

Recommendation 59: Revise the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act to focus more on building professional qualifications.

Problem

Provisions in DAWIA are intended to professionalize the DoD AWF by establishing specific requirements for education, training, and experience.¹ After nearly 30 years, DoD is still attempting to use a *certification* structure that includes a greater emphasis on experience and ensuring AWF members attain necessary qualifications to fulfill their responsibilities.² A current problem is that DoD's certification programs create a sense among the AWF that professional development occurs in a finite period at the beginning of members' careers rather than being a continuing process. Congress and DoD should revise DAWIA to focus on building a professional AWF qualified to tackle the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. Such a refocus would comprise substantiating *qualifications* and a modernization of the *certification* process.

Background

Congress enacted DAWIA (Chapter 87 of Title 10 U.S. Code) on November 5, 1990 to provide a foundation for the AWF management framework.³ In Chapter 87, DAWIA charges the Secretary of Defense with responsibility for establishing education, training, and experience requirements for personnel serving in acquisition positions. It also charges the Secretary with establishing requirements for continuing education and a certification process.⁴ The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment's Human Capital Initiatives (HCI) Office is responsible for executing DoD-wide AWF governance, strategies, policies, programs, and talent management initiatives.⁵

"The content of DAWIA has evolved since its initial implementation in the early 1990s, but the intent remains the same—the recruitment, development, and retention of a professional, educated, and experienced workforce."⁶ DoD uses a certification process to determine whether an employee meets the required education, training, and experience standards for an acquisition career field.⁷

DoD has made improvements in developing a certification process that serves as a model for federal civilian agency acquisition programs as well as industry but has made less progress in identifying and addressing employees' job skill gaps.⁸ Former Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology,

¹ Management Policies, 10 U.S.C. § 1701.

² DoD, *Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY 2016 – FY 2021*, 1, accessed November 6, 2018, http://www.hci.mil/docs/DoD_Acq_Workforce_Strat_Plan_FY16_FY21.pdf.

³ Management Policies, 10 U.S.C. § 1701.

⁴ General Education, Training, and Experience Requirements, 10 U.S.C. § 1723.

⁵ Charles H. Porter et al., *Independent Study of Implementation of Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Efforts*, CNA, December 2016, 26, accessed November 6, 2018,

[http://www.hci.mil/docs/Policy/Reports%20to%20Congress/CNA_Study_Def_AWF_Improvements_\(Public_Release\)_Feb2017.pdf](http://www.hci.mil/docs/Policy/Reports%20to%20Congress/CNA_Study_Def_AWF_Improvements_(Public_Release)_Feb2017.pdf).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Defense Acquisition Workforce Program Desk Guide, DoDI 5000.66, 3 (2017).

⁸ OMB Memorandum, *The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program*, January 20, 2006, revised December 2008, accessed December 2, 2018, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/procurement/fac_contracting_program.pdf. Bryan Herdlick, Ph.D., *Discipline-Specific Certifications (SE, T&E, MGT): Can they serve as surrogates for DAWIA Qualifications in the DoD Contractor Workforce?*, presentation at INCOSE, May 30, 2014, accessed August 6, 2018, <http://www.incose-somd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Professional-Certifications-INCOSE-SoMD.pptx>.

and Logistics Frank Kendall highlighted this issue in the Better Buying Power 2.0 objective to increase professional qualification requirements for all acquisition specialties and DoD addressed it by launching the Acquisition Workforce Qualification Initiative (AWQI) employment development tool in May 2013.⁹

Discussion

The Section 809 Panel interviewed DoD acquisition executives and members, acquisition career managers, AWF subject matter experts (SMEs), civilian agency experts and industry experts. The panel also reviewed DoD AWF certification standards listed in the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) icatalog, various Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) memoranda, Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports, and other acquisition career-field-related literature.

DAWIA

In 1990, Congress required DoD to establish a management and career development structure with specific education, training, experience, and other qualification requirements for the AWF. The structure included (a) contracting officer qualification requirements, (b) acquisition corps membership selection and eligibility requirements, (c) program and deputy program manager assignment and other qualification requirements, and (d) requirements for acquisition personnel assigned to Critical Acquisition Positions (CAPs).¹⁰

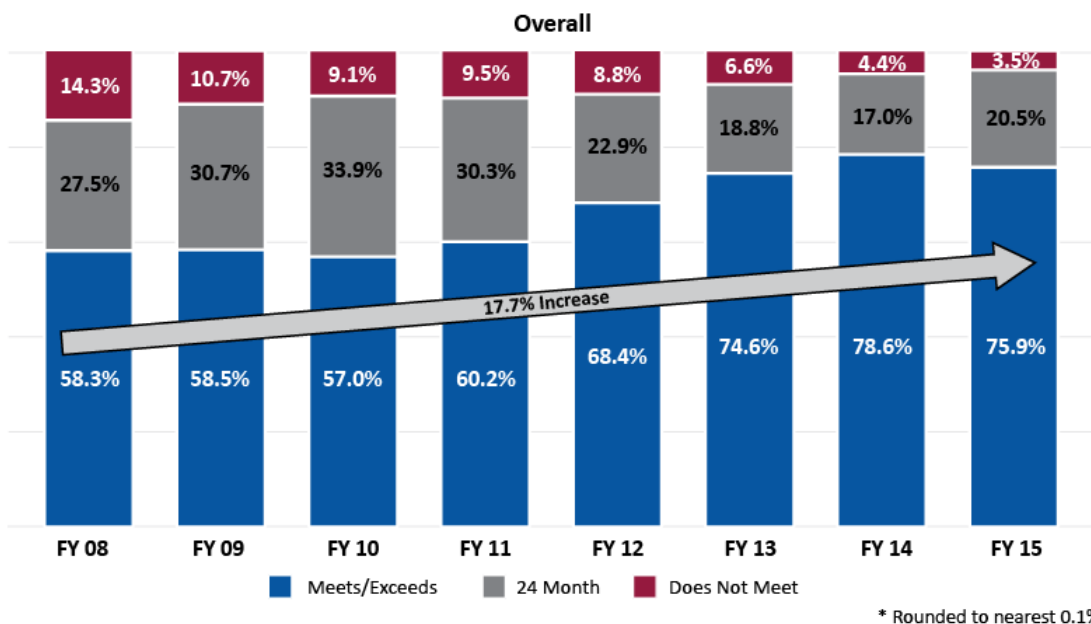
Since DAWIA enactment, DoD substantially increased DAWIA certification rates (see Figure 5-1). DoD has also improved education levels of DoD AWF members and the training capacity of DAU.¹¹

⁹ Data obtained during Section 809 Panel interviews with DoD senior leaders, August 2018.

