

UNCLASSIFIED

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Pass Line: FOR ALL STATE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES FROM THE ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL
Subject: Introducing the Professional Development Program for Foreign Service Generalists

1. Summary: The Bureau of Human Resources is pleased to announce the Professional Development Program (PDP) for Foreign Service Generalists, which is designed to enhance leadership and adaptive capacity, fuel professional development, and develop the experience and skills of employees over the length of their careers. The PDP will be phased in over the next eight years and ultimately will replace the Career Development Plan (CDP). Based on input from employees, working groups, and bureaus, the streamlined PDP will help ensure that Senior Foreign Service officers have the demonstrated skills and experience needed to lead in the field and in Washington. Through 2025, FSOs considering opening their window for promotion into the Senior Foreign Service (SFS) may elect to either meet all the requirements of the CDP or all the requirements of the new PDP. By the end of January 2018, the Department will send an ALDAC with guidance and instructions for Class FS-01 members (Generalists and Specialists) regarding opening their Senior Threshold windows to compete for promotion into the SFS. End Summary.

 The PDP in a Nutshell

2. The text of the PDP can be found in Paragraph 10. Its four principles – which Generalists must develop and demonstrate over the course of their career to be considered for promotion across the Senior Threshold – are:

- Operational effectiveness, including a breadth of experience over several regions and functions.
- Leadership and management effectiveness, with an emphasis on supervisory and management experience.

- Professional language proficiency, with a requirement that Generalists test at the 3/3 level any time after tenure.
- Responsiveness to Service needs, including the requirement for service at high hardship differential posts.

 How the PDP is different from the CDP

3. A key aspect of the streamlined PDP is that it makes requirements clearer to understand and follow. The PDP places greater emphasis on leadership and professional development, and requires “significant and substantial” supervisory and management experience.

4. While the CDP requires Generalists to serve three tours dealing with one region and two tours dealing with another region (i.e., having a “major” and “minor,” respectively), the PDP requires a mix of domestic and overseas assignments in at least two different bureaus after tenure. Under the PDP, Generalists who entered the service after January 1, 2017 must serve at least one tour in a global affairs bureau or in a global affairs position (see definition below in paragraph 11).

5. The PDP also changes the language requirement. The PDP requires Generalists to test at the 3/3 level (or at the 3/2 level for a hard or super-hard language) any time after tenure. The CDP requires Generalists to test at the 3/3 level within seven years before opening their window for consideration of promotion across the Senior Threshold.

6. The PDP requires Generalists to serve at hardship posts in order to be considered for promotion across the Senior Threshold. Under the PDP, Generalists will need to complete a tour at a 25 percent or greater hardship/danger differential post from entry into the Foreign Service OR complete a tour at an unaccompanied post from entry into the Foreign Service, AND complete another tour at a 20 percent or greater hardship/danger differential post after tenure. The PDP Service need requirement is designed to enhance the ability of Generalists to lead effectively once they cross the Senior Threshold, ensure more equitable burden-sharing, and expand the pool of qualified bidders at historically-difficult-to-staff posts.

7. Waiver provisions for the PDP Service need requirement will include limited medical clearances or needs of the Service – as is the case with the CDP – and will be expanded to include extraordinary circumstances that may affect an FSO’s ability to service in the required hardship postings. The Department has begun initial consultations with AFSA on this matter.

8. The PDP will be phased in over the next eight years, beginning in 2018. Through 2025, FSOs who apply for Senior Threshold Board (STB) review may elect to meet all of the CDP requirements or may instead elect to meet all of the new PDP requirements, depending on which complete plan they prefer. Beginning January 1, 2026, all FSOs who apply to open their windows must meet the requirements of the PDP. Once HR attests that an FSO has met the

requirements to open his or her window – either through the CDP or PDP – he or she does not need to reapply or resubmit another application for consideration.

More information

9. In the coming weeks, HR will use webinars, trainings, and CDO outreach to answer questions. By the end of January 2018, the Department plans to send an ALDAC with guidance and instructions for Class FS-01 members (Generalists and Specialists) regarding opening their Senior Threshold windows to compete for promotion into the SFS. Policy questions can be sent to careerdevhelpdesk@state.gov.

10. The Department wishes to thank bureaus, working groups, employees, AFSA, and HR for their thoughts and contributions in shaping the PDP. We look forward to providing more information as we implement the PDP and other professional development innovations.

11. The full text of the PDP is below. For comparison, the Generalist CDP can be viewed at: <https://intranet.hr.state.sbu/Workforce/Development/Pages/CDP.aspx>.

