## POSITION DESCRIPTION

# director of policy planning, department of state

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| **OVERVIEW** | |
| Position Type | Presidentially appointed (PA) |
| Agency Mission | The Department of State is the lead institution for the conduct of U.S. diplomacy, and the secretary of state is the president’s principal foreign policy advisor. |
| Position Overview | The policy planning staff provides policy analysis and advice to the secretary of state. The director usually holds the rank of assistant secretary and serves as the secretary of state’s chief of staff. |
| Compensation | Level IV $158,500[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of State |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** | |
| Management Scope | The policy planning staff has less than a dozen individuals, but team members have a range of backgrounds, from career government officials with expertise on foreign policy, arms control, intelligence and military matters, to outside specialists such as think tank experts, university academics, business consultants and economists. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Directs an internal think tank for the Department of State that studies regional and functional issues, identifies policy gaps and formulates recommendations to address these gaps, while working with the academic and nongovernmental communities. * Provides policy alternatives to the secretary of state. * Works with the department’s functional and regional bureaus and interagency partners to coordinate and integrate U.S. government policy. * Manages the department’s Dissent Channel to share constructive criticism with the secretary and present differing views on foreign policy questions. * Helps the secretary articulate policy and, with the assistance of the secretary’s speechwriters, prepares speeches, public remarks, congressional testimony and other published material. |
| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration.] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** | |
| Requirements | * Excellent communication, writing, interpersonal, networking and research skills. * Keen interest in public policy * In-depth knowledge of current affairs and global events |
| Competencies | * Capacity to lead and inspire a team. * Ability to think strategically. * Readiness to take on multiple, distinct projects on short notice while also managing various long-term projects. |
| **PAST APPOINTEES** | |
| Salman Ahmed (2021 to Present) – Senior Fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Strategic Planning, National Security Council; Chief of Staff, United States Mission to the United Nations | |
| Peter Berkowitz (2019 to 2021) – Tad and Dianne Taube Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution; Contributor, RealClearPolitics; Dean of Students, The Public Interest Fellowship | |
| Kiron Skinner (2018 to 2019) – Taube Professor of International Relations and Politics, Carnegie Mellon University Institute for Politics and Strategy; W. Glenn Campbell Research Fellow, Hoover Institution | |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260, December 27 ,2020), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials through January 1, 2022. The compensation information is based on guidance from the Office of Personnel Management and can be accessed [here](https://www.chcoc.gov/content/continued-pay-freeze-certain-senior-political-officials-4#:~:text=Section%20748%20of%20division%20E,on%20December%2031%2C%202020%2C%20by). If you are selected for this position, please consult the agency’s HR representative for further guidance on compensation.   [↑](#endnote-ref-1)