# THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR

# SPECIAL AGENTS

The Career Development Program is designed to develop the experience and skills of employees over the length of their careers. It is also designed to meet Service needs at the various grade levels. Service needs have evolved from the more traditional practice of diplomacy to include as well a more “crisis-response” focus. The principles outlined below encompass this dual objective.

Career Development has **four principles** that each member of the Foreign Service must develop and demonstrate over the course of his or her career, from entry through tenure and up to consideration to the senior rank of specialty (FP-01):

1. Operational effectiveness, including a breadth of experience over several functions;
2. Leadership and management effectiveness;
3. Professional, technical, and language proficiency; and
4. Responsiveness to service need.

## **The Mandatory Requirements of the Four Principles**

1. **OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:**
* Service overseas, at least one tour of which must be in a designated RSO or Deputy RSO position. (two tours or four years)
* Service at DS headquarters. (one tour)
* Participation in the DS physical fitness program. (from entry on duty)
1. **LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS:**
* Mandatory FSI Leadership and management training at each grade.

Intermediate Leadership Skills

Basic Leadership Skills

* Service in a position that is designated as “supervisory” in a domestic field office criminal investigative program, or in a headquarters position. (one tour, from entry on duty)
1. **PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:**
* Successfully complete Basic Special Agent Training and Basic Regional Security Officer Training.
* Any two DS Agent refresher courses provided by DS, State Department or U.S. Government training facilities (i.e. ISSO training, Basic Field Firearms Instructor, DS Special Agent In-Service, RSO In-service, etc.). (from entry on duty)

## **RESPONSIVENESS TO** **SERVICE NEEDS:**

## Service at a 15% or greater post (hardship) differential/danger pay post. (one tour, after tenure, or two directed EL tours)

**Note:** A tour of duty at a danger pay post prior to tenure meets this criterion. The qualifying percentage can be a combination of post differential and danger pay. If the qualifying percentage is lowered after an employee has been assigned or arrives at post, the assignment will still fulfill the requirement for service as long as the employee completes the tour as assigned. Negotiated tours of 12 month duration in Historically Difficult to staff posts do not met the criterion of a qualifying assignment. The completion of two directed entry-level assignments to 15% or greater differential posts will also fulfill this requirement.

## **The Eight Elective Requirements of the Four Principles**

1. **OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:**
2. Professional development, e.g., Joint Military Intelligence College, War College, Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), or other external training opportunities. (one tour, after tenure)
3. Service in operational, management or professional development positions, from entry on duty, e.g., Protection (SD or DP), DS Training Center, headquarters or excursion-type assignment (i.e., other agency, INR, INL, bureau security officer, JTTF, external training, SSM, ILEA, ATA or special assistant). (one tour or two years)
4. **LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS:**
5. Significant and substantial supervisory responsibility(one tour, after tenure), for example: supervises USG personnel, to include PSC and PSA personnel, assigns work, develops and sets priorities, counsels employees and evaluates performance, resolves disputes, recommends candidates for positions within the office, justifies and obtains program resources.
6. **PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, AND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY:**
7. A foreign language tested by FSI at the level of 2/2 in a world language or 2/0 in a hard or super-hard language. The language may be tested at any time from entry on duty into the Foreign Service.
8. **RESPONSIVENESS TO SERVICE NEEDS:**
9. Operational/Crisis Response: e.g., service in a post under ordered or authorized departure status, 120 day or longer TDY in support of High Threat Posts, support of Presidential, Cabinet-level, and other high-level visits, service in the DS Command Center or other crisis response role. (one year, cumulative, from entry on duty)
10. Service in an officially designated critical needs position (one tour, after tenure).
11. Service at an unaccompanied post (one tour, from entry).
12. One additional tour at a differential post with a 15% or greater differential and/or danger pay.

##

## **Implementation**

Effective January 1, 2014, the program was phased in as follows:

All members of the Foreign Service in the Diplomatic Security Special Agent Skill Code who are tenured after January 1, 2014 will be required to fulfill all the **mandatory** requirements under the four principles and four of the eight **elective** requirements, in order to become eligible for consideration for promotion to FP-01.

All Special Agents who are tenured FP-04s as of January 1, 2014 will be required to fulfill all the **mandatory** requirements under the four principles and three of the eight **elective** requirements to become eligible for consideration for promotion to FP-01.

All Special Agents who are FP-03s as of January 1, 2014 will be required to fulfill all the **mandatory** requirements under three of the four principles and two of eight **elective** requirements to become eligible for consideration for promotion to FP-01.

All Special Agents who are FP-02s as of January 1, 2014 will continue to follow the guidelines that were in place before the advent of the Department’s Career Development Program for specialists in order to become eligible for consideration for promotion to FP-01. If you have further questions, please refer to the FAQ in the Career Development Playbook.