



Defense Health Agency

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

NUMBER 1430.01

October 27, 2022

Director, J-1

SUBJECT: Competitive Programs

References: See Enclosure 1.

1. PURPOSE. This Defense Health Agency-Administrative Instruction (DHA-AI), based on the authority of References (a) and (b), and in accordance with the guidance of References (c) through (l), establishes the Defense Health Agency's (DHA) procedures for the Workforce Development Branch (WFD) program directives. The DHA Competitive Programs provides stipends for professional development opportunities that build competencies through focused academic study. The purpose of the DHA Competitive Programs is to continually enhance the culture of professional development and support the agency's overarching goal of fostering a learning organization.
2. APPLICABILITY. This DHA-AI applies to civilian employees permanently assigned to DHA HQ Directorates and the National Capitol Region (NCR) Market grades General Service-4 through 15 with a minimum of one year of Federal service.
3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION. It is DHA's instruction, pursuant to References (a) through (i), that:
 - a. All employee requests to attend external training courses under the Competitive Programs opportunities must be submitted in accordance with this DHA-AI.
 - b. All employees receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of the competitive selection process, and that selections are made without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or disabled condition and with proper regard for merit system principles.
 - c. Prepare high potential employees for increased responsibility and leadership.
 - d. Competitive Program requests must be reviewed and approved or disapproved through the following levels of authorization:

- (1) The employee's supervisor;
 - (2) The employee's Assistant Director (AD), Deputy Assistant Director (DAD), J-Director, Special Staff /equivalent or reviewing official and;
 - (3) DHA Labor Management and Employee Relations (LMER).
4. RESPONSIBILITIES. See Enclosure 2.
 5. PROCEDURES. See Enclosure 3.
 6. PROPONENT AND WAIVERS. The proponent of this publication is the Director, Administration and Management (J-1). When Activities are unable to comply with this publication the activity may request a waiver that must include a justification providing an analysis of the risk associated with not granting the waiver. The Activity director or senior leader will submit the waiver request through their supervisory chain to the Director, J-1 to determine if the waiver may be granted by the Director, DHA or their designee.
 7. RELEASABILITY. **Cleared for public release.** This DHA-AI is available on the Internet from the Health.mil site at: <https://health.mil/Reference-Center/Policies> and is also available to authorized users from the DHA SharePoint site at: <https://info.health.mil/cos/admin/pubs/SitePages/Home.aspx>.
 8. EFFECTIVE DATE. This DHA-AI:
 - a. Is effective upon signature.
 - b. Will expire 10 years from the date of signature if it has not been reissued or canceled before this date in accordance with Reference (c).

9. FORMS. The Standard Form (SF) 182, Authorization, Agreement, and Certification of Training is available at: <https://www.gsa.gov/forms-library/authorization-agreement-and-certification-training>.

/s/
RONALD J. PLACE
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Director

Enclosures

1. References
2. Responsibilities
3. Procedures
4. Competitive Programs Descriptions
5. Senior Champions Board

Glossary

ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Directive 5136.01, "Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD(HA))," September 30, 2013, as amended
- (b) DoD Directive 5136.13, "Defense Health Agency (DHA)," September 30, 2013, as amended
- (c) DHA-Procedural Instruction 5025.01, "Publication System," April 1, 2022
- (d) United States Code, Title 31, Section 1535
- (e) United States Code, Title 5, Section 4108
- (f) DHA-Administrative Instruction 043, "Continued Service Agreement (CSA)," June 19, 2018
- (g) Public Law 91-219, "Veterans Education and Training Act," March 26, 1970
- (h) DoD Directive 1322.06, "Fellowships, Scholarships, Training with Industry (TWI), and Grants for DoD Personnel," October 12, 2016
- (i) DoD Instruction 1400.25, Volume 410 and Volume 1703, "DoD Civilian Personnel Management (CPM): Training, Education, and Professional Development," September 25, 2013
- (j) DHA-Administrative Instruction 5015.01 "Records Management Program" February 6, 2020
- (k) DoD Manual 5400.07, "DoD Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Program," January 25, 2017
- (l) DoD Directive 5400.07, "DoD Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Program," April 5, 2019

ENCLOSURE 2
RESPONSIBILITIES

1. DIRECTOR, DHA. The Director, DHA will review and approve the Senior Champions Board's (SCB) recommended selection of candidates for the annual DHA Competitive Programs.

2. SCB, DHA. The SCB will:
 - a. Ensure that DHA Competitive Programs both align and contribute to the organization's mission and priorities.

