

# Position Designation Tool (PDT)

**Job Aid for NIH**  
**February 2020**



# Part I: PDT Overview



- In order to ensure a *systematic, dependable*, and *uniform* way of designating federal government positions, the **Office of Personnel Management (OPM)** in conjunction with **National Background Investigation Service (NBIS)** provide the **Position Designation Tool (PDT)**
- The **PDT** is the official mechanism to determine the required background investigation for a position in the Federal Government.
- The link to access the PDT is <https://pdt.nbis.mil/>.

- For ***generic questions on the PDT***, please contact the ORS Division of Personnel Security & Access Control at 301-402-9755 or [ORSPersonnelSecurity@mail.nih.gov](mailto:ORSPersonnelSecurity@mail.nih.gov).
- If you have questions on ***how to properly designate a position, or would like assistance designating a position***, please contact DCSA Suitability Adjudications at (724) 794-5612, extension 7400 or email [SUITEA@opm.gov](mailto:SUITEA@opm.gov).
- DCSA Position Designation training is highly recommended. Please view [https://www.dcsa.mil/mc/tec/upcoming\\_courses/](https://www.dcsa.mil/mc/tec/upcoming_courses/) for a list of available courses.
- To see a quick tutorial on the PDT, please visit: [https://www.opm.gov/leaving/index.aspx?link=https://youtu.be/LCrT\\_C\\_Olwg](https://www.opm.gov/leaving/index.aspx?link=https://youtu.be/LCrT_C_Olwg)



- Proper position designation is the foundation of an **effective** and **consistent** suitability and personnel security program
- Agencies are required to demonstrate adherence to the standards for proper designation of positions

Parts 1400 and 731 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations establish the requirements for agencies to evaluate relevant covered positions for a position **sensitivity** and position **risk designation** commensurate with the duties and responsibilities of those positions.



# Position Designation Responsibilities

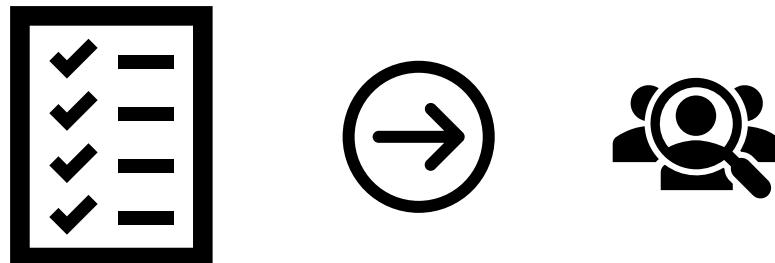
Office of Research Services  
Serving the NIH Community

- **Position designators must carefully evaluate the Position Description (or equivalent) and any other position information to:**
  - Assess the nature of the position as it relates to the potential material adverse impact to the national security or public trust
  - Determine the proper designation and required level of investigation
- **Position Designators at NIH may include:**
  - NIH Office of Human Resources Personnel (for Federal Staff)
  - Contract Officers Representatives, Project Officers or Administrative Officers (for non-Federal Staff)



# Position Designation Steps

- Use of the PDT consists of a four-step process that guides the designator through an examination of the position's duties and responsibilities
- The completion of the PDT process will result in a final designation for the position which, in turn, will **determine the investigative requirement** for the position





