

## **DECISION CRITERIA FOR TENURE AND PROMOTION IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE**

The Core Precepts provide the guidelines by which Selection Boards determine the tenure and promotability of U.S. Foreign Service employees. These Precepts will be in effect for the **2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2010-2011** rating cycles. The precepts reflect the principles of the Career Development Program, with its emphasis on operational effectiveness, leadership and management effectiveness, sustained professional language and/or technical proficiency, and responsiveness to service needs.

The Precepts enlarge upon the headings found in existing Employee Evaluation Report (EER) forms, defining the specific skills to be considered and the level of accomplishment expected at different grades. They distinguish between apprentice, journeyman and master level – the junior, mid-level and senior ranks.

The Precepts are arranged in a grid; the left column defines the skill; the progressive possession and exercise of that skill are captured in boxes from left to right. The skills are cumulative; the descriptions for each level assume the employee has mastered those at the lower level(s). The rating employee should review descriptions at lower levels before making an evaluation. For instance, in rating a mid-level employee, the rating employee should review the descriptions both for “Mid-level” and for “Entry-level.”

Because progression in some specialist skill codes is capped at the mid-levels, the Senior Foreign Service column does not apply to those specialists.

Management has consulted with AFSA regarding the content and form of these Precepts.

**Leadership Skills**

<i>Entry-Level</i>	<i>Mid-Level</i>	<i>Senior-Level</i>
<b>Innovation</b>		
Takes initiative to go beyond assigned tasks; identifies problems and proposes creative solutions; seeks to improve job and organization performance.	Develops insights into situations and applies them in the workplace; devises innovative solutions to make organizational improvements and policy adjustments; engages staff in process of developing new and effective solutions.	Creates an organization-wide environment which encourages innovation; takes a long-term view and acts as a catalyst for constructive change; conceives and institutes organization-wide policy and program initiatives; anticipates and prepares for the future.
<b>Decision Making and Judgment</b>		
Identifies issues within context of own job which require decisions or other action; arrives at recommendations in a logical, orderly manner; acts confidently and decisively within own purview, consulting others as appropriate; is sensitive to needs and opinions of others. <b><i>Displays good judgment by discerning what is appropriate, practical, and realistic in the performance of official duties.</i></b>	Makes reasoned, effective, and timely decisions after considering all relevant factors and options, even when data are limited or conflicting or will produce unpleasant consequences; implements decisions and evaluates their impact and implications, making adjustments as needed. <b><i>Determines whether and how to make decisions or take action without senior-level review displaying good judgment in making those decisions.</i></b>	Integrates policy and administrative factors into problem solving and decision making in a manner enhancing the entire organization; actively works to achieve Department's goals and objectives; encourages staff to accept responsibility. <b><i>Demonstrates good judgment in all decisions.</i></b>
<b>Team Building<sup>1</sup></b>		
Applies what he/she learns about team building to be an effective team member. Is open to views of others; works in collaborative, inclusive, outcome-oriented manner with U.S. and foreign colleagues; accepts team consensus.	Is an effective team leader, who creates an environment that facilitates full participation and an open exchange of ideas; fosters cooperation and collaboration among U.S. and foreign colleagues; motivates and guides team members toward a common goal. Actively develops the skills of subordinates, counsels them, and makes optimum use of their talents.	Is an effective team motivator <b><i>and leader</i></b> , who inspires staff to participate and contribute; encourages and develops a sense of pride and cohesiveness among staff; resolves work-related problems by mobilizing team skills and resources; develops and implements strategies to improve the workplace, morale, skills and achievements of team members <b><i>and the effectiveness of the overall organization.</i></b>
<b>Openness to Dissent</b>		
Demonstrates the intellectual integrity to speak openly within channels and a willingness to risk criticism in order to voice sensible dissent. Publicly supports official decisions, even when disagreeing with them.	Discerns when well-founded dissent is justified; engages in constructive advocacy of policy alternatives; guides staff to do the same.	Accords importance to well-founded dissent and defends its appropriate expression.
<b>Community Service and Institution Building</b>		
Participates actively in outreach or "community service" activities that contribute to employee welfare. For example, volunteers for Post or Department programs, initiatives, ceremonies, special events, blood and fund drives, and other activities.	Participates actively in performance evaluation decision making and resource allocation activities, e.g., serves on Selection Boards or on post EER Review Panel; works on resource allocation committees, e.g., Housing Board; counsels/mentors personnel more junior in grade.	Participates actively in "institution building" activities that strengthen the Department as an organization. For example, recruits for the Department, e.g., serves as Diplomat-in-Residence or on the Board of Examiners; works on the Selection Boards; participates in Department mentoring program.

