



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

MAY 07 2013

## **PERSONNEL BULLETIN # 13-04**

### **SUBJECT: The Department of the Interior Pathways Programs**

#### **1. PURPOSE.**

This Personnel Bulletin (PB) establishes the Department of the Interior (DOI) procedures and guidance on the use of the Pathways Programs and how the Department will appoint and employ individuals under the three Pathways Programs, i.e., Internship Program, Recent Graduates Program and Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program. This policy authorizes DOI to make appointments under Schedule D in the excepted service to any Pathways Program, and provides guidance establishing DOI's plan for recruitment, selection, appointment, and employment in the Pathways Programs in accordance with Title 5, United States Code, Sections 3302(1) and 2301(b)(1), and the Code of Federal Regulations, 5 CFR 213, 302 and 362. It also defines requirements for non-competitive conversion to the competitive service upon successful completion of Pathways Program requirements

This supersedes Departmental Manual 370 DM 380 and the PBs: PB 06-08, Departmental Policy on the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP); PB 09-04, Presidential Management Fellows Program; and PB 02-6, Department of the Interior Federal Career Intern Program. PB 02-05, Departmental Qualification Standard for Excepted Service Student Career Experience Program Positions remains in effect for all students hired under the new Pathways Internship Program, which replaces SCEP.

#### **2. AUTHORITY.**

Executive Order 13562, 12015, Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 213, 302, 315, 330, 334, 335, 351, 362, 430, 531, 537, 550, 575, and 890.

#### **3. BACKGROUND.**

Executive Order (EO) 13562, Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates, was signed by President Barack Obama on December 27, 2010, creating the Pathways Programs as a solution to undo the complexity of the rules governing admission to the career civil service. The EO eliminated the former Federal Career Intern Program, effective March 1, 2011, and is part of the overall hiring reform through which the federal government is seeking to streamline and improve the federal hiring process, to specifically enable the federal government to compete effectively for students and recent graduates. The Internship Program replaces and is modeled after the former Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) and the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). The Recent Graduates Program is a new program designed to provide developmental opportunities in federal employment for individuals who have recently graduated from qualifying educational institutions or programs. It replaces the former Federal Career Intern Program. The PMF Program remains in existence with revisions.

Appointment to a Pathways Program will confer no right to further Federal employment in either the competitive or excepted service upon completion of the program requirements and/or the expiration of the appointment. Bureaus/Offices may convert eligible participants noncompetitively to term, career, or career-conditional appointments after satisfying the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) requirements. Pathways participants who were initially converted to a term appointment under the Pathways Programs may be converted to a career or career-conditional appointment before the term appointment expires.

#### **4. PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.**

(1) The Director of OPM retains exclusive authority to establish and maintain an oversight program; establish caps on the number of individuals who may be hired under the Pathways Programs or noncompetitively converted from the Pathways Programs to a position in the competitive service; or revoke an agency's Pathways Programs Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

#### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES.**

The Department will:

- Conduct program oversight and ensure that all managers and supervisors are aware of the programs' requirements and carry out their responsibilities related to the program and participants within their bureaus/offices;
- Monitor and assess Pathways Program operations, and reports results to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, as required.

The Human Resources Offices will:

- Ensure HRO staff understand the requirements, intent and operations of the Pathways Programs, and provide accurate and appropriate guidance and assistance to management and employees;
- Post all job opportunities for Pathways Internship and Recent Graduates positions on USAJOBS.
- Perform the minimum announcement requirement for internal vacancy announcements for current Pathways Interns;
- Provide all Pathways participants meaningful developmental work and set clear expectations regarding the work experience of the Intern, Recent Graduates or PMF;

- Advise managers on the recruitment and on-boarding process for Pathways Programs participants;
- Engage supervisors and Pathways participants, as necessary, in the preparation of the Individual Development Plan for each Intern without a not to exceed date, Recent Graduate and PMF participants within the required timeframes;
- Assist supervisors, as necessary, in developing performance plans.
- Use appropriate merit-based procedures for recruitment, assessment, and placement of Pathways participants. Assessment methods may include Rule of Three, Unranked, and Category Rating method;
- Ensure adherence to veterans' preference requirements in accordance with the provisions of Part 302 of 5 CFR;
- Ensure participants meet the criteria to be appointed in the Pathways Programs as stated under section 362.203(c) of title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These criteria include but are not limited to requirements related to all Federal appointments such as qualification standards and suitability;
- Ensure a Pathways participant agreement is signed by each program participant;
- Provide training and developmental experiences for participants which will be evaluated and used to determine eligibility for conversion to the competitive service;
- Establish written oversight procedures to ensure proper use of the DOI Pathways Programs. The Department as well as OPM may review the use of this program under its accountability program.
- Provide information to OPM about opportunities for individuals interested in participating in the Pathways Programs, as appropriate.
- Adhere to any caps on conversion of Pathways Programs participants imposed by OPM.
- Designate a Pathways Programs Officer to administer the Pathways Programs, to serve as liaison with DOI and OPM, and to report to DOI and OPM on the implementation of the Pathways Programs and the individuals hired under them.

Supervisors will:

- Identify positions in their organization to be filled through the Pathways Programs.
- Participate or send representatives to job fairs to recruit for vacant Pathways positions.

- Issue critical elements and performance standards as required by the DOI Performance Management System.
- Create and issue Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for Pathways recruits consistent with the critical elements and performance standards of the position being filled.
- Evaluate performance and ensure that the participants have a clear understanding of the evaluation. Provide counseling and guidance to when performance is determined to be less than satisfactory in accordance with the DOI performance Management System;
- Monitor developmental assignments of the Pathways participants.
- Ensure Pathways Interns on appointments greater than 90 days, Recent Graduate and PMF participants receive formal training and development to acquire the appropriate competencies needed for conversion.
- Will consult with HR to make a recommendation, 60 days in advance, to convert or not convert a program participant upon completion of his/her Pathways Program.

## **6. DEFINITIONS.**

a. Pathways Program Participant. An individual appointed under one of the three Pathways Programs: Internship Program, Recent Graduates Program, or the Presidential Management Fellows Program.

b. Student. An individual who has been accepted for enrollment or who is enrolled and seeking a degree (diploma or certificate) in a qualifying educational institution on a full or half-time basis (half-time is defined by the educational institution in which the student is enrolled). Students need not be in actual physical attendance in school, so long as all other requirements are met. An individual who needs to complete less than the equivalent of half an academic/vocational or technical course load in the class enrollment period immediately prior to graduating is still considered to meet the definition of a student and meets the eligibility requirements of the Internship Program.

c. Pathway Programs Officer (PPO). A DOI employee who is in a position, either at the headquarters or bureaus/offices level, at or higher than a GS-12 or equivalent under the Federal Wage System or other pay and classification system.

## **7. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND KEY COMPONENTS.**

a. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). DOI has entered into a MOU with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). The MOU must be renewed every 2 years.

b. Adherence to Merit Principles. DOI will provide equal employment opportunity in all actions taken under the Pathways Programs. All actions to evaluate, appoint, develop and promote individuals under the Pathways Programs will be based on merit and made without regard to race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, genetic information or any other non-merit-based factor.

c. Workforce Planning. HR and supervisors should ensure workforce plans identify the use of the Pathways Participants and identify sufficient number of positions to allow for the conversion of Pathways Programs participants who successfully complete the program.

d. Qualifying Education. Regulations governing the Pathways Programs identify qualifying education that Program participants must be pursuing or have completed in order to meet the Pathways Program eligibility requirements.

Requirements are defined below:

(1) Secondary Education. A high school or home-school curriculum that has been approved by a State or local governing body is considered qualifying.

(2) Post-secondary Education. Educational institutions and curricula listed below must be accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the by the Secretary of the U. S. Department of Education to be qualifying education.

- a. Technical or vocational school
- b. Two-year or four-year college or university
- c. Graduate or professional school (e.g., law school, medical school)
- d. A home-school curriculum\*

(3) Certificate Programs. A certificate program consists of post-secondary education, in a qualifying educational institution, as defined 5 CFR 362,102, equivalent to at least one academic year of full-time study that is part of an accredited college-level technical, trade, vocational, or business school curriculum. Short-term training programs (e.g., several 2-week programs completed or class sessions attended over a period of 2 years) are not considered an academic course of study. Acceptable certificate programs are those earned at accredited vocational or technical schools.

\*Under the Pathways Programs, the definition of qualifying educational institution includes certain home-school curricula. To be included, secondary home-school programs must be recognized by the state or local government oversight agency. For post-secondary, vocational or technical home-school programs, the curricula must be approved by an organization recognized by the U. S. Department of Education. For additional information, refer to the U.S. Department of Education web site at <http://www.ed.gov>. Students participating in these recognized home-school curricula may apply for consideration under the Pathways Programs. Since requirements and standards for homeschooling vary from state to state, servicing HR offices must determine the eligibility of a home-schooled student applicant as defined by the state of residence.

e. Individual Participant Agreement. DOI must enter into an agreement with each Pathways Program participant it employs, defining the roles and responsibilities of each party to the agreement. When a Pathways Program participant moves between agencies or to another bureau within the Department, a new participant agreement must be created and signed

Agreements must include and address the following:

- a. A general description of the duties to be performed;
- b. Work schedules;
- c. Length of appointment and termination date;
- d. Procedures and requirements for evaluating Pathways Programs participants, including frequency of evaluations;
- e. Requirements for continuing and successful completion of the program;
- f. Minimum eligibility requirements for non-competitive conversion to term or permanent appointment in the competitive service under the specific Pathways Program in which employed;

f. Developmental activities. HR offices may provide an orientation program for each class or cohort of Fellows and may provide information on available training opportunities known to it.

g. On-Boarding. HR offices should have an established process that has been designed to provide a consistent on-boarding experience for all new Interns and Recent Graduates.

h. Qualifications and Eligibility. Applicants must meet all eligibility and qualification requirements for the Pathways position(s) being filled, including, general and/or specialized experience as defined by the OPM, or by the agency for positions not covered in OPM's standards, any positive education requirements and selective placement factors identified for the position, any special conditions of employment associated with the position, and achieve a passing score on any required tests/assessments (e.g., ACWA, when applicable to the Pathways positions being filled).

i. Classification of Positions. Positions that are classified to the General Schedule (GS) must be classified as student trainee, in the GS-xx99 series of the appropriate occupational series for use in the Internship Program. Positions that are classified to the Federal Wage System must be classified as student trainee in the xx01 series of the appropriate occupational group.

