

May 9, 2008

AGAR ADVISORY

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF PROCUREMENT AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT
AGAR ADVISORY NO. 85**

Acquisition Workforce Training, Delegation, and Management System

INTRODUCTION: The purpose of this Agriculture Acquisition Regulation (AGAR) Advisory is to establish temporary Acquisition Workforce policy and procedures for USDA employees pursuant to—

- The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program (FAC-C) dated January 20, 2006;
- The Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) dated April 25, 2007; and
- The Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (FAC-COTR) dated November 26, 2007.

SUMMARY: The Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) is issuing interim guidance to accelerate the mandatory implementation of the FAC-C, FAC-P/PM, and FAC-COTR programs within USDA. This interim guidance shall supersede guidance provided in Departmental Regulation (DR) 5001-1, *Acquisition Workforce Training, Delegation and Tracking system*, dated September 30, 2003. The attached guidance will be codified in a revised Departmental Regulation 5001-1 at a future date.

AGAR Advisories are posted on the USDA World Wide Web site at the following URL: <http://www.usda.gov/procurement/policy/advisories.html>. If you have questions or comments on this Advisory, please contact Linda Persons by phone ((202) 720-7529) or email (linda.persons@usda.gov).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective upon issue date until cancelled or for a period not to exceed one year.

[END]



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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of Procurement
And Property Management

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

1. **PURPOSE**

This Advisory establishes the following procedures for the USDA Acquisition Workforce (AW) Career Management Program:

- a. Procedures for effective career development pursuant to Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Policy Letter No. 05-01.
- b. Departmental procedures for the selection, appointment, and termination of appointment of Contracting Officers as required by Section 1.603 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and Section 401.603 of the Agriculture Acquisition Regulation (AGAR).

2. **CANCELLATION**

This AGAR Advisory does not cancel DR 5001-1 Departmental Regulation (DR) 5001-1 “*Acquisition Workforce Training, Delegation, and Tracking Systems*” dated September 30, 2003. However, guidance within this AGAR Advisory shall supersede DR 5001-1 Departmental Regulation (DR) 5001-1 “*Acquisition Workforce Training, Delegation, and Tracking Systems*” dated September 30, 2003, on an interim basis.

3. **POLICY**

Contracting activities shall provide AW employees government-wide training for creating the skills necessary to deliver best value supplies and services, to find the best business solutions, and to provide strategic business advice to accomplish agency missions. On behalf of the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) and Senior Procurement Executive (SPE), each Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA) is responsible for developing and maintaining an acquisition career management program that is in compliance with mandatory acquisition training and experience standards as outlined in this Advisory.

4. APPLICABILITY

The guidance contained herein shall apply to the following acquisition workforce personnel:

- a. Contracting Officers regardless of General Schedule series;
- b. All positions in the GS-1102 Contracting series;
- c. All positions in the GS-1105 Purchasing Series;
- d. Contracting Officer Representatives/Contracting Officer Technical Representatives or equivalent positions;
- e. Program and project managers as identified by the CAO;
- f. Heads of Contracting Activity Designees; and
- g. Any other position identified by the CAO to be an acquisition workforce position.

5. BACKGROUND

In 1996, Congress passed the Clinger-Cohen Act (Act), Pub. L. 104-106, to establish education, training, and experience requirements for civilian agencies that are comparable to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) for the Department of Defense (DOD). This Advisory builds on that Act by implementing OFPP Policy Letter No. 05-01 and closely aligning civilian (non-DOD) and DOD workforce requirements.

6. ABBREVIATIONS

ACM	Acquisition Career Manager
AGAR	Agriculture Acquisition Regulation
ACMIS	Acquisition Career Management Information System
AW	Acquisition Workforce
CAO	Chief Acquisition Officer
CO	Contracting Officer
COTR	Contracting Officer Technical Representative
DAU	Defense Acquisition University
DAWIA	Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act
DOD	Department of Defense
DR	Departmental Regulation
EO	Executive Order
FAC-C	Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting
FAC-COTR	Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives
FAC-P/PM	Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FAI	Federal Acquisition Institute
FPDS-NG	Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation
FSS	Federal Supply Schedule

GS	General Schedule
GSA	General Services Administration
HCA	Head of the Contracting Activity
HCAD	Head of the Contracting Activity Designee
IT	Information Technology
NCMA	National Contract Management Association
OFPP	Office of Federal Procurement Policy (Office of Management and Budget)
OPPM	Office of Procurement and Property Management
PPD	Procurement Policy Division
SAP	Simplified Acquisition Procedures
SPE	Senior Procurement Executive
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

7. DEFINITIONS

- a. Acquisition Workforce. The personnel component of the Federal acquisition system. The Acquisition Workforce includes employees in the GS-1102 series, GS-1105 series, HCADs, Contracting Officers, COTRs/CORs or equivalent, program and project managers, and other positions as identified by the CAO.
- b. Acquisition Career Manager. An employee responsible for an agency's acquisition career management program. The ACM helps to assure the agency's acquisition workforce meets the requirements of OFPP Policy Letter 05-01. The ACM for USDA is in OPPM/PPD. Each contracting activity appoints an ACM to carry out their agency's workforce activities.
- c. Acquisition Career Management Information System. ACMIS is a federal system of records to track acquisition workforce training and education. FAI developed the system to assist civilian agencies in making informed budgeting, staffing, training, and employment development decisions. It also supports agencies' requirements to maintain AW training records as directed under the Clinger-Cohen Act. Acquisition workforce employees are responsible for updating and maintaining their training record using ACMIS.
- d. Acquisition Career Management Program. An established program within OPPM responsible for enhancing the careers of USDA's AW by developing, implementing, and evaluating training policies issued pursuant to Executive Order No. 12931, and Policy Letter No. 05-01.
- e. Appointing Official. A person authorized to confer warrant authority (issue a Contracting Officer warrant) consistent with the applicable requirements of the FAR, AGAR, and this Advisory.

- f. Certification. An assurance that an employee has the experience, education and training plus personal factors such as business acumen, judgment, character, reputation, and ethics to perform selected duties.

- g. Chief Acquisition Officer. A non-career employee designated by the Secretary pursuant to Public Law 108-12, Title XIV (Title 41, Chapter 7 §414) to assure best value acquisition services are delivered to USDA customers in support of their mission, while balancing an emphasis on compliance, ethics, and integrity. The CAO is responsible for managing a broad range of acquisition activities including:
 - (1) Managing USDA's contract activities;
 - (2) Overseeing the development of procurement systems;
 - (3) Evaluating system performance in accordance with approved criteria;
 - (4) Enhancing career management of the AW;
 - (5) Certifying to the Secretary that procurement systems meet approved criteria.

The Secretary has designated the Senior Procurement Executive as the Deputy CAO.

- h. Continuous Learning Point (CLP). Continuous learning activities enhance the employees' ability to stay current by learning new skills and improving current competencies. These activities may consist of events, self-paced and instructor-led training, and other educational activities. One continuous learning point is equivalent to one hour of instruction or learning activity.

- i. Contract. See definition in FAR 2.101. A mutually binding legal agreement signed by a Contracting Officer that obligates the Government to an expenditure of funds, despite the character of the funding.

- j. Contract Specialist. Federal employees in the GS-1102 series.

- k. Contracting Activity. A USDA organization with a written departmental delegation from the SPE establishing it as a contracting activity with authority to manage its contract function and those of other organizations for which it provides contracting support.

- l. Contracting Officer (CO). A person delegated authority to (1) enter, administer, terminate contracts in accordance with Federal acquisition laws and regulations, and (2) make related determinations and findings.

- m. Contracting Officer's Representative (COR). See Contracting Officer Technical Representative.

- n. Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTR). Also referred to as Contracting Officer Representative. A person designated by the Contracting Officer to assist in the technical monitoring or administration of a contract. Procedures vary slightly from agency to agency, but agencies must designate COTRs in writing with a copy furnished to the contractor. The designation does not include authority to make

commitments or changes that affect price, quality, quantity, delivery, or other terms and conditions of the contract.

- o. Contracting Officer Warrant Authority. Authority to bind the Government.
- p. Current Certification. A certification that meets all continuous learning requirements.
- q. Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Equivalency. Contractor courses that correspond to the mandatory DAWIA contracting courses.
- r. Equivalent Course. A course used as a substitute for one or more of the mandatory government-wide courses as specified by FAI or DAU.
- s. Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C). An acquisition certification program that reflects a government-wide standard for education, training, and experience leading to core competencies. Certifications do not expire. However, employees are required to keep certificates current by meeting the continuous learning requirements of OFPP 05-01 and DR 5001-1.
- t. Federal Supply Schedule (FSS). Indefinite delivery contracts, including requirements contracts, awarded by the General Services Administration (GSA), using competitive procedures to provide supplies and services for given periods.
- u. Head of the Agency or Agency Head. The Secretary of Agriculture, Deputy Secretary, or the Assistant Secretary for Administration.
- v. Head of the Contracting Activity (HCA). The official delegated broad authority by the SPE to manage the contracting activity (e.g., Chief, Forest Service, USDA Agency Administrator, etc.). Unless stated otherwise, the HCA may designate, on a non-delegable basis, an employee (not a position), to act as the HCA.
- w. Head of the Contracting Activity Designee (HCAD). An employee (not a position) designated by the HCA to carry out the functions of the HCA. The HCAD must meet the requirements of DR 5001-1 and be no lower in the organization than the Director of Administrative Services or an equivalent position.
- x. Procurement Authority. Includes one or more of the rights to appoint contracting officers on a SF-1402, *Certificate of Appointment*, sign FAR determinations, or bind the government by signing contracts. Procurement authority within USDA flows from the SPE, to the HCA, to the HCAD, on to the Contracting Officer.
- y. Procurement System. The integration of the procurement process, the professional development of the AW, and the management structure for carrying out the procurement function. Authority over the procurement system flows from the CAO, to the SPE, to the HCA, on to the HCAD.

- z. Program Manager. The person with overall responsibility for program plans, budgets, schedules, and timely completion within cost limitations. Planning responsibilities include developing acquisition strategies and promoting full and open competition.
- aa. Project Manager. The person with knowledge of the principles, methods, or tools for developing, scheduling, coordinating, and managing projects and resources, including monitoring and inspecting cost, work, and contract performance.
- bb. Senior Procurement Executive (SPE). The Agency official designated by the Secretary pursuant to Executive Order No.12931 and the OFPP Act, 41 U.S.C. 414. Through a delegation to the Assistant Secretary for Administration, the Secretary has designated the Director, Office of Procurement and Property Management, to serve as the SPE.
- cc. Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP). The methods prescribed in FAR Part 13 for making purchases of supplies or services up to \$100,000 or the otherwise defined simplified acquisition threshold.
- dd. Unauthorized Commitments. Commitments made without authority to bind the Government.
- ee. Valid Certification. Authentic documentation signed and issued by an authorized employee within a legitimate organization.
- ff. Warrant. A Certificate of Appointment, SF-1402, authorizing an employee to serve in the capacity of a Contracting Officer. It also assures the public that the Contracting Officer has authority to enter into, administer, and/or terminate contracts.

8. EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCUREMENT TRAINING

a. Educational Requirements

Appendix A, *Qualification Standard for GS-1102 Personnel*, outlines educational requirements for contract specialists (e.g., college degree, semester hours, etc.)

Educational requirements for COTRs and HCA/HCADs fall within the purview of their job series and are not AW requirements. USDA recommends GS-1105 employees meet the minimum educational requirement outlined in Appendix D for Level I contracting officers.

b. GS-1102 Qualification Standard Mandatory Procurement Training

Whether warranted or unwarranted, GS-1102 employees are responsible for knowing, understanding, and performing contract duties commensurate with their grade level. Upon issuance of this Advisory, employees shall meet the FAC-C Level II requirements to qualify for a GS-1102-13 and above position. Two years after issuance of a revised version of DR 5001-1, employees shall meet the FAC-C Level III requirements to qualify for a GS-1102-13 and above position (See Appendix F). Hiring activities who

are considering hiring individuals who do not meet the Qualification standard or FAC-C requirements shall coordinate with their Human Resource officer when submitting a waiver request in accordance with Paragraph 36. The hiring activity shall provide the Human Resource officer a copy of the approved SPE waiver prior to making a job offer.

c. Training GS-1105 Personnel

Personnel in the GS-1105 series, Purchasing Agents, are not required to meet FAC-C Level I educational requirements. Contracting activities are encouraged to provide GS-1105 employees FAC-C Level I procurement training upon completion of the basic SAP course. At a minimum, contracting activities shall provide GS-1105 employees an extensive *Simplified Acquisition Procedure* course.

d. Training Heads of the Contracting Activity Designees

- (1) Each HCAD shall have a cumulative sum of 160 hours of procurement training within one year after designation by the HCA. Non-GS-1102 HCADs shall obtain at least 40 hours of procurement training every two years. GS-1102 employees shall comply with the continuous learning requirements outlined in Appendix C. Listed below are some activities for accumulating procurement training:

- (a) Attend seminars to remain current with new procurement reforms;
- (b) Attend courses via formal classroom training, brown-bag luncheons, on line, etc.;
- (c) Attend NCMA and other meeting with special speakers on procurement issues; or
- (d) Attend procurement courses.

- (2) HCADs shall assure training accomplishments, including the number of hours, are included in ACMIS. Submit all requests for exceptions or extensions to the Director/OPPM.

e. Training Contracting Officer Technical Representatives

Employees designated as COTRs must demonstrate an ability to perform selected pre-award and post-award administrative functions on behalf of the Contracting Officer. Professional business and technical competencies for COTRs are listed on the FAI website. COTR training shall be as directed in Appendix G or as updated by FAI at (www.fai.gov). In lieu of formal classroom instruction, COTRs may obtain basic on-line training from the FAI Continuous Learning Center

f. Micro-Purchase Training for Nonprocurement Personnel

Unwarranted Micro-purchase cardholders are not AW members. USDA issued purchase cards to employees to reduce the issuance of administratively costly purchase orders for inexpensive goods and services up to the Micro-purchase threshold. Purchase

Card Managers are responsible for providing cardholders training prior to issuance of the purchase card.

9. FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATIONS

a. The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program

The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) program establishes mandatory core requirements for education, training, and experience for GS-1102 contracting professionals within civilian contracting activities. A FAC-C Level III is the acceptable standard throughout the Federal Government and is evidence that senior level employees have met the requirements for a GS-1102, grade 13 and above position.

Upon issuance of this Advisory, contracting officers issued new warrants must meet the FAC-C program requirements at an appropriate level to support their warrant. Executive guidance defines new warrants as warrants issued for the first time in USDA.

In special situations, the SPE may waive the FAC-C training requirements for warranting purposes by granting a non-transferable waiver when it is determined to be in the best interest of the agency. Contracting activities shall submit their request through the HCA to the SPE. At a minimum, each request shall include a description of the deficiency, the estimated time required to meet the FAC-C warrant requirement, and the impact on the agency should the SPE not grant a waiver.

The CAO has determined non-GS-1102 contracting officers to be outside the scope of the FAC-C program. Therefore, their participation in the FAC-C program is highly advised, but not required to obtain a new warrant.

b. FAC-C Application Process

After completion of the requirements listed in Appendix L, employees must apply for a FAC-C certificate (see Appendix K) through their supervisor or other requesting official as directed by the agency. Verification of mandatory training for the specified FAC-C request level and a copy of any previous FAC-C certification shall be part of the submission package to the contracting activity. The ACM for the agency shall review the request and forward the FAC-C application, minus education and training documentation, to OPPM/PPD. Upon receipt, the USDA ACM will provide a final FAC-C review, verify employee documented training information in ACMIS, obtain SPE approval, and forward the signed FAC-C certificate back to the requesting agency HCA/HCAD.

The issuance of the FAC-C certificate at a specific level is a one-time process. The certificate represents completion of government-wide standards and each Executive agency shall accept the certificate as proof of competency for the certified level.

c. FAC-P/PM Program

On April 25, 2007, the OFPP established guidelines for well-trained and experienced program and project managers. The guidelines help establish a partnership between program/project managers and contracting professionals. Details for the program are in Appendix M. OPPM will post the application process at www.usda.gov/procurement.

d. FAC-COTR Program

Contracting activities are responsible for establishing and managing their COTR programs. Each activity shall administer the program in accordance with the guidance in Appendix G. The HCA/HCAD shall assure the COTR enters applicable training information in ACMIS after issuance of the designation letter by the Contracting Officer and before issuance of the FAC-COTR certificate.

Agencies shall certify Level I COTRs no later than six months from the date of appointment. Level II or Level III COTRs shall meet the training and experience requirements within three months after assuming COTR duties. During unusual and compelling emergencies, when it is certain that a higher level COTR is needed but not available, the HCA/HCAD, on a one-time, non-delegable basis, may temporarily waive any COTR training requirements above the basic 40 hour minimum. Waivers shall document why the designated employee(s) will not have an opportunity to obtain the required training within the three-month timeframe and a proposed schedule for completion of the training.

COTRs who fail to meet the 40 CLP training requirement are not considered current in the FAC-COTR program. Inactive COTRs must meet the continuous learning requirement within six months from their date of appointment.

Contracting Officers and Program managers shall determine when a COTR is required and the level necessary to administer the contract.

Specific details on the FAC-COTR program are in Appendix N. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy and FAI will periodically update the FAC-COTR program. Federal FAC-COTR guidance and program changes shall take precedence over USDA guidance.

10. APPOINTMENTS AND WARRANT AUTHORITY

a. Appointing Officials for Contracting Officers

Unless authorized otherwise by the SPE in writing, the HCA and HCAD are the agency's appointing officials for Contracting Officers. The HCA and HCAD shall determine if the appointment is consistent with applicable requirements of the AGAR, DR 5001-1, the FAR and other delegations of authority.

