

BPA Human Resources Directive 410-03

Hiring, Selecting, and Assigning Employees

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1. Purpose & Background

Communicates BPA-wide guidance for hiring individuals into the Federal service and selecting and assigning employees to positions within BPA as permitted by Government-wide regulations and/or Department of Energy (DOE) policy.

2. Policy Owner

The Chief Administrative Officer, through Human Capital Management's (HCM) Integrated Strategy (NHI-1), has overall responsibility for monitoring, reporting, executing, and maintaining this policy.

3. Applicability

Except where noted, this policy applies to all BPA General Schedule (GS) or equivalent and hourly employees.

4. Terms & Definitions

- A. **Accelerated Promotion:** Advancement to a higher grade based on experience gained under a formal training plan or approved Training Agreement that is credited for qualifications and time-in-grade requirements at an accelerated rate.
- B. **Accession:** A personnel action that results in the addition of an employee to the rolls (staff) of an agency.
- C. **Accretion of Duties:** A promotion resulting from the upgrading of an employee's position because of additional duties and responsibilities.
- D. **Alternative Work Assignment:** A temporary or permanent job assignment in another job classification designed to accommodate work restrictions while an employee recovers from a work-related injury or occupational illness or as a permanent assignment for an employee who is medically unable to return to his/her former job after work-related traumatic injury, occupational disease, or illness, or as direct result of a Reasonable Accommodation.
- E. **Applicant:** A person being considered for Federal employment.
- F. **Appointee:** For suitability determinations, this is a person who has entered on duty (EOD) and is in the first year of an appointment subject to investigation as described in 5 CFR 731.104.
- G. **Classified Positions:** A specific set of duties and responsibilities for which HCM has officially assigned a title, series, and grade in accordance with Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) guidance on Position Classification.

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- H. **Detail:** Temporary assignment of an employee to a different position or set of duties for a specified period to meet a specific business need.
- I. **Professional Employee:** Employees in classified positions that require academic credentials from an accredited college or university.
- J. **Student Volunteer** (also see Volunteer): An individual who is enrolled not less than half-time in a high school, trade school, technical or vocational institute, junior college, college, university, or other accredited educational institution.
- K. **Temporary Employment:** An appointment made for a limited period of time and with a specific not-to-exceed (NTE) date.
- L. **Temporary Promotion:** Promotion made on a temporary basis. For positions under the same type job classification system and pay schedule, a promotion changes the employee to a higher grade level. When the old and new positions are under different job classification systems and pay schedule, a promotion changes the employee to a position with a higher rate of basic pay.
- M. **Term Employment:** Appointment to a position that is projected to last more than one year (typically, 13 months minimum), but not more than four years and where the job will terminate upon completion of the project or assignment. Reasons for making a term appointment include, but are not limited to: project work, extraordinary workload, scheduled abolishment, reorganization, contracting out of the function, uncertainty of future funding, or the need to maintain permanent positions for placement of employees who would otherwise be displaced from other parts of the organization.
- N. **Volunteer** (also see Student Volunteer): A person who is not considered to be a Federal employee for any purposes other than injury compensation or laws related to the Tort Claims Act and who is uncompensated, donating his/her service.

5. Policy

DOE employment program authorities are delegated to the heads of DOE elements, which includes the BPA Administrator. As a result, BPA managers and supervisors are able to use available hiring authorities to recruit, select, and assign applicants and employees to Federal positions in both the competitive and excepted services while adhering to merit system principles. BPA establishes recruitment and staffing strategies to identify and select the high quality, diverse workforce that BPA needs now and in the future.

6. Responsibilities

As stated in applicable HR Desk References and/or Standard Operating Procedures (see “Related HR Desk References” section).

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7. Standards & Procedures

7.1. Effective Dates for Accessions and Grade and Position Changes

- A. **Accessions:** All new employees or reinstated employees (with break in service of 90 days or more) are appointed effective the first day of a pay period (Sunday).
- B. Promotions and changes to a lower grade:
 - 1. Are effective on the Sunday at the beginning of a pay period, except changes-to-lower-grade resulting from Promotion NTE that are effective on the NTE date, unless the effective date is otherwise determined consistent with applicable bargaining agreements, Memorandums of Agreement (MOU), and Memorandums of Agreement (MOA).
 - 2. May be deferred for a maximum of two pay periods to allow an employee to receive a within grade increase (WGI) due during that period, when approved by the manager, HCM staff, and employee.
 - 3. Promotions through accretion of duties are effective on the Sunday at the beginning of a pay period provided there is no need to re-compete the established position.
- C. Reassignments are effective on the Sunday at the beginning of a pay period.
- D. HCM establishes effective dates in consultation with managers and supervisors. The Human Resources Director (HRD) approves requested exceptions to the required effective dates. Exceptions should be rare; but if approved, offer letters to employees must indicate that benefits and pay may be interrupted or delayed due to beginning during the middle of the pay period, if applicable.

