

# Department of Defense (DoD) College Acquisition Internship Program (DCAIP) Implementing Guidance



(09/10/2021)



## **Department of Defense (DoD) College Acquisition Internship Program**

### **Mission**

The Office of Human Capital Initiatives (HCI), under the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), is responsible for assisting the USD (A&S) in carrying out statutory powers, functions, and duties of the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) with respect to the Defense Acquisition Workforce (AWF) as it relates to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA). HCI executes DoD-wide acquisition workforce governance, strategies, policies and talent management initiatives to equip a highly-qualified workforce of professionals in acquiring and delivering world-class warfighting capabilities to our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines.

### **Overview**

Lethality and readiness are not just priorities of our Service Members. DoD's civilian workforce is essential to sustaining the viability and capabilities of the All-Volunteer Force. This workforce leads the way in supporting the warfighter through key efforts such as maintaining critical equipment; acquiring and sustaining weapons; providing base support, logistics and engineering expertise; administering family support programs; conducting business operations; and providing medical care to ensure our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines are ready to deploy world-wide and answer the call of our operational Commanders. The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) states that *"A modern, agile, information-advantaged Department also requires a motivated, diverse, and highly skilled civilian workforce, sufficiently sized and appropriately resourced. DoD civilians are an essential enabler of our mission capabilities and operational readiness."* The NDS further directs efforts to build its civilian workforce to best serve mission requirements.

In support of the NDS, the DoD Human Capital Operating Plan, and the DoD Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan, HCI recognizes the imperative of cultivating the talent of the acquisition workforce. As part of our strategic talent acquisition effort, HCI created a branding platform for DoD civilian acquisition careers to increase national awareness of our outstanding career acquisition opportunities. Since 2017, HCI has engaged with numerous colleges and universities across the country, through exchanges with provosts, chancellors, and deans, to significantly improve college and student awareness of DoD civilian opportunities. Our outreach efforts have laid the groundwork for the Department of Defense College Acquisition Internship Program (DCAIP).

### **Program Authority**

To enhance the success of the DoD Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project (AcqDemo), Congress, through the FY17 NDAA, transferred full management authority for AcqDemo from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF).

Section 1742 of Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C), provides the SECDEF authority to establish and implement an internship program for the purpose of providing highly-qualified and

talented individual's opportunities for accelerated promotions, career broadening assignments, and specified training to prepare them for entry into the AWF.

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## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **1. Purpose**

The Department of Defense (DoD) College Acquisition Internship Program (DCAIP) is a highly competitive program that seeks to attract a diverse group of bright and innovative full-time college students for Acquisition Workforce (AWF) positions located throughout the country. The program is a paid, 10- week, summer opportunity designed to expose students pursuing relevant undergraduate degrees to the DoD AWF culture and to provide real world experience in various acquisition career fields. As part of our strategy to attract and retain top talent, Human Capital Initiatives (HCI) centrally funds TERM positions specifically for full-time students currently enrolled in institutions of higher learning for a period during their summer and winter break, if desired. Students that successfully complete the internship program may be offered non-competitive conversion into permanent positions within the federal government.

The DCAIP will:

- a. Emulate industry talent acquisition best practices;
- b. Make the acquisition workforce competitive with industry recruiters on college campuses;
- c. Promulgate the use of direct hire authorities and adopt hiring policies and procedures consistent with the new authorities; and
- d. Reduce the burden on DoD Components by developing a program in which they can easily duplicate, or participate.