 - b. Rate and rank program candidate application packages, and provide recommendations for selection.

 - c. Encourage DHA employees to participate in DHA Competitive Programs.

 - d. Resolve issues internally with the guidance of an appointed chairperson.

 - e. Ensure that all program candidates receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of the competitive selection process.

3. ADs, DADs, J-DIRECTORS, AND SPECIAL STAFF, DHA. The ADs, DADs, J-Directors, and Special Staff DHA, will:
 - a. Serve as Program Champions to market the program among internal staff.

 - b. Provide justification statements required for candidate application packages, which will outline the return on investment that the agency will see as a result of employee participation in the program.

 - c. Support employee Individual Development Plan (IDP) development for career planning and advancement.

4. CHIEF, HUMAN CAPITAL DIVISION. The Chief, Human Capital Division, will serve as a Program Champion to support the planning and implementation of DHA Competitive Programs.

5. LMER, DHA. LMER will:
 - a. Review candidate application packages that are submitted via the DHA Competitive Programs Portal against human resources personnel files in order to confirm eligibility.

b. Confirm candidate approval or disapprovals for participation in the program with WFD, as applicable.

c. Provide disapproved candidates with information regarding the reason(s) for their disapproval, as appropriate. *Note: WFD will have no access to the details of any reasons for a candidate being disapproved by LMER.*

6. CHIEF, WFD. The Chief, WFD, will:

a. Formulate the overall DHA Competitive Programs.

b. Budget for and manage financial resources to support centralized training.

c. Coordinate with the SCB to resolve issues of mutual concern.

d. Ensure the availability of staff and financial resources to implement effective professional development programs.

e. Develop and implement activity-wide professional development programs, standards, procedures, guidelines, information systems, and records.

f. Provide guidance, information, publicity, and staff assistance regarding professional development to DHA leadership, supervisors, and employees.

g. Interpret and apply guidelines from higher authorities in professional development matters not specifically covered by this DHA-AI.

7. PROGRAM MANAGER, WFD. The Program Manager, WFD will:

a. Ensure that program content and offerings are current and relevant to the DHA's mission and goals.

b. Provide both open and ad hoc on-request briefings for the program.

c. Manage the program budget.

d. Audit the financial records for the program.

e. Coordinate and facilitate the SCB meeting to rate and rank all candidate applications for the program.

f. Identify all requirements for the automated DHA Competitive Programs Portal that supports the program application process.

g. Complete a program assessment, including surveying participants (both employees and supervisors).

h. Coordinate and facilitate a mandatory program orientation in collaboration with WFD support staff.

i. Inform candidates of selection or non-selection within 14 business days after the DHA Director's approval of the SCB's recommendations.

j. Ensure that training and career development opportunities are made without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, or mental or physical condition, and with proper regard for their privacy and rights as provided by the merit system principles.

k. Provide administrative support for SCB meetings.

l. Support the adjudication and disposition of Continued Service Agreements (CSA) for cases involving unusual circumstances in coordination with agency leadership, as appropriate.

8. DIRECTORS, DIRECT REPORTING ORGANIZATIONS (DRO). It is intended that the DRO Directors will establish their own Competitive Program utilizing the policy and guidance set forth in this DHA-AI. The DRO Directors will:

a. Each market will work with the WFD Program Manager to establish their own Competitive Programs comparable to the flagship program run at the DHA HQ level.

b. Budget for and manage financial resources to support their own Competitive Programs.

c. Establish a SCB that will serve as rating and ranking officials for their program. (See paragraph 2, above.)

d. Establish the corresponding roles (see roles in paragraphs 2, 3, 5, and 7 through 10 of this enclosure) within their specific DRO that will support their own Competitive Programs.

9. DIRECTORS, MILITARY MEDICAL TREATMENT FACILITIES, DENTAL TREATMENT FACILITIES, AND VETERINARY TREATMENT FACILITY. Military Medical Treatment Facilities, Dental Treatment Facilities, and Veterinary Treatment Facility Directors will endorse, promote, and adhere to the guidance within this DHA-AI in coordination with their respective Market.

10. SUPERVISORS. Supervisors will:

- a. Serve as Program Champions for the program.
- b. Provide justification statements required for candidate applications, which outline the return on investment that the agency will see as a result of an employee participation in the program.
- c. Ensure employees update their IDP to include the specific program that they are applying for within the DHA Competitive Programs.
- d. Certify that each requested professional development opportunity will satisfy an identified need, is mission-related, and that the employee meets all eligibility requirements.
- e. Provide concurrence or approval on an employee's requested development program in advance of the program dates. Ensure employees who attend career and professional development opportunities comply with process guidelines and requirements outlined within this DHA-AI.
- f. Determine reasons for unsatisfactory completion of a Competitive Program opportunity by an employee, notify the DHA Competitive Programs Manager, and take appropriate action.

