

GAO's PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

New employees are critical to GAO accomplishing its mission to support the Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and accountability of the federal government. To accomplish our mission, we rely on analysts and specialists who possess certain knowledge, skills, and abilities that permit them to conduct program evaluations and audits successfully. The GAO Professional Development Program was created to help our newly hired, entry-level staff succeed at the agency by developing their knowledge, skills, and abilities through work experiences and training.

WHAT IS THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM?

The Professional Development Program consists of a combination of formal and on-the-job training, regular feedback and counseling, and exposure to different assignments and management styles. We work with new employees to create an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that will guide them through the first 2 years of their GAO experience. The IDP includes personal goals, an outline of preferred assignments, and time frames for attending formal training sessions and meetings with their Development Program advisor. The IDP also addresses the staff member's participation in such activities as orientation sessions, speakers programs, the "shadowing" of experienced staff, and mentoring.

WHAT ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

During their first 2 years with GAO, newly hired staff generally work on a variety of engagements (i.e., assignments) involving different teams and managers; however, some new staff are assigned to a single team. The staffing approach taken is decided upon before the individual is offered a job with GAO. More information about the two approaches follows:

Staff who rotate among teams: Most analysts are assigned to engagements on different teams during their 2-year program. This affords them the opportunity to experience several of the many subject areas in which GAO works.

Staff who are assigned to one team: In some circumstances, the education, experience, and interests of an analyst may indicate that he or she should be assigned directly to a specific team. Similarly, some individuals are hired as specialists (e.g., accountants, health care analysts, information systems specialists, economists, tax analysts, and statisticians) for a specific team. These analysts and specialists also have multiple assignments during their first 2 years at GAO, but they are generally within the same team.