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# DoD Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Personnel System

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## *Developmental Program Guidance* March 2020



# DoD Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Personnel System *Developmental Program Guidance*

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## Introduction

The Office of the DoD Chief Information Officer (DoD CIO), in partnership with the Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS), is providing this guidance to implement procedures and practices for establishing and administering Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Developmental Programs in accordance with section 1599f of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.). The information contained within this guide is subject to change as additional information is incorporated.

This guide is being implemented to provide guidance in lieu of formal instruction to CES designated component organizations, Human Resources Offices, and other Component employees who are responsible for implementation, establishment and/or administration of CES Developmental Programs. This document will provide technically sound guidance regarding the CES Developmental Programs.

This guidance addresses:

1. **PURPOSE.** This guidance establishes policies, responsibilities and procedures for establishing and filling CES developmental positions and defines TE&PD roles for developmental program support.
2. **APPLICABILITY.** This guidance applies to all CES designated positions and organizations.
3. **POLICY.** Civilian developmental programs and practices for excepted service employees covered under CES shall be strategic, joint, and integral to Cyber careers. To that end, such programs and practices shall:
  - (a) Improve organizational results by increasing the job competencies and proficiencies, and enhance the career professional development of CES employees.
  - (b) Create opportunities for both vertical and horizontal advancement of employees across all the CES Enterprise and the Functional Communities (FC) to sustain a culture of continuous learning vital to recruiting, retaining, and developing intellectual capital.
4. **RELEASABILITY – UNLIMITED.** This guidance is approved for public release.
5. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** 13 March 2020.

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## References

- (a) Section 1599f of Title 10, United States Code
- (b) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3001, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Introduction," August 15, 2017
- (c) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3005, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Employment and Placement," August 15, 2017
- (d) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3006, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Compensation Administration," August 15, 2017
- (e) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3007, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Occupational Structure," August 15, 2017
- (f) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 250, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Civilian Strategic Human Capital Planning (SHCP), June 7, 2016
- (g) DoDD 8140.01, Cyberspace Workforce Management, July 31, 2017
- (h) 5 CFR Part 335 (Promotion and Internal Placement)
- (i) 5 CFR Part 511 (Position Classification under the General Schedule)

## Overview

CES Developmental Programs for employees entering the Professional work category at the Entry/Developmental work level support the Department of Defense, Chief Information Officers' DoD Digital Modernization Strategy to professionalize the workforce and utilize CES policies to enable the recruitment, development, and retention of a mission-focused agile workforce. For CES civilian employees, a developmental program is an opportunity to progress to positions of greater responsibility for career growth and development through identified specialized functional training, education and professional development (TE&PD) while working with mentors, career program officials and industry partners.

As directed by CES policy, DoD Components must establish Developmental Programs for CES employees. Components have the flexibility to develop training and individual development plans (IDPs) specific to individual employees to meet the qualifying criteria for advancement to

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the target grade of the developmental position. Components may also create cohort programs applicable to multiple employees. When creating cohort programs, master training plans are required as a guide by which to develop individual training and development plans to meet the TE&PD requirements in conjunction with the varied education and experience each employee possesses upon entering the program.

### Program Goals

Establish career developmental positions to optimize efficiency, productivity and organizational effectiveness. Career developmental positions should:

1. Broaden the pool of applicants with filling vacant positions;
2. Enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction through planned employee development;
3. Reduce time to process promotions and administrative costs by providing non-competitive advancement within the career progression;
4. Enhance workforce retention by providing internal career opportunities; and
5. Lower average human capital costs by including a range of pay levels.

### Responsibilities

1. UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS (USD(P&R)). Establishes and maintains, in conjunction with the DoD CIO and in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)), CES policies covered by this guidance.
2. DOD CIO. Oversees the components' implementation and management of this guidance.
3. DOD COMPONENT HEADS. The DOD Component heads:
  - (a) Conduct workforce planning; identify appropriate applicant sources; and recruit, assign, and manage CES-covered positions and personnel within their DoD Components in accordance with the DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1400.25, Volume 250 and CES Volumes.

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- (b) Develop, publish, and maintain in conjunction with the DoD CIO current qualifications criteria for all CES positions with each Component, as described in DoDD 8140.01
  - (c) Monitor Component compliance and respond to reporting requirements determined by DoDD 8140.01
4. Career Program Managers (CPM). CPMs should:
- (a) Advise on local CES personnel and resourcing issues in conjunction with appropriate personnel and manpower components.
  - (b) Ensure employees and supervisors receive current information on TE&PD opportunities, suspense dates, requirements, and other related issues.
  - (c) Advise and assist CES employees and supervisors with career appraisals, career referrals, and career counseling responsibilities.
  - (d) Advise supervisors and employees on the availability of appropriate training opportunities for CES employees.
  - (e) Provide advice, assistance and guidance to CES employees and supervisors/managers (civilian/military) regarding training requirements, planning and prioritization, use of centralized training funds and the development of Training Plans and IDPs.
5. Managers and Supervisors. Managers and Supervisors should:
- (a) Exercise primary responsibility for implementation of CES policies and procedures.
  - (b) Advise CES employees on requirements and prospects of various specialties, career areas, tracks and levels.
  - (c) Establish Training Plans and IDPs in consultation with the employee within 30 days of the start of the rating period.
  - (d) Review employee's IDP to ensure consistency with organizational goals and objectives, appropriateness to employee experience, developmental needs and work assignments commensurate with work category and work level.

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- (e) Actively manage employee's professional development in coordination with CPM or designee.
  - (f) Advise CES employees on most economical and effective means of attaining competencies and professional certification, and alternatives where applicable.
  - (g) Ensure official training records are maintained and updated.
6. CES Employees. Employees should:
- (a) Exercise primary responsibility for their professional development, successfully completing approved authorized training and education, as well as fulfilling all obligations relative to TE&PD.
  - (b) Collaborate with supervisor and supporting CPM to identify TE&PD opportunities and required certification(s) needed to improve individual and organizational performance and identify methods to meet them timely and effectively.
  - (c) Collaborate with supervisor to develop an annual IDP within 30 days of the start of the rating period, document progress, and meet periodically (at least bi-annually, but monthly is encouraged) to discuss progress along with any necessary changes based on mission requirements.
  - (d) Attain and maintain required and desirable competencies and professional certification(s) through education, training, developmental/rotation assignments and self-development activities.
  - (e) Attain professional certification for their career level, track and/or area and specialty as documented in the position description or other policy or regulatory guidance.
  - (f) Comply with TE&PD terms of conditions of employment.

### **Developmental Program Requirements**

Developmental Programs may be structured to accommodate both grade and banded structures. These programs include non-competitive advancement to pre-determined CES grade levels in positions at the Full Performance work level (for employees in the graded structure) or to pre-determined positions in the CES Pay Band 3 (for employees in the pay banded structure). All

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progression is tied to achieving established developmental milestones along with TE&PD. Component Developmental Programs must include the following guidance:

- (a) State process in internal merit placement policy on how best qualified was determined and outline management's right to use selection procedures to select/non-select from among any particular group of best qualified candidates., e.g., job fairs, campus recruiting.
- (b) Hiring criteria for the functional occupation.
- (c) Planned duration in the program relative to the type and quality of experience when hired.
- (d) Developmental benchmarks, performance requirements, supporting criteria and standards that must be met in order to receive a developmental salary progression or non-competitive promotion.
- (e) Program completion at the Full Performance work level to a pre-determined grade in the Professional work category at a point established at the start of the program by the Component and shared with the employee. For example, an employee is hired as a GG-7 in a position with a designated target grade of GG-11. Target grade is established prior to hiring the employee and is communicated to the employee at program entry. The Developmental Program includes milestones to support the employee's progression to the target grade

While there is no established timeframe for the completion of Developmental Programs, CES does not allow Professional work category positions to be permanently aligned to the Entry/Developmental work level, and as such, they typically last 3-6 years. The specific program participation is determined based on variables such as entry level education, relative work experience, progression milestones, training and development - as the starting point in the Entry/Developmental work level and expected end point in the Full Performance work level.

### **Eligibility**

A Developmental Program is designed to progress an employee in the professional work category from the Entry/Developmental work level (GG-07-10 or PB-02) up to, and at component discretion, through the Full Performance work level (GG-11-13 or PB03). Entry into the Developmental Program must be conducted through a competitive process, such as an announcement or job fair or other solicitation.

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### **Progression**

Components may provide non-competitive consideration for promotion progression or salary advancement through its Developmental Programs to any, all or none of the participants. For example, Components may choose to include such non-competitive advancement to Entry/Developmental employees in some or all occupations. If the Developmental Program includes salary advancement or promotion consideration, the associated expectations should be provided to the employee upon the start of the Developmental Program. Salary advancements or promotions within the program are not an entitlement, but are contingent upon meeting all qualifying advancement criteria within the program.

CES Developmental Programs may require a review of participants at regular intervals, to assess progress against established milestones and make decisions on within-program promotions or salary advancements. CES prohibits time-in-grade requirements. Consideration periods (e.g. annually, bi-annually, when the employee is deemed ready) and progression plans (e.g. one grade interval or two grade intervals or established amount of money) may be established by the Component.

