



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON DC



MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM-FOA-DRU-COCOM/A1s  
DISTRIBUTION C

08 Sep 17

FROM: HQ USAF/A1  
1040 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1040

SUBJECT: Air Force Civilian Recruitment and Selection Policies

1. In accordance with the memorandum from the SecAF, the CSAF, and the CMSAF dated 4 March 2015, along with the memorandum from HQ USAF/A1 dated 1 April 2015, this memorandum further describes and updates Air Force recruitment and selection policies. An evaluation of Air Force recruitment and selection strategies for senior civilian positions was conducted prompting this adjustment in civilian policies. Some of the policies below apply only to GS-14 and GS-15 and equivalent level positions, while others apply to all civilian positions. MAJCOM and local agreements for bargaining unit positions remain unchanged by this policy; however, bargaining should be undertaken to incorporate these policies into existing labor agreements.

2. In support of the diversity initiatives outlined in the tri-signature memorandum, Air Force will implement the following recruitment and selection policies, effective immediately:

**a. Use of Hiring Panels.** Hiring panels will be convened when screening candidates and making selections for GS-14 and GS-15 and equivalent level positions. Interview panels must be conducted and will consist of at least three individuals, equal or senior in grade to the advertised position. Additionally, the panel composition should be diverse under the Air Force definition of diversity (AFI 36-7001, *Diversity*) and will include at least one civilian who does not possess any previous military experience (career civilian). If there is no career civilian in the unit, then a career civilian from outside the unit may be utilized. Best practice is to preposition the necessary hiring panel schedule, members, and panel questions when the announcement opens to allow an expeditious panel process as soon as the referral certificate is received. This provision does not apply to non-competitive reassignments within the Air Force or from a Combatant Command. The use of hiring panels is not required for the placement of career broadeners or of individuals returning from a boarded civilian developmental education program. In addition, IAW HQ AF/A1C memo "Military Spouse Interviews" dated 19 Nov 15, DoD Priority Placement Program military spouse matches are not to be interviewed; however, the spouse's package should be reviewed by the panel. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by HQ AF/A1C. Military spouses overseas and those not registered and matching through PPP may all be interviewed.

**b. Restrictions on External-Only Recruitment.** Managers will initiate and consider internal recruitment and placement actions (through the use of an announcement and hiring panel) for all GS-14/15 level or equivalent civilian positions IAW AFMAN 36-203, paragraph 1.13.7. External only recruitment and by-name requests are prohibited at the GS-14/15 level or equivalent unless the position is covered by a non-competitive or special expedited hiring authorities granted by statute. Please refer to the attached Questions and Answers for non-competitive and special expedited hiring authorities considered exempt. For positions not covered by an exemption, management may initiate internal, external recruitment and all U.S. citizens' recruitment simultaneously or choose to consider external and all U.S. citizens after internal recruitment and consideration has been conducted. Further, managers may use external-only recruitment when filling temporary or term positions at any grade level. An exception may be granted by MAJCOM/CV/CA (or equivalent) or by SAF/AA for the Headquarters AF. Exceptions may only be granted based upon mission criticality. Records and documents regarding exceptions approved should be retained, for a minimum of 5 years, for reporting to HQ USAF/A1 upon request.

**c. Non-Competitive Assignments (Transfers) Within the Department of Defense (DoD).** Non-competitive assignments within DoD at the GS-14 and above or equivalent require vacancy announcements and the use of a hiring panel. These non-competitive assignments include the following: reassignments, changes to lower grade, transfers (same or lower grade), reinstatements and re-promotions. Exceptions may be granted in rare circumstances by the MAJCOM CV/CA (or equivalent) or by SAF/AA for the HAF Staff.

**d. Non-Competitive Assignments (Transfers) Within DoD at the GS-13 and below or equivalent.** These assignments may be accomplished without a vacancy announcement and/or hiring panel. Note: Most non-competitive assignments of current or former federal employees who are outside of DoD will require an announcement to clear Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP).

**e. Position Descriptions, Announcements and Assessments.** Unless absolutely required for the position, position descriptions, vacancy announcements and job assessments will not mandate specific military or MAJCOM attributes that can only be gained through uniformed service, but instead will emphasize the capabilities needed for the position. All assessments should be reviewed by the Career Field Team, hiring official, or staffing specialist prior to posting a job announcement for a new vacancy or during development for a new position.

**f. Minimum Announcement Period.** All civilian job announcements will be posted for a minimum of five business days on [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov). In addition, for all GS-13/14/15 (and equivalent) positions, the recommended announcement period is ten business days. Longer announcement periods for lower grades may be granted on a case-by-case basis if deemed warranted. Exceptions to the minimum announcement period may be granted based upon previous recruitment actions that show an overwhelming applicant response.

3. Please take immediate action to review and amend any existing MAJCOM recruitment and selection policies to comply with these items and the SECAF-CSAF direction. The Air Force Barrier Analysis Working Group (BAWG) will continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions. Working together we can make great strides toward ensuring the merit system

principles are preserved, adding transparency to our recruitment and selection processes, and establishing a level playing field for all applicants and employees within our Air Force community.

4. I appreciate your leadership and support in the Air Force recruitment and selection policy. My Civilian Personnel point of contact for this policy memorandum is Ms. Melanie McGuire, HQ USAF/A1C, melanie.j.mcguire.civ@mail.mil, (703) 692-5500, DSN 222-5500.



