SMART
SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS, AND RESEARCH FOR TRANSFORMATION

PART OF THE NATIONAL
DEFENSE EDUCATION PROGRAM

2022
SCHOLAR HANDBOOK

Table of Contents

1. **APPLICABILITY**

The Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship-for-Service Program is established pursuant to Section 2192a of Title 10, U.S.C., as amended, and is funded through the National Defense Education Program. The SMART Scholarship-for-Service Program provides academic funding in exchange for completing a period of full-time civilian employment with the Department of Defense (DoD). The SMART Service Agreement (SSA) is the formal binding written agreement between the SMART Scholarship Program Scholar (herein scholar) and the DoD. By signing the SSA, the scholar agrees to comply with all program policies and procedures, including the handbook. In return, the DoD funds the scholar's academic pursuit and provides full-time employment upon the scholar's graduation. This handbook applies to all scholars regardless of the cohort year. This handbook includes information applicable to all scholars, as well as information applicable to specific types of scholars. If a policy or procedure does not specify the type of scholar, then it applies to all scholars.

This handbook is updated annually to reflect current policies and procedures. Scholars must comply with the policies set forth in the most current handbook. Scholars will be informed of any changes or updates.

2. **SMART SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM CONTACTS AND DEFINITIONS**

   2.1. **SMART Program Office**

The SMART Program is sponsored by the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering (USD(R&E)), Office of the Director for Defense Research and Engineering (Research and Technology) (DDRE(R&T)). The DDRE(R&T), through the SMART Program Office, is responsible for program policy and oversight. See Appendix A for a graphical depiction of the SMART Program organizational structure.

   2.2. **Sponsoring Components**

A sponsoring component is a DoD Component that participates in the SMART Program. There are four sponsoring component designations in the SMART Program: Army, Navy, Air Force, and Other DoD Agencies. Each sponsoring component has a Component Execution Lead (CEL), who holds the authority to execute the program on behalf of their respective component.

   2.3. **Sponsoring Facilities**

The sponsoring facility (SF) is a laboratory, agency, or organization within the DoD Component that participates in the SMART Program. The SF is the location at which a scholar completes all internships and the service commitment. Each SF has a designated point of contact (POC) to coordinate the execution of SMART at the SF.

2.4.   SMART Program Support Team

2.4.1. Scholar Coordinator

Each scholar is assigned a Scholar Coordinator (SC) while participating in the SMART Program. SCs are the first point of contact for scholars during degree pursuit. The SMART Program provides scholars their SC's name upon award acceptance. For all questions, email: smartscholar@smartscholarship.org, phone: 571-633-7940.

2.4.2. Component Liaisons

Each DoD Component has a designated Component Liaison (CL) within the SMART Program. The CL is the main point of contact between the SMART Program, the sponsoring DoD Component, and the SFs. The SMART Program provides scholars with their CL's name and contact information upon entering DoD employment. For all questions, email smartcl@smartscholarship.org.

2.5.   SMART Scholars

A scholar is an individual who received and accepted a SMART award. An individual remains a scholar throughout all SMART Program phases.

A recruitment scholar is a scholar who is not employed full-time in either a permanent or renewable term civilian position by the SF at the time of the award. Scholars who are employed by the SF in temporary or internship positions at the time of award are recruitment scholars.

A retention scholar is a scholar who is employed full-time in either a permanent or renewable term civilian STEM position by the SF at the time of the award.

Scholars matriculate through four phases of participation in the SMART Program:

Phase 0 - Engagement and Onboarding Requirements: During Phase 0, potential scholars engage with the SMART Program and submit applications. If awarded, SMART awardees complete onboarding with the SMART Program, including a SF site visit, prior to matriculating into Phase 1. During Phase 0, potential SMART scholars are referred to as "applicants," "semifinalists," or "awardees."

Phase 1 - Degree Pursuit: Phase 1 begins on August 1st of each award year. During Phase 1, scholars complete requirements to obtain the degree funded by the SMART Program. During Phase 1 summer months, multi-year recruitment scholars complete internships with the SF and multi-year retention scholars generally return to work full-time with their SF. As scholars near completion of Phase 1, they work with the SF, SC, and CL to prepare for the service commitment.

Phase 2 - Service Commitment: Phase 2 begins upon the work start date and ends upon completion of the required service commitment. The work start date is the day on which a scholar begins full-time employment with the SF after verified completion of all Phase 1 requirements. During Phase 2, scholars complete the service commitment by working full-time for their SF.

Phase 3 - Monitoring: After completing the Phase 2 service commitment, scholars begin Phase 3. In Phase 3, the SMART Program tracks scholar employment progression and retention. During Phase 3, SMART scholars have opportunities to engage with the SMART Program and promote its success for future years.

2.6.   SMART Program Contacts

The SMART Scholar Portal: For program related documents and information, visit the SMART Scholar Portal. The SMART Scholar Portal is located at https://www.smartscholarship.org/scholar.

Scholar Coordinator: Each scholar has a designated Scholar Coordinator (SC) within the SMART Program. SCs are the first point of contact for scholars during degree pursuit. The SMART Program provides scholars their SC's name. For all questions, email: smartscholar@smartscholarship.org, phone: 571-633-7940.

Component Liaison: Each DoD Component has a designated Component Liaison (CL) within the SMART Program. The CL is the main point of contact between the SMART Program, the sponsoring DoD Component, and SFs. The SMART Program provides scholars with their CL's name and contact information upon entering DoD employment. For all questions, email smartcl@smartscholarship.org.

SMART Technical Help Desk: For technical assistance with the SMART Scholar Portal, email: it@smartscholarship.org, phone: 571-633-7940.

SMART Outreach: For information on SMART events, scholar highlights, or how to get involved in outreach within your network, email outreach@smartscholarship.org.

3. GENERAL PROGRAM PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

3.1.   SMART Program Commitments

3.1.1. Award Length

The award length is defined as the total amount of time for which the scholar receives Phase 1 funding and benefits. The award length determines the length of the scholar's service commitment. Each academic year funded obligates the scholar to a full calendar year of service. Funding that extends beyond the confines of a typical academic year may be included in the scholar's award length in 0.5 calendar year increments.

Scholars have a minimum award length of 1.0 academic year (with a minimum service commitment of 1.0 year) and a maximum award length of 5.0 years. Any requests to amend award length and/or requests for leaves of absence (LOAs) to prevent the accrual of award length are subject to handbook sections 3.3.3. Award Length Change and 3.3.2. Leave of Absence, respectively.

3.1.2. Degree Funding

Scholars enrolled in a single degree program receive SMART funding for that degree only. Scholars funded for a dual degree may receive funding throughout the completion of both degrees, not to exceed a total of 5 years. Scholars may request funding for subsequent degrees by submitting a SMART Service Agreement Amendment Request (SAAR, detailed in section 3.3.1) or by reapplying to SMART for a separate award in accordance with the SMART Program follow-on funding policy (detailed in section 3.1.3).

3.1.3. Follow-on Funding

SMART scholarships are awarded for one degree program at a time. Should the scholar desire to seek a SMART award for an additional degree, the scholar may pursue a degree level change SAAR (see Appendix E) or apply for a follow-on award. Follow-on awards are not guaranteed and are offered at the discretion of the SF.

Follow-on awards are treated as new awards, separate from the initial award. Award of follow-on funding is not guaranteed. The maximum award length is 5 calendar years per award. If a scholar does not receive follow-on funding, the scholar is expected to begin their service commitment after completion of their SMART-funded degree as determined in their SSA.

3.2. SMART Scholar Commitments

3.2.1. Compliance Requirements

Scholars comply with all SMART Program policies and procedures, including the requirements set forth in this handbook. Compliance with all SMART Program policies and procedures, as agreed to in the SSA, is required for continued participation and funding under the SMART Program.

3.2.2. Completion of Degree in Compliance with the SMART Service Agreement

Scholars complete the degree funded by SMART as set forth in the SSA. Scholars complete all degree requirements during Phase 1, including thesis/dissertation writing, edits, defense, etc. In certain unusual circumstances, a scholar may request an amendment to the SSA. Requests to amend the SSA can be made by submitting the SAAR and appropriate supporting documents, via the SMART Scholar Portal. If the request is approved, the SSA will be amended. If the request is denied and the scholar fails to complete the degree in compliance with the SSA, the scholar may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

3.2.3. Code of Conduct

SMART is committed to the professional development of scholars, securing the program's reputation of excellence, and safeguarding the public's investment in the program.

a) Academic Excellence: Scholars strive to meet SMART academic requirements, attend all classes/laboratories, are respectful to instructors, and complete coursework to the best of their ability.

b) Professionalism: Scholars are courteous, honest, and responsible in their communications and interactions. Scholars are timely in attendance and completion of duties. Scholars strive to achieve a level of excellence that exceeds minimum requirements.

c) Leadership: Scholars take the initiative to advance their knowledge and share their experience with others.

d) Integrity: Scholars adhere to the highest ethical standards and comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

e) Public Service: Scholars are mindful of the public investment made in their SMART awards and act in a manner that is worthy of that investment. Scholars are dedicated to and uphold the principles and national interests of the United States.

3.2.4. Current Contact Information

Scholars maintain current contact information with the SMART Program, including accurate email address(es), mailing address, telephone, and residency status (the residency status claimed by the scholar for tax purposes). Scholars contact the SMART Program immediately with changes or updates to their contact and/or residency information. Scholars update their contact and/or residency status information immediately via the SMART Scholar Portal. In order to update their primary e-mail address, scholars contact IT@smartscholarship.org.

3.2.5. Communication

The SMART Program uses all methods of communication; however, email is the primary form. Scholars check their email regularly and designate SMART-related emails as non-SPAM material or regularly check SPAM email folders. Scholars respond to SMART Program emails in a professional and timely manner.

Scholars' main POCs for all SMART Program-related inquiries are dependent on their phase within the program.

a) Phase 1: The Scholar Coordinator is the main POC. Scholars should also regularly communicate in Phase 1 with their SF POC, mentor, and supervisor. It is strongly encouraged that scholars develop clearly articulated and mutually agreeable communication expectations with SF personnel. If a Phase 1 scholar has any questions or concerns related to their ability to comply with their SSA and relevant policies, the SMART Program expects that they contact their SC as soon as possible.

b) Phase 2: The Component Liaison is the main POC. The CLs works closely with the SF POC and other SF personnel, namely on matters related to clearances, internships, hiring, and service commitment phases. If a Phase 2 scholar has any questions or concerns related to their ability

to comply with their SSA and relevant policies, the SMART Program expects that will they contact their CL as soon as possible.

Open and clear communication between the scholar, SMART personnel, and SF personnel is a shared expectation of all parties involved in the success of the SMART Program.

3.2.6. SF Sponsorship

Scholars maintain facility sponsorship as set forth by the SSA. Sponsorship is defined as the commitment made by the SF to support the scholar throughout their participation in the SMART Program. Sponsorship includes the SF's commitment to the award length outlined in the SSA and its provision of internship, mentorship, and post-graduation employment to the sponsored scholar. Continued sponsorship of the approved SF is a requirement to maintain participation in and funding under the SMART Program. Any scholar communication or actions with the assigned SF that result in loss of sponsorship from the assigned SF (at the sole discretion of the SF) may result in the scholar's dismissal from the program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

Loss of sponsorship occurs in rare situations for various reasons, including but not limited to the SF's inability to provide long-term employment (as determined by the SF), poor scholar academic performance, misaligned academic goals, the scholar's inability to meet clearance requirements necessary for post-graduation employment with the SF, or general performance/conduct issues, as reported by the SF.

Only the SMART Program may reassign a scholar to a new SF. A scholar may not initiate a SF transfer. In the rare occasion where a scholar has questions or concerns with their SF assignment, in Phase 1 or Phase 2, contact the SMART Program as soon as possible.

It is extremely unusual for the SMART Program to assign a scholar to a facility other than the original SF for completion of the service commitment. In the rare case that a change of SF is considered, it is generally initiated by the original SF and is done on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the SMART Program. If the SMART Program determines that the match between the SF and scholar is not viable, the SMART Program will work with the CL and SF and attempt to find alternative placement for the scholar.

3.2.7. Geographic Mobility

Scholars must be geographically mobile and relocate to the SF for completion of the service commitment and internship periods, if required. Under rare circumstances, scholars must be willing to relocate to and complete the internship periods and the service commitment with a new SF located anywhere within the United States if re-assigned by the SMART Program.

3.2.8. Security Clearance Requirement

Scholars complete the following security clearance requirements:

a) Provide complete and timely information and documentation as requested;
b) Be eligible to timely **obtain** the level of security clearance required by the Sponsoring Facility (SF);
c) Be eligible to **maintain** the required level of security clearance through completion of the service commitment; and
d) Notify the SF prior to traveling to a foreign country.

