

# Defense Logistics Agency Instruction



DLAI 1404.01  
Effective December 17, 2012  
DLA Human Resources,  
Policy, J14

## DLA Merit Promotion Program

References: Refer to Enclosure 1.

### 1. PURPOSE:

a. This DLA Instruction (DLAI) supersedes DLA Regulation (DLAR) 1404.4, dated January 29, 1991 (Reference (a)). This instruction outlines the competitive procedures to be used in selecting best-qualified applicants to fill vacancies on the basis of merit and qualifications. It establishes the policy and procedures designed to ensure a systematic means of selection for promotion according to merit for positions at the GS-15 level and below in the competitive service and equivalent positions in other merit systems. It implements Part 335, Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) (Reference (b)), and 5 C.F.R. Part 330, Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (Reference (c)).

b. The DLA Merit Promotion Program supports 5 U.S.C. 2301, the Merit System Principles (Reference (d)), of fair and open competition that allows employees the opportunity to advance based on merit; and selection and placement that is void of bias and other 5 U.S.C. 2302, Prohibited Personnel Practices (Reference (e)).

### 2. APPLICABILITY: This Instruction:

a. Applies to DLA Headquarters, DLA Primary Level Field Activities (PLFAs), and all other Defense activities serviced by the DLA Human Resources Services according to the terms of applicable support agreements. It does not apply to matters covered by the Merit Promotion Articles of the applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement for bargaining unit positions.

b. Applies to actions implementing the competitive placement, for more than 120 days, of employees to positions at grade levels higher than those of their previous positions; as well as placement into positions that offer promotion to grades that are higher than the full performance level of any position previously held on a permanent basis. It does not apply to non-competitive actions such as reassignments, changes to lower grade, re-promotion to a grade held previously on a permanent basis, and actions made under Delegated Examining procedures.

c. Specific applicable and non-applicable actions are identified in Enclosure 2.

3. **DEFINITIONS:** See Glossary.

4. **POLICY:**

a. All selections for competitive position change will be based on job-related criteria; and will be free of discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, marital status, political affiliation, non-disqualifying physical or mental disability, or labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation.

b. A job opportunity announcement (JOA) will be used to advertise all positions which are required to be filled competitively under the provisions of this DLAI. JOAs may pertain to more than one position, may be advertised as open continuous announcements, and may be used to fill subsequent vacancies of the same title, series, and grade.

c. Hiring managers may choose to select or not select any candidate referred for promotion or position change under the terms of this DLAI. They have the flexibility to fill vacancies from a variety of sources such as veterans eligible for non-competitive appointment, people with disabilities, individuals eligible for reinstatement, those applying from outside the Federal workforce competing through delegated examining procedures, and individuals receiving priority consideration. Hiring managers may leave the position vacant, re-announce the position, or abolish or reengineer the position to meet agency mission objectives.

d. Any employee who has the authority to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action will not appoint, employ, promote, advance, or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement any relative as defined in Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.) 3110. No employee shall take, or direct others to take, any prohibited personnel practice as set forth in Title 5, U.S.C. 3301, 3302.

5. **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

a. The Director, DLA Human Resources, J1 will provide broad policy guidance to DLA Headquarters, PLFAs, and the DLA Human Resources Services on merit promotion matters.

b. The Staff Director, DLA Human Resources, Policy, J14 will provide policy and guidance to the DLA Human Resource Services.

c. The Heads of the DLA Headquarters and Heads of the DLA Primary Level Field Activities will implement this DLA Instruction, and ensure that actions taken are made on the basis of merit and comply with equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies and relevant career development programs.

d. Equal Employment Managers will identify positions which are under represented, and assist in locating recruitment sources and conveying job opportunity information to categories of under- represented candidates; and provide advice and assistance to hiring managers in fulfilling their EEO responsibilities.

e. Hiring managers will actively support the DLA Merit Promotion Program, and select the best qualified candidates based on merit factors.

f. Employees will submit all required resumes and applicable supporting documents within the specified time limits.

g. The DLA Human Resources Services will administer the DLA Merit Promotion Program for all serviced organizations and employees covered by this DLAI according to the terms of applicable support agreements; and provide advice and assistance to hiring managers, supervisors, and employees in carrying out their responsibilities.

6. PROCEDURES: Refer to Enclosure 3.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE: This Instruction is effective immediately.

