

AIR FORCE LABORATORY

**COMMONLY
ASKED QUESTIONS**

PERSONNEL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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Introduction

Following is a compilation of the answers we have developed in response to many of the questions received over the past year and a half regarding the Air Force Laboratory Personnel Demonstration Project. Wherever possible, we have deleted references to specific labs, directorates, and divisions in an effort to afford maximum confidentiality. In some cases, we have edited the questions and responses to keep pace with the changes that have occurred to the demonstration project plan over time. In other cases, we have combined questions which touch on the same subject. If you have a specific question you would like answered, please contact us in any of the following manners. We will keep this document updated with additional questions as we receive them. **The latest revisions were made on 1 Dec 96.**

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Section 1 - General Demonstration Project Questions

What is the duration of the lab demo? Is there an evaluation period for success or failure of the demo project and what are the criteria?

Public Law 103-337 removed any mandatory expiration date for this demonstration. A project evaluation plan has been developed which addresses how each initiative will be comprehensively evaluated for at least the first 5 years of the demonstration. Major changes and modifications may be made as the demonstration progresses if results of the evaluations indicate changes are needed. If needed, these will be made through re-announcement in the Federal Register. At the 5 year point, the entire demonstration will be re-examined for either: 1) permanent implementation, 2) changes and another 3-5 year test period, or 3) expiration. A more detailed discussion of the Evaluation Plan can be found in Section VII of the Federal Register.

Can we vote on whether or not we want to be part of the demo?

Employees will not be permitted to opt out of the demonstration project. The initial phase of the demonstration project includes General Schedule (GS/GM) positions within the scientific and engineering specialties. Research Medical Officers (GS-0602) have been excluded from the project because of special pay provisions for their occupation which exceed the upper limits of the broadband. Decision points are being established as to whether or not remaining lab employees (i.e. non-S&Es) will be brought into the system.

Why weren't all lab employees included in the project as opposed to just the scientists and engineers? Will other lab employees ever be brought into the demonstration?

There were several reasons for restricting the project initially to the S&Es. Most import of these centered around the sheer magnitude of the effort. Limiting the demo to just S&Es reduced the number of effected employees from 5350 to 3000, the number of occupational series from 154 to 40, the number of national unions from 4 to 2, and the number of local unions from 14 to 4. Even with these reductions, we were still looking at a monumental task. In addition, there were (and still are) efforts to bring broadbanding and pass/fail appraisals to the workforce at large. This would have an effect on all the lab employees. Another point weighing in favor of limiting the demo was the CCS system. It was designed and tailored specifically for the S&E workforce and was not viewed as readily transportable to other career fields. Trying to force-fit it to the entire laboratory workforce would have been a disservice to the non-S&Es. The pros and cons of both options (including all lab employees or restricting to S&Es) were briefed to HQ AFMC/ST and HQ AFMC/DP and the decision was made to restrict the initial phase of the project to S&Es. In this way, the project would be more manageable both in size and diversity; carry a higher probability of success; allow for higher concentration on the CCS system, and provide additional time to study the impact or benefits of extending it to non-S&Es. The provision for optional expansion of the employee coverage to non-S&Es at about the two year point was included in the project plan. At that time, we should have a better picture of the probable success of separate initiatives currently being worked by OPM and DOD for non-S&Es.

Will this same team work to implement this for non-S&Es and when?

The decision point for expanded employee coverage has been programmed for the end of the second year of the demonstration project. The majority of the IPT team members for the initial phase consisted of laboratory S&Es and personnel specialists. It is anticipated that any IPTs for a follow-on phase would also consist of personnel specialists and those affected by the project. In this regard, many of the team members would be new to the project.

I'm interested in the 19 studies conducted on the laboratories which are referred to in much of the lab demo literature. What were the findings of these studies and how did our demonstration project initiatives address these issues?

These studies focused on inadequacies in nine different areas: S&T Strategy, Personnel, Management and Organization, Funding, Peer Review/Performance, Facilities and Equipment, University/Industry Services, Technology Transfer, and Contracting. This demonstration project addresses issues related to three of these areas: Personnel, Management and Organization, and Performance. The Laboratory Quality Improvement Program (LQIP), which operates out of HQ AFMC/STD, is addressing other areas identified in the studies which are critical to laboratory success. The studies are summarized as follows:

Title	Date	Prime Focus
DSB Task Force on Laboratory Management	Apr 94	Personnel, Mgmt & Org, Fac & Equip, Univ/Ind/Services, Tech Transfer, Contracting
Federal Advisory Commission Report on Consolidation and Conversion of Defense R&D Laboratories	Sep 91	S&T Strat, Mgmt & Org, Univ/Ind/Services
OTA Study - Holding the Edge/ Maintaining the Defense Technology Base (DTIC No. AD-A210409)	1989	
DSB Report Technology Base Management (DTIC No. AD-A188560/AD-A196469)	Aug/ Dec 87	Mgmt & Org, Funding, Personnel, Performance, Tech Transfer
Report on Funding Recommendations	May 84	Funding
President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control	Dec 83	Personnel, Mgmt & Org, Univ/Ind Services
White House Science Council Report - Federal Laboratory Review Panel	May 83	Personnel, Mgmt & Org, Funding, Perf., Tech Transfer, Contracting
USDRE Independent Review of DoD Laboratories (DTIC Report No. AD-A118006)	Mar 82	S&T Strat, Personnel, Perf, Fac & Equip, Univ/Ind Services, Tech Transfer, Contracting
DSB Report on University Responsiveness to National Security Requirements	Jan 82	Funding, Fac & Equip, Univ/Ind Services, Contracting
DSB Report 1981 Summer Study Panel on Technology Base	Nov 81	All except Perf. and Tech Transfer

Title	Date	Prime Focus
Report of the DoD Laboratory Management Task Force (STIC Report No. AD-A102549)	Jul 80	Mgmt & Org, Fac & Equip, Contracting
Report of the Committee on Application of OMB Circular A-76	Oct 79	Mgmt & Org
Institutional Barriers on DoD Laboratories	Oct 79	Personnel, Mgmt & Org
Report of the Acquisition Cycle Task Force DSB 1977 Summer Study	Mar 78	Contracting
DSB Task Force on Federal Contract Center Utilization	Feb 76	Mgmt & Org, Contracting
DoD Medical and Human Resources Laboratory Utilization Study	Sep 76	S&T Strat, Mgmt & Org, Funding
DSB Summer Study Task force on Technology Base Strategy	Sep 76	S&T Strat, Mgmt & Org, Funding
DoD Laboratory Utilization Study	Apr 75	S&T Strat, Personnel, Mgmt & Org, Funding
Task Group on Defense In-House Laboratories	Jul 71	S&T Strat, Personnel, Mgmt & Org
DoD In-House Laboratories	Oct 66	Mgmt & Org

Concerning the project timeline. Are we on schedule and when will training be done.

We have experienced some delays, primarily in the staffing of the various packages through Air Force Headquarters, the Department of Defense, and the Office of Personnel Management. While these organizations have been very cooperative, several “sticky issues” have arisen which needed to be worked out. This has all served to delay the implementation date to at least February 97. Training is not allowed to begin until the Federal Register “Notice of Approval” is published. A mandatory 90 day waiting period must be observed after the publication, during which time the training will be conducted.

Section 2 - Classification Questions

What does “SDE” stand for?

“SDE” is the Statement of Duties and Experience. This document replaces the Position Description (PD) as we know it under the current system. The SDE combines a single-page form, which includes a brief description of job-specific information and reference to the assigned Broadband Level Descriptors, with a one-page addendum which identifies data element information pertinent to the job.

How will shreds/subshreds be determined when someone transfers from the Demo to outside the Demo?

Shreds/subshreds, formally known as “skill codes”, will be retained under the demonstration project. Assignment of these codes will be done by the supervisor (when completing the Statement of Duties and Experience (SDE)) rather than someone in personnel. Retaining these codes, while not viewed as essential to the demonstration project itself, will allow employees to remain competitive for both training and promotion opportunities outside of the laboratory.

How were the broadbands determined? GS-11s and GS-12s are similar here at Lab XYZ, yet they are in separate broadbands. There is a big distinction between GS-12s and GS-13s here but they are in the same band. Also, why shouldn't GS-14s and GS-15s share a band?

Related question: My main concern is the way GS grades become levels, since there are 9 GS grades why not an even distribution?

It is important to remember that S&E occupations are in two-grade interval series from GS-5 through GS-11. As such, the laboratory demonstration project will cover S&Es in seven grades: GS-7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. The primary reason for the separation of levels, however, is their correlation to distinct levels of professional development. Level I represents the entry level positions which correspond to positions which classify to GS-7 to 11 grades under the General Schedule. Level II represents positions at the journeyman level which correspond to positions which classify to GS-12 and 13 grades under the General Schedule. Level III, the GS-14 grade classification equivalent, is typical of senior or professional level positions. Level IV, the GS-15 grade classification equivalent, is reserved for the principal research manager/leader; that single individual ultimately responsible for the research and management of a major research effort. With the natural breaks in professional levels, the establishment of the broadband levels was a logical extension.

Section 3 - Staffing and Hiring Questions

How will regulated things like EEO work? Will there be some type of quota system?

