

Department of Defense (DoD)
Cyber Scholarship Program

Application Background and Requirements

Recruitment / Basic Scholarships

ATTACHMENT C

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1. BACKGROUND

Cybersecurity is considered so important to our national defense that a formal DoD CySP was established by the National Defense Authorization Act for 2001 (Public Law 106- 398). The purpose is to promote the education, recruitment, and retention of ***rising second-year NCAE-C community college, junior and senior undergraduate, and graduate/doctoral students*** in cybersecurity studies. In 2018, the program was renamed the DoD Cyber Scholarship Program (DoD CySP).

The DoD is seeking rising second-year NCAE-C community college, junior and senior (third and fourth year) undergraduate, and graduate/ doctoral students who are interested in full-ride scholarships for concentrated studies in cybersecurity and other cyber-related disciplines. Students selected for the program will receive full scholarships. This requires the student to agree to serve one year of service to the DoD, upon graduation, for each year or partial year of scholarship received, in addition to the internship identified below. An opportunity also exists for scholarship payback through military service. Individuals choosing to enlist or accept a commission to serve on active duty in one of the Military Services shall incur a service obligation of a minimum of 4 years on active duty in that Service upon graduation. The Military Services may establish a service obligation longer than 4 years, depending on the occupational specialty and type of enlistment or commissioning program selected. Traditional Guardsmen and Reserve Soldiers are eligible to apply. Scholarship payback for this group is two years of service for each year of scholarship received.

During breaks in their academic studies, DoD Cyber Scholars will receive progressive, hands-on experience in information security internships. In return, scholars must agree to some restrictions and obligations regarding curriculum, GPA, and pre- and post- program employment. If all conditions are met, DoD Cyber Scholars will receive full-time conditional/permanent positions in Components of the DoD upon program completion.

HOW TO APPLY

Only students at designated National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (Cyber Defense Education, Research, and Operations), hereinafter referred to as NCAE-Cs may apply. Review the list of schools included with this announcement for clarification: <https://www.caecommunity.org/cae-map>

Note: Undergraduate students selected must attend full-time.

Online programs are allowed

Review all application instructions and materials included with this announcement. Pay close attention to the mandatory conditions of financial assistance and employment.

Students will be required to use the new DoD CySP online application tool <https://www.avuedigitalservices.com/casting/aiportal/control/mainmenu?agency=DDW&portal=CYSP> to apply. Student applications are due by 01 February 2022. Each NCAE-C that participates in the DoD CySP has designated a campus liaison, point of contact, or Principal Investigator (PI), for CySP management and administration. The website <https://www.caecommunity.org/cae-map> provides known points of contact for the current NCAE-Cs. You are responsible for identifying the appropriate PI for the DoD CySP On your campus.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SCHOLARSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Chapter 112 of title 10, United States Code authorizes the DoD CySP. The purposes of the program are to recruit and retain well-qualified cyber personnel to cultivate continuing capacity for cyber workforce development at select institutions of higher learning (NCAE-Cs) throughout the United States. As directed by the Secretary of Defense, the DoD CIO has delegated authority and responsibility to establish scholarship and institutional grant programs to achieve these purposes, including the authority to conduct civilian employee recruitment for these purposes. This program is executed by the National Security Agency (NSA) on behalf of the DoD.

Rising community college, junior and senior undergraduates, master's and doctoral candidates, who are U.S. citizens and are at least 18 years of age are eligible for consideration for the program. Students in the second year of a two-year degree program, who are continuing to a partner university to pursue a bachelor's degree are eligible to apply. Students selected as Cyber Scholars will receive the full cost of tuition, books (from the institution/degree specific required book list, not books which are optional for the class), required fees (including health care), and a stipend to cover room and board. The stipend levels are \$22,000 for community college students, \$27,000 for undergraduate students and \$32,000 for graduate (Master's/PhD) students. Awards will be made via a grant to the NCAE-C. Disabled students may receive additional allowances. There are no allowances for dependents.

Additional years of scholarship awards are dependent upon satisfactory academic progress, internship performance, if applicable, and the availability of funds. Returning students will be given first priority over new students to the program as long as they continue to meet the DoD CySP requirements and appropriate funding is available. Scholarship recipients who successfully complete the terms of an initial one or two-year scholarship (for example, complete an undergraduate degree), may apply for a second scholarship of up to three years for completing an advanced degree, if the sponsoring agency agrees. Funding amounts will be pro-rated for returning Cyber scholars requesting less than a full year of support. When funding allows, students may be provided funding to attend one cybersecurity-related conference - USA-based only. No foreign travel authorized.

