

ARS CSREES ERS NASS

Policies and Procedures (P&P)

Title: Creditable Non-Federal Service for Annual Leave Accrual Purposes

Number: 420.0

Date: January 3, 2007

Originating Office: Human Resources Division, Office of the Deputy Director, Human Resources Operations, AFM/ARS

This Replaces: Bulletin Number 06-420, dated April 19, 2006

Distribution: All REE Employees

This P&P establishes REE guidance for crediting non-Federal experience or active duty uniformed service that would otherwise not be creditable for annual leave accrual purposes.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Policy
3. Authorizing Guidance
4. Delegation of Authority
5. Eligibility
6. Creditable Service
7. Approval Procedures
8. Effective Date
9. Service Agreement
10. Documenting Service Credit
11. Examples
12. Separations/Transfers
13. Summary of Responsibilities

Attachments:

REE-12D, Creditable Service for Annual Leave Accrual Service Agreement
REE-11, New Hire Recruitment Incentives

1. Introduction

On October 30, 2004, the President signed the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act to provide Federal managers with additional tools for meeting the human capital challenges in the 21st century to include the ability to fill vacant positions caused by changing technologies and baby boomer retirements. One provision of the Act provides agencies with the authority to grant a newly appointed or reappointed employee credit for prior work experience that otherwise would not be creditable for the purpose of determining the employee's annual leave accrual rate. This flexibility will allow the REE agencies to better compete with the private sector by offering seasoned workers better leave benefits than what otherwise would be allowed.

The Office of Personnel Management issued final regulations on September 18, 2006 to implement this provision of the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004. This P&P sets policy, assigns responsibility, and explains the rules and procedures regarding the use of this important flexibility in the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area. REE is comprised of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS); Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES); Economic Research Service (ERS); and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

2. Policy

It is REE's policy to utilize every possible tool available in order to hire and maintain a highly qualified, diverse workforce. Therefore, the agency's approving official may choose to offer newly appointed or reappointed employees credit for non-Federal work experience or unformed service that would not otherwise be creditable for annual leave accrual purposes when such an offer is necessary to achieve an important agency mission or performance goal. This mechanism has been authorized for all Senior Scientific Research Service positions, National Program Leaders, Research Leaders, and all supervisory positions at the GS-14 level and above (as defined in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide) based on the importance of these position categories to the accomplishment of the REE mission. The use of this authority may be considered for other positions on a case-by-case basis.

All decisions to offer this incentive will be determined with no regard to political, religious, or labor organization affiliation, marital or family status, race, color, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, or non disqualifying disability.

Selecting officials, human resources specialists, and employees are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the requirements of this program. Any questions should be referred to the appropriate Human Resources Division (HRD) servicing human resources specialist, hereafter referred to as servicing specialist.

3. Authorizing Guidance`

- Section 202(a) of the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-411, dated October 20, 2004)
- Title 5, United States Code, Chapter 63
- Departmental Notice 4060-001, Interim Creditable Service for Annual Leave Accrual, dated March 13, 2006
- Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 180, dated September 18, 2006

4. Delegation of Authority

The following officials are delegated authority to approve the credit of non-Federal work experience or uniformed service in accordance with the guidelines specified in this document.

In ARS	Office/Staff/Area Directors and Division Directors;
In CSREES	The Administrator must approve the Associate/Deputy Administrators' recommendations;
In ERS	Division Directors;
In NASS	Administrator

Additionally, all requests must be signed and have the concurrence of a Team Leader in the Operating Branches, Human Resources Division (HRD). All authorizations for Senior Scientific Research Service (SSRS) positions must be approved by the Administrator.

5. Eligibility

Newly appointed employees and reappointed employees following a break in service of at least 90 calendar days from the date of their last period of civilian Federal employment are eligible to be considered for this incentive. The use of this authority has been authorized for all Senior Scientific Research Service positions, National Program Leaders, Research Leaders, and all supervisory positions at the GS-14 level and above (as defined in the General Schedule Supervisory Guide). While selections for these position categories will still require the requisite approvals (as defined above) to document the amount of non-Federal and uniformed service to be credited, additional justification on the position's necessity towards achieving an important agency mission or performance goal is not required. The use of this authority may be considered for other positions on a case-by-case basis.