There will be no change in recruitment sources under Lab Demo, although the continuous open application process will be new. Programs in place designed to identify high quality minorities for employment will continue to be used to achieve a diverse workforce. The laboratories will continue to be included in Affirmative Employment Plans developed at each installation. Minority and age distribution information will continue to be available through the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System.

Section 4 - Probationary Period Questions

On day one, will the Demo be requiring all employees to serve a new 3-year probationary period? If not, would someone who had served 3 months of a one year probationary period then be required to complete another 2 years 9 months? Also, can partial periods already served transfer with Demo employees from one lab to another in the demo? Also, what about coming out of the demo - will periods in the demo apply (if a new hire comes in and serves 3 months, then gets out - does he/she serve 9 months or start over at twelve)?

Only new hires into the Demo will serve the three year probationary period. Current employees moving into the Demo on conversion will move "as is". They will not be required to serve a new probationary period and will continue serving a one year probationary period if applicable. For newly hired Palace Knights, if they work in a lab during breaks in school, that period could count toward their probationary period. Their time in school is not credited toward the probationary period. Current employees hired into the demo will move into it with a reassignment, promotion, etc. and current probationary period dates will remain. An employee leaving the demo follows the rules of the system to which they are moving. If a one year probationary period has been served, then the requirement has been met.

Section 5 - Contribution-Based Compensation System Questions

I am quite upset concerning the way employees will be appraised competitively. I have always heard they should be appraised on their own merits. I can see this competition thing causing some lack of cooperation between employees so they can get ahead. This lab demo project does not seem to promote team work, and I feel team work is what this lab needs a whole lot more of!

Promoting team work and assessing individuals based on their own contribution is exactly what the demonstration project is aimed at accomplishing. If employees isolate themselves thinking this new system promotes competition, they will quickly find their personal contribution scores (and therefore their relative level of compensation) decreasing. Those employees who get involved in the laboratory programs and encourage and promote their fellow employees will find they have more opportunities to demonstrate their own contribution. This increased contribution will be reflected in their increased compensation.

I also see a big problem in assessing peoples contributions. When people have entirely different jobs, and do entirely different things, how can managers grade their contributions? Yes, in the S&E field you can use number of papers published, yet I see many papers are complete junk because the authors are in a publish or perish environment, where as that technician solved or corrected a major design flaw of the engineer, and finally got the noise down so data could be taken, but how much credit does he get?

If supervisors are doing their job, they should be able to assess their employees quite easily. This is not a change from today's situation. What is being expressed here is a basic mistrust for management. This has been a constant theme on the part of those S&Es providing comments since the beginning of Lab Demo. It must be recognized that Lab Demo is not the source of this mistrust, but simply serves to magnify it since more responsibility and authority are being placed in the hands of the supervisors. While Lab Demo was not designed to make good supervisors out of bad supervisors, it should serve to help identify the bad ones (so that corrective action can be taken by higher management levels) and it has provided increased emphasis on correcting the problem. Two actions have already been taken as a result. Supervisory evaluation has been added to the assessments of the supervisors and additional supervisory skills and management training for all supervisors will be provided before the first CCS assessment cycle in October 1997.

Are there any provisions in the lab demo project to allow employees to evaluate their supervisors?

Such provisions are being added to the demonstration as a result of the public hearing process. It is anticipated that the second level supervisor would ask for inputs from employees (using standardized forms), collect this information, weigh it, and then have a feedback session with the first-level supervisor sometime in the middle of the CCS assessment cycle. The supervisor's ability to improve relative to the needs identified in the data can be used as a basis for the supervisor's CCS annual assessment. The system will not require employees to criticize or applaud their immediate supervisors directly or publicly.

What items are included in the "discretionary pool" for supervisors to use to compensate major contributors?

Each pay pool under the Contribution-based Compensation System (CCS) will be comprised of "G" + "I". "G" is the amount of money equal to the General Schedule increase % provided by Congress times the aggregate salaries of all the people in the pay pool. "I" represents the amount of the payroll line that we typically spend on within-grade-increases (WGIs) and promotions during the year and will initially be set at 2.4% of the aggregate salaries of all the people in the pay pool. Each employee in a pay pool will receive a CCS rating, and will then be considered for a salary adjustment based upon this rating. The money for the salary adjustments will come from "G+I". Rules have been established for minimum and maximum pay increases for employees based on their position with respect to the Standard Pay Line (SPL) and the associated rails (minimum of "G" increase if on or between the rails, minimum "G+I" if below the lower rail, maximum of "G" if above the rails). Once these rules are satisfied, paypool managers can award any remaining paypool money in a discretionary manner. Locality pay is not included in the pay pool, so every employee will receive locality pay over and above their base salary.

How is the "I" portion of the pay pool computed?