11. SF-182/CSA COORDINATOR OR TRAINING LIAISON. The SF-182, Authorization, Agreement, and Certification of Training or CSA Coordinator or Training Liaison will:

- a. Serve as Program Champions for the program.
- b. Support program socialization in collaboration with WFD.
- c. Review all training requests originating in their organization and verify the inclusion of all required information within the SF-182 request packages.
- d. Attend and participate in WFD-sponsored conferences and workshops.

12. EMPLOYEES. Employees will:

- a. Develop, prepare, and sign their IDP, ensuring to update it on an annual basis in conjunction with the annual Performance Appraisal Plan and also participate fully in career and professional development opportunities outlined within the IDP.
- b. Seek information from their supervisor and/or designated SF-182/CSA Coordinator concerning opportunities for professional development.

- c. Adhere to the provisions of this DHA-AI when requesting and participating in professional development activities.
- d. Attend and participate fully in all approved professional development activities.
- e. Submit a course completion certificate and/or complete an online end-of-course evaluation within five business days of completing a professional development event.
- f. Provide any requested documentation for auditing purposes in a timely manner.
- g. Include all required documentation when submitting an SF-182 request package for training.

ENCLOSURE 3

PROCEDURES

1. OVERVIEW. WFD will manage the DHA Competitive Programs and announce these opportunities to the workforce. Training program descriptions and requirements will be distributed through various communication channels and briefings.

a. Candidates must submit applications and any supporting documents, adhering to established dates, through their supervisors and ADs, DADs, J-Directors and Special Staff via the automated WFD Competitive Programs Portal.

b. To be considered by the SCB, candidates must be recommended by their supervisors and ADs, DADs, J-Directors or Special Staff (or delegate) for selection.

c. ADs, DADs, J-Directors and Special Staff are asked to encourage their eligible candidates to compete when programs are announced DHA-wide.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS. The DHA Competitive Programs application process includes the following steps:

a. Step 1: Request to Create a Profile. The Candidate will submit a request to create profile via the DHA Competitive Programs portal for supervisory approval. The request to create a profile can be found on the Competitive Programs SharePoint site:
<https://info.health.mil/cos/admin/ld/ProgramsandEvents/cp/Pages/CompetitivePrograms.aspx>

b. Step 2: Supervisor Review. The Candidate's immediate Supervisor will review the request to create a profile and either approve or disapprove the employee's participation.

c. Step 3: LMER Review. Upon receipt of the Candidate's approval from their immediate Supervisor, LMER will review the Candidate's request to create a profile to confirm eligibility. Depending upon the status of the Candidate's personnel status, LMER will either approve or disapprove their participation.

d. Step 4: Applicant Builds Application Package. Once approved by both the Immediate Supervisor and LMER, the applicant will complete all Competitive Programs application requirements, which includes the following:

(1) A completed application (including both Supervisory and ADs, DADs, J-Directors approval(s));

(2) An updated resume;

(3) An approved IDP;

(4) A completed CSA, as applicable (See Reference (f)); and

(5) A completed and fully executed performance appraisal.

e. Step 5: WFD Staff Reviews for Completeness. Once submitted by the applicant, DHA WFD will conduct a quality check on the application package to ensure that it meets all requirements.

f. Step 6: SCB Review. The SCB will review and rate each application package, including all supporting documentation and, once completed, there will be a final ranking list created. The Competitive Programs Manager will conduct a meeting with the SCB to review the final ratings and rankings in order to determine which candidates are approved and denied for participation in the program. SCB recommendations will be submitted to the DHA Front Office for final approval.

g. Step 7: Applicant Selection. Applicant selection will be based on the quality and merit of the individual's application package, the number of seats, and funding available for a given program year. Specific merit criteria includes:

(1) Career history (e.g., resume, performance appraisals);

(2) Recommendations by authority (e.g., recommendation letters, letters of recognition, endorsements, narrative justification);

(3) Honorary awards and professional training/education (e.g., certificates, achievements/ accomplishments);

(4) Civic/community recognition (e.g., certificates, letter(s) of recognition)

(5) Former educational performance, if applicable, including official transcripts, honor societies, Dean's List, etc.

h. Step 8: Program Participation and Completion. WFD will send formal selection and non-selection letters to candidates within 14 business days of the Director, DHA approval of SCB recommendations. Selected applicants will be required to attend a mandatory Competitive Programs orientation and ensure that all requirements specific to their program or training are satisfied.