6. Creditable Service

Directly Related Experience

Only experience which is directly related to the position being filled can be credited. For this purpose, **directly related experience** is defined as experience which has equipped the individual with the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the duties of the position.

The description of duties and responsibilities contained in the position description should be used to identify the kinds of work experience that would meet this requirement.

Amount of Service Credited

At management's discretion, an amount of service equal to all, some, or none of the directly related work experience as described above can be credited. The amount of service credited can never exceed the actual amount of directly related service. Full-time credit can be awarded for full-time service. Less than full-time service is prorated (e.g., a person working 20 hours a week for a 12-month period can be credited with up to 6 months service).

Double Credit

An employee can only receive credit for service one time. Double credit cannot be awarded for any service to include a period of employment for service that is otherwise creditable under existing leave regulations or credited under this provision while on a previous appointment.

7. Approval Procedures

Please note: The determination to offer this flexibility must be documented and approved before the potential employee can be officially offered the benefit.

Recommending Official

Contacts servicing specialist for advice and guidance.

Initiates form REE-11, New Hire Recruitment Incentives, by checking the appropriate blocks to indicate "Creditable Service for Leave Accrual" and "Creditable Non-Federal Experience" or "Uniformed Service" (a DD-214 or other acceptable documentation is required to show service was active duty honorable uniformed service); attaching supporting documentation (e.g., resume) **and** a narrative statement which explains how the skills and experience the employee possesses are: (1) essential to the new position; (2) were acquired through performance in a non-Federal position or active uniformed service, as appropriate; (3) directly related to the duties of the position to which he/she is being appointed; and, (4) necessary to achieve an important agency mission or

performance goal; and signing/dating the form. Form REE-11 can be found at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/divisions/hrd/hrdhomepage/webforms/ree11.PDF>.

Forwards the completed form REE-11, New Hire Recruitment Incentives, and supporting documentation to the second level supervisor for review.

Second Level Supervisor and Any Other Required Level Up to Final Approving Official

If disapproved, returns the unsigned form REE-11 and supporting documentation to the recommending official.

If approved, signs and forwards form REE-11 and supporting documentation to the next level approving official or servicing specialist, as appropriate, for review, final approval, and processing.

Lead Human Resources Specialist (Team Leader)

Reviews the REE-11 submitted by the servicing specialist to assure that the appropriate documentation in support of the service credit has been provided and makes a concurrence decision.

Conveys this information to the potential employee, personally or through the servicing specialist, when making the official offer.

8. Effective Date

Creditable service under this provision is granted to the employee upon the effective date of his/her initial appointment or reappointment to the agency. Since there is no provision in law or regulation for retroactive approval, sufficient time must be allowed to approve creditable non-Federal work experience/active uniformed service and establish the reporting date. The credit of non-Federal work experience for leave accrual purposes cannot be authorized after the appointment/reappointment has been effected.

9. Service Agreement

A potential employee will be required to sign form REE-12D, Creditable Service for Leave Accrual Service Agreement, before service may be credited for leave accrual.

10. Documenting Service Credit

All Non-Federal service or active duty uniformed service must be documented on the SF-144, Statement of Prior Federal Service. Credit is to be granted in terms of years and months, and the exact number of years and months of credit being granted is recorded in Section 5 for civilian service and Section 7 for uniformed service. Include a note at the top of page 2 to indicate, "This documents creditable non-Federal service or active uniformed service work experience that otherwise would not be credited for annual leave accrual purposes." The SF-144 can be located at http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/SF144.pdf. In order to appropriately document the employee's Official Personnel Folder, the servicing specialist must include appropriate remark codes on the accession action.

11. Examples

The following examples illustrate how the use of this authority would affect a new hire's service computation date for annual leave accrual purposes. In both of these examples, the selectee did not have any previous Federal civilian work experience or any military service.

Example # 1: Dr. Jane Doe has been selected for a National Program Leader position with CSREES. Upon review, the CSREES Administrator has approved the Deputy Administrator's recommendation that 15 years of Dr. Doe's non-Federal full-time work as a Program Leader with a land-grant university be credited for annual leave accrual purposes. Upon her entrance on duty on January 1, 2007, Dr. Doe's service computation date for annual leave accrual purposes would be January 1, 1992 and she would be in the 8 hour annual leave accrual category.