Appointing officials shall issue warrants when there is an organizational need for a Contracting Officer. Factors such as volume of actions, complexity of work, and organizational structure shall be major consideration when determining whether to grant a warrant request. The appointing official shall assure the applicant has demonstrated an ability to apply applicable procurement laws, regulations, policies, and sound business judgment.

b. Contracting Officer Appointments

Appointing officials shall grant Level I through Level III Contracting Officer warrants in writing on a Certificate of Appointment (SF-1402). The certificate shall state the employee's name (not a position); limitations on the scope of warrant authority; and be displayed openly to the general public and agency personnel. Appointing officials shall ensure employees nominated as Contracting Officers meet the minimum requirements of Appendix D and Appendix E. The ACM shall periodically examine the qualifications and need for Contracting Officer appointments.

c. Contracting Officer Appointment Procedures

The following guidance is not mandatory for non-GS-1102 employees or GS-1102 employees applying for Level I Contracting Officer warrants.

- (1) *Warrants to new USDA employees without a FAC-C certificate:* Employees applying for new warrants must become FAC-C members at a level to support their warrant. Contracting Officer candidates shall provide a copy of their training information to their supervisor or Agency ACM as directed by the contracting activity. Supervisors and Agency ACMs shall accept training certificates or other official documentation as verification of the successful completion of warranting requirements outlined in Appendix D and Appendix E. Excluding the issuance of an unlimited warrant, the agency HCA/HCAD has authority to issue a new warrant after approval of the warrant request and submission of the FAC-C package to OPPM. The HCA/HCAD shall issue an unlimited warrant after receipt of the Level III FAC-C certificate.
- (2) *Warrants to new USDA employees with a FAC-C certificate:* Contracting activities shall accept FAC-C certificates issued by USDA and other Executive agencies as verification of successful completion of government-wide standards. Upon presentation of a valid and current certificate, the HCA/HCAD may issue the warrant in accordance with agency standards. Employees who do not hold current FAC-C certificates must complete the "80 CLP requirement" prior to the issuance of a warrant.
- (3) *Warrants to USDA employees without a FAC-C certificate:* The HCA/HCAD may reissue warrants at the same dollar amount (or less) without meeting the FAC-C requirements when employees move from one USDA Contracting Activity to another USDA Contracting Activity. USDA employees must meet the FAC-C

requirements using procedures in paragraph (1) above for an increase in warrant authority.

- (4) *Warrants to DAWIA Certified employees:* A DAWIA certification in contracting is equivalent to a FAC-C at the same certification level. Employees are responsible for providing a current DAWIA certificate and information that documents their continuous learning history. Upon satisfactory review, the HCA/HCAD may issue a warrant to employees who hold a valid and current DAWIA certification. Employees who do not hold current DAWIA certificates must complete the “80 CLP requirement” prior to the issuance of a warrant.

d. Required Amount of Delegated Warrant Authority

Contracting Officers have authority to sign contracts up to their delegated warrant authority as specified on the SF-1402. They also have authority to use Government-wide purchase cards as a payment mechanism for contractual actions over the micro-purchase threshold and up to their delegated warrant authority or \$1 million, whichever is less, after confirming the receipt of goods and services.

Contracting Officers shall not sign contracts, including modifications, options, estimated orders against an indefinite delivery contract, or any other agreement, that will result in the total amount of the contract exceeding their delegated warrant authority. In some situations, higher-level Contracting Officers must sign the contract when amendments or modifications to orders and contracts make the total amount of the contract exceed the Contracting Officer’s warrant limitation. Contracting Officers are not necessarily required to conduct or participate in every aspect of the contract personally. However, the Contracting Officer is the person responsible for assuring the signed document complies with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Contracting Officers are legally responsible for their signed procurement documents. Contracting Officers cannot sign “for” or over the name of another Contracting Officer, or at a level exceeding the limitations stated on his or her warrant.

e. Maximum Warrant Authority for GS-1102 Personnel

Appointing Officials may grant up to an unlimited amount of warrant authority to GS-1102 personnel. Warrant authority should be limited to the level necessary to support the agency’s procurement requirements. Contracting Officers shall meet all general and specialized requirements outlined requirements in Appendix D and Appendix E prior to the issuance of a warrant.

f. Maximum Warrant Authority for GS-1105 Personnel

When authorized, GS-1105 personnel have authority to purchase supplies/services, IT products, construction, and architect/engineering contract requirements using the simplified acquisition procedures with the following limitations:

- (1) Purchase orders, including modifications, up to \$100,000 and
- (2) Delivery orders, including modifications, up to \$300,000.

g. USDA Warrant Authority and Intra-Agency /Interagency Procurements

The contracting activity has the ultimate responsibility for determining the acceptability of intra-agency and interagency work assignments. Contracting Officers are authorized to award contracts for other agencies or government entities using the USDA Certificate of Appointment when the work assigned by their supervisor is an approved agency work project.

h. COTR Authority

On occasion, the HCA/HCAD may delegate a COTR Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) authority, (e.g., award modifications against the contracts, etc.). A COTR who is also an ACO shall meet the requirements listed in Appendix D and Appendix E at a level equivalent to the estimated value of the contract with options.

i. Warrant Authority for Non-Procurement Personnel

Appointing officials may grant non-procurement personnel warrant authority to issue purchase orders and delivery orders up to \$25,000 for commercial supplies and services, including construction. Non-procurement personnel granted procurement authority must comply with all Federal laws, rules, regulations, agency directives, FPDS reporting requirements, and other acquisition guidelines.

j. Contracting Officer Appointment Equivalencies

Employees may use ONE of the following equivalencies when they have a year or more of on-site procurement experience. Equivalent experience shall not exceed one year.

- (1) Completion of a 2-year associate degree program in procurement for six months of procurement experience;
- (2) Completion of a 4-year undergraduate program in procurement from an accredited college or university for one year of procurement experience; or
- (3) Completion of a graduate program in procurement from an accredited college or university for one year of procurement experience.

k. Exemptions from Warranting Requirements

The Contracting Officer warranting requirement does not cover personnel carrying out transactions or executing documents listed below. Contracting activities should duly authorize and instruct employees on their responsibilities and limitations when

obligating the Government using these procedures. Although the following transactions and documents are exempt by the FAR warranting requirements, a HCA/HCAD may require a warranted Contracting Officer to sign any or all of the listed procedures:

- (1) *Request, Authorization, Agreement, and Certification of Training*, SF-182,
- (2) Government Bills of Lading.
- (3) Micro-purchase credit card transactions (authorized under DR 5013-6)
- (4) Cooperative agreements and grants.

11. CONTINUOUS LEARNING FOR ACQUISITION WORKFORCE EMPLOYEES

Contracting Officers and GS-1105/GS-1102 employees shall obtain a minimum of 80 CLPs every two years to remain current in the FAC-C training program. Employees working as COTRs shall obtain a minimum of 40 CLPs every two years to remain current in the COTR certification program as outlined in Appendix G. Program and project managers shall obtain a minimum of 80 CLPs as outlined in Appendix M. Failure to meet the continuous learning requirements may result in the termination of a Contracting Officer warrant, an outdated certification, or an inability to meet the GS-1102 qualification standard.

Continuous learning may include the study of new requirements, procedures caused by changes in law, regulations, policy, reviews, or business research. In addition to attending Government-wide training facilities, maintenance training may include non-mandatory classroom training, conferences, on-line courses, agency sponsored training, management/executive seminars, professional association-related projects, or any other training that enhances present acquisition job skills. Contracting activities shall not grant employees continuous learning credit for taking the same or similar course within a four-year period.

Agencies may credit employees with 60 CLPs of “general subject” training for certifications awarded during a continuous learning period. Professional organizations may include:

- a. The National Contract Management Association
- b. National Institute of Government Purchasing
- c. National Association of Purchasing Management

12. TERMINATION/REVOCAION OF APPOINTMENT

The HCA/HCAD may terminate or revoke a Contracting Officer warrant at any time. Termination/revocation is appropriate for the following situations

- a. Failure to comply with applicable laws and regulations
- b. Violation of the Standards of Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch. (See C.F.R. Part 2635).
- c. Failure to maintain training standards after appointment.
- d. Failure to maintain a satisfactory performance rating.
- e. Reassignment to a position not requiring a warrant.
- f. Discontinuance of the organization's need for the appointment.
- g. Separation from the organization (Automatic Termination).

13. **GS-1102 QUALIFICATION STANDARD WAIVERS**

- a. For a specific vacant position at grade 13 and above, the GS-1102 qualification standard includes a provision that permits the SPE to waive mandatory requirements. The SPE may consider waiving the following requirements in unusual situations when a highly qualified candidate does not meet the GS-1102 standard:
 - (1) Mandatory procurement training as prescribed in this Advisory (Appendix L)
 - (2) 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree requirement
 - (3) 24 semester hours in specified business courses, and
 - (4) Experience in performing contracting duties.
- b. To meet the conditions of OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 and the GS-1102 qualification standard, the SPE, on a non-delegable basis, shall sign a certification detailing the basis for a decision to waive the mandatory requirement(s).
- c. The requesting HCA/HCAD shall prepare a decision memorandum for the SPE's approval that includes the following information:
 - (1) A description of the position, location, grade and anticipated procurement workload/warrant level;
 - (2) Adherence to the Agency's Human Capital Plan and the recruiting strategy used;
 - (3) Why qualified candidates are not readily available for the position;
 - (4) The candidate's efforts to meet the standard and the estimated timeframe for completion;
 - (5) Details on how the candidate shows potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance, qualifying experience, etc.;

- (6) The impact on the agency should the SPE not issue a waiver for the candidate; and
 - (7) A request that the SPE certify the candidate's potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority based on demonstrated analytical and decision-making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience.
- d. The requesting organization may make a job offer to the waiver candidate upon approval of the waive request.

14. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CAREER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

- a. OPPM/PPD shall develop and issue policies, procedures, training plans, and other guidance for implementation of AW mandates. As the oversight authority for USDA's AW programs, OPPM/PPD shall:
- (1) Make final determinations on applicability of this Advisory;
 - (2) Review Contracting Officer appointments;
 - (3) Assure Contracting activities urge their AW to use ACMIS; and
 - (4) Review agency supplements to this Advisory
- b. HCADs shall:
- (1) Establish and prescribe an AW accountability system that:
 - (a) Sets a performance standard;
 - (b) Includes an adequate set of checks and balances;
 - (c) Includes external and internal review coverage;
 - (d) Involves annual appraisals; and
 - (e) Identifies effective and ineffective performance
 - (2) Ensure supervisors and ACMs are fully knowledgeable of the program requirements and comply with the provisions.
 - (3) Ensure supervisors or ACMs schedule and evaluate classroom training.
 - (4) Review Contracting Officer requests.
 - (5) Sign Contracting Officer Certificates of Appointment and assure Contracting Officers properly display the Certificates.
- c. Supervisors or ACMs shall:
- (1) Recommend employees for Contracting Officer appointments.
 - (2) Ensure training is scheduled, conducted, and evaluated.
 - (3) Monitor and evaluate employees' progress.
- d. Participating Employees shall:

- (1) Make a personal effort to take maximum advantage of developmental experiences, and training opportunities, as authorized by their supervisors.
- (2) Actively participate with supervisors and ACMs in discussing, developing, and preparing training plans.
- (3) Maintain a personal file containing training certificates and other verification of education, procurement training, and job experience.
- (4) Keep training record updated in ACMIS.

15. ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CONTRACTOR-EMPLOYEES

Contract Specialist awarding contracts for the performance of acquisition functions as outlined in OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 (Appendix B) shall assure solicited personnel meet comparable training requirements for government employees performing the same or similar functions.

16. CIVIL RIGHTS

The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities (including the hiring, developing, and assigning of personnel) based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital or family status, or sexual orientation.

17. CONFLICT OF INTEREST/ETHICS

USDA acquisition workforce personnel must comply with existing conflict of interest regulations/laws, and file the approved forms as required. At a minimum, all individuals whose duties involve procurement and contracting shall file a financial disclosure statement.

Acquisition workforce employees must also comply with the high standards of ethical behavior to assure complete trust in the integrity of the acquisition system.

18. AGENCY SUPPLEMENTS

The policy provided in this Advisory supersedes supplemental guidance issued by a contracting activity. A departure from this Advisory requires a written request and authorization from the SPE. Changes to the FAC-C, FAC-COTR, and FAC-P/PM programs by FAI supersede this Advisory. Federal program changes are not considered a departure from this Advisory.

Supplemental instructions and amendments to DR 5001-1 require review and concurrence by OPPM/PPD before issuance. Contracting activities are reminded that supplements shall not repeat, paraphrase, or restate policy guidance.

19. **AUTHORIZATION TO WAIVE THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS ADVISORY**

Unless otherwise specified, the SPE and CAO are the only individuals authorized to waive the requirements in this Advisory.

20. **INQUIRIES**

Direct all AW inquiries through agency channels to the Division Chief/OPPM/PPD or to ACM@usda.gov.

-END-

APPENDIX A

**Qualification Standard for General Schedule Positions
Individual Occupational Requirements for**

GS-1102 Contract Specialist Revised Standard Effective Date: January 1, 2000

The text below is extracted verbatim from Section IV-B of the Operating Manual for Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions (p.166-167), but contains minor edits to conform to web-page requirements. This is an individual qualification standard developed by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy under the authority of 41 U.S.C. 433. It does not apply to Department of Defense positions.

Basic Requirements for GS-5 through GS-12

- A. 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field or;
- B. At least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Applicants who meet the criteria for Superior Academic Achievement qualify for positions at the GS-7 level.

The following table shows the amounts of education and/or experience required to qualify for positions GS-7 through GS-12 covered by this standard.

GRADE	EDUCATION	OR SPECIALIZED
GS-7	1 full academic year of graduate education or law school or superior academic achievement	1 year equivalent to at least GS-5
GS-9	2 full academic years of progressively higher level graduate education or masters or equivalent graduate degree or LL.B. or J.D.	1 year equivalent to at least GS-7
GS-11	3 full academic years of progressively higher level graduate education or Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-9
GS-12 and above	(No educational equivalent)	1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level
Equivalent combinations of education and experience are qualifying for all grade levels for which both education and experience are acceptable.		

Graduate Education. To qualify for GS-1102 positions on the basis of graduate education, graduate education in one or a combination of the following fields is required: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Note - For positions at GS-7 through GS-12, applicants who are qualifying based on experience must possess at least one year of specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level, that provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position, in addition to meeting the basic requirements in paragraph A or B, above.

C. Exceptions: Employees in GS-1102 positions will be considered to have met the standard for positions they occupy on January 1, 2000. Employees who occupy GS-1102 positions at grades 5 through 12 will be considered to meet the basic requirements for other GS-1102 positions up to and including those classified at GS-12. This includes positions at other agencies and promotions up through grade 12. However, employees must meet specialized experience requirements when seeking another position.

Basic Requirements for GS-13 and Above

A. Completion of all mandatory training prescribed by the head of the agency for progression to GS-13 or higher level contracting positions, including at least 4-years experience in contracting or related positions. At least 1 year of that experience must have been specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level of the position, and must have provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position.

B. A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree, that included or was supplemented by at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

C. Exceptions: Employees in GS-1102 positions will be considered to have met the standard for positions they occupy on January 1, 2000. This also applies to positions at the same grade in the same agency or other agencies if the specialized experience requirements are met. However, they will have to meet the basic requirements and specialized experience requirements in order to qualify for promotion to a higher grade, unless granted a waiver under Paragraph D.

D. Waiver: When filling a specific vacant position, the senior procurement executive of the selecting agency, at his or her discretion, may waive any or all of the requirements of Paragraphs A and B above if the senior procurement executive certifies that the applicant possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority, based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience. With respect to each waiver granted under this Paragraph D, the senior procurement executive must document for the record the basis of the waiver. If an individual is placed in a

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position in an agency on the basis of a waiver, the agency may later reassign that individual to another position at the same grade within that agency without additional waiver action.

APPENDIX B

April 15, 2005

OFPP POLICY LETTER 05-01

TO THE HEADS OF CIVILIAN EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce

1. Purpose. This Policy Letter establishes the government-wide framework for creating a federal acquisition workforce with the skills necessary to deliver best value supplies and services, find the best business solutions, and provide strategic business advice to accomplish agency missions.

2. Authority. This Policy Letter is issued pursuant to section 6(a) of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 405(a)), and sections 37(b)(3) and (g) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 433(b)(3) and (g)).

3. Rescission. OFPP Policy Letters 92-3 and 97-01 are rescinded. Policy Letter 05-01 consolidates OFPP policy on acquisition workforce development.

4. Background. The quality and effectiveness of the federal acquisition process depend on the development of a capable and competent workforce. Congress recognized the need for a professional workforce through the passage of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) (10 U.S.C. §§ 1741-46) and section 4307(a) of the Clinger-Cohen Act (40 U.S.C. § 1401(3), amending section 37 of the OFPP Act (41 U.S.C. § 433)). These acts established education, training, and experience requirements for entry and advancement in the acquisition career fields for the Department of Defense (DOD) and civilian agencies respectively. Policy Letter 92-3, dated June 24, 1992, established policies for skill-based training in contracting and purchasing duties for all executive agencies. Policy Letter 97-01, dated September 12, 1997, established career management, education, and training requirements for contracting personnel in civilian executive agencies. This Letter builds on those previous efforts to improve the development of the acquisition workforce by more broadly defining the acquisition workforce and more closely aligning civilian (non-DOD) and defense acquisition workforce requirements.

5. Applicability. This Letter applies to all executive agencies, except those subject to DAWIA.

The acquisition workforce includes individuals who perform various acquisition-related functions to support the accomplishment of an agency's mission. The Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003 (SARA) (P.L. 108-136) defines acquisition to include, among traditional contracting functions, requirements definition, measurement of contract performance, and technical and management direction. One of the principal purposes of this Letter is to include formally these individuals in the definition of the acquisition workforce so they can be trained and developed using common standards.

