

**Department of Defense (DoD)  
Information Assurance Scholarship Program**

## ***Application Background and Requirements***

### ***ATTACHMENT C***

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#### **1. BACKGROUND**

Cybersecurity is considered so important to our national defense that a formal DoD IASP was established by the National Defense Authorization Act for 2001 (Public Law 106- 398). The purpose is to promote the education, recruitment, and retention of ***rising junior and senior undergraduate and graduate/doctoral students*** in cybersecurity studies.

The DoD is seeking rising junior and senior (third and fourth year) undergraduate and graduate/doctoral students who are interested in full-ride scholarships for concentrated studies in cybersecurity. Students selected for the program will receive full scholarships. This requires the student to agree to serve one year of service to the DoD, upon graduation, for each year of scholarship received, in addition to the internship identified below. An opportunity also exists for scholarship payback through military service. Individuals choosing to enlist or accept a commission to serve on active duty in one of the Military Services shall incur a service obligation of a minimum of 4 years on active duty in that Service upon graduation. The Military Services may establish a service obligation longer than 4 years, depending on the occupational specialty and type of enlistment or commissioning program selected. Traditional Guardsmen and Reserve Soldiers are eligible to apply. Scholarship payback for this group is two-years of service for each year of scholarship received.

During breaks in their academic studies, Information Assurance Scholars will receive progressive, hands-on experience in information security internships. In return, scholars must agree to some restrictions and obligations regarding curriculum, GPA, and pre- and post- program employment. If all conditions are met, Information Assurance Scholars will receive full-time conditional/permanent positions in Components of the DoD upon program completion.

## **HOW TO APPLY**

Only students at designated National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education, National Centers of Academic Excellence Cyber Defense– Research, and National Centers of Academic Excellence – Cyber Operations, hereinafter referred to as CAEs may apply. Review the list of schools included with this announcement for clarification: [https://www.iad.gov/NIETP/reports/cae\\_designated\\_institutions.cfm](https://www.iad.gov/NIETP/reports/cae_designated_institutions.cfm)

**Note: Undergraduate students selected must attend full-time.**

**Online programs are allowed**

**Review all application instructions and materials included with this announcement. Pay close attention to the mandatory conditions of Financial assistance and employment.**

Check with the identified Point of Contact for your college or university to find out what you must do to apply and to obtain an augmented application package if your school requires one. (Application due dates and requirements may vary from school to school.) Each CAE has designated a campus liaison, point of contact, or Principal Investigator (PI), for IASP management and administration. The above reference website provides known points of contact for the current CAEs. You are responsible for identifying the appropriate PI for the IASP On your campus.

**DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION TO THE DOD.** Submit your application package directly to the appropriate Point of Contact for your college or university.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF SCHOLARSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

Chapter 112 of title 10, United States Code authorizes the IASP. The purposes of the program are to recruit and retain well-qualified personnel for work in the vital cybersecurity field and to cultivate continuing capacity for cybersecurity workforce development at select institutions of higher learning (CAEs) throughout the United States. As directed by the Secretary of Defense, the DoD CIO has delegated authority and responsibility to establish scholarship and institutional grant programs to achieve these purposes, including the authority to conduct civilian employee recruitment for these purposes. This program is executed by the National Information Assurance Education and Training Program (NIETP) of the National Security Agency (NSA) on behalf of the DoD.

Rising junior and senior undergraduates, master's and doctoral candidates, who are U.S. citizens and are at least 18 years of age are eligible for consideration for the program. Students selected as Cybersecurity Scholars will receive the full cost of tuition, books (from the institution/degree specific required book list, not books which are optional for the class), required fees (including health care), and a stipend to cover room and board. The stipend levels are \$25,000 for undergraduate students and \$30,000 for graduate (Master's/PhD) students. Awards will be made via a grant to the CAE. Disabled students may receive additional allowances. There are no allowances for dependents.

Additional years of scholarship awards are dependent upon satisfactory academic progress, internship performance, if applicable, and the availability of funds. Returning students will be given first priority over new students to the program as long as they continue to meet the IASP requirements and appropriate funding is available. Scholarship recipients who successfully complete the terms of an initial one or two-year scholarship (for example, complete an undergraduate degree), may apply for a second scholarship of up to three years for

completing an advanced degree, if the sponsoring agency agrees. When funding allows, students may be provided funding to attend one cybersecurity related conference - USA-based only. No foreign travel authorized.

### **3. APPOINTMENT AND HIRING AUTHORITIES**

Chapter 112, title 10, United States Code anticipates that recipients of scholarships will participate in experiential learning assignments (called "internships" in the law) at the DoD Components and Agencies while completing their academic degree programs. There are a variety of hiring authorities across DoD and the determination will be made by those Agencies in conjunction with the IASP Program Office.

Information Assurance Scholars will be appointed at those General Schedule grade levels for which they are qualified and selected by DoD component officials. Since the Area of Consideration for scholarship applicants includes rising junior and senior year undergraduates, master's and doctoral degree candidates, and graduate/doctoral certificate program students, it is anticipated that applicants will (variously) meet minimum qualification standards for Student Trainee appointments at GS-0099-7, GS-0099-9, and GS-0099-11. The Military Departments and DoD Components that select and appoint students will decide at what grade levels successful Information Assurance Scholars will be appointed in light of any applicable component-unique factors such as the target occupations or full-performance position levels for the candidates. To obtain information on the general salary schedule, please visit: <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/2017/general-schedule/>

### **4. MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOLARSHIP AND APPOINTMENT**

To be eligible for the IASP opportunity described in this announcement, you must meet all of the following minimum requirements:

- a) You must be 18 years of age or older.
- b) You must be a citizen of the United States at the time of application. ***Note, if family members are not U.S. Citizens, some DoD Agencies may be unable to process the applicant (student) to the security clearance level required. Every effort will be made to assign eligible students at an Agency without such restrictions.***
- c) You must be enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) in one of the identified CAE colleges or universities listed in this announcement, or enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) at an institution selected by a CAE as a collaborative partner for these purposes.
- d) You must have completed (or by August 2018 will have completed) at a minimum the first two years of an undergraduate degree program and be eligible to (a) begin either the third or fourth year of an undergraduate degree program; (b) begin the first or second year of a Master's degree program; or (c) pursue doctoral studies
- e) You must be pursuing a course of study and/or have a declared major in one of the scientific, technical, or managerial disciplines related to cybersecurity or with a concentration in cyber security. For these purposes, the scientific, technical and managerial disciplines related to computer and network security and cybersecurity are:
  - Biometrics
  - Business:
    - Management
    - Administration
  - Process Analysis
  - Computer:
    - Crime Investigations
    - Engineering

- Forensics
  - Information Science
  - Information Systems
  - Programming
  - Science
  - Systems Analysis
  - Critical Information Infrastructure Assurance
  - Cyber:
    - Operations
    - Security
    - Policy
  - Cryptography
  - Database Administration
  - Data Management
  - Digital and Multimedia Forensics
  - Electrical Engineering
  - Electronics Engineering
  - Information Assurance:
    - Systems and Product Acquisition
    - Training, Education and Management
    - Information Security
    - Information Systems
  - Information Technology:
    - Acquisition
    - Program/Project Management
  - Mathematics
  - Network Administration and Operations
  - Network Management
  - Operation of Computer Emergency Response Teams
  - Software Engineering
  - Systems Security Engineering
  - Threat and Vulnerability Assessment, to include Risk Management
  - Web Security
  - And other similar disciplines as approved by the DoD Chief Information Office (DoD CIO).
- f) Ability to obtain a security clearance. See the web page information below, which provides more information about fulfilling the necessary security requirements. Failure to be able to obtain a security clearance is grounds for dismissal from the DoD IASP. You must be able to obtain the required security clearance for the position selected. You may be required to undergo certain tests, including drug and polygraph tests, to obtain and maintain a clearance. Before you may be awarded a scholarship or hired by DoD, you will be required to complete certain forms to initiate the security clearance process. Some of these forms will require that you reveal extensive information about your background, such as potentially sensitive information about your financial circumstances and any arrests and/or convictions for offenses of any kind. You must agree to all of these conditions of employment and you must complete these forms as a condition of financial assistance and appointment.
- Current web pages from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) are provided below. These are provided for your review and consideration in determining whether you will be eligible for a security clearance. They may not be all inclusive, however, it is highly recommended that you review and understand the requirements prior to signing up to participate in the DoD IASP. <https://www.opm.gov/investigations>

## **5. ACADEMIC SUFFICIENCY**

Your school must recommend you for scholarship. The CAE shall review the application materials, and conduct such verification as may be necessary to establish the following standards of academic sufficiency. CAEs shall exclude from further evaluation (and provide an endorsement of “Not Recommended” for) any applicant unable to meet the following academic requirements:

The applicant is pursuing a course of study and/or has a declared major in one of the scientific, technical or managerial disciplines related to computer and network security that are enumerated under Section 4.E. above.

As an undergraduate student, the applicant has a 3.2 out of a 4.0 grade point average (*GPA*) or, as a graduate student, the applicant has a 3.5 GPA out of 4.0, or an analogous rank based on a comparable scale.

The applicant’s demonstrated potential for academic success and fulfillment of degree requirements is substantial. CAEs shall review the factors enumerated below, and shall exclude from further evaluation and not recommend any candidate unable to achieve a minimum score of 2 points on a 5-point scale. Scale values range from:

- Insufficient Potential (One),
- Sufficient Potential (Two),
- Average Potential (Three),
- High Potential (Four), and
- Superior Potential (Five)

Factors to be considered in arriving at the rating for “demonstrated potential” are:

- The applicant’s original transcript(s) from all institutions of higher education attended
- The applicant’s current Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Academic honors, distinctions and awards
- Letters of reference

## **6. KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY**

Please use Attachment E, Student Endorsement and Ranking Form, for the following: The CAE shall document its evaluation of each applicant meeting administrative and academic sufficiency requirements against the following competencies, using a 5-point scale of values, to assess and report on *each* of the six competencies below. The rating scale is:

- No Knowledge or Ability (One)
- Basic Knowledge or Ability (Two)
- Intermediate Knowledge or Ability (Three)
- Advanced Knowledge or Ability (Four)
- Superior Knowledge or Ability (Five)

Evaluations of the following factors shall be based on the supplemental application material provided by the candidates, letters of reference, and any additional information provided by the applicant in response to CAE requests made for this purpose.

- Knowledge of the techniques of the information technology and/or information security (assurance) discipline, including encryption, access control, physical security, training, threat analysis, and authentication.
- Knowledge of the human factors in the information technology and/or information security (assurance), including human computer interaction, design, training, sabotage, human error prevention and identification, personal use policies, and monitoring.
- Ability to identify and analyze problems, distinguish between relevant and irrelevant

information to make logical decisions, and provide solutions to individual and organizational problems.

- Ability to consider and respond appropriately to the needs, feelings, and capabilities of different people in different situations; is tactful, compassionate and sensitive, and treats others with respect.
- Ability to make clear and convincing oral presentations to individuals or groups; listens effectively and clarifies information as needed, facilitates an open exchange of ideas and fosters an atmosphere of open communication.
- Ability to express facts and ideas in writing in a clear, convincing and organized manner appropriate to the audience and occasion.

The CAE shall also provide in written paragraph form the reason for one of the following recommendations:

- Highly Recommended
- Recommended
- Not Recommended

## **7. GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Application Forms and Materials:** On the application and the following pages you will find instructions for preparing and submitting an application for the IASP, as well as application forms and materials. Please read all information and instructions for application preparation before you begin. The application itself consists of your resume and all of the OF612 supplements. **The OF612 Supplemental Competency Statement and Resume must be included or the package will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered.**

Please be aware that your CAE is required by the DoD to participate in the evaluation of your application for scholarship assistance under this program. Your CAE may fulfill its responsibilities to evaluate your application in a variety of ways. Your CAE might constitute a panel to review your application materials or conduct interviews with you or other applicants. To fulfill its responsibilities, your CAE may require that you obtain and submit information and/or materials in addition to those required in the application package. Any written information or material that your CAE requires shall become the CAE Supplement to your OF612 and must be included in the final application package that your school transmits to the DoD in order for you to receive consideration.

Therefore, if you are interested in applying for this opportunity, ***you should check with the PI, for your school immediately*** to learn of any additional application requirements.

**Veteran's Preference in Hiring:** If you served on active duty in the United States Military and were separated under honorable conditions, you may be eligible for veteran's preference. For further details visit the Office of Personnel Management website at:  
<http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

- To claim 5-point veterans' preference, attach a copy of your DD-214, Certificate of Release or discharge from Active Duty, or other proof of eligibility, to your Optional Form 612 - Optional Application for Federal Employment, as required at Item 15 of the application.
- To claim 10-point veterans' preference, attach an SF 15, Application for 10-Point Veterans' Preference, plus the proof required by that form, to your Optional Form 612 - Optional

Application for Federal Employment, as required at Item 15 of the application.

Applicants with Disabilities: You can find out about alternatives for submitting your application by calling the Office of Personnel Management at 912-757-3000. If you have a hearing disability, call TDD 912-744-2299. You may obtain case-by-case assistance by calling the Department of Defense point of contact for this announcement. The name, address, and email address of the point of contact for this announcement are below:

DoD IASP Program Office  
National Security Agency  
Attn: NIETP, A233, Suite 6804  
9800 Savage Road  
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6804  
AskIASP@nsa.gov

**Equal Employment Opportunity:** The Department of Defense is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified persons shall receive consideration for this opportunity without regard to political, religious, labor organization affiliation or non-affiliation, marital status, race, color, sex, national origin, non-disqualifying physical disability, age, or sexual orientation.

