



**PREMIER COLLEGE INTERN PROGRAM**



**HANDBOOK**

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## HANDBOOK

This Handbook applies to newly hired and current members of the Premier College Intern Program (PCIP). This document is not all inclusive and is provided as a general Handbook that should be used in conjunction with appropriate laws and regulations, i.e., 5 CFR, AFI 36-602, AFI 36-802 etc.

## PURPOSE

The Premier College Intern Program is designed to prepare program participants for future science, technology, engineering, mathematics, cyber, acquisition, intelligence, mission critical and vocational/technical specialty positions in the Air Force Civilian Service.

This objective is accomplished by

- Recruiting and selecting high-caliber candidates
- Strategically placing interns with management committed to development
- Building competent, effective, and productive employees
- Providing training and challenging assignments
- Deliberate mentorship by higher-level management

Premier College Interns (PCIs) will have the opportunity to access special projects using cutting edge technology, while under the mentorship of senior managers. The paid 12-week internship will occur during the summer of their Sophomore and/or Junior year (before heading into Senior year) for undergraduate participants. Upon graduation and program requirement completion, a Premier College Intern will be eligible for a full-time position into a formal training program (PALACE Acquire (PAQ) or COPPER Cap).

To be eligible for conversion to a full-time position a Premier College Intern (PCI) must:

- Successfully complete an academic course of study from a qualifying institution
- Meet the OPM Qualification Standard for the position
- Receive a favorable recommendation by supervisor and program office
- Obtain necessary security background checks/clearance

## Entry Level Grades

PCIs are typically appointed at the GS-04 or GS-05 level.

## Length of Training

PCIs enter into a 3-month (12-week) training and development program that occurs during the summer after their Sophomore or Junior year.

## Types of Positions

PCI positions are established in the wage grade, administrative, professional, and technical career fields.

## Types of Appointments

### Competitive Service

Term appointments to the competitive service are made utilizing the 1106 Direct Hire Authority (DHA). The PCI may noncompetitively transition within 120 days after all graduation requirements have been completed and verified. All time served under term appointment counts toward the appointee's probationary period.

### Excepted Service

Premier College Intern appointments under 5 CFR, part 362, Subparts A & C, (Schedule D) counts toward the appointee's trial period. PCIs may be noncompetitively moved into the competitive service without further competition.

### Participant Agreement

Any PCI accepting an offer of employment must sign a Participant Agreement. This agreement requires the PCI to pursue and successfully complete the basic training objectives and activities in the training and development (T&D)/Individual Development Plan (IDP), and to obtain and maintain a security clearance, as required. Failure to satisfy the Participant Agreement may result in separation from Air Force employment.



## **Training and Development Plan (TDP) Objectives**

TDPs serve as the primary document for PCI development and training. The plans identify the KSAs which must be mastered during the training period, and the proficiency level to be achieved.

TDPs must

- Be real and challenging
- Provide experience and sufficient training in the target series to assure full performance at the target grade level.

## **Training and Development Plan Structure**

### **Orientation**

A general orientation session is given to each new PCI by the supervisor of record. The orientation addresses the functional area the trainee is assigned; the position description; TDP objectives; supervisor expectations; and administrative and personnel matters.

### **Formal Classroom Instruction**

Specify government and nongovernment-sponsored courses, dates, times and locations.

### **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**

Planned on-site work assignments designed to challenge the PCI and develop their skills and abilities.

### **Special Assignments/Projects**

It is highly desirable that PCIs be provided the opportunity to work on higher level assignments during their training period. This assignment provides them the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills gained in the program, and to utilize skills brought with them from their academic environments. Such assignments should provide exposure to mid-level management.

## **PCI Responsibilities**

- Complete each requirement of the TDP.
- Work with the supervisor/trainer in all aspects of the training, including problems encountered with the TDP.

As part of the Premier College Intern Program (PCIP), interns will experience a 3-day Symposium that will introduce you to the Air Force, Air Force Civilian Service (AFCS), networking and training. The mandatory orientation will cover the following:

- Purpose of the program
- Overview of Air Force mission and major programs
- Understanding your TDP
- Opportunities offered after the PCIP
- Required Training

## **Symposium Overview**

### **Briefs/Training**

- Senior Leaders from across the Air Force
- Benefits and Entitlements
- Panels
- Former Interns

### **Tours/Demonstrations**

- See how the local base supports the Warfighter
- View the future positions

### **Networking**

- Group Challenges/Projects
- Connect with Interns from across the country
- Meet Palace Acquire Interns/Copper Caps
- Get to know your Career Field Program Administrators

## **Travel to Symposium**

You will receive notification 4-6 weeks before your first day of work for which regional symposium you will attend. If you are selected to travel, we will fund your lodging, meals, and tickets! You will work with your supervisor to purchase your plane tickets in your first week of work. You will receive a travel advance that will cover baggage, meals during travel, and transportation to/from the airport. You will receive a detailed message on the Symposium closer to your start date.

