

Q1. What is the Cyber Interagency Transfer Authority (CITA)?

A1. In accordance with Section 1643 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, the Cyber Interagency Transfer Authority (CITA) facilitates non-competitive movement from the excepted service to the competitive service and vice versa for the DoD Cyber workforce. Specifically, the CITA affords the interchange of qualified employees without external competition. The appointments to cyber workforce positions in the competitive service are subject to the merit promotion provisions of part 335 of title 5, CFR. Appointments from cyber workforce positions in the competitive service into the DoD Cyber Workforce are subject to applicable provisions of DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3005.

For the purpose of the CITA, the “DoD Cyber workforce” encompasses positions in the DoD competitive service and CES, irrespective of occupational series and/or work role.

Hence, the CITA facilitates non-competitive movement across Phase I and Phase II CES designated organizations, as described in the examples below:

Example 1: A CES employee in a Phase I designated organization may be assigned to a competitive service position in a Phase II designated organization.

Example 2: An employee in a Phase II designated organization may be assigned to a CES position within a Phase I designated organization.

Example 3: An employee who encumbers a position that is not in a designated CES organization cannot use this authority to move into a CES designated position.

Q2. What is the purpose of the CITA?

A2. The CITA (one of many appointment authorities) enables qualified employees to move within the Department without external competition. Specifically, the CITA enables employees that do not have competitive service career status with the opportunity to move without regard to competition from a CES position to another DoD competitive service position within a CES designated organization.

Q3. Is the CITA exclusively for Phase I and Phase II Cyber Excepted Service (CES) designated organizations?

A3. Yes. CES implementation of the CITA is only applied to Phase I and Phase II CES designated organizations in accordance with Section 1599f of Title 10, United States Code.

Q4. What are the requirements for an excepted service employee to utilize the CITA?

A4. Employees in the CES must have served continuously for at least one year in a permanent CES position prior to a non-competitive appointment in the DoD competitive service under this CITA authority.

For employees whose positions are part of a CES designated organization, time spent serving in these positions will count toward the one-year waiting period.

Q5. What authorities, other than the CITA, may be used for appointments in the cyber workforce?

A5. CES employees may be appointed to a DoD competitive service position, outside of the purview of the CITA, under one of the following appointment authorities: 1) Competitive/Delegated Examining (open competition for candidates without career status); 2) Merit Promotion (MP) or Non-Competitive Reinstatement (for candidates with attained competitive service career status); or 3) other special hiring authorities (i.e., Direct Hire, Veterans, Disability, Career Transition Assistance Program, etc.) for which the candidate is deemed eligible in accordance with a position's specified area of consideration.

Employees in the DoD competitive service may be appointed to a CES position under CES-specific hiring authorities, outside of the purview of the CITA, but in accordance DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3005.

Q6. What organizations may use the CITA?

A6. The CITA is exclusive to the Military Departments and Defense Agencies. The CITA excludes Department of Defense organizations like Office of the Secretary of Defense, DoD Field Activities, and the United States Intelligence Community.

Q7. Who has the delegated authority to use the CITA?

A7. The Secretaries of the Military Departments and Directors of Defense Agencies with independent appointing authority for themselves and their service organizations, as defined in their respective DoD chartering directives.

Q8. When does the CITA expire?

A8. The CITA will remain in effect until the Department completes implementation of the authority in Section 1599f of Title 10, United States Code, to establish the Cyber Excepted Service (CES) personnel system. Since the Department has prescribed notional dates for executing a phased approach for implementing the CES, the expiration for the CITA has not been explicitly defined.

Q9. Can the CITA be utilized for the purpose of Management Directed Reassignments (MDRs) to/or from competitive to excepted service?

A9. No. The CITA facilitates voluntary movement between cyber workforce positions in the excepted and competitive service.

Mandatory MDRs under the CES cannot be used to place competitive service employees into excepted service positions, and vice versa.

Q10. What minimum qualification standards and requirements must be met for competitive and excepted service employees undergoing a lateral transfer using the CITA?

A10. Employees in DoD Cyber workforce positions must meet the Office of Personnel Management qualification standards and any additional requirements (e.g., security clearance) for the competitive service position to which they will be appointed. Employees in the competitive service must meet the qualification standards applicable to the DoD Cyber Workforce position as referenced in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1400.25, Volume 3005, “DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Employment and Placement.” At a later date, the Department will issue overarching DoD Cyber Workforce Qualification Standards, in accordance with DoDD 8140.01.

Q11. Is an employee that is currently still serving their probationary/trial period eligible to undergo a lateral transfer using the CITA?

A11. Yes. Employees in permanent positions must meet the eligibility requirements of serving one year in a DoD position before they are eligible to apply using the CITA authority. At the time of transfer, the employee will be required to complete the remaining time towards probationary or trial period that was required under his or her previous appointment.

Q12. Will a competitive service employee transferring to CES via the CITA lose their career status?

A12. No. In accordance with Title 5 CFR section 315.201, once the requirements for career tenure have been fulfilled an employee will not lose his or her attained career tenure. Career tenure is achieved by completing three years of substantially continuous service as a career-conditional employee.

