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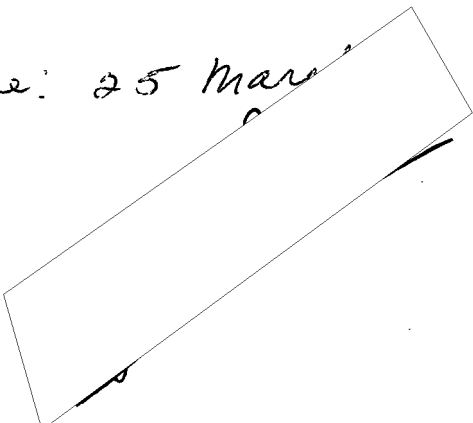
Date

TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post)	Initials	Date
1. <i>Co/</i> Deputy Director for Administration		14 MAR 1983
2. 7D24 Headquarters		
3.		
4.		
5.		

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REMARKS

Suspense: 25 Mar



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FROM: (Name, org. symbol, Agency/Post) James N. Glerum Director of Personnel	Room No.—Bldg. 5E58 Hqs.
	Phone No.

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14 MAR 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration
Deputy Director for Intelligence
Deputy Director for Operations
Deputy Director for Science and Technology
Chairman, E Career Service

FROM: James N. Glerum
Director of Personnel

SUBJECT: Review of Comparative Evaluation Descriptors

1. During our review of the effectiveness of the Uniform Precepts for Boards and Panels in 1981, we learned that Career Service Boards and Panels were having some problems with the evaluation category descriptors. At the Personnel Management Advisory Board meeting where the report of our study was reviewed, that group recommended that we undertake a more in-depth study of the descriptors with a view towards correcting the problems if possible.

2. My staff is now ready to begin this project and has prepared a paper on the subject which is attached for your information. Because of the importance of this element of our personnel management system and its impact on all employees, we believe it necessary to obtain the ideas of all the Career Services. I would appreciate it, therefore, if you would select an officer to represent your Career Service to serve on a working group to be convened to assist us in reviewing the descriptors and in formulating options for management's consideration. I suggest that your representative be an individual who has had some experience with the current system as a board or panel member so that we may benefit from that experience. We would appreciate your response by 25 March 1982.

/s/ James N. Glerum

James N. Glerum

Attachment

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Attachment A

ATTACHMENT

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION DESCRIPTOR STUDYINTRODUCTION

1. The current comparative evaluation descriptors (Categories I, II, III, IV) evolved from a series of events dating as far back as 1954. That year, following the establishment of (then 23) Career Services, the comparative evaluation concept and process were introduced in the Agency, primarily for the purposes of comparing the relative capabilities of one professional employee with another, and for ranking all professional employees for their value to the Agency. Until 1973, the Career Services accomplished this task by whatever mechanism best suited their needs although most used some sort of board and panel system. Since 1973, in the interest of uniformity and equity, several refinements to the process have been made:

- a. a requirement that boards and panels include promotion consideration as part of the evaluation process in 1978;
- b. extension of the formal evaluation process to GS-08 and above secretarial employees in 1978, and later to all employees in 1980;
- c. establishment of a category descriptor system in 1975, which was revised in 1980;
- d. standardization of evaluation precepts and promotion criteria in the Uniform Precepts system in 1980;
- e. voluntary exclusion of clerical employees GS-06 and below from the formal panel system in 1982.

2. The predecessor of the current four-category comparative evaluation descriptor system had five categories identified as High Potential (HP), May Develop High Potential (MD), Valuable Contribution (VC), Limited Potential (LP), and SubStandard (SS). From 1975 until 1980, Career Services formally ranked and evaluated their personnel for value to the Agency, potential to advance, and promotion. With the implementation of the Uniform Precepts for Boards and Panels in 1980, the descriptors were redefined and reduced to four.

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3. In reviewing the value and effectiveness of the Uniform Precepts in 1981, it became clear that the Career Services were having some problems with the revised system, particularly with Category III because of the definition which includes both employees who may have potential and those who may not. As a result of that review, the Personnel Management Board recommended that the descriptors be studied again with a view towards resolving the problems that seem to exist.

DISCUSSION

1. The comparative evaluation descriptors were designed with the intention of assisting Agency management in determining the value of an employee to the Agency at a given time, with later expansion to include promotion consideration. The determination of value, and now eligibility for promotion, includes a review of an employee's performance, growth of skills and experiences, demonstrated potential, evidence of capability, degree of flexibility for other assignments and consideration of the individual's personal elections. From those determinations flow decisions about assignments, internal and external training, counseling, promotion, career guidance, and adverse action. With regard to the latter action, Category IV has replaced the former low three-percent ranking as the primary mechanism in determining the need for some adverse action.

2. Given the broad use of the descriptors, they have become a critical element of our personnel management system and now have a wide-ranging effect on employees and their careers. Therefore, it is now equally critical that the descriptors be defined as clearly as possible so as to serve both employees and management fairly.

