

**The Defense College Acquisition Internship  
Program (DCAIP)  
Implementing Guidance**



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## **Department of War College Acquisition Internship Program (DCAIP)**

### **Mission**

The Defense College Acquisition Internship Program (DCAIP) aims to cultivate the next generation of acquisition professionals by providing immersive, hands-on experience within the Department of War (DoW or Department). Aligned with the Human Capital Initiatives (HCI) and the Warfighting Acquisition University (WarU), DCAIP helps create and sustain a workforce with the skills, training, and operational awareness championed in the Department of War's Acquisition Transformation Strategy by building a pipeline of emergent acquisition professionals capable of delivering capability quickly, flexibly, and at wartime speed under the new Warfighting Acquisition System paradigm. Through structured development and mentorship, DCAIP supports the statutory responsibilities of the Secretary of War (SECWAR) and Under Secretary of War for Acquisition and Sustainment (USW(A&S)) under the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), ensuring a highly skilled and mission-ready warfighting acquisition workforce (WAW).

### **Overview**

DCAIP is a paid summer internship for college sophomores and juniors, introducing them to the acquisition workforce. Through hands-on experience in fields such as contracting, logistics, engineering, and program management, interns gain a foundational understanding of how civilian professionals support the readiness and lethality of the Warfighter. Interns are placed with DoW agencies and Military Services across the country, contributing to real-world projects that sustain critical equipment and manage acquisition programs.

DCAIP is a key component of the Department's strategic talent acquisition efforts, aligned with the National Defense Strategy's call for a modern, agile, and highly skilled civilian workforce. Since its inception in 2017, DCAIP has increased awareness of the DoW's civilian career opportunities, through extensive outreach to colleges and universities, creating a strong pipeline of future acquisition professionals, dedicated to public service and mission success.

### **Program Authority**

DCAIP is authorized under Title 10, United States Code (U.S.C.) section 1742, empowering the SECWAR to establish education and training programs for a highly qualified acquisition workforce. This includes internship programs that provide structured learning, career development, and accelerated opportunities for individuals preparing for acquisition positions within the DoW. Additionally, DCAIP aligns with the Federal Government's Pathways Programs framework, specifically governed by Title 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), section 362.107, which permits the noncompetitive conversion of eligible interns to term or permanent positions in the competitive service upon successful completion of their internship and program requirements. Further authority is supported by 82 Federal Register (FR) 52104, outlining the DoW's authority to conduct personnel demonstration projects for the civilian acquisition workforce, including initiatives like DCAIP designed to attract, develop, and retain top talent in support of national defense priorities.

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## GENERAL PROVISIONS

### **1. Purpose**

The DCAIP is a competitive, paid, 10-12-week summer program authorized under 10 U.S.C. § 1742, which empowers the SECWAR to establish education and training initiatives to develop a highly qualified acquisition workforce. DCAIP is designed to attract a competitive pool of full-time undergraduate students pursuing relevant degrees and provide them with structured learning, real-world experience, and early exposure to the DoW's acquisition culture and mission.

To support the Department's long-term talent pipeline, HCI centrally funds term positions for participating students during their summer break. Consistent with the Pathways Programs framework (5 CFR § 362.107), students who successfully complete DCAIP may be non-competitively converted to a permanent federal position, ensuring continuity in the WAW and strengthening mission readiness.

Further supported by the DoW's personnel demonstration authorities granted in 82 FR 52104, DCAIP advances national defense priorities by adopting talent acquisition best practices and offering Components a ready-made mechanism for identifying and retaining high-potential candidates. Specifically, the program will:

- a) Emulate industry recruiting strategies to remain competitive on college campuses;
- b) Position the WAW to effectively compete with private-sector recruiters;
- c) Expand the use of Direct Hire Authorities (DHAs) and align hiring practices with new flexibilities; and
- d) Reduce the burden on the DoW's Components by offering a centrally managed internship pipeline that supports future talent development.

### **OPM Internship Hiring Program Information and Memorandum of Agreement: Roles and Responsibilities**

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be executed between the DoW Component and HCI, as the Program Manager, on behalf of the USW(A&S). HCI will provide the framework for cooperation between the two parties to participate in the DCAIP. This MOA is executed pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 1742, 5 CFR § 362.107, and the authority of Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Account (DAWDA). All actions under this MOA will comply with applicable law, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations, and DoW policies.

