

PART 2045 - GENERAL

Subpart F - Student Programs

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PART 2045 - GENERAL

Subpart F - Student Programs

§ 2045.251 Overview.

Student Programs are designed to combine academic studies with on-the-job training and experience and to give students an opportunity to work with Rural Development while completing their education. Rural Development provides undergraduate and graduate students with paid opportunities to serve as interns to scientific, professional, and administrative employees.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management has consolidated the previous programs (e.g., Cooperative Education, Stay-in-School, Federal Junior Fellowship, and Summer Aid Programs) into the new Student Educational Employment Program. This new program combines key features of the old programs along with added flexibilities to produce a more effective and streamlined program.

The Student Educational Employment Program has two components; Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) and Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). It is available to all levels of students: high school, vocational and technical, associate degree, bachelor's degree, graduate degree, and professional degree. Degrees must be from an accredited college or university recognized by the Department of Education.

This policy applies to any student under the Student Career Experience Program authority however, where RD Instruction 2045-F differs with a negotiated agreement, the negotiated agreement takes precedent.

§ 2045.252 Purpose.

- (a) To enrich the educational process by giving students relevant job experiences;
- (b) Provide Federal employers with an opportunity to take an active role in developing their future workforce; and
- (c) Provide flexible schedule of work assignments.

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General  
Personnel

§ 2045.253 Objective.

Student and volunteer programs are an integral part of sound human resources management workforce planning. By utilizing these programs effectively, managers can close the skills gap, accomplish succession planning and knowledge management, as well as build a more diverse workforce in accordance with the Rural Development Human Capital Plan. Federal regulations allow agencies a great deal of flexibility in employing students and volunteers.

§ 2045.254 Legal Authorities.

The Student Programs come under:

- (a) Title 5 USC Chapter 42 and Title 5 CFR Part 410.
- (b) Title 5 USC Chapter 41; Executive Order 13162; 5 CFR 315.712.
- (c) Schedule A, appointing authority for persons with Mental Retardation, Severe Physical Disabilities, or Psychiatric Disabilities. Executive Orders 12125 and 13124; 5 CFR 3.1(b); and 5 CFR 315.709.
- (d) Excepted Service, Student Educational Employment Program-Student Career Experience Program 1890.
- (e) 1996 Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act (FAIR Act), Title DC, Section 922 (7 U.S.C. 2279c (a)).
- (f) 5 CFR Parts 213 and 315, Executive Order 13162; 5 CFR 315.712 Federal Career Intern Program.
- (g) Executive Order 13318, Executive Order 12364; 5 CFR Part 362; 5 CFR 315.708.
- (h) Public Law 110-315.
- (i) Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. 7201).

§ 2045.255 Definitions.

- (a) Associate's degree. An award that normally requires at least 2 but less than 4 years of full-time equivalent college work.
- (b) Bachelor's degree. An award that normally requires at least 4 but not more than 5 years of full-time equivalent college-level work.
- (c) Graduate student. A student who holds a bachelor's or first-professional degree, or equivalent, and is taking courses at the post-baccalaureate level.
- (d) High School Student. A student who attends secondary school usually including grades 9 through 12.
- (e) Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Internship Program. Provides college students from nationwide academic institutions with significant numbers of Hispanic students the opportunity to explore a potential Federal service career.
- (f) Presidential Management Fellows (PMF). The Federal Government's premiere program for bringing persons with advanced degrees into Federal service. It was established by Executive Order 13318 on November 21, 2003 and transformed the Presidential Management Intern Program into the more flexible PMF Program.
- (g) Student Career Experience Program. Combines paid, study-related employment with periods of formal education study. Students are given the chance to apply their academic field of study to their on-the-job experience.
- (h) Student Temporary Employment Program. A Federal program that employs students in any occupation on a temporary basis during the school year and/or in the summer.
- (i) Student Volunteer Program. USDA provides unpaid internships as part of the Federal Student Volunteer Program.

