

**PATHWAYS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
QUALIFICATION STANDARD**

AUTHORITY: Executive Order 13562, Recruiting and Hiring Students and Recent Graduates

1. COVERAGE. This appendix outlines the qualification requirements for Schedule D, Internship Program appointments under the Pathways Programs. This qualification standard is mandated for use by VA HR Offices when making appointments and executing in-service placement actions in the Pathways Internship Program. This qualification standard is to be used in conjunction with Appendix N of this part and is consistent with the policies outlined in the [OPM Operating Manual for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions](#). Occupations covered by this standard may follow a one- or two-grade interval work pattern. This standard covers the following occupations:

- 0099 - General Intern (covers occupations in the 0006 through 0095 series)
- 0199 - Social Science, Psychology, and Welfare Intern
- 0299 - Human Resources Intern
- 0399 - General Administrative and Office Services Intern
- 0499 - Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Intern
- 0599 - Accounting and Budget Intern
- 0699 - Medical, Hospital, Dental and Public Health Intern
- 0799 - Veterinary Medical Science Intern
- 0899 - Engineering and Architecture Intern
- 0999 - Legal and Kindred Intern
- 1099 - Information and Arts Intern
- 1199 - Business and Industry Intern
- 1299 - Copyright, Patent, and Trade-Mark Intern
- 1399 - Physical Sciences Intern
- 1499 - Library and Archives Intern
- 1599 - Mathematics and Statistics Intern
- 1699 - Equipment, Facilities, and Service Intern
- 1799 - Education Intern
- 1899 - Inspection, Investigation, Enforcement, and Compliance Intern
- 1999 - Quality Assurance, Inspection, and Grading Intern
- 2099 - Supply Intern
- 2199 - Transportation Intern
- 2299 - Information Technology Intern

2. DUTIES. The duties of the Internship Program position should be related to either the Intern's academic or career goals. The appointment may be used to meet long term and temporary staffing needs. An indefinite Intern may be appointed without time limitation for an initial period expected to last more than 1 year. A temporary Intern may also be appointed on a temporary basis, not to exceed 1 year, to complete temporary projects, to perform labor-intensive tasks not requiring subject-matter expertise, or to fill traditional summer jobs.

3. GRADE LEVEL REQUIREMENTS.

a. An Internship Participant must meet the definition of a student as defined in 5 CFR 362.202 and may be appointed up to the highest grade level for which qualified. An applicant with no previous related education or experience may qualify based on the level of education. An applicant with previous education and or experience may be qualified at the appropriate grade level regardless of his or her current level of education. The basis of the qualification may be based on the level of education, general or specialized experience, or a combination of education and experience (as applicable).

(1) **Level of Education.** One full academic year of undergraduate, graduate, vocational, trades, technical or high school education is the number of credit hours determined by the college, university or school to represent 1 year of full-time study. The high school curriculum must be approved by a State or local governing body and may include home-school course work. All education beyond high school must be accredited by an accrediting body or organization recognized by the [U.S. Department of Education](#).

(2) **General Experience.** General experience is experience creditable at grade levels GS-2 through GS-4 where the knowledge, skills and competencies needed to perform the duties of a position are not essential, but where an applicant can demonstrate in his or her past experience the ability to acquire the particular knowledge, skills and competencies. When determining general experience requirements, the requirements may vary based on the position, but in general the experience provides an applicant with or familiarity with certain knowledge, skills, and competencies related to the position.

(3) **Specialized Experience.** In accordance with the [OPM Operating Manual for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions](#), specialized experience is experience that has equipped the applicant with the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully perform the duties of the position and is typically in or related to the work of the position to be filled. When crediting specialized experience, the HR Office must determine the normal line of progression (i.e., one- or two- grade interval) in order to accurately describe the quality and level the required specialized experience. For grade levels that indicate general experience to meet minimum requirements, specialized experience may be substituted to meet general experience requirements. General experience may not be substituted for required specialized experience.

