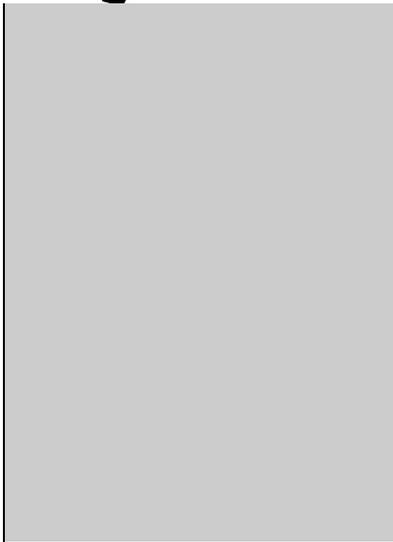
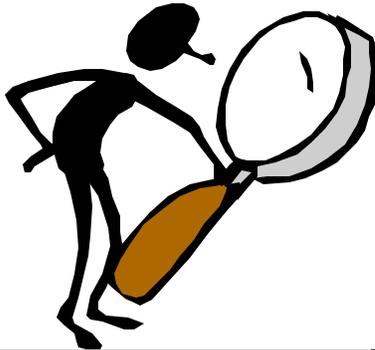
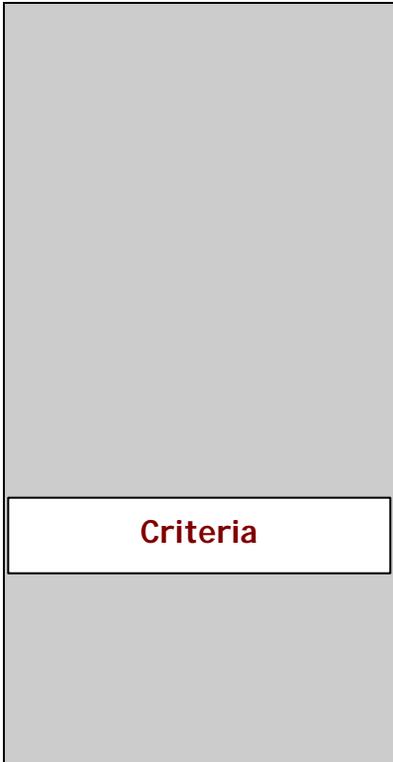


Promotions Through Accretion of Duties

You have a person working for you who is dependable, intelligent and willing to assume additional duties when the work requires. In fact, over the past fifteen months she has willingly assumed a number of duties that are not currently part of her official position description. In your carpool you mention that you would like to do something to get her promoted, but are not sure what to do. The driver says, “Just accrete her. She doesn’t have to compete for the job and because it is an exception to the Priority Placement Program, you don’t have to worry about being required to hire someone from outside. If you feel she deserves a promotion, just do it!” Not wanting to look foolish, you don’t admit that you have heard of accretion of duties promotions, but have no idea what they involve.

**What is accretion of
duties?**

“Accretion of Duties” is a shortened version of saying a promotion that results from an employee’s position being classified at a higher grade *because of additional duties and responsibilities*. Merit Principle #1 for Federal Employment holds that there should be fair and open competition for positions within the Federal Service. But there are **SOME RARE EXCEPTIONS, including promotions resulting from additional duties and responsibilities.**



MERIT SYSTEMS PRINCIPLE #1

(From 5 United States Code Section 2301)

Recruit qualified individuals from appropriate sources representing all segments of society; select and advance individuals solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge and skills, after fair and open competition, that assures equal opportunity.

