



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

6000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-6000

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Cyber Scholarship Program (DoD CySP) Academic
Year 2024-2025: Education Opportunity for Civilian and Military Personnel

The Office of the Department of Defense Chief Information Officer (DoD CIO) is announcing the opportunity for civilian and active-duty military member participation in the retention component of the Department of Defense Cyber Scholarship Program. The DoD CySP provides professional development opportunities for employees who support DoD's critical cyber functions in exchange for continued service within the Department.

Interested candidates can apply using the DoD CySP Retention Application from October 16, 2023, through February 01, 2024, at <https://www.dodemergingtech.com/cyber-scholarship-program-cysp>. After submission, each application will go through a review process based on personal goal statements and supervisor recommendations/endorsements. The process will also include a preliminary review by the identified academic program lead (AFIT, NDU CIC, JCAC Partner Institutions, and community colleges) to ensure acceptance into their institution.

The DoD CySP is a unique scholarship program for the Department's existing civilian and military cyber personnel to expand their skillsets. Participating in programs like the DoD CySP is a key part in developing and retaining a more agile and flexible cyber workforce.

For additional information, please contact the DoD CySP Program Office at AskCySP@nsa.gov.

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Christine M. Condon
Deputy Chief Information Officer
for Resources & Analysis

Attachment(s):
As stated



DoD Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Department of Defense Cyber Scholarship Program:
2024-2025 Retention Program Guidelines

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Program Overview

The DoD CySP is authorized by Chapter 112 of title 10, United States Code, Section 2200. The purpose of the program is to support the recruitment of new cyber talent and the retention of current highly skilled professionals within the DoD cyber workforce.

Additionally, this program serves to enhance the national pipeline for the development of cyber personnel by providing grants to higher education institutions. The DoD CySP is sponsored by the DoD Chief Information Officer and administered by the National Security Agency (NSA). The overall program timeline for 2024 - 2025 is detailed in Table 1: DoD CySP Retention Program Timeline.

This document provides details on the academic opportunities offered under the Department of Defense Cyber Scholarship Program (DoD CySP) Retention Program. After reading this document in its entirety, DoD Agencies/Components/Military Departments (hereinafter referred to as Components) and scholarship applicants can use the DoD CySP Retention Application and apply from October 16, 2023 – February 01, 2024 at:

<https://www.dodemergingtech.com/cyber-scholarship-program-cysp/>.

Table 1: 2024 – 2025 DoD CySP Retention Program Timeline

Description	Timeline
Application window	October 16, 2023 – February 01, 2024
Component nomination review	March 2024
DoD CySP Program Office review	April 2024
Applicants notified of status	May 01, 2024

Eligibility Requirements

The DoD CySP program is open to U.S. citizens who meet the following requirements:

- **Active-duty military members**
 - Currently not performing a period of obligation service for another program.
- **Traditional Reservist and National Guard members**
 - Must be in an active-duty status.
 - May apply if they are eligible to attend an education program while on active-duty.
- **Permanent DoD civilian employees**
 - Must have completed any required probationary time.
 - Temporary, conditional, or employees on performance improvement plans are not eligible to apply for the DoD CySP.
 - Those currently not performing a period of obligated service for any programs.

- **Grade Point Average (GPA)¹:**
 - Applicant's pursuing an associate's degree does not require an identifies GPA or transcripts.
 - Applicants pursuing a bachelor's under the Joint Cyber Analytics Course (JCAC) program does not require an identified GPA but must include their JCAC completion certificate.
 - Applicants pursuing a master's degree must have an appropriate bachelor's degree with a minimum 3.0 GPA (validated by transcripts).
 - Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT), National Defense University College for Information and Cyberspace (NDU CIC), JCAC
 - Applicants pursuing a PhD/Doctorate must have an appropriate master's degree and a minimum 3.2 GPA (validated by transcripts).
 - AFIT, NDU CIC, JCAC

- **GRE/GMAT:**
 - Copies of Graduate Record Examinations General Test (GRE) or Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) scores for applicant's pursuing a graduate level program. (This is a DoD CySP requirement for all graduate level programs)
 - AFIT, NDU and Partner Universities each have their own minimum GRE/GMAT score requirements.
 - Applicants are responsible for ensuring they research and meet the minimum GRE/GMAT requirement for their Partner University of choice (if applicable).

- **Transcripts**
 - Transcripts must be included/attached in the application as identified in the GPA section above.
 - Transcripts may be official or unofficial.
 - Transcripts should not be sent directly to DoD CySP Program Office.

- **Recommended/Endorsed by their Supervisor**
 - Supervisor shall only recommend/endorse employees who are high performing military members/civilians rated at the upper (e.g., above satisfactory) levels of the applicable performance appraisal system and who demonstrate sustained quality performance with the potential of increased responsibilities.
 - Supervisors shall also confirm that participating in an education program will not negatively affect any service or job duty requirements (e.g., Rated Officers, special pay band/Military Occupational Specialty code/Occupational Series).

- **Meet all requirements for acceptance to the specific institution they plan to attend.**
 - All eligibility criteria, especially academic credentials, should be carefully reviewed as DoD CySP requirements may be more stringent than general academic enrollment criteria for a particular academic institution. No waivers will be granted.

¹ Students applying for a master's program must have a conferred undergraduate degree and students applying for a PhD program must have a conferred graduate degree.

Scholarship Quotas

No quotas have been identified. The actual number of scholarships available will be contingent on the total number of eligible applicants and available funding.

Program Costs

Cost of tuition, required fees, and required books (any recommended books or materials are not covered) will be covered by the DoD CySP. Selected applicants will continue to receive their military pay or civilian salary from the Component throughout their course of study. Components are responsible for any Permanent Change of Station (PCS) costs associated with the degree program. For example, Components are responsible for travel/ PCS costs to and from the academic institution and any necessary position back-fill for selected applicants. The DoD CySP will fund any short-term, degree specific on-campus activities (e.g., cohort requirements, short-term Temporary Duty Travel (TDY)). Academic institutions will identify any degree specific on-campus activities that require travel. It is highly recommended that prospective applicants meet with their supervisor to discuss all program costs. This meeting should provide a full understanding of what is expected during their education experience and upon completion of the academic degree. The DoD CySP is funded annually. All participation is contingent upon available funding.

Available Degree Programs/Paths and Academic Start Dates

The following list of degree programs/paths are the only options through the DoD CySP Retention Program. The DoD CySP Retention Program does not offer scholarships to attend a school of choice or to pay for degree programs currently in progress. The DoD CySP will not pay for “like” degrees. Individuals who already hold a degree in Cyber, Information Technology, Information Assurance, Computer Science, or any other related technical field may apply, but for the next level higher. Example: An applicant who currently has a Master’s in Computer Science would be eligible to apply for a PhD/Doctorate Program, but not another Master’s Program.

Additional information on the programs listed below can be found in follow-on sections of this document.

PhD

- Air Force Institute of Technology: (*Full-time / In-Resident ONLY*) *August 2024 or January 2025*
 - PhD in Computer Science
 - PhD in Electrical Engineering
 - PhD in Computer Engineering

Master's

- Air Force Institute of Technology: (*Full-time / In-Resident ONLY*) (*August 2024 or January 2025*)
 - Master of Science in Cyber Operations
 - Master of Science in Electrical Engineering
 - Master of Science in Computer Engineering
 - Master of Science in Computer Science
 - Master of Science in System Engineering (Cyber Systems)

Associate's

- Eastern New Mexico University – Ruidoso Branch (*Both Full-time / Part-time & In-residence / Distance² Learning*) (*August 2024 or January 2025*)
 - Associate of Science – Information System Cybersecurity
- Anne Arundel Community College (Distance Learning) (August 2024 or January 2025)
 - Information Assurance and Cybersecurity Associates Degree
- Rowan College at Burlington County (Distance Learning) (August 2024 or January 2025)
 - Associates of Applied Science in Cybersecurity

Other Programs

- Joint Cyber Analysis Course (JCAC) Partner Program (Active-Duty Military ONLY) (*August or September 2024*)
 - JCAC is housed at the Information Warfare Training Command Corry Station, Pensacola, Florida.
 - Utilizing pre-established National Security Agency (NSA) agreements, graduates of the JCAC program may transfer credits into an undergraduate or graduate program.
 - DoD CySP Program Office cannot assist interested military service members with acceptance to the JCAC Program.
- National Defense University and Partner University Program - Leadership Development Programs (Partner Programs) (LDP) (*Full-time / In-Residence*) (*August 2024 or January 2025*)
 - Cyber Leadership Development Program (Cyber LDP)
 - Chief Information Officer Leadership Development Program (CIO LDP)

² Distributed learning is synonymous with distance learning.

Obligations

All applicants will be required to sign a continued service agreement (CSA) (included as part of the online application). Retention students shall fulfill post-academic service obligations pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2200a. Program participants are obligated to maintain good standing in their degree programs, to continue as a program participant. If a program participant does not maintain a good standing in their degree program, they will be responsible for repaying the program costs for failure to complete the degree program satisfactorily and/or to fulfill the service commitment consistent with 10 U.S.C. 2200a(b)(2) and (3) and the policies of the Department and the respective Component. All required documents and agreements will be captured in the DoD CySP Retention Application.

Continued Service Agreement Requirements

- Members of the Military Services shall serve on active duty while fulfilling service obligations defined by their respective Component. While the service obligation is at the discretion of the respective Component, members of the military services may use the following times as a baseline:
 - 2 years for the Community College program.
 - 4 years for an undergraduate program (JCAC – only).
 - There is no undergraduate option outside of JCAC
 - 3-5 years for graduate programs (Graduate Certificate, Master’s, PhD, and Doctorate).
- DoD civilian employees shall sign a CSA with their parent organization or Component that complies with 10 U.S.C. 2200a, prior to commencement of their education, to continue service within the DoD upon conclusion of their education, for a period equal to:
 - 3 years for the Community College program.
 - 5 years for graduate programs (Graduate Certificate, Master’s, PhD, and Doctorate).
 - NOTE: The Supervisor may require additional service requirements. There is no undergraduate option for civilians.

Notification of Acceptance

Each application will go through a review process based on personal goal statements, and supervisor recommendations/endorsements. The process will also include a preliminary review by the identified academic program lead (AFIT, NDU CIC, JCAC Partner Institutions, and community colleges) to ensure acceptance into their institution. If during preliminary review, the applicant does not meet the requirements of the academic program, the application will be disqualified.

Based on the outcomes of the review process and funding levels, the DoD CIO in partnership with the DoD CIO Program Office will make selections. The DoD CySP Program Office will formally notify applicants through the online application on or about May 1, 2024.

If selected, applicants may be required to sign a Student Expectation Agreement, a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) waiver (required for release of transcripts), and other additional forms.

Applicant Responsibilities

All applicants are responsible for submitting an unclassified application through the DoD CySP Retention Application. Each package must include all items listed below. **Please redact any Personally Identifiable Information (PII).**

Each application package should be consistent of first- and second-level supervisor endorsement. The Supervisor shall ensure all applicants fulfill the specific academic and personnel development requirements (e.g., individual development plans). The applicant is responsible for submitting the nomination statement within the DoD CySP Retention Application. See section Supervisor Requirements.

Incomplete applications will be rejected, with no exceptions. Applicants should take the time to go over their application with their management chain and/or Supervisor to ensure the package is complete. Applicants must utilize the online DoD CySP Retention Application and submit applications by **February 01, 2024.**

Application required documents: (PII should be redacted)

Items listed below may be attached directly or completed as part of the online application. However, all items must be included to be considered for the scholarship program.

- Military or civilian personnel resume.
- Most recent SF-50 – Notification of Personnel Actions (Applies to DoD civilians only).
- Applicant’s personal goals statement.
- Signed CSA.
- Recommendation/Endorsement from the applicant’s first and second-level supervisor. Please note, that these recommendation/endorsement letters from the first and second-level supervisor are two separate documents (See Supervisor Endorsement section).

Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors (first and second level) must provide a recommendation/endorsement letter in the applicant’s submission, prior to the due date (February 1, 2024). Since no quotas have been allotted to the Components, it is important that application recommendation/endorsement letter

include enough information as to why the Supervisor is recommending/endorsing the applicant. Supervisors are responsible for the following:

- Submit supervisor endorsement, each endorsement should include the following information:
 - Highlight how the applicant's DoD CySP education will be used
 - Strategically identify how the Component plans to utilize this new cyber leader (identified positions, leadership roles, cyber vacancies, career development, etc.)
 - Determine and confirm each scholar met/achieved satisfactory or higher performance review within the past year
- Provide any required PCS costs associated with the degree program.
- Ensure administrative actions and requirements are processed (Time and Attendance, Personnel Actions, Annual Training, etc.)
- Ensure all applicants fulfill the specific academic and personnel development requirements (e.g., individual development plans).