The MOA will establish the following roles and responsibilities:

- a) HCI will:
  - 1) Establish and manage the DCAIP;
  - 2) Centrally fund DCAIP student labor with DAWDA and transfer funds to the respective Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM) or Director, Acquisition Talent Management (DATM) office, where the DoW Component

Point of Contact (POC) will work with business financial managers to distribute funding to each command. Travel expenses may be paid upon request from the Component POC based on availability of funds;

- 3) Issue and maintain strategic and program guidance;
- 4) Provide DCAIP strategic communications, public notice via social media and [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov), and outreach to the DoW's Components and academic institutions;
- 5) Place and manage the DCAIP student applications on [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov);
- 6) Review applications for eligibility determination;
- 7) Work with WARU Human Resources Office and Servicing Human Resources Offices to develop job announcements, position descriptions, and assessment questions;
- 8) Distribute eligible applicant certification packages to participating DoW Components; and
- 9) Maintain student application records in compliance with OPM requirements, the Privacy Act of 1974, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) standards, and applicable DoW cybersecurity policies.

b) The DoW Component agrees to:

- 1) Adopt all DoW Component provisions and duties included in the DCAIP Guide;
- 2) Designate a DCAIP Component Lead who will:
  - Serve as the Component's intern advocate;
  - Liaise with HCI;
  - Manage and oversee the Component program;
  - Execute DCAIP in accordance with HCI program guidance;
  - Assist with outreach and branding;
  - Participate in the intern selection process;
  - Respond to HCI reporting requirements; and
  - Ensure execution of DAWDA funds for student labor and incentives
  - Return unexecuted funds by August 15
- 3) Execute Human Resources (HR) functions, including:
  - Designate an HR advocate that will participate in all DCAIP meetings;
  - Prepare DCAIP "student trainee" position descriptions (e.g., 0399, 0899, 0599), as applicable;
  - Participate in the intern selection process;
  - Generate Requests for Personnel Actions (RPAs);
  - Issue/rescind Tentative Job Offers (TJOs), as appropriate;
  - Initiate security clearance investigations upon acceptance of TJOs;
  - Initiate drug testing, if required;
  - Issue Firm Job Offers (FJOs); and
  - Maintain student application records in compliance with OPM requirements, the Privacy Act of 1974, and NARA standards and applicable DoW cybersecurity policies.

- 4) Provide a meaningful onboarding and integration process;
  - 5) Assign each intern a mentor/sponsor;
  - 6) Document training and development, including completion of any courses taken in support of DAWIA Certification;
    - Note: All first-time DCAIP interns should complete ACQ 0010 Welcome to Defense Acquisition, through WARU
  - 7) As determined by agency, convert eligible DCAIP interns to full-time entry-level acquisition positions upon graduation;
  - 8) Notify HCI of any change in status, including appointment, reappointment, extension of appointment, certification of completion of program, resignation, termination, readmission, and/or conversion; and
  - 9) Ensure that interns are provided with a safe and supportive work environment consistent with applicable federal workplace safety standards, DoW anti-harassment policies, and any relevant local command requirements.
  - 10) Ensure that official travel or relocation incentives funded through DAWDA is arranged and administered in compliance with DoW travel regulations.
- 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, onboarding, intern progress, and funding;
  - 2) Cooperate to resolve issues. If resolution cannot be achieved at the working level, disputes will be elevated to the Director, Human Capital Initiatives, and the appropriate Component Acquisition Executive for final determination;
  - 3) Evaluate the effectiveness of the program by jointly establishing performance metrics such as intern placement, completion, and conversion rates, with annual reporting to support continuous improvement; and
  - 4) Recognize that either party may terminate its participation under this MOA by providing a 60 days notice written to the other party. Termination shall not affect the validity of obligations incurred prior to the effective date of termination.

### **3. Public Notification**

HCI will develop and implement public notification and advertising for DCAIP. Such notifications will include program details, position duties, occupational series and grade, salary information, geographic locations, eligibility requirements, and application procedures.

