

SFS FAQ LIST (Updated Nov 3, 2021)

Can we purchase a laptop with our professional allowance (PA)?

Yes.

Do we have to attend the SFS job fair in January?

Yes, unless you have a signed contract.

Do we have to attend the SFS job fair in January, even if we have an offer for an internship/job?

Yes, unless you have a signed contract.

Can International students get US security clearances?

No.

Where can I go to find a list of federal and state organizations?

For federal organizations, you can refer to <https://www.usa.gov/federal-agencies>. For state organizations, you will need to refer to the main site for that state's government. For Tennessee as an example, you would go to <https://tn.gov>.

What is and is not considered under Professional Development Fund?

Refer to the slide deck for November 3, 2021 (presented by Eric Brown).

Do we have non-competitive eligibility for federal positions?

This will vary from agency to agency from job announcement to job announcement.

What are the main websites to look at for finding internships?

<https://usajobs.gov> and selected agency websites.

Do SFS funds pay for travel expenses for the in person SFS job fair? If so, what is included (e.g., transportation, lodging, etc.) ?

Everything that is reasonably related to travel that is not covered by the SFS Program Office directly (dinners served at SFS job fair are excluded from reimbursement) and valid during the job fair dates can be paid with SFS professional development funds. For example, your Uber rides to and from the airport would be paid from these funds.

Are we allowed to participate in study abroad and study away programs?

No.

When will we find out the dates for the SFS job fair?

As soon as OPM is ready to announce.

Who can we contact to collaborate with other schools for more projects and mentor opportunities?

Ask your SFS program director. There is no such central initiative.

Will there be another job fair before the January that will give us a chance to network?

No.

Is it possible to transfer from a public service to a private sector?

Not until you complete your SFS obligation.

Where can we buy SFS merch?

There is no SFS merchandise. Schools may have their own items. Ask your SFS program director.

Are SFS students allowed to take Co-op positions?

This will vary from school to school. Ask your SFS program director.

What do career paths look like? Can we work for the private sector or in other industries after our commitment period but within the reporting period?

You can work in the private sector only after you complete your SFS commitment.

When in January is the in-person job fair typically held? (Beginning, Middle or End?) OR when was last year's so we can get an approximation for scheduling purposes

Second week of January, typically

Where can we get tax information about the stipend?

You will need to consult a tax advisor in your state to get that information. Tax requirements vary from state to state.

Can you extend your scholarship?

The law requires that the scholarship be no longer than a three year period.

How does the Pathway internship program work described in USAJobs?

This is a question for Ms. Sandra Cyphers from OPM.

After working for the government for your required work time, can you go back to school and apply for SFS again or is it a once in a lifetime thing?

It is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

What happens if you fail a class during your scholarship period?

Ask your SFS program director.

Should we continue looking for internships even if we have already secured one?

Unless you have a signed contract, Yes.

Do you have to report a job application?

Yes.

What's the difference between "report a commitment" and "job activity" forms on the SFS website.

This is a question for Ms. Sandra Cyphers from OPM.

How many internships should you apply for?

As many as it takes to get a signed contract.

What are some good places to look for internships?

<https://usajobs.gov>.

Are we allowed to put our stipend money in investments?

Your stipend is for your discretionary use.

Could you have a spring internship instead of a summer and go to school in the summer?

Especially if the agency only offers spring internships?

Ask your SFS program director.

Can you take classes during the summer if one does not find an internship?

Ask your SFS program director.

Ways to spend your SFS fund?

Refer to the slide deck for November 3, 2021 (presented by Eric Brown).

Can you take extra classes during your internship?

Ask your SFS program director.

Do professional development funds roll over to the next year if not fully used?

In our school, they don't . Likely everywhere else also. Done for budgetary reasons.

What is the limit on money we can use for purchasing a computer with our professional allowance?

It has to be reasonable with justification. There is no hard limit. Check with your program director.

Can we leave the country at all?

Not permanently! Yes, certainly you can go for leave outside of the country. Have a good reason (even if personal) and document it.

Will we need to reserve for ourselves for the job fair event?

You mean, trip logistics? Yes.

Does having a passport help or hinder you at all in a background check for some of the agencies we are applying for?

Passport does not help nor does it hurt. It is totally separate. It might help you to log information correctly in your clearance forms as it shows all dates of travel.

Could we have an optional meeting for going over Form 86 (? Clearances form) or questions we have about it when we fill it out?

We will see.

How can we connect with other current SFS students who want to go into similar areas of cybersecurity?

SFS Tribe discord server is the only thing that is there now to connect scholars. Request specific interest channels.

So study away programs are not allowed? Even if it's still in a US state?

No.

What types of things/requirements are usually decided by OPM versus what types of things are usually decided by your PI or depend on your university?

Federal rules/regulations about everything are overseen by OPM. Issues about local program/logistics/funding are school specific, provided they conform to federal rules/guidelines.