DoD CySP Programs

Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT)

<https://www.afit.edu/>

AFIT offers Master of Science (MS) degrees with majors in Cyber Operations, Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Computer Science. The Cyber Operations major provides an in-depth study of defensive and offensive theory, tools, and techniques associated with protection and exploitation of information-based systems. The Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Computer Science majors allow for specialization in Cyber Security through a subset of courses from the Cyber Operations degree program. More information about these majors can be found at <https://www.afit.edu/ENG/programs.cfm>. Doctoral degree opportunities in Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, and Computer Science are also available.

AFIT also offers a MS degree in Systems Engineering with a domain specialization in Cyber Systems, which provides students with the prerequisite capabilities necessary to efficiently design, analyze, deploy, protect, and exploit cyber systems (e.g., the combination of people, processes, and technology). Focus areas include database development, cyber security, network defense, data analytics, and risk management.

All students are expected to start in the Fall (August 2024) due to course sequencing. Other start dates are possible but are handled on a case-by-case basis and require a waiver.

MS in Cyber Operations, Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Computer Science, and Systems Engineering (Cyber Systems):

- Full-time, in-residence only. MS students must complete thesis research and a written thesis.
- Requires 18 months for completion; an individual student's program may need to begin earlier (June) if prerequisite knowledge is needed.

PhD in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Computer Engineering:

- Full-time, in-residence only. PhD students must complete a doctoral dissertation.
- Requires three years to complete; an individual student's program may be extended if prerequisite knowledge is needed.

AFIT Requirements

Listed below are the minimum eligibility requirements for participation in the DoD CySP through AFIT.

- Civilian and military applicants may be of any GS or equivalent grade.
- MS applicants must meet the admission requirements listed at:
 - <https://www.afit.edu/ADMISSIONS/page.cfm?page=452>
 - PhD applicants must meet the admission requirements listed at:

Computer Engineering:	https://www.afit.edu/ENG/programs.cfm?a=view&D=10
Computer Science:	https://www.afit.edu/ENG/programs.cfm?a=view&D=12
Electrical Engineering:	https://www.afit.edu/ENG/programs.cfm?a=view&D=16

Questions concerning AFIT programs should be addressed to Lt Col Wayne Henry at (937) 255-3636, ext. 7243; DSN 785-3636, ext. 7243, or via email at wayne.henry@afit.edu.

National Defense University

College for Information and Cyberspace (NDU CIC)

<https://cic.ndu.edu/>

The NDU College of Information and Cyberspace (CIC) offers a wide spectrum of educational activities, services, and programs to prepare information leaders to play critical roles in national security in the Information Age. Whether in pursuit of the Master of Science, a Certificate, or a graduate level course for professional development—CIC students bring diverse perspectives to contribute to a rich and dynamic learning environment. They are motivated to learn and share knowledge, experience, and best practices. Students are encouraged to become better leaders and decision-makers and to master the tools of lifelong learning. Students, graduates, employers, leaders, and practitioners create a global learning community to foster innovation and creativity.

NDU CIC and NCAE-C Partner University Program: Selected scholars will complete the first part of their degree through the NDU CIC and then enter a partner university to complete the remaining degree requirements. Transfer agreements are currently being processed with National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (NCAE-C). It is expected that scholars will have 9 to 15 transfer credits into a NCAE-C partner program (Masters, PhD, or Doctorate).

Components may also include candidates holding a bachelor's degree or higher, who have completed one of the two NDU CIC Leadership Development Programs (LDP) in FY21 or later. If selected, these candidates will continue their studies (Masters, PhD, Doctorate) at a partner NCAE-C.

- **NCAE-C Partner University:** Upon successful completion of one of the NDU CIC LDPs requirements, students will continue their studies at a selected NCAE-C Partner University to complete their Master's, PhD, or Doctorate. Both full-time and part-time, as well as distance learning options will be available.
- Scholars entering the partner NCAE-C will need to meet all NCAE-C acceptance requirements. Acceptance in the DoD CySP does not automatically translate to acceptance by the partner NCAE-C. The scholars will receive 9, 12, or 15 transfer credits toward completion of their advanced degrees, dependent on the selected college/university. The degree the scholar earns varies by institution, but each degree will include a cyber-focus. DoD CySP Scholars may only pursue the degree identified by the DoD CySP Program Office. Scholars may only select from identified partner universities (list is forthcoming).

Once NCAE-C partner universities are identified, student will be encouraged to research the institution prior to starting the NCAE-C acceptance process. Scholars are also encouraged to attend any open houses either in person or virtual. There will be plenty of time given to select the follow-on NCAE-C university. It is the scholar's responsibility,

not that of the DoD CySP Program Office or the NDU CIC, to apply to the NCAE-C partner university. Additionally, the student should ensure that they are academically eligible for acceptance into the university. The DoD CySP may assist and make recommendations on NCAE-C partner university.

