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The DIA Application Process

Applying for a position with the Intelligence Community is a long path. From application submission to interview will be 2-3 months, then for those who receive a Conditional Job Offer it can be 4-6+ months for drug test, polygraph, psychological evaluation, and the security clearance, and then plan for another one month to potentially multiple-months in the Hiring Pool until receiving a Final Job Offer.

DIA holds invitation-only hiring events, and only 10-15% of the applicants receive an interview – preparing an application that documents the individual's skills and talent is crucial! (Note: Applicants cannot upload a resume.)

APPLY ON THE DIA JOBS WEBSITE

- Create an account - <https://diajobs.dia.mil> or www.dia.mil // Careers and Internships // Search Vacancies
 - Review the job description (ensure you meet the "position requirements")
 - Also check out [https://www.dia.mil/Careers-and-Internships/Hiring-Process/](http://www.dia.mil/Careers-and-Internships/Hiring-Process/)
- Complete applicable fields on the application
- Carefully review and address, when possible, all position requirements listed; be sure to note specific education or courseware requirements (such as IT)
- Education
 - Include all levels of degrees you have received in the Education category, along with your graduation year (or expected graduation date) and GPA
 - Someone who has been accepted to graduate school should list the "expected" graduation date in this section (and also upload the letter of acceptance, for those applying to student internship programs)
- Language skills
 - Indicate level of foreign language proficiency (scores can set an applicant apart from others)
- Transcript, letters of recommendation and cover letter?
 - Transcripts are only to be uploaded when applying for a student internship program
 - Graduate school letter of acceptance can be uploaded (for student programs)
 - Letters of recommendation will not be uploaded (those contacts can be good references for the security clearance though)
 - Do not prepare and upload an overall cover letter – instead, consider each work experience as a separate "cover letter" explaining what you accomplished during each period of time

WORK EXPERIENCE PORTION OF THE APPLICATION – Applicants for DIA positions should aim to meet the criteria and stand-out

- Review the desired criteria for each advertised DIA career field (individuals can apply for more than one career field opening), also review [https://www.dia.mil/Careers-Internships/Career-Fields/](http://www.dia.mil/Careers-Internships/Career-Fields/)
- Work experience (accomplishments) submission
 - Not just a 1-2 page resume, prepare a narrative document (similar to a longer cover letter-format) outlining each work accomplishment by timeframe; aim to provide detailed examples

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- DIA is hiring individuals with potential for entry-level positions and those who can demonstrate an ability to some essential skills (such as analyze, review, assess, project management, customer service, timeliness, integrity, communicate, apply skills, teamwork, and so on) are ideal for future training in specific tasks
- Example:
 - From 6/2020-9/2020; __ Intern with __ [company]; paragraph(s) outlining the work experience
 - From 1/2020-5/2020; special project/studies at __ University; paragraph(s) outlining the work experience
 - From 8/2019-12/2019; volunteer at __; paragraph(s) outlining the work experience
- Write for impact (the "so what") – use the "C-A-R" method:
 - Context – Talk about the individuals and groups you worked with and/or the environment in which you worked to tackle a particular challenge (e.g., clients, co-workers, members of Congress, shrinking budget, low morale). This is the background information needed to understand why your accomplishment was significant.
 - Action - Discuss the specific actions you took to address a challenge. Focus on actions that showcase your ability to solve problems in the organization to which you are applying. Be sure to include multiple actions. Some people find it easier to actually list their actions (1, 2, 3, etc.; you can smooth it out when you edit).
 - Result – Give specific examples of the results of your actions. These accomplishments demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of your leadership skills. Results can be quantitative (with metrics) and/or qualitative. And of course, they need to demonstrate that you solved the problem.
 - Also, Impact – explain the results and impact of your actions; what did you achieve? [quantify if possible]
- Tips for writing
 - Incorporate action words – descriptive language is helpful [created, authored, achieved, etc.]
 - Relevancy – more current and relevant examples will make for stronger statement
 - Variety – can you demonstrate a breadth of experiences?
- The "project example" is a great way to describe how you put your skills and talent to work (translatable)
 - The topic of the project is fine, but not the focus (keep it brief, lengthy explanation is unnecessary)
 - Describe your role in the project (leader, worker, contributor), did you pick the team (criteria for selection, task assignments), interim progress reports (format, how delivered, any setbacks, change of plans), finalizing (report preparation, style, content, "answer the mail")
 - What did you learn or gain from this effort (what will you do the same or different in the future, successful or failure)
- Career field and specialty criteria
 - First – Prepare a descriptive, document of your work experiences using a cover letter-style (for each entry on your bulleted resume, write 1-2 paragraphs describing summer or college jobs, participation in efforts like committees, class projects, volunteer projects,

