



Schedule Policy/Career: What it Means for You as a Human Resources Manager - Updated June 8, 2026

Quick Reference Guide

Schedule Policy/Career (Schedule P/C) is a career, non-political schedule in the excepted service for certain confidential or policy-influencing positions that are not in the Senior Executive Service (SES).

The chart below highlights where Schedule P/C and other career excepted service positions follow the same practices and where key rules differ.

Topic	Schedule Policy/Career	Other Career Excepted Service
Hiring procedures	Positions moved to Schedule P/C continue to be filled through either competitive service procedures or the procedures that applied to their prior excepted service schedule, if applicable.	Varies by schedule and appointing authority.
Trial period	Not subject to a trial period.	Varies by schedule and appointing authority.
Competitive status	If an employee with competitive status is moved to Schedule P/C, the employee retains that status. Employees in competitive service probationary periods at the time that their position is moved into Schedule P/C will earn competitive status after one year of service in that position. Employees otherwise obtain competitive status after two years, if hired using competitive merit hiring procedures.	In general, excepted service employees do not earn competitive status. If an employee had competitive status prior to entering the excepted service, the employee retains that status.
Performance-based actions (5 CFR part 432)	Schedule P/C employees are excluded from coverage.	Employees who have completed one year of continuous service are covered.
Adverse actions (5 CFR part 752)	Schedule P/C employees are excluded from coverage.	Adverse action procedures apply to employees who complete two years of current continuous service in the same or similar positions under other than a temporary appointment limited to two years or less See Note 1.
Whistleblower protections	Agency policies protect Schedule P/C employees from whistleblower retaliation under E.O. 13957.	Generally, employees are covered upon appointment under 5 U.S.C. 2302(b) with two exceptions. See Note 2.

Topic	Schedule Policy/Career	Other Career Excepted Service
Bargaining-unit status	May be eligible depending upon determination by the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) on application of statutory criteria.	Same.
Pension/retirement benefits	Eligible for the same retirement benefits as other federal employees.	Same.
Veteran's preference	Agencies should follow the principle of veterans' preference as far as administratively feasible. Applicants for Schedule P/C positions may still seek corrective action for failures to provide veterans' preference.	Varies by schedule and appointing authority.
Incentives	Generally, Schedule P/C employees are not eligible for student loan repayment or recruitment, relocation, and retention (3R) incentives. However, employees reassigned into Schedule P/C may continue to receive student loan repayment and 3R incentives under existing service agreements. Employees may receive retention incentives without a service agreement under certain circumstances.	Employees may receive student loan repayment and 3R incentives under new and existing service agreements. Employees may receive retention incentives without a service agreement under certain circumstances.
Compensation flexibilities	Available flexibilities include superior qualifications and special needs pay setting: General Schedule (GS) maximum payable rate rule, critical position pay, and authority to approve creditable service for annual leave accrual for qualifying non-federal service and uniformed service.	Same.

Notes

- Note 1: There are exceptions to the general rule in 5 CFR part 752. For example, preference eligible employees may be covered after one year of continuous service. See 5 CFR 752.401(c)(3).
- Note 2: For statutory whistleblower protections under 5 U.S.C.2302(b), two exceptions include positions that are (1) excepted from the competitive service because of their confidential or policy-influencing character, and (2) excluded by the President based on a determination that exclusion is necessary and warranted by conditions of good administration. See 5 U.S.C. 2302(a)(2)(B).