- DoD CySP Retention Scholars will have a maximum of 2 years to complete a Master's, or 4 years to complete a PhD/Doctorate at the follow-on NCAE-C university

NDU CIC Leadership Development Programs:

- **Cyber (Cyber LDP)** - is an Executive Leadership Program designed to focus on the integration of cyberspace and national security. The program is designed to provide a broad range of leaders with a deeper understanding of how effective leadership in the cyber domain is pivotal to the success of U.S. and international security. This intensive 14-week program assembles National Defense University Faculty, senior government policy makers, and technical experts to provide participants with competencies in cyberspace and national security. The educational experience includes extensive seminar instruction, site visits, travel, and practicum. This program emphasizes developing knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with the leadership in the cyber workforce. Successful completion provides graduates with five graduate course equivalents and a graduate certificate in Cyber Leadership.
 - Full-time, 14-week in-residence program
 - Bachelor's degree (3.0 GPA minimum)
 - GS-13, O-4, equivalent and above
 - <https://cic.ndu.edu/Shared-Media-Manager/Academics/Graduate-Programs/Cyber-Leadership-Program/>
- **Chief Information Officer (CIO LDP)** - is the College's flagship resident program for rising senior-level managers and leaders responsible for promoting and attaining national and international security goals through the strategic use of information and information technology as identified in the CIO competencies. This prestigious program is administered in an intensive and highly interactive fourteen-week forum. The student-centered educational experience emphasizes developing leadership skills and abilities while learning CIO content through completion of five courses. Students who complete the 14-week intensive program will receive a CIO graduate certificate.
 - Full-time, 14-week in-residence program
 - Bachelor's degree (3.0 GPA minimum)
 - GS-13, O-4, equivalent and above
 - <https://cic.ndu.edu/Shared-Media-Manager/Academics/Graduate-Programs/Chief-Information-Officer-Program>

Joint Cyber Analytics Course (JCAC)

JCAC is an intensive 126-day (26 week) Course of Instruction designed to prepare service members for the Cyberspace Mission. The course covers a wide variety of topics from basic computer fundamentals to advanced cyber operations (CO) topics. JCAC utilizes virtualized systems and networks to provide students with a hands-on experience that closely mimics CO scenarios that would occur in the mission. JCAC graduates support Cyber Mission Force work roles.

Uniformed military members who will graduate from JCAC or who have graduated in the past 4 years may apply to the DoD CySP and transfer JCAC credits to one of the following partner programs:

Capitol Technology University:

- BS – Cyber and Information Security
- BS – Cyber Analytics
- BS – Management of Cyber and Information Technology
- MS – Cyber and Information Technology
- MS – Cyber Analytics
- BS – Cybersecurity

Dakota State University:

- BS – Cyber Operations
- MS – Applied Computer Science with Specialization in Cyber Operations University of Maryland Global Campus:
- BS – Cybersecurity
- BS – Computer Science
- MS – Cybersecurity Technology

University of Texas at San Antonio:

- BBA – Cybersecurity
- BS – Computer Science – concentration in computer security
- BS – Computer Science – concentration in cyber operations
- MS – IT concentration in Cybersecurity
- MS – Management of Technology
- PhD – Cyber Security (resident only)

University of West Florida:

- BS – Computing and Information Science – concentration in Cybersecurity

The DoD CySP is utilizing a partnership program between specific National Centers of

Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (NCAE-Cs) and the JCAC program. **The DoD CySP cannot assist interested military service members with acceptance to the JCAC program.** Additional NCAE-Cs may be added in the future.

DoD CySP Community College Program

The Fiscal Year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 115-91) required the DoD to establish a community college scholarship program within the DoD CySP. Permanent DoD civilian and uniformed employees seeking to enhance their cyber skills and knowledge may pursue an associate degree at a community college or college/university offering 2-year degrees designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Security (NCAE-C).

Students participating in this program will have up to four years to complete an associate degree. Ideal candidates will have earned previous academic credits that can be applied toward completing their degree. Most programs offer experienced-based credits. In addition, schools may offer credit for specific technical training received. An excellent resource is the Department of Defense Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (DoD COOL): <https://www.cool.osd.mil/>

The DoD CySP Program Office can assist the applicant with identifying an institution's point of contact. For questions, please contact AskCySP@nsa.gov.