



FORS|MARSH
GROUP

MODERATOR'S GUIDE

College Student and Recent
Graduates' Knowledge of DoD
Careers
and Scholarship Opportunities
Focus Groups



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Summary Page

Research Objective: Conduct focus groups with college students and recent graduates to gather feedback on their perceptions of the ideal employer (Section 2), their knowledge and awareness of the Department of Defense as a potential employer (Section 3), and perceptions of the branding of current Department of Defense marketing and recruitment materials for civilian careers (Section 4).

NOTES TO REVIEWER:

This focus group guide is not a script and, therefore, should not be read verbatim. The moderator will use these questions as a roadmap and probe as needed to maintain the natural flow of conversation.

Moderator instructions are highlighted in yellow.

SESSION OVERVIEW: Total time 70 minutes

SECTION 1: Introduction and Warm-Up (5 min.)

The moderator will explain the purpose of the research, remind the group their participation is voluntary, present the ground rules, allow the participants to ask any questions, and get to know the participants.

SECTION 2: Employment Ideals (20 min.)

The purpose of this section is to gather feedback from college student and recent graduates' on their perceptions of the ideal employment organization and their typical strategies for seeking out information about employers they're interested in.

SECTION 3: DoD as a Potential Employer (20 min.)

The purpose of this section is to gather feedback from college student and recent graduates' regarding their knowledge and awareness of the opportunities available to them through DoD civilian careers.

SECTION 4: Reactions to DoD Materials (20 min.)

The purpose of this section is to hear input from college students and recent graduates' regarding their perceptions of the current Department of Defense marketing and recruitment related information and processes for civilian careers.

SECTION 5: Conclusion (5 min.)

The moderator wraps up the discussion and ensures that all questions have been answered and all comments have been heard.

Section 1: Introduction and Warm-Up (5 min)

Goal: The moderator will explain the purpose of the research, present the ground rules, allow the participants to ask any questions, and get to know the participants.

Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is _____ and I work for Fors Marsh Group, which is a private research firm. The federal government has contracted with us to conduct focus groups with college students and recent graduates about their career interests.

The purpose of our discussion today is to hear your thoughts about what types of careers you are interested in, as well as what factors might influence your decision to apply to and accept a job.

Before we begin, I want to say a couple of things:

- Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If I ask any questions you do not wish to answer, you are welcome to pass and do not have to respond.
- There are no wrong answers here; I want to know what is true for you.
- We are audio recording this session. This is for note-taking purposes only so that I can be present with you now and refer to them later as I write my report. Additional project staff may hear the recordings as well. However, your name and personal information will not be included in any of our reports.
 - o Is it all right with you if we continue recording?
- We will have about 70 minutes for our discussion.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

Okay, great! I'd like to start with an ice breaker.

- Think back to when you were ten years old. What did you want to be when you grew up? Why?

Section 2: Employment Ideals (20 min.)

Goal: The purpose of this section is to gain a deeper understanding of college student and recent graduates' perceptions of the ideal employment position and the ideal employment organization.

I want to begin our conversation today by talking about what you look for in a job and in an employer.

- **Activity:** Looking at this worksheet, what 3-5 words best describe your ideal organization to work at?
- What types of organizations are you most interested in working at?
- Name an organization that stands out to you as an employer of choice. What makes them stand out to you?
- What qualities make a potential employer/workplace attractive to you?
 - *What aspects of an employer/workplace would motivate you to apply for a job?*
 - *What aspects of an employer/workplace would motivate you to stay at a job for a long period of time?*
- What qualities might deter you from seeking a job with a potential employer?
 - *What aspects of an employer/workplace would motivate you to leave a job sooner than you had expected?*
- What, if any, employer benefits matter to you?

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and opinions with me! Now I want to talk a bit about what the job application process is like for you.

- **Flip chart activity:** Let's now imagine you have just started looking for a job.
 - What kinds of things do you want to know about the job?
 - Where do you go looking for this information?
 - *Which of these mediums or platforms do you prefer to use?*
 - *Which do you use most frequently?*
 - *When searching for an internship or a job after you graduate, which avenue would you prefer to search for your ideal job – meet face-to-face with recruiters/employers at a live Career/Job Fair or online through a Virtual Career Fair with conversation taking place online? Why would you choose one over the other?*
 - Which of these do you find to be the most effective for obtaining the information you want and need?

- If you were applying to a job, what aspects of the job application process do you think would matter most to you?
- What qualities, if any, of a job application might encourage you to apply to job? What qualities might discourage you?
- Imagine you are deciding whether or not to accept a job offer. What factors do you consider when deciding whether or not to accept a job offer?

Section 3: DoD as a Potential Employer

(20 min)

Goal: The purpose of this section is to understand college student and recent graduates' level of awareness of the opportunities available to them through DoD civilian careers.

This is very helpful information. I would like to share a job description with you. Let's start off with an activity [moderator hands out a sheet with a job description but no employer details to each participant (job description will be relevant population participating in focus group)]. Take a few minutes to read this job description and use a blue pen to underline things you like and a red pen to underline things you dislike.

