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# NASA Procedural Requirements

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**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**

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## Merit Promotion and Placement

**Responsible Office: Office of Human Capital Management**

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# Preface

## P.1 Purpose

- a. This directive provides the procedural requirements for the Agency's Merit Promotion and Placement (MPP) plan that supports the competitive and non-competitive placement of individuals based on job-related criteria. This plan supplements the requirements set forth in statute and 5 CFR parts 330 and 335 and establishes minimum Agency procedures for filling positions with current or former Federal employees with competitive status at or below the General Schedule (GS) 15 level on the basis of merit.
- b. This directive also covers term employees eligible for conversion to permanent appointments covered by 5 U.S.C. 9806, veterans who are eligible under the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA), and the hiring of individuals eligible for non-competitive appointments under Government-wide special hiring authorities.
- c. Consult Center Human Resources (HR) offices for further information and guidance.

## P.2 Applicability

- a. This directive is applicable to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities and Technical and Service Support Centers.
- b. Any reference to Center Director(s) includes the Executive Director for Headquarters Operations and the Executive Director of the NASA Shared Services Center.
- c. Negotiated collective bargaining agreements that contain procedures that differ from the provisions of this plan remain in effect until renegotiated, except where such agreements are specifically superseded by applicable laws or regulations.
- d. In this directive, all mandatory actions (i.e., requirements) are denoted by statements containing the term "shall." The terms: "may" or "can" denote discretionary privilege or permission, "should" denotes a good practice and is recommended, but not required, "will" denotes expected outcome, and "are/is" denotes descriptive material.
- e. The Office of the Inspector General has statutory independence and may create its own MPP plan that meets its mission requirements.
- f. In this directive, all document citations are assumed to be the latest version unless otherwise noted.

## P.3 Authority

- a. Promotion; Competitive Service; Examination, 5 U.S.C. 3361.
- b. Recruitment, Selection, and Placement, 5 CFR part 330.
- c. Promotion and Internal Placement, 5 CFR part 335.
- d. NPD 3000.1, Human Capital Management.

## **P.4 Applicable Documents and Forms**

- a. Merit System Principles, 5 U.S.C. 2301.
- b. Prohibited Personnel Practices, 5 U.S.C. 2302.
- c. Employment of Relatives; Restrictions, 5 U.S.C. 3110.
- d. Term Appointments, 5 U.S.C. 9806.
- e. Entire Executive Civil Service, 5 CFR § 213.3102 (u).
- f. Appointment of Certain Veterans Who Have Competed Under Agency Merit Promotion Announcements, 5 CFR 315.611.
- g. Reemployment Priority List, 5 CFR 330, subpart B.
- h. Promotion and Internal Placement, 5 CFR part 335.
- i. Grade and Pay Retention, 5 CFR part 536.
- j. NPD 1382.17, NASA Privacy Policy.
- k. NPD 3010.1, Strategic Workforce Planning.
- l. NPD 3213.1, Excepted Service Appointments.
- m. NPD 3511.1, Classification, Position Management, and Promotions.
- n. NPR 1441.1, NASA Records Retention Schedules.
- o. NPR 3300.1, Employment, Appointment Authorities, and Details.
- p. NPR 3330.1, NASA Career Transition Assistance Plan.

## **P.5 Measurement/Verification**

a. The Assistant Administrator, Human Capital Management (AA, HCM) shall conduct periodic program reviews and direct Center self-assessments to ensure program compliance and identify systemic issues. b. HR Directors shall conduct periodic program reviews to ensure program compliance. Results of the reviews will be used to correct actions, as needed, and identify staff training and development needs.

## **P.6 Cancellation**

NPR 3335.1H, Internal Placement of NASA Employees, dated December 1, 2010.

# Chapter 1. General Provisions

## 1.1 General Provisions for Filling Jobs

1.1.1 Recruitment strategies should maximize the Center's ability to recruit from a diverse, broad spectrum of potential applicants. Such decisions will be based on the Agency's workforce plan (NPD 3010.1), the nature of the position to be filled, the likely number of available highly qualified candidates, and the Center's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) objectives.