<sup>1</sup> Previously part of "Interpersonal Skills"  
DS-1829CP  
04-2009 (replaces 04-2005)

**Managerial Skills**

<i>Entry-Level</i>	<i>Mid-Level</i>	<i>Senior-Level</i>
<b>Operational Effectiveness</b>		
Plans, organizes <i>and directs operations and strategies</i> within areas of responsibility effectively; ensures that projects within area of responsibility are completed in a timely, <i>high quality and efficient</i> manner; accepts supervision and guidance, <i>and supports the projects of others</i> ; provides feedback to supervisors. Demonstrates commitment and moral courage by making difficult choices, by working with a sense of purpose, and by caring about the results.	Completes projects and produces results in most effective manner while balancing the Department's goals and objectives <b>and constraints of time and resources</b> ; critically analyzes the organization's strengths and weaknesses, and takes appropriate action.	Establishes effective procedures and controls <i>to manage the work activities of subordinates</i> ; encourages, <i>develops</i> and rewards efforts of staff to enhance their effectiveness, including their ability to contribute to the achievement of the Department's goals and objectives; foresees challenges to, and opportunities for, the organization and takes steps in advance to deal with them.
<b>Directing and Developing Performance</b>		
Participates in preparation of work requirements for self and works with staff in preparing their work requirements; develops plans to accomplish work requirements; gives staff both formal and informal feedback on performance and potential; completes employee evaluations in accordance with standards and deadlines.	Establishes and clearly communicates broad performance expectations for unit; manages staff <i>effectively to meet those performance expectations</i> ; monitors plans to accomplish work requirements; delegates appropriately; creates a productive work environment in which employees' contributions are valued and encouraged; works to prevent and resolve personnel problems in a timely manner; ensures that the evaluation process is properly conducted and that counseling occurs throughout the rating year; <i>effectively selects, trains, develops and supervises employees; ensures that staff is appropriately utilized, appraised, and rewarded; develops these same skills in others.</i>	Establishes and clearly communicates organization-wide performance expectations in accordance with the Department's goals and objectives; inspires a high level of performance in staff; ensures the professional development and mentoring of staff; oversees possible improvements in human resource processes; ensures that the evaluation and counseling process is conducted effectively and in accordance with standards and deadlines.
<b>Management of Resources</b>		
Utilizes internal controls to protect the integrity of the organization and prevent waste, fraud, and mismanagement, reporting any instances where such problems occur; uses material and financial resources prudently; strives to produce highest return with lowest cost.	Ensures that effective internal controls are in place and work correctly; allocates resources efficiently, equitably, and in conformity with policy and regulatory guidelines; makes every effort to ensure that employees have the tools needed to work effectively.	Evaluates adequacy of internal controls and ensures implementation of improvements as warranted; holds managers accountable for the consequences of their resource policy decisions; seeks resource adjustments as needed.

<b>Customer Service<sup>2</sup></b>		
Responds professionally, courteously and competently to both internal and external customers.	Balances competing and sometimes conflicting interests of a variety of customers; anticipates and responds appropriately to customer needs.	At the organization level, encourages customer-oriented focus; maintains or improves services organization-wide.
<b>Support for Equal Employment Opportunity and Merit Principles</b>		
Takes diversity training and applies its principles to the workplace; treats all individuals with respect and without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation; acts in compliance with USG and Department EEO policies.	Manages diversity by recruiting diverse staff at all levels and ensuring staff diversity training and awareness. Promotes diversity awareness through training; ensures by example and instruction, and verifies through monitoring and follow-up, that all employees are treated with fairness and respect; applies EEO and merit principles consistently; identifies and addresses situations giving rise to complaints and grievances based on issues of fairness in the workplace.	Fosters an organization-wide environment in which diversity is valued and respected; <i>encourages the organization to realize the full potential of a diverse staff</i> ; provides personal leadership and vigorous support for EEO, merit principles, and fair employment practices; <i>recognizes that diversity within the workplace is a strategic advantage and acts accordingly.</i>
<b>Security, including Management of Sensitive and Classified Material, Information and Infrastructure</b>		
Practices good personal, information, <b>and physical</b> security. Takes full responsibility for handling and safeguarding sensitive and classified material, information, and infrastructure properly. <b><i>Has knowledge of security threats, responsibilities, procedures, regulations and issues.</i></b>	Encourages the practice of good personal, information, and <b>physical</b> security measures and serves as a model for others. Takes full responsibility for handling and safeguarding sensitive and classified material, information, and <b>infrastructure</b> properly; ensures that effective procedures are in place to protect sensitive and classified material, information <b>and</b> infrastructure and that established security regulations are being followed.	Promotes the practice of good personal, information, and <b>physical</b> security measures by employees. Takes full responsibility for handling and safeguarding sensitive and classified material, information and infrastructure properly; promotes security consciousness on an organization-wide basis; evaluates and monitors procedures to safeguard sensitive and classified material, information, and infrastructure and ensures that necessary changes are made if current procedures are inadequate; holds managers accountable for the consequences of their security policy decisions.
<b>Crisis Management Skills</b>		
<b><i>Possesses appropriate knowledge of short-term (emergency) management and long-term (business continuity) management responses to crises, incidents or other serious situations and when appropriate may participate in the development of plans to respond to such incidents.</i></b>	<b><i>Performs crisis management for the area of responsibility, including the development of preventative (risk management) plans; and develops awareness and skill in crisis management among the staff.</i></b>	<b><i>Performs crisis management and risk management for the entire organizational unit; sets the tone for the importance of crisis management for the unit; and seeks to reduce the need for crisis management if possible.</i></b>

<sup>2</sup> Previously part of "Interpersonal Skills"

**Interpersonal Skills**

<i>Entry-Level</i>	<i>Mid-Level</i>	<i>Senior-Level</i>
<b>Professional Standards</b>		
Holds self accountable for rules and responsibilities; is dependable and conscientious; is composed, professional, and productive, even in difficult conditions. Treats all with respect.	Holds others accountable for rules and responsibilities; consistently maintains equanimity and a professional demeanor; maintains own motivation and encourages others to persevere in difficult circumstances.	Sets the standard for integrity and workplace behavior by example and instruction; does not lose composure under stress or in crisis; fosters a climate based on mutual respect and trust.
<b>Persuasion and Negotiation</b>		
Learns to influence others; gains cooperation while showing, in the spirit of mutual respect, understanding of others' positions.	Influences others deftly; fosters understanding of USG/Department views and positions and/or procedures and requirements; develops alliances with others; finds common ground among disparate forces and builds consensus; facilitates win-win situations.	Negotiates effectively on a wide range of issues in internal, bilateral, and multilateral environments; manages and resolves major conflicts and disagreements in an interest-based manner; manifests a faculty for astute compromise without sacrificing ultimate goals.
<b>Workplace Perceptiveness</b>		
Demonstrates sensitivity in both domestic and foreign environments to status, protocol, and chain of command; responds considerately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of others; shows respect for cultural differences.	Understands and deals effectively with relationships and aspirations; anticipates how others will react; frames own responses to achieve results.	Navigates easily in an environment of shifting relationships; anticipates socially sensitive issues and potential conflicts of interest and takes appropriate action.
<b>Adaptability</b>		
Adapts behavior and work methods as needed in response to new information, changing conditions, preferences of other people, or unexpected obstacles; and displays <i>sensitivity</i> to cultural differences.	Guides staff in adjusting to change; models and reinforces flexibility in the staff; manages risk and uncertainty; seeks to reduce <i>any</i> negative impact of change on the organization; and maintains own standards and identity despite change.	Anticipates the need for change; weighs risks; creates proactive plans to deal with change that reduces any negative impact on the unit; uses change to improve the effectiveness of the unit and its members; and exercises sophisticated cultural sensitivity in all circumstances.
<b>Relationship Building and Representational Skills<sup>3</sup></b>		
Establishes and maintains purposeful and productive relationships with domestic and foreign contacts; interacts effectively in official and social encounters; <i>attends and hosts representational events to promote relationships and understanding with host country officials and when appropriate, hosts such events.</i>	Identifies and cultivates professional relationships with key individuals and institutions; advances USG interests through hosting and attending representational events.	Moves with ease at all social settings and levels; <i>cultivates professional relationship with audiences important to U.S. interests; frequently hosts representational events at most senior levels of society.</i>