ENCLOSURE 4

COMPETITIVE PROGRAMS DESCRIPTIONS

1. OVERVIEW. DHA Competitive Programs consist of three key components, including the Competitive Education Program (CEP)/CEP-Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), the Competitive Development Program (CDP), and Office of Secretary of the Defense (OSD) Programs, which offer training opportunities of varying duration.

a. Participants will be required to have a completed and approved Standard Form (SF)-182 form, and must receive a Training Authorization Letter prior to the start of any requested, external training.

b. A CSA will be required for all training programs that cost \$1,500 or more and/or lasting more than 39 hours. *Note, employees who are unable to meet their continued service obligations must follow established CSA recoupment protocols.*

c. Special assignments and other professional development opportunities may be proposed for extended study, research, or development.

d. The proposed study or research program must have a direct relationship to the employee's position, role, or assignment, and provide the DHA significant return on investment. To access the DHA Competitive Programs application and frequently asked questions, visit the DHA Competitive Programs SharePoint Site:

<https://info.health.mil/cos/admin/ld/ProgramsandEvents/cp/Pages/CompetitivePrograms.aspx>

2. DHA CEP AND CEP-TAP. The DHA CEP and CEP-TAP provide DHA employees with an opportunity to pursue focused academic study to improve technical and business knowledge in a competitive work environment and to foster professionalism.

a. The DHA CEP consists of two opportunities:

(1) A \$20,000 stipend towards a graduate degree, including a Master's or PhD, or undergraduate course of study to be used within a three or four year period. The DHA Competitive Programs does not fund medical or law degrees.

(2) A \$3,000 stipend towards one or two classes to be used during the fiscal year (FY) of the approval.

b. The selection in the DHA CEP is contingent on acceptance by the academic institution. The candidates must provide a copy of their acceptance letter in their application package or, if not available at the time of application, to the WFD with their updated SF-182 prior to the start of class.

c. DHA Competitive Programs stipends will cover the costs for tuition, textbooks, research, and thesis/dissertation credits associated with the respective course of study. The course of study must be in support of the candidate's directorate's mission and goals and/or the DHA's mission.

d. DHA Competitive Programs stipends does not cover certain fees, including:

(1) Degree-related fees (e.g., typing or reproducing a thesis, transcript fees, technical lab fees).

(2) Placement tests (unless required for an agency-funded course).

(3) Tests to obtain academic credit in lieu of a course.

(4) Courses required for a degree but are not related to the employee's job or the agency's mission (e.g., art, music, physical education).

(5) Registration for thesis or research projects that do not directly benefit the agency.

(6) Tuition for degree programs associated with non-credit programs.

(7) Seminars required for off-campus degree programs that are not job related.

(8) Degree training from colleges or universities that are not accredited.

(9) Graduation fees.

e. Temporary Duty expenses are not expected to be incurred with CEP; however, if travel expenses are incurred, then the employee's office will be responsible for that funding.

f. Candidates are highly encouraged to apply to local or state universities to maximize tuition discount benefits. The candidates should make every effort to select a study program that can be attended during non-duty hours (e.g., evening classes or distance learning). The study programs that are most likely to be considered by the board for selection are those regarded as being in support of the directorate or agency mission. The most beneficial study programs are in the realm of Health Administration, Health Services, Information Technology, Acquisition Management, Business Administration, Program Management, and Human Resources Management.

g. Initial acceptance into a specific FY Competitive Programs cohort does not imply automatic acceptance into future-year Competitive Programs cohorts.

h. Participants can only have one active stipend within a given FY and can only participate in one program or course of study per FY.

3. DHA CDP. The DHA CDP is a cadre of nationally prominent developmental programs. DHA offers the CDP programs competitively to high performing civilian employees. These

programs broaden and enhance leadership skills through advanced academic courses, focused training, and challenging developmental assignments. These programs may include the following components:

- a. Intensive off-site training and development.
- b. Component/career specific development programs.
- c. Mentorship opportunities.
- d. Minimum employee eligibility requirements for candidates of DHA Competitive Programs training:

(1) Must demonstrate acceptable or exceptional duty performance, intellectual maturity, and leadership abilities.

