

RULES AND GUIDELINES IN THE CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS FOR THE CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE CORPS

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Pursuant to Title VI of Republic Act 7157, otherwise known as the Philippine Foreign Service Act of 1991, approved on 21 September and which took effect on 11 October 1991, the Board hereby adopts the following Rules to carry out the provisions of the Act on matters pertaining to the Board:

Article I

Organization

SECTION 1. The Board of Foreign Service Examinations shall be composed of the following:

Chairman: Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs

Members: Assistant Secretary, DFA Office of Personnel and Administrative Services
Commissioner, Civil Service Commission

Board Secretary: Director, Foreign Service Institute

SECTION 2. A Secretariat shall assist the Board so that it can perform its functions efficiently. It shall be composed of a Foreign Service Officer and a staff to be assigned by the Secretary.

SECTION 3. An Assistant Board Secretary shall be appointed to oversee the work of the Secretariat and assist the Board Secretary on all relevant tasks and responsibilities.

SECTION 4. In the event that there is no official Board Secretary, which may happen when the position of Director of the Foreign Service Institute is vacant, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs may designate a foreign Service Officer as Acting Board Secretary.

Article II

Functions

SECTION 1. The Board shall conduct examinations for Career Ministers, Foreign Service Officers (FSOs), Foreign Service Staff Officers (FSSOs) and Foreign Service Staff Employees (FSSEs). The examinations for Career Ministers and the Foreign Service Officers shall be done at least once a year. The examinations for FSSOs and FSSEs shall be done at least once in every two (2) years or whenever necessary.

SECTION 2. The Board shall determine the subjects for the examinations it will give. It shall also be responsible in preparing and grading the examination papers on the specified subjects. Through the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, it shall seek the assistance of competent officers in government service and of other governmental institutions for the formulation of the examination questions and the checking of the test papers.

SECTION 3. The Board shall facilitate the giving of psychological examinations to the examinees. The psychological examinations should test, among others, the examinees' stress points, emotional stability and overall fitness for higher responsibilities.

SECTION 4. The Board shall announce the final ratings of the examinees and, thereafter,

- a. shall recommend to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs for appointment by the President of the Philippines, as Foreign Service Officers, Class IV those who successfully passed the examinations.
- b. shall certify to the Board of Foreign Service Administration the nominees for the position of Career Ministers.
- c. shall certify to the Office of Personnel and Administrative Services, which will later recommend them to the Board of Foreign Service Administration, the names of the career Foreign Service Staff Officers and Foreign Service Staff Employees who have successfully passed the examinations given them.

SECTION 5. The Board shall set the necessary qualification standards and requirements for all applicants to the examinations.

SECTION 6. It shall also set all pertinent rules which shall govern the examination process and the giving of the final passing marks.

SECTION 7. It shall continually review, whenever necessary, these examination systems for purposes of assessing their relevance, effectiveness, and validity given the changing conditions and needs of the service. Special studies may be conducted and assistance from the Foreign Service Institute or other government institutions and experts may be solicited.

SECTION 8. It shall meet at least once in every six (6) months or whenever the Board Chairman calls for one.

Article III

Qualifications of Examination Applicants

SECTION 1. The Board shall enforce the following basic requirements for applicants to the examinations:

a. For Career Ministers: Foreign Service Officers, Class 1, who have completed at least two (2) years of “very satisfactory” service in the rank.

b. For Foreign Service Officers, Class IV:

b.1.

Academic Training — holder of at least a 4-year Bachelor’s Degree or its equivalent;

b.2.

Practical Experiences — preferably those who have had two (2) years of work experience from the time the Bachelor’s Degree was received;

b.3.

Must be less than 36 years old at the date of the examinations;

b.4.

Filipino citizen and a permanent resident of the Philippines; and

b.5.

Physically and psychologically fit, and of good moral character.

c. For Foreign Service Staff Officers: Examinations shall qualify applicants to be appointed to FSSO Rank IV (lowest rank). The examinations shall be competitive and shall therefore be open to personnel of the Department and to outsiders.

c.1.

Academic Training: Bachelor's degree;

c.2.

Must not be more than 35 years old at the date of the examination;

c.3.

Must be a Filipino citizen and a permanent resident of the Philippines; and

c.4.

Physically and mentally fit, and of good moral character.

d. For Foreign Service Staff Employees: Examinations shall be to FSSE III (lowest rank). The examinations shall be open to personnel of the Department and to outsiders.

d.1.

Academic Training: Completed at least three (3) years of college work;

d.2.

