast to setting pay under the more traditional GS/SL/SES systems.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

EXCEPTED SERVICE APPOINTMENT AUTHORITIES (continued)

Considerations	The Excepted Service authorities may be particularly useful to organizations undergoing restructuring and associated skills mix concerns.
Authorization	Further guidance on the appropriate use of Excepted Service authorities may be obtained from your Servicing Personnel Office or the Division of Executive and Technical Resources at Headquarters. Actions to fill positions under these authorities are subject to review and approval by the Department's Executive Resources Board.
References	Section 621(d), DOE Act (Pub. L. 95-91); Section 3161(a), National Defense Authorization Act (Pub. L. 103-337) Authorization Act (Pub. L. 103-337)

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RECRUITMENT BONUS

Overview	Recruitment bonuses of up to 25 percent of basic pay may be paid to high-quality candidates who would otherwise be lost due to the normal entry salary being non-competitive with others in the labor market.
Applicability	The recruitment bonus may be used for appointments in the General Schedule, Senior Level or Scientific or Professional, Senior Executive Service, law enforcement, Executive Schedule, and presidential appointees.
Considerations	The need for a recruitment bonus is shown by the difficulties encountered in filling the position with a high-quality candidate, including information about the success or failure in recent efforts to recruit high-quality candidates for the position or a similar position (such as, offer acceptance rates, proportions of positions filled, length of time required to fill similar positions), and the effect of the bonus on the morale of current employees. Also, the practicality of using the superior qualifications appointment authority alone or in combination with a recruitment bonus should be considered.
Basis for Amount	The amount of the bonus is based on the candidate's current salary and salary history, current benefits in comparison to those offered by the Federal Government, other earned income and salary increases already scheduled. The bonus amount can also reflect other bona fide job offers to the candidate, salaries offered to others for the same or similar positions in the local commuting area, and special skills and qualifications required to meet a specific need. A service agreement of not less than 6 months is required. Also, the bonus must reflect budget considerations and policies. The bonus cannot exceed 25 percent of basic pay.

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RECRUITMENT BONUS (continued)

Combined Usage	The recruitment bonus may be used in combination with critical pay, dual compensation restriction waivers, superior qualifications appointments above the minimum rate, and special salary rates.
Payment	The bonus is paid as a lump sum.
Authorization	The Office of the Secretary for Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, Scientific and Professional, and Schedule C positions. For all other positions, Heads of Departmental Elements.
References	5 USC 5753; 5 CFR 575.1

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

RELOCATION BONUS

Overview	Relocation bonuses of up to 25 percent of basic pay may be paid to attract high-quality candidates, or employees, to positions which are difficult to fill or to keep filled.
Applicability	The relocation bonus may be used for Federal employees who must relocate to different commuting areas and who are appointed to positions without time limitations or to a temporary appointment of at least 2 years. Positions covered include those in the General Schedule, Senior Level or Scientific or Professional, Senior Executive Service, law enforcement, Executive Schedule, and presidential appointees.
Considerations	The need for a relocation bonus is shown by the difficulties encountered in filling the position with a high-quality candidate including information about the success or failure in recent efforts to recruit high-quality candidates for the position or a similar position (such as, offer acceptance rates, proportion of positions filled, length of time required to fill the positions), recent turnover data in similar positions, and labor market factors that affect recruiting for high-quality candidates in the position now or in the future.
Basis for Amount	The amount of the bonus is based on the comparison between the existing and new areas, whether the position is in a shortage category, special qualifications of the employee, and special need of the Department of Energy. A service agreement is required at the new duty station. The bonus cannot exceed 25 percent of basic pay.
Combined Usage	The relocation bonus may be used in combination with critical pay, dual compensation restriction waivers, retention allowances, and special salary rates.
Payment	The bonus is paid as a lump sum.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

RELOCATION BONUS (continued)

Authorization	The Office of the Secretary for Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, Scientific and Professional, and Schedule C positions. For all other positions, Heads of Departmental Elements.
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References	5 USC 5753; 5 CFR 575.2
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ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

RETENTION ALLOWANCE

Overview	Retention allowances of up to 25 percent of basic pay may be paid to high-quality employees who would otherwise leave Federal Government.
Applicability	Retention allowances may be used for current employees who are likely to leave Federal Service, and whose services the Department considers essential. Positions covered include those in the General Schedule, Senior Level or Scientific or Professional, Senior Executive Service, law enforcement, Executive Schedule, and presidential appointees. Also, the employee must have completed the period of service established under any agreement of relocation and recruitment bonuses.
Considerations	The need for retention allowances is shown by the determination that the employee is likely to leave Federal Service, how the employee's leaving would affect the Department's ability to conduct essential activities/functions, data on the success or failure in recent efforts to recruit and retain high-quality candidates for the position or similar position (e.g., offer acceptance rates, proportion of positions filled, length of time required to fill the position), and availability in the labor market of suitable candidates.
Basis for Authorization	The amount of the allowance is based on whether a special need exists within the Department, and whether the allowance is cost effective, funds are available, and it makes sense in terms of overall organizational goals and staffing allocations. The allowance cannot exceed 25 percent of basic pay.
Combined Usage	The retention allowance may be used in combination with critical pay, dual compensation restriction waivers, recruitment and relocation bonuses (provided there are no service agreements in effect), and special salary rates.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

RETENTION ALLOWANCE (continued)

Payment	The allowance is paid in the same manner and at the same time as the employee's basic pay.
Authorization	The Office of the Secretary for Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, Scientific and Professional, and Schedule C positions. For all other positions, Heads of Departmental Elements.
References	5 USC 5754; 5 CFR 575.3

