DRAFT: Blueprint for a World-Class IT Talent Pipeline

Office of the Chief Information Officer
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

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NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
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HANDBOOK

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to guide NOAA hiring managers on how they can participate in the program – an initiative to increase the number and quality of NOAA's entry-level Information Technology (IT) workforce. For purposes of this program, entry-level is defined as employees that are hired competitively or non-competitively into both career and career-conditional positions at the GS-5, GS-7, and GS-9 grades (or equivalent). The program is intended to provide maximum flexibility in meeting Line and Staff Office needs and enable quality hiring for entry-level IT positions. Entry-level, student intern and co-op IT positions are included.

The handbook provides details on how the program is run and how to participate—including tools, tips and helpful suggestions for making the most of the program experience. This handbook outlines each step in the program process and provides specific guidance for each step, covering topics such as roles and responsibilities, recruitment, hiring, training and development, and program administration.

Note: This handbook is intended to be a "living document" that will be updated as factors that impact program administration (such as hiring rules and regulations) change.

Roles and Responsibilities

Hiring Managers/Supervisors

- Partner with human resources professionals
- Conduct workforce planning
- Convey needs to Program Coordinator and the Workforce Management Office
- Select position type
- Secure resources

OCIO

- Champion the hiring of intern and entry-level personnel
- Endorse the concept of workforce planning

Program Team and Coordinator

- Partner with hiring managers
- Consult with hiring managers to help them determine appropriate type(s) of position(s)

Workforce Management Office

- Partner with hiring managers
- Assist in workforce planning by providing guidance, tools and templates

SECTION 1 – WORKFORCE PLANNING

Hiring new employees can be a time-consuming and challenging task for federal managers who face many pressing, daily obligations. Making the time to build the right team, though, is one of the most critical elements of success for your Line or Staff Office and ultimately, for NOAA.

For managers, this means hiring must become a primary leadership responsibility and not perceived solely as a Workforce Management Office function. Smart hiring decisions, in fact, provide the foundation for developing a high-performing workforce, successfully delivering services and implementing NOAA programs, products and services. This section provides a summary of the planning considerations that, as a hiring manager, should factor into your decision about what type of employee is right to meet your needs.

CONSIDERATIONS

As a federal manager, you are most familiar with the work that will be done by a prospective intern or new employee, and you are the best evaluator of the talent, skills and abilities needed for the job. You also have a stake in making sure the best person is matched with the job that needs to be filled in your Line or Staff Office.

Understanding your workforce needs is typically the first step that should take place before you have a staff opening. Waiting until you are short-staffed to fully understand your workforce gaps and needs will impact your work group's resources and negatively affect its productivity. Depending on your mission, this can even increase the possibility of compromised security of IT systems. Before you can begin to think about the person you want to hire for a given position, you first must analyze your workforce needs. No one understands those needs better than you, as the manager of your work area.

Workforce planning typically begins with an assessment of the types of individuals you need to perform your work now and in the future, followed by contrasting that outlook with the current state of your work unit. Understand that both internal and external forces, including the economy, changes in mission, retirements of key personnel and budget changes will impact your workforce plan. You also will want to analyze how effectively your current talent roster can meet mission priorities, goals and targets, and how expected changes will affect your work unit.

The following "challenge areas" note various questions you should be asking when determining your workforce plan:

WORK UNIT CHALLENGES

- What critical mission challenges are likely to affect your work unit in the short-term (i.e., the next one to three years) and long-term (i.e., the next three to five years)?
- Why do you consider these challenges to be the most significant?
- How will these challenges affect your unit's contribution to your organization's mission?

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

- What types of employees does your work unit currently need to both achieve its mission and address its critical challenges? Describe the work employees perform that contributes to the mission of the organization.
- What other resources does your unit need (e.g., contractors, technology)?
- What should your work unit's workforce look like in the future (e.g., employees with certain skills/competencies, more employees, more contractors)?
- What do these people need to do differently than your current workforce to ensure your future mission success?
- What trends are likely to affect your work unit's ability to recruit, hire, develop, motivate, and retain the employees needed (e.g., retirements, turnover, competition for limited skills)? Note: Provide any relevant data that may be available. Otherwise, please describe the data you believe

would highlight the challenges described.

- What is the impact to the mission of the organization if these workforce trends are left unaddressed? Please describe the impact in compelling terms that would resonate with a policy maker or an average citizen.

SOLUTIONS

Generally describe the ongoing and planned initiatives—in your work unit and organization-wide—to address these challenges.

- Who is responsible for these steps?
- When are the steps scheduled to be completed?
- What other solutions may be needed?
- Define success for this workforce planning effort. What outcomes or changes would you most like to see?

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

It helps to look not only at the number of people needed to perform the key mission activities within your office, but also to determine if an intern or entry-level employee is appropriate the competencies required by the position. Ask yourself what specific skills or behaviors, in addition to technical knowledge, your ideal candidates should possess. To assist in the development of your workforce plan, you should consult with those in your agency who may have workforce planning experience or expertise.

IDENTIFYING RESOURCES AND POSITIONS

What general budgetary resources will be required to implement these solutions?

Are there any expected cost-savings/benefits of these solutions in the short- and long-terms?

DECIDING TO SELECT AN INTERN OR ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYEE: A MANAGER'S CHECKLIST

The Program provides managers with an effective tool for attracting and developing new and diverse talent into their organization. However, participating in the program requires a commitment – not only from the intern or the entry-level employee, but also from the supervisor and the hiring office. The following checklist is designed to help managers determine if they are ready to participate in the program. Please review the following statements and check all those that apply:

As a Manager participating in the Program, I am prepared to …

____ 1. Provide an FTE position and appropriate funding for a candidate.

____ 2. Fund training and development opportunities for an intern or entry-level employee.

____ 3. Actively participate in the recruitment and interview process.

____ 4. Define a clear job description and specific job responsibilities for an employee/intern.

____ 5. Assign an employee/intern with meaningful work assignments.

____ 6. Develop and manage an IDP that addresses both core training requirements and specific technical training needs.

____ 7. Identify and arrange for a 30-day minimum rotational assignment within OCIO or another NOAA Line/Staff Office.

____ 8. Identify and arrange for on-the-job and cross teaming work assignments.

____ 9. Participate in quarterly performance review activities.

____ 10. Be accountable for developing participants as they progress through the program.

____ 11. Serve as an advisor and throughout the duration of the program.

____ 12. Communicate effectively and often, staying actively involved in a participant's experience.

____ 13. Evaluate intern performance and suggest areas for improvement and further development.

____ 14. Work with Human Capital professionals on program administration and evaluation requirements.

____ 15. Confirm achievement of developmental and rotational requirements at the conclusion of the term.

If you checked all of the above statements, you are ready for a successful experience with the program. If you were unable to check one or more of the above statements, you might want to reevaluate your readiness to participate in the program at this time

NEXT STEPS

Partnering with the Workforce Management Office

Clear and focused communication between your office and the Workforce Management Office (WFMO) increases your chances of hiring top talent. In concert with WFMO and the program Coordinator, develop plans that leverage your respective knowledge and resources across technical, HR and policy areas. Helping WFMO staff understand your organization's specific needs will help engage them in collaborative planning to meet those needs. This collaboration will result in better candidates, a faster hiring process and increased chances of success.

SECTION 2 – RECRUITMENT & MARKETING

Making sure you get the best available talent to apply for the job is essentially a three-part process: identifying your current needs based on the recently vacated or newly created position; composing a job announcement; and publicizing the opening to all appropriate avenues for recruitment.

Recruitment success for the Program will depend on a host of factors including the effective communication of organizational missions, values, goals, priorities, strategies, resources, and, most importantly, the culture. Hiring managers, working with the coordinator, should develop a systematic approach focusing on three dimensions:

- Leadership: The commitment of leaders at all levels within the organization defines and supports the environment within which recruitment is performed.
- Structure and Process: The organization's policies, resources and processes, both at an organizational and divisional level, need to be aligned and supportive of the intern and entry-level recruitment activities.
- Law and Regulation: Human Capital professionals need to stay current with potential changes to intern and entry-level authorities and other regulations that could affect their ability to successfully attract needed talent.
- Partnership: Hiring Managers and Human Resources representatives need to work closely together to ensure that the Hiring Manager's needs are met, while taking advantage of the quality and efficiencies of established university relationships

UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIPS

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS

Building a quality relationship takes time. Colleges and universities are eager to work with agencies to connect their best and brightest students with good jobs. When first beginning to recruit for interns and entry-level hires, consider going to a career fair at a college or university with an established relationship with NOAA. Students at these colleges or universities will be more familiar with the NOAA "brand." Over time, assessments can be made as to which college or university provides the most promising students or recent graduates for the IT workforce.

Currently, NOAA does not have an established central source of information regarding existing relationships with colleges and universities. There are many established pipelines that exist between NOAA and various high schools, colleges and universities. However, because the line offices tend to work

Roles and Responsibilities

Hiring Managers/Supervisors

- Relay any existing university relationships, pipelines or specific programs to target to Program coordinator
- Participate in recruitment activities (career fairs, interviews, etc.)
- Identify flexibilities to be used
- Assess and select candidates

Program Team and Coordinator

- Establish and maintain university relationships
- Coordinate recruitment activities
- Provide hiring managers information on available flexibilities

Workforce Management Office

- Publicize opportunities

independently one would have to check in with each line office for specific knowledge regarding this information.

The NOAA line offices tend to operate independently and as a result develop relationships with colleges and universities that align themselves with the mission of the individual line offices. There are college and university campuses that have actual NOAA sponsored laboratories and scientists on-site that teach classes to the students and manage science camps for high school students during summer break. An example would be NOAA Fisheries and NOAA Weather Service that have established such arrangements. Many of these relationships go back several years.

CAREER FAIRS

NOAA has participated in several career fairs hosted by high schools, colleges/universities and special interest groups/organizations. Most academic institutions have two major career fairs a year. Many areas that are home to multiple colleges and universities often get together in sponsoring these events for several reasons cost impact on the attending companies being among them. In the past it has been possible, on occasion, to have the registration fees waived or reduced. One of the lessons learned from attending these events has been that when company representatives attend career fairs in the fall of the year the primary expectation is to keep that company on the mind of students when it is time for them to consider career employment opportunities. Attendance in the spring of the year seems to imply that the employers in attendance have immediate job opportunities for the soon to be graduates.

