

Glossary of Terms

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Active Clearance

Security clearance status where the individual granted a clearance currently occupies a position for which the clearance is required.

Adjudicative Guidelines

Document containing 13 criteria used by all federal security clearance adjudicators to determine an applicant's eligibility for access to classified national security information.

ANACI

Access National Agency Check with Inquiries—Type of personnel security investigation required for initial-hire federal employees who need a Confidential or Secret clearance or a DOE "L" Access Authorization.

ARC

Automated Record Check—Basic investigative component for all future federal personnel security investigations. The ARC will collect data from numerous government and commercial databases and will replace the NAC. (The ARC will be implemented as part of the security/suitability process reform.)

BI

Background Investigation—Type of personnel security investigation conducted for High-Risk Public Trust Positions. BI is also used as a generic term for any personnel security investigation. DoD used the term BI to describe the type of investigation previously required for critical sensitive positions and collateral Top Secret clearances. The DoD BI was replaced by the SSBI in December 1991.

CAF

Central Adjudication Facility—The office of a federal agency that adjudicates all security clearances for that agency. Within the Department of Defense there are 10 CAFs (Army, Navy, Air Force, DISCO, JCS, WHS, DIA, NSA, NGA, and NRO).

CATS

Case Adjudication Tracking System—A DoD computer program that allows electronic receipt of investigative case files from OPM and electronic screening and adjudication.

CE

Continuous Evaluation—will replace what is now known as a Periodic Reinvestigation (PR). CE (although not actually continuous) will be conducted annually for critical sensitive and special sensitive positions and once every 5 years on moderate-risk, high-risk, and non-critical sensitive positions. (To be implemented as a component of the reformed security/suitability process.)

Classified Information

The 3 levels of classified national security information are: Confidential, Secret, and Top Secret. There are categories of classified information, such as SCI, SAP, and COMSEC, within these 3 levels requiring special safeguarding and access controls that exceed those normally required for information at the same classification level.

CNWDI

Critical Nuclear Weapons Design Information—A category of DoD Secret and Top Secret Restricted Data that reveals the theory of operation or design of the components of a thermonuclear or fission weapon or test device. Special access controls and briefings are required for CNWDI.

COMSEC

Communications Security—Protective measures taken to deny unauthorized persons information derived from telecommunications of the U.S. Government relating to national security and to ensure the authenticity of such communications. COMSEC is also a category of classified information that requires special safeguarding, access restrictions, and briefings.

COSMIC Top Secret

COSMIC stands for "Control Of Secret Material in an International Command." COSMIC Top Secret is the term used for NATO Top Secret information.

CRYPTO

Cryptographic—A category of classified information at the Secret and Top Secret levels related to cryptographic logic, keys, and authenticators that require special access controls and briefings.

Current Clearance

Commonly used term to describe the status of an individual's security clearance where the clearance has terminated but is eligible for reinstatement.

CUI

Controlled Unclassified Information—Unclassified information pertinent to the national interest of the United States. Other unclassified information protected by law from unauthorized disclosure is also designated CUI. (See also FOUO and SBU.)

CVS

Central Verification System—OPM's online computer database of investigations and clearances. CVS will eventually replace OPM's older SII database. CVS has linkage to DoD's JPAS database. CVS maintains data on security clearances, HSPD-12 credentialing, and suitability/fitness for federal employment.

DCII

Defense Central Index of Investigations—Computer database containing records of criminal and security investigations conducted by Department of Defense investigative agencies. Since July 2005 the DCII has not been updated with new clearance data, which is now being entered into the Joint Personnel Adjudication System (JPAS).

DISCO

Defense Industrial Security Clearance Office—Component of DSS that processes, adjudicates and grants security clearances for industrial (contractor) personnel under the National Industrial Security Program (NISP).

DOHA

Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals—Component of the Defense Legal Services Agency that issues decisions in security clearance cases for contractor personnel doing work for DoD components and 20 other Federal agencies. It also conducts personal appearances for federal employee and military personnel security clearance appeals.

DISS

Defense Information Systems for Security—New system being designed to replace DSS legacy systems (JPAS, ISFD, DCII, iIRR, and ENROL) and integrate new programs like SWFT and CATS.

