



What Can I Apply For?

A guide to applying for jobs at NIH

At NIH we understand that applying for a federal position can be confusing. The following is information to help you, the applicant, navigate the federal personnel system as you pursue a career in the Federal service.

General Schedule

The "General Schedule" (GS) is the basic classification and compensation schedule for white collar federal jobs. The "Federal Wage System" (FWS) covers Federal blue collar occupations.

In the Federal GS classification system, "occupational groups" consist of related occupations grouped together numerically within the same multiple of 100. Under each group are a number of "**occupational series**." For example, "GS-600" is the *Medical, Hospital, Dental, and Public Health Group*. Included in this Group is the *Nurse Series*, GS-610, the *Pharmacist Series*, GS-660, and the *Environmental Health Technician Series*, GS-698.

Examples of an occupational series in a job announcement

- Biologist, GS- **0401** -12

This position is classified under the General Schedule, as indicated by the "GS". The occupational series is 0401, which is in the *Biomedical Science Group*, GS-0400. The grade level for the position is a GS-12.

- Grants Management Specialist, GS- **1101** -05/07

This position is also classified under the General Schedule, as indicated by the "GS". The occupational series, 1101, is the *General Business and Industry Series*, under the *Business and Industry Group*, GS-1100. This example is being offered at the GS-5 and GS-7 grade levels.

Grades

The "General Schedule" (GS) is the general classification and [compensation system](#) for white collar federal jobs; the pay scale contains 15 grades and 10 steps within each grade. (For salary information, visit the Office of Personnel Management's [pay tables](#).)

Normally, if you are just starting out, you can qualify for jobs at the GS-2 level with just a high school diploma or as little as 3 months of general work experience. At GS-3 and GS-4 levels, you can qualify with more months of general experience. Starting at GS-5, jobs generally require one year of specialized experience to qualify. When you have a degree but no specialized experience in a career field, you are eligible for appointment at the GS-5 pay scale. (If you maintained a B average, or met other academic credentials in college, you can start out at the GS-7 pay scale.) To qualify for jobs at the GS-7 and higher grades, your background must have included experience closely related to the work to be performed in the job for which you are applying. You can qualify for GS-9 positions on the basis of a master's degree, and for GS-11 positions on the basis of a doctorate.

Veterans Preference

If you served on active duty in the United States Military and were separated under honorable conditions, you may be eligible for veterans' preference. To receive preference if your service began after October 15, 1976, you must have a Campaign Badge, Expeditionary Medal, served on active duty during the Gulf War from August 2,

1990, through January 2, 1992, or have a service-connected disability. For more information see the Office of Personnel Management's VetGuide: <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

Appointment Authorities

There are several mechanisms for appointing an individual to a career or career-conditional appointment. (Permanent federal *career* status is automatically gained upon completion of the mandatory three-year *career-conditional* period.) Some appointments allow an employee to be converted to a career-conditional appointment noncompetitively, including the *Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)*, the *Presidential Management Fellows Program* (<http://www.pmi.opm.gov/>), and *Schedule A appointments*.

Student Positions

Student educational programs provide Federal employment opportunities to students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment as degree seeking students taking at least a half-time academic, technical, or vocational course load in an accredited high school, technical, vocational, 2 or 4 year college or university, graduate or professional school. This program is comprised of two components: the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP), and the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). The STEP provides maximum flexibility to both students and managers because the nature of the work does not have to be related to the student's academic or career goals. The SCEP, however, provides work experience which is directly related to the student's academic program and career goals. Students in the SCEP may be noncompetitively converted to term, career or career-conditional appointments following completion of their academic and work experience requirements.

To see current Job Openings [go to http://www.jobs.nih.gov](http://www.jobs.nih.gov).

HHS Emerging Leaders Program

The Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) is designed to recruit high potential employees and provide fast track development highlighting leadership and business skills through experiential learning and training. This program is one of the recruitment tools used by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to hire exceptional interns with a variety of backgrounds for the effective analysis and execution of our programs. The program recruits for GS-9 level positions in the following career tracks: Administrative, Information Technology, Public Health, Scientific, and Social Science. Please note: not all career tracks recruit each year.

The program is intended to provide centralized recruitment and management, and rotations within the Operating Divisions (OPDIVs) of the Department. Formal training and leadership development are the foundation of this two-year internship, resulting in a cadre of well-trained, well-qualified employees for leadership roles in the Department of Health and Human Services.

For more detailed information, please visit the program Web site at <http://hhsu.learning.hhs.gov/elp/>

