GAO Survey on SEC Personnel and Human Capital Management

United States Government Accountability Office

Introduction

Introduction

The U.S. Government Accountability Office, an independent agency of Congress, has been mandated by the Dodd-Frank Act (Section 962) to study personnel management at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), including issues related to human capital programs, workforce planning, performance management, and communication. As a part of our study, we are sending this questionnaire to Senior Officers across all divisions and offices of the SEC. Your cooperation is critical to providing the Congress with complete and balanced information on how personnel management is functioning across these offices and divisions within the SEC. This questionnaire should take about **20 minutes** to complete.

GAO pledges to maintain the confidentiality of the responses to this survey: we will not share individually identifiable information obtained from responses to this survey with SEC nor will we release any identifiable information outside of GAO, unless compelled by law or requested by the Congress. Our information protection protocols include destroying any link between the identification number assigned to your questionnaire and your identifying information before issuance of our report. The results of this questionnaire will be used to compile descriptive information on SEC's personnel management, and the results will be included in summary form in our final report. Individual answers may be discussed in the report, but we will not include any information that could be used to identify individual respondents.

Instructions

All of the questions in this survey can be answered by clicking on radio buttons or providing comments in spaces provided at the end of each section. Please complete the questionnaire **within 10 business days of receipt.** This questionnaire is divided by topic into six sections:

(1) Recruitment, Training, Staff Development, and Resources
(2) Communication Between and Within SEC Divisions and Offices
(3) Leadership and Management
(4) Performance Management and Promotions
(5) Organizational Culture and Climate
(6) Demographics and Background Information; and
(7) Final Comments.

Although your participation is voluntary, we urge you to complete this questionnaire. We cannot develop meaningful information without your frank and honest answers.

Thank you very much for your time.

To learn more about completing the survey, printing your responses, and whom to contact if you have questions, click here for help.

Section 1 - Recruitment, Training, Staff Development, and Resources

Notes on terms used in Section 1:

(1) <u>**Division/office:**</u> For purposes of this survey, the phrase "division/office" refers to **your division or office** (such as OCIE or the Division of Corporation Finance in the Home Office or the Division of Enforcement or OCIE in a regional office).

(2) <u>**Supervisors and managers:**</u> The phrase "supervisors and managers" refers to those in supervisory or management positions **below** your current level that you oversee such as Assistant Directors or those in the SK-15 to SK-17 grades that you oversee.

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on recruitment, hiring and retention? *(Select one response per item.)*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
a. My division/office is able to attract talented and qualified employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. My division/office retains its most talented and qualified employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. When new people start in jobs in my division/office, they are given enough guidance and training.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Hiring is sometimes based more on personal connections than on substantive experience or qualifications.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Overall, SEC's Office of Human Resources provides timely support to my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. SEC's Office of Human Resources has the necessary expertise to assist in recruiting and hiring qualified employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. The process of hiring qualified employees is usually more time-consuming than need be.	○	○	○	○	○	○

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on training and development opportunities? *(Select one response per item.)*

Please note: Some questions ask you to look back over the past three years. If you have worked at the SEC for less than three years, we ask that you look back over the period of time that you have worked at the SEC.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
a. SEC needs to invest more in the development of new employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. The training I have received over the past three years has provided me skills and experience to meet SEC's needs.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. My division/office needs to do more to address skills gaps.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Over the past three years, SEC's leadership training has been effective in improving the management skills of supervisors and managers in my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○

3. For those training opportunities that you have been involved with over the past three years, to what extent, if at all, have the following types of training provided information and knowledge that is directly relevant to your work? *(Select one response per item.)*

	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	To no extent	No basis to judge	Do not know
a. Training provided by the SEC University including classroom, WebEx, and office/division specific trainings.	○	○	○	○	○	○

	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	To no extent	No basis to judge	Do not know
b. External training or conferences	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Computer-based training delivered by Internet via external vendors	○	○	○	○	○	○

4. If there are any other issues, details, or information concerning recruitment, training, staff development and resources that you would like us to know about, please use the space below to provide this information.

Section 2 - Communication Within and Between SEC Divisions and Offices

Notes on terms used in Section 2:

(1) **Division/office:** For purposes of this survey, the phrase "division/office" refers to **your division or office** (such as OCIE or the Division of Corporation Finance in the Home Office or the Division of Enforcement or OCIE in a regional office).