"I" represents the amount of the payroll line that we typically spend on within-grade-increases (WGIs) and promotions during the year and will initially be set at 2.4% of the aggregate salaries of all the people in the pay pool at the end of the CCS assessment cycle (i.e. 30 Sep). The costs associated with CCS payouts will be monitored over the life of the demonstration. If the 2.4% figure is determined to be inappropriate, it can be adjusted on an annual basis.

Even if we bring more customer dollars into the labs, aren't we constrained by "cost-neutrality" from really effectively compensating the high contributors? *Related question: Will pay-banding & CCS allow salaries to keep in pace with inflation and be competitive with industry?*

While it is true that additional customer dollars will not increase the overall CCS paypool, we feel there will be sufficient "I" funds to adequately compensate those S&Es assessed as "undercompensated" in relationship to their contribution to the mission of the laboratory. We understand that "adequately" is a relative term. While compensation for the most talented employees may still not match that of industry, the situation will be considerably better relative to the current system.

With cost neutrality as a governor, how do we compensate everyone if all employees become higher contributors?

The primary objective of CCS is to properly compensate each employee for their contributions. But, there is only "so much" money in any system to fund increases and career growth and if everyone becomes a higher contributor, then they all can expect some increase toward their career growth. What must be considered is that under CCS employees should expect to experience career growth that reflects contribution and that not every employee is expected to receive a CCS score of 4.9 (i.e., CCS is not a "firewall" type system). Average employees will see average career growth and above average employees will see faster than normal career growth. The reverse will also be true.

What happens if G and L are zero?

The locality pay “L” is not a factor in CCS; all employees will receive the locality pay adjustment approved for their geographic area without regard to their contribution assessment. If “G” is zero for a given year, then only “T” money can be dispersed through the CCS process that year.

What becomes of the money we traditionally used to give performance awards?

Even though the "June" performance awards associated with the GS appraisal cycle will no longer be given to employees participating in the demonstration, each laboratory WILL continue to have an additional, but now separate awards pot. Each lab is establishing an awards program which will recognize employees based upon specific accomplishments as opposed to performance throughout the year. Again, this new awards program will be delinked from the appraisal system. Non-demonstration employees will continue to receive performance awards based on appraisals on the AF Form 860a.

Who is left to correct pay problems at the GS-14 and GS-15 level?

The paypool structure is under the authority of the laboratory commander/director. To date, all labs have stated their paypools are planned to be at the directorate levels, meaning the directorate chiefs will be the paypool managers and will hold yearly pay adjustment authority. Lab Demo rules state that neither the pay pool manager nor supervisors within the pay pool will recommend or set their own individual pay. That must be done by some higher level of management. None of the directorate chiefs will be effected since, as SESs or Colonels, they are not included in the Lab Demo.

Shouldn't the supervisor be the one to suffer a low rating when an employee's contribution to the mission is low? The supervisor is mismanaging.

It would seem logical that an inefficient, poorly performing branch/division, that is providing little or no contribution to the laboratory mission, would result in a low assessment for the supervisor. But one cannot conclude that when an employee is not contributing, the supervisor is to blame. Each situation must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Are there initiatives to take action on persistently low or high contributors, such as demotion or removal after a certain period of time for the low contributors and training and promotion for the high contributors?

These types of initiatives have been included in the demonstration project. Section 3.e of the Federal Register details the streamlined “Contribution-based Reduction in Pay and Removal Actions” available to supervisors for dealing with low contributors. For rewarding high contributors, several alternatives are available: the new awards program, additional training/developmental opportunities, and accelerated career progression under the CCS.

How can we be sure the Pay Pool managers manage fairly and consistently?

The CCS assessment process includes a requirement for review by a group of supervisors to ensure that contributions are assessed and measured similarly for all employees within a pay pool. Through this process, supervisors should garner encouragement for accurate assessment of employee contribution and will gain experience in articulating the reasons for the assessments given. We believe the factor level descriptors and the key elements assigned, coupled with the review by the group of supervisors, form a rational foundation for the

system. But, the system is only as viable as the supervisors who administer it. CCS is a cultural change and this may be one of the harder facets to incorporate.

Will the results of the compensation system (after appraisals) be open to everyone?

The assessment of individual employees will remain confidential and will not be open to everyone, just as today's appraisal process works. Some statistical characteristics of each year's overall cycle will be calculated and open to the public. The exact nature of these numbers have not yet been determined. As a minimum, each employee will be given a statistical correlation pertaining to their relative standing within the pay pool.

Will there be a procedure to grieve your rating?

Employees can grieve the contribution assessments received. The grievance and appeal rights of employees that are in place under the current personnel system will not change under the demonstration.

Was any thought given to actually reducing the pay of low contributors?