¹⁰ GAO, *Defense Management Implementation of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act*, 2, <https://www.gao.gov/products/NSIAD-93-129>.

¹¹ Charles H. Porter et al., *Independent Study of Implementation of Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Efforts*, CNA, December 2016, 26, accessed November 6, 2018, [http://www.hci.mil/docs/Policy/Reports%20to%20Congress/CNA_Study_Def_AWF_Improvements_\(Public_Release\)_Feb2017.pdf](http://www.hci.mil/docs/Policy/Reports%20to%20Congress/CNA_Study_Def_AWF_Improvements_(Public_Release)_Feb2017.pdf).

Figure 5-1. Defense Acquisition Workforce Certification Rates¹²



Source: Adapted from DAU graphic.

Education

Congress specified educational requirements for each acquisition career field in DAWIA to professionalize the AWF. Specifically, the law requires contracting officers and DoD acquisition corps members to have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited educational institution and have completed at least 24 semester credit hours in various disciplines.¹³ The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) implemented governmentwide qualification requirements for acquisition occupations in accordance with DAWIA.¹⁴ DoD implemented DAWIA so that only five career fields require formal education as a prerequisite for an employee to be hired:

- The *auditing* and *contracting* career fields require 24 semester credit hours in accounting or business disciplines, in addition to their baccalaureate degree prerequisites.
- The *engineering* and *science and technology manager* career fields require baccalaureate degrees in various technical and engineering disciplines.
- The *test and evaluation* career field requires an associate’s degree in any discipline as a prerequisite.

¹² DoD, *Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY 2016 – FY 2021*, 17, accessed November 6, 2018, http://www.hci.mil/docs/DoD_Acq_Workforce_Strat_Plan_FY16_FY21.pdf.

¹³ Contracting positions: qualification requirements, 10 U.S.C. § 1724 and Selection criteria and procedures, 10 U.S.C. § 1732.

¹⁴ “Classification & Qualifications, General Schedule Qualification Standards,” Office of Personnel Management, accessed August 28, 2018, <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/#url=List-by-Title>.

- The *international acquisition* career field educational requirements are permitted to be specified by the career field.
- DoD does not specify any formal education for the other nine AWF career fields.¹⁵

Although the educational requirements have helped DoD professionalize the DoD AWF, they also limit the ability to hire individuals who do not meet the requirements. The case study below provides an example of how the current DAWIA educational requirements restricts the ability for DoD to hire a talented individual interested in public service.

Case Study: Individual's Federal Hiring Experience

PROBLEM: An individual the Section 809 Panel interviewed explained that she graduated from college with a baccalaureate degree in political science that included 12 semester hours of business credits. She hoped to enter the government as a DoD contracting intern but did not meet the DAWIA minimum education requirements and could not be hired without obtaining the additional business credits the law requires. She encountered three challenges in her experience looking to be hired as an 1102 in DoD:

Requirement to Have 24 Semester Hours: For DoD 1102 positions, minimum education requirements are a baccalaureate degree AND 24 semester hours of business credits. This differs from OPM's 1102 requirements that require either a baccalaureate degree OR 24 semester hours of business credits. The interviewee explored the possibility of obtaining the additional 12 semester hours that she needed by going to a local community college. This solution would cost more than \$2,000 and would take almost a year to complete the training if she took the courses during the summer or as a part-time student.

Hiring Process: The interviewee further encountered a frustrating experience navigating her way around the USAJobs website. For example, one position for which she wanted to apply was open for an entire year, all grades, and all locations. She contacted the point of contact listed on the job announcement for more information and was told there was no information available about whether a position is actually open and mentioned that some of these postings are online so offices can collect resumes in case hiring needs come up later. She sought assistance from individuals who were more experienced with the federal hiring process and was advised the following:

- If a job posting was open for a short period of time (1–2 weeks), it was likely there was an actual position that needed to be filled.
- On the submitted resume, applicants should mark themselves as *highly qualified* in all criteria for the application package to pass through the algorithm to a human reviewer.
- Job postings may say they are *open to the public* when actually, the hiring manager wants to hire internally but must post the position publicly because of human resources requirements to do so.
- It can take 6 months to 1 year to get hired and on-boarded.
- The best way to get hired is for applicants to know someone who can push their resume to the top.

Limited Opportunities for Nonrecent Graduates: Through her research, she learned about the Pathways Program for entry-level 1102s, but Pathways is only open to recent college graduates. Because she graduated in 2015, she was ineligible.

CONCLUSION: The interviewee was faced with two choices: (a) Pay \$2,000 to obtain the additional business credits, delaying her ability to apply for positions until at least Sept 2018, and then potentially wait a year to get hired or (b) Seek

¹⁵ "iCatalog," Defense Acquisition University, accessed August 10, 2018, <http://icatalog.dau.mil/onlinecatalog/CareerLvl.aspx>.

**Case Study:
Individual's Federal Hiring Experience**

employment outside of DoD. She chose the latter, applied for a position outside the federal government, and was hired within 2 months. She currently works in an entry-level contracting position for a major defense contractor.

Training

As required by DAWIA, the Secretary of Defense established DAU to develop and deliver the core acquisition training required for DAWIA certifications, continuous learning courses, assignment-specific courses, and executive-level development training.¹⁶ One major challenge DAU faced from its inception was an “overwhelming backlog of training requirements it has created. The number of people attempting to sign up for required courses and for newly created courses threatened to overwhelm DAU’s capability.”¹⁷ DoD addressed the backlog in two ways:¹⁸

- Allowing some students to meet their training requirements by receiving credit for previous experience through a process called *fulfillment*.
- Developing distance learning courses that allow students to receive immediate training at a reduced cost and with minimum interference with their work schedules.

Today, DAU continues its distance-learning program via online acquisition resources, job support tools, and on-the-job assistance to acquisition organizations and teams.¹⁹ DoD’s efforts to increase DAU’s training capacity and enhance DAU training contributed toward improved workforce certification levels.²⁰ Notwithstanding DAU’s efforts to increase training capacity, DoD officials told the Section 809 Panel that they desire a better balance among the three elements (diamonds) of DAU’s acquisition learning model, which is designed to deliver learning that enhances performance at the precise time it is needed.²¹ The three diamonds model (Figure 5-2) consists of foundational learning (structured training courses, continuous learning modules, and policy updates), workflow learning (online courses/webinars), and performance learning (multifunctional team training). As DAU’s training model has evolved, it has become clear that the workforce’s and DAU’s focus on certification and knowledge needs to shift toward a focus on behavioral change and building workplace leadership confidence and competence.

¹⁶ DoD, *Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY 2016 – FY 2021*, 9, accessed November 6, 2018, http://www.hci.mil/docs/DoD_Acq_Workforce_Strat_Plan_FY16_FY21.pdf.

¹⁷ Evelyn Layton, *The Defense Acquisition University: Training Professionals for the Acquisition Workforce 1992-2003*, 46, accessed August 10, 2018, <https://www.dau.mil/about/Documents/DAU%20History%20Book.pdf>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ DoD, *Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY 2016 – FY 2021*, 9, accessed November 6, 2018, http://www.hci.mil/docs/DoD_Acq_Workforce_Strat_Plan_FY16_FY21.pdf.

²⁰ Ibid, 18.

²¹ Data obtained during Section 809 Panel interviews with DoD senior leaders, August 2018.

Figure 5-2. DAU’s Acquisition Learning Model: The Three Diamonds²²



Source: Adapted from DAU graphic.

Senior acquisition leaders indicated DoD should consider reducing some content included in foundational certification courses and instead offer this content later in employees’ careers when it will actually improve their capabilities. The current construct drives overspending due to *training atrophy*, meaning by the time employees actually need the training for successful performance in their position, they have forgotten it because the training occurred too far in advance of the need. A related problem is that today’s functional integrated product team focuses on a broad range of competency elements. This situation leads to a focus on making sure someone—often someone with shallow knowledge—is assigned to all of the functional roles, at the expense of ensuring AWF members build confident expertise. To compound the problem, AWF members have a difficult time getting refresher training because DAU, due to training capacity limitations, prioritizes foundational training for employees working toward a certification over advanced employees who need to refresh their knowledge.²³

Virtually all of acquisition is a team activity involving multiple functional players, yet in preparing AWF members to do their jobs, DoD relies almost exclusively on individual skills training, especially for certification. This approach varies greatly from proven performance models in virtually every other military mission area or corporate/commercial learning design for which new entrants first learn individual skills, then learn how to apply those skills in concert with other teammates in small teams, then the small teams learn how to integrate their capabilities either in support of other teams, or how to coordinate support from other teams and functions, and so on.

Experience

The DoD Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan sets a goal of prioritizing experiential learning through rotational assignments and exchange programs, yet so far it has focused more on workforce shaping and relied on certification training completion as a measure of success with regard to DAWIA.²⁴ DoD

²² “Acquisition Learning Model,” Defense Acquisition University, accessed August 28, 2018, <https://www.dau.mil/about/p/Acquisition-Learning-Module>.

²³ Data obtained during Section 809 Panel interview with DoD senior leaders, July–August 2018.

²⁴ DoD, *Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY 2016 – FY 2021*, 28, accessed November 6, 2018, http://www.hci.mil/docs/DoD_Acq_Workforce_Strat_Plan_FY16_FY21.pdf.

lacks metrics to measure improving workforce proficiency and capability.²⁵ DoD senior leaders indicated that certification means nothing without an understanding of true capabilities. Some believe employees are over-trained, they are completing certifications they may never need, and DoD should balance certification training with getting real work done. Interviewees agreed that experience is the greatest contributor through which employees become qualified in their chosen career field.

According to psychologist K. Anders Ericsson and author Malcom Gladwell, one must accrue 10,000 hours of practice to become a master of anything.²⁶ Under the current construct, interns and new AWF employees are fully certified and considered experts in their field by merely remaining employed in a DoD acquisition organization for 4 years, along with the education and training for certification, without having to demonstrate that they have mastered the proficiencies of an expert acquisition professional. Certification Level III should indicate AWF members have achieved initial readiness, not certified expertise.

AWQI is a positive step for ensuring employees are qualified in addition to being certified, but AWQI is a voluntary program, and organizations within DoD have been slow to embrace it. The major obstacle seems to be that AWQI is complex and requires a substantial time commitment from employees and their supervisors but does not show them an obvious benefit for devoting the time to use it.

Continuous Learning

Once employees achieve certification to a certain level, they never have to recertify, even though the knowledge base of regulations, technology, and best practices applicable to acquisition grows every year. Instead, DoD requires certified AWF members to accumulate 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) within a 2-year training cycle to maintain certifications. Creditable activities include academic courses, training courses, professional activities such as obtaining professional licenses or teaching, and experiential learning such as rotational assignments or participating in exchange programs. The point credit for each activity is set forth on the DAU website.²⁷ Continuous learning activities are largely self-directed by employees, with some involvement by immediate supervisors (e.g., a sign-off on an employee's individual development plan (IDP)), but little strategic guidance from the enterprise on competencies desired for the future.

DoD officials offered mixed reviews of this approach to maintaining certification. Some indicated 80 CLPs was reasonable, but criteria should be factored into the continuous learning requirement so that employees are incentivized to take training or participate in activities that will improve their performance or prepare them for future job opportunities. One official pointed out that DoD's self-imposed criteria sometimes misses the mark by allowing AWF members to be trained in areas that they do not need in their current positions because it is easy for them to take training courses available through DAU.²⁸ A better, less used alternative, would be for employees to fulfill continuous learning

²⁵ Data obtained during Section 809 Panel interviews with DoD senior leaders. August 2018.

²⁶ Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2008), 40.

²⁷ "Continuous Learning Center, Point Credit," Defense Acquisition University, accessed August 28, 2018, <https://www.dau.mil/training/clc/p/Point-Credit>.

²⁸ Data obtained during Section 809 Panel interviews with DoD senior leaders, August 2018.

requirements by actively seeking training from other education providers (e.g., local community colleges, commercial training providers) that addresses knowledge gaps. CLPs should be used to maintain certification by focusing on competencies needed for current and future positions.

Specialties and Leadership

DAU worked with functional leaders to establish a set of Core Plus courses for each career field and each DAWIA certification level.²⁹ Employees and their supervisors can use the DAU Core Plus Development Guide to identify training beyond certification requirements that allows employees to specialize in a specific acquisition area and may be beneficial to employees' career development or performance in a particular assignment.³⁰ Officials indicated they like the idea of Core Plus specialization and that it is a step in the direction of better training focused on the competencies required for the position and could result in a more capable workforce that delivers improved acquisition outcomes.³¹

DAU is also making inroads with regard to leadership development training. It offers five courses that embed leadership development within some Level II certification but primarily Level III certification courses across all acquisition career fields. It also promotes employee participation in leadership and management courses such as the Harvard Business School for Continuous Learning credit as a means of maintaining their certification after acquiring Level III certification.³² Further, DAU established a Leadership Learning Center of Excellence (LLCOE) "to increase awareness of the importance of leadership to successful acquisition outcomes."³³ The LLCOE offers a combination of courses and executive coaching to develop future leaders. In September 2018, DAU began piloting an Acquisition Leader Development (ALD) series of seven integrated programs delivered through a combination of on-line, classroom, and workplace experiences. The initial ALD program targets early-career professionals and the subsequent programs will be available as professionals move through their career.³⁴

DoD-unique Certification

Both the government AWF and industry recognize the DAWIA construct as a well-developed certification program. It serves as a model for federal civilian agencies' acquisition workforce and industry.³⁵ However there are no universal certification standards.

²⁹ Charles H. Porter et al., *Independent Study of Implementation of Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Efforts*, CNA, December 2016, 26, accessed November 6, 2018,

[http://www.hci.mil/docs/Policy/Reports%20to%20Congress/CNA_Study_Def_AWF_Improvements_\(Public_Release\)_Feb2017.pdf](http://www.hci.mil/docs/Policy/Reports%20to%20Congress/CNA_Study_Def_AWF_Improvements_(Public_Release)_Feb2017.pdf).

³⁰ "What is Core Plus?" United States Army Acquisition Support Center, accessed August 28, 2018, <https://asc.army.mil/web/faqs-train-42/>.

³¹ Data obtained during Section 809 Panel interviews with DoD senior leaders, August 2018.

³² DoD, *Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY 2016 – FY 2021*, 19, accessed November 6, 2018, http://www.hci.mil/docs/DoD_Acq_Workforce_Strat_Plan_FY16_FY21.pdf.

³³ "Defense Systems Management College, Leadership Learning Center of Excellence," DAU, accessed November 20, 2018, <https://www.dau.mil/locations/dsmc/p/Leadership-Center>.

³⁴ Data obtained during Section 809 Panel interviews with DoD senior leaders, August 2018.

³⁵ OMB Memorandum, *The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program*, January 20, 2006, revised December 2008, accessed December 2, 2018, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/procurement/fac_contracting_program.pdf. Bryan Herdlick, Ph.D., *Discipline-Specific Certifications (SE, T&E, MGT): Can they serve as surrogates for DAWIA Qualifications in the DoD*

The exclusivity associated with DAWIA certification has some unintended, negative consequences. DoD-unique standards use DoD-unique terminology that is not widely accepted. Project management, for example, is different than DoD science and technology and acquisition governance. DAU has comingled the two concepts, which has rendered the associated training unnecessarily complex, focusing on policy at the expense of building solid program management or systems engineering skills.

The intent of DAWIA was to professionalize the DoD AWF; however, a certification program unique to DoD presents problems.³⁶ For example, AWF members may have difficulty communicating with industry due to use of DoD-unique terminology, and DoD employees may not understand the language of business, business activity, or motives, and the realities of how the private sector operates.³⁷ This situation can result in insufficiently developed requirements and suboptimally negotiated contracts. Standards that support a common foundation for communication and collaboration in both government (including DoD) and industry would render workforce members more effective.³⁸ It is important to recognize economics and market forces are key differences in dealing with firms that offer defense-unique products as compared to firms that offer commercial products.

DoD's unique certification program makes it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to hire quality employees when they do not comply with DAWIA requirements but are otherwise qualified and desirable to do the job. "No rules are so good that there should not be some mechanism to allow unusual people to enter the acquisition work force."³⁹ DoD's implementation of DAWIA does not give hiring managers enough flexibility in choosing the right person for a job.

Leveraging commercial certification programs would help DoD overcome the unintended consequences created by adopting a DoD-unique certification process. The certification programs must be based on nationally or internationally recognized standards, not those that simply offer a certificate upon completion of training. In implementing this shift in certification focus, it is important to recognize what learning content commercial certification programs address, and what learning content will need to be addressed in DoD-provided training as truly DoD-unique.

Conclusions

Current implementation of DAWIA in DoD policy has succeeded in its goal of supporting professionalism of its AWF.⁴⁰ DoD's robust AWF management framework promotes education, training, and experience that, on completion, allows personnel serving in acquisition positions to be certified at various levels. DoD's implementation of DAWIA falls short, however, by making

Contractor Workforce?, presentation at INCOSE, May 30, 2014, accessed August 6, 2018, <http://www.incose-somd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Professional-Certifications-INCOSE-SoMD.pptx>.

³⁶ Management policies, 10 U.S.C. §1701.

³⁷ Data obtained during Section 809 Panel interview with industry leaders, August 2018.

³⁸ Bryan Herdlick, Ph.D., *Discipline-Specific Certifications (SE, T&E, MGT): Can they serve as surrogates for DAWIA Qualifications in the DoD Contractor Workforce?*, presentation at INCOSE, May 30, 2014, accessed August 6, 2018, <http://www.incose-somd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Professional-Certifications-INCOSE-SoMD.pptx>.

³⁹ Dr. Robert B. Costello, former Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition), testimony before the Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives (Hearing Record), March 28 and April 24, 1990, 163-10.

⁴⁰ Charles H. Porter et al., *Independent Study of Implementation of Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Efforts*, CNA, December 2016, 26, accessed November 6, 2018, [http://www.hci.mil/docs/Policy/Reports%20to%20Congress/CNA_Study_Def_AWF_Improvements_\(Public_Release\)_Feb2017.pdf](http://www.hci.mil/docs/Policy/Reports%20to%20Congress/CNA_Study_Def_AWF_Improvements_(Public_Release)_Feb2017.pdf).

certification the goal and not linking certification to *occupational qualifications* that AWF members can demonstrate on the job.

