

SMART

SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS
& RESEARCH FOR
TRANSFORMATION

PART OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE
EDUCATION PROGRAM

SMART Scholarship

Science, Mathematics & Research for Transformation



SMART SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

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1. APPLICABILITY

The Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship-for-Service Program is established pursuant to 10 USC §2192a, as amended, and is funded through the National Defense Education Program (NDEP). SMART is a scholarship-for-service program that provides academic funding in exchange for completing a period of full-time employment with the Department of Defense (DoD). The SMART Service Agreement (SSA) is a written agreement between the SSPP and the DoD. The SSPP agrees to comply with all program policies and procedures, including the handbook. In return the DoD funds the SSPOP academic pursuit and provides full-time employment upon SSPP graduation. This handbook applies to all SSPPs regardless of cohort year. This handbook includes information applicable to all SSPPs, as well as information applicable to specific types of SSPPs. If a policy or procedure does not specify that it is specific to a particular type of participant, it applies to all SSPPs.

This handbook is a transitional document. This handbook will be updated to reflect current policies and procedures. SSPPs will be informed of any changes or updates.

2. SMART SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM CONTACTS

2.1. SMART Program Sponsor

Within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (ASD(R&E)) is responsible for program policy and oversight.

2.2. Sponsoring Services

A sponsoring service is a DoD Component that participates in the SSP. There are four sponsoring service designations in the SSP: Army, Naval, Air Force, and other DoD Agencies.

2.3. Sponsoring Facilities

The sponsoring facility (SF) is the particular laboratory or agency within the DoD Component that participates in the SSP. The SF is the location at which a SSPP completes internships and the service commitment.

2.4. Service Liaisons

Currently, each DoD Component has a designated service liaison (SL) within the SSP. The SL is the main point of contact (POC) between the SSP, sponsoring service, and SFs. The SSPP provides SSPPs with their SL's name and contact information.

2.5. Cohort Administrators

Currently, each DoD Component has a designated cohort administrator (CA) within the SSP. CAs are the first point of contact for SSPPs. The SSP provides SSPPs their CA's name and contact information.

2.6. Recruitment and Retention Participants

A SSPP is an individual who received and accepted a SMART award. An individual remains a participant throughout all three SSP phases.

A recruitment participant is a participant who is not employed in a permanent civilian position by the SF at the time of award. Participants who are employed by the SF in temporary or internship positions at the time of award are recruitment participants.

A retention participant is a participant who is employed in a permanent civilian position by the SF at the time of award.

2.7. SMART Program Contacts

- a. The SMART website. For program related documents and information visit the SMART Awardee website. The SMART website is located at <http://smart.asee.org/award>.
- b. American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE). For all questions email: smartparticipant@asee.org, phone: 202-331-3544, fax: 202-265-8504.

3. PROGRAM AWARD CYCLE

Month	Action
August	The application period opens in August.
December	The application period closes in December.
Winter	After the application period closes, applications are verified, sent to panel review, and ranked. The top designated percentage of ranked applications are sent to SFs for review. SFs review applications and interview applicants.
Spring	SFs submit selection list. Award offers are sent out. Depending on the number of declinations, a second round of awards may be issued.
Summer	SSPP web-based orientation, Recruitment Site Visit, and on-boarding call.
August	The SMART award year begins 1 August.

4. PROGRAM PHASES

SSPPs complete the following four program phases during their lifecycle with the SSP:

Phase 0: Award. Phase 0, begins at the time a SSPP accepts a SMART award by signing the SSA and ends 31 July of the award year. Phase 0 SSPPs do not receive award funding nor does any time spent attending a site visit, completing orientation, or completing an onboarding session count towards completion of the service commitment. Prior to funding an award, phase 0 SSPPs must comply with acceptance deadlines, complete orientation, and provide all funding prerequisite documentation.

Phase 1: Degree Pursuit. Phase 1 begins 1 August of the award year and ends upon verified completion of all phase 1 requirements. During phase 1, SSPPs complete requirements to obtain the funded degree and any required internships. As SSPPs near completion of phase 1, they work with the SF, CA, and SL to prepare for the start of the service commitment.

Phase 2: Service Commitment. Phase 2 begins the service commitment as defined by the work start date. The work start date is defined as the first day of full-time employment with the SF after verified degree completion. Once phase 1 is verified completed, the SSP provides written confirmation of official entry into phase 2, including service commitment start and end dates. During phase 2, SSPPs complete the service commitment by working full-time for their SF.

Phase 3: Post-Service Commitment. Phase 3 is a 10 year post-service commitment monitoring period that begins upon completion of the service commitment. During phase 3, the SSP tracks SSPP employment status for 10 years to obtain information on SSPP retention rates within the DoD.

5. GENERAL PROGRAM PROCEDURES

5.1. Compliance Requirement

SSPPs comply with all SSP policies and procedures, including the requirements set forth in this Handbook. Compliance with all SSP policies and procedures, as agreed to in the SSA, is required for continued participation and funding under the SSP.

5.2. Completion of Degree in Compliance with SSA

SSPPs complete the degree funded by SMART as set forth in the SSA. SSPPs complete all degree requirements during phase 1, including thesis/dissertation writing, edits, defense, etc. In certain unusual circumstances, a SSPP may request an amendment to the SSA. Requests to amend the SSA can be made by submitting the Service Agreement Amendment Request (SAAR) and appropriate supporting documents. If the request is approved, the SSA will be amended. If the request is denied and the SSPP fails to complete the degree in compliance with the SSA, the SSPP may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the program depending on the nature of the default.

5.3. Code of Conduct

SMART is committed to the professional development of SSPPs, securing the program's reputation of excellence, and safeguarding the public's investment in the program.

- a. Academic excellence. SSPPs strive to meet SMART academic requirements, attend all classes/laboratories, are respectful to instructors, and complete coursework to the best of their ability.
- b. Professionalism. SSPPs are courteous, honest, and responsible in their communications and interactions. SSPPs are timely in attendance and completion of duties. SSPPs strive to achieve a level of excellence that exceeds minimum requirements.
- c. Leadership. SSPPs take the initiative to advance their knowledge and share their experience with others.
- d. Integrity. SSPPs adhere to the highest ethical standards and comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.
- e. Public service. SSPPs are mindful of the public investment made in their SMART awards and act in a manner that is worthy of that investment. SSPPs are dedicated to and uphold the principles and national interests of the United States.

5.4. Current Contact Information

SSPPs maintain current contact information with the SSP at all times, including accurate email address(es), mailing address, telephone, and residency status (the residency status claimed by the SSPP for tax purposes). SSPPs contact the SSP immediately with changes or updates to their contact and/or residency information. The SSPP information on file will be verified annually via the Participant Information Verification Sheet.

5.5. Communication

The primary method of communication with SSPPs is through email. SSPPs check their email regularly and designate SMART-related emails as non-SPAM material or regularly check SPAM email folders.

5.6. SMART Website

SSPPs comply with updated SSP policies and procedures posted on the SMART website, <http://smart.asee.org/>. Updated information regarding program policies, deadlines, and other program events are located on the SMART website. The website also contains SSPP submittal documents.

5.7. SF Sponsorship

SSPPs maintain sponsorship of the facility approved by the SSA. Continued sponsorship of the approved SF is a requirement to maintain participation in and funding under the SSP. Any SSPP communications or actions with the assigned SF that result in loss of sponsorship from the assigned SF (at the sole discretion of the SF) may result in SSPP dismissal from the program. Only the SSP may reassign a SSPP to a new SF. It is extremely unusual for the SSP to assign a SSPP to a facility other than the original SF for completion of the service commitment. In the rare case that a change of SF is considered, it is done on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the SSP. If the SSP determines that the match between the SF and SSPP is not viable, the SSP will work with the SL and SF and attempt to find alternative placement for the SSPP.

5.8. Outside Funding

During phase 1, SSPPs may accept funding from sources outside of SMART, including private scholarships, fellowships, grants, and private or federal student loans. SSPPs may not accept funding from federal scholarships, fellowships, grants (including the Federal Pell Grant) or other federal funding sources other than SMART with the exception of salary supplements provided by SFs and Veteran's Affairs programs (ex: Montgomery GI Bill, Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program).

There is no monetary limit on the amount of outside funding a SSPP may accept. Acceptance of outside funding may in no way impact SSA obligations. Receipt of outside funding does not reduce or eliminate the service commitment.

5.9. Outside Employment

During phase 1, recruitment SSPPs may accept employment outside of SMART that does not exceed 16 hours per week.

SMART does not require retention SSPPs to continue working for the SF during phase 1. There is no set limit on the number of hours a retention SSPP can work for the SF during phase 1. However, retention SSPPs are expected to work less than full-time prior to completion of all degree requirements, including thesis or dissertation writing. Funding provided by the SSP is to be used for academic pursuit pertaining to the SSA, not to fund SF project work.

SSPP employment hours may be further restricted if the work negatively impacts SSA fulfillment. There is no monetary limit on the amount of wages a SSPP may earn. Outside employment may in no way impact SSPP obligations under the SSA.

5.10. Pursuit of Degrees Outside the SSP

SSPPs may not simultaneously pursue another degree while in phase 1. The SSP only supports the degree as funded by the SSA. Pursuit of a double major must not cause a delay in degree completion of the SMART funded degree.

5.11. Follow-on Funding

SMART scholarships are awarded for one degree program at a time. Should the SSPP desire to seek an additional degree award, the SSPP would apply for the follow-on funding as a new award, with no guarantee of award. Follow-on awards are separate from the initial award. The 5 year funding cap is calculated separately for each award.

5.12. Leave of Absence

SSPPs continuously participate in the program at all times. During phase 1, SSPPs continually pursue the funded degree on a full-time basis. If a SSPP is unable to participate in the SSP for more than 4 consecutive weeks, the SSPP must either take a leave of absence or withdraw from the program. SSPPs may request a leave of absence in the following circumstances:

- a. The SSPP or an immediate family member, as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, has a medical condition requiring the SSPP to take a leave of absence;
- b. The SSPP may request a leave of absence in other emergency situations;
- c. The SSPP is activated for military service.

Approval from the SSP is required prior to the leave of absence to take effect.

Additionally, the SSP may direct a SSPP to take a leave of absence in the following circumstances:

- a. The SSPP fails to obtain the SMART funded degree on time and in accordance with the SSA;
- b. The SSPP fails to obtain the SMART funded degree within the SSP 5 year funding cap.

All SSP funding is suspended during a leave of absence. A leave of absence is not to exceed two years. Justification will be required for all leave of absence requests. During a leave of absence, SSPPs continue to comply with reporting requirements, as applicable. SSPPs on a leave of absence are also required to check-in with their SF and provide a report to the SSP every three months detailing progress and possible obstacles.

5.13. Withdrawal from the SSP

SSPPs notify the SSP if they wish to withdraw from the program. A SSPP may withdraw from the SSP by submitting the SAAR for a withdrawal. If a SSPP withdraws from the program after 1 August of the first award year, the SSPP will be subject to debt repayment procedures.

5.14. Non-Compliance and SSA Amendments

If a SSPP is found non-compliant, the SSP will provide the SSPP with a non-compliance notice or a dismissal notice, depending on the nature of the default. A non-compliance notice specifies the SSPP is in an auditable status of non-compliance, and provides next steps. If the SSPP does not return to

compliance, or is beyond the ability to return to compliance, the SSP may provide the SSPP with a dismissal notice. See Appendix A for Non-Compliance Matrix.

In certain circumstances, a SSPP may request an amendment to the SSA. If the request is approved, the SSA will be amended. If the request is denied and the SSPP fails to complete the degree in compliance with the SSA, the SSPP may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the program depending on the nature of the default.

5.15. Dismissal from the SSP

A SSPP may be dismissed from the SSP for failure to comply with any program policy or procedure. A dismissal notice will be provided to the SSPP specifying the date of and reason for the dismissal. All SSP funding will cease immediately upon the date of dismissal. A SSPP dismissed from the program may be required to repay the entire award amount.

5.16. Debt Repayment

If a SSPP, whether employed by the DoD or not, is dismissed from the program for failure to comply with any SSP policy or procedure, or withdraws from the SSP prior to completing the service commitment, the SSPP may be subject to debt repayment procedures. A SSPP subject to debt repayment procedures may be required to promptly refund all amounts expended under the SSPP's SMART award, including all stipend, tuition, approved related educational expenses, travel expenses, health insurance funds, miscellaneous supplies allowance, and all other funds expended by the Federal Government under the SSPP's award, plus interest on that amount from the date of the award. The obligation to make a refund and to reimburse the United States is for all purposes a debt owed to the United States. A discharge in bankruptcy that is entered less than 5 years after termination of a SSA, does not discharge the person signing such agreement from a debt arising under such agreement. The repayment of any refund shall be accomplished in accordance with the procedures established pursuant to the provisions of Volume 5, Chapter 28 of DoD 7000.14-R, "Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation (FMR)," November 2012, applicable policies and procedures established by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), and any additional applicable debt repayment policies and procedures.

5.17. Patents

During the course of studies, research, and/or other phase 1 activities, the SSPP may make discoveries, creations, inventions, or intellectual property which may be eligible for protection by patent or other means. SSPPs are required to notify their SF of the conception of discoveries, inventions, or creations which may be patentable. The SSP will not make a claim on a SSPP patent. However, depending on the situation, the SF and/or academic institution may have a claim on the patent. Pursuit of a patent may not cause a delay in degree completion or conferral, or necessitate any other amendment to the SSA.

6. PRE-AWARD PROCEDURES

6.1. SF Assignment

SSPPs are notified of the identity and location of their assigned SF at the time of award. During the award process, SFs recommend individuals for SMART awards with the expectation that the awardee will join the facility's workforce after completion of phase 1.

Prior to accepting a SMART scholarship, awardees are responsible for investigating the SF, its activities, additional service obligation requirements, and SF location to ensure that the facility and local area are an appropriate fit.

All SSPPs complete the service commitment with the SF approved by the SSP. Multi-year SSPPs complete internships with the SF approved by the SSP.

6.2. Geographic Mobility

SSPPs must be geographically mobile and relocate to the SF for completion of the service commitment and internship periods, if required. Under rare circumstances, SSPPs must be willing to relocate to and complete the internship periods and the service commitment with a new SF located anywhere within the United States if re-assigned by the SSP.

6.3. Degree Funding

SSPPs enrolled in a single degree program receive SMART funding for that degree only. SSPPs funded for a dual degree may receive funding throughout the completion of both degrees, not to exceed a total of 5 years. SSPPs may request funding for subsequent degrees by reapplying to SMART for a separate award in accordance with the SSP follow-on funding policy. Follow-on funding is not guaranteed.

6.4. Award Length

SMART scholarships are awarded for a specific time based on the anticipated degree completion and conferral dates on the SSA. SMART scholarships range from a minimum of 1 year to a total of 5 years per award, depending on degree requirements.

6.5. Award Deferral

Commencement of a SMART award generally may not be deferred. SSPPs begin or resume academic work in the term immediately following 1 August of the award year.

6.6. Application to Initial Award Funding Grade Point Average Requirement

SSPPs enter the first funding year with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. If grades for the degree funded by SMART fall below a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale between application and the start of the fall term of the initial funding year, the SSPP may be immediately dismissed from the SSP.

6.7. Required Documentation

SMART awards are based on the availability of funds. SSPPs provide the following documentation, unless otherwise stated. An award will not be funded until all required documentation is received. Failure to provide required documentation or meet any eligibility requirement may result in dismissal from the SSP.

- a. SMART Service Agreement;
- b. Official transcript. If the SSPP attended school the previous year, an official transcript from the academic institution attended is required. (This requirement is in addition to the transcript provided with the application and must reflect all coursework and grades during the academic year preceding issuance of the award);
- c. Participant Information Verification Sheet;
- d. Form W-9;

- e. Official Form 306 – Declaration for Federal Employment;
- f. Official Form 612 – Optional Application for Federal Employment;
- g. Educational Work Plan (EWP);
- h. Media Release;
- i. SMART Scholarship Authorization for Direct Deposit;
- j. All requested security clearance information and paperwork; and
- k. Recruitment Site Visit Request, if applicable.

6.8. Orientation

All SSPPs are required to complete the mandatory SSP orientation. Orientation includes a web-based presentation, Recruitment Site Visit, if applicable, and an onboarding call with the CA. Orientation provides an opportunity to learn more about the SSP and the SF. Orientation completion is a prerequisite to initial receipt of SSP funds.

- a. Web-based orientation. All SSPPs complete a web-based orientation presentation covering SSP requirements, prior to 15 July. At the conclusion of the presentation is a short quiz to verify completion of the requirement. The quiz is electronically submitted to the SSP.
- b. Recruitment Site Visit. All recruitment SSPPs are required to complete the mandatory site visit at their SF prior to the start of the award. Site visits are generally completed by 15 July and consist of 1-2 business days with the SF. Web-based orientation must be successfully completed prior to the site visit. Recruitment SSPPs contact their SF Point of Contact (POC) to receive site visit dates. Recruitment SSPPs must submit the Site Visit Request along with the award documents. Recruitment SSPPs whose summer address is 50 miles or more from the SF location are eligible for site visit allotment. Retention SSPPs generally do not complete a site visit.

Site visits offer SFs an opportunity to orient the SSPP with the facility and prepare the SSPP for future internships and employment. The site visit is an opportunity for SSPPs to ensure personal suitability with the SF prior to the start of the award. Recruitment SSPPs submit a site visit report to the SSP detailing the SSPP site visit experience within 5 days of the conclusion of the site visit. After completion of the site visit, SSPPs who do not feel comfortable with their placement will have the option to withdraw from the SSP without penalty, via the Site Visit Report.

- c. Onboarding session. All SSPPs complete a 45 minute, one-on-one, onboarding session with their CA upon completion of the web-based orientation. The on-boarding session is an opportunity for the SSPP to ask questions and to verify award information. The on-boarding session will be scheduled after receipt of web-based orientation completion, official transcript, and signed Site Visit Report for Recruitment Participants, if applicable.

6.9. Security Clearance Overview

The nature of work performed at SFs requires employees to be eligible to maintain at minimum a SECRET level security clearance. Depending on the needs of the SF, the clearance level required may be higher than SECRET. For additional information, please reference <http://www.OPM.gov>.

6.10. Security Clearance Requirement

SSPPs complete the following security clearance requirements:

- a. Provide complete and timely information and documentation as requested;
- b. Be eligible to timely obtain the level of security clearance required by the SF;
- c. Be eligible to maintain the required level of security clearance through completion of the service commitment;
- d. Notify the SSP prior to traveling to a foreign country; and
- e. Notify the SMART security specialist immediately of any actions or events that may affect eligibility to obtain or maintain the security clearance. For a list of activities that may result in the denial or revocation of a security clearance visit <http://www.OPM.gov>.

6.11. Denial of SSPP Application for Security Clearance

If the application for the security clearance is denied, the SSPP will be dismissed from the SSP.

6.12. Revocation of SSPP Security Clearance

If a security clearance is revoked at any time prior to completion of the service commitment, the SSPP will be dismissed from the SSP.

6.13. Security Clearance and Start of Service Commitment

SFs usually require the security clearance be in place prior to start of the service commitment. If a security clearance has not been finally adjudicated by degree completion, the SSPP may be dismissed from the SSP.

6.14. SSPP Foreign Travel

Foreign travel is any travel outside the United States, its Territories or Possessions. Foreign travel may affect eligibility to obtain and maintain a security clearance. Recruitment SSPPs submit the Foreign Travel Notification to the SSP 60 days before traveling to a foreign country. Retention SSPPs follow their foreign travel procedures set forth by the SF.

7. PHASE 1 FUNDING PROCEDURES

7.1. Phase 1 Funding Overview

All SSP funding is based on the availability of funds. SMART awards provide the amount of financial assistance determined by ASD(R&E) as being necessary to pay all educational expenses incurred by the SSPP, including tuition, fees, miscellaneous supplies, laboratory expenses, equipment expenses, and expenses of room and board. SSPPs only receive funding for the degree specified in the application to SMART and approved in the SSA. Additional degree funding requires re-application to SMART for a separate award in accordance with the follow-on funding policy.

7.2. Stipends

Based on the availability of funds, SSPPs receive a stipend based on an annual rate as determined by ASD(R&E). Stipend rates may vary by cohort year. SSPPs who complete less than 12 months of phase 1 activities receive the stipend on a pro-rated basis.

- a. Recruitment SSPP Stipend Timing and Distribution. Recruitment SSPP stipend payments are paid directly to the SSPP. Recruitment SSPPs generally receive stipend payments on the third Friday of each month, beginning in August of the first award year, provided all award funding prerequisites have been met.
- b. Retention SSPP Stipend Timing and Distribution. Retention SSPP stipend payments are distributed through the SF's payroll and purchasing system. Retention SSPPs receive the payments in accordance with SF practices.
- c. Final Stipend Payment. SSPPs generally receive one stipend payment after degree completion.
- d. Stipend Rate Increases. SSPPs who applied for and received a SMART award in the years 2008 through 2016 may request an increase in the stipend rate for additional qualifications earned in the form of a conferred STEM degree funded by SMART. SSPPs awarded funding for a dual degree whose program does not confer the initial degree may establish additional academic qualifications by providing documentation from the academic institution verifying the SSPP has completed all requirements for the first degree such that if the SSPP left the degree program as of that date, the SSPP would be awarded the first degree. Documentation contingent upon the SSPP fulfilling additional requirements for the first degree will not support a stipend increase.

