



## SES Fact Sheet: Differences between GS and SES

The Senior Executive Service (SES) is a completely separate pay and performance management system for the highest level career federal employees. Most people are more familiar with the General Schedule (GS). Unlike the GS system, the SES is a pay for performance system and has far fewer protections with greater risks and more agency discretion in its treatment of employees. The following is a brief summary of major differences between the two systems.

	General Schedule employees (GS)	Senior Executives (SES)
<b>Annual pay adjustments</b>	Compensation includes locality pay and yearly across-the-board inflation adjustments, the allocation between which is determined by the President.	At the discretion of each agency, under individual agency pay-for-performance plans. No across-the-board inflation adjustments or locality pay, but OPM "expects" agencies to give a pay adjustment to Fully Successful level and above.
<b>Performance appraisals</b>	No standardized process. Varies by agency. Appraisal programs must specify employees covered and include procedures for planning, monitoring, and rating performance.	Each Senior Executive is subject to an annual review and evaluation of their individual and organizational performance elements, as identified in their individualized performance plan. Senior Executives must be removed from the SES after 2 unsatisfactory ratings in 5 years or 2 less than fully successful ratings in 3 years.
<b>Periodic within-grade pay increases</b>	Automatic. Each amounts to approximately three percent.	None
<b>Pay caps</b>	For basic pay, Executive Level V. After addition of locality pay, Executive Level IV.	Executive Level III. If agency's performance appraisal plan has been certified by OPM/OMB, Executive Level II.
<b>Number of employees</b>	Approximately 1.5 million worldwide	Approximately 8,000; 7,200 of which are career employees.
<b>Credit hours, compensatory time and overtime</b>	Permitted	Prohibited
<b>Employee job protection</b>	System of rights and protections.	Severely limited.
<b>Annual leave carryover</b>	Restricted to 240 hours (30 days).	Restricted to 720 hours (90 days).
<b>Bargaining unit union coverage</b>	As determined by the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) (5 USC 7112).	Barred from joining employee unions (5 USC 7112 (b)). Membership in professional associations is permitted.
<b>Representation by union in grievances</b>	Permitted	Prohibited
<b>Reassignments</b>	Only allowed to same grade job & classification.	Management flexibility to place in any SES position, incl. geographic reassignment. Refusal to relocate results in removal from Federal service.
<b>Appeals from performance appraisals</b>	Union-represented employees can grieve; others can file administrative grievance.	None. (Can only provide comments to internal Performance Review Board.)
<b>Promotions</b>	Pay increased if placed in higher graded position.	Pay increase discretionary with agency irrespective of assignment.
<b>Hours of work</b>	Limited to 80 hours per pay period. If more, overtime or compensatory time paid.	Unlimited, with no increased compensation or time off.