Director, DLA Strategic Plans and Policy

Enclosures:

Enclosure 1 – References

Enclosure 2 – Specific applicable and non-applicable actions

Enclosure 3 – Procedures

Glossary

ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- a. DLA Regulation 1404.4, dated January 29, 1991 (superseded).
- b. 5 C.F.R., Part 335: [5 C.F.R. Part 335 – Promotion and Internal Placement](#).
- c. 5 C.F.R. Part 330, Recruitment, Selection, and Placement: [5 C.F.R. Part 330 – Recruitment, Selection, and Placement \(General\)](#).
- d. 5 U.S.C. 2301, Merit System Principles: [5 U.S.C. § 2301 Merit System Principles](#).
- e. 5 U.S.C. 2302, Prohibited Personnel Practices: [5 U.S.C. § 2302 – Prohibited Personnel Practices](#).

## ENCLOSURE 2

### SPECIFIC APPLICABLE AND NON-APPLICABLE ACTIONS

1. The competitive procedures of this DLA Instruction apply to the following actions:

a. Time limited promotions or details of more than 120 calendar days to higher-graded positions. Service during the preceding 12 months under noncompetitive time limited promotion and noncompetitive details to higher-graded positions or to positions with known promotion potential which occurred within the 12 months before the effective date of the present time limited action count toward the 120 day total. A temporary promotion may be made permanent without further competition if the temporary promotion was made under competitive procedures and a statement was included on the announcement to indicate that it may lead to a permanent promotion.

b. Selection for training which is part of an authorized training agreement that allows an employee to qualify for a different occupational series, is part of a promotion program, or is required before an employee may be considered for promotion.

c. Reassignment, transfer, or change to a lower graded position that has greater promotion potential than a position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service (except as permitted by reduction-in-force regulations, if applicable).

d. Reinstatement for more than 120 days to a permanent or temporary position at a higher grade or with greater promotion potential than a position previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service.

2. The competitive procedures of this DLA Instruction do not apply to the following actions:

a. Assignment actions taken in accordance with Reduction-in-Force (RIF) regulations, including position change actions resulting from the application of RIF procedures that are processed as a promotion.

b. Selection and placement into positions in the Senior Executive Service.

c. Promotions resulting from the upgrading of a position due to issuance of a new or revised classification standard.

d. Promotions resulting from an employee's position being classified at a higher grade because of additional nonsupervisory duties and responsibilities based on a planned management action or accretion of duties provided that:

(1) the employee will continue to perform the duties of the previous position in addition to the new duties assigned.

(2) the addition of the new duties and responsibilities will not have an adverse effect on the grade of another occupied position.

(3) the additional duties and responsibilities do not change a former nonsupervisory position into a supervisory position.

(4) the employee meets all other requirements for promotion to the position.

e. Career promotion of an employee without further competition when the employee was previously appointed from a valid referral certificate, by direct-hire, by noncompetitive appointment, by noncompetitive conversion of an employee serving on an appointment which conveys noncompetitive conversion eligibility to a position with noncompetitive promotion opportunity to the full performance level, or under competitive promotion procedures, for an assignment intended to prepare the employee for the position being filled. This includes any promotion up to and including the full performance level of the job series.

f. Temporary promotion or detail for 120 days or less to a position at a higher grade level, or with known promotion potential higher than the highest grade previously held on a permanent basis.

g. Promotion to a grade previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service, or other merit system which the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has an interchange agreement with, from which an employee was separated or demoted for other than performance or conduct reasons.

h. Promotion, reassignment, demotion, transfer, reinstatement, or detail to a position having promotion potential no greater than the potential of a position an employee currently holds or previously held on a permanent basis in the competitive service, or other merit system which OPM has an interchange agreement with, and did not lose because of performance or conduct reasons.

i. Promotion of a candidate who was not given proper consideration in a previous competitive promotion action, or in resolution or settlement of a grievance or EEO complaint.

j. Temporary promotions made permanent without a break, when the temporary promotion was made under competitive procedures and a statement was included on the announcement to indicate that it may lead to a permanent promotion.

## ENCLOSURE 3

### PROCEDURES

1. Mandatory Placement. Before filling positions through the procedures of this DLAI, the following categories of qualified and available individuals will be given mandatory placement entitlement:

a. Persons with statutory, regulatory, or administrative reemployment or restoration rights such as employees returning from military service, employees returning from overseas assignments under the terms of a return agreement, and after recovery from a compensable injury or disability within one year.

b. Placement actions required under reduction-in-force procedures.

c. Placement, reassignment, or promotion that is directed by OPM, the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), or other authority that is required in order to effect a corrective action resulting from an appeal, grievance, or EEO complaint decision, or to correct a violation of law or regulation.

d. Individuals entitled to mandatory placement under the provisions of the DoD Priority Placement Program.

e. Individuals identified on the Reemployment Priority list.

f. Placement of qualified recovered disability annuitants and former employees receiving Workers Compensation.

