

February 4, 2005

AGAR ADVISORY

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
PROCUREMENT POLICY DIVISION
AGAR ADVISORY NO. 73**

Purchase of Online Courseware Libraries and Learning Management Systems or Services

INTRODUCTION: The purpose of this Agriculture Acquisition Regulation (AGAR) Advisory is to update information previously issued concerning approval requirements for the purchase of online courseware libraries and learning management systems or services (LMS).

SUMMARY: USDA Departmental Regulation (DR) 3620-001, "USDA eLearning Services, Courseware and Content," updated the USDA policy on acquisition of online courseware libraries and LMS established by joint Assistant Secretary for Administration and Chief Information Officer (CIO) memorandum of June 26, 2003. Written approval from the USDA CIO and Director, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) is required for purchase of online courseware libraries from sources other than Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This Advisory supersedes AGAR Advisory 56.

SPECIFIC ISSUES:

- The USDA Electronic Learning (eLearning) initiative provides USDA agencies with an enterprise-wide learning service, known as Agriculture Learning (AgLearn).
- AgLearn consolidates existing USDA agency learning needs and eliminates duplicative learning services.
- USDA agencies are required to use AgLearn to the maximum extent possible to deliver online training, manage training and maintain training records.
- USDA has entered into an interagency agreement with OPM to acquire online courseware libraries. The agreement specifies that USDA OHRM is USDA's exclusive ordering agent for online courseware libraries available from OPM.
- DR 3620-001 delineates the specific policies and procedures applicable to the purchase of online training and related services.
 - Purchase of online courseware libraries from sources other than OPM may be made only with the written approval of the Director, OHRM and the CIO.
 - Procurement offices shall not process procurement requests for online

courseware or LMS unless the request is accomplished by written approval from the Director, OHRM and the CIO.

- Definition of Online Courseware and LMS (DR 3620-001).
 - Online courseware are commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) courses that are taken by computer and are available from vendors without customization or changes.
 - LMS is information technology hardware, software and services that will be used to provide online training and/or to manage the functions of a training program, such as scheduling classroom training, tracking student training records, issuing training certificates, assessing competencies and planning career development.
- Departmental Regulation 5039-7, Delegation of Procurement Authority for Information Technology, dated September 18, 1998, paragraph 3, Background, subparagraph d states that:

“Proposed IT acquisitions and information resources activities must comply with all requirements established by the OCIO. OCIO oversight includes both approving IT investments and monitoring and evaluating the performance of these investments. Requirements include: (1) compliance with the Capital Planning and Investment Control Process; (2) compliance with standards of the USDA Information Systems Technology Architectures; (3) obtaining technical approvals in accordance with DR 3130-1; and (4) compliance with requirements of any prevailing OCIO moratoriums or USDA directives.”

The eLearning initiative, which is part of the USDA eGovernment effort, is under the cognizance of the Associate Chief Information Officer for eGovernment. As such, the requirements for approval of acquisition of online courseware and LMS fall within the requirements of DR 5039-7.

If you have questions about this advisory, please contact Pat Honda by telephone at (202) 720-8924, by fax at (202) 720-8972, or by email to pat.honda@usda.gov. This advisory is available on the USDA homepage at <http://www.usda.gov/procurement/policy/advisories.html>.

EXPIRATION DATE: Effective until canceled.

[END]