The SF determines the level of clearance that the scholar is required to obtain, and manages the process of submitting scholar applications for the appropriate level. For scholars at non-Intelligence agency SFs requiring a Secret or Top Secret clearance, the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) "DCSA Adjudications" is the sole authority to determine security clearance eligibility. If, near the end of the adjudication process, DCSA Adjudications has questions regarding a scholar's ability to obtain the appropriate clearance requested by the Sponsoring Facility, DCSA will provide the scholar the appropriate information which will give the scholar an opportunity to respond to these concerns (this may come in the form of a "Statement of Reasons" (SOR) or other similar notification). Upon review of the scholar's response, DCSA will make a *final determination*. If, upon the *final determination*, DCSA reaffirms that the scholar is ineligible to hold a position of national security and receive the appropriate clearance (or the scholar fails to respond as directed by DCSA) then the scholar will be dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

Individuals seeking Due Process may appeal DCSA' s final determination, however the SMART Program is not obligated to await the outcome of an appeal as DCSA has, in practice, already made a final determination. Scholars who receive successful appeals after their dismissal from the SMART Program and subsequent debt establishment may provide this new information for consideration through the SMART Program's debt dispute or waiver process (see Section 3.4 for more information).

 If a security clearance is revoked at any time prior to completion of the service commitment, the scholar will be dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

Certain Other DoD SMART SFs in the Intelligence Community may have other authorized entities and procedures. Please consult with your SFs security manager to understand how the process may differ.

Notify the SF immediately of any actions or events that may affect eligibility to obtain or maintain the security clearance. For a list of activities that may result in the denial or revocation of a security clearance, visit https://www.opm.gov. For more information on the investigation and adjudication process, visit https://www.dcsa.mil/mc/pv. Please contact the SF with any security clearance requirement questions.

3.2.9. Length of Service Commitment

Scholars perform post-graduation employment with the SF at the rate of 1.0 calendar year of service for each full academic year. Financial support for an academic term (quarter, semester) that is less than a full academic year requires an additional six (6) months of post-graduation employment. For

example, an award for 2.0 academic years requires 24 months of service. An award for 1.5 academic years requires 18 months of service.

The SMART service commitment is in addition to any other period for which the scholar is obligated to serve in the civil service of the United States.

Time spent working at the SF during Phase 1 is not applied toward fulfillment of the service commitment. Accordingly, recruitment scholar time spent during internships is not applied toward the service commitment. Similarly, retention scholar time spent at the SF during the academic year or summer months is not applied toward the service commitment.

3.2.10. Non-compliance

If a scholar is found non-compliant, the SMART Program will provide the scholar with a non-compliance notice or a dismissal notice, depending on the nature of the non-compliance. Scholars will acknowledge receipt of the non-compliance notice. A non-compliance notice specifies the scholar is in an auditable status of non-compliance and provides the next steps. If the scholar does not return to compliance or is beyond the ability to return to compliance, the SMART Program may provide the scholar with a dismissal notice. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3). See Appendix B for Non-Compliance Matrix.

3.3. Modifying Commitments

3.3.1. Service Agreement Amendment Requests (SAARs)

SMART Scholars requesting to amend their existing SSA must submit a SAAR. Multiple parties review each SAAR, but the CEL holds the authority to approve or deny the request. Any changes approved pursuant to a given SAAR modify only the specific terms of the SSA amended; the rest remains in full force and effect. After approval, all SAARs amend the initial SSA.

Scholars may request a SAAR by submitting an electronic form via the [SMART Scholar Portal](.).

The list of approved terms of an SSA that may be amended through a SAAR is outlined in section 5.2.13., Phase 1 Service Agreement Amendment Requests, and section 6.1.7, Phase 2 Service Agreement Amendment Requests.

3.3.2. Leave of Absence

Scholars are expected to participate in the program and pursue their approved degree on a full-time basis. If a scholar is unable to participate in the SMART Program, including full-time academic enrollment, for more than 4 consecutive weeks, the scholar must either submit a leave of absence (LOA) SAAR or withdraw from the program. Justification will be required for all LOA requests. The LOA SAAR must go through a review process based on the SF's ability to support and SMART Program policy guidelines and procedures. Approval from the SMART Program is required prior to the LOA taking effect. Only the SMART Program may decide if LOA SAAR is approved or denied.

Phase 1 scholars on an LOA are required to maintain regular communication with their SF and the SMART Program detailing degree pursuit progress. All SMART Program funding ceases during an LOA. While in Phase 1, a scholar may not exceed a cumulative total of 2.0 years on an LOA. During an LOA, scholars continue to comply with reporting requirements, as applicable.

Scholars may submit a SAAR for a LOA in the following circumstances:

a) The scholar or an immediate family member, as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, has a medical condition requiring the scholar to take an LOA.
b) The scholar may request a LOA in other emergencies.
c) The scholar is activated for military service.

Additionally, the SMART Program may direct a scholar to take an LOA in the following circumstances:

a) The scholar fails to obtain the SMART-funded degree on time and in accordance with the SSA, at fault of the scholar.
b) The scholar fails to obtain the SMART-funded degree within the SMART Program 5-year funding cap. All SMART Program funding is suspended during an LOA.

In rare circumstances, LOAs may be requested retroactively. For example, a scholar requests a LOA to account for an absence that has already occurred, because they were unable to submit the LOA proactively. If approved, the SMART Program may collect funding erroneously provided during the retroactively approved LOA period (including stipends and tuition). Scholars may repay funding through a check, mailed to SMART Program, LMI, 1777 NE Loop 410, Suite 808, San Antonio, TX 78217. Additionally, scholars may choose to have future stipends and tuition withheld, commensurate with the retroactive LOA duration, if applicable. If the scholar completes Phase 1 without having refunded outstanding LOA payments and commensurate funding has not been withheld, the scholar's service commitment will be revised in accordance with the LOA duration owed.

3.3.3. Award Length Change

Scholars in Phase 1 continually pursue their approved degree on a full-time basis. SMART scholarships range from a minimum of 1.0 year to a total of 5.0 years per award, depending on degree requirements. If the scholar needs to either increase or decrease the length of the award, due to circumstances outside of the scholar's control, the scholar may submit a request for an award length change. Scholars must provide justification for the award length change and have validation of the new graduation date from the scholar's university or college. It must be submitted at least 60 days before the current graduation date on record with SMART. The award length change SAAR must go through a review process based on the availability of funds, SF ability to support, and SMART Program policy guidelines and procedures.

Only the SMART Program may decide if the award length change SAAR is approved or denied. If the SMART Program approves an award length change, the scholar's service commitment will be revised in accordance with the approved change.

3.3.4. Withdrawal from the SMART Program

Scholars notify the SMART Program if they wish to withdraw from the program. A scholar may withdraw from the SMART Program by submitting the SAAR for a withdrawal, via the SMART Scholar Portal. If a scholar withdraws from the program after 1 August of the first award year, the scholar will be subject to debt repayment procedures and may be responsible for repaying all funds expended on their behalf.

3.4. Default Cases

3.4.1. Dismissal from the SMART Program

A scholar may be dismissed from the SMART Program for failure to fulfill any requirement of the SSA, or to comply with any program policy or procedure outlined in the SMART Scholar Handbook. A dismissal notice will be provided to the scholar specifying the date of and reason for the dismissal. All SMART Program funding will cease immediately upon the date of dismissal. A scholar dismissed from the program has defaulted on their SSA and may be subject to debt repayment, per section 3.4.3.

3.4.2. Withdrawal from the SMART Program

A scholar may voluntarily withdraw from the SMART Program at any time, prior to the completion of their Phase 2 service commitment. Scholars notify the SMART Program if they wish to withdraw from the program and submit a SAAR for withdrawal, via the SMART Scholar Portal. A withdrawal acknowledgement letter will be provided to the scholar, specifying the date of withdrawal. All SMART Program funding will cease immediately upon the date of withdrawal. If a scholar withdraws from the program after 1 August of the first award year, the scholar will be in default of their SSA and may be subject to debt repayment, per section 3.4.3.

3.4.3. Debt Repayment

3.4.3.1. Debt Repayment Overview

Any scholar (recruitment or retention) who defaults on their service agreement, may be subject to debt establishment procedures. Subsection (e) of Section 2192a of Title 10, U.S.C. establishes the right of the United States government to pursue a refund of scholarship benefits from a scholar for any period of unserved obligated service as outlined in the SSA. An obligation to reimburse the United States for failure to complete the program per the above is, for all purposes, a debt owed to the United States. Scholars subject to debt repayment may be required to refund all amounts expended under the scholar's SMART award, including those expended after graduation.

A discharge in bankruptcy that is entered less than five (5) years after termination of an SSA does not discharge the person signing such agreement from a debt arising under such agreement. The repayment of any refund shall be accomplished in accordance with the procedures established pursuant to the provisions of Volume 5, Chapter 28 of DoD 7000.14-R, "Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation (FMR)," November 2012, applicable policies and procedures

established by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), and any additional applicable debt repayment policies and procedures.

3.4.3.2. The Debt Establishment Process

There are three (3) entities involved in the establishment of debt cases: the SMART Program Office within OUSD(R&E), , the DoD Components, and the SMART Program Support Team. Per 10 USC 2192a, and DoD Instruction 1025.09, the DoD Components make final determinations regarding the establishment of debts, *not* the SMART Program Support Team. Thus, the SMART Program Support Team (including Scholar Coordinators, Component Liaisons, or any other employee of the Program Support Team) are not able or authorized to project specific outcomes of debt establishments. Nor are they able to immediately initiate debt repayment procedures on the Government's behalf. Rather, the establishment and collection of debts follows a well-defined procedure defined by statute and DoD policy. The following information is meant to provide some insight into the process, so scholars know what to expect when separating from the program.

When a scholar defaults on their SSA, the SMART Program Support Team will create a Default Package that includes the scholar's service agreement, modifications to the service agreement, and all documentation and correspondence related to the scholar's withdrawal or dismissal. The Default Package is referred to the SMART Program Office who provides the respective SMART DoD Component Execution Lead with an initial recommendation based on SMART Program policies. The DoD Component Execution Lead then makes a final determination of debt on behalf of their DoD Component in accordance with the other SMART Program policies, DoD Instruction 1025.09, Volume 5 of DoD 7000.14-R, and provisions of Subsection (e) of Section 2192a of Title 10, U.S.C.

The debt establishment process typically results in one of three outcomes:

a) Establishment of Monetary Debt: The DoD Component determines the scholar is obligated to refund the United States for failure to complete the program under the terms of the SSA. For scholars who have partially completed their service commitments, the amount of the debt is pro-rated according to the amount of time served.

b) Determination of No Debt: The DoD Component determines the scholar is not obligated to refund the United States under Subsection (e) of Section 2192a of Title 10, U.S.C.

c) Service Repayment: In exercising discretion under Section 2192a of Title 10, U.S.C. to determine an appropriate amount for a monetary refund, the DoD Component may provide an alternative to monetary repayment if , at the time of debt establishment, the scholar is currently a DoD employee and agrees to perform an obligated period of service commensurate with the years of scholarship or educational benefits initially provided by the SMART program.

3.4.3.3.   Debt Disputes and Waivers

Upon notification of an established debt, an indebted scholar may dispute the validity of the debt or apply for the debt to be waived under Subsection (e) of Section 2192a of Title 10, U.S.C. Additional instructions are provided at the time of establishment.

3.4.3.4. Debt Repayment

Absent of a request for review or application of a waiver, debts are then referred to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) to initiate collection on behalf of the respective DoD Component. The terms of repayment (including interest and fees, if applicable) are negotiated between the scholar and DFAS, and only upon the initiation of collections with DFAS. Debtors do not incur interest or fees while their default case is being administratively handled prior to establishment (as described in 3.4.3.2). The SMART Program Support Team, the SMART Program Office, or the DoD Components and their Sponsoring Facilities have no role in the actual collection of debts, and thus are unable to answer questions regarding payment plans or terms. More information is provided at the time of establishment. You may also visit https://www.dfas.mil/debtandclaims/paymydebt/Debt-Repayment-Options for more information.

The repayment of any refund shall be accomplished in accordance with the procedures established pursuant to the provisions of Volume 5, Chapter 28 of DoD 7000.14-R, "Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation (FMR)," November 2012, applicable policies and procedures established by DFAS, and any additional applicable debt repayment policies and procedures.