SSPPs who applied for and received a SMART award in the years 2008 through 2011 may additionally request an increase in the stipend rate for additional qualifications earned by passing qualifying examinations or equivalent requirements for acceptance as a permanent Ph.D. candidate.

7.3. Miscellaneous Supplies Allowance

The SSP provides an annual miscellaneous supplies allowance. Miscellaneous supplies might include but are not limited to books, technology purchases, and other school supplies. SSPPs funded for a partial academic year receive the miscellaneous supplies allowance on a pro-rated basis.

7.4. Health Insurance Allowance

The SSP provides an annual health insurance allowance to recruitment SSPPs. Recruitment SSPPs funded for a partial academic year receive the health insurance allowance on a pro-rated basis. Retention SSPPs generally continue to receive health insurance through their SF and the federal employee benefit system.

7.5. Tuition and Approved Related Educational Expenses

The SSP funds the total cost of full-time tuition and approved related educational fees during the standard academic year. Full-time tuition includes fall through spring standard terms only. Full time tuition does not include summer or condensed winter terms. SMART awards are tenable at any regionally accredited U.S. college or university. There is no cap on tuition and the amount of tuition does not affect the length of the service commitment. Approved related educational fees generally include mandatory fees such as student activity and student government fees.

7.6. Additional Tuition and Enrollment

The SSP funds the total cost of full-time tuition and approved related educational fees during the standard academic year. Full-time tuition includes fall through spring standard terms only. SSP funding does not include tuition paid for summer and/or condensed winter terms. Courses taken outside the standard academic year and without prior approval will not be funded by the SSSP.

Under rare circumstances, requests for additional tuition and/or enrollment can be made. Enrollment and/or completion of coursework during summer and/or condensed winter terms, whether taken on-line or at a physical location, requires prior authorization from the SSP even when the academic institution does not assess tuition charges for the additional term/enrollment.

7.7. SSPP Phase 1 Tax Responsibilities

The SSP does not withhold taxes from funds paid to or on behalf of SSPPs during phase 1, including but not limited to stipends, allowances, and Internship Support Payments (ISP). It is the responsibility of the SSPP to adhere to state and federal regulations regarding tax responsibilities. The SSP provides each recruitment SSPP and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) with the Form 1099-MISC recording the amount paid to the SSPP during the tax year. Taxes are withheld from retention SSPP stipends in accordance with the W-4. The SSP do not provide tax advice.

8. PHASE 1 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

8.1. Reporting Requirements Overview

SSPPs submit, at their own expense, documentation and information requested by the SSP. Updated SSPP reporting information is available on the SMART website. Failure to timely provide required documentation and/or information may result in the SSPP being placed in a status of non-compliance or dismissed from the SSP.

8.2. Official Transcripts

SSPPs submit official transcripts from the academic institution within 30 days after the end of each academic term.

8.3. Phase 1 Annual Report

SSPPs submit a Phase 1 Annual Report to the SSP on or before 1 June each year during phase 1. The Phase 1 Annual Report tracks and projects completion of degree requirements, projects number of internships, projects work start date, discloses outside funding, discloses outside employment, discloses health insurance information, discloses study abroad activities, and reports SSPP research, achievements, and other activities.

8.4. Phase 1 Hiring Reporting Requirements

Prior to degree completion, SSPPs provide updated degree completion, degree conferral, and work start dates.

Participant Type	Requirement	Details	Due no Later Than
All	Updated Completion Date	Date on which all degree requirements are completed.	6 months prior to graduation
All	Updated Conferral Date	Date on which the degree will be bestowed. This is noted on the official transcript reflecting the degree earned.	6 months prior to graduation
Recruitment	SF Offer Letter and Acceptance	Official offer of employment from the SF and SSPP acceptance. If the work start date is not reflected on the offer, report the date to the CA. Include any pertinent email messages with the SF.	As soon as received
Retention	Retention Work Start Date	Email verification from supervisor confirming, the date on which the SSPP anticipates returning to work at the SF.	As soon as identified
All	Official Conferral Transcript	Official final transcript from registrar reflecting conferral of the degree funded and date conferred.	As soon as available

9. PHASE 1 ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

9.1. Academic Requirements and Procedures Overview

SSPP academic performance is foundational to maintaining SF capabilities. This performance ensures that qualified individuals are provided through the SSP with STEM skills in disciplines that are critical to the national security functions of the DoD workforce.

9.2. Completion of Degree Requirements During Phase 1

SSPPs complete all degree requirements during phase 1, including thesis/dissertation writing, edits, defense, etc.

9.3. Minimum GPA Requirement

SSPPs maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale from the academic institution(s) for which they receive SMART funding. After a SMART award is funded, only the grades for the degree funded by SMART are used to calculate GPA. If the SSPP fails to maintain the required GPA, the SSPP may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SSP.

9.4. Failure to Complete Degree with Required GPA

SSPPs who do not complete the degree funded with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale do not successfully complete phase 1. If a SSPP cannot be hired by the SF based on their failure to meet SSP academic requirements, then the SSPP will be dismissed from the SSP.

9.5. Incomplete Coursework

SSPPs complete all coursework on time and in accordance with the EWP as reflected on the Phase 1 Annual Report. Incomplete coursework is receiving a grade of incomplete for a registered course and does not constitute adequate progress toward degree completion as reflected in the EWP. Incomplete coursework also includes failure to earn a passing grade for any coursework taken in a single term, even

if the cumulative GPA remains above 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. If a SSPP earns an incomplete grade which results in less than full time credits earned for the academic term, the SSPP may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SSP.

9.6. Failure to Earn Course Credit

All coursework that is offered for a grade must be taken for a grade. If the SSPP takes coursework on a pass/fail basis when the course is offered for a grade, the SSPP may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SSP.

9.7. Full-Time Status

SSPPs maintain full-time enrollment status with their approved academic institution(s). During phase 1, SSPPs continually pursue the funded degree on a full-time basis. If the SSPP does not maintain full-time enrollment status during phase 1, the SSPP may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SSP.

9.8. Participation in Study Abroad Programs

SSPPs may engage in a study abroad program if the following conditions are met:

- a. The study-abroad curriculum must directly contribute to degree requirements for which the SSPP receives funding;
- b. Participation in the study-abroad program must not affect the SSPP degree completion, conferral, or start of service commitment dates;
- c. Participation in the study-abroad program must not affect the ability to complete the internship and service commitment requirements;
- d. The SSPP maintains full-time enrollment status in the U.S. academic institution for which he/she receives SMART funding;
- e. Tuition for the study-abroad program is paid directly to the U.S. academic institution for which the SSPP receives SMART funding; and
- f. Participation in the study-abroad program must not affect the SSPP eligibility to obtain or maintain the security clearance required for internship and/or service commitment requirements.
- g. Recruitment SSPPs notify the SSP 60 days prior to travel. Retention SSPPs notify their SF, in accordance with their security policies.