## **PAY SETTING**

PCIs being appointed to the Federal government for the first time are normally placed in step 1 of the grade level for which hired under the appropriate pay scale for that position. PCI's pay will be set in accordance with AFI 36-802, Pay Setting, and any local pay setting guidance.

## **LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP) DURING INTERN PERIOD**

The PCI must notify their supervisor if they plan to request LWOP and for what reason(s). If the LWOP request is for more than 30 days, the supervisor will discuss the request with the Career Field Team and what impact the LWOP would have as it relates to the PCIs established TDP and completion of the program.

PCIs requesting LWOP should contact their local Employee Management Relations (EMR) office to discuss what impact LWOP will have on probationary/trial periods, promotions, within-grades increases (if applicable), tenure, benefits, TSP etc. Supervisors must forward PCI's LWOP request to the EMR office for review and final approval.

## **LWOP-US/Leave of Absence to Perform Duty with the Uniformed Services**

The PCI must notify the appropriate CFT (AFPC/DP2) that he/she will go on LWOP-US. If the LWOP request is for more than 30 days, the CFT will discuss with the supervisor what impact the LWOP would have as it relates to the PCI established TDP. As a result of activation to military service, an extension may be warranted to complete the requisite training. This determination should be made by the supervisor based on evaluation of training progression as well as input from the employee.

PCIs going on LWOP-US should contact their local CPS/EMR office to discuss impact of military duty as it relates to promotions, within-grade increases (if applicable), tenure, benefits, TSP, etc. Generally, the PCI is entitled to be treated as though he or she never left Federal employment. This means a person who is reemployed following uniformed service receives credit for the entire period of the absence for purposes of rights and benefits. Additional information is available under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

## **TELEWORK**

PCIs are not eligible to telework.

# BENEFITS & ENTITLEMENTS

As a Premier College Intern with the Air Force Civilian Service you are entitled to the following benefits and entitlements:

- 4 hours of sick leave and 4 hours of annual leave each pay period when working 40 hours a week.
- Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB)\*- Voluntary health insurance program with government paying 72% of premiums. Elections must be made within 60 days of eligibility and may retain coverage while on leave without pay during the school year\*\*
- Flexible Spending Account (FSA) - FSA's pay for qualifying medical, dental, vision expenses and over the counter prescriptions with \$500 carryover of unspent funds per year.
- Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) – Voluntary dental and vision coverage. Elections must be made within 60 days of eligibility.
- Federal Employees Group Life Insurance\*- Automatically enrolled with life insurance coverage starting at \$32,000.00 while in a duty status.
- Thrift Savings Plan (401K equivalent) – Automatically enrolled in a retirement and investment plan with up to 5% government contribution matching.
- Federal Employees Retirement System- Further Revised Annuity Employee (FERS-FRAE) – Full retirement benefits at age 57 with a monthly annuity.



For questions regarding enrolling in your benefits visit [OPM.gov](https://www.opm.gov) or call the Total Force Service Center at 1-800-525-0102.

\* Must be in pay status for coverage to be effective

\*\* Premiums must be paid to the agency while on leave without pay

## **Purpose**

All PCIs are required to complete and submit feedback online through the SharePoint link or email a softcopy to the Central Programs office. A PCI will not successfully complete the program without submitting documented feedback. Submitting feedback on time ensures that paperwork is processed in a timely manner and interns receive notification if they are asked to continue a career with the Air Force.

## **Mid Intern Feedback**

Feedback is completed at the 6 week mark of the program or the half way mark of the program (if completing less than 12 weeks). Feedback will cover the Symposium, training completed, program satisfaction, mentorship sessions and additional comments.

## **Final Feedback**

Final Feedback is completed at the 10th week of the program. This is the opportunity for the PCI to indicate their desire for full time employment upon graduation. Feedback will cover training, mentoring sessions, career field specific questions, program satisfaction, supervisor recommendation and desire to continue employment with the Air Force.