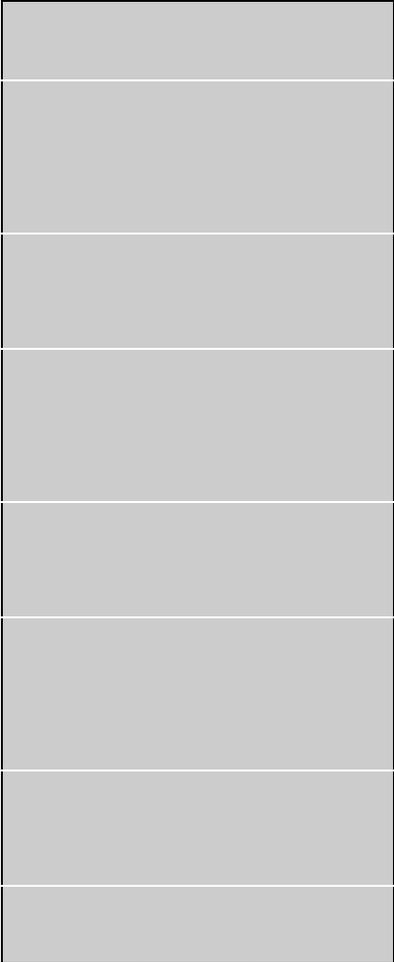
The Department of the Navy has established the following criteria for promotions resulting from the addition of duties and responsibilities that may be done without competition:

- ***The major duties of the employee's old position are absorbed into the new position, and the former position is cancelled.***

Major duties are those duties that represent the primary reason for the position's existence and the duties that govern the employee's time. These are the duties that drive the series and grade of the position. Since the new duties are absorbed *into the new position*, there is no need for the old position and it *must* be cancelled or abolished.

- ***The new position has NO KNOWN promotion potential.***

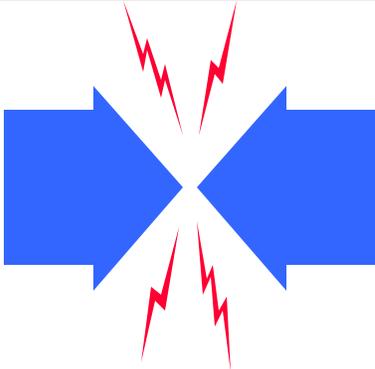
The position *cannot* have any further promotion potential or career ladder



associated with it. Avoiding the appearance of giving someone a *competitive advantage* on the next promotion is also important. If you know that further duties that could increase the grade again are likely to be added in the future, then competition for the promotion should be held.

Appearing to change your organization's past promotional practices to suit one person should also be avoided. Check with your Human Resource Office advisor to see how similar positions have been filled in the past before you decide to promote a person without competition.

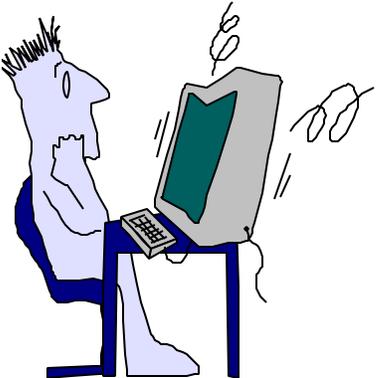
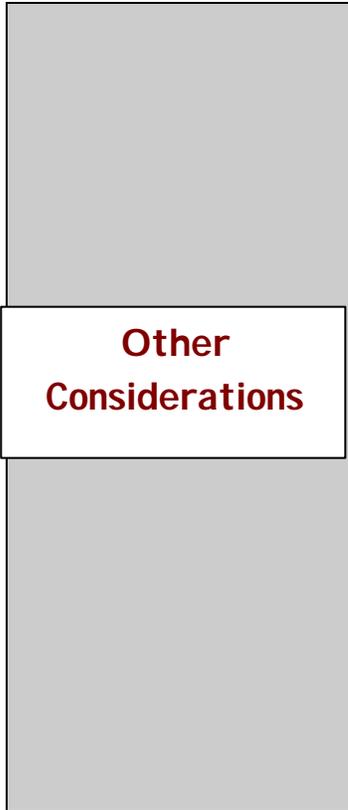
- *The additional duties do not adversely affect another encumbered position.*



In order to add duties and responsibilities to one position, you cannot adversely affect another encumbered position, thereby causing a downgrade of that position or a reduction-in-force.



Problems resulting from the removal of duties from one position and the addition of duties to another generally occurs when one or more employees of an organization are performing below expected levels. The work has to get done, so the supervisor assigns additional duties and responsibilities to



someone else who will do the work. Supervisors ***must*** address the performance issues -- promoting someone else to perform the work is ***not*** allowed.