To facilitate the identification of individuals included in the acquisition workforce, agencies shall consider the functions performed by those individuals. Membership in the acquisition workforce may be on a full-time, part-time, or occasional basis. For example, members of the acquisition

workforce may include: individuals who are substantially involved in defining, determining, and managing requirements,

- individuals involved in acquisition planning and strategy,
- individuals who participate in the process of establishing the business relationship to obtain needed goods and services, (e.g., contracting process, those involved in the solicitation, evaluation and award of acquisitions),
- individuals who manage the process after business arrangements have been made to ensure that the government's needs are met (e.g., testing and evaluating, managing and monitoring the manufacturing and production activities, auditing, contract administration, performance management and evaluation, etc.),
- individuals who arrange disposal of any residual items after work is complete, (e.g., property management/disposal),
- individuals who support the business processes of the above listed activities (e.g., General Counsel, finance, or other subject matter experts), and
- individuals who directly manage those involved in any of the above activities.

At a minimum, the acquisition workforce of an agency, for purposes of this Letter, includes:

1. All positions in the general schedule contracting series (GS-1102) and non-DOD uniformed personnel in comparable positions.
2. All Contracting Officers (CO) regardless of general schedule series with authority to obligate funds above the micropurchase threshold.
3. All positions in the general schedule purchasing series (GS-1105).
4. Program and project managers, as identified by the agency's Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), or equivalent.
5. All Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) and Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTRs), or equivalent positions.
6. Any significant acquisition-related positions identified by the CAO, or equivalent, using the guidance provided above.

6. Agency Responsibilities.

a. Authority - In accordance with section 16(b)(6) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 414(b)(6)), sections 37(g)(1) and (g)(3) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. §§ 433(g)(1) and (3)), and subject to the authority, direction, and control of the

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head of an executive agency, the CAO, or equivalent, shall develop and maintain an acquisition career management program to ensure the development of a competent, professional workforce to support the accomplishment of agency mission. The CAO is responsible for identifying the members of the agency's acquisition workforce and for implementing a budget strategy that reflects the workforce's development needs and organizational structure of the agency. This strategy might include identifying funding sources, establishing a methodology for prioritizing funding needs, and otherwise institutionalizing a process for maximizing the agency's acquisition workforce training budget. The CAO shall carry out the powers, functions, and duties of the agency head with respect to implementation of this Letter. The CAO may delegate this responsibility to a level no lower than the deputy CAO, or equivalent, and may appoint functional advisors for each segment of the acquisition workforce (i.e. contracting, program management, etc.) to facilitate the management of the agency's acquisition workforce, in accordance with the requirements of this Letter. The CAO shall consider appointing senior civil service managers as functional advisors to promote technical continuity in advising the CAO on career management issues in the various disciplines.

b. Inclusion of Acquisition Workforce in Agency Human Capital Plans - The CAO, in consultation with agency acquisition career managers and functional advisors, shall **provide to the agency's Chief Human Capital Officer, or equivalent, substantial input to the agency's human capital strategic plan regarding the acquisition workforce.** This may include recruitment needs and hiring strategies, relevant agency workforce statistics, skills assessments, accession plans, workforce development initiatives, and performance incentive plans (in accordance with section 37(b)(1) of the OFPP Act, 41 U.S.C. § 433(b)(1)). Additionally, the CAO is responsible for assessing the current skills inventory of the workforce, identifying short- and long-term agency needs, and establishing plans, including recruitment and retention strategies, for obtaining the acquisition workforce resources and skills required to meet future agency mission needs.

c. Agency Acquisition Workforce Management - The CAO, or designee, shall appoint an individual with acquisition experience to lead the agency's acquisition career management program. The Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) will be responsible for ensuring that the agency's acquisition workforce meets the requirements of this Letter. At a minimum, the ACM shall:

1. manage the identification and development of the acquisition workforce, including identifying staffing needs, training requirements, and other workforce development strategies;
2. propose to the CAO an annual budget for the development of the acquisition workforce to fulfill the requirements of this Letter and other agency human capital objectives;
3. provide coordinated input to the CAO and Chief Human Capital Officer regarding short and long term human capital strategic planning for training, competency

fulfillment, career development, accession, recruitment and retention, and other facets of human capital management affecting the acquisition workforce;

4. recommend to the CAO a transition plan for meeting the requirements of this Letter;
5. ensure that agency policies and procedures for workforce management are consistent with those established by OFPP, as appropriate;
6. coordinate with agency functional advisors to ensure fulfillment of requirements of this Letter;
7. recommend to the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) waivers to the GS-1102 education and training provisions of this Letter, as needed and in accordance with the qualification standards; and
8. maintain and manage consistent agency-wide data on those serving in the agency's acquisition workforce in the acquisition career management information system (Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS)) – see paragraph 12).

The CAO shall forward the name and contact information (phone number, email, etc.) of the person designated to perform these roles to the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) at ACMinfo@fai.gov not later than October 1, 2005, and shall update this information, as needed, to ensure that agencies receive timely information from FAI and Defense Acquisition University (DAU) regarding training and development opportunities and other related information.

7. Core Competencies. The development of a highly-qualified, well-trained workforce will generally be based on a framework of core competencies that are common to defense and civilian agencies. DOD maintains core competencies that OFPP, in consultation with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) shall consider for civilian agency use in fulfilling the requirements of this Letter. OFPP, in consultation with OPM, and DOD shall also establish a process for updating these competencies, as needed, and developing specialized competencies for particular areas of focus. Agencies may require their acquisition workforce members to obtain additional competencies to fulfill agency mission needs.

8. Federal Acquisition Certifications.

a. General - OFPP's vision for the federal acquisition workforce is the development of common certification programs that generally reflect a government-wide standard for education, training, and experience leading to the fulfillment of core competencies in a variety of acquisition-related disciplines. To promote the development of core acquisition competencies government-wide and to facilitate employee mobility, FAI, in consultation

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with OPM, shall develop federal acquisition certification programs that shall be accepted by, at a minimum, all civilian executive agencies. These certifications will generally serve as one means to demonstrate that an employee meets the core education, training, and experience requirements, as appropriate, for that acquisition-related discipline (e.g., contracting, program management, etc.). Agency-specific certification programs are not transferable to other agencies.

Federal acquisition certifications shall be offered to, though not necessarily required of, the general acquisition workforce as defined in this Letter and further identified by agency CAOs. However, agencies may specify a particular type and/or level of certification when establishing quality ranking factors when it is determined that the certification is job related.

b. Federal Acquisition Certification - Contracting (GS-1102) Series - Not later than January 1, 2006, FAI, in partnership with DAU, shall develop a certification program that considers a variety of means, including a fulfillment process, for assessing and certifying that the education, training, and experience requirements for the GS-1102 series, as described herein, have been met. The program shall be based on the DAWIA requirements for certification at the junior, intermediate, and senior levels to reflect the need to meet increasingly more rigorous standards for education, training, and experience throughout the career development process. The Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) shall approve the program. Once granted, the certification shall be accepted by, at a minimum, all civilian executive agencies as evidence that an employee meets the core education, training, and experience requirements for the GS-1102 series.

The GS-1102 federal acquisition certification is not mandatory for all GS-1102s. However, members of the workforce issued new CO warrants on or after January 1, 2007, regardless of GS series, must be certified at an appropriate level to support their warrant obligations. New CO warrants are defined as warrants issued to employees for the first time at a department or agency. This requirement does not apply to senior level officials responsible for delegating procurement authority or those whose warrants are generally used to procure emergency goods and services.

CAOs shall establish agency-specific requirements for tying warrant levels to certification levels based on agency needs. However, agencies are encouraged to require a senior level certification for any employee issued an unlimited Contracting Officer's warrant on or after January 1, 2007. The SPE of a civilian agency may waive this requirement in writing, on a case-by-case basis, if granting a waiver is in best interest of the agency. This authority may not be delegated, and the use of this authority shall be adequately documented. This waiver is not transferable to another agency. The CAO shall ensure that an employee's warrant information is entered and maintained in ACMIS (see paragraph 12).

1. Contracting (GS-1102) Series Education Requirements - The Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard, established in consultation with

OPM, establishes the education requirements for civilian GS-1102s (see www.opm.gov). This Policy Letter does not change the education requirements for the civilian GS-1102 series, and the certification program shall be developed to reflect any differences between civilian and defense education requirements. For example, a GS-7 civilian contract specialist (1102) who meets the education requirement in the qualification standard (a bachelor's degree OR 24 hours of business classes) but does not meet the DAWIA requirements (a bachelor's degree AND 24 hours of business), may still be eligible for a federal acquisition certification, but would not be considered qualified for a position subject to DAWIA.

The SPE of a civilian agency may waive the education and training requirements for an applicant for a GS-13 position and above based on that person's demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience. This authority may not be delegated. In accordance with the Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard, this waiver must be based on a certification by the SPE that the applicant possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority. The use of this authority shall be adequately documented and exercised on a case-by-case basis, as needed, to ensure that the best candidate for a position is selected. This waiver is not transferable to another agency and does not apply toward the requirements for federal acquisition certification.

- 2. Contracting (GS-1102) Series Training Requirements** - One of the principal purposes of this Letter is to establish uniform core training requirements for the civilian and defense acquisition workforce. Not later than October 1, 2005, civilian agencies shall prospectively follow the training requirements established by DOD, in consultation with OFPP, as part of their acquisition workforce development program (see Attachment 1) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/goodbye/005d0c33e796692dd11f5ef59f0151322307fca1.html>). Employees are not required to retake classes, but shall follow the DOD training requirements when considering additional core training, if needed, or continuous learning.

The SPE of a civilian agency may waive the training requirements for an applicant for a GS-13 position and above based on that person's demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience. (Please see paragraph 8(b)(1) above for additional information on the SPE waiver authority.)

To ensure consistent quality of the training provided to the acquisition workforce, civilian agencies shall follow the course equivalency determinations accepted by DAU to ensure that core training is comparable across the workforce and qualifies for certification. Electives and other courses do not generally require a course equivalency determination.

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3. **Contracting (GS-1102) Series Experience Requirements** - Experience requirements for GS-1102 positions are identified in the Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard.
4. **Contracting (GS-1102) Series Continuous Learning Requirements** – GS-1102s, including all warranted Contracting Officers regardless of series, shall earn 80 continuous learning points every two years to maintain the GS-1102 federal acquisition certification. Civilian agencies shall generally follow the guidance provided by DOD on how these points can be earned (see www.dau.mil), and are encouraged to use continuous learning opportunities to assist individuals in obtaining core acquisition competencies, maintaining critical acquisition skills, and acquiring agency-specific training. The Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy may prescribe specific continuous learning courses to ensure that training is provided to the acquisition workforce on topics such as ethics, performance-based contracting, strategic sourcing, or others, as needed.

c. Federal Acquisition Certification - Program and Project Managers - A cross-agency and cross-functional working group will be formed to assist FAI in developing recommendations for the establishment of certification programs for program and project managers that are guided by the general competencies, experience, and training associated with the DAWIA requirements, accepted industry certification programs, and existing government requirements, such as the qualification requirements established by the Chief Information Officers Council (CIOC) for information technology project management.

FAI shall work with the CAOC, the CIOC, the Chief Financial Officers Council, the Chief Human Capital Officers Council, and other organizations with subject matter expertise, as appropriate, to ensure that these certification programs reflect the needs and priorities of the community and meet the general requirements of this Letter. FAI shall develop these recommendations not later than October 1, 2006.

Not later than, January 1, 2007, agency CAOs shall identify program and project managers who will be subject to the requirements of this Letter, and shall establish appropriate timeframes and policies for applying the certification program requirements. (For example, agencies may choose to require certification for individuals working on certain critical agency projects or programs, those of a certain dollar threshold, or other high visibility programs and projects.) Individuals identified by the CAO as subject to this Letter shall ensure that the appropriate information is included in ACMIS (see paragraph 12) so that workforce data may be captured for future training and development planning.

d. Federal Acquisition Certification - Other Acquisition-Related Positions - At the direction of the FAI Board of Directors, FAI shall develop additional recommendations for certification programs that are guided by the general competencies, experience, and training associated with the DAWIA requirements and accepted industry certification programs for other acquisition-related positions (see paragraph 5), excluding requirements for CORs and COTRs (see paragraph 9).

9. Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) and Contracting Officer's Technical Representatives (COTRs). The CAO is responsible for developing basic and refresher training requirements to ensure CORs and COTRs are adequately trained for the functions they perform in the acquisition workforce. FAI and DAU have a number of continuous learning resources to assist agencies in this effort (see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/goodbye/6f28a0148c29dd67d271be1b9bb2aa082764ac55.html> and <http://www.whitehouse.gov/goodbye/a845c611abc06095342e223bee6b9abdde233699.html>). CAOs shall require that CORs and COTRs enter their information into ACMIS (see paragraph 12) to ensure that agency acquisition workforce information is complete. CAOs shall establish agency requirements for continuous learning for CORs and COTRs. Agencies are encouraged to require, at a minimum, 40 continuous learning points every two years for CORs and COTRs. Additionally, the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy may prescribe specific continuous learning courses to ensure that training is provided on topics such as ethics, performance-based contracting, strategic sourcing, or others, as needed.

10. Tuition Assistance. Each executive agency must recognize, in its strategic planning and budgeting activities, the importance of developing its acquisition workforce. OMB Circular A-11 provides guidance concerning classification of education and training obligations within budget documentation. To the extent that funding is available, agencies may provide tuition reimbursement at accredited institutions for education, including a full-time course of study leading to a degree, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 4107 (as authorized by section 37(h)(2) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. 433(h)(2)), for personnel serving in acquisition positions in the agency.

11. Acquisition Workforce Training Fund. In accordance with section 37(h)(3)(A) of the OFPP Act (41 U.S.C. § 433(h)(3)(A)), as amended by the Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-136), the Administrator of General Services shall establish an acquisition workforce training fund (AWTF) to support the training of the acquisition workforce of the executive agencies other than the DOD. Agencies administering contracts specified in section 37(h)(3)(B) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 433(h)(3)(B)) shall credit *5 percent of the fees collected under these contracts to the AWTF at the end of each quarter of the fiscal year and in accordance with the instructions issued by the Administrator of General Services.* The fund shall be managed by FAI in accordance with section 37(h)(3)(A) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 433(h)(3)(A)). OFPP and the FAI Board of Directors (see paragraph 13(b)) shall provide direction to FAI on the allocation of these resources to ensure equitable training opportunities for all civilian agencies.

The AWTF supplements, but does not replace, existing agency training budgets, and agencies should continue to budget separately for the training and education of their acquisition workforce. In accordance with section 37(h)(1)(A) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 433 (h)(1)(A)), agency heads shall set forth separately the funding levels requested for education and training of the acquisition workforce in the agency's annual budget request to OMB.

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12. Management Information Systems. In accordance with section 37(d) of the OFPP Act, as amended, (41 U.S.C. § 433(d)) each executive agency must collect, maintain, and utilize information to ensure effective management of the acquisition workforce. FAI maintains an acquisition career management information system (ACMIS) that can assist agencies in managing their workforce and help members of the workforce manage their individual education, training, and experience information. Civilian agencies may populate ACMIS through existing agency learning management systems or may populate ACMIS directly. However, all civilian agencies shall ensure that ACMIS has complete and current information on the members of the acquisition workforce as described below. Not later than October 1, 2006, each civilian agency shall have complete, current records in ACMIS for, at a minimum, the following:

- All positions in the general schedule contracting Series (GS-1102) and non-DOD uniformed personnel in comparable positions;
- All Contracting Officers regardless of general schedule series with authority to obligate funds above the micropurchase threshold;
- All positions in the general schedule purchasing series (GS-1105).

Not later than April 1, 2007, each civilian agency shall have complete, current records in ACMIS for program and project managers, including CORs and COTRs, who have been identified by the CAO as members of the acquisition workforce. Information on employees in other acquisition-related disciplines can be entered, as appropriate, but not later than one year after the certification program for that discipline has been developed. The Enterprise Human Resources Integration (EHRI), developed by OPM to manage human resources information government-wide, will work in concert with ACMIS by providing general workforce data and information. ACMIS will use the EHRI information, agency learning management systems information, if applicable, and additional information provided by employees and supervisors to capture more specific data on the acquisition workforce. Additionally, ACMIS will provide detailed reports to assist agencies in short- and long-term workforce planning.

As soon as practicable, FAI will prepare guidance for agencies on ACMIS implementation.

13. The Federal Acquisition Institute.

a. Roles and Responsibilities – FAI fosters and promotes the development of a professional acquisition workforce and is responsible for performing a wide range of activities supporting management of the acquisition workforce as directed by the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, pursuant to section 6(d)(5) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 405(d)(5)). To support the management of the workforce in accordance with this Letter, FAI shall focus on the following priorities:

1. *Establish performance measures.* Not later than April 1, 2006, and in consultation with the CAOC and other organizations, as appropriate, FAI shall establish general performance measures that agencies may use in assessing their acquisition workforce development programs.

