This document is provided for historical purposes only. Transition to DCIPS Grades by all affected components was completed in April 2012.

DCIPS Transition - FAQs

The *Frequently Asked Questions* chapter of the Transition Guidance provided FAQ's as of March 15, 2011. This is a living document. Throughout the DCIPS transition period, we will continue to add new FAQ's as they are identified by the date they are posted.

22 April 2011

Q. Will HR practitioners use current DCIPS alignment (classification) standards to transition positions and employees to DCIPS Grades?

A. Yes, just as when positions were aligned to DCIPS Bands, the DCIPS standard that is outlined in DCIPS Volume 2007 will be used by components as the common process to align positions and employees to grades. A revised version of this Volume is in coordination and provides the necessary information and process to properly identify the appropriate mission category, work category, and work level for each position and, for this transition, to determine the grade level of each position. To make this additional determination, the Enterprise adopted the standard that was initially created for the Civilian Intelligence Personnel Management System (CIPMS), the personnel management system that was a precursor to DCIPS and applicable to the intelligence positions of the Military Services. This standard is now referred to as the DCIPS standard.

31 March 2011

Q. I was on a career ladder when my component converted to DCIPS pay bands and I am still on that ladder. What will happen to me when my component transitions to DCIPS grades?

A. Documented career ladders in effect when components converted to DCIPS pay bands were continued while under DCIPS pay bands. In the event that a career ladder that was continued at the point of a component's conversion to DCIPS pay bands has not ended, the career ladder will be permitted to continue in DCIPS grades.

Q. What happens to my developmental progression program?

A. Developmental progression refers to the expected progression of employees assigned to the professional work category in pay band 2, entry and developmental work level (1). This progression provides for the non-competitive progression through the band and "graduation" into the full

performance band and work level 2. The plans are component-specific and will be continued upon transition to DCIPS grades, as they were during the DCIPS INTERIM period. Because developmental progression is component-specific and often employee-specific, questions should be addressed to your component transition point of contact.

Q. Can I ask for reconsideration of the alignment of my position in DCIPS grades before transition?

A. No. Employees remain aligned to DCIPS bands until the transition to DCIPS grades is effected. After alignment to DCIPS grades, employees who believe their position was not appropriately aligned may request reconsideration of the alignment through component reconsideration processes. Components processes will be communicated and available to all employees. Please see page 13 of the DCIPS Transition Guidance for additional information on reconsideration of the alignment decision.

Q. When and how will I be informed of my new alignment under DCIPS grades?

A. Components are required to inform employees of their alignment to the DCIPS occupational structure, including their alignment to a specific grade, in advance of the transition. All DCIPS employees will be provided information identified on a standard template to ensure that all employees receive the same information about the transition and their new alignment to the DCIPS occupational structure. Information required to be provided includes mission category, work category, work level, grade and step, and salary, in addition to other information. Components will determine how far in advance they will provide this information to employees.

Q. Is there a special reconsideration process for alignment decisions resulting from transition to DCIPS grades?

A. Components are required to have an alignment (i.e., Classification) reconsideration process in effect at all times. There is currently a reconsideration process at all components, and these processes will continue after transition to DCIPS grades. In addition to the current processes, components have the option of creating special processes specifically for reconsiderations related to the transition to DCIPS grades. For example, these transition related processes may provide for expedited handling of transition-related reconsideration requests, and may be available for a limited time period after transition to DCIPS grades. Component points of contact will be able to provide information specific to each component's process or processes.

15 March 2011

Q. What authority permits this transition to DCIPS Grades?

A. Title 10 USC 1601-1614 provides authority to the Secretary of Defense to establish positions, appoint personnel, and fix rates of pay for Defense Intelligence positions in the Department of Defense. The specific format of the system is not stipulated.

Q. Why are we transitioning to DCIPS Grades?

A. The Secretary of Defense made the decision to transition all Defense Intelligence employees currently in DCIPS pay bands, with the exception of those at NGA, to DCIPS Grades. His decision was based on input from Component and Department leadership, the Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and our congressional oversight committees. The Secretary's decision does not represent abandonment of DCIPS and its fundamental tenets of unifying the Defense Intelligence Enterprise within a performance-driven culture. However, excluding NGA, future Defense Intelligence base pay increases will not be directly linked to performance and employees will be aligned to the DCIPS graded structure. The heart of the DCIPS program will stay intact, including the occupational structure, common performance management system, and bonuses tied to performance. We also will implement NAPA recommendations for continually improving DCIPS.