1.1.2 Management has the right to select from any appropriate source of applicants and may select or not select from a certificate. Filling a vacancy through the use of a Merit Promotion (MP) vacancy announcement is one method of locating applicants for a vacancy. Positions may also be filled non-competitively in accordance with paragraph 3.2 of this directive or through the use of delegated examining procedures, which allow the recruitment of candidates from outside of the Federal workforce.

1.1.3 To increase the number of opportunities to hire persons with disabilities, Centers are encouraged to include individuals with disabilities covered by 5 CFR § 213.3102 (u) in the minimum area of consideration on all MP announcements. (Reference NPD 3213.1).

1.1.4 Selections shall be based on job factors, including experience, education, competencies, performance, and awards, and be made without regard to political, religious, or labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, status as a parent, or any other non-merit based factor in accordance with Federal laws and regulations.

1.1.5 The supervisor and/or designee(s) may conduct interviews (including telephone interviews) of some, all, or none of the candidates referred on the certificate.

1.1.6 Supervisors should consider restructuring mid-level positions to enable the hiring of candidates at the entry level to increase career opportunities for less experienced applicants and meet succession planning objectives. This option should only be considered when the organization is prepared to provide the necessary mentoring, development, and training.

1.1.7 Agency employees who are selected for vacancies under this plan will be expeditiously released from their current position.

1.1.8 Personnel actions shall be documented in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements and Agency guidance in order to allow full reconstruction by a third party.

# Chapter 2. Responsibilities

## 2.1 Human Resources (HR) Directors

2.1.1 HR Directors or their designees are responsible for:

- a. Integrating diversity and inclusion into strategic recruitment decisions to enhance organizational effectiveness and help achieve Center mission goals.
- b. Collaborating with the EEO office to identify recruitment strategies, best practices, and alternative hiring authorities to reach underrepresented groups as identified in the Center's Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) plan and the EEO barrier analysis.
- c. Assisting management with the identification of recruitment strategies, participation in the development of rating criteria, and selection procedures.
- d. Ensuring HR staff, responsible for advising management and executing personnel actions, are trained and knowledgeable of legal, regulatory, and program requirements, including alternative methods of filling jobs, special appointing authorities, veterans' preference, and EEO objectives.
- e. Preparing and publishing vacancy announcements in USAJOBS and issuing certificates using the Agency-approved automated staffing and referral tool in accordance with OPM regulations and Agency guidance.
- f. Granting an extension of the application deadline if circumstances warrant; when an extension is granted, granting the extension to all applicants in like circumstances.
- g. Prior to the opening date of the vacancy announcement, and in consultation with the supervisor, conducting and documenting the job analysis process, including the identification of any selective factors, when applicable.
- h. Evaluating applicants for minimum qualifications and eligibility and ranking applicants to identify best-qualified candidates, as applicable.
- i. Ensuring selections are made in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.
- j. Notifying applicants of the status of their application in a timely manner in accordance with paragraph 4.5 of this directive.
- k. Ensuring employees downgraded due to a planned management action (e.g., reduction in force, reorganization, or reclassification) are provided special consideration in accordance with 5 CFR 536.
- l. Ensuring employees eligible for reemployment priority are provided reemployment consideration in accordance with 5 CFR 330, subpart B.
- m. Deciding on requests for reconsideration in accordance with chapter 7 of this directive.
- n. Ensuring that personnel actions are fully documented, case file documentation allows reconstruction of personnel actions, and files and records are maintained, controlled, and protected in accordance with NPD 1382.17 and NPR 1441.1.
- o. Setting the entrance on-duty date on a Sunday for current Federal-civil service employees and on a workday (generally, the first Monday of a pay period), for individuals outside the civil-service

workforce.

p. When establishing an applicant supply file, ensuring proper acceptance and referral of applicants and application of veterans' preference, when applicable.

