



Term Appointments

An agency may make a term appointment for a period of more than 1 year, but not more than 4 years, to positions where the need for an employee's services is not permanent. Merit System Audit and Compliance at OPM may authorize exceptions beyond the 4-year limit when the extension is clearly justified and is consistent with applicable statutory provisions, but this exception is rarely granted.

A term appointee does not acquire a competitive status on the basis of the term appointment. The employment of a term appointee ends automatically on the expiration of the term appointment unless the employee has been separated earlier.

Reasons that agencies may hire term employees include:

- Project work
- Extraordinary workload
- Reorganization
- Uncertainty of funding

Term appointments are usually used for positions such as archaeologists, museum curators, researchers, etc., where the project may be grant-funded or only last for a short time.

Term employees have no career status, but are eligible for benefits and within-grade increases, and can move to other term positions. They can be promoted, demoted, detailed, or reassigned to other positions that are appropriate for filling by term.