

Pathways

Internship, Recent Graduates, Presidential Management Fellows

Frequently Asked Questions for Interns

If you do not see your question or answer here, please contact VA's Pathways Program Management Office at pathways@va.gov with the subject line "Question."

If I am hired for a summer internship, can it be extended as an ongoing internship over the school year?

Some internships have a specified end date indicated in the Job Opportunity Announcement (JOA). These are called Not to Exceed (NTE) positions and are often used to complete temporary projects or perform labor intensive tasks. These internships do not require that they be related to your area of study. However, if the JOA includes the potential for conversion and all other eligibility requirements for conversion have been met, then a conversion is possible. It is best to consult with your HR representative to be sure.

If you want to apply for a different internship in the same organization, a minimum public notification (internal to the agency – not on USAJOBS) must be provided to similarly situated Interns in the organization who may also be interested in the position. The application of standard selection procedures including the application of veteran's preference applies.

What if there is a full-time position in my organization that I want to apply for when I complete my internship?

You can be "non-competitively" converted to the position if you have completed all the requirements for conversion and the position is in the same job series as your current internship. You can also be non-competitively converted into a career ladder position if the JOA states this possibility. Please note that conversion is not automatic nor guaranteed.

What qualifies as a "certificate program" when determining eligibility?

The Pathways Programs regulation (see 5 CFR 362.103) defines certificate program as "post-secondary education, in a qualifying educational institution, equivalent to at least one academic year of full-time study that is part of an accredited college-level, technical, trade, vocational, or business school curriculum."



VA Pathways FAQs for Interns

Can the completion of certain coursework be required for an internship position?

Yes. Some internships may state that certain educational or “positive education” requirements be completed in order to be eligible for conversion to a fulltime position. For example, the JOA for an Engineering Internship may indicate that only students who have completed or are currently taking certain courses would be eligible for the Engineering Intern position.

What if I want or need to take a break from my schooling while in my internship?

You should check with your local VA office to determine if there is a procedure for accommodating a break in either the internship or schooling. Otherwise, students are required to continue to maintain eligibility requirements in order to remain in their internship.

When does the 120-day clock for non-competitive conversion to the competitive service begin? Does it start when I complete my academic requirements or upon graduation (i.e., when my academic institution confers the degree which could be several weeks or months later)?

The 120-day clock for non-competitive conversion starts when you complete your academic requirements (as determined by the educational institution). You should check with your educational institution to determine when degree requirements have been met.

While I am in my internship I plan on enrolling in another school after I graduate. Do I have to stop my internship and apply again?

Your organization can retain you as an Intern or Intern NTE following initial Pathways appointment if you have been accepted into another qualifying degree program upon completion of the initial degree or certificate program that qualified you for Pathways. It is not uncommon, for example, for students who finish a degree to immediately begin a master’s or professional degree program. In such situations, the acceptance into another qualifying educational program means the student maintains eligibility for employment as an Intern. Public notification and competition are not required for the participant to continue in the Internship Program.