(2) Must be a permanent employee with a minimum of one year of Federal service at the time of application.

e. An employee who normally works 40 hours per week and who is assigned for full-time study is considered to be on training duty for 40 hours each week during the academic study period, including any academic recess periods, providing the student devotes these recesses to study and research in support of the full-time study program. Employees selected for these programs will be regarded as on training duty until the classes and/or tests end, except that additional time will be allowed for authorized travel when required. If an employee takes time off from schoolwork, or is absent because of sickness, the employee must report this time off to his/her directorate as leave. Employees enrolled in a CDP educational program are advised to limit annual leave to periods of academic recess to the fullest extent possible.

4. OSD PROGRAMS. OSD Programs are those offered by external DoD agencies, including the Washington Headquarters Service and Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service that allow the DHA to nominate eligible employees as candidates for participation.

a. These programs require a secondary board review, and attendance is contingent upon the individual being approved by the sponsoring institution. Selected candidates may be asked at a later date to provide additional information and documentation according to the requirements of the specific program.

b. These programs are not managed or funded through the DHA Competitive Programs, but are vetted through the SCB to identify which candidates will be selected as the DHA nominees.

ENCLOSURE 5

SENIOR CHAMPIONS BOARD

1. OVERVIEW. The DHA SCB was established under the TRICARE Management Activity, as a formal committee to nominate and select employees for DHA Competitive Programs under the oversight of the DHA Director. WFD will announce DHA Competitive Programs opportunities to include accredited institution courses and degree programs. These opportunities will be shared with the organization as a whole. Employees may self-elect with their supervisor's approval or be nominated by their supervisors. The SCB will rate and rank candidates and selections determined based on funding available, seat quotas, and final ranking among the pool of candidates.

2. SCOPE OF ACTIVITY. The SCB provides their recommended candidates to the Director, DHA on the basis of promoting professional development of the DHA workforce and to demonstrate active involvement in promoting career-training opportunities. As part of the selection process:

a. Board members will consider each candidate's resume, professional background, academic discipline and, if applicable, grade point average.

b. Board members will evaluate work experience, accomplishments, adaptability, character, leadership ability, potential for future growth, and any recommendations included in the candidate's request.

c. Board members will use a criteria-ranking sheet for all nominees, following written instructions and guidance as set out in this DHA-AI and any updates to responsibilities.

d. Required documentation may vary according to the program being offered (e.g., justifications, transcripts, performance appraisals, original documents, and/or number of copies may be requested). The minimum required documents for each candidate application package includes a completed application specific to the program, updated IDP, signed CSA (if applicable), current resume, and the most recent and completely executed performance appraisal. The information may not be modified, withdrawn, or supplemented after confirmed receipt of the application package, unless otherwise warranted by the DHA Director.

e. To ensure fairness in the selection process, no single factor leads to an individual's selection or non-selection. Each candidate will be awarded points for each criterion within the ranking factors and tallied for an overall calculation.

3. MEMBERSHIP. The WFD Branch will solicit through nomination for new SCB members. The Program Manager will provide the SCB Chairperson with a qualified list of candidates for his/her selection. The SCB consists of DHA Senior Executives, Flag-level Officers, or Senior-

level Managers. The Senior Executive Service or Flag-level Officers will have the authority to appoint alternates to serve in instances whereas board members are absent or not available.

4. CRITERIA FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS. The SCB Chairperson has the authority to approve new SCB members. The SCB will evaluate proposed new members against the following criteria:

- a. Proven leadership ability.
- b. Previous experience serving on committees or boards (either internal to DHA or external).
- c. Diversity, including but not limited to gender, ethnicity, race, age, disabilities, and geography.
- d. Current or prior executive, officer, director, or chief level experience.

5. MEETINGS. There could be two to three SCB meetings per year requiring board member attendance in person or through video tele-conference. The meetings may include special board meetings, individual board member briefings, and selection panel board meetings, which are typically held after the application window closes. The board will convene to consider all candidates on the nomination list, rank each, and discuss major discrepancies (e.g., scores, eligibility, differences in range or points). The meetings will be coordinated and scheduled by WFD. All materials, instructions, applications, and agenda items will be gathered for the board at the time of meeting by WFD. WFD will serve as advisors to the SCB.

GLOSSARY

PART I. ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AD	Assistant Director
CDP	Competitive Development Program
CEP	Competitive Education Program
CSA	Continued Service Agreement
DAD	Deputy Assistant Director
DHA	Defense Health Agency
DHA-AI	Defense Health Agency-Administrative Instruction
DRO	Direct Reporting Organizations
FY	Fiscal Year
IDP	Individual Development Plan
LMER	Labor Management and Employee Relations
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
SCB	Senior Champions Board
SF	Standard Form
TAP	Tuition Assistance Program
WFD	Workforce Development Branch