



PREMIER COLLEGE INTERN PROGRAM



PREMIER COLLEGE INTERN PROGRAM HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	2
Training & Development	4
Symposium	5
Compensation	6
Benefits & Entitlements	7
Feedback	8
AFCS App Information	9
Premier College Intern Career Plan	10
Returning PCIs	12
Frequently Asked Questions	13
Important Websites	17
Glossary	18
References	19
Air Force Base Locations	20

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 reference that should be used in conjunction with appropriate laws and regulations, i.e., Title 5 CFR, AFI 36-130, AFI 36-128, AFI 36-2670, and the Joint Travel Regulations, etc. Premier College Interns are referred to as PCIs.

PURPOSE

The Premier College Intern Program is designed to prepare program participants for future STEM, cyber, acquisition, and mission-critical specialty positions in the Air Force Civilian Service (AFCS).

This objective is accomplished by:

- Recruiting and selecting high-caliber candidates
- Strategically placing Premier College Interns (PCIs) with management committed to training and 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 12-week, paid internship will occur during the summer of their sophomore and/or junior year (before heading into their senior year) for undergraduate participants. Upon graduation and successful completion of program requirements, a Premier College Intern will be eligible for a full-time position into a formal training program, i.e., PALACE Acquire (PAQ) or COPPER Cap (COP) position.

To be eligible for conversion to a full-time position, a PCI must:

- 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 three (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 administrative, professional, and technical career fields.

Types of Appointments

Competitive Service

Term appointments to the competitive service are made utilizing the 1102 Direct Hire Authority (DHA). The PCI may noncompetitively transition within 120 days after all graduation requirements have been successfully completed and verified. All time served under term appointment counts toward the appointee's probationary period.

Excepted Service

PCI appointments under Title 5 CFR, Part 362, Subparts A & C, (Schedule D) count toward the appointee's trial period. PCIs may be noncompetitively converted into the competitive service without further competition.

Participant Agreement

This agreement requires the PCI to pursue and complete the basic training objectives and activities in the Training and Development Plan (TDP)/Individual Development Plan (IDP), maintain a minimum 2.95 GPA, and obtain and maintain a security clearance, as applicable.



Training and Development Plan (TDP) Objectives

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

TDPs must:

- Be meaningful.
- 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 using a supervisor checklist developed for the program. 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

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

PCI 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 any problems encountered with the TDP.

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

- Purpose of the program
- Understanding your TDP
- Opportunities offered after the PCIP
- Required training during the internship

Symposium Overview

Briefs/Training

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

Virtual Tours/Demonstrations

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

Networking

- Group Challenges/Projects
- Connect with PCIs from across the country
- Meet PALACE Acquire (PAQ)/COPPER Cap (COP) Interns
- Get to know your Career Field Team (CFT) Program Administrators

Virtual PCIP Symposium

Your Entrance on Duty (EOD) date or your first date of work will determine which virtual PCIP Symposium you will be scheduled to attend. You will attend a Symposium during either your first or second week of work, depending on when you in-process with the locally servicing Civilian Personnel Section (CPS).

Due to COVID-19 precautions, the PCIP Symposium will be held virtually. An invite with more information will be forwarded to you approximately a week before your first day of work.

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. A PCI's pay will be set in accordance with AFI 36-128, Pay Setting and Allowances, and any local applicable pay setting guidance.

LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP) DURING INTERN PERIOD

Leave without pay (LWOP) is an approved form of leave in a non-pay status; it still requires a request by the employee and approval by the supervisor. The PCI must notify their supervisor if they plan to request LWOP. The request should be submitted in writing and should include the reason for the LWOP and the dates. If the LWOP request is for more than 30 days, the supervisor will discuss the request and the impact the LWOP would have as it relates to the PCI's established TDP and completion of the internship with your Career Field Team.

PCIs requesting LWOP should contact their local Employee Management Relations (EMR) Specialist for questions on the impact LWOP has on their employment, e.g., probationary/trial periods, promotions, within-grade increases (if applicable), tenure, benefits, TSP. Your supervisor should provide you with a written response to your request for LWOP, approving or disapproving the request.