# Position Designation Steps

Office of Research Services  
Serving the NIH Community

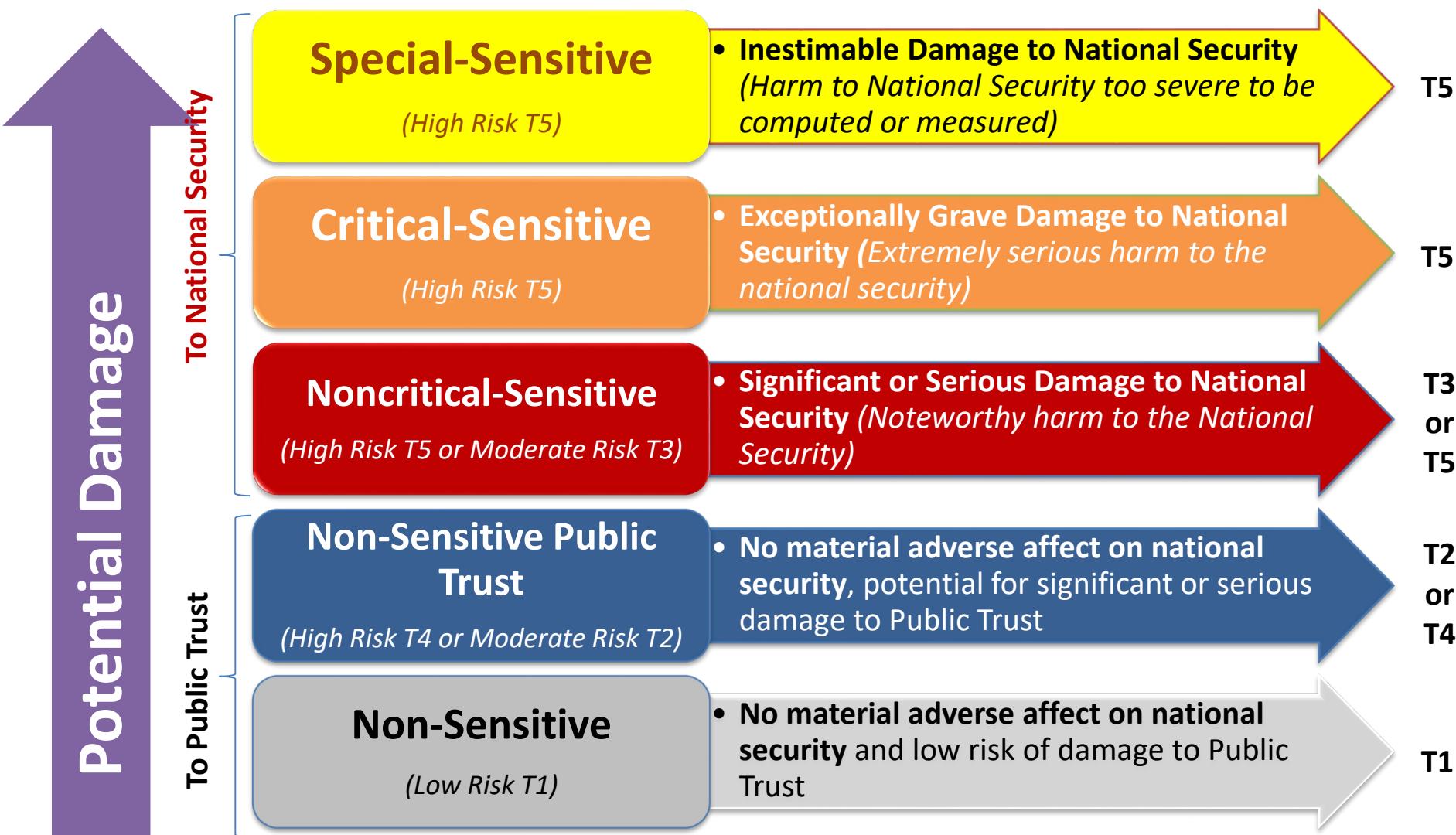
## Position Designation Process:

1. **Examine and select the *National Security Requirements*** of the Position and determine the Potential Damage to the National Security
2. **Examine and select the *Public Trust Requirements*** of the Position (unrelated to National Security) and determine the potential impact on the efficiency or integrity of the service
3. **Apply adjustments for program designation and level of supervision** and choose adjustment value for the scope of program impact and level of related controls
4. **Final Position Designation and Investigation Requirement**

As defined in 5 CFR 1400.102(a), **national security** “refers to those activities which are directly concerned with the foreign relations of the United States, or protection of the Nation from internal subversion, foreign aggression, or terrorism.”

# Sensitivity & Risk Levels with Corresponding Degree of Damage

Office of Research Services  
Serving the NIH Community



- Once the final Position Designation is made, DPSAC is responsible for:
  - Ensuring the correct investigation is conducted based on the individuals calculated **Position Designation**
  - Ensuring a **suitability determination** is made based on that investigation



# Part 2: PDT Navigation

You can access the PDT by visiting: <https://pdt.nbis.mil/>

## Position Designation Record

**Agency:**\*

DEPT OF HHS-NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

**Position Title:**\*

[enter position title here]

**Position Description:**

[optional: enter position description here]

**Series and Grade/Pay Band:**\*

[enter series and grade for FTE; enter “not applicable” for non-FTE]

**Position Description Number:**\*

[enter position description number for FTE; enter “not applicable” for non-FTE]

**Designator's Name & Title:**\*

[enter IC person who DPSAC can contact with questions]

Valid characters for all fields are: a-z, 0-9, spaces, and special characters: () " ' - \_ . ,

# Step 1: National Security

- Each position in the Federal service must be evaluated for a position sensitivity designation commensurate with the responsibilities and assignments of the position as they relate to national security.
  - Any national security duties will be indicated by checking the appropriate box as outlined on the next slide.
  - For contractor positions, you assess the duties the position will be performing for the Federal Government and not for their contractor employer.
  - **If you are not sure if any of the boxes are applicable, please contact the supervisor or project officer who will be overseeing the person filling the position.**

# Step 1: National Security

OD

Office of Research Services  
Serving the NIH Community

## NATIONAL SECURITY POSITION REQUIREMENTS, DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Select all factors that apply

- Requires eligibility for access to classified information
- Homeland security and duties involving protecting the nation's borders, ports, critical infrastructure or key resources
- Developing plans or policies related to national defense or military operations
- Planning or conducting intelligence or counterintelligence activities, counterterrorism activities or related activities concerned with the preservation of the military strength of the United States
- Protecting or controlling access to facilities or information systems
- Controlling, maintaining custody, safeguarding, or disposing of hazardous materials, arms, ammunition or explosives
- Investigative or adjudicative duties related to national security, suitability, fitness or identity credentialing
- Duties related to criminal justice or law enforcement
- Conducts internal or external investigations, inquiries or audits of the functions listed here in Step 1
- National security policy-making or policy-determining responsibility
- Public health and safety
- Fiduciary responsibility in support of activities with national security impact
- Unclassified information (e.g. private, controlled unclassified, or proprietary information)
- Other duties that could otherwise bring about a material adverse effect on national security. Provide sufficient unclassified explanation to document that the duty does not fit in one of the preceding available selections.

- OR -

Select no factors apply

No National Security Duties



- If any factors are selected, you must indicate the level of damage that may be caused by the position:
  - If you are not sure what to choose, please contact the supervisor or project officer who will be overseeing the person filling the position.

Requires eligibility for access to classified information

Select only one

<input type="radio"/> Inestimable Damage Position requires eligibility for access to Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI), other intelligence-related Special Sensitive information, or involvement in Top Secret Special Access Programs (SAP)
<input type="radio"/> Exceptionally Grave Damage Position requires eligibility for access to Top Secret or "Q" level information
<input type="radio"/> Significant or Serious Damage Position requires eligibility for access to Secret, Confidential, or "L" level information
<input type="radio"/> No Material Adverse Effect on National Security Position does not require eligibility for access to classified information

# Step 2: Suitability

- Every covered position must be designated at the low, moderate, or high risk level as determined by the position's potential for adverse impact on the efficiency and integrity of the service.
  - Any public trust duties will be indicated by checking the appropriate box as outlined on the next slide.
  - For contractor positions, you assess the duties the position will be performing for the Federal Government and not for their contractor employer.
  - **If you are not sure if any of the boxes are applicable, please contact the supervisor or project officer who will be overseeing the person filling the position.**

# Step 2: Suitability

OD

Office of Research Services  
Serving the NIH Community

## PUBLIC TRUST POSITION REQUIREMENTS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES (UNRELATED TO NATIONAL SECURITY):

Select all factors that apply

- Government operations – rulemaking, policy, and major program responsibility (includes regulation or policy making, directing, implementing, advising and audits)
- Public safety and health services, regulation, enforcement, and protection (Food safety and inspection, occupational health and safety, transportation safety, environmental safety and hazard mitigation)
- Law Enforcement or criminal justice duties
- Protection of government funds for non-national security operations
- Customs, Immigration, and/or Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources
- Hazardous material handling and transportation
- Physical security, controlling facility or physical access to information technology, and/or controlled access to arms, ammunitions, or explosives
- Investigation, oversight, and audits of government personnel, programs, and activities
- Adjudication of matters or claims (other than national security, suitability, fitness, or credentialing) with the potential to impact the public's trust
- Protection of government information technology systems (supervision or control of information technology systems, authority to bypass significant technical and operational security controls for general support systems, or access to major applications – the scope of these duties exceed that of ordinary or routine computer use)
- Protection of personal, private, controlled unclassified, or proprietary information-with the potential to damage the public's trust (includes access to or processing of personal information such as that protected by the Privacy Act (PA) of 1974, exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), financial data, or privileged information involving the award of contracts, contractor proprietary information, etc.)
- Government service delivery, including customer service or public liaison duties
- Other activities demanding a significant degree of public trust (Specify any other specific duties that are not otherwise covered):  
Describe Other Activities

- OR -

Select no factors apply

- No Public Trust Duties



# Step 2: Suitability

OD

Office of Research Services  
Serving the NIH Community

If any factors are selected, you must indicate the level of damage that may be caused by the position

Government operations – rulemaking, policy, and major program responsibility (includes regulation or policy making, directing, implementing, advising and audits)

Automatic High-Risk Conditions

- Senior management official for critical government programs, the compromise of which could result in grave damage to the public's trust

Severe impact

One or more of the following:

- Senior management duties or assignments that do not rise to the level of an automatic High-Risk condition
- Substantial responsibility for approving regulations and/or rule-making agendas for significant government programs impacting the public's trust
- Independent responsibility for planning or approving continuity of government operations
- Sets policy for significant government programs impacting the public's trust
- Independent agency spokesperson concerning delicate controversial matters impacting the public's trust
- Serves in advisory role to senior agency officials who complete one or more of the above duties

Select only one

Moderate impact

One or more of the following:

- Mid-level management duties or assignments
- Assists agency rule-makers or policy decision-makers for significant public trust government programs in an influential way
- Responsible for independent or semi-independent action with moderate impact on efficiency and integrity of the service
- Significant public contact about important government programs impacting the public's trust

Limited impact

One or more of the following:

- Management duties with less than moderate impact on programs
- Regulation or policy input is limited to contributing to working groups or providing technical input

# Step 3: Point Adjustments

OD

Office of Research Services  
Serving the NIH Community

- If any factors are selected in Section 2, you must indicate the scope of impact for any damage that may be caused by the position
  - If you are not sure if any of the boxes are applicable, please contact the supervisor or project officer who will be overseeing the person filling the position

## Adjustment for Scope of Program and Correlation to Extent of Impact

Select only one

- Worldwide or government-wide impact
  - Program operations have potential to affect the entire government or have global implications. Misconduct or damage would have potential for a national to international impact of a broad nature on the United States government or other countries and/or the individuals or private entities affected by the Government.
- Multi-agency impact
  - Program operations affect more than one agency. Misconduct or damage would have potential to impact multiple government agencies, and/or the individuals or private entities affected by those agencies.
- Agency impact
  - Program operations affect only one agency. Misconduct or damage would have potential for a local impact on the agency, and/or the individuals or private entities affected by the agency.

# Step 3: Point Adjustments

OD

Office of Research Services  
Serving the NIH Community

- If any factors are selected in Section 2, you must also indicate the level of supervision over the position
  - If you are not sure if any of the boxes are applicable, please contact the supervisor or project officer who will be overseeing the person filling the position

## Adjustment for level of supervision or other controls

Select  
only one

- Limited or no supervision - ability to act independently in almost all areas almost all of the time
  - Occasional review from a perspective of major policy issues by a superior who likely has no relevant expertise in the technical aspects of the duties performed.
- Periodic, ongoing review - ability to act independently a lot of the time
  - Ongoing spot review from a perspective of policy and organizational concerns by a superior with expertise in the technical aspects of the duties performed.
- Close technical supervision - ability to act independently infrequently
  - Continuing review of all work by a technical expert.

- Once complete, you will see the final position designation record. You can then save a copy of the record as a PDF file for uploading to NED.

## Position Designation Record

<b>Agency:</b> *	<input type="text" value="DEPT OF HHS-NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH"/>
<b>Position Title:</b> *	<input type="text" value="enter position title here"/>
<b>Position Description:</b>	<input type="text" value="enter position description (optional)"/>
<b>Series and Grade/Pay Band:</b> *	<input type="text" value="enter series and grade or not applicable if non-FTE"/>
<b>Position Description Number:</b> *	<input type="text" value="enter position description number or not applicable if non-FTE"/>
<b>Designator's Name &amp; Title:</b> *	<input type="text" value="enter IC person who can answer questions about the entries on this form"/>

## Step 4: Final Position Designation and Investigation.

The final position designation is outlined below.

Sensitivity Level	Risk Level	Investigation	Form
Non-Sensitive	Low Risk	Tier 1	SF 85

[« Previous](#)

[Reset](#)

Use this to save the file  
for uploading to NED

PDF filename:\*

[Save to PDF](#)



# Common Question

May the PDT results be modified if the agency is not in agreement with the results?

**NO**



**National Institutes of Health**  
*Office of Management*