j. Tenure Group. For the purpose of reduction in force under title 5 of the Federal Code of Regulations Part 351, interns serving in an appointment expected to last more than one year are placed in excepted service Tenure Group II; interns serving in an appointment not to exceed one year or less are placed in excepted service Tenure Group 0; interns serving under an appointment not to exceed one year but who have completed one year of current continuous service are placed in excepted service Tenure Group III. Recent Graduates and Presidential Management Fellows are placed in excepted service Tenure Group II.

k. Movement between Agencies. Participants in the Recent Graduates and PMF programs may receive a new appointment with another agency as long as it meets all the requirements for both programs. To move from one agency to another the program participants must

separate from the current employing agency and be appointed into the new agency without a break in service. Time served in the previous agency is credited towards the program requirements for the Recent Graduates and PMF programs. A new training period is not required in the new agency because there is no break in service.

DOI must identify program requirements for Program completion and eligibility for conversion for those Recent Graduate participants acquired from another Federal agency. For PMF participants, their previous agency must notify OPM when the Fellow is appointed within DOI and if the appointment occurs within the first six months of the Fellow's tenure, the losing agency may request reimbursement of one-quarter of the placement fee from DOI.

## **8. FILLING POSITIONS.**

a. Job Opportunity Announcements (JOA) All JOAs for employment in the Internship and Recent Graduates Pathways Programs at DOI will be posted on USAJOBS or minimum announcement requirement for currently employed interns. JOAs will include the following information:

- Announcement Number
- Position title, series and grade, duty station location
- Full-performance level of the position
- Salary
- Employing office name
- Number of positions
- Open and close date
- Geographic location/Area of Consideration
- How to apply, including additional required documents (e.g., transcripts, DD214, official documentation of registration, tuition bill, or, if a new student, a copy of the acceptance letter from the college or university)
- Agency point-of-contact and how to request additional information
- Other pertinent information such as veterans preference information

JOAs should be posted for a period of at least 5 calendar days. Notice periods of less than 5 calendar days must be documented in the case file to show the examining offices rationale for using a shorter notice period.

b. Geographic Location/Area of Consideration (AOC) AOC may be limited to the city or region where the Pathways positions are located, such as Washington, DC or Washington Metropolitan Area (Washington, DC, Virginia and Maryland). Pathways participant must live or attend school in the area of consideration. Applications must be accepted from veterans outside of the area of consideration.

c. Citizenship. A non-citizen may be appointed to a Pathways Program provided the individual is lawfully admitted to the United States as a permanent resident or is otherwise authorized to be employed. However, a Pathways Program participant must be a U. S. citizen to be eligible for non-competitive conversion to a position in the competitive service.

d. Employment of Relatives. A Pathways Program participant may work in the same agency with a relative when there is no direct reporting relationship and the relative is not in a position to influence or control the participant's appointment, employment, promotion, advancement or conversion within the agency.

## **9. ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS.**

a. DOI JOAs must include complete and clear instructions to the applicants on how to apply for Pathways positions. DOI may receive applications/resume through an automated system, facsimile or email. Applicants must submit all other required documentation (e.g., transcript, DD214) to substantiate their eligibility for the program under which they are applying. Applications must be accepted from veterans outside of the area of consideration.

## **10. ASSESSING CANDIDATES.**

a. HR offices will either use the OPM Qualifications standards or the Departmental Qualification Standards outlined in PB-02-05 or bureau developed qualification standards to evaluate candidates' minimum qualifications for the position and grade level being filled. To be eligible for appointment under any Pathways Program, candidates must meet all qualifications requirements, including any positive education requirements and/or selective placement factors, and any other designated special qualifications requirements and conditions of employment (e.g., medical standards) appropriate to the specific position.

b. For Recent Graduate positions and Intern positions greater than 12 weeks covered under the Administrative Career with America (ACWA) occupations, which are two-grade interval positions being filled at entry level GS-05 or GS-07 with promotion potential of GS-09 or higher, applicants must take the ACWA assessment exam. Servicing HR offices authorized to administer the ACWA assessment must provide access to the link for applicants to take the assessment online or schedule a proctored written test session. Servicing HR offices not authorized to administer the ACWA assessment must coordinate posting of the JOA with OPM. See Appendix D of the Delegated Examining Operations Handbook for the list of ACWA occupations.

c. Each bureau should have an established policy to address applicant reconsideration requests. If an applicant does not believe he or she was rated properly, and wishes to have a rating reconsidered, a written request for reconsideration must be filed with the servicing HR office that processed the recruitment action. The request must specify why the applicant believes the original rating was improper, what factors were not considered, and any other pertinent information that will support the request and enable the HR office reviewer to re-evaluate the original rating. Any new information, experience or education received after the closing date of the vacancy announcement associated with the reconsideration request cannot be considered.

The reconsideration request will be evaluated by a qualified staff member not associated with the original rating. Upon completion of this re-evaluation, the qualified staff member will provide the applicant with an explanation that supports the reconsideration decision. That review and rating is considered final, and there is no further appeal.