ABSENT-US (formerly LWOP-US)/LWOP to Perform Duty with the Uniformed Services

If the PCI is eligible and scheduled for military leave, the PCI must notify your CFT of the need for ABSENT-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 PCIs established TDP. As a result of activation to military service, an extension may be warranted to complete the requisite training.

PCIs going on LWOP-US should contact their servicing EMR Specialist at the locally servicing CPS office to discuss the impact of military duty as it relates to their employment as applicable, e.g., promotions, within-grade increases, 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. Employment and reemployment of members of uniformed service is codified in Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 43 and 5 CFR Part 353 Subparts A and B.

TELEWORK

IAW AFI 36-130, PCIs are *not* eligible to telework. However, due to COVID-19 precautions, an Exception to Policy (ETP) has been authorized allowing PCIs to perform situational telework in accordance with Restriction on Movement (ROM) policies in applicable areas.

BENEFITS & ENTITLEMENTS

As a Premier College Intern with the Air Force Civilian Service, you are eligible for the following benefits & entitlements:

- Four (4) hours of sick leave and four (4) hours of annual leave each pay period when working full-time or forty (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 coverage may be retained 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 (FEGLI)*- Automatically enrolled with life insurance coverage starting at \$32,000 while in a duty status.
- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) (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.



2018 Premier Interns at Symposium

For questions regarding enrolling in your benefits, visit myPers at <https://www.myPers.af.mil>, or contact the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team by calling the Total Force Service Center (TFSC) at 1-800-525-0102, select option (2) civilian, option (3) benefits and entitlements.

* Must be in pay status for coverage to be effective

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

FEEDBACK

Purpose

All PCIs are highly encouraged to complete and share their internship experience through feedback. The feedback you provide is highly valued and is used to shape the PCIP for the next year. We appreciate your time, perspective, and the comments you have to share.

Initial Feedback

Feedback is completed around the third (3rd) week of the program or near the beginning of the program (if completing less than 12 weeks). You will have an opportunity to provide feedback on your experience with on-boarding, in-processing, the PCIP Symposium (if applicable), any training completed to date, program satisfaction, mentorship sessions, and any additional comments you want to provide.

Final/After the Internship Feedback

Final feedback is completed around the 10th (tenth) week of the internship. This is your opportunity as a PCI to indicate your desire for full-time employment upon graduation and your intent to accept a PAQ/COP position if offered. You will have the opportunity to provide feedback on your training, mentoring sessions, program satisfaction, supervisor recommendation, and your desire on whether to continue employment with the Air Force Civilian Service.



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

- Janelle Miller -
Premier College Intern '18

AFCS has an application (App) available for download in Google Play and the App Store. The AFCS App is a great way to stay up-to-date with Air Force news, stay connected with other PCIs, and provides valuable information through content and videos available only on the AFCS app.

AFCS App Groups

Symposium

Key information provided in our Symposium Group will be featured during our Virtual Symposium. On Day One of each Symposium, we will announce the group code that will allow access to the Symposium Group. In this app group, we will post poll questions and encourage you to post pictures. AFCS, the CFTs, and the Force Renewal Management Team will use this forum to provide you with any updates or changes during this event.

Career Field Groups

Each CFT has a designated group in the app. Reach out to your CFT POC for the code to your designated group if it has not already been provided. Please use this forum to connect with other PCIs 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 in the app, please use the 'Contact' feature to initiate the request.

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, badges and 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 (TJO) and respond to the email message by the suspense date
- Interns complete and return the required documents by the suspense date
- Receive Firm Job Offer (FJO) with Entrance on Duty (EOD) date and respond to the email message by the suspense date

Spring of Junior Year

- Submit transcripts to FR Staffing POC
- Receive information on the PCIP Symposium

Summer of Junior Year

- In-process with Civilian Personnel
- Attend Symposium
- Complete initial feedback
- Complete 'final/after the internship' feedback
- Complete 'intent' form

Senior Year

- Go on Leave Without Pay
- Submit transcripts each semester to CFT POC
- Submit official transcripts with Degree Conferral date to CFT POC
- Receive Conversion to full-time, if eligible

After Graduation

- Return to duty
- Receive Promotion to GS-07 or higher depending on degree/experience, if eligible

RETURNING PCIS

This section only applies to PCIs that have already completed a summer Premier Internship and are returning for a second year in the Premier College Intern Program before converting to a PAQ/COP position.

