# HRDG 4500 - Recruitment and Retention Incentives - Section I

Last Modified:

**Subchapter 4500 - Recruitment and Retention Incentives**
**Section I - Pay for Positions Above GS-15 and for Scientific and Professional Positions (Established to carry out research and development functions)**

- Description
- Justification Criteria
- Process for Requesting Authority to Establish New Pay System
- Approval Authority

Return to 4500 Table of Contents

**Description**

You may request authority to establish a new pay system for two categories of executive positions (5 CFR 534.501):

"Senior-level positions classified above GS-15." Positions in this category were formerly classified as GS-16, 17, and 18 and are primarily positions excluded from the Senior Executive Service (SES) or positions that do not meet the functional criteria (e.g., managerial or supervisory responsibilities) for inclusion in the SES.

"Scientific and professional positions" include positions established to carry out research and development functions under 5 U.S.C. 3104.

The new pay scale that may be established for each category ranges from a minimum of 120 percent of GS-15, Step 1, to a maximum of level IV of the Executive Schedule (5 CFR 534.502).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Justification Criteria** | **Positions Above GS-15** | (1) Analyze the position in terms of the following applicable factors and their relative importance in the position:<br>• Qualifications, achievements, and professional stature of the incumbent.<br>• Work situation.<br>• Scope, character, and effect of the program.<br>• Responsibility and authority.<br>• Technical and managerial demands of the work.<br>• Impact of exceptional qualifications, achievements, and professional stature of the incumbent (or proposed incumbent).<br><br>(2) Define and illustrate the impact of the incumbent, or proposed incumbent, in terms of qualifications, achievements, and professional stature.<br>• Establish that the level of the position exceeds grade GS-15 by comparing the duties and responsibilities and the impact of the incumbent against published position-classification standards.<br><br>(3) Tentatively determine the grade level above GS-15 by comparison with other positions classified formerly as GS-16, 17, and 18. |
| | **Scientific and Professional Positions (to carry out research and development)** | • The alignment with other positions and incumbents with comparable responsibilities and qualifications; and<br>• Other relevant factors, including pay for comparable private sector personnel. |

| | Step | If: | Then: |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Process for Requesting Authority to Establish New Pay System** | 1 | Considering establishing a new pay system | Consult the justification criteria in this section. |
| | 2 | Consulting the justification criteria | Contact HRD-HREB and your SPO classifier to discuss the position's inclusion in either of the two categories |
| | 3 | It's been determined the position has potential to be included in either of the categories. | The SPO/HRD-HREB will audit the position, prepare the necessary paperwork and submit the request for approval. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Approval Authority** | Authority to approve the establishment of a senior-level position above GS-15 and the corresponding new pay system rests with the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), USDA.<br><br>Authority to approve the establishment of a scientific and professional position (established to carry out research and development functions) and the corresponding new pay system rests with OPM. |

Return to 4500 Table of Contents

Print