DoD Acquisition Workforce Hiring Authorities as of 14 March 2019

The Department of Defense (DoD) has a robust Acquisition Workforce (AWF) which consists of approximately 170,000 military and civilian employees. The DoD appoints over 8,000 new civilian hires annually; therefore, DoD must provide managers and human resource professionals access to efficient hiring authorities to ensure the right candidates are hired in a timely fashion to support the DoD acquisition mission. Over recent years, DoD has been granted a number of special AWF hiring authorities to expedite the process. The AWF is defined as positions and their incumbents so 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 career field. They do not include wage grade, clerical, indirect hire foreign national, non-appropriated fund, or political appointee positions.

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

Acquisition Workforce Hiring Authorities

I. Expedited Hiring Authority (EHA) for Select Acquisition Positions (Title 10 U.S.C. subsection 1705(g))

This authority provides that the Secretary of Defense may designate any category of acquisition positions within DoD as positions for which there exists a shortage of candidates or there is a critical hiring need. The EHA can be used for acquisition positions that are GS-09 through GS-15 and comparable levels in the following acquisition career fields: Auditing (AUD); Business, Cost Estimating, Financial Management (BCEFM); Contracting (CON); Facilities Engineering (FE); Information Technology (IT); Life Cycle Logistics (LCL); Production, Quality and Manufacturing (PQM); Program Management (PM); Quality Control and Assurance (QA); Science and Technology Management (S&T); System Planning, Research, Development, Engineering and Testing (SPRDE); and Test and Evaluation (T&E).

II. Direct Hire Authority (DHA) for Select Technical Acquisition Positions, including Technicians, by a Military Department (Section 1112 of National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2016)

Provides a Pilot Program for the Secretaries of the Military Departments to use DHA for directly hiring select technical experts including technicians into the AWF of a Military Department and delegate appointment authority under this program. Applies to certain AWF scientific, technical, engineering, and mathematics positions including technicians.

III. DHA for Qualified Candidates Possessing a Scientific or Engineering Degree Hired Directly to AWF Scientific or Engineering Positions within the Military Departments (Section 1113 of NDAA for FY 2016)

Provides for recruitment and appointment of qualified candidates possessing a scientific or engineering degree to AWF scientific or engineering positions within a Military Department.

IV. DoD Temporary DHA for Certain Competitive Service Positions (Section 9905 of Title 5, U.S.C. and ASD(M&RA) Performing the Duties of the USD(P&R) dated February 1, 2019)

Provides authority for DoD Components to non-competitively appoint qualified competitive service candidates to positions involving: DoD maintenance activities, such as maintenance of weapon systems, hardware, equipment, software, installation infrastructure, or any combination thereof, including maintenance and repair; Cybersecurity as defined in DoDD 8140.01; Acquisition workforce management of services contracts necessary to the operation and maintenance of programs of the Department; or science, technology, or engineering including any such position at the Major Range and Test Facilities Base in order to develop new systems or provide for the maintenance for legacy systems.

V. DHA for DoD Post-Secondary and Recent Graduates (Section 1106 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2017; and Section 1102 of the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2019)
Provides that the Secretary of Defense may recruit and appoint qualified current 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 and administrative occupations at the General Schedule (GS)-11 level and below (or equivalent).

**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 an AcqDemo Participating Organization may appoint: 1) qualified candidates possessing at least a baccalaureate degree required by OPM or DoD qualification standards covering acquisition positions and/or 2) qualified candidates for those non-AWF positions involving 51% or more of time in direct support of acquisition positions. The positions must be in an acquisition career field classified to the Business and Technical Management Professional, NH, career path.


The Head of a Participating Organization may appoint qualified Veteran candidates to acquisition positions in an acquisition career field and to those non-AWF 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. The term “veteran” for this authority has the meaning given that term in 38 U.S.C. section 101.

III. **Acquisition Student Intern Appointments**

The Head of a Participating Organization may appoint candidates enrolled in a program of undergraduate or graduate instruction 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 acquisitions position’s requirements 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. 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 at 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 Specific Hiring Authorities and Technical Details

