

DoD Acquisition Workforce Hiring Authorities as of 1 February 2024

The Department of Defense (DoD) has a robust Acquisition Workforce (AWF) which consists of approximately 162,000 military and civilian employees. Acquisition professionals and their positions are defined and designated pursuant to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act, Chapter 87, 10 U.S.C. 1721(a). These positions include acquisition functions as the predominant (i.e., greater than 50 percent) duty in a specific functional area. They do not include wage grade, clerical, indirect hire foreign nations, non-appropriated fund, or political appointee positions. To cultivate a highly competent professional acquisition workforce, the DoD equips managers and human resource professionals with streamlined hiring authorities. These authorities facilitate the expedited recruitment of suitable candidates, ensuring timely support for the DoD acquisition mission. In recent years, the DoD has been granted various specialized AWF hiring authorities, enhancing the efficiency of the recruitment process.

Below is a description of the DoD and AcqDemo related hiring authorities followed by a table with technical details for each authority.

DoD Hiring Authorities (Applicable to organizations with members in the Acquisition Workforce):

I. Direct Hire Authority for Certain Personnel of the Department of Defense USD(P&R) Memorandum dated June 23, 2023. (Section 1109 of NDAA for FY 2020)

Provides authority for DoD Components to non-competitively appoint qualified candidates to competitive service positions in the DoD and rescinds other hiring authorities.

II. DHA for DoD Post-Secondary and Recent Graduates (Section 1106 of the NDAA for FY 2017; and Section 1102 of the NDAA for FY 2019)

Provides that the Secretary of Defense may recruit and appoint qualified post-secondary students and recent graduates directly to competitive service positions in professional and administrative occupations without regard to sections 3309 through 3318, 3327, and 3330 of title 5, U.S.C. and corresponding CFR provisions related to recruitment and appointment. This DHA may be used for positions in professional administrative occupations at the General Schedule (GS)-11 level and below (or equivalent).

Specific Hiring Authorities and Technical Details

Hiring Authority, Governing Statute, Regulation, Policy	Expiration Date	Common Uses/Other Features	Public Notice	Legal Authority/Other Considerations
<p>Direct Hire Authority for certain Personnel of the Department of Defense</p> <p>Statute: Section 1117 of the NDAA FY21, PL 116-283, Section 905 of Title 5, U.S.C.</p> <p>Statute: Section 1109 of the NDAA for FY20 amended Section 9905 of Title 5, U.S.C. to incorporate, streamline, and</p>	<p>September 30, 2025, except for positions covered by paragraph 3.e. of the USD(P&R) memorandum, for which the authority does not expire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-competitively appoint qualified candidates into positions. • Appointment authority is delegated to DoD Components. • General Schedule (GS)-15 and below (or equivalent). • Subject to modified Priority Placement Program procedures. • Covers 11 position categories, specifically: positions in the acquisition workforce responsible for managing any services contracts necessary to the operation and maintenance of programs of the DoD; position in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics, including technician positions, within the defense acquisition workforce, or any category of acquisition positions 	<p>Not Required</p>	<p>Z5CAQ/Direct Hire Auth 5 U.S.C. § 9905, June 23, 2023.</p>