2. *Core competencies and curriculum support:* In partnership with DAU, FAI shall support the identification and maintenance of core acquisition workforce competencies and a core curriculum to develop these competencies government-wide. FAI shall develop curriculum content, if necessary, to support the civilian workforce needs.
 3. *Establish career development programs.* To assist the workforce in obtaining the necessary competencies and skills, FAI shall establish career development programs. These may include developing a rotational program among agencies, managing a government-wide intern program for agencies that don't have their own, developing mentoring programs, or identifying other career enrichment experiences. The FAI Board of Directors will assist FAI in prioritizing the development of these programs.
 4. *Establish the federal acquisition certification programs:* FAI shall develop and administer, with agency involvement, the federal acquisition certification programs. Certification program requirements for the GS-1102 series shall be submitted to the CAOC for approval not later than January 1, 2006. Recommendations for the requirements for the program and project management certification shall be submitted to the CAOC, and other organizations, as appropriate, not later than October 1, 2006. The Board shall direct FAI to prepare recommendations for other certification programs as needed.
 5. *Manage the AWTF:* In accordance with SARA, FAI shall manage the AWTF fund. The Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy and the Administrator of General Services, in consultation with the FAI Board of Directors, shall provide direction to FAI on the allocation of these resources.
- b. FAI Board of Directors** - In FY 2004, OFPP established a Board of Directors to assist FAI in its efforts to support the acquisition workforce. The Board provides general direction to FAI to ensure fulfillment of FAI's statutory requirements and the requirements of this Letter. The Board, which reports to the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy, makes recommendations to OFPP regarding the development and execution of FAI's annual budget. The Board also provides general direction to FAI on the allocation of AWTF resources, in accordance with the priorities of the acquisition community. The Board's charter can be found on <http://www.whitehouse.gov/goodbye/a845c611abc06095342e223bee6b9abdde233699.html>.
14. **Information Contact.** Questions regarding this Policy Letter should be directed to Lesley A. Field, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (lfield@omb.eop.gov), or call (202) 395-7579.
 15. **Judicial Review.** This Policy Letter is not intended to provide a constitutional or statutory interpretation of any kind and it is not intended, and should not be construed, to

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create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any persons. It is intended only to provide policy guidance to agencies in the exercise of their discretion concerning federal contracting. Thus, this Policy Letter is not intended, and should not be construed, to create any substantive or procedural basis on which to challenge any agency action or inaction on the ground that such action or inaction was not in accordance with this Policy Letter.

16. *Effective Date.* This Policy Letter is effective April 15, 2005.

David H. Safavian
Administration

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FOR MANAGEMENT**

January 20, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF ACQUISITION OFFICERS AND SENIOR PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVES

FROM: Clay Johnson III
Deputy Director for Management

SUBJECT: The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program

In April 2005, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) published Policy Letter 05-01, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce*, which required the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) to develop, and the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) to approve, a certification program for contracting professionals in civilian agencies that reflects common standards. The goal of the certification program is to standardize the education, training, and experience requirements for contracting professionals, which will improve workforce competencies and increase career opportunities. The attached Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program was approved by the CAOC in December 2005.

The program mirrors, as closely as possible, the requirements that the Department of Defense established for its contracting workforce under the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act. The program will be administered by each civilian agency, and FAI will conduct periodic reviews to ensure that the program is being managed consistently. The certification shall be accepted by, at minimum, all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets the core education, training, and experience requirements to be a contracting professional (generally the GS-1102 series).

A well-trained acquisition workforce is critical to ensuring that agencies accomplish their mission goals. Investment in the development of the federal acquisition workforce will improve our ability to meet mission needs and continue being effective stewards of taxpayer dollars. If you have questions regarding the implementation of the program, please call Lesley Field on the OFPP staff at (202) 395-7579.

Attachment

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers



Attachment

The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) program is to establish core requirements for education, training, and experience for contracting professionals in civilian agencies.
 2. **Authority.** This certification program is issued pursuant to section 6(a) of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 405(a)), 6(c)(5) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 405(c)(5)), sections 37(b)(3) and (g) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. § 433(b)(3) and (g)), and OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, paragraph 8(b).
- Based on these authorities, all executive agencies, except those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), shall accept the FAC-C as evidence that an employee meets the applicable core education, training, and experience requirements for the general schedule (GS)-1102 series.
3. **Background.** OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 established a requirement for federal acquisition certification programs. Section 8(b) of this Letter required the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) to develop, and the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) to approve, a FAC-C program. The FAC-C program was approved by the CAOC in December 2005.
 4. **Applicability.** The FAC-C program applies to all executive agencies, except those subject to DAWIA (10 U.S.C. §§ 1701-64).

The federal certification in contracting is not mandatory for all GS-1102s; however, members of the workforce issued new Contracting Officer (CO) warrants on or after January 1, 2007, regardless of GS series, must be certified at an appropriate level to support their warrant obligations, pursuant to agency policy. New CO warrants are defined in Policy Letter 05-01 as warrants issued to employees for the first time at a department or agency. This requirement does not apply to: • senior level officials responsible for delegating procurement authority; • non-1102s whose warrants are generally used to procure emergency goods and services; or • non-1102s whose warrants are so limited as to be outside the scope of this program, as determined by the Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO).

Agencies have discretion to make additional warranting requirements, and employees should review carefully agency warranting policy. CAOs shall establish agency-specific requirements for tying warrant levels to certification levels based on agency needs. However, agencies are encouraged to require a senior level certification for any employee issued an unlimited Contracting Officer's warrant on or after January 1, 2007. All agency warranting programs

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should be updated to reflect the need for a minimum of 80 continuous learning points every two years (see paragraph 6.e.).

The SPE of a civilian agency may waive the requirement for obtaining a certification for warranting purposes in writing, on a case-by-case basis, if granting a waiver is in the best interest of the agency. This authority may not be delegated, and the use of this authority shall be adequately documented. This waiver is not transferable to another agency.

The certification program is available to all members of the federal acquisition workforce and the volume of requests may be significant when the program begins. For agency planning purposes, priority for consideration will be as follows:

- all warranted COs in the GS-1102 contracting series and non-DOD uniformed personnel in comparable positions;
- all warranted COs regardless of general schedule series with authority to obligate funds above the micropurchase threshold;
- other GS-1102s;
- other eligible individuals.

5. Certification Program Oversight and Administration. The FAI Board of Directors, in consultation with FAI, the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Council (IACMC), and other organizations as appropriate, shall provide general program oversight and shall recommend program changes to the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy to ensure that the program reflects the needs of all civilian agencies. Changes to the program may be communicated formally through the CAOC or through other means, depending on the significance of the change. FAI shall maintain the most current version of the FAC-C program on its website, www.fai.gov.

FAI shall administer the program through issuance of guidance, processes, and information dissemination, principally through its website. Additionally, FAI shall periodically review agencies' implementation to ensure that the program remains rigorous and that the standards for certification for education, training, experience, and continuous learning are consistently applied by all civilian agencies.

FAI shall conduct periodic agency audits to validate that the standards for the certification program are being met. Audit checks may include:

- verifying that the agency maintains FAC-C applications;
- auditing an individual's records for documentation that they attended the training reported on the FAC-C application;
- verifying that a rigorous fulfillment process is being followed by the agency and that this process is aligned with the Department of Defense (DOD) DAWIA fulfillment process; and
- after January 1, 2007, verifying that new warrant holders are appropriately certified in accordance with agency-specific policy.

The certification process, including verification and assessment of applications, will be managed by each agency. Authority for overseeing the agency FAC-C program, resolving disputes, and granting certifications shall be at the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) level. The SPE may delegate, in writing, certain functions to a level no lower than the Acquisition Career Manager (ACM), as needed, to ensure effective and efficient management of the program. The SPE may not delegate the waiver function as defined in the GS-1102 Qualification Standard.

The ACM, appointed by the CAO under Policy Letter 05-01, or designee, is responsible for administering the agency certification program, including developing a communications strategy, in accordance with this and any subsequent guidance provided by OFPP or FAI. The ACM shall also serve on the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Committee (IACMC), which is run by FAI, to ensure that workforce development policies and opportunities meet the needs of the acquisition workforce.

6. General Information on Core Competencies and the FAC-C Requirements for Education, Training, Experience, and Continuous Learning.

a. Competencies - Although DOD and OFPP retain responsibility for managing their respective workforces, the establishment of core competencies will ensure that the acquisition community develops common skills. The objective of the FAC-C is to align the core competencies and training requirements across the acquisition workforce, and the current competencies for the GS-1102 workforce shall be maintained on the FAI website, www.fai.gov. However, these core competencies will periodically be updated, expanded, or otherwise modified to meet the current and future acquisition workforce requirements, and specialized competencies may be developed to support emerging trends in the government's acquisition practices. OFPP, Dodd, and OPM shall establish a competency management process to ensure that the core competencies remain relevant and current and are integrated into the curriculum, as appropriate.

b. Education - This program does not change the education requirement in the Qualification Standard for Contract Specialist (GS-1102). The civilian (non-DOD) and DOD education requirements for the GS-1102 series differ at grades 5 through 12 (or equivalent). In accordance with the Qualification Standard, available on www.opm.gov, persons in civilian (non-DOD) GS-1102 positions grades 5 through 12 are required to have, from an accredited institution, either 24-semester hours of business related education OR a baccalaureate degree. Persons seeking positions subject to DAWIA must have both 24-semester hours of business related education AND a baccalaureate degree at all grade levels.

Civilian agency employees in GS-1102 positions will be considered to have met the standard, including the education requirement, for positions they occupied on January 1, 2000. FAC-C Appendix 1 provides guidance on the subject areas and types of classes that meet the education requirement, and agencies shall use this guidance to ensure consistent interpretation of the standard. FAI and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) will make further guidance available on their respective websites, as needed.

Education waivers granted by an agency, in accordance with the Qualification Standard, are not transferable to other agencies and do not satisfy the education requirement for a FAC-C. An

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employee must meet the appropriate education requirements to be certified.

c. Training - In accordance with OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, civilian agencies shall follow the training curriculum established by DOD (see paragraph 7). Core courses must be provided by DAU or be considered DAU-equivalent courses. Agencies may require agency-specific training as part of the elective requirements or continuous learning requirements, but additional agency-specific training beyond the training specified under paragraph 7 is not required for certification. Business-related academic courses that are recognized by DAU as equivalent to core courses may be used to meet training requirements for this program.

When DAU modifies its curriculum, it publishes a list of predecessor classes that allows an individual to associate past training with the new requirements. That list is provided in the DAU catalog (www.dau.mil/catalog), and will assist individuals in determining the DAU courses or DAU-equivalent courses that meet these requirements. FAI will make this information available on its website as well.

As agreed to by the employee and supervisor, electives may be any training opportunity related to the employee's job, those necessary for career development, or those used for cross training. Electives may include no-cost distance learning, assignment-specific courses, or other training opportunities. Employees are encouraged to take courses that add to their knowledge base or enhance existing skills; electives should generally be increasingly more complex throughout an employee's career progression. There are no DAU equivalency requirements for electives.

d. Experience - The requirements for experience are generally based on the Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard. Experience may be time spent on the job in a contracting related job assignment, either in the private or public sector, that reflects the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and abilities during years of progressively more responsible work assignments.

e. Continuous Learning – To maintain a FAC-C, acquisition professionals are required to earn 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency training every two years beginning October 1, 2007. During the transition to the FAC-C program, agencies are encouraged to be flexible on how this requirement is met initially to ensure that employees are given credit for earlier continuous learning activities. ACMs, or designees, shall monitor the continuous learning requirements for employees holding FAC-Cs to ensure they meet this requirement. A FAC-C will expire if the 80 CLPs are not earned every two years, and the SPE, or other appropriate warranting authority, may choose to revoke or modify a warrant if this condition is not met. If the SPE revokes or modifies a warrant, he or she must notify the warrant holder in writing when the revocation or modification is to be effective, providing enough time and sufficient instruction to ensure that no unauthorized obligations are made.

Civilian agencies shall generally follow the guidance provided by Dodd on how CLPs can be earned. DAU equivalency is not required for continuous learning. Agencies are encouraged to use continuous learning opportunities to assist individuals in obtaining core competencies, maintaining critical acquisition skills, and acquiring agency-specific training. Continuous learning activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- training activities, such as teaching, self-directed study, mentoring;
- courses completed to achieve certification at the next higher level;
- professional activities, such as attending/speaking/presenting at professional seminars/symposia/conferences, publishing, and attending workshops; or
- educational activities, such as formal training, and formal academic programs.

FAC-C Appendix 2 provides guidance on earning CLPs and assigning points to various developmental activities. FAI will provide additional guidance, as needed, on its website.

7. FAC-C Requirements for Education, Training, Experience, and Continuous Learning.

a. General - The FAC-C program is based on the DAWIA requirements for certification at the junior, intermediate, and senior levels to reflect the need for an individual to meet increasingly more rigorous standards for education, training, and experience throughout his or her career. Federal certification levels are not directly associated with warrant limits as certification requirements for warrants are determined by each agency. However, agencies are encouraged to require a senior level certification for any employee issued an unlimited CO's warrant on or after January 1, 2007. Achievement of the FAC-C is based on three requirements: education, training, and experience and the requirements are cumulative, (i.e., a person must meet the requirements of each previous certification level). Maintenance of a FAC-C is a function of continuous learning, which is addressed in paragraph 6.e.

The requirements for the FAC-C are shown below. Agencies may determine that an assignment requires additional training beyond the FAC-C requirements. Many civilian agencies are moving toward implementing new personnel systems that are not based on the general schedule system. However, the education requirements in the Qualification Standard are tied to grade level and are reflected in these requirements.

b. Level I -

1) Education (see also paragraph 6.b) – Baccalaureate degree OR at least 24 semester hours among these disciplines: accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.

2) Training –

- CON 100 Shaping Smart Business Arrangements*
- CON 110 Mission Support Planning
- CON 111 Mission Strategy Execution
- CON 112 Mission Performance Assessment
- CON 120 Mission Focused Contracting
- 1 Elective

3) Experience – 1 year of contracting experience

*CON 100 should be taken by those just entering the acquisition workforce or those new to the government. Employees who are beginning a level I certification program must

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take CON 100. Employees pursuing Level II or Level III certifications may consider taking CON 100 as an elective.

c. Level II* -

1) Education (see also paragraph 6.b) – Baccalaureate degree OR at least 24 semester hours among these disciplines: accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.

2) Training –

- CON 202 Intermediate Contracting
- CON 204 Intermediate Contract Pricing
- CON 210 Government Contract Law
- 2 Electives

3) Experience – 2 years of contracting experience

* DAU is in the process of revising the level II curriculum for FY07. Employees are encouraged to complete CON 202, 204, and 210 training in FY06, if possible, to facilitate the transition to the new curriculum.

d. Level III -

1) Education (see also paragraph 6.b) - Baccalaureate degree AND at least 24 semester hours among these disciplines: accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.

2) Training -

- CON 353 Advanced Business Solutions for Mission Support
- 2 Electives

3) Experience - 4 years of contracting experience

8. Ways to Meet the Requirements

a. Education and Experience – A candidate must meet the education and experience requirements established in the Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard. There are no exceptions to these requirements and candidates must provide evidence of this to the ACM. In accordance with the Qualification Standard, employees in GS-1102 positions will be considered to have met the standard, including the education requirement, for positions they occupied on January 1, 2000. Please see the Qualification Standard on www.opm.gov for specific requirements for the GS-5 through GS-12 level, and for GS-13 and above.

b. Training – A candidate must meet the training requirements by taking DAU training, DAU-equivalent courses, or through fulfillment.

1) **DAU training or DAU-equivalent courses** - A full list of the currently required courses and their predecessor courses is available on www.dau.mil/catalog and www.fai.gov.

Candidates must provide evidence of satisfactory completion of these courses.

2) **Fulfillment** - The FAC-C fulfillment process will follow the fulfillment process for DOD agencies so that the DAWIA certification and FAC-C programs are closely aligned.

Details regarding and tools for using DOD's fulfillment process will be maintained on the DAU and FAI websites, but generally candidates must submit, and supervisors must review, evidence as to how the required competencies for a particular certification level were attained through alternative training, experience, education, certification by another recognized organization, or other developmental activities.

- **Alternative training:** If an applicant obtained competencies through courses that were not DAU or DAU-equivalent courses, he or she must provide for each competency the dates of training, course descriptions, provider names, grades (if applicable), and competencies achieved, to the maximum extent practicable. To facilitate this process, the IACMC will recommend and FAI will approve certain common acquisition training courses that members of the civilian agency workforce completed in the past to meet the requirements of their agency training program. The IACMC and FAI will review course information to determine if the necessary competencies were presented to fulfill all or part of a course requirement, and this information will be available on the FAI website. This process will facilitate fulfillment determinations by establishing common alternative training courses that were taken previously by current members of the acquisition workforce.
- **Experience:** If the applicant is using job experience, he or she must provide the agency name, dates, location, position title, and the duties performed that provided the relevant competencies.
- **Education:** If an applicant obtained competencies through academic courses provided at an accredited institution, he or she must provide the dates of each class, course descriptions, provider names, grades (if applicable), and competencies achieved.
- **Certification by a recognized organization:** Civilian agencies shall follow the determinations made by DOD as to which certifications by organizations outside the federal government are eligible for full or partial consideration under the DAWIA and FAC-C programs. These determinations are maintained by DAU as part of DOD's fulfillment program and shall be maintained on the DAU and FAI websites.

c. DAWIA Certification – A valid, current DAWIA certification in contracting is equivalent to a FAC-C at the same certification level. The employee is responsible for providing the necessary documentation of the DAWIA certification and the appropriate continuous learning history to ensure validity and currency of the DAWIA certification.

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9. Application Processes. In consultation with the CAO and other agency stakeholders, the SPE shall establish the agency process for applying for a FAC-C, verifying information, granting the FAC-C, and maintaining currency. At a minimum, an individual meeting the FAC-C requirements shall request certification through their immediate supervisor. The individual is responsible for producing certificates, transcripts, and records that provide evidence that he or she satisfies the requirements for the program. The supervisor should take this opportunity to assess the skills and competencies of the applicant and develop a plan for enhancing or adding to the employee's competencies, if appropriate. FAI will develop checklists that agencies can use for the FAC-C application process and will make these available on the FAI website.

The certification will be issued at the employing agency, but will represent the achievement of government-wide standards. This decentralized approach will allow for efficiency, especially during the first year of the FAC-C program. Authority to grant the FAC-C shall be at the SPE level and may be delegated no lower than the ACM (see paragraph 5 above). The ACM is responsible for ensuring that certification applications are available for audit purposes.

10. Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS). ACMIS will be the official system of records for the FAC-C program for all civilian agencies and will support the application process. However, agencies must maintain supplemental records for quality assurance (e.g., copies of course certificates, etc.). FAI is responsible for managing ACMIS and will issue guidance, as necessary, to support ACMIS implementation.

11. Information Contact. Questions regarding this program should be directed to Lesley A. Field, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (lfield@omb.eop.gov), or call (202) 395-7579.

12. Effective Date. This program is effective January 20, 2006.

FAC-C APPENDIX 1

Guidance on Meeting the Business Course Requirements for the
Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard

Below are types of courses that generally satisfy the Qualification Standard requirement for 24-semester hours (or equivalent) of study from an accredited institution of higher education in any of the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management. Additional information about accreditation can be found on: ope.ed.gov/accreditation.

The following is based on guidance provided by the Defense Acquisition University to the defense workforce and lists subject areas identified by the American Council on Education for each of the business disciplines listed above. Although not an exhaustive list, this guidance should be used by civilian agencies to determine if certain courses provide enough business instruction to count toward the 24-semester hour business requirement. ACMs should work with their human resources departments to ensure a consistent interpretation of which types of courses should count toward the requirement.

BUSINESS/MANAGEMENT DISCIPLINE	AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION SUBJECT AREA
Accounting	Cost Accounting Standards
Business Finance	Business Communications Business and Personnel Business Statistics Financial Cost Management Financial Planning and Analysis Inventory Management Resource Planning Risk Analysis
Contracts	Acquisition Contracting Acquisition Management Business Communications in Contracting Writing Business Contract Law Contract Administration Contract Law Contract Management Contract Pricing and Negotiation Contracting Management Cost & Price Analysis Government Contracting Government Contract Law

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Economics	<p>Procurement Procurement and Contracting Procurement Management</p> <p>Cost and Price Analysis Cost Analysis Economic Analysis Economic Principles and Decision Making Economics and Financial Management Economics</p>
Industrial Management	<p>Automated Systems in Logistics Management Civil Engineering Management Environmental Management Engineering and Analysis Logistics Management Manufacturing Management Material Acquisition Process & Support Systems Property Disposal Management Supply Management Systems Engineering Technology Warehousing Operations</p>
Law	<p>Commercial or Business Contracts Contract Law</p>
Organization and Management	<p>Business Administration Advanced Management (Math) Business Business Management Business and Personnel Management Computer Programming Computer Programming & Systems Development Computer Sciences, Data Processing Data Entry and Automated Systems Input General Management Human Resource Development Leadership and Group Decision Process Management Science Management & Leadership Managerial Analysis Manpower Management Materiel Management</p>

<p>Purchasing</p> <p>Quantitative Methods</p>	<p>Methods of Adult Education Organizational Behavior Personnel Administration Principles of Management Quality and Reliability Assurance Research and Development Management Strategic Management Survey of Program Operations</p> <p>Basic Purchasing</p> <p>Business Statistics Computer Science Decision Risk Analysis Operations Research Probability Statistics Quantitative Analysis Statistics</p>
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Guidance on Meeting Continuous Learning Points Requirements

These guidelines are generally based on DOD's requirements for achieving continuous learning points (CLPs). Agencies have flexibility in assigning points and ACMs and/or supervisors, as appropriate, should work with employees to identify appropriate opportunities. Below is guidance on how training, professional activities, education, and experience can be used to meet the CLP requirements. All activities must be job-related.

A. Training

- 1) *Completing awareness training.* Periodically agencies conduct briefing sessions to acquaint the workforce with new or changed policy. Generally, no testing or assessment of knowledge gained is required.
- 2) *Completing learning modules and training courses.* These may be formal or informal offerings from a recognized training organization, including in-house training course/sessions, which include some form of testing/assessment for knowledge gained.
- 3) *Performing Self-Directed Study.* An individual can keep current or enhance his or her capabilities through a self-directed study program agreed to by the supervisor.
- 4) *Teaching.* Employees are encouraged to share their knowledge and insights with others through teaching of courses or learning modules. Teaching is also a part of the Professional Activities category.
- 5) *Mentoring.* Helping others to learn and become more productive workers or managers benefits the agency and the individuals involved. Mentoring is also a part of the experience category.

B. Professional Activities

- 1) *Participating in Organization Management.* Membership alone in a professional organization will not be considered as fulfilling continuous learning requirements, but participation in the organization leadership will. This includes holding elected/appointed positions, committee leadership roles, or running an activity for an organization that you are permitted to join under current ethics law and regulation. The employee must first ensure that participating in the management of an organization is allowed by the agency.
- 2) *Attending/Speaking/Presenting at Professional Seminars/Symposia/Conferences.* Employees can receive points for attending professional seminars or conferences that are job related. However, the supervisor needs to determine that the individual learned something meaningful from the experience. Because significant effort is involved in preparing and delivering presentations, credit should be given for each hour invested in the preparation and presentation.
- 3) *Publishing.* Writing articles related to acquisition for publication generally meets the criteria for continuous learning. Points will be awarded only in the year published. Compliance with

agency publication policy is required.

4) *Participating in Workshops*. Points should be awarded for workshops with planned learning outcomes.

C. Education

1) *Formal training*. ACMs and supervisors should use Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as a guide for assigning points for formal training programs that award CEUs. The CEUs can be converted to points at 10 CLP points per CEU.

2) *Formal academic programs*. For formal academic programs offered by educational institutions, each semester hour is equal to one CEU. A three-hour credit course would be worth three CEUs and 30 CLP points, assuming that it is applicable to the acquisition function.

CREDITABLE ACTIVITIES	POINT CREDIT (see note)
Academic Courses:	
Quarter Hour	10 per Quarter Hour
Semester Hour	10 per Semester Hour
Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	10 per CEU
Equivalency Exams	Same points as awarded for the course
Training Courses/Modules:	
DAU Courses	10 per CEU (see DAU catalog) or:
• Awareness Briefing/ Training- no testing/assessment associated	• .5 point per hour of instruction
• Continuous Learning Modules- testing/assessment associated	• 1 point per hour of instruction
Other Functional Training	1 point per hour of instruction
Leadership or Other Training	1 point per hour of instruction
Equivalency Exams	Same points as awarded for the course
Professional Activities:	
Professional Exam/License/Certificate	10-30 points
Teaching/Lecturing	2 points per hour; maximum of 20 points per year
Symposia/Conference Presentation	2 points per hour; maximum of 20 points per year
Workshop Participation	1 point per hour; maximum of 8 points per day and 20 points per year

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Symposia/Conference Attendance

.5 point per hour; maximum of 4 points per day and 20 points per year

Publications

10 to 40 points

Note- All activities may earn points only in the year accomplished, awarded or publishes.

D. Experience

Experience includes on-the-job experiential assignments, and intra/interorganizational rotational career broadening and developmental experiences. While agencies can use discretion in arriving at a reasonable point value to be awarded for rotational and developmental assignments, a sliding scale is recommended. Suggested points for such assignments are in the table below.

The assumption is that longer assignments are more beneficial than shorter assignments. The supervisor may feel that an individual may deserve more or less than the value shown. In determining the points for a rotational/developmental assignment, the supervisor should consider both the long-term benefit to the agency, and the immediate benefit to the supervisor’s organization and the workforce member. For example, a second rotational assignment of the same sort would be less valuable than a different type of rotational assignment.

CREDITABLE ACTIVITIES	POINT CREDIT
Experience:	
On-the-job Experiential Assignment	Maximum of 20 points per year
Integrated Product Team (IPT)/ Special Project Leader	Maximum of 15 points per year
IPT/ Special Project Member	Maximum of 10 points per years
Mentor	Maximum of 5 points per year
Assignment Length (Rotational Assignments of Training with Industry):	Recommended Points:
12 Months	80
9 Months	60
6 Months	40
3 Months	15
2 Months	10
1 Month	5

APPENDIX D

**Contracting Officer Warrant Authority
For GS-1102/GS-1105 Personnel, Contracting Officers, and
Heads of the Contracting Activity Designee**
APPENDIX D

Level	Minimum Procurement Experience/Series	Contract Duties %	Minimum Education	Minimum Training	Continuous Learning Points	Maximum PO/DO Warrant Authority
Level IA	1 Year Proc. Exp. Any Job Series	25%	High School	Must include a Simplified Acquisition Course or equivalent (60 hours)	80 CLPs every two years	Up to \$10,000
Level IB	2 Years Proc Exp. Any Job Series	50%	High School	Contract and Purchase Related Courses (100 hours)	80 CLPs every two years	Up to \$25,000
Level IC	4 Years Proc. Exp. GS-1102 and GS-1105	90%	High School	FAC-C Level I Training	80 CLPs every two years	Up to \$100,000 on Purchase Orders \$300,000 on Delivery Orders
Head of the Contracting Activity Designee	N/A	N/A	N/A	160 hours of contract training	40 Hours of contract training every two years	Unlimited
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level I Contracting Officers are limited to writing Delivery Orders, Purchase Orders, and calls up to their delegated amounts only. • There are no grade levels associated with Level I Contracting Officer warrant authority. • Level IC Contracting Officers must have 24 hours of construction and/or A/E before awarding orders over \$25,000 in specialized areas. • Level IC Contracting Officers are not required to be FAC-C certified. However, at a minimum, they must have completed all FAC-C Level I training or equivalent. 						

APPENDIX E

**CONTRACTING OFFICER WARRANT AUTHORITY
FOR GS-1102 PERSONNEL
APPENDIX E**

Level and Minimum Grade	Minimum Procurement Experience	Contract Duties (%)	Minimum Education	Minimum Training/OJT	Continuous Learning Points	Warrant Authority
Level IIA (GS-1102/11)	4 Years	90%	Mandatory 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field OR At least 24 semester hours in business	FAC-C LEVEL II	80 CLPs every two years	Up to \$500,000
Level IIB (GS-1102/11)	6 Years	90%	Mandatory 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field OR At least 24 semester hours in business	FAC-C LEVEL II	80 CLPs every two years	Up to \$1,000,000
Level IIIA (GS-1102/11)	7 Years	90%	Mandatory 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field OR At least 24 semester hours in business	FAC-C LEVEL III	80 CLPs every two years	Up to \$5,000,000
Level IIIB (GS-1102/11)	9 Years	90%	Mandatory 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field OR At least 24 semester hours in business	FAC-C LEVEL III	80 CLPs every two years	Up to \$25,000,000
Level IIIC (GS-1102/11)	10 Years	90%	Mandatory 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field OR At least 24 semester hours in business	FAC-C LEVEL III	80 CLPs every two years	Up to an Unlimited Amount

- Level II and III Contracting Officers must have 40 hours of construction and/or A/E training before awarding orders over \$25,000.
- Minimum education requirements do not apply to GS-1102 employees grandfathered into the series on January 1, 2000.
- New Unlimited Contracting Officer candidates must hold a FAC-C Level III certificate prior to the issuance of an unlimited warrant. (See Paragraph 36)

APPENDIX F

**Education and Training for
GS-1102 Personnel
APPENDIX F**

GS-1102 Grade Level	Education	Minimum Training/OJT During Grade Levels	Continuous Learning Points
GS – 5 through 9	Mandatory 4-year course of study leading a bachelor’s degree with a major in any field OR At least 24 semester hours in business AND Specialized experience as outlined in the GS-1102 Qualification Standard	FAC-C Level I	80 CLPs every two years
GS – 10 through 12	Mandatory 4-year course of study leading a bachelor’s degree with a major in any field OR At least 24 semester hours in business AND Specialized experience as outlined in the GS-1102 Qualification Standard	FAC-C Level II	80 CLPs every two years
GS – 13 and above	Mandatory 4-year course of study leading a bachelor’s degree with a major in any field AND At least 24 semester hours in business AND Specialized experience as outlined in the GS-1102 Qualification Standard	FAC-C Level III (See Paragraph 12 for Exception)	80 CLPs every two years
Requirements outside of OPM’s GS1102 Qualification Standard are subject to revision by the CAO or SPE.			

APPENDIX G

<p style="text-align: center;">Training for COR/COTRs or Equivalent Positions APPENDIX G</p>				
Level	Experience	Competencies	Minimum Training Hours	Continuous Learning Points
Level I	None	Basic COR Course that includes the Federal Acquisition Process	40	40 CLPs Every two Years
Level II	One year as a Level I COR	As outlined in the FAC-COTR Program Guidance	80	40 CLPs Every two Years
Level III	One year as a Level II COR	As outlined in the FAC-COTR Program Guidance	120	40 CLPs Every two Years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees shall go to www.fai.gov for COR competency updates. 				

APPENDIX H

APPENDIX H
CONTRACTING OFFICER QUALIFICATION STATEMENT

Use a similar format with the following information:

Last/Middle/ First Name:

Title, Series, Grade:

Agency/Office/Organizational Identification Number (four-digit code):

Office Address:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

E-Mail Address:

American Citizen: [] Yes

[] No

Experience: (Begin with your current position and work back until you have demonstrated the required relevant work experience). Information on each position should include:

Name of Employer

Dates Employed

Title of Position

Kind of Business/Organization

Description of Work

Percent of Time Spent on Contract Duties

Current Acquisition Career Specialties (e.g., Policy, IT, Construction, A/E, General, SAP)

FAC-C certified ____ Yes ____ No ____ (If yes, attach a copy of the FAC-C certificate)

Are you presently a warranted Contracting Officer? No ____ Yes ____ If yes, provide Warrant Level ____

Continuous Learning Period: _____

Education: (Highest Level Completed):

Name of High School/College/University

Dates Attended

Diploma Received

Years Completed

No. of Semester/Quarter Hour Credits Completed

Type and Year of Degree

Major Field of Study

Other relevant special qualifications, certifications (e.g., CPCM, CFCM, CCCM, CACM, SAS, etc.)

I have at least 24 Semester Hours in a combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organizational and management.

Yes ____ No ____ (You must provide a list of courses and the number of semester hours for each course if you do not have a Bachelors or Masters Degree in one of the previously listed fields)

Procurement Related Training: (If applicable, attach a copy of your ACMIS printout or equivalent)

Name of Course

Dates Attended

Training Mode (e.g., tests, classroom, waiver, etc.)

Name of School/Vendor

Number of Training Hours Per Course

APPENDIX I

**CONTRACTING OFFICER REPRESENTATIVE QUALIFICATION
STATEMENT**

Use a format similar to this with the following information:

Last/Middle/ First Name:

Title, Series, Grade:

Agency/Office/Organizational Identification Number (four-digit code):

Office Address:

American Citizen: [] Yes [] No

Telephone Number: Fax Number: E-Mail Address:

COR Experience:

Information on each position should include :(Begin with your current position and work back until you have demonstrated the required relevant work experience).

Name of Employer
Dates Employed
Title of Position
Description of Work
Percent of Time Spent on COR Duties
Type of Acquisition Project (e.g., Policy, IT, Construction, A/E, General, SAP)

Education:

High School: Yes _____ No _____
College: Yes _____ No _____ Graduated Yes _____ No _____
Graduate School Yes _____ No _____ Graduated Yes _____ No _____
Major Field of Study: _____

Procurement Related Training: (Attach a copy of your ACMIS printout or equivalent)

Name of Course
Dates Attended
Training Mode (e.g., tests, classroom, waiver, etc.)
Name of School/Vendor
Number of Training Hours Per Course

APPENDIX J

FORMAT FOR CONTRACTING OFFICER WARRANT REQUESTS

1. There is a clear and convincing need to appoint a contracting officer at Level _____ for the following reasons:

2. The Contracting Officer candidate is:

 (Name, Title, Series, and Grade)

3. Work location:

 (Office/Branch/Division/City/State)

4. The candidate meets established qualification standards.

5. If required, the candidate's current conflict of interest disclosure statement and OGE 450 reports are on file in the appropriate personnel office. ____ Yes ____ No

6. A copy of the candidate's qualification statement is attached

7. In addition to Procurement Laws, Regulations, and other applicable requirements, the following warrant limitations are requested:
 Dollar Thresholds:
 - a. Supplies and Services: _____
 - b. Construction, A/E: _____
 - c. Delivery Orders: _____
 - d. Other Limitations: _____

8. Is the candidate FAC-C certified: ____ Yes ____ No (If yes, attach a copy of the FAC-C certificate)

FAC-C trained: ____ Yes ____ No

FAC-C Level: _____ FAC-C Application Attached ____ Yes ____ No

I hereby certify that the above information, including any attachment, is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Nominating Officer:

(Signature)

(Typed Name, Title, and Agency) (Date)

APPENDIX K

**USDA Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting
Application Format**

PART A – EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)

Organizational /Address

Title, Series, Grade

Date Submitted:

PART B – CERTIFICATION REQUESTED

Certification Level Requested

FAC-C Level I

FAC-C Level II

FAC-C Level III

PART C – PREVIOUSLY HELD CERTIFICATION FROM

Name of Agency:

Date Certification Issued:

(Attach a copy of the certification including confirmation of last 80 CLPs)

PART D – CERTIFICATION ANALYSIS

Applicable Standard

How Met & Verified

Experience

(SF-171, SF 50s, previous certification resume OF 612, etc.)

Education (Major)

(Copy of Degree, Previous certification, etc.)

24 Sem. Hrs of Bus.

(Degree, College transcripts if other than a Business Degree, previous certification SF 171, OF 612)

Training

(Course certificates and transcripts for documenting FAC-C Level requested only)

Mandatory training documented in ACMIS?

Waiver (If applicable attach copy of waiver)

PART E – SIGNATURES

Applicant's signature _____ Date: _____

Supervisor or requesting official's signature _____ Date: _____

Print Name _____

Agency FAC-C approving official's signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name _____

PART F - USDA CERTIFICATION DECISION *(for Departmental use only)*

Recommend Certification Approval Disapproval

_____ Date: _____
USDA Acquisition Career Manager or other authorized official

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FAC-C PROGRAM

FILL IN APPLICATION SHEET AS FOLLOWS:

PART A - EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

PART B - CERTIFICATION REQUESTED

Place an "X" in box next to level you are requesting.

