Summary

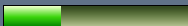View and print a summary of your responses.

Help

If you have any questions about this GAO survey, please call:

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202-512-9313

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or send an e-mail to
SECPersonnel
ManagementlI@gao.gov

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GAO Survey on SEC Personnel and Human Capital Management

U.S. Government Accountability Office

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 SEC employees to obtain their opinions about various aspects of working at 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.

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) **Division/office:** For purposes of this survey, the phrase "division/office" refers to **your division or office** (such as the Office of Human Resources in Headquarters or the Division of Enforcement in a regional office).

(2) **Management:** For purposes of this survey, "management" refers to Assistant Directors and those at the Senior Officer (SO) level including Directors, Deputy Directors, General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Associate General Counsel, Managing Executives and Associate Directors.

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. Management usually hires employees who are a good fit for SEC's mission.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. When new people start in jobs in my division/office, they are given enough guidance and training.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Hiring is sometimes based more on personal connections than on substantive experience or qualifications.	○	○	○	○	○	○

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 management is committed to the ongoing training and development of staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. SEC needs to invest more in the development of new staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. The training I have received over the past three years has provided me skills and experience to meet SEC's needs.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Management in my division/office needs to do more to address skills gaps.	○	○	○	○	○	○

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	○	○	○	○	○	○
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 the Office of Human Resources in Headquarters or the Division of Enforcement in a regional office).

(2) **Supervisors and managers:** For the purposes of this survey, the phrase "supervisors and managers" refers to those in supervisory or management positions **above your current level**.

For non-supervisory staff, "supervisors and managers" refers to Exam Managers, Branch Chiefs, Assistant General Counsel, and Assistant Directors.

For Exam Managers, Branch Chiefs, and Assistant Directors, "supervisors and managers" refers to those persons above you in the chain of command who are Assistant Directors or Associate Directors.

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. Supervisors and managers ensure that employees are included in the flow of relevant information.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. My division/office supports open, two-way communication between staff and management.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Information is adequately shared across groups in my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Communication across groups in my division/office has improved over the past three years.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Overall, information and knowledge are shared openly at all levels within my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. In my division/office, communication between other offices/divisions 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) <u>Division/office:</u> For purposes of this survey, the phrase "division/office" refers to **your division or office** (such as the Office of Human Resources in Headquarters or the Division of Enforcement in a regional office).

(2) <u>Supervisors and managers:</u> For the purposes of this survey, the phrase "supervisors and managers" refers to those in supervisory or management positions **above your current level**. For non-supervisory staff, "supervisors and managers" refers to Exam Managers, Branch Chiefs, Assistant General Counsel, and Assistant Directors.

For Exam Managers, Branch Chiefs, and Assistant Directors, "supervisors" refers to those persons above you in the chain of command who are Assistant Directors or Associate Directors.

(3) <u>Management:</u> For purposes of this survey, "management" refers to Assistant Directors and those at the Senior Officer (SO) level including Directors, Deputy Directors, General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Associate General Counsel, Managing Executives, and Associate Directors.

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 supervisors and managers are clearly defined.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Supervisors and managers in my division/office are genuinely interested in the opinions of their staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Promotion to management is mostly based on technical skills.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Promotion to management is mostly based on the ability to manage people effectively.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Promotion to management is mostly based on connections that staff have with management.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. There is not much incentive to get promoted into a management position because the salary increase is minimal.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Over the past 3 years, I have seen SEC staff leave due to being dissatisfied with a supervisor or manager.	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. Over the past three years, to what extent, if at all, have the Senior Officers (including Directors, Deputy Directors, General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Associate General Counsel, Managing Executives and Associate Directors) in your division/office worked to make improvements in the areas listed below? *(Select one response per item.)*

Please note: "Division/office" refers to **your division or office** (such as OHR or Enforcement).

SOs worked to make improvements in...

	No basis to judge	To no extent	To a small extent	To a moderate extent	To a great extent	Do not know
a. Workforce morale	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Collaboration between divisions and offices	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Staff training focused on specific competencies	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Transparency in the promotion process	○	○	○	○	○	○

9. Over the past three years, how satisfied have you been with initiatives management developed

to improve communication, the performance management system, and training opportunities?
(Select one response per item.)

	Not aware of any such initiative	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Do not know
a. Initiatives designed to improve communication	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Initiatives designed to improve the performance management system used to evaluate your performance	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Initiatives designed to improve training opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○

10. Are the **numbers of supervisors, managers, and Senior Officers** 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

11. 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

> Your direct supervisor is the next person above you in the chain of command to whom you report. It is the person who more often than anyone else directs your work on a day-to-day basis or who has the authority to direct your work, assign tasks, or reward, promote and discipline you.
>
> NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY: Please note that your responses will be kept confidential. GAO will not release individually identifiable information and will only present results at a highly aggregated level. **GAO will not reference specific offices or AD groups.**

12. What is your current, direct supervisor's position or title?

    1. ○ Director
    2. ○ Deputy Director
    3. ○ General Counsel
    4. ○ Deputy General Counsel
    5. ○ Associate General Counsel
    6. ○ Assistant General Counsel
    7. ○ Exam Manager
    8. ○ Assistant Director
    9. ○ Associate Director
    10. ○ Branch Chief
    11. ○ Other

Please specify the "other" direct supervisor's position or title:	

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your current direct supervisor? *(Select one response per item. Please note that your responses will be kept confidential.)*

My direct supervisor ...