Example # 2: Dr. John Smith has been selected as a GS-15 Supervisory Economist with ERS. The Division Director has approved 4 years and six months of Dr. Smith's non-Federal experience with a private economics consulting firm as creditable for annual leave accrual purposes. Upon reporting for duty on July 1, 2007, Dr. Smith's service computation date for annual leave accrual purposes would be January 1, 2003, and he would be in the six hour annual leave accrual category.

The employee's service computation for other purposes (e.g. retirement) would not be affected.

12. Separations/Transfers

If an employee separates or transfers, prior to completing one full year of continuous service with the Department of Agriculture, the individual is not entitled to retain service credit granted under this provision. Therefore, the servicing specialist will establish a new service computation date for leave on the transferring/separating employee, subtracting the credit that was provided for non-Federal or military work experience. However, all unused annual leave accrued and accumulated by the employee remains to the credit of the employee and must be transferred to the new agency or liquidated by a lump-sum payment as appropriate.

After completing one full year of continuous service with the Department of Agriculture, the employee is permanently credited with service granted under this provision for the duration of the employee's career. The employee's service computation date for leave would not be recalculated if the employee separates or transfers.

13. Summary of Responsibilities

Agency Heads

In ARS

- Delegates authority to review and approve/disapprove creditable service for leave accrual.

In CSREES

- Approves/disapproves Associate/Deputy Administrators' recommendations.

In ERS

- Delegates authority to review and approve/disapprove creditable service for leave accrual.

In NASS

- Approves/disapproves recommendations.

Office/Staff/Area and Division Directors in ARS; Associate/Deputy Administrators in CSREES; Division and Associate Division Directors in ERS; and Recommending Officials in NASS

In ARS and ERS

- Reviews and approves/disapproves requests to authorize creditable service for annual leave accrual purposes.

In CSREES and NASS

- Recommends requests to authorize creditable service for annual leave accrual purposes.

Second Level Supervisors and Any Other Required Intermediate Level

- Reviews and recommends approval/disapproval.

All Supervisors, REE Mission Area

- Initiates requests for use of creditable service for annual leave accrual as appropriate when making selections.

Servicing Specialists, HRD, AFM

- Advises selecting officials on the use of creditable service for annual leave accrual.
- Provides information on crediting service for leave accrual to supervisors and applicants.
- Calculates service computation date for annual leave accrual purposes based on amount of service credited.
- Makes official offers.

Lead Human Resources Specialists (Team Leaders)

- Ensures documentation is complete and appropriate.
- Reviews all recommendations for use of creditable service for annual leave accrual to assure that the requisite documentation has been provided.

Employment Officer, Office of the Deputy Director, Human Resources Operations, HRD, AFM

Develops policy guidance on the use of Creditable Service for Annual Leave Accrual.

Reviews the use of Creditable Service for Annual Leave in REE to determine its effectiveness and recommends changes needed to resolve problem areas and/or to ensure compliance with requirements.

James H. Bradley
Deputy Administrator
Administrative and Financial Management

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Research, Education, and Economics

Creditable Service for Annual Leave Accrual Service Agreement

I hereby agree to remain in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) - _____
Agency
for the period beginning _____ and ending on _____ .

I understand and agree that if I separate or transfer prior to completing one full year of continuous service with the Department of Agriculture (dates specified above), I am not entitled to retain service credit granted under the Creditable Service for Leave Accrual provision. Therefore, prior to separating/transferring, a new service computation date for leave will be established for me by subtracting the credit that was provided for non-Federal or military work experience. All unused annual leave I accrued and accumulated, however, will remain to my credit and will be transferred to the new agency or liquidated by a lump-sum payment as appropriate.

I understand that if I separate or transfer after I've completed one full year of service, the service granted to me under the Creditable Service for Leave Accrual provision will be made permanent. If I separate or transfer thereafter, my service computation date for leave will not be recalculated.

