

## INSTRUCTIONS BY APPLICANT TYPE

### RECRUITMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

#### **Announcing and Promoting the Program:**

National Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity wishing to submit a proposal will be expected to take the following actions, at a minimum, to promote student interest in the DoW CSA opportunity.

Institutions must be willing to advertise the DoW CSA program; conduct an evaluation of applicants' qualifications and abilities; provide recommendations for all applicants and support selected scholars. Institutions will have five weeks to review all student applications (27 February – 03 March 2026) and are reminded to submit all required nominations (*DoW CSA Budget and Student Identification Sheet 2026-2027*) as well as the required grants documents by *20 April 2026*.

Institutions must demonstrate how they plan to lay a sound foundation for the development of a robust cyber program for undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the institution or its collaborating institutions' degree and graduate certificate cyber programs. To this end, institutions receiving grants will be required to conduct a self-evaluation to identify improvements in program design and management for implementation in future years.

#### **Manage the Application Review and Candidate Assessment Process:**

Institutions electing to propose establishment of a recruitment/basic scholarship program are required to verify each applicant's eligibility for scholarship and academic sufficiency, to evaluate each eligible candidate's knowledge and ability in certain competency areas important to successful cyber work, and to provide a relative endorsement level for each eligible candidate. Institutions may determine the procedures to be followed in conducting the evaluation, including records verification, individual interviews, faculty review panels, as long as all applicants are afforded full and equal opportunity for consideration in appropriate review phases.

The nomination for each applicant must be included in the *DoW CSA Budget and Student Identification Sheet 2026-2027*. A review should include be based on the overall evaluation of all applicant materials, including the competency evaluations described above. In addition to a brief statement about each student, institutions shall indicate only one of the following three levels of endorsement for each applicant:

1. Not Recommended
2. Recommended
3. Highly Recommended

## RETENTION SCHOLARSHIP

### **Announcing and Promoting the Program:**

Institutions may, but are not required to, address this section. Active-duty military members (including active-duty reservist and National Guard members), as well as permanent DoW civilian employees are eligible to apply, but must first be nominated by their Component. Institutions are proposing their intent to host retention students. Institutions are not required to find retention students.

The Institutions will provide a technical approach that communicates one of the following program tracks. Additional information is included as a separate PDF (*DoW CSA Retention Program 2026*)

1. **Two-Year Community College Program**
2. **DoW Partnership Transfer Credit Programs**
3. **Graduate Certificate Program**

Institutions must be willing to consider acceptance of DoW-selected students who meet college/university entrance requirements. Institutions should briefly address the following by utilizing the *DoW CSA Budget and Student Identification Sheet 2026-2027*:

- number of credit hours required for degree completion.
- estimated number of months to complete degree.
- prerequisite qualifications required or desired (if any) of potential DoW students.
- whether students will be required to attend courses on the college campuses or whether there are alternative means (e.g. web-based or satellite-based distance learning) through which students might participate in the NCAE's degree programs.

## CAPACITY BUILDING

The institution's current academic programs and proposed enhancements provide significant benefits to potential Cyber Scholarship students and support DoW mission needs.

The institutions should identify key activities (e.g., programs, forums or partnerships with DoW, other government Components, academia, or private industry) that enhance its cybersecurity academic credentials and contribute to faculty, staff, and student awareness and experiences in current cybersecurity trends. Lab activities and curricula enhancements should provide students with critical cyber skills and knowledge.

Cost supporting capacity building should be identified separately from scholarship costs and should detail salaries, materials, equipment, and related direct and indirect costs for supporting the initiative(s) proposed.

Institutions are advised that the request shall be limited to the following amounts:

- Outreach to Academia – Faculty / Curriculum / Facility Development: \$150,000.00
- Outreach to Academia – Information Security Research and Education (INSuRE) Summer Camps: \$125,000
- Outreach to Academia – Community Cyber Outreach: \$125,000
- DoW CSA Boot Camp: \$500,000

### Examples of Projects Under Focus Areas:

#### Outreach to DoW / Outreach to Academia:

- **Faculty Development:** Implement faculty development programs that provide experiential learning opportunities to cultivate a larger and more skilled force of cybersecurity educators.
- **Curriculum Development:** Create modular cybersecurity curriculum with content that is readily mappable to the work roles, tasks, and Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) of the DCWF and DoWD 8140.01.
- **Facility Development:** Foster collaboration by creating shared lab facilities and technology resources. Make these accessible to other departments, institutions, and DoW partners to support joint software testing and hands-on training initiatives.
- **INSuRE Summer Camps:** Host summer camps for students and faculty that provide collaborative, hands-on research opportunities on real-world cybersecurity challenges, fostering talent and strengthening the pipeline between academia and government. Additional guidance is provided.
- **Community Cyber Outreach:** Establish community cyber outreach initiatives, partnering with educational institutions, local organizations, and veteran support groups to raise public awareness, promote cyber education, and illuminate pathways into DoW careers.
- **DoW CSA Boot Camp 2027:** Host the boot camp for the newly selected CSA scholars, providing the foundational, hands-on training necessary to launch their careers and forge a strong cohort identity.

**Registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submission. ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov))**