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know

							disagree
a. Is knowledgeable in the issue areas I conduct my work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. Has the skills and expertise to be an effective supervisor or manager.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Does a good job in sharing information.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. Clearly defines goals and expectations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Provides useful and constructive feedback.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Will listen to me if we have differing ideas or approaches.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. Is willing to change his or her position when there is compelling information.	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Gives me the flexibility I need to do my job effectively.	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. Spends too much time closely monitoring my work.	○	○	○	○	○	○

14. 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) <u>Division/office:</u> For purposes of this survey, the phrase "division/office" refers to your division or office (such as the Office of Human Resources in Headquarters or the Division of Enforcement in a regional office).

(2) <u>Supervisors and managers:</u> For the purposes of this survey, the phrase "supervisors and managers" refers to those in supervisory or management positions **above your current level**.

For non-supervisory staff, "supervisors and managers" refers to Exam Managers, Branch Chiefs, Assistant General Counsel, and Assistant Directors.

For Exam Managers, Branch Chiefs, and Assistant Directors, "supervisors and managers" refers to those persons above you in the chain of command who are Assistant Directors or Associate Directors.

15. 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. Overall, supervisors and managers deal effectively with poor performing staff.	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. I know what is expected of me regarding my work performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. My direct supervisor provides sufficient performance feedback.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. The criteria for rewarding staff are clearly defined.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. The criteria for promoting staff are clearly defined.	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
g. The opportunities in my division/office to get promoted into a management position are limited.	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Favoritism is typically not an issue in promotions.	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. Promotions go to those who most deserve it.	○	○	○	○	○	○
j. There is a clear link between my performance and recognition of it.	○	○	○	○	○	○
k. Current performance incentives are effective tools to motivate employees to perform well.	○	○	○	○	○	○

16. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding SEC's current performance management system used to rate your performance? *(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. SEC's performance management system provides consistent standards for rewarding	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
performance.						
d. Changes need to be made to increase transparency in the process used to rate my performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Calibration of performance ratings by management improves fairness in the performance management system.	○	○	○	○	○	○
f. Employee performance appraisals are fair and appropriate under SEC's performance management system.	○	○	○	○	○	○

17. 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) **Division/office:** For purposes of this survey, the phrase "division/office" refers to **your division or office** (such as the Office of Human Resources in Headquarters or the Division of Enforcement in a regional office).

(2) **Supervisors and managers:** For the purposes of this survey, the phrase "supervisors and managers" refers to those in supervisory or management positions **above your current level**.

For non-supervisory staff, "supervisors and managers" refers to Exam Managers, Branch Chiefs, Assistant General Counsel, and Assistant Directors.

For Exam Managers, Branch Chiefs, and Assistant Directors, "supervisors and managers" refers to those persons above you in the chain of command who are Assistant Directors or Associate Directors.

(3) **Management:** For purposes of this survey, "management" refers to Assistant Directors and those at the Senior Officer (SO) level including Directors, Deputy Directors, General Counsel, Deputy General Counsel, Associate General Counsel, Managing Executives and Associate Directors.

18. 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. Management in my division/office has taken steps to improve employee morale.	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. Supervisors and managers in my division/office tolerate honest mistakes.	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Do not know
f. Protecting investors is sometimes hampered by staff or managers who view firms as places they can potentially work at in the future.	○	○	○	○	○	○
g. There are clearly defined policies and procedures for doing my work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
h. Innovative ideas are encouraged in my division/office.	○	○	○	○	○	○
i. Fear of public scandals has made SEC overly cautious and risk-averse.	○	○	○	○	○	○
j. In my view, the fear of being wrong makes supervisors and managers in my division/office reluctant to take a stand on important issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○
k. In my view, the fear of being wrong makes Senior Officers in my division/office reluctant to take a stand on important issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○

19. 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.
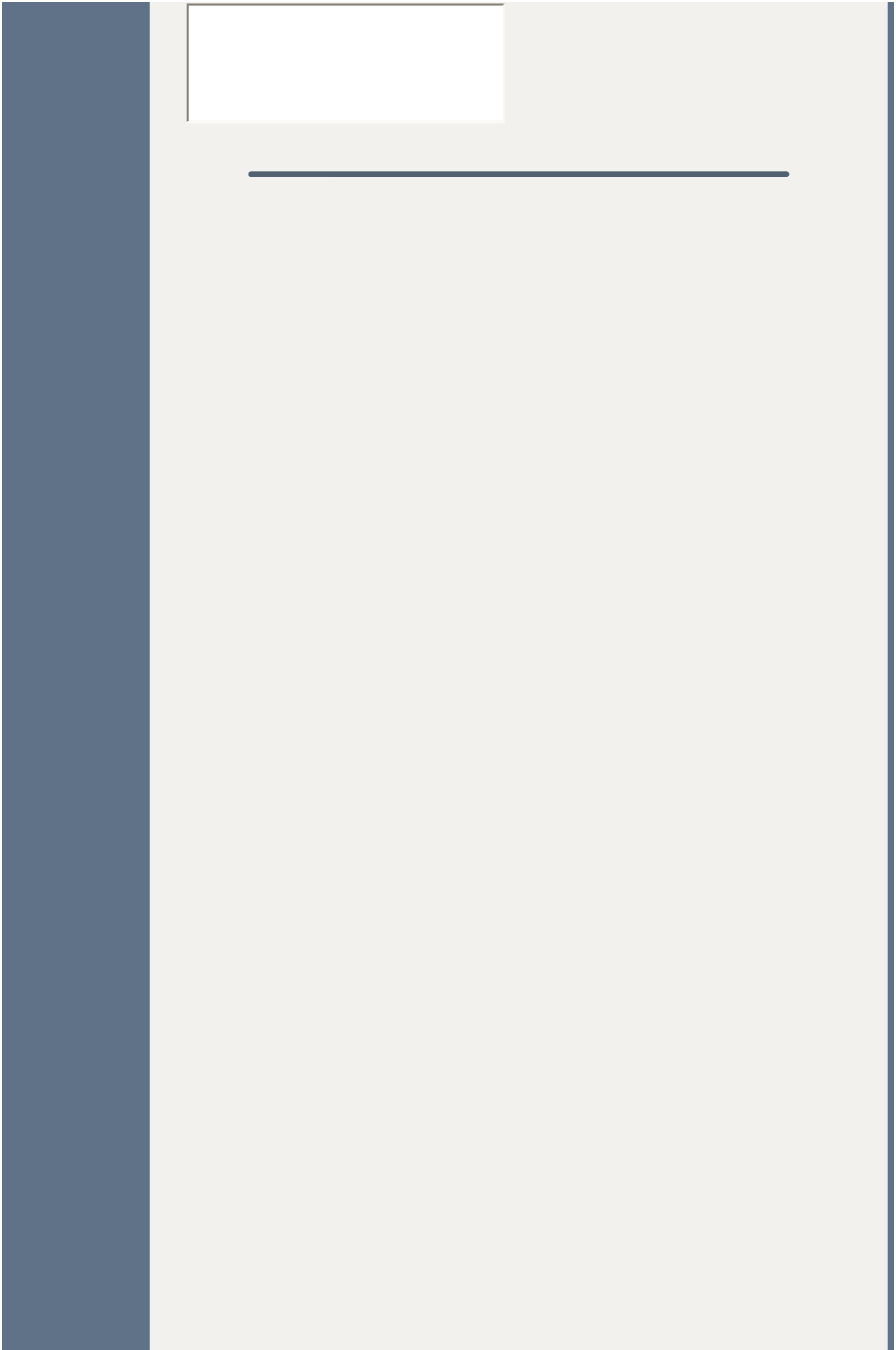
Section 6 - Demographic and Background Information

20. 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

21. 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

22. Which of the following best describes your position?
    1. ○ Accountant
    2. ○ Administrative Assistant
    3. ○ Assistant Director
    4. ○ Assistant General Counsel
    5. ○ Associate General Counsel
    6. ○ Attorney
    7. ○ Auditor
    8. ○ Branch Chief
    9. ○ Business Analyst
    10. ○ Financial Management Specialist
    11. ○ Human Resource Specialist
    12. ○ Information Technology Specialist
    13. ○ Legal Assistant
    14. ○ Management and Program Analyst
    15. ○ Paralegal
    16. ○ Program Specialist
    17. ○ Project Managers
    18. ○ Other

Please specify your position: [   ]

23. What is your current level or grade?
　　　1. ○ SK-5
　　　2. ○ SK-6
　　　3. ○ SK-7
　　　4. ○ SK-8
　　　5. ○ SK-9
　　　6. ○ SK-10
　　　7. ○ SK-11
　　　8. ○ SK-12
　　　9. ○ SK-13
　　10. ○ SK-14
　　11. ○ SK-15
　　12. ○ SK-16
　　13. ○ SK-17
　　14. ○ Other

Please specify your level or grade: [   ]

24. 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

25. How many years did you work outside of SEC, but in a position related to the type of work that you currently do at SEC?
　　　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

26. 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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27. **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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