

# GAO

MAKING a DIFFERENCE for CONGRESS and the NATION

## Professional Development PROGRAM

*New staff are an integral part of GAO's mission to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government. The GAO Professional Development Program (PDP) was created to help GAO's newly hired entry-level staff develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities through on-the-job and formal learning experiences.*

### How the Professional Development Program Works

The PDP includes a combination of on-the-job and formal learning, regular feedback and counseling, and exposure to different projects and management styles. In addition, an adviser is assigned to meet with each new staff member to provide guidance and assistance so that new staff can smoothly adjust to the organization and the work of GAO. Specifically, the adviser has discussions with new staff monthly during their first 6 months and bimonthly thereafter. Advisers also talk with managers and supervisors to ensure that new staff receive appropriate feedback, coaching, and on-the-job-learning. Each new staff member, together with an adviser, creates an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The IDP identifies personal goals, outlines preferred assignments, and sets time frames for attending formal training sessions. The IDP also identifies relevant activities, including orientation sessions, speakers programs, "shadowing" of senior staff, congressional hearings, and mentoring.

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### How the Professional Development Program Makes Project Assignments

Project assignments are based on a combination of GAO's needs and an individual's background and interests. The PDP makes project assignments through discussions with new staff members and with GAO's teams to ensure that new staff are assigned to projects involving different issues and managers during their first 2 years. New staff are either (1) assigned to one team to work on different projects within that team's area of specialization or (2) rotated among several teams to work on projects in different subject areas. The staffing approach taken depends on the staff member's education, experience, and interests, and is decided upon before an individual is offered a position at GAO.

Questions?

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