As DoD continues to reform its AWF policies, it can improve the capabilities of the AWF by abandoning the three-level certification structure and instead addressing employee development through two processes:

- Modernizing the existing certification process to emphasize professional skills that are transferable across the AWF and industry by relying more on *professional certifications* based on nationally or internationally recognized standards.
- Preparing employees to perform better in their current jobs and for future positions by adding *occupational qualifications* or demonstrated competencies to an employee's job series for defense acquisition-specific skills.

The three-level certification structure burdens DoD with mandatory training requirements that, although important, do not align with employees' learning needs as they progress through their careers. The layers of DAU training are often not timed to employee job needs and unnecessarily drive DAU resources to focus on basic foundational training that can be gained in many other ways.

Additionally, the three-level structure provides a false sense of assurance that AWF members are job-ready without any consideration of their proficiency. A second-order effect of this flaw is DoD uses the AWF certification system as selection criteria for filling positions. Thus, it is possible that a level-three-certified applicant for a position with little or no proven job experience would be more likely to be considered to fill a position than an experienced applicant who is not level-three certified.

Professional certification should be to industry- and governmentwide standards. Examples of such practice would be certified public accountants (CPAs) or professional engineers for which accepted standards fundamental to the profession exist, and they do not vary whether practitioners are in industry or government. Training related to these certifications is sanctioned by the professional community through independent validation processes. Adoption of a professional standards model would permit DAU to shift its training focus and resources to offer employees experiences that fit their precise needs as they flow through various jobs in their careers. DAU would also need to focus on the defense-unique buying context because it would not be content addressed in industry certification programs. It is vital that AWF members understand the similarities and differences in economic and market forces for defense-unique and commercial markets and how DoD policies and processes address those differences.

Amend DAWIA to Require Professional Certification

Professional certification is defined as the process by which an AWF member participates in a program that offers a combination of education, training, or experiences based on third-party accredited, nationally or internationally recognized standards. Third-party accreditation adds credibility to the standard.

DoD should require *professional certification* as part of DAWIA when such a program exists for a particular career path. Introducing *professional certification* as an element of the DAWIA process will

help to avoid the unintended consequences created by the current DoD-unique certification construct. Requiring a *professional certification* would allow DoD and industry to work from a common body of knowledge, improve communication and collaboration between government and industry, increase the applicant pool, and raise the professionalism of the DoD AWF to meet national or international standards.

Once DoD AWF members acquired *professional certification*, they would rely on the certifying organization's process for maintaining certification. That could involve recertifying by means of retesting or continuous learning.

Amending DAWIA to require *professional certification* also would provide an opportunity for DoD AWF members to acquire their training and testing for certification and continuous learning from local academic institutions or other accredited education providers in the commercial marketplace. This approach could help reduce costs associated with employees being sent to DAU training courses. Additionally, costs associated with employees' professional certification could be covered by DoD through redirection of certain training funds.

If a third-party accredited program based on nationally or internationally recognized standards does not exist for a particular DoD AWF career field the certification requirement would not simply disappear. Instead, DoD would be responsible for creating its own certification program for that particular career field using whatever institutions or resources were deemed appropriate. DoD would need to determine the best approach to satisfying the certification requirement and ensuring that it conforms with the practices of national accrediting bodies such as ISO. The professional certification program should focus on validating employees' attainment of the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for them to be successful across a career continuum.

In a modernized implementation of DAWIA, professional certification would no longer be the goal for AWF members but would instead be a baseline used to demonstrate AWF members' understanding of acquisition subject matter. Beyond professional certification, AWF members would also need to demonstrate they are capable of performing acquisition-specific skills in their current or future positions to be considered qualified—the new goal. Adopting industry-/governmentwide professional certifications similar to the CPA profession as a baseline is not a substitute for the training and development responsibility that DoD and other federal agencies bear for the lifetime learning needed by their workforces.

Amend DAWIA to Eliminate the Mandated 24 Semester-Hour Prerequisite

DAWIA has succeeded in professionalizing the DoD AWF. The number of DoD AWF members with baccalaureate and advance degrees has steadily increased.⁴¹ Having specific credit requirements in statute may hinder hiring managers' ability to choose the right person for a job.

DoD should be allowed to determine for itself if specific credit requirements should be applied to any particular DoD AWF career fields. Eliminating the statutory mandate would not preclude DoD from

⁴¹ DoD, *Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY 2016 – FY 2021*, 17, accessed November 6, 2018, http://www.hci.mil/docs/DoD_Acq_Workforce_Strat_Plan_FY16_FY21.pdf.

instituting its own educational requirements if it chose to do so. DoD would have the flexibility to make that determination for the acquisition workforce based on its own evaluation, rather than a congressional directive. This flexibility would allow DoD to become more agile in hiring candidates with backgrounds and education that no one imagined when DAWIA passed, such as data analysis, cyber security, supply chain management, or artificial intelligence, including fields that may emerge as important skills for a future AWF.

Implementation

Legislative Branch

- Amend 10 U.S.C. § 1701a, Management for Acquisition Workforce Excellence.
 - Require DoD to implement an AWF professional certification program based on third-party accredited, nationally or internationally recognized standards for each DoD acquisition career field.
 - If a third-party accredited, nationally or internationally recognized certification program does not exist for a DoD acquisition career field, require DoD to establish a certification program using the best approach determined by the Secretary of Defense for meeting the requirement including implementation through entities outside DoD.
- Amend 10 U.S.C. § 1724, Contracting Positions: Qualification Requirements.
 - Eliminate the requirement for contracting officers to have completed at least 24 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) of study in the specified areas.
- Amend 10 U.S.C. § 1732, Selection Criteria and Procedures.
 - Eliminate the requirement for contracting officers to have completed at least 24 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) of study in the specified areas.

Executive Branch

- There are no regulatory changes required for this recommendation.

Implications for Other Agencies

- If Congress agrees to statutorily mandate DoD AWF members to acquire *professional certifications*, then the Section 809 Panel recommends Congress also extend the mandate to the federal civilian AWF and provide adequate funding to accommodate such a program. DoD and civilian agencies share an applicant pool. Extending the mandate to all federal civilian AWF members would raise the professionalism of the entire federal AWF, giving hiring managers added assurance they are hiring quality employees, regardless of whether applicants come to them from inside or outside their own agency.