<p>simplify certain DoD civilian hiring authorities.</p> <p>Authorizes the Secretary of Defense to appoint qualified candidates to certain positions in the competitive service in the DoD without regard to 5 U.S.C., chapter 33, subchapter I, other than sections 3303 and 3328. As a matter of policy, sections 3321 and 3323 of title 5, U.S.C., chapter 33, subchapter I, and corresponding C.F.R. provisions will apply.</p>	<p>(Science, technology, engineering, including technician positions, within the acquisition workforce or any category of acquisition positions designated as critical).</p>	<p>within the DoD designated by the Secretary as a shortage or critical need category, as outlined in Table I (Acquisition Career Fields).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authority should primarily be used to appoint qualified candidates who are not existing DoD competitive service employees with permanent status. DoD Components should follow their merit promotion plans to enable movement of the existing DoD competitive service workforce. • Appointments may be permanent, term, or temporary. • No allocation limitation in using authority. • Veterans' preference does not apply. • ICTAP and RPL exempt. 		
<p>Direct Hire Authority for DoD Post-Secondary and Recent Graduates</p> <p>Statute: Section 1106 of the NDAA for FY 2017 allows the Secretary of Defense to appoint qualified post-secondary students and recent graduates directly into complete service position in General Schedule (GS)-11 and below (or equivalent) professional and administrative occupations.</p> <p>Statute: Section 1102 of the NDAA FY 2019 amended in the following manner: increasing the limitation on the number of appointments made under the authority during a FY from 15 percent to 25 percent of the total number of hires made into professional and administrative occupations within the DoD at the</p>	<p>September 30, 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-competitively appointed qualified current post-secondary and recent graduates directly into competitive service positions in the professional and administrative occupations at GS-11 level and below (or equivalent). • Appointment authority is delegated to DoD Components. • Competitive – Permanent (Career-Conditional), Term, and Temporary Appointments. • Appointments in a calendar year may not exceed 25 percent of the total number of hires made into professional and administrative occupations within the DoD at the GS-11 level and below (or equivalent) under competitive examining procedures during the previous FY. • Allocations set by DCPAS by 31 October of each calendar year. • ICTAP and RPL exempt. • Priority Placement Program exception. • Veterans' preference does not apply. 	<p>Yes – DoD components will establish procedures for publicly advertising positions.</p>	<p>Z5CX; Z5CY; Z5CZ/Direct-Hire Auth (DoD Post-Sec Student Appt), Sec 1102, PL 115-232, August 13, 2018.</p> <p>USD(P&R) memorandum, "Modification of Direct-Hire Authority for the Post-Secondary Students and Recent Graduates," January 15, 2019.</p>

GS-11 level and below (or equivalent) under competitive examining procedures during the previous FY.				
--	--	--	--	--

Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project (AcqDemo) Hiring Authorities (Applicable only to organizations participating in AcqDemo):

I. Direct Hire Appointment for the Business Management and Technical Management Career Path

The Head of a Participating Organization may appoint qualified candidates possessing at least a baccalaureate degree required by OPM or DoD qualification standards covering acquisition positions and/or qualified candidates for those positions involving 51% or more of time in direct support of acquisition positions in a critical acquisition career field classified to the Business and Technical Management Professional, NH, career path, without regard to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. chapter 33, subchapter I (other than sections 3303, 3308, and 3328 of such title).

II. Veteran Direct Hire Appointments for the Business Management and Technical Management Professional and Technical Management Support Career Paths

The Head of a Participating Organization may appoint qualified veteran candidates to acquisition positions in a critical acquisition career field and to those positions involving 51% or more of time in direct support of an acquisition position classified to either the Business and Technical Management Professional, NH, career path or to the Technical Management Support, NJ, career path, without regard to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. chapter 33, subchapter I (other than sections 3303 and 3328 of such title). The term “veteran” has the meaning given that term in 38 U.S.C. 101.

III. Acquisition Student Intern Appointments

The Head of a Participating Organization, without regard to the provisions of 5 U.S.C. chapter 33, subchapter I (other than sections 3303, and 3328 of such title), may appoint candidates enrolled in a program of undergraduate or graduate institution at an institution of higher education leading to either:

- A baccalaureate degree in a course of study required by OPM qualification standards for an acquisition position in an acquisition career field; or
- A degree the completion of which (including any additional essential credit hours or related experience in an acquisition-related field as defined by DoD internal issuances) provides competencies, knowledge, skills, etc., directly linked to an acquisition position’s requirements (selective placement or quality ranking factors) for one of the acquisition career fields.
- An “institution of higher education” for this purpose has the same meaning as that term is defined in Sections 101 and 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001). Appointments under this authority may be made using a term appointment authority or the Pathways appointment authority.

