U.S. Office of Personnel Management

Schedule Policy/Career: What it Means for You as an Employee - Updated June 8, 2026

Quick Reference Guide

This overview is for employees whose positions may be designated as Schedule Policy/Career (Schedule P/C). It explains, in plain language, what Schedule P/C is, why your position may be moved into it, and what changes — and doesn't change — for you as an employee.

What is Schedule Policy/Career?

- Schedule P/C is for career positions that are confidential or policy-influencing (policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating).
- These positions are not political appointments and are not part of the Senior Executive Service (SES).

How are positions designated?

- Your agency may recommend certain policy-influencing positions to OPM.
- Only the President has the authority to designate positions as Schedule P/C.
- Employees do not have a right to appeal a decision to designate or transfer a position into Schedule P/C.

What changes when a position moves into Schedule P/C?

If your position is moved into Schedule P/C, you remain a career federal employee, but some employment rules and appeal rights may change.

Nature of employment and trial period

- Schedule P/C positions are at-will and you will not serve a trial period.

Competitive Status

- If you already have competitive status and your current position is moved into Schedule P/C, you keep your competitive status.
- If you are hired into Schedule P/C without competitive status, you may gain competitive status after two years if you were hired using competitive merit hiring procedures.

What changes when a position moves into Schedule P/C? *(continued)*

Appeal rights and whistleblower protections

- **Performance-based actions (5 CFR part 432):** Schedule P/C employees cannot appeal these actions to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB).
- **Adverse actions (5 CFR part 752):** Schedule P/C employees cannot appeal these actions to MSPB.
- **Whistleblower protections:** Employees are covered by internal agency procedures as required by E.O. 13957.

What does not change?

- **Bargaining-unit status:** Moving into Schedule P/C does not automatically remove a position from an existing bargaining unit.
- **Retirement benefits:** There are no changes to your pension or retirement benefits.
- **Veterans' preference:** Veterans' preference remains unchanged.
- **Incentives:** If you are reassigned into Schedule P/C, you may continue to receive student loan repayment and recruitment, relocation, and retention (3R) incentives under existing service agreements. Employees may also be able to continue receiving retention incentives where there is no service agreement.

What you can do next?

- **Review your status:** Confirm with your HR office whether you have competitive status and how your move affects appeal rights and protections.
- **Talk with your HR office:** Ask how Schedule P/C affects your position, bargaining-unit questions, and agency procedures.
- **Ask about internal protections:** Request information on your agency's whistleblower reprisal protections and any internal grievance procedures.
- **Confirm incentives and agreements:** If you have student loan repayment or a 3R incentive(s), verify which agreement(s) remain in place and what conditions apply.

Where to go with questions?

- **Your HR office:** Questions on designation, competitive status, trial periods, and incentives.
- **Labor relations or your union (if applicable):** Bargaining-unit coverage and labor-management questions.