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Date

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) BULLETIN # 010, FY05, 5 CFR 213.3202

**SUBJECT:** Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon release of regulations from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

**EXPIRATION DATE:** N/A

**SUPERSEDES:** N/A

**BACKGROUND:** Formerly referred to as Co-operative Education Program (Co-op), 5 CFR 213.3202 (b) designates SCEP as an excepted service appointment under Schedule B and public notice is not required. The requirements define what a student is and describe eligibility requirements for student appointment under SCEP. The requirements also outline the components of the formal agreement between the agency, school, and student; and describe eligibility criteria for noncompetitive conversion to the competitive service (term, career, or career-conditional appointments) upon students' satisfactory completion of diploma, degree, or certificate program requirements and work experience.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this HR Bulletin is to notify human resources offices of OPM's proposed changes to SCEP.

**PROPOSED CHANGES:** OPM recently proposed changes to SCEP that give agencies more flexibility in recruiting and retaining talented students. The changes will allow credit to be given for certain nonfederal internships or military service toward the minimum time needed under a SCEP appointment to qualify for a permanent federal job.

The SCEP permits agencies to appoint students to excepted service positions where they gain work experience related to their academic study—similar to the co-operative education program it replaced. When students complete their schooling and meet the minimum number of required work hours in the work-study program, agencies can noncompetitively convert them to a career or career-conditional positions in the competitive service. In addition to giving the

student valuable work experience, SCEP gives agencies the opportunity to assess the student's performance in real work situations and determine the student's potential as a permanent employee.

Specifically, the changes OPM proposes will:

- Allow agencies to credit up to half of the required 640 hours of job-related experience gained in other (nonfederal) formal work-study programs toward the minimum needed under a SCEP appointment to qualify for a permanent federal job
- Allow agencies to credit a student's job-related experience gained as an active duty member of the armed forces, including the National Guard or the Reserves
- Permit an agency to waive up to one-half of the required work experience hours for students who have exceptional job performance and academic excellence while enrolled in the work-study program

These new flexibilities will assist agencies in hiring high-potential graduates for entry-level positions in the civil service. Furthermore, OPM cautions agencies that the flexibilities must be implemented with sufficient rigor to ensure that the experience or performance credited to interns meets the program's intent—bringing high quality, well-educated graduates into the federal workforce.

**WHEN TO USE:** SCEP can be a good tool to "grow your own" workforce by hiring students into developmental positions to address future agency needs.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE:** Criteria for eligibility requirements for SCEP include:

- Enrollment or accepted for enrollment as a degree-seeking student in an accredited high school or technical or vocational school, 2-year or 4-year college or university, or graduate or professional school
- Student is at least 16 years old
- Student is taking at least a half-time course load as determined by the academic institution

**BENEFITS TO THE HIRING MANAGER:** Hiring under SCEP is an effective way for a manager to:

- Bring students into the agency in targeted positions for workforce and succession planning
- Evaluate the student's performance in real work situations
- Permanently place successful students upon completion of coursework leading to a diploma, certificate, or degree by permitting the crediting of up to half of the required 640 hours of job-related experience gained in other (non-federal) formal work-study programs toward the minimum needed under a SCEP appointment

Additional information on SCEP will be disseminated upon release of regulations from OPM.

**REFERENCES:** (5 CFR Part 213, Section 213.3202 (b))

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