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS APPOINTMENT

Overview	Pay at a higher step within the grade rate range may be offered to candidates with unusually high or unique qualifications the Department of Energy needs.
Applicability	A superior qualifications appointment (also referred to as “advanced in-hire”) includes new hires in General Schedule positions at GS-15 or below. New hires with prior Federal Service employment must have a break in service of at least 90 days unless the employment was with the District of Columbia government beginning on or after 10/1/87, as an expert or consultant, a selected temporary appointment made in connection with completing an advanced academic degree, under certain student programs, or as a commissioned member of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or Public Health Service.
Considerations	The use of a recruitment bonus must be considered. Documentation on why the superior qualifications appointment was used instead of, or in addition to, a bonus is required. The candidate’s qualifications must be superior. The Federal Government must have a special need for the candidate’s qualifications. A review of the recruitment efforts that have been undertaken to fill the position is also required.
Basis for Amount	Payment is established within the rate range (steps 2 through 10) of the grade for which the candidate is selected. The advanced pay rate is based on the comparative levels of total compensation between that in the candidate’s current job and the proposed Federal Service position, and on the candidate’s unwillingness to accept the job offer at less than an advanced pay rate.
Combined Usage	Superior qualification appointments may be used in combination with dual compensation restriction waivers, recruitment and relocation bonuses, and special salary rates.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS APPOINTMENT (continued)

Payment	Regular pay methods and location for this type of position.
Authorization	Local management through the Servicing Personnel Office, unless the proposed pay rate would exceed the candidate's existing pay rate by more than 20 percent. The Director of Human Resource and Management must approve proposed pay rates that exceed the 20 percent differential.
References	5 USC 5333; 5 CFR 531.203

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CRITICAL PAY

Overview	Higher pay, up to Level II of the Executive Schedule, may be offered to candidates who are exceptionally well qualified for certain positions critical to the Department's mission.
Applicability	Critical pay is limited to presidential appointees, Senior Executive Service, Senior Level positions, and Scientific or Professional positions.
Considerations	Individuals being considered for critical pay must be exceptionally well-qualified for a position that is critical to the agency's mission.
Basis for Amount	Pay may be requested up to Executive Schedule Level II.
Combined Usage	Critical pay may be used in combination with dual compensation restriction waivers, recruitment and relocation bonuses and retention allowances.
Payment	Regular pay method and location for the position.
Authorization	Office of Personnel Management and Office of Management and Budget. Request submitted by the Secretary.
References	5 USC 5377

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

SAVED GRADE AND PAY

Overview

Grade and pay retention is available for an employee placed in a lower grade as a result of a reduction in force (RIF), or whose position is reduced in grade as a result of reclassification of their position. In addition, grade and pay retention can be made available to employees who voluntarily accept a reassignment or transfer to a lower-graded position. The employee retains the grade held immediately before that placement or reduction for 2 years and is entitled to indefinite pay retention based on the former position. Heads of Departmental Elements have been delegated full authority to grant optional grade pay retention under a broad range of circumstances, including as part of the Strategic Alignment Initiative and associated reengineering efforts, to facilitate employee transition, and to retain high-caliber staff.

Considerations

This tool is to help managers recruit or retain employees with special skills or incumbents of hard-to-fill positions during downsizing.

Applicability

Grade Retention: For an employee who is being placed in a lower graded position, the employee must have served for 52 consecutive weeks or more at a grade(s) higher than the placement. Grade retention is for 2 years, after which the employee's grade is reduced.

Pay Retention: This applies when an employee's rate of basic pay would be reduced: (1) as a result of the expiration of the 2-year period of grade retention; (2) as a result of RIF or reclassification when the employee does not meet grade retention requirements; or (3) as a result of a reduction or elimination of scheduled rates, special schedules, or special rates, and the amount exceeds the maximum in the new pay range.

For more information, contact your Servicing Personnel Office.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

SAVED GRADE AND PAY (continued)

Authorization

The Office of the Secretary for Senior Executive Service, Senior Level, Scientific and Professional, and Schedule C positions. For all other positions, Heads of Departmental Elements have the discretion to extend saved grade and pay retention under appropriate circumstances.

References

5 USC 5362-5363; 5 CFR 536.
5 USC 3594 (c) (1) (B); 5 CFR 359.705

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DUAL COMPENSATION RESTRICTION WAIVER

Overview	The restriction on a military or civilian retiree receiving dual compensation; i.e., retirement and salary, may be waived when there is exceptional difficulty in recruiting or retaining a qualified employee for the position, or to meet temporary emergency hiring needs.
Applicability	Applies to military or civilian Federal Government retirees for any pay system or position.
Considerations	Must show that there is an exceptional difficulty in recruiting or retaining a qualified employee, or an emergency situation. Information must be provided documenting the recruitment difficulties, or emergency situation. This would include, for example, the number of vacancies in the series, grade, or location; average annual turnover; average time positions remain vacant; number and quality of candidates; and description of recruiting efforts. Must also show that other alternatives have been considered, such as reengineering or redistribution of work, or retraining of current employees.
Basis for Amount	Basic pay for any pay system or position plus full Federal Service retirement annuity or military retirement pay.
Combined Usage	Dual compensation restriction waivers may be used in combination with critical pay, recruitment bonuses, superior qualifications appointments above the minimum rates, and special salary rates.
Payment	Regular pay method and location.
Authorization	Office of Personnel Management. Request submitted by the Secretary.
References	5 USC 5531; 5 CFR 553.1