(j) USDA/1890 National Scholars Program. The partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the 1890 institutions helps to increase the number of students studying agriculture and related disciplines, and offers career opportunities at USDA. The Student Career Experience Program is the official authority under which students may be employed by Rural Development and attend school while pursuing studies related to an identified major, and under which the students become eligible for noncompetitive conversion into the permanent workforce after graduation.

(k) Washington Internship for Native Students. This program is for students of American Indians and Alaskan Native heritage who are in good academic standing.

(l) Workforce Recruitment Program. A summer intern program for college students with disabilities that is a resource for employers nationwide to identify qualified temporary and permanent employees from a variety of fields.

§ 2045.256 Eligibility Criteria.

All students must be a United States citizen and pass a background investigation.

(a) Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Internship Program (HACU). This was established in 1986 with a founding membership of eighteen institutions. In 1992, HACU led the effort to convince Congress to formally recognize campuses with high Hispanic enrollment as federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions and to begin targeting federal appropriations to those campuses. Today, HACU represents nearly 450 colleges and universities committed to Hispanic higher education success. For additional information see [www.hacu.net/hacu/default\\_EN.asp?SnID=1212556743](http://www.hacu.net/hacu/default_EN.asp?SnID=1212556743).

- (1) Willing to work in the Washington, D.C. area.
- (2) Applicants are active in college and community activities.
- (3) Possess a grade point average of 3.0 or above.
- (4) Are recommended by their advisors or professors.
- (5) Submission of academic transcripts and proof of enrollment.

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(b) Presidential Management Fellows (PMF). This program is designed to attract to Federal service outstanding individuals from a wide variety of academic disciplines who have an interest in, and commitment to, a career in the public service. By drawing graduate students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, the PMF Program provides a continuing source of trained men and women to meet the future challenges of public service. The PMF Program is an excellent source of high potential candidates for management and program analysts. Additional information may be obtained at [www.pmf.opm.gov](http://www.pmf.opm.gov).

- (1) In their last year of graduate school or law school;
- (2) Completion of graduate or law degree must be done by August 31 of each year; and
- (3) Submission of academic transcripts and proof of enrollment.

(c) Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). The SCEP can provide Rural Development an effective, low-cost recruitment and training method which will help meet staffing goals. Managers also have the option of non-competitively converting a college student appointed to the STEP to a SCEP, with subsequent non-competitive conversion to a term, career, or career-conditional appointment within 120 days upon graduation. Before being converted, SCEP students must fulfill a 640 hour work experience requirement. For additional information see <http://www.opm.gov/employ/students/intro.asp>.

- (1) Enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a degree-seeking student in an accredited technical or vocational school, 2-year or 4-year college or university, or graduate or professional school;
- (2) Enrolled in at least a half-time course load as determined by the academic institution;
- (3) At least 16 years old; and
- (4) Submission of academic transcripts and proof of enrollment.

(d) Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). Students must be enrolled in high school or in a accredited institution of higher education on at least a half-time basis. Students may be placed in any type of position, regardless of field of study. For additional information see <http://www.opm.gov/employ/students/intro.asp>.

- (1) Students must be enrolled in high school or at an accredited institution of higher education on at least a half-time basis. Half-time is defined by each school;
  - (2) Submission of transcripts and proof of enrollment is required;
  - (3) Students may be placed in any type of position, regardless of field of study;
  - (4) Submission of academic transcripts and proof of enrollment; and
  - (5) At least 16 years old.
- (e) Student Volunteer Program. This program is often used for students to obtain an unpaid and meaningful work experience to receive college credit for a particular course or for an entire semester's course work.
- (1) A letter of understanding between USDA and the student's academic institution.
  - (2) Submission of academic transcripts and proof of enrollment.
- (f) USDA/1890 National Scholars Program. Each year USDA offers scholarships to U. S. citizens who are seeking a bachelor's degree at one of the eighteen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University to study agriculture, food, or natural resources sciences and related majors. The scholarship includes tuition, room, board, books and a computer. The Student Career Experience Program is the official authority under which students may be employed by Rural Development and attend school while pursuing studies related to an identified major, and under which the students become eligible for non-competitive conversion into the permanent workforce after graduation. The deadline for applying is February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Students must work one year for each year of financial support. A contract is signed between the student, the university or college, Rural Development, and if the student is under 18, the parent. If the student voluntarily leaves the program, changes their major to one outside of those covered by the program or has their grade point average drop below 3.0 they will be required repay the cost of tuition, books and fees. For additional information see <http://www.ars.usda.gov/sp2UserFiles/Subsite/careers/2009USDA1890ScholarApp.pdf>.

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- (1) Be an entering freshman;
- (2) Hold a high school diploma or G.E.D. certificate;
- (3) Have a high school GPA of 3.0 or better;
- (4) Have a SAT combined verbal/math/written score of 1,500 or more. (Note: 1000 or more combined for those universities that only accept verbal/math score or an ACT composite score of 21 or more);
- (5) Attend one of the eighteen 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Institutions;
- (6) Study agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or other related disciplines;
- (7) Demonstrate leadership and community service;
- (8) Apply for admission to the institution(s) of his or her choice;
- (9) Submit an official transcript with the school seal and an authorized official's signature;
- (10) Sign all applications (original signature only); and
- (11) Submission of academic transcripts and proof of enrollment.

(g) Washington Internship for Native Students (WINS). The WINS program is supervised and coordinated by an advisory council made up of Native Americans who represent many tribes throughout the United States. For additional information see [www.american.edu/wins/](http://www.american.edu/wins/).

- (1) Native American or Alaskan Native college student;
- (2) Will be a sophomore or junior;
- (3) Have a grade point average of 2.5 or above;
- (4) Willing to work in the Washington, D.C. area; and
- (5) Submission of academic transcripts and proof of enrollment.

(h) Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP). This program is designed for applicants who are highly motivated postsecondary students and recent graduates eager to prove their abilities in the workforce. Applicants are interviewed in January and February of each year and a database with resumes and interview notes is released in March to all Federal Agencies. For additional information see <http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/brochures/wrp4Cstd.htm>.

- (1) Current, full-time undergraduate or graduate students with a disability, or who have graduated within one year of the release of the database each March;
- (2) Housing arrangements are made by the WRP; however, the cost is borne by the Student; and
- (3) Submission of academic transcripts and proof of enrollment.

§ 2045.257 Benefits.

(a) Presidential Management Fellows.

- (1) Four hours of sick leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees;
- (2) Four hours of annual leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees; and
- (3) After one year of continuous service eligibility to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program at full cost.

(b) Student Career Experience Program.

- (1) Four hours of sick leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees;
- (2) Four hours of annual leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees; and
- (3) After one year of continuous service eligibility to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program at full cost.

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(c) Student Temporary Employment Program.

(1) Four hours of sick leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees;

(2) Appointments lasting 90 days or more will earn four hours of annual leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees; and

(3) After one year of continuous service eligibility to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program at full cost.

(d) USDA/1890 National Scholars Program.

(1) Four hours of sick leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees;

(2) Four hours of annual leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees; and

(3) After one year of continuous service eligibility to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program at full cost.

(e) Workforce Recruitment Program.

(1) Four hours of sick leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees; and

(2) Appointments lasting 90 days or more will earn four hours of annual leave for full-time employees, prorated for part-time employees.

§ 2045.258 Pay Grade Determination.

The student's transcripts are used to determine their grade level. The information below does not apply to the HACU or WINS programs. Students in these programs have their salaries determined by the organization. Federal pay setting rules do not apply.

- (a) Fewer than 30 credit or 45 quarter hours qualifies for a GS-2;
- (b) 30 credit or 45 quarter hours to 59 credit or 89.67 quarter hours qualifies for a GS-3; and
- (c) 60 or more credit or 90 or more quarter hours qualifies for a GS-4.

§§ 2045.259 - 2045.300 [RESERVED]

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