The SSP does not provide additional funding for travel or other fees related to study abroad programs beyond the standard tuition and related educational fees.

9.9. Participation in Fieldwork, Conferences, Meetings, or Training

SSPPs may study or engage in research fieldwork, conferences, meetings, or training away from the academic institution for which they receive funding. SMART does not provide additional funding for fieldwork, conferences, meetings, or training beyond the standard tuition and related educational fees. SSPPs personally fund these activities.

9.10. Retention SSPP Return to SF during Phase 1

Retention SSPPs are expected to remain a full time student during phase 1. In certain circumstances, a retention SSPP may return to the SF to conduct research and/or thesis or dissertation writing based on ideal equipment or facilities available at the SF. Retention SSPPs request prior approval from the SSP. Time spent at SF during phase 1 does not count toward completion of the service commitment.

10. COMMON ACCESS CARDS

The common access card (CAC) is a DoD smart card used for identification as well as for security authentication. CACs are issued by the SF. SFs usually require SSPPs to have a valid CAC to gain entrance to the SF and use the SF computers or network.

Recruitment SSPPs confirm the CAC requirement and coordinate the CAC process directly with the SF well in advance of arriving for an internship and employment. Recruitment SSPPs work directly with the SF to resolve any CAC questions or concerns.

Retention SSPPs retain their CACs issued by the SF. Retention SSPPs work directly with the SF to resolve any CAC questions or concerns.

11. MUTLI-YEAR RECRUITMENT SSPP INTERNSHIPS

11.1. Internship Requirement

All multi-year recruitment SSPPs complete internships with their SF during phase 1. SSP internships provide an opportunity for SSPPs to make a meaningful contribution to the SF mission, establish a positive working relationship with future co-workers and supervisors, and become familiar with the local area.

11.2. Internship Length and Timing

Internships begin the summer after initial funding. Internships are completed each year the award crosses a summer period. Internships are usually completed during summer months and range in duration from 8 to 12 weeks, unless the SF requests a different length. SSPPs with alternative academic schedules such as year-round coursework, extended internship/co-op periods or other special requirements may receive alternative timing or internship lengths upon prior approval of the SSP.

11.3. Internship Funding

Eligible recruitment SSPPs completing internships may receive Internship Support Payments (ISPs) in addition to the monthly stipend. ISPs are intended to support the cost of travel, lodging, meals, transportation, and incidental expenses. If eligible, recruitment SSPPs may receive ISPs in addition to the monthly stipend payment during the internship period.

Eligibility for ISPs is determined based on the SSPP summer address. Recruitment SSPPs whose summer address is 50 miles or more from the SF/internship location are eligible for ISPs. SSPPs are notified of whether they are eligible for ISPs when their Recruitment Internship Request is processed by the SSP.

If a SSPP is eligible for ISPs, the disbursement dates are set forth on the processed Recruitment Internship Request. Eligible SSPPs receive ISPs for each week the SSPP completes the internship, up to a maximum of 12 weeks. Eligible SSPPs whose circumstances require extended internships do not receive more than 12 weeks of ISPs.

A decrease in the duration of the internship results in a corresponding reduction in ISPs. SSPPs who are absent from the internship do not receive ISPs for the time they are away from the SF. If the ISPs were processed prior to the reduction of internship length, the SSPP is required to refund the overpayment.

SSPPs that receive ISPs and then do not perform an internship may be responsible for repaying all ISPs expended on their behalf.

ISPs are reported to the IRS by the SSP on the annual 1099-MISC received by the SSPP. SSPPs are personally responsible for withholding taxes from all funds during phase 1 as appropriate. The program does not withhold taxes from funds paid to or on behalf of SSPPs.

11.4. Internship Waiver

The internship requirement is rarely waived. A waiver of the internship requirement does not reduce the length of the SSPP service commitment. Requests for a waiver are considered for a single internship period at a time.

If a SSPP is unable to complete an internship because the application for the security clearance is not adjudicated 2 months prior to internship start date due to government delay, or the SSPP is not eligible for an INTERIM clearance, the SSPP is required to complete appropriate coursework instead of completing the internship period.

11.5. Internship Preparation Procedure

- a. Coordinate Internship Dates with the SF. SSPPs coordinate mutually agreeable internship start and end dates directly with their SF by contacting their mentor and/or facility point of contact (POC), as directed by the SF. Internships begin on a Monday and end on a Friday due to SMART funding distribution schedules.
- b. Confirm Facility Access. SSPPs discuss facility access requirements with their mentor/facility POC in advance of the internship to avoid problems at the start of the internship with regard to access to the facility grounds, computers, email, etc.
- c. Security Manager Office Code. The security manager office (SMO) code is a unique identifier for the SF in the Joint Personnel Adjudication System (JPAS). The SMO code is used to verify SSPP security clearance and need for access during the internship. SSPPs contact their mentor or facility POC to obtain the SMO code.
- d. Security Clearance. The SF determines the security clearance requirements necessary to complete an internship. SSPPs need the security clearance required by their SF in place in order to successfully complete the internship. If the security clearance requirements are not met 2 months prior, then the SSPP may be required to complete summer coursework. SSPPs discuss SF clearance requirements with their mentor/facility POC in advance of the internship.
- e. Submit Recruitment Internship Request. Recruitment SSPPs submit the Recruitment Internship Request to the SSP annually, as requested. The Recruitment Internship Request provides the SSP with proposed internship dates and ISP eligibility information. SSPPs do not finalize their internship travel arrangements until the Recruitment Internship Request is processed by the SSP and funding eligibility is determined.

- f. Booking Travel. ISP funding eligibility is determined by the SSP and approved via the Recruitment Internship Request. SSPPs do not finalize internship travel arrangements until the ISP eligibility is determined. SSPPs are responsible for making their own travel and lodging arrangements. Receipts are not required in order to receive ISPs and are not accepted by the SSP. However, SSPPs are encouraged to save receipts for tax purposes.