### **2. The Civilian Deployment Experience Roles and Responsibilities**

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed between the DoD Component and the Under Secretary of Acquisition and Sustainment USD (A&S) HCI will provide the framework for cooperation between the two parties to participate in the DCAIP. The MOA will establish roles and responsibilities as follows:

- a. HCI will:
  - 1) Establish and manage the DCAIP;
  - 2) Centrally fund DCAIP student labor and authorized travel expenses with the DoD Acquisition Workforce Development Account (DAWDA) and forward to the respective Director, Acquisition Career Management office where the DoD Component POC will work with Business Financial Managers to distribute the salary funding to each command;
  - 3) Issue and maintain strategic and program guidance;
  - 4) Provide DCAIP strategic communications, public notice and outreach to DoD components and academic institutions;
  - 5) Host DCAIP student application on website;

- 6) Review applications to verify eligibility;
  - 7) Provide examples of DCAIP “student trainee” position descriptions;
  - 8) Distribute eligible applicant certification packages to participating DoD components; and
  - 9) Maintain student application records complying with OPM requirements and NARA standards.
- b. The DoD Component agrees to:
- 1) Adopt all DoD Component provisions and duties included in DoD College Acquisition Internship Program Guide;
  - 2) Designate a DCAIP Component lead responsible to:
    - a) Serve as the Component’s intern advocate;
    - b) Liaise with HCI;
    - c) Manage and oversee the component program;
    - d) Execute DCAIP in accordance with HCI program guidance;
    - e) Assist with outreach and branding;
    - f) Participate in the intern selection process;
    - g) Respond to HCI reporting requirements; and
    - h) Ensure execution of DAWDA funds for student labor and incentives.
  - 3) Execute Human Resources functions, including:
    - a) Designate an HR Advocate that will participate in all DCAIP meetings;
    - b) Prepare DCAIP “student trainee” positions descriptions i.e. 0399, 0899, 0599, as applicable;
    - c) Participate in the intern selection process;
    - d) Generate Requests for Personnel Action (RPAs);
    - e) Issue/Rescind Tentative Job Offers (TJOs), as appropriate and No Later Than (NLT) 14 January;

- f) Initiate security clearance investigations upon acceptance of TJOs;
  - g) Initiate drug test, if required;
  - h) Issue Firm Job Offers (FJOs); and
  - i) Maintain student records complying with OPM requirements and NARA standards.
- 4) Provide a meaningful on-boarding process;
  - 5) Assign each intern a mentor/sponsor;
  - 6) Document training and development;
  - 7) Convert *eligible* DCAIP interns to full-time entry level acquisition positions upon graduation; and
  - 8) Notify HCI of any change in status, to include appointment, reappointment, extension of appointment, certification of completion of program, resignation, termination, readmission, and/or conversion.
- c. All parties agree to:
- 1) Communicate and collaborate with each other to ensure timely and accurate reporting of the status of selections, job offers, security clearances, on-boarding, intern progress, and funding;
  - 2) Cooperate to resolve issues; and
  - 3) Evaluate the effectiveness of the Program.

### **3. Public Notification**

HCI will develop and implement public notification and will advertise the DCAIP. Notification will include information such as: program information, duties, series and grade, salary, geographic locations, eligibility requirements, and how to apply.

- a. HCI Website: <https://www.hci.mil/dodcareers/internship.html>
- b. For questions about the DoD College Acquisition Internship Program, contact [DoDCollegeInternship@hci.mil](mailto:DoDCollegeInternship@hci.mil).

#### **4. Program Accountability and Oversight**

The Director of HCI retains exclusive authority to establish and maintain oversight of the program and to establish caps on the number of individuals who may participate. Students selected to participate in the DCAIP receive no right to further employment in the competitive or excepted service.

#### **5. Selection**

Applicants will be assessed on basic eligibility using OPM qualification standards for student trainees and specific DoD Component qualification requirements.

Applicants that meet all eligibility requirements and submit all required documentation by 2359 (11:59 p.m.) EST 12 October are placed on a selection certificate by geographic location. All additional selection criteria will be determined by the participating DoD Component utilizing their internal Human Resource procedures.

DoD Components will issue TJOs no later than 14 January. DoD Components will use internal procedures to ensure students are processed/on-boarded in a timely and meaningful manner. Appointments are subject to the same requirements governing term, career or career-conditional employment.

#### **6. Veterans' Preference**

If a student is claiming veterans' preference, they must submit a copy of their DD-214 (Member 4 copy) or other official documentation from a branch of the Armed Forces or the Department of Veterans Affairs showing dates of service and type of discharge. For more information on veterans' preference view [FedsHireVets](#).

#### **7. Citizenship**

Student applicants must be United States citizens to be eligible for security clearances and noncompetitive conversion to the competitive service upon approval of successful completion of the program. Students cannot hold dual citizenship.

#### **8. Security Clearance**

DCAIP positions may require a security clearance. The security clearance level will depend on access to classified information and secure facilities that the intern will need to perform his or her job. The position description will note the appropriate clearance designation.

#### **9. Drug Testing**

Drug testing is a pre-employment requirement at several participating DoD Components.

#### **10. Appointment**

Participating DoD Components are responsible for confirming availability of hiring authorities with their local HRO and make appointments to DCAIP, pursuant to the implementation guidance of their applicable Direct Hire Authorities (DHAs) such as but limited to:

- a. Post-Secondary Students and Recent Graduates (Appendix 1, [https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP\\_Appendix1.pdf](https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP_Appendix1.pdf))



- b. AcqDemo Student Intern (Appendix 2, [https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP\\_Appendix2.pdf](https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP_Appendix2.pdf))
- c. Department of Defense Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory (STRL) (Appendix 3, [https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP\\_Appendix3.pdf](https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP_Appendix3.pdf))
- d. Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) DoDI 1400.25, Volume 2005 (Appendix 4, [https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP\\_Appendix4.pdf](https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP_Appendix4.pdf))

## **11. Classification**

Interns whose positions are under AcqDemo are to be classified as student trainees, in the xx99 series of the appropriate occupational group. As an example: NH I 0899 (Technical), or NH I 0399 (Non-Technical).

Interns whose positions are under the General Schedule (GS) are to be classified as student trainees, in the xx99 series of the appropriate occupational group. As an example: GS 0899 (Technical), GS 0399 (Non-Technical), or GS 0599 (Financial).

Interns whose positions are under the STRL Demo are to be classified as student trainees, in the xx99 series of the appropriate occupational group. As an example: GS 0899 (Technical), or GS 0399 (Non-Technical).

Interns whose positions are under the DCIPS are to be classified as student trainees, in the xx99 series of the appropriate occupational group. As an example: GG 0899 (Technical), or GG 0399 (Non-Technical).

## **12. Intern Schedules**

Interns will work full-time (40 hours per week) for 10 weeks (not to exceed 400 hours) of each summer of program participation. Participating DoD Components will arrange intern work schedules. At the Supervisor's discretion, unpaid time off is allowed for vacation during the 10 weeks. If funding is available, interns may also work full-time (40 hours per week) for 2 weeks (not to exceed 80 hours) over "winter" break should the employing DoD Component desire. Participating DoD Components will arrange intern work schedules.

## **13. Non-Duty Status**

At the conclusion of the ten week summer internship, DoD Components may place interns into a non-duty status upon their return to school so that they may be returned to duty over winter break or during the following summer, provided they still meet the program's eligibility requirements. Interns still meeting the provisions of the DCAIP program will not need to reapply. Participating DoD Components will need to verify that their interns still meet the eligibility requirements of the DCAIP program such as:

- a. Holding a security clearance, i.e. it has not been revoked;

- b. Continuing to be enrolled full-time in an undergraduate program at an [accredited university](#);
- c. Maintaining a minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0; and
- d. Not graduating before the start of the next summer program.

#### **14. Conversion to the Competitive Service**

Although a DoD Component is NOT obligated, they may:

Noncompetitively convert a student intern who has met all program requirements to a position in the competitive or excepted service under a term or permanent appointment.

To be eligible for conversion, an intern must:

- a. Complete the required number of hours of work experience (generally at least 400 hours) while enrolled as a full-time degree-seeking student;
- b. Complete all educational requirements from a qualifying institution;
- c. Receive a favorable recommendation by an official of the DoD Component;
- d. Meet the OPM qualification requirements for the position to which the intern will be converted; and
- e. Complete all other requirements as stipulated by the DoD Component.