Here are a few additional ***considerations*** that relate to the principle of fair and open competition that you should consider:

- Are there other employees in the same organization, under the same supervisor, or who are assigned the same duties who are eligible to compete for the promotion?
- Is the position that you are considering for upgrade a generic or standard position used in various places in your organization?
- Did you give the employee occupying the position you desire to upgrade additional training or other developmental opportunities that were not available to other employees of the organization?
- How often has your organization used accretions of duties in the past? How often? Under what circumstances?

Example
Documentation
Some Cases to Consider

Tracy Hill is Program Analyst, GS-11, in a resources office. The position was classified when Tracy’s office had responsibility for resource management for his field organization and four site offices. During a recent streamlining initiative, Tracy’s office how has been given claimancy-level responsibility for the program that he is assigned. With this increase of responsibility, the position Tracy occupies has been reclassified as a Program Analyst, GS-12.

Since Tracy’s current position unique to his organization, the upgrading of the positions does not adversely affect the duties performed by any other employee and the duties in the old positions remain part of the new position, a noncompetitive promotion is appropriate here.

So how do you document your request for a promotion resulting from additional duties and responsibilities? A checklist is provided at the end of this discussion that will help you in preparing the necessary documentation:

Case 1. LaVerne supervises a lab that employs both medical technologists and medical technicians. There are ten medical technicians all of whom have approximately the same duties and responsibilities. One of the technicians

Cases Continued

has been attending college at night and now has the education and experience to work as a medical technologist. None of the other medical technicians meet these requirements. Can I promote this technician?

Comment: Yes, you can offer a promotional opportunity **BUT IT SHOULD BE DONE COMPETITIVELY.** This case does not involve the addition of duties and responsibilities to an existing position. It involves the promotion of a person with additional training. It is not an accretion of duties.

Case 2: A supervisory Accountant has four teams of operating accountants reporting to her. As a result of consolidation of the accounting functions, three more teams are added, almost doubling the number of subordinate personnel. May I accrete the incumbent to the next highest grade?

Comment: The issue here is not the promotion of a person, but whether the increase in the number of people or teams reporting to someone changes the classification of the position. In all likelihood, the position will not be classified at a higher grade, so the issue of promotion will not come up.

Case 3: Your organization has undergone a number of reorganizations and has contracted out much of its work over the past decade. Promotions have been frozen for the past eighteen months. You have

Cases Continued

one Inventory Management Specialist, GS-11, remaining of a group that once had one GS-12 and three GS-11s. Over the past two years you have continually asked the remaining specialist to perform many of the duties previously assigned to those who have left. You are convinced that this specialist is performing at the GS-12 level now. Can you accrete him?

Comment: Probably, yes. The new, higher-graded duties and responsibilities were *added to* the old position, there is no known promotion potential and no one else is adversely affected by what you have done. The old position needs to be cancelled when the new one is established.

Case 4: I have five Budget Analysts, GS-12. They all do approximately the same work. Because I am required to do so much travelling in my job, I tend to leave one of the five in charge in my absence. I want to set up a team leader position at the GS-13 level. Can I noncompetitively place my trusted GS-12 in that position?

Comment: NO. This violates the principle of fair and open competition. In addition, you should stop assigning the duties to act in your absence to one person and rotate that responsibility among the others.

Case 5: I have a Secretary, GS-5, with a college degree. She is so good with

**Questions and
Answers**

computer hardware and software that she serves as our help desk and troubleshooter. Since almost all the work she does is computer work, can I accrete her?

Comment: PROBABLY NOT. First, it appears that you are attempting to assign work based on a person's education and interests and not on the duties and responsibilities of the position itself. Second, the work that you have added is not secretarial work, so the work cannot easily be absorbed in the new position. Third, if the new position is classified in the computer field, it would probably have promotion potential above the GS-6 level. Your first step would be to get classified the actual duties that she is performing.

Question 1: Who has the authority to set the date when the promotion takes place. If the person is in fact doing the work, shouldn't the supervisor determine when to promote the person?