Career fairs connect students and recent graduates with NOAA representatives and encourage entry-level and internship talent to bring their skills and experiences to NOAA. When preparing for a career fair, remember to carefully select all members of your career fair team. Bring a mixture of friendly, knowledgeable employees from HR, senior management, and young practitioners. Current and former interns also make great recruiters.

In addition to making the right people available to answer questions, materials play an important role. Prominent, interesting displays grab job-seekers' attention. Also, remember to bring colorful, branded recruitment materials that describe available positions and information about NOAA.

PUBLICIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Vacancy Announcements: If using vacancy announcements to seek candidates for the program, make sure they provide a realistic preview of the jobs, give a good description of the training and development components integral to the Program, and highlight points of interest. Think about what would make an exceptional person want to work for your organization.

The best job announcements are those that attract the most qualified candidates. As such, they should start with an accurate and interesting description of the position, comprised of a clear, concise job summary and the job's career progression; the job duties, requirements and assignments; qualifications for the position; an explanation of how applicants will be evaluated; and, certainly, how to apply. Your hiring committee is essential for this task. Using your job analysis as a guide, decide on the selection criteria that will determine the viability of job candidates.

Write the announcement for the lay reader. It is common for the position description (PD) to be used in drafting the announcement. Remember that the PD was written for a different purpose and a different audience. Speak to the things that would most resonate to an applicant—how the job fulfills the organization's mission, not just the tasks that will have to be performed. Try to think about what language would attract a talented person to this job.

Use Any Available Flexibilities: Identify and use any hiring flexibilities available to program candidates.

Follow Up With Candidates: Send follow up letters or make phone calls to candidates who were met on the recruitment trips. It is important to make sure that candidates have access to someone knowledgeable after the recruiting contact is over.

ASSESSING AND SELECTING CANDIDATES

- ✓ Reviewing Resumes
  - The basic flow and readability of an applicant's resume represents their ability to communicate in writing and organize their thoughts. How duties and experience are described may give some indication of the applicant's reasoning process which is a fair and necessary attribute to evaluate in the selection of a candidate.
  - The first and most important factor for the hiring official to consider is the applicant's possession of critical knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and specific experience related to the advertised position. Notes should be made of other unique KSAs that may enhance job performance and may set the applicant apart from the others.
  - Next, the resumes should be reviewed for incentive awards and current performance ratings which should be factors when assessing candidates.
  - Finally, education, training, professional licenses and certificate information should be reviewed. Educational requirements should be treated as a skill and noted to determine if the applicant's educational background further supports or enhances the position requirements.
- ✓ Interviewing Applicants
  - **Who Conducts the Interview?** The hiring official usually conducts the interview. However, the hiring official may designate another person or a panel with knowledge of the position to be filled to conduct the interview. It is strongly recommended to incorporate diverse panel members when using interview panels.
  - **Importance of the Interview** Interviews are strongly encouraged because this is an opportunity to gather additional information from the applicant. The resume is only a brief description of the individual's background. An interview may provide more information that can be used during the selection process. It can be especially useful in evaluating such skills as oral communication and interpersonal skills that are not otherwise easily measured in writing. The interview also provides an opportunity for a face-to-face information exchange, affording the applicant an opportunity to learn about the organization.
  - **Interviewing Techniques** Interview questions should always elicit job-related information relative to the KSAs of the position for which the candidate is applying. Questions should be prepared in advance to ensure that all candidates are treated in the same manner. Generally, the same questions should be asked of each candidate. However, follow-up questions may be used to obtain additional or clarifying information in order to access an individual's specific qualifications for the position.
  - All applicants should be allotted the same amount of time for the interview, with time allowed for the applicant to ask questions of the interviewer(s).
  - In all cases, it is a good idea to record notes to eliminate the need to recall key points from memory. It is also helpful to note the date, time, place, and length of the interview. A

copy of interview questions and the name of individual(s) who conducted the interview should be on file. This information is very critical in the event that an Equal Employment Opportunity complaint is filed and such information is requested.
  - It is permissible to ask all candidates to bring writing samples, such as reports, publications or technical articles to the interview.

- ✓ Checking References
  - After reviewing the resume and conducting an interview, the interviewer should have a clear indication of the top applicants for further selection consideration. The next step is to check references which preferably should be verified, using prior supervisors over personal references since these individuals have knowledge of the candidate's work performance. The current supervisors should only be contacted if the candidate has given permission which should be indicated on the resume. It is also advisable to obtain more than one reference for each candidate.
  - Performance and other pertinent aspects of the candidate's employment should be verified. The questions should focus on the candidate's overall qualifications for the position and how the reference assessed the candidate's fitness for the job. Be sure to ask follow-up questions or ask for additional information about something that is not clear.
  - It is advisable to verify the candidate's current employment including position(s) held and dates employed. The hiring official may also ask the reference about the following:
    - Applicant's work relationships
    - Work attitude
    - Quality of work product
    - Applicant's strengths and weaknesses
    - If the applicant should be recommended for the position
    - If the applicant would be rehired
  - It is a good idea to keep the documentation of these questions and notes for future reference.

- ✓ Making a Selection
  - Careful attention to assessment:
    - Increases ability to accurately predict the relative success of each applicant on the job
    - Results in hiring, placing, and promoting greater numbers of superior performers
    - Results in reduced turnover
    - Decreases the likelihood of a bad hire
    - Results in enhanced job satisfaction for new hires and a more cohesive work group

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT

Know Your Recruiting Needs: The hiring of a program participant is a significant responsibility for the hiring manager. Hiring Managers should be very clear on the job the participant is being hired to do and the commitment to continued development and supervision required before the decision to recruit is made.

Know Your Recruiting Options: Simply issuing a vacancy announcement alone is not an effective method of finding a highly qualified diverse pool of candidates. In fact, hiring managers need to consider using a variety of job search locations, such as:

- College placement centers and student associations
- Internet websites
- Newspapers and magazines
- Professional organizations

In addition, the Program Coordinator or even existing employees can often provide recommendations regarding good sources of diverse candidates (their alma maters, professional organizations, etc.).

Know Your Audience: Studies show that the components most valued by prospective interns or entry-level candidates are:

- The nature of the work – the appeal of what NOAA IT organizations do and deliver;
- Compensation and benefits – salary, retirement and health, bonuses, insurance;
- Culture and work environment – senior management team and co-worker quality; technology level, risk-taking environment, size, diversity, empowerment, recognition, work challenges, mobility, opportunity to learn new skills, and career advancement;
- Work-life balance – location, work hours, travel, vacation, childcare, telecommuting.

Apply Effective Interviewing and Assessment Tools: The use of consistent interviewing tools is critical to ensure that program candidates are thoroughly assessed and to match the best candidates with the right opportunity. Once participants successfully complete the Program they have the opportunity to convert to permanent appointment so their selection process should be as rigorous as other Federal recruitment efforts. See the Interviewing and Assessment tools in Appendix C.

Develop Data on Recruitment: Data is critical for identifying priorities in the recruitment process and keeping management informed regarding trends, successes, and returns on investment.

Teamwork: Ensure that selection officials work closely with the Program Coordinator and Workforce Management Office Human Resources Specialists during the recruiting process. Maintaining close relationships will facilitate a smooth and easy recruiting process.

SECTION 3 - COHORT MANAGEMENT

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The program requires core training to help participants understand the work and mission of NOAA while providing additional training requirements for the development of critical employee competencies. The training and development objective is for the participants to receive a broad overview of NOAA in general and how their particular CIO Office supports its customers, while helping to develop key performance skills.

The basic training and development characteristics of the program are:

- 2-year training and development timeline
- Mandatory Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Common core training for all participants
- Field/Program Office specific work and training assignments
- Rotational assignment (minimum 30 days)

Each participant's hiring office is responsible for providing and funding training and travel as appropriate.

CORE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The program includes a set of core organizational courses for all interns, regardless of grade level or technical expertise. These courses are designed to give participants a baseline understanding of NOAA and the particular office within which they work. The Program also includes a set of core competency courses, based on a participant's grade and/or experience level, which are designed to help interns work more effectively with colleagues and customers. These are explained in more detail below.

CORE ORGANIZATIONAL COURSES

Each participant is required to complete a minimum of two core organizational courses and one course in each of the assigned core competencies for a total of six (6) core courses over the duration of the Program. All core courses must be completed before an intern can participate in additional training opportunities.

Participants should complete the "Welcome to NOAA" course featured on the CLC and IT Security Awareness Training.

Roles and Responsibilities

Hiring Managers/Supervisors

- Provide guidance on and support to employees regarding their development
- Devise specific on-the-job training requirements
- Support participation in cohort events

Program Team and Coordinator

- Plan, manage and coordinate cohort activities
- Monitor external evolution of IT workforce development priorities and opportunities (e.g., Federal CIO Council, OPM)

Participating Employee

- Participate in formal, informal, and job-specific training and professional development activities
- Participate in cohort activities
- Fulfill role-specific training and certification requirements (as applicable)

CORE COMPETENCIES AND RELATED COURSES

Core Competencies define the personal characteristics, knowledge, and skills needed to ensure success as a program participant. Employees will be expected to participate in one training course in each of the four core competencies over the two-year duration of the Program. Courses and opportunities will depend on the intern's grade level, interest, and developmental needs and will be subject to supervisory approval. The four core competencies are:

Core Competency 1: Interpersonal Skills: This core competency involves the ability to treat others with courtesy, sensitivity and respect and to respond appropriately to the needs and feelings of different people in different situations.

Core Competency 2: Oral and Written Communications: This core competency involves the ability to make clear and convincing oral presentations; participants develop skills to listen effectively and to write in a clear, concise, organized and convincing manner for the intended audience.

Core Competency 3: Integrity/Honesty: This core competency involves the ability to behave in an honest, fair, and ethical manner and show consistency in words and actions.

Core Competency 4: Continual Learning: This core competency involves the ability to assess and recognize one's own strengths and weaknesses and to pursue self-development.

ON-THE-JOB

On-the-job training takes place in a normal working situation, using the actual tools, equipment, documents or materials that program participants will use when fully trained. On-the-job training is very useful in training employees, as it is performed in the context of the actual work environment and is usually timely and relevant. An example of on-the-job training is a developmental project that is then reviewed by a subject matter expert or the supervisor.

On-the-job activities can also be rotational assignments that should be no less than 30 days in duration and should expose the participant to different areas of the organization, different lines of business, and different skills and experiences. These assignments may or may not take place outside of the participant's commuting area. Each hiring office is responsible for managing and funding any travel related to the rotational assignment. Rotational assignments must be included in the IDP as a part of the participant's overall development activities.

JOB-SPECIFIC TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Due to the fast-paced nature of Information Technology, supervisors will work with their entry-level hires to develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP) that best suits the needs of the office and the individual. The Program Team and Coordinator will assist supervisors as needed on an individual case-by-case basis in developing IDPs.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (IDPS)

Note: IDPs are not required for interns, but will be for permanent employees

Upon entering the Program, and in collaboration with supervisors, participants will develop a comprehensive IDP that focuses on the training and developmental experiences, the development of core competencies, and the career goals of the participant for the entire duration of the program. Performance goals identified during ongoing evaluations and the performance appraisal process should contribute to the further development of the IDP. Participants and their supervisors should follow the training and qualification requirements as stated in the IDP. IDPs will be **required** for each participant.

Draft IDPs are to be submitted within 30 days after the participant's entry-on-duty (EOD) date, with the final version required by no later than 60 days after EOD. Copies of the IDPs should be provided to the employee, the employee's supervisor and the Program Coordinator. Each IDP should:

- Be designed around specific learning objectives and requirements;
- Contain a general description of work assignments and subject matter to be learned, as well as competencies to be acquired;
- Identify activities through which learning objectives will be accomplished, including their duration, and the time frames for accomplishment; and
- Serve as a planning document to be reviewed periodically and revised as appropriate.

Training may include formal coursework, required readings, and on-the-job training. To complete the Program, participants must successfully complete the development activities described in their IDP.

PARTICIPATING EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees should be able to work independently or function as part of a team. Employees should be motivated, willing to do a good job, do more than is expected, and exhibit a positive attitude. Last but not least, employees should arrive and leave on time and adhere to the dress code of the organization.

The employee is responsible for:

- Accepting and satisfactorily completing on the job and formal and informal training assignments;
- Maintaining a high level of work performance in rotational and host assignments;
- Maintaining academic standards for approved coursework, as appropriate;
- Preparing participant course and Program evaluations as requested;
- Agreeing to work with employee's supervisor to ensure employee reaches desired career development;
- Preparing evaluations for my supervisor(s) and program as requested.

The employee may be released from the program at any time if the employee does not take full advantage of the required training, or fails to perform in a fully successful manner.

COHORT EVENTS

Collaboration and socialization are important to today's recent graduates and current students. Cohort events are one way that employees can feel part of a larger NOAA team. Cohort events also enable employees to get a better understanding of NOAA as a whole in addition to the picture of the line or staff office where they work.

EXAMPLE COHORT ACTIVITIES

- Orientation and SSMC tour
- Meet with top NOAA management at HCHB
- Visit the library and receive historic overview of NOAA
- Attend CIO Council meetings

- Shadow CIOs
- Participate in a NOAA-wide, cross-office and/or cross-discipline assignment or activity
- Speakers featured at brown bags
    - CIO mentoring (share about their jobs and what interested them in their career, government service)
    - IT Specialists could talk about innovative projects, i.e. GeoPlatform
    - Career workshops, such as writing an “accomplishment-based resume”
- Site visits, such as touring the NOC, NCEP (Suitland, MD), NSOF (College Park, MD), Telecom Gateway and SOC/HPC (Fairmount, WV)
- Program debriefing with program staff, including an exit survey

SECTION 4 - DAY-TO-DAY MANAGERIAL ACTIVITIES

MANAGING THE ONBOARDING PROCESS

Onboarding will be the first step hiring managers will be engaged in as part of their managerial responsibilities. Many organizations focus their attention on the new employee's first day, during which they typically complete forms and learn about benefits. This is commonly called "orientation" or "entrance on duty (EOD)." Often, orientation or EOD (which at NOAA is coordinated by the Workforce Management Office) is a discrete, stand-alone event, not integrated with other first-year experiences for new employees. For the Program, a more comprehensive "onboarding" approach, where the hiring manager takes an active role, is expected. Onboarding is the process of integrating and acclimating new employees into your organization and providing them with the tools, resources and knowledge to become successful and productive.

Research clearly shows that effective onboarding improves employee performance, increases employee engagement, increases employee retention, and accelerates time-to-productivity. Investing in effective onboarding helps new employees get up to speed quickly, equips them with the information they need to excel at their jobs and creates a sense of commitment to your organization. That is why it is critical that you, as a hiring manager, invest your time in onboarding activities for your new employee(s), as part of a five-step process outlined below.

OVERVIEW OF ONBOARDING ACTIVITIES

The onboarding process begins when a new employee or intern receives his or her offer of employment and ends after the first year of employment (for a full time employee), or at the conclusion of the internship (for an intern). Onboarding can be broken out into five separate phases:

1. Before the First Day
2. First Day/EOD
3. First Week
4. First 90 Days
5. First Year

Please use the checklist on the following page to track progress against completing the activities. Note that some of the activities will be performed by the Workforce Management Office (especially those that occur during EOD).

Roles and Responsibilities

Hiring Managers/Supervisors

- Conduct onboarding activities
- Communicate performance expectations
- Develop a work plan
- Observe employee performance
- Evaluate performance
- Provide effective feedback

Workforce Management Office

- Conduct Entrance on Duty activities

ProgramTeam and Coordinator

- Provide guidance and checklists for conducting strategic onboarding activities
- Provide guidance and templates for evaluating employee performance

Participating Employee

- Participate in onboarding activities
- Listen to and act on supervisory feedback

ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

NEW EMPLOYEE INFORMATION	Name:	Start Date:
	Position:	Supervisor:
	Office/Cube Number:	Phone Number:

	Task	Status
BEFORE FIRST DAY	Send welcome packet with important information (e.g., benefits and EOD logistics) and welcome letter	☐
	Provide NOAA and LO/SO information	☐
	Provide job/duties information	☐
	Encourage the review and completion of paperwork (if feasible) before EOD date	☐
	Contact new employee/intern to answer questions and set expectations	☐
	Assign a sponsor/buddy	☐
	Assign and prepare workspace and provide office supplies	☐
	Ensure essential resources (e.g., computer, phone, email, training accounts) are set up	☐
FIRST DAY/EOD	If possible, personalize the experience for the new employee (e.g., welcome note, nameplate)	☐
	Communicate vision and mission, and administer a formal oath	☐
	Complete paperwork and security requirements	☐
	Explain benefits and policies	☐
	Have a senior leader welcome new employees (in person or through recorded means)	☐
	Arrange for new employees to eat lunch together as a group or individually with office members	☐
	Introduce new hire to sponsor/buddy	☐
	Provide realistic information about the organization and its culture; avoid “over promising”	☐
FIRST WEEK	Ensure that job roles and responsibilities are clearly communicated to the new employee	☐
	Introduce the new employee to other employees and senior staff	☐
	Provide meaningful work for the new employee; consider training or substantive job-related work	☐
	Ensure that a senior leader (in the new employee’s office) welcomes the new employee	☐
	Review the organizational structure and key staff	☐
	Have the new employee complete the “Welcome to NOAA” course on CLC	☐
	Provide a list of contacts who can address the new employee’s question on a variety of issues	☐
	Discuss individual work styles and communication preferences	☐
	Gather feedback about the onboarding process from new employees	☐
FIRST 90 DAYS	Develop work plan; review performance objectives and set individual development goals	☐
	Give performance feedback early and often to the new employee/intern	☐
	Provide training, as needed, to help the new employee understand internal systems, general operating practices and obtain other information on skills required in the performance of his or her job	☐
	Arrange for the new employee to meet key stakeholders (customers, staff from other offices, etc.)	☐
	Check with the new employee regularly to ensure they are assimilating and expanding abilities	☐
FIRST YEAR	Provide training to build competencies and fill skill gaps	☐
	Conduct a new employee survey and address any issues surfaced	☐
	Assess performance	☐
	Provide a congratulatory message from senior leadership at anniversary/conclusion of internship	☐

MANAGING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Another major activity that the hiring manager will be responsible for the program is the management of employee performance. Performance management is the systematic process by which an agency involves its employees, as individuals and members of a group, in improving organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of agency mission and goals.

Employee performance management includes:

- planning work and setting expectations,
- continually monitoring performance,
- developing the capacity to perform,
- annually rating performance in a summary fashion, and
- rewarding good performance.

PLANNING WORK

In an effective organization, work is planned out in advance. Planning means setting performance expectations and goals for groups and individuals to channel their efforts toward achieving organizational objectives. Getting employees involved in the planning process will help them understand the goals of the organization, what needs to be done, why it needs to be done, and how well it should be done.

The regulatory requirements for planning employees' performance include establishing the elements and standards of their performance appraisal plans. Performance elements and standards should be measurable, understandable, verifiable, equitable, and achievable. Through critical elements, employees are held accountable as individuals for work assignments or responsibilities. Employee performance plans should be flexible so that they can be adjusted for changing program objectives and work requirements. When used effectively, these plans can be beneficial working documents that are discussed often, and not merely paperwork that is filed in a drawer and seen only when ratings of record are required.

MONITORING PERFORMANCE

In an effective organization, assignments and projects are monitored continually. Monitoring well means consistently measuring performance and providing ongoing feedback to employees and work groups on their progress toward reaching their goals.

Regulatory requirements for monitoring performance include conducting progress reviews with employees where their performance is compared against their elements and standards. Ongoing monitoring provides the opportunity to check how well employees are meeting predetermined standards and to make changes to unrealistic or problematic standards. And by monitoring continually, unacceptable performance can be identified at any time during the appraisal period and assistance provided to address such performance rather than wait until the end of the period when summary rating levels are assigned.

DEVELOPING EMPLOYEES

In an effective organization, employee developmental needs are evaluated and addressed. Developing in this instance means increasing the capacity to perform through training, giving assignments that introduce new skills or higher levels of responsibility, improving work processes, or other methods. Providing employees with training and developmental opportunities encourages good performance, strengthens job-related skills and competencies, and helps employees keep up with changes in the workplace, such as the introduction of new technology.

Carrying out the processes of performance management provides an excellent opportunity to identify developmental needs. During planning and monitoring of work, deficiencies in performance become evident and can be addressed. Areas for improving good performance also stand out, and action can be taken to help successful employees improve even further.

RATING PERFORMANCE

From time to time, organizations find it useful to summarize employee performance. This can be helpful for looking at and comparing performance over time or among various employees. Organizations need to know who their best performers are.

Within the context of formal performance appraisal requirements, rating means evaluating employee or group performance against the elements and standards in an employee's performance plan and assigning a summary rating of record. The rating of record is assigned according to procedures included in the organization's appraisal program. It is based on work performed during an entire appraisal period. The rating of record has a bearing on various other personnel actions, such as granting within-grade pay increases and determining additional retention service credit in a reduction in force.

Note: Although group performance may have an impact on an employee's summary rating, a rating of record is assigned only to an individual, not to a group.

REWARDING PERFORMANCE

In an effective organization, rewards are used well. Rewarding means recognizing employees, individually and as members of groups, for their performance and acknowledging their contributions to the agency's mission. A basic principle of effective management is that all behavior is controlled by its consequences. Those consequences can and should be both formal and informal and both positive and negative.

Good performance is recognized without waiting for nominations for formal awards to be solicited. Recognition is an ongoing, natural part of day-to-day experience. A lot of the actions that reward good performance — like saying "Thank you" — don't require a specific regulatory authority. Nonetheless, awards regulations provide a broad range of forms that more formal rewards can take, such as cash, time off, and many nonmonetary items. The regulations also cover a variety of contributions that can be rewarded, from suggestions to group accomplishments.

MANAGING PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVELY

In effective organizations, managers and employees have been practicing good performance management naturally all their lives, executing each key component process well. Goals are set and work is planned routinely. Progress toward those goals is measured and employees get feedback. High standards are set, but care is also taken to develop the skills needed to reach them. Formal and informal rewards are used to recognize the behavior and results that accomplish the mission. All five component processes working together and supporting each other achieve effective performance management.

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT FORM

Student Intern Performance Appraisal Form

Name of Intern: _________________________ Internship Title: ______________________________

Name of Evaluator: ____________________________ Date: ________________________________

Name of Organization: ____

Part A: General Intern Performance

Instructions: Rate the student intern on each of the following job dimensions. For each dimension sample behaviors of excellent and poor performance are listed as guidelines. The intern needn't display these exact behaviors, but behaviors of a similar caliber.

Reliability: Extent to which the intern can be counted on to be in attendance and complete tasks in a timely fashion.

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Poor	Excellent
Chronically late for work	Arrives on time or early
Fails to show up for work	Rarely absent
	Absence planned/non-disruptive

Works Independently: Extent to which the intern demonstrates the ability to work conscientiously to complete tasks with minimum supervision.

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Poor	Excellent
Fails to submit assignments	Completes assignments on time or early
Submits assignments late	
Incomplete tasks	Tasks are fully completed
Needs constant supervision/help	Works well independently

Appearance: Extent to which the intern maintains a professional appearance.

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Wears inappropriate clothing	Dresses appropriately
Sloppy appearance	Neat/clean appearance

Attitude/Effort: Amount of effort that the intern puts into their duties, and the extent to which the intern maintains a positive work attitude while performing these duties.

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Fails to meet deadlines	Meets deadlines or is early
Refuses to take on extra duties	Team player/assists others
Must be told what to do	Self-starter
When own work is done, does nothing	When own work is done, asks for more
Complains about job duties	Takes initiative
	Enthusiastic about job

Interpersonal Skills: Degree to which intern gets along with others (co-workers, supervisor, clients).

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Ineffective on work-team	Maintains effective and cooperative relationships with co-workers
Avoids working with others	Initiates interactions with others
Receives complaints	No complaints/receives compliments

Written Communication: The intern's ability to communicate clearly in writing.

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Poor/ineffective writing skills	Excellent writing skills
Many spelling/grammatical errors	Clear, organized, fluent writing
Writing is unclear/unorganized	

Verbal Communication: The intern's ability to communicate orally.

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Poor/ineffective verbal skills	Excellent verbal skills
Lack of eye contact	Clear voice

Adaptability: The extent to which the intern can adjust to new work requirements, directions, or personnel with a minimum loss of efficiency.

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Cannot accept criticism	Willingly accepts criticism and modifies behavior/task accordingly
Does not respond to feedback	
Resists change to work duties	Willingly accommodates new directions/tasks

Ability to learn: The extent to which the intern is able to understand/grasp new ideas and instructions.

Poor		Moderate		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

Not interested in learning new tasks	Actively seeks out information
Has not improved in job performance	Continually improves in job performance

Part B: Specific Internship Learning Objectives (specific learning objectives should be filled in by student prior to giving form to supervisor)

Instructions: The following objectives are specific to this individual student's internship experience. Please rate the student on the following dimensions:

Specific Learning Objective	**Poor** **Moderate** **Excellent** **1 2 3 4 5**

Part C: Additional Feedback/Comments

1) Now that you have firsthand knowledge of the student's performance, would You consider him/her for employment should a position be available? Why or why not?

2) Any additional comments

____

Signature of Evaluator

____

Date

ASSESSMENT AND HIRING DECISION

Internship and entry-level hiring programs, such as SCEP, provide a unique opportunity for assessing potential career and career-conditional hires. Through these programs, supervisors have an extended period of evaluation before making a final hiring decision. Supervisors should use this time wisely and evaluate students and recent graduates in terms of their aptitude and current knowledge, skills and abilities. Questions, like those featured on the sample assessment form, can aid supervisors in determining areas to focus on for evaluation.

SECTION 5 - PROGRAM EVALUATION

It is important to continually review and revise intern recruitment strategies. Recent interns or entry-level hires are often the best source of information about what “sold” them on the program, NOAA as an organization, and IT as an area of professional interest. Following up with those who turned the organization down can also reveal important information and give helpful insights about potential changes that could be made. Finally, it is important to ask for feedback from employees and managers about how the Program is working and what can be done to further enhance the program experience. By collecting this information, trends can be identified and problems resolved. Collecting feedback will allow the program to be continually improved and updated.

Roles and Responsibilities

Hiring Managers/Supervisors

- Encourage participants to complete the survey

Program Team and Coordinator

- Collect metrics on conversion rates, retention/attrition
- Provide feedback to Line and Staff Offices and universities

Participating Employee

- Complete the survey honestly

FEEDBACK SURVEY

Thank you for your participation in the NOAA IT internship and entry-level program. In an effort to improve the program, please take 10 to 15 minutes to complete this feedback survey on your experience. We will use your answers to identify best practices and ensure the quality of the program moving forward.

Your individual responses will be kept confidential. The program coordinator will share recurring themes and important trends with NOAA leadership and supervisors. Your supervisor will not see individual responses, and the program coordinator will work to address issues raised with the appropriate individuals. Your candid and honest responses are paramount to making the NOAA entry-level and intern experience in IT exemplary.

If you have any questions about this survey or would like to provide additional feedback, please contact the program coordinator.

THE RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PROCESS

1.) How did you hear about the entry-level or internship position at NOAA?

( ) USAJobs

( ) University job board

( ) Friend

( ) Other

Please specify other source:

____

2.) How much did the following factor into your decision to accept the entry-level or internship position at NOAA?

	(1 is not at all, 5 is very strongly)
Salary	___
Location	___
Kind of work	___
Mission	___
Career Development	___

3.) Were there any other factors that influenced your decision to apply for and accept the entry-level or internship position at NOAA? If so, please use this space to explain.

4.) Please rate your agreement with the following statements around the application and hiring process.

	1 is strongly disagree, 5 is strongly agree
The application and hiring process was easy to understand.	___
The application, interview, and hiring process was timely.	___
I received sufficient communication about the status of my application throughout the process.	___
The job description provided a realistic description of my position and what my position was actually like.	___

(Optional) Please use this space to explain any of the above answers or to include other comments or suggestions about recruitment and hiring for entry-level or internship positions in IT at NOAA.

YOUR FIRST FEW DAYS

Please answer these questions about your onboarding experience in the entry-level or internship position at NOAA.

5.) Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of your early time at the entry-level or internship position at NOAA, including your onboarding and introduction to NOAA.

	Very Dissatisfied (either there was no introduction, or the introduction was not helpful)	**Dissatisfied (either more of an introduction or a different introduction would have helped me orient quicker)**	**Satisfied (the introduction I received was somewhat thorough and relevant, it helped me orient quicker than without it)**	**Very Satisfied (the introduction was thorough and relevant, it helped me orient quickly)**	**Does not apply (to me, any introduction to this topic wouldn't help me orient to NOAA or perform my job)**
The information I received before the start of my position	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Introduction and orientation to the people and culture of the NOAA	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Introduction to my team's activities	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Introduction	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

to the different teams and programs across NOAA					
Introduction to the NOAA's mission, vision, and strategic goals	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

(Optional) Please use this space to explain any of the above answers or other comments about the onboarding experience.

YOUR ASSIGNED WORK

6.) Please rate your overall satisfaction with the nature of the work you were given during your entry-level or internship position at NOAA.

( ) Very dissatisfied - Not helpful at all to my personal and professional development, not at all what I expected

( ) Dissatisfied -Parts of my job helped me develop my skills professionally, but a majority of my work was not helpful to my professional development

( ) Neutral - Somewhat helpful to my professional development

( ) Satisfied - Helpful to my professional and personal development, I got out of this position all that I expected to

( ) Very Satisfied - Very helpful to my professional and personal development, it exceeded my expectations and I ended my position with more skills and experiences than I had even hoped to learn

7.) Please rate your agreement with the following statements about the nature of your work.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My work was appropriate and commensurate with my skills, level of experience, and performance.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My work was beneficial to my professional development (for example it helped develop professional skills or clarify career goals and aspirations)	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
My work was beneficial to my personal development (for example it helped increase understanding of strengths and weaknesses).	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

8.) The amount of work I am asked to do...

( ) Too little

( ) About right

( ) Too much

9.) To what degree did your entry-level or internship position at NOAA help you develop skills important to your professional development and career goals?

	1 is to little or no degree, 5 is to a moderate degree, and 10 is to a great degree
Please rate from 1 to 10	___

10.) Please rate how challenging your work was?

( ) Too easy

( ) Easier than expected

( ) About right

( ) More challenging than expected

( ) Too challenging

(Optional) Please use this space to explain any of the above answers or add other comments about the nature of your work.

YOUR SUPERVISOR AND TEAM

11.) Please rate your agreement with the following statements about your relationship with your supervisor and team as it related to your work here. To what degree do you agree with the following statements?

	1 is to little or no degree, 5 is to a moderate degree, and 10 is to a great degree
My accomplishments and successes were adequately acknowledged and praised by my supervisor.	___
My supervisor and I had a positive working relationship.	___
My supervisor treated me with respect.	___
My supervisor clearly communicated expectations for my work.	___
My supervisor was an effective communicator.	___
I felt comfortable bringing issues or problems to my supervisor's attention	___
My supervisor supported my professional development.	___
If I asked to learn a new skill or try out a new project, my supervisor tried to make it happen to the best of his/her abilities.	___
My supervisor gave me quality and actionable feedback so that I could do my job effectively and improve.	___
My supervisor helped me effectively manage my workload.	___

12.) Relationship with your Team(s)

Please rate your agreement with the following statements about your relationship with your team(s) as it related to your work here. To what degree do you agree with the following statements?

	1 is to little or no degree, 5 is to a moderate degree, and 10 is to a great degree
Project leads and other team members communicated expectations for my work clearly.	___
I felt like an integral part of my team.	___
My team treated me with respect.	___
My team asked for and respected my ideas, opinions and input.	___
My team was concerned about letting me develop new skills.	___
I clearly understood how my work fit into the work of my team.	___
I clearly understood how my work fit into the overall work of NOAA.	___
My accomplishments and successes were adequately acknowledged and praised by my team.	___

13.) (optional) Please use this space to add any details or explain any of your above answers about your relationship with your supervisor, team, or recognition in the organization.

IMPROVING THE PROGRAM

14.) Please rate your agreement with the following statement:
Overall, my entry-level or internship position at NOAA was a good experience.

( ) Strongly disagree

( ) Disagree

( ) Neutral

( ) Agree

( ) Strongly agree

15.) Would you recommend the program to a friend or colleague?

( ) Yes

( ) No

16.) If you could change or add anything to the program, what would it be?

17.) Please describe the most valuable part of your experience.

18.) What was the most difficult part of the program?

19.) How useful were the following aspects of the program?
(Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5)

	NOT APPLICABLE	**1, not at all useful**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5, very useful**
Meet with top NOAA management	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Attend CIO Council meetings	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
IT Specialist Guest Speakers	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Rotational assignment	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Other training opportunities such as brownbags	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

20.) What other training or professional development opportunities would be useful? (You may also use this space to explain any of your answers above)

THANK YOU!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your response will help improve the NOAA program for entry-level or intern positions in IT.

APPENDIX A: HIRING REFORM – NEW HIRING MODEL

OVERVIEW

1. What are the basic requirements of the Hiring Reform?
    a. The following are the basic requirements of the Hiring Reform, as outlined in the Presidential Memorandum of May 11, 2010:
        i. Conduct workforce planning.
        ii. Improve the quality and speed of hiring.
        iii. Allow individuals to apply with resume and cover letters.
        iv. Use occupational questionnaires, which include true/false and multiple choice questions. Written essay-style questions will not be used for the initial application.
        v. Use Category Rating.
        vi. Notify applicants about their status.
        vii. Ensure manager responsibility and accountability for hiring by using a mandatory critical performance element.
2. Why were essay questions eliminated?
    a. To make it easier for people to apply for Federal positions by streamlining the process for applicants.
3. What is the difference between "DE" and "MAP"?
    a. Delegated Examining (DE) refers to the process of hiring applicants new to Federal service, otherwise known as "non-status" candidates. Merit Assignment Procedures (MAP) refers to the process of selecting candidates who are already Federal employees or those applicants who have reinstatement eligibility based upon previous Federal service. Additionally, Veterans whose latest discharge were issued under honorable conditions, and who are either a 'preference eligible' or have completed three or more year of active service, are also eligible to apply for "MAP" positions.
4. During the hiring process, at what points will the candidates be notified of the status of their applications?
    a. There are four points of notification:
        i. Application received.
        ii. Application assessed for qualifications.
        iii. Application referred or not referred to selecting official.
        iv. Applicant selected or not selected.
5. How does the hiring reform affect lateral transfers from within NOAA?
    a. For non-competitive lateral transfers, there is no change from the current procedures.
6. Are there templates that can be used to assist with preparing a hiring package? If so, where are they located?
    a. A sample hiring package template is currently under development. Vacancy Announcement Templates are located in DOC HR Bulletin #126, "Creating a Vacancy Announcement". This bulletin is located on the Workforce Management web site at www.wfm.noaa.gov. You may also contact your servicing HR Specialist for additional guidance.

WORKFORCE PLANNING

1. What exactly should we do for "workforce planning"?
    a. You should assess your staffing needs for the future to strategically plan recruitment options and recruitment sources. If you anticipate the need for a surge in hiring during a specific timeframe, alert the Workforce Management Office (WFMO) in advance so they can provide timely support to process all your hiring actions.
2. Who can help facilitate our workforce planning?
    a. Contact WFMO's Workforce Planning and Development Division: Christine.Carpino@noaa.gov

NOAA'S 80-DAY HIRING MODEL

1. Does the "80-Day" Hiring Model refer to business days or calendar days?
    a. 80 calendar days.
2. Having only 14 calendar days to review applicants, schedule and conduct interviews, check references, select, and determine salary is not enough time. What can I do to have more time for these important steps?
    a. It is very important to plan ahead for the dates scheduled for this process. When submitting the recruitment package to the Workforce Management Office, use the 80-day model to calculate when the certificate will be issued. Schedule the interview panel ahead of time. Also, posting the vacancy for 7 days (rather than 14 days) would allow for an additional 7 days to complete the selection steps described above.
3. Vacancies in remote locations (e.g., Alaska, Hawaii) and certain specialized scientific positions are more difficult to fill. Can I post a vacancy for more than 14 calendar days in such cases? How will that affect the 80-day timeline?
    a. Yes, the vacancy can be posted for more than 14-calendar days, if required. The goal to meet the 80-day model does not change, so the time should be made up by compressing other stages of the hiring process wherever possible.
4. Is the 80-day target "set in stone" for every hiring action, or are we aiming for an average of 80 days? Will we be held accountable for hiring within 80 calendar days in every case?
    a. The intent is for all recruitment actions to be processed within 80 calendar days. NOAA must report to DOC the average and total time to complete prescribed hiring steps.
5. Is there a penalty if deadlines in the 80-day model are violated at various points? How do we ensure these guidelines are adhered to? How do we document exceptions?
    a. The intent is to meet the overall 80-day goal. Times associated with the individual steps of the model may vary. All hiring actions subject to the 80-day model are documented in Recruitment Analysis Data System (RADS), including authorized exceptions.
6. New hires seldom report within one pay period of the job offer — especially if they are relocating. Meeting the 80-day goal is more realistic if the process is measured from the start of the recruitment action to the job offer (rather than EOD). How can we be held accountable for a 14 calendar day EOD when that time frame is atypical and out of our control?
    a. a. The model allows for an "exception" category to be entered in the tracking system (RADS) when the EOD is more than 14 days out.
7. How does NOAA's 80-Day Hiring Model affect Union agreements?
    a. A Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) supersedes any policies or procedures outlined in NOAA's 80-Day Hiring Model.
8. Are tasks in the 80-day model adjusted to account for days that fall on weekends and holidays? Will employees be expected to work on weekends to use all 80 calendar days?

a. Although weekends (and other non-working days) occur during the 80 calendar days of the hiring model, employees are not expected to work on weekends and holidays. Adjustments should be made in other areas of the model to accommodate holidays and weekend dates.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The role of the Line Office/Staff Office (LO/SO) Point of Contact (POC) as the single point of contact raises a concern. Any one person in this role could be overwhelmed at times and Hiring Officials need direct access to WFMO staff for questions and to collaborate. Can you describe the role of the POC?
    a. The LO/SO POC is the single point of contact to ensure consistency in package submission. The POCs have backup employees who provide coverage when they are not available. The servicing HR Specialist is also available to Hiring Officials for questions and collaboration on a continuous basis.

RECRUITMENT PACKAGE

1. What is included in a complete recruitment package?
    a. The WFMO Intake Checklist identifies the required documents for a recruitment package. Briefly, it includes:
        i. RADS SF-52, Request for Personnel Action (RPA)
        ii. Job Analysis*
        iii. Draft Occupational Questionnaire
        iv. Specialized Experience Statement*
        v. CD-516, Position Description (PD) Cover Sheet*
        vi. Classified Position Description*
        vii. Performance Plan, if required*
        viii. Justification of non-payment of relocation expenses, if applicable
        ix. Major Duties Statement (optional) for the Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA)

        *For multi-grade recruitments, include for each grade/band.

2. What happens if a partial hiring package is submitted?
    a. If the package is incomplete, WFMO will return it to the LO/SO POC with explanation.

JOB OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT (JOA)

1. Can I let people know publicly that a vacancy is about to come open, before it is officially announced?
    a. Yes, you are encouraged to promote anticipated vacancy announcements. Keep in mind that potential applicants must be treated equitably and fairly.
2. Do we have to advertise all jobs through all sources?
    a. Yes, in most cases.
3. I have a position that requires writing ability. Without the essay questions, how can I assess the candidate's writing ability?

   a. During the interview process, you may ask candidates to provide a writing sample, as long as all candidates are treated equitably and fairly. You need to work closely with your HR Specialist.
4. Does the resume for Federal jobs have to be in a particular format?
   a. No. However, candidates should focus on preparing a resume that best describes their background and abilities.
5. Is there a maximum length for the resume?
   a. No. However, candidates should focus on preparing a resume that best describes their background and abilities.
6. How important is the cover letter? When should the applicant include one?
   a. The cover letter is an additional tool for candidates to further describe their qualifications for the position. It is the applicant's decision whether to include one.
7. Is there a limit on the length of the cover letter?
   a. No.
8. If you ask to open an announcement for 14 calendar days and don't get a good list of acceptable candidates, can you choose to leave it open another 14 days? If so, how does this affect the 80-day model?
   a. As long as the announcement hasn't closed, you can request that the announcement be extended for an additional time period. However, those additional days will need to be made up in another place. You may want to initially advertise for 7 days and then see if additional time is needed.
9. Can you still state on the job announcement "no relocation expenses"?
   a. Yes, with justification. This hasn't changed.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS (SMES)

1. What is a SME and what exactly does a SME do?
   a. The SME is an individual who has full knowledge of the duties of the position being filled and of the skills and abilities necessary to perform that work. The SME may participate in the Job Analysis. They also can assist with developing questions for the Occupational Questionnaire and determine an applicant's qualifications by validating that answers to the questions are supported by the applicant's resume and cover letter. For additional information, please refer to the SME Job Aid at http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/pdfs/SME_job_aid.pdf. All SMEs must adhere to the Merit Systems Principles (http://www.opm.gov/ovrsight/mspidx.asp) and Prohibited Personnel Practices (http://www.opm.gov/ovrsight/proidx.asp).
2. Do we need a SME for all hiring actions?
   a. SMEs are encouraged, but not required.
3. What process should I use to select a SME?
   a. Please refer to the reference in Question #1.
4. Can the SME be the Hiring Official?
   a. The SME should not be the Hiring Official. Having a separate reviewer involved reduces the chances that an applicant will be able to claim that the process was biased to favor a particular candidate.
5. Can the SME be a person outside of NOAA?
   a. Yes.
6. Can there be multiple SMEs?
   a. Yes.

7. Can a SME be on the interview panel?
    a. Yes, if the SME has not assisted in the review of applications for basic qualification determination prior to issuance of the certificate. If he/she has assisted in the qualification determination, it is recommended that a different SME should participate in the interview in an effort to avoid the perception of undue influence.
8. Does the SME require special training? If so, is there training or coaching available for SMEs?
    a. There is no training specifically for SMEs. They are selected based on what they already know about the work. The servicing HR Specialist can provide procedural guidance for the SME, as needed.
9. Does the SME need to sign a contract?
    a. Yes. The HR Specialist will provide it.
10. What if the SME knows a candidate personally?
    a. The SME should participate in review of the candidate only if he/she can fairly evaluate the candidate and will be viewed as impartial.
11. Who makes the decision whether or not a SME should assist in qualifications review of the applicants?
    a. The Hiring Official and/or the HR Specialist.
12. If we use yes/no, multiple choice, best answer questions, then score the applications electronically against these question, is a SME still required for review of the applications?
    a. Yes. The SME's review will be to ensure the answers to the questions are supported by the information contained in the resume and cover letter.
13. Can the SME interview the applicant's previous supervisors and/or references before the certification is issued?
    a. No.
14. What's the process for replacing a SME, if the one originally picked is no longer available?
    a. The process is the same as selecting the first SME. See Question #1 for more details.
15. Will the SME see ALL the job applications? For example, will they have to read/review the potentially dozens or more of applications? What sort of time commitment is expected from the SME?
    a. Yes, the SME will see all job applications. The time commitment will vary depending on the number of applications.
16. Is it true that SMEs can only assist in qualifications review BEFORE the certificate is issued and not after?
    a. Yes.
17. Can a retiring employee serve as either the SME or on the hiring panel prior to his or her retirement? Is this a conflict?
    a. Yes, employees approaching retirement may serve in both capacities. This is not a conflict.

RADS

1. What is RADS?
    a. The Recruitment Analysis Data System (RADS) is a Web-based system designed to begin and track all recruitment actions. It was designed to streamline NOAA's recruitment process by providing an automated submission for the SF-52 and other documents needed for processing hiring requests. RADS:
        i. Eliminates manual paper logs now kept by HR Specialists.
        ii. Centralizes SF-52s and all required documents in one case.

    iii. Facilitates routing and accountability between user roles.
    iv. Improves case status communications with Hiring Officials and Line Offices.
    v. Creates an audit trail of every action any user takes on a case.
    vi. Permits the automatic development of hiring plans, in compliance with the 80-day hiring model, once RADS is successfully paired with Monster Government Solutions.
    vii. Customizes automated reports, as requested.

2. What can I do in RADS?
    a. That depends on your role and your permissions. Designated Line Office Points of Contact (LO POC) can submit cases to WFMO. Line Office Assistants (LOAs) can build these cases by creating SF-52s and uploading documents. Line Office Hiring Officials and Subject Matter Experts can review theses cases for accuracy and follow their progress in the system. If you have further questions, please send them to RADS.Support@noaa.gov.
3. Who is the person that enters data into the RADS system?
    a. The SF-52, case description, and appropriate supporting documentation can be entered either by the LO POC, or by a LOA. Hiring Officials cannot enter data. They have read-only access to their cases.
4. Why can't the Hiring Official input information into an electronic system that is then reviewed by the LO POC, and when complete, approve it for submission and then submit? Is there a reason why hiring officials cannot load the job analysis into RADS themselves? Wouldn't this reduce the burden on the LO POC?
    a. Hiring Officials hire on an ad hoc basis; some may not hire for a long time, others hire more frequently. In order to maintain consistency, WFMO determined that it is best to limit the number of individuals who input into RADS. This accomplishes several things: the LO POC becomes the expert adviser to the Hiring Official and it eliminates the need for Hiring Officials who hire infrequently to periodically relearn the system. Another benefit of restricting access is that a limited number of people are held accountable for the submission of hiring actions to WFMO. Many of us have experienced miscommunication in the hiring process. RADS offers a more efficient process in that people on both sides of the transaction are held accountable for timely action. The system holds the most recent case status information and all pertinent documents are located in one place.
5. Who has 'read' access to RADS to check on status?
    a. Your role defines the extent of the access you have. This is defined in the Roles and Responsibilities slide in the Hiring Reform training. For the LO/SOs, the Hiring Official has read-only access to his or her own cases, whereas the LO POC and the Assistant(s) have access to read all cases. The POC is the only person with system permissions to submit a case. Typically, the POC adds the Hiring Official and occasionally a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to the case to enable them to follow progress and review applicable documentation.
6. What does a RADS case number signify?
    a. In RADS, a number is automatically assigned to every "case". A "case" is a request for some type of hiring action. As soon as a case is created in RADS, an automatic 8-character number (beginning with an R) is assigned to it. This is the number WFMO will use to refer to your case. One case can include a single hire, multiple hires, or an inter-disciplinary hire that is generally pulled off of one certificate. Multiple hiring actions must be related; otherwise a separate case entry (and thus a separate RADS case number) is

required for each unrelated hiring action. All tracking of cases by WFMO is done by the RADS case number. RADS also provides a way for the LO/SO to record any existing Line Office numbering systems.

7. Can I submit a paper SF-52, like I've always done?
    a. No, you must submit your SF-52 in RADS.
8. What format is required for documents submitted to RADS?
    a. RADS will accept both Adobe PDF (.pdf) and Word documents (.doc or .docx). No other file format is allowed. However, we request Word documents to allow for editing.
9. Is there a time expectation for entering data into the RADS to ensure the package moves forward?
    a. This is a pre-submission activity, and therefore is not tracked in RADS. The time expectation for entering the initial data will be set by your Line Office/Staff Office. Once the case is submitted to WFMO, all cases follow the timeline shown in the 80-Day Hiring Model. NOAA is held accountable to this standard by the Office of Personnel Management.
10. How do I get access to RADS?
    a. If you are a Hiring Official, send an email to RADS.Support@noaa.gov. If you want to request the ability to upload documents and create your own SF-52s, contact the designated RADS Point of Contact for your office. If you're not sure who this is, email RADS.Support@noaa.gov and we can let you know.

OCCUPATIONAL QUESTIONNAIRES

1. What is an "Occupational Questionnaire" and how is it used in the hiring process?
    a. It is a tool used to assess applicants' qualifications for the position advertised. It can include Multiple Choice, True/False or Yes/No questions. The questionnaire cannot include open-ended questions that require long answers or essay responses.
2. How many questions should we ask on an Occupational Questionnaire?
    a. Questions should be limited to assessing the competencies and skills that will best differentiate candidates. Effective February 1, 2011, WFMO is limiting the number of questions per job to 10.
3. Should each question be weighted and add up to 100?
    a. Yes.
4. Is there a "library" of questions that we can use for the Occupational Questionnaire? Or can we create our own questions?
    a. Yes. There is a library of questions to which managers have access. Contact your HR Specialist. In addition, you can request that questions be added before the package is submitted.

CATEGORY RATING/ISSUING THE CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBLES

1. Who reviews the applications initially?
    a. The HR Specialist and possibly the SME.
2. What is "category rating"? How are the candidates scored to assign them to the "Gold", "Silver", or "Bronze" category? Will an applicant's score be based only on how specific questions are answered, or will the resume, cover letter and SME input be used also?
    a. Category rating puts qualified candidates into one of three categories: Gold (highest), Silver, or Bronze, based on the candidate's self-scored occupational questionnaire

answers. Those answers are cross-referenced with the resume and cover letter information to determine whether they support their questionnaire responses. Although scores are used to place candidates into the categories, the scores will not appear on the certification.

