



Student Educational Employment Program Questions and Answers

Q. What is the Student Educational Employment Program?

A. The Student Educational Employment Program consists of two programs.

- **Student Careers Employment Program (SCEP)** offers students the opportunity to gain valuable work experience directly related to their academic field of study. The program can also lead to permanent employment at FWS upon graduation and completion of 640 work hours.
- **Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)** is a temporary employment program. Employment under STEP can range from summer jobs to positions that last as long as the employee is a student. STEP offers maximum flexibility for students looking for temporary employment — schedules are flexible and the work does not have to be directly related to the student's academic field of study.

Q. What are the eligibility requirements for the Student Educational Employment Program?

A. You are eligible under the Student Educational Employment Program if you are:

1. A student enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a degree-seeking student (diploma, certificate, etc.)
2. At least the minimum age required by Federal, state or local laws and standards governing the employment of minors,
3. Taking at least half-time academic or vocational and technical course load in an accredited high school, technical or vocational school, 2-year or 4-year college or university, graduate or professional school, and
4. A U.S. citizen or a national (resident of American Samoa or Swains Island). Non-citizens may be eligible for employment if:
 - permitted by a Federal agency's appropriation act, and
 - eligible to work under U.S. immigration laws.

U.S. citizenship is required for conversion to permanent employment under the Student Career Experience Component.

Q. Can A Student Appointed To One Of These Programs Remain On The Appointment Once They Have Completed Their Educational Requirements?

A. Students appointed to the Student Career Experience Program may continue on the appointment for 120 days beyond the date of completing their work and academic requirements. This 120 day period is permitted by Executive Order 12015. At the end of the 120 days, if the graduate has not been converted to a position in the competitive service, he/she must be separated.

Once a student appointed to the Student Temporary Employment Program has completed the requirements for his/her degree/diploma/certificate (as appropriate), he/she is no longer a student, and must be separated, even if the NTE date on their current appointment has not been reached. The reason for the separation is that they are no longer "students" and therefore no longer meet the basic eligibility for the program. The Executive Order 12015 does not apply to these graduates. If enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an additional educational program they may be given a new appointment.

Q. Can Students Be Promoted?

A. Yes. Students in both programs are eligible for promotion. However, the NOAC (Nature of Action Code) for students in the Student Temporary Employment Program is actually a conversion to a new appointment (at the higher grade level) while keeping the current NTE date. Even though the actual nature of action is a conversion

to a new appointment, a GS employee is entitled to an increase in pay of at least two steps (about 6 percent) upon placement in a higher graded position without a break in service. A WG employee is entitled to an increase in pay of at least one step (about 4 per cent).

Q. Are Students Eligible For Annual And Sick Leave?

A. Yes. Students in both programs earn annual and sick leave.

Q. Are Students Eligible For Health And Life Insurance Benefits?

A. Health and life insurance coverage for Federal employees depends on the type of appointment an employee has and the expectation of substantial employment during the year. Students in the Student Temporary Employment Program are considered temporary employees and are generally not entitled to these benefits. However, once students have been continuously employed for a year without a break in service exceeding 5 days, they may enroll in the Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, but they would have to pay 100% of the premium (i.e., both the employee and government share). There is no provision for temporary employees to be eligible for life insurance coverage.

Students in the Student Career Experience Program are eligible for both health and life insurance coverage as long as they are expected to be employed under this appointment authority for at least one year and are expected to be in a pay status for at least one third of the total period of time from the date of their initial appointment to the date of the completion of the program. Cost of premiums is split between the employee and the agency, as for all permanent employees.

Q. Are Students Eligible For Retirement Benefits?

A. Students in the Student Temporary Employment Program are generally ineligible for retirement coverage. Students in the Student Career Experience Program with less than 5 years of prior civilian service are generally covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). (See 5 CFR, part 842)

Q. Can Students Be Placed On Intermittent Schedules?

A. An intermittent schedule is only appropriate when the nature of the work is so sporadic and unpredictable that a regularly scheduled tour of duty cannot be scheduled in advance. It is not the intent of the Student Educational Employment Program to have students working in these types of positions. Students can work full or part time schedules, as best meets their needs and the needs of the agency.

Q. Must Students Work Or Attend School During The Summer?

A. The intent of the Student Educational Employment Program is that students are always either attending classes, working at the agency, or both. However, agencies may use their discretion to permit a "break in program" during which time a student is neither attending classes nor working. The student would be placed on LWOP during this time.

Q. Does A Student's Work Experience, While On The Student Temporary Appointment, Count Towards The Required 640 Hours Necessary For Noncompetitive Conversion Career Conditional Employment?

A. Yes, if the work performed is related to the student's academic studies and career goals. There should be clear documentation showing the "relatedness" between the work (actual duties/tasks/assignments) performed while on the Student Temporary Employment Program appointment and the Student Career Experience Program appointment.

Q. Does A Student's Work Experience, While On The Former Stay In School Program And Prior To Conversion To The New Student Temporary Employment Program, Count Toward The Required 640 Hours?

A. Yes. Agencies may consider and count work experience gained under the former Stay in School Program toward the 640 hours. However, there should be clear documentation showing the "relatedness" between the work (actual duties/tasks/assignments) performed under the Stay in School appointment and the work being performed under the Student Career Experience Program.

Q. Does The Time Spent On The Student Temporary Employment Program Count Towards Career Tenure? Time-In-Grade?

A. The time does not count towards career tenure because the three year period must begin and end with non-temporary employment in the competitive service. However, the time spent on the student temporary appointment would be creditable towards any time in grade calculation. (Time spent on the former Stay-In-School appointment would also be credited towards time in grade)

Q. May Students Alternate School And Work (i.e. Work Full Time This Semester, And Next Semester Go To School Full Time, and Not Work At All)?

A. Yes. The student, school and agency need to work together to accommodate the academic needs of the student and the work related needs of the agency. For students participating in the Student Career Experience Program there must be a written agreement and a formally arranged schedule of school and work.