***"This has been my dream career so from here I just want to grow with the AF and try out different positions and see where I fit. Maybe leadership - the world's my oyster."***

**- Janelle Miller -**

The Air Force Civilian Service App is available for download in Google Play and the App Store. The Air Force Civilian Service App is a great way to stay up-to-date with Air Force news, stay connected with other interns, and provides valuable information through content and videos available only on the app.

## Groups

### Symposium

- The Symposium will feature key information in our Symposium Group. On Day 1 of each Symposium, we will announce the group code for access. We will post poll questions, encourage you to share pictures and give you any updates or changes during this event.

### Career Field

- Each Career Field has a group. Reach out to your Career Field Team POC for the code. Connect with other interns across the country in your career field. You never know what opportunities you will be afforded when you network!

### Other

- If you would like to start a specific group, please use the contact feature to get that started.

## Remember

- Do not share Personally Identifiable Information (PII) on the app. Look before you take a picture- make sure nothing is in the background. Examples of PII include but are not limited to Social Security numbers, birth dates, places of birth, badge numbers, office locations, financial information, military records, home and personal cell numbers, and spouse information.
- Do not share access codes with employees outside of the Premier College Intern Program.
- Participate! The more you engage, the more you can learn!
- Let us know if you want to see more content by using the contact feature.

## Example of your career progression when hired into the program as a junior



### Fall of Junior Year

- Receive Tentative Job Offer
- Intern complete required documents
- Receive Firm Job Offer with Entrance on Duty (EOD) date

### Spring of Junior Year

- Submit transcripts to Staffing POC
- Receive information on Symposium and if travel is required

### Summer of Junior Year

- Inprocess with Civilian Personnel
- Attend regional Symposium
- Complete mid-term feedback
- Complete final feedback

### Senior Year

- Go on Leave Without Pay
- Submit transcripts each semester to Career Field Team POC
- Submit Official transcripts with Degree Conferral date to Career Field Team POC
- Receive Conversion to full time employment

### After Graduation

- Return to duty
- Receive promotion to GS-07 or higher depending on degree/experience

## **Before the start of the internship**

### **1) Am I able to get school credit for my internship?**

Yes! Please submit required documents for signature to your supervisor and cc your Career Field Program Administrator. If you do not receive a signature within 5 business days- please follow up with your Career Field Program Administrator.

### **2) Who should complete my documents for school credit?**

Your supervisor should complete the documents.

### **3) What is required to apply for the program?**

Please submit your resume and transcript to a Career Field Program Administrator, Air Force Civilian Service website or USAJobs Public Notice.

### **4) How will I be notified if I have been selected for the internship?**

The Career Field Program Administrator will reach out to you.

### **5) When will I be notified if I have been selected for the internship?**

You will be notified by a staffing team member if you are selected for the internship. If it has been more than 2 weeks and you have not received an email, please reach out to the Career Field Program Administrator.

### **6) What is a complete application package?**

A complete application has your resume, degree plan and transcripts. You do not have to submit an official transcript until you receive the job offer.

### **7) Can I mail in, hand deliver, fax, or email my application?**

Use email to deliver your application to your Career Field Program Administrator.

### **8) Can I complete the fingerprints at my local police station?**

No. Please wait for the Civilian Personnel Section to reach out to you with information on completing your fingerprints.

### **9) When are the internship start and end dates?**

Internship start and end dates depend on when you are on break from school. You will work with your human resources specialist to determine your dates. We target May-August as the typical timeframe, but we will work with those who are not on a traditional schedule.



**10) I will be gone for part of the summer. Can I still participate in the program?**

Extended leave will require advanced approval on a case by case basis. Our supervisors have set aside special projects that will take 12 weeks to complete. We do not want to do a disservice to the organization if you are not able to complete the projects. Please reach out to your Career Field Program Administrator.

**11) Do I have to submit a letter of recommendation?**

You do not have to submit a letter of recommendation.

**12) Do I have to submit official transcripts?**

Yes. Please submit your official transcripts as soon as possible. We cannot submit an official firm job offer until it is received by our human resources office.

**13) Can I apply if I am a recent graduate or graduate student?**

We are currently accepting students in their Sophomore or Junior year of their undergraduate program. Please look into our Palace Acquire or Copper Cap programs if you are a recent graduate.

**14) Do I need to be enrolled as a student to be eligible for the program?**

Yes. You will need to submit your transcripts and degree plan.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**15) Does the program pay for my travel to/from the internship location and/or pay for room and board?**

At this time, we do not pay travel costs or room and board. You will receive a full salary as an intern and will have to find your own accommodations. Our local program offices will assist in housing recommendations.

