

Procurement & Property Division Policy Memorandum

Subject: Acquisition Workforce			Number: 1-03, amended
Distribution: ARS CSREES ERS NASS FD PPD	Date: 2/20/03	This Replaces: 1-03, Dated: 10/24/01	

Purpose

To provide policy guidance and an overview for Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Acquisition Workforce personnel in meeting the requirements of DR 5001-1, Acquisition Workforce Training, Delegation, and Tracking System.

Policy Guidance

DR-5001-1 provides guidance for all USDA Contracting Activities to provide their Acquisition Workforce personnel with competency based training. The ARS Head of the Contracting Activity Designee (HCAD) is responsible for enhancing the development of a professional workforce by assuring compliance with mandatory acquisition training and experience standards provided in the DR. This policy memorandum summarizes the standards for GS-1102's, GS-1105's, Contracting Officer Representatives (COR's), Contracting Officer (CO) appointments, etc. DR-5001-1 should be reviewed in conjunction with this policy to obtain a sufficient understanding of how these regulations impact your Acquisition Workforce as well as their application.

Authorities OFPP Letter No. 92-3; Procurement Professional Program Policy; OFPP Policy Letter No. 97-01, Procurement System Education, Training and Experience Requirements for Acquisition Personnel; FAR 1.603, Selection, Appointment, and Termination of Appointment; AGAR 401.603, Selection, Appointment, and Termination of Appointment.

Abbreviations

AWTS	Acquisition Workforce Tracking System
AGAR	Agriculture Acquisition Regulations
CO	Contracting Officer
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
COTR	Contracting Officer Technical Representative
DR	Departmental Regulation
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
FAI	Federal Acquisition Institute
FSS	Federal Supply Schedule
GSA	General Services Administration
HCA	Head of the Contracting Activity
HCAD	Head of the Contracting Activity Designee
IDP	Individual Development Plan
IT	Information Technology
OFPP	Office of Federal Procurement Policy (Office of Management and Budget)
OJT	On the Job Training
OPPEP	Office of Procurement, Property and Emergency Preparedness
PPD	Procurement and Property Division (ARS)
PPD	Procurement and Policy Division (OPPEP)
SPE	Senior Procurement Executive
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

Definitions See DR-5001-1

Requirements for
GS-1102's

Education: Reference DR-5001-1, Appendices C, E, and F. All GS-1102's shall meet the educational requirements outlined in Appendices C, E, and F. The educational requirement applies to both warranted and non-warranted GS-1102 personnel.

Minimum Training: Reference DR-5001-1, Appendices C, E, and F. The DR establishes minimum training for GS-1102's. Review the referenced appendices to identify minimum training requirements.

GS-1102's may use the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) On-Line University website training courses to satisfy a few of the minimum training requirements.

The website is located at:

<http://faionline.com>

Each Contract Specialist, Supervisor, or Acquisition Workforce Coordinator shall have access to a copy of the Contract Specialist Training Blueprints. Copies of the workbooks can be downloaded from a link on the Department's web page at:

<http://www.usda.gov/procurement/career>

On the Job Training (OJT): Reference DR-5001-1, Section 11. All warranted and non-warranted CO's, Contract Specialists, and Procurement Analysts must complete the OJT units of instruction for each competency listed in FAI's Contract Specialist Workbook. Supervisors or Acquisition Workforce Coordinators may schedule work assignments, rotational assignments, practicums, and other developmental activities to complete OJT Units of Instruction. Waivers may be granted by the HCAD under certain circumstances.

Maintenance: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 26. In the new DR maintenance training requirements require GS-1102 employees to obtain at least 40 hours of continuing education or training every 2 years. The failure of GS-1102 personnel to meet bi-annual maintenance requirements may result in the termination of a CO warrant or the inability to meet the GS-1102 qualification standard.

The new DR requires that maintenance training dates for GS-1102 personnel be computed on a calendar year basis. Therefore, each maintenance period will commence on January 1 and end on December 31 of the following year.

Individual Development Plan (IDP): Reference DR-5001-1, Section 19 and Appendix K. GS-1102 employees shall develop in conjunction with their Supervisor, an IDP that reflects necessary course work, training schedule, and related OJT units of instruction. The IDP should be prepared and approved on an annual basis, coinciding with the performance rating period.

Certification: Reference 5001-01, Section 17. The DR implements certification programs for GS-1102's. Fulfillment of certification requirements allows GS-1102 acquisition workforce personnel to meet the uniform education and training established at all Federal agencies. GS-1102 personnel will be noted in the Acquisition Workforce Tracking System (AWTS) as a certified Level I, Level II, or Level III Acquisition Professional. Warranted and unwarranted GS-1102 personnel will receive a "Level III Certificate" signed by the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE) upon completion of Level III training requirements.

Requirements for
GS-1105's

Education: Reference DR-5001-1, Appendix D. All GS-1105's (Purchasing Agents) must meet the minimum educational requirements (high school diploma) identified in Appendix D.

Minimum Training: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 13 and Appendix D. Review reference sections to identify minimum training courses. GS-1105 personnel are commonly referred to as Purchasing Agents and may be delegated authority to award and administer purchase card transactions up to their open-market warrant authority, and Purchase Orders (POs) for goods and services up to a maximum of \$100,000 and \$300,000 for Delivery Orders (DOs). Each GS-1105 employee shall complete an extensive Simplified Acquisition Procedure course.

Employees taking the same course more than once within a 4 year period will only receive credit toward maintenance and/or mandatory training requirements for the initial completion of the course.

OJT: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 14, Appendix K and Appendix I. Purchasing Agents must attain a minimum skill level for each required course and its associated duties on the IDP (Appendix K). Recommended duties and skills levels are identified in Appendix I.

Maintenance: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 26. GS-1105's shall abide by the same maintenance requirements as GS-1102's. See Maintenance under Requirements for GS-1102's for additional guidance.

IDP: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 19 and Appendix K. This requirement for the development of an IDP is applicable to GS-1105 employees who are preparing for Level IC warrant authority. Competencies for Simplified Acquisition and CON 101 courses must be completed. All other IDP requirements are identical to those provided under Requirements for GS-1102's... IDP.

Certification: No requirements for GS-1105's.

Requirements for CORs

Employees formally designated as CORs (sometimes referred to as Contracting Officer Technical Representative must perform selected pre-award and post-award administrative functions on behalf of the CO. If an employee is given an informal responsibility to perform minimal administrative tasks (i.e., accepting shipments of supplies/delivery of services; reviewing/approving vendor/contractor invoices), then this individual can serve as the CO's Technical Point of Contact rather than be formally designated as a COR. This determination as to whether a COR or Technical Point of Contact is required for a particular contract, can only be made by the CO. The Technical Point of Contact does not require mandatory training.

Education: High School Diploma.

Minimum Training: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 20, and Appendix G. Review referenced sections to obtain minimum training courses. CORs must demonstrate the ability to perform

selected pre-award and post-award administrative functions on behalf of the CO. A copy of FAI's Contracting Officer Representative Workbook including the Government-wide training curricula for CORs can be obtained from a link on the Department's web page at:

<http://www.usda.gov/procurement/career>

Designated CORs shall obtain training as outlined in the DR, Table 3. In lieu of formal classroom instruction, CORs may obtain training from the FAI's On-Line University as referenced by Minimum Training under Requirements for GS-1102's of this policy.

OJT: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 20, and Appendix K-2. CORs must fulfill applicable OJT or classroom requirements. Level II and III CORs must meet both classroom and OJT requirements before certification.

Maintenance: Reference DR-5001-1, Appendix G. CORs must obtain 24 hours of maintenance training every 2 years. For additional information reference maintenance requirements for GS-1102's.

IDP: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 23, Table 3, and Appendix K-2. Employees nominated to serve as Level II and III CORs must develop a training plan with their supervisor on an annual basis. Additional guidance can be obtained in the references indicated above.

Certification: Reference DR-5001-1, Section 21, Table 3, and Appendix G. Employees will be noted as certified Level I, II, or III in the AWTS upon completion of the training requirements outlined in Table 3, and Appendix G. Certification provides verification that the employee has fulfilled the required training to perform contract administration at the appointed level. PPD (ARS) will issue certificates indicating the certification level of each COR.

Delegation of Warrant
Authority

Reference: DR-5001-1, Section 29. The SPE, HCA, HCAD, and employees delegated warrant authority are the only individuals legally authorized to bind the Government by executing contracts, as defined in the DR, and to sign determinations and findings

required by the FAR. CO warrant authority shall be clearly stated, in writing, on a SF-1402. Reference Section 30, for Exemptions from Warranting Requirements.

Maximum Warrant
Authority for GS-1102
Personnel

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 31, Appendices C and E. Appointing Officials may grant up to an unlimited amount of warrant authority to GS-1102 personnel. The amount of authority granted shall be determined by the agency's needs, employee's education, procurement training, and experience. In addition to meeting the Office of Personnel Management's qualification standard for GS-1102 employees, Appendix C, CO's must meet all general and specialized requirements outlined in Appendix E.

Required Delegated
Authority for IDIQ

CO's are authorized to sign contract actions up to their delegated warrant authority as specified on the SF-1402. CO's are prohibited from signing actions, including modifications, options, or any other situation that will result in the total amount of the contract exceeding their delegated warrant authority. This includes Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts. However, orders issued against IDIQ contracts are treated differently. Once an IDIQ contract is awarded by a CO with the appropriate authority, orders against the contract may be issued by others up to their delegated warrant authority. This policy assumes that each order is separate and distinct (not a follow-on of another order) from each other.

Maximum Warrant
Authority for GS-1105
Personnel

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 32, and Appendix D for GS-1105 Personnel. GS-1105 personnel are authorized to use the simplified contract format for issuing:

1. Purchase Orders (PO's), including modifications, up to \$100,000;

2. Delivery Orders (DO's), including modifications, up to \$300,000;
3. PO's and DO's, including modifications for the award of IT, construction, and Architect/Engineering (A/E) contract requirements. Orders over \$25,000 must be signed by a Level IC CO with specialized training in that particular area.

Warrant Authority
Non-procurement
Personnel

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 33, and Appendix D, Appointing Officials may grant non-procurement personnel warrant authority up to \$25,000 (Level IA or IB) for commercial supplies and services. PO and DO authority, including orders for IT, may be authorized up to the delegated warrant authority for commercially priced supplies and services.

CO Appointments

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 35, Appendices D and E. Level I through III CO's shall be appointed in writing on a SF-1402. The certificate shall state the individual's name (not position); limitations on the scope of warrant authority; and be **displayed openly to the general public and agency personnel**. Appointing officials shall ensure that individuals nominated as CO's meet the minimum requirements of Appendices D and E.

No contingent warrants will be granted by the HCAD. Individuals not meeting minimum training requirements for construction, A/E, and IT contracts will be granted only the minimum warrant level for these types of requirements.

Required Amount
of Delegated Warrant
Authority

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 36. CO's are authorized to sign contract actions up to their delegated warrant authority as specified on the SF-1402.

Higher level COs must sign the action in some situations such as when amendments or modifications to orders and contracts make the total amount exceed the COs warrant limitation. COs are not necessarily required to conduct or participate in every aspect of the contract personally.

CO Appointment
Appointee Procedures

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 38, Appendices L-1 and M. Once the need is determined, the supervisor or the workforce coordinator may nominate a CO candidate at an appropriate level. The amount specified on the warrant should cover the estimated maximum contract amount, including all option periods. The candidate shall prepare a qualification statement similar to Appendix L-1, documenting all required qualifications. The supervisor or workforce coordinator must review the statement and prepare a request for appointment similar to Appendix M for each candidate nominated. After receipt and a satisfactory review of the information outlined above, the Appointing Official shall sign and issue the SF-1402.

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 42 for ~~A~~Termination/Revocation of Appointment~~@~~. If an employee's warrant is terminated or revoked for any other reason than separation from service, the contracting activity shall return the warrant to the Policy Branch, PPD (ARS).

Appointing Foreign
Nationals as COs

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 40. ARS shall notify OPPEP/PPD before delegating warrant authority to any individual who is not an American citizen.

CO Appointment
Equivalencies

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 41.

GS-1102 Qualification Standards and Application

Reference DR-5001-1, Sections 43 and 44. A full explanation of the standard for civilian GS-1102 employees can be found in Appendix C. The GS-1102 qualification standard contains provisions for employees presently in the GS-1102 series that allows them to qualify for positions in other Federal agencies.

Employees Occupying Occupying GS-1102 Positions in Grades 13 Through 15

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 45, and Appendix C. Employees occupying GS-1102 positions in Grades 13 through 15 and did not meet the standards outlined in Appendix C were eligible for promotions in USDA and other Federal agencies up to December 31, 1999. After January 1, 2000, these employees will remain eligible to compete for jobs at the same grade level; however, they must meet the revised standard for a promotion.

Employees Occupying GS-1102 Positions in Grades 5 Through 12

Reference DR-5001-1, Section 46, and Appendix C. Employees occupying GS-1102 positions in Grades 5 through 12 on January 1, 2000, and who meet the standards outlined in Appendix C are eligible for promotions in USDA and other Federal agencies up through Grade 12. There is no time limit associated with promotions up to Grade 12 or other limits on an employee's eligibility to compete for other Federal jobs at the same grade level. Procurement personnel competing for promotions after Grade 12 must meet the GS-1102 qualification standard.

Acquisition Workforce Tracking System (AWTS)

Government-wide mandates require executive agencies to collect and maintain standard Acquisition Workforce personnel data in a management information system. Based upon OPPEP data collection requirements, PPD or OPPEP will collect, update and maintain Acquisition Workforce training records for the agencies.

PPD Point of Contact

Policy Branch, 301-504-1725.

Approved:

_____/s/_____
_Larry R. Cullumber,
Director
Procurement and Property Division