

IPS 1-23 Student Internship Program

Effective Date: December 6, 2023

Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources

Issuance Memo (12/06/2023)

Table of Contents

- 1.0 Purpose
 - 2.0 Authority
 - 3.0 Applicability
 - 4.0 Student Internship Program Overview
 - 4.1 Paid General Internships
 - 4.2 Legal Internships
 - 4.3 Unpaid Internships
 - 4.4 Recruitment and Hiring of Federal Interns
 - 5.0 Security Background Investigations
 - 5.1 Prior Intelligence Employment and Background of Applicants
 - 6.0 Nepotism; Employment of Relatives
 - 7.0 Internship Participant Agreements
 - 8.0 Intern Pay and Benefits
 - 9.0 Telework and Remote Work Eligibility
 - 10.0 Movement Restrictions
 - 11.0 Voluntary Separations and Resignations
 - 12.0 Terminations of Internship Appointments
 - 13.0 Effective Date
-

Attachments

Attachment A – Internship Participant Agreement

Attachment B – Intern Evaluation Form

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Interim Policy Statement (IPS) is to create a framework pursuant to which the agency may flexibly appoint selected candidates to paid and unpaid domestic federal internships. *Circumstances under which the agency may offer unpaid internships are covered in subsection 3.3 of this IPS.*

These internships are intended to provide those selected with meaningful training, mentoring, and career-development opportunities. In carrying out its Student Internship Program, the Peace Corps is committed to promoting intercultural competency, diversity, equity, inclusion, and

accessibility; providing equal employment opportunity; and hiring diverse talent in support of the agency's mission.

Appointments will be made based solely upon job-related criteria, without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, language proficiency, age, genetic information, marital status, parental status, political affiliation, labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, and disability.

This IPS shall be reviewed and its substance reassessed at least annually following its effective date. Such reassessment shall include a determination as to whether the agency is fulfilling the purpose of the IPS as stated herein, including whether the agency's commitments to promoting intercultural competency, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; providing equal employment opportunity; and hiring diverse talent in support of the agency's mission are being advanced.

As the Student Internship Program for paid internships gets underway, and the agency has had an opportunity to observe and consider its functioning, the Office of Human Resources (OHR) intends to propose that this IPS be replaced by a Manual Section and implementing procedures that, together, set forth, in greater detail, the agency's Student Internship Program and its functioning.

2.0 Authority

- (a) Executive Order (E.O.) 14035 of June 25, 2021, *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce*, Section 6 Promoting Paid Internships.

3.0 Applicability

This IPS applies to all domestic internships within the Peace Corps, except those initiated by the Office of Inspector General¹, whether paid or unpaid. Applicants selected for internships (Interns) within the agency must be external candidates currently enrolled full or part-time in a community college, college, or university that has recognized accreditation by the U.S. Department of Education. This program is not intended to appoint, reassign, or promote current employees at the Peace Corps.

¹ OIG operates and maintains its own internship program consistent with its authority under the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended. All relevant inquiries should be directed to the Assistant Inspector General for Management and Administration.

4.0 Student Internship Program Overview

All United States citizens are eligible to apply for federal internships at the Peace Corps. Student Internship Program appointments will not exceed one year. Applications will be accepted each semester (spring, summer, and fall), as set forth in the Internship Enrollment Schedule, and appointments will be made on a rolling basis. Interns in the Student Internship Program will not be eligible for promotion opportunities during the period of their internship.

Once selected, Interns may be appointed on a full or part-time basis, and if paid shall have the status of a temporary employee, under an Internship Participant Agreement (*see* the template for such an agreement in Attachment A). The agency will make best efforts to align internships with Interns' field(s) of study.

4.1 Paid General Internships

The agency provides appointment opportunities to students who are enrolled full or part-time in various academic fields of study. Interns may be hired up to the FP-05 level, with the exception of Interns who are pursuing higher level medical degrees and those referred to in sub-section 4.2 below who may be hired up to the FP-04 level. Interns may be assigned by the agency to any Peace Corps office with the exception of the Office of the General Counsel.

4.2 Legal Internships

The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) may provide internships to current students who have completed at least one year of their legal studies, or are part of a Master of Laws (LL.M) Program, at an institution accredited by the American Bar Association. Such Interns, "Legal Interns," may be appointed on a full-time or part-time basis, as outlined in their Internship Participant Agreement, with the objective of providing each Legal Intern with valuable experience and exposure to legal issues within OGC practice areas. Legal Interns may be hired up to the FP-04 level.

4.3 Unpaid Internships

Though it is the intention of the agency to pay its Interns, the agency may select Interns to participate in the Student Internship Program on an unpaid basis (e.g., in cases where Interns are not permitted by their academic institution to accept compensation for their internship while receiving academic credit, or are receiving compensation for their participation in the Student Internship Program from another source, or where the needs of the agency do not permit Interns to be paid).