2. Priority Consideration. Before making selections under competitive promotion procedures, priority consideration will be provided to current employees who are receiving grade or pay retention because they were involuntarily placed in lower grade positions for reasons such as reduction-in-force, correction of a classification error, return from overseas, or declination of a functional transfer. Employees entitled to priority consideration will be referred to the hiring manager before a promotion certificate or other referral list is issued; however, the hiring manager is not required to interview or select employees referred under these provisions.

a. If these employees are qualified, interested, and within the area of consideration, priority consideration must be extended for positions at or below the grade from which demoted and in the pay group which covered the employee prior to placement in the lower grade position.

b. Priority consideration will not extend to positions which offer known promotion potential to a grade above that from which demoted. Priority consideration ends when the employee is no longer entitled to grade or pay retention.

c. Declination of an offer at an intervening grade will terminate the employee's entitlement to re-promotion at the grade level, but the employee will continue to receive priority

consideration for higher grades up to and including that from which downgraded unless further declinations occur.

d. Employees awarded priority consideration as part of the disposition of an EEO complaint and employees denied proper promotion consideration because of an error or promotion program violation are also entitled to priority consideration. Unless otherwise dictated by settlement agreement, declination of a valid job offer within the commuting area by these employees will result in termination of entitlement to priority consideration.

3. Area of Consideration: The area of consideration must be sufficiently broad to ensure the availability of a reasonable number of high quality applicants that will result in the best qualified candidates; taking into account the nature and level of the position to be filled, and merit and EEO principles. The area of consideration must be identified in the merit promotion vacancy announcement and may not be changed while a vacancy announcement is open.

a. Prior to recruiting for a newly established position, the hiring manager, in consultation with their servicing Human Resources Specialist, should determine the appropriate recruitment strategy to ensure a diverse pool of qualified applicants.

b. For positions covered by this plan, the minimum areas of consideration will be:

(1) Permanent GS-15 and equivalent positions: DoD-wide

(2) Permanent GS-14 and equivalent positions: DLA-wide

(3) Permanent GS-7 through GS-13 and equivalent, Career Ladder GS-5/7 and equivalent, and Wage Supervisor (WS) positions: DLA in the local commuting area

(4) Permanent GS-3 through GS-6 positions and Wage Grade (WG) and Wage Leader (WL) positions: DLA in the local commuting area

c. When the area of consideration includes applicants from external sources outside the DoD, preference eligibles or veterans who have completed at least three years of continuous active military service, and are eligible for appointment under the Veterans' Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA), will be included in the area of consideration.

4. Announcements: JOAs will be published on the USAJOBS website when filling vacancies through the competitive procedures described in this Plan. JOAs are normally used to fill a specific vacancy or vacancies, however additional positions may be filled from the same announcement if the promotion certificate is issued within six months after the closing date. JOAs used to fill competitive temporary promotions may not be made permanent without further competition unless the JOA states that the promotion may be made permanent.

a. JOAs will be open a minimum of seven calendar days; and will include the following information:

(1) Announcement number, opening and closing dates, and organization and geographic location of position



- (2) Area of consideration
- (3) If the position is being advertised as open continuous, identify cut-off dates for receipt of applications in order to begin consideration of applicants
- (4) Point of contact for vacancy, including mailing address, e-mail address and telephone number
- (5) Number of positions available
- (6) Position title/series/grade and salary range, including identification of full performance level of the position
- (7) Work schedule; if part-time, must include hours per week
- (8) A summary of the duties of the position
- (9) Complete minimum qualification requirements including selective factors (if applicable), applicable educational requirements, and any other factors that must be met in order to qualify for the position
- (10) A statement that indicates that basic eligibility and qualification requirements must be met by the closing/cut-off date of the vacancy announcement
- (11) For positions that have a minimum education requirement or allow applicants to be determined as basically qualified based on their education, a statement indicating the requirement to submit transcripts
- (12) A description/definition of specialized or qualifying experience
- (13) Evaluation method(s) to be used
- (14) How to apply for the position, and supporting documentation receipt requirements
- (15) Any unusual conditions of employment such as shift work, frequent travel, physical exam, temporary duty travel, licenses/certifications, financial statement, drug testing, and security requirements, mobility/rotation, probationary period requirements, availability of permanent change of station (PCS) funds, bargaining unit status
- (16) EEO, reasonable accommodation, and selective service statements
- (17) A statement that applications will be accepted from applicable veterans categories

5. Minimum Qualifications: When determining basic eligibility and minimum qualifications, the resumes and supporting documents of applicants will be reviewed for basic eligibility and minimum qualifications using the OPM Qualification Standards and/or any OPM approved agency qualification standard for the position; and any positive education requirements and

selective and/or other factors identified in the announcement as being essential to establish basic eligibility for consideration.

6. Candidate Evaluation: The process of evaluating applicants who are determined to meet the eligibility and basic qualification requirements assures that the selection is made from the best qualified candidates. Candidate evaluations must be based on job-related requirements and applied fairly and consistently.

a. Evaluation methods may include the use of crediting plans or rating guides, assessment questionnaires using generic or customized response scales, and/or alternative assessment tools such as structured interviews, and OPM developed on-line assessments. The method(s) used to evaluate applicants will be documented through a job analysis and identified in the vacancy announcement.

b. The job analysis will document the competencies determined to be necessary for successful performance in the position and the degree to which each is needed; the factors to be used to evaluate applicants; the assessment tools to be used in the evaluation process; and the method of determining the best qualified candidates to be referred to the hiring manager. Best qualified determination methods such as a natural break, best qualified category, top three plus ties, and/or establishing a cut-off score will be documented in the job analysis.

c. The evaluation process will be performed using the agency approved Talent Acquisition System (TAS), currently OPM's USA Staffing system (USAS). Other agency approved automated assessment tools may also be used in conjunction with USAS. In addition, the HR Specialist, subject-matter experts (SME), and/or panels may participate in the evaluation process, using the assessment tool(s) designated for the vacancy.

d. The DLA Human Resources Services will develop procedures for implementing the evaluation methods determined for use. Job analysis, assessment alternatives, and assessment questionnaire (AQ) development guidance may be found in Section 13., a. and b.

7. Referral of Candidates: When referring candidates to the hiring manager, the promotion candidates determined to be best qualified through the evaluation process, as documented in the job analysis, will be referred to the hiring manager for consideration.

a. When a referral list contains at least three best qualified promotion candidates, the hiring manager may not refuse the list based solely on an insufficient number of candidates.

b. If the referral list contains less than three best qualified promotion candidates the hiring manager may request that the vacancy be re-announced in order to obtain an adequate supply of best qualified candidates from which to make a selection.

c. When there is more than one vacancy, an additional best qualified promotion candidate may be referred for each additional vacancy.

d. For positions announced to be filled at more than one grade level, a referral list will be provided to the hiring manager for each grade level.

e. Qualified and otherwise eligible non-competitive candidates will also be forwarded to the hiring manager for consideration.

8. Interviews: Best qualified promotion candidates referred for consideration may be interviewed. Although not required, interviews may be one of the tools used by the hiring manager as part of the selection decision process, to validate the possession of the required competencies of the position.

a. If the hiring manager makes the decision to not conduct interviews, the reasons for not doing so will be documented.

b. If the decision is made to conduct interviews, hiring managers will use behavior based interview techniques during the interview process.

c. Hiring managers may not use any form of written test or formal scoring as part of the selection decision process.

d. Hiring Managers should refer to any applicable local policy with regard to the requirement to conduct interviews. If panel interviews are required based on local policy, panel members should be subject matter experts at least at the grade level of the position being filled.

9. Selection: Each candidate referred will be given consideration, and the selection decision will be made based on job related criteria. The hiring manager may select any candidate referred on the promotion list, or may make a selection from other appropriate sources such as non-competitive eligibles and/or from a referral list prepared through delegated examining procedures.

10. Release of Employees: Selections for promotion will be completed expeditiously; and normally managers will release employees selected for promotion the pay period following the time at which all conditions of employment have been met for the position.

11. Information Availability and Disclosure: The primary method of providing information to hiring managers and applicants will be through the OPM USAJOBS website, and the TAS used to implement this DLAI.

a. The DLA Human Resources Services will develop procedures for ensuring the availability of information, to include the following:

(1) Applicant qualifications and referral determinations; and the evaluation factors used to make the determinations.

(2) Results of the hiring manager selection decision.

b. In response to a formal complaint or grievance, the following information may be provided upon request:

The name(s), qualifications, and results of the evaluation process for those selected.

12. Records: All documentation and records will be maintained in accordance with requirements established by the OPM. The DLA Human Resources Services will establish procedures for records maintenance within the TAS; along with any documentation required that is not part of the automated case file.

13. Helpful Links:

a. OPM Personnel Assessment and Selection Resource Center:  
<http://apps.opm.gov/ADT/Content.aspx>.

b. DoD Hiring Manager's Toolkit:  
[http://www.cpms.osd.mil/hiringreform/hm\\_resources.aspx](http://www.cpms.osd.mil/hiringreform/hm_resources.aspx).

## GLOSSARY

### DEFINITIONS

Area of Consideration: The area, organization, or group of organizations in which a search is made for eligible applicants to fill vacancies covered by this Plan. The area of consideration must be sufficiently broad to ensure the availability of a reasonable number of high quality applicants, taking into account the nature and level of the positions to be covered.

Basically Qualified: An applicant being considered for any placement action who meets all established minimum qualification requirements (as prescribed in the OPM qualification standards, or an OPM-approved agency-specific qualification standard, including appropriate selective factor(s) for the position being filled).

Best Qualified: Those candidates considered to be the most highly proficient in the requirements of the position as defined and documented through a job analysis; and who demonstrate the most attainment of the necessary competencies over other applicants for a position.

Career Ladder: The range of grades in an occupational series or specialization starting with the lowest level at which an employee can be hired, up to and including the full performance level of the position. There must be enough work classifiable at the highest grade so that there is a reasonable expectation that all employees in the given organization and occupational series or specialization can progress to that grade. Promotion to higher grade levels within the career ladder is not guaranteed once minimum qualifications are attained. Promotions are dependent upon the employee's performance rating being at least fully successful, his/her ability to perform the duties at a higher level, the continuing need for the employee to be assigned to the higher level, and supervisory approval.

Category Rating: The process of evaluating eligible applicants by quality categories rather than assigning numeric scores. Applicants are assessed against job-related criteria and then placed into a pre-defined category with individuals with similar levels of job related competencies.

Detail: The temporary assignment of an employee to a different position or to unclassified duties for a specified period with the employee retaining his/her position of record and returning to his/her regular duties at the end of the temporary assignment.

DoD Priority Placement Program: A program designed to serve as the Department of Defense Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP) which actively assists its surplus and displaced employees by providing selection priority for competitive service vacancies.

Evaluation Criteria: The knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)/competencies and other characteristics needed for successful performance in the position to be filled. These job related criteria are used to determine the best qualified applicants for the position. The KSAs/competencies and other characteristics are derived from an analysis of the position and must be documented as part of the job analysis process. Applicants may be evaluated through the use of KSAs/competencies, applicant assessment questions, and/or other assessment methodologies such as structured interviews and OPM online assessment tools.

Full Performance Level: The highest known promotion potential of a given position.

Hiring Manager: The selecting official delegated the authority to make the decision regarding the selection for placement into a position.

Job Analysis: The process of identifying the basic duties and responsibilities, KSAs/competencies and other characteristics essential to successful performance in the position. These factors provide the basis for evaluation and selection for the position. This process must be documented as part of the vacancy case file.

Local Commuting Area: The geographic area that usually constitutes one area for employment purposes as defined in 5 C.F.R. 351.203.

Promotion Certificate: The referral list containing the names of the best qualified candidates eligible to be considered by the hiring manager for competitive promotion.

Selective Factor: A job-related competency/knowledge, skill, and/or ability that is required for satisfactory performance in a particular position. A selective factor, sometimes referred to as a selective placement factor, is in addition to the basic OPM qualification standard for a position and is therefore part of the minimum qualification requirements that applicants for the position must meet to be minimally qualified. Selective factors cannot be so narrow that they preclude from consideration applicants who could perform the duties of the position. Selective factors that could be learned readily during the normal period of orientation to the position are not appropriate, nor are selective factors that are so Agency-specific that they exclude from consideration applicants without prior Federal service.

Talent Acquisition System (TAS): An automated method of attracting, sourcing, recruiting, and hiring employees within an organization.

Under-represented Position: A position in an occupation or at a grade level in which the organization assigned to the hiring manager has not reached the identified DLA EEO and/or Affirmative Employment Program goal(s).

USA Staffing: The OPM automated Talent Acquisition System that is a means of getting the best-qualified candidates for public sector hiring. The system automates the complex staffing process of recruitment, assessment, referral, notification, and records maintenance.