#### **15. Separations**

A DoD Component may terminate a student intern for misconduct, poor performance, ineligibility, or suitability issues. In the event of separation, DoD Components shall notify the HCI point of contact.

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### **1. Application Period**

Applications will be accepted starting on **14 September** until the maximum number of applications per location have been received, or until 2359 (11:59 p.m.) EST 12 October. Applicants are encouraged to submit early as the window for popular locations will close much earlier than **12 October**. Incomplete application packages will NOT be considered. "Once the application period is open, students may apply for an internship digitally. A link to the digital application can be found on HCI's website, <https://www.hci.mil/dodcareers/internship.html>

Applications will NOT be accepted before **14 September**.

### **2. Participating DoD Components**

Students will have the opportunity to perform their internships within DoD Components participating in the DCAIP. Participating DoD Components may vary year to year based on resources and hiring needs. Students selected will be placed in a DoD Component according to their geographic preference and degree

### **3. Program Tracks**

The DCAIP has several tracks such as technical, financial, contracting, and business. Students in all degree fields are encouraged to apply.

### **4. Program Length**

Students selected will work full-time (40 hours/week) between May/June and August of each year. There may be opportunities to work over winter break, based on funding and the DoD Components requirements and needs.

### **5. Location**

Students will choose from a list of geographic locations coinciding with participating DoD Components. Although selected students receive hourly pay, they do NOT receive a housing allowance. Students applying should choose a location in which they have access to housing.

### **6. Salary**

Students selected will earn an hourly rate based on OPM guidelines to determine their qualifications, education level, and set within the basic hourly range of \$16.00 - \$22.00. This rate includes a locality adjustment, which varies depending on geographic location.

### **7. Benefits**

The program offer interns an opportunity to gain the relevant work experience required when searching for a job within the U.S. government. Other benefits include:

- a. Opportunities to gain experience in research, analysis, report writing, oral briefings, policy development, program analysis, and computer applications related to the acquisition workforce
- b. Paid salary
- c. Training/Mentoring
- d. Security clearance
- e. Earn annual leave, sick leave and paid federal holidays
- f. May qualify for travel expenses (determined by DoD Component)
- g. May gain the opportunity to non-competitively convert to a permanent AWF position upon successful completion of the program after graduation under the Recent Graduates Direct Hiring Authority

#### **8. Eligibility Requirements**

This program is for currently-enrolled, full-time college students. To be considered, a student must not graduate before August of the summer program. To be eligible a student MUST:

- a. Be a U.S. citizen (interns cannot hold dual-citizenship);
- b. Be suitable for Federal employment, determined by a background investigation;
- c. Be able to obtain and hold a security clearance;
- d. Be enrolled full-time as a sophomore or junior in an undergraduate program at an [accredited university](#) and have completed a minimum of 24 credit hours toward a specific degree program;
- e. Have a minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0;
- f. Be available for an interview and other applicable processing between October and November of the application year;
- g. Be available for the 10-week summer program in May/June through August;
- h. If male, over 18 years of age, and born after December 31, 1959, be registered with the [Selective Service System](#);
- i. NOTE: Some positions require pre-employment drug testing.

## **9. Required Documents**

Application packets **MUST NOT** include Personally Identifiable Information (PII) such as Social Security Numbers, Financial Information, Race/Ethnicity, or Photographs.

Applications **MUST** include:

- a. A résumé that includes the following information:
  - 1) Contact information;
  - 2) Completed course work (unit/credit hours);
  - 3) Degree and academic standing/GPA;
  - 4) Work/volunteer experience including the work schedule and hours worked per week as well as dates of employment; and title, series, and grade, if applicable;
  - 5) Two (2) references that include the name, phone number and email address for each reference. References can be selected from a part-time or full-time job, prior internship, volunteer, or paid work experiences. References might include current or former supervisors, faculty mentors, campus staff or advisers, coaches or anyone in a professional position who can speak about your character, skills, and work ethic.
- b. Current transcripts. An unofficial copy is sufficient with the application; however if selected, an official college transcript will be required. Transcripts **MUST** include the student's name, name of the school, current GPA/academic standing, past and current coursework, and degree program.
- c. Proof of Enrollment or Class Registration and documentation that states projected graduation date.<sup>1</sup>
- d. If you are claiming veterans' preference, you must submit a copy of your **DD-214 (Member 4 copy)**, or other official documentation from a branch of the Armed Forces or the Department of Veterans Affairs showing dates of service and type of discharge. Those eligible for ten-point preference must also submit an [Application for 10-point Veteran Preference, SF-15](#), along with the required documentation listed on the back of the SF-15 form. For more information on veterans' preference view [FedsHireVets](#).

***Students submitting incomplete applications, applications for a location that has closed, or applications past the deadline WILL NOT be considered!***

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<sup>1</sup> Proof of Enrollment may include a screen shot of the student's semester class schedule, an official letter of enrollment, or listed on official transcripts. The document should show the academic institution where the full-time student is currently enrolled. All documents **MUST** include the student's name.

## **10. Timeline Milestones 14 September: Application opens:**

- a. **14 September – 12 October:** Applications will be accepted starting on **14 September** until the maximum number of applications per location have been received, or until 2359 (11:59 p.m.) EST 12 October;
- b. **27 October – 2 November:** DCAIP Eligible Intern Certs sent to Component Intern Representatives for their review and selection **27 October:** Ineligible students notified by HCI;
- c. **3 November:** Components inform HCI Program Manager of the applicants they intend to interview and possibly hire. **3 November – 14 January:** Students under consideration should be contacted for interviews by participating DoD Component Human Resource Offices (HROs). HROs should make TJO's upon selection;
- d. **NLT 14 January:**
  - o TJOs extended by servicing DoD Component HRO
  - o Security clearance background investigations are initiated
- e. **NLT 30 March:** FJOs should be extended to ALL selectees upon grant of interim secret clearances;
- f. Late May/ Early June:
  - o Interns Effective On Date (EOD)
  - o Group On-Boarding
- g. Late May – Early August: 10 week summer internship program;
- h. Early August: Students participate in ten week Summer Internship Program Complete;
- i. August: Interns placed in non-duty status upon DoD Component decision;

## **11. Appendices**

- a. Priority Placement Program (PPP) Exemption and Implementing Instructions for the Post-Secondary Students and Recent Graduates Direct Hiring Authority (DHA), [https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP\\_Appendix1.pdf](https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP_Appendix1.pdf);
- b. Priority Placement Program (PPP) Exemption and Implementing Instructions for AcqDemo Student Intern Direct Hiring Authority (DHA), [https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP\\_Appendix2.pdf](https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP_Appendix2.pdf);
- c. Implementing Instructions for Department of Defense Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory (STRL) Direct Hiring Authority (DHA), [https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP\\_Appendix3.pdf](https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP_Appendix3.pdf);

- d. DoDI #1400.25, Volume 2005. DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) Employment and Placement. DCIPs Direct Hiring Authority (DHA), [https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP\\_Appendix4.pdf](https://www.hci.mil/docs/2021DCAIP_Appendix4.pdf);
- e. Department of Defense College Acquisition Internship Program (DCAIP).Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Template between HCI and participating DoD Components;

