



Title: Federal Career Intern Program

Approved By: J. Blackburn

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I. Purpose. To establish policies and procedures for the implementation and operation of OFHEO's Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP). This program will be used in conjunction with other recruitment methods to assist in recruiting and attracting exceptional candidates who have a variety of experience and competencies necessary to carry out the OFHEO's mission.

II. Scope. Consistent with Federal regulations, the program may be used to fill any entry level professional and administrative positions at the OF-12, 14 and 16 grade levels (equivalent to the General Schedule GS-5, 7 and 9). Positions will have promotion potential up to the OF-20 level.

III. Authority and References. The Federal Career Intern Program was created in July 2000 by Executive Order 13162. The FCIP is codified in law at 5 CFR 213.3202 (o). In addition to 5 CFR 213, OFHEO must also follow the provisions of 5 CFR 302 and 315 in the execution of the FCIP.

IV. Policy. OFHEO will use the following procedures to manage the FCIP:

A. Recruitment. Recruitment for the FCIP will be targeted to a variety of sources with the potential of producing highly-qualified candidates, such as colleges and universities, professional organizations, referrals and/or other institutions of higher education through job fairs, professional journals and college visits. Although not required, the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) may issue public notice to assist recruitment efforts for FCIP positions.

Current Federal employees applying to FCIP positions will be considered in the same manner as external candidates. Because positions in the FCIP are in the excepted service, clearance of Inter-Agency Career Transition Assistance Program (ICTAP) is not required.

The FCIP procedures will not be used to circumvent the requirement for competition under merit staffing procedures, or competitive hiring procedures such as Delegated Examining Unit or the Luevano Consent Decree.

B. Eligibility and Qualifications. Candidates for the FCIP must be US Citizens. Candidates will be evaluated using the minimum qualifications requirements established in OFHEO's qualification standards.

Title: Federal Career Intern Program

C. Evaluation: Qualified applicants will be further evaluated by the use of knowledge, skill and ability factors to determine their category ranking (i.e. Best-Qualified, Well-Qualified, or Qualified). Applicant rankings will be determined electronically by their self-certified answers to the AVUE Questionnaire. The KSA's should be developed to assess the applicant's basic knowledge of the career area and their potential to perform at a high caliber level. Candidates applying for position covered by the Luevano Consent Decree will be evaluated using OPM approved assessment tools.

After the aforementioned evaluation has been conducted, applicants will receive appropriate consideration for veterans preference. Ten point preference eligibles (CP and CPS) will be placed at the top of the Best-Qualified group. Based on their scores, all other preference eligibles (XP and TP) will be placed at the top of their category ahead of all non-preference eligibles.

D. Selection. Candidates in the Best-Qualified category will be referred for selection. If there are less than ten qualified candidates in the Best-Qualified category, the selecting official may request that the list be merged with the Well-Qualified candidates. If the categories are merged, the preference eligibles from the lower category will be placed at the top of the merged group. The selecting official may make his/her selection from any of the listed candidates, but may not pass over a preference eligible to select a non-preference eligible. If the selecting official believes that a preference eligible candidate does not meet the requirements of the program, they must follow the procedures outlined in OFHEO Guideline # 224, Guide for Processing Passovers and Objections.

E. Appointments. Candidates selected under the FCIP will be appointed to the excepted service under Schedule B, 5 CFR 213.3202(o) for a period not to exceed two (2) years. Federal Career Interns (FCI) will be required to sign a statement of understanding (Appendix A) upon being appointed.

At the request of an Office Director, the OHRM may request in writing, approval from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to extend internships for up to one (1) additional year beyond the authorized two year program if the intern needs to complete additional training and developmental activities prior to being converted. OHRM has delegated authority to extend FCIP appointments up to an additional 120 to cover rare and unusual circumstances. Both extensions require the requesting office to submit a written justification to OHRM describing the need for an extension.

FCI are entitled to benefits.

Title: Federal Career Intern Program

F. Career Development. During the internship, the OFHEO will design and provide FCI with formal and developmental opportunities to acquire skills and work experience needed for conversion to a permanent appointment.

Supervisors are required to implement a two-year Individual Development Plan (IDP) within 30 days of the intern's appointment. OHRM will assist supervisors in developing specific training programs relevant to the career field of the intern. The IDP will serve as the formal 2-year plan for training and developmental opportunities which will include on-the-job training and experience, rotational assignments, attendance at professional conferences and seminars, professional certifications and/or formal training (classroom, online etc).

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to identify a mentor for the FCI to further promote professional development.

G. Promotions. During the internship period, participants in the program will receive promotions on a noncompetitive basis, in accordance with the established career-ladder qualifications, and performance and development requirements. Advancement will be based on the first-line supervisor's determination that the incumbent has exhibited the ability to work at the higher-grade level. This provision does not confer entitlement to promotion.

H. Conversion. Except as provided in paragraph (2) below, service as an intern shall confer no rights to further Federal employment in either the competitive or excepted service upon the expiration of the internship period.

1. Appointment in the competitive service may be granted to FCIP participants who successfully complete their internships and meet all qualifications, suitability and performance requirements. These noncompetitive conversions will be effective on the date the 2-year service requirement is met or at the end of any extensions.
2. An employee who held a career or career-conditional appointment with OFHEO immediately before entering the Federal Career Intern Program, and who fails to complete the FCIP for reasons unrelated to misconduct or suitability, shall be placed in a career or career-conditional position in OFHEO equivalent to the position the employee left to accept the position in the FCIP.

Title: Federal Career Intern Program

3. Service under the FCIP counts toward career tenure in the competitive service, if the FCI is converted to a career-conditional appointment.

I. Trial and Probationary Periods. Federal Career Interns serve a two-year trial period, except for preference eligibles who serve a one-year trial period. During the trial period, supervisors must closely assess interns' performance and conduct to determine fitness for continued employment. If converted, interns do not have to complete a probationary period. Completion of the 2-year FCIP will be considered fulfillment of the probationary period requirements.

J. Termination.

1. If at any time a supervisor determines that the Federal Career Intern is incapable of performing the duties of the position, the incumbent may be terminated during the 2-year training period, but before conversion to a permanent position occurs.
2. The appointment of a FCI expires at the end of the 2-year internship period, or any granted extensions. If the FCI is not converted to a career or career-conditional appointment, the FCIP appointment terminates and the FCI is separated, unless specifically eligible for placement under paragraph H.2.

V. Definitions

A. Career Ladder – The predefined incremental advancement levels associated with a specific position (ie OF-14, 16, 18).

B. Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP) – A formal program designed to provide training and professional development to prepare an individual for a career or career-conditional appointment in a predetermined position.

C. Federal Career Interns (FCI) – An individual actively participating in the FCIP to prepare themselves for full-time permanent employment in a specific career.

D. Individual Development Plan (IDP) – A written plan documenting the training and developmental objectives a FCI needs to meet to fulfill the requirements of the FCIP.

Title: Federal Career Intern Program

VI. Functional Responsibilities. OFHEO's OHRM and managers will determine the appropriate use of the Federal Career Intern Program as one of its recruitment tools to attract and train individuals in specific occupational series and grade levels.

A. OHRM's will:

1. Publish, review, and revise the Federal Career Intern Program policy as needed.
2. Provide leadership and guidance on the policy.
3. Facilitate identification of potential FCIP candidate recruiting sources based on agency recruiting goals.
4. Ensure that each FCI meets the established qualification requirements for the positions; ensure veterans' preference is properly adjudicated.
5. Assist supervisors in the development of FCIP Individual Development Plans.
6. Ensure FCIP educational and developmental components align with OFHEO's Human Capital Plan and the overall recruiting program.
7. Create and maintain files consistent with program management documentation.

B. Office Director's will:

1. Embrace, support and promote the use of the FCIP.
2. Budget for and identify FTE's to be filled using the FCIP.

C. Supervisor's will:

1. Identify positions to be filled through the FCIP.
2. Work with OHRM in identifying requirements for selection, promotion and conversion.
3. Maintain records of candidates interviewed, and the recruitment sources used.
4. Work with OHRM and the FCI to identify training and educational needs that will allow the intern to develop the competencies needed for the position.
5. Provide quarterly written feedback to the FCI.
6. Evaluate the employee's performance and progress in meeting training and performance standards.
7. Support the FCI's professional growth through on-the-job guidance and coaching, and assist the FCI in selecting a mentor.
8. Assess FCI's ability to continue performance at a high caliber level; Recommend FCI's conversion or termination from the program.

Title: Federal Career Intern Program

D. The Federal Career Intern will:

1. Participate in the preparation of the IDP;
2. Actively participate in counseling activities and the individual goal setting process;
3. Strive to improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities identified in the IDP;
4. Perform assigned work and fulfill the responsibilities of the position and their performance goals.
5. Actively participate in training and developmental activities.

VII. Types of Records Created. Although the FCIP recruitment procedures are excepted from the competitive procedures, OHRM will maintain documents to prove we followed the merit system principles in filling FCIP positions. Our recruitment files will document our targeted outreach, application of veterans preference and fair and equitable treatment of all applicants. Recruitment files generated from the above procedures will be maintained for three years from the date the recruitment efforts were initiated, or the date any candidates were appointed into the FCIP.