## **2.2 Supervisors**

2.2.1 Supervisors are responsible for:

- a. Deciding on the method of filling vacancies and the area of consideration (i.e., who can apply.)
- b. Integrating diversity and inclusion into strategic recruitment decision making to enhance organizational effectiveness and help achieve mission goals.
- c. Participating in the development of recruitment strategies aimed at reaching qualified individuals who are underrepresented in the workplace as identified in the Center's FEORP plan and the EEO office's barrier analysis.
- d. Participating in the job-analysis process, including the identification of selective factors.
- e. Releasing employees to serve as subject-matter experts in the job analysis process or for participating on interview panels, as applicable.
- f. Ensuring that employees within the area of consideration who are absent for legitimate reasons and do not have access to Agency vacancy announcements receive appropriate consideration for promotion opportunities, as requested.
- g. Making timely selections based on job-related factors, including experience, education, competencies, performance, and awards.
- h. Monitoring selection procedures and outcomes and ensuring actions are consistent with merit system principles. (Reference 5 U.S.C. 2301).

## **2.3 Employees**

2.3.1 Employees are responsible for:

- a. Complying with the requirements of this directive and following procedures outlined in vacancy announcements when applying for jobs.
- b. Notifying their supervisor in writing if they want to be considered for vacancies that may occur during their temporary absence when they will not have access to Agency vacancy announcements.

# Chapter 3. Competitive Procedures

## 3.1 When Competitive Procedures Are Required

3.1.1 Competitive procedures and the use of a MP announcement are required for the following actions:

- a. Temporary promotions over 120 days. In computing the 120 days, prior service under all noncompetitive details to higher-graded positions or noncompetitive temporary promotions during the preceding 12 months is included. Centers may include the option to make these promotions permanent without additional competition when it is clearly stated in the announcement.
- b. Details of more than 120 days to a higher-graded position or to a position with greater promotion potential. Centers may use the option of extending a detail without further competition when it is clearly stated in the announcement.

*Note: For temporary promotions and details for more than 120 days, competitive procedures are not required when the individual has previously held the higher grade on a permanent basis or was selected and appointed to a permanent position with promotion potential to the higher grade.*

- c. Training that is required for promotion.
- d. Reassignment or change to a lower grade to a position with more promotion potential than a non-temporary position previously held (except when permitted by reduction-in-force regulations).
- e. Competitive procedures may be used to select term employees who meet conversion requirements in accordance with NPR 3300.1.

## 3.2 When Competitive Procedures Are Not Required

3.2.1 Competitive procedures are not required for the following actions:

a. Promotion resulting from reclassification of a position (without significant change in duties and responsibilities) on the basis of one of the following:

- (1) The issuance of a new classification standard.
- (2) The correction of a classification error.
- (3) A classification action resulting in an accretion of duties or impact of the person on the job in accordance with NPD 3511.1.

b. A position change permitted by reduction-in-force regulations.

c. Any action, including a promotion, directed by an individual or organization with authority that supersedes this plan. These include, but are not limited to, actions as a result of discrimination complaint decisions, court decisions, settlement of judicial or administrative cases, or arbitrators' decisions.

d. A career promotion, when:

- (1) Competition was held at an earlier stage, and the promotion is to a grade at or below the full

performance level of the position in which the employee competed. In such cases, there must be clear evidence of competition, e.g., a remark on the notification of personnel action.

(2) Promotion of a Pathways Program participant and following the noncompetitive conversion of a Pathways appointment to the full-performance grade level of the position for which the employee initially competed.

(3) Promotion of a veterans' recruitment appointee, a 30 percent or more disabled veteran, or a Schedule A appointee covered by 5 CFR § 213.3102 (u) to the established full-performance level of the position to which they were appointed.

e. Temporary promotions for periods of 120 days or less.

f. Details for 120 days or less to a higher-graded position or position with promotion potential.

g. Promotion, transfer, reassignment, demotion, reinstatement, or detail to a position having promotion potential no greater than the promotion potential of the position the employee currently holds or previously held. (Reference 5 CFR § 335.103 (3) (v)).

*Note: Although reinstatement and transfer actions do not require competitive procedures, a vacancy announcement is required to clear ICTAP candidates*

prior to appointment.

h. Selection of an applicant who is eligible for a non-competitive appointing authority based on service as a former Peace Corps/AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer. Such appointments are subject to clearing ICTAP. (Reference 5 CFR 315).

i. Selection of a term employee appointed under 5 U.S.C. 9806 who is eligible for non-competitive conversion to a career or career-conditional appointment. (Reference NPR 3300.1).

j. Appointment of a 30 percent or more disabled veteran.

k. Appointment of an individual with disabilities covered by 5 § CFR 213.3102 (u).

l. Selection of a candidate from a reemployment priority list or a special or priority consideration list in accordance with applicable regulations and this directive.

m. Selection of a candidate under Direct Hire Authority.