**16) Do you have any suggestions for where I could find resources to help with my living arrangements?**

Please reach out to your local program office or log into the AFCS app to meet other interns.

**17) I am a returning applicant, do I need to apply online?**

Please reach out to the Career Field Program Administrator for assistance.

**18) Can I edit my application after I have submitted it?**

Please email your Career Field Program Administrator POC if you want to submit an updated resume or transcript. Your Human Resource POC will reach out to you for an update of your transcripts before your internship begins.

**19) Will transportation be provided to and from the base?**

Some bases have a ride share program. Please reach out to your local program office to determine what is available at your location.



## **During the Internship**

### **1) What is the Symposium?**

The 3-day Symposium serves as an introduction to the Air Force, Air Force Civilian Service, networking and training.

### **2) Do I get paid while I am at Symposium?**

Yes! You will receive your regular pay for each day at the Symposium. It is an alternate work location.

### **3) Who pays for travel to symposium if I am assigned to a different duty location?**

The Air Force will fund your trip if you are traveling to a Symposium. You will receive all the information closer to date.

### **4) What is my TDP?**

The Training and Development Plan is the document you are required to complete to meet the program requirements. You should review the TDP with your supervisor in the first week of work. It will tell you what projects, training, or shadowing you will complete during the 12 weeks.

### **5) What happens after the internship when I go back to school?**

If you complete a successful internship and are offered a Palace Acquire/Copper Cap position, you will go on leave without pay (LWOP) and return to work with us full-time when you graduate.

### **6) How many hours do I have to work?**

The internship is a full-time position of 40 hours a week.

### **7) Will I be able to continue working after the internship?**

Continuing in a part-time status will be addressed on a case by case basis.

### **8) By when will I know if I will continue with the program?**

You will know if you are offered a position by the 10th week of your 12 week internship.

### **9) By when do I need to enroll in my benefits?**

You will have 60 days to enroll in your benefits from the day you start work.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **10) Will my benefits continue after the internship?**

You are able to elect if you wish to continue paying your premiums at an increased percent. Please call the Benefits and Entitlements Services Team at 1-800-525-0102 for details on costs.

## **11) Why is my access taking so long?**

You work for the Department of Defense and we have many security requirements. We understand it can be frustrating, and we have worked to expedite your computer access.

## **12) Will I be rotating positions during the duration of my internship?**

Please review your TDP with your supervisor. Some interns will rotate sections and others will stay in the same location.

## **13) Can I rollover and old 401K plan into my TSP account?**

Yes, you are able to rollover your old plan. Please review the tsp website for additional information - <https://www.tsp.gov/forms/transfersAndRollovers.html>

## **14) Do I accrue Leave if I am on LWOP for just one day in the pay period?**

You will accrue leave if you take LWOP for one day in the pay period.

## **15) When is my end date?**

Your end date is 12 weeks after you start work in the summer.

## **16) How can I find a mentor?**

You will be assigned a mentor for the duration of your internship. If you would like to find another mentor, please refer to the myVector website.

## **17) Will I be able to continue working after the internship?**

Continuing in a part time status will be addressed on a case by case basis.

## **18) Can I refer someone for the internship?**

Yes! Refer all potential interns to your Career Field Program Administrator POC.

# IMPORTANT WEBSITES

<https://opm.gov/>

<https://mypers.af.mil/>

<https://eopf.opm.gov/usaf/>

<https://www.benefeds.com/>

<https://myvector.us.af.mil/myvector>

<https://www.tsp.gov/index.html>

<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>

<https://golearn.adls.af.mil/login.aspx>



***"My husband was in the military and I had always dreamed of working at Eglin but at the time I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up. When I went back to college I saw the Air Force had this Civilian program and that's when I realized this was where I was meant to be. I love the law. And I love the minutia of the law and I'm a great proofreader so these are things that are tailored to my skill set. It was tailored for me."***

**- Kyla Orinick -**

# GLOSSARY

**5 CFR** - Code of Federal Regulations containing the principal set of rules and regulations issued by federal agencies regarding administrative personnel