(2) **Management:** For purposes of this survey, "management" refers to those at the **Senior Officer (SO) level** (Associate Director, Deputy Director, etc.).

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding communication within your division/office and between your division/office and other SEC offices and divisions? *(Select one response per item.)*

Please note: Some questions ask you to look back over the past three years. If you have worked at the SEC for less than three years, we ask that you look back over the period of time that you have worked at the SEC.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
a. My division/office supports open, two-way communication between staff and Senior Officers.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Information is adequately shared across groups in my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Communication across groups in my division/office has improved over the past three years.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Overall, information and knowledge are shared openly at all levels within my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. In my division/office, communication between other offices and divisions (such as between OCIE and CorpFin) on work-related matters is encouraged.	○	○	○	○	○	○

6. If there are any other issues, details, or information concerning communication between and within divisions and offices that you would like us to know about, please use the space below to provide this information.

Section 3 - Leadership and Management

Notes on terms used in Section 3:

(1) **Division/office:** For purposes of this survey, the phrase "division/office" refers to **your division or office** (such as OCIE or the Division of Corporation Finance in the Home Office or the Division of Enforcement or OCIE in a regional office).

(2) **Supervisors and managers:** The phrase "supervisors and managers" refers to those in supervisory or management positions **below** your current level that you oversee such as Assistant Directors or those in the SK-15 to SK-17 grades that you oversee.

7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the quality of management and leadership in your division/office? *(Select one response per item.)*

Please note: Some questions ask you to look back over the past three years. If you have worked at the SEC for less than three years, we ask that you look back over the period of time that you have worked at the SEC.

|	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
a. In my division/office, the roles and responsibilities of Senior Officers are clearly defined.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. In my division/office, the roles and responsibilities of non-Senior Officer supervisors and managers are clearly defined.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Senior Officers in my division/office are genuinely interested in the opinions of their employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Non-Senior Officer supervisors and managers in my division/office are genuinely interested in the opinions of their staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Promotion to management is mostly based on technical skills.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Promotion to management is mostly based on the ability to manage people effectively.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. There is not much incentive to get promoted into a management position because the salary increase is minimal.	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Over the past 3 years, I have seen SEC staff leave due to being dissatisfied with a supervisor or manager.	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. Are the **numbers of supervisors and managers** currently in your division/office more than is needed, less than is needed, or an appropriate amount given the current workload?

    1. ○ More than needed
    2. ○ An appropriate amount
    3. ○ Less than needed
    4. ○ Do not know

9. Are the **numbers of levels of supervision** currently in your division/office more than is needed, less than is needed, or an appropriate amount given the current workload?

    1. ○ More than needed
    2. ○ An appropriate amount
    3. ○ Less than needed
    4. ○ Do not know

