

Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada

Classification Standard **Foreign Service (FS) Group**

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Introduction

The classification standard for the Foreign Service Group is a point-rating plan consisting of an introduction, definition of the Foreign Service Group and the rating scale.

Point rating is an analytical, quantitative method of determining the relative values of jobs. Point-rating plans define characteristics or elements common to the jobs being evaluated, define degrees of each element and allocate point values to each degree. The total value determined for each job is the sum of the point values assigned by the evaluators.

Elements

Eight elements are used in this plan. Each element contains a number of degrees that describe the various levels of work that may be present in FS jobs.

Element Weighting

The importance of the characteristics of work in terms of assessing the relative value of each element is reflected in the maximum point values assigned to the elements.

Each element in the FS standard is designed as a continuum of value, ranging from low to high. The overall value of a given job using this system is therefore the sum of the points for each selected rating in each element.

Knowledge	17.5%
Information Analysis	15.5%
Communication and Influencing	15.5%
People and Operational Management	15.5%
Horizontal Leadership	15.5%
Problem Solving / Decision Making	15.5%
Psychological / Emotional Effort	2.5%
Working Conditions	2.5%
Total	100.0%

Rating Scale

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Knowledge	Information Analysis	Communication and Influencing	People and Operational Management	Horizontal Leadership	Problem Solving / Decision Making	Psychological / Emotional Effort	Working Conditions

Level

1	25	15	15	10	15	25	5	5
2	80	45	62	40	65	75	10	10
3	120	95	109	105	95	105	25	25
4	175	155	155	155	155	155		
%total	17.5%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	15.5%	2.5%	2.5%

Point Boundaries

Level	Min	Max	Spread
1	115	300	185
2	301	500	200
3	501	800	300
4	801	1000	200

Foreign Service Group Definition

The Foreign Service Group comprises positions that are primarily involved in the planning, development, delivery and promotion of Canada's diplomatic, commercial, human rights, cultural, promotional and international development policies and interests in other countries and in international organizations through the career rotational foreign service.

Inclusions

Notwithstanding the generality of the foregoing, for greater certainty, it includes positions that have, as their primary purpose, responsibility for one or more of the following activities:

1. ***commercial and economic relations and trade policy*** – the planning, development, delivery or management of policies, programs, services or other activities directed at Canada's economic or trade relations with foreign countries, including the development, promotion or strengthening of Canada's economic or trade interests in bilateral or multilateral forums;
2. ***political and economic relations*** – the planning, development, delivery or management of policies, programs, services or other activities directed at Canada's political relationships with foreign countries;
3. ***immigration affairs*** – the delivery or management of immigration policies, programs, services or other activities in support of the Canadian immigration program abroad;
4. ***legal affairs*** – the provision of legal advice to the federal government on Canada's international rights and obligations; the interpretation and application of the international legal obligations; the negotiation of various bilateral and multilateral agreements, treaties and conventions; and the defence of Canada's position respecting those obligations and agreements including dispute settlement;
5. ***communication and culture*** – the planning, development, delivery or management of communication and cultural policies, programs, services or other activities in Canada and abroad to promote Canada's foreign service role to Canadians and to promote Canada in the world; and
6. **the provision of related advice.**

Also included are positions occupied by members of the group on assignments in Canada.

Exclusions

Positions excluded from the Foreign Service Group are those whose primary purpose is included in the definition of any other group or those in which one or more of the following activities is of primary importance:

1. the provision of administrative or information services as described in the Program and Administrative Group; and
2. the representation in other countries of Canadian interests in a specialized field when the incumbent is not a career rotational foreign service officer.

Element 1 – Knowledge

This element measures the level of knowledge and business acumen required to perform the job in an effective manner.

This element captures both the knowledge of job related concepts such as **relevant area of expertise, international issues/area of application**, principles, practices/processes or approaches, legislation and the **practical** knowledge acquired through experience in the international milieu.

The following is a description of the four degrees:

1. Requires basic knowledge in a relevant area of expertise. Requires knowledge of the department's and the federal government's legislation, policies and processes, the department's business and clients, **understanding** of the international area of application, and knowledge of the legislative and policy frameworks within which the department conducts its business.
2. Requires **broad** knowledge in a relevant area of expertise. Requires a **broad knowledge** of other stakeholder programs, policies and concerns, and the international context that is **directly relevant** to the area of responsibility.
3. Requires **extensive** knowledge in relevant areas of expertise. Requires extensive knowledge of Canadian and international legislation, policies and priorities and of their inter-relationships and linkages across multiple sectors, programs and issues.
4. Requires **expert** knowledge in relevant areas of expertise and is recognized as a **leading authority in a key subject area within the global international context**. The job requires an **extensive knowledge** of the external environment, including relevant legislation, and political, economic and socio-cultural conditions that impact the Government's ability to achieve its mandate.