- a) Official Job Announcement will be made at: <https://www.USAJobs.gov>
- b) HCI Website: <https://www.dau.edu/hci/acq-career-internship>
- c) For questions about DCAIP, contact [DoDCollegeInternship@dau.edu](mailto:DoDCollegeInternship@dau.edu).

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

The Director of HCI retains exclusive authority to establish and maintain oversight of the program and to establish limits 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. Conversions of DCAIP participants from intern to full time employees are at the discretion of the Component.

#### **5. Selection**

All DCAIP positions are announced on [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov). Applicants must submit a complete application package by the closing date and time listed in the announcement.

- a) Eligibility Review: Applications are first reviewed to ensure candidates meet the minimum qualifications based on OPM qualification standards for student trainees and any specific requirements.

Applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications or submit incomplete application packages will not be considered for further evaluation.

- b) Best-Qualified Determination: Candidates who meet minimum qualifications are then evaluated to determine the “best-qualified” group. This may include a structured review of resumes against the job requirements and, where applicable, use of category rating procedures.
- c) Assessments: While DCAIP currently relies on resume review, basic questionnaires and interviews, the Department may in the future use additional tools such as the USA Hire online assessment ([USA Hire<sup>SM</sup>](#)) or other work-related assessments to evaluate general competencies and job-related skills.
- d) Interviews: The DoW Components may conduct in-person or virtual interviews with candidates to assess fitness for the organization and position.
- e) Tentative Selection and Offers: The hiring manager reviews the best-qualified candidates and selects those who best meet mission needs. Components then extend TJOs no later than mid-February. After applicants accept a TJO, the Component initiates required pre-employment processes, including security clearance investigations and drug testing, if applicable.
- f) Conditional and Final Offers: Selected applicants receive a conditional offer of employment contingent upon successfully completing all pre-employment requirements. Once those requirements are satisfied, a FJO is issued, and the candidate is scheduled for onboarding.

Appointments are made under the same rules that govern term, career, or career-conditional federal employment. DoW Components are responsible for ensuring students are processed and onboarded in a timely and meaningful manner.

#### **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 as part of their application package on [USAJobs.gov](https://USAJobs.gov). For more information on veterans' preference view [FedsHireVets](https://FedsHireVets).

### **7. Citizenship**

Student applicants must be U.S. citizens to be eligible for security clearances and noncompetitive conversion to the competitive service upon approval of successful completion of the program.

### **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 DoW Components.

### **10. Appointment**

Participating DoW Components are responsible for coordinating with their local Human Resources Office (HRO) to confirm the availability of hiring authorities and to make DCAIP appointments in accordance with the implementation guidance for applicable DHAs. Common authorities that may be used include, but are not limited to:

- a) Post-Secondary Students and Recent Graduates (Pathways);
- b) DoD Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project Student Intern;
- c) Department of Defense Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory (STRL);
- d) Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS), DoDI 1400.25, Volume 2005; and
- e) Schedule A, "Hiring Authority for People with Disabilities" (5 CFR 213.3102(u) and 5 CFR part 302).

Additional information on hiring authorities applicable to the WAW can be found in the DoW resource: DoD Acquisition Workforce Hiring Authorities (as of March 2025), available at [https://www.dau.edu/sites/default/files/2025-03/DoD-Acquisition-Workforce-Hiring-Authorities-%20as-of-March%202025\\_V2.pdf](https://www.dau.edu/sites/default/files/2025-03/DoD-Acquisition-Workforce-Hiring-Authorities-%20as-of-March%202025_V2.pdf).

### **11. Classification**

All DCAIP interns must be classified as **Student Trainee** in the "xx99" occupational series of the appropriate career field, based on the personnel system under which the position falls.

- *Examples:* NH I-0899 (Technical), NH I 0399 (Non-Technical), GS 0899 (Technical), GS 0399 (Non-Technical), GS 0599 (Financial), GG 0899 (Technical), or GG 0399 (Non-Technical).

For recruitment purposes, only **four job announcements** are used, covering the following occupational series, unless specific requests with justification are made to the HCI Program Manager:

- **0399 – Non-Technical**
- **0899 – Technical**

- **0599 – Financial**
- **1199 - Business and Industry**

Components may use their own position descriptions provided they are properly classified within these series. The position descriptions used for the job announcements are generic but appropriately classified by grade and series for the work to be performed.