Career-conditional status is obtained through a permanent appointment in the competitive service that leads to career tenure after completion of three years of substantially continuous service. An employee who has not attained career status before transferring to CES may be able to credit time completed toward career tenure, in accordance with 5 CFR section 315.201, should the employee return to an eligible competitive status position at a later time.

Q13. Will a conversion or appointment to a CES position affect an employee’s eligibility for reinstatement back to the competitive service? Is there a time limitation for reinstatement to the competitive service?

A13. No. Conversion or appointment to a CES position will not affect an employee’s eligibility for reinstatement back to the competitive service if he or she previously fulfilled the requirements in accordance with Title 5 CFR, section 315.401. Reinstatement eligibility refers to the ability of former permanent, competitive service federal employees to be reinstated to a competitive service position. The length of time a former permanent, competitive service federal employee has reinstatement eligibility is dependent upon their total length of service.

Federal employees who have served less than 3 years on a permanent career-conditional appointment have reinstatement eligibility for 3 years following their separation from the competitive service; however, intervening service in an excepted service position extends this time limit. Federal employees who have served for more than 3 years have lifetime reinstatement eligibility. Federal employees eligible for veterans' preference also have lifetime reinstatement eligibility, regardless of their length of service.

If you are a current or former federal employee, to determine your tenure group and reinstatement eligibility refer to your SF-50, "Notification of Personnel Action", in the section "Employee Data", block number 24 ("Tenure") and block 34 (appointment type).

Q14. Can an employee negotiate steps upon accepting a new appointment via the CITA (i.e., GS to GG)?

A14. No, employees may not negotiate steps upon accepting a new appointment via the CITA. Pay will be set by the appointing agency in accordance with Section 3.9 DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3006.

Q15. If a CES employee in the extended range (i.e., Step 11 or Step 12) voluntarily elects to utilize the CITA for a lateral move to a competitive service position, how will their pay be set?

A15. Pay setting will be administered in accordance with the provisions outlined by the gaining system into which the employee is moving. In accordance Title 5 CFR part 536, based on the voluntary nature of the move to competitive service, the employee will be ineligible for pay retention.

Q16. A career competitive service employee served for 4 years at the GS-12 level, then applied for and was promoted to a CES position at the GG-13. After serving less than one year in the CES at the GG-13 level, the employee returned to a competitive service position. Does this employee have non-competitive rights back to the competitive service and, if so, at what grade level?

A16. Yes. The employee may be non-competitively appointed back to the competitive service at the GS-12 level, without utilizing the CITA or may compete with other general public applicants under the Competitive Examining procedures for consideration for a GS-13 level competitive position. To use the CITA to move to a GS-13 position, the employee must complete 52 weeks at the GG-13 level.

Q17. Will time spent in the CES count towards meeting the Competitive Service requirement for career tenure?

A17. No. If the employee is a new CES hire (new appointment to federal service), no service time will be counted towards the competitive service career tenure. CES appointment authorities do not confer competitive service career tenure.

Q18. An employee was recently promoted to the GS-12 level, has career status, and is in a documented career ladder (GS-11/12/13) position. What if an employee converts to the CES, but after 3 months wants to go back to the Competitive Service?

A18. If a competitive service employee elects to opt into the CES, the CES will honor the original terms and conditions of employment for the documented career ladder to the full performance level grade 13, at the intervals prescribed upon competitive service appointment. If the converted CES employee wishes to return back to the competitive service, he or she can utilize their career status to move back (e.g. merit promotion or voluntary reassignment) to a vacant competitive service position with rights back to the GS-12, without utilizing the CITA.

However, if the employee elects to stay in the CES and fulfills the requirements (e.g. specialized experience and complete 52 weeks time-in-grade in accordance with the original conditions for the career ladder, as stated in the *CES HR Implementation Guide*) to be promoted to GG-13, the employee can later utilize the CITA to non-competitively move back to a vacant competitive service position at the GS-13 level.

Q19. A competitive service employee with career status tenure was promoted from the GS-12 to the GS-13 level. To date, the employee has served six months at the GS-13 grade level:

Q19a. An employee elected to convert to the CES. With six months of experience in the competitive service at the GS-13 level and six months of experience in CES at the GG-13 level, would the employee be eligible to apply for a GS-14 level position in the competitive service using the CITA?

A19a. No. In order to comply with time-in-grade restrictions in 5 CFR 300.603(b)(4), the employee must complete a total of 52 weeks (includes the completed 6-months of GG-13 level experience) at the GG-13 level or higher to be considered for promotion to a competitive service position at the GS-14 level. However, without utilizing the CITA, the organization could promote the employee to the GG-14 level based on his or her qualifications, irrespective of the amount time spent in the current grade, in accordance with CES DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3005.

Q19b. At what grade-level could this CES GG-13 level employee be reinstated to in the competitive service?

A19b. The employee could be non-competitively reinstated to the competitive service at the GS-13 grade level.

Q20. If employees or managers still have questions regarding the CITA, who should they contact?

A20. Employees should contact their local servicing Human Resources Office for additional information regarding their organization's specific procedures for implementing CES authorities and flexibilities.