## **8. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THIS OPPORTUNITY**

Before being hired, the appointing agency (the specific DoD Agency requesting to hire you) will ask you to complete a Declaration for Federal Employment or other agency or component specific form to determine your suitability for federal employment and to authorize a background investigation of your suitability. The agency will also ask you to sign and certify the accuracy of all the information in your application. If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; you may be fired after you begin work; or you may be fined or jailed.

You will be required to obtain and maintain eligibility for a security clearance in order to receive financial (scholarship) assistance or an appointment under the IASP. The appointing agency will ask you to complete certain forms to initiate the security clearance process. These forms require you to reveal many details about your background, including your financial circumstances, and other sensitive matters such as any arrests and/or convictions for offenses of any kind. You must complete these forms as a condition of financial assistance and appointment.

If you are a male over age 18 who was born after December 31, 1959, you must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for a federal job.

Federal law prohibits officials from appointing, promoting, or recommending their relatives.

Federal annuitants (military and civilian) may have their salaries or annuities reduced. All employees must pay any valid delinquent debts or the employee's payroll office may garnish their salary.

## **9. APPLICATION CONTENT REQUIREMENTS**

**DO NOT INCLUDE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS, COPIES OF PASSPORTS or DRIVERS LICENSE, BIRTH CERTIFICATES, or ANY OTHER TYPE OF PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION.**

**HAND WRITTEN APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED**

**STUDENTS NOT CURRENTLY IN THE IASP:** An acceptable application package for the IASP consists of the following requirements:

- **The IASP Student Application** completely filled out and signed. (Attachment D)
- **Separate sheet highlighting recognitions, honors and awards.** You may attach a separate sheet of plain 8 ½" x 11" paper on which you record your responses or the continuations of your responses. On each such page, indicate your name.
- **Supplemental Academic Sufficiency Statement.** You must complete the Statement of Academic Sufficiency supplement to the OF612, to which you must attach the following additional supplemental statements:
  - **Resume**
  - **One (1) Letter of Reference** from a current faculty member who is fully knowledgeable of your potential for successful learning, your knowledge, and your ability. See remainder of application package for instructions about the content of this Letter of Reference. Letters must be on University letterhead and contain the full name and contact information of the faculty member (phone, email, and address).
  - **One (1) additional Letter of Reference** from either a current or former faculty member, or a current or former supervisor who is fully knowledgeable of your potential for successful learning, your knowledge, and your ability. See remainder of application package for instructions about the content of this Letter of Reference. Letters must be on official letterhead and contain the full name and contact information of the faculty member or current/former supervisor (phone, email, and address).
  - **Official (certified) Transcripts** from all the institutions of higher learning you have attended. Electronic transcripts may be accepted as long as they are certified by the institution. NOTE: University POCs processing applications for submission may open the transcripts.
  - **Supplemental Competency Statement: Knowledge, Skills and Attributes:** You must complete the OF612 Supplemental Competency Statement with narrative responses that describe the level of your attainment of the knowledge and ability factors indicated. See remainder of application package for instructions about the content of this supplemental statement.
  - **Signature of the Supplemental Statement of General Academic and Employment Conditions.** If you agree with the all of the academic and employment conditions required for your receipt of scholarship assistance and appointment under the IASP, and wish to be considered for it, you must sign the OF612 Supplemental Statement of General Academic and Employment Conditions, which is the last page of the Attachment D, Student Application.

**CURRENT IASP STUDENTS WHO ARE REAPPLYING:** An acceptable application package for the Information Assurance Scholarship Program consists of the following:

- **The IASP Student Application** completely filled out and signed. (Attachment D). By signing the Student Application, you are stating that you have re-read section G and H.
- **One (1) Letter of Reference** from the current Principal Investigator or key faculty member who is fully knowledgeable of your potential for successful learning, your knowledge, and your ability, *based upon this past year of effort.*
- **Official (certified) Transcripts** from all the institutions of higher learning you have attended *SINCE* your last submission. You are required to maintain the appropriate grade point average to maintain your status in the program. NOTE: University POCs processing applications for submission may open the transcripts.
- Updated resume to include your summer internship activities.
- **Returning students do not need to provide:**
  - a list of their honors and awards
  - Supplemental Competency Statement