10. If there are any other issues, details, or information concerning leadership and management at SEC that you would like us to know about, please use the space below to provide this information.
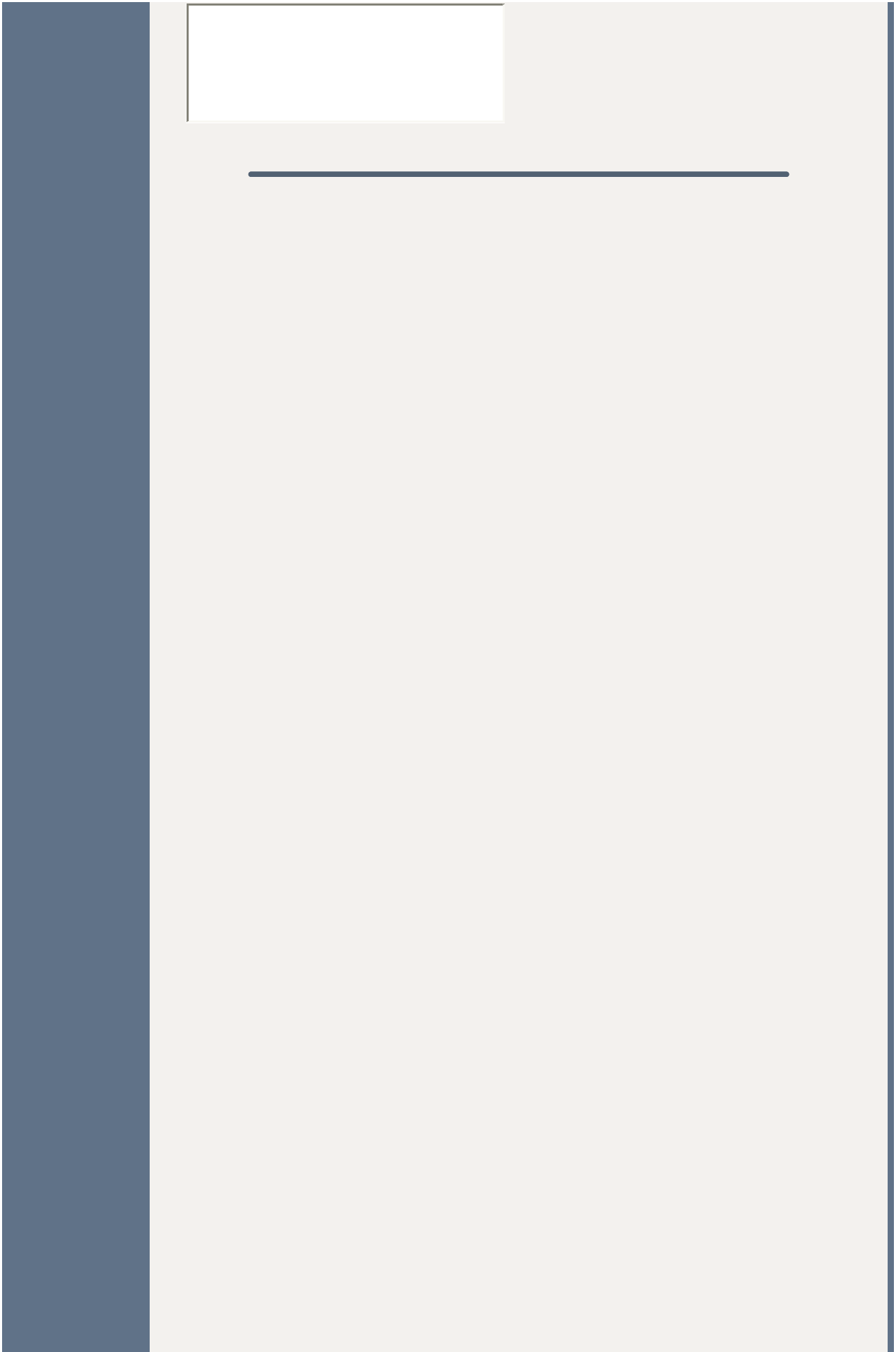
Section 4 - Performance Management and Promotions

Notes on terms used in Section 4:

(1) **Management:** For purposes of this survey, "management" refers to those at the **Senior Officer (SO) level** (Associate Director, Deputy Director, etc.).

(2) **Supervisors and managers:** The phrase "supervisors and managers" refers to those in supervisory or management positions **below** your current level that you oversee such as Assistant Directors or those in the SK-15 to SK-17 grades that you oversee.

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding how SEC management recognizes and rewards performance in your division/office? *(Select one response per item.)*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
a. Overall, Senior Officers deal effectively with poor performing supervisors and managers.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. In my division/office, Senior Officers have the resources (including training and support from OHR and OGC) they need to effectively deal with poor performing employees.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. The opportunities in my division/office to get promoted into a management position are limited.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Current performance incentives are effective tools to motivate employees to perform well.	○	○	○	○	○	○

12. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding SEC's current performance management system? *(Select one response per item.)*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
a. SEC's performance management system uses relevant criteria to evaluate my performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. SEC's performance management system allows supervisors and managers to have a meaningful discussion with their staff on how they are performing.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. The time it takes me to develop, review, and formalize performance assessments under SEC's current performance management system is unreasonable.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. SEC's performance management system provides consistent standards for rewarding performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Changes need to be made to increase transparency in the process used to rate performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Calibration of performance ratings by management improves fairness in the performance management system.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Employee performance appraisals are fair and appropriate under SEC's performance management system.	○	○	○	○	○	○