Point Allocation - Knowledge

Degree	Points	Degree	Points
1	25	3	120
2	80	4	175

Element 2 – Information Analysis

This element captures the requirement in FS work to research, compile, and analyze information. This element recognizes the increasing level of analytical skill that stems from factors such as the nature and complexity of the information, the medium, and the multiplicity and diversity of sources of information. Information includes both oral and written information. It refers to files, documents, knowledge of events and situations, and other data sources required to fulfill the job responsibilities.

The following is a description of the four degrees:

1. Gathers and analyzes information to **respond to a specific need**. The analysis of the information is **limited to the area of responsibility**.
2. Independently synthesises and analyses a variety of sources to identify gaps, determine missing information, or to identify the nature of other sources that should be examined. The analysis of the information is **related to the area of responsibility**.
3. Synthesises and analyses information that may be contradictory or incomplete. Need to assess the quality and reliability of the information and to look **beyond the area of responsibility and to understand the broader context**.
4. **Integrates** research and analysis from others and **identifies the linkages and interplay** with other key areas. Ensures that the whole context is in play. Information analysis involves risk assessments and typically has limited precedents.

Point Allocation – Information Analysis

Degree	Points	Degree	Points
1	15	3	95
2	45	4	155

Element 3 – Communication and Influencing

This element captures the requirement in all FS work to apply communication and influencing skills. It includes sharing and explaining information, defending, promoting or advocating positions, and high-level persuasion and diplomacy skills required to influence or advance positions or issues.

The following is a description of the four degrees:

1. **Establishes and maintains** contacts to gather information / intelligence or to **explain policy or positions**. **Presents and explains** information on procedures and regulations to internal and external clients. Counsels clients on **routine** issues.
2. Maintains and expands a network of contacts in a wide range of organizations to coordinate approaches. Requires persuasion skills to promote and advocate positions and policies in situations where **differences of view are the norm**. Counsels clients on **non-routine** issues.
3. Maintains and expands a network of contacts outside the recognised area of application to advance Canada's interests. Requires the use of persuasion skills and diplomacy to **influence approaches on emerging or sensitive issues** or to address **complex cases** or issues to minimize or manage the potential for escalation.
4. Establishes and broadens a network of contacts with parties with different views and interests to influence policies, and to develop international frameworks for protecting and promoting Canadian interests. Requires the use of **advanced persuasion and diplomatic skills in critical situations** or to resolve **contentious** or **high profile** cases or issues.

Point Allocation – Communication and Influencing

Degree	Points	Degree	Points
1	15	3	109
2	62	4	155

Element 4 – People and Operational Management

People and Operational Management is defined as the formal delegated responsibility for planning, leading and being accountable for human, including locally engaged staff, and financial resources assigned for the achievement of the work. Responsibility includes functions such as the selection and training of personnel, the assignment of work, monitoring and follow-up to ensure performance standards are met and managing own operational management budget.

The following is a description of the four degrees:

1. Provides **on-the-job mentoring and coaching** of new employees and may assign work to a shared support resource.
2. **Supervises** assigned human resources in the achievement of **specific goals and objectives of the work unit**. Responsibilities include planning and assigning work, reviewing performance of work on an ongoing basis, as well as final deliverables. **Some performance issues** are handled directly; however, more complex situations are **referred** to more senior managers. Provides input in planning and budgeting process.
3. **Manages** human resources **assigned for the delivery of a service**. Responsibilities include establishing human resources plans and work standards, adjusting workloads, leading recruiting efforts, evaluating performance of subordinate employees and setting plans and providing coaching and guidance for improvement. Responsibilities also include modifying operating procedures, allocating resources to meet changes in work priorities and/or volume, and ensuring that established human resources policies are carried out. Provides input and analysis in the planning and budgeting process, and may manage a small budget.
4. **Manages** human resources assigned for the delivery of a service in their own area of responsibility involving **significant planning, and directing and controlling of human and financial resources**. Responsibilities at this level involve **considerably more complex operations** that typically involve a multiplicity and/or diversity of major programs or functions, layers of management accountability, fluctuating workforces, and/or geographic dispersion of human resources.