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Attachment:

Questions and Answers – New AF Civilian Recruitment/Selection Policies

**Questions and Answers – New AF Civilian Recruitment/Selection Policies**

**Q1: Do these policies apply to direct hiring authorities (DHA)?**

**A1:** No. All DHAs are granted by statute and covered by law. DHA is used when experiencing a severe shortage of candidates or to meet critical hiring needs. Consequently, vacancies filled through DHA are exempt from the requirements of these recruitment/selection policies. However, the guiding principles and requirements for use of any DHA must be strictly observed.

**Q2: Are Lab Demo positions exempt from 2 (a) “Use of Hiring Panels” and (c) “Prohibition of External-Only Recruitment”?**

**A2:** This does not apply to positions covered by the special expedited hiring authority granted to the Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratories by statute.

**Q3: Expedited Hiring Authority (EHA) is mentioned in 2 (b) and (c) of the memo. When using EHA, are we also exempt from 2 (a) “Use of Hiring Panels”?**

**A3:** Yes. EHA is exempt from the Use of Hiring Panels.

**Q4: Do these policies apply to Schedule A hiring authority to staff certain positions for a cyber-security workforce and the new Cyber Excepted Service?**

**A4:** No. The Schedule A authority for cyber-security and Cyber Excepted Service are exempt from the recruitment and selection policies. These authorities are designed to permit the speedy hire of qualified candidates to accommodate the increase in workload associated with the stand-up of USCYBERCOM.

**Q5: Do these policies apply to Schedule A hiring authority for selection of individuals with targeted (severe) disabilities?**

**A5:** No. Panel interviews do not have to be conducted; however, in accordance with A1 Policy Memo "Change 2-180 Day Waiver" dated 9 August 2017, announcements are required to support the hiring and appointment of any military retiree who has not met the 180-day waiting period.

**Q6: Since the requesting Command is also the approval Command, will the Career Field Teams (CFTs) or Career Field Managers (CFMs) have an opportunity to coordinate/provide a recommendation for approval/disapproval of an external “by name request” for centrally managed positions?**

**A6:** IAW AFMAN 36-203, Staffing Civilian Positions, the CFT or CFM will have an opportunity to coordinate and provide a recommendation for approval/disapproval of an external “by name request” for centrally managed positions.

**Q7: Do we have to conduct panel interviews for GS-14/15 term and temporary appointments?**

**A7:** No. Panel interviews are not required for term and temporary appointments. However, if the position is made permanent, the position will have to be re-advertised and panel interviews will have to be conducted.

**Q8: Do we have to conduct panel interviews for GS-14/15 temporary noncompetitive appointments (Provisional Appointments) of 30% or more Disabled Veterans with the intent to convert to a permanent appointment?**

**A8:** No. Panel interviews do not have to be conducted; however, in accordance with A1 Policy Memo "Change 2-180 Day Waiver" dated 9 August 2017, announcements are required to support the hiring and appointment of any military retiree who has not met the 180-day waiting period.

**Q9: Do we have to conduct panel interviews when an encumbered position has been upgraded to a GS-14/15 as the result of a position review (planned management action)?**

**A9:** Interviews would only be required if there is more than one eligible employee in the organization who is qualified for the position. If this is the case, a competitive announcement and interviews would be required under AFMAN 36-203, Table 2.1., Rule 21.

**Q10: Do the AF civilian recruitment policies under the AF/A1 Memorandum apply to the Administratively Determined (AD) positions (Professors, Deans, Instructors, etc.,) at Air University/Air Force Academy?**

**A10:** AD positions are not subject to Paragraph 2(c). However, all other policies apply as appropriate.

**Q11: Is it the intent of the memo to allow managers the option of internal and external recruitment? (It didn't leave it up to the career fields). What about recruitment open to the public (open to all U.S. citizens)?**

**A11:** Yes. IAW AFMAN 36-203, paragraph 2.2.2. Management must initiate internal and external recruitment simultaneously. Management may pursue Delegated Examining (DEU) recruitment (all U.S. citizens) either simultaneously with or after internal candidates have been considered.

**Q12: Does this policy apply to Attorney positions?**

**A12:** Yes. However, the exception authority for these provisions is the General Counsel of the Air Force, for SAF/GC employees, or the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, for AF/JA employees.

**Q13: OSI currently recruits via their OSI public homepage for Criminal Investigators, GS-1811s. They do not use USAJOBS for recruitment. Do we need to come in with a formal exception for these positions?**

**A13:** No. The GS-1811 positions are exempt from these policies as long as they are selected through a competitive process.

**Q14: What is your interpretation of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) and non-competitive selection as it relates to the competitive program?**

**A14:** VEOA is a competitive service appointing authority that can only be used when filling permanent, competitive service positions. AF will accept applications from VEOA eligibles whenever we accept applications from individuals outside our own workforce under merit promotion procedures.

**Q15: Is the requirement to announce on USAJOBS applicable to all career fields and pay plans?**

**A15:** Yes, it is applicable to all career fields and pay plans when recruiting via a competitive process. All provisions of the AF/A1 memo apply to all career fields and pay plans unless specifically exempted by a provision of the memo or this document.

**Q16: Is placement in Key Career Positions (KCPs) exempt from using hiring panels?**

**A16:** If candidates were previously vectored through the competitive Development Team (DT) process, hiring panels are not required for placement of candidates in KCPs. If candidates were not DT-vectored, but CFT screened for attributes, hiring panels are required for placement.

**Q17: Are hiring panels required for Air Reserve Technician (ART) positions?**

**A17:** No, hiring panels are not required for ART positions. They are filled based on military qualification requirements.

**Q18: Does this policy apply to Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) positions?**

**A18:** Yes, this policy applies to all Air Force appropriated fund pay plans in the competitive and exceptive service.