

### **Q1. What is the Cyber Excepted Service (CES)?**

A1. CES is a mission-focused personnel system that aligns to Title 10 and Title 5 provisions; it supports the human capital lifecycle for civilian employees engaged in or in support of a cyber-related mission. In Fiscal Year 2016 Congress gave the Secretary of Defense new authorities to create the CES personnel system under Section 1599f of Title 10, United States Code to meet the unique needs of the Department's cyber mission. In partnership with the Principal Cyber Advisor (PCA), the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness (USD(P&R)), and the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)), the Office of the DoD Chief Information Officer (DoD CIO) in collaboration with Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory (DCPAS) developed the first four policies for implementing this new personnel system.

### **Q2. What are the key features of CES?**

A2. The key features of CES are:

- A new occupational structure that defines work in terms of work categories and work levels
- A common compensation architecture that is associated with the work categories and work levels throughout the DoD cyber community
- A common performance management system to measure employee work accomplishments achieved against work objectives
- A mission-focused design and classification of positions
- A comprehensive cyber career management program that will provide a roadmap for a career path

### **Q3. Who is responsible for the oversight of CES?**

A3. The Office of DoD Chief Information Officer (DoD CIO), in conjunction with the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), leads and oversees the implementation of CES across the Department.

### **Q4. Why does the Department need CES?**

A4. CES strengthens the Department's ability to accomplish the cyber mission in an ever-changing national security environment:

- CES provides greater flexibilities and options for recruiting and retaining cyber professionals across the Department
- Provides agile recruitment sourcing flexibilities to solicit high quality candidates
- Streamlines HR procedures to ensure the timely acquisition of mission-focused talent
- Leverages a market-based pay structure to deliver competitive compensation packages

### **Q5. When will CES be implemented?**

A5. CES implementation and hiring began in August 2017 with Phase 1 organizations-United States Cyber Command, Joint Force Headquarters-DoD Information Networks, and Office of the Deputy Chief Information Officer for Cybersecurity. After the conclusion of Phase 1, Phase 2 implementation will occur at Defense Information Systems Agency and the Service Cyber Components. Ongoing Department cyber mission assessment activities may identify other organizations for CES in the future.

### **Q6. How will be CES implemented?**

A6. The Office of DoD Chief Information Officer (DoD CIO), in conjunction with the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)), is leading the affected DoD Components through the implementation process. CES implementation includes the release of strategic communications and training for DoD leaders, HR practitioners, and the general workforce; along with the completion of required local Human Resource Office operational activities and labor relations obligations.

### **Q7. Are all occupational specialties eligible for CES (i.e. financial, human resources etc.)?**

A7. Yes. All occupational series in CES designated organization are eligible for conversion.

### **Q8. How many employees will be affected by CES?**

A8. Phase 1 and Phase 2 implementation will affect approximately 3,000 to 5,000 DoD personnel (including vacant and encumbered positions).

### **Q9. Is conversion into CES mandatory?**

A9. CES facilitates voluntary employee conversions from the competitive (GS) to excepted (GG) service. The servicing DoD Component Human Resources Offices will provide employees with a one-time opportunity letter to voluntarily convert to the CES. Employees will have a 15 to 30-day window to make their decision to convert to the CES. If an employee declines to voluntarily convert to CES, the CES-designated position will be converted to CES when vacated by the employee. An employee's decision to decline an offer to convert voluntarily to the excepted service will be final, although the employee may compete for other positions in CES.

### **Q10. Are Cyber Schedule A (213.3106(b)(11) employees mandatory conversions to CES?**

A10. Yes. Cybersecurity Schedule A employees will be mandatorily converted to the CES as stated in the DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3001 when CES is implemented at their organization.

### **Q11. Will an employee receive a step increase or within grade buy in if they opt to convert to CES?**

A11. No. Under the CES employees will be converted "as-is" from the competitive service to the excepted service. As-is means there will be no change in salary, grade, job title, position and duties.

### **Q12. How does CES effect an employee's position description? Will all position descriptions have to be rewritten?**

A12. For CES encumbered positions that were previously classified under the competitive service, DoD Components will use the CES Position Description Cover Sheet to align positions to the following elements of the CES Occupational Structure: mission category, work category, and work level. During the CES conversion

process, it is intended that the integrity of the position (title, occupational series, duties, qualification, and grade) of a previously classified position remain unchanged at the point of conversion.

**Q13. If an employee chooses not to convert to CES, will they have any opportunity to convert at a later date?**

A13. No. However, the employee will have the opportunity to apply and compete for other CES positions and/or opportunities.

**Q14. How are probationary periods handled under CES?**

A14. All employees newly appointed to a CES position will be required to serve a 3-year probationary period. Current permanent and term employees will not be required to serve another probationary or trial period upon acceptance of, or reappointment to, a CES position if they have previously completed: 1) A probationary period in the competitive service; or 2) A probationary or trial period in the excepted service. Permanent and term employees currently serving in a probationary period in the competitive service or a probationary or trial period in the excepted service will complete the period as prescribed in their original conditions of employment, in the new CES position if they: 1) Transfer without a break in service; or 2) Are promoted, demoted, or reassigned to a CES position.

**Q15. What are the advantages for employees converting to CES?**

A15. The CES provides many opportunities for current DoD employees which include:

- Qualification-Based (no time-in-grade) Requirements for Promotion
- Promotions and Quality Step Increase Awards Up to step 12 (with justification)
- Future Compensation Initiatives
- Future Career Management Program
- Future Rotational Assignments across the DoD Cyber Community

**Q16. Will the implementation of CES improve the hiring lag?**

A16. Yes. CES provides hiring managers with greater flexibilities to quickly identify, recruit, and hire quality talent. Under CES candidates can be sourced by any legal merit-based means, with or without public notification and/or vacancy announcements, therefore streamlining the upfront recruitment process. (USA Jobs is not required, but remains an option).

**Q17. Are hiring managers and human resource offices still required to apply Veteran's Preference?**

A17. CES does not apply to 5 or 10-point veterans' preference. Only veterans' preference-eligible candidates with a Military Service-connected disability of 30 percent or more will be specifically identified and documented, if a CES position is opened to external sources.

**Q18. Will the implementation of CES result in higher grades?**

A18. No. CES is a personnel system, it does not affect nor influence a Component manpower structure.

**Q19. Will the implementation of CES alleviate budget constraints (i.e. bonuses etc.)?**

A19. No. CES is a personnel system, it does not affect nor influence a Component fiscal allocations and/or budget constraints.

**Q20. What are the disadvantages of employee conversion to CES?**

A20. None. As the Department develops new cyber workforce initiatives and programs, CES employees will have new opportunities for professional development and advancement.

**Q21. Will converting impact an employee's Federal Benefits?**

A21. No. CES will continue the existing Federal leave, benefits, and entitlements programs that are common to all federal employees, to include annual and sick leave, retirement, health and life insurance, etc.

**Q22. Will converting impact an employee's retirement?**

A22. No. CES does not impact retirement benefits and eligibility.

**Q23. Will converting impact an employee's appeal rights?**

A23. No. CES, aligned to Title 5 provisions, will not affect current protections and appeal rights.

**Q24. Will converting impact an employee union rights/coverage?**

A24. No. CES aligns to Title 5 labor relations provision labor relations provisions.

**Q25. How does the Reduction in Force (RIF) Process work under CES?**

A25. The CES does not impact Title 5 RIF policies and procedures.

**Q26. If an employee converts to CES, will they lose their competitive service career status?**

A26. No. An employee will not lose their attained competitive career status when converting to the CES.

**Q27. Will an employee be able to convert back to the competitive service (GS) later after spending time in the excepted service (GG)?**

A27. Yes. Employees that have already attained competitive career status (see your official Standard Form-50), prior to converting to the excepted service (GG), can non-competitively be reinstated back to the competitive service (GS).

**Q28. If employees still have questions regarding CES, who should they contact?**

A28. Employees should contact their local servicing Human Resources Office for additional information regarding their organization's specific procedures for implementing CES authorities and flexibilities.