Answer: The supervisor may *suggest* a date, but the decision on whether the proposed promotion in fact is appropriate and meets the criteria listed above is a decision that is made by the Personnel Specialist who approves the action. There are three significant steps or parts to a noncompetitive promotion that result from an employee's position being classified at a higher grade because of additional duties and responsibilities.

**Questions and
Answers Continued**

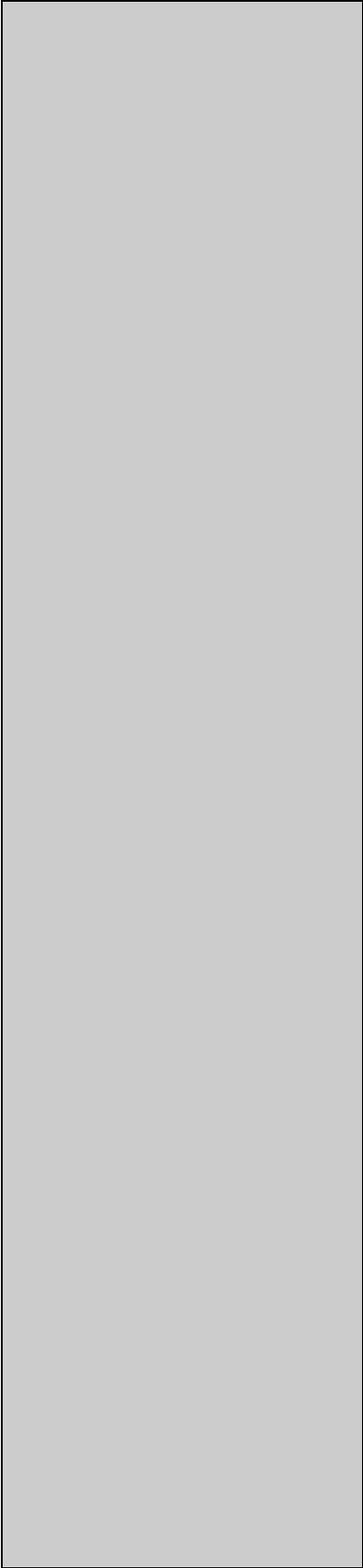
The first step is that the supervisor has assigned and the employee is performing higher graded duties. Second, the classification of the new duties and responsibilities are indeed at a higher grade. Finally, there is a decision, made at the Human Resource Service Center that the proposed promotion is appropriate as an exception to competition. Only after that decision is made is the action effective.

Question 2: *Can I change the series of the position and still use accretion of duties to promote someone?*

Answer: It is possible but **EXTREMELY RARE**. The additional duties and responsibilities must reflect the primary reason for the position to exist. The major duties of the old position must also be absorbed into the new position. So in all but a few rare cases the duties that drive the series and grade of the position will remain the same in the old and new position.

Reference

There is a circumstance under Cases 1 and 5 above in which an accretion action could be justified. If the organization has work that it is *required* to do, but is not allowed to hire any additional staff, it may be necessary to assign those duties and responsibilities to someone on the existing staff. Then the criteria for accretion of duties would be applied.



here, however, the required duties and responsibilities are driving the assignment of work and not the education or interests of a particular staff member. For additional ways that may be appropriate to handle Cases 1 and 5, see sections entitled **Management Identification of Candidates and Planned Management Action.**

**Department of the Navy
Guidance/Advice memorandum # 63,
subj., Merit Promotion Exceptions
Resulting From Additional Duties and
Responsibilities, of 23 May 1995.**

Documentation for Noncompetitive Promotion Based on Additional Duties

- Submit a Personnel Action Request (Standard Form 52 or electronic equivalent) for a promotion due to additional duties and responsibilities;**
- Submit copy of old position description and new position description;**
- Submit a justification for promotion as an exception to the competitive process, which includes:**
 - Old and new position description numbers**
 - Explanation of what caused the increased duties and responsibilities to the incumbent's position;**
 - Statement that the duties of the old position are absorbed in the new position and that the old position is cancelled;**
 - Statement that no other position is adversely affected by adding new duties and responsibilities to the new positions; AND**
 - Statement that the position has no known promotion potential.**
- Supervisor of the position signs justification.**