11.6. Internship Procedures

- a. Required Personal Documents. SSPPs need original personal documents to establish identity and citizenship to obtain facility access and badging. SSPPs coordinate with their SF prior to the internship to obtain facility-specific requirements.
- b. SSPP Internship Time and Attendance Requirement. SSPPs work full-time for their SF throughout the internship period and comply with all SF policies and procedures regarding time and attendance. SSPPs follow the SF's policies regarding notification of tardiness or absence.
- c. Internship Vacation and Leave Policy. SSPPs work continuously at the SF for the dates of the internship period listed on the processed Recruitment Internship Request. Approval of optional personal leave is at the discretion of the SF and must be reported to the SSP. SSPPs receiving ISPs during their internship will not receive ISP payments during the vacation or leave. If the SSPP has already received ISP payments and does not complete the full approved time period, the SSPP may be required to refund the overpayment.
- d. Internship Sick/Medical Leave Policy. If a SSPP is absent from the internship due to an illness or medical condition, the SSPP follows SF policy regarding sick/medical leave. The SSPP keeps the supervisor and/or mentor informed of the status and expected date of return.
- e. SSPP Internship Professionalism Requirements. SSPPs adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards throughout the internship period, including complying with the SMART code of conduct, adhering to SF dress code, being timely in attendance, acting professionally, and satisfactorily completing internship duties and responsibilities. SSPPs are encouraged to request guidance and support as needed, as well as accept and learn from instruction and constructive criticism.
- f. Misconduct During the Internship. Personal and/or professional misconduct during the internship may result in dismissal from the program.
- g. Internship Related Illnesses and Injuries. SSPPs who are injured or become ill as a result of performing internship duties contact their SF immediately. During an internship, a recruitment SSPP is considered an employee for the purposes of chapter 81 of title 5 U.S.C., relating to compensation for work injuries, and to be employee for the purposes of chapter 171 of title 28 U.S.C., relating to tort claims. Such SSPPs who are not otherwise employed by the Federal Government shall not be considered to be Federal employees for any other purpose. Any illness or injury is reported to the CA as soon as the SSPP is able.
- h. SSPP Points of Contact During the Internship
 - a. SSPP Issues with the SF. SSPPs experiencing problems during the internship related to the SF should contact their mentor and/or internship supervisor, as appropriate. If the SSPP cannot resolve the issue with SF members, the SSPP should contact the SL.

- b. Programmatic Issues. All questions related to SSP policies and procedures should be directed to the CA.
- c. Emergencies. If there is a medical or other emergency during the internship, SSPPs should proceed as necessary and contact their mentor/facility POC and CA as soon as practical.

11.7. Internship Report

SSPPs submit a Recruitment Internship Report to the SSP detailing the SSPP internship experience within 14 days of the conclusion of the internship. The internship report is an opportunity for the SSPP to share information with the SSP regarding duties performed, insights gained, and other details regarding the internship.

12. MULTI-YEAR RETENTION SUMMER WORK PERIODS

12.1. Summer Schedule Notification

During the summer months, multi-year retention SSPPs generally return to work full-time with their SF. The SF may waive a summer work period to enable the SSPP to complete coursework or research. Retention SSPPs attending academic institutions that require year-round coursework, extended internships/co-ops, or other special requirements may receive alternative summer employment period lengths or timing upon prior approval of the SSP.

Retention SSPPs submit the Retention Summer Schedule as requested annually by the SSP. The Retention Summer Schedule informs the SSP of whether the retention SSPP intends to complete summer coursework or return to work at their SF during the summer. Retention SSPPs notify the SSP whether they will complete a summer work period with the SF or complete coursework.

12.2. Summer Work Period Travel

Retention SSPPs whose academic address is 50 miles or more from the SF location are eligible for SSP funded travel to return to their SF for completion of a summer work period. Retention SSPPs who require travel to complete summer work at the SF fill out the travel information on the Retention Summer Schedule and Retention Travel Expense Request. Retention summer work travel funding is approved by the SSP and disbursed in accordance with SF practices.

Beginning May 2016, retention SSPPs must submit a form signed by the SF providing dates, reason, and estimated cost for all potential travel for the entire year (01 October-30 September). Approved funding will be distributed with stipend and miscellaneous allowance funding to SF. Retention SSPPs provide the SSP with copies of the DTS travel authorization and voucher to verify final travel costs within 14 days of completion of the approved travel.

12.3. Summer Work Period Illness and Injuries

Retention SSPPs remain employees of their SF during phase 1 and are covered under the SF workers compensation policy while performing duties at their SF. Retention SSPPs comply with the SF workers compensation policy and notification requirements.

13. RECRUITMENT SERVICE COMMITMENT HIRING PROCESS

SFs hire SSPPs as full-time federal civilian employees for completion of the service commitment. The hiring process varies among facilities and may include an application process. SSPPs complete all necessary steps to accept employment with the SF. SSPPs may be required to complete application materials and provide supplemental documentation at their expense such as curriculum vitas, references, and official transcripts. SFs confirm with the SSP that the SSPP has successfully completed all phase 1 requirements before hiring the SSPP for phase 2. If the SSPP is in a noncompliance status and the SF cannot complete the hiring action, the SSPP will be dismissed from the SSP.

14. PHASE 2 PROCEDURES

14.1. Start of Phase 2

Phase 2 begins the service commitment as defined by the work start date. The work start date is defined as the first day of full-time employment with the SF after verified degree completion. Requests for a short delay to commencement of the service commitment require the prior authorization of both the SSP and the SF. SSPPs generally do not defer or otherwise delay their service commitment.

14.2. Phase 2 Letter

Upon verified completion of all phase 1 requirements, including receipt of conferral transcript and verification of work start date, the SSP will issue a Phase 2 Letter to the SSPP and the SF. The Phase 2 Letter serves as written confirmation that the SSPP has completed all phase 1 requirements. The Phase 2 Letter also provides degree completion and conferral dates, the name and location of where the SSPP will complete the service commitment, basic award information, and service commitment start and end dates.

14.3. Length of Service Commitment

The period of obligated service for educational financial assistance received by a SSPP shall be the period determined by ASD(R&E) as being appropriate to obtain adequate service in exchange for such financial assistance. The period of service required of a SSPP may not be less than the total period of pursuit of a degree that is covered by such financial assistance and may not be less than 1 year.

The SSP requires a minimum of 1 year of post-graduation employment for all SSPPs. SSPPs perform post-graduation employment with the SF at the rate of 1 calendar year of service for each full academic year. Financial support for an academic term (quarter, semester) that is less than a full academic year requires an additional 6 months of post-graduation employment. For example, an award for 2 academic years requires 24 months of service. An award for 1 and a half academic years requires 18 months of service.

The SMART service commitment is in addition to any other period for which the SSPP is obligated to serve in the civil service of the United States.

Time spent working at the SF during phase 1 is not applied toward fulfillment of the service commitment. Accordingly, recruitment SSPP time spent during internships is not applied toward the service commitment. Similarly, retention SSPP time spent at the SF during the academic year or summer months is not applied toward the service commitment.

14.4. Completion of Service Commitment with Approved SF

SSPPs complete the service commitment with the SF in accordance with the SSA. SSPPs may not choose to complete the service commitment with another facility.

14.5. Full-Time Federal Civilian Employment

SSPPs work as full-time federal civilian employees for the SF in phase 2 until the service commitment is fulfilled. Periods of leave without pay, or other periods during which the employee is not in a pay status, do not count toward completion of the required service commitment. Thus, the service completion date must be extended by the total amount of time spent in non-pay status. SSPPs must inform the SSP of any leave without pay or non-pay status during phase 2.

14.6. Failure to Complete the Service Commitment

SSPPs fulfill the service commitment in accordance with the SSA. If a SSPP fails to properly complete the service commitment, the SSPP will be dismissed from the SSP. SSPPs dismissed from the SSP will be subject to debt repayment procedures and may be required to repay the entire award amount.