### **12. Intern Schedules**

Interns will work full-time (40 hours per week) for up to 12 weeks, not to exceed 480 hours, during each summer of program participation. Participating DoW Components are responsible for arranging intern work schedules, which may include use of accrued leave. Interns will also receive paid federal holidays that fall within the internship period, which typically include Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Independence Day. At the Supervisor's discretion, interns may be granted unpaid time off for vacation during the scheduled weeks.

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

At the conclusion of the summer internship, DoW Components may place interns into a leave without pay (LWOP) status upon their return to school so that they may be returned to duty during the following summer or holiday break, provided they still meet the program's eligibility requirements. Interns still meeting the provisions of the DCAIP program will not need to reapply. Participating DoW 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) If applicant is NOT graduating before the next summer program begins, the applicant will need to obtain a waiver from HCI for extenuating circumstances.

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

Although DoW Components are not obligated, Components 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. This authority is provided under the Pathways Programs regulations at 5 CFR § 362.107, which permits the noncompetitive conversion of eligible interns into the competitive service upon successful completion of their program requirements. For the WAW, this authority is also consistent with 10 U.S.C. § 1742, which empowers the SECWAR to establish education and training programs, including internships, that support the development and retention of a highly qualified acquisition workforce.

Students who are converted to a competitive service position will have their pay set by the Component's HR office. In making pay determinations, HR should consider recent graduate appointments, skills, and labor market conditions to ensure salaries are commensurate with qualifications. Students may be placed at a GS-05, GS-07 or GS-09 (or equivalent pay band) provided they meet the OPM qualification standards for the applicable job series and grade.

To be eligible for conversion, an intern must:

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

### **15. Separations**

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

## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

### **1. Application Period**

The application window will be announced annually on the HCI website and social media, as well as on [USAJobs.gov](https://USAJobs.gov). All applications must be submitted through [USAJobs.gov](https://USAJobs.gov) and will only be accepted while the job announcement is open. Announcements generally open in mid-September and close in mid-October at 11:59 p.m. (EST). Applicants should note that [USAJobs.gov](https://USAJobs.gov) postings may close without advance notice once the maximum number of applications has been received, which will be stated on the announcement.

Incomplete application packages will not be considered. Applications will NOT be accepted early or after the announcement has closed.

### **2. Participating DoW Components**

Students will have the opportunity to perform their internships within DoW Components participating in the DCAIP. Participating DoW Components may vary year-to-year based on resources and hiring needs. Students selected will be placed in a DoW 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.

### **5. Location**

Students will choose from a list of geographic locations coinciding with participating DoW 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**

Interns will earn an hourly rate set in accordance with OPM pay guidelines and determined by their qualifications and education level. For reference, most interns are paid within the range of GS-3, Step 1 through GS-4, Step 10, including applicable locality pay adjustments based on the geographic location of the duty station. This means interns in higher cost-of-living areas, as recognized by OPM, will receive a higher salary even at the same grade and step (or equivalent). Current OPM salary tables are available at: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>.

While GS pay tables are used to illustrate pay levels, interns may also be hired under a payband system such as AcqDemo, STRL, or DCIPS. These systems provide additional flexibility in setting starting salaries, but the resulting pay is designed to be broadly consistent with GS rates for similar positions.

## **7. Benefits**

The program offers interns an opportunity to gain the relevant work experience. Other benefits include:

- Opportunities to gain experience in research, analysis, report writing, oral briefings, policy development, program analysis, and computer applications related to the acquisition workforce;
- Paid salary;
- Training/Mentoring;
- Security clearance;
- Earn annual leave, sick leave and paid federal holidays;
- May qualify for travel expenses (determined by DoW Component). Funding may be provided by HCI, if available; and
- The opportunity to noncompetitively convert to a permanent WAW position upon successful completion of the program after graduation.