**AFCS** - Air Force Civilian Service

**AFI** - Air Force Instruction

**AFIT** - Air Force Institute of Technology

**AFPC** - Air Force Personnel Center

**CFMD** - Career Field Management Division

**CFTs** - Career Field Teams

**COP** - Copper Cap

**CSA** - Central Salary Account

**DCPDS** - Defense Civilian Personnel Data System

**DoD** - Department of Defense

**DSN** - Defense Switched Network

**EOD** - Entrance on Duty

**GS** - General Schedule

**KSAs** - Knowledge Skills and Abilities

**LWOP** - Leave without Pay

**MAJCOM** - Major Command

**OJT** - On-the-Job Training

**OT** - Overtime

**OPM** - Office of Personnel Management

**PAQ** - PALACE Acquire

**PCS** - Permanent Change of Station

**PII** - Personally Identifiable Information

**PPP** - Priority Placement Program

**RPA** - Request for Personnel Action

**SLRP** - Student Loan Repayment Program

**SF** - Standard Form

**T&D** - Training and Development

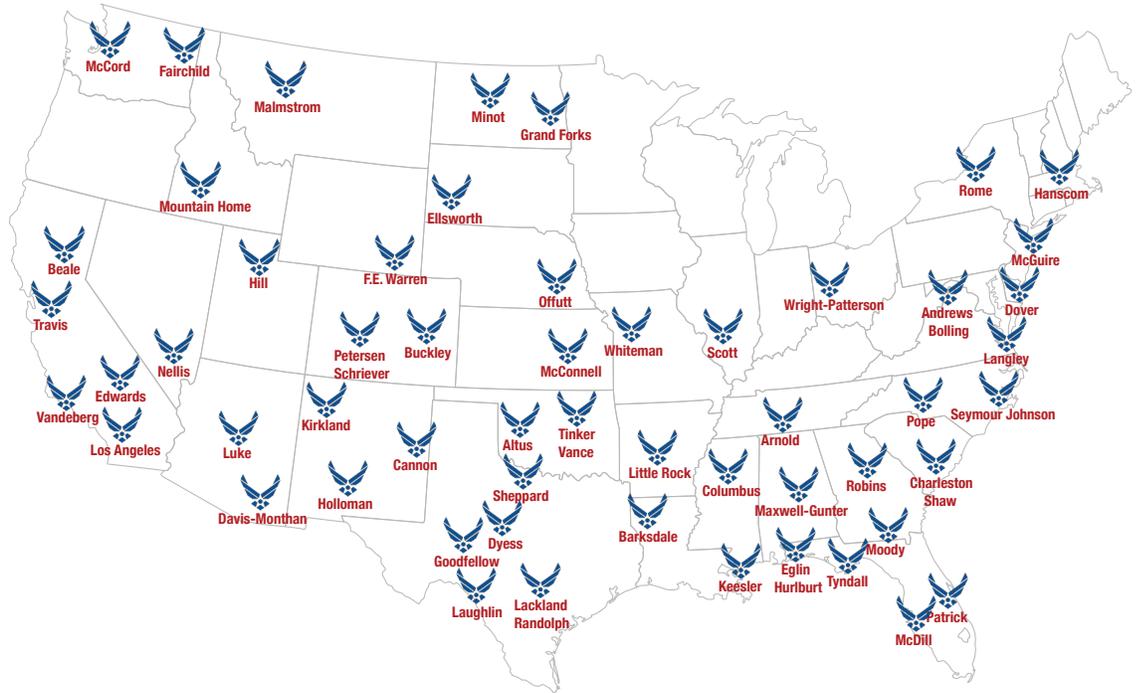
**TCA** - Temporary Change of Assignment

**TDY** - Temporary Duty

**U.S.C.** - United States Code

**WIGI** - Within-grade Increase

# AIR FORCE BASE LOCATIONS\*



- Andrews AFB – Maryland
- Arnold AFB – Tennessee
- Dahlgren – Virginia
- Edwards AFB – Florida
- Eglin AFB – Florida
- Gunter AFB – Alabama
- Hanscom AFB – Massachusetts
- Hill AFB – Utah
- JBER Alaska – Alaska
- JBPH-Hickam – Hawaii
- JBSA – Texas
- Keesler AFB – Mississippi
- Kirtland AFB – New Mexico
- LA AFB – California
- Luke AFB – Arizona
- MacDill – Florida
- Nellis AFB – Nevada
- Offutt AFB, NE – Nebraska
- Pentagon – Virginia
- Peterson AFB – Colorado
- Robins AFB – Georgia
- Rome – New York
- Scott AFB – Illinois
- Tinker AFB – Oklahoma
- Tyndall AFB – Florida
- US Air Force Academy – Colorado
- Wright-Patterson AFB – Ohio

\*Not all bases have locations for PCIs