14.7. Phase 2 Salary and Benefits

SSPPs work directly with the SF to obtain information about salary, benefits, and relocation costs. SFs are usually not able to provide relocation costs; accordingly, SSPPs should anticipate paying for relocation and travel to the SF themselves. Information regarding federal salary levels may be found at www.OPM.gov.

15. PHASE 2 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

15.1. Phase 2 Service Commitment Reporting Requirements

Shortly after beginning the service commitment with the SF, SSPPs provide the SSP with employment verification documentation and updated contact information. SSPPs provide these documents to the CA.

Participant Type	Requirement	Details	Due No Later Than
All	Updated Personal Contact Information	Confirm or update personal contact information including mailing address, telephone number(s), and email address(es).	2 weeks after work start date
All	Updated Professional Contact Information	Confirm or update professional contact information including telephone number and email address.	2 weeks after work start date
All	Updated Supervisor Contact Information	Confirm or update the supervisor's name and contact information.	2 weeks after work start date
Recruitment	SF-50 (with birthdate and SSN redacted)	Notification of personnel action hiring SSPP as a full-time federal civilian employee. Available from the SF human resources office after work start date.	6 weeks after work start date
Retention	Employment Verification	Documentation confirming the SSPP is a full-time federal civilian employee of the SF, including work start date. May be provided in an email from the SF and/or a new SF-50.	6 weeks after work start date

15.2. Phase 2 Annual Report

SSPPs submit a Phase 2 Annual Report to the SSP on or before 1 June each year during phase 2. The Phase 2 Annual Report tracks updated contact information, reports SSPP achievements and activities, and indicates if potential problems need a follow up with the SSP.

15.3. Phase 2 Current Contact Information

SSPPs keep current contact information with the SSP at all times, including accurate email address(es), mailing address, and telephone. SSPPs update the SSP immediately with changes or updates to their contact information by emailing the CA.

15.4. Change in Security Clearance Eligibility

SSPPs notify the SSP immediately of any change in their eligibility to maintain the security clearance required by the SF.

16. PHASE 3 PROCEDURES

16.1. Transition to Phase 3 and Phase 3 Letter

Upon completion of all phase 2 requirements, the SSP will issue a Phase 3 Letter to the SSPP and the SF. The Phase 3 Letter serves as written confirmation that the SSPP has fully completed phase 2 and outlines phase 3 requirements. During phase 3, the SSP tracks SSPP employment status for 10 years to obtain information on SSPP retention rates within the DoD.

17. PHASE 3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

17.1 Phase 3 Annual Report

SSPPs submit a Phase 3 Annual Report to the SSP on or before 1 June each year during phase 3. The Phase 3 Annual Report tracks updated contact information, current employment information, potential additional education, and reports SSPP achievements and activities.

17.2 Phase 3 Current Contact Information

SSPPs maintain current contact information with the SSP at all times, including accurate email address(es), mailing address, and telephone. SSPPs update the SSP immediately with changes or updates to their contact information by emailing the CA. SSPPs may be requested to provide the SSP with updated employment information.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASD(R&E)	Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering
CA	cohort administrator
DFAS	Defense Finance and Accounting Service
DTS	Defense Travel System
EWP	Educational Work Plan
FMR	Financial Management Regulation
GPA	grade point average
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
ISP	internship support payment
POC	point of contact
SF	sponsoring facility
SL	service liaison
SMART	science, mathematics, and research for transformation
SSA	SMART Service Agreement
SAAR	SMART Service Agreement Amendment Request
SSP	SMART Scholarship Program
SSPP	SMART Scholarship Program Participant
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

GLOSSARY

academic address. An academic address is the current address of record for the SSP while enrolled at the academic institution. The academic address is usually a temporary address located near the academic institution. In some cases, the academic address may be the same as the permanent address.

academic term. An academic term is a division of the academic year. Depending on how the academic institution structures its classes, an academic term may consist of a quarter or a semester.

academic year. An academic year in the SSP consists of the fall through spring academic terms and is generally nine months in length. An academic year does not include the summer term or condensed winter term.

award. An award in the SSP is an offer of scholarship for the completion and conferral of a specific degree in accordance with the SSA in exchange for a period of obligated service. Also referred to as the SMART award or the SMART Scholarship.

award funding. Award funding occurs at the time SSP funds are expended on behalf of a SSPP.

award year. An award year refers to a SSP funding year which generally begins 1 August and ends 31 July.

cohort. A cohort refers to the group of SSPPs who received a SMART award in a particular year.

debt repayment. The procedure for recovering funds determined due the Federal Government under a SMART award based on SSPP withdrawal or dismissal from the SSP prior to completion of the service commitment.

degree completion. Degree completion refers to the date on which an individual completes all requirements to complete a degree. This date generally occurs prior to degree conferral and is not set forth on official transcripts. The degree completion date may be the same as the degree conferral date.

degree conferral. Degree conferral refers to the date on which a degree is bestowed upon an individual. This date is set forth on the official transcript reflecting the degree earned. The degree conferral date may be the same as the degree completion date.

dismissal. Dismissal is the process to remove a SSPP from the SSP based on failure to comply with SSP policy, procedure, and/or SSA.

DoD component. Organizational entities in the DoD. There are four DoD component designations in the SSP: the Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, Department of the Air Force, and other DoD Agencies.

Other DoD Agencies. Individual DoD agencies that do not belong to the Army, Naval, or Air Force.

full time employment. Employment that includes regularly scheduled work hours and days required by the administrative work-week for a particular group or class.

incomplete coursework. Incomplete coursework is receiving a grade of incomplete for a registered course and does not constitute adequate progress toward degree completion as reflected in the EWP.

internship support payment. Internship support payment(s) (ISP) are intended to support travel, lodging, meals, transportation, and incidental expenses for eligible SSPPs attending an internship.

mentor. A mentor is an experienced individual who assists and guides another person's professional development. SSP mentors may coordinate internship logistics and assist SSPPs in educational and professional growth.

multi-year SSPP. A multi-year SSPP is a SSPP whose award length is more than one academic year.

permanent address. A permanent address is the domicile and legal permanent residence of the SSPP. In some cases, the permanent address may be the same as the academic or summer address.

program phases. SSPPs complete four SSP phases: award, degree pursuit, service commitment, and post-service commitment.

phase 0 – Award. Phase 0, award, begins at the time a SSPP accepts a SMART award by signing the SSA and ends 31 July of the award year. A phase 0 SSPP does not receive award funding nor does any time spent attending a site visit, completing orientation, or completing an onboarding session count towards completion of the service commitment. Prior to funding an award, the phase 0 SSPP must comply with acceptance deadlines, complete orientation, and provide all funding prerequisite documentation.

phase 1 – degree pursuit. Phase 1, degree pursuit, begins 1 August of the award year in accordance with the SSA and ends upon verified completion of all phase 1 requirements. During phase 1, SSPPs complete requirements to obtain the degree funded and internships, if required. As SSPPs near completion of phase 1, they work with the SF, SSP, CA, and SL to prepare for the start of the service commitment.

