



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

Mr. Ashish S. Vazirani
Acting, Under Secretary of Defense
for Personnel and Readiness
U.S. Department of Defense
4000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Vazirani:

I am writing to inform you the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), with the concurrence of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), hereby grants full certification of the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Senior-Level (SL) and Scientific or Professional (ST) performance appraisal system. The certification period begins on the date after your current certification expires (September 21, 2024) and continues for 24 months, expiring on **September 20, 2026**.

Since full certification of DOD's SL/ST appraisal system is granted through this letter, the appraisal system's certification may be renewed automatically for an additional 24 months. Therefore, prior to expiration, DOD will only be required to submit a request letter and verification statement, in addition to the agency's annual SL/ST ratings, pay, and awards data for review. DOD must continue to report annually to OPM the data that result from the application of this certified system, and DOD's compliance with the established report submission requirements and deadlines will be relevant for renewed certification. OPM will review this data to determine whether DOD's system application for all DOD SL/ST employees involves meaningful distinctions in ratings, and pay and awards differentiation based on those ratings. Accordingly, OPM may determine, with OMB concurrence, that the appraisal system continues to meet the certification criteria.

Certification authorizes pay above the rate for level III of the Executive Schedule, up to the rate for level II of the Executive Schedule, and use of the higher aggregate pay limit. To avoid a gap in authority to apply the higher maximum rate of pay and higher aggregate limitation on pay beyond the expiration date, DOD must submit its request for certification **by June 20, 2026**.

If you have any questions, please contact OPM's Executive Services and Workforce Development staff by telephone at (202) 606-8046, or by email at performance-management@opm.gov.

Sincerely,

Veronica E. Hinton
Associate Director
Workforce Policy and Innovation