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR INTERVIEWS

Overview	Payment is authorized for expenses of an individual traveling to and from a preemployment interview for any Federal Service position which is not limited to 1 year or less. The purpose of the interview must be to assess the individual's qualifications for a position or, in the case of a shortage occupation, to interest a candidate in the position. This applies to individuals under consideration for appointment or relocation.
Considerations	The necessity of conducting an interview should be considered as well as the possibility of the interview being conducted by a Department official in the geographic location of the candidate. Other considerations include the availability of funds and assurance that this provision is being used equitably in a manner consistent with merit principles.
Basis for Amount	Reimbursement is based on Federal Government standard travel policy and regulations.
Combined Usage	Reimbursement of travel expenses for interviewing may be used in combination with critical pay, dual compensation restriction waivers, recruitment and relocation bonuses, superior qualification appointments above minimum rates, and special salary rates.
Payment	Reimbursement is made after submission and approval of the travel expense form and required cost receipts.
Authorization	Local management through the Servicing Personnel Office.
References	5 USC 5706; 5 CFR 572.1

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

TRAVEL AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS FOR NEW HIRES

Overview	Payment may be authorized for the expenses of a new hire's travel and transportation of household goods to their first duty station for any position regardless of whether a shortage of candidates exists. The appointment cannot be limited to 1 year or less.
Considerations	A review should be made of the sufficiency of qualified candidates for the position within the local geographic area. Also, the availability of funds in the interviewing office must be considered. In the case of inter-Departmental transfers, authority has been delegated to the heads of Departmental Elements that allows the losing organization to fully fund or share allowable relocation expenses with the gaining organization. This is intended to facilitate the transfer of high-caliber Department of Energy employees, some of whom may be facing separation through reduction-in-force.
Basis for Amount	Expenses covered include transportation costs for the new hire and immediate family, per diem for the new hire while en route from old residence to first duty station, transportation of household goods, and temporary storage of household goods.
Combined Usage	Reimbursement for a new hire's travel and household goods transportation to the first duty station may be used in combination with critical pay, dual compensation restriction waivers, recruitment and relocation bonuses, superior qualifications appointment above minimum rates, and special salary rates.
Payment	Reimbursement is made after submission and approval of the required travel expense form(s) and cost receipts. The employee must sign an agreement to remain in Federal Service for 12 months. Indebtedness will occur due to failure to complete the 12 months employment unless a waiver is approved.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

TRAVEL AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS FOR NEW HIRES (continued)

Authorization	Local management through the Servicing Personnel Office.
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References	5 USC 5723; 5 CFR 572.1
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ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

SPECIAL SALARY RATES

Overview

Special salary rates provide a higher salary range for a particular occupational series, grade, and geographical area. For example, Engineers at the GS-5 through GS-12 levels are paid at higher rates than those applicable to other General Schedule positions. Governmentwide special schedules that exist for many occupations may be used. DOE may also establish special schedules subject to OPM approval.

Considerations

Special salary rates are to be used to overcome existing or likely significant handicaps in the recruitment or retention of well-qualified personnel that impact on the Department's mission. Difficulties in recruitment or retention are indicated by: significantly higher rates of pay in non-Federal positions within the area, location, or occupational group; the success or failure in efforts to recruit candidates for the positions (e.g.; offer acceptance rates, proportion of positions filled, length of time required to fill the position); recent turnover data, including the number quitting for higher paying non-Federal positions; labor market factors; the remoteness of the area or location; the undesirability of the working conditions or nature of the work; and the extent to which other pay flexibilities available to the Department have been used. Also considered is the Department's use of non-pay solutions to solve the staffing problems including aggressive recruiting, redesigning jobs, training programs, and improved working conditions. In addition, agency funds must be available to cover the additional costs of salary and benefits that will result from the special salary rates.

Basis for Amount

The minimum rate of the special salary rate range can be as much as 30 percent more than the maximum rate of the regular General Schedule rate range but cannot exceed the rate of the basic pay for Level V of the Executive Schedule. The amount is set at a level that is necessary to recruit or retain an adequate number of well-qualified employees.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

SPECIAL SALARY RATES (continued)

Combined Usage	Special salary rates may be used in combination with dual compensation restriction waivers, recruitment and relocation bonuses, retention allowances, and superior qualifications appointments above minimum rates.
Payment	Regular pay methods and location.
Authorization	Office of Personnel Management.
References	5 USC 5305; 5 CFR 530.3

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

DELEGATED EXAMINING AND DIRECT-HIRE AUTHORITIES

Overview	Servicing Personnel Offices have the authority to conduct their own examinations and directly hire candidates in certain shortage occupations, i.e., they do not have to go through OPM.
Applicability	<p>Delegated examining and direct-hire authority provide flexibilities in the examining system to meet special staffing situations.</p> <p><u>Delegated Examining:</u> The Department may carry out competitive examining and certification requirements at its Delegated Examining Units or contract with the Office of Personnel Management to perform this service.</p> <p><u>Direct-Hire Authority:</u> Direct-hire authority is designed to provide flexibilities to effectively recruit employees for positions in shortage or critical-shortage occupations. This authority may also be used during job fairs for hard-to-fill positions. Direct-hire authority involves direct recruitment, examination, and immediate selection of candidates and significantly reduces recruitment and appointment procedures.</p>
Considerations	OPM has designated certain engineering positions as shortage for direct-hire purposes on a nationwide basis. Conditions which would warrant the Department's request for other positions would include a finding that an insufficient number of high-caliber candidates exist for a given occupation.
Combined Usage	These authorities may be used in combination with most of the incentives listed in this Guide.
Authorization	Local management through the Servicing Personnel Office.
References	5 USC 1301-1302; 5 CFR 330.101

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

STUDENT AND ENTRY-LEVEL PROGRAMS

Overview

The Headquarters Special Employment Programs Team in the Office of Human Resources, and Servicing Personnel Offices throughout the Department, conduct marketing and outreach recruiting programs, which include college and entry-level recruiting efforts. These flexible and varied programs can be used to introduce students and new, entry-level employees to the Department, support managers in realizing their program goals, and demonstrate the Department's commitment to a talented and diverse workforce.