IV. Scholastic Achievement Appointment

AcqDemo establishes a Scholastic Achievement Appointment that provides the authority to appoint candidates with degrees to acquisition positions with positive education requirements without regard to the provisions of subchapter I of chapter 33 of Title 5, U.S.C. (other than sections 3303 and 3328 of such title). This authority allows for competitive appointment to acquisition positions classified to either the NH-II or NH-III broadband level of the Business Management and Technical Management Professional career path.

Candidates may be appointed under this procedure if:

- They have at least a baccalaureate degree required by OPM or DoD qualification standards, or a degree the completion of which (including any additional essential credit hours or specialized experience in an acquisition-related field as identified by DoD internal issuances) provides competencies, knowledge, skills, etc., directly linked to an acquisition position’s requirements for one of the acquisition career fields plus any selective factors.

- The candidate has a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 or better (on a 4.0 scale) in those courses in those fields of study that are specified in the OPM Qualification Standards for the occupational series and an overall undergraduate GPA of a least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; and
- The appointment is into permanent or term position at a pay level within the NH-II broadband level basic pay range. Appointments may also be made to the NH-III broadband level on the basis of graduate education and/or experience, but with the requirement of a GPA of at least 3.5 on a scale of 4.0 for graduate courses in the field of study required for the occupation.

Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project (AcqDemo) Hiring Authorities (Applicable only to organizations participating in AcqDemo)

Hiring Authority, Governing Statute, Regulation, Policy	Expiration Date	Common Uses/Other Features	Public Notice	Legal Authority/Other Considerations
<p>DHA for AcqDemo Business and Technical Management Professional Career Path (NH)</p> <p>Regulation: Federal Register Notice 82 FR 52104-52172 dated November 9, 2017, and 10 U.S.C. 1762. For these authorities, Participating Organizations may appoint qualified candidates without regard to the provisions of 5 U.S.C., Chapter 33, Subchapter 1, other than 3303, 3308, 3328 and 5 CFR Parts 300-330 other than Subpart G of 5 CFR part 300.</p>	December 31, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to all AWF positions and non-AWF positions involving 51% or more of time in direct support to the AWF, in all broadband levels of the NH career path. • Competitive - Permanent (Career, Career-Conditional), Term & Temporary Appointments. • Vacancies are exempt from clearing the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) prior to filling IAW waiver to 5 CFR Part 330. • Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) & Reemployment Priority List (RPL) clearance not required IAW waiver to 5 CFR Part 330. • No limitations on the number of hires using this authority. 	Not Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Authority Code: Z5C – DoD Direct Hire – FRN Vol. 82, No 216 dated November 9, 2017, (Acq-Bus and Tech Mgmt) Section II.B.4.b and, • Z2W – Pub. L. 111-383, dated January 1, 2011. • Qualified candidates with veterans' preference should be considered when best meet mission requirements.
<p>Veteran DHA for AcqDemo Business and Technical Management Professional Career Path, (NH) and Technical Management Support Career Path (NJ)</p> <p>Regulation: Federal Register Notice 82 FR 52104-52172 dated November 9, 2017, and 10 U.S.C. 1762. For these authorities,</p>	December 31, 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to all AWF positions and non-AWF positions involving 51% or more of time in direct support to the AWF, filled by veterans, in all broadband levels of the NH and NJ career path. • The term “veteran” as defined in 38 U.S.C Section 101. • Competitive - Permanent (Career, Career-Conditional), Term & Temporary Appointments. • Vacancies are exempt from clearing the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) prior to filling IAW waiver to 5 CFR Part 330 	Not Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Authority Code: Z5C – DoD Direct Hire – FRN Vol. 82, No 216 dated November 11, 2017, (Acq-Vet Bus and Tech Mgmt) Section II.B.4.c and, • Z2W – Pub. L. 111-383, dated January 7, 2011. • Qualified candidates with veterans' preference should