Q. When are we transitioning to DCIPS Grades?

A. Components will transition their entire workforces on an effective date selected in coordination with the USD(I) that will be contingent on 1) final approval by the Department of all DCIPS policies updated due to transition to DCIPS Grades, and 2) achievement of all readiness conditions required.

Q. How do we treat employees joining our Component while we plan for the transition to DCIPS Grades?

A. All employees hired or reassigned into DCIPS Components prior to the Component's transition date will enter on duty in the Component at the DCIPS pay band appropriate for the position to which he or she is being assigned. Employees will be aligned to the appropriate mission category, work category and work level for their positions. DCIPS INTERIM policy of aligning employees to a GGE will continue until Components transition to DCIPS Grades.

Q. What information do we share with our employees regarding transition to DCIPS Grades?

A. It is DCIPS policy that Components will be as transparent as possible in sharing information regarding the transition to the DCIPS graded structure with their workforces. Information appropriate for wide distribution should be provided to employees as soon as practicable. At a minimum, Components should provide transition timelines, processes and information on position alignment under DCIPS Grades, including DCIPS grade and step. Components should include information on how transition will occur, e.g., whether transition will be effected as a mechanical position-based process or through a manual individual position-based process, and information

about the process that will be used for making decisions on placement. Employees should receive this information in advance of the transition to DCIPS Grades. Standard template language has been developed with input from the DCIPS Components for the formal notification to employees of their alignment under DCIPS Grades.

Q. How do we answer questions from employees whose salary is above the step 10 rate of their new DCIPS grade?

A. Provided an employee's salary did not exceed the rate for level IV of the Executive Schedule prior to enactment of NDAA FY2010, they were not placed on retained pay under DCIPS INTERIM and this will continue as we transition to DCIPS Grades. This means these employees will receive 100% of any General Pay Increase and any increases to Local Market Supplements or Targeted Local Market Supplements but cannot receive other pay increases such as WGIs. Employees whose basic salary does not exceed the rate for level IV of the Executive Schedule, or whose base pay exceeds the step 12 rate of their grade will be placed on retained pay. Under retained pay, employees are not eligible for scheduled step increases or awards that result in salary increases, but do receive 50% of any increase to the maximum of the employee's rate range (in this case the equivalent to the step 12 rate of the employee's grade). Employees in a retained pay status, as well as those whose salaries are over the step 10 rate, are still eligible for bonuses and other awards in accordance with DCIPS policy and Component guidance on the receipt of such awards provided the awards do not result in employee's exceeding applicable pay caps.

Q. After converting to DCIPS pay bands, pay was permitted to exceed the statutory pay cap (level IV of the Executive Schedule) by 5%. Does this higher cap still apply to DCIPS?

A. Unfortunately, no. DCIPS adopted this special provision that was included as a part of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). With the termination of NSPS, and that special provision, DCIPS no longer has the authority to offer this extended pay cap. Employees who were permitted to exceed the statutory pay cap by 5% have been placed on retained pay so as to not decrease their pay.

Q. I have not had any changes to my position since my Component converted to DCIPS pay bands. Is my DCIPS grade simply the grade that I held at the time of conversion?

A. Generally yes, but there will be exceptions. In either a mechanical position-based or a manual individual position-based transition, if there have been no significant changes to the duties and responsibilities of your position, you generally should transition to the grade you held at the time of conversion to DCIPS. However, if there have been changes to your position through reassignment, assignment of new responsibilities, or other events, your DCIPS grade at transition will be based on the DCIPS grade assigned to your position of record at the time of transition.

Q. My position is aligned to DCIPS Pay Band 5; will it be aligned to a DCIPS graded position at the GG-15 level?

A. For Components utilizing the mechanical position-based transition, the answer is yes, because the DCIPS occupational structure provides that Pay Band 5 encompasses only GG-15, and this transition method provides that positions cannot be aligned to a DCIPS grade that is lower or higher than the DCIPS grade(s) encompassed within the assigned DCIPS pay band. As a result, all Pay Band 5 positions will transition to GG-15, work level 4. Mission category, work category and work level will remain the same as they do not change as a result of transition to DCIPS Pay Bands. Employees in Components using a manual individual position-based process will need to refer to guidance specific to and issued by their Components.