13. If there are any other issues, details, or information concerning performance management and promotions at SEC that you would like us to know about, please use the space below to provide this information.
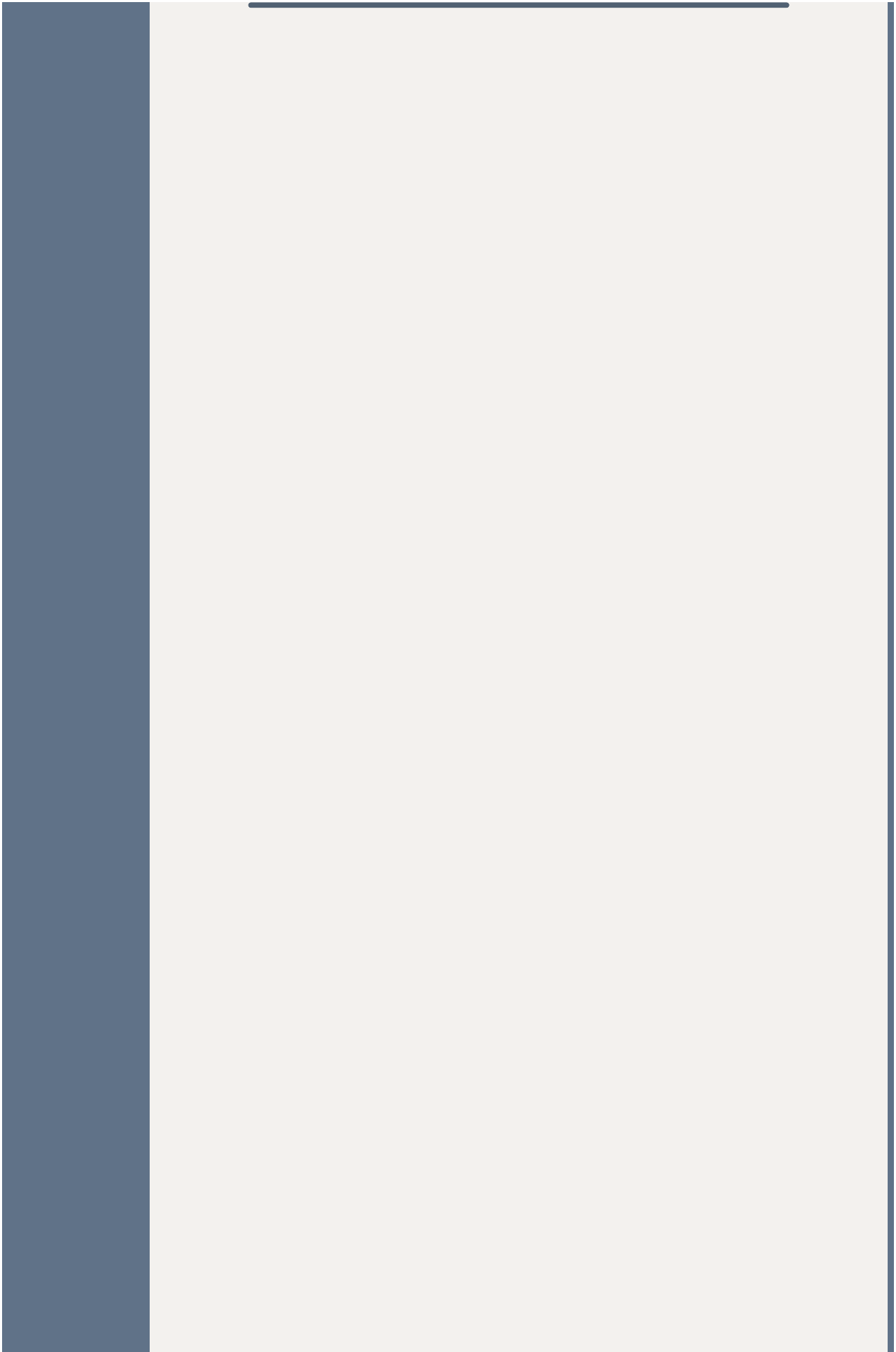
Section 5 - Organizational Culture and Climate

Notes on terms used in Section 5:

(1) <u>**Division/office:**</u> For purposes of this survey, the phrase "division/office" refers to **your division or office** (such as OCIE or the Division of Corporation Finance in the Home Office or the Division of Enforcement or OCIE in a regional office).

(2) <u>**Supervisors and managers:**</u> The phrase "supervisors and managers" refers to those in supervisory or management positions **below** your current level that you oversee such as Assistant Directors or those in the SK-15 to SK-17 grades that you oversee.

