



# Homeland Security

Naval Postgraduate School  
Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS)  
Master's Degree  
DHS Nomination Application

## Description

Graduate Academic Programs (GAP) foster employee development by using educational curricula at respected academic institutions across the country to cultivate creative homeland security strategic analysis and decision-making skills and preparing future leaders at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). These programs are offered at high-quality, fully-accredited degree granting institutions. For information on specific programs, please visit the [Academic Programs](#) page on DHS Connect.

## Master's Program

The CHDS Master's program focuses on building collaboration among local, tribal, state, and federal leaders who develop strategies, plans, and programs to prepare and respond to national security threats and catastrophic events. The 18-month program requires two weeks of residency per quarter, with the remainder of the work completed on-line. The in-residence portion is completed in Monterey, CA at the Naval Postgraduate School.

## Funding

Tuition, fees and travel are funded through a FEMA grant. Applicants will be required to sign a Continuing Service Agreement issued by CHDS/FEMA if selected for the program. **Service obligation for the Master's degree program is 24 months, which begins upon completion of the program.**

## Eligibility

### Master's Program – Grade/Status Requirement

- Federal employees who have been with DHS for at least one (1) year at the time the application is due are eligible to apply. Any individual who has completed a degree under a Department of Homeland Security Graduate Academic Program within the last three years is not eligible to apply.
- Employees must have achieved at least a "Meets Expectations" or equivalent on their most recent review and must be in good standing.
- Applicants at time of application must be a GS-12-15, or equivalent. Exceptional GS-11s at time of application may apply.

An exceptional GS-11 is one who:

- Has demonstrated the ability to supervise or lead a team such as assigning and monitoring work; maintaining workflow;
- Is responsible for strategic and operational planning;
- Has the ability to prepare reports, correspondence, and other communications;
- Has demonstrated the ability to work effectively under time constraints and in stressful situations; and the ability to communicate well, both in writing and orally.



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## Education

Applicants must have earned at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a minimum GPA of 3.0. Consideration is given to those who already have a master's degree. An unofficial transcript from the institution awarding the highest degree must be included. Any individual who has completed a degree under a Department of Homeland Security graduate academic program within the last three years is not eligible to apply.

## Application Process

### Step One: Completion of Application

Individual must complete application electronically. Do not copy and paste essays into the application. Spelling and grammar check will not work within the form. Upon completion, applicant shall sign the document, and obtain their direct supervisor's signature. Application package is not considered complete unless all items are present. You must submit your application to your Component POC according to their internal deadlines. The dates listed on chds.us and the DHS Academic Programs page are for the Component Points of Contact (POCs). Contact your component POC to determine your required submission deadline! Please visit the [Academic Programs](#) page on DHS Connect for a list of Component POCs.

Applications must be saved using the following format: LastName\_First\_Component

**Applications are accepted twice per year for this program – please contact your Component Academic Program POC for Component requirements. Individuals also need to complete the school's application simultaneously at [www.chds.us](#). Please consult [www.chds.us](#) for CHDS application deadlines as they are different from DHS internal processes.**

### Step Two: Component Prescreening

Components will prescreen application based upon their established criteria. Components will submit all applications to the DHS Chief Learning Officer ([academicprograms@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:academicprograms@hq.dhs.gov)) for concurrence. All applications must be submitted electronically. Only approved applications by eligible individuals will be reviewed for nomination. **Nomination by DHS does not guarantee selection for a program as CHDS makes final admission decisions.**

### Step Three: Program Review

CHDS reviews their application based upon school's acceptance criteria. Selection notification will come directly from the school via the DHS Chief Learning Officer.

## Nomination Criteria

Applications will be pre-screened by each Component in the following areas:

### Academic Credentials

Undergraduate and graduate academic performance will be used to determine ability to succeed in the program. Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 on their most recent transcript. More points will be given for a higher GPA; and consideration will be given to those already holding a master's degree or higher. An unofficial transcript from the institution awarding the highest degree must be included for each application being submitted.



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## Biography

Academic, professional, and personal achievements will be assessed. Applicant shall submit a biography that includes significant positions held (most recent first), agency/firm and major responsibilities. Gaps in employment history should be explained.

## Essay

The Self-assessment Essay is a statement specifying: (1) your reasons for seeking graduate education in homeland security; (2) the ways your background and experience flow logically toward such an endeavor; and (3) what you believe will be your future contributions to "homeland security." From this information, combining relevance, motivation, drive, and potential, your "Future Contributions" to the field of homeland security will be assessed. This essay is assessed based on depth, breadth, and synthesis of information; as well as organization of essay and communication skills.

## Letters of Recommendation (LOR)

Two LORs are required for the DHS application. These two LORs can be submitted to CHDS as well in support of the CHDS application. The first is from the direct supervisor or Agency/Component leadership and is based upon the last page of this application. The second letter may be from a peer. Letters should attest to applicant's dedication, conscientiousness, and communication skills. Please see the CHDS application for further information on LORs.

## Potential for Graduate Study

The entire application is reviewed to assess the individual's potential to succeed in the program of study they are applying to; and to apply the knowledge gained upon return to duty. The application will be reviewed for completeness; organization; ability to write at a master's level; and general communication skills. To score high in this area, the applicant must clearly demonstrate an understanding of the program they are applying to, and how it applies to the mission of the Department.

## Application Submission

Applications must be submitted in electronic .pdf format. Applications must be saved using the following file name process: LastName\_First\_Component. Please submit **ONLY** the "application" portion of the document. Please do not include these instructions or examples in the final .pdf.

**Applications must be submitted to your Component Academic POC by the deadline established for your Component.**

***Individual must complete both the DHS and CHDS applications electronically. Do not wait on a DHS nomination to complete the CHDS application.***

**For program information or application questions, please contact your Component Academic Program POC.**



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## Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense & Security Directions for Letter of Recommendation #1

**Please provide this sheet to your direct supervisor or Component leader who will be writing Letter of Recommendations.**

To: Supervisors and Component Leaders

From: Strategic Learning and Development, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer

RE: Letter of Recommendation for Naval Postgraduate School Program

Participation in the Naval Postgraduate School programs requires a significant investment in time and resources for both the applicant and the Department. You are being asked to write a letter of recommendation for an applicant.

As part of their application package, individuals must include a letter from their direct supervisor or Component leadership that indicates an understanding of how their participation in this program will benefit DHS; and how the knowledge gained through participation will be implemented upon their return to duty. The letter should address the following questions:

1. How does this opportunity link to the applicant's career growth within the Department of Homeland Security?
2. How will your organization benefit from the knowledge the applicant will gain as part of this opportunity?



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## General Information

Name (First, Middle, Last)

Grade/Step or Band	Current Job Title
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Parent Agency	Office/Directorate
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**Date of Service to DHS** **Date of Current Position**

## Work Address

First Line Supervisor Name

## Work Email

Second Line Supervisor Name

## Work Email

**Which program are you applying to?** (Applicants who apply to both the Spring/Summer and Fall Cohort will be considered for either cohort.) Applications are good for one year and you will be considered for Fall, Spring or Summer cohorts.

### Fall Cohort

Spring/Summer Cohort

## Academic Information

### Highest Degree Awarded:

Name of Highest Degree Awarding Institution:

Is this an accredited institution?

What was your final GPA at this institution?

Provide an unofficial Transcript to your component for verification. NOTE: CHDS will require an official transcript as part of their separate application process.



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## Biography

Please provide a biography that highlights your education and career history. Your response is limited to 10,000 characters (approximately 1,500 words). Formatting will not copy into the form. Attachments are not accepted.



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## Essay Question

The essay question is a significant part of the application review. Your response must be written by you personally and may not be written, edited or translated by anyone other than yourself. The essay is evaluated on the depth, breadth and level of experience, as well as activities and accomplishments of the applicant. Essays are also judged on organization and communication skills, including punctuation and grammar, to determine if the applicant demonstrates a graduate student level of writing. Evaluation criteria are outlined at the beginning of this application. Formatting will not copy into this form.

### Essay

The Self-assessment Essay is a statement specifying: (1) your reasons for seeking graduate education in homeland security; (2) the ways your background and experience flow logically toward such an endeavor; and (3) what you believe will be your future contributions to "homeland security." From this information, combining relevance, motivation, drive, and potential, your "Future Contributions" to the field of homeland security will be assessed. When writing your essay, you may consider the following categories. While they do not represent

"topics" to adopt for the essay, they may serve as examples of items or issues which could be incorporated in your essay:

- The contribution your background and educational experiences have made to your success in public safety, public administration, or homeland security.
- Your current position, opportunities, challenges, and successes in improving the quality of life of the citizens of your jurisdiction.
- The value of a graduate degree in homeland security to you and your organization, agency, jurisdiction, or state.
- Your assessment of your career path and the progression of your positions as well as the contributions you expect to make over the next five to ten years in the fields of public safety, public administration, or homeland security.
- What you consider to be the greatest challenges faced by your jurisdiction in the next decade and the ways you will be able to assist in meeting those challenges.
- An example or several examples of the homeland security-related topics you consider most critical in your jurisdiction and your plans to study those topics within the graduate curriculum.