4.4 Recruitment and Hiring of Federal Interns

OHR will post Job Opportunity Announcements (JOAs) via USAJobs.gov to solicit candidates for the Student Internship Program's general and legal internships. All applicants considered by

the agency will have met all eligibility requirements and qualifications outlined in the JOA prior to its closing date. OHR is the sole agency authority that verifies the eligibility requirements and qualifications of all applicants considered by the agency for internships.

Appointments in the Student Internship Program are not subject to the veteran's preference procedures, as outlined in Manual Section 601 *Administration of the Peace Corps Direct Hire Personnel System*, subsection 3.7.1(e).

5.0 Security Background Investigations

As required by the Peace Corps Act, 22 USC 2519, all applicants must undergo and clear a federal background investigation before they may be appointed to the Student Internship Program. OHR will facilitate all communications with the Office of Safety and Security (OSS) related to the adjudication and completion of required employment background investigations. OHR will not extend a final internship offer or set an Entrance on Duty (EOD) date for any internship candidate until OSS has notified OHR that it has completed the background investigation requirements for that candidate.

5.1 Prior Intelligence Employment and Background of Applicants

See MS 611 *Eligibility for Peace Corps Employment or Volunteer Service of Applicants* for agency restrictions with respect to employment of applicants previously employed by intelligence agencies, or who have otherwise been associated with intelligence activities.

6.0 Nepotism; Employment of Relatives

Interns enrolled in the Student Internship Program may work in an office where a relative is also employed but only in those cases when there is no direct reporting relationship, and the relative is not in a position to influence or control the Intern's appointment or scope of work. If circumstances should arise that result in a direct supervisory relationship between relatives, a final determination will be made by OHR on the assignment of the Intern.

Managers, supervisors, and others in positions that may influence personnel actions cannot use their position to influence the selection of an Intern.

7.0 Internship Participant Agreements

All Interns must enter into an Internship Participant Agreement that is signed and completed before the Intern receives a final offer of an internship. Internship Participant Agreements define the roles and responsibilities of all parties (i.e., supervisor and Intern). Before substantive changes to an existing Internship Participant Agreement can go into effect for its parties, each party to the original Internship Participant Agreement must sign a new such agreement.

8.0 Intern Pay and Benefits

Interns participating in the Student Internship Program on a paid basis will be paid in accordance with the Foreign Personnel (FP) pay plan, as set forth in MS 601 *Administration of the Peace Corps Direct Hire Personnel System Policy*, subsection 6.0 and the terms of this IPS. All pay determinations are final for the duration of the internship.

Interns may work on a full or part-time basis. Approved work schedules will be as set forth in the Internship Participant Agreements. Part-time internships will require regularly scheduled work from 16 to 32 hours per week.

Paid Interns, as temporary employees at the agency, will receive the rights and benefits of temporary employees.

9.0 Telework and Remote Work Eligibility

Interns in the Student Internship Program may be eligible for Telework or Remote Work. Eligibility for these workplace flexibilities may be granted at the discretion of the Intern's assigned supervisor, as set forth in MS 632 *Direct Hire Telework Program* and MS 633 *Remote Work Program*. Interns approved for Telework or Remote Work will enter into a Telework or Remote Work Agreement with their assigned supervisor prior to the commencement of their internship. If an Intern has not been approved for Telework or Remote Work, they will report to the designated agency Official Worksite.

10.0 Movement Restrictions

Interns generally will not be authorized to be reassigned, detailed, or promoted to another position and/or office during their participation in the Student Internship Program. However, internal movements of interns to other positions will be considered, and may be effected, on a case-by-case basis by OHR.

11.0 Voluntary Separations and Resignations

When an Intern resigns from the Student Internship Program, which the Intern may do at any time, the agency will request that the Intern submit a resignation letter providing the effective date of resignation and future contact information (e.g., address, phone number, and email). The agency will also request a reason for the resignation should the Intern wish to provide one.

All Interns are evaluated by their assigned supervisor at the end of each semester, or upon completion of their internship. Intern supervisors provide formal oral and written feedback using the Intern Evaluation Form (*see* Attachment B). All evaluation documents must be submitted to OHR where they are retained in accordance with the agency's records schedule.

12.0 Termination of Internship Appointment

The Peace Corps may terminate an Intern at any time during their appointment for any reason including, but not limited to:

- (a) Intern misconduct;
- (b) Poor job performance;
- (c) Failure to maintain good academic standing, as defined by their educational institution;
- (d) Failure to meet any requirement(s) as set forth in their signed Internship Participant Agreement; and
- (e) Reduction-in-force at the agency.

Supervisors shall consult with OHR's Employee and Labor Relations Division whenever the termination of an Intern's appointment is involuntary.

13.0 Effective Date

- (a) The effective date of this IPS is the date of issuance.
- (b) This IPS and its provisions shall be reviewed within one year of its effective date.