

Recommendation 60: Implement acquisition career paths that are integrated with an institutionalized competency model tailored to mission needs.

Problem

DoD has taken an unbalanced approach to professionalizing the workforce by focusing primarily on training to meet certification requirements, rather than enhancing the qualifications of the workforce. To develop the workforce, occupational qualifications and competency measures must exist from the time the member enters the AWF until they separate or retire. Twenty-nine percent of AWF members are early in their career, meaning they have 20 or more years until they reach retirement eligibility. More than half of those individuals have less than 5 years of experience.¹ This situation indicates a large wave of early career (i.e., pipeline) professionals who require a long-range plan today for their development. DoD has not addressed the appropriate standards to guide AWF members in increasing their technical and nontechnical competencies to advance in their careers. Solving these problems requires culture change regarding how DoD develops highly qualified AWF members.

Background

A disconnect exists between what behaