

# DoD Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Personnel System



CLEARED  
For Open Publication

Nov 19, 2019

Department of Defense  
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

## *Implementation Guide for CES Student Programs*

*November 2019*



# DoD Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Personnel System

## *CES Student 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 exclusively implement procedures and practices for employing DoD CES civilian student employees in accordance with section 1599f of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.). The information contained within this guide will continue to be improved and is subject to change as additional information is incorporated.

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

This guidance addresses:

1. **APPLICABILITY.** This guidance applies to all civilian student personnel on excepted service appointments of the CES designated organization's rolls within the Department.
2. **RELEASABILITY – UNLIMITED.** This guidance is approved for public release.
3. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** 19 November 2019.

References:

- (a) Section 1599f of Title 10, United States Code
- (b) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3005, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Employment and Placement," August 15, 2017
- (c) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3006, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Compensation Administration," August 15, 2017
- (d) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 3007, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Cyber Excepted Service (CES) Occupational Structure," August 15, 2017
- (e) United States Office of Personnel Management Pathways Program Handbook, August 2016

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### Program Overview

Established from the Cyber Excepted Service personnel system under Section 1599f of title 10 United States Code; the DoD CES student program provides DoD Components the ability to utilize and structure student internships that will provide students with temporary exposure to work environments, acquaint them with cyber missions, and encourage student interests in new or developing occupations and professions in alignment with the five Cyber Workforce Functional Areas.

The CES student program will provide internship opportunities for students who are enrolled in or accepted for enrollment in a wide variety of qualifying educational institutions with paid opportunities to work either part – or full-time in agencies and explore career paths related to their academic field of study or career interests. Students who successfully complete Program requirements may be eligible for non-competitive conversion to a term or permanent CES position in a CES designated organization.

### Program Goal

By adopting many of the provisions from the OPM Pathways Program, the program shall provide students with the ability to gain knowledge of specific cyber-related topics and apply that knowledge to address various real-world mission-related technical challenges.

DoD Components are encouraged to develop student programs within compensation parameters, advancement time-frames, and advancement criteria coordinated through DoD (CIO). Funding for the student program will be administered by the Component.

### Program Requirements

#### Eligibility Requirements

Interns and Interns Not-to-Exceed (NTE) must:

1. Be accepted for enrollment or enrolled and seeking a degree or certificate in a qualifying educational institution on a half- to full-time basis (as determined by the educational institution);
2. Meet the definition of a student throughout the duration of their appointments;
3. Meet component-specific requirements as specified in the component's Participant Agreement with the Intern and; and
4. Meet the qualification standards (e.g., series and grade) for their Internship positions.

In addition to the Government-wide eligibility requirements noted above, components may use requirements such as the ability to work a specified number of hours per week or remain in good academic standing (i.e., maintenance of a minimum grade point average) as eligibility criteria. In addition, components may require applicants to confirm their ability to work in the

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specific location(s) listed in the job opportunity announcement (JOA). These criteria may be referenced in the Participant Agreement.

Components may not require the completion of educational requirements for specific coursework for occupations that do not have positive education requirements.

### **Component Supplemental Guidance**

The CES personnel system provides Components the opportunity to develop supplemental guidance for student programs in alignment to the provisions specified in the DoDI 1400.25 and CES volumes. Components supplemental guidance shall detail developmental programs for student employees in the Professional Work Category and the advancement through the Entry/Developmental work level grades (or the Entry/Developmental work level pay band) in accordance with rules established at the DoD Component level and in accordance with DoDI 1400.25 Volume 3005. Components shall also include in the guidance the developmental progression termination points at the Full Performance work level, as detailed in Section 6 of DoDI 1400.25 Volume 3007 and defined in Section 9701.212 of the Code of Federal Regulations (reference (d)).

### **DoD Policy**

It is DoD policy that:

1. Merit system principles will apply to CES employment and placement actions, in accordance with Section 2301 of Title 5, U.S.C.
2. CES employment and placement actions will be free from unlawful discrimination, as well as other practices prohibited by Section 2302 of Title 5, U.S.C., as required by applicable law.
3. CES employment and placement actions will be consistent with equal employment opportunity principles, including part 1607 of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations.
4. Advocacy for CES appointment, employment, promotion, and advancement of relatives is prohibited in accordance with Section 3110 of Title 5, U.S.C.
5. DoD Components will apply the provisions of Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act in employment and placement policies and practices in order to ensure the protection of civilian job rights and benefits for veterans and members of Reserve Components as provided for by applicable law, Sections 4314-4315 of Title 38, U.S.C.

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### **Program Objective**

The primary objective of the CES student program is to:

1. Enhance the effectiveness of the Department's cyber defensive and offensive mission
2. Attract and recruit quality students and recent graduates to meet short-and long-term staffing needs
3. Attract new educational methods and concepts into the workforce
4. Strengthen relationships between students and Federal employers
5. Assist students in applying classroom theory to practical work experience
6. Assist students in meeting financial obligations by earning income while learning

### **CES Student Program Benefits**

The CES personnel system offers flexibilities for the recruitment of students across the Department. Flexibilities include but are not limited to the following:

1. Attract and retain talented students
2. Enhance Components ability to compete with private sector and other employers for talented candidates
3. Expand the pool of qualified applicants for mission-critical positions
4. Provide applicants with a greater number of employment opportunities in the DoD
5. Target mission-critical and hard to reach occupations and audiences

### **Program Administration**

1. The CES student program is administered primarily by each hiring component.
2. Components may hire students on a temporary basis for up to one year for an initial period, or for an indefinite period, to complete the educational requirement.
3. Each Component must sign a Participant Agreement with the student that sets forth the expectations for the program.
4. Components will provide the DoD CIO with information regarding their opportunities and post information in accordance with DoDI 1400.25-V3005.

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### **Program Applicability**

1. This guidance applies to OSD, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD that employ students under the CES, referred to collectively in this issuance as the “DoD Components.” Use of the CES student program is limited to students who are enrolled at least half-time (as determined by the educational institution) at a qualified educational institution recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and who have the permission of that institution, where necessary, to work at the Component.
2. This guidance does not apply to:
  - a) Student employees covered by the Competitive Service, Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System or the Federal Wage System, or equivalent; non-appropriated fund employees; and foreign national employees employed under authority other than the CES.
  - b) Student employees in CES-designated cyber positions who declined the voluntary opportunity to convert to the CES.
  - c) Student employees in cyber positions that are not CES-designated.
3. Examples of student Internships include the following:
  - a. Interns NTE (i.e., summer hires)
  - b. Temporary and intermittent paid student internships
  - c. Scholarship programs internships (e.g., Cyber Scholarship Program (CySP), Scholarship for Service (SFS)).
4. Excepted service student employees under an OPM Pathways program (Intern, Recent Graduate, or PMF) agreement prior to the Component’s opt-in decision window will be ineligible to convert to CES during the conversion process. Students ineligible for CES conversion will uphold their original conditions of employment in accordance with their pathways program agreement under competitive service. Components are encouraged to conduct workforce analysis to ensure the continued operation of an OPM Pathways program for those ineligible to convert. However, the student employee may compete for other positions in CES.



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### **Responsibilities**

#### **UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR PERSONNEL AND READINESS**

**(USD(P&R))**. Establishes, in conjunction with the DoD CIO, and in coordination with the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)), maintains CES policies covered by this guidance

**DOD CIO**. Oversees the components implementation and management of this guidance

**DOD COMPONENT HEADS**. The DoD Component heads:

1. 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
2. Develop, publish, and maintain in conjunction with the DoD CIO current qualifications criteria for all CES positions within each Component, as described in DoDD 8140.01
3. Monitor Component compliance and respond to reporting requirements determined by DoDD 8140.01
4. Implement this guidance for all CES student internship positions

#### **STUDENT PROGRAM OFFICE**

Component that are implementing a student program must designate a program office coordinator (POC) who is responsible for program administration plans, including coordinating recruitment and onboarding processes, and ensuring that mentors are assigned, as appropriate, and IDPs are put in place. The POC should also serve as a liaison to the DoD CIO by providing the DoD CIO with implementation updates, clarifying technical and programmatic issues, sharing best practices and lessons learned, and submitting applicable reports.

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### Program Inclusions

Components should include the following within their developmental program:

1. Hiring guidance for the occupation
2. The duration of the developmental program relative to the experience at hire
3. Developmental benchmarks and supporting criteria and standards that must be met to receive a developmental salary progression or non-competitive promotion, if provided for in the Component's Developmental Program
4. Promotion schedule associated with the program
5. End point (mission category/ work category/ work level and grade/band level) of the development program

### Program Requirements

Student hires are required to:

1. Provide proof of their academic status;
2. Maintain good academic standing, as defined by the educational institutions
3. Complete their Participant Agreement and obtain signatures from her/his supervisor and the HR official;
4. Remain students as long as they are employed under the student program by the Component;
5. Perform their jobs successfully; and
6. Meet any other component-specific requirements outlined in their Participant Agreements.

In addition to these requirements, DoD CIO recommends that any student hire appointed for longer than 90 days be placed on an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to create and track her or his career planning, professional development, and training activities.

### Documenting Appointments

CES Position Appointing Authority:

Authority code to be cited: UKM – Sec. 1599F United States Cyber Command PL 114-92, 11/25/2015

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

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### **Assessments and Selection**

CES student applicants are evaluated by adopting the OPM qualification standards for the Pathways Program. The Human Resources Office (HRO), in consultation with hiring managers, documents and submits the method(s) by which they plan to accept, rate and arrange applications in accordance with 5 CFR 302, Subpart C and component policy. For each method used, the component identifies the title, occupational series, grade/band, mission category, work category, and work level for the position being filled. DoD components are highly encouraged to begin the security process upon a student selection in an CES internship program.

### **Qualifications**

DoD Components will apply general qualification profiles developed in accordance with DoDD 8140.01. These profiles will include descriptions of the competencies, knowledge, skills, abilities, education, training, and the type and quality of experience required for successful job performance in the CES occupational structure as defined in Volume 3007 of DoDI 1400.25. In the absence of DoD CIO general qualification profiles, DoD Components may adopt OPM qualification standards, or use existing Component qualification standards based on OPM guidelines, to evaluate candidate qualifications.

### **Benefits**

Health and life insurance coverage for student hires depends on the type of appointment and the expectation of substantial employment during the year. Students hired under an appointment for a period expected to last longer than one year are eligible for health and life insurance coverage, so long as they are also expected to be in a pay status for at least one-third of the total period of time from the date of their initial appointment to the date of completion of the Program. The cost of premiums is split between the student employee and the component, as is the case for all permanent employees.

When a student employee on a temporary appointment has, a seasonal schedule of less than six months per year, or an intermittent schedule and is expected to work 130 hours per month or more for at least 90 days, the student employee is eligible to enroll in an FEHB plan and receive the same government contribution as full-time permanent employees. These newly eligible student employees will receive the same government contribution as full-time permanent employees.

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### Program Recruitment Opportunities

Program Elements	CES Student Hires
Applicant Sources	<p>DoD Components may access applicant sources through any legal means, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) USAJOBS website (<a href="http://www.usajobs.gov">http://www.usajobs.gov</a>);</li> <li>DoD Component-specific or cyber community-hosted websites;</li> <li>Newspaper and periodic publications distributed in applicant-rich population areas;</li> <li>Job fairs or college campus recruiting activities organized by the DoD Component or jointly by cyber community or federal entities;</li> <li>Employee referral programs; or</li> <li>Other means consistent with the merit system principles in Section 2301 of Title 5, U.S.C.</li> </ul>
Appointments	<p>Students may be appointed to the “Technician and Administrative Support” or “Professional” work category and the “Entry and Developmental” or “Full Performance” work levels at any grade level for which they qualify. For intern appointments with no time limitation, the duties of the position to which they are appointed must be related to her or his academic field of study or career interests.</p> <p>Interns on NTE appointments should be used to complete temporary projects, to perform labor-intensive tasks not requiring subject-matter expertise, or to fill traditional summer jobs. This work is not required to be related to the student’s area of study.</p>
Veteran’s Preference*	<p>Veterans’ preference applies to the selection process for Interns and Interns NTE. Components should follow section 3.6 of DoDI 1400.25, Vol 3005 for applying Veteran’s Preference.</p>
Schedule	<p>Student hires may work full- or part-time schedules</p>
Type of Work	<p>Components should assign meaningful work that supports your needs and the Student’s academic field of study or career interests. Components should not assign, as a student’s primary duties, simple administrative or clerical tasks, such as scanning documents or filing.</p>
Mission Category	<p>Cyber</p>
Work Category	<p>Technician and Administrative Support or Professional</p>
Work Level	<p>Entry and Developmental or Full Performance (Upon conversion out of program)</p>
Tenure Groups for Reduction of Force	<p>Tenure Groups for Reduction in Force As outlined in 5 CFR 351:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interns serving under appointments for an initial period expected to last more than one year are classified in Tenure Group II of the excepted service and have the same retention rights as other excepted service employees.</li> <li>Interns NTE, serving under appointments not to exceed one year, who have completed one year of current, continuous service, are classified in Tenure Group III of the excepted service and have the same retention rights as other excepted service employees.</li> <li>Interns NTE, serving under appointments not to exceed one year, who have not completed one year of service, are classified in Tenure Group 0 of the excepted service and have the same retention rights as other excepted service employees.</li> </ul>

### Movement within the program

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Components may promote students in the developmental program above the grade to which these students were initially appointed. Promotions are never an entitlement and Components must have excepted service policies in place that cover promotions for positions in the excepted service. In developing these policies, components should consider factors such as the ability to perform at the next grade level and the impact of rapid advancement on employees outside of the Program.

Students may be promoted when a Component has an excepted service policy in place for promotions and when the Interns meet the qualification requirements for the higher-graded positions. Students on a NTE appointment are similar to temporary employees and are not eligible for promotions

Application of a 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.

CES student programs are not like traditional career ladders (CES does not have career ladders). Student employees in developmental programs may advance through the Entry/Developmental grades (or the Entry/Developmental pay band) in accordance with rules established at the DoD Component level and in accordance with DoDI 1400.25 Volume 3005. Developmental progression terminates at the Full Performance work level, as detailed in Section 6 of DoDI 1400.25 Volume 3007, once the employee has reached the termination point designated by the DoD Component. Such progression is considered non-competitive because the initial program entry included competition for the entirety of the program.

### **Reassignments**

Components must follow Section 3.17.b.(2) and Section 3.17.c.(2) of DoDI 1400.25-V3005 for internal reassignment actions and students must meet the qualification requirements for the positions to which they will be reassigned.

### **Program Conversion**

For both Interns and Interns NTE, components have the discretion to consider interns for non-competitive conversion to term or permanent positions in cyber excepted service, provided that the interns have met all academic and Program requirements, and that they are within 120 days of academic program completion. For Interns to be eligible for conversion, this possibility must have been included in the job opportunity announcement used to fill the Internship positions.

If the Component decides to convert the intern, then conversion must take place within 120 days of successful degree completion for both Interns and Interns NTE. If eligible participants are not

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converted within this window of time, then they must be terminated. The 120-day period, which cannot be extended, cannot be used for the participant to finish any remaining academic or Program requirements—it should be used solely for administrative purposes.

An eligible participant may be converted to a position within her or his employing component or any other component across the Federal Government. But, conversion is not mandatory or guaranteed for participants.

If an eligible student is converted to a term position, she or he may be non-competitively converted from that competitive term position to a permanent appointment without further competition. The conversion must be made effective prior to the expiration of the competitive term appointment.

### Conversion Types

1. **Converting Student Hires to Permanent Positions.** Noncompetitive conversion to a permanent position is permitted for student program participants who have successfully completed an academic course of study and met other program requirements established by the DoD Component. In determining the appropriate work level and pay band or grade, as applicable, for student employees who are being placed in permanent positions, the DoD Components will consider all qualifications including the student's performance record as a student employee.
2. **Inter-Component Conversion.** DoD Components may noncompetitively convert student program participants from other DoD Components with the consent of the parent Component.
3. **Scholarship Programs Conversions.** DoD Components may use scholarship programs, whether statutorily limited to individual DoD Components or broadly applicable in the government, the federal cyber community or the DoD, consistent with Component staffing requirements and governing statutes and regulations.
4. **Conversion of Interns NTE** should be rare, though it is possible. An Intern NTE may be noncompetitively converted to a CES permanent position provided that she or he has met all academic and Program requirements, and that the JOA used to fill her or his position stated the possibility of conversion. In order for Interns NTE who were hired without the possibility of non-competitive conversion to be converted to longer term, indefinite Interns, they must compete for these opportunities.

### Conversion Eligibility

To be eligible for conversion, an Intern or eligible Intern NTE must:

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- Be a United States citizen;
- Complete at least 640 hours of work experience acquired through the Program while enrolled as a half- or full-time degree- or certificate-seeking student;
- Complete a course of academic study, within the preceding 120-day period, at a qualifying educational institution conferring a diploma, certificate or degree;
- Meet the qualification standards for the position to which she or he will be converted;
- Receive a favorable recommendation by an official of the component or components in which she or he served; and
- Meet component-specific requirements, as specified in the Participant Agreement.

### **Exceptions to the 640-Hour Service Requirement**

Interns must complete 640 hours of work in order to be eligible for conversion. In order to more quickly convert Interns, components may grant credit for up to 320 hours for:

- Other comparable Federal internship experience;
- Other comparable non-Federal (e.g., third-party) internship experience;
- Certain active duty military or volunteer service; or
- Outstanding academic achievement and exceptional job performance.

Components may evaluate, consider and grant credit for up to one-half (320 hours) of the 640-hour service requirement for comparable non-Federal internship experience in a field or functional area related to the student's target position and acquired while the student:

- Worked in, but not for, a Federal agency pursuant to a formal internship agreement comparable to the Internship Program, between the component and an accredited academic institution;
- Worked in, but not for, a Federal agency, pursuant to a written contract with a third-party internship provider officially established to provide internship experiences to students that are comparable to the Internship Program; or
- Served as an active duty member of the armed forces (including the National Guard and Reserves), as defined in 5 USC 2101, provided the veteran's discharge or release is under honorable conditions (i.e., with a general or honorable discharge).

Student volunteer service under 5 CFR 308 and other Federal programs designed to give internship experience to students (e.g., fellowships and similar programs) may be evaluated, considered and credited when the experience is comparable to experience gained in the Internship Program. Components may also waive up to one-half (320 hours) of the 640-hour minimum service requirement when an Intern completes 320 hours of career-related work experience under an Internship Program appointment and demonstrates high potential by outstanding academic achievement and exceptional job performance.



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- Outstanding academic achievement means an overall grade point average of 3.5 or better, on a 4.0 scale; standing in the top 10 percent of the student's graduating class; and/or induction into a nationally-recognized scholastic honor society.
- Exceptional job performance means a formal evaluation conducted by the student's Internship supervisor(s), consistent with the applicable performance appraisal program that results in a rating of record (or summary rating of record) of higher than "Achieved Results" or equivalent.

Components may not grant a credit or waiver (or a combination of a credit and waiver) totaling more than 320 hours of the 640-hour service requirement.

## Separations

Separations are actions that end employment with components. Separations can take several forms, two of the most common forms are resignations and terminations:

### Resignations

CES student participants may resign at any time. When doing so, they should submit a resignation letter that states the effective date of resignation, and provides both forwarding contact information (e.g., address, phone number, and email) and, if desired, a reason for resignation. This information should be documented as a remark entry on the SF-52 (Request for Personnel Action).

### Terminations

Components may terminate CES student participants for misconduct, poor performance or because they have been determined to be unsuitable under the applicable provisions of title 5 of the United States Code and the Code of Federal Regulations. Various situations may result in the termination of participants.

The following examples are merely illustrative and not meant to be exclusive

1. Not maintaining good academic standing, as defined by their educational institutions.
2. Not providing proof of current academic status during the allotted timeframe and/or failing to maintain eligibility as a student.
3. Failing to meet any requirements set forth in the Participant Agreement.

In all cases, it is important to consult with a representative from the Components Employee Relations (ER) or Labor Relations (LR) Office who has responsibility for evaluating terminations and ensuring compliance with Federal regulations and component-specific policies.

## Appeal Rights

If an Intern meets the definition of "employee," as defined in 5 USC Chapter 75, then she or he may have the right to appeal for the remainder of the appointment. If so, then the adverse action



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procedures outlined in 5 CFR 752 will apply to the action.

### **Awards**

Awards are an excellent way to acknowledge employee contributions and to encourage employees to excel in their jobs. Student interns and intern NTE are eligible to receive awards for their work. Components should consider the range of options available for awarding and acknowledging student employees, including performance awards, on-the-spot awards, special acts, time off and more.

### **Training and Development**

Interns and Interns NTE are eligible to participate in training and development activities.

### **Performance Management and Evaluation**

Components should establish performance goals and evaluation criteria with Interns and Interns NTE. CES student hires, are required to have a formal evaluation for any appointments lasting 90 days or more. This plan will help the participant understand what is expected of the student during the Program, and will allow the component and other officials to provide objective feedback regarding the student performance. The performance management and evaluation will also outline the level of job performance required for the participant to be eligible for conversion (if applicable), and will help the component make a recommendation for conversion, as appropriate, at the end of the Program.

### **Mentors**

While components are not required to assign mentors to participants in the Program, they are encouraged to assign mentors to Interns whose appointments are expected to last longer than 120 days in order to support their development and aid in their retention.

Mentors for CES student employee should be current component employees, at the senior level or above, and should be outside of the Students' chain of command.

Mentors should serve as coaches and trusted colleagues, not as supervisors. A formal mentoring process affords the students with professional development and guidance, and capitalizes on the experiences of seasoned employees who are committed to developing a highly skilled and high performing workforce.

### **Participant Agreements**

Every Component must enter into a written agreement with each student employee that it employs. These agreements are typically signed by an HR official, hiring manager or supervisor, and participant. Agreements must include expectations and define the following:

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1. A general description of the duties to be performed;
2. Work schedules;
3. Length of the appointment and termination date;
4. Mentorship opportunities;
5. Training requirements;
6. Evaluation procedures that will be used for the participant;
7. Requirements for continuation and successful completion of the Program;
8. Minimum eligibility requirements for non-competitive conversion to a term or permanent appointment under the specific Program in which the participant is employed; and
9. Any other requirements or expectations established by the component.

### **Breaks in Program**

A break in program is defined as a period of time in which a student is working, but unable to attend classes, or is neither attending classes nor working. While breaks in program are not common, they are permissible in certain circumstances (e.g., medical leave, financial hardship, or military service). A component may use its discretion to either approve or deny a request for a break in program, as well as determine the length of the break.

Components should as part of their supplemental guidance, establish policy that defines breaks in program, as well as limits to the allowable number of breaks in program to ensure that Students make progress toward completing their academic and Program requirements in a reasonable timeframe.

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### Appendix A

#### Definitions

**Appointment:** Any personnel action that brings an individual onto the rolls (staff) of a component.

**Appointment Extension:** An component may extend the appointment of a student Not-to-Exceed (NTE) (temporary student) who meets eligibility criteria for one additional year up to the maximum allowable time in the program.

**Break in Program** (applies to student and student NTE): A period of time in which a student is working, but unable to attend classes, or is neither attending classes nor working. While breaks in program are not common, they are permissible in certain circumstances.

**Break in Service:** The time when an employee is no longer on the payroll of a component. A separation of less than three calendar days is not considered a break in service. (In computing creditable service for benefits (e.g., leave accrual and reduction in force retention), a separation of one, two or three calendar days is not considered to be a break in service; a separation of four or more calendar days is considered to be a break in service and the days of separation are subtracted from the employee's total creditable service.)

**Competitive Service:** All civilian positions in the federal government that are not specifically excepted from the civil service laws by or pursuant to statute, by the President or by OPM under Rule VI, and that are not in the Senior Executive Service (SES).

**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

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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. 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 that 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.

**Intermittent Schedule:** A schedule in which an employee's work recurs at sporadic or irregular intervals so that her or his tour of duty cannot be scheduled in advance of the administrative work week.

**Intern:** A current student who has been appointed to the Internship Program for an initial period that is expected to last more than one year.

**Intern Not-to-Exceed (NTE):** A current student who has been appointed to the Internship Program for an initial period that is not expected to last more than one year.

**Merit Systems Principles:** The nine statutory principles governing the management of the federal executive branch workforce.

**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.

**Participant Agreement:** A required written agreement between the component and student participant that clearly identifies expectations, including a general description of duties, evaluation procedures, work schedules, and minimum eligibility requirements for conversion to term or permanent positions in the excepted service.

**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

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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.

**Qualifying Educational Institution:** A public high school whose curriculum has been approved by a State or local governing body, a private school that provides secondary education as determined under State law, or a homeschool that is allowed to operate in a State; and any of the following educational institutions or curricula that have been accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the Secretary of Education: a technical or vocational school, a two- or four-year college or university, a graduate or professional school (e.g., law school or medical school), or a post-secondary homeschool curriculum.

**Senior:** Work at this mastery level involves a wide range of complex assignments and non-routine situations that require extensive knowledge and experience in the technical or specialty field. Receiving broad objectives and guidelines from their supervisors, Senior Work Level employees independently handle a wide range of complex assignments and non-routine situations, and exercise independent judgment to identify and take alternative courses of action. Following broad objectives and guidelines, employees act independently to establish priorities and deadlines within expectations established by their supervisor and exercise individual judgment to choose alternative guidelines to complete assignments. Employees may lead and coordinate special projects, teams, tasks, and initiatives, and may be required to build and use collaborative networks with key contacts within and outside of their immediate organization. Actions at this level are likely to have an impact beyond the employee's immediate organization.

**Technician and Administrative Support Work Category:** This CES work category includes positions with duties and responsibilities that primarily involve support for the operations and functions of a particular type of work or organizational unit. Such support activities are technical or administrative, and qualifications generally are acquired through practical experience supplemented by on-the-job or skills-specific training. Such work generally has fewer career progression stages and work levels. Positions in this category typically are covered by Section 201 et seq. of Title 29, U.S.C., also known as the "Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938."

**Temporary appointment:** An appointment made initially for 1 year or less to meet short-term surge or other short-duration mission requirements.

**Term Appointment:** An appointment made to a position in the excepted service for a period that is expected to last longer than one year, but no more than four years, when the need for an employee's services is not permanent.