3. APPOINTMENT AND HIRING AUTHORITIES

Chapter 112, title 10, United States Code anticipates that recipients of scholarships will participate in experiential learning assignments (called "internships" in the law) at the DoD Components and Agencies while completing their academic degree programs. There are a variety of hiring authorities across DoD and the determination will be made by those Agencies in conjunction with the DoD CySP Program Office.

DoD Cyber Scholars will be appointed at those General Schedule grade levels for which they are qualified and selected by DoD component officials. Since the Area of Consideration for scholarship applicants includes 2nd-year community college, rising junior and senior year undergraduates, master's and doctoral degree candidates, and graduate/doctoral certificate program students, it is anticipated that applicants will (variously) meet minimum qualification standards for Student Trainee appointments at GS-0099-7, GS-0099-9, and GS-0099-11. The Military Departments and DoD Components that select and appoint students will decide at what grade levels successful Cyber Scholars will be appointed in light of any applicable component-unique factors such as the target occupations or full-performance position levels for the candidates. To obtain information on the general salary schedule, please visit: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>

4. MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOLARSHIP AND APPOINTMENT

To be eligible for the CySP opportunity described in this announcement, you must meet all of the following minimum requirements:

- a) You must be 18 years of age or older.
- b) You must be a citizen of the United States at the time of application. Note, if family members are not U.S. Citizens, some DoD Agencies may be unable to process the applicant (student) to the security clearance level required. Every effort will be made to assign eligible students at an Agency without such restrictions.
- c) You must be enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) in one of the identified NCAE-C colleges or universities, or enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) at an institution selected by a NCAE-C as a collaborative partner for these purposes.
- d) You must have at least one academic year remaining:
 - o And completed (or by August 2022 will have completed) at a minimum:
 - the first year of an associate's degree; **or**
 - first two years of an undergraduate degree program; **or**
 - a bachelor's degree; **or**
 - a master's degree
 - o And be eligible to:
 - begin a second year of an associate's degree (with continuation to a 4-year degree program); **or**
 - begin either the third or fourth year of an undergraduate degree program; **or**
 - begin the first or second year of a Master's degree program; **or**
 - pursue doctoral studies
- e) You must be pursuing a course of study and/or have a declared major in one of the scientific, technical, or managerial disciplines related to cyber or with a concentration in cybersecurity. For these purposes, the scientific, technical and managerial disciplines related to computer and network security and cybersecurity are:
 - o Cybersecurity encompasses the scientific, technical, and management disciplines required to ensure computer and network security, including the following functions:
 - System/network administration and operations

- Systems security engineering
- Information assurance systems and product acquisition
- Cryptography
- Threat and vulnerability assessment, to include risk management
- Web security
- Operations of computer emergency response teams
- Computer forensics
- Defensive information operations
- Critical information infrastructure assurance
- Relevant cyber-related academic disciplines, with concentrations in cyber security, would include, but are not limited to:

Biometrics	Data Science
Business Management or Administration	Digital and Multimedia Forensics Electrical
Business Process Analysis	Engineering
Computer Crime Investigations Computer	Electronics Engineering
Engineering	Information Security (Assurance)
Computer Programming	Information Systems
Computer Science	Information Technology Acquisition
Computer Systems Analysis Cyber Operations	IT Program/Project Management
Cybersecurity	Mathematics
Cybersecurity Policy	Network Management/Operations
Database Administration	Software Engineering
Data Management	Systems Engineering
- f) Ability to obtain a security clearance. See the web page information below, which provides more information about fulfilling the necessary security requirements. Failure to be able to obtain a security clearance is grounds for dismissal from the DoD CySP. You must be able to obtain the required security clearance for the position selected. You may be required to undergo certain tests, including drug and polygraph tests, to obtain and maintain a clearance. Before you may be awarded a scholarship or hired by DoD, you will be required to complete certain forms to initiate the security clearance process. Some of these forms will require that you reveal extensive information about your background, such as potentially sensitive information about your financial circumstances and any arrests and/or convictions for offenses of any kind. You must agree to all of these conditions of employment and you must complete these forms as a condition of financial assistance and appointment.
 - Current web pages from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) are provided below. These are provided for your review and consideration in determining whether you will be eligible for a security clearance. They may not be all inclusive, however, it is highly recommended that you review and understand the requirements prior to signing up to participate in the DoD CySP. <https://nbib.opm.gov/e-qip-background-investigations/>

