



EUROSAI ITWG e-Seminar: Recruiting and Retaining Skilled IT Auditors

**U.S. Government Accountability Office
Information Technology and Cybersecurity
(ITC)**

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Overview

- Hire and recruit qualified staff
- Prioritize training
- Offer competitive benefits to retain staff

Hiring

- Emphasis on summer student internship program
 - allows for vetting
 - better informs prospective hire
- Hire full-time staff at the entry level (instead of at senior levels)
 - allows for on-the-job training
- Hire recent graduates from undergraduate schools or graduate schools, or those with a few years of professional experience

Hiring

- Hire staff with a wide range of ITC-related experience and degrees
 - e.g. computer science, engineering, information science, information management, mathematics, operations research, statistics, business IT, and data analytics
 - allows for more diverse thinking about our audits
 - Challenge to compete with private sector companies for IT talent and private sector wages
 - Compete with compelling mission, interesting work, benefits, and work/life balance
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Recruiting

- Plan and prepare for job posting announcements
- Communicate with universities and other entities
- Participate at in-person and virtual job fairs and other public sector career development programs offered

Training

- Formal and informal programs,
- Customizable to the individual, and
- Changes over time as the staff develops

Training

Learning Center

- Agency-wide organization offering year-round required and elective courses
- Topics include engagement-specific procedures and leadership development
- Responsible for designing, developing, and administering the policies, systems, and learning resources that support career-long growth
- Develops a foundation of GAO standards, practices, and methodologies

Training

ITC PDP Program

- Two-year program prepares entry-level staff to succeed at GAO
- PDP staff rotate among the directors within ITC and experience a range of engagements
- Assigned advisors play a critical role in mentoring
 - set goals, establish training schedules, and provide feedback
- Performance Review Group meets every 26 weeks to discuss performance and developmental needs with opportunities for salary increases

Training

On-the-job Training

- Designated Performance Managers and supervisors provide staff with on-the-job training and coaching to ensure ongoing professional development
- Supervisors and staff also utilize GAO's Career Action Plan Toolkit
 - set of 1-pagers that cover specific skills that help staff carry out day-to-day work and assist with long-term career goals

Training

Other Learning Opportunities

- Offer group training from outside vendors
- Coordinate a week-long (or over multiple weeks) series of training
 - combination of team building and knowledge sharing through internal training sessions
- Internal learning committee in ITC
- Access to Skillsoft and Cybrary
- Support academic degree programs and certifications for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

Benefits and Employee Retention

- GAO's support of diversity has been top-ranked among mid-sized federal agencies since 2011
- Ranked in the top 5 Best Places to Work in the Federal Government every year since 2005
- Staff appreciate the “work/life” balance, offering continuous learning, flexible work schedules/telework, and a pay system that rewards performance

Benefits and Employee Retention

GAO offers a number of highly desired benefits including:

- Competitive salary (dependent upon qualifications and geographic location)
- Federal holidays – 10 days per calendar year
- Vacation leave – 13 days per year for the first 3 years, 20 days per year for 3 to 15 years, 26 days per year after 15 years.
- Sick leave – 13 days per year
- Telework and flexible hours (based on approval by supervisor)
- Retirement – including the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), the Thrift Savings Plan (similar to a 401(k) plan), and Social Security
- Other benefits such as a student loan repayment program, on-site child care, exercise facility, etc. (Some of these items are not available in field locations)

Summary and Questions

Keys to Success

- Dedicate resources and target hiring
- Value training and allow staff ample opportunities
- Offer attractive benefits with a work/life focus
- Provide opportunity to work in a non-partisan, inclusive organization comprised of professional, dedicated public servants who believe in GAO's core values of *Accountability, Integrity and Reliability*