At least 20 but not more than 30 years of age;

d.3.

Must be a Filipino citizen and a permanent resident of the Philippines; and

d.4.

Mentally and physically fit, and of good moral character.

e. Common Provisions on Qualifications

e.1.

Marriage Status — A Filipino of either sex who is married to an alien may not take examinations unless there is

a written consent of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

e.2.

Age Limit — Any person holding a responsible position in the service, meaning the Department of Foreign Affairs or the Foreign Service Institute, for at least two (2) years prior to the date of the examinations, who is otherwise qualified to take the examinations may do so, regardless of the maximum age limit prescribed.

e.3.

Citizenship — No person shall be eligible for appointment to a permanent item in the career service to whatever rank or class who is not a citizen and permanent resident of the Philippines at the time of his appointment and, thereafter, for the entire duration of his tenure in the Department; Provided, that those who have secured permanent residence status in a foreign country cannot be appointed to a permanent item in the career service unless they have given up said status for at least one (1) year and established permanent residence in the Philippines for at least the same period.

f. Civil Service Eligibility of successful examinees — Those who successfully pass the FSSO and FSSE examinations will acquire the corresponding Civil Service eligibilities.

All applicants to FSSE and FSSO ranks shall adhere to Civil Service requirements for employment; priority employment, however, shall be given to those who passed the examinations for FSSOs and FSSEs conducted by the Board.

Article IV

Frequency of Examinations

SECTION 1. The Foreign Service Officers' Examinations shall be conducted at least once a year at an appointed schedule. Announcement of the scheduled examinations shall be made public at least four (4) months before the due date. Applications should be received at least two (2) months before the examination date.

SECTION 2. The examination for Career Ministers shall be conducted at least once a year at an appointed time.

SECTION 3. The examinations for FSSEs and FSSOs shall be conducted at least once in two (2) years or whenever necessary.

Article V

Examination Procedures

SECTION 1. The Board shall decide on the dates of examinations and shall make the announcement at least four (4) months before the date.

SECTION 2. The Board shall define the scope of the examinations in accordance with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected from the rank positions to be filled up.

SECTION 3. The Secretariat shall process all necessary applications to the examinations and shall see to it that all requirements are followed.

SECTION 4. The Board shall decide on the examiners. These examiners shall be selected from among the senior officials of the Foreign Service Corps and from other competent officers/institutions in government. Consultants may be invited from non-governmental institutions. The examiners are to be given specific instructions regarding

the formulation of examination questions and the correction of test papers.

SECTION 5. The examiners shall submit their test questions in handwritten form and duly signed in sealed envelopes. These shall be opened by the Board after which the members shall select the questions they see most appropriate for the examinations. In all such meetings, there shall be a quorum.

SECTION 6. Reproduction of the test questions shall be done as confidentially as possible with only the Board Secretary and/or his Assistant and one staff member present. The reproduced test questions should then be sealed and opened only on the day of the appointed examinations.

SECTION 7. There shall be a set of rules to guide the examination proctors as to the proper monitoring of the examinees and the examination processes. These proctors shall be briefed by the Board Secretary or the Assistant before the examination dates.

SECTION 8. All rules regarding the examinations shall be made clear to the examinees since any violations can disqualify them from further taking the examinations.

SECTION 9. The examinees shall be notified as soon as possible of the results of the examinations, including their individual subject ratings.

All decisions of the Board as to the final ratings of the examinations are final.

SECTION 10. All deliberations on the results of the examinations shall be held in confidentiality. If the situation arises, the members of the Board shall not intervene in deliberations affecting any member of his family or his interests.

SECTION 11. Prospective Foreign Service Officers who, after passing the examinations, decline to accept the appointment within a period of one (1) year from the date they were offered the appointment, shall be required to take and pass the examinations again in order to be eligible for an initial appointment.

SECTION 12. There shall be no limit as to the number of times one may take the examinations so long as he is within the age limit.

Article VI

Amendment

The Board of Foreign Service Examinations may amend or modify these rules as may be necessary.

Article VII

Effectivity

These implementing rules and guidelines shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

Adopted: March 17, 1992

(SGD.) TOMAS R. PADILLA

Chairman

Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs

Members:

(SGD.) ROWENA M. SANCHEZ

Acting Assistant Secretary

Office of Personnel and Administrative Services

(SGD.) SAMILO N. BARLONGAY

Commissioner

Civil Service Commission

Approved:

(SGD.) RAUL S. MANGLAPUS

Secretary of Foreign Affairs

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