### **Awards, Recognition and Pay Pools**

Employees in approved Developmental Programs remain eligible to compete in Component pay pools and receive awards and recognition through the pay pools or other Component processes. Salary increases and promotions received under the Developmental Program may be considered in determining eligibility for additional increases or bonuses in the pay pool or for any other award received throughout the performance period.

### **Completion or Exiting a Developmental Program**

1. Completion. Successful completion of the developmental program occurs when the employee meets all necessary milestones for advancement as agreed upon at initiation of the program.
2. Exiting. Employees who apply for competitive promotions outside the Developmental program and are selected/accepted will be removed from the program.

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## **Career Developmental Programs in Non-Professional Work Category**

Career Developmental Programs developed for positions in other work categories will include information provided in DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3005, Paragraphs 3.17.c.(5)(a)1.- 4, in addition to any information specific to the program.

Promotions to a higher pay band or grade made as a part of a documented CES career progression for employees in other work categories or occupations may be developed and implemented by CES policy, if included in the Component's merit placement policy.

## **Establishment of Career Developmental Positions**

1. Career Developmental Position - A new or restructured position to allow for entry at a lower grade level than the full performance grade level which allows for progression to the full performance level. Normally, a developmental position is announced and filled on a competitive basis with promotion potential to a higher grade level position made on a non-competitive basis. The career progression refers to the range of grades to which the employee may be promoted non-competitively up to the classified full-performance level of the position.
2. Consideration should be given to the following factors when deciding to establish a career developmental position:
  - (a) Funding is appropriated and available.
  - (b) Size of Applicant pool. Career developmental positions are a useful tool when recruitment for the position may be difficult at a higher grade level. Recruitment at a lower grade level can broaden the applicant pool and increase retention.
  - (c) Availability of Staff. Consideration should be given to availability of staff with the depth, breadth and technical knowledge necessary to mentor, develop and/or train the incumbent.
  - (d) Duties. Developmental positions should not be established if a position requires unique, specific, and/or specialized qualifications where there are no staff available or knowledgeable to mentor and/or train the incumbent.

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- (e) Risk Management. Career developmental positions should not be established where anything less than full performance would put the Department at risk.
  - (f) Supervisory Status. Career developmental positions should not be established for supervisory positions.
  - (g) Grade Level. Typically, positions graded above the GG-13 level should not be established as career developmental positions.
3. Supervisors and Managers. Once a career developmental position is established and filled:
- (a) Provide employees with increasingly difficult assignments, training and education to prepare them for the next higher grade.
  - (b) Monitor training progress continuously to enable subsequent promotions.
  - (c) Clearly communicate to the applicant the developmental benchmarks, performance requirements, supporting criteria, and standards between subsequent promotions, i.e. contingent upon satisfactory or better performance and supervisor's recommendation.
  - (d) Promote employees who demonstrate the ability to successfully perform the next higher grade level duties in accordance with (IAW) developmental benchmarks, performance requirements, supporting criteria, and standards in the career developmental position.
  - (e) Provide program-related advice and assistance IAW the Defense Performance Management Appraisal Program (DPMAP) to employees who are not ready for promotion in an effort to prepare them for improvement and future success.
4. Documentation. All requests to establish and fill career developmental positions at the entry grade level up to the full performance grade level must include the appropriate documentation, to include:
- (a) A position description (PD) signed by the manager with authority over the position.
  - (b) A PD or Statement of Difference for each intervening level in the career developmental position that references the full performance PD.

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- (c) Appropriate job analysis relevant to each of the grade levels. Job requirements for trainee grade levels are normally not the same as for full performance grade levels.
- (d) Appropriate criteria (e.g., questions from the automated recruitment system question library) that aligns with the job analysis.

### **Use of Time-in-Band or Time-in-Grade**

As part of an approved Developmental Program, an employee selected competitively for a position in the Developmental Program may be advanced non-competitively to the established end work level, pay band (for those organizations operating the CES banded structure), or grade (for those organizations operating under the CES graded structure) included in the original competition for the Developmental Program upon meeting developmental benchmarks, performance requirements, supporting criteria, and standards as applicable. Salary advancements or promotions within the program are not an entitlement, but are contingent upon meeting all advancement criteria within the program.

Application of a specific time-in-band (for those organizations operating under the CES banded structure) or time-in-grade (for those organizations operating under the CES graded structure) will not be used to determine an employee's qualifications. However, an associated time standard may be used as an element to define specific competency-based qualification requirements that are experiential in nature.