## **11. APPLICATION OF VETERANS PREFERENCE.**

- a. The procedures outlined in 5 CFR 302 must be followed when filling positions under any Pathways Program. Selections will be made in accordance with the requirements of 5 CFR 302.401 and veterans preference laws.
- b. Each servicing HR office is responsible for ensuring that any candidates entitled to priority consideration as defined in 5 CFR 302.103 receive it.

## **12. REFERRAL AND SELECTION OF CANDIDATES.**

- a. Referral and selection of Interns and Recent Graduates will be made in accordance with procedures outlined in 5 CFR 302.304 and 5 CFR 302.401. Candidates may be referred by using a numerical ranking method such as category rating, rule of three, or unranked method.

When category rating is used, the definitions of the categories and the quality ranking factors used must be recorded and retained in the recruitment case file.

Preference-eligibles with a compensable service-connected disability of 10% or more, who meet the minimum qualifications for the position, "float to the top" (i.e., they are placed at the top of the highest category), with the exception of positions that are scientific or professional, GS-9 level or equivalent or higher.

OPM makes the final determination on objections on qualifications which result in the Passover of a compensable preference eligible (CPS) veteran with a disability of 30% or more. It is recommended, especially when using the unranked method, that selecting officials provide the reason(s) for their selections to provide complete documentation for the recruitment case file. Documentation should support the hiring decision with specific details identifying why the candidate was selected. For example, describe the qualities that differentiated the candidate from other candidates.

## **13. APPOINTMENT EXTENSION.**

- a. An extension to the appointment of a Pathways Program participant in either the Recent Graduates Program or Presidential Management Fellows Program may be requested for up to 120 days. There are no provisions in the OPM regulations or the EO 13562 for extensions beyond 120 days. HR offices may grant an extension of a Interns without a not-to-exceed date, Recent Graduate or PMF appointment for the following circumstances:
  - a. Approved leave for medical reasons;
  - b. Delayed completion of required training due to events beyond the participant's control;
  - c. Military obligation;
  - d. Bereavement; or
  - e. Other unforeseen circumstances which render an exception necessary (will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis).

- 1e. Requests will be made in writing at least 30 days in advance of the participant's expiration of appointment.
- 2e. Extensions will not be approved for additional training or administrative errors.

#### **14. TERMINATION OF APPOINTMENT.**

- a. The appointment of a Pathways Program participant may be terminated at any time for reasons which include those relating to misconduct, poor performance, suitability, lack of funds or change in priorities (e.g., a program or function is eliminated).
- b. The appointment of a Pathways Program participant who is not converted to a term, career-conditional or career appointment in the competitive service automatically expires at the end of their appointment or bureau-approved extension, if applicable. Therefore, the appointment of any Interns, Recent Graduates or Presidential Management Fellows who have not been converted at the end of the program period must be terminated.
- c. Guidelines for terminating participants in the Presidential Management Fellows Program can be found within OPM guidelines on the program.
- d. As a condition of employment, a Recent Graduate appointment expires at the end of the 1-year program period, plus any agency-approved extension, unless the participant is selected for noncompetitive conversion under 5 CFR 362.306.
- e. A Recent Graduate who held a permanent, career-conditional or career, appointment with DOI immediately before entering the Program, and fails to complete the Program for reasons that are not related to misconduct, poor performance, or suitability, may be placed in a permanent competitive service position for which the individual meets all eligibility and qualification requirements, if one is available.

#### **15. DOCUMENTING THE APPOINTMENT.**

- a. Appointments made under the Pathways Programs are under Schedule D, and will be documented with the appropriate codes and remarks from OPM's Guide to Processing Personnel Actions (Pathways Programs Nature of Action codes can be found in Appendix A).

#### **16. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF PATHWAYS PARTICIPANTS.**

- a. Pathways Programs participants, specifically Interns (without a not to exceed date), Recent Graduates and Presidential Management Fellows, are Federal employees subject to performance management provisions of 5 CFR 430 and are required to have performance plans. Please reference the Department of Interior's Performance Appraisal Handbook for further guidance.

#### **17. DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY.**

- a. The Department delegates authority to the Bureaus/Offices to manage the Pathways Programs in accordance with Departmental policy and OPM Pathways Programs regulations.

## **18. GENERAL PROVISIONS.**

Certain aspects of the Pathways Programs are common to the Internship Program, Recent Graduates Program, and PMF Program. This section addresses the overarching requirements of the three programs and procedures to implement and utilize the Pathways Programs.

**A. Internship Program.** The following conditions pertain to the Internship Program.

**a. Qualifications and Eligibility.**

(1) Individuals must meet the qualifications and eligibility requirements throughout the duration of the Internship appointment. Prior to initial appointment, Interns must provide documentation of student status. Such documentation may be in the form of an *official* copy of school transcript, documentation of registration, tuition bill, or, a copy of the acceptance letter from the college or university for new students.

(2) Interns must provide a copy of up-to-date transcripts (unofficial) at the end of each academic year, unless requested more frequently by the supervisor or Human Resources Office, for verification of enrollment and academic standing as proof of continuing eligibility for participation in the Intern Program.

**b. Appointment.**

(1) Interns are appointed using Schedule D, excepted service appointing authorities, as provided for in 5 CFR 362.203(d), i.e., using the appointing authority provided in 5 CFR 213.3401.

(2) Appointment may be on a temporary basis, not to exceed one year or for an initial period that is expected to last more than one year. Such temporary appointments may be appropriate for employment during the traditional summer months. The time limitations found in 5 CFR 213.104 and 5 CFR 316.401, do not apply to individuals hired under the Pathways Intern Program.

(3) An Intern with a not-to-exceed date may be converted to an appointment without a not-to-exceed date once the bureau/office has met OPM's internal or external notice requirements in accordance with 5 CFR 213.3401.

(4) An Intern serving under an appointment for an initial period expected to last more than one year is placed in Tenure Group II in the excepted service for purposes of 5 CFR 351.502 and is afforded the same retention rights as other excepted service employees. An intern hired on an appointment not to exceed one year is placed in Tenure Group 0. An Intern serving under a temporary appointment that has completed 1-year of current continuous service and whose appointment is extended for an additional period of time is placed in excepted service Tenure Group III.

(5) The agreement between DOI and the student should identify an agreed-upon schedule of school and work to ensure work responsibilities do not interfere with academic performance. The agreement will be revised as necessary to update changes to the school/work schedules.

(6) Participants will agree that completion of educational and Internship Program requirements will be accomplished within a reasonable and appropriate time frame.

c. Training and Development.

(1) Interns on a continuous appointment lasting longer than 12 weeks must be placed on an Individual Development Plan that outlines the formal and development designed to assist the Intern acquire the competencies of the target position to which the Intern may be assigned upon completion of the program.

d. Promotions, Reassignments, Details and Temporary Promotions.

(1) An Intern without a not-to-exceed date may be promoted as long as all eligibility and qualification requirements for the position to which they are being promoted are met. However, this provision does not confer entitlement to promotion.

(2) A promotion of an Intern with a not to exceed date must meet OPM's internal/external notice requirements before processed as a conversion to another Schedule D excepted service appointment using the original not-to-exceed date of the current appointment.

(3) An Intern with a not-to-exceed date may be reassigned to another organization within the bureau/office if the position is the same series, grade, location and meets the qualification standard requirements. The expiration date of the current appointment must remain the same.

(4) An Intern without a not-to-exceed date may be reassigned to another bureau organization if the position is the same grade, full performance level and meets the qualification standard requirements.

(5) An Intern without a not-to-exceed date may be reassigned to another bureau organization if the position is the same grade and higher full performance level after competing through an internal bureau announcement.

(6) An Intern with or with a not-to-exceed date may be detailed up to 120-day increments up to one year to unclassified duties in the same grade or lower-graded positions.

(7) An Intern without a not-to-exceed date may be detailed to higher-graded positions not to exceed 120 days.

(8) An Intern without a not-to-exceed date may be detailed beyond 120 days to another bureau/office organization if the position is to a higher grade after competing through an internal bureau announcement.

(9) An Intern without a not-to-exceed date may be temporarily promoted to a higher-graded positions not to exceed 120 days and meets the qualification standard requirements.

e. Conversion of Interns to the Competitive Service.

- (1) An Intern who is a U.S. citizen may be non-competitively converted from the Internship Program to a term or permanent position in the competitive service when the Intern:
  - (2) Completed at least 640 hours of work experience acquired through the Internship program while enrolled as a full- or part-time degree-seeking student. Up to one-half (320 of the 640-hours service requirement) may be waived when an Intern completes 320 hours of career related experience or other experience that may be credited in accordance with 5 CFR 362.204(c) or 5 CFR 362.204(d).
  - (3) Completed a course of academic study, within the 120-day period preceding the conversion to the competitive appointment, at a qualifying educational institution conferring a diploma, certificate or degree;
  - (4) Received a favorable recommendation for conversion from the work experience supervisor (whether the work experience was completed at DOI or at another agency);
  - (5) Met all the qualifications and eligibility requirements for the position to which the Intern will be converted and all specific requirements identified in DOI's Pathways Agreement with the Intern.
  - (6) An intern may be converted to a position in another career field, for which qualified, only when there is no permanent position related to the Interns field of study at the end of the Internship to which the Intern can be appointed.
  - (7) An Intern may be converted to a position in the agency in which the participant has served the Internship or to a position in another federal agency.
  - (8) An Intern who has been noncompetitively converted to a term appointment may be subsequently noncompetitively converted to a permanent competitive service position. The effective date of the conversion to a permanent appointment must be before the expiration date of the term appointment.
  - (9) The provisions of the career transition assistance programs do not apply to the conversions of Interns to the competitive service.
  - (10) Time spent as an Intern (with or without a not-to-exceed date) counts toward completion of the probationary period and toward career tenure when the Intern is noncompetitively converted to a permanent position in the competitive service upon completion of the program. Time spent as an Intern with a not-to-exceed date counts toward completion of the probationary period when noncompetitively converted to a permanent position in the competitive service upon completion of the program.
  - (11) If the employing office wishes to convert an Intern to the competitive service upon successful completion of the Intern program, a request for personnel action must be submitted to the servicing Human Resources Office to process the conversion. If the

conversion action is not processed, the Pathways appointment will expire, and employment will be terminated. Additionally, any Intern who fails to maintain eligibility to continue in the Intern Program (e.g., does not meet definition of student, or fails to adequately progress toward completion of the academic program) must be terminated.

(12) The position to which an Intern is converted may be part of a career ladder. The full performance level (FPL) of career ladder positions must be identified at the time of the conversion, and employees can only be promoted non-competitively up to the FPL of the approved career ladder. Competitive procedures must be used to promote an employee to grade that exceeds the established FPL or to place an employee in a career ladder position with a higher FPL.

f. Breaks in the Internship Program.

(1) A break in the Internship Program is defined as a period of time when an Intern is working but is unable to go to school, or is neither attending classes nor working at the agency. The bureau/office should have a written process to receive and consider a participant's request for a break in the Internship Program. The bureau/office may use its discretion in either approving or denying a break in Program.

**B. Recent Graduates Program.** The following conditions pertain to the Recent Graduate Program.

a. Qualifications and Eligibility.

(1) To be eligible, applicants must apply for a Recent Graduate position within 2 years of completing a qualifying educational program, i.e., within the previous 2 years, the Recent Graduate must have completed a qualifying associates, bachelors, masters, professional, doctorate, vocational or technical degree or certificate from a qualifying educational institution. Except as provided for in paragraph 2 below, an application will be considered only if it is received no later than 2 years from the date all requirements for a qualifying degree or certificate were met. Applicants who apply to Recent Graduates job announcements within the 2-year time limit may be considered and appointed even if the appointment does not occur until after the 2-year time limit.

(2) The 2-year period of eligibility will be extended for veterans who are precluded from applying within the two-year window due to a military service obligation. In such cases, veterans will have up to 6 years from the date of discharge or release from active duty to apply for the Recent Graduates Program. Eligibility cannot extend for more than 6 years after the date on which the individual completed his or her educational requirements.

(3) Anyone who would have become eligible for the Recent Graduates Program after the date that Executive Order 13562 was issued and before the final regulations were effective will have 2 full years of eligibility from the date the final regulations were issued (i.e., until July 10, 2014). Refer to OPM's transition guidance for detailed instructions on the application of this special limited eligibility provision.

(4) OPM qualification standards for the occupation and grade level of the position being filled will be used to evaluate candidates for positions for appointment under the Recent Graduate program.

b. Appointment.

(1) Under the Recent Graduates Program, individuals are given a 1-year appointment to an entry-level position designed to provide a developmental experience that will lead to a career and permanent position in the federal government. Recent Graduate Programs that exceed the 1 year appointment limitation must be approved within the DOI MOU. Recent Graduates are placed in Tenure Group II in the Excepted Service.

(2) Recent Graduates are appointed under Schedule D, using the appointing authority provided in 5 CFR 213.3402(b). See Appendix A for Nature of Action and Legal Authority Codes required to document appointments under the Recent Graduates Program.

(3) Recent Graduates may be appointed to any position filled under this authority for which qualified up to the GS-09 level or equivalent.

(4) Appointment may be made at the GS-11 or GS-12 levels for filling certain science, technology, engineering, and mathematics Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) positions in accordance with 5 CFR 362.303(b)(3)(ii) through (iv).

(5) Positions to which Recent Graduates are appointed must provide career advancement, i.e., are part of a career ladder progression that will enable the participant to gain experience and assume more responsible duties as competence is gained and be promoted to higher grade levels when all eligibility and qualification requirements are met. The FPL of the career ladder must be identified at time of recruitment and appointment.

(6) The initial 1-year appointment of a Recent Graduate may be extended for up to 120 days in rare or unusual situations. Extensions may be granted to provide for time lost through prolonged illness; to participate in additional developmental activities or assignments if the participant is reassigned from one line of work to another or from one target position to another. Extensions will not be granted to appraise performance or conduct, or to allow the participant to finish school or to accept a scholarship. Reasons for the extension will be documented by the immediate supervisor and submitted to the Pathways Program Coordinator through the servicing HR office.

(7) The duration of the Recent Graduates appointment in the excepted service is a trial period.

### c. Training and Development

- (1) Within the first 45 days of appointment, the supervisor, in coordination with the Recent Graduate, will create an Individual Developmental Plan (IDP) that outlines the specific developmental activities designed to help the Recent Graduate acquire the competencies of the target position in which the recent Graduate will be placed upon completion of the program. The developmental activities to be included in the IDP are as follows:
- (2) On-the-Job Training (i.e., daily instruction and guidance designed to prepare the employee to assume progressively more difficult, responsible, and productive work, and that must constitute at least 50 percent of the developmental activities) and;
- (3) At least 40 hours of formal, interactive training which may include conference attendance, on-line training, and/or classroom training, that must be provided during the year in the program;
- (4) The IDP will identify appropriate sources and content of developmental activities and formal interactive training and expected timeframes for completion of developmental activities and training;
- (5) IDPs will be reviewed and revised as necessary to ensure the training activities originally identified are meeting developmental goals and are being completed.
- (6) Within 90 days of appointment, each Recent Graduate must be assigned a mentor from outside his or her chain of command. The mentor is typically a senior or journeymen-level DOI employee who can provide the participant with the guidance and support needed to develop effectively in the workplace; a trusted advisor, to share with the employee a different focus or perspective from the technical emphasis on the job and oversight that the supervisor provides; a role model who shares his or her expertise with less experienced individuals in order to help the Recent Graduate understand the workplace culture and effectively build workplace relationships. The mentor does not have to be in the same occupational field as the Recent Graduate, but should be available as a counselor who can properly advise on work-related and personal workplace issues that may arise.