Signature of Employee

Date

NEW HIRE RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES

1. NAME (Last, First, MI)	2. POSITION TITLE, SERIES, GRADE, STEP
---------------------------	--

3. TENATIVE REPORTING DATE	4. LOCATION	5. REPORTING AGENCY
----------------------------	-------------	---------------------

RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL OF <i>(check appropriate box(es)):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pre Employment Interviews <i>(Attach list of all candidates)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment Incentives <i>(Complete Section A below)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Travel and Transportation Expenses <i>(Complete Section B below)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Superior Qualifications/Advanced Step <i>(See Section C below and attach REE-13)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Student Loan Repayment <i>(Complete Section D below)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Advance in Pay <i>(Complete Section E below)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Creditable Service for Leave Accrual <i>(Complete Section F below)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> _____ Creditable Non-Federal Experience _____ Uniform Service <i>(attach DD-214 or other acceptable documentation)</i> 	JUSTIFICATION <i>(check all that apply):</i> <table style="width:100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width:50%; border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of qualified applicants</td> <td style="width:50%; border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Recent Turnover Rate</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Unique Qualifications</td> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Emerging Technology</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Urgency to Fill Position</td> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Salary Compatibility/Offer Issues</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Labor Market Conditions</td> <td style="border: none;"><input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(explain in narrative statement)</i></td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of qualified applicants	<input type="checkbox"/> Recent Turnover Rate	<input type="checkbox"/> Unique Qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Emerging Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Urgency to Fill Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Salary Compatibility/Offer Issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Labor Market Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(explain in narrative statement)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of qualified applicants	<input type="checkbox"/> Recent Turnover Rate								
<input type="checkbox"/> Unique Qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/> Emerging Technology								
<input type="checkbox"/> Urgency to Fill Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Salary Compatibility/Offer Issues								
<input type="checkbox"/> Labor Market Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(explain in narrative statement)</i>								

SECTION A. RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES *(Attach General Service Agreement REE-12 signed by selectee)*

Pay Comparability Act (FEPCA) <input type="checkbox"/> Up to 25% of Base Salary _____ % of Salary equivalent to \$ _____	Demonstration Project <input type="checkbox"/> One Lump Sum payment (upon EOD) of \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Deferred (payment within 36 months of EOD) Select one of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> One Lump Sum of \$ _____ payable on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Incremental payments (attach payment agreement signed by selectee).
--	--

SECTION B. PAYMENT OF TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES *(Attach Service Agreement signed by Selectee)*

1. Travel and Transportation Expenses in accordance with FTR's (for New Hires not under Demonstration Project)

2. Travel and Transportation Expenses (for Demonstration Project New Hires):

a. All expenses below in item b.

b. Options

<input type="checkbox"/> (1) Per diem allowance for immediate family	<input type="checkbox"/> (4) Purchase of residence expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> (7) Shipment and Storage of Household Goods
<input type="checkbox"/> (2) House hunting trip travel and expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> (5) Temporary quarters subsistence expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> (8) Miscellaneous Allowances
<input type="checkbox"/> (3) Sale of residence expenses	<input type="checkbox"/> (6) Shipment of P.O.V. (1)	

SECTION C. SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS APPOINTMENT *(Attach justification to this form stating)*

- Selectee's superior qualifications or special need of the agency
- Factors considering in determining existing pay and reason for setting at the higher rate
- Reasons for authorizing an advanced rate instead of or in addition to a recruitment bonus

SECTION D. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT *(Attach written justification and signed Service Agreement (REE-12B))*

Amount Offered _____ *(not to exceed \$10,000 per calendar year or \$60,000 per career)*

Verify Federally Insured Loan to Repay

Payment Options:

Lump Sum Payment

Interval Payments

SECTION E. ADVANCE IN PAY *(Attach Repayment Agreement)*

- Domestic Assignment
- Overseas Assignment *(See Definition in P&P)*
-

SECTION F. CREDITABLE SERVICE FOR LEAVE ACCRUAL - *Attach supporting documentation (e.g., resume) and a narrative statement which explains how the skills and experience the employee possesses are:*

- essential to the new position;
 - were acquired through performance in a non-Federal position or active uniformed service, as appropriate;
 - directly relate to the duties of the position to which he/she is being appointed; and,
 - necessary to achieve an important agency mission or performance goal.
-

RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL INFORMATION

	Signature	Date
1. Selecting Official Name and Title		
2. Second Level Supervisor Name and Title		
3. Budget and Fiscal Officer Name and Title		
4. Area Director/HQ Staff Office/Division Director Name and Title		
5. Team Leader/HRD/AFM Name and Title		

This form was electronically produced by USDA/ARS/OCIO/ADB.