

Using the DoD Civilian Leader Development Continuum for Individual Development

Ensuring that our civilian leaders have the required competencies to meet the mission is a critical readiness issue. DoD leaders must continually assess their capabilities and continue their development regardless of the leadership position they are in. The Department requires leaders who can think strategically and work in the joint, interagency and global environments. It is incumbent upon civilian leaders to continue learning through formal and diverse experiential development opportunities that “challenge” their skills and expand their professional growth.

The continuum will help DoD civilian leaders plan for their individual development, be it development required for the current job or preparing for future leadership positions. The continuum is competency based and fosters progressive development for each leadership level. When planning individual development it is recommended that leaders consider a variety of developmental opportunities to include formal education (degrees or certifications) to training (short term seminars or courses) to experience (details to special projects, task forces, working groups or rotational assignments).

Leaders are encouraged to consider where they are on the continuum and focus on attaining the required proficiency for their position in each of the competencies at their level on the continuum. For example, a supervisor should be proficient in all of the competencies under “Lead Self” and “Lead Teams/Projects.” The focus of development would be on the competencies under “Lead People,” e.g., Human Capital Management, Leveraging Diversity, Conflict Management, Developing Others, the DoD Corporate Perspective and National Security Foundation. Depending on the area of development the leader’s supervisor or mentor can help to determine the best value and venue to meet the developmental need, such as on-the-job experiences, e.g., leading a project or participation in a working group, training courses offered through the Component, federal, private sector or education courses through an accredited institution.

Once an individual attains the required proficiency levels it is critical to continue development to maintain the required level of performance and currency. Based on career plans, a leader might decide to target developed that would prepare him or her for increased leadership responsibilities at the next level of continuum.