



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

Merit System  
Accountability and  
Compliance

December 30, 2022

Memorandum For            Chief Human Capital Officers

From:                         Mark W. Lambert  
                                     Associate Director

Subject:                      Political Appointees and Career Civil Service Positions

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) issued a memorandum dated February 22, 2021, describing our oversight role to safeguard merit system principles when a current or former political appointee is selected for a permanent non-political civil service position, including a time-limited appointment that allows for non-competitive conversion to a permanent appointment. This memorandum is a reminder of agency responsibilities related to these cases, including the importance of identifying cases and submitting documentation promptly to OPM prior to appointment. Additionally, pre-appointment checklists have been streamlined for ease of use in case submission. Lastly, to expedite our reviews, we are asking that agencies provide us access to the case in the automated staffing system within two business days of our request once a case is assigned.

The following types of appointments are subject to OPM pre-appointment review and approval:

- A. The appointment of a current or former political appointee as described under 5 U.S.C. sections 5312 through 5316 (relating to the Executive Schedule) to a permanent competitive service, non-political excepted service, or career Senior Executive Service (SES) position;
- B. The appointment of a current or former political Schedule A, Schedule C, or an individual who serves or served in a political capacity under agency-specific authority in the Executive Branch to a permanent competitive service, non-political excepted service, or career SES position;
- C. The appointment of a current or former noncareer SES appointee, or an individual who serves or served in a political capacity under Limited Term SES or Limited Emergency SES appointment in the Executive Branch, to a permanent competitive, non-political excepted service, or career SES position;
- D. The appointment of a current or former political appointee in the Executive Branch (as described in the subsections above) to an agency position covered by an interchange agreement with OPM established under Civil Service Rule 6.7 allowing movement from the agency's merit system to the competitive civil service; and

- E. The appointment of a current or former political appointee to permanent positions involving noncompetitive and direct-hire appointments, under 5 C.F.R. § 315, subpart F, and 5 C.F.R. § 337, subpart B.

As part of this process, it is critical for your agency to identify applicants who are current or former political appointees. If not already doing so, we recommend your agency add a question applicants must answer that asks if they have held a political appointment with the Federal government in the last five years and if so, to identify the position held, the employing agency/organization, and the dates of the appointment.

OPM will continue to conduct merit staffing reviews of proposed selections of current or former political appointees for career SES positions before they are presented to OPM's Qualification Review Board (QRB) for certification of executive qualifications. Agencies should carefully review all proposed SES selections to ensure they accord with merit staffing requirements before such cases are forwarded to the QRB. Once complete, your agency will be notified of the outcome of the merit staffing review and subsequently should contact [QRB@opm.gov](mailto:QRB@opm.gov) for next steps.

We recognize agencies are eager to bring selectees on board; thus, timely identification of each case and submission of a complete package will help expedite our review and decision making. Failure to request OPM's approval prior to appointment will necessitate review after an individual is appointed and may require corrective action. Similarly, failure to provide required supporting documentation could result in a denial of the agency's proposed appointment.

Please send requests to appoint current or former political appointees to competitive service, non-political excepted service, or career SES positions to [PoliticalConversions@opm.gov](mailto:PoliticalConversions@opm.gov) using the checklists attached and located on the [OPM website](#). If your agency has documents of large size to submit or system access is not possible, please contact [PoliticalConversions@opm.gov](mailto:PoliticalConversions@opm.gov) and we will provide a means of submitting those documents to us.

Following case submission, OPM will acknowledge receipt, assignment, and acceptance separately. During intake, additional documents may be required. Once documents are received, cases will be assigned to an evaluator at which time your agency will be notified and be required to provide access to the case in the automated staffing system within two business days. Cases will be accepted once all information necessary to review the case is provided. OPM will issue a decision letter to approve or deny the appointment within 15 business days of case acceptance.

Should OPM determine the proposed selection is free from political influence and adheres to merit system principles, applicable civil service laws, and regulations, we will ask agencies for the following information<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> OPM is required to report this information to Congress pursuant to the Edward "Ted" Kaufman and Michael Leavitt Presidential Transitions Improvements Act of 2015.

- A. If appointed to the covered civil service position, submit a copy of the appointment SF-50, confirming the employee's entrance on duty date and rate of basic pay. Provide documentation within 60 days of appointment, or as soon as practicable.
- B. If not appointed to the proposed civil service position, notify OPM within 60 days of the decision, or as soon as practicable.

The frequently asked questions and answers on the [OPM website](#) provide additional details on OPM's pre-appointment review process. If you have any questions or need further information about the requirements established by this memorandum, please contact Ana A. Mazzi, Principal Deputy Associate Director, Merit System Accountability and Compliance, at (202) 606-4309 or [Ana.Mazzi@opm.gov](mailto:Ana.Mazzi@opm.gov).

Attachment

cc: Deputy Chief Human Capital Officers  
Human Resources Directors

[OPM.gov – Pre-Appointment Checklists, FAQs, and Memos](#)