Q. How do I know what grade my position will be under DCIPS Grades?

A. At this point, there is no way to specifically know until your Component has prepared documentation for alignment at transition and determined the appropriate grade for each position. As a rule, though, employees in Components using a mechanical position-based transition will be aligned under DCIPS Grades to a grade encompassed by the pay band they are currently assigned to and at the same work level.

Employees in Components using a manual individual position-based process will need to refer to guidance specific to and issued by their Component.

Q. Are GGEs considered when assigning grades?

A. No. As noted in the DCIPS INTERIM guidance, GGEs were established solely for the purpose of determining waiting periods for Periodic Increases while under DCIPS INTERIM. They are not classifications of people or positions. As noted above, the Defense Intelligence Components will transition to DCIPS Grades using a position-based transition. This means that positions will be assigned to DCIPS Grades based on the work assigned, and employees will be assigned to the DCIPS grade of their current position.

Q. What will happen to Periodic Increases?

A. Periodic Increases are similar to within-grade increases (WGIs) under the GS/GG system, but Periodic Increases apply only under DCIPS INTERIM. As Components transition to DCIPS Grades, they will resume paying WGIs, and Periodic Increases will no longer be necessary. Under DCIPS Grades, WGIs will be paid up to the step 10 of each grade, applying the same waiting periods, one, two or three years, used by the General Schedule.

Q. What if my salary does not clearly align to a step once my position and DCIPS grade are determined?

A. Within the DCIPS graded structure, DCIPS employees must align to a grade and step, with the exception of those who are above the step 10 of their grade. The Secretary of Defense committed that no one shall suffer a loss of, or decrease in, pay as a result of transition to DCIPS Grades so employees not aligned to a step will be aligned to the next higher step.

Q. Does the alignment to the next step change my Date of Last Equivalent Increase (DLEI)?

A. No. While the Within-Grade Increase Buy-In (WGI Buy-In) did change the DLEI at the time of conversion to DCIPS pay bands, because employees were being bought in to a system that would not have tenure-based step increases, the alignment to a step for the purpose of transition to DCIPS Grades will not change the DLEI.

Q. When we transition to DCIPS Grades, will I be limited in competing for promotions to the next grade, or can I skip a grade or two?

A. Under DCIPS Grades, as with DCIPS pay bands, promotions are based on qualifications for the position. The natural progression is from one grade to the next; however, employees who are eligible, based on qualifications, experience, knowledge, etc., may apply for any position for which they are qualified.

Q. Will we have time-in-grade requirements for promotion under DCIPS Grades?

A. No. As noted above, DCIPS is a qualifications-based system, and employees are eligible for consideration for new positions based on qualifications, experience, knowledge, etc.

Q. How are promotions under DCIPS Grades calculated?

A. Under the DCIPS pay-setting rules, the employee's current rate of base pay is increased by the equivalent of two steps of the employee's current DCIPS grade and the new rate of base pay is established at the next DCIPS grade/step that is equal to or exceeds that rate.

Q. How will the transition to DCIPS Grades be handled?

A. The DCIPS position-based transition is driven by the work employees are assigned to perform. The transition to DCIPS Grades is a two-step process under either the mechanical or the manual individual position-based transition process. First, the appropriate DCIPS grade is determined for the position following guidance contained in Chapter 2 of this Transition Guidance, and Volume 2007. Second, the employee is aligned to the appropriate grade of their official position of record. Once the employee's DCIPS grade is determined, pay will be set based on the guidance in Chapter 3 – Setting Pay Upon Transition to the DCIPS Graded Structure.

Q. Does transition to DCIPS Grades impact performance management?

A. Generally, no, but all should be aware of a few situations where performance management may be impacted through transition. DCIPS Volume 2011 provides timelines for the performance management cycles and provides the minimum rating period as 90 days; selection of transition timelines should consider the on-going performance management cycle requirements. Those Components using the mechanical position-based transition process will not see any required changes to performance management because alignment to mission categories, work categories or work levels will not change as a result of transition. Those Components using the manual individual position-based process may have situations where the current alignment to mission category, work category, occupational series, or work level changes, thus requiring changes to the current performance plan to support the new alignment.