# Chapter 4. Filling Jobs

## 4.1 Vacancy Announcements

4.1.1 Vacancy announcements are prepared using the Agency-approved automated staffing and referral tool in accordance with regulatory requirements and Agency guidance.

4.1.2 Announcements should remain open for at least five workdays. A shorter open period may be used when large numbers of qualified and diverse applicants are anticipated based on recent experience of filling like positions.

4.1.3 When anticipating a high volume of applicants, Centers may set limits to accept no fewer than 75 resumes. When using such limits, applications will be received up until 11:59 p.m. (eastern standard or daylight time) of the day the limit is reached to accommodate applicants in different time zones.

4.1.4 Open continuous announcements with closing dates of up to one year from the initial opening date may be used to advertise recurring vacancies.

4.1.5 A certificate may be reissued to fill like vacancies if the selection(s) is made within 90 days of issuance of the original certificate. A "like vacancy" is considered to be one with the same title, series, grade, promotion potential, and duty location; the primary duties and competencies of the position are similar.

## 4.2 Area of Consideration

4.2.1 The area of consideration (i.e., who can apply) will be sufficiently broad to ensure a diverse applicant pool with sufficient numbers of high-quality candidates. The minimum area of consideration for positions advertised under this plan should be Center-wide. The basis of a management decision to use a smaller minimum area of consideration will be documented in the staffing case file.

4.2.2 When Centers recruit from outside the Agency, applicants eligible for VEOA are included in the minimum area of consideration in accordance with 5 CFR 315.611.

4.2.3 Employees on long-term rotational assignments in technical roles covered in chapter 6 of this directive are eligible to apply and be considered for any vacancy in the Agency, including those open only to Center employees.

## 4.3 Determining Minimum Qualifications

4.3.1 The minimum qualification standards prescribed or approved by OPM (e.g., NASA's Aerospace Technology Qualifications) will be used to determine minimum qualifications.

4.3.2 When an applicant's education is used to meet minimum qualifications, Centers shall obtain official college transcripts to validate education credentials prior to appointment.

4.3.3 Selective factors are job-related competencies that are essential prior to appointment for satisfactory performance and are part of the minimum qualifications. Accordingly, selective factors are identified along with the minimum qualification requirements in the vacancy announcement.

4.3.4 Applicants shall meet time-in-grade and time-after-competitive-appointment requirements by the closing date of the vacancy announcement.

## **4.4 Ranking Candidates**

4.4.1 The ranking process is intended to identify the relative degree to which qualified applicants possess the specified skills or competencies. Applicants who meet the minimum qualifications of the position shall be rated against job-related criteria, unless the applicant is being considered under noncompetitive procedures.

4.4.2 When filling positions using announcements, minimally qualified applicants eligible under special appointing authorities (e.g., 30 percent or more disabled veteran) need not be further ranked, unless there is a large applicant pool.

4.4.3 As applicable, veterans' preference is applied to each pool of candidates eligible for a specific appointing authority. Use Agency guidance on quality grouping, category rating, and order of consideration.

4.4.4 The HR specialist may waive the normal ranking process if there are ten or fewer qualified applicants at a given grade level and document such decision in the staffing case file.

4.4.5 If no selection has been made within 30 days of the date the certificate was issued, the HR Director may cancel the certificate unless the selecting official has requested an extension. With appropriate justification, the HR Director may approve up to two 30-day extensions. In no case will a certificate be extended beyond 90 days.

## **4.5 Applicant Notification**

4.5.1 At a minimum, applicants will be notified on the status of their application/resume at the following points in time:

- a. Upon receipt of resume.
- b. When found ineligible or not qualified for the position.
- c. When the applicant is referred to the selecting official for consideration OR not referred and no longer under consideration.
- d. For referred applicants, when the selection is made and whether or not they were selected.
- e. When a vacancy announcement is cancelled, if applicable.

