

Applying for a position with the Federal Government can be quite different than applying for positions in the private sector. This Ready Reference includes information on writing a Federal résumé and other need-to-know terminology.

## Selected Terminology

**Career-Conditional Appointment**—the status of a new hire for the first three years of service.

**Career Appointment**—the status which is automatically awarded a career-conditional appointment after three years of successful service; preference is given for career appointees in job selection.

**Competitive Service**—positions based on fair, open, and a merit-based process. Most civil service jobs fall in this category and necessitates that the applicant compete in an open examination (evaluation) under OPM procedures and is then officially selected by an agency for a permanent competitive service position.

**Excepted Appointment**—positions that are outside the competitive service which does not lead to competitive status.

**General Schedule**—the payment system in place for most white-collar federal jobs; positions are identified by GS level from GS-1 to GS-15.

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)**—qualities required to perform the duties of a given position, written as a narrative to answer questions that could be asked in the interview.

**Outstanding Scholar Program**—the program in place to recruit entry or near-entry level candidates based on outstanding college performance; 3.5 GPA or higher may enable being hired without a competitive process.

**Public Trust Designation**—positions requiring applicants to undergo a background check.

**Qualifications Standards Operating Manual**—OPM's guide to qualifications required for a particular job at a specified grade level.

**Quality Ranking Factors**—criteria used to evaluate applicants to help determine those most qualified and usually found in the vacancy announcement.

**Rule of Three**—the top three eligible applicants based on merit; in the event of a tie, preference factors are considered.

**Status**—preference given to the following: veteran, spouse, widow, mother, disabled, graduate with 3.5 GPA, former Peace Corps. Extra points are given on the application as well as higher retention in the event of reduction of work force.

**Superior Academic Achievement**—notation given to applicants not possessing required experience or education provided they graduated in the upper third of the college class, have a GPA of 3.0 or better or belong to a nationally recognized honors society (i.e., Phi Beta Kappa).

**Term Position**—one which is for a limited period of time, from one to four years.