

PATHWAYS FLEXIBILITIES

Resource for Hiring Managers and Supervisors – Internship Program Edition

There are a number of Government-wide flexibilities within the existing [Pathways regulations](#), outlined below, that can help you and your colleagues more effectively use the Pathways Programs (Programs), particularly the Internship Program. We encourage you to review your Pathways Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and agency-specific policies before using any of these strategies. Please consult your Pathways Programs Officer (PPO) or a human resources (HR) professional for further guidance.

To learn more about the Internship Program, please visit the [Program Fact Sheet](#) on the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) website.

FLEXIBILITY	BENEFITS	HOW IT WORKS	SUPPORTING CITATION OR REFERENCE
Agencies may:			
Conduct outreach on campuses	<p>Target mission-critical and hard-to-reach occupations and audiences</p> <p>Meet agency diversity goals</p> <p>The ability to recruit locally and/or use familiar recruiting networks</p>	<p>Agencies have the discretion to conduct outreach on campuses before or without posting a job opportunity announcement (JOA) on USAJOBS, provided that they are participating in informational or awareness-type events or liaison activities.</p>	<p>5 CFR 362.203(a)</p> <p>Final Rule (Responses to Overarching Comments – #6)</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#5-10)</p>

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<p>Collect applications at an on-site recruiting event</p>	<p>Maintain relationships with talent partners</p> <p>Target mission-critical and hard-to-reach occupations and audiences</p> <p>Meet agency diversity goals</p> <p>Reduce your recruitment timeline</p>	<p>To collect applications at an on-site recruiting event for Interns, agencies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post an advertisement that publicizes the event on USAJOBS; • Make the event open to the public and part of an overall recruitment strategy; • Provide instructions on how candidates can apply if they are unable to attend the event; and • Have HR professionals and hiring managers on-site to assess applications and conduct interviews, as well as make selections. 	<p>5 CFR 362.105</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#7, #9 and #10)</p>

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<p>Post an advertisement rather than a JOA</p>	<p>Experience greater flexibility in advertising and receiving applications through means other than, or in addition to, your Talent Acquisition System (TAS) (e.g., USA Staffing)</p> <p>Receive and/or review applications at on-site recruiting events</p> <p>Make the rating and ranking process more manageable for HR professionals</p> <p>Make the review of the list of eligibles more manageable for hiring managers</p> <p>Allow applicants to be notified of their status more quickly</p>	<p>Agencies may advertise an Internship position using a JOA or by posting an advertisement on USAJOBS.</p> <p>Posting an advertisement for an Internship position is different from posting a JOA in that the “Apply Online” button is not a part of its functionality. This means that applicants cannot submit their applications directly through USAJOBS. Therefore, agencies must include instructions on where to find information to apply for the position within the body of the advertisement.</p>	<p>5 CFR 362.104(c) 5 CFR 362.105(b) 5 CFR 362.203</p> <p>Final Rule (Responses to Overarching Comments – #6)</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#12)</p> <p>OPM Pathways Transition and Implementation Guidance (Appendix E)</p>
<p>Recruit students up to nine months before they complete their academic requirements</p>	<p>Enhance your ability to compete with private sector and other employers for talented students and recent graduates</p> <p>Experience greater flexibility in syncing your recruitment timelines with academic calendars</p> <p>Provide applicants with a greater number of employment opportunities in Government</p>	<p>Agencies inform applicants in the JOA of how soon they may apply for the position prior to completing their academic requirements.</p> <p>The JOA should state that all qualification requirements must be met by applicants before they may enter on duty.</p> <p>Agencies using their own qualification standards for Pathways Interns may adopt similar provisions in order to use this flexibility.</p>	<p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#21)</p> <p>OPM Qualification Standards (General Policies, Application of Qualification Standards, 4.d. Educational and Training Provisions or Requirements, College or University Education)</p>

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<p>Use pay flexibilities and/or incentives for Internship positions</p>	<p>Attract and retain talented students</p> <p>Enhance your ability to compete with private sector and other employers for talented candidates</p>	<p>Agencies determine if the use of incentives (e.g., recruitment, relocation and retention incentives; student loan repayment assistance; superior qualifications and special needs pay settings; maximum payable rate rules; etc.) is appropriate and offers them to eligible applicants.</p>	<p>5 CFR 362.105(j) 5 CFR 531.212 5 CFR 537 5 CFR 575 (Subparts A, B and C)</p>
<p>Consider non-U.S. citizens for Internship positions</p> <p><i>Pathways participants must be U.S. citizens in order to be eligible for conversion to permanent positions</i></p>	<p>Expand the pool of qualified applicants for mission-critical positions, in particular</p>	<p>Agencies may hire non-U.S. citizens under any of the Pathways Programs provided that they meet applicable immigration requirements.</p> <p>Participants in the Programs must be U.S. citizens in order to be eligible for non-competitive conversion to the competitive service.</p>	<p>5 CFR 362.105(e)</p> <p>OPM Pathways Transition and Implementation Guidance (Citizenship)</p>
<p>Consider competitive status candidates for Internship positions</p>	<p>Expand the pool of qualified applicants for available positions</p> <p>Recruit candidates with valuable Federal experience</p> <p>Develop and retain existing talent</p>	<p>Agencies may consider all eligible and qualified applicants for Pathways positions, including applicants with competitive status.</p> <p>When applicants include those with competitive status, agencies should be aware of certain considerations when appointing them (e.g., applicants must leave the competitive service in order to accept an excepted service position).</p>	<p>5 CFR 302.102(b) 5 CFR 315.713(b) 5 CFR 315.201(c) 5 CFR 362.204 5 CFR 362.205 5 CFR 550.703</p>

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<p>Choose whether to appoint not-to-exceed (NTE) or longer-term, indefinite Interns</p>	<p>Hire the types of Interns who will best meet your agency's needs</p>	<p>Intern NTE appointments should be used for work that is short-term, of a project-oriented nature or of similarly limited duration. Intent to convert Interns NTE should be rare, though the JOAs for their positions should indicate the possibility of such conversion.</p> <p>In order for Interns NTE who were hired without the possibility of non-competitive conversion to be converted to longer-term, indefinite Interns, they must compete for these opportunities.</p>	<p>5 CFR 362.203</p> <p>Final Rule (Reponses to Comments on the Regulations – page 28207 (columns two and three))</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#41-42)</p>
<p>Establish a minimum GPA above the 2.0 requirement for Internship positions</p>	<p>Improve the quality of Intern hires</p> <p>Ensure that Interns have an incentive to maintain a strong academic record while participating in the Program</p>	<p>Agencies should review applicant data to see what impact, if any, a higher GPA would have had on applicant pools for Pathways positions.</p> <p>If no adverse effect is found on veterans who applied to and were qualified for the opportunities, agencies may establish a GPA above the 2.0 requirement.</p>	<p>Final Rule (Reponses to Comments on the Regulations – pages 28204 (column three) to 28205 (column one))</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#15 and #24)</p> <p>OPM Pathways Transition and Implementation Guidance (Appendix B – Sample Internship Program Participant Agreement)</p>
<p>Limit the number of days a JOA is open</p>	<p>Make the rating and ranking process more manageable for HR professionals</p> <p>Make the review of the list of eligibles more manageable for hiring managers</p> <p>Allow applicants to be notified of their status more quickly</p>	<p>Agencies must list the opening and closing dates in the JOA.</p>	<p>5 CFR 302.301</p> <p>Final Rule (Responses to Overarching Comments – #6)</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#15)</p> <p>OPM Delegated Examining Operations Handbook</p>

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Set a cap on the number of applications received	<p>Make the rating and ranking process more manageable for HR professionals</p> <p>Make the review of the list of eligibles more manageable for hiring managers</p> <p>Allow applicants to be notified of their status more quickly</p>	Agencies must include language in the JOA that states that it will close after receipt of a specified number of applications (e.g., 200 applications).	<p>5 CFR 302.301</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#15)</p> <p>OPM Delegated Examining Operations Handbook</p>
Decide which qualification standards to use to hire Interns	<p>Target qualified applicants</p> <p>Enhance the quality of your applicant pool</p>	Agencies may establish agency-specific qualification standards or use the OPM qualification standards for the competitive service in place of the “Group Coverage Qualification Standards for Schedule D Internship Appointments.”	<p>5 CFR 362.203(c)</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#29)</p> <p>Group Coverage Qualification Standards for Schedule D Internship Appointments</p>
Modify Participant Agreements	Ensure that the expectations outlined in Participant Agreements best meet your agency’s needs	<p>Agencies have discretion to tailor Participant Agreements for each of the Pathways Programs.</p> <p>While these documents must include certain elements (e.g., general descriptions of duties and work schedules), agencies have the flexibility to incorporate additional components into them (e.g., points of contact at educational institutions).</p>	5 CFR 362.106

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<p>Waive up to 320 of the hours needed for Interns to convert to the competitive service</p>	<p>Enhance your ability to compete with private sector and other employers for talented students and recent graduates</p> <p>Recognize the knowledge, skills and abilities that students and recent graduates gained through diverse experiences</p> <p>Gain the ability to convert qualified, valuable employees more quickly and aid in their retention</p>	<p>Conversion eligibility requirements, including hours required for conversion, must be reflected in Participant Agreements.</p> <p>Interns must complete 640 hours of work in order to be eligible for conversion to the competitive service. In order to more quickly convert Interns to the competitive service, agencies may grant credit for up to 320 hours for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding academic achievement and exceptional job performance; • Other comparable Federal* or non-federal (e.g., third-party) internship experience; or • Certain active duty military or volunteer service. <p><i>*Hours spent in a previous Pathways Internship may be credited toward the hours needed for Interns to convert to the competitive service.</i></p>	<p>5 CFR 362.204</p> <p>OPM Pathways Transition and Implementation Guidance (Student Schedules and Conversion to the Competitive Service)</p> <p>OPM Program Fact Sheets (Internship Program)</p>

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<p>Convert eligible Interns to permanent positions at any agency within 120 days of Program completion</p>	<p>Expand the pool of qualified applicants for positions at agencies across Government</p> <p>Select candidates from a pre-vetted set of students and recent graduates</p> <p>Retain talented students and recent graduates, and meet your hiring needs</p> <p>Provide Interns with greater employment opportunities in Government</p>	<p>An Intern who has met all Program requirements may be converted to a position within her or his employing agency or any other agency within 120 days of Program completion.</p> <p>OPM and the Partnership for Public Service are developing an Intern Database that will help agencies to identify conversion-eligible Interns from across Government.</p> <p>Until this tool is released, agencies are encouraged to reach out to one another to find and connect with conversion-eligible Interns from other organizations.</p>	<p>5 CFR 362.107(c)</p>
<p>Convert Interns to term appointments first and then to permanent positions later on</p>	<p>Retain Pathways participants even when permanent positions are not immediately available</p>	<p>Agencies may convert a Pathways Intern to a term appointment—one to four years—within 120 days of Program completion.</p> <p>Agencies may then convert an Intern from the term appointment to a career or career conditional (permanent) appointment when a position or slot becomes available.</p>	<p>5 CFR 362.107(b) 5 CFR 362.204(a)</p> <p>OPM Pathways FAQs (#45)</p>