phase 2 – service commitment. Phase 2 begins the service commitment as defined by the work start date. The work start date is defined as the first day of full-time employment with the SF after verified degree completion. Once phase 1 is verified completed, the SSP provides written confirmation of official entry into phase 2, including service commitment start and end dates. During phase 2, SSPPs complete the service commitment by working full-time for their SF.

phase 3 – post-service commitment. Phase 3, post-service commitment, is a 10 year employment status monitoring period that begins upon completion of the service commitment. During phase 3, the SSP tracks SSPP employment status for 10 years to obtain information on SSPP retention rates within the DoD.

recruitment SSPP. A recruitment SSPP is a SSPP who is not employed in a permanent civilian position by the SF at the time of award. Participants who are employed by the SF in temporary or internship positions at the time of award are recruitment SSPPs.

retention SSPP. A retention SSPP is a SSPP who is employed in a permanent civilian position by the SF at the time of and throughout the award.

satisfactory academic progress. Maintenance of a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale within the criteria defined in the SSA and maintaining adequate progress toward degree completion.

scholarship. A financial award for full-time study leading to a STEM degree.

scholarship-for-service. Scholarships-for-service refers to programs that provide scholarship funding in exchange for an agreement to complete a period of employment after degree completion or conferral.

security clearance. A security clearance is an authorization issued primarily by the Federal Government permitting an individual access to sensitive and classified information.

service commitment. The period of service for a SSPP determined by the DoD as being appropriate to obtain adequate service in exchange for financial assistance.

SMART Scholarship Program. The SMART Scholarship Program is the Department of Defense Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation Scholarship for Service Program.

SMART Scholarship Program Participant. A SMART Scholarship Program Participant is an individual who has received and accepted a SMART award. An individual remains a participant throughout all three program phases. A SSPP may also be referred to as a “participant.”

SMART Service Agreement. The SMART Service Agreement is a signed written agreement whereby the DoD funds the academic pursuit of a SSPP in exchange for a period of obligated service to the DoD. The SMART Service Agreement is signed by the SSPP and the awarding DoD Component.

sponsoring facility. A sponsoring facility is a particular laboratory or agency within the DoD Component that participates in the SSP.

summer address. A summer address is the usually a temporary address during summer activities. In some cases, the summer address may be the same as the permanent address.

United States citizen. A United States citizen is an individual who was born or naturalized within the United States and is subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. SMART awards are available only to U.S. citizens who are 18 years or older.

work start date. The work start date is defined as the first day of full-time employment with SF after verified degree completion.

APPENDIX A – NON-COMPLIANCE MATRIX

Sub Process	Policy	Description of Violation	Length to Comply	How to Comply	Failure to comply with terms of the Non-Compliance notice
PHASE 1 – DEGREE PURSUIT NON-COMPLIANCE					
Award – Orientation	Award Documents	Failure to submit award documents w/o prior request/consent	N/A	N/A	Will be considered a declination
	Web Based Orientation	Failure to complete web based Orientation with award acceptance	Within 5 days of notice	Log on to Awardee Portal and complete Orientation and quiz	Possible rescind of award
	Site Visit	Failure to attend scheduled RC Site Visit	Within 5 days of notice	Submit statement for review. If approved attempt to reschedule.	Delay of first stipend until return to compliance
	Site Visit Report	Failure to submit RC Site Visit Report	Within 5 days of notice	Submit to SSP as directed	Will be considered a reaffirmed acceptance of award.
	Onboarding	Failure to complete onboarding session prior to 1 August	Within 5 days of notice	Respond to scheduling request immediately; Complete telephone call as scheduled	Possible rescind of award
Degree Pursuit	Cumulative GPA below 3.0	Cumulative GPA below 3.0	1 academic term	Bring GPA to 3.0 or above	Possible dismissal if GPA is not above 3.0 after 1 academic term
	Pass/Fail or No credit received	Failure to complete a course for a grade if a grade is offered	Within 10 days of notice	Acknowledge notice of non-compliance	Possible dismissal if credit not earned after 1 academic term
	Incomplete coursework	Receiving an incomplete on an official transcript	1 academic term	Complete coursework in the following academic term	Possible dismissal if coursework not complete after 1 academic term
	Full Time Status	Failure to maintain full time status	Within 5 days of notice	Acknowledge notice of non-compliance	Possible dismissal
	Satisfactory Academic Progress	Failure to make progress towards degree completion within the awarded time. As provided by school.	1 academic term	Return to Good Standing/ Satisfactory Progress within 1 academic term	Possible dismissal
	Transcript submission	Failure to submit transcripts within 30 days of end of academic term	Within 10 days of notice	Submit official electronic version; or Provide verification from school that transcripts have been ordered	Possible stipend suspension
	Phase 1 Annual Report	Failure to submit the annual report by due date	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SSP as directed	Possible stipend suspension
	Completion of Degree as Awarded	Failure to complete degree per the terms of the service agreement	Within 10 days of notice	Submit a SAAR for specific award change for approval	Dismissal if SAAR denied or not submitted
	Code of Conduct	Failure to maintain SMART Code of Conduct at school, and with the SSP	Within 5 days of notice	Acknowledge notice of non-compliance	Possible dismiss

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Degree Pursuit	Communication	Failure to maintain communication with the SSP	Within 5 days of notice	Satisfactory communication is restored	Possible stipend suspension
	Loss of Sponsorship	Failure to maintain sponsorship at the SF	SSP directed	Varies: Submit to SSPP as directed	Possible Dismissal
Internship	Internship Travel Request	Failure to submit the Internship Travel Request by due date	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SSPP as directed; or Submit SAAR for waiver request	Possible stipend suspension or dismissal
	RT Summer Schedule	Failure to submit the RT Summer Schedule by due date	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SSP as directed	Possible stipend suspension or dismissal
	RT Travel Auth & Voucher	Failure to submit Travel Authorization & Voucher	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SSP as directed	Possible stipend suspension or dismissal
	Internship completion	Failure to complete internship as approved on the Internship Travel Request	Within 10 days of notice	Complete the internship as approved	Possible stipend suspension or dismissal
	Internship Report - SSPP	Failure to submit Internship Report to the SSP	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SSP as directed	Possible stipend suspension
Security	Security Clearance	Failure to submit security paperwork	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SSP security as directed	Possible stipend suspension or dismissal
	Security Clearance	Failure to obtain/maintain clearance	N/A	N/A	Dismissal
Hiring	Submit SF50 or verification of return to work	Failure to provide verification of work start; SF50 (RC) or letter from supervisor (RT)	Within 10 days of notice	Submit documents to the SSP as directed	Possible Dismissal
PHASE 2 – SERVICE COMMITMENT NON-COMPLIANCE					
Service Commitment	Commencement of service commitment	Failure to commence service commitment within offer letter requirements	Within parameters set by SF HR POC	Commence service commitment with the date set forth by the SF	Dismissal
	Completion of service commitment	Failure to complete length of service commitment with the SF	N/A	N/A	Dismissal
	Phase 2 Annual Report	Failure to submit the annual report by due date	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SSP as directed	Refer to SF for action
	Code of Conduct	Failure to maintain SMART Code of Conduct at SF, and with the SSP	Within 5 days of notice	Acknowledge notice of non-compliance	Refer to SF for action