Student Career Experience Program

The Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) recognizes the need for career related employment that enriches students' academic experiences and offers them valuable work experience in their career fields. The program also gives students exposure to public service and provides financial assistance to support their educational goals. The program further encourages partnerships between Federal agencies and educational institutions and helps agencies attract, recruit, and hire highly qualified graduates into the workforce.

Student Temporary Experience Program

The Student Temporary Experience Program (STEP) provides employment for students who need income to continue their education.

Volunteer Service Program

This program provides opportunities for students to explore career options as well as develop personal and professional skills. It allows for jointly developed agreements between the Department and academic institutions aimed at providing students with academic related work experience for which they may receive college credit. Student volunteer services are uncompensated.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

STUDENT AND ENTRY-LEVEL PROGRAMS (continued)

Summer Employment Program

The Summer Employment Program provides practical work experience for high school and college students that offers early career exposure to the Federal work environment. The program allows students to acquire skills and develop work habits fundamental to their future career success.

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ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

TRAINING/RETRAINING PROGRAMS

Overview

The Office of Training and Human Resource Development coordinates training policy and planning for the Department on a corporate-wide basis. Manager and employee training and development responsibilities are delegated to each Headquarters and Field Element. These organizational programs operate within their own local frameworks, but also receive support from specific training centers specializing in occupational or programmatic types of training for Department-wide needs. This maximizes subject matter expertise and program responsibilities in the design and delivery of training, but maintains a line management responsibility for workforce planning and development in each Departmental Element.

For additional information, see the Department's Clearinghouse for Training, Education and Development on the Internet. The address is <http://cted.inel.gov/cted>. This can also be accessed from DOE's home page.

Considerations

Training programs in each Element are built around an annual training plan that matches the objectives and needs of employees' individual development plans and the strategic goals of each office and the Department as a whole. Job requirements, performance needs, future workforce skill needs, and workload requirements are all taken into consideration in the development of each organization's training plan.

Federal managers have broad authority to establish short and long-term training programs to develop knowledge and skills needed to meet anticipated work requirements. Managers can make use of Federal, corporate, university, non-profit, and other training, education, or developmental work assignment sources to provide occupational enrichment programs that meet both employee career development and Departmental workforce knowledge, skill, and experience needs.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

TRAINING/RETRAINING PROGRAMS (continued)

Authorization

In general, first-line supervisors approve and their managers authorize training assignments in a two-step process. However, Departmental Elements have the authority to impose additional approvals for special types of training or for training above certain cost or duration levels. For additional information, consult your local training office or coordinator.

References

5 USC 4100; 5 CFR 410; DOE O 360.1

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION PROGRAM (TQP)

Overview

The Department's Federal Technical Capability Policy for Defense Nuclear Facilities, pages v - vii of this Guide, commits the Department to developing and maintaining a technically competent workforce to accomplish its mission in a safe and efficient manner through the Federal Technical Capability Program (FTCP). The objective of the FTCP is to: recruit, deploy, develop, and retain Federal personnel with the demonstrated technical capabilities to safely accomplish the Department's safety missions and responsibilities. The Department is determined to continue making improvements in the capabilities of the Federal workforce and to fully utilize all of the tools at its disposal.

Applicability

The FTCP applies to DOE Federal technical employees in the 800 and 1300 occupational series, and others, whose position requires them to provide management direction or oversight that could impact the safe operation of a defense nuclear facility. Headquarters and Field Element managers decide which employees in their organizations will be required to participate in the FTCP.

Program Design

The FTCP requires that each Headquarters and Operations Office with defense nuclear safety responsibilities establish a Technical Qualification Program. The Technical Qualification Programs will be used to identify position requirements, individual competencies, and developmental needs of any employee performing activities related to the technical management, oversight, or operation of the Department's defense nuclear facilities.

Employees in a Technical Qualification Program must satisfy the competencies applicable to their position. Supervisors and employees should meet and determine which Qualification Standards apply to the employee's position. They should also discuss requirements the employee may have already met, through equivalent experience, and determine which training activities will enable the employee to satisfy the remaining competencies.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION PROGRAM (TQP) (continued)

Authorization

Participation in a Technical Qualification Program is determined by managers. Individual training, development, and education opportunities must be approved by employees' supervisors/ managers, supported by the training office (Headquarters or Field).

For further information, please consult your local training office.

References

DOE P 426.1; DOE O 360.1

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

MONETARY AWARDS

Overview

There are a variety of monetary awards which you can use as tools to motivate, reward, or recognize technically excellent employees. These should be used in a progressive manner commensurate with the nature of the contribution or continuous contributions in order to increase employee responsiveness and mission accomplishment. A brief summary of some of the major monetary awards follows.

Special Act or Service Award

This is a monetary award granted to an employee or group of employees for a contribution or accomplishment in the public interest that is a nonrecurring contribution either within or outside of established job responsibilities; a scientific achievement; or an act of heroism. Awards of up to \$7,500 per person may be approved by the Head of the Departmental Element.