Yes, but because reduction in pay is considered an "adverse action", requiring more documentation than normally required for the CCS salary adjustment, we opted for a separate system to address low contributors. Streamlined reduction in pay and removal procedures were incorporated into the demonstration project which will facilitate the process for supervisors while still affording the employees all of their rights.

Will there be a leveling of ratings from one paypool to the next? This could play an important part in any RIFs.

There will be some indicators to the laboratory commanders/directors if inequities exist. This would come from the statistical characteristics generated at the conclusion of the cycle, such as the average ΔX for the pay pools. The commanders/directors have no requirement to initiate any action to level the ratings. Note that this is no different from the way the process works under the current appraisal system.

Will employees be able to harass supervisors with grievances to such a degree that they will give unjustified good ratings just to avoid it. Said another way, how much work will be required to overcome unjustified grievances over evaluations?

There is no question that supervisors under the demonstration project are being given more responsibility for personnel actions. With that responsibility comes accountability. We expect supervisors to assess contribution to the mission under the CCS process rather than performance as described in a work plan under the traditional system. To the extent that they can assess contribution, they may be required to articulate that assessment. Yes, employees will be able to grieve the assessments given - just as they do today. For the most part, employees do not grieve appraisals; however, some do and there is a process in place to address such grievances. It is only when management does not have a rational explanation for a poor rating that problems result. The "harassment" alluded to normally comes when a supervisor succumbs to the fear that the majority of the ratings given will be challenged. Unless we train, encourage, and support our supervisors in rendering accurate assessments, the supervisors who have been vulnerable in the past will continue to rate inappropriately. Since we have no track record with grievances under CCS, we cannot adequately predict "how much work" will be involved in processing grievances. Considering that we are already

ahead in terms of workload by removal of the requirement to complete work plans, a lessening of the total workload of supervisors involved with CCS may actually result.

"Contribution to the mission" is nebulous. Won't this cause S&Es to fight for the higher contributing programs? Who decides the importance of a project? What about quality work vs. work that is high contribution or work on an "important" project?

First, we must realize that any appraisal or assessment system will rely on, to some degree, the subjective judgment of the supervisors. It is recognized that broader work will be required under the demonstration project. Managers must (and will) be aware that all employees need to have contribution opportunities in each of the factors under which they are assessed. If they feel they don't have those opportunities, the employee will need to initiate the appropriate dialog with his/her supervisor. This issue will be stressed during management orientation and training sessions for the project.

For vacancies in a pay pool, what is the salary associated with them in calculating the pay pool dollars?

No money will be allocated for vacancies within the paypool. The value of the pay pool is based upon the sum of the salaries of all paypool members on the last day of the assessment cycle (30 Sep). Therefore, vacancies make no contribution to the pay pool.

Section 6 - Pay/Conversion Questions

Are we still considering step buy-ins? *Related question: When will step increases stop? For example, if lab demo takes effect in February, will people scheduled to receive step increases in February or March still receive them?*

Step buy-ins will be accomplished under Lab Demo. Step increases will cease to exist for Lab Demo employees on the date of implementation. On that date, however, each employee, except those already in step 10, will have earned some portion of the next higher step. Therefore, each employee's base salary will be increased by the earned portion of the next step. The effective date of the adjusted salary will be the date of the implementation. At that point, every employee may have a "unique" salary that no longer can be found on any pay table.

What is your base salary when you move into one of the broadband levels?

Initial entry into the demonstration project will be accomplished through a full employee protection approach that ensures each employee an initial place in the appropriate broadband level without loss of pay. Employee's "new base pay rate" is determined by dividing their current total salary (after adjustment for step buy-ins) by (1 + locality rate). A full measure of locality pay is then added back into this "new base pay rate" to determine their "new demo total salary". This value will equal their "current total salary". This approach allows special rates to be removed from the system without impacting anyone's total pay.

Not all S&Es entering the demo get locality pay. I am a GS-12 Electrical Engineer and somebody has decided that EE's in special rates categories (12 and below I assume) do not get locality pay (although Aerospace Engineers evidently do). How will lab demo effect my special rate and will I begin getting locality rates under lab demo.

A couple points need to be made to ensure we have a common understanding from which to work. Under the current system, certain series were identified (many years ago at this point) as being very competitive in employing engineering talent. These series were granted "special pay rates" in order to recruit more of the higher qualified engineers. Since then several things have changed. The competition for engineers is not nearly what it used to be; however, the use of special pay rates have not yet disappeared. In the mean time, congress authorized locality pay for the civil service workforce to account for cost-of-living differences based upon the region of the country in which they are employed. This locality pay is based upon the General Schedule, not special pay rates. What this means for engineers on special rates is this: they will receive the greater of the following two possible amounts: 1) the general schedule rate plus the locality rate or 2) the special rate.