DOD Components will emphasize the quality, rather than the duration of experience and assess how the quality of the experience of the candidate demonstrates possession of the required knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies necessary for successful job performance in the CES occupational structure when staffing CES positions.

Additional experience from any source, at or equivalent to the candidate's current grade (for those organizations operating under the CES graded structure), or pay band (for those organizations operating under a banded structure) and not previously used to qualify the employee for his or her current position may be credited toward eligibility for the next level within a graded or banded structure.

### **Recent Graduates**

1. DoD Components may establish a Recent Graduate Program. The Recent Graduates Program is a dynamic, one-year developmental program designed to promote careers in

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the Federal Government to recent graduates. Individuals must apply within two years of receiving a qualifying degree or certificate, with the exception of veterans, who have up to six years to apply due to military service obligations. Students may also apply up to nine months prior to completing their academic requirements, pending component-specific policies.

2. Components may establish a Recent Graduates Program that lasts longer than one year for positions that require longer and more structured training schedules.
3. Participants in the Program receive training and professional development, complete an IDP, and are assigned a mentor. Recent graduates who successfully complete Program requirements may be eligible for non-competitive conversion to a term or permanent position in the CES.
4. The CES Recent Graduates Program legal authority and nature of action codes (NOAC) are as follows:

Authority code to be cited: UKM – Sec. 1599F United States Cyber Command PL 114-92, Nov 25, 2015

- (a) CES Time limited Appointment (ex: Summer Hires, Temp, Terms)  
NOAC: 171
- (b) CES Conversions (Converting to permanent CES position)  
NOAC: 570
- (c) CES Appointments (not on component rolls)  
NOAC: 170

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### Appendix: Definitions

**Competitive Process:** In regards to selections for the Developmental Program, Components must specifically outline the formal process in internal merit placement policy and define how the best qualified individual for a specific career or advancement opportunity was determined. Plans should outline management's right to use selection procedures to select or not select from among any particular group of best qualified candidates. Components have the ability to access applicant sources through any legal means which includes job fairs or college campus recruiting events.

**Developmental Program:** An opportunity to progress to positions of higher levels of greater responsibility for career growth and development through identified specialized functional training and education.

**Entry and Developmental Work Level:** In both the Professional and the Technician and Administrative Support Work Categories, work at this foundational level includes learning and applying basic procedures and acquiring competencies through training or on-the-job experience. Positions in the Technician and Administrative Support Work Category at this level may involve independent performance of duties. Technician and Administrative Support positions should be placed in this work level when their primary function is performing established office procedures and standard program practices, and when typical career patterns for the occupation do not extend to the complexity, variety, and scope of the Full Performance Work Level.

**Excepted Service:** Unclassified service, unclassified civil service or positions outside of the competitive service and the SES. Although excepted service positions have been excepted from some of the requirements of the competitive service by law, executive order or OPM regulation, components must make selections using the provisions of part 302, which, among other things, provides for the application of veterans' preference.

**Full Performance Work Level:** Work at this journeyman level involves independently performing the full range of non-supervisory duties assigned to the employee. Employees at this level have successfully completed required entry-level training or developmental activities either within the employing organization or before joining the organization. Employees at this work level have a full understanding of the technical or specialty field, independently handle situations or assignments with minimal day-to-day instruction or supervision, and receive general guidance and direction on new projects or assignments. Within established priorities and deadlines, Full Performance employees exercise independent judgment in selecting and applying appropriate work methods, procedures, techniques, and practices in accomplishing their duties and responsibilities.

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Actions at this level may have impact beyond the work unit and, as a result, employees at this level typically collaborate internally and externally with their peers.

**Individual Development Plan (IDP):** A strategic roadmap employees can use to create and track their career planning, professional development, and training activities. It should make note of an individual's target position, learning objectives and developmental requirements.

**Non-Competitive Conversion:** The changing of an employee from one appointment to another appointment without competition under the same authority in the same or different agency/component.

**Professional Work Category:** This CES work category includes positions with duties and responsibilities that primarily involve professional or specialized work that requires the interpretation and application of concepts, theories, and judgment. At a minimum, all groups in this category require either a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience for entry. However, some occupations in this category have positive education requirements (i.e., a requirement for a particular type or level of academic degree). This work category features multiple career progression stages and work levels.

**Recent Graduate:** Two-year career developmental program for recent graduates who completed a qualifying associates, bachelors, masters, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate within the last two years.

**Student:** Students who are currently enrolled in a degree-seeking program at an accredited school from the high school to postgraduate level.