## **8. Eligibility Requirements**

This program is for full-time, currently-enrolled sophomores and juniors college students. To be considered, a student cannot graduate before August of the summer program. Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- a. Be a U.S. citizen;
- b. Be determined suitable for federal employment through a background investigation;
- c. Be able to obtain and maintain a security clearance;
- d. Be enrolled full-time as a sophomore or junior at an [accredited college or university](#) with at least 24 credit hours completed toward a degree program;
- e. Have a minimum GPA of 3.0/4.0;
- f. Be available for an interview and other applicable processing;
- g. Be available for the 10-12 week summer program (generally, May/June through August);
- h. If male, over 18 years of age be registered with the [Selective Service System](#) (if over age 18 and born after December 31, 1959); and,
- i. Comply with any additional requirements, including pre-employment drug testing as designated in the conditions of employment.

## **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 2-page maximum 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;

- b) 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 experience(s). 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.
- c) 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 academic institution, current GPA/academic standing, past and current coursework, and degree program.
- d) Proof of Enrollment or Class Registration and documentation that states anticipated graduation date.<sup>1</sup>
- e) 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 ten-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!***

## **10. Timeline Milestones**

- a) **Early Fall:** Applications will be accepted through [USAJobs.gov](#) until either the maximum number of applications for a location has been received or until 11:59 p.m. (EST) on the closing date stated in the announcement (generally mid-October).
- b) **Late October – Mid November:** DCAIP Eligible Intern Certificates sent to Component Intern Representatives for their review and selection in late October. Ineligible students will be notified by [USAJobs.gov](#) directly;
- c) **December:** Components inform HCI Program Manager of the applicants they intend to interview and possibly hire.
- d) **December – Mid-January:** Students under consideration should be contacted for interviews by participating DoW Component Human Resource Offices (HROs). HROs should make TJO's upon selection;
- e) **NLT Late February:**
  - o TJOs extended by servicing DoW Component HRO
- f) Security clearance background investigations are initiated

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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.

- g) **15 April:** FJOs should be extended to ALL selectees upon grant of interim secret clearances;
- h) **Late May/ Early June:** Interns Enter On Duty (EOD) Date and HCI-hosted Orientation;
- i) **Late May – Early August:** Summer internship program runs;
- j) **Early August:** Students’ participation in Summer Internship Program completed;
- k) **Late August:** Interns may be placed in LWOP status or separated by the DoW Components in accordance with local policy.

## **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.dcpas.osd.mil/sites/default/files/Priority%20Placement%20Program%20Handbook%201%20October%202023.pdf>;
- b) Priority Placement Program (PPP) Exemption and Implementing Instructions for AcqDemo Student Intern Direct Hiring Authority (DHA), <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/sites/default/files/PPP%20Exemption%20for%20AcqDemo%20Intern%20Positions%20-%20508.pdf>;
- c) Implementing Instructions for Department of Defense Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratory (STRL) Direct Hiring Authority (DHA), <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/10/17/2022-22527/department-of-defense-science-and-technology-reinvention-laboratory-personnel-demonstration-project>;
- d) Department of Defense Instruction 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.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/140025/140025\\_vol2005.PDF?ver=2020-02-06-140852-567](https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/140025/140025_vol2005.PDF?ver=2020-02-06-140852-567);
- 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 DoW. It is highly encouraged you read the security clearance adjudication guidelines that can found at:

<https://news.clearancejobs.com/2021/03/05/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

an 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 wage for the duration of the program. Pay is set in accordance with OPM guidelines and is determined by the student's qualifications and education level. Interns generally earn between an equivalent of GS-3, Step 1 and a GS-4, Step 10, with adjustments for locality pay based on the geographic location of the duty station. Interns in higher cost-of-living areas, as recognized by OPM, receive higher pay at the same grade and step (or equivalent).

**3) How is this program funded?**

**A:** DCAIP is funded by DAWDA; HR Services and billets provided by Component.

**4) Is this program the same as Pathways?**

**A:** No. DCAIP is not part of the Federal Pathways Programs. DCAIP is a direct hire program managed by the HCI Directorate under the authority of 10 U.S.C. § 1742 and funded through DAWDA.

While DCAIP is separate from Pathways, it aligns with certain elements of the Pathways Internship Program framework (5 CFR § 362.107) by allowing noncompetitive conversion of eligible interns to term or permanent positions in the federal service upon successful completion of the program.

This distinction means that DCAIP is tailored specifically for the DoW's WAW, with centrally managed recruitment, funding, and program guidance provided by HCI. Participating Components gain access to a pipeline of highly qualified students without bearing the full administrative and financial burden of managing a separate internship program.

**5) Do I qualify for the internship if I have already completed my undergraduate degree?**

**A:** No, to be eligible for the DCAIP, you must be currently enrolled in a full-time undergraduate program. You may be eligible for other programs with the Federal Government. You should look at [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) for more information, <https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students/> or HCI's Entry-Level Career page: [ACQ Career & Internship | www.dau.edu](https://www.dau.edu).

**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. Students who are graduating in the fall of the program year would still be eligible for the summer prior to graduation. You may be eligible for other programs with the Federal Government. You should look at [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) for more information or <https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students/>.

- 7) Do I qualify for the internship if I graduate before the summer program initiates?**  
**A:** No, DCAIP is not a recent graduate program. You may be eligible for other programs with the Federal Government. You should look at [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov) for more information or <https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/unique-hiring-paths/students/>.
- 8) What skills/competencies is DCAIP looking for in a candidate?**  
**A:** Many DCAIP interns are majoring in STEM, Accounting, Business, or Humanities. However, we will consider students from all majors for appointment.
- 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@dau.edu](mailto:DoDcollegeinternship@dau.edu) 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.gov?**  
**A:** Yes, applications for the DCAIP program are only accepted through [USAJobs.gov](https://www.usajobs.gov).
- 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 11:59 p.m. EST on the date posted on the HCI website. You are encouraged to apply quickly and completely as the application window for popular locations will close earlier than the deadline.
- 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 DoW Component in advance. You are encouraged to seek a location where you have access to housing.
- 15) Do you provide a stipend for rent, utilities, etc.?**  
**A:** No, interns will not be provided a stipend for rent, utilities, etc.
- 16) Will the Government pay to ship my car?**  
**A:** No, 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 DoW, applicants must generally

not have used illegal drugs, including marijuana, or misused prescription drugs within the last 12 months. The issue of illegal drug, including marijuana, use prior to 12 months is carefully evaluated during the security processing. Drug abuse is one of the most common reasons applicants are denied a security clearance. Many jobs within the DoW require the applicant to be able to obtain and maintain a security clearance. Some jobs also require drug testing and a medical screening for safety or national security reasons.

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

**A:** While several states have legalized recreational marijuana under state law, and other states including 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 determination for employment. All illegal drug use, including marijuana, within the 12 months before the application submission date is carefully evaluated during the security process and any medical screening.

**19) What if the background investigation finds something disqualifying about me? Will I have a chance to explain?**

**A:** Yes. Before a final security clearance is denied, you will be given an opportunity to provide additional information to explain the circumstances surrounding the derogatory information. If the clearance is ultimately denied, you also have the right to appeal that decision. Applicants are strongly advised to be truthful and forthcoming throughout the investigative process, as failure to provide requested information is itself a serious issue.

It is important to note, however, that if you are unable to obtain the interim level clearance required to begin work, you may be delayed in starting your internship—or unable to participate at all. A denial of an interim clearance is not the same as a denial of a final security clearance. Questions about this process may be directed to [DoDCollegeInternships@dau.edu](mailto:DoDCollegeInternships@dau.edu).

**20) When can I expect to hear if I will be offered an internship?**

**A:** Participating DoW Components are responsible for selecting summer interns and notification will vary; however, if selected you should be notified no later than 1 March before the internship summer.

**21) How are selection decisions made by DoW Components?**

**A:** This varies by each DoW Component. Some factors that may be considered are your major, your GPA, your locations of interest, and interview.

**22) If I am eligible to convert out of my intern position to a permanent position, where will I be placed?**

**A:** If you are eligible for conversion, the location will typically be where you have worked your summer internship, however, the Component may have additional opportunities at other locations which you may be considered for. These discussions should occur with your Component's HR office.

**23)** If I am eligible to convert out of my intern position to a permanent position what will my salary be?

**A:** Students who are converted to a competitive service position will have their pay set by the Component's HR office. The HR office will consider other recent graduate appointments and that salaries should be adjusted commensurate with skills, labor/market conditions etc. Students can be placed in a GS-05/GS-07/GS-09 (or equivalent in non-GS pay systems such as Acquisition Demonstration, the Scientific Reinvention Labs or Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System) provided that they have met the OPM guidelines for the job series and grade.