<sup>3</sup> Previously part of "Leadership Skills"  
DS-1829CP  
04-2009 (replaces 04-2005)

**Communication and Foreign Language Skills**

<i>Entry-Level</i>	<i>Mid-Level</i>	<i>Senior-Level</i>
<b>Written Communication</b>		
Writes succinctly; produces written materials that are thorough; conveys analysis that highlights essential points and clearly explains essence of subject to the intended audience -- whether mission management or senior Department official.	Writes clearly and persuasively; ensures that policy and operational issues are articulated in ways most helpful to the intended audience; assists staff to develop effective writing skills.	Exhibits full mastery of written communication; shows sophisticated ability to analyze, synthesize, and advocate in a timely manner; edits others' texts judiciously.
<b>Oral Communication</b>		
Speaks in a concise, effective, and organized manner, tailored to the audience and the situation; speaks convincingly in groups and in individual discussion.	Speaks authoritatively to all audiences, demonstrating comprehensive understanding of issues and options; articulates policy goals persuasively; fosters an atmosphere of open communication and exchange of ideas.	Effectively argues complex policy issues; deals comfortably with the most senior levels of government and society.
<b>Active Listening</b>		
Listens attentively; understands and absorbs others' messages; correctly reads nonverbal signals; summarizes others' views accurately and confirms accuracy of understanding; considers and responds respectfully and appropriately.	Instills trust in others which motivates them to speak openly and candidly; understands and respects cultural sensitivities and constraints in discussing issues and opinions; asks open-ended, incisive questions to ensure accuracy of understanding.	Adeptly discerns the innermost meanings and nuances of messages that others convey.
<b>Public Outreach</b>		
Develops public speaking and writing skills by seeking appropriate opportunities to present U.S. views and perspectives.	Seizes and creates opportunities to advocate U.S. perspective to a variety of audiences. Actively develops the skills of subordinates.	Deals comfortably with the media; is active and effective in public diplomacy, both in the U.S. and overseas. Contributes to and implements strategies to encourage a fair hearing for U.S. views and perspectives.
<b>Foreign Language Skill (Generalists; Specialists as applicable)</b>		
Meets language probation requirements; uses foreign language skills to enhance job performance; seeks to improve foreign language skills.	Attains general professional proficiency* in at least one foreign language, strives to acquire advanced level proficiency and/or general professional proficiency in additional languages; uses that skill effectively to communicate USG themes and exercise influence; works to increase foreign language ability.  *Generalists, to cross senior threshold, must attain S/3-R/3 (i.e., general professional proficiency) in one language.	Maintains and/or further develops proficiency in foreign language(s); uses skill to promote U.S. interests with a wide range of audiences, including the media.

**Intellectual Skills**

<i>Entry-Level</i>	<i>Mid-Level</i>	<i>Senior-Level</i>
<b>Information Gathering and Analysis</b>		
Locates, evaluates, and quickly assimilates <i>key</i> information; reorganizes information logically to maximize its practical utility and identify key underlying factors; recognizes when additional information is required and responds accordingly; considers a variety of sources, cross-checking when appropriate.	Has a sophisticated understanding of sources and their reliability; knows what to report and when; accepts that it may not be possible to base recommendations, decisions, or actions on comprehensive information; considers downstream consequences; guides and motivates staff to refine their own analytical skills.	Integrates fully a wide range of information and prior experiences in policy making; ensures that staff search out and evaluate information before making recommendations and decisions; recognizes situations in which information and analysis are incomplete, and responds wisely; accepts accountability for self and insists on it for staff.
<b>Critical Thinking</b>		
Identifies key information, central issues, and common themes; identifies the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches; outlines realistic options; distinguishes fact from opinion and relevant from irrelevant information.	Isolates key points, central issues, and common themes in a mass of complex information or procedures; can determine the best solution or action from a range of options; is objective in analyzing problems and judging people.	Analyzes and defines complex policy issues clearly, in terms which permit them to be dealt with in a practical way; encourages staff to analyze situations and propose options, giving constructive and instructive feedback; correctly senses when it is appropriate to take risks, and does so.
<b>Professional Development, including Active Learning</b>		
Seeks out new job-related knowledge and readily grasps its implications for the workplace; seeks informal feedback and learns from mistakes; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses and pursues self-development.	Develops own knowledge through broadening experiences, whether work-related, academic studies, or other type of professional development; <b><i>applies the principles learned on the job and encourages and supports professional development among subordinates;</i></b> provides informal feedback to colleagues and seeks feedback on own performance.	Anticipates the need for new information or knowledge for self and others; identifies sources of new information; communicates these sources to staff and facilitates access; <b><i>actively promotes professional development at the organizational unit level; applies principles to foster organizational improvements, and promotes a workplace supportive of continuous professional development.</i></b>
<b>Leadership and Management Training</b>		
Learns basic principles of effective leadership and management. Pursues formal and informal training opportunities.	Uses training opportunities to improve personal leadership and management skills and to keep abreast of current theory and techniques. Applies the principles learned at FSI and other relevant courses on the job, e.g. by developing subordinates.	Actively promotes leadership and management training at the organizational unit level; applies principles of leadership and management training to foster organizational improvements.

