



Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Common Terms on Job Opportunity Announcements

The following information is intended to assist you in understanding TSA job opportunity announcements (JOAs). This list is not exhaustive, but it should provide you with a helpful overview of common hiring terms. Before you take the time to start the application process, please review a JOA very carefully. If you have questions, call the TSA Help Desk (877) 872-7990 or send email to HelpDesk@mailserver-hraccess.tsa.dhs.gov. HRAccess Help Desk Hours: M-F 7 AM-10 PM ET, Sat 11 AM-3 PM ET, Sun 12 PM-4 PM ET

TERM	DEFINITION
All U. S. Citizens	This means the announcement is open to everyone in the public who wishes to apply and is a United States (U.S.) citizen/national.
Basic Trial Period	A period of time during which a supervisor monitors a new employee’s performance and conduct to ensure his/her performance and conduct are at a sufficient level for continued employment.
Competencies	A measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics that an individual needs in order to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.
Competitive Service versus Excepted Service	There are two classes of non-executive positions in the federal government: 1) those that are in the competitive civil service, and 2) those that are in the excepted service. Competitive service positions are subject to the civil service laws passed by Congress. Excepted service positions are not subject to the appointment, pay and classification rules of the competitive service.
Competitive Selection Procedures	Using competitive selection procedures means considering candidates who have applied to a job opportunity announcement, and evaluating qualified candidates against job-related selection criteria. Competitive selection procedures must be applied for permanent internal assignments (i.e., appointments, promotions, reassignments, and demotions), unless there is a prescribed exception to competitive procedures.
Competitive Temporary Appointment	A time-limited appointment for a specific period of no less than 2 years and no more than 5 years, made under TSA’s competitive procedures, i.e., a job opportunity announcement that was widely advertised; was opened to all U.S. citizens; applied a competitive process for evaluating applicants; and provided veterans’ preference to eligible applicants at the time of referral.



Core Compensation System	TSA's compensation management program covering all non-TSES (Transportation Security Executive Service) employees that outlines the policies, procedures, and guidelines TSA will use to determine the compensation of employees in covered positions. Positions in the Core Compensation System are in Pay Plan SV.
Direct Hire Authority	An appointing (hiring) authority that provides for the hiring of a qualified individual without regard to 5 U.S.C. 3309 through 3318 (i.e., veterans' preference) or use of competitive appointment procedures when a critical hiring need or severe shortage of candidates exists.
Desirable Factors	Competencies and/or knowledge, skills, and/or abilities (KSAs) that, in addition to basic qualification requirements, could be expected to significantly enhance the effectiveness of the person selected for the position and may be identified and used to rank candidates as part of a competitive process.
Disability	An intellectual impairment, a severe physical impairment, or a psychiatric impairment, which seriously limits one or more of an individual's functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills).
Disabilities Hiring Authority	An appointing authority that provides for the hiring of individuals with intellectual disabilities, severe physical disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities, without regard to veterans preference provisions or TSA's competitive hiring process. Severe physical disabilities include but are not limited to blindness, deafness, paralysis, missing limbs, epilepsy, and dwarfism.
Emergency Essential	An employee who is not dismissed or excused from duty if an emergency arises because the employee encumbers a position that management has identified as necessary for continuity of TSA operations during emergencies. The emergency employee designation may vary according to the nature of the emergency event.
Interchange Agreement	TSA is an Excepted Service agency exempt from most of Title 5 United States Code, including regulations which apply to displaced Federal employees (CTAP/ICTAP) of other agencies, and employment with TSA does not confer "Competitive Status" that generally results from selection and service in Competitive Service agencies. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has established an Interchange Agreement, which allows most permanent TSA employees to apply and be considered for vacancies in Competitive Service agencies. Information from OPM on this or other Interchange Agreements is available at: http://www.opm.gov .
Job Category	Occupations encompassing similar work grouped together within TSA's Core Compensation System.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)	Are a list of special qualifications and personal attributes that you need to have for a particular job. These are the unique requirements that TSA wants to find in applicants for a job. KSAs are defined as the factors that identify the better candidates from a group of people basically qualified for a position. How well an applicant can show that he or she matches the position’s defined KSAs will determine whether that person will be seriously considered for a job.
Permanent Internal Assignments	Appointments (including conversions, reinstatements, transfers), promotions, reassignments, and demotions (or change to lower band) of individuals to permanent TSA positions through internal selection procedures.
Recruitment Sources	<p>You may select one or more that applies to you and express how you want your application to be considered.</p> <p>External – All U.S. Citizens may apply. Under the external recruitment source, applicants are ranked using TSA’s Category Grouping procedures and Veterans’ Preference is afforded to eligible applicants. (You will be given a new appointment if selected under this recruitment source, even if you are a current Federal employee.)</p> <p>Internal - Current TSA permanent employees OR competitive temporary employees (who obtained their temporary appointment through a competitive process) are eligible under this recruitment source. (Veterans’ Preference does not apply and you are not required to submit an SF-50.)</p> <p>Status - Former TSA permanent OR competitive temporary employees; AND current, permanent civilian Federal employees of other agencies OR former, permanent civilian employees of any Federal agency (which includes Executive agencies under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. § 105, the U.S. Postal Service, or the Postal Rate Commission) are eligible under this recruitment source. (Veterans’ Preference does not apply. If you are selecting this recruitment source, please remember to submit your most current SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, or comparable document that provides proof of your current or former permanent appointment status as a Federal employee.)</p>
Reinstatement	Former, permanent civilian employees of any Federal agency which includes Executive agencies under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. § 105, the United States Postal Service, or the Postal Rate Commission); and former, temporary TSA employees who obtained their temporary appointment through a competitive process, may be eligible for reinstatement.
Selective Placement Factor	There are some positions where specific qualifications are absolutely required because a person cannot perform successfully in the position without such qualifications. These qualifications may include specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) or federal or state licenses or certifications.

Specialized Experience	A description of the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that you must possess to perform the work of a position. TSA explains specialized experience in the qualifications section of the job opportunity announcement.
Status Eligibles	Former TSA permanent OR competitive temporary employees; AND current, permanent civilian Federal employees of other agencies OR former, permanent civilian employees of any Federal agency (which includes Executive agencies under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. § 105, the U.S. Postal Service, or the Postal Rate Commission).
Veterans' Preference	Veterans' preference can be confusing. Not all veterans are considered eligible for preference for the purpose of federal civilian employment, and not all active duty service counts towards veterans' preference. Only veterans discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions are eligible for veterans' preference. This means you must have been discharged under an honorable or general discharge. If you are a "retired member of the Armed Forces," you are not included in the definition of preference eligible unless you are a disabled veteran, OR you retired below the rank of major or its equivalent. There are basically two types of preference eligibles: disabled (10-point preference eligible) and non-disabled (5-point preference eligibles). For detailed information or to see if you qualify, please visit Feds Hire Vets' Veterans' Preference page.
Veterans' employment Opportunity Act of 1998 (VEOA)-Like Hiring Authority	When issuing a job opportunity announcement with an area of consideration which is wider than TSA-only, but is not open to the general public/all United States citizens, it is the policy of TSA to accept applications from veterans' preference eligibles and veterans who either have been or will be honorably discharged from the armed forces after completing at least three (3) years of continuous active duty service by the closing date of the announcement. This policy simply provides additional opportunities for veterans to apply for TSA vacancies that would otherwise not be open to them. Such candidates will be considered in the same way as other applicants: veterans' preference is not a factor in the selection process under TSA's Permanent Internal Assignment Policy.