Professional Development Program Full Text

THE PDP PRINCIPLES

The Professional Development Program (PDP) is designed to enhance leadership and adaptive capacity, fuel professional development, and develop the experience and skills of employees over the length of their careers. It is also designed to meet Service needs at various grade levels. Service needs continue to evolve based on U.S. interests, international challenges, and the evolution of diplomacy to encompass inter-agency and “crisis response” responsibilities. The principles outlined below encompass this dual objective of employee and Service needs. No single career path -- no specific set or sequence of assignments, no particular promotion timing - - determines success. Professional growth and career advancement come from taking on challenges and demonstrating accomplishments across an array of Service-needs assignments to broaden experience, widen perspective, deepen expertise and language proficiency, and amplify leadership and adaptive capacity. Employees should use assignments and training opportunities to challenge themselves and to integrate competencies and skill sets for positions of greater responsibility irrespective of rank or grade.

The PDP has four principles that an officer must develop and demonstrate over the course of his or her career, from entry through tenure and up to consideration for promotion at the Senior Threshold. Officers considered for entry into the Senior Foreign Service should demonstrate:

- 1) Operational effectiveness, including a breadth of experience over several regions and functions;
- 2) Leadership and management effectiveness;

- 3) Professional language proficiency; and
- 4) Responsiveness to Service needs.

OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Mandatory Requirement

A minimum of 15 years in the Foreign Service, to include service in a mix of completed domestic and overseas assignments with demonstrated regional and substantive expertise, including service in two separate bureaus after tenure. Those entering the Foreign Service after January 1, 2017, must serve at least one tour in a global affairs bureau^A or in a global affairs position^B.

(Note: Superhard language training held in-region may be counted toward regional expertise. “Domestic assignments” refers to Department positions in Washington and elsewhere in the United States, not details or long-term training.)

Mandatory Requirement: Completing one of the following two electives

1) Professional Development (one tour/one academic year, cumulative, after tenure). Such assignments would be drawn from the annual list of training opportunities and details managed by the HR Bureau’s Professional Development Unit (HR/CDA/PDU), including long-term training opportunities such as Senior Training programs at the War Colleges; academic study; Transatlantic Diplomatic Fellowships; Commands and Staff Colleges; Inter-American Defense College; National Intelligence University; and details such as NSC; DHS; Pearson Fellowships; USTR; Treasury; and USTDA.

2) Out-of-Cone Assignment (one year, after tenure). Such assignments would include a position with a skill code other than your primary skill code.

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

Mandatory Requirement

Significant and substantial leadership responsibility (one tour, after tenure). Such assignments would include positions that assign work, develop and set priorities, counsel employees, evaluate performances, resolve disputes, effect minor disciplinary measures, interview and recommend candidates for positions within a unit, and supervise other employees who perform such responsibilities. Positions such as Deputy Chief of Mission, section heads, unit chiefs, and office (or deputy office) director positions could be examples of positions that fulfill this requirement. Leadership effectiveness entails executing and achieving policy and programmatic results through people.

Mandatory Requirement

In accordance with the Procedural Precepts, FS-03s must complete Basic Leadership Skills (PK245) for promotion to FS-02; FS-02s must complete Intermediate Leadership Skills (PT207) for promotion to FS-01; and FS-01s must complete Advanced Leadership Skills (PT210) for promotion into the SFS.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Mandatory Requirement

One language at the 3/3 level (or at the 3/2 level for a hard or superhard language) tested after tenure, or one language at the 4/4 level (tested either before or after tenure).

SERVICE NEEDS

Mandatory Requirement

A completed tour at a 25% or greater hardship differential post from entry into the Foreign Service OR a completed tour at an unaccompanied post from entry into the Foreign Service
AND

Another completed tour at a 20% or greater hardship differential post after tenure.

Note: The standard definitions for “tour completion” apply:

10 months for a 12-month TOD

20 months for a 24-month TOD

30 months for a 36-month TOD

^A The term ‘global affairs bureau’ means any bureau of the Department that is under the responsibility of—

- (I) the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment (E);
- (II) the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Affairs (T);
- (III) the Under Secretary for Management (M);
- (IV) the Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs (IO);
- (V) the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs (R); or
- (VI) the Under Secretary for Civilian, Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (J)

^B Diplomatic Policy and Support The Departmental components funded under this category are the bureaus and offices of Administration; Arms Control, Verification and Compliance; Budget and Planning; Chief of Protocol; Comptroller and Global Financial Services; Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor; Economic and Business Affairs; Energy Resources; Information Resource Management; Intelligence and Research; International Criminal Justice; International Security and Nonproliferation; the Legal Adviser; Legislative Affairs; Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs; Political-Military Affairs; Population and International Migration; Public Affairs; the Secretary of State; the Under Secretary for Management; and the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

12. Minimize considered.

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