United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington. D.C. 20240

FEB 8 1994

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 94-3   (920)

SUBJECT: Senior Executive Service Qualifications

The U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has issued new instructions which supersede those found in FPM Supplement 920-1, Subchapter 5, Exhibit 5-A, concerning Senior Executive Service (SES) qualification requirements.

The new instructions, attached, include the following changes:

*   The five Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ's) described in Attachment 1 replace the six SES activity areas now used to evaluate SES candidates. In addition to reducing the number of broad qualifications from 6 to 5, the ECQ's link SES qualifications requirements to the 22 competencies of the Leadership Effectiveness Framework (LEF), defined in Attachment 2.

*   In order to obtain Qualifications Review Board (QRB) certification, candidates for SES appointment must demonstrate executive experience or present a plan for obtaining full proficiency in all five of the ECQ's. (Current OPM policy only requires proposed SES appointees to be proficient in four of six qualification areas.)

*   Effective January 31, 1994, all vacancy announcements for SES positions and all program announcements for SES Candidate Development Programs must reflect the five new ECQ's, rather than the obsolete six SES activity areas.

Acting Director of Personnel

Attachments

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Memorandum for Heads of Departments and Agencies
Attachment 1

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE
EXECUTIVE CORE QUALIFICATIONS

This exhibit contains information on the scope and content of the five Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ's) that are considered necessary for effective performance in any Senior Executive Service (SES) position. Note that the ECQ's do not include professional, technical, and program knowledge, skills, and abilities, which are covered in the qualifications standard for the particular SES position being filled.

The basic definition for each ECQ is supplemented with a list of those Leadership Effectiveness Framework (LEF) Competencies which are particularly important to it and Key Characteristics which reflect possession of the ECQ. Definitions of the LEF Competencies are attached.

Candidates do not need to have experience in each LEF Competency and Key Characteristic to demonstrate possession of the ECQ. Rather, the candidate's overall record (professional and volunteer experience, education and training, accomplishments, awards, and potential) should indicate the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to apply the ECQ in an executive capacity.

(1) Strategic Vision.

This core qualification involves the ability to ensure that key national and organizational goals, priorities, values, and other issues are considered in making program decisions and exercising leadership to implement and to ensure that the organization's mission and strategic vision are reflected in the management of its people.

LEF Competencies		
Creative Thinking	*Leadership*	*Self–Direction*
Customer Orientation	*Oral Communication*	*Team Building*
External Awareness	*Planning & Evaluating*	*Vision*

Key Characteristics include:

(a) Identifying and integrating key issues affecting the organization, including political, economic, social, technological, and administrative factors.

(b) Understanding the roles and relationships of the components of the national policy–making and implementation process, including the President, political appointees, Congress, the judiciary, state and local governments, and interest groups.

(c) Exercising leadership and motivating managers to incorporate vision, strategic planning, and elements of quality management into the full range of the organization's activities.

(2) Human Resources Management.

This core qualification involves the ability to design human resource strategies to meet the organization's mission, strategic vision, and goals and to achieve maximum potential of all employees in a fair and equitable manner.

LEF Competencies		

Conflict Management
 Customer Orientation
 Decisiveness
 Flexibility
 Human Resources
   Management
	Influencing/
	   Negotiating
	 Interpersonal Skills
	 Leadership
	 Managing Diverse
	   Workforce
		Oral Communication
		 Planning & Evaluating
		 Problem Solving
		 Self–Direction
		 Team Building
		 Vision

Key Characteristics include:

(a) Acquiring a diverse workforce with the necessary knowledges, skills, abilities, and/or potential through appropriate planning, recruitment/outreach and selection processes.

(b) Assessing employees' unique developmental needs and providing developmental opportunities which maximize employees' capabilities and contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.

(c) Fostering a working environment where people who are culturally diverse can work together cooperatively and effectively in achieving organizational goals.

(d) Providing leadership in setting the work force's expected performance levels commensurate with the organization's strategic plan objectives.

(e) Promoting quality through effective use of the organization's performance management system (e.g., establishing performance standards, appraising staff accomplishments using the developed standards, and taking action to reward, counsel, or remove employees, as appropriate).

(f) Dealing effectively with employee/labor management relations matters, including resolving conflicts, attending to morale and organizational climate issues, handling administrative, labor management, and EEO issues, and taking disciplinary actions when other means have not been successful.

(3) Program Development and Evaluation.

This core qualification involves the ability to establish program/policy goals and the structure and processes necessary to implement the organization's mission and strategic vision. Inherent in this process is ensuring that programs and policies are being implemented and adjusted as necessary, that the appropriate results are being achieved, and that a process for continually examining the quality of program activities is in place.

LEF Competencies		
Creative Thinking Customer Orientation Decisiveness External Awareness Flexibility Human Resources Management	Influencing/Negotiating Leadership Management Controls/Integrity Oral Communication Planning & Evaluating	Problem solving Self–Direction Team Building Technology Management Vision Written Communication

Key Characteristics include:

(a)   Assessing policy, program, and project feasibility.

(b)   Formulating short– and long–term goals and objectives and integrating them into a strategic plan.

(c)   Structuring and organizing work and setting priorities.

