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DCIPS and the Excepted Service

This Fact Sheet discusses DCIPS positions in the **excepted service** and how they differ from positions in the **competitive service**.

The **competitive service** refers to those organizations that use the Office of Personnel Management's competitive hiring processes to evaluate and rank candidates. **Excepted service** organizations are specifically excluded from those competitive service procedures. This means that these organizations have their own hiring system which establishes the evaluation criteria they use in filling their vacancies.

Competitive status is a person's basic eligibility for assignment to a position in the competitive service without having to compete with members of the general public in an open competitive examination. Competitive status is attained upon satisfactory completion of a probationary period with a competitive service organization. Because the hiring and staffing practices associated with excepted service differ from those of the competitive service, competitive status can only be attained by employment with a competitive service organization.

All Defense Intelligence positions under the Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) are in the excepted service by specific statute, 10 U.S.C. 1601. This cite is the specific appointing authority for all DCIPS positions. Although the hiring and staffing processes associated with DCIPS positions differ from those of the competitive service, employee protections such as the application of merit system and veterans' preference principles are safeguarded. DCIPS employees are also eligible for the same benefits such as retirement, health and life insurance, Thrift Savings Plan, leave accruals, etc., as employees of the competitive service.

Vacancy announcements for DCIPS positions should clearly note that the position is in the excepted service. Non-DCIPS applicants selected for a DCIPS position must acknowledge in writing, prior to actual appointment to the DCIPS position, that the position for which he or she has been selected is in the excepted service and covered by DCIPS. Federal employees currently serving in the competitive service must also acknowledge that they will voluntarily leave the competitive service by accepting an offer of employment for a DCIPS position. This acknowledgement is necessary as movement between the excepted service and competitive service may be limited if the employee does not possess competitive status. Vacancy announcements for DCIPS positions should note that all new DCIPS employees are required to complete a two-year DCIPS trial period.

Although all DCIPS positions are in the excepted service, Defense Intelligence employees may compete for competitive service positions that are announced “all sources.” DCIPS employees with competitive status from previous employment may also apply for positions open to “status candidates” for which they are otherwise eligible.

Under the Department of Defense’s Priority Placement Program, unless their component is specifically excluded from participation, DCIPS employees may register, when appropriate situations warrant, for other excepted service positions no higher than their current permanent level (or grade). DCIPS employees who have competitive status from previous employment also have the option of registering for competitive service positions but may register no higher than the highest level (or grade) for which they are eligible for reinstatement in the competitive service.