

Eligibility Requirements to Serve as a Department Sponsor/NOAA

Below is a reminder of the Department of Commerce (DOC) policy as to who may serve as a Department Sponsor/NOAA (DSN):

Department Administrative Order (DAO) 207-12, Foreign National Visitor and Guest Access Program, defines the Department Sponsor (DS) as:

A U.S. Citizen employee of the Department responsible for the day-to-day activities associated with the successful accomplishment of a foreign visit and for taking all reasonable steps to protect classified, Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU), or otherwise controlled, proprietary, or not-for-public release data, information, or technology from unauthorized physical, visual, and virtual access by a Foreign National Visitor or Guest.

The DS is responsible for taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the conduct of, and activities for, their Foreign National Visitor or Guest are appropriate for the Federal workplace and comply with this Order.

Under DAO 207-12, the Office of Security (OSY) requires the DSN to be the scientific, technical, or policy expert at NOAA who determines the specific scope of work for the FN and who is responsible for the FN's performance while working with NOAA.

As a general rule, this requirement will preclude administrative officers, executive officers, contracting officers, trusted agents, or those performing an office managerial, secretarial, or point of contact role from serving as the DS/DSN. While this is not an ironclad statement, these individuals, in most cases, perform program management or support roles for the office and do not oversee the specific scientific research or project assigned to the FN.

CTCs must ensure that the DSN who has signed the ESF is the actual DSN and not someone assigned by the DSN to assist with processing forms for that office. If you have any doubt, please do not forward the forms to the CAO until the DSN status is confirmed.

Some Line Office (LO) CTCs have implemented a minimum grade level for DSNs in their LO. This practice is acceptable.

OSY reminds us of the importance of the DSN assurance. This assurance permits FN access to federal facilities and assets, access to which many U.S. citizens do not have. Accountability for FNs is not an administrative responsibility.

Each CTC is responsible for implementing their LO procedures to ensure compliance with the DAO and related policies. Exceptions may be made by the CTC following appropriate justification and consultation with the OCAO.