### d. Promotions.

- (1) Any Recent Graduate who meets eligibility and OPM qualification requirements may be promoted. Supervisors must evaluate the quality of each employee's work and level of proficiency demonstrated in the performance of assignments, document successful completion of all training requirements, and provides a recommendation for the promotion to interim grade levels and position if in a career ladder. A Recent Graduate will be eligible for promotion only if his or her performance is at least at the Fully Successful level. There is no entitlement for a promotion.
- (2) The intent of the Recent Graduates program is to provide a developmental experience designed to lead to a career in the federal service. Therefore, there is no provision for accelerated promotions under the Recent Graduates Program.

(3) The FPL of career ladder positions must be identified at the time of recruitment and appointment, and employees can only be promoted non-competitively up to the FPL of the approved career ladder. Competitive procedures must be used to promote an employee to a higher grade or to place an employee in a career ladder position with a higher FPL.

e. Conversion to the competitive service

(1) A Recent Graduate may be non-competitively converted to a term or permanent appointment in the competitive service only within the employing agency. In order to be non-competitively converted, the Recent Graduate must:

(2) Be a U.S. citizen;

(3) Have successfully completed all the requirements of the Recent Graduates Program as defined in the agency - participant agreement;

(4) Have demonstrated successful job performance as documented by a rating of record (or summary rating) of at least Fully Successful or equivalent;

(5) Be recommended for conversion by the first-level supervisor; and

(6) Have met the OPM qualification standard for the competitive service position to which the Recent Graduate will be converted.

(7) The noncompetitive conversion of a Recent Graduate must be effective on or by the date the 1-year service requirement is met, or at the end of an agency approved extension, if applicable.

(8) A Recent Graduates program participant who is noncompetitively converted to a competitive service term appointment may be subsequently converted noncompetitively to a permanent competitive service position. The conversion to a permanent appointment must be made effective prior to before the expiration date of the term appointment.

**C. Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program.** The following conditions pertain to the PMF Graduate Program.

a. Qualifications, Eligibility and Appointment

(1) OPM centrally manages the Presidential Management Fellows program, retaining responsibility for soliciting applications, rating applications and identifying finalists under the PMF Program. All other aspects of DOI's PMF program are governed by the provisions in 5 CFR 362, Subpart D.

b. Training and Development

(1) Bureaus/Offices will provide each Fellow a minimum of 80 hours of formal interactive training per year that addresses the competencies outlined in the Individual Development Plan (IDP). Mandatory annual training, such as information security and ethics training, does

not count towards the 80-hour requirement. Each Fellow must complete at least one developmental assignment of four to six months in duration, with management and/or technical responsibilities consistent with the Fellow's IDP. A Fellow may participate in an agency-wide initiative or other Presidential or Administrative initiative that provides the Fellow with the management and/or technical development indentified in their IDP. The developmental assignment may be within the Fellow's organization, in another component of the agency, or in another Federal agency.

(2) By regulation [5 CFR 362.405(b)(6)], OPM has the authority to request that agencies make Fellows available to assist in the assessment process for subsequent PMF classes. Any interactive training provided to a Fellow in connection with assisting OPM in the assessment process may be counted toward the minimum 80-hour annual training requirement.

(3) Within 90 days of appointment, each PMF will be assigned a mentor who is a managerial employee outside the PMF's chain of command. The relationship with the mentor is to provide counseling on a specific career path and for guidance on professional and educational questions. Fellows may wish to identify an individual they feel would be an appropriate mentor who possesses desired skills, knowledge, and/or perspectives, and negotiate a mentor/mentee relationship with that person.

**c. Promotions.**

(1) Any PMF who meets eligibility and OPM qualification requirements, as specified in DOI's Pathways MOU with OPM, may be promoted. Supervisors must evaluate the quality of each employee's work and level of proficiency demonstrated in the performance of assignments, document successful completion of all training requirements, and provide a recommendation for the promotion (by submitting a Request for Personnel Action or SF-52) to approve an employee's promotion to interim grade levels and to the target position if in a career ladder. A PMF will be eligible for promotion only if his or her performance is at least at the Fully Successful level. There is no entitlement to a promotion.

(2) The FPL of career ladder positions must be identified at the time of recruitment and appointment, and employees can only be promoted non-competitively up to the FPL of the approved career ladder. Competitive procedures must be used to promote an employee to a higher grade that exceeds the established FPL or to place an employee in a career ladder position with a higher FPL.

**19. THIRD-PARTY PROVIDED PATHWAYS PARTICIPANT.**

(1) DOI may hire third-party provided Interns into the Pathways Internship and Recent Graduate programs so long as DOI follows regulatory requirements for filling positions within each program. Third-party provided Pathways participants should have the same access to training, career development, and mentoring as other DOI Pathways Programs participants. DOI is permitted to count 320 hours of the work performed as a third-party provided Pathways participant towards the total 640 hours required for completion of the Pathways Internship program. Upon completion of the requirements of the Pathways Internship and Recent Graduate programs, third-party provided Pathways participants may be converted to a term or permanent Federal position.