On-The-Spot Monetary Recognition Award

This is a monetary award granted to an employee or group of employees for performing, usually short-term, tasks or assignments with exceptional and unanticipated speed and quality under difficult or unusual circumstances. Award amounts range from \$25 - \$300 for an individual and \$25 - \$2,500 for a group (maximum of \$300 for individual in group). Awards may be approved by a supervisor or management official at least one level higher than the supervisor recommending the award.

Performance Management System Award

This award recognizes and rewards high-level performance based on an employee's current appraisal period rating of record for 1 full year. (Awards granted for a lesser period may be prorated.) Each Departmental Element establishes an award scale/method to be used for these awards. Scales/methods may be uniform or variable, and may be expressed as a percentage of salary or as dollar amounts. All performance awards should be made in conjunction with the official responsible for making the performance appraisal decision and the official responsible for managing the performance award budget for the organization.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

MONETARY AWARDS (continued)

**Quality Step
Increase**

This award may be granted to General Schedule employees with a current rating at the highest level for continuing high-quality performance, usually extending over more than one rating period. Heads of Departmental Elements have approval authority.

For further information, please contact your Servicing Personnel Office.

References

5 USC 4503; 4505a; 5336;
5 CFR 451.104; 430; 531.5

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

NONMONETARY AWARDS

Overview

There are also nonmonetary awards which may be used to recognize major contributions in support of the Department's missions and goals. These nonmonetary awards can be used as tools to motivate, reward, or recognize excellent employees. A brief summary of some of the major nonmonetary awards follows.

Time Off Award

Additional time off may be granted, without loss of pay or charge to leave, in recognition of superior accomplishment or other personal effort that contributes to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations. Full-time employees may be granted up to 40 hours of time off from duty for any single contribution, and receive a maximum of 80 hours of time off per year. Supervisors may grant Time Off Awards up to 1 workday; Time Off Awards of more than 1 workday require higher-level approval.

Exceptional Service Award

This bronze medal, rosette and plaque may be granted for outstanding service or an established record of achievement in the conduct or improvement of Departmental programs or operations; accomplishment of assigned responsibilities in an exemplary manner; the demonstration of unusual initiative in contributing to efficiency or improved management; outstanding executive or technical ability; unusual devotion to duty under adverse conditions; or for any other equally notable achievement deemed worthy of this level of recognition. This award may be approved by the Head of the Departmental Element.

ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITIES GUIDE

NONMONETARY AWARDS (continued)

Nonmonetary Superior Accomplishment Awards

Other nonmonetary awards may be granted for superior accomplishment of assigned tasks to provide recognition for more exceptional accomplishments and creative endeavors which may result in significant benefits to the Department or the parent organization. These awards include the Superior Achievement Award, Award for Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity, and Certificates of Appreciation. Approval levels for these awards are with the Heads of the Departmental Elements and may, in some instances, be redelegated to lower levels. Please check with your Servicing Personnel Office for nomination procedures and local approval levels.

For further information, please contact your Servicing Personnel Office.

References

5 USC 4502-4503; 5 CFR 451.104

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APPENDIX A

Staffing Actions and Approval

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STAFFING ACTIONS AND APPROVAL

TYPE OF ACTION	LEVEL OF APPROVAL REQUIRED			
	Supervisor, Line Management	Head of Departmental Element	Servicing Personnel Office	Office of Personnel Management
RETENTION				
• Retention Allowance		X		
• Technical Qualification Program	X			
• Training/Retraining Programs	X			
• Monetary Awards	X			
• Nonmonetary Awards	X			
• Saved Grade and Pay*		X		
RECRUITMENT AND HIRING				
• Excepted Service*			X	
• Recruitment Bonus*		X		
• Relocation Bonus*		X		
• Superior Qualifications Appointment**	X			
• Travel Expenses for Interviews	X			
• Travel & Household Goods for New Hires	X			
• Special Salary Rates				X
• Delegated Examining & Direct-Hire Authority			X	
• Student & Entry Level Programs			X	
RECRUITMENT/HIRING AND RETENTION				
• Critical Pay (also requires OMB approval)				X
• Dual Compensation Restriction Waivers				X

* The Secretary of Energy has final approval authority for certain positions.

** The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources has approval authority for certain rates.

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APPENDIX B

Headquarters Policy Staff

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**Headquarters Policy Staff
United States Department of Energy**

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Director of Human Resource Management
(202) 586-5610 / Fax (202) 586-3294

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APPENDIX C

Guidelines for Senior Safety Management Positions

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Guidelines for Senior Safety Management Positions

Purpose	<p>This document provides guidance to be used when filling and assessing the competency of incumbents of and applicants for senior safety management positions. This guidance is intended to complement local merit staffing procedures, the provisions of which still apply.</p>
Background	<p>The Department's most critical objective is to ensure that work is done safely with regard to the public health, worker safety and the environment. Senior safety managers are key to meeting that objective.</p> <p>It is imperative that senior safety managers be technically competent as well as good managers. Selecting senior safety managers is a complex process. There are no absolutes in the selection process. However, there are several attributes that are common to successful managers of technical programs. Several methods have proven successful in recruiting the best talent available.</p>
Qualifications	<p>An applicant for or incumbent of a senior safety management position shall possess a scientific or engineering degree with a major in an academic area that supports the functional responsibilities of the position. (Exceptions to this requirement should be considered only in rare circumstances, and then in accordance with Office of Personnel Management qualification standards.)</p> <p>An advanced technical degree is considered to be an advantage. Professional credentials (such as PE) and certifications should be considered positively.</p> <p>The applicant's resume or work history should show a demonstrated capability to manage technical issues at the level the position requires. For example, for a management position that is narrow in scope with significant detail work, the applicant shall have a level of expertise close to that of a subject matter expert. For a management position that is very</p>

Guidelines for Senior Safety Management Positions (continued)

Qualifications (continued)

broad in scope, applicants shall possess an interdisciplinary background and have demonstrated technical competence at a previous point in their careers. For supervisory or managerial positions, applicants should also have demonstrated leadership skills. Additionally, an applicant should have considerable experience (3 years or more) in an equivalent position or a position one below the position for which the applicant has applied.