5. ACADEMIC SUFFICIENCY

Applicants must be recommended by their school for the scholarship. The NCAE-C shall review the application materials, and conduct such verification as may be necessary to establish the following standards of academic sufficiency. NCAE-Cs shall exclude from further evaluation (and provide an endorsement of “Not Recommended” for) any applicant unable to meet the following academic requirements:

The applicant is pursuing a course of study and/or has a declared major in one of the scientific, technical or managerial disciplines related to computer and network security that are enumerated under Section 4.E. above. As a community college or undergraduate student, the applicant has a 3.2 out of a 4.0 grade point average (*GPA*) or, as a graduate student, the applicant has a 3.5 GPA out of 4.0, or an analogous rank based on a comparable scale.

The applicant’s demonstrated potential for academic success and fulfillment of degree requirements is

substantial. NCAE-Cs shall review the factors enumerated below, and shall exclude from further evaluation and not recommend any candidate unable to achieve a minimum score of 2 points on a 5-point scale. Scale values range from:

- Insufficient Potential (One),
- Sufficient Potential (Two),
- Average Potential (Three),
- High Potential (Four), and
- Superior Potential (Five)

Factors to be considered in arriving at the rating for “demonstrated potential” are:

- The applicant’s original transcript(s) from all institutions of higher education attended
- The applicant’s current Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Academic honors, distinctions and awards
- Letters of reference

6. KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY

The NCAE-C shall use Attachment E, Student Endorsement and Ranking Form, to document its evaluation of each applicant meeting administrative and academic sufficiency requirements against the following competencies, using a 5-point scale of values, to assess and report on *each* of the six competencies below. The rating scale is:

- No Knowledge or Ability (One)
- Basic Knowledge or Ability (Two)
- Intermediate Knowledge or Ability (Three)
- Advanced Knowledge or Ability (Four)
- Superior Knowledge or Ability (Five)

Evaluations of the following factors shall be based on the supplemental application material provided by the candidates, letters of reference, and any additional information provided by the applicant in response to NCAE-C requests made for this purpose.

- Knowledge of the techniques of the information technology and/or information security (assurance) discipline, including encryption, access control, physical security, training, threat analysis, and authentication.
- Knowledge of the human factors in the information technology and/or information security (assurance), including human computer interaction, design, training, sabotage, human error prevention and identification, personal use policies, and monitoring.
- Ability to identify and analyze problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information to make logical decisions, and provide solutions to individual and organizational problems.
- Ability to consider and respond appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect.
- Ability to make clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals or groups; listens effectively and clarifies information as needed, facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication.
- Ability to express facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing and organized manner appropriate to the audience and occasion.

The NCAE-C shall also provide in written paragraph form the reason for one of the following recommendations:

- Highly Recommended

- Recommended
- Not Recommended

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

Application Forms and Materials: applicants will complete all questions within the new DoD CySP online application tool

<https://www.avuedigitalservices.com/casting/aiportal/control/mainmenu?agency=DDW&portal=CYSP>. Please read all questions and answer to the best of your ability. The application itself consists of a resume and additional OF612 Supplemental items.

Please be aware that your NCAE-C is required by the DoD to participate in the evaluation of your application for scholarship assistance under this program. Your NCAE-C may fulfill its responsibilities to evaluate your application in a variety of ways. Your NCAE-C might constitute a panel to review your application materials or conduct interviews with you or other applicants.

If you are interested in applying for this opportunity, ***you should check with the DoD CySP On-Campus Point of Contact, for your school immediately*** to learn of any additional application requirements.

Veteran's Preference in Hiring: If you served on active duty in the United States Military and were separated under honorable conditions, you may be eligible for veteran's preference. For further details visit the Office of Personnel Management website at: <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

- To claim 5-point veterans' preference, attach a copy of your DD-214, Certificate of Release or discharge from Active Duty, or other proof of eligibility, to your Optional Form 612 - Optional Application for Federal Employment, as required at Item 15 of the application.
- To claim 10-point veterans' preference, attach an SF 15, Application for 10-Point Veterans' Preference, plus the proof required by that form, to your Optional Form 612 - Optional Application for Federal Employment, as required at Item 15 of the application.

