

Superior Academic Achievement

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- A. *Superior academic achievement (S.A.A.)* -- This provision covers advanced trainee positions that provide opportunities for advancement upon attaining required job skills and knowledge, require no prior experience, and have work classified at two-grade intervals. It recognizes students who have achieved superior academic standing as evidenced by one of the three methods described below. In order to be creditable under this provision, superior academic achievement must have been gained in a curriculum that is qualifying for the position to be filled.

The superior academic achievement provision applies to both initial appointment and in-service placement actions. It is to be used to determine eligibility for applicable GS-7 level positions of persons who have completed (or expect to complete within 9 months) all the requirements for a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

Senior students can apply for positions prior to graduation and be considered for a GS-7 appointment based on their grades at the time of application. However, some applicants may not receive their final grades in a timely fashion after graduation. Therefore, agencies can either:

- Require that senior students provide evidence that they maintained the required grades during their senior year prior to entry on duty; or
- Appoint applicants based on their claimed academic achievement, pending verification of final grades. Agencies should inform such applicants that if the required grades were not maintained through their senior year, there is a possibility that they may not be able to retain either the GS-7 grade or the position.

S.A.A. is based on (1) class standing, (2) grade-point average, or (3) honor society membership.

1. *Class standing* -- Applicants must be in the upper third of the graduating class in the college, university, or major subdivision, such as the College of Liberal Arts or the School of Business Administration, based on completed courses

2. *Grade-point average (G.P.A.)* -- Applicants must have a grade-point average of:

- a. **3.0 or higher out of a possible 4.0 ("B" or better)** as recorded on their official transcript, or as computed based on 4 years of education, or as computed based on courses completed during the final 2 years of the curriculum; or
- b. **3.5 or higher out of a possible 4.0 ("B+" or better)** based on the average of the required courses completed in the major field or the required courses in the major field completed during the final 2 years of the curriculum.

Grade-point averages are to be rounded to one decimal place. For example, 2.95 will round to 3.0 and 2.94 will round to 2.9.

The G.P.A should be credited in a manner that is most beneficial to the applicant. For example, applicants may list their G.P.A. as recorded on their final transcript, or they may choose to compute their G.P.A. The specific provisions are detailed below:

- G.P.A. as recorded on the final transcript. The final transcript must cover the period being used to determine G.P.A., i.e., all 4 years or last 2 years.
- G.P.A. including course work after bachelor's degree. Undergraduate course work obtained after an applicant has received a bachelor's degree can be credited in computing the G.P.A. of applicants who need those courses to meet minimum qualification requirements, i.e., the courses are required by the standard or by the individual occupational requirement. They are treated as described in the following example:
 - An applicant for a Biologist position has a bachelor's degree that included no biology course work, but has taken 24 semester hours in undergraduate biology courses after obtaining the bachelor's degree. The grades earned in the biology courses should be included in the computation to determine this applicant's eligibility for GS-7 under the Superior Academic Achievement provision. These courses should be counted in determining (1) the overall grade-point average, (2) the average obtained during the final 2 years of the undergraduate curriculum, and/or (3) the average in the major field of study. For purposes of this example, biology would be considered the major field of study.
- G.P.A. excluding pass/fail courses. Applicants usually cannot claim credit based on their *overall* G.P.A. if more than 10 percent of their total credit was based on pass/fail or similar systems rather than on traditional grading systems. However, if they can document that only their freshman-year

courses (25 percent or less of their total credit) were credited on a pass/fail or similar system, they can use their overall G.P.A. to claim Superior Academic Achievement. If 10 percent or fewer credits or only freshman-year courses were based on pass/fail or similar systems, such credits can be ignored and the G.P.A. computed on the graded courses. Applicants can, however, still claim credit based on their last 2 years if 10 percent or fewer credits were based on pass/fail or similar systems. Applicants who cannot claim credit under the G.P.A. requirements may claim credit for superior academic achievement only on the basis of class standing or honor society membership.

3. *Election to membership in a national scholastic honor society* -- Applicants can be considered eligible based on membership in one of the national scholastic honor societies listed below. These honor societies are listed by the [Association of College Honor Societies](#). Agencies considering eligibility based on any society not included in the following list must ensure that the honor society meets the minimum requirements of the Association of College Honor Societies. Membership in a freshman honor society cannot be used to meet the requirements of this provision.

Note: Organizations in table taken from website of the Association of College Honor Societies, 10/01/2009.

Alpha Beta Gamma	Beta Gamma Sigma	Gamma Theta Upsilon
Alpha Chi	Beta Kappa Chi	Golden Key International Honour Society
Alpha Epsilon	Beta Phi Mu	Kappa Mu Epsilon
Alpha Epsilon Delta	Chi Epsilon	Kappa Omicron Nu
Alpha Kappa Delta	Chi Sigma Iota	Kappa Tau Alpha
Alpha Kappa Mu	Delta Epsilon Sigma	Lambda Iota Tau
Alpha Lambda Delta	Delta Mu Delta	Lambda Pi Eta
Alpha Phi Sigma	Delta Sigma Rho - Tau	Lambda Sigma
Alpha Pi Mu	Kappa Alpha	Mortar Board
Alpha Sigma Mu	Delta Tau Alpha	Mu Kappa Tau
Alpha Sigma Nu	Epsilon Pi Tau	

<u>National Society of Collegiate Scholars</u>	<u>Pi Delta Phi</u>	<u>Sigma Delta Pi</u>
<u>Omega Chi Epsilon</u>	<u>Pi Gamma Mu</u>	<u>Sigma Lambda Alpha</u>
<u>Omega Rho</u>	<u>Pi Kappa Lambda</u>	<u>Sigma Lambda Chi</u>
<u>Omicron Delta Epsilon</u>	<u>Pi Omega Pi</u>	<u>Sigma Pi Sigma</u>
<u>Phi Alpha Theta</u>	<u>Pi Sigma Alpha</u>	<u>Sigma Tau Delta</u>
<u>Phi Eta Sigma</u>	<u>Pi Tau Sigma</u>	<u>Sigma Theta Tau</u>
<u>Phi Sigma</u>	<u>Pi Theta Epsilon</u>	<u>Tau Alpha Pi</u>
<u>Phi Sigma Iota</u>	<u>Psi Beta</u>	<u>Tau Beta Pi</u>
<u>Phi Sigma Tau</u>	<u>Psi Chi</u>	<u>Tau Sigma Delta</u>
<u>Phi Upsilon Omicron</u>	<u>Rho Chi</u>	<u>Theta Alpha Kappa</u>
<u>Pi Alpha Alpha</u>	<u>Sigma Beta Delta</u>	<u>Upsilon Pi Epsilon</u>