7.2. Commitment to Hire

- 1. Specific language about eligibility for a pro-rated performance award, as shown in DOE's Policy Guidance Memorandum #29, is incorporated into employment offer letters to incoming transfer employees (except SES, SL, and ST employees).
- 2. All individuals selected for vacant BPA positions are notified in writing and by email, if applicable, of their selection.
- 3. Managers may conduct initial/tentative employment discussions with prospective appointees, including a proposed entrance-on-duty (EOD) date and salary requirements of the selectee with the understanding that the final EOD date will be determined by HCM.
- 4. Authorized HCM staff will make employment offers.

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7.3. Probationary and Trial Periods for New Employees

1. Excepted service employees may be separated for the same reasons as employees serving probationary/trial periods in the competitive service if the separation is effected prior to the time the employees gain appeal rights under 5 CFR Parts 752, Adverse Actions and 432, Performance Based Reduction in Grade and Removal Actions.
2. The length of the probationary/trial period may vary depending on the type of appointment, but generally is one or two years.
3. Review by Employee Relations is required before terminating a probationer or employee on a trial period.

7.4. Probationary and Trial Periods for New Supervisors

1. Supervisors/Managers of employees serving a probationary period for initial appointment as supervisor or manager advise employees of their progress or lack of it throughout the probationary period and suggest remedial actions if an employee appears to need it.
2. The next level below Tier 1 manager has authority to reassign or demote an employee during the supervisory/managerial probationary period.
3. The lowest level to which the authority can be assigned is a second level supervisor or manager. The Tier 1 manager approves all assignments of responsibilities. Assignments must be in writing and signed by the appropriate Tier 1 manager.
4. Review by Employee Relations is required before reassigning or demoting a probationary supervisor.

7.5. Details and Temporary Promotions to General Schedule Positions

1. Managers and supervisors may detail employees to a different position or set of duties or temporarily promote employees to a different position for a specified period to fulfill mission requirements subject to the provisions below.
2. Details to positions that are equivalent to or at a lower grade than the employee's position may be made non-competitively for a period of up to one year, in 120-day increments. In some instances details may be extended for an additional year, in 120-day increments, if approved by the HRD.
3. Temporary Promotions may be made non-competitively up to 120 days. Details for more than 120 days to a higher grade position or to a position with higher promotion potential and temporary promotions more than 120 days must be filled competitively. Prior service during the preceding 12 months under non-competitive details to higher-graded positions and non-competitive time-limited promotions counts toward the 120-day total.

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4. Details are not a substitute for a permanent action such as a promotion, reassignment, or appointment.
5. Details for a period of 121 days or longer must be to classified positions.
6. A term appointee may be detailed to another position that meets the criteria for term employment.
7. Temporary employees on time-limited appointments (not-to-exceed one year) are eligible for details only to positions that are equivalent to or lower-in-grade than their current assigned position.
8. Managers may use details at their discretion subject to applicable provisions of collective bargaining agreements and this policy.
9. Managers determine the appropriate method for temporary duty travel allowances, e.g., lodging plus per diem, reduced per diem, or actual expenses, when an employee is on an extended detail, e.g., over 30 days, to a position in another geographic location.
10. The Labor Relations staff determines proper handling of matters related to pay administration, other impacted working conditions, and necessary involvement of the Columbia Power Trades Council (CPTC) when hourly employees are detailed to annual positions.

7.6. Volunteer Services

1. Managers and supervisors may use volunteers who donate their service.
2. Service performed by an individual on a voluntary basis may not be used to displace or replace any employee in BPA's work force and must not contribute to erosion of the position duties of employees.
3. Volunteers are not assigned to perform volunteer services of a sensitive nature or are they allowed access to classified or sensitive materials.
4. A written agreement between the BPA supervisor and the volunteer is required. The agreement must also be negotiated with the applicable educational institution for student volunteers.
5. Volunteers may only be trained in procedures and/or systems that are unique to their service and essential to conducting assigned responsibilities.
6. Managers determine if they provide volunteer students education-related work assignments.
7. As authorized under the Bonneville Project (16 U.S.C. 832i(c)), the BPA Administrator may use voluntary and uncompensated services of Federal, State, or local government officers and employees to carry out BPA work.