Essay is limited to 7000 characters (approximately 1,000 words). Attachments are not accepted.



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## Optional Essay

If you have concerns about your prior academic background or work experience, you may address them in the optional essay. This is not mandatory and will only be used as general information when reviewing your application. Your response is limited to 3,500 characters (Approximately 500 words). Attachments are not accepted.



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## Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation should be addressed to the Chief Learning Officer. Both letters should be submitted with the application. Format is provided on page 4 of the application instructions.

### Letter of Recommendation #1

The first letter of recommendation should be written by your supervisor or Component leadership that indicates how the organization will benefit from your participation in the program. Please provide them the last page of the application package as a reference.

### Letter of Recommendation #2

This letter should be written by someone within the component not blood or marriage related to the applicant, attesting to the applicant's dedication, conscientiousness and communication skills.

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## Authorization to Release Education Records

By signing this statement and enrolling in a course, I acknowledge and agree that my education records, including copies of my transcripts, grade reports and/or student evaluations may be disclosed to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for inclusion in my personnel records and considered during my annual performance review. No further release to any other party is authorized without my expressed written consent. This release remains in effect until I am no longer employed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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Applicant Signature

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Date

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### Privacy Act Statement

**AUTHORITY:** The Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-296, Sec 1331; 5 U.S.C. Chapter 41-Training.

**PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:** The purpose is to enable individuals to provide the necessary information for enrollment in a specific college, course, or program, and for other administrative processing associated with applying to the Naval Postgraduate School.

**ROUTINE USES:** Data will be used to compile student databases, class placements, statistical data, and for other routine administrative purposes. Information will be shared with Academic Program personnel in the DHS Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, the Component where the applicant resides, and the Naval Post Graduate School. In exceptional cases, information may also be shared in accordance with the routine uses described in DHS/ALL-003 Department of Homeland Security Training Records.

**MANDATORY OR VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE:** Disclosure is voluntary; however, failure to provide the requested information may prevent enrollment.



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## Applicant Signature

The information on this application is correct and was completed by me without assistance in editing or translating. I understand that nomination by the Department of Homeland Security does not guarantee acceptance into any program and that the school to which I am applying will make the final selection decision.

If chosen, I will not be available to perform my regular duties during the in-residence portion of the program. Any evaluations or performance reports done by the program may be sent to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to be included in my personnel record. My supervisor and I have discussed how the skills and knowledge gained while in this program will be implemented upon my return to duty. We have discussed possible areas of study and research topics as they apply to the mission of my Component and DHS as a whole.

Further, I understand that participating in this program requires a considerable investment in time and I am prepared to put forth the effort required to successfully complete this program. If selected for the program, I will be required to submit a Continuing Service Agreement issued by FEMA/CHDS as described in the directions for this application.

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Applicant Signature

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Date

## First Line Supervisor Signature

I understand that this application is for an academic program and that if selected, the applicant will be unavailable during the in-residence sessions (two weeks per quarter for Master's degree). The applicant and I have reviewed the program information and how the knowledge gained may be applied upon his/her return to duty.

I have reviewed the eligibility criteria for this program, and feel this applicant is eligible based on their grade/band, duties and last performance review.

I understand that the applicant, if selected, shall sign a Continuing Service Agreement (24 months for the Master's program) issued by CHDS/FEMA.

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Supervisor Signature

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Date



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## Application Checklist

Your application is not complete without the following:

- All fields completed
- Biography (no attachments accepted)
- All essays written (no attachments accepted)
- Letter of recommendation #1
- Letter of recommendation #2
- Applicant signature in all required places
- Supervisor signature
- PDF file saved using LastName\_First\_Component format

*When complete with above, go to CHDS website and complete CHDS application.*

## Component Review and Approval

We have reviewed this application for eligibility and completion. The following recommendation is submitted:

- This application is approved for nomination to the designated Naval Postgraduate School program.

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Component Academic Program POC Name (Print/Type)

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Date

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Component Academic Program POC Signature