(4) **Combining Education and Experience.** Consistent with the [OPM Operating Manual for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions](#), HR Offices may combine combinations of education and experience that are qualifying for grade levels that indicate education or (general or specialized) experience are acceptable. When combining education and experience to meet the minimum requirements, first determine the applicant's total qualifying experience as a percentage of the experience required for the grade level. Next determine the applicant's education as a percentage of the education required for the grade level. To determine if the applicant has met the minimum requirement, add the education percentage and experience percentage. The total percentage must equal or exceed 100 percent.

b. The grade level requirements are described in the following table:

GRADE LEVEL	LEVEL OF EDUCATION		LEVEL OF GENERAL EXPERIENCE		LEVEL OF SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE
GS-1	Enrollment in a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED) program		None		None
GS-2	Completion of high school or GED diploma	OR	3 months or 13 weeks		Not Applicable
GS-3	Completion of 1 full academic year of post-high school study	OR	6 months or 26 weeks		Not Applicable
GS-4	Completion of 2 full academic years of post-high school study or an associate's degree	OR	1 year or 52 weeks		Not Applicable
GS-5	Completion of 4 full academic years of post-high school leading to a bachelor's degree or equivalent degree		Not Applicable	OR	1 year or 52 weeks of equivalent to at least next lower grade level in the normal line of progression
GS-6	Completion of 6 full months of graduate level education		Not Applicable	OR	1 year or 52 weeks of equivalent to at least next lower grade level in the normal line of progression
GS-7	Completion of 1 full academic year of graduate level education; or Eligibility under the Superior Academic Achievement (S.A.A.) Provision and completion of a bachelor's degree		Not Applicable	OR	1 year or 52 weeks equivalent to at least next lower grade level in the normal line of progression

GRADE LEVEL	LEVEL OF EDUCATION		LEVEL OF GENERAL EXPERIENCE		LEVEL OF SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE
GS-8	Completion of 1 ½ full academic years of graduate level education, or a master's degree or equivalent degree		Not Applicable	OR	1 year or 52 weeks of equivalent to at least next lower grade level in the normal line of progression
GS-9	Completion of 2 full academic years of graduate level education, a master's degree, related equivalent graduate degree, LL.B. or J.D.		Not Applicable	OR	1 year or 52 weeks of equivalent to at least next lower grade level in the normal line of progression
GS-10	Completion of 2 ½ academic years of graduate level education, or a master's degree or equivalent graduate degree		Not Applicable	OR	1 year or 52 weeks of equivalent to at least next lower grade level in the normal line of progression
GS-11	For research positions, completion of all requirements for a master's or equivalent graduate degree For non-research positions, completion of all requirements for a Ph.D. or equivalent degree		Not Applicable	OR	1 year or 52 weeks of equivalent to at least next lower grade level in the normal line of progression
GS-12 and above	No education is qualifying for the GS-12 grade level and above		Not Applicable	OR	1 year or 52 weeks of equivalent to at least next lower grade level in the normal line of progression

8. GRANDFATHERING PROVISION. All persons employed in VA in the Internship Program on the effective date of this qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the specific title, series and grade. For employees who do not meet all of the requirements in this standard, but who met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed to it, the following provisions apply:

- a. Employees grandfathered into the applicable occupational series under the provision of this paragraph may be reassigned, promoted up to the full performance level of a career ladder position, or

changed to a lower grade within the applicable occupation, but may not be promoted beyond the full performance level or placed in a supervisory or managerial position.

b. Employees who are appointed on a temporary basis (i.e., Interns serving on an appointment with a not-to-exceed (NTE) date) prior to the effective date of the qualification standard may not have their appointment extended or be reappointed, on a temporary or permanent basis, until they fully meet the qualification requirements of this standard.

c. Employees initially grandfathered in the Internship Program who subsequently obtain additional education and/or licensure that meet all basic requirements of the position must maintain the required credentials as a condition of employment in the program.

d. If an employee who is retained under this provision leaves the Internship Program position in VA, the employee loses protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of reentry to the Internship Program.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059)