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| **Expedited Hiring Authority** for Select Defense Acquisition Workforce Positions: Title 10 U.S.C. subsection 1705(g). Regulations: Authorizes appointment of qualified individuals to select acquisition positions for which DoD designates a shortage of candidates exists or there is a critical hiring need. | Permanent Authority |  - Competitive - Permanent (Career, Career-Conditional), Term & Temporary Appointments  
- Does not include non-AWF positions directly supporting AWF positions  
- No mandated hiring number limitations  
- Open to Military Departments, Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities  
- Most widely used Direct Hire Authority across defense acquisition workforce  
- Clearance of ICTAP and PPP required  
- Applies to most AWF positions (See EHA for Select Defense Acquisition Workforce Positions memorandum dtd Dec 18, 2015) | Required | Qualified candidates with veterans' preference should be considered when best meet mission requirements |
| **Direct Hire Authority for Qualified Veteran Candidates to Certain Acquisition Workforce STEM Positions, including technicians.** Regulation: Section 1112 of National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2016 - Pilot program to hire directly qualified Veteran candidates to certain STEM positions, including technicians. | No appointment after November 22, 2020 |  - ICTAP (Federal agency version of PPP) clearance not required  
- Specific PPP exemption authorized when filling positions under this authority  
- Does not include non-AWF positions directly supporting AWF positions  
- Limited to DoD Military Departments  
- Appointments in a calendar year may not exceed 1% of the total civilian acquisition workforce hires of the respective Military Department during the previous fiscal year | Not Required |  - “Veteran” is defined by section 101 of title 38, U.S.C.  
- Merit factors shall be the basis for selecting individuals for positions |
| **Direct Hire Authority for Qualified Candidates Possessing a Scientific or Engineering Degree Hired Directly to Acquisition Workforce Scientific or Engineering Positions** Regulation: Section 1113 of NDAA for FY 2016 - Directly hire | No appointment after December 31, 2020 |  - Specific PPP exemption authorized when filling positions under this authority  
- ICTAP clearance not required. | Not Required | Merit factors shall be the basis for selecting individuals for positions |
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| qualified candidates possessing a **scientific or engineering degree** to scientific or engineering positions. Direct hire authority for technical experts into the defense acquisition workforce. | September 30, 2025 | • Appointment authority delegated to Secretaries of Military Departments and Directors of Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities with appointing authorities.  
• Modified/ Streamlined Priority Placement Program applies  
• Applies to some AWF individuals and positions. Only part of the acquisition workforce may be covered by this DHA, i.e., "Any individual in the acquisition workforce that manages any services contracts necessary to the operation and maintenance of programs in the Department." It may also be used for “DAWIA coded and direct support positions at the Broadband I (post-secondary level).” Direct support positions are defined as non-AWF direct support positions involving 51% or more of time in direct support of acquisition-coded positions.  
• Components have flexibility to define covered AWF positions using the requirements in 10 U.S.C.1721.  
• No limitations on the number of hires using this authority.  
• No requirement for designation of a shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for positions/individuals covered.  
• Does not cover non-AWF direct support positions supporting AWF positions less than 51% or more of the support position’s time. | Not Required | Merit factors shall be the basis for selecting individuals for positions. |
| **DoD Temporary Direct Hire Authority for Certain Competitive Service Positions**  
**Statute:** Section 9905 of Title 5, U.S.C. authority to non-competitively appoint qualified candidates to certain positions in the competitive service in the Department of Defense (DoD) including maintenance activities (weapon systems, hardware, equipment, software, installation infrastructure, or any combination thereof, including maintenance and repair); Cybersecurity as defined in DoDD 8140.01; Acquisition Workforce management of services contracts necessary to the operation and maintenance of programs of the Department; or science, technology, or engineering including any such position at the Major Range and Test Facilities Bases in order to allow new system development and maintenance for legacy systems. | September 30, 2025 | | |
| **Direct Hire Authority for DoD Post-Secondary and Recent Graduates**  
**Statute:** Section 1106 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017 | September 30, 2025 | • Competitive - Permanent (Career, Career-Conditional), Term and Temporary Appointments.  
• For the purpose of this authority, this DHA may be used by DoD components participating in AcqDemo for DAWIA coded and Direct Support positions at the Broadband I (post-secondary) level  
• Specific PPP exemption authorized when filling positions under this authority. | Yes – however, “traditional” JOA n/a | Qualified candidates with veterans’ preference should be considered when best meet mission requirements |
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| provides that the Secretary of Defense may recruit and appoint qualified current post-secondary students and recent graduates directly to competitive service positions in professional and administrative occupations. | | • ICTAP clearance not required.  
• Appointments in a calendar year may not exceed 25 percent of the total number of hires made into professional and administrative occupations within the Department of Defense at the GS-11 level and below (or equivalent) under competitive examining procedures during the previous fiscal year.  
• Allocations set by DCPAS by 31 October of each calendar year. | | |
| **Statute:** Section 1102 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 amended in the following manner: increasing the limitation on the number of appointments made under this authority during a fiscal year from 15 percent to 25 percent of the total number of hires made into professional and administrative occupations within the Department of Defense at the GS-11 level and below (or equivalent) under competitive examining procedures during the previous fiscal year. | | | | |

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

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| **DHA for AcqDemo Business and Technical Management Career Path (NH)** | December 31, 2023 | • 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  
• Modified/Streamlined Priority Placement Program Applies  
• ICTAP clearance not required | Not Required | Qualified candidates with veterans' preference should be considered when best meet mission requirements |
<p>| <strong>Regulation:</strong> Federal Register Notice 82 FR 52104-52172 dated November 9, 2017 and 10 U.S.C. | | | | |</p>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran DHA for AcqDemo NH and Technical Management Support Career Path (NJ)</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>December 31, 2023</td>
<td>No limitations on the number of hires using this authority, No requirement for designation of a shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for positions/individuals covered, Not Required</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisition Student Intern Appointments</td>
<td>Applies to AWF positions and those non-AWF positions involving 51% or more of time in direct support to the AWF in all broadband levels of the NH and NJ demo career paths</td>
<td>December 31, 2023</td>
<td>No limitations on the number of hires using this authority, No requirement for designation of a shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for positions/individuals covered, Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholastic Achievement Appointment</td>
<td>Applies to AWF positions only in all broadband levels of the three demo career paths</td>
<td>December 31, 2023</td>
<td>No limitations on the number of hires using this authority, No requirement for designation of a shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need for positions/individuals covered, Not Required</td>
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