DSS

Defense Security Service—DSS is responsible for administering the National Industrial Security Program (NISP) and providing security education and training to DoD and other federal personnel and contractors.

eApplication

New terminology for the enhanced version of e-QIP.

eAdjudication

The use of a computer program to screen and adjudicate investigations and make favorable Secret clearance, employment suitability, and employment fitness determinations on cases containing very little or no derogatory information.

EFI

Expandable Focused Investigation—New field investigative component to be used as needed to resolve identified issues in any type of security/suitability investigation. (To be implemented as a component of the reformed security/suitability process.)

Eligibility for Access

The term used in most government documents and by government personnel security specialist for a security clearance.

e-QIP

Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing—Web-based versions of OPM Standard Forms 85, 85P, 85PS and 86 used for initiating federal personnel security investigations. The e-QIP version of the SF86 replaced DoD's Electronic Personnel Security Questionnaire (EPSQ).

ESI

Enhanced Subject Interview—New in-depth interview of a clearance applicant to ensure a full understanding of the applicant's personal history, potential issues, and mitigating factors. The ESI is a standard component of OPM MBIs, BIs, SSBIs, SSBI-PRs, PPRs and PRIs. OPM replaced the PRSI with the ESI and also began using the ESI as a replacement for the SPIN in October 2010.

Expired Clearance

Commonly used term to describe the status of an individual's security clearance where the clearance has terminated and is no longer eligible for reinstatement because time limits for reinstatement have been exceeded.

FISD

Federal Investigative Services Division—A division of OPM that conducts personnel security investigations for most executive branch agencies of the Federal Government.

FORM

File Of Relevant Materials—The FORM consists of all material submitted by the DOHA Department Counsel to the DOHA Administrative Judge for a clearance decision based solely on the written record.

FOUO

For Official Use Only—Protective marking used to identify unclassified sensitive government information requiring special handling and access controls. FOUO is being replaced by the term Control Unclassified Information. (See also CUI and SBU)

FRD

Formerly Restricted Data—Classified information which has been removed from the Restricted Data category after DoE and DoD have jointly determined that it relates primarily to the military utilization of atomic weapons and can be adequately safeguarded as national security information.

FSO

Facility Security Officer—The security manager for a cleared federal contractor facility under the National Industrial Security Program (NISIP).

HSPD-12

Homeland Security Presidential Directive Number 12—Mandated a standard for secure and reliable forms of identification for personnel requiring physical or logical access to federal facilities or computer systems. Sponsorship plus a favorable NACI are needed to obtain a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card required by this directive.

Interim Security Clearance

Temporary security clearance based on the favorable completion of minimum investigative requirements, pending the completion of the full investigative requirements for the final clearance determination.

JPAS

Joint Personnel Adjudication System—Web-based system that connects DoD security personnel with a database used to initiate, manage, and maintain a record of personnel security clearances.

LAA

Limited Access Authorization—Permission granted by the Government to non-U.S. citizens for access to classified national security information where the non-U.S. citizen possesses unique or unusual skill or expertise that is urgently needed to support a specific government project involving access to specified classified information and a clearable U.S. citizen is not readily available.

“L” Access Authorization

Department of Energy clearance that authorizes access up to Secret Formerly Restricted Data and Secret National Security Information.

LBI

Limited Background Investigation—Type of personnel security investigations previously used for Moderate-Risk or High-Risk Public Trust positions. OPM stopped using this investigation in October 2010.

LOD

Letter of Denial—Letter issued by an adjudication facility informing an applicant of a final decision to deny the applicant a security clearance and of the applicant's right to appeal the decision to the agency's Personnel Security Appeals Board.

LOI

Letter of Intent or Letter of Instruction—Letter that accompanies a "Statement of Reasons" explaining why a tentative decision to deny a security clearance was made and offering the applicant an opportunity to rebut or mitigate the reasons.

Loss of Jurisdiction

Status of an individual's security clearance when employment for the required clearance terminates after a clearance action is initiated but before a final determination is made to grant, continue, deny, or revoke the clearance. This status is also applied when a previously granted interim clearance is withdrawn before a final clearance determination is made.