RECOMMENDED REPORT LANGUAGE

SEC. ____. DEFENSE ACQUISITION CERTIFICATION AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.

This section would amend 10 U.S.C. § 1701a, Management for acquisition workforce excellence.

The committee notes that the Department of Defense (DoD) could better prepare its acquisition workforce to perform in their current jobs and prepare for future positions by modernizing its certification process to emphasize professional skills that are transferable across the workforce and industry. The committee recognizes that DoD could achieve that goal by implementing a professional certification program based on third-party accredited, nationally or internationally recognized standards, where they exist. If a program based on a third-party accredited standard does not exist for a particular acquisition career field, the Secretary would be authorized to establish a certification requirement using the best approach determined by the Secretary for meeting the requirement, including implementation through entities outside DoD.

This section also would amend 10 U.S.C. § 1724, Contracting positions: qualification requirements, to strike the requirement for contracting officers to have completed at least 24 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) of study from an accredited institution of higher education, and make conforming amendments to 10 U.S.C. § 1732, Selection criteria and procedures. The committee notes that the Department has succeed in its goal of raising the professionalism of its acquisition workforce since enactment of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) in 1990 and it is no longer necessary to statutorily mandate positive education requirements within DAWIA. This would allow the Department the flexibility to establish the specific educational requirements that should be applied to a particular workforce career field.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

1 **SEC. ____ . DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CERTIFICATION AND**
2 **EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.**

3 (a) PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT.—

4 (1) PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIRED FOR ALL ACQUISITION WORKFORCE
5 PERSONNEL.—Section 1701a of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

6 (A) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as subsections (d) and (e),
7 respectively; and

8 (B) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

9 “(c) PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION.—

10 “(1) The Secretary of Defense shall implement a certification program to provide
11 for a professional certification requirement for all members of the acquisition workforce.
12 Except as provided in paragraph (2), the certification requirement for any acquisition
13 workforce career field shall be based on standards under a third-party accredited program
14 based on nationally or internationally recognized standards.

15 “(2) If the Secretary determines that, for a particular acquisition workforce career
16 field, a third-party accredited program based on nationally or internationally recognized
17 standards does not exist, the Secretary shall establish the certification requirement for that
18 career field that conforms with the practices of national or international accrediting
19 bodies. The certification requirement for any such career field shall be implemented
20 using the best approach determined by the Secretary for meeting the certification
21 requirement for that career field, including implementation through entities outside the
22 Department of Defense and may be designed and implemented without regard to section
23 1746 of this title.”.

1 (2) CERTIFICATION RENEWAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 1723(a) of such title is
2 amended by striking the second sentence.

3 (3) PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.— Section 1701a(b) of such
4 title is amended—

5 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (6), (7), (8), and (9) as paragraphs (7), (8),
6 (9), and (10), respectively; and

7 (B) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph (6):

8 “(6) authorize members of the acquisition workforce to participate in professional
9 associations, consistent with their individual performance plans, linked to both
10 professional development and opportunities to gain leadership and management skills;”.

11 (4) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The Secretary of Defense shall implement procedures to
12 institute the program required by subsection (c) of section 1701a of title 10, United States
13 Code, as added by paragraph (1), not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment
14 of this Act.

15 (b) ELIMINATION OF STATUTORY REQUIREMENT FOR COMPLETION OF 24 SEMESTER
16 CREDIT HOURS.—

17 (1) QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACTING POSITIONS.—Section 1724
18 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

19 (A) in subsection (a)(3)—

20 (i) by striking “(A)” after “(3)”; and

21 (ii) by striking “, and (B)” and all that follows through “and
22 management”; and

1 (B) in subsection (b), by striking “requirements” in the first sentences of
2 paragraphs (1) and (2) and inserting “requirement”;

3 (C) in subsection (e)(2)—

4 (i) by striking “shall have—” and all that follows through “been
5 awarded” and inserting “shall have been awarded”;

6 (ii) by striking “; or” and inserting a period; and

7 (iii) by striking subparagraph (B); and

8 (D) in subsection (f), by striking “, including—” and all that follows and
9 inserting a period.

10 (2) SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES.—Section 1732 of such title is
11 amended—

12 (A) in subsection (b)(1)—

13 (i) by striking “Such requirements,” and all the follows through
14 “the person—” and inserting “Such requirements shall include a
15 requirement that the person—”;

16 (ii) by striking subparagraph (B); and

17 (iii) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subparagraphs (A) and
18 (B), respectively, and realigning those subparagraphs so as to be 4 ems
19 from the margin; and

20 (B) in subsection (c), by striking “requirements of subsections (b)(1)(A)
21 and (b)(1)(B)” in paragraphs (1) and (2) and inserting “requirement of subsection
22 (b)(1)”.

1 (c) DAU CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT.—Section 1746(c) of title 10, United States Code,
2 is amended by inserting “, and with commercial training providers,” after “military
3 departments”.

4 -----

Changes to Existing Law made by the Legislative Proposal related to education requirements:

TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE

CHAPTER 87—DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

§1701. Management policies

(a) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—The Secretary of Defense shall establish policies and procedures for the effective management (including accession, education, training, and career development) of persons serving in acquisition positions in the Department of Defense.

(b) UNIFORM IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary shall ensure that, to the maximum extent practicable, acquisition workforce policies and procedures established in accordance with this chapter are uniform in their implementation throughout the Department of Defense.

§1701a. Management for acquisition workforce excellence

(a) Purpose.—The purpose of this chapter is to require the Department of Defense to develop and manage a highly skilled professional acquisition workforce—

- (1) in which excellence and contribution to mission is rewarded;
- (2) which has the technical expertise and business skills to ensure the Department receives the best value for the expenditure of public resources;
- (3) which serves as a model for performance management of employees of the Department; and
- (4) which is managed in a manner that complements and reinforces the management of the defense acquisition system pursuant to chapter 149 of this title.