# Chapter 5. Details

5.1 A detail is a temporary assignment of an employee to a different position or set of duties for a specified period. There is no formal position change. The employee continues to hold their position of record from which detailed and maintains the same status and pay. At the end of the detail, the employee returns to their position of record.

5.2 Employees do not need to meet minimum qualifications in order to be detailed, unless the position has a positive education requirement.

5.3 Details are intended to meet temporary needs of the Agency's work, program, or mission requirements.

5.4 Details to higher-level positions may require competitive procedures (see chapter 3 of this directive).

5.5 Reference NPR 3300.1 for additional Agency procedural requirements regarding details.

# Chapter 6. Assignments to Agency-Level Functions

## 6.1 Purpose

6.1.1 This chapter enables organizations with responsibility for Agency-level functions to recruit and select candidates for key positions from highly qualified individuals across the Agency.

## 6.2 Coverage

6.2.1 This chapter applies to filling technical positions/assignments in organizations with responsibility for Agency-level functions.

6.2.2 Administrative, secretarial, and business support positions/assignments within these organizations are not covered by this chapter.

## 6.3 Duration of Assignments

6.3.1 Assignment periods are long-term rotational assignments lasting two to five years.

6.3.2 The rotational nature of the assignment will be documented in a memorandum of understanding or other appropriate documentation.

6.3.3 The need for long-term rotational assignments of more than two years will be assessed on an annual basis.

## 6.4 Temporary Promotions

6.4.1 To attract NASA's best talent to Agency-level positions, temporary promotion opportunities may be offered.

6.4.2 Temporary promotions of GS employees are subject to the requirements in chapter 3 of this directive.

## 6.5 Eligibility to Apply for Vacancies

6.5.1 Employees on long-term rotational assignments are eligible to apply for any NASA vacancy announcement, regardless of the area of consideration.

## 6.6 Placement of Returning Employees

6.6.1 If an employee on a long-term rotational assignment chooses to return to their Center, the Center is responsible for placing the returning employee into a position at the same grade level and with the same promotion potential as the position occupied immediately before assignment to the Agency-level function.



# Chapter 7 Special Consideration

## 7.1 Displaced Employee Programs

7.1.1 The reemployment priority list is a statutory placement program administered under the provisions of 5 CFR 330, subpart B and NPR 3330.1. Under this program, eligible employees separated by reduction in force or fully recovered from a compensable injury after more than one year receive priority consideration in their commuting area.

7.1.2 Placement requirements for displaced individuals eligible for the Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP) and ICTAP are contained in NPR 3330.1.

## 7.2 Special Consideration for Repromotion

7.2.1 Agency employees who have been demoted without personal cause are entitled to special consideration for repromotion. Special consideration will be provided in the same commuting area where the employee was demoted starting on the effective date of the change to lower grade action.

7.2.2 Special consideration applies to positions at the employee's former grade or any intervening grades that are to be filled under this plan. It does not apply to positions with promotion potential higher than the retained grade.

7.2.3 The entitlement to special consideration continues for two years, unless the employee declines a reasonable offer of a position as defined in 5 CFR 536 or accepts an equivalent position and is promoted back to the level of the retained grade.

## 7.3 Requests for Reconsideration of a Referral Decision

7.3.1 An employee may request reconsideration of a referral decision by forwarding a written request to the servicing HR office. The request shall include the reason(s) why the applicant believes the referral decision was not proper. The provisions in this section also apply to applicants external to the Agency who are eligible to apply to vacancy announcements issued under MP procedures.

7.3.2 Such requests will be assigned to an HR specialist who had no involvement in the original referral decision to conduct a review and provide a recommendation to the HR Director or designee.

7.3.3 Applicants will be provided a timely written response (usually within ten business days) as to the outcome of the determination along with an explanation of the reason(s) for the decision. If the job has not been filled, the review and determination should be expedited to avoid a potential missed consideration of a vacancy or promotion opportunity.

## 7.4 Priority Consideration - Correction of Procedural Errors

7.4.1 If a reconsideration request leads to a change, the applicant's record will be updated to reflect the new information. If an error results in the applicant being improperly excluded from consideration on a certificate, the certificate will be amended, unless a selection has been made.

