

1. The Customer Service Center (CSC): The mission of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Office of Personnel Security and Suitability (DS/SI/PSS), Customer Service Center (CSC) is to provide Personnel Security support to the Department's applicants and employees. The Customer Service Center's role is to diligently answer questions telephonically or via email throughout the security clearance process. The Customer Service Center is dedicated to ensuring applicants and employees are provided assistance with completing the necessary paperwork to be considered for access to national security information and granted a public trust certification or security clearance on behalf of the Department of State.

The interns should query the Customer Service Center, which is part of the Department of State's Diplomatic Security (DS) Bureau, to check the status of their security package; The CSC is available for questions at SecurityClearance@state.gov or 571-345-3186. Additionally, they can be contacted Toll Free at 1-866-643-INFO (4636), or Fax 1-571-345-3190. IVG may be used with these numbers.

Students are invited to view the process at <https://www.state.gov/m/ds/clearances/c10978.htm>. The CSC, as part of DS, closely monitors all correspondence and students will receive a response within 48 hours.

2. Gathering your Security Package Documents:
At a minimum, each security package consists of the following documents:
 - a.) A completed e-Qip application
 - b.) Two fingerprint cards – **FD-258 (must be captured by U.S. Official)**
 - c.) Proof of citizenship (copy of U.S. passport, U.S. naturalization document, U.S. birth certificate)
 - d.) DS may request additional documents after their initial review of the application
3. Security Package processing:
 - a.) **e-QIP**- How to sign in, etc. Once HR-Student Programs has initiated an e-QIP, the Intern will receive a 14- character registration code. The registration code will be a combination of capital letters and numbers. The Intern can use this link: <https://www.opm.gov/investigations/e-qip-application/> or go to Google and type in 'e-QIP'. For a more detailed explanation or step-by-step guidance, please use the attached **First-time User Login Instructions**.
The following is an example:
 1. Click on "ENTER e-QIP APPLICATION"
 2. Next page, click on "**Continue to e-QIP.**"
 3. Click on "Register for a new username and password"
 4. Enter SSN: XXX-XX-XXXX
 5. GOLDEN QUESTIONS:

***** Please click on the box that allows viewing of the written answers*****

- a. What is your LAST Name? (**INSERT YOUR LAST NAME**)
- b. In what CITY were you born? (DO NOT provide the actual CITY, use **Unknown**, note this is case sensitive) (**INSERT "Unknown"**)
- c. In what four-digit YEAR were you born? (**INSERT YOUR BIRTH YEAR**)
- d. Registration Code: (**INSERT THE REGISTRATION CODE YOU RECEIVED IN A SEPERATE EMAIL from OPM**) Please note that this is CASE SENSITIVE.

When copying and pasting, be sure that no extra characters have been added, such as spaces.

- If the account is locked, try waiting 30 minutes for the system to unlock itself, or contact Student Programs to unlock the account. (studentinternship@state.gov)
- If the Intern forgets his/her password, try clicking on 'Forgot Password.' This will allow the Intern to answer his/her chosen security questions. If this does not work, please contact Student Programs to reset the account.
- Once the e-QIP has been completed, please notify HR Student Programs so that the security package can be released for processing. studentinternship@state.gov

b.) Fingerprints

- Fingerprints must be captured on **FD-258 cards only**
- Fingerprints must be captured by **U.S. Officials only**

Fingerprints can be taken at any local police station or certified fingerprinting facility in the U.S. If the candidate is in the greater DC area including Maryland and Virginia, contact the CSC to **schedule** an appointment by emailing securityclearance@state.gov or call 1-866-643-INFO (4636) or 571-345-3186.

When scheduling with the CSC, it is first come, first served. Appointments book quickly so be sure to schedule as soon as possible. Please bring two VALID forms of I-9 (Form) documents, as well as the offer letter or instructions from Department of State HR (proof of conditional DOS employment/security clearance processing requiring fingerprints email will suffice).

c.) Fingerprints taken outside the greater D.C. area may be shipped using the following methods. Shipping courier is dependent on the address used; any additional documents (see Section 2) should be included in the package.

- **Shipped via Fed Ex, UPS, DHL, or TNT (these are the only mail carriers that are accepted by our building) to:**

*U.S. Department of State
DS/SI/PSS Routing/Intake Dept. – 10th Floor 1801 North Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209-2000*

- **Mailed via United States Postal Service (USPS) to:**

*Department of State
P.O. Box 13285 Arlington, VA 22219*

d.) Fingerprints must be captured by **U.S. official**. If outside continental U.S. please contact Regional Security Officer for the region

4.) How the clearance process works:

a.) Step 1 - OPS (Operations):

- Once the case is released by HR Student Programs to the DS/SI/PSS Operations Division, the security package will go into a queue to be reviewed to ensure it is complete and ready for investigative processing.

- If there is any documentation missing from the security package, the Intake Unit will contact the Intern by email.
- Once the security package is deemed complete, the Intake Unit will open the case and forward it to the Records Team. The Records Team will complete the National Agency Checks (NAC). Once the NACs have been completed, the case will be moved to a case manager in the Investigative Division.

b.) Step 2 - Investigations Division:

- Once a case is assigned to a case manager, the Investigative Phase begins.
- An Interim determination based on the 13 Adjudicative Guidelines is made during this phase if an Interim certificate or clearance is requested (see Step 5, below). Case managers will attempt to make the Interim determination within the first 14 days of receipt of the case.
- There are several field investigators working a case, including the one the Intern meets during the subject interview. The investigator will submit his/her report back to the case manager.
- Once the case manager has all of the information needed to make a determination, the case will be completed or forwarded to Adjudications for additional work, as needed.
- Please ensure that contact information is current, (i.e. change of residence, travel) by submitting new information to securityclearance@state.gov.

c.) Step 3 - Adjudications Division:

- Cases forwarded to Adjudications will be reviewed using the “whole person concept” to make the final determination. Once the case is closed, a DS Clearance Notification will be sent to HR Student Programs.

5.) 13 Adjudicative guidelines:

- (1) Guideline A: Allegiance to the United States
- (2) Guideline B: Foreign Influence
- (3) Guideline C: Foreign Preference
- (4) Guideline D: Sexual Behavior
- (5) Guideline E: Personal Conduct
- (6) Guideline F: Financial Considerations
- (7) Guideline G: Alcohol Consumption
- (8) Guideline H: Drug Involvement
- (9) Guideline I: Psychological Conditions
- (10) Guideline J: Criminal Conduct
- (11) Guideline K: Handling Protected Information
- (12) Guideline L: Outside Activities
- (13) Guideline M: Use of Information Technology Systems

To get a better understanding what each guideline entails, please visit our site:

<http://www.state.gov/m/ds/clearances/60321.htm>

6.) Reciprocity and Revalidation Guidelines:

a.) **Reciprocity** may apply to candidates who currently hold or have held a position with another Federal agency that requires a security clearance within the last two years.

NOTE: Public Trust Certificate does not qualify as Clearance and does not meet the requirements for candidate for reciprocity

Reciprocity is a method by which one Federal agency grants a security clearance based on an investigation completed by another Federal agency that meets investigative requirements.

The following requirements must be met for reciprocity to apply:

- Intern held an active security clearance with another Federal agency within the last two years.
- The requested clearance level is the same or lower than that for which the intern was previously deemed eligible.
- The last background investigation was completed within the last seven years for a Top Secret clearance and within the last ten years for a Secret clearance.
- No derogatory information has come to DS's attention since the last investigation occurred.

If all four requirements are met then reciprocity may apply, please contact Student Programs – studentinternship@state.gov

b.) **Revalidation applies only to candidates who have previously held a security clearance with the Department of State. Complete this form and return to [SF86C Form](#) (signed in ink) to Student Programs – studentinternship@state.gov ONLY if you held a FULL clearance at the SECRET or TOP SECRET level. You do not qualify for revalidation if you held an interim SECRET or Interim TOP SECRET or Public Trust Certificate with Department of State.**

- Intern held an active security clearance with DOS within the last two years.
- The requested clearance level is the same or lower than that which the applicant was previously granted.
- The last background investigation was completed within the past five years.
- No derogatory information has come to DS's attention since the last investigation occurred.

If all four requirements are met then revalidation may apply, please send completed form SF86c [SF86C Form](#) (signed in ink) to Student Programs – studentinternship@state.gov

Note: e-signatures on this document will not be accepted

7.) Commonly asked questions:

a.) **How long does the security clearance process take?** Unfortunately, the Department cannot provide any estimated completion dates/timelines. Each case may have its own complexities and differing circumstances which can impact overall clearance mitigation times. ***Good news, ALL INTERN CASES ARE EXPEDITED!**

b.) **When the clearance process concludes, what happens when my security clearance is granted?** Student Programs is notified via an official DS Clearance Notification, which is then relayed to you along with further instructional guidance.

c.) **What happens if my security clearance is not completed in time?** Unfortunately, this can occur. If your investigation is not completed in time, you will need to discuss with Student Programs any potential options, e.g., deferment to the following semester, later start date, etc.

d.) **How do I obtain a copy of my e-QIP if I did not save it as a PDF originally?** It is usually best to try to save a copy before releasing the e-QIP. If you are unable to save a copy, please contact Student Programs to receive temporary access which will allow you to save and print a copy for up to 20 days.

e.) **How do I provide additional/updated information if I have already released my e- QIP?** If you have forgotten to submit information or if it has changed since you last submitted your e-QIP, please send updates to securityclearance@state.gov. The CSC will ensure that your information is sent for review and inclusion in your security file.

f.) **What does the e-QIP mean when it refers to foreign contacts?** Reporting Foreign National Contacts: The term “contact” means all manner of personal or impersonal communication and includes, but is not limited to, written, telephonic, electronic mail, text messaging, chat room discussion, facsimile, wire, and amateur radio. **Example:** If you were to visit the foreign country of your contact, or vice versa, would you meet up with her/him for dinner, coffee, etc.? If so, this would need to be listed as a foreign contact. DS is looking for any time of repetitive, patterned behavior and contact.

g.) **How long is my security clearance good for?** You have up to 2 years to have your clearance (Secret and Top Secret) reactivated from the last date you are on duty. A SECRET is good for 10 years and a TOP SECRET is good for 7 years of continuous access. A non-sensitive request must be submitted every time. Keep in mind, your security clearance is tied to the position and not the person.

h.) **How frequently should I request an update on my case?**

- a. 3 weeks after your e-QIP submission date.
- b. 3 weeks after your target completion date.
- c. 3 weeks after case has been moved to Adjudications.