Point Allocation – People and Operational Management

Degree	Points	Degree	Points
1	10	3	105
2	40	4	155

Element 5 – Horizontal Leadership

This element captures the responsibility of FS officers for getting work done through others without the benefit of formal power or authority. It recognizes that much of FS work involves the horizontal leadership challenges of bringing people together into work teams/groups from across organizational and/or jurisdictional boundaries, and through new virtual organizational relationships where there is not a formal reporting relationship. Work groups or teams could include members from:

- other divisions or sections within the department
- Canadian departments and agencies
- other levels of government
- industry and private sector associations within Canada and abroad
- non-governmental organizations
- foreign governments bilaterally or multilaterally
- international organizations

Responsibilities of horizontal leadership include planning, leading and being accountable for results of team members. Responsibility for horizontal team leadership typically increases with the nature and scope of planning, the complexity of the issues and initiatives, and the multiplicity of interests/stakeholders involved.

The following is a description of the four degrees:

1. **Participates and organises** teams or work groups on well-defined issues or initiatives within the area of responsibility.
2. **Plans and leads** teams or work groups, on issues and initiatives which are **generally defined** and are **related to the areas of responsibility**. May need to obtain buy-in of parties, though participants typically have **shared goals and objectives**.
3. **Plans and leads** the work of **multiple** teams or work groups or a single major team or a major workgroup with various subgroups. Builds consensus among participants with **varied and sometimes conflicting goals and objectives**. Issues and initiatives **cover a range of areas of responsibility** and typically need to be **scoped out or defined**.
4. **Designs, plans and leads the work of multiple teams or work groups, or a single major team, or a major workgroup with various subgroups, which typically requires** the development of strategic alliances and partnerships. Issues and initiatives are **high profile, sensitive or unconventional**, and the goals and objectives of parties involved are **conflicting**.

Point Allocation – Horizontal Leadership

Degree	Points	Degree	Points
1	15	3	95
2	65	4	155

Element 6 – Problem Solving / Decision Making

This element captures the nature, scope and complexity of problems/issues encountered in FS work, and the level of judgement applied in reaching solutions or making decisions, and the impact of these decisions.

In this element, the term “problem” should be interpreted in its broadest sense to include situations or issues. Guidance can be in the form of procedures and policies, or the direct assistance of supervisors.

The following is a description of the four degrees:

1. Problems, issues or situations are often **predictable** and have a **known** range of possible solutions. Guidance is **available** and typically sought out **where problems are atypical**. Decisions are typically **issue or case specific**.
2. Problems, issues or situations are **generally, but not always predictable**, and there is **latitude** in arriving at solutions. Recommendations impact on decisions made on broader issues or decisions impact on specific **issues or cases**. –
3. Problems, issues or situations are **diverse, often unpredictable** and **sometimes controversial**. Decision making involves **significant autonomy**. Decisions are broader in their impact, affecting **program or service delivery, and priorities** as a whole and the achievement of **broad operational objectives**.
4. Problems, issues or situations are **sensitive** and **not well defined** with **few or no precedents** or international norms for addressing them. Advice and decisions are **authoritative**, and often **precedent setting**. Decisions impact on the policy, and **strategic direction of the organization as a whole and that of stakeholders**.-

Point Allocation – Problem Solving / Decision Making

Degree	Points	Degree	Points
1	25	3	105
2	75	4	155

Element 7 – Psychological / Emotional Effort

The following element measures the extent to which the job is required to exert psychological or emotional effort.

1. Limited Psychological / Emotional Effort

- circumstances, people, or conditions could cause minor psychological or emotional reactions.

2. Moderate Psychological / Emotional Effort

- circumstances, people, or conditions could cause moderate psychological or emotional reactions.

3. Intense Psychological / Emotional Effort

- circumstances, people, or conditions could cause strong psychological or emotional reactions.

Point Allocation – Psychological / Emotional Effort

Degree	Points	Degree	Points
1	5	3	25
2	10		

Element 8 – Working Conditions

This element measures the disagreeable working conditions under which FS work is performed, and their potentially negative effects on the well being of employees.

The following examples of disagreeable psychological and physical work environment are illustrative only.

- confined spaces
- crowded working conditions
- motion, physical instability
- dusty or dirty conditions
- noise, vibration
- extremes of cold or heat
- fumes, noxious odours
- poor weather and disagreeable outdoor conditions
- wetness, humidity, dampness or drafts
- insecure travel conditions
- job related security risks, threats, people not welcoming your presence
- custody of sensitive documents or valuable assets while in transit

1. Somewhat Unpleasant

- conditions in the work cause minor psychological or physical discomfort

2. Unpleasant

- conditions in the work cause a moderate degree of psychological or physical discomfort

3. Extremely Unpleasant

- conditions in the work cause a high degree of psychological or physical discomfort

Point Allocation – Working Conditions

Degree	Points	Degree	Points
1	5	3	25
2	10		