

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IMPLEMENTING GUIDANCE  
FOR THE PATHWAYS PROGRAMS

1. PURPOSE. This provides the Department of Defense (DoD) guidance on the implementation of the Pathways Programs (PP).
2. AUTHORITY. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and DoD authorizes implementation of the PP (Internship, Recent Graduates, and Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs)), in accordance with 5 CFR part 362 and OPM guidance, within the DoD.
3. APPLICABILITY. This guidance applies to the Military Departments, the Defense Agencies, the DoD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DoD. DoD excepted service entities and demonstration projects which have the flexibility to create intern type programs are excluded from using the PP.
4. RESPONSIBILITIES
  - a. The Military Departments, Defense Agencies, and DoD Field Activities (hereafter referred to in this guidance as “Components”) with independent appointing authority, as defined in their respective DoD chartering directive:
    - (1) may recruit and appoint qualified persons under the PP in accordance with 5 CFR part 362, the DoD MOU, and this guidance;
    - (2) will ensure adequate resources to execute and maintain PP, Individual Development Plans (IDPs), mentors, training, etc.; and
    - (3) will identify a Component Pathways Programs Coordinator (PPC).
  - b. DoD Pathways Program Officer (PPO) serves as the point of contact/liaison for DoD with OPM and other Federal agencies on the PP, providing information/reports and updates on DoD implementation of the PP; provides DoD oversight and guidance to Components on implementation of the PP, including oversight of the recruitment and the on-boarding process. The PPO is identified in the MOU.
  - c. DoD PMF Coordinator coordinates the placement, development, and other PMF-related activities of Fellows appointed in DoD. Serves as the DoD liaison to OPM for the PMF Program. The PMF Coordinator is identified in the MOU.
  - d. Major Commands/Activities are responsible for complying with 5 CFR, DoD, and Component policy/implementation guidance for workforce planning, to include budgets for the training and payroll costs of the PP participants, as well as for projected conversion at the end of their PP appointments.

- e. Component Pathways Programs Coordinator (PPC) is responsible for the Component's PP implementation and oversight, coordinating requests for extension of appointments, and providing assistance to major commands/activities. The PPC will serve as the point of contact for the DoD PPO.
- f. Supervisor of PP Participant will provide PP participant with meaningful on boarding and current job description, establish performance goals and work schedule, provide for training/development of the PP participant, evaluate performance, and assess and determine disposition (conversion/separation) of participant at end of appointment.
- g. Human Resources Staff will provide information on PP opportunities, announce vacancies, and verify eligibility for appointment under specific PP. Ensure the appropriate Participant Agreement is completed and maintained per Component policy. Complete appropriate documentation of appointment/conversion/separation. Provide advice and assistance to supervisors. Monitor program expiration dates of appointees to ensure appropriate action is taken to convert or terminate the participant.
- h. Mentors will provide guidance and advice to assigned participant(s), including career planning, information on organization culture, and other developmental assistance. Assignment of mentors is required for Recent Graduates and PMF participants within 90 days of their appointment. Mentors may be assigned to Interns.

## 5. PROCEDURES

- a. Program Labels. Components often have other intern programs in addition to those in the PP. Within the Department, Components will identify their programs by adding the Component's name to the appropriate PP name listed below:

XXXXXX Pathways Internship Program (Example: Department of the Navy Pathways Internship Program)

XXXXXX Recent Graduates Program (Example: Defense Logistics Agency Recent Graduates Program)

XXXXXX Presidential Management Fellows Program (Example: Department of the Air Force Presidential Management Fellows Program)

- b. Identification of PP Opportunities. Each Component will provide the DoD PPO a projection of the PP Opportunities for each Program for the upcoming fiscal year, as requested. The projection will include information required by OPM and DoD.
- c. Vacancy Announcements
  - (1) Components will post job opportunity announcements to USAJOBS for all PP positions.