PART C – PREVIOUSLY HELD CERTIFICATION FROM ANOTHER FEDERAL AGENCY

Employees holding certifications from other Federal agencies are not required to complete Part C. To verify the possession of a current certification, applicants shall provide evidence for their last continuous learning period.

PART D - CERTIFICATION ANALYSIS

Check each applicable box and describe the type of documentation you are providing as confirmation:

Experience - Attach documents detailing contracting experience. Acceptable documentation includes SF-50s (showing beginning and ending dates served in qualifying positions), SF-171/OF617, or a resume with a description of the contracting work performed.

Education - Attach a copy of degree. Specify if it is a business degree.

24 Semester Hours of Business - College transcript if providing other than a Business Degree to verify Education above (List of College Courses and Certificate of Scholastic Achievement) or an SF-171/OF-617 showing college courses completed.

Training - Attach verification of successful completion of FAC-C training. Acceptable documentation includes copies of course certificates, an official FAI or ACMIS training transcript, fulfillment of mandatory training record, or other acceptable documentation as noted by OPPM/PPD. Provide mandatory course numbers for all mandatory and equivalent, fulfillment, or predecessor courses.

Waiver: Attach a copy of any waivers granted (i.e. education, 24 business hours, procurement training, or experience).

PART E - SIGNATURES

Three signatures are required. Applicant shall sign on line one. Your supervisor or other authorized official shall sign Part E, line two. The agency approving official, which is generally the ACM or other official as designated by the contracting activity, shall approve the request by signing on line three. The Agency ACM shall review all certification requests prior to approval of the FAC-C request and submission to the Department. Applicants shall submit their application packages to the office designated by the contracting activity.

PART F – USDA CERTIFICATION DECISION

The USDA ACM will review each FAC-C application and recommend SPE approval/disapproval of the FAC-C request.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION TO OPPM/PPD

The FAC-C package must contain the following:

1. Signed FAC-C Application (Education and training verification not required by OPPM)
2. FAC-C Checklist (Appendix L or equivalent format with course name and number)

Mail package to USDA/OPPM/PPD, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Stop 9303, Washington, DC 20250.

FOR QUESTIONS, Contact your Agency ACM or the USDA's ACM at linda.persons@usda.gov.

APPENDIX L

APPENDIX L

FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATION IN CONTRACTING CHECKLIST

Level I

1. EDUCATION

- a. Baccalaureate degree OR
- b. At least 24 semester hours among accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management

2. EXPERIENCE

- a. 1 year of contracting experience

3. TRAINING

- a. CON 100 Shaping Smart Business Arrangements
- b. CON 110 Mission Support Planning
- c. CON 111 Mission Planning Execution
- d. CON 112 Mission Performance Assessment
- e. CON 120 Mission Focused Contracting
- f. 1 Elective

Level II

1. EDUCATION

- a. Baccalaureate degree OR
- b. At least 24 semester hours among accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management
- c. (Desired) Graduate studies in business administration or procurement

2. EXPERIENCE

- d. 2 years of contracting experience
- e. (Desired) An additional 2 years of contracting experience

3. TRAINING

- f. CON 202 Intermediate Contracting
- g. CON 204 Intermediate Contract Pricing
- h. CON 210 Government Contract Law
- i. 2 Electives

Level III

1. EDUCATION

- a. Baccalaureate degree AND
- b. At least 24 semester hours among accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management
- c. (Desired) Master's degree in business administration or procurement

2. EXPERIENCE

- a. 4 years of contracting experience
- b. (Desired) An additional 4 years of contracting experience

3. TRAINING

- a. CON 353 Advanced Business Solutions for Mission Support
- b. 2 Electives
- c. (Desired) 2 weeks of management and leadership training

* Electives must be at least 16 CLPs

The NCMA Certified Federal Contracts Manager (CFCM) certification is equivalent to CON 110 (Mission Support Planning) and CON 112 (Mission Performance Assessment) and also satisfies the experience requirement for FAC-C Level I. The NCMA Certified Professional Contracts Manager (CPCM) certification is equivalent to CON 202 (Intermediate Contracting) and CON 210 (Contract Law) and satisfies the experience requirement for FAC-CC Level II.



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20503

OFFICE OF FEDERAL
PROCUREMENT POLICY

April 25, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF ACQUISITION OFFICERS

FROM: Paul A. Denett
Administrator

SUBJECT: The Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers

Well-trained and experienced program and project managers are critical to the acquisition process and the successful accomplishment of mission goals. A strong partnership between program and project managers and contracting professionals requires a common understanding of how to meet the government's needs through acquisitions that deliver quality goods and services in an effective and efficient manner. This memorandum establishes a structured development program for program and project managers that will improve this partnership and our collective stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) led an interagency working group to develop common, essential competencies for the program and project management community. The attached Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) reflects these recommendations and applies to all executive agencies, except those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act. The certification shall be accepted by, at minimum, all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets the core training and experience requirements.

The certification is required for program and project managers that are assigned to major acquisitions as defined in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11, Part 7, exhibit 300, *Planning, Budgeting, Acquisition, and Management of Capital Assets*. The attached provides more details on transition time, waivers, and the responsibilities of the Chief Acquisition Officer in implementing the policy. Program and project managers assigned to information technology (IT) investments must also meet the technical requirements of the Federal IT Project Manager Guidance Matrix.

The program will be administered by each civilian agency, and FAI will conduct periodic reviews to ensure that the FAC-P/PM program is being managed consistently. Additionally, FAI is mapping the program and project management competencies, which are included in the attachment, to learning objectives that will be used to assess current training or develop new training to meet these requirements. Private vendors, the Defense Acquisition University, and other government agencies offer a variety of online and classroom courses that address many of

these competencies. FAI plans to offer additional training in the first quarter of FY 2008.

A well-trained acquisition workforce is necessary to ensure that agencies accomplish their mission goals effectively and responsibly. Skilled program and project managers are critical in developing accurate government requirements, defining measurable performance standards, and managing contractor activities to ensure that intended outcomes are achieved.

If you have questions regarding the implementation of the program, please call Lesley Field on the OFPP staff at (202) 395-7579, or Karen Pica, Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute, at (703) 805-2333.

Attachment

cc: Chief Information Officers
Chief Human Capital Officers
Senior Procurement Executives

Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM)

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of the Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) is to establish general training and experience requirements for program and project managers in civilian agencies. The FAC-P/PM focuses on essential competencies needed for program and project managers; the program does not include functional or technical competencies, such as those for information technology, or agency-specific competencies.
2. **Authority.** Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Policy Letter 05-01, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce*, established a requirement for federal acquisition certification programs. The Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) is issued pursuant to 41 U.S.C. 401, et seq and OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, paragraph 8(c).
3. **Background.** The Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003, P.L. 108-136, expanded the definition of acquisition to include functions performed by program and project managers, such as requirements development, performance management, and technical direction. OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 built upon this broader definition of acquisition workforce and required FAI to make recommendations for a program and project management certification program. FAI partnered with twenty federal agencies to recommend the competencies and framework for this program. A report on the working group's efforts is available at <http://www.fai.gov/policies/sturep.asp>.
4. **Applicability.** This policy applies to all executive agencies, except those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA, 10 U.S.C. §§ 1741-46). The broader definition of the acquisition function, in accordance with the Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003 (SARA, P.L. 108-136) and further defined by OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, includes program and project management. The similarities and distinctions between program and project management are discussed in FAC-P/PM Appendix 4. The certification shall be accepted by, at a minimum, all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets core training and experience requirements for general program and project management.

The Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO), in consultation with appropriate agency officials, is responsible for developing workforce policies that apply the FAC-P/PM requirements as necessary to ensure agency program and project managers have essential program and project management competencies. The competency-based model serves as a foundation allowing agencies to build on these requirements or modify existing programs. Agencies may require additional management and technical competencies for particular functional areas, agency programs, or program assignments. The CAO may give implementation authority to other functional managers, such as the Chief Information Officer (CIO) or Chief Financial Officer (CFO), to ensure the FAC-P/PM requirements are implemented appropriately.

The FAC-P/PM is not mandatory for all program and project managers; however, at a minimum, program and project managers assigned to programs considered major acquisitions must be senior-level certified unless a waiver is granted by the appropriate agency official (see paragraph

below). The target completion date for this certification is one year from the date of assignment to the program or project. Major acquisitions are defined in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-11, Part 7, exhibit 300, *Planning, Budgeting, Acquisition, and Management of Capital Assets*. OMB may work with an agency to declare other investments as major investments, and agencies should consult with the appropriate agency personnel about what investments to consider major.

The CAO, or designated functional manager, may waive all or part of the FAC-P/PM requirements in writing, on a case-by-case basis, if granting the waiver is in the best interest of the agency. This authority shall be used only when necessary, the written justification shall include reasons for and conditions of the waiver, and agency Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) must maintain all supporting documentation to confirm information entered into the Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS – see paragraph 8) and for program quality assurance. Waivers are not needed for the first year following assignment to a major acquisition, in accordance with the paragraph above. However, waivers for additional time beyond that year shall be granted for no more than an additional year. If time is necessary beyond this, the CAO must concur with any extensions.

Program and project managers assigned to information technology (IT) investments must also meet the requirements of the Federal IT Project Manager Guidance Matrix found (see www.cio.gov/documents/Federal%20IT%20PM%20Guidance%20Matrix2.ppt). This matrix references additional Office of Personnel Management guidance for IT project managers (see www.opm.gov/fedclass/cg03-0001.pdf). The FAC-P/PM generally mirrors the program and project management competencies and experience standards found in the matrix. However, the FAC-P/PM does not include the technical standards found in the IT PM guidance. Individuals certified under the FAC-P/PM program can be considered to meet the general PM competencies and suggested experience standards of the IT PM qualification guidance for purposes of identifying qualified project managers, but must also meet the technical standards to satisfy fully the IT PM requirements.

When identifying individuals to be certified under this program and other applicability requirements, the CAO shall review the guidance provided in OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 and obtain concurrence from the CIOs, CFOs, Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs), or others as appropriate. At a minimum, agencies should consider applying the FAC-P/PM requirements to the following:

1. individuals with significant involvement in one or more phases of the acquisition investment process (initiation, conceptualization/design, development, implementation, modification, maintenance, evaluation, disposal),
2. managers with authority and responsibility for overseeing multiple phases of the acquisition investment process,
3. individuals with responsibility for leading cross-agency or acquisition investment programs for a major portion or all of the investment life-cycle,
4. individuals responsible for leading, coordinating, managing integrated project teams for acquisition investments,
5. individuals participating on an integrated project team or a phase of the investment lifecycle with aspirations for career development as a program or project manager

APPENDIX M

The certification is not intended to confer qualification for assignment as a program or project manager within an agency, as the assignment of personnel is an agency-specific function, but provides a structured approach to developing program and project managers.

5. Certification Program Oversight and Administration. The FAI Board of Directors, in consultation with FAI, the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Council (IACMC), the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC), the CIOC Council IT Workforce Committee, and other organizations as appropriate, shall provide general program oversight and shall recommend program changes to the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy to ensure the program reflects the needs of all civilian agencies. Changes to the program may be communicated formally through the CAOC and other councils or through other means depending on the significance of the change. FAI shall maintain the most current version of the FAC-P/PM on www.fai.gov.

FAI will administer the program through issuance of guidance and dissemination of information, principally through its Web site. Upon agency request, FAI will review existing agency programs against the requirements contained in this document to identify the extent to which an agency's certification program meets the FAC-P/PM guidelines. In addition, FAI will periodically review agencies' implementation of this guidance to ensure the program remains rigorous and the standards for certification for training, experience and continuous learning are consistently applied by all civilian agencies.

Essential FAI responsibilities for program administration are included below:

- develop and review competencies and training standards
- review agency programs as needed
- manage and analyze workforce information
- develop training blueprints to be used by agencies, vendors, or other organizations in assessing existing courses against these standards or developing new courses to satisfy the requirements of the FAC-P/PM

The certification process, including assessment of applications, will be managed by each agency. The agency Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) appointed by the CAO under Policy Letter 05-01, or designee, is responsible for administering the agency certification program, in accordance with this guidance and any subsequent guidance provided by OFPP or FAI. Authority for overseeing the agency FAC-P/PM program, resolving disputes, and granting certifications will be at the CAO or designee level. The CAO may delegate, in writing, certain functional responsibilities as needed to ensure effective and efficient management of this program within an agency.

Essential agency responsibilities for program administration are included below:

- identify and assess the program and project management acquisition workforce
- develop this workforce in accordance with the standards
- issue FAC-P/PMs
- monitor continuous learning achievement

6. General Information on Essential Competencies and the FAC-P/PM, Requirements for Training, Experience, and Continuous Learning.

a. General – Unlike the Federal Acquisition in Contracting (FAC-C) program, which prescribes a specific curriculum, the FAC-P/PM describes core, minimum competencies that are

considered essential for successful program and project management. Certification under the FAC-P/PM is based on attaining these competencies and having a certain number of years of experience associated with each of three levels. Additionally, 80 hours of continuous learning is required every two years to ensure currency. The competencies and experience are cumulative across levels. While a specific curriculum is not articulated, training plans are available at FAC-P/PM Appendix 1 that will help agencies and individuals determine training and development needs.

An applicant can satisfy the competency requirements through successful completion of suggested training, completion of comparable education or certification programs, or demonstration of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Additional guidance can be found at www.fai.gov or through your agency Acquisition Career Manager.

FAI has developed a Program/Project Manager training blueprint that associates the competencies in FAC-P/PM Appendix 2 with learning outcomes. This document is located at www.fai.gov. The blueprint can be used to compare existing or planned training and/or certification programs to the FAC-P/PM. The blueprint can also be used by individuals to identify areas where training has already been completed and where training should be targeted to meet FAC-P/PM requirements.

b. Competencies (see FAC-P/PM Appendix 2 for complete list) – The establishment of core competencies ensures the program and project management community develops common, basic skills. The competencies in FAC-P/PM Appendix 2 were developed by an interagency working group using a competency confirmation process, which involved identifying tasks, conducting focus groups, rating tasks, and analyzing results. Focus group subject matter experts were drawn from various civilian and defense agencies, including the Office of Personnel Management, and the competencies associated with this certification program were determined by this group to be essential competencies for program and project management. (See paragraph 3 for additional details.)

The objective of the FAC-P/PM is to align a base of essential competencies across the federal government's acquisition workforce. Some departments will have additional competencies associated with essential mission areas that overlay these common elements.

The current competencies for program and project managers will be maintained by FAI at the FAI Web site, www.fai.gov. These essential competencies will be updated periodically, expanded, or otherwise modified to meet current and future acquisition workforce requirements and to reflect emerging trends in the government's acquisition practices. FAI, DoD, and OPM will work collaboratively to establish a competency management process to ensure the base core competencies remain relevant and current and are integrated into the curriculum, as appropriate.

c. Certification Levels -- FAC-P/PM will recognize three levels of certification— entry/apprentice, mid level/journeyman and senior/expert. A brief explanation of each follows. (To avoid confusion with established terms associated with levels of program

investment, the FAC-P/PM will not use I, II, or III to distinguish the levels.) A sample training plan for meeting these competencies is included in FAC-P/PM Appendix 2.

1) Entry Level – At this level, program and project managers should have, through training, experience, and other development activities:

- knowledge and skills to perform as a project team member
- ability to manage low risk and relatively simple projects or to manage more complex projects under direct supervision of a more experienced manager
- overall understanding of project management practices, including performance-based acquisition
- recognition of an agency’s requirements development processes
- ability to define and construct various project documents, under supervision
- understanding of and involvement in the definition, initiation, conceptualization or design of project requirements

Competencies and Proficiencies at Entry Level: See FAC-P/PM Appendix 2.

Experience at Entry Level: At least one year of project management experience within the last five years. Project management experience includes experience constructing a work breakdown structure, preparing project analysis documents, tailoring acquisition documents to ensure that quality, effective, efficient systems or products are delivered, analyzing and/or developing requirements, monitoring performance, assisting with quality assurance, and budget development.

Training: Training in program and project management at this level should be provided to develop the essential interpersonal and management competencies required of high-performing, successful program and project managers. See FAC-P/PM Appendix 1 for training plans that provide the necessary competencies at this level.

2) Mid-Level/Journeyman – At this level, program and project managers should have, through training, experience, and other development activities:

- knowledge and skills to manage projects or program segments of low to moderate risks with little or no supervision
- ability to apply management processes, including requirements development processes and performance-based acquisition principles, to support the agency’s mission to develop an acquisition program baseline from schedule requirements, plan technology developments and demonstrations and apply agency policy on interoperability

- ability to identify and track actions to initiate an acquisition program or project using cost/benefit analysis
- ability to understand and apply the process to prepare information for a baseline review, and can assist in development of Total Ownership Cost (TOC) estimates
- ability to manage projects as well as program segments and distinguish between program and project work

Competencies at Mid-Level/Journeyman: See FAC-P/PM Appendix 2

Experience at Mid-Level/Journeyman: At least two years of program or project management experience within the last five years that includes experience at the entry level as well as experience performing market research, developing documents for risk and opportunity management, developing and applying technical processes and technical management processes, performing or participating in source selection, preparing acquisition strategies, managing performance based service agreements, developing and managing a project budget, writing a business case, and strategic planning.

Training: It is highly recommended that interactive training in these areas be designed to develop the essential interpersonal and management competencies required of high-performing, successful program and project managers such as team building, influencing/negotiating, decisiveness, partnering, and managing diverse workforce. See FAC-P/PM Appendix 1 for training plans that provide the necessary competencies at this level.

3) Senior/Expert Level – At this level, program and project managers should have, through training, experience, and other development activities:

- knowledge and skills to manage and evaluate moderate to high-risk programs or projects that require significant acquisition investment and agency knowledge and experience
- ability to manage and evaluate a program and create an environment for program success
- ability to manage and evaluate the requirements development process, overseeing junior level team members in creation, development, and implementation
- expert ability to use, manage, and evaluate management processes, including performance-based management techniques
- expert ability to manage and evaluate the use of earned value management as it relates to acquisition investments

Competencies at Senior/Expert Level: See FAC-P/PM Appendix 2

Experience at Senior/Expert Level: At least five years of program and project management experience at the federal level, including managing and evaluating agency acquisition investment performance, developing and managing a program budget, building and presenting a successful business case, reporting program results,

APPENDIX M

strategic planning, and high-level communication with internal and external stakeholders.

Training: It is highly recommended that interactive training in these areas be designed to develop the essential interpersonal and management competencies required of high-performing, successful program and project managers such as strategic thinking, vision, and external awareness. See FAC-P/PM Appendix 1 for training plans that provide the necessary competencies at this level.

d. Continuous Learning – To maintain a FAC-P/PM, certified professionals are required to earn 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency training every two years beginning the first fiscal year following the effective date of this memorandum. CLPs begin to accumulate on the date the individual is certified. For further information on CLPs, refer to FAC-P/PM Appendix 3. Individuals are responsible for maintaining continuous learning records and agency ACMs, or their designees, will monitor the continuous learning requirements to ensure certifications remain active.

Continuous learning activities related to program and project management activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- training activities, such as teaching, self-directed study, mentoring
- courses completed to achieve certification at the next higher level
- professional activities, such as attending/speaking/presenting at professional seminars/symposia/conferences, publishing and attending workshops
- educational activities, such as formal training, and formal academic programs
- experience such as developmental or rotation assignments

FAI will provide additional guidance as needed on its Web site, www.fai.gov.

e. Certification by a recognized organization: Civilian agencies will follow the determinations made by FAI, which will consider the determinations made by DoD, as to which certifications by organizations outside the federal government are eligible for full or partial consideration under the FAC-P/PM. Information will be available at www.fai.gov.

8. Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS). For all civilian agencies, ACMIS will be the official system of records for the FAC-P/PM program and will include waiver information, as necessary (see paragraph 4). Agencies and individuals are responsible for maintaining supporting certification documentation for quality assurance purposes. FAI is responsible for managing ACMIS and will issue guidance, as necessary, to support ACMIS implementation. Agencies are encouraged to begin entering or migrating data on designated program and project managers as soon as practicable but no later than July 1, 2007 or as otherwise directed. Please refer to www.fai.gov for the most up-to-date information.

FAC-P/PM Appendices

- 1 Training Plans for the FAC-P/PM
- 2 Competencies and Proficiencies at Each FAC-P/PM Certification level
- 3 Guidance on Meeting the Requirements for Continuous Learning Points

4 Relationship Between Program Management and Project Management

FAC-P/PM APPENDIX 1 – Training Plans for the FAC-P/PM

Entry/Apprentice Level Training

Between 24-40 hours of coursework in basic acquisition that cover the competencies contained in FAC-P/PM Appendix 1 and enable the individual to:

- Explain the requirements development process;
- Define concept selection;
- Recognize technology development process;
- Perform a business strategy for market research (FAR Parts 10 and 12) to include socio-economic considerations.

Between 24-40 hours of coursework in basic project management that enable the individual to:

- Prepare project components to the task level in preparation for developing the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)
- Define requirements in terms of performance-based outcomes, where appropriate;
- Recognize role of an estimate in Total Ownership Cost (TOC)/Life Cycle Cost process;
- Recognize the risk and opportunity management process;
- Recognize systems life cycle management concepts used for information systems;
- Recognize the need for a comprehensive Test and Evaluation (T&E) program;
- Recognize the need to implement alternative logistics support.

Between 16-24 hours of coursework in employing effective leadership and interpersonal skills to include:

- Effective oral and written communications;
- Understanding of the functions of membership in a working group or project oriented team;
- Customer service;
- Conflict management;
- Accountability.

Between 24-40 hours of coursework that is government-specific and prepares the individual to:

- Become aware of a process by which the efforts of all acquisition personnel are integrated through a comprehensive plan;
- Recognize a need for the Project/Program Manager to participate in pre-award actions required by acquisition planning (FAR Part 7.1);
- Recognize the need for a comprehensive program specification and requirements statement that fully and correctly define the program;
- Recognize the need to formulate a source selection plan that allows for best value selection from competitive solicitations;
- Recognize the need to support contract administrative actions;
- Recognize the need for establishment of a negotiated baseline of performance;
- Recognize the need to oversee application of Total Life Cycle Systems Management (TLCSM);

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- Discuss Management's Responsibility for Internal Control (OMB Circular A-123) and Capital Asset Planning (OMB exhibit 300).

Between 24-40 hours in Earned Value Management (EVM) and cost estimates that will prepare the individual to:

- Recognize EVM policies, methodologies, and software for performance measurement of programs;
 - Identify management techniques;
 - Recognize the need for an Integrated Baseline Review process;
 - Recognize allocation of funds within appropriation categories and use of funds from each appropriation;
 - Identify the information system for financial management reporting;
 - Be knowledgeable of a cost estimating processes, methods, techniques, analytical principles, data, confidence bands, specialized costing, application of OMB A-94, *Guidelines and Discount Rates for Benefit-Cost Analysis of Federal Programs*, and management applications.
-

Mid Level/Journeyman Training

Between 24-40 hours of coursework in intermediate project management that enables an individual to:

- Develop and document an integrated master schedule;
- Assist in the development of an estimate of Total Ownership Cost (TOC);
- Clearly define requirements to meet needs including, where appropriate, performance-based outcomes and setting performance standards;
- Formulate the key features of a risk/opportunity management process;
- Establish a requirements development process that provides traceability back to user-defined capabilities;
- Formulate the key features of the T&E program, including modeling and simulation;
- Develop a life-cycle plan for delivering, maintaining, and retiring a product that includes supply chain considerations.

Between 16-24 hours of coursework in employing correct and effective leadership and interpersonal skills to include:

- Partnering;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Strategic Thinking;
- Team Building/IPT;
- Conflict Management;
- Creativity/Innovation;
- Leveraging Diversity.

Between 24-40 hours of coursework that is government-specific and prepares the individual to:

- Develop an overall strategy for managing the acquisition, coordination, and development of the acquisition strategy to include socioeconomic considerations;

- Identify key features in terms of pre-award actions required by acquisition planning (FAR Subpart 7.1);
- Formulate the key features of a comprehensive program specification and requirements statement;
- Identify and develop source selection criteria, including risk analysis method (FAR Part 15.3);
- Identify and track contract performance and administrative actions;
- Conduct financial planning and execution reviews;
- Build program and project plans in accordance with Management's Responsibility for Internal Control (OMB Circular A-123) and Capital Asset Planning (OMB exhibit 300).
- Use strategic sourcing when building and finalizing requirements across the program.

Between 24-40 hours in EVM and cost estimates that will prepare the individual to:

- Identify the information system for financial management reporting;
- Conduct EVM analysis and implementing changes based on analysis;
- Analyze resource needs for management, including planning for an EVM program linked to risk;
- Apply business process re-engineering methods for continuous improvement.

Senior/Expert Level Training

Between 24-40 hours of learning in advanced acquisition management that prepares the individual to:

- Manage a departmental/agency effort;
- Direct the development of concepts, requirements, and project documents related to the program;
- Manage the preparation of a program's acquisition strategy;
- Maximize the use of performance-based acquisition principles;
- Manage team activities in appropriate market research and acquisition of commercial items in accordance with FAR Parts 10 and 12;
- Direct requirements baselining, change processes, and resourcing.

Between 24-40 hours of instruction in advanced program management to provide skills in:

- Coordinating an integrated master plan for life-cycle management and support ;
- Interpreting and overseeing application of department/agency financial policies and directives as it relates to program and resource management;
- Directing and monitoring risk management processes and making adjustments as necessary;
- Overseeing a comprehensive test and evaluation program;
- Examining and implementing innovative, alternative logistics support practices;
- Ensuring adequate staffing and resources across the program lifecycle.

Between 16-24 hours of coursework in employing correct and effective leadership and interpersonal skills to include:

- Delivering effective presentations to senior level audiences through practice and instruction;

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- Building and directing high-powered teams;
- Creating a culture of development and accountability;
- Communicating a compelling vision that generates excitement, enthusiasm, and commitment among team members.

Between 24-40 hours of coursework that is government-specific and prepares the individual to:

- Work with a warranted contracting officer and develop the overall strategy for managing the acquisition;
- Participate in pre-award actions required by acquisition planning (FAR Part 7.1)
- Apply appropriate principles of OMB Circular A-123, *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control*;
- Direct completion of successful Capital Asset Plan (OMB exhibit 300);
- Employ strategic planning and resource management in the federal environment (budget cycle, paperwork, and congressional considerations);
- Apply principles of contract and fiscal laws and regulations (anti-deficiency, procurement integrity, and specific purpose statues) as they pertain to development of program funding, contracts, and strategies;
- Manage program in accordance with the agency's and OMB's planning, programming, and budgeting process, as appropriate.

Between 24-40 hours in EVM and cost estimates that will prepare the individual to:

- Direct and manage EVM implementation across the program spectrum;
- Use advance project management skills with extensive EVM capabilities.

FAC-P/PM APPENDIX 2 Essential Competencies and Proficiencies for each Certification Level
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This FAC-P/PM Appendix provides the essential competencies and levels of proficiency for the FAC-P/PM. As an individual gains experience, the proficiency level evolves from recognition and awareness of concepts at the entry level to the management and evaluation of their application at the senior level. Additionally, the individual is expected to obtain increasingly more complex leadership competencies.

Entry/Apprentice Level
<p>Requirements Development and Management Processes – Recognition of government-wide and agency-specific investment management requirements, acquisition policies, and program management strategies that support assigned missions and functions; understanding of how to manage risk; understanding of the many factors that influence cost, schedule, and performance; attention to lessons learned; understanding of metrics needed to manage programs and projects that deliver quality, affordable, supportable, and effective systems/products. Specifically includes recognition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requirements Development Process - Concept Selection Process - Technology Development Process - Core Management Skills and Processes - Total Ownership Cost (OMB Circular A-94) - Risk and Opportunity Management - Market Research (including socio-economic considerations) - Communications Management - Working Groups and Teams
<p>Systems Engineering – Recognition of the scientific, management, engineering, and technical skills used in the performance of systems planning, research and development, with an emphasis on performing and managing a technical process.</p>
<p>Test and Evaluation (T&E) – Recognition of efficient and cost effective methods for planning, monitoring, conducting, and evaluating tests of prototype, new, or modified systems equipment or materiel, including the need to develop a thorough T&E strategy to validate system performance through measurable methods that relate directly to requirements and to develop metrics that demonstrate system success or failure.</p>
<p>Life Cycle Logistics (LCL) – Recognition of performance-based logistic efforts that optimize total system lifecycle availability, supportability, and reliability/maintainability while minimizing cost and logistic footprint, and interoperability.</p>
<p>Contracting – Recognition of the supervision, leadership and management processes/procedures involving the acquisition of supplies and services, construction, research and development; acquisition planning to include performance-based considerations; cost and price analysis; solicitation and selection of sources; preparation, negotiation, and award of contracts; all phases of contract administration; termination options and processes for closeout of contracts; legislation, policies, regulations, and methods used in contracting, and business and industry practices, with particular emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in determination of contract approach - Development of performance-based solutions - Preparation of requirements and supporting documentation

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation in source selection - Management of contractor performance and contract administration
<p>Business, Cost Estimating and Financial Management – Recognition of the forms of cost estimating, cost analysis, reconciliation of cost estimates, financial planning, formulating financial programs and budgets, budget analysis/execution, benefit-cost analysis, Earned Value Management (EVM) in accordance with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Electronics Industries Alliance (EIA) Standard for EVM Systems #748-A, and other methods of performance measurement.</p>
<p>Leadership/Professional – These are the skills, knowledge, abilities and traits acquired through experience, training and education within government and the private sector and are cumulative, leading to skilled supervision and seasoned leadership. These competencies may appear in successive levels to emphasize the process of evolving, developing, and maturing leadership skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oral Communications - Problem Solving - Interpersonal Skills - Accountability - Written Communication - Flexibility - Conflict Management - Resilience - Customer Service

Mid-Level/Journeyman
<p>Management Processes – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize and <u>apply</u> the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.</p>
<p>Systems Engineering – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize <u>and</u> apply the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.</p>
<p>Test and Evaluation (T&E) -- Individuals at this level should be able to recognize <u>and</u> apply the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.</p>
<p>Life Cycle Logistics (LCL) – Individuals at this level able to recognize <u>and</u> apply the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.</p>
<p>Contracting – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize <u>and</u> apply the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.</p>
<p>Business, Cost Estimating & Financial Mgmt – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize <u>and</u> apply the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.</p>
<p>Leadership/Professional – These competencies, in addition to those listed at entry-level, comprise a foundation for effective mid-level program/project manager-related responsibilities. These competencies may appear in successive levels to emphasize the process of evolving, developing, and maturing leadership skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influencing/Negotiating - Team Building/IPT - Political Savvy - Decisiveness - External Awareness - Entrepreneurship - Leveraging Diversity - Partnering - Conflict Management - Strategic Thinking - Creativity/Innovation - Developing Others

Senior/Expert Level
Management Processes – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize, apply, <u>and</u> manage and evaluate the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.
Systems Engineering – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize, apply, <u>and</u> manage and evaluate the application of the scientific, management, engineering, and technical skills used in the performance of systems planning, research and development.
Test and Evaluation (T&E) – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize, apply, <u>and</u> manage and evaluate the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.
Life Cycle Logistics (LCL) – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize, apply, <u>and</u> manage and evaluate the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.
Contracting – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize, apply, <u>and</u> manage and evaluate the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.
Business, Cost Estimating & Financial Mgmt – Individuals at this level should be able to recognize, apply, <u>and</u> manage and evaluate the concepts presented at the entry/apprentice level.
Leadership/Professional -- These are the skills, knowledge, abilities and traits acquired through experience, training and education within government and the private sector and are cumulative, leading to skilled supervision and seasoned leadership. These competencies may appear in successive levels to emphasize the process of evolving, developing, and maturing leadership skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vision - Strategic Thinking - External Awareness - Entrepreneurship

FAC-P/PM APPENDIX 3 Guidance on Meeting the Requirements for Continuous Learning Points (CLP)

These guidelines reflect best-in-practice recommendations for continuous learning. Agencies retain flexibility and supervisors remain responsible for working with program and project managers to identify those activities and opportunities of greatest benefit to the professional development of an individual. The training, professional activities, education and experience that are used to meet the CLP requirements must be job related.

A. Training

- 1) Completing awareness training. Periodically agencies conduct briefing sessions to acquaint the workforce with new or changed policy. Generally, no testing or assessment of knowledge gained is required.
- 2) Completing learning modules and training courses. These may be formal or informal offerings from a recognized training organization, including in-house training courses/sessions, which include some form of testing/assessment for knowledge gained.
- 3) Performing Self-Directed Study. An individual can keep current or enhance his or her capabilities through a self-directed study program agreed to by the supervisor.
- 4) Teaching. Employees are encouraged to share their knowledge and insights with others through teaching of courses or learning modules.
- 5) Mentoring. Helping others to learn and become more productive workers or managers benefits the agency and the individuals involved.

B. Professional Activities

- 1) Participating in Organization Management. Membership alone in a professional organization will not be considered as fulfilling continuous learning requirements, but participation in the organization leadership will. This includes holding elected/appointed positions, committee leadership roles, or running an activity for an organization that one is permitted to join under current ethics law and regulation. The employee and supervisor must first ensure that participating in the management of an organization is allowed by the agency.
- 2) Attending/Speaking/Presenting at Professional Seminars/Symposia/Conferences. Employees can receive points for attending professional seminars or conferences that are job related. However, the supervisor needs to determine that the individual learned something meaningful from the experience. Because significant effort is involved in preparing and delivering presentations, credit should be given for each hour invested in the preparation and presentation.
- 3) Publishing. Writing articles related to acquisition for publication generally meets the criteria for continuous learning. Points will be awarded only in the year published. Compliance with agency publication policy is required.

4) Participating in Workshops. Points should be awarded for workshops with planned learning outcomes.

C. Education

1) Formal training. Supervisors should use Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as a guide for assigning points for formal training programs that award CEUs. The CEUs can be converted to points at 10 CLP points per CEU.

2) Formal academic programs. For formal academic programs offered by educational institutions, each semester hour is equal to one CEU. A three-hour credit course would be worth three CEUs and 30 CLP points, assuming that it is applicable to the acquisition function.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES	RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF HOURS
Active Association Membership (in relevant subject area or program/project management association)	5 hours for an active membership year OR 1 hour for each 60 minutes of activity attended during the year
Publication of P/PM/acquisition-related articles, technical papers, etc.	20 hours for articles 25 for technical paper
Formal rotational assignments	40 hours per assignment
Conference presentations, training or seminar delivery	2 hours for 60 minutes of first-time presentation (1 for presentation, 1 for preparation, .5 credit for repeat delivery of same material)
Team leadership activities, participation on project teams for new products/activities	1 hour for every 60 minutes of participation
Formal education	1 hour for each hour of instruction up to 36 hours for a 3 credit course or American Council on Education (ACE) recommendation
Professional examination, license, or certification	40 hours in the year obtained
1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	10 hours
1 Continuous Learning Point (CLP), Professional Development Unit (PDU), or Professional Development Hour (PDH)	1 hour

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1 credit hour (college course or ACE recommendation)	12 hours
Conference attendance	1 hour for each 50 minute presentation attended

Note - All activities may earn points only in the year accomplished, awarded or published.

D. Experience

Experience includes on-the-job experiential assignments and intra- or inter-organizational rotational career-broadening and developmental experiences. While supervisors and employees must use discretion in arriving at a reasonable point value to be awarded for rotational and developmental assignments, a sliding scale is recommended. Suggested points for such assignments are in the table below.

The assumption is that longer assignments are more beneficial than shorter assignments. The supervisor may feel that an individual may deserve more or less than the values shown. In determining the points for a rotational/developmental assignment, the supervisor should consider both the long-term benefit to the agency and the immediate benefit to the supervisor’s organization and the individual. For example, a second rotational assignment of the same sort would be less valuable than a different type of rotational assignment.

When experience or other activities are to be used to earn CLPs, certain principles should be followed. Supervisors and employees should pre-define, as closely as possible, the tasks to be accomplished, expected outcomes, and the learning opportunities. If it is an assignment, the individual should be mentored during the assignment. Accomplishment of a product, such as a briefing, a project design, a report, or other work product that shows the learning attained, is desirable. Sharing the knowledge and experience gained and the product with others in the organization is encouraged.

CREDITABLE ACTIVITIES	POINT CREDIT
Experience:	
On-the-Job Experiential Assignments	Maximum of 20 points per year
Integrated Product Team (IPT)/ Special Project Leader	Maximum of 15 points per year
IPT/Special Project Member	Maximum of 10 points per years
Mentor	Maximum of 5 points per year
Assignment Length (Rotational Assignments or Training with Industry):	Recommended Points:
12 Months	80
9 Months	60
6 Months	40
3 Months	15
2 Months	10
1 Month	5

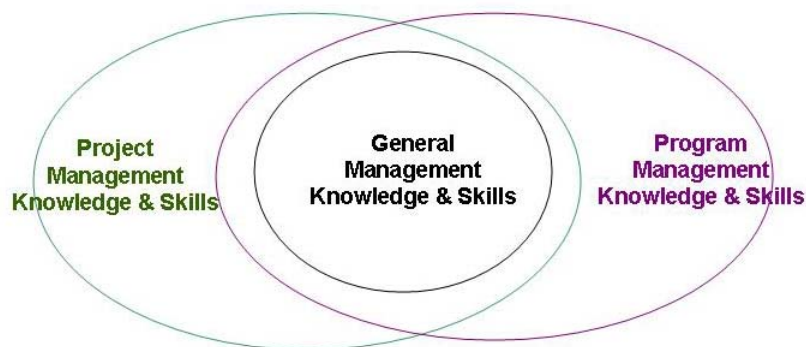
FAC-P/PM APPENDIX 4 Relationship Between Program Management and Project Management

The relationship between program and project is interdependent, not discrete, and cumulative. Entry level project managers gain experience leading teams, building technical and leadership skills that continue to mature as the nature of assignments becomes more complex. The project manager builds skills and expertise in project management throughout his/her career. Instead of a dividing line between program and project, there is generally an overlap during mid-level assignments.

The FAC-P/PM includes both program and project management within a single certification rather than two separate tracks. These program guidelines are built to reflect both the interdependent nature of program and project management as well as the development needs of a program and project manager. The definitions below shape the discussion.

- **Project:** a specific investment having defined goals, objectives, requirements, lifecycle cost, a beginning and an end that delivers a specific product, service or result.
- **Program:** a group of related work efforts, including projects, managed in a coordinated way. Programs usually include elements of ongoing work.
- **Program Management and Project Management:** as appropriate, these specific definitions are the responsibility of the respective agency.

This is pictorially represented below:



Program management competencies are built into the project management foundation. Some of the core project management competencies are a subset of program management competencies. As project managers develop their project management competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills and abilities), they acquire the important program perspectives. The ability to use sound judgment in both project and program management is critical.

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OFFICE OF FEDERAL ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT
PROCUREMENT POLICY

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

November 26, 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF ACQUISITION OFFICERS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul A. Denett".

FROM: Paul A. Denett
Administrator

SUBJECT: The Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer
Technical Representatives

Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs) perform critical acquisition and technical functions, and Contracting Officers rely on them to ensure that contracts are managed properly to meet mission needs. This memorandum establishes a structured training program for COTRs and other individuals performing these functions, including Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs), that standardizes competencies and training across civilian agencies and improves our collective stewardship of taxpayer dollars. The attached Federal Acquisition Certification for COTRs (FAC-COTR) reflects recommendations from an interagency working group led by the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) and applies to all executive agencies, except those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act.

All COTRs appointed to a contract after the effective date of this policy must be certified no later than six months from their date of appointment and must maintain their skills currency through continuous learning. COTRs who hold delegation letters on active contracts as of the effective date of this policy have generally taken agency-required training. To recognize this earlier training, current COTRs must review their training in accordance with agency policy, ensure that all essential competencies articulated in the attached have been obtained, and be certified no later than 12 months from the effective date of this policy. Any training required to obtain needed competencies can count toward the continuous learning requirement for current COTRs.

The Chief Acquisition Officer of each agency is responsible for the policies and programs necessary to implement this certification program. Upon agency request, FAI will review existing agency programs against the FAC-COTR requirements to facilitate implementation. FAI, the Defense Acquisition University, private vendors, and other government agencies offer a variety of online and classroom courses that address these competencies.

If you have questions regarding the implementation of the program, please call Lesley Field on the OFPP staff at (202) 395-7579, or Karen Pica, Director of the Federal Acquisition Institute, at (703) 805-2333.

Attachment

cc: Chief Information Officers
Chief Human Capital Officers
Senior Procurement Executives

**Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer
Technical Representatives (FAC-COTR)**

1. Purpose. The purpose of the Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (FAC-COTR) is to establish general training requirements for COTRs in civilian agencies. This certification program will promote development of essential, standard acquisition competencies across civilian agencies for COTRs. Under this program, COTRs are required to achieve certain competencies for certification and maintain their certification through continuous learning opportunities.

2. Authority. Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Policy Letter 05-01 established a requirement for federal acquisition certification programs. The FAC-COTR is issued pursuant to 41 U.S.C. 403, et seq and OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, paragraph 9.

3. Background. The quality and effectiveness of the federal acquisition process depend on the development of a capable and competent workforce. The Services Acquisition Reform Act of 2003, P.L. 108-136, expanded the definition of acquisition to include functions performed by COTRs, such as managing and measuring contract performance and providing technical direction. COTRs and Contracting Officer Representatives (CORs) are terms given to individuals who are authorized in writing by the Contracting Officer (CO) to perform prescribed administrative and/or technical functions. For the purposes of this policy, the term COTR includes CORs and other individuals performing these functions.

OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 built upon this broader definition of acquisition workforce and required the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) to develop and the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) to approve better standards for training and managing COTRs. An interagency working group chartered to develop the program and project management certification also recommended a separate certification for COTRs.

FAI published a report in 2003 on the competencies necessary for the COTR job function and the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board published a report in 2005 entitled “Contracting Officer Representatives: Managing the Government’s Technical Experts to Achieve Positive Contract Outcomes.” Both reports can be found on www.fai.gov. A common theme in these reports is the need to organize and support the COTR community to ensure that acquisition management is implemented effectively. Examples of their findings and recommendations are as follows:

- COTRs should be formally delegated authority to work on particular contracts
- COTRs should receive adequate training in contracting, their technical area, and general competencies at the right time and in the right way
- the COTR workforce should be strategically managed by identifying COTRs and tracking competencies and skills currency

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4. Applicability. The FAC-COTR program applies to all executive agencies, except those subject to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA, 10 U.S.C. §§ 1741-46). The certification shall be accepted by, at a minimum, all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets core training requirements to perform COTR functions,

All COTRs appointed to a contract after the effective date of this policy must be certified no later than six months from their date of appointment and must maintain their skills currency through continuous learning. COTRs who hold delegation letters on active contracts as of the effective date of this policy have generally taken agency-required training. To recognize this earlier training, current COTRs must review their training in accordance with agency policy, ensure that all essential competencies have been obtained, and be certified no later than 12 months from the effective date of this policy. Any training required to obtain needed competencies can count toward the continuous learning requirement for current COTRs.

The Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) may waive, for a period not to exceed 12 months, all or part of the FAC-COTR requirements in writing, on a case-by-case basis, if granting the waiver is in the best interest of the agency. This authority shall be used only when necessary, the written justification shall include reasons for and conditions of the waiver, and the agency's Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) must maintain all supporting documentation to confirm information entered into the Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS – see paragraph 7) and for program quality assurance.

5. Certification Program Oversight and Administration. The FAI Board of Directors, in consultation with FAI, the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Council (IACMC), the CAOC, and other organizations as appropriate, shall provide general program oversight and shall recommend program changes to the Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy to ensure the program reflects the needs of all civilian agencies. Changes to the program may be communicated formally through the CAOC or through other means depending on the significance of the change. FAI shall periodically revalidate the competencies and will maintain the most current version of the FAC-COTR on www.fai.gov. FAI will also maintain on its Web site a map of the COTR competencies and training to facilitate implementation.

FAI will administer the program through issuance of guidance and information dissemination, principally through its Web site. Upon agency request, FAI will review existing agency programs against the requirements contained in this document to correlate agency training and/or certification program with this policy.

The CAO, in consultation with other appropriate agency officials, is responsible for developing workforce policies that apply the FAC-COTR requirements, as necessary, to ensure agency COTRs have essential competencies. The certification process, including the assessment of applications, will be managed by each agency. Authority for overseeing the agency's FAC-COTR program, resolving disputes, and granting certifications will be at the CAO or designee level. The CAO may delegate, in writing, certain functional responsibilities as needed to ensure effective and efficient management

of this program within an agency. The agency ACM appointed by the CAO under OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, or designee, is responsible for administering the agency certification program, in accordance with this guidance and any subsequent guidance provided by OFPP

6. Certification for Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs). The FAC-COTR will consist of competency-based core training and assignment specific training to achieve certification, and ongoing continuous learning to maintain certification. Obtaining the FAC-COTR does not mean that an individual will be assigned as a COTR; the agency shall make this determination in accordance with agency need.

Competencies for COTRs: The skills and competencies outlined in the table below are based on the COTR competencies report published by FAI in 2003 and are the core competencies on which the certification is built.

COTR Key Competencies	
Professional Business Competencies	Technical Competencies
Oral Communication	* Understanding COTR duties, responsibilities, and obligations
Decision-Making	Effective Communication of Contract Requirements
Teamwork	Effective Performance Management
Problem Solving	Strategic Planning
Attention to Detail	Detailed Evaluation Skills
Reasoning	Defining Business Relationships
Flexibility	Understanding the Marketplace
Interpersonal Skills	Effective Communication
Self-Mgmt./Initiative	Defining Government Requirements in Commercial/Non -Commercial Terms
Integrity/Honesty	Effective Negotiation Skills and Effective Analytical Skills
Planning and Evaluating	
Influencing/Negotiating	
Writing	
Project Management	

* These duties are articulated in FAI’s 2003 report. COTRs are reminded that their duties, responsibilities, and obligations are limited to those articulated in their delegation letters and must be exercised in accordance with agency policies.

Training: COTRs must have a minimum of 40 hours of training and must maintain their skills currency through continuous learning. The training can be obtained through FAI, the Defense Acquisition University, commercially-available sources, colleges or universities, or agency-specific courses. Twenty-two of the required 40 hours of training hours must cover the essential COTR competencies listed above. A suggested training curriculum includes the following courses. Agencies considering substituting other training for these courses must ensure that the curriculum covers all essential competencies.

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CLC106 – COR with a Mission Focus (8 CLPs)
CLM024 – Contracting Overview (8 CLPs)
CLC004 – Market Research (3 CLPs)
CLC007 – Contract Source Selection (1 CLP)
CLM003 – Ethics Training for Acquisition Technology and Logistics (2 CLPs) or similar

Both the title and course number are provided for reference. These courses can be accessed by registering at www.fai.gov. Individuals who have completed FAI's 24-hour "COR Mentor" course have satisfied this requirement.

The remaining 18 hours of the required 40 hours of training should include agency-specific courses, electives, and/or those identified by the COTR's supervisor, in consultation with the Contracting Officer, as necessary, for managing a particular contract. The supervisor should assess the COTR's previous experience as it relates to the type of contract the COTR will be managing to determine if additional training is needed. Examples could include additional training on services, performance-based acquisition, earned value management, time and materials contracts, green purchasing, socioeconomic issues, etc. Additional classroom and online training is available on the FAI Web site. Supplemental references and resources to further develop COTR skill sets can be found through the COTR online community of practice on the acquisition community connection (acc.dau.mil/cor) and also available through www.fai.gov or www.dau.mil.

Individuals certified as Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) Level I or Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM) Mid-Level/Journeyman are considered to have met the FAC-COTR requirements, but must still submit the necessary documents to their ACMs and obtain certification. However, an individual with a FAC-COTR does not necessarily meet the requirements for the FAC-C level I or the FAC-P/PM mid-level/journeyman.

Continuous Learning: To maintain a FAC-COTR, COTRs are required to earn 40 continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency training every two years beginning the first fiscal year following the effective date of this memorandum. ACMs, or designees, shall monitor the continuous learning requirements for employees holding FAC-COTRs to ensure they meet this requirement. Additional guidance on determining continuous learning points is included in Appendix A and learning is available on the FAI Web site. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure the continuous learning requirements are met.

A FAC-COTR will expire if the 40 CLPs are not earned every two years, and the CAO, or other appropriate agency authority, shall recommend that the COTR's delegation letters be revoked or modified if this condition is not met. The COTR must be notified in writing in a timely manner of any changes to his or her delegations of authority, and the contractor should be notified as appropriate.

Experience: There is no federal standard for experience and each agency is encouraged to nominate only those individuals with adequate technical and management experience to

7. Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS). ACMIS is the central acquisition workforce information system for all civilian agencies and will support the FAC-COTR program. Agencies and individuals are responsible for maintaining certification documentation for quality assurance purposes. FAI is responsible for managing ACMIS and will issue guidance, as necessary, to support ACMIS implementation. More information can be found at www.fai.gov.

In accordance with OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, COTRs must enter their training data into ACMIS. COTRs must update their existing ACMIS records in a timely manner and keep these records current to reflect their certification status and continuous learning points. OFPP, FAI, and agencies use ACMIS information to make strategic acquisition workforce decisions and agencies and individuals must ensure that this information is accurate.

APPENDIX N

Appendix A. Guidance on Meeting the Requirements for Continuous Learning

These guidelines reflect best-in-practice recommendations for continuous learning. Agencies retain flexibility and supervisors remain responsible for working with COTRs to identify those activities and opportunities of greatest benefit to the professional development of an individual. The training, professional activities, education and experience that are used to meet the CLP requirements must be job related.

A. Training

- 1) Completing awareness training. Periodically agencies conduct briefing sessions to acquaint the workforce with new or changed policy. Generally, no testing or assessment of knowledge gained is required.
- 2) Completing learning modules and training courses. These may be formal or informal offerings from a recognized training organization, including in-house training courses/sessions, which include some form of testing/assessment for knowledge gained.
- 3) Performing Self-Directed Study. An individual can keep current or enhance his or her capabilities through a self-directed study program agreed to by the supervisor.
- 4) Teaching. Employees are encouraged to share their knowledge and insights with others through teaching of courses or learning modules.
- 5) Mentoring. Helping others to learn and become more productive workers or managers benefits the agency and the individuals involved.

B. Professional Activities

- 1) Participating in Organization Management. Membership alone in a professional organization will not be considered as fulfilling continuous learning requirements, but participation in the organization leadership will. This includes holding elected/appointed positions, committee leadership roles, or running an activity for an organization that one is permitted to join under current ethics law and regulation. The employee and supervisor must first ensure that participating in the management of an organization is allowed by the agency.
- 2) Attending/Speaking/Presenting at Professional Seminars/Symposia/Conferences. Employees can receive points for attending professional seminars or conferences that are job related. However, the supervisor needs to determine that the individual learned something meaningful from the experience. Because significant effort is involved in preparing and delivering presentations, credit should be given for each hour invested in the preparation and presentation.
- 3) Publishing. Writing articles related to acquisition for publication generally meets the criteria for continuous learning. Points will be awarded only in the year published. Compliance with agency publication policy is required.

4) Participating in Workshops. Points should be awarded for workshops with planned learning outcomes.

C. Education

1) Formal training. Supervisors should use Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as a guide for assigning points for formal training programs that award CEUs. The CEUs can be converted to points at 10 CLP points per CEU.

2) Formal academic programs. For formal academic programs offered by educational institutions, each semester hour is equal to one CEU. A three-hour credit course would be worth three CEUs and 30 CLP points, assuming that it is applicable to the acquisition function.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES	RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF HOURS *
Active Association Membership (in relevant subject area such as program/project management, acquisition management, or appropriate technical area)	5 hours for an active membership year OR 1 hour for each 60 minutes of activity attended during the year
Publication of related management or technical papers, etc.	20 hours for articles 25 for technical paper
Formal rotational assignments	40 hours per assignment
Conference presentations, training or seminar delivery	2 hours for 60 minutes of first-time presentation (1 for presentation, 1 for preparation, .5 credit for repeat delivery of same material)
Team leadership activities, participation on project teams for new products/activities	1 hour for every 60 minutes of participation
Formal education	1 hour for each hour of instruction up to 36 hours for a 3 credit course or American Council on Education (ACE) recommendation
Professional examination, license, or certification	40 hours in the year obtained
1 Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	10 hours
1 Continuous Learning Point (CLP), Professional Development Unit (PDU), or Professional Development Hour (PDH)	1 hour
1 credit hour (college course or ACE recommendation)	10 hours
Conference attendance	1 hour for each 50 minute presentation attended

* Note - Points are earned only in the year accomplished, awarded or published.

APPENDIX N