<p>Participating Organizations may appoint qualified candidates without regard to the provisions of 5 U.S.C., Chapter 33, Subchapter 1, other than 3303, 3308, 3328 and 5 CFR Parts 300-330 other than Subpart G of 5 CFR part 300.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) & Reemployment Priority List (RPL) clearance not required IAW waiver to 5 CFR Part 330. • No limitations on the number of hires using this authority. 		<p>be considered when best meet mission requirements.</p>
<p>Acquisition Student Intern Appointments</p> <p>Regulation: Federal Register Notice 82 FR 52104-52172 dated November 9, 2017, and 10 U.S.C. 1762. For these authorities, Participating Organizations may appoint qualified candidates without regard to the provisions of 5 U.S.C., Chapter 33, Subchapter 1, other than 3303, 3308, 3328 and 5 CFR Parts 300-330 other than Subpart G of 5 CFR part 300.</p>	<p>December 31, 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to AWF positions only in all broadband levels of the NH, NJ and Administrative Support (NK) demo career paths. • Competitive term appointment with potential for non-competitive conversion to permanent (career, career conditional), term or temporary appointment. • Enrolled in a program of undergraduate or graduate instruction at an education leading to either 1) a baccalaureate degree in a course of study required by OPM qualification standards for an acquisition position in an acquisition functional area or; 2) a degree providing competencies, knowledge, and skills directly linked to an acquisition position's requirements. • Vacancies are exempt from clearing the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) prior to filling IAW waiver to 5 CFR Part 330. • Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) & Reemployment Priority List (RPL) clearance not required IAW waiver to 5 CFR Part 330. • No limitations on the number of hires using this authority. • Student intern relocation incentive available. 	<p>Not Required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Authority Code: Z5C – DoD Direct Hire – FRN Vol. 82, No 216 dated November 9, 2017 (Acq-Student Intern) Section II.B.4.d and, • Z2W – Pub. L. 111-383, dated January 7, 2011. • Qualified candidates with veterans' preference should be considered when best meet mission requirements.
<p>Scholastic Achievement Appointment</p> <p>Regulation: Federal Register Notice 82 FR 52104-52172 dated November 9, 2017, and 10 U.S.C. 1762. For these authorities, Participating Organizations may appoint qualified candidates without regard to the provisions of</p>	<p>December 31, 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to AWF positions only with positive education requirements in broadband levels NH-II and NH-III. • Competitive - Permanent (Career, Career-Conditional), Term & Temporary Appointments. • Cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.25 or better (on a 4.0 scale) in those courses in those fields of study that are specified in the OPM Qualification Standards for the occupational series and an overall undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale; and the 	<p>Not Required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Authority Code: Z5C – DoD Direct Hire – FRN Vol. 82, No 216 dated November 9, 2017 (Acq-Scholastic Achievement) Section II.B.4.e and, • Z2W – Pub. L. 111-383, dated January 7, 2011. • Qualified candidates with veterans' preference should

<p>5 U.S.C., Chapter 33, Subchapter 1, other than 3303, 3308, 3328 and 5 CFR Parts 300-330 other than Subpart G of 5 CFR part 300.</p>		<p>appointment is into a permanent or term position at a pay level within the NH-II broadband level basic pay range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments may also be made to the NH-III broadband level on the basis of graduate education and/or experience, but with the requirement of a GPA of at least 3.5 on a scale of 4.0 for graduate courses in the field of study required for the occupations. • Vacancies are exempt from clearing the DoD Priority Placement Program (PPP) prior to filling IAW waiver to 5 CFR Part 330. • Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP) & Reemployment Priority List (RPL) clearance not required IAW waiver to 5 CFR Part 330. • No limitations on the number of hires using this authority. • No recency of degree requirements. 		<p>be considered when best meet mission requirements.</p>
--	--	---	--	---