

# Recruiter's News

Recruiting for the ARS Future!

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## STEP vs. SCEP

Do you know when you should be hiring students under the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) versus the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)? Understanding the difference between these two appointment types will help you make decisions when hiring student employees for your program area.

The Student Educational Employment Program provides Federal employment opportunities for students who are enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program of study leading to a degree, diploma or certificate, at an accredited high school, technical or vocational school, college, university, or graduate or professional school while taking at least a half-time course load. Following is a brief description of the two components of this program:

The **Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)** offers temporary employment for students ranging from summer jobs to positions lasting as long as the individual is still qualified as a student. STEP appointments are particularly appropriate for meeting short-term hiring or seasonal employment needs.

Students are hired on temporary appointments not to exceed 1 year or for shorter periods of time. There are no restrictions on the number of times this authority may be used to fill a position, the number of times a student may be appointed, or the number of days worked in a year.

All STEP employees earn sick leave and those with appointments lasting 90 days or more earn annual leave. Employees with a year of service are eligible for health insurance at full cost (there is no government contribution). STEP employees are not eligible for conversion to permanent or term appointments.

The **Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)** offers students the opportunity to gain valuable work experience in a position that is directly related to their academic field of study. A SCEP appointment requires a written commitment by the student, the supervisor (or employing agency), and the educational institution. SCEP appointments are particularly appropriate for meeting long-range hiring or specific employment needs when the pool of available applicants for permanent positions is lacking or when the applicant pool lacks diversity.

SCEP students are hired on an excepted appointment and may serve under this appointment for up to 120 days following completion of their academic requirements. SCEP students serve a one-year probationary period and their performance is rated just as you would rate a permanent employee. SCEP students not converted to permanent employment by the end of the 120 days following completion of their academic requirements must be terminated.

SCEP employees are eligible for health and life insurance, retirement, and leave accrual on the same basis as career or career-conditional employees with comparable tours of duty.

Unlike STEP, SCEP appointments offer students the possibility of noncompetitive conversion to career, career-conditional, or term employment in the same office, agency, or in other Federal agencies upon successful completion of all academic program requirements. When establishing and filling a SCEP position, you will be asked to identify a target position in which you will noncompetitively convert the student upon completion of their education. While noncompetitive conversion is not a guarantee, SCEP appointments should be used only when there is a good likelihood that the student will be converted to a permanent position.

Annually you should:

- Evaluate your SCEP students' performance;
- Verify that your SCEP student is still in good academic standing; and
- Ensure that your SCEP student is still pursuing an academic major that is directly related to the position they are in.

## Tips for Marketing Your Employment Opportunities

Your Human Resources (HR) Specialist, as a normal activity, will prepare your vacancy announcement after conducting discussions with you. Once the announcement is ready to post, your HR specialist will ensure that your job announcement is posted on the USAJOBS web site, as well as on the ARS web site job listing section. It is your responsibility, as a supervisor, to market your employment opportunities.

The first step in your marketing efforts should be to identify the applicant pool you are trying to reach. For example, if you are recruiting for a PhD level scientist, your applicant pool will be different than for an administrative type position. Each time you are recruiting to fill a position you should define the pool of candidates you are trying to reach and establish a marketing strategy for the position.

To ensure that your position announcement gets broad visibility by your applicant pool, you should consider the following suggestions to market your employment opportunity:

- Contact your Area Civil Rights Manager for ideas to promote your job announcement with potential minority applicants. Make sure your Area Civil Rights Manager has a copy of your vacancy announcement to promote on your behalf.
- Ask your Area Civil Rights Manager to mail copies of your job announcement to the USDA liaison officers working on college/university campuses.
- Place ads in appropriate scientific journals, newspapers, and minority publications.
- Place ads through online job boards hosted by scientific professional societies, minority-based organizations, and colleges/universities.
- Share your vacancy announcement with employees in your work unit and ask for their assistance in promoting the employment opportunity.
- Let colleagues and peers (both in and outside the agency) know that you are recruiting and ask for their assistance in promoting the opportunity.
- Mail copies of your job announcement to appropriate departments in colleges and universities in your recruiting area (if you are limiting to local commuting area) and to relevant departments in all colleges and universities for nationwide searches.
- Mail copies of your vacancy announcement to your local vocational rehabilitation office(s) and veterans organizations.
- Identify and mail copies of your vacancy announcement to relevant student organizations on college and university campuses.
- Mail copies of your announcement directly to diversity/minority and disability offices at colleges and universities.
- Set up an account to post your jobs on local college and university job boards. Most offer this service for free or a small fee. Search the resume books, identify potential applicants, and mail copies of the announcement to these potential applicants.
- Publicize your vacancy with alumni associations of colleges and universities.
- Publicize your vacancy in relevant e-mail groups to which you belong.
- Time your announcement closing date to coincide with professional society meetings you will be

attending and post the announcement on bulletin boards at the meeting.

- Establish an account and post your job announcement with America's Job Bank <[www.americasjobbank.com](http://www.americasjobbank.com)>. Search the resumes and mail a copy of the announcement to potential applicants identified in your resume search.

Additional suggestions for marketing your employment opportunities can be found on the "Recruiters Resource" web site. You can access the Recruiters Resource web site from the ARS Careers web site <[www.ars.usda.gov/careers](http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers)>, right column under the heading of "Careers Links," or at <<http://arsnet.usda.gov/HR/recruiters/index.html>>.

## Useful Web Sites

ARS Careers

[www.ars.usda.gov/careers](http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers)

Recruiters Resources

<http://arsnet.usda.gov/HR/recruiters/index.html>

Association of College Honor Societies

<http://www.achsntl.org/>

Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities – Summary Report 2002

<http://www.norc.uchicago.edu/issues/sed-2002.pdf>

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