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8. The Labor Relations staff has final authority to determine whether a volunteer's duties infringe on work performed by the CPTC bargaining unit.

7.7. Temporary and Term Employment

1. Term and temporary time-limited appointments allow BPA to maintain a workforce to meet short-term staffing needs consistent with strategic initiatives. Such appointments are appropriate to meet a current business need when there is no expectation for permanent employment.
2. A temporary employee is notified in writing two weeks in advance when his/her appointment will be terminated prior to the expiration date (NTE date) when there is no longer funding or the position is no longer needed.
3. Managers and supervisors determine non-permanent situations warranting term and/or temporary limited appointments.

7.8. Merit Promotion

1. Vacant positions may be filled through a variety of recruitment sources and methodologies, including non-competitive sources when appropriate, in order to meet BPA's business needs and affirmative employment goals.
2. BPA's merit promotion plans identify specific personnel actions that are excepted from competitive procedures in accordance with Federal regulations and DOE policy.
3. When competitive selection procedures are used, selection is from among the best qualified candidates.
4. Managers may, at their discretion, reassign employees without competition to positions for which the employee meets the qualification requirements (determined by HCM) with an equivalent full performance level in the same or different commuting area, except in the case of reassignment of a non-supervisory employee without Federal supervisory experience into a supervisory position.
5. Hourly job vacancies above the entrance level are normally filled by promotion from within BPA unless a sufficiently well-qualified employee is not available or it is clearly in the best interest of the Administrator to recruit from outside.
6. Time-limited (temporary) promotions are not used when employees are performing a higher-graded position for 30 or fewer days, except:

Exception: A "professional" employee who is/was assigned to a higher-graded Professional Division of Laborer's (PDL) bargaining unit position for 21 calendar days or more is temporarily promoted if the employee meets the qualifications and time-in-grade requirements and is assigned the full range of duties and responsibilities of the higher-graded position.

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7. HCM, in conjunction with managers, determines recruitment sources and methodologies to select applicants.
8. Managers determine situations that require a time-limited (temporary) promotion and the length of time for the temporary promotion, up to five years. Competitive procedures are required for time-limited promotions for more than 120 days to higher-graded positions.

7.9. Accelerated Training and Promotion

1. BPA has established a plan that allows an accelerated promotion to one higher grade for annual employees in specific documented shortage occupations.
2. Employees who are not on an accelerated training and promotion plan at the time the HRD approves a training agreement for their occupation (series and grade) are placed on an accelerated training and promotion plan as a result of the approved agreement. A MOA and training plan must be signed by the supervisor and the candidate/employee prior to the employee’s assignment at the entry grade level.
3. Position descriptions for which accelerated training plans are being used must include the following statement: “This is a developmental position established as part of an accelerated training and promotion program. A formal Memorandum of Agreement outlining requirements for promotion is required prior to assignment to this position.”
4. The HRD approves Training Agreements that provide for one accelerated promotion for certain annual positions that have been identified as experiencing demonstrable recruitment or retention difficulties within BPA.
5. Supervisors assess completed training and employee readiness for promotion.

7.10. Consecutive Accelerated Training and Promotion

1. BPA has established a consecutive accelerated training and promotion plan for candidates/employees at grades GS-5 to GS-12 in critical shortage occupations, subject to OPM and DOE approval.
2. Occupations may be considered for coverage under the plan when significant evidence of recruitment or retention difficulties is documented.
3. A MOA and training plan must be signed by the supervisor and the candidate/employee prior to the employee’s assignment at the entry grade level.
4. Employees who are not on a consecutive accelerated training and promotion plan at the time OPM approves a training agreement for their occupation (series and grade) are placed on a consecutive accelerated training and promotion plan as a result of the approved agreement.

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5. Position descriptions must include the following statement: “This is a developmental position established as part of an accelerated training and promotion program. A formal Memorandum of Agreement outlining requirements for promotion is required prior to assignment to this position.”
6. The HRD determines the occupations (series and grade) to be submitted through DOE to OPM for approval.
7. Supervisors assess completed training and employee readiness for promotion.

7.11. Suitability Determinations

1. BPA ensures individuals hired into Federal employment are of character and conduct that will not negatively impact the integrity and efficiency of the service. This is accomplished by making suitability determinations and taking suitability action, as needed, in cases involving applicants and appointees, subject to limitations and requirements described in Federal regulations and DOE policy. Suitability determinations are the result of background investigations processed for appointees and employees.
2. Authorized HCM staff adjudicates suitability of applicants, appointees, and employees for Federal employment.
3. The HRD takes action against applicants and appointees found unsuitable for Federal employment.

**7.12. Return to Work – Office of Workers’ Compensation Program (OWCP)
BPA HR Directive**

1. The overarching goal of BPA’s return-to-work BPA HR Directive is to return injured/ill employees to the workplace as soon as they are medically able.
2. Returning an employee to work is a mutual management and employee responsibility.
3. Supervisors throughout BPA must support efforts to place injured/ill employees in Alternative Work Assignments (AWA) that accommodate medical limitations.
4. BPA carries an injured/ill employee on leave without pay (LWOP) or paid leave for up to one year if no suitable light- or limited-duty assignment or AWA can be identified.
5. BPA may administratively separate an employee one year from the date eligibility for compensation began if he/she is unable to return to full duty and placement in an AWA and/or reasonable accommodation is not possible. An employee may be separated earlier if his/her ability to return to work is indeterminate and BPA can demonstrate a compelling need to fill the employee’s position **prior to one year**.

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8. Authorities & References

- A. 5 U.S.C. 1104, Delegation of Authority for Personnel Management
- B. 5 U.S.C. 3111, Acceptance of Volunteer Service
- C. 5 U.S.C. 3341, Details within Executive or Military Departments
- D. 16 U.S.C., Chapter 12B, Bonneville Project
- E. 5 CFR 250, Personnel Management in Agencies
- F. 5 CFR 300, Employment (General), Subpart C – Details of Employees
- G. 5 CFR 300, Employment (General), Subpart F – Time-In-Grade Restrictions
- H. 5 CFR 308, Volunteer Service
- I. 5 CFR 316, Temporary and Term Employment, Subpart C – Term Employment
- J. 5 CFR 316, Temporary and Term Employment, Subpart D – Temporary Limited Employment
- K. 5 CFR 335, Promotion and Internal Placement
- L. 5 CFR 410, Training
- M. 5 CFR 731, Suitability
- N. OPM’s Guide to Processing Personnel Actions
- O. DOE O 320.1, Chg. 1, Acquiring and Positioning Human Resources
- P. DOE O 3731.1, Suitability, Position Sensitivity Designations, and Related Personnel Matters
- Q. DOE Policy Guidance Memoranda:
 - 1. #4, Setting Effective Dates for New Hires, 1/06/10
 - 2. #15, Processing Personnel Actions for Details, 12/16/10
 - 3. #29, Employment Offer Letters – Performance Management, 9/7/12

8.1 Additional Resources

- A. DOE O 321.1, Employment of Experts and Consultants, 11/06/06
- B. DOE M 321.1-1, Intergovernmental Personnel Act Assignments, 8/24/00
- C. DOE O 341.1A, Federal Employee Health Services, 10/18/07
- D. DOE Policy Guidance Memoranda:
 - 1. #05, Accretion-of-Duties, 1/07/10
 - 2. #34B, Direct-Hire Authority for Contract Specialist Positions, May 28, 2014

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3. #10, Category Rating, 8/27/10
4. #11A Approval Process for Dual Compensation Waivers for Reemployed Annuitants, 8/27/10
5. #13, Reemployment Priority List Selections, 10/06/10
6. #15, Processing Personnel Actions for Details, 12/16/10
7. #17, Special Employment Program Codes, 1/13/10
8. #22, Inappropriate Use of Credit Reports, 3/25/10
9. #23, Permanent and Non-Permanent Positions, Appointments, and CHRIS Codes, 10/28/11
10. #28, Requirements for Non-Competitive Reassignments into Supervisory and/or Managerial Positions, 9/4/12
11. #30, Job Opportunity Announcement Template Implementation, 12/29/12

E. Related HR Desk References:

1. 410-03-01: BPA Career Pathways Program
2. 410-03-02: Merit Promotion Plan (MPP) for Annual Positions
3. 410-03-03: Classification
4. 410-03-04: Incentives Annual

9. Revision History

This chart contains a history of the revisions and reviews made to this document.

| Version Number | Issue Date | Brief Description of Change/Review |
|----------------|------------|---|
| 1.0 | 1/19/2016 | Initial publication. |
| 2.0 | 4/18/2016 | Style, formatting, and grammar changes. Removed part of Section 7.11(C) which specified that employees would be placed on a consecutive accelerated training plan upon the HRD's approval of an occupation for inclusion in the consecutive accelerated promotion program. OPM, not the HRD, approves which occupations will be covered under a consecutive accelerated promotion plan. |
| 2.1 | 9/1/2017 | List formatting changes in Section 8 |

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