- (2) An announcement may cover multiple positions.
- (3) An announcement may limit the area of consideration to a specific geographic area which is expected to provide a sufficient applicant pool. Veterans and diversity of the applicant pool are to be considered in determining the applicant pool. The area of consideration cannot be limited to specific academic institutions.
- (4) An announcement will indicate the potential for conversion to a permanent or term appointment in the competitive service, as appropriate. PP Intern positions announced with not-to-exceed (NTE) dates are for temporary, short-term use only, such as summer employment programs. These NTE positions will not be used for subsequent noncompetitive conversions to other PP appointments.

d. PP applications will only be accepted through USAJOBS.

e. The Office of the General Counsel of the Department of Defense and other organizations which employ civilian attorneys (0905 occupational series) in DoD are provided flexibility to recruit legal Interns on a short-term (NTE) basis by posting ads (versus posting and receipt of applications through job opportunity announcements) on USAJOBS. Flexibility is due to the unique nature of such Intern's assignments and their inability to be noncompetitively converted to positions in the competitive service since attorneys are in the excepted service pursuant to section 213.3102 of 5 CFR. The following provisions apply when using this flexibility:

- (1) Ads must inform applicants on how to apply (e.g., provide a publicly accessible link to the agency's web site that provides further information on how to apply). The information must include: position title, series, and grade; geographic location of the position; how to apply; and other information required by OPM, DoD, and the Component. Use of this flexibility must also meet the requirements in sections 362.105 and 362.203 of 5 CFR and other regulatory requirements applicable to the Pathways Internship Program.
- (2) Organizations must work with their PPC on using this flexibility to ensure appropriate procedures are used for posting opportunities on USAJOBS; receipt of applications; rating, ranking, and referring qualified candidates, while affording veterans' preference pursuant to 5 CFR part 302; notifying applicants of receipt of their applications and their status; and any other requirements.

f. Candidates will be assessed on basic eligibility for PP using OPM qualification standards and in accordance with 5 CFR part 302 procedures, including application of Veterans' Preference. However, for PP Interns, Components may establish agency-specific qualification requirements, use the OPM Qualification Standard for Schedule D Pathways Internship Programs, or use the OPM qualification requirements for the competitive service. At the time of their conversion to the competitive service, PP participants must meet the requirements stipulated by the appropriate OPM qualification standard for the competitive service position.

- g. Qualified candidates will be rated and ranked using a category-like rating.
- h. When filling Recent Graduates two-grade interval professional and administrative positions at the GS-05 or GS-07 level (or equivalent) with promotion potential of GS-09 or higher, Components must use the Administrative Careers With America (ACWA) assessment or other valid assessment for such positions identified in Appendix D of the OPM Delegated Examining Operations Handbook. When using assessments other than ACWA, such assessments must comply with the requirements in 5 CFR part 300, DEOH Chapter 2, Section C, and be consistent with the technical standards in the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (Uniform Guidelines) (see 29 CFR part 1607).
- i. Components will establish procedures to ensure PP participants are processed/on boarded in a timely and meaningful manner, ensuring IDPs are developed and mentors, where applicable, are assigned within the prescribed timeframes.
- j. Each PP participant will complete the appropriate PP Participant Agreement upon appointment. The ending date of the agreement will be input in the appropriate data field in Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS).
- k. Components will adhere to 5 CFR part 362 in the design and implementation of a formal training and development plan within 45 days of the participant's appointment. The design and implementation of the training will vary based on the occupational series, position requirements, and the specific PP. Training for Recent Graduates will consist of at least 40 hours of interactive formal training per year. Training for PMFs will consist of at least 80 hours of interactive formal training per year. Additionally, training plans may include projects and developmental assignments, as appropriate. The Recent Graduates Programs identified in the attached listing of exceptions to the 1 year limit will not exceed 2 years, plus up to 120 days extension, if appropriate. A formal training and development plan will not be required for short-term temporary work not exceeding 90 days, such as summer jobs. Completed training will be documented in the employee's record.
- l. Mentors will be assigned to Recent Graduates and PMFs within 90 days of their appointments. Mentors may be assigned to Interns.
- m. Any break in the Program for Interns will be when the Intern is working but is unable to go to school, or is neither attending classes nor working at the agency. The Component may use its discretion in either approving or denying a request for a break in the Program.
- n. Extension of a PP Recent Graduate or PMF appointment, up to 120 days, is decided on a case-by-case basis. Extensions will only be approved for a reason that was beyond the control of the organization and/or the participant. (Examples: death in participant's immediate family, extended illness of the participant, Component directed furloughs). Extension requests will be submitted to the Component PPC for coordination of the final decision. The appropriate change to the program end date will be updated in DCPDS for tracking purposes.

- o. Conversion/Termination. PP participants will be converted/terminated as provided in 5 CFR part 362. The PPO will be notified in advance if a Component anticipates a participant, who will satisfactorily complete their program, will not be converted due to circumstances internal to that Component. This may allow for the participant to be converted in another Component within DoD.
- p. Reports will be provided as requested by the DoD PPO or the DoD PMF Coordinator.
- q. Questions or clarification of PP regulations or policy will be submitted through the Component PPC to the PPO.