

# CHAPTER TWO

## QUALIFICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, CANDIDATE DEVELOPMENT, SELECTION, OVERSIGHT, AND PROBATION

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The selection process for career SES appointees involves two steps interrelating the efforts of agency employers and OPM. Agencies develop vacancy announcements that list specific professional and technical qualifications for the positions being filled, and candidates are evaluated by agency selection procedures that utilize agency-level Executive Resources Boards (ERBs) to review qualifications of individual candidates and to make selection recommendations to agency appointing officials. 5 USC 3393. Agency appointing officials make their selections, but before those selections result in a final SES career appointment, the tentative selectees' application and selection packages are forwarded to OPM. Following staff review of those materials, OPM convenes Qualifications Review Boards (QRBs) to assess whether the tentative selectees possess core executive qualifications. Those core requirements are leading change, leading people, results driven, business acumen, and building coalitions. OPM's responsibility is to assess overall executive qualifications and capabilities relative to those executive core qualifications, not to determine qualifications of a tentative candidate for a particular SES job. It is the responsibility of agencies, not OPM, to assess the fit of executives for requirements of agency positions. The agency that will employ the SES member essentially determines that the individual has executive and technical qualifications for the job; OPM reviews the candidate to ensure he or she has basic executive skills. If the OPM QRB determines that the individual tentatively selected by the agency for a career SES position possesses executive core qualifications, that individual is certified as eligible for appointment to a career SES position, and the employing agency makes the appointment. 5 CFR 317.502.

Agencies are required to publish information about SES vacancies to be filled by initial career appointment for at least 14 days with USAJOBS ([www.usajobs.com](http://www.usajobs.com)) pursuant to 5 CFR 317.501(b)(2) and with the Department of Labor United States Employment Service when recruitment for career appointment is extended outside the federal service. 5 USC 3327(b)(1). Agencies may advertise SES vacancies on their websites or through other means, subject to the information requirements of 5 CFR 330.707. OPM maintains a website devoted to SES job listings at <http://jobsearch.seniorleaders.gov>.

5 USC 3393(c)(2) establishes three means for entry into the career SES: consideration of demonstrated executive experience of an individual, as measured against the five executive core qualifications and technical qualifications set by an agency; consideration of successful participation of an individual in an OPM-approved career executive development program, for which candidates are selected competitively; and appointment of an individual who has special or unique qualities indicating a likelihood of executive success with regard to executive potential, as measured against executive core qualifications, and who would not otherwise be eligible for appointment.

### I. QUALIFICATIONS

OPM and individual agencies set qualifications to be met by SES applicants and appointees. In accordance with 5 USC 3393, OPM provides broadly-stated core qualification requirements. The five executive core qualifications established by OPM are: leading change; leading people; results driven; business acumen; and building coalitions. OPM, *Recruitment and Selection*, <http://www.opm.gov/ses/recruitment/ecq.asp>. Agencies establish technical and professional qualification requirements keyed to the requirements of particular positions. OPM-convened Qualifications Review Boards certify qualifications of SES candidates for initial appointments. Applicants for SES positions (and SES members) are not considered "preference eligibles" for purposes of veterans preference laws and regulations. See 5 USC 2108(3); 5 USC 3501(b).

## A. CORE QUALIFICATIONS

### 1. OPM Guidance

OPM informal guidance provides an explanation concerning the qualification requirements that are specific to particular positions and concerning the core requirements that are applicable to all SES positions:

#### *Qualifications Requirements*

An applicant must meet two types of qualifications for any SES position:

- The Executive Core Qualifications, which apply to every SES position; and
- Specific, professional/technical qualifications (if any) for the position being advertised.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has identified five Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) common to all SES positions [www.opm.gov/ses/qualify.asp#qualify](http://www.opm.gov/ses/qualify.asp#qualify) [now <http://www.opm.gov/ses/recruitment/qualify.asp>]. The ECQs are:

- Leading Change
- Leading People
- Results Driven
- Business Acumen
- Building Coalitions

The ECQs are mandatory qualification standards for every SES position. Agencies may also identify specific, professional/technical qualifications for the position being filled. The qualification standards for an advertised SES position are listed in the agency's vacancy announcement. Applicants need to obtain a copy of the agency's vacancy announcement to respond to these requirements.

<http://www.usajobs.gov/EI30.asp>.

The OPM website provides definitions of the executive core qualifications:

#### *Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs)*

The Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) define the competencies needed to build a federal corporate culture that drives for results, serves customers, and builds successful teams and coalitions within and outside the organization. The Executive Core Qualifications are required for entry to the Senior Executive Service and are used by many departments and agencies in selection, performance management, and leadership development for management and executive positions.

#### *Executive Core Qualifications:*

- ECQ 1 Leading Change
- ECQ 2 Leading People
- ECQ 3 Results Driven
- ECQ 4 Business Acumen
- ECQ 5 Building Coalitions

#### *Fundamental Competencies*

##### ECQ 1: Leading Change

Definition: This core qualification involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment.

### Creativity and Innovation

Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting edge programs/processes.

### External Awareness

Understands and keeps up-to-date on local, national, and international policies and trends that affect the organization and shape stakeholders' views; is aware of the organization's impact on the external environment.

### Flexibility

Is open to change and new information; rapidly adapts to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles.

### Resilience

Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity. Recovers quickly from setbacks.

### Strategic Thinking

Formulates objectives and priorities, and implements plans consistent with the long-term interests of the organization in a global environment. Capitalizes on opportunities and manages risks.

### Vision

Takes a long-term view and builds a shared vision with others; acts as a catalyst for organizational change. Influences others to translate vision into action.

## ECQ 2: Leading People

Definition: This core qualification involves the ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts.

### Conflict Management

Encourages creative tension and differences of opinions. Anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.

### Leveraging Diversity

Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization.

### Developing Others

Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization by providing ongoing feedback and by providing opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods.

### Team Building

Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.

## ECQ 3: Results Driven

Definition: This core qualification involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks.