



UNIVERSITY & DoD FAQs

Is the Defense Civilian Training Corps (DCTC) the same as the [SMART \(science, mathematics, and research for transformation\) Scholarship](#) program?

SMART is focused on STEM skills specifically for employment in the DoD Science and Technology (S&T) workforce. DCTC is focused on both STEM and non-STEM degrees, with future employment throughout the DoD civilian workforce.

DCTC is complementary to – not duplicative of – the SMART Scholarship Program. Modeled after Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs, DCTC will provide coursework, curriculum, and internships that prepare college students for careers in DoD leadership roles. Once the first-year pilot concludes, DCTC will evolve into ROTC's scholarship-for-service model and DCTC scholars will be placed in civilian positions within DoD organizations upon graduation.

The SMART program provides scholarships, internships, and DoD employment after graduation; however, it does not provide coursework and curriculum. DCTC will be embedded within public land grant universities, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and minority institutions (MIs). Each semester students will enroll in a DCTC course that complements their major with lessons on leadership, organizational behavior and ethics, and innovation within the DoD civilian workforce. During the summer, DCTC Scholars will be placed in internships within DoD organizations where they can apply their classroom learning on the job.

When will the pilot DCTC program start? How many schools are involved?

AIRC will launch a pilot of students in "Cohort 0" in Fall 2023. The Pilots launching in Fall 2024 and Fall 2025 will award scholarships, with placement in the civilian workforce and a service commitment upon graduation. Scholarships will be innovation-focused to develop next generation talent for the DoD to transition to civilian careers in acquisition, digital technology, science, engineering, finance, and other DoD-critical skills determined by the Secretary of Defense.

The pilot programs will be run at a minimum of three colleges/universities (including one HBCU/MI); with ten pilot scholars per school to be placed at three participating DoD sponsor field organizations.

How did you choose the pilot universities?

The Department of Defense (DoD) did not choose the pilot schools. Congress encouraged DoD to leverage the resources and programs of the Acquisition Innovation Research Center (AIRC) to establish the DCTC Program. The AIRC, part of a university affiliated research center (UARC) managed by the Stevens Institute of Technology, created the selection criteria and performed analysis to determine the pilot universities for the DCTC program. In the interest of expediting launch of the DCTC pilot to test the program's feasibility, AIRC's selection process emphasized



existing relationships with DoD hiring activities, established ROTC programs, and a DoD presence on campus through innovation labs etc.

How can I (DoD organization) get involved? How will it benefit me?

There are many, diverse opportunities to get involved in launching DCTC. DoD organizations can provide detailees to support the Program Management Office, identify critical skill gaps, join the DCTC advisory board, and identify internship opportunities for students. DoD organizations can also identify future billets for DCTC cohorts to fill in your organization. The preferred placement model for the DCTC program is to hire talent pools, rather than engage in position-based hiring. Cohort hiring provides more opportunity for systemic career planning and rotational, career-building assignments. This model will benefit all DoD organizations by streamlining the process of hiring highly talented university graduates and creating challenging, developmental positions to ensure retention as the workforce becomes more skilled and experienced.

How will future schools be selected to participate in the DCTC program?

Once the pilot program yields lessons that can be used to scale up the DCTC program, the AIRC will establish and publish an invitation to state, public land grant, HBCU, and MI colleges and universities to submit proposals to participate as host schools. The goal is to grow DCTC to 20 colleges and universities. Future consideration will be given to tailoring the DCTC program to be hosted at community colleges to develop the skilled technical workforce of the future.