(b) Performance Management.—In order to achieve the purpose set forth in subsection (a), the Secretary of Defense shall—

- (1) use the full authorities provided in subsections (a) through (d) of section 9902 of title 5, including flexibilities related to performance management and hiring and to training of managers;
- (2) require managers to develop performance plans for individual members of the acquisition workforce in order to give members an understanding of how their performance contributes to their organization's mission and the success of the defense acquisition system (as defined in section 2545 of this title);
- (3) to the extent appropriate, use the lessons learned from the acquisition demonstration project carried out under section 1762 of this title related to contribution-based compensation and appraisal, and how those lessons may be applied within the General Schedule system;
- (4) develop attractive career paths;
- (5) encourage continuing education and training;
- (6) authorize members of the acquisition workforce to participate in professional associations, consistent with their individual performance plans, linked to both professional development and opportunities to gain leadership and management skills;
- (7) develop appropriate procedures for warnings during performance evaluations for members of the acquisition workforce who consistently fail to meet performance standards;
- (8) take full advantage of the Defense Civilian Leadership Program established under section 1112 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111–84; 123 Stat. 2496; 10 U.S.C. 1580 note prec.);

(9) use the authorities for highly qualified experts under section 9903 of title 5, to hire experts who are skilled acquisition professionals to—

(A) serve in leadership positions within the acquisition workforce to strengthen management and oversight;

(B) provide mentors to advise individuals within the acquisition workforce on their career paths and opportunities to advance and excel within the acquisition workforce; and

(C) assist with the design of education and training courses and the training of individuals in the acquisition workforce; and

(10) use the authorities for expedited security clearance processing pursuant to section 1564 of this title.

(c) PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION.—

(1) The Secretary of Defense shall implement a certification program to provide for a professional certification requirement for all members of the acquisition workforce. Except as provided in paragraph (2), the certification requirement for any acquisition workforce career field shall be based on standards under a third-party accredited program based on nationally or internationally recognized standards.

(2) If the Secretary determines that, for a particular acquisition workforce career field, a third-party accredited program based on nationally or internationally recognized standards does not exist, the Secretary shall establish the certification requirement for that career field that conforms with the practices of national or international accrediting bodies. The certification requirement for any such career field shall be implemented using the best approach determined by the Secretary for meeting the certification requirement for that career field, including implementation through entities outside the Department of Defense and may be designed and implemented without regard to section 1746 of this title.

~~(e)~~ **(d) NEGOTIATIONS.—**Any action taken by the Secretary under this section, or to implement this section, shall be subject to the requirements of chapter 71 of title 5.

~~(f)~~ **(e) REGULATIONS.—**Any rules or regulations prescribed pursuant to this section shall be deemed an agency rule or regulation under section 7117(a)(2) of title 5, and shall not be deemed a Government-wide rule or regulation under section 7117(a)(1) of such title.

§1723. General education, training, and experience requirements

(a) QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall establish education, training, and experience requirements for each acquisition position, based on the level of complexity of duties carried out in the position. In establishing such requirements, the Secretary shall ensure the availability and sufficiency of training in all areas of acquisition, including additional training courses with an emphasis on services contracting, market research strategies (including assessments of local contracting capabilities), long-term sustainment strategies, information technology, and rapid acquisition.

(2) In establishing such requirements for positions other than critical acquisition positions designated pursuant to section 1733 of this title, the Secretary may state the requirements by categories of positions.

(3) The Secretary of Defense, acting through the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, shall establish requirements for continuing education and periodic renewal of an individual's certification. ~~Any requirement for a certification renewal shall not require a renewal more often than once every five years.~~

(b) CAREER PATH REQUIREMENTS.—For each career path, the Secretary of Defense, acting through the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, shall establish requirements for the completion of course work and related on-the-job training and demonstration of qualifications in the critical acquisition-related duties and tasks of the career path. The Secretary of Defense, acting through the Under Secretary, shall also—

(1) encourage individuals in the acquisition workforce to maintain the currency of their acquisition knowledge and generally enhance their knowledge of related acquisition management disciplines through academic programs and other self-developmental activities; and

(2) develop key work experiences, including the creation of a program sponsored by the Department of Defense that facilitates the periodic interaction between individuals in the acquisition workforce and the end user in such end user's environment to enhance the knowledge base of such workforce, for individuals in the acquisition workforce so that the individuals may gain in-depth knowledge and experience in the acquisition process and become seasoned, well-qualified members of the acquisition workforce.

(c) LIMITATION ON CREDIT FOR TRAINING OR EDUCATION.—Not more than one year of a period of time spent pursuing a program of academic training or education in acquisition may be counted toward fulfilling any requirement established under this chapter for a certain period of experience.

§1724. Contracting positions: qualification requirements

(a) CONTRACTING OFFICERS.—The Secretary of Defense shall require that, in order to qualify to serve in an acquisition position as a contracting officer with authority to award or administer contracts for amounts above the simplified acquisition threshold referred to in section 2304(g) of this title, an employee of the Department of Defense or member of the armed forces (other than the Coast Guard) must, except as provided in subsections (c) and (d)—

(1) have completed all contracting courses required for a contracting officer (A) in the case of an employee, serving in the position within the grade of the General Schedule in which the employee is serving, and (B) in the case of a member of the armed forces, in the member's grade;

(2) have at least two years of experience in a contracting position;

(3) ~~(A) have received a baccalaureate degree from an accredited educational institution authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees, and (B) have completed at least 24 semester credit hours (or the 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, and organization and management;~~ and

(4) meet such additional requirements, based on the dollar value and complexity of the contracts awarded or administered in the position, as may be established by the Secretary of Defense for the position.

(b) GS-1102 SERIES POSITIONS AND SIMILAR MILITARY POSITIONS.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall require that in order to qualify to serve in a position in the Department of Defense that is in the GS-1102 occupational series an employee or potential employee of the Department of Defense meet the **requirements requirement** set forth in paragraph (3) of subsection (a). The Secretary may not require that in order to serve in such a position an employee or potential employee meet any of the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of that subsection.

(2) The Secretary of Defense shall require that in order for a member of the armed forces to be selected for an occupational specialty within the armed forces that (as determined by the Secretary) is similar to the GS-1102 occupational series a member of the armed forces meet the **requirements requirement** set forth in paragraph (3) of subsection (a). The Secretary may not require that in order to be selected for such an occupational specialty a member meet any of the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (2) of that subsection.

(c) EXCEPTIONS.—The qualification requirements imposed by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) shall not apply to an employee of the Department of Defense or member of the armed forces who—

(1) served as a contracting officer with authority to award or administer contracts in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold on or before September 30, 2000;

(2) served, on or before September 30, 2000, in a position either as an employee in the GS-1102 series or as a member of the armed forces in a similar occupational specialty;

(3) is in the contingency contracting force; or

(4) is described in subsection (e)(1)(B).

(d) WAIVER.—The Secretary of Defense may waive any or all of the requirements of subsections (a) and (b) with respect to an employee of the Department of Defense or member of the armed forces if the Secretary determines that the individual possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority, based on demonstrated job performance and qualifying experience. With respect to each waiver granted

under this subsection, the Secretary shall set forth in a written document the rationale for the decision of the Secretary to waive such requirements.

(e) DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES.—(1) The Secretary of Defense may—

(A) establish or continue one or more programs for the purpose of recruiting, selecting, appointing, educating, qualifying, and developing the careers of individuals to meet the requirements in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (a)(3);

(B) appoint individuals to developmental positions in those programs; and

(C) separate from the civil service after a three-year probationary period any individual appointed under this subsection who fails to meet the requirements described in subsection (a)(3).

(2) To qualify for any developmental program described in paragraph (1)(B), an individual shall have—

~~(A) been awarded a baccalaureate degree, with a grade point average of at least 3.0 (or the equivalent), from an accredited institution of higher education authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees; or .~~

~~(B) completed at least 24 semester credit hours or the equivalent of study from an accredited institution of higher education in any of the disciplines of accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.~~

(f) CONTINGENCY CONTRACTING FORCE.—The Secretary shall establish qualification requirements for the contingency contracting force consisting of members of the armed forces whose mission is to deploy in support of contingency operations and other operations of the Department of Defense, ~~including— .~~

~~(1) completion of at least 24 semester credit hours or the equivalent of study from an accredited institution of higher education or similar educational institution in any of the disciplines of accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management; or~~

~~(2) passing an examination that demonstrates skills, knowledge, or abilities comparable to that of an individual who has completed at least 24 semester credit hours or the equivalent of study in any of the disciplines described in paragraph (1).~~

§1732. Selection criteria and procedures

(a) SELECTION CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES.—Selection for membership in the Acquisition Corps shall be made in accordance with criteria and procedures established by the Secretary of Defense.

(b) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—Except as provided in subsections (c) and (d), only persons who meet all of the following requirements may be considered for service in the Corps:

(1) The person must meet the educational requirements prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

Such requirements, ~~at a minimum,~~ shall include ~~both of the following:~~

~~(A) A requirement that the person—~~

~~(i) (A) has received a baccalaureate degree at an accredited educational institution authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees, or~~

~~(ii) (B) possess significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority, based on demonstrated analytical and decisionmaking capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience.~~

~~(B) A requirement that the person has completed—~~

~~(i) at least 24 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) of study from an accredited institution of higher education from among the following disciplines: accounting, business finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management; or~~

~~(ii) at least 24 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) from an accredited institution of higher education in the person's career field and 12 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) from such an institution from among the disciplines listed~~

~~**in clause (i) or equivalent training as prescribed by the Secretary to ensure proficiency in the disciplines listed in clause (i).**~~

(2) The person must meet experience requirements prescribed by the Secretary of Defense. Such requirements shall, at a minimum, include a requirement for at least four years of experience in an acquisition position in the Department of Defense or in a comparable position in industry or government.

(3) The person must meet such other requirements as the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of the military department concerned prescribes by regulation.

(c) EXCEPTIONS.—(1) The ~~requirements of subsections (b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)~~ **requirement of subsection (b)(1)** shall not apply to any employee who, on October 1, 1991, has at least 10 years of experience in acquisition positions or in comparable positions in other government agencies or the private sector.

(2) The ~~requirements of subsections (b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)~~ **requirement of subsection (b)(1)** shall not apply to any employee who is serving in an acquisition position on October 1, 1991, and who does not have 10 years of experience as described in paragraph (1) if the employee passes an examination considered by the Secretary of Defense to demonstrate skills, knowledge, or abilities comparable to that of an individual who has completed at least 24 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) of study from an accredited institution of higher education from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.

(d) WAIVER.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the Secretary of Defense may waive any or all of the requirements of subsection (b) with respect to an employee if the Secretary determines that the employee possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority, based on demonstrated analytical and decisionmaking capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience. With respect to each waiver granted under this subsection, the Secretary shall set forth in a written document the rationale for the decision of the Secretary to waive such requirements.

(2) The Secretary may not waive the requirements of subsection (b)(1)(A)(ii).

(e) MOBILITY STATEMENTS.—(1) The Secretary of Defense is authorized to require civilians in the Acquisition Corps to sign mobility statements.

(2) The Secretary of Defense shall identify which categories of civilians in the Acquisition Corps, as a condition of serving in the Corps, shall be required to sign mobility statements. The Secretary shall make available published information on such identification of categories.

§1746. Defense Acquisition University

(a) DEFENSE ACQUISITION UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE.—The Secretary of Defense, acting through the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, shall establish and maintain a defense acquisition university structure to provide for—

- (1) the professional educational development and training of the acquisition workforce; and
- (2) research and analysis of defense acquisition policy issues from an academic perspective.

(b) CIVILIAN FACULTY MEMBERS.—(1) The Secretary of Defense may employ as many civilians as professors, instructors, and lecturers in the defense acquisition university structure as the Secretary considers necessary.

(2) The compensation of persons employed under this subsection shall be as prescribed by the Secretary.

(3) In this subsection, the term "defense acquisition university" includes the Defense Systems Management College.

(c) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT.—The President of the Defense Acquisition University shall work with the relevant professional schools and degree-granting institutions of the Department of Defense and military departments, **and with commercial training providers**, to ensure that best practices are used in curriculum development to support acquisition workforce positions.

(d) COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS.—(1) In engaging in research and development projects pursuant to subsection (a) of section 2358 of this title by a contract, cooperative agreement, or grant pursuant to subsection (b)(1) of such section, the Secretary may enter into such contract or cooperative agreement or award such grant through the Defense Acquisition University.

(2) The Defense Acquisition University shall be considered a Government-operated Federal laboratory for purposes of section 12 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3710a).