In short, both demonstrated technical expertise and managerial skills are necessary.

The Hiring Process

The hiring process should be designed to identify and actively recruit personnel who have demonstrated sustained technical excellence in positions of increasing technical and managerial responsibility. Vacancy announcements should fully reflect the technical skills required for the position based on the job description and associated requirements. Well-written vacancy announcements, including specialized experience and skill requirements, will help ensure that applications are received from people with the requisite technical skills. The vacancy announcement should be posted so as to ensure recruitment over a wide geographic area, including the use of advertisements in professional publications and other proven means to attract a diverse pool of highly qualified applicants.

The Principal Secretarial Officer (PSO) or Manager responsible for hiring the applicant should ensure that a thorough review of each applicant's credentials is conducted using a centrally managed screening process as described in the following paragraphs.

Management and Administration personnel, with assistance from subject-matter experts, should evaluate the applications to develop a list of candidates who clearly meet the position requirements. Successfully screened applicants should then be further reviewed under the direction of the Manager/PSO; a suggested process follows.

Guidelines for Senior Safety Management Positions (continued)

The Hiring Process (continued)

The Manager/PSO should consider establishing a review board comprised of individuals who meet the selection criteria for senior technical safety management positions themselves. The Manager/PSO's "alter ego" (the person designated by the Manager/PSO who is also responsible for that office's technical competence) should always be a member of the review process/board. Regardless of whether a review board is used, the review should include comprehensive interviews with the applicants and verification of resumes and evaluations from previous employers in order to validate technical knowledge and managerial competence. Interviews should include evaluation of the applicant's technical competence, understanding of integrated safety management principles, experience in dealing with the Federal workforce, breadth of interdisciplinary background, and leadership and management skills. In addition to interviews, comprehensive reference checks should be conducted by the technical manager(s) responsible for the selection. The process should conclude with the Manager/PSO or alter ego reviewing and interviewing the most qualified applicants.

The above process should also be used for internal reassignments that are required to be done competitively.

Summary

Safety requires managers who are technically competent. Managers/PSOs are encouraged to adopt a formal process, similar to that described above, to ensure that personnel selected for senior safety management positions have the highest level of technical competence obtainable.

APPENDIX D

Guidance on Retention of Technical Competence During Reductions In Force

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memorandum

DATE: April 21, 1998

REPLY TO

ATTN OF: FM-10(J. Hassenfeldt, 202 586-1643)

SUBJECT: Guidance on Retention of Facility Representative Technical Competence during Reductions in Force

TO: Distribution

The Department's Revised Implementation Plan (IP) for Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 93-3 renews the Department's commitment to maintaining the technical capability necessary to safely manage and operate defense nuclear facilities. Retaining highly qualified employees in critical technical skills areas is vital to the maintenance of these technical capabilities. The Department has therefore committed in the revised IP to the development of a model that offices can use to proactively manage and preserve critical technical capabilities.

During the worst case Fiscal Year 1998 Budget scenario, the Department had to quickly prepare for a widespread reduction in force for the first time in over 15 years. Position descriptions, qualification requirements, and competitive level determinations had to be reviewed and documented in a very short period of time. The Department became concerned about the vulnerability of unique critical technical positions under these circumstances. Of particular concern, were DOE's Facility Representative positions. These positions' operational safety role in their assigned facilities is recognized as unique within the Department. Fortunately, the Department was able to cancel the majority of reduction in force actions resulting from the FY 1998 Budget proposals, but the need to review and improve documentation required for any future reductions in force remained.

This memorandum and its attachments focus on the Facility Representative position in order to address the type of documentation necessary to support competitive level determinations and to document special qualification requirements beyond those published by the Office of Personnel Management where applicable. This same process may be applied to other positions, especially other critical technical positions, where duties and qualification requirements are unique. This model is provided as guidance to be used, as necessary, by individual field offices to supplement existing procedures.

In reviewing the Facility Representative qualifications program, it was determined that a level of knowledge and experience needed to be identified for development of this model. The portions of the qualification process common for all Facility Representatives which must be completed before a candidate can be considered a "Designated Facility Representative" are listed in Attachment 1.

In the reduction in force process, the agency must establish competitive levels based on regulations found in Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations Part 351.403 which defines a competitive level as:

"...all positions in a competitive area which are in the same grade (or occupational level) and classification series, and which are similar enough in duties, qualification requirements, pay schedules, and working conditions so that an agency may reassign the incumbent of one position to any of the other positions in the level without undue interruption."

In order that competitive levels can be properly established, position descriptions must document the duties and functions performed as well as the knowledge required to fully perform the duties of the position, especially where qualifications should be expanded through the use of selective placement factors. The Facility Representative Personnel Guide issued in 1993 provided sample position descriptions as well as information about the possibility of establishing selective placement factors. This memorandum provides sample language that can be used as an amendment to those position descriptions and any vacancy announcements issued to fill the positions describing the knowledge, skills, and abilities required (selective placement factors) for entry into the Designated Facility Representative Position. The selective factors along with the unique nature of the duties and functions of the position distinguish the Designated Facility Representative Positions as unique for competitive level purposes and for qualification determinations during the RIF process. (See Attachment 2.)

Questions regarding this model should be sent to Joe Hassenfeldt, Facility Representative Program Manager, FM-10, or to Pam Jeckell, Assistant Director for Workforce Reinvention, HR-32. Joe can be reached at 202 586-1643, or via e-mail at "joseph.hassenfeldt@hq.doe.gov". Pam can be reached at 202 586-8511, or via e-mail at "pam.jeckell@hq.doe.gov".

Timothy Dirks /s/
Director of Human Resource Management

Franklin G. Peters /s/
Acting Associate Deputy Secretary
for Field Management

Attachments

Attachment 1

Formal Designation as a Department of Energy (DOE) Facility Representative (FacRep)

The training and qualification process required of Department of Energy Facility Representatives varies somewhat throughout the DOE complex. The portions of the qualification process common for all Facility Representatives which must be completed before a candidate can be considered a "Designated Facility Representative" are:

1. The General Technical Base Qualification Standard¹, and
2. The Facility Representative Functional Area Qualification Standard¹, and
3. At least six (6) months experience assigned to a Facility Representative position under the tutelage of a FacRep supervisor, FacRep mentor, or senior FacRep at DOE facilities.

When these three conditions are met, the Field Element Manager may award Designation to the candidate. The Facility Representative Program Manager, in the Office of Field Management, FM-10, should be notified of all Designations for DOE-wide recording purposes. The Field Element Training Organization and Personnel Organization should also be notified to record the training achievement and to assign employees to Designated Facility Representative position descriptions with the established unique competitive level codes.

It is important to note that Designation is not equivalent to "Qualification" as defined in DOE-STD-1063-97, "Establishing and Maintaining a Facility Representative Program at DOE Facilities." Facility Representative Designation will occur BEFORE a Facility Representative achieves full Qualification². Qualification occurs in accordance with each Field Element's Facility Representative Program plan, and will include completion of FacRep Qualification Cards, facility-specific knowledge requirements, examinations, and oral boards.

Note 1. Qualification Standards are to be completed as specified in DOE O 360.1, Training.

Note 2. Individuals previously Qualified as Facility Representatives under DOE-STD-1063 who have met Designation requirements are eligible for Designation by the Field Element Manager. All notifications must be made.

Attachment 2

The Facility Representative Personnel Guide issued in 1993 included sample position descriptions for use in filling Facility Representative positions. The following selective placement factors are samples of factors which may be augmented or tailored to Designated Facility Representative positions at any site. Appropriate selective placement factors must be incorporated into the knowledge required by the position and used to determine basic qualifications for job entry. In addition, the inclusion of these selective placement factors along with the unique nature of the duties and functions of the position support the establishment of unique competitive level codes.

Selective placement factors, when incorporated into the knowledge required for job accomplishment and when supported by the duties and responsibilities of the position, extend the qualification requirements for initial entry into the position as well as entry into the position during reduction in force.

In order to fully perform the functions of this position, the incumbent must demonstrate:

- ! Knowledge of the advanced concepts, theories, principles, and practices of engineering or related physical science fields sufficient for independent technical evaluations of all aspects of nuclear and/or non-nuclear facility design, construction, maintenance and operation activities for facilities associated with Department of Energy activities.
- ! Knowledge of safety analysis principles and techniques sufficient to describe the basis, function, and operational characteristics of safety systems in the event that emergencies preclude immediate access to relevant plans and specifications.
- ! Knowledge of laws and regulations relating to occupational safety and health, environmental compliance, nuclear safety, and industry standards applicable to conduct of operations/maintenance at assigned facilities.
- ! Ability to operate independently at assigned facilities, serving as DOE technical expert regarding operational safety, day-to-day operational oversight, problem identification, analysis, and problem solving.

Completion of the requirements for "Designated Facility Representative" could be evidence of meeting the above selective placement factors.

APPENDIX E

Best Practices

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Best Practices

Integration of Technical Qualifications and Personnel Processes

The **Albuquerque Operations Office (AL)** has taken steps to integrate its Technical Qualification Program with recruitment and staffing processes. Specifically, managers certify that critical technical competencies have been considered in the review of the position description, and in the identification of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities. Positions covered by this program are then identified as such in vacancy announcements so that prospective candidates understand the requirements for these positions. Albuquerque's vacancy announcements are made available to all employees through its client-server computer environment, thus reducing the requirements for copying and mailing numerous copies, while ensuring wider distribution. In addition, Albuquerque has modified its evaluation forms so that required managerial competencies are identified and used in the rating and ranking process for supervisory positions.

The **Richland Operations Office (RL)** is in the process of developing a Core Position Description (PD) Library that will reside on the RL Office of Human Resources Management (HRM) Home Page. Core PD's in the library will serve as templates that may be used "as-is," or modified to include competitive level information, or other job specific criteria. Once a core PD template has been developed, reviewed, approved and placed into the core PD Library located on RL's HRM Home Page, it can be readily accessed by managers and HR staff as a tool for preparing related personnel actions.

A future enhancement involves using PeopleSoft HRMS for Federal Government to generate official position descriptions for each position at RL by combining core PD templates and related competitive level descriptions.