## **12. Frequently Asked Questions**

- 1) Will I need to qualify for a security clearance?  
A: Participants in the Internship program **must be** able to obtain and maintain a security clearance from the DoD. It is highly encouraged you read the security clearance adjudication guidelines that can found at: <https://news.clearancejobs.com/2015/06/10/security-clearance-adjudicative-guidelines/> prior to applying to the program. A copy of the standard security questionnaire form can be found at: [http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf\\_fill/SF86.pdf](http://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/SF86.pdf). Applicants should not submit a SF86 form at this time. Applicants will be notified when and if they are required to submit this form.
- 2) Is this a paid internship?  
A: Yes, interns receive a competitive hourly rate for the duration of the internship.
- 3) How is this program funded?  
A: DCAIP is funded with DAWDA; HR Services & Billets provided by Component
- 4) Is this program the same as Pathways?  
No, this is a direct hire program managed by the Human Capital Initiatives office.
- 5) Do I qualify for the internship if I have already completed my undergraduate degree?  
A: No, to be eligible for the DoD College Acquisition Internship, you must be currently enrolled in a full-time undergraduate program.
- 6) Do I qualify for the internship if I am a senior?  
A: No, to be eligible for the DCAIP, you must be enrolled full-time as a sophomore or junior in an undergraduate program at an accredited university and have completed a minimum of 24 credit hours.
- 7) Do I qualify for the internship if I graduate before the summer program initiates?  
A: No, DCAIP is not a recent graduate program.
- 8) What skills/competencies is DCAIP looking for in a candidate?  
A: STEM/Accounting/Business/Humanities.
- 9) Are there any resources I can use to help craft my application?

A: Your University career center should be able to assist. Please reach out to [DoDcollegeinternship@hci.mil](mailto:DoDcollegeinternship@hci.mil) for any questions you may have.

10) If I did not receive an internship in a previous application cycle but I am still eligible this year, can I apply again?

A: Yes, We encourage you to apply again if you are still eligible!

11) Do I apply through USAJOBS?

A: No, you are only able to apply through the HCI website.

<https://www.hci.mil/dodcareers/internship.html>

12) When is the application deadline?

A: The application window will close upon the receipt of the maximum number of applications per location, or by 2359 (11:59 p.m.) EST on 12 October 2021. You are encouraged to apply quickly and completely as the application window for popular locations will close earlier than 12 October.

13) Are international students eligible for an internship?

A: No, only U.S. citizens are eligible to participate in the DCAIP.

14) Do you provide housing?

A: No, student interns will not be provided housing. Selected students, however, may be eligible for travel expenses, such as transportation to duty station and back. This must be coordinated with the hiring DoD Component in advance. You are encourage to seek a location in which you have access to housing.

15) Do you provide a stipend for rent, utilities, etc.?

A: No, Student Interns will not be provided a stipend for rent, utilities, etc.

16) Will the Government pay to ship my car?

A: The Government will not pay to ship your car.

17) What if I used drugs or still use drugs; will this disqualify me from the internship or future employment?

A: To be considered suitable for employment with the DoD, applicants must generally not have used illegal drugs or misused prescription drugs within the last 12 months. The issue of illegal drug use prior to 12 months ago is carefully evaluated during the medical and security processing. Drug abuse is one of the common reasons applicants are denied a security clearance. Many jobs within the DoD require the applicant to be able to obtain and maintain a security clearance. Some jobs also require drug testing for safety or national security reasons.

18) I live in a state that has legalized the use of marijuana. How will that affect my internship and possible employment with the DoD?

A: While Alaska, California, Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington have legalized recreational marijuana under state law, and other states plus the District of Columbia have legalized the use of marijuana for medical use, marijuana remains a controlled substance under federal law.



Controlled substance use is considered during the background investigation process and may adversely impact your eligibility for a security clearance or suitability for employment.

- 19) What if the background investigation finds something disqualifying about me? Will I have a chance to explain?  
A: Yes, prior to the denial of a security clearance, you will be given an opportunity to provide additional information to explain the circumstances surrounding the issue. If the clearance is denied, you will also have the right to appeal that decision. It is advised that applicants be truthful and forthcoming throughout the investigative process, as failure to provide requested information is a serious issue.
- 20) When can I expect to hear if I will be offered an internship?  
A: Participating DoD Components are responsible for selecting summer interns and notification will vary; however, if selected you should be notified no later than 1 December of the application year.
- 21) How are selection decisions made by DoD Components?  
A: This varies by each DoD Component, it could be major, GPA, location, or telephonic interview.
- 22) Will I be required to work during the “winter” break period by my employing DoD Component?  
A: No, your internship should start in the summer.