- What stands out to you about this job description?
 - *What do you like about it?*
 - *What do you dislike about it?*
- Is this a job that you would be interested in applying for?
 - [If yes] *What about this description makes you want to apply for the job?*
 - [If no] *What would have to change about this description to make you want to apply for the job?*
- What company or organization do you think this is a job description for?
 - *Tell me more.*
 - *What if I told you this was for a Civilian Career at the DoD? What is your first reaction, then?*
- When I say the "Department of Defense" or "DoD," what is the first word that comes to mind?
 - *What words, terms, or phrases would you use to describe the DoD?*
 - *Do you tend to think of positive or negative things associated with the DoD?*
 - *In what places or situations have you heard of the DoD before?*
- Think about the type of person who would work at the DoD. How would you describe that individual?
 - *Is this person similar or different to you? How so?*
- What sorts of tasks could you see being involved in working for the DoD?
- What types of jobs or careers might be available to you if you were to work at DoD?

- o *Are you aware that there are internships, scholarships, entry level, and developmental positions?*
- What qualifications do you think would be important for working at the DoD?
- How might one go about applying for a job at the DoD?
- Do you know anyone who has ever had a job working for the federal government? What about in the Department of Defense?
 - o *How did they find about the job?*
 - o *How did they apply for the job?*
 - o *What was their experience like?*
 - *What was their application process like?*
 - o *What, if anything, interested you about their experience?*
- What does the phrase “civilian careers” mean to you?
- What does the phrase “non-combat military position” mean to you?

[Moderator shares definition of civilian career].
- What would you call a position like this?
- How would you describe a job like this to one of your friends?

Section 4: Reactions to DoD Materials (20 min)

Goal: The purpose of this section is to understand college student’s perceptions of the current Department of Defense marketing and recruitment materials for civilian careers.

Now, I would like us to do another activity [moderator hands out printed screen shots of career information from godefense DoD Careers website (See: Appendix A)] Now, I would like you each to pretend these materials are reflective of the personality of someone that you have invited over to dinner. Please write down 3-5 personality traits that you think best describe these materials on the small slips of paper next to you. When you’re done we’ll talk about your lists of traits.

- Who would like to share some of the words that they wrote down?
- What made you pick those words?
 - o *How well do they match up with the words you picked for this activity in the beginning?*
- If you saw these materials at a recruitment fair, would you be interested in applying to work for DoD?
 - o *Why or why not?*
- If you picked up and read these materials, would you be interested and applying to work for DoD?
 - o *Why or why not?*
- What, if anything, would you change about these materials to make DoD seem like a more attractive employer to you?
- [Moderator shares some fast facts about working at DoD]

- o How interested are you at this point in applying for a position at the DoD?
 - [If not that interested] *What would increase your interest in applying?*
- o How likely would you be to tell your friends about the types of jobs that are available at the DoD?
 - [If not that likely] *What would increase the chances that you would share this information with your friends?*

Section 5: Conclusion (5 min.)

Goal: The moderator wraps up the discussion and ensures that all questions have been answered and all comments have been heard.

Thank you very much for participating in this interview. I appreciate you sharing your time and valuable feedback. Is there anything that you would like to share that you did not have a chance to share yet?

[If time permits - false close] If you will excuse me for just a moment, I would like to check in with my team to see if they have any follow up questions for you.

Appendix A: Godefense DoD Careers Website Screenshots



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

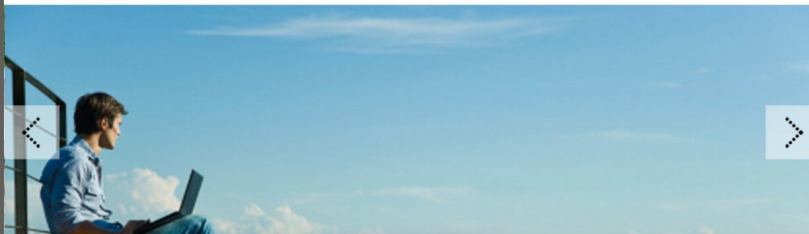
In the Department of Defense (DOD), nearly 800,000 civilian employees in more than 750 occupations play the important role of providing support to keep our armed services equipped and supplied for their vital mission. Civilian employees are hired in the fields of engineering, science, procurement, transportation, logistics, supply management, contract management, acquisition, auditing, information technology, human resources, legal services, intelligence analysis, accounting, education, advance research, security imagery and mapping, commissary management, management analysis, program analysis, operations research analysis and many other areas.



THERE'S A PLACE FOR YOU

Every Department of Defense employee plays a vital role in securing our country and preserving our freedoms. We seek applicants from all backgrounds, from students to Veterans. Become a part of our talented, dedicated and diverse workforce!

The Department of Defense is an Equal Opportunity Employer.





ENTRY LEVEL

The Department of Defense (DOD) is a great place to get started on a fast-moving career. We are constantly looking to fill positions that are typically suited to those graduating from college with little or no work experience. We have hundreds of jobs available in a wide variety of fields throughout the U.S. and around the world.

Entry Level Benefits

We select the best and brightest to be a part of the DOD team, creating a stimulating corporate culture of openness, integrity, and creativity. You'll be eligible for our generous benefits program-which is considered one of the finest available anywhere. You will also participate in an exceptional environment that provides growth, recognition and continuous learning. We believe that to attract and retain the very best, we must invest in our people.