3. Will we use category rating on all vacancies?
    a. Yes, if the announcement is open to non-status candidates.
4. If candidates are self-scoring, at what point do we verify that they have not inflated their scores? What if the candidate's resume and cover letter do not support their answers in the occupational questionnaire?
    a. The HR Specialist and SME review the answers to the questionnaire to determine if the resume and cover letter support the score. Scores can be changed prior to the certificate being issued, but not after. Although scores are used to place candidates into the categories, the scores will not appear on the certification. WFMO strongly encourages the use of a SME to assist in this process.
5. Are all the names on the "Gold" list referred to the hiring official or just those with Veterans' Preference?
    a. Generally all Gold candidates are referred. However, HR Specialists have the flexibility to refer only preference eligibles in the Gold category when it appears likely that non-preference eligibles will not be within reach for consideration because the number of preference eligibles. (HR Bulletin 133, http://hr.commerce.gov/s/groups/public/@doc/@cfoasa/@ohrm/documents/content/prod01_009474.pdf)
6. Would any names on the Silver or Bronze list ever be referred?
    a. Yes, if the HR Specialist in conjunction with the Hiring Official decide to merge the Silver and Bronze categories into the Gold category. This would generally occur if there were insufficient numbers of candidates in the Gold category.
7. If the Gold category has only a few candidates, can the Hiring Official receive the Silver category?
    a. Yes. The categories may be merged, as described in Question #6.
8. What if no candidates are in the Gold category?
    a. Candidates in the Silver category will be referred.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE

1. Did the regulations for receiving Veterans' preference change under the Hiring Reform? What are the categories of Veterans and what do they mean?
    a. Veterans' preference regulations have NOT changed. The following categories are still used:

Identifier	Description
CPS	Service-connected disability of 30% or greater.
CP	Service-connected disability of greater than 10% and less than 30%.
TP	Former active duty military.
XP	Eligible family members, based on complete disabled or deceased veteran preference, or Purple Heart veteran.

2. Who is responsible for determining the eligibility of the Veteran?
    a. WFMO verifies preference eligibility.
3. If there are multiple Veterans on the Gold list, can any of them be selected?

   a. Yes. Any Veteran on the list can be selected.
4. How do the Veterans' preference points work in category rating?
   a. There are no preference eligibility points assigned with category rating. The preference eligibles are placed in a category (i.e., Gold, Silver, or Bronze). Within that category, the preference eligibles are placed ahead of non-preference eligibles.

INTERVIEWS

1. If I have 10 candidates to choose from, do I have to interview them all? I'm concerned that I won't have time in the allotted 14 calendar days to get that many interviews completed and make a selection.
   a. No, the Hiring Official can determine which candidates to interview. However the selection of which candidates to interview must be based on valid job-related criteria.
2. What if everybody is not available to interview in-person and I have limited travel funds? Can I bring in some candidates in person and others interview by phone?
   a. Interviews can be conducted either in person or by phone. If travel funds are extended to one non-local candidate, it is best to make funds available to all non-local candidates. Keep in mind that all applicants must be treated equitably and fairly.
3. If I uncover discrepancies during the interview process, can the category rating be revised?
   a. If discrepancies are uncovered, contact your servicing HR Specialist for guidance.

SELECTION PROCESS

1. Are reference checks required?
   a. No, but they are highly recommended.
2. As the Hiring Official, can I send letters to people they interviewed but did not select?
   a. Yes. You should coordinate this with your HR Specialist.

OFFER

1. What if the position is offered but the candidate doesn't respond for weeks or even a month? How will that affect the 80 calendar days? Can candidates be given a deadline by which they must respond to the offer?
   a. Hiring Officials should coordinate a deadline for response with their HR specialist.
2. The 80-day model assumes that everything goes as planned. What if a candidate turns the offer down and it becomes necessary to offer the position to a different candidate? How can I stay within the 80-day model when that happens?
   a. This would qualify as an "exception" for the final 14 calendar days to EOD.

SECURITY CLEARANCE

1. In Step 12 in NOAA's 80-Day Hiring Model, what if there are issues with the security clearance? Is the security step in the process (e.g., number of days) also being monitored for timeliness?
   a. Yes, the security step is being monitored. Every effort will be made to keep the security clearance time to a minimum.
2. When can a security clearance transfer?

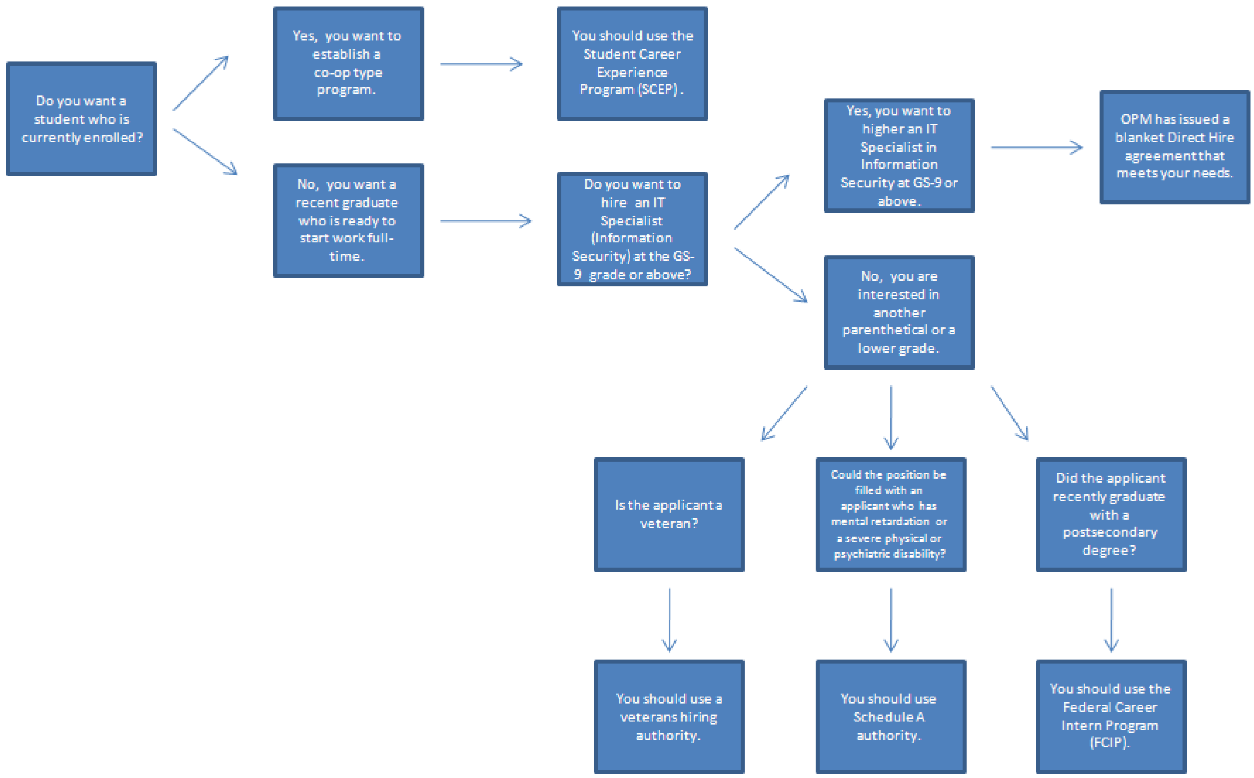
   a. Basic security clearance requirements transfer with Federal employees from agency to agency. There may be exceptions for higher level clearances. Please coordinate with your servicing HR Specialist.

3. When are fingerprints needed?
   a. Fingerprints are required for selectees new to the Federal government or those without appropriate clearance for a particular position.

APPENDIX B: HIRING FLEXIBILITIES

HIRING DECISION TREE

Text here…update based on Pathways



HIRING FLEXIBILITIES

Veterans Employment Opportunities Act

The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) of 1998, as amended, provides that agencies must allow eligible veterans to apply for positions announced under merit promotion procedures when the agency is recruiting from outside its own workforce. ("Agency," in this context, means the parent agency, i.e., Treasury, not the Internal Revenue Service, and the Department of Defense, not the Department of the Army.) A VEOA eligible who competes under merit promotion procedures and is selected will be given a career or career-conditional appointment. Veterans' preference is not a factor in these appointments. (5 USC 3304 (f); 5 CFR 315.611; 335.106)

Veterans Recruitment Appointments

Agencies have the authority to appoint veterans in the excepted service under the Veterans Recruitment Appointment. This is a special authority under which agencies can appoint an eligible veteran up through the GS-11 or equivalent grade level without competition. The candidate must meet specific eligibility requirements along with the applicable qualification requirements. The agency must convert the appointment to career or career-conditional after 2 years of satisfactory service. (5 CFR part 307)

Pathways Program

To be determined…

Direct-Hire

This authority allows agencies with delegated examining authority to hire individuals without regard to sections 3309-3318 of title 5, United States Code, to positions for which:

- Public notice has been given, and
- The U.S. Office of Personnel Management determines there is a severe shortage of candidates or a critical hiring need.

OPM may issue direct-hire authority for one or more of the following: occupational series, grades (or equivalent), and geographical location. (5 U.S.C. 3304 and 5 CFR part 337, subpart B). Government-wide direct hires for Information Technology Specialists: Information Technology Management (Information Security), GS-2210, GS-09 and above

Special Appointing Authorities: Schedule A (5 CFR part 213)

Schedule A authority can be used to hire applicants with mental retardation or a severe physical or psychiatric disability to fill any job in which the person is able to perform with or without reasonable accommodation. Applicants with disabilities frequently apply for consideration under Schedule A. Schedule A authority allows hiring on a "trial" basis. After 2 years of successful performance, the agency may noncompetitively convert the appointment to a permanent appointment in the competitive service or they may remain on the excepted service appointment.

PATHWAYS FACT SHEET

[To be developed once guidance has been promulgated.]

SCHOLARSHIP FOR SERVICE (SFS) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Scholarship for Service (SFS) program?

It is the Federal Government's response to deal with the threat to our information technology infrastructure by strengthening the cadre of professionals who protect it. Through this program, the National Science Foundation partnered with Department of Homeland Security issues selected 4-year colleges and universities scholarship grants to attract students to the information assurance field.

What agency administers the SFS program?