Grades

Submit your transcript or grades to your CFT POC for each semester that you are away from work.

Returning to Duty

Coordinate with your supervisor no later than four (4) weeks prior to the end of your leave without pay on the date you will return to work.

Training and Development Plan

You will have a new Training and Development Plan (TDP) when you return next summer. Make sure you complete the plan by the end of the summer.

Symposium

Symposium participation is only required for your first summer internship. You will not be required to attend the Symposium again unless requested by the CFT.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Before the start of the internship

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

Yes! Please submit the required documents for signature to your supervisor and cc your CFT Program Administrator. If you do not receive a signature within five (5) business days, please follow up with your CFT Program Administrator.

2) Who should complete my documents for school credit?

Your supervisor should complete the documents.

3) 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.

4) 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 Force Renewal (FR) Specialist (DP2ZAA) 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.

5) 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 CFT Program Administrator for questions.

6) Do I have to submit official transcripts?

Yes. Please submit your official transcripts to your FR Staffing Specialists soon as possible. We cannot issue an official firm job offer (FJO) until it is received by our Human Resources Office.

7) 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.

8) 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 and transportation costs or room and board. You will receive a full salary as a Premier College Intern and will have to find your own accommodations. Our Force Renewal Management team will assist in sharing housing recommendations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

Please reach out to the Force Renewal Management team or log into the AFCS app to meet other interns.

10) Will transportation be provided to and from the base?

Some bases have a rideshare program. Please reach out to your CFT Program Administrator to determine what is available at your location.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

During the Internship

1) What is the Symposium?

The PCIP Symposium is a three (3) day event to welcome PCIs and serves as an introduction to the Air Force and the Air Force Civilian Service (AFCS). There are briefings from Senior Leaders, training sessions, networking opportunities, and breakout sessions with your CFT throughout the three days.

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

Yes! The PCIP Symposium will be your alternate work/duty location for the dates you are assigned to attend. You will receive your regular pay for each day at the Symposium.

3) What is my TDP?

The Training and Development Plan is a structured schedule for your internship that outlines what you are required to complete during your internship in order to meet the program requirements. During the first week of work, your CFT will review the TDP with you. It will tell you what projects, training, or job shadowing that is to occur during the 12 weeks.

4) What happens after the internship when I go back to school?

If you are in your second year and are graduating from college and you complete a successful internship, you may be offered a PALACE Acquire (PAQ)/COPPER Cap (COP) position. After the internship, you will complete a form with your intentions for moving forward. If you desire to continue your employment with AFCS and are offered a position, you will go on leave without pay (LWOP) after the internship while you finish college. After you graduate, you would return to work with us full-time.

5) How many hours do I have to work?

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

6) 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.

7) By when will I know if I will continue with the program?

You will know if you will be offered a conversion to PAQ/COP position by the 10th week of your 12-week internship.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

8) By when do I need to enroll in my benefits?

You will have 60 days from the day you start work to make an election(s) and enroll in benefits. More information on your options and limitations will be provided during the Virtual PCIP Symposium. A representative from the Benefits and Entitlements Service Team (BEST) will provide an informational session during the Symposium and will be available to answer any questions you may have.

9) 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 more information, details on costs, and how to make the payments.

10) Why is my access taking so long?

The Department of Defense has many security requirements, and getting access to the systems has its processes as a result. We understand the wait can be frustrating, and we have worked with our partners to help expedite your computer access.

11) Will I be rotating positions during the duration of my internship?

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

12) Can I roll over an old 401K plan into my TSP account?

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

13) 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.

14) When is my end date?

Your end date is based off your start date, usually being 12 weeks after you start your internship in the summer. Please reach out to your CFT Program Administrator for questions.

15) How can I find a mentor?

One of the premier aspects of this internship is having a mentor assigned to you for the duration of your internship.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

16) 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.

17) Can I refer someone for the internship?

Absolutely! Please refer all interested candidates to your CFT Program Administrator or our Force Renewal Management group box at AFPC.DP2Z.FRStratEngagement@us.af.mil.

18) I have not heard from my CFT Program Administrator/POC, or no one has returned my call or answered my email.

If you have tried to contact your CFT POC and have been unable to reach someone for assistance, please send a message to the Force Renewal Management group box at: AFPC.DP2Z.FRStratEngagement@us.af.mil.



"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 that 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 to me."

— Kyla Orinick
Premier College Intern 2018

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) - <https://opm.gov/>

Website for chief HR agency and personnel policy manager for federal government.

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

AF's official online source for personnel policies, day-to-day transactions, and empowering members to manage their careers.

Electronic Official Personnel Folder (eOPF) - <https://eopf.opm.gov/usaf/>

A secure portal to access the electronic version of your Official Personnel Folder, which contains your official records documenting your federal employment.

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

A secure portal for eligible participants to use to enroll in Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). It also manages the billing systems and customer service functions for premium collections and allotments.

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

An enterprise tool to support force development and mentoring opportunities.

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) - <https://www.tsp.gov/index.html>

A secure portal for eligible participants to learn about TSP indexes, manage their plan, and monitor fund performances.

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

DFAS' automated system to access your pay and tax statements.

Advanced Distance Learning Service (ADLS) - <https://fm.adls.af.mil/login.aspx>

AF's enterprise tool delivering online courses (most importantly your Cyber Awareness training required to get your CAC) and tracking learner progress.

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

CFT - Career Field Team

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

TDP - Training and Development Plan

TCA - Temporary Change of Assignment

TDY - Temporary Duty

U.S.C. - United States Code

WIGI - Within-grade Increase

REFERENCES

AFH 36-2643

AFI 36-130

AFI 36-128

AFI 36-2670

DODI1400.25V431_AFI36-1002

DODI1400.25V451_AFI 36-1004

DODI1400.25V550_AFI36-808

DODI1400.25V630_AFI36-815

DoDMAN5200.02-AFMAN16-405

Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations

Title 5, United States Code

Title 10, United States Code

PCIP Information

MyPers

[Air Force Mentoring Program](#)

[Civilian Career and Developmental Programs](#)

[Pay Setting and Allowances](#)

[Total Force Development](#)

[Performance Management and Appraisal Program](#)

[Administration](#)

[Civilian Recognition Program](#)

[Pay Administration](#)

[Leave](#)

[AF Personnel Security Program](#)

Administrative Personnel, current edition

Government Organization and Employees

Armed Forces, current edition

[FR PCIP milSuite Site](#)

[PCIP myPers Knowledge Article](#)

AIR FORCE BASE LOCATIONS*



Altus AFB – Oklahoma	JWAC Dahlgren — Virginia
Arnold AFB – Tennessee	Kirtland AFB – New Mexico
Barksdale AFB – Louisiana	Los Angeles AFB – California
Buckley AFB – Colorado	Luke AFB – Arizona
Cape Canaveral AFB – Florida	MacDill AFB – Florida
Dyess AFB – Texas	Malmstrom AFB – Montana
Edwards AFB – California	Minot AFB – North Dakota
Eglin AFB – Florida	Offutt AFB – Nebraska
Fort Meade AFB – Maryland	Pentagon/JBAB/AFDW/PK — Virginia
Grissom ARB – Indiana	Peterson AFB – Colorado
Hanscom AFB – Massachusetts	Robins AFB – Georgia
Hill AFB – Utah	Rome AFB – New York
Hurlburt Field AFB – Florida	Schriever AFB — Colorado
JB Andrews – Maryland	Scott AFB – Illinois
JB Langley-Eustis AFB – Virginia	Tinker AFB – Oklahoma
JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst – New Jersey	Travis AFB – California
JB Pearl Harbor-Hickam – Hawaii	Vandenberg AFB – California
JB San Antonio – Texas	Wright-Patterson AFB – Ohio

*Not all bases have locations for PCIs