The core PD library will significantly enhance and streamline the position classification process, facilitate classification consistency, save managers and HRM time in writing PD's, and expedite the processing of personnel actions and filling vacancies. Generally, the need for development and/or modification of lengthy individual PD's will be eliminated. For more information contact Connie Pierce at (509) 376-7380 or Julie Hathaway at (509) 376-8999.

Best Practices (continued)

Excepted Service Recruitment Strategy

The **Richland Operations Office (RL)** has successfully strengthened its technical capability through the innovative use of the flexibilities allowed under the Excepted Service Hiring Authorities. RL incorporated references to TQP within position descriptions and vacancy announcements, increased minimum education and experience requirements, and ensured extensive technical subject matter expert review at each step.

To date, RL has recruited and filled 26 Excepted Service positions using the new process. The process was recognized by Department of Energy officials and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board as instrumental in screening and selecting individuals with exceptional technical skills. The RL process was also audited by OPM who rated it excellent. For more information contact Sherri Scheer at (509) 376-7380 or Julie Hathaway on (509) 376-8999.

Guidelines for Senior Safety Management Positions

These guidelines were developed by the **Federal Technical Work Force Review Group**, and are attached as Appendix D. The guidelines provide a model process for filling senior technical safety manager positions which, with senior management involvement, will help ensure that personnel selected for senior safety management positions have the necessary level of technical competence. The guidelines are intended to complement local merit staffing procedures, the provisions of which still apply. The guidelines should also be helpful in assessing the competency of incumbents of senior technical safety management positions. For more information, contact Bill Pearce at (202) 426-1384.

Integration of Leadership in Performance Evaluation

Good leadership is vital to ensuring the technical competence of the DOE workforce. **The Idaho Operations Office (ID)** has implemented a **Leadership Development Program** for its employees. This program covers all employees and incorporates training, mentoring, developmental assignments and workshops which focus on developing leadership characteristics.

Best Practices (continued)

Integration of Leadership in Performance Evaluation (continued)

These characteristics serve as evaluation criteria for the 360-degree feedback survey used in Idaho's performance management system.

Computer-Based Training

Like to finish your day by curling up with a cup of hot cocoa and a good "whodunit?" Then you may want to check out the **Nevada Operations Office's (NV)** computer-based course entitled "*Murder, They Wrote: A Short Course in Personnel Management for DOE Supervisors.*" This course replaced its classroom counterpart with a computerized "murder mystery" that can be delivered in four hours or less. The modular structure of "*Murder, They Wrote*" allows students to access the course's ten lessons in any order they choose. If they are unable to complete the course in one sitting, they can return later and the program will bring them back to the point where they left off—an incentive for supervisors who have only short time blocks to devote to training. The original target audience was supervisors. However, the content is proving highly relevant to current Federal personnel issues and DOE/NV decided to make the course available to anyone who wishes to take it. For more information, contact Ms. Clark at (702) 295-0954.

Department of Energy Job Bank

Employment opportunities with the Department can be found on the Internet at <http://www.hr.doe.gov/pers/doejobs.htm>. This site provides access to job information posted by each of the Department's Headquarters and Field Offices. Separate listings are provided for those jobs available only to Department employees and for jobs available to any individual.

Lead Site Activities & Centers of Excellence

The Department of Energy is establishing national Centers of Excellence in the areas of training and development. Training Centers of Excellence are a key initiative championed by the Department of Energy Corporate Approach to Training plan. The vision is a network of Training Centers of Excellence, each dedicated to a particular priority topical area, serving DOE employees by providing best-in-

**Lead Site
Activities &
Centers of
Excellence
(continued)**

class training, education, and professional development in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

There are currently two training Centers of Excellence designated by the Secretary of Energy. The **National Environmental Training Office (NETO)** was established by the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management to strengthen and maintain the technical environmental management skills and abilities of DOE employees through a national integrated program. The Center coordinates and delivers uniform, high-quality, technical environmental education and skills training that have crosscutting applicability. Located at the Savannah River Site, NETO is sponsored by the Office of Environmental Management (EM-I) and the Savannah River Operations Office.

Information about NETO can be obtained by contacting Nick Delaplane at (803) 725-0845, or by visiting their home page at www.em.doe.gov/neto/.

The **Central Training Academy (CTA)** is the Center of Excellence for Safeguards and Security Training. CTA is chartered to ensure that efficient and effective training is provided using a standardized core training curriculum to orient, familiarize, inform, certify, and qualify persons to perform in a broad range of safeguards and security topical area disciplines. CTA is located in Albuquerque, New Mexico and is sponsored by the Office of Safeguards and Security (NN-51) and other organizations within the Office of Nonproliferation and National Security (NN-1). Information about CTA can be obtained by contacting Don Cook at (505) 845-6180, or by visiting their home page at www.cta.doe.gov/.

**For More
Information**

For more information on programs at your work site, contact your local training office or Servicing Personnel Office.

ERRATA SHEET

This Errata Sheet transmits an administrative change to DOE P 420.1, FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY POLICY FOR DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES, dated 12-10-98; and DOE G 420.1-1, RECRUITING, HIRING, AND RETAINING HIGH-QUALITY TECHNICAL STAFF, dated 12-10-98. These directives are being re-issued under the “426” subject matter category.

The “420” category is a general classification for “Facilities Authorization” and therefore does not reflect a specific designation for “Training at Nuclear Facilities”. The subject directives are hereby reissued as DOE P 426.1, FEDERAL TECHNICAL CAPABILITY POLICY FOR DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES, and DOE G 426.1-1, RECRUITING, HIRING, AND RETAINING HIGH-QUALITY TECHNICAL STAFF.