If an engineer on a special rate salary scale is not receiving any locality pay, they must be in the situation where their special rate exceeds the general schedule rate plus the locality rate. As the locality rates increase, albeit at a disappointingly slow rate, their special rate would eventually be overtaken by the locality adjusted general schedule rate. Special rate engineers should not be upset about other engineers getting locality pay -- that simply means the other engineers have been receiving less pay than the special rate engineers for an equivalent grade/step.

With that background, we can now discuss how lab demo will effect all of this. Engineers NOT on special rates will see no change - they currently receive a base salary and a full locality adjustment and will continue to do so under lab demo. Engineers that DO receive special rates will have to go through a conversion equation to factor out their special rates and convert their total pay to a sum of two components: base pay and locality pay. Therefore, everyone under lab demo will be on a level playing field. Everyone's salary will have a base pay component and a full locality pay component which together will add up to their current total salary. The conversion equation is detailed in the preceding question.

What happens if someone moves out of the demo but no longer has a GS rating?

Demonstration project employees in single grade broadband levels will be considered to have attained the General Schedule grade corresponding to their level. Where multiple grades are included in a broadband level, employees are considered to have progressed to the next higher General Schedule grade within that level when they have been in the level for one year and their salary equals or exceeds the minimum salary of the higher General Schedule grade. The new salary will be rounded to the GS or special rate salary equal to or just greater than the demo salary.

Section 7 - Promotion and Career Progression Questions

How does one progress from one broadband level to another?

For employees not affected by high grade controls, there are two ways to move to a higher broadband level. The first is through continuous contribution improvements resulting in increasing CCS scores and annual salary adjustments. Areas have been established in relation to the Standard Pay Line. If an employee's CCS score plots in an "eligibility" (or "E") zone, they are eligible for a broadband level change, but one should not be given unless the supervisor has a compelling reason to change the employee's level. If the employee's score plots in the "Change to Higher Level" (or "CH") zone, the employee should be moved to the higher broadband level unless the supervisor has a compelling reason not to request the change. If an employee moves totally above the CH zone, the employee will be changed in broadband level without supervisory action. The second manner in which an employee can increase their broadband level is through merit promotion. When managers decide to look outside of the broadband level to fill a vacant position, merit promotion procedures apply. If a demonstration project employee is selected to fill the vacancy, they will receive their existing salary or the minimum salary of the new broadband level, whichever is greater.

How do you get your promotion from GS-12 to GS-13 now that they are in the same broadband level?

"Promotion" is a term now reserved for merit (competitive) promotions to higher broadband levels. Even broadband level increases caused by progression under the CCS system are not considered promotions. While comparison to the GS grades was useful in setting the upper and lower dollar limits of the broadband levels, once the demonstration project is implemented and employees are moved into the appropriate broadband level, General Schedule grades will no longer apply. As such, current GS-12 employees will be in the same broadband level as GS-13 employees. While regular "promotions" are a casualty of going to broadbanding, the use of broadbanding provides a stronger link between pay and contribution to the mission of the laboratory. It is simpler, less time consuming, and less costly to maintain. In addition, such a system is more easily understood by managers and employees, is easily delegated to managers, coincides with recognized career paths, and complements the other personnel management aspects of the demonstration project.

If another engineering office on base, but not in the lab demo, has a merit promotion open, will people in lab demo be eligible?

Yes, but only to the extent they are now. Most merit fills done outside the lab demo are done through the career programs at Randolph AFB. To be eligible, employees must be registered in the specific career program being used to fill the position, must have the required APDP certifications, performance evaluations, etc. To be sure that Lab Demo employees remain eligible for these kinds of jobs, supervisors will still be required to fill out the nine appraisal factors on the front side of the 860a in July each year. When the career programs pull a list, Lab Demo S&Es will thus have a current rating in the traditional format.

How will promotions to a job in a higher broadband level work? Will people be able to transfer around more easily? We noticed that there will be more commonality in the new "PD's". Will this hurt or help our employees? It appears that some people may not be as protected.

The ability of an employee to "transfer around", whether internal to the directorate, the lab, or to external organizations should be no different under Lab Demo than it is now. There will have to be vacancies available, people will have to possess the desired skills, be willing to move, etc. Yes, the new SDEs may be broader than the current PDs, but the supervisor will write a few sentences that capture the critical features of the job, not covered by the "boilerplate". When words like "hurt", "help", and "protected" are used, we assume we're talking about RIF. All Lab Demo employees at a geographical location will be in their own competitive area. Within that competitive area, there will be many competitive levels, based on job series, broadband level, and specialization. From this point of view, we believe that employees will be, at the very least, as well protected under Lab Demo as they are now.