7.4.2 If a selection has already been made, the applicant who missed consideration due to an error is entitled to priority consideration for the next available similar vacancy filled under this plan. If no

selection is made and the certificate is cancelled, the applicant is not entitled to receive priority consideration.

7.4.2.1 Priority consideration means that an individual is referred to the selecting official for bona fide consideration for the next similar vacancy before other candidates are considered under competitive procedures. If selected, the placement action is an exception to the competitive procedures.

7.4.2.2 A similar vacancy is defined as a vacancy at the same grade and in a similar (although not necessarily identical) occupational series to the position for which the error occurred, in the same geographic area, and under the same appointing office (i.e., Center HR office) as the position for which the employee was denied proper consideration.

7.4.3 In the reconsideration process, the HR Director's decision is final. Agency employees may use the Agency administrative or bargaining unit grievance system (as applicable) when they are not satisfied with the results of the reconsideration process under this plan.

# Chapter 8. Grievances

8.1.1 If an employee has a question or complaint about the MPP plan or a specific action, the employee (or designated representative) should discuss it with the Center HR office.

8.1.2 Formal grievances concerning a MPP action are processed through the Agency grievance system or other grievance procedures negotiated with recognized bargaining units, as appropriate.

8.1.3 An employee may not grieve non-selection from a properly ranked certificate under the NASA administrative grievance system.

# Chapter 9. Nepotism, Personal Favoritism, and Recusal

9.1.1 An employee who has the authority to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action will not appoint, employ, promote, advance, or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement of any relative as defined in 5 U.S.C. 3110.

9.1.2 No employee shall take, or direct others to take, any prohibited personnel practice as set forth in 5 U.S.C. 2302.

9.1.3 No employee may, in recommending or selecting candidates for promotion, show or give preference to any candidate based upon factors not pertinent to the candidate's qualifications for performing work.

9.1.4 A management official may not appoint, employ, promote, or advance one of his/her relatives (by blood or marriage) to a position in the Agency, nor may a management official advocate a relative for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement in the Agency.

9.1.5 An individual may not be appointed, employed, promoted, or advanced if the action was advocated by a management official who is serving in or exercising jurisdiction or control over the organization and who is a relative of the individual.

9.1.6 These provisions apply to all individuals involved in the rating, ranking, evaluation, and/or selection processes for actions under this plan.

9.1.7 All Agency personnel should recuse themselves from any official activities associated with the recruitment, placement, and promotion process where there is a reasonable basis for questioning their impartiality.

# Appendix A: Definitions

**Area of Consideration.** Also referred to as who may apply, the area of consideration describes the individuals from whom the Center will accept applications to compete for a vacancy.

**Best-qualified candidates.** Highly qualified candidates who rank in the top category or group when compared to other candidates and who are referred to the selecting official on a certificate for selection consideration.

**Category rating.** A process in which applicants who meet minimum qualifications are further assessed for job-related competencies and placed into one of two or more predefined quality categories.

**Certificate.** A list of the candidates referred to the supervisor for selection consideration.

**Delegated examining authority.** Authority delegated from OPM to make career-conditional appointments in the competitive service. Vacancies filled through the competitive examining process are open to all U.S. citizens.

**Direct hire authority.** Authority delegated from OPM to fill jobs open to all U.S. citizens for positions that OPM has determined that there is either a severe shortage of available candidates or a critical hiring need.

**Evaluation.** The process of assessing the degree to which each applicant possesses the skills or competencies essential for satisfactory performance in the position.

**ICTAP.** This program provides job placement assistance to eligible surplus or displaced Federal employees by providing selection priority over applicants from outside of NASA.

(Reference 5 CFR 330).

**Job analysis.** The systematic process of gathering, analyzing, and documenting information about a position in order to determine minimum qualification requirements and identify the skills or competencies to be used in further evaluating qualified candidates.

**Merit Promotion.** The system under which agencies consider internal eligible employees for vacant positions on the basis of merit. Individuals are evaluated on the basis of their experience, education, competencies, performance, and awards.

**Minimally qualified candidates.** Those who meet OPM-approved qualification standards and any selective factors applicable to the position.