MBI

Moderate Risk Background Investigation—Type of personnel security investigation used for Moderate-Risk Public Trust positions. Prior to October 2010 this investigation was known as a Minimum Background Investigation.

NAC

National Agency Check—Basic component of all federal personnel security investigations. As a minimum all NACs include a check of FBI Headquarters records, an FBI technical fingerprint search, and a check of OPM and DoD investigative databases.

NACI

National Agency Check with Inquiries—Type of personnel security investigation used for determining federal employment suitability or for the issuance of a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) card required by HSPD-12. An NACI plus credit check can be used as the basis for contractor Moderate-Risk Public Trust positions.

NACLC

National Agency Check with Local Agency Checks and Credit Check—Type of personnel security investigation used for Confidential and Secret clearances or for DOE "L" access authorizations. This investigation is not authorized for initial-hire federal employees requiring a Secret clearance or a DOE "L" Access Authorization.

National Security Position

Positions designated "non-critical sensitive," "critical sensitive," and "special sensitive." Almost all positions are designated as national security positions because of the need to access certain levels of classified information. Exceptions to this rule include ADP-I (IT1), ADP-II (IT2), and federal investigators positions.

NISP

National Industrial Security Program—Program established by E.O. 12829 and implemented by the NISP Operating Manual (NISPOM—DoD 5220.22M) for the safeguarding of classified national security information by federal contractors.

OHA

Office of Hearings and Appeals—Component of the Department of Energy (DOE) responsible for conducting hearings and issuing decisions involving personnel security clearance cases of DOE employees and contractors.

OPM

Office of Personnel Management—Government agency responsible for regulating federal employment practices. One of its major components, FISD, is the principal supplier of personnel security investigations to the Federal Government.

Period of Coverage

Also known as the "Period of Investigation"—Standard period of time covered by a Personnel Security Investigation (PSI). Each type of PSI has an overall period of coverage and specific periods of coverage for individual components (e.g. employment, police records, education, etc.) of a PSI.

Polygraph

Device that measures and records physiological responses while a subject answers a series of questions. It relies on the belief that false answers will produce distinctive measurements. Polygraph screening examinations are used as an

adjunct to an SSBI for some Special Access Programs and can be either Counterintelligence-Scope or Full-Scope (lifestyle and counterintelligence questions).

PPR

Phased Periodic Reinvestigation—A periodic reinvestigation of limited scope used in lieu of a Single Scope Background Investigation—Periodic Reinvestigation (SSBI-PR). The PPR is an optional form of the SSBI-PR reserved for personnel with no unfavorable information listed in their SF86.

PR

Periodic Reinvestigation—Reinvestigations required at specific intervals to maintain a security clearance or a designated public trust position.

PRI

Periodic Reinvestigation—Type of reinvestigation used for Public Trust positions.

PRIR

Periodic Reinvestigation and Residence Coverage—Type of reinvestigation previously used for Public Trust position. This reinvestigation was eliminated in October 2010.

PRSI

Personal Subject Interview—OPM renamed the PRSI an Enhanced Subject Interview (ESI) in October 2010. It is an in depth interview of the subject of a personnel security investigation by a security investigator. The ESI is a standard component of the SSBI, SSBI-PR, PPR, BI, MBI and PRI and it can be added to an NACL or ANACI.

PSAB

Personnel Security Appeal Board—A three member board created by a federal agency to review appeals to security clearance denials and revocations.

PSI

Personal Security Investigation—Term that encompasses all types of background investigations used for employment suitability, HSPD-12 credentialing, and security clearance determinations.

Public Trust (PT) Position

Designated federal employee and contractor positions involving sensitive unclassified duties. PT positions are designated as Moderate Risk or High Risk. These positions may involve “policy making, major program responsibility, public safety and health, law enforcement duties, fiduciary responsibilities or other duties demanding a significant degree of public trust. . . .”

PT-SBI

Public Trust-Special Background Investigation—Type of personnel security investigation previously conducted for selected High Risk Public Trust positions. This investigation was eliminated in October 2010.

“Q” Access Authorization

Department of Energy clearance that authorizes access up to Top Secret Restricted Data and Top Secret National Security Information.

