



# One Option For Doctoral Students: Federal Employment

From Ph.D. to Public  
Servant:



*Tips on obtaining federal  
employment.*

## The good news:



- Federal, state and local governments are almost always hiring.
- Job security and benefits are generally good.
- Job applications are usually handled on a single web site.

## The not-so-good news:

- Job applications are not evaluated individually.
- You must complete every step of the application process completely and correctly.



## Other considerations:

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- There may be age or citizenship restrictions on certain positions.
- Background checks (criminal, personal and financial) are usually required.
- Duty location and hours are generally not negotiable.

## Let's start at the top:

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<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>

and

<https://www.applicationmanager.gov>

*are the most important web sites you will use. For most applicants, they are the only web sites you will use in your applications.*

## Typical Job Listing:

**Job Title: Management & Program Analyst**  
**Department: Department of Homeland Security**  
**Agency: Customs and Border Protection**

- **SALARY RANGE: 71,674.00 - 110,104.00 USD /year**
- **OPEN PERIOD: Friday, February 12, 2010 to Wednesday, August 11, 2010**
- **SERIES & GRADE: GS-0343-13/14**
- **POSITION INFORMATION: Full Time Career**
- **PROMOTION POTENTIAL: 14**
- **DUTY LOCATIONS: Multiple duty locations - [click for more info](#)**
- **WHO MAY BE CONSIDERED: United States Citizens**

## Do you want to apply for this job?

- Focus on the promotion potential -- the highest salary grade you can achieve in the position -- not just the starting salary.
- Most agencies require you to work your way up. There are few opportunities to get an initial appointment above the GS-7 level, although some GS-9 or GS-11 positions are available in specialized or technical positions.

## *What is GS pay?*

Click here for 2010 Salary Table:

<http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/html/RUS.asp>

Remember, salary adjustments are made for various locations. Pay adjustments are also made for night work, weekends and holidays.



## *GS Pay Scale for 2010:*

| <b>Grade</b> | <b>Step 1</b> | <b>Step 2</b> | <b>Step 3</b> | <b>Step 4</b> |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>5</b>     | 31,315        | 32,359        | 33,402        | 34,445        |
| <b>7</b>     | 38,790        | 40,084        | 41,377        | 42,671        |
| <b>9</b>     | 47,448        | 49,029        | 50,611        | 52,192        |
| <b>11</b>    | 57,408        | 59,321        | 61,234        | 63,148        |
| <b>12</b>    | 68,809        | 71,102        | 73,396        | 75,689        |

## Before you apply, make sure you meet the qualifications:

- Most jobs call for a general set of skills, such as the following:

*“Experience with budget justifications based on staffing, facilities, and equipment.”*

- However, many jobs also require other qualifications. Make sure you take note of these:

*“Candidates must be United States citizens and present proof of citizenship, if selected.”*

## *Pay attention to details!*

*If you don't meet the required qualifications, or fail to answer the questions on the application correctly, your application will be rejected.*

*Unfortunately, you cannot amend your application after the deadline has passed.*



## *Think creatively, but always tell the truth.*

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It is easy to convert academic accomplishments into job qualifications, but don't exaggerate your claims:

|                         |   |                         |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Dissertation</i>     | = | <i>Research project</i> |
| <i>Fellowships</i>      | = | <i>Grants</i>           |
| <i>In-service talks</i> | = | <i>Public outreach</i>  |

## [applicationmanager.gov](http://applicationmanager.gov)

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- You will actually apply for a position through this web site.
- Typically, you will answer a standard set of questions and upload a resume.
- The resume is stored for use on other applications.

## Again, pay attention to the details:

- You may be required to take an initial screening exam (i.e. a standardized test). You will be told in advance of its content and format.
- You may have to submit additional documents for a tentative job offer.
- You may have to undergo medical, drug, criminal and security screenings.
- *Never forget to meet the deadlines!*

## Interviews



- The job announcement should specify whether an interview is required.
- Interviews may be pre-scripted telephone interviews, scenario-based personal interviews, or some other format. You will almost certainly know what the format is prior to the interview.
- Typically, interviews for government positions are much more rigid and scripted than interviews in the private sector.





## Getting a job offer:



- It is difficult to get feedback during the application process.
- *Remember that job offers depend on budgetary concerns, which often change.*
- If you know someone at the agency, ask for information.

## Avoid these common mistakes:

- Make sure you list a current phone numbers and e-mail address in your application.
- Never miss a deadline; always submit *every required* form or document.
- Keep a rolling stock of applications, not just one at a time.



**Good luck!**

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Persistence pays off.