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- and so on); of note, these paragraphs also serve as a sample of written communication skills for the application reviewer
- Next – Review the applicable career field’s desired criteria and prepare separate, tailored versions that “speaks-to” each separate career field; for comparison (remember, individuals can apply for multiple career fields) and use this for the work experience entries of each application. For example:
 - Analysis: integrity, intellectual curiosity, critical consideration, constructive collaboration, clear communication, assess, analyze, evaluate
 - CI: strong oral and written communications skills; able to collect, protect and report information; prepare and provide briefings, conduct interviews; operate independently and are relied upon to make sound judgements
 - Finance & Acquisition: analyze data, manage programs, strategic planning, communicating, advocating, planning an execution schedule, evaluate proposals, monitoring performance
 - Human Services: conduct assessments, manage programs, apply research findings, analyze trends, apply laws and regulations, manage resources, develop others
 - HUMINT: sound judgement, interpersonal skills, manage projects, oversee complex operations, apply management fundamentals, ensure timely solutions
 - IT: analyze info systems, assess requirements, develop contingency plans, apply IT knowledge, build and deploy IT applications, develop and troubleshoot
 - IG: identify risks, work constructively to achieve goals, assess internal controls, prepare reports, conduct audits, assess performance
 - MM: evaluate policies and strategies, conduct assessments, develop and manage relationships, provide procedural guidance, coordinate resources
 - OMI: project management, create info/communication plans, manage materiel and resources, task and record management, communicate with variety of audiences
 - S&T: research and development of technologies, evaluate effectiveness and suitability, collaboration, apply expertise, develop concepts, data analysis, evaluate systemic efficiencies
 - Security: program management, problem resolution, apply guidelines, conduct investigations, develop and implement policies, identify program requirements
 - DIA receives thousands of applications and only invites 10-15% for an interview. **The success of getting an invitation is largely based on the work experience portion of the application.** Recommendations to use the C.A.R. method is helpful: a brief CONTEXT of the situation, what were your individual ACTIONS, and the RESULTS of what you did, as well as *Reading The Full Question* to ensure the application addresses the career field’s “desired criteria!”

APPLICATION REVIEW

- After an individual registers on DIA’s jobs website and submits an application, the applications are reviewed once all applications have been received by our Office of Human Resources to ensure each application meets the individual criteria. Next, the applications are routed to the applicable career development officers for further scrutiny to ensure the application aligns with what they

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need – so, it is essential to tailor the application's work experience portion with the vacancy announcement. Each career field determines whom to extend invitations to the top-ranked candidates; this can take many weeks for the review and notification process.

- As mentioned in the vacancy announcement: *"DIA will evaluate your online application to ensure it demonstrates the knowledge, skills, abilities, work experience, and any mandatory education, certification, and/or license requirements, to successfully perform the duties of the advertised position. Failure to provide clear examples of claimed experience will preclude further consideration of your application."*

INTERVIEWS – DIA is currently conducting virtual hiring events. An individual can have interviews for multiple career fields, so the Office of Human Resources will be sure to deconflict the interview days and times. Each interview typically lasts about 20-30 minutes; additionally, the Analysis Career Field requires applicants selected to interview to also complete a timed writing assessment prior to the interview. OHR will notify the applicant if they have been offered a "conditional job offer" after the interview with a career field at a specified pay grade and step-level (calculated on education and work experience – this is not negotiable). Of note, individuals with interviews for more than one career field may receive an offer for each career field and the pay grade may be different, depending on how the individual's skills and talent align with the applicable career field.

PROCESSING – Those individuals who receive a conditional job offer must *"meet the Agency's conditions of employment, to include, but not limited to, satisfactory completion of an initial special background investigation and periodic reinvestigation, completion of any required medical examination and physical requirements, completion of any required personal interviews, favorable completion of any required initial or aperiodic polygraph examinations, completion of any required drug test, satisfactory completion of a two-year Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System trial period, and completion of a civilian mobility agreement."* This screening may take 4-6+ months, depending on complexity of the security clearance and OHR will contact the individual about the successful adjudication of the TOP SECRET security clearance.

HIRING POOL – The next step after "clearing security," applicants will be considered for the Agency's Hiring Pool. *"DIA is an Agency with worldwide positions. Selected candidates must be willing to relocate in support of mission requirements. Each week the hiring managers and career development officers review the current list of cleared candidates for available positions throughout the Agency."* Since there will have been a few months between receiving the conditional job offer and clearing security, the applicant is encouraged to submit a resume with current information (updating what has been accomplished since the interview – additional work experience during those months, degree awarded, certifications achieved, etc.). The timeline for the Hiring Pool overall is variable; it may be a relatively short period of time – the recently-cleared individual may be an ideal match for a position that just became available – or the individual might be an ideal candidate, but the desired position is not yet open. DIA does not place individuals without a specific billet. While some individuals may move quickly and receive a Final Job Offer, there are some individuals who remain in the Hiring Pool for many months, so plan accordingly.