



HUMAN RESOURCES BULLETIN

Promotion Redesign Update

May 1999

Standing Review Panels for GS-14 and GS-15 Promotion Process

(For Accretion Promotions Only)

[This is the third in a series of articles which will be published separately over coming weeks on the new promotion process. It provides greater detail about one feature of the process that was introduced in Center Announcement #99-13, dated March 12, 1999. Note: The "original and second in the series" articles can be found at <http://obr.gsfc.nasa.gov/promotion/promodesc.htm>]

Introduction

A new feature of the Center's promotion process is the establishment of standing review panels for accretion promotions only. This communiqué will highlight the main features of the standing review panel process. The full text version may be found at <http://ohr.gsfc.nasa.gov/promotion/promodesc.htm>

Panel Roles - Why have panels?

Standing promotion review panels will only be utilized for independent reviews of candidates for promotion above the full performance level to GS-14 and GS-15 positions. These types of promotion are known as "accretions." Panel assessments are to be advisory in nature. The panels will not decide on promotion, rather they provide a broad view of the relevant discipline and serve as a "group memory." Panels will provide an independent check on candidates' promotion readiness, assure consistency in application of promotion criteria across directorates, and will supply subject-matter-expert evaluation of candidates' skills and accomplishments within the context of their skill group. (Promotion criteria are available on the OHR Home Page, under the Promotion Redesign header.)

Panel Membership - Who is on the panels? How are they chosen?

The panels will be comprised of a diverse cross-section of GS-15 and/or Senior Scientific and Technical (SST) supervisory and non-supervisory employees for a respective skill group, e.g., engineering, science, program/project management, and professional administrative; it is intended that the panels be composed of peers carrying out an objective assessment. Each panel will include expertise in a wide variety of disciplines associated with that skill group. Panels will have a minimum of seven members, drawn from a pool of approximately 15 trained individuals in that skill group. Pool members will serve three year terms, with approximately 1/3 of the membership changing each year. Three year terms are expected to provide stable group memory of procedures and therefore long term consistency of results. Willing individuals with broad experience in the relevant skill area will be nominated by their directorate to serve in the pool of trained panel members. Establishment of each panel's membership is by the Director of Human Resources, and includes consideration of a variety of factors (e.g., broad discipline mix, broad organization mix, and diversity.) The final recommendation on panel composition will be

Promotion Redesign Update

forwarded by the Director of Human Resources to the Executive Council for concurrence. Each panel includes an OHR representative as a non-voting member, to provide guidance on operating procedures and to serve as an executive secretary as needed.

Panel Guidelines - How do the panels work?

In order to protect the candidate's privacy, all panel discussions, conclusions, and recommendations will be confidential. Provisions have been made to avoid conflict of interest by panel members. In addition, panel members receive training in panel ethics and operations.

Evaluations will be guided by written promotion criteria, tailored for each skill group but based on a clear set of overarching Center promotion criteria (under development). The employee's supervisor provides materials to the panel to be used in the assessment. However, consistent with mandatory principles, the supervisor will obtain input from matrixed managers, customers, and the employee in creating the promotion documentation.

Panel Operation - What do the panels do?

Regularly scheduled assessments will occur throughout the year in each skill group. Initially, panels will be convened at least six times per year in each skill group, if needed in order to ensure timely feedback. Each member of a panel will review all candidates submitted to that panel, and the panel will make its assessment as a group.

All panel members participate in developing feedback for each candidate. Panels only consider one review per year, per candidate. This is intended to ensure that the candidates have time

to address perceived development needs, and to ensure that the panel has sufficient opportunity to provide accurate and complete review of all employees forwarded for assessments. However, if the feedback on a candidate indicates that the package was inadequately prepared or that important information was omitted, panels may ask for further information during consideration of a package, at the panel's discretion.

Products - What do the panels produce?

Panels will provide a written assessment for each promotion criterion and an overall assessment of the candidate's promotion readiness to the employee's supervisor. The panel only provides recommendations for further development (if needed, in the panel's opinion). It is the supervisor's responsibility to debrief the employee on the panel's assessment, and should do so both when the panel's assessment is positive as well as when it is not.

The final promotion decision is by the employee's direct management. In cases where promotion is not recommended by the standing panels, higher level management concurrence will be required to proceed. The supervisor makes the final decision and is accountable for it.

Additional questions may be directed to any of the members of the Promotion Redesign Team (see the OHR home page, Promotion Redesign), or the Human Resources Management Specialist who supports your organization.

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