3.4.3.5. Tax Implications

Debtors are liable for all amounts expended under the scholar's SMART award. Established debts are not adjusted for any income tax withheld in previous years based on the debtor's specific tax situation. However, as your debt is repaid, you may have some recourse with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). IRS Publication 525 explains the instances under which a person may seek a credit or deduction on current year taxes as debts are repaid on prior year scholarship benefits. Upon request, DFAS may provide debtors with a "tax certificate" showing the amount of repaid scholarship debt and the year of repayment. This tax certificate is not a formal tax document utilized or required by the IRS but is provided as a courtesy from DFAS as a record of the repayment. and may be utilized by the scholar in consultation with a tax professional. The SMART Program cannot provide specific tax advice. Please consult a tax professional to discuss further implications.

4. PHASE 0 – PRE-AWARD PROCEDURES

4.1. SF Assignment

Awardees are notified of the name and location of their assigned SF at the time of the award. During the award process, SFs recommend individuals for SMART awards with the expectation that the awardee will join the facility's workforce after completion of Phase 1.

Prior to accepting a SMART Scholarship, awardees are responsible for researching the SF, its activities, any additional service obligation requirements, and SF location to ensure that the facility and local area are an appropriate fit.

All scholars complete the service commitment and applicable internships at their assigned SF.

4.2. Award Deferral

Commencement of a SMART award generally may not be deferred. Awardees begin or resume academic work in the term immediately following 1 August of the award year for the degree set forth in the SSA.

4.3. Grade Point Average Requirement

Awardees enter the first funding year with a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, per their most recent official transcript. If, per the most recent official transcript, grades for the degree to be funded by SMART fall below a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale between the application and award start date, the award may be immediately rescinded. All awardee transcripts are due by 1 July.

4.4. Required Documentation

Awardees provide the following documentation unless otherwise stated. An award will not be funded until all required documentation is received. Failure to provide required documentation or meet any eligibility requirement may result in the award being rescinded.

a) SMART Service Agreement;
b) Media Release;
c) Educational Work Plan (EWP);
d) Official transcript – If the scholar attended school the previous year, an official transcript from the academic institution attended is required. (This requirement is in addition to the transcript provided with the application and must reflect all coursework and grades during the academic year preceding issuance of the award);
e) All requested security clearance information and paperwork
f) Form W-9 (Recruitment only);
g) Official Form 306 – Declaration for Federal Employment, used for initiation of clearance processing (Recruitment only);
h) Official Form 612 – Optional Application for Federal Employment, used for initiation of clearance processing (Recruitment only);
i) SMART Scholarship Authorization for Direct Deposit (Recruitment only); and
j) Site Visit Request (Recruitment only)

4.5. Orientation

All awardees are required to complete the mandatory SMART Program orientation. Orientation includes a web-based presentation; site visit, if applicable; and an onboarding call with the SC. Orientation provides an opportunity to learn more about the SMART Program and the SF. Orientation completion is a prerequisite to initial receipt of SMART Program funds.

a) Web-based orientation: All awardees complete a web-based orientation presentation covering SMART Program requirements prior to 1 July. At the conclusion of the presentation is a short

quiz to verify the completion of the requirement. The quiz is electronically submitted to the SMART Program. Web-based orientation must be successfully completed prior to the site visit.

b) <u>Site Visit</u>: All recruitment awardees are required to complete the mandatory site visit at their SF prior to the start of the award. Site visits are generally completed by 1 July and consist of 1-2 business days with the SF. Recruitment awardees contact their SF POC to receive site visit dates. Recruitment awardees must submit the Site Visit Request along with the award documents. Recruitment awardees whose regular summer address is 50 miles or more from the SF location are eligible for site visit funding if travel is required. Retention awardees do not complete a site visit.

The site visit is an opportunity for awardees and SFs to ensure suitability prior to the start of the award. Recruitment awardees submit a site visit report to the SMART Program detailing the awardee site visit experience within 5 days of the conclusion of the site visit. After completion of the site visit, awardees who do not feel comfortable with their placement will have the option to withdraw from the SMART Program without penalty, via the Site Visit Report.

Site visits offer SFs an opportunity to orient the awardee with the facility and prepare the awardee for future internships and employment. In doing so, representatives from the SF may discuss aspects of future employment, such as current technical projects ongoing at the SF, or current general practices used by the SFs Human Resources department in determining compensation for new hires. While the SSA commits the SF to hire their selected awardee upon successful completion of their SMART funded degree and all SMART program requirements, informal discussions held during site visit (or at any other time during Phase 1) do not constitute the formal offer of employment. Thus, awardees should not read in any promises or guarantees regarding salary, incentives, benefits, or specific positions/roles to be awarded at a future time. The formal offer of employment is only made by the SFs Human Resources department, at or near the end of Phase 1, and in accordance with the policies, procedures, and authorities used by that specific SF at that specific moment in time when the offer is tenured. See section 6.1.5 for more information on Phase 2 hiring.

c) <u>Onboarding session</u>: All awardees complete a 30 minute, one-on-one, onboarding session with their SC upon completion of the web-based orientation and site visit (if applicable). The onboarding session is an opportunity for the awardee to ask questions and to verify award information. The onboarding session will be scheduled after receipt of web-based orientation completion, official transcript, and signed Site Visit Report for Recruitment Scholars, if applicable.

4.6. Awardee Background Check

SFs typically conduct an initial background check during Phase 0, prior to the award start date. This is an opportunity for the SF security manager to vet the prior to submitting the full clearance investigation. If the SF security manager determines that the scholar fails this initial vetting, their SMART award may be rescinded.

5. PHASE 1 – ACADEMIC PURSUIT

5.1. Phase 1 Funding

5.1.1. Phase 1 Funding Overview

All SMART Program funding is based on the availability of funds. SMART awards provide the amount of financial assistance determined by Section 2192a of Title 10, U.S.C. and USD(R&E) as being necessary to pay tuition, educational fees, miscellaneous supplies, and stipend. Scholars only receive funding for the degree specified in the application to SMART and set forth in the SSA. Additional degree funding requires re-application to SMART for a separate award in accordance with the follow-on funding policy.

5.1.2. Recruitment Scholar Stipends

Scholars receive a stipend based on an annual rate as determined by USD(R&E). Stipend rates may vary by cohort year. Scholars who complete fewer than 12 months of Phase 1 activities receive the stipend on a pro-rated basis.

a) Recruitment Scholar Stipend Timing and Distribution: Recruitment scholar stipend payments are paid directly to the scholar. Recruitment scholars generally receive stipend payments on the third Friday of each month, beginning in August of the first award year, provided all award funding prerequisites have been met.

b) Miscellaneous Supplies Allowance: The SMART Program provides an annual miscellaneous supplies allowance. Miscellaneous supplies might include but are not limited to books, technology purchases, and other school supplies. Scholars funded for a partial academic year receive the miscellaneous supplies allowance on a pro-rated basis.

c) Health Insurance Allowance: The SMART Program provides an annual health insurance allowance to recruitment scholars, to help supplement health insurance expenses. Recruitment scholars funded for a partial academic year receive the health insurance allowance on a pro-rated basis.

d) Final Stipend Payment: Scholars generally continue to receive stipend payments after degree completion unless they begin work within 30 days of degree completion or if there is a scholar-driven delay in hiring. Determination of a scholar-driven delay is at the sole discretion of the SMART Program Manager. Once the scholar begins employment with their assigned SF, SMART can no longer provide a stipend to the recruitment scholar. If the scholar is dismissed or withdraws from the SMART Program, all stipends, including those provided after graduation are subject to debt establishment procedures outlined in section 3.4.3.

e) Stipend Rate Increases: Scholars may request an increase in the stipend rate for additional qualifications earned in the form of a conferred STEM degree funded by SMART. In some cases, scholars are awarded funding for a dual degree whose program does not confer the initial degree. Scholars may establish additional academic qualifications by providing

documentation from the academic institution verifying the scholar has completed all requirements for the first degree such that if the scholar left the degree program as of that date, the scholar would be awarded the first degree. Documentation contingent upon the scholar fulfilling additional requirements for the first degree will not support a stipend increase. If a scholar meets these criteria and is eligible to request a stipend rate increase, they may do so by submitting a SAAR via the [SMART Scholar Portal](). If approved, the SMART Program may provide the retroactive stipend increase to cover the duration between initial degree conferral (or documented completion) and the date of the SAAR approval.

5.1.3. Retention Scholar Stipends

Scholars receive a stipend based on an annual rate as determined by USD(R&E). Stipend rates may vary by cohort year. Scholars who complete less than 12 months of Phase 1 activities receive the stipend on a pro-rated basis.

a) Retention Scholar Stipend Timing and Distribution: The SMART Program Office (USD(R&E)) provides retention scholar stipends directly to the scholar's SF near the beginning of each academic year. SFs then distribute payments to scholars through the SF's payroll and purchasing system, in accordance with SF practices. The retention scholar stipend is not a bonus in addition to a retention scholar's full-time salary. Rather, the retention scholar stipend is intended to supplement the retention scholar's salary while they pursue the SMART-funded degree. A SMART SF may, at their sole discretion, provide additional project funding to make up the difference between the retention scholar's current DoD salary and the SMART-provided stipend.

b) Miscellaneous Supplies Allowance: The SMART Program provides an annual miscellaneous supplies allowance. Miscellaneous supplies might include but are not limited to books, technology purchases, and other school supplies. Scholars funded for a partial academic year receive the miscellaneous supplies allowance on a pro-rated basis. The miscellaneous supplies allowance is provided directly to the SF with the retention scholar stipend each academic year. Retention scholars receive the miscellaneous supplies allowance in accordance with SF purchasing or payroll practices.

c) Health Insurance: Retention scholars generally continue to receive health insurance through their SF and the federal employee benefits system. The SMART Program provides an additional 30% of the scholar's retention scholar stipend to the SF each academic year to help offset the cost of acceleration and benefits. The additional 30% does not go directly to the retention scholar and is not a bonus in addition to the retention scholar stipend.

d) Stipend Rate Increases: Scholars may request an increase in the stipend rate for additional qualifications earned in the form of a conferred STEM degree funded by SMART. In some cases, scholars are awarded funding for a dual degree whose program does not confer the initial degree. Scholars may establish additional academic qualifications by providing documentation from the academic institution verifying the scholar has completed all requirements for the first degree such that if the scholar left the degree program as of that date, the scholar would be awarded the first degree. Documentation contingent upon the

scholar fulfilling additional requirements for the first degree will not support a stipend increase. If a scholar meets these criteria and is eligible to request a stipend rate increase, they may do so by submitting a SAAR via the SMART Scholar Portal. If approved, the SMART Program may provide the retroactive stipend rate increase to cover the duration between initial degree conferral (or documented completion) and the date of the SAAR approval.

5.1.4. Tuition and Approved Educational Expenses

The SMART Program funds the total cost of full-time tuition and approved related educational fees during the standard academic year. Full-time tuition includes fall, winter, and spring standard terms only, as defined by the academic institution. Standard terms may include semesters, trimesters, or quarters, dependent on institutions' academic calendars. Full-time tuition does not include summer or condensed winter terms. In order to receive tuition and approved educational expenses, scholars must be enrolled in a regionally accredited U.S. college or university, in a program that complies with SF hiring requirements. Sponsoring facility hiring requirements may include ABET accreditation, for applicable STEM disciplines. There is no cap on tuition and the amount of tuition does not affect the length of the service commitment. Approved related educational fees generally include mandatory fees such as student activity and student government fees.

A sponsor letter is provided in August each program year. The scholar must provide the letter to their school's bursar's office or third-party billing coordinator in order for SMART to begin paying tuition. The sponsor letter will provide the school with instructions on where to send the invoice.

5.1.5. Additional Tuition and Enrollment

SMART Program funding does not include tuition paid for summer and/or condensed winter terms. Courses taken outside the standard academic year and without prior approval will not be funded by the SMART Program. Requests for additional tuition and/or enrollment can be made by submitting a SAAR via the SMART Scholar Portal. When considering SAARs for additional tuition and enrollment, the SMART Program may consider availability of SMART program funds, whether the proposed coursework fulfills an academic requirement, or other considerations as determined by the SMART Program Office. Scholars should not submit a SAAR for additional enrollment during condensed terms with the intention of decreasing future course loads that would result in a less than full-time enrollment in the future. Enrollment and/or completion of coursework during summer and/or condensed winter terms, whether taken online or at a physical location, requires prior authorization from the SMART Program even when the academic institution does not assess tuition charges for the additional term/enrollment. If an additional tuition request is approved, a separate sponsor letter will be provided.

5.1.6. Scholar Phase 1 Tax Responsibilities

The SMART Program does not withhold taxes from funds paid to or on behalf of recruitment scholars during Phase 1, including but not limited to stipends, allowances, and Internship Support Payments (ISP). It is the responsibility of the scholar to adhere to state and federal regulations regarding tax responsibilities. The SMART Program provides each recruitment scholar and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) with the Form 1099-MISC recording the amount paid to the scholar during the tax year.

Retention scholars receive funds as part of their salary through the SF. Taxes are withheld from retention scholar stipends in accordance with the W-4 on file at the SF. The SMART Program cannot provide tax advice. It is recommended scholars talk to a tax professional.

5.2.   Phase 1 Compliance Requirements and Procedures

5.2.1. Outside Funding

During Phase 1, scholars may accept funding from sources outside of SMART, including private scholarships, fellowships, grants, and private or federal student loans. Scholars may not accept funding from federal scholarships, fellowships, grants (including the Federal Pell Grant), or other federal funding sources other than SMART (including the DoD STEM Student Employment Program (SSEP) or Pathways Program). The only exceptions are salary supplements provided by SFs and some Veteran's Affairs programs (ex: Montgomery GI Bill, Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program).

There is no monetary limit on the amount of outside funding a scholar may accept. Acceptance of outside funding may in no way impact SSA obligations, including but not limited to expected graduation date and ability to complete internships. Receipt of outside funding does not reduce or eliminate the service commitment.

5.2.2. Outside Employment

During Phase 1, recruitment scholars may accept employment outside of SMART. Outside employment cannot be through a federal agency or be federally funded tasking. Federal employment in a temporary position, such as the DoD SSEP or Pathways, must be terminated by 31 July of the year funding begins.

SMART does not require retention scholars to continue working full-time for the SF during Phase 1. Retention scholars are expected to work less than full-time prior to completion of all degree requirements, including thesis or dissertation writing. However, retention scholars may retain full-time employment status with their SF if it does not interfere with the retention scholar's ability to complete the degree in accordance with the SSA. Funding provided by the SMART Program is to be used for academic pursuit pertaining to the SSA, not to fund SF project work. RT scholars work closely with SF to establish a successful work and school schedule.

There is no monetary limit on the wages a scholar may earn. Outside employment may in no way impact scholar obligations under the SSA.

5.2.3. Pursuit of Degrees Outside of SMART Program

Scholars may not simultaneously pursue another degree while in Phase 1. The SMART Program only supports the degree listed in the SSA. A scholar initially sponsored for a Bachelor's (BS) degree may submit a SAAR to pursue a Master's (MS) degree or joint Bachelor-Master's (BS/MS) degree. Requests to change to a PhD degree are outside of policy. The pursuit of a double major or a minor must not cause a delay in degree completion of the SMART-funded degree.

5.2.4.   Completions of Degree Requirements during Phase 1

Scholars complete all degree requirements during Phase 1, including thesis/dissertation writing, edits, defense, etc.

5.2.5.   Minimum GPA Requirement

Scholars maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for their SMART-funded degree, per the most recent official academic transcript provided by their currently funded institution. After a SMART award is funded, the only grades used to determine GPA compliance are those recorded on the most recent official academic transcript from their currently funded institution for the degree funded. These include grades for courses taken prior to the start of the SMART award. If the scholar fails to maintain the required GPA, the scholar may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

All course work during the SMART-funded degree pursuit must be taken for a grade, in order to determine GPA compliance. While some universities offer flexible course grading systems, including pass/fail credit, SMART policy stipulates that all course work offered for a grade must be taken for a grade. If a scholar fails to receive a grade on SMART-funded degree course work, the scholar may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SMART. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

5.2.6.   Failure to Complete Degree with Required GPA

Scholars who do not complete the degree funded with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale do not successfully complete Phase 1. If a scholar cannot be hired by the SF based on their failure to meet SMART Program academic requirements, then the scholar will be dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

5.2.7.   Incomplete Coursework

Scholars complete all coursework on time and in accordance with the EWP, as reflected on the Phase 1 Annual Report. Incomplete coursework is receiving a grade of incomplete for a registered course and does not constitute adequate progress toward degree completion, as reflected in the EWP. Incomplete coursework also includes failure to earn a passing grade for any coursework taken in a single term, even if the cumulative GPA remains above 3.0 on a 4.0 scale. If a scholar earns an incomplete grade the scholar may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

5.2.8. Failure to Earn Course Credit

All coursework that is offered for a grade must be taken for a grade. If the scholar takes coursework on a pass/fail basis when the course is offered for a grade, the scholar may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SMART. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

If the scholar does not receive credit for coursework due to one or more failing grades, even if the cumulative GPA remains above 3.0, the scholar may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

5.2.9. Full-time Status

Scholars maintain full-time enrollment status with their approved academic institution(s), as defined, in writing, by the academic institution's minimum credit requirement for full-time enrollment. During Phase 1, scholars pursue a funded degree on a continuous full-time basis. If the scholar does not maintain full-time enrollment status during Phase 1, the scholar must submit a SAAR (see Appendix E). SAARs to waive the full-time enrollment requirement are only considered for circumstances outside of their control, such as logistical or course scheduling issues at the academic institution. Medical hardships that require dropping below full-time status require an LOA SAAR. Scholars who do not comply with the full-time status requirements and do not have an approved SAAR may be placed in an auditable status of non-compliance and/or dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

5.2.10. Participation in Study Abroad Programs

Scholars may engage in a study abroad program if the following conditions are met:

a) The study-abroad curriculum must directly contribute to degree requirements for which the scholar receives funding;
b) Participation in the study-abroad program must not affect the scholar's degree completion, conferral, or the start of service commitment dates;
c) Participation in the study-abroad program must not affect the ability to complete the internship and service commitment requirements;
d) The scholar maintains full-time enrollment status in the U.S. academic institution for which he/she receives SMART funding;
e) Tuition for the study-abroad program is paid directly to the U.S. academic institution for which the scholar receives SMART funding;
f) Participation in the study-abroad program must not affect the scholar's eligibility to obtain or maintain the security clearance required for internship and/or service commitment requirements; and
g) Scholars notify their SF 30 days prior to travel.

The SMART Program does not provide additional funding for travel or other fees related to study abroad programs beyond the standard tuition and related educational fees during the standard

academic term. Scholars may submit a request for additional funding for tuition outside of standard academic terms.

5.2.11. Participation in Fieldwork, Conferences, Meetings, or Training

Scholars may study or engage in research fieldwork, conferences, meetings, or training away from the academic institution for which they receive funding. The SMART Program does not provide additional funding for fieldwork, conferences, meetings, or training beyond the standard tuition and related educational fees. Scholars personally fund these activities.

5.2.12. Retention Scholar Return to SF During Phase 1

Retention scholars are expected to remain full-time students during Phase 1. In certain circumstances, a retention scholar may return to the SF to conduct research and/or thesis or dissertation writing based on ideal equipment or facilities available at the SF. Retention scholars may be eligible for travel funding, per section 5.5. Time spent at the SF during Phase 1 does not count toward completion of the service commitment.

5.2.13. Phase 1 Service Agreement Amendment Requests

SMART scholars requesting to amend their existing SMART Service Agreement must submit a SAAR. Multiple parties review each SAAR, but the CEL holds the authority to approve or deny the request. Any changes approved, pursuant to a given SAAR, modify only the specific terms of the SSA amended – the remainder of the SSA remains in full force and effect. After approval, all SAARs amend the initial SSA. If the SAAR is denied, the scholar must fulfill the terms of their Service Agreement, as approved by the SMART Program.

Scholars submit SAARs via the SMART Scholar Portal. The following list outlines the SAAR types that may be requested by scholars during the Phase 1 degree pursuit. For more information on each SAAR type, please refer to Appendix E.

a) Academic Institution
b) Additional Enrollment
c) Additional Tuition
d) Award Length Decrease
e) Award Length Increase
f) Award Type
g) Degree Level
h) Field of Study
i) Full-Time Enrollment
j) Internship Waiver
k) Leave of Absence
l) Sponsoring Facility
m) Stipend Rate Increase
n) Withdrawal
o) Other

5.2.14. Patents

During the course of studies, research, and/or other Phase 1 activities, the scholar may make discoveries, creations, inventions, or intellectual property that may be eligible for protection by patent or other means. Scholars are required to notify their SF of the conception of discoveries, inventions, or creations which may be patentable. The SMART Program will not make a claim on a scholar's patent. However, depending on the situation, the SF and/or academic institution may have a claim on the patent. The pursuit of a patent may not cause a delay in degree completion or conferral or necessitate any other amendment to the SSA.

5.3. Phase 1 Reporting Requirements

5.3.1. Reporting Requirements Overview

Scholars submit, at their own expense, documentation and information requested by the SMART Program. Updated scholar reporting information is available on the SMART Scholar Portal. Failure to timely provide the required documentation and/or information may result in the scholar being placed in a status of non-compliance or dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

5.3.2. Official Transcript

Scholars submit official transcripts from the academic institution within 30 days after the end of each academic term and once grades have been posted. Scholars who fail to submit official transcripts to the SMART Program as required are placed in an auditable status of non-compliance. Official electronic (preferred) transcripts may be sent directly from the academic institution to smartscholar@smartscholarship.org. Official transcripts can also be mailed directly from the academic institution to the SMART Program at:

SMART Program, LMI, 1777 NE Loop 410, Suite 808, San Antonio, TX 78217

5.3.3. Scholar Foreign Travel

Foreign travel is any travel outside the United States, its Territories, or Possessions. Foreign travel may affect eligibility to obtain and maintain a security clearance. Scholars must inform their SF POC and relevant security personnel, prior to any foreign travel, in accordance with travel procedures set forth by the SF.

5.3.4. Phase 1 Annual Report

Scholars submit a Phase 1 Annual Report to the SMART Program on or before 1 June each year during Phase 1. The Phase 1 Annual Report tracks and projects completion of degree requirements, projects number of internships, projects work start date, discloses outside funding, discloses outside employment, discloses health insurance information, discloses study abroad activities, reports scholar research, achievements, and other activities. Scholars who fail to submit a fully completed Phase 1 Annual Report to the SMART Scholarship Program, as required, are placed in an auditable status of non-compliance.

5.3.5. Recruitment Internship Report

Scholars submit a Recruitment Internship Report to the SMART Program detailing the scholar's internship experience within 14 days of the conclusion of the internship. The internship report is an opportunity for the scholar to share information with the SMART Program regarding duties performed, insights gained, and other details or concerns regarding the internship. SFs also report to the program regarding duties performed and other details or concerns. Scholars who fail to submit a Recruitment Internship Report to the SMART Program as required are placed in an auditable status of non-compliance.

5.3.6. Phase 1 Recruitment Hiring Reporting Requirements

Prior to degree completion, scholars provide updated degree completion, degree conferral, and work start dates via the SMART Scholar Portal. Additionally, the SF may have pre-hiring reporting requirements that the scholar must comply with. Scholars who fail to submit the below Phase 1 Hiring Reporting requirements to the SMART Program are placed in an auditable status of non-compliance.

Scholar Type	Requirement	Details	Due no Later Than
All	Updated Completion Date	Date on which all degree requirements are completed.	6 months prior to graduation
All	Updated Conferral Date	Date on which the degree will be bestowed. This is noted on the official transcript reflecting the degree earned.	6 months prior to graduation
Recruitment	SF Offer Letter and Acceptance	Official offer of employment from the SF and scholar acceptance. If the work start date is not reflected on the offer, report the date to the SC. Include any pertinent email messages with the SF.	As soon as received
Retention	Retention Work Start Date	Email confirming the date on which the scholar anticipates returning to work at the SF.	As soon as identified
All	Official Conferral Transcript	Official final transcript from registrar reflecting conferral of the degree funded and date conferred.	As soon as available

5.4.   Phase 1 Recruitment Internships

5.4.1. Internship Requirement

All recruitment scholars in good academic standing complete internships with their SF during Phase 1. However, recruitment scholars who are on a leave of absence during the standard internship period do not complete internships. SMART Program internships provide an opportunity for scholars to make a meaningful contribution to the SF mission, establish a positive working relationship with future co-workers and supervisors, and become familiar with the local area.

5.4.2. Common Access Cards (CACs)

The common access card (CAC) is a DoD smart card used for identification as well as for security authentication. CACs are issued by the SF. SFs generally require scholars to have a valid CAC or other approved identification to gain entrance to the SF and use the SF computers or network.

Obtaining a CAC may be a lengthy process and the time it takes to issue a CAC is dependent on each SF. Recruitment scholars confirm the CAC requirement and coordinate the CAC process directly with the SF well in advance of arriving for an internship and employment. Recruitment scholars work directly with the SF to resolve any CAC questions or concerns.

Retention scholars retain their CACs issued by the SF. Retention scholars work directly with the SF to resolve any CAC questions or concerns.

If a recruitment scholar has been issued a CAC and withdraws or is dismissed during Phase 1, the CAC will be deactivated, and its privileges revoked. Since the CAC is U.S. Government property, recruitment scholars who have withdrawn or are dismissed are required to return the CAC to the U.S. Government immediately upon the withdrawal or dismissal effective date.

5.4.3. Internship Length and Timing

Internships typically begin the summer after initial funding. Internships are completed each year the award crosses a summer period. Internships are usually completed during summer months and range in duration from 8 to 12 weeks unless the SF requests a different length. Scholars with alternative academic schedules, such as year-round coursework, extended internship/co-op periods, or other special requirements, may request alternative timing or internship lengths by submitting a SAAR via the SMART Scholar Portal. The periods spent performing internships at the SF do not count towards fulfillment of the scholar's service commitment, nor do they reduce the amount of funds that may be repaid if the scholar is dismissed or withdraws.

5.4.4. Internship Funding

Eligible recruitment scholars completing internships may receive Internship Support Payments (ISPs) in addition to the monthly stipend. ISPs are intended to offset the cost of travel to the SF and lodging if required while performing the internship.

Eligibility for ISPs is determined based on the scholar's summer address. Recruitment scholars who are required to travel 50 miles or more to relocate near their SF/internship location may be eligible for ISPs. Scholars are notified whether they are eligible for ISPs when the SMART Program processes their Recruitment Internship Request.

If a scholar is eligible for ISPs, the disbursement dates are set forth on the processed Recruitment Internship Request. Eligible scholars receive ISPs for each week the scholar completes the internship, up to a maximum of 12 weeks of total funding. Internships may be requested to extend longer than 12 weeks; however, additional ISPs for the extended duration will not be provided.

A decrease in the duration of the internship results in a corresponding reduction in ISPs. Scholars who are absent from the internship do not receive ISPs for the time they are away from the SF. If the ISPs were processed prior to the reduction of internship length, the scholar is required to refund the overpayment.

Scholars that receive ISPs and then do not perform an internship may be responsible for repaying all ISPs expended on their behalf.

ISPs are reported to the IRS by the SMART Program on the annual 1099-MISC received by the scholar. Scholars are personally responsible for withholding taxes from all funds during Phase 1 as appropriate. The Program does not withhold taxes from funds paid to or on behalf of scholars.

5.4.5. Internship Waiver

The internship requirement is rarely waived. A waiver of the internship requirement does not reduce the length of the scholar service commitment. Requests for a waiver are considered for a single internship period at a time. If a scholar wishes to request an internship waiver, they must submit a SAAR for an internship waiver, which can only be approved by the SMART Program.

If a scholar is unable to complete an internship for any reason, including the security clearance not being adjudicated by 1 March, the scholar is required to complete appropriate coursework instead of completing the internship. If summer coursework is required, the scholar must complete a SAAR for Additional Tuition or Additional Enrollment. Delayed adjudication may be due to a government delay, or because the scholar is not eligible for an interim clearance.

If an internship waiver is approved, scholars must submit a Communications Log, documenting their continuous engagement with their SF, by 1 September.

5.4.6. Internship Preparation Procedures

a) <u>Coordinate Internship Dates with the SF:</u> Scholars coordinate mutually agreeable internship start and end dates directly with their SF via email, by contacting their mentor and/or SF POC, as directed by the SF. Internships begin on a Monday and end on a Friday due to SMART funding distribution schedules.

b) <u>Confirm Facility Access:</u> Scholars discuss facility access requirements with their mentor/facility POC in advance of the internship to avoid problems at the start of the internship regarding access to the facility grounds, computers, email, etc.

c) <u>Security Clearance:</u> The SF determines the security clearance requirements necessary to complete an internship. If the security clearance requirements are not met by 1 March and the SF cannot host without a clearance, then the scholar is required to complete summer coursework. If summer coursework is required, the scholar must complete a SAAR for Additional Tuition or Additional Enrollment, via the SMART Scholar Portal. Scholars discuss SF clearance requirements with their mentor/facility POC in advance of the internship.

d) <u>Submit Recruitment Internship Request:</u> Recruitment scholars submit the Recruitment Internship Request to the SMART Program annually, as requested. The Recruitment Internship Request provides the SMART Program with proposed internship dates and ISP eligibility information. Scholars do not finalize their internship travel arrangements until the SMART Program processes the Recruitment Internship Request and funding eligibility is determined.

e) <u>Booking Travel:</u> ISP funding eligibility is determined by the SMART Program and approved via the Recruitment Internship Request. Scholars should not finalize internship travel arrangements until the ISP eligibility is determined. Scholars are responsible for making their travel and lodging arrangements. Receipts are not required to receive ISPs and are not accepted by the SMART Program. However, scholars are encouraged to save receipts for tax purposes.

5.4.7. Internship Procedures

a) <u>Required Personal Documents:</u> Scholars coordinate with their SF prior to the internship to obtain facility-specific requirements, such as personal documents to establish identity and citizenship for facility access and badging.

b) <u>Scholar Internship Time and Attendance Requirement:</u> Scholars work full-time for their SF throughout the internship period and comply with all SF policies and procedures regarding time, attendance, and notification of tardiness or absence.

c) <u>Internship Vacation and Leave Policy:</u> Scholars work continuously at the SF for the dates of the internship period listed on the processed Recruitment Internship Request. Approval of optional personal leave is at the discretion of the SF and must be reported to the SMART Program. Scholars receiving ISPs during their internship will not receive ISP payments during the vacation or leave. If the scholar has already received ISP payments and does not complete the full approved internship period, the scholar may be required to refund the overpayment.

d) <u>Internship Sick/Medical Leave Policy:</u> If a scholar is absent from the internship due to an illness or medical condition, the scholar follows SF policy regarding sick/medical leave. The scholar keeps the supervisor, mentor, and the SMART Program informed of the status and expected date of return.

e) <u>Scholar Internship Professionalism Requirements:</u> Scholars adhere to the highest professional and ethical standards throughout the internship period, including complying with the SMART code of conduct, adhering to SF dress code, being timely in attendance, acting professionally, and satisfactorily completing internship duties and responsibilities. Scholars are encouraged to request guidance and support as needed, as well as accept and learn from instruction and constructive criticism.

f) <u>Misconduct During the Internship:</u> Personal and/or professional misconduct during the internship may result in the scholar being dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

g) <u>Internship Related Illnesses and Injuries:</u> Scholars who are injured or become ill as a result of performing internship duties contact their SF immediately. During an internship, a recruitment scholar is considered an employee for the purposes of Chapter 81 of Title 5 U.S.C., relating to compensation for work injuries, and to be an employee for the purposes of Chapter 171 of Title 28 U.S.C., relating to tort claims. Such scholars who are not otherwise employed by the Federal Government shall not be considered Federal employees for any other purpose. Any illness or injury is reported to the SC as soon as the scholar is able.

h) <u>Scholar Points of Contact During the Internship:</u>

<u>Scholar Issues with the SF:</u> Scholars experiencing problems during the internship related to the SF should contact their mentor and/or internship supervisor, as appropriate. If the scholar cannot resolve the issue with SF members, the scholar should contact the CL.

<u>Programmatic Issues:</u> All questions related to SMART Program policies and procedures should be directed to the SC.

<u>Emergencies:</u> If there is a medical or other emergency during the internship, scholars should proceed as necessary and contact their mentor/facility POC and SC as soon as practical.

5.4.8. Internship Report

Scholars submit a Recruitment Internship Report to the SMART Program, via the [SMART Scholar Portal](), within 14 days of the conclusion of the internship. The internship report is an opportunity for the scholar to share information with the SMART Program regarding duties performed, insights gained, and other details or concerns regarding the internship. SFs also submit an internship report to the program regarding duties performed and other details or concerns.

5.5. Phase 1 Retention Summer Work Periods

During the summer months, multi-year retention scholars generally return to work full-time with their SF. The SF may waive a summer work period to enable the scholar to complete coursework or research. Retention scholars attending academic institutions that require year-round coursework, extended internships/co-ops, other special requirements may receive alternative summer employment period lengths, or timing upon prior approval from the SF and the SMART Program.

Retention scholars whose summer address is 50 miles or more from SF may be eligible for travel funding of up to $12,000.00 per academic year of their award. Approved SMART Program-funded travel is for retention scholars to return to their SF for completion of a summer work period. The approved funding will be distributed with a stipend and miscellaneous allowance funding to SF. If a scholar does not use the travel allowance, the SF will return the funds to SMART at the end of the academic year. Any travel required by the SF that exceeds the standard allowance amount will not be covered by SMART; SFs will need to implement a policy and practice to address these instances.

5.6. Phase 1 Recruitment Service Commitment Hiring Process

5.6.1. Service Commitment Hiring Process Overview

SFs hire scholars as full-time federal civilian employees for completion of the service commitment. The hiring process varies among facilities and may include an application process. Scholars complete all necessary steps to accept employment with the SF. Scholars may be required to complete application materials and provide supplemental documentation at their expense such as a curriculum vitae (CV), references, and official transcripts. SFs confirm with the SMART Program that the scholar has successfully completed all Phase 1 requirements before hiring the scholar for Phase 2. If the scholar is in a noncompliance status and the SF cannot complete the hiring action, the scholar will be dismissed from the SMART Program. If a scholar declines the offer of employment from their SF, the scholar will be dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

5.6.2. Security Clearance and Start of Service Commitment

SFs typically require the security clearance be in place prior to start of the service commitment.

6. PHASE 2 – SERVICE COMMITMENT

6.1. Phase 2 General Procedures

6.1.1. Start of Phase 2

The Phase 2 service commitment begins on first day of full-time employment with the SF after verified degree completion. Requests for a short delay to the commencement of the service commitment require the prior authorization of both the SMART Program and the SF and are rarely approved. Scholars may not defer or otherwise delay their service commitment.

6.1.2. Phase 2 Letter

Upon verified completion of all Phase 1 requirements, including receipt of conferral transcript and verification of work start date, the SMART Program will issue a Phase 2 Letter to the scholar and the SF. The Phase 2 Letter serves as written confirmation that the scholar has completed all Phase 1 requirements. The Phase 2 Letter also provides degree completion and conferral dates, the name and location of where the scholar will complete the service commitment, basic award information, and service commitment start and end dates.

6.1.3. Completion of Service Commitment with Approved SF

Scholars complete the service commitment with the SF in accordance with the SSA. Scholars may not choose to complete the service commitment with another facility.

6.1.4. Full-time Federal Civilian Employment

Scholars work as full-time federal civilian employees for the SF in Phase 2 until the service commitment is fulfilled. Periods of leave without pay, or other periods during which the employee is

not in a pay status, do not count toward completion of the required service commitment. Thus, the service completion date must be extended by the total amount of time spent in non-pay status. Scholars must inform the SMART Program of any leave without pay or non-pay status during Phase 2.

6.1.5. Phase 2 Salary and Benefits

Scholars work directly with the SF to obtain information about salary, benefits, and relocation costs. The SMART Program does not set or determine salaries of SMART scholars in Phase 2. All salary and benefit details are determined by the SF according to Office of Personnel Management guidance and policies and procedures of the specific SF. I Information regarding federal salary levels may be found at www.OPM.gov.

6.1.6. Failure to Complete the Service Commitment

Scholars fulfill the service commitment in accordance with the SSA. If a scholar fails to properly complete the service commitment, the scholar will be dismissed from the SMART Program. If dismissed, the scholar will have defaulted on their SSA (per section 3.4.1) and may be subject to debt repayment (3.4.3).

6.1.7. Phase 2 Service Agreement Amendment Requests

SMART scholars requesting to amend their existing SSA must submit a SAAR. Multiple parties review each SAAR, but the CEL holds the authority to approve or deny the request. Any changes approved pursuant to a given SAAR modify only the specific terms of the SSA amended – the rest remains in full force and effect. After approval, all SAARs amend the initial SSA. If the SAAR is denied, the scholar must fulfill the terms of their SSA, as approved by the SMART Program.

Scholars submit SAARs via the SMART Scholar Portal. The following list outlines the SAAR types that may be requested by scholars during Phase 2 service commitment.

a) Leave of Absence
b) Sponsoring Facility
c) Withdrawal
d) Other

6.2. Phase 2 Reporting Requirements

6.2.1. Phase 2 Service Commitment Reporting Requirements Overview

Shortly after beginning the service commitment with the SF, scholars provide the SMART Program with the employment verification documentation listed in the table below, as well as updated contact information, via the SMART Scholar Portal.

Scholar Type	Requirement	Details	Due No Later Than
All	Updated Contact Information	Confirm or update contact information including mailing address, telephone number(s), and email address(es) through the SMART Scholar Portal.	Within 2 weeks of work start date
All	Phase 2 Annual Report	The Phase 2 Annual Report tracks updated contact information, reports scholar achievements, and activities, and indicates if potential problems need a follow up with the SMART Program.	1 June, annually
Recruitment	SF-50 (with birth date & SSN redacted)	Notification of personnel action hiring scholar as a full-time federal civilian employee. Available from the SF human resources office after work start date.	Within 6 weeks of work start date
Retention	Employment Verification	Documentation confirming the scholar is a full-time federal civilian employee of the SF, including work start date. May be provided in an email from the SF and/or a new SF-50.	Within 6 weeks of work start date
All	6.2.4. Change in Security Clearance Eligibility	Scholars notify the SMART Program immediately of any change in their eligibility to maintain the security clearance required by the SF.	Continuous

6.2.2. Phase 2 Current Contact Information

Scholars maintain current contact information with the SMART Program, including accurate email address(es), mailing address, and telephone number. Scholars notify the SMART Program immediately with changes or updates to their contact information through the SMART Scholar Portal.

6.2.3. Phase 2 Annual Report

Scholars submit a Phase 2 Annual Report to the SMART Program on or before 1 June each year during Phase 2. The Phase 2 Annual Report tracks updated contact information, reports scholar achievements and activities, and indicates if potential problems need a follow up with the SMART Program.

6.2.4. Phase 2 Employment Verification

Recruitment Scholars: Scholars submit a notice of personnel action (SF-50), documenting their hiring as a full-time federal civilian employee at the SF, via the SMART Scholar Portal. Scholars may obtain an SF-50 from the SF human resources office after the work start date. The SF-50 must be redacted and submitted to the SMART Program within six (6) weeks of the work start date.

Retention Scholars: Scholars submit a documentation of their post-conferral return to work as a full-time federal civilian employee at the SF, via the SMART Scholar Portal. Scholars may submit a notice of personnel action (SF-50), employment verification letter, and/or email from their supervisor. Documentation must be submitted to the SMART Program within six weeks of the work start date.

6.2.5. Change in Security Clearance Eligibility

Scholars notify the SMART Program immediately of any change in their eligibility to maintain the security clearance required by the SF.

7. PHASE 3 – POST-SERVICE COMMITMENT

7.1. Phase 3 General Procedures

7.1.1. Transition to Phase 3 and Phase 3 Letter

Upon verified completion of all Phase 2 requirements, the SMART Program will issue a Phase 3 Letter to the scholar and the SF. The Phase 3 Letter serves as written confirmation that the scholar has fully completed Phase 2 and outlines Phase 3 requirements.

During Phase 3, the SMART Program tracks scholar employment status to obtain information on scholar retention rates within the DoD.

7.1.2. Phase 3 Engagement Opportunities

During Phase 3, SMART scholars have opportunities to engage with the SMART Program and promote its success for future years. These opportunities include but are not limited to promoting the SMART Program within their community (facility of employment and professional associations) as well as serving as an evaluation panelist and reviewing applications for future cohorts. Phase 3 SMART scholars are encouraged to communicate with their CL to learn more about Phase 3 engagement opportunities.

7.2. Phase 3 Reporting Requirements

7.2.1. Reporting Requirements Overview

Shortly after completing the service commitment with the SF, scholars provide the SMART Program with completion verification documentation and updated contact information. Scholars provide these documents to the CL.

Scholar Type	Requirement	Details	Due No Later Than
All	Updated Contact Information	Confirm or update contact information, including mailing address, telephone number(s), and email address(es) through the SMART Scholar Portal.	Continuous
All	Phase 3 Annual Report	The Phase 3 Annual Report tracks updated contact information, current employment information, potential additional education, and reports scholar achievements and activities.	1 June, annually

7.2.1. Phase 3 Current Contact Information

Scholars always maintain current contact information with the SMART Program, including accurate email address(es), mailing address, and telephone. Scholars update the SMART Program immediately with changes or updates to their contact information via the SMART Scholar Portal. Scholars may be requested to provide the SMART Program with updated employment information.

7.2.2. Phase 3 Annual Report

Scholars submit a Phase 3 Annual Report to the SMART Program on or before 1 June each year during Phase 3. The Phase 3 Annual Report tracks updated contact information, current employment information, potential additional education, and reports scholar achievements and activities.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAC	Common Access Card
CEL	Component Execution Lead
CL	Component Liaison
DFAS	Defense Finance and Accounting Service
DoD	Department of Defense
DTS	Defense Travel System
EWP	Educational Work Plan
FMR	Financial Management Regulation
FY	Fiscal Year
GPA	Grade point average
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
ISP	Internship support payment
LOA	Leave of absence
POC	Point of contact
SC	Scholar coordinator
SF	Sponsoring facility
SMART	Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation
SSA	SMART Service Agreement
SAAR	SMART Service Agreement Amendment Request
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
USD(R&E)	Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering

SMART

GLOSSARY

Academic Address: An academic address is the current address of record for the scholar while enrolled at the academic institution. The academic address is usually a temporary address located near the academic institution. In some cases, the academic address may be the same as the permanent address or the summer address.

Academic Term: An academic term is a division of the academic year. Depending on how the academic institution structures its classes, an academic term may consist of a quarter or a semester.

Academic Year: An academic year in the SMART Program consists of the fall through spring academic terms and is generally nine months in length. An academic year does not include the summer term or condensed winter term.

Award: An award in the SMART Program is an offer of scholarship for the completion and conferral of a specific degree in accordance with the SSA in exchange for a period of obligated service. Also referred to as the SMART award.

Awardee: An awardee is an individual that has been offered and accepted a SMART award but has not begun to receive funding yet.

Award Funding: Award funding refers to the amount of funds expended under the scholar's SMART award including all stipend, tuition, approved related educational expenses, travel expenses, health insurance funds, miscellaneous supplies allowance, and all other funds expended by the Federal Government under the scholar's award. Award funding begins 1 August of the first award year.

Award Year: An award year refers to a SMART Program funding year which generally begins 1 August and ends 31 July.

Cohort: A cohort refers to the group of scholars who received a SMART award in a particular year.

Cohort Year: A cohort year refers to the year the scholar begins their SMART award.

Cumulative GPA: A cumulative GPA is determined based on the grades and courses listed on the most-recent official transcript from the SMART-funded institution, for the SMART-funded degree and is calculated on a 4.0 scale.

Debt Establishment: The procedure for determining whether a valid debt to the Federal Government is owed based on scholar withdrawal or dismissal from the SMART Program prior to completion of the service commitment.

Degree Completion: Degree completion refers to the date on which an individual completes all requirements to complete a degree, including thesis/dissertation writing, edits, defense, etc. This date generally occurs prior to degree conferral and is not set forth on official transcripts. The degree completion date may be the same as the degree conferral date.

39 | P a g e

Degree Conferral: Degree conferral refers to the date on which a degree is bestowed upon an individual. This date is set forth on the official transcript reflecting the degree earned. The degree conferral date may be the same as the degree completion date.

Dismissal: Dismissal is the process to remove a scholar from the SMART Program based on failure to comply with SMART Program policy, procedure, and/or SSA.

DoD Component: Organizational entities in the DoD. There are four DoD component designations in the SMART Program: Department of the Army, Department of the Navy, Department of the Air Force, and other DoD Agencies.

Full-Time Employment: Employment that includes regularly scheduled work hours and days required by the administrative workweek for a particular group or class.

Incomplete Coursework: Incomplete coursework is receiving a grade of incomplete for a registered course and does not constitute adequate progress toward degree completion as reflected in the EWP.

Internship Support Payment: Internship support payment(s) (ISP) are intended to support travel, lodging, meals, transportation, and incidental expenses for eligible scholars attending an internship.

Mentor: A mentor is an experienced individual who assists and guides another person's professional development. SMART Program mentors may coordinate internship logistics and assist scholars in educational and professional growth. A mentor may be a facility supervisor, or the SMART SF POC.

Other DoD Agencies: Individual DoD agencies that do not belong to the Army, Navy, or Air Force.

Permanent Address: A permanent address is the legal permanent residence of the scholar. In some cases, the permanent address may be the same as the academic or summer address.

Program Phases: Scholars complete four SMART Program Phases: Phase 0 - award, Phase 1 - degree pursuit, Phase 2 - service commitment, and Phase 3 - post-service commitment.

Phase 0 – Award: Phase 0, award, begins at the time an awardee accepts a SMART award by signing the SSA and ends 31 July of the award year. A Phase 0 awardee does not receive award funding. Any time spent attending a site visit, completing orientation, or completing an onboarding session does not count towards completion of the service commitment. Prior to funding an award, the Phase 0 awardee must comply with acceptance deadlines, complete orientation, and provide all funding prerequisite documentation.

Phase 1 – Degree Pursuit: Phase 1, degree pursuit, begins 1 August of the award year in accordance with the SSA and ends upon verified completion of all Phase 1 requirements. During Phase 1, scholars complete approved degree requirements and internships. As scholars near completion of Phase 1, they work with the SF, SMART Program, SC, and CL to prepare for the start of the service commitment.

Phase 2 – Service Commitment: Phase 2 begins the service commitment as defined by the work start date. The work start date is defined as the first day of full-time employment with the SF after verified degree completion. Once Phase 1 is verified completed, the SMART Program provides written confirmation of official entry into Phase 2, including service commitment start and end dates. During Phase 2, scholars complete the service commitment by working full-time for their SF.

Phase 3 – Post-Service Commitment: Phase 3, post-service commitment, is an employment status monitoring period that begins upon completion of the service commitment. During Phase 3, the SMART Program tracks scholar employment status to obtain information on scholar retention rates within the DoD.

Recruitment Scholar: A recruitment scholar is a scholar who is not employed in a permanent civilian position by the SF at the time of and throughout the award. Scholars who are employed by the SF in temporary or internship positions at the time of award are recruitment scholars.

Renewable Term Employment: Employment classification that includes defined and renewable terms of full-time civilian employment with a SMART sponsoring facility.

Retention Scholar: A retention scholar is a scholar who is employed in a permanent civilian position by the SF at the time of and throughout the award. This does not include term or temporary employees or interns, e.g., Pathways.

Satisfactory Academic Progress: Maintenance of a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale within the criteria defined in the SSA and maintaining adequate progress toward degree completion.

Scholar: A scholar is an individual who has received and accepted a SMART award. An individual remains a scholar throughout all three program phases.

Scholarship: A financial award for full-time study leading to a STEM degree.

Scholarship-For-Service: Scholarships-for-service refers to programs that provide scholarship funding in exchange for an agreement to complete a period of employment after degree completion or conferral.

Security Clearance: A security clearance is an authorization issued by the Federal Government permitting an individual access to sensitive and classified information.

Service Commitment: The period of service for a scholar determined by the DoD as being appropriate to obtain adequate service in exchange for financial assistance.

SMART Public Website: The SMART Public Website provides updated information regarding other program events. The SMART Public Website is located at: http://www.smartscholarship.org/smart.

SMART Scholar Portal: The SMART Scholar Portal contains scholar submittal documents, posts policies and procedures, and is where scholars update their contact information during all phases. The SMART Scholar Portal is located at: http://www.smartscholarship.org/scholar.

SMART Scholarship Program: The SMART Scholarship Program is the Department of Defense Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation Scholarship for Service Program.

SMART Service Agreement: The SMART Service Agreement is a signed written agreement whereby the DoD funds the academic pursuit of a scholar in exchange for a period of obligated service to the DoD. The SMART Service Agreement is signed by the scholar and the awarding DoD Component.

Sponsoring Facility: A sponsoring facility is a particular laboratory or agency within the DoD Component that participates in the SMART Program.

Summer Address: The summer address is where the scholar is located prior to traveling to their summer activities, example internship. In most cases this will be either the academic address or permanent address.

United States Citizen: A United States citizen is an individual who was born or naturalized within the United States and is subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

Work Start Date: The work start date is defined as the first day of full-time employment with SF after verified degree completion.

Appendix A – SMART Organizational Stakeholders
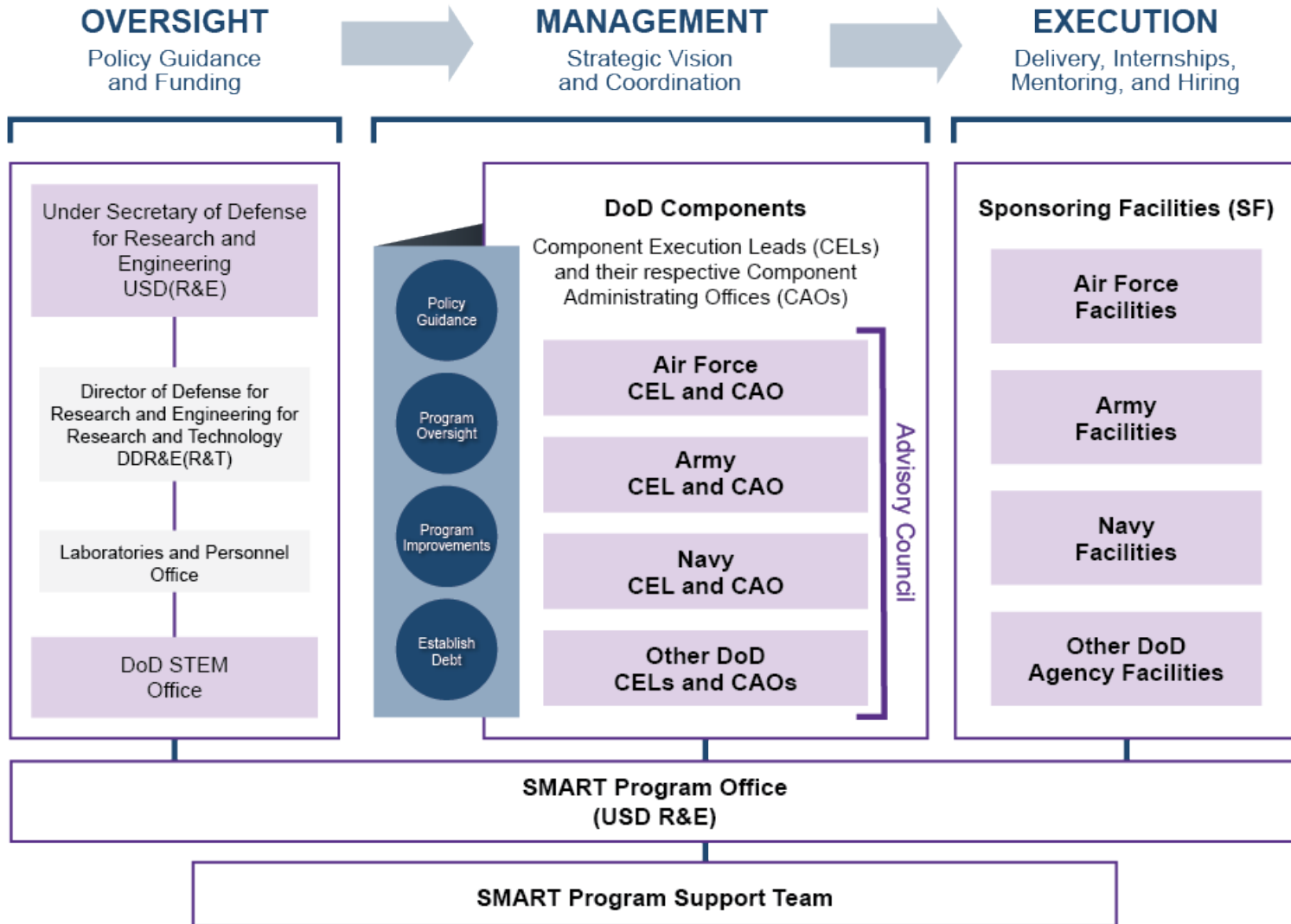
SMART

Appendix B - Non-Compliance Matrix

All Non-Compliance notices must be acknowledged within 5 days of the notice.

Sub Process	Policy	Description of Violation	Length to Comply	How to Comply	Failure to comply with terms of the Non-Compliance notice
PHASE 0 – AWARD ORIENTATION NON-COMPLIANCE					
Award Orientation	Award Documents	Failure to submit award documents by deadline without prior consent	N/A	N/A	Will be considered a declination
	Web Based Orientation	Failure to complete web-based Orientation with award acceptance by deadline	Within 5 days of notice	Log on to Awardee Portal and complete Orientation and quiz	Possible rescind of award
	Site Visit	Failure to attend scheduled RC Site Visit	Within 5 days of notice	Submit statement for review. If approved attempt to reschedule.	Delay of first stipend until return to compliance
	Site Visit Report	Failure to submit RC Site Visit Report within 5 days of Site Visit end date	Within 5 days of notice	Submit to SMART Program as directed	Possible rescind of award
	Onboarding	Failure to complete onboarding session prior to 1 August	Within 5 days of notice	Respond to scheduling request immediately; Complete telephone call as scheduled	Possible rescind of award
	Starting Cumulative GPA below 3.0	Transcript submitted by 01 July below 3.0	N/A	N/A	Rescind of award
	Security Clearance Initial Suitability	Derogatory information discovered, prior to award start date, as part of SF initial suitability or background check	N/A	N/A	Rescind of award
	Note: Awardees will be notified via email if they fail to comply with awardee requirements during the Orientation Phase.				
PHASE 1 – DEGREE PURSUIT NON-COMPLIANCE					
Degree Pursuit	Maintain Academic Enrollment	Failure to enroll and maintain enrollment throughout academic term	Within 5 days of notice	Submit a completed SAAR for Leave of Absence or to enroll full-time during academic term in accordance with Service Agreement	Possible dismissal
	Minimum GPA Requirement	Cumulative GPA below 3.0	1 academic term	Bring GPA to 3.0 or above in the next standard academic term	Possible dismissal

Degree Pursuit	Failure to Earn Course Credit	Failure to complete a course for a grade if a grade is offered (e.g., pass/fail coursework); or Failure to receive passing grade for any course taken in a single term, even if the cumulative GPA remains above a 3.0	Within 5 days of notice	Acknowledge notice of non-compliance and confirm all future courses will be taken for a grade, if a grade is offered, and that credit will be received for all coursework for the duration of the SMART award	Possible dismissal if future courses are taken as pass/fail or no credit received during the SMART award, without consent from the SMART program
	Incomplete coursework	Receiving an incomplete on an official transcript; or	1 academic term	Complete coursework in the following standard academic term	Possible dismissal
	Full-Time Status	Failure to maintain full-time status, as defined by the academic institution's minimum credit requirement for full-time enrollment	Within 5 days of notice (acknowledgement) and in the next standard academic term (proof of full-time enrollment	Acknowledge notice of non-compliance within 5 days. Confirm that you will return to and maintain full-time enrollment status as defined by the academic institution's minimum credit requirement for full-time enrollment for all remaining terms under SMART award. Provide proof of full-time enrollment during the next standard academic term	Possible dismissal if full-time status is not maintained for future standard academic terms during the SMART award, without consent from the SMART program.
	Satisfactory Academic Progress	Failure to make progress towards degree completion within the awarded time.	1 academic term	Satisfactory academic progress within 1 academic term	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension or dismissal
	Transcript submission	Failure to submit transcripts within 30 days of end of academic term	Within 5 days of notice	Provide verification from school transcripts have been ordered	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension
	Phase 1 Annual Report	Failure to submit the Annual Report by due date Failure to make requested corrections to Annual Report by due date	Within 10 days of notice	Submit Annual Report to the SMART Program as directed	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension or sponsoring facility supervisor notification of non-compliance

SMART

Degree Pursuit	Completion of Degree as Awarded	Failure to complete degree per the terms of the service agreement	Within 10 days of notice	Submit a completed SAAR for specific award change or complete degree per the terms of the service agreement	Dismissal if SAAR is not submitted or is denied
	Code of Conduct	Failure to maintain SMART Code of Conduct at school, and with the SMART Program	Within 5 days of notice	Acknowledge notice of non-compliance	Possible dismissal
	Communication	Failure to maintain communication with the SMART Program	Within 5 days of notice	Restore satisfactory communication	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension or dismissal
	Loss of Sponsorship	Failure to maintain sponsorship at the assigned SF per the service agreement	SMART Program directed	Comply with directions provided by the SMART Program	Possible dismissal
Internship	Internship Request	Failure to submit the Internship Request by due date	Within 10 days of notice	Submit document to SMART Program as directed	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension or dismissal
	Internship Completion	Failure to complete internship as approved on the Internship Request	Within 10 days of notice	Complete the internship as approved or submit a completed SAAR for approval	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension or withholding of internship support payments
	Internship Report	Failure to submit Internship Report to the SMART Program	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SMART Program as directed	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension
	Communication Log	Failure to submit Communication Log by 1 September, if required to by the SMART Program	Within 5 days of notice	Submit Communication Log to SMART Program as directed	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension
Security	Security Clearance	Failure to submit required security paperwork and/or documentation	Within 10 days of notice	Submit to SMART Program and/or SF, as directed	Possible stipend and/or tuition suspension or dismissal
	Security Clearance	Failure to obtain/maintain clearance	N/A	N/A	Possible dismissal
Hiring	Submit SF50 or verification of return to work	Failure to provide verification of work start; SF50 (RC scholars) or letter from supervisor (RT scholars)	Within 10 days of notice	Submit documents to the SMART Program as directed	Notification of non-compliance provided to facility supervisor and written confirmation of service commitment commencement withheld until conferral transcript is received or possible dismissal

SMART

Hiring	Conferral Transcript Submission	Failure to submit conferral transcript within 30 days of degree conferral	Within 5 days of notice	Provide verification from school that transcripts have been ordered	Notification of non-compliance provided to facility supervisor and written confirmation of service commitment commencement withheld until conferral transcript is received or possible dismissal
	Start of Phase 2	Failure to respond to and accept SF offer of employment by the date indicated on the offer of employment	Immediately upon issuance of notice	Respond to or accept offer of employment, provided by the SF	Possible dismissal
	Note: Return to compliance after submission of SAAR is contingent on SAAR approval.				

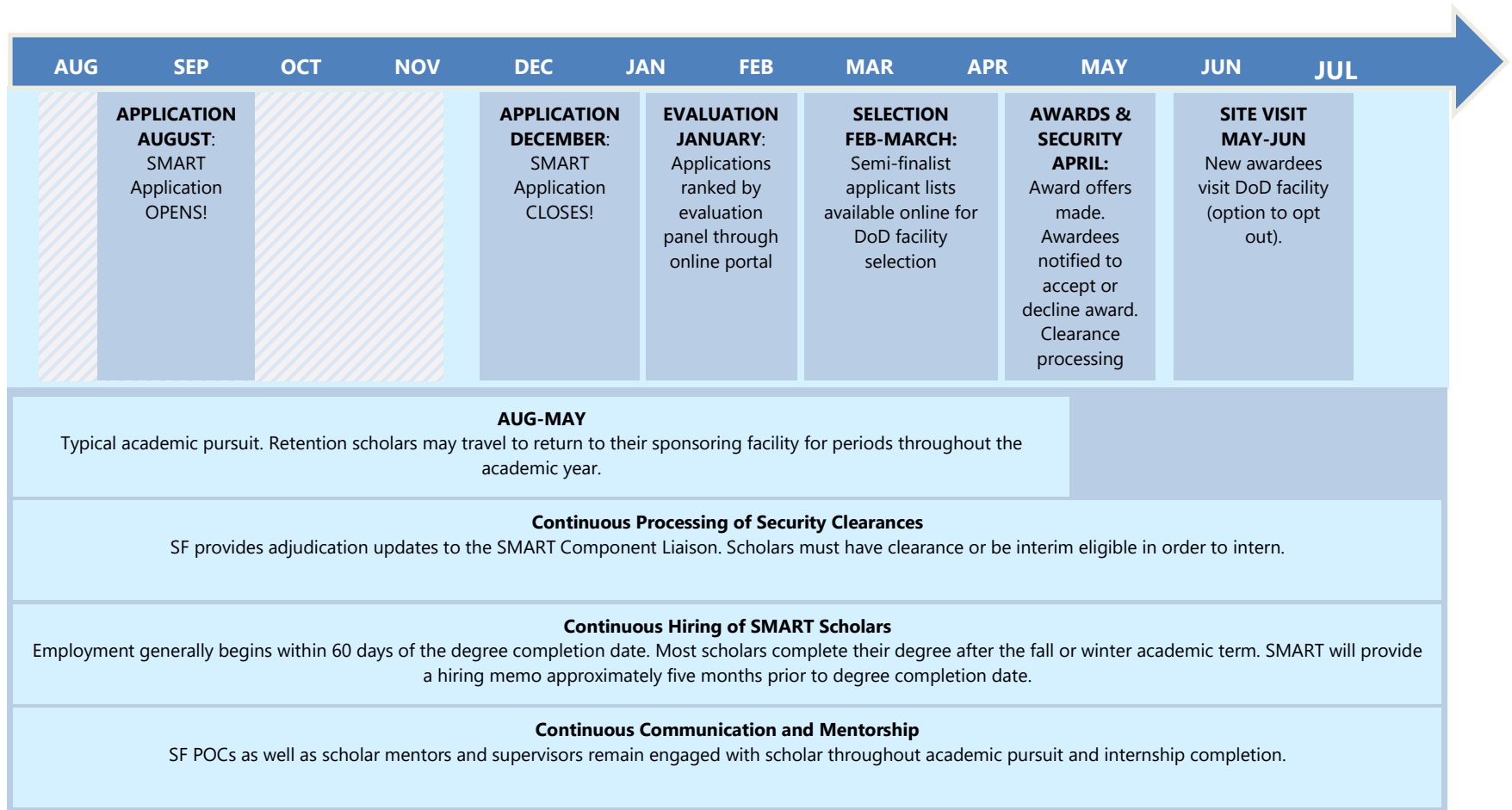| PHASE 2 – SERVICE COMMITMENT NON-COMPLIANCE					
Service Commitment	Commencement of service commitment	Failure to commence service commitment according to the offer of employment letter provided by the SF	Within parameters set by SF HR POC	Commence service commitment with the date set forth by the SF	Dismissal
	Completion of service commitment	Failure to complete service commitment with the SF, per the terms of the service agreement	N/A	N/A	Dismissal
	Phase 2 Annual Report	Failure to submit the Annual Report by due date	Within 10 days of notice	Submit the Annual Report to SMART Program as directed	Notification of non-compliance provided to facility supervisor or possible dismissal

Appendix C – Reporting Requirement Matrix

Program Phase	Scholar Type	Requirement	Details	Due no Later Than
Phase 1	All	Official Transcript	Scholars submit official transcripts from the academic institution within 30 days after the end of each academic term and once grades are posted.	No later than 30 days after semester end
	All	Phase 1 Annual Report	Scholars submit the Phase 1 Annual Report, via the SMART Scholar Portal. The Phase 1 Annual Report tracks and projects completion of degree requirements, projects number of internships, projects work start date, discloses outside funding, discloses outside employment, discloses health insurance information, discloses study abroad activities, and reports scholar research, achievements, and other activities.	1 June, annually
	Recruitment	Internship Report	Scholars submit the internship report via the SMART Scholar Portal. The internship report is an opportunity for the scholar to share information with the SMART Program regarding duties performed, insights gained, and other details or concerns regarding the internship.	2 weeks after internship end date
	Recruitment	Communication Log	For those SMART scholars who are approved for an internship waiver, SMART requires the scholar to complete regular check-ins (recommended at least monthly) with their supervisor, mentor, and/or Sponsoring Facility (SF) POC. The SMART Program requires verification of these check-ins via this Communication Log. The scholar will be provided with a copy of this log upon approval of an internship waiver, at which time they should begin logging communication with their SF.	1 September, annually
	All	Updated Completion Date	Date on which all degree requirements are completed.	6 months prior to graduation
	All	Updated Conferral Date	Date on which the degree will be bestowed. This is noted on the official transcript reflecting the degree earned.	6 months prior to graduation
	Recruitment	SF Offer Letter and Acceptance	Official offer of employment from the SF and scholar acceptance. If the work start date is not reflected on the offer, report the date to the SC. Include any pertinent email messages with the SF.	As soon as received
	Retention	Retention Work Start Date	Scholars submit email verification from supervisor confirming, the date on which the scholar anticipates returning to work at the SF, via the SMART Scholar Portal.	As soon as identified
	All	Official Conferral Transcript	Official final transcript from registrar reflecting conferral of the degree funded and date conferred.	As soon as available

Phase 2	All	Updated Contact Information	Confirm or update contact information including mailing address, telephone number(s), and email address(es) through the SMART Scholar Portal.	Within 2 weeks of work start date
	All	Phase 2 Annual Report	The Phase 2 Annual Report tracks updated contact information, reports scholar achievements, and activities, and indicates if potential problems need a follow up with the SMART Program.	1 June, annually
	Recruitment	SF-50 (with birth date & SSN redacted)	Notification of personnel action hiring scholar as a full-time federal civilian employee. Available from the SF human resources office after work start date.	Within 6 weeks of work start date
	Retention	Employment Verification	Documentation confirming the scholar is a full-time federal civilian employee of the SF, including work start date. May be provided in an email from the SF and/or a new SF-50.	Within 6 weeks of work start date
	All	6.2.4. Change in Security Clearance Eligibility	Scholars notify the SMART Program immediately of any change in their eligibility to maintain the security clearance required by the SF.	Continuous
Phase 3	All	Updated Contact Information	Confirm or update contact information including mailing address, telephone number(s), and email address(es) through the SMART Scholar Portal	Continuous
	All	Phase 3 Annual Report	The Phase 3 Annual Report tracks updated contact information, current employment information, potential additional education, and reports scholar achievements and activities.	01 June, annually

SMART

Appendix D – Program Cycle Calendar

AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL

APPLICATION AUGUST: SMART Application OPENS!	APPLICATION DECEMBER: SMART Application CLOSES!	EVALUATION JANUARY: Applications ranked by evaluation panel through online portal	SELECTION FEB-MARCH: Semi-finalist applicant lists available online for DoD facility selection	AWARDS & SECURITY APRIL: Award offers made. Awardees notified to accept or decline award. Clearance processing	SITE VISIT MAY-JUN New awardees visit DoD facility (option to opt out).

AUG-MAY
Typical academic pursuit. Retention scholars may travel to return to their sponsoring facility for periods throughout the academic year.

Continuous Processing of Security Clearances
SF provides adjudication updates to the SMART Component Liaison. Scholars must have clearance or be interim eligible in order to intern.

Continuous Hiring of SMART Scholars
Employment generally begins within 60 days of the degree completion date. Most scholars complete their degree after the fall or winter academic term. SMART will provide a hiring memo approximately five months prior to degree completion date.

Continuous Communication and Mentorship
SF POCs as well as scholar mentors and supervisors remain engaged with scholar throughout academic pursuit and internship completion.

SMART

Appendix E – Service Agreement Amendment Request List

SAAR Type	Applies to	Required Documentation
Academic Institution	Scholars who request to change their awarded Academic Institution or whose Sponsoring Facilities request them to change	1. Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances of the request, including confirmation that all other aspects of the award will not change; 2. Documentation that the new institution accepts you into the program; and 3. Submit a Revised Degree Completion Plan.
Additional Enrollment	1. Year-round enrollment and/or completion of coursework required by program/institution. 2. Required coursework during summer or winter terms without tuition. 3. Elective coursework during summer or winter terms without tuition.	1. If the coursework and/or enrollment is required for degree completion, and cannot be taken another time, provide a letter on official university letterhead from your research advisor, academic advisor, or appropriate dean of the academic institution confirming the need; 2. If the course can be taken during the Fall/Spring term, provide written statement explaining the extenuating circumstances for this request; and 3. Documentation verifying there is no SMART funding associated with this request.
Additional Tuition	1. Year-round enrollment and/or completion of coursework required by program/institution. 2. Required coursework during summer or winter terms. 3. Elective coursework during summer or winter terms.	1. If the coursework and/or enrollment is required for degree completion, and cannot be taken another time, provide a letter on official university letterhead from your research advisor, academic advisor, or appropriate dean of the academic institution confirming the need; 2. If the course can be taken during the Fall/Spring term, provide a signed personal statement explaining the extenuating circumstances for this request; and 3. Include documentation of the SMART funding associated with this request.

SMART

SMART

Award Length Decrease	Scholars who request to decrease their award length are recommended to do so one term prior to the proposed degree completion date.	1. Letter on official letterhead from a research advisor, academic advisor, or appropriate dean of your academic institution: a. Confirming the new date which you will have completed all educational requirements for your degree completion. b. Confirmation of a new conferral date; 2. Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances causing the decrease in degree completion and confirmation that you have discussed the need for the change with the SF; and 3. Submit the Revised Degree Completion Plan.
Award Length Increase	Scholars whose degree completion is delayed due to circumstances outside of their control, and who have not exhausted the 5-year funding cap are eligible to submit a request for an Award Length Increase. If the delay in degree completion is scholar driven, a Leave of Absence SAAR must be submitted in lieu of an Award Length Increase. Award length increase requests should be submitted at least one term prior to original degree completion date.	1. Letter on official letterhead from a research advisor, academic advisor, or appropriate dean of your academic institution confirming: a. The extenuating circumstance that caused the delay in degree completion including dates and steps taken to mitigate risks; b. Steps remaining prior to degree completion and when those milestones will be met; and confirmation that you are capable of completing the degree in accordance with the proposed award length change. 2. Signed personal statement detailing: a. The extenuating circumstances causing the delay in degree completion, including dates; b. Steps taken to mitigate risks and/or manage the issue causing the delay; c. Steps remaining prior to degree completion; d. Confirmation that you have discussed the need for the change with the SF; and e. Confirmation if outside funding sources are assisting in funding the remainder of the degree. 3. Submit the Revised Degree Completion Plan.
Award Type	Scholars who are directed to change their program status from Recruitment to Retention or Retention to Recruitment	1. Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances of the request, including confirmation that all other aspects of the award will not change;

		2. Statement of support from sponsoring facility, confirming the need for the change; and 3. If changing from RC to RT, SF confirms the ability to accept a MIPR, disburse SMART funds to the scholar, and understands the processes associated with a RT scholar.
Degree Level	Scholars requesting to change their degree level from BS to a MS or joint BS/MS program or to change from a PhD to a MS.	1. Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances of the request, including: a. The details of the request and how it aligns to the SF mission ; b. Confirmation that the details of the request have been discussed with the scholar's SF supervisor and/or mentor : and c. Confirmation that all other aspects of the award will not change; and 2. Statement of support from sponsoring facility, confirming the need for the change. 3. Statement of support from the academic institution, verifying acceptance into the degree program and/or the ability to grant the degree being requested.
Field of Study	Scholars requesting to change their field of study within the SMART-approved STEM disciplines.	1. Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances of the request, including confirmation that all other aspects of the award will not change; and 2. Statement of support from sponsoring facility, confirming the need for the change.
Full-Time Enrollment	Scholars who must drop below full-time enrollment status, due to circumstances outside of their control, request to waive the full-time status policy for one (1) academic term.	1. Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances of the request, including confirmation that all other aspects of the award will not change and confirmation that the request only applies to one term; and 2. Attach confirmation on official letterhead from the academic advisor detailing the need to drop below full-time enrollment status and confirming that you will still complete your degree as awarded if enrollment is decreased.

Internship	**Internship Waiver Request:** Scholars requesting to waive an internship. Requests for a waiver are considered for a single internship period at a time. A waiver of an internship does not reduce the length of a scholar's service commitment.	1. Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances of the request, including confirmation that all other aspects of the award will not change; and 2. Statement of support from sponsoring facility, confirming the internship period is approved to be waived or alternatively timed.
	Alternatively Timed Internship: Scholars requesting an alternatively timed internship. Requests for alternatively timed internships are considered for a single internship period at a time.	

Leave of Absence	Scholars requesting LOAs that require an absence from school for:
	
	1. Personal or family medical
	2. Military activation
		1. Signed personal statement, detailing the need for the request and commitment to continued submission of the Annual Report each June for the duration of the LOA;
		2. Letter on official letterhead from a research advisor, academic advisor, or appropriate dean of your academic institution confirming:
		  a. Approval of requested leave of absence and that the institution will allow you to re-enroll after the leave is complete (if applicable); and
		  b. Your degree completion and conferral dates.

	Scholars requesting LOAs that do not require an absence from school:
	
	1. Award Length Change denial (if directed)
	2. Past maximum funding cap
		1. Signed personal statement, detailing the need for the request and commitment to:
		  a. Submitting transcripts at the close of each term; and
		  b. Continued submission of the Annual Report each June for the duration of the LOA
		2. Letter on official letterhead from a research advisor, academic advisor, or appropriate dean of your academic institution confirming:
		  a. Extenuating circumstance that caused the delay in degree completion including dates and steps taken to mitigate risks;

		b. Steps remaining prior to degree completion and when those milestones will be met; and confirmation that you are capable of completing the degree in accordance with the proposed award length change. 3. Submit a Revised Degree Completion Plan. 4. **(For RT scholars only)** Statement of support from SF supervisor, to include: a. Approach to balancing academic commitments with employment; b. If and how the scholar's academic work is related to their employment; c. Whether the SF is represented on the scholar's academic committee, if applicable (PhDs only); and d. What arrangements have been made to ensure timely completion of the SMART-funded degree.
Sponsoring Facility	Scholars who lose sponsorship of their SF for reasons that would not warrant a dismissal and scholars whose facilities recommend a change of SF.	Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances of the request, including confirmation that all other aspects of the award will not change.
Stipend Rate Increase	Scholars may request an increase in the stipend rate for additional qualifications earned in the form of a conferred STEM degree funded by SMART.	Submit documentation from your academic institution confirming the conferral of the STEM degree funded by SMART.
Withdrawal	Scholars who wish to withdraw from the SMART program notify SMART prior to the withdrawal, via a SAAR.	Brief statement in Section 3 is required. Scholars may provide supporting documentation as to the context of their withdrawal; however, no additional documentation is required.
Other	Scholars that have general requests not specifically outlined above.	1. Signed personal statement detailing the circumstances of the request, including confirmation that all other aspects of the award will not change; and 2. Any applicable documentation.

SMART