ACTION PLAN

1. In view of the importance of this element of our personnel management system Agency-wide, we believe it necessary to enlist the participation of the Career Services in our review of the descriptors. Following is our proposed course of action:

- A. Enlist the participation of the Career Services through a request from D/OP.
- B. Provide the selected representatives with copies of the study proposal and the attached listing of questions and possible options for redefining the categories.

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- C. Convene the group for as many meetings as necessary to resolve the problems already known or that we discover as a result of the group discussions.
- D. Prepare a paper reporting the consensus of the group for review by D/OP, with possible review by the Personnel Management Advisory Board, and the Executive Committee if a policy change is recommended.

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QUESTIONS, ISSUES AND OPTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED
IN PLAN TO STUDY EVALUATION DESCRIPTORS

I. Questions

- A. What are the characteristics Panels identify to separate those having or lacking potential?
- B. Are Panels attempting to describe potential for managerial responsibilities, advanced substantive responsibility or both?
- C. What characteristics distinguish fast trackers and prospective managers from their peers?
- D. With regard to questions B and C: should we develop, separate from precept factors, a list of questions/guidelines/factors for panel use toward assisting them decide more systematically those having or lacking managerial potential, i.e., questions centering on creativity, communication skills, stress management, planning and organizing skills, etc.?
- E. Do we need a category which, in title or content, specifically identifies prospective managers? or in title that remedial action is required?
- F. What is "demonstrated potential?"
- G. What words and phrases in current categories cause greatest difficulty?
- H. Should there be more emphasis on career actions or options to be followed for those placed in a particular category?
- I. How should value to service vs. potential be addressed in descriptors?
- J. Do we need a formal "limbo" category which would have panels defer categorical judgments until recently promoted/hired employees have established a track record at current grade or officially advise panels of availability of that option?
- K. Should we have separate descriptor systems for various grade levels, i.e., a) clerical, b) professional/technical GS-11 and below, and c) one which gives greater emphasis to management potential for GS-12's and above.
- L. What is meant by personal history?

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- M. Should categories contain flexible wording for granting more leeway in assigning to a category or more precise wording for same.

II. Observations, Issues, and Discussion Points

- A. Remove reference to problems and categories III and IV are too similar.
- B. Placement in category III is viewed as being negative.
- C. In practice, panels place in category III promotable and non-promotable officers and those having and lacking potential.
- D. There seems to be inadequate consideration for employees with limited experience. Lack of experience may be the sole reason for placement in next lower category.
- E. Categories address a mixture of performance and potential; some view this as essential while others see it as a problem.
- F. Perhaps a five (or greater) tier system would be better for telling employees more about degrees of potential.
- G. We need to identify a system that eliminates the temptation to refer to an employee as a "high category III or low II."
- H. Perhaps wording of category III is too negative for a category meant to describe those who are providing a "valuable service."
- I. First sentence of category III..."tend to show"...appears too vague. "Indicate" could be an improvement.
- J. We should attempt to eliminate all overlapping information between categories.
- K. Some existing problems in application apparently stem from the fact that few guidelines were issued in connection with introduction of system.
- L. The test for whether or not a category tells us something:
 - a) what are we describing?
 - b) on what is it based?
 - c) what does it lead us to conclude about potential?
 - d) what career actions are appropriate? (Assuming the above is valid and complete any revised system should respond with such a flow of information)

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- M. Presently there is no category which addresses a situation of someone having no potential; categories III and IV call for inclusion of those who may have potential.

III. Preliminary Options

A. 3-Tier System

1. a combination of current Category I and perhaps some from category II.
2. remainder of - Category II and all Category III.
3. low or no potential/problem cases.

B. 4-Tier System (Refines current system by changing some words)

1. same as current Category I.
2. includes current Category II and those in current Category III who "may be capable of performing successfully at higher levels."
3. those who apparently have peaked out but who have no real performance problems.
4. does not address potential; these are people who require remedial attention.

C. 5-Tier System (Basically a reversion to former HP, MD system with careful look at wording. Indicated by numbering system and would better define middle category)

D. 6-Tier System (would be numbered - titles below are meant only to help establish degrees for purpose of illustration)*

1. Absolute Fast Track - no TIG restrictions (very limited use).
 2. Apparent Fast Track - some further assessment of officers needed (some from current Category I and some from Category II).
 3. Developing Track - solid performer with apparent room for growth at slower pace.
 4. Valuable Contribution - near peak but no performance problem.
 5. Management Attention - some problems which indicate probable lack of potential; also for those with no real problem but who clearly have zero potential (counseling required).
 6. Management Action - no potential due to: poor performance, real problems, surplus for cause (Remedial Action Needed).
- } Meant to be categories for vast majority of employees

*Promotion would normally go to those in first 3 categories.

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