Applicants with Disabilities: You can find out about alternatives for submitting your application by calling the Office of Personnel Management at 912-757-3000. If you have a hearing disability, call TDD 912-744-2299. You may obtain case-by-case assistance by calling the Department of Defense point of contact for this announcement. The name, address, and email address of the point of contact for this announcement are below:

DoD CySP Program Office
National Security Agency
Attn: A29, Suite 6810
9800 Savage Road
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6804
AskCySP@nsa.gov

Equal Employment Opportunity: The Department of Defense is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified persons shall receive consideration for this opportunity without regard to political, religious, labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, national origin, non-disqualifying physical disability, age, or sexual orientation.

8. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY

Before being hired, the appointing agency (the specific DoD Agency requesting to hire you) will ask you to complete a Declaration for Federal Employment or other agency or component specific form to determine your suitability for federal employment and to authorize a background investigation of your suitability. The agency will also ask you to sign and certify the accuracy of all the information in your application. If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; you may be fired after you begin work; or you may be fined or jailed.

You will be required to obtain and maintain eligibility for a security clearance in order to receive financial (scholarship) assistance or an appointment under the CySP. The appointing agency will ask you to complete certain forms to initiate the security clearance process. These forms require you to reveal many details about your background, including your financial circumstances, and other sensitive matters such as any arrests and/or convictions for offenses of any kind. You must complete these forms as a condition of financial assistance and appointment.

If you are a male over age 18 who was born after December 31, 1959, you must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for a federal job.

Federal law prohibits officials from appointing, promoting, or recommending their relatives.

Federal annuitants (military and civilian) may have their salaries or annuities reduced. All employees must pay any valid delinquent debts or the employee's payroll office may garnish their salary.

9. APPLICATION CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

DO NOT INCLUDE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS, COPIES OF PASSPORTS or DRIVERS LICENSE, BIRTH CERTIFICATES, or ANY OTHER TYPE OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION.

STUDENTS NOT CURRENTLY IN THE CySP: An acceptable application package for the DoD CySP consists of the following requirements:

- **The DoD CySP Online Application Tool** completely filled out and submitted by 01 February 2022 <https://www.avuedigitalservices.com/casting/aiportal/control/mainmenu?agency=DDW&portal=CYSP>.
- The online application will ask specific questions to determine if you are eligible to apply. If you are eligible you will be required to provide the following:
 - **Information about recognitions, honors and awards.**
 - **Resume** – the system will prompt the application to provide the required information.
 - **One (1) Letter of Reference** from a current faculty member who is fully knowledgeable of your potential for successful learning, your knowledge, and your ability. See remainder of application package for instructions about the content of this Letter of Reference. Letters must be on University letterhead and contain the full name and contact information of the faculty member (phone, email, and address).
 - **One (1) additional Letter of Reference** from either a current or former faculty member, or a current or former supervisor who is fully knowledgeable of your potential for successful

- learning, your knowledge, and your ability. See remainder of application package for instructions about the content of this Letter of Reference. Letters must be on official letterhead and contain the full name and contact information of the faculty member or current/former supervisor (phone, email, and address).
- Official Transcripts from all the institutions of higher learning you have attended. Electronic transcripts may be accepted as long as they are certified by the institution. NOTE: University POCs processing applications for submission may open the transcripts.
 - **Knowledge, Skills and Attributes:** You must complete the OF612 Supplemental Competency Statement with narrative questions that describe the level of your attainment of the knowledge and ability factors indicated. See remainder of application package for instructions about the content of this supplemental statement.

Returning DoD CySP STUDENTS WHO ARE REAPPLYING: An acceptable application package for the Cyber Scholarship Program consists of the following:

- **The CySP Student Application** completely filled out and signed. (**Attachment D**). By signing the Student Application, you are stating that you have re-read section G and H.
- **One (1) Letter of Reference** from the current Principal Investigator or key faculty member who is fully knowledgeable of your potential for successful learning, your knowledge, and your ability, *based upon this past year of effort*.
- **Official (certified) Transcripts** from all the institutions of higher learning you have attended **SINCE** your last submission. You are required to maintain the appropriate grade point average to maintain your status in the program. NOTE: University POCs processing applications for submission may open the transcripts.
- Updated resume to include your summer internship activities. A template has been provided in the application. Applicants are required to use the template.
- **Returning students do not need to provide:**
 - a list of their honors and awards
 - Supplemental Competency Statement