(d)   Anticipating and identifying, diagnosing, and consulting on potential or actual problem areas relating to program implementation and goal achievement; selecting from alternative courses of corrective action; and/or taking action from developed contingency plans.

(e)   Setting effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, evaluation, and management/internal control standards.

(f)   Establishing and utilizing procedures and processes to monitor progress toward organizational objectives.

(g)   Taking any necessary corrective action to ensure an effective, efficient, and productive organizational unit

(4) Resources Planning and Management.

This core qualification involves the ability to acquire and administer financial, material, and information resources. It also involves the ability to accomplish the organization's mission, support program policy objectives, and promote strategic vision.

LEF Competencies		
Conflict Management Decisiveness External Awareness Financial Management Flexibility	Human Resources Management Influencing/Negotiating Leadership Management Controls/Integrity	Oral Communication Planning & Evaluating Problem Solving Technology Management Written Communication

Key Characteristics include:

(a)   Managing the budgetary process, including preparing and justifying a budget and operating the budget under organizational and Congressional procedures.

(b)   Overseeing procurement and contracting procedures and processes.

(c)   Integrating and coordinating logistical operations.
(d)   Overseeing the allocation of financial resources.
(e)   Establishing and assuring the use of internal controls for financial systems.
(f)   Ensuring the development and utilization of management information systems and other technological resources that meet the organization's needs.

(5) Organizational Representation and Liaison.

This core qualification involves the ability to explain, advocate, and negotiate with individuals and groups internally and externally. It also involves the ability to develop an expansive professional network with other organizations and organizational units.

LEF Competencies		
Conflict Management *Customer Orientation* *External Awareness*	*Flexibility* *Influencing/Negotiating* *Interpersonal Skills*	*Oral Communication* *Self–Direction* *Written Communication*

Key Characteristics include:

(a)   Representing and speaking for the organizational unit and its work (e.g., presenting, explaining, selling, defending, and negotiating) to those within and outside the agency (e.g., agency heads and other political and career executives; Office of Management and Budget; Congressional members, staffs, and committees; the media; clientele and professional groups).
(b)   Establishing and maintaining working relationships with internal organizational units (e.g., other program areas and staff support functions).
(c)   Developing and enhancing alliances with external groups (e.g., other agencies and governments, Congress, and clientele groups).
(d)   Working in groups and teams; conducting briefings and other meetings.
(e)   Seeing that reports, memoranda, and other documents reflect the position and work of the organizational unit.
(f)   Getting understanding and support from higher level management.

Memorandum for Heads of Departments and Agencies
Attachment 2

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORK
COMPETENCY DEFINITIONS

LEF COMPETENCY	DEFINITION
Conflict Management	Anticipates and seeks to resolve confrontations, disagreements, and complaints in a constructive manner.
Creative Thinking	Develops insights and solutions; fosters innovation among others.
Customer Orientation	Actively seeks customer input; ensures customer needs are met; continuously seeks to improve the quality of services, products, and processes.
Decisiveness	Takes action and risks when needed; makes difficult decisions when necessary.
External Awareness	Stays informed on laws, policies, politics, Administration priorities, trends, special interests, and other issues; considers external impact of statements or actions; uses information in decision-making.
Financial Management	Prepares and justifies budget; monitors expenses; manages procurement and contracting.
Flexibility	Adapts to change in the work environment; effectively copes with stress.
Human Resources Management	Ensures effective recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal, recognition, and corrective/disciplinary action; promotes affirmative employment, good labor relations, and employee well-being.
Influencing/Negotiating	Networks with, and provides information to, key groups and individuals; appropriately uses negotiation, persuasion, and authority in dealing with others to achieve goals.
Interpersonal Skills	Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, capabilities and interests of others; provides feedback; treats others equitably.

Leadership	Demonstrates and encourages high standards of behavior; adapts leadership style to situations and people; empowers, motivates, and guides others.
Management Controls/Integrity	Ensures the integrity of the organization's processes; promotes ethical and effective practices.
Managing Diverse Workforce	Recognizes the value of cultural, ethnic, gender, and other individual differences; provides employment and development opportunities for a diverse workforce.
Oral Communication	Listens to others; makes clear and effective oral presentations to individuals and groups. (NOTE: Use of a sign language interpreter may be appropriate for persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.)
Planning and Evaluating	Establishes polices, guidelines, plans, and priorities; identifies required resources; plans and coordinates with others; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes; improves organizational efficiency and effectiveness.
Problem Solving	Recognizes and defines problems; analyzes relevant information; encourages alternative solutions and plans to solve problems.
Self-Direction	Realistically assesses own strengths, weaknesses, and impact on others; seeks feedback from others; works persistently towards a goal; demonstrates self-confidence; invests in self-development; manages own time efficiently.
Team Building	Fosters cooperation, communication, and consensus among groups.
Technical Competence	Demonstrates technical proficiency and an understanding of its impact in areas of responsibility.
Technology Management	Encourages staff to stay informed about new technology; applies new technologies to organizational needs; ensures staff are trained and capable.
Vision	Creates a shared vision of the organization; promotes wide ownership; champions organizational change.
Written Communication	Communicates effectively in writing; reviews and critiques others' writing.