How will people in accelerated pay schedules (like electrical engineers) be affected?

Under Lab Demo, all S&Es will be placed in the appropriate broadband level at implementation. At that point, General Schedule grades and accelerated pay schedules will no longer apply. All employees will progress along a career path driven by the CCS system. Those employees with consistently high contributions to the laboratory mission will be the ones enjoying accelerated salary adjustments.

Will advancement to broadband level III (i.e., GS-14) be any easier under lab demo than it is now?

It is the intent of the demonstration project to have S&E career growth be accomplished through unrestricted movement through the broadband levels based on contribution and salary. Unfortunately, at the present time, high grade controls within the agency restrict movement from broadband level II to level III. A separate tri-service initiative to replace these controls with other management measures has resulted in an agreed upon definition of high grade under laboratory demonstration project authority. Based on that definition, all employees in broadband levels III and IV will be designated as high graded employees. Until the high grade controls are lifted, demonstration project employees will not be able to advance from broadband level II to broadband level III unless a high grade authorization is available. To accommodate this, level II employees whose salary adjustment would place them above the CH zone for level II in organizations where high grade authorizations are unavailable will receive permanent adjustments to basic salary up to an amount equivalent to the top of broadband level II. Any additional amount granted under CCS will be paid as a one-time "CCS Special Adjustment" from pay pool funds. This pattern of payout will continue until high grade authorizations become available.

Section 8 - Reduction-In-Force Questions

We have heard that some of the RIF procedures under Lab Demo may have changed since the first Federal Register release in May 96. Is this true?

Just prior to the Final Federal Register Release, Congress passed the 1997 National Defense Authorization Act. Section 1615 of that act prohibits the DoD from taking any personnel action which violates veterans preference. While the sponsors of this legislation apparently did not intend to impact the various DoD demonstration projects, legal opinions were rendered which would require us to maintain the status quo relative to personnel practices derived from OPM regulations touching upon both the appointment and retention of preference eligibles. Because of this, the Air Force Personnel Demonstration Project Final Plan was modified to provide a link between CCS and the RIF process used under the current personnel system. The CCS assessment score will be used as additional service credit during RIFs as follows. For Broadband levels I through III, CCS assessment scores below the lower rail will equate to 20 additional years of service. Scores within the rails but on or below the SPL will equate to 16 years of service. Scores within the rails but above the SPL will be credited with 12 years of service. No additional years of service will be given for assessment scored above the upper rail. For level IV S&Es, CCS assessments on or below the SPL will equate to 20 years of service. Scores above the SPL but on or below the upper rail will be credited with 12 years of service. No additional years of service will be given for assessment scores above the upper rail. Once additional years of service credit is given according to the rules stated above, the existing RIF procedures will be used. It should be noted that we are still trying to get amending legislation passed which will permit us to return to our proposed RIF process sometime in the future.

In a RIF, do you carry over your 3 year performance rating from the previous system into the Demo?

With the revised RIF rules outlined above, the answer is yes. No matter when the RIF occurs, the prior 3 years of service credit would be averaged and applied to the service computation date. If amending legislation is passed, the process would be somewhat different. Until the first CCS assessment is given under the demonstration project, traditional RIF rules would be followed. Should a RIF occur between the first and second CCS assessment dates, employees would have their SCD adjusted based on the employee's two most recent annual performance ratings of record received during the 3-year period prior to implementation of the demonstration project. Effective with the second CCS assessment date, no credit would be given for ratings received outside the demonstration project.

In a RIF, it appears that you keep only the low paid people, which means that if a supervisor wanted to get rid of someone, he/she should promote them just prior to a RIF.

Several points need to be made before directly answering the question. First, under lab demo, "promotions" are competitive fill actions to vacant positions. If the employee is a problem employee, one would have to question why they are showing up on merit promotion rosters. The other possibility for attaining a higher broadband level is via progression through the CCS system. Again, if the employee is a problem, one would have to question why they were receiving assessments high enough to be advanced to a higher broadband level. The one scenario in this area that is plausible would be as follows. The supervisor anticipates a RIF in

the competitive level of an employee that, for whatever reason, they would like to see separated. The supervisor then gives an unjustly large pay adjustment under CCS. The following year, the supervisor gives the employee an unjustly low CCS score. These two actions combined could unjustly place the employee above the upper rail. Note that this scenario must be played out over an entire year. Three aspects of the demo will prevent this scenario from happening. First, all CCS scores will be reviewed by a group of paypool managers and payouts will be done several levels above the immediate supervisors. Therefore, the supervisor would have to first convince the group of managers and the payout manager to give the employee an unusually large pay adjustment. The following year, that same supervisor would have to convince those same people to give the employee an unusually low assessment. This would be difficult to justify at best. The second safeguard in the system is the retention of all grievance rights. If the employee does receive an unjustly low assessment, they can grieve it just as is done under today's system. The third safeguard available is the option for an employee to voluntarily decline a pay raise or to accept a pay reduction. If the employee feels they are being "set-up" in such a manner, they can decline (within 30 days) the higher pay rate.