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding different aspects of organizational culture and climate within your division/office? *(Select one response per item.)*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
a. There is an atmosphere of trust in my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Employee morale is generally high most of the time.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I have a voice in decisions that affect me and my work environment.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Senior Officers tolerate honest mistakes.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. There are clearly defined policies and procedures for doing my work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Innovative ideas are encouraged in my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Fear of public scandals has made SEC overly cautious and risk-averse.	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. In my view, the fear of being wrong makes Senior Officers in my division/office reluctant to take a stand on important issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. In my view, the fear of being wrong makes non-Senior Officer supervisors and managers in my division/office reluctant to take a stand on important issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○

15. If there are any other issues, details, or information concerning the organizational culture or climate at the SEC or in your division/office that you would like us to know about, please use the space below to provide this information.

Section 6 - Demographic and Background Information

16. In which location or regional office do you work?

    1. ○ Washington, D.C. (Headquarters)
    2. ○ Atlanta
    3. ○ Boston
    4. ○ Chicago
    5. ○ Denver
    6. ○ Fort Worth
    7. ○ Los Angeles
    8. ○ Miami
    9. ○ New York
    10. ○ Philadelphia
    11. ○ Salt Lake
    12. ○ San Francisco

17. In which SEC division or office do you currently work?

    1. ○ Division of Enforcement
    2. ○ Division of Corporation Finance
    3. ○ Division of Investment Management
    4. ○ Division of Trading and Markets
    5. ○ Division of Economic and Risk Analysis
    6. ○ Office of Acquisitions
    7. ○ Office of Administrative Law Judges
    8. ○ Office of the Chief Accountant
    9. ○ Office of the Chief Operating Officer
    10. ○ Office of Compliance Inspections and Examinations
    11. ○ Office of Credit Ratings
    12. ○ Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)
    13. ○ Office of the Ethics Counsel
    14. ○ Office of Financial Management
    15. ○ Office of FOIA Services
    16. ○ Office of the General Counsel
    17. ○ Office of Human Resources
    18. ○ Office of Information Technology
    19. ○ Office of Inspector General
    20. ○ Office of International Affairs
    21. ○ Office of the Investor Advocate
    22. ○ Office of Investor Education and Advocacy
    23. ○ Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs
    24. ○ Office of Municipal Securities
    25. ○ Office of Public Affairs
    26. ○ Office of the Secretary
    27. ○ Office of Support Operations
    28. ○ Office of Minority and Women Inclusion
    29. ○ Other

    Please specify the "other" division or office where you currently work: [   ]

18. Which of the following best describes your position?

    1. ○ Director
    2. ○ Associate Director
    3. ○ Associate Regional Director
    4. ○ General Counsel
    5. ○ Deputy General Counsel
    6. ○ Associate General Counsel
    7. ○ Deputy Director
    8. ○ Regional Director
    9. ○ Deputy Regional Director
    10. ○ Managing Executive
    11. ○ Other

Please specify your position: [   ]

19. What is your current level or grade?

    1. ○ SO1
    2. ○ SO2
    3. ○ SO3
    4. ○ Other

Please specify your current level or grade: [   ]

20. How long have you worked for the SEC (please include total years of service with SEC if you left SEC and came back again)?

    1. ○ Less than 1 year
    2. ○ 1 to less than 2 years
    3. ○ 2 to less than 3 years
    4. ○ 3 to less than 5 years
    5. ○ 5 to less than 10 years
    6. ○ 10 to less than 15 years
    7. ○ 15 to less than 20 years
    8. ○ More than 20 years

21. How many years did you work outside of SEC, but in a position related to the type of work SEC conducts or that dealt with issues SEC covers?

    1. ○ No related outside employment
    2. ○ Less than 1 year
    3. ○ 1 to less than 2 years
    4. ○ 2 to less than 3 years
    5. ○ 3 to less than 5 years
    6. ○ 5 to less than 10 years
    7. ○ 10 to less than 15 years
    8. ○ 15 to less than 20 years
    9. ○ More than 20 years

Section 7 - Comments and Final Response Submission

22. Please use the space below to provide any additional information about SEC's human capital programs, workforce planning, performance management, and communication that you would like us to know about.

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23. **Are you ready to submit your final completed survey to GAO?**

    (This is equivalent to mailing a completed paper survey to us. It tells us that your answers are official and final.)

    1. ○ Yes, my survey is complete - *To submit your final responses, please click on "Exit" below.*

    2. ◉ No, my survey is not yet complete - *To save your responses for later, please click on "Exit" below.*

    You may view and print your completed survey by clicking on the Summary link in the menu to the left.

    Thank you very much for your assistance.

Print
Exit

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