RD

Restricted Data—Classified information defined by the Atomic Energy Act as concerning: 1) design, manufacture, or utilization of atomic weapons; 2) production of special nuclear material; or 3) use of special nuclear material in the production of energy. RD is considered a special access program.

ROI

Report of Investigation—A report documenting the results of a personnel security investigation by a federal or federal contract investigator.

RRU

Request for Research/Recertify/Upgrade Eligibility—Direct notification by an authorized requestor to the appropriate CAF through JPAS of any personnel security clearance status changes a JPAS user cannot make himself/herself within the system.

RSI

Reimbursable Suitability/Security Investigation—A customized investigation composed of specific investigative action(s) to gather information to resolve issues that surfaced during or after a standard OPM personnel security investigation.

SAP

Special Access Program—Certain programs established for a specific categories of classified information that impose safeguarding and access requirements that exceed those required for information at the same classification level.

SBI

Special Background Investigation—Type of personnel security investigation previously required for special-sensitive positions/Sensitive Compartmented information (SCI) eligibility. The SBI was replaced by the SSBI in December 1991.

SBPR

Single Scope Background Investigation-Periodic Reinvestigation—A shorter acronym for an SSBI-PR

SBU

Sensitive But Unclassified—Term that is being replaced by “Controlled Unclassified Information.” (See also CUI and FOUO).

Scattered Castles

Consolidated personnel security investigation and clearance database of U.S. Intelligence Community personnel. The database is operated and maintained by the Director of National Intelligence.

SCI

Sensitive Compartmented Information—Category of classified information with many separate subcategories or compartments that imposes safeguarding and access restrictions that exceed those normally required for collateral classified information at the same classification level. SCI is a Special Access Program (SAP) involving intelligence sources, methods, or analytical processes.

Scope of Investigation

Standard components of an investigation, such as character references, employment records, credit report, police record checks, educational records, etc. The term “scope” is often misused to describe an investigation’s “Period of Coverage.”

Security Clearance

Determination made by a government personnel security adjudicator that an individual’s access to classified information is clearly consistent with the interests of national security. Among adjudicators the term “Security Clearance” is being replaced by the term “Eligibility for Access.”

SF85

Standard Form 85—Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions. Form used for a NACI to determine an individual’s suitability for federal employment or to hold certain non-sensitive, low risk federal contractor positions or for HSPD-12 credentialing.

SF85P

Standard Form 85P—Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions. Form used as the basis for an investigation to determine an individual’s suitability to hold a Public Trust position and in some cases for HSPD-12 credentialing.

SF85P-S

Standard Form 85P-S—Supplemental Questionnaire for Selected Positions. Form used in addition to the SF85P as the basis for an investigation to determine an individual’s suitability to hold selected High Risk Public Trust positions.

SF86

Standard Form 86—Questionnaire for National Security Positions. Form used as the basis for an investigation to determine an individual’s eligibility for a security clearance or for continuation of an existing security clearance.

SII

Security/Suitability Investigations Index—OPM’s online computer database of personnel security investigations accessible to federal security personnel.

SOR

Statement of Reasons—Document from a security clearance adjudication facility advising an applicant of the specific reason(s) why the adjudication facility intends to deny or revoke a security clearance. The SOR also advises the applicant of his/her right to submit a written rebuttal and/or mitigating information regarding the allegations. In the contractor cases it also advises of the right to a hearing before an administrative judge.

SPIN

Special Interview—Subject interview to address unresolved issues present in a clearance application form or developed during an OPM personnel security investigation.

SPR

Secret Periodic Reinvestigation—An NACLIC used as the periodic reinvestigation for a Secret clearance.

SSBI

Single Scope Background Investigation—Type of personnel security investigation used for Top Secret clearances, DOE “Q” access authorizations, Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI), and other designated Special Access Programs (SAP).

SSBI-PR

Single Scope Background Investigation-Periodic Reinvestigation—Type of reinvestigation used when the initial clearance investigation was an SSBI and the individuals access is unchanged.

SWFT

Secure Web Fingerprint Transmission—a web-enabled biometric system to transmit electronic fingerprints to DSS and OPM.