

# **Pathways – A Virtual International Auditor Fellowship Program**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **General Information and Requirements**

#### **Q What is Pathways?**

**A** GAO's Pathways, A Virtual International Auditor Fellowship Program, is a 5-week, pilot program in which fellows will participate in live, virtual training; learn about U.S. intergovernmental auditing experiences; and develop strategies to implement change within their respective Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs). It is a condensed version of the 4-month, in-person program and is entirely virtual. Pathways will include no travel to the United States and require no tuition or fees.

#### **Q What are the requirements to apply to Pathways?**

**A** In order to apply for Pathways, you must

- be from a SAI in the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institution (INTOSAI) OLACEFS or CAROSAI regions
- be nominated by the Head of the SAI, who may only nominate one individual
- be a middle- to senior-level professional
- demonstrate English proficiency as determined by a minimum TOEFL score of 550 (paper-based) or 80 (internet-based) within the last 5 years, or a video conference interview if applicant has completed more than 1 year of full-time studies in English within the last 3 years
- submit a completed program application. Part I of the application is to be completed by nominee and Part II is to be completed and signed by the Head of the SAI
- prepare a special capstone project in the form of a strategy paper and work directly with the Head of your SAI and its leadership to identify a specific topic of change or area of interest for advancing capacities that you will introduce or champion upon your return. Some examples of topics selected by past participating fellows are "overlap, duplication, and fragmentation," "internal controls," and "effective report writing."
- dedicate time in the two months directly following the virtual program to transform your detailed outline, developed during the 5-week program, into a full strategy paper

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### **Q What is the language proficiency requirement?**

**A** The program is conducted in English. Applicants with insufficient English proficiency skills would not find the program and its content rewarding. TOEFL scores are valid for 2 years, but scores within the last 5 years will be considered given the timing of the application window. Applicants with TOEFL scores over two years will be interviewed by GAO staff to confirm proficiency. If an applicant has scores other than the TOEFL or believe that their circumstances can show their English-language proficiency, they are invited to email [IAFPCurriculum@gao.gov](mailto:IAFPCurriculum@gao.gov) to request a review of their case and confirm whether they are a viable applicant.

### **Q What are the requirements to nominate and support a Pathways fellow?**

**A** In order to nominate a fellow, the Head of the SAI must

- nominate only one individual
- complete and sign Part II of the program application
- work directly with the applicant and leadership to identify a specific topic of change or area of interest for advancing capacities that the applicant will introduce or champion upon their return
- appoint a SAI sponsor, an IAFP alum when possible, to provide guidance and support to the fellow during the virtual program and in the two months directly following the virtual program as the applicant transforms their detailed outline, developed during the 5-week program, into a full strategy paper

### **Q What is the SAI Sponsor?**

**A** A SAI Sponsor is a senior leader at the fellow's home SAI that will be selected by the Head of the SAI to provide guidance and support to the fellow during the virtual program. The SAI Sponsor will provide guidance to the fellow as they prepare their strategy paper, serve as a resource for the fellow on learnings from the program, and help ensure the fellow is able to dedicate the required amount of time necessary to participate in the program, advocating for the fellow if anything is interfering with participation in the virtual program, such as being asked to carry out their normal work responsibilities. Further, they will aid the fellow in implementing any recommended changes identified in their strategy paper upon program completion.

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**Q I am in a region located outside of the INTOSAI OLACEFS and CAROSAI regions. Can I participate in the 2022 pilot virtual program?**

A No. Due to the logistical challenges that time zones present to this first-ever, 5-week virtual program, we cannot accept in the program anyone located outside of the OLACEFS and CAROSAI regions. Depending on the success of this 2022 pilot program, we hope to expand this virtual program to additional INTOSAI regions in the future.

**Q Is there a cost to participate in Pathways?**

A No, Pathways will include no tuition or fees.

**Q Does Pathways involve travel?**

A No, Pathways will include no travel to the United States.

**Q Besides not being in-person, what are the differences between Pathways and the in-person IAFP?**

A The virtual program (5 weeks) is a shortened version of the in-person program (16 weeks), offering participants a feel for the in-person program in many respects, but tailored to meet the needs of the virtual fellow. Given the significantly shorter amount of time, the virtual program does not cover many of the courses that are covered in the in-person program. In addition, the length of time for the courses covered in the virtual program are in many cases much shorter than the in-person courses. These changes are necessary to make the virtual program viable.

**Q What is a strategy paper?**

A The crowning accomplishment for each fellow will be their capstone project—a strategy paper that integrates what the fellow has learned with the needs of their home SAI. As part of the application, the fellow will submit a proposal on an area of improvement for the SAI that the head of their SAI has approved. The fellow will develop the content of the paper during the 5-week program and in the two months immediately following. They will have the support from their SAI sponsor, their GAO mentor, the instructors and program administrators, as well

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as their cohort members. The final product will include an analysis about the proposed change and a plan for implementation. The fellow will have an opportunity to present the strategy paper to a select audience two months after virtual classes conclude.

A few examples of strategy paper topics and titles are:

- Auditing for Fraud, Waste and Abuse
- Using Data Analytics in Auditing
- Enhancing the Accessibility and Readability of Audit Reports
- Enhancing Internal Controls
- Strategic Planning

## Technology Requirements

### **Q What technology will I need to participate?**

**A** You must have the below:

- desktop or laptop computer
  - *recommended:* 14 in (35.5 cm) screen or larger to see and use all required functions
  - *required:* USB plug-in
- speakers and microphone – built-in, USB plug-in, or Bluetooth
- webcam – built-in or USB plug
- reliable internet connection
  - *required:* broadband wired or wireless (4G/LTE)
  - *required:* ~2-3 Mbps download speed, for 1080p HD video
- separate phone or cell line

### **Q What if I do not have the required technology?**

**A** We encourage all those who are interested and meet the program requirements to apply, regardless of whether they meet the technology requirements. In the application, we ask applicants to describe any technology challenges they face. Program staff will do our best to work with the applicant to address those challenges.

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### **Cultural Events and Forming Connections**

**Q Will there be cultural events to learn more about the United States?**

**A** Yes, there will be several events held throughout the program to help ensure fellows can learn more about United States culture, as well as offering opportunities for fellows to share experiences about their own culture with GAO staff and the other fellows.

**Q How will I get to know other fellows in a virtual environment?**

**A** The program will offer numerous ways for fellows to connect, including working on group assignments, interviewing fellow participants, and fun team-building activities with fellows and GAO staff.

### **In-Person International Auditor Fellowship Program**

**Q Is the in-person program being offered in 2022?**

**A** No. Given the uncertainty about the duration of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic and its continued impacts on the program, we are currently not able to offer an in-person fellows class in 2022.

**Q If I participate in the virtual program, will I still be eligible to participate in the in-person program once it resumes?**

**A** Yes. Please note, participation in the virtual program does not provide priority selection when applying for the in-person program.