Would a RIF at WL include EN?

A separate competitive area will be established, by geographic location, for all laboratory personnel included in this demonstration project regardless of the laboratory to which they are assigned. For the commuting area around Wright-Patterson AFB, the competitive area includes both Wright Lab and Armstrong Lab-North. The competitive area will not include S&Es from other organizations on Wright-Patterson. If a RIF occurs within the laboratory demonstration, S&Es in the demonstration will not be eligible to displace an S&E outside of the lab demo competitive area (such as EN). Similarly, if a RIF occurs in the local area, outside of the laboratory demonstration (such as EN), S&Es from outside the demonstration will not be permitted to displace S&Es who are included in the demonstration project. It should be noted that vacancies can be used across competitive area lines to place employees that have been displaced by the RIF process in any organization.

What will be the rules if a RIF occurs in Oct 96? Will there be bumping between WL and ASC?

With implementation, a separate competitive area will be established by geographic location for all personnel in the demo. If the RIF precedes implementation, the RIF rules in force at that time would be used. This could include bumping between WL and ASC. If implementation precedes the RIF, then the new competitive areas would apply. For the first year of the demo, traditional RIF rules will apply within the Lab Demo competitive area. Once CCS ratings are available (and assuming amending legislation is passed concerning the veterans preference issue), there is no bumping or retreating, but there is "trumping". Trumping occurs when an employee with a higher retention standing displaces another employee in another competitive level in the same broadband level. A competitive level is described as all positions in a broadband level in the same occupational family (job series and, perhaps, specialization) which are similar enough so that the incumbent of one position could succeed in the new position without any loss in productivity beyond that normally expected in the orientation of any new but fully qualified employee. Thus, you have to be "multi-skilled" to be able to cross competitive levels to "trump" another employee in another competitive level in the same broadband level.

Section 9 - Awards and Developmental Opportunities Questions

The motivation factors appear to be just dollars and cents. Are there others?

The Laboratory Demonstration recognizes that trained, educated, and motivated civilian personnel are a critical resource with which organizations accomplish their Air Force Mission. In addition to addressing the compensation issue through CCS, lab demo is also attempting to foster these characteristics through additional awards and developmental opportunities. While awards will also equate to “dollars and cents”, they also bring with them considerable prestige and recognition. While each lab will be responsible for developing its own enhanced awards program, all will have some similar characteristics. Awards will be tied to specific accomplishments and will not be given in connection with the annual appraisal/assessment cycle. They will also be administered in a timely manner, be consistent with laboratory goals and objectives, and be approved at the laboratory commander/director (as opposed to the installation commander) level. In addition to the awards program, there will be increased developmental opportunities under lab demo. These will provide a motivational change of pace, and an opportunity for learning or developmental experiences such as teaching or research with public, private, non-profit, or not-for-profit organizations, for writing or for independent study. In conjunction with this, the 1-in-10 waiver approval authority has been re-delegated to laboratory commanders/directors.

Some managers are people oriented and some are not. The people oriented ones will put their employees in for awards and the others will not.

The lab demo may provide some assistance in this area by highlighting the problem (which also exists under today’s system) to higher management. We are recommending that the labs establish an internal awards board, with one objective being they establish a process to track how the awards (and nominations) are being distributed by directorate/division/etc. In addition, the project evaluation efforts required by the congressional demonstration authority requires some oversight in this area.

I despise the way most organizations distribute bonus and award money. Most make bonuses proportional to salary. Thus CEO's get \$50,000 Christmas bonus, and technicians get \$50. And I am sure the technician could use it, needs it, and in many instances deserves it much more than that CEO. How will bonus money be divided between the level I, level II, level III, and level IV pots?

There will be no division of the awards money by level. Under lab demo, the laboratories will have the opportunity to establish additional awards to recognize personnel who have made a single-event accomplishment that warrants such recognition. The awards board in each lab should measure the effectiveness of the laboratory awards program and verify consistency in its application.

Is the awards pot based on total salary or basic pay?

There is no hard and fast requirement directing a laboratory as to how much money should be placed in the awards pot; however, we are encouraging lab commanders/directors to sufficiently fund this pot so as to be able to achieve the new philosophical goals of this project.

Section 10 - Laboratory Organizational Structure and Unit Manpower Document Questions

No questions have yet been received in this area.