**Noncompetitive eligible.** Individuals who have acquired noncompetitive eligibility under a specific hiring or appointing authority, such as: a former Peace Corps/AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer; individuals with disabilities (these are excepted service positions with provisions for conversion to the competitive service); 30 percent or more disabled veterans; current or former employees in the competitive service excepted from competitive procedures in this directive (see paragraph 3.2); individuals covered by an OPM-approved interchange agreement; and persons qualified for a position covered by a direct hire authority.

**Priority consideration.** For the purposes of this directive, the employee shall be referred to the selecting official for consideration before other candidates are considered under these competitive procedures. If selected on the basis of the priority consideration, the employee may be promoted or reassigned as an exception to the competitive procedures of this plan.

**Promotion potential.** The full performance level (or highest grade) of a classified position. A position has promotion potential when the incumbent is selected at a grade lower than the full performance level. For example, if a position with the full performance level of GS-13 is advertised and filled at the GS-11 level, the incumbent may be noncompetitively promoted up to the GS-13 level. Promotions are not automatic and are subject to supervisory approval.

**Promotion.** A change from one GS grade to a higher GS grade of a continuously employed civil-service employee.

**Quality grouping.** A process in which applicants who meet minimum qualifications are further assessed for job-related competencies and placed into one of two or more predefined quality categories. Quality grouping is used to rank applicants when using internal MP procedures where veterans' preference does not apply. For example, when a vacancy announcement is open to current or former nontemporary Federal employees, and applicants eligible for VEOA.

**Ranking.** The process of arranging qualified candidates in order of relative standing.

**Rating.** The end product of evaluation. A rating reflects the degree to which the candidate's qualifications meet the skills or competencies identified in the vacancy announcement.

**Reconstruction.** Refers to the ability of a third party to recreate a personnel action, for example during a compliance review or when the action is being challenged.

**Reassignment.** The movement of an employee to another position at the same grade level. A reassignment action may be directed by management or initiated at the request of an employee.

**Reinstatement.** Reinstatement eligibility allows someone to re-enter the Federal competitive service workforce without competing with the public. Reinstatement eligibles may apply for Federal jobs open to status candidates or be selected noncompetitively in accordance with this directive.

**Schedule A appointing authority.** An appointment authority covered by 5 CFR § 213.3102 (u) used to appoint persons with disabilities to excepted service appointments. These appointments provide appointees noncompetitive eligibility for conversion to the competitive service after two years of service.

**Selective factors.** In addition to minimum qualification requirements, selective factors identify additional qualification requirements that are required when the person starts the job. Characteristics of a selective factor include extensive training or experience essential for successful performance on the job that cannot be learned on the job in a reasonable amount of time. An example of a selective factor is a specific language requirement.

**Staffing case file.** This is a record generally maintained in the Agency-approved automated staffing and referral tool that contains sufficient documentation to allow full reconstruction of the placement action.

**Status candidates.** Applicants eligible to apply for MP vacancy announcements based on their current or former permanent Federal status, including individuals who are eligible for reinstatement and transfer. Status applicants may be eligible for noncompetitive consideration (i.e., considered and selected without the use of a vacancy announcement) based on their current or former permanent Federal status in accordance with this directive.

**VEOA.** Provides eligible applicants an opportunity to compete when issuing a vacancy announcement using merit promotion procedures that includes the acceptance of applicants from outside of the NASA civil-service workforce. Such vacancy announcements must include VEOA in the minimum area of consideration. VEOA applicants are rated and ranked along with other

applicants and must be among the best-qualified candidates in order to be referred for consideration. Veterans' preference does not apply.

# Appendix B Acronyms

AA	Assistant Administrator
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CTAP	Career Transition Assistance Plan
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EO	Executive Order
FEORP	Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program
GS	General Schedule
HCM	Human Capital Management
HR	Human Resources
ICTAP	Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan
MP	Merit Promotion
MPP	Merit Promotion and Placement
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NPD	NASA Policy Directive
NPR	NASA Procedural Requirements
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
U.S.C.	United States Code
VEOA	Veterans Employment Opportunity Act
VISTA	Volunteers in Service to America