The Interagency Coordinating Committee (ICC) oversees the program. The ICC is composed of representatives from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), National Security Agency (NSA), Department of Treasury, and Office of Management and Budget (OMB). NSF administers the issuance of grants process and the capacity building component. The scholarship component (including the placement and tracking of participants) of the SFS program is administered by OPM's San Antonio Services Branch. Questions about the program may be addressed to Kathy Roberson, SFS Program Manager, at sfs@opm.gov or (202) 369-1011.

Why is the SFS program important to the Federal agencies?

The SFS program is important to the Federal agencies because it helps them obtain the talent they need to protect their information systems. Upon graduation, participants must serve at a Federal agency for a period equivalent to the length of the scholarship or one year, whichever is longer. This service must be in a position concerned with information assurance. During their period of Federal service, participants join the agency's cadre of professionals that protect its critical information systems infrastructure.

Is there any evidence that the SFS Program will work?

The SFS program is modeled after other successful programs and borrows some of their best features. For example, much like the Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program, top-level students are nominated by their institutions. The internship offers the student-agency bonding opportunity of the co-op work experiences. The scholarships and stipends serve a similar purpose as that of the recruiting bonuses and retention allowances Federal agencies may use to attract top talent.

Can any college or university participate?

No. Colleges and universities must vie for participation. Only those selected through a competitive process may participate. You may access a list of contacts and institutions currently participating by selecting Principal Investigators on our website's Contacts page.

Who pays for the scholarships?

The National Science Foundation awards the grants for the scholarships to the selected colleges and universities. The Federal agencies that choose to participate by hiring program participants bear none of the cost for the scholarships.

How may students apply, and how are they selected for the program?

Students must apply to a participating university. Students who apply will be selected for the program in accordance with the process and screening criteria set forth by the participating university.

What are the student eligibility requirements?

The student must meet all of the following:

- be pursuing a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree at an institution that has been awarded a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant under the SFS program;
- be attending school on a full-time basis while receiving a scholarship under the SFS program;
- be willing to pursue studies with an emphasis in information assurance;
- be a United States citizen;
- meet criteria for Federal employment; and
- be able to obtain a security clearance, if required.

Does the student have to serve the internship at the Federal agency that will employ him or her upon graduation?

No. The student may serve the internship at another Federal agency.

May an agency make an offer of employment to a student who served the internship at another agency?

There is no legal or regulatory basis to prevent an agency from making an offer of employment to a student who served the internship at another Federal agency even if the student is currently on the latter's rolls.

What happens if the student leaves his Federal position before he or she serves the required period?

The student must repay a prorated amount equivalent to the length of the period not served. For example, if the student received funds for two years and serves for one-and-a-half years, he or she must repay 25% of the funds received. Federal agencies must notify the SFS Program Office immediately when this occurs. That office is responsible for initiating the repayment process.

It is clear NSF funds the scholarships. Are there any program-related costs to the agency?

Yes! Federal agencies must pay the students' salary (and benefits, if applicable) during the internship and other periods of employment. Additionally, it is expected that in virtually all cases, a security clearance may be required. The Federal agency will bear the cost of the background investigation (if needed), case adjudication, and other expenses associated with obtaining the required level of security clearance.

GENERAL INTERVIEW STRATEGIES

The interview is one of the most important steps in the intern selection process. With a strategic approach, you can help identify and attract the best talent for your team. Following are tips for conducting a successful interview.

1. **Prepare in Advance**: Develop an approach you'll use with all candidates. Rank intern requirements in order of importance, and prepare a list of questions that will enable you to assess candidates' talents and expertise in these areas. Be sure to include questions designed to gauge interpersonal skills and problem-solving abilities.
2. **Make Your Candidate Comfortable**: Start by engaging with the candidate. You can gain insight into the candidate's personality and also put him or her at ease, increasing the likelihood that you'll receive candid responses.
3. **Conduct behaviorally-based, structured interviews**: Develop a set of behaviorally-based questions that allow the candidate to relate how they have demonstrated performance of the competencies required of the job. See below for examples. Provide structure to the interview by ensuring that the same questions are asked to each candidate, to provide equity and avoid potential bias.
4. **Ask Diverse Questions**: To assess the candidate's work style and compatibility with your organization's culture, vary the style of your questions. Ask close-ended, factual ones ("How many years did you work for organization A?"); open-ended questions ("Can you describe your major accomplishments?"); and behavioral-based questions ("Tell me about a time you handled constructive criticism?").

5. **Rephrase Questions When Necessary**: If a candidate's response to your question is vague or insufficient, don't be afraid to ask for the information in a different way. For example, rephrase "Why did you leave your previous position?" to "What types of opportunities are you looking for that your last experience did not provide?"
6. **Make a Pitch for Your Organization**: The interview works both ways, so be sure to emphasize the positive aspects of your group to prospective candidates.
7. **Pay Attention**: Fight the urge to formulate your next question while the candidate responds to the last one. You need to listen attentively to pick up on bits of information that might otherwise escape you.
8. **Write it Down**: Memory is unreliable, so take notes in an unobtrusive way during the interview. Don't transcribe everything the candidate says – jotting down the highlights should be sufficient. Use an interview scoring template to record your impressions along with the candidate's responses to questions.
9. **Don't Rush to Judgment**: Try to avoid forming an opinion too quickly about a candidate. Wait until after the interview to evaluate responses and make interpretations.
10. **End on a Positive Note**: Once you feel you have enough information, end the interview politely. Thank the candidate for his or her time and interest. Be upfront with next steps without promising something you cannot deliver. Conducting an effective job interview isn't always as easy as it may first appear. You can get more out of these meetings by planning ahead, taking good notes and evaluating each candidate objectively.

SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Behavioral interviewing is a technique in which the questions asked assist in making predictions about a potential candidate's future success. Answers are based on a candidate's actual past behaviors, instead of on responses to hypothetical questions. In behavior-based interviews, candidates are asked to give specific examples of when they demonstrated particular behaviors or skills. The candidate should describe in detail a particular event, project, or experience that they dealt with, as well as the actual outcome.

The following are some sample behavioral-based interview questions. The specificity of the questions should be adjusted depending on the experience level of the candidate:

Decision Making and Problem Solving

- Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.

Leadership and Motivation

- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.

Communication

- Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.

Interpersonal Skills

- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).

Planning and Organization

- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- What do you do when your schedule is suddenly interrupted? Give an example.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE AGREEMENT FORMS

INTERN RECRUITMENT REQUEST FORM

Requesting Office: ____

Type Requested: ( ) Intern ( ) Entry-Level

Required Approvals

1. Has this request received Division Director approval? ( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) N/A

2. Who is the selecting official? ____________________________

3. Have adequate payroll funds been confirmed for the position requested? ( ) Yes ( ) No

If the answer to any of the above is "No," please provide comments and or explanation:

General Position Information

Completed by OCIO official requesting the intern recruitment

4. Grade Level:

5. Intern Reports To (Supervisor):

6. Position Location:

7. Overview of proposed intern roles and responsibilities, competencies:

8. Has a job description been created for this intern position? ( ) Yes ( ) No

If yes, please attach a copy to this request

10. Who will be the POC for questions regarding this recruitment request? ___________________

Requesting Official: ______________________________ (signature) Date: _______________

HC Official: ___________________________________ (signature) Date: _______________

PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I hereby agree to participate for a period of [24 months] in the Program. I am willing to:

1. Accept and satisfactorily complete on the job and formal and informal training assignments;

2. Maintain a high level of work performance in rotational and host assignments;

3. Maintain academic standards for approved coursework, as appropriate;

4. Prepare participant course and Program evaluations as requested;

5. Agree to work with my supervisor to ensure I reach my desired career development;

6. Prepare evaluations for my supervisor(s) and program as requested.

I understand that I may be released from the Program at any time if I do not take full advantage of the required training, do not apply myself adequately, or fail to perform in a fully successful manner.

____

Participant Signature: Date:

CC: Program Coordinator
Supervisor

SUPERVISOR AGREEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I hereby agree to participate for a period of [24 months] as a supervisor to__________________ while he/she participates in the Program. I am willing to:

1. Assign quality work and responsibilities to the participant;

2. Recommend and facilitate rotations that will help the participant develop in areas productive to the participant and the office;

3. Allow the participant to rotate to different areas within my Line/Staff Office (including headquarters and field area offices);

4. Approve the training listed in the participant's Individual Development Plan whenever practical;

5. Assign on the job and formal and informal training;

6. Review and prepare quarterly reports;

7. Prepare letters of recommendation as requested;

8. Communicate on a regular basis;

9. Coach and council the participant at the conclusion of each rotational assignment.

I understand that I have a responsibility to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to open and honest communication.

____

Supervisor Signature Date

CC: Program Coordinator
Intern
Supervisor

DEVELOPMENTAL/ROTATIONAL ASSIGNMENT CONTRACT

1. Participation information:

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

2. Rotational assignment position and location:

Division:

Office:

Address:

Host Supervisor:

3. Assignment period:

Beginning date:

Ending date:

Vacation period:

Training period:

4. Overview of the host office: (include primary mission and tasks)

5. Overview of program assignment duties:

6. Assignment objectives:

7. Describe how the assignment will expose the participant to technical and business experiences that will further address the competency areas identified in the IDP.

Flexibility clause: If the evaluation of the participant's progress dictates change, the assignment objectives may be modified. If the assignment plan does not provide facilities and the opportunity to achieve the participant's objectives, the developmental assignment may be terminated with mutual consent.

Approval signatures:

Participant Signature/Date: ____

Supervisor Signature/Date: ____

Host Supervisor Signature/Date: ____

CC: Program Coordinator

CERTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSIGNMENT

(To be completed by the host supervisor upon completion of the assignment)

Name Of The Participant: ____

Assignment (LO/SO; Component; City): ______________________________________

Start Date: ______________________

Completion Date: ___________________

Provide a brief evaluation of the experiences and insights the participant gained from this developmental assignment.

Describe the assignment's benefits: 1) What can the participant do differently; and 2) How did this assignment change the technical and/or business behaviors of the participant.

What recommendations, if any, would you make for future FCIP participants seeking developmental assignments?

Other comments:

Host Supervisor Signature/Date: ___________________________________

Upon completion of each assignment, return a copy of this certification to the Program Coordinator.