## **20. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

(1) Beginning fiscal year 2014 and beyond, bureaus/offices will provide the Department the number of occupations that will be used to fill entry-level positions for the upcoming year; the percentage of positions to be filled under the Internship, Recent Graduate and PMF programs. Bureaus/offices will provide to the Department information on the previous fiscal year to include the number of participants initially appointed under each Pathways Programs; the percentage of overall hires made from each program; the number of conversions from each program and the number of separations from each program. Bureaus/offices will provide this information no later than October 15th of each fiscal year (Sample Pathways Programs reporting document and checklist can be found in Appendices B and C).

Contact: If you have any questions pertaining to this bulletin, please contact Kermit Howard at 202-208-4231 or by email at [kermit\\_howard@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kermit_howard@ios.doi.gov) if there are any questions.



Thomas Mulhern  
Director, Office of Human Resources

### Attachments:

Appendix A: Nature of Action Code Matrix

Appendix B: Sample Reporting Document

Appendix C: Pathways Programs Reporting Checklist

## Appendix A

<b>Pathways Programs Nature of Action (NOA) Codes</b>				
<i><b>If the person is being employed</b></i>	<i><b>Nature of Action</b></i>	<i><b>NOAC</b></i>	<i><b>Authority Code</b></i>	<i><b>Legal Authority</b></i>
<i><b>Intern Temporary NTE 1 year and the person is not on your agency roles</b></i>	Exc Appt NTE	171	YEA	Sch D, 213.3402(a)
<i><b>Intern Temporary NTE 1 year and the person is on your agency roles</b></i>	Conv to Exc Appt. NTE	571	YEA	Sch D, 213.3402(a)
<i><b>Intern and the person is not on your agency roles</b></i>	Exc Appt	170	YEA	Sch D, 213.3402(a)
<i><b>Intern and the person is on your agency roles</b></i>	Conv to Exc Appt	570	YEA	Sch D, 213.3402(a)
<i><b>Recent Graduate and the person is not your agency roles</b></i>	Exc Appt	170	YEB	Sch D, 213.3402(b)
<i><b>Recent Graduate and the person is on your agency roles</b></i>	Conv to Exc Appt	570	YEB	Sch D, 213.3402(b)

<b><i>PMF</i></b> and the person is not on your agency roles	Exc Appt	170	YEC	Sch D, 213.3402(c)
<b><i>PMF</i></b> and the person is on your agency roles	Conv to Exc Appt	570	YEC	Sch D, 213.3402(c)

## Appendix B

<b>Pathways Beginning of Year Report</b>	
Agency Name	
Total Size of Agency Workforce	
Start date of measurement year	
End date of measurement year	
Agency POC for Report	
OPM Human Capital Officer	
Date of this report	

Indicate the percentage of overall hiring under the Internship, Recent Graduates and PMF Programs respectively expected during the coming year.

*Determined through workforce planning methods	Number of Hires	Percentage of Hires
Total Agency hiring needs for the upcoming measurement year		
Internship opportunities		

Recent Graduate opportunities		
PMF opportunities		
Total Pathways opportunities		

<b>Pathways End of Year Report</b>	
Agency Name	
Total Size of Agency Workforce	
Start date of measurement year	
End date of measurement year	
Agency POC for Report	
OPM Human Capital Officer	
Date of this report	

<b>Previous Year Usage</b>				
	<b>Total Hires</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Converted</b>	<b>Separated</b>
<b>Total Agency hires (all authorities)</b>		N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Internship Program</b>				
<b>Recent Graduates Program</b>				
<b>Presidential Management Fellows Program</b>				
<b>Total Agency Pathways hires</b>				

## Appendix C

### PATHWAYS PROGRAM REVIEW CHECKLIST

<b>DEPARTMENT/AGENCY:</b>
<b>LOCATION:</b>

**References:** E.O. 13562; 5 CFR part 302; 5 CFR part 362

Y/N	Review Item	Comments
	<p>The agency has a current OPM-approved Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place prior to appointing Pathways Program participants. MOUs must be executed every 2 years.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[5 CFR 362.104(a)]</i></p>	
	<p>The agency has appointed a Pathways Programs Officer who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is in a GS-12 or higher level position at the agency's HQ level or at the HQ level of a departmental component</li> <li>• Is responsible for administering the Pathways Programs, including coordinating the recruitment and on-boarding process for participants</li> <li>• Serves as a liaison with OPM by providing updates and reports on the agency's implementation of the Pathways Programs</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[5 CFR 362.104(c)(7)]</i></p>	
	<p>The agency adheres to OPM's reporting requirements regarding workforce planning strategies as outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on the entry-level occupations targeted for Pathways Programs in the coming year</li> <li>• Percentage of overall hiring expected in the coming year under each of the Pathways Programs</li> <li>• Information from the previous year about:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The number of initial appointments under each Pathways Program</li> <li>○ The percentage of overall hires made from each Pathways Program</li> <li>○ The number of Pathways participants, per program, converted to the competitive service</li> <li>○ The number of Pathways participants, per program, who were separated</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[5 CFR 362.109]</i></p>	
	<p>The agency has definite rules and written policy describing procedures for the acceptance of applications for employment in Pathways Program positions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>[5 CFR 302.301]</i></p>	

**Note:** This checklist applies only to Department/Agency HQ level reviews.

**Reviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_