**Substantive Knowledge**

<b>Entry-Level</b>	<b>Mid-Level</b>	<b>Senior-Level</b>
<b>Job Information</b>		
Develops and applies knowledge needed in current assignment; learns factors which impact work; understands how job relates to organizational goals and U.S. policy objectives. Uses FSI and other training to improve individual performance.	Has broad knowledge of job-related processes and practices; remains current on policies, <i>programs</i> , and trends that affect the organization; analyzes the interplay of forces influencing the achievement of policy and program objectives and makes reasonable recommendations. Uses training and other means to improve programs. Supports continuous learning of employees through both training and work opportunities.	Integrates thorough knowledge of issues arising in job to formulate and implement policies and programs; monitors internal and external sources for information and ideas; uses job knowledge to shape outcomes. Utilizes FSI training to raise level of organizational unit performance. Creates an environment and strategies to support professional development both through training and work opportunities.
<b>Institutional Knowledge</b>		
<i>Understands the roles and authorities of both the Department and other USG agencies and how they affect the Department. Applies that knowledge and the institutional realities it imposes to develop interagency cooperation to get tasks accomplished.</i>	<i>Proactively applies knowledge of other USG Agencies and institutional realities to advance effectively State Department goals; operates on an equal footing with officials in other bureaus, foreign governments, business communities, academia, and media; develops these same skills in subordinates.</i>	<i>Uses sophisticated understanding of other USG Agencies and institutional realities to advance effectively USG foreign policy objectives; develops those same skills in subordinates. Promotes interagency cooperation with a wide variety of senior USG officials to achieve the Department's foreign policy objectives.</i>
<b>Technical Skills</b>		
Learns and uses technical skills and technology as appropriate in setting of job; understands the impact of technology on the workplace; seeks ways to use technology to enhance performance.	Continuously enhances own and staff's understanding of work-related technical skills and technology and their applications; advances policy and program goals through the use of available and appropriate technology.	Promotes own and staff's full utilization of technical skills and technology to achieve bureau/mission goals; devises efficient and cost-effective strategies to integrate technology into the workplace.
<b>Professional Expertise</b>		
Understands and applies Department of State procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies; assimilates Department of State and Foreign Service milieu; builds knowledge of U.S. and foreign environments; uses developing expertise in work situations.	Strives to deepen understanding of the Department of State and of the Foreign Service as a profession; uses expertise to evaluate policies and programs and to advise and develop others; is able to operate independently to further bureau/mission objectives.	Combines mastery of U.S. policy objectives and knowledge of foreign environments to advance U.S.G. goals; assists staff to develop Foreign Service skills and expertise, promoting a work environment that enhances their professional development.
<b>Knowledge of Foreign Cultures</b>		
Develops and demonstrates knowledge of foreign cultures, values, and norms; appropriately applies foreign perspective to domestic assignments and host country perspective to assignments abroad.	Has sophisticated grasp of foreign political, economic, cultural, and information environments; relates knowledge to fulfillment of bureau/mission goals.	Uses thorough knowledge of foreign environments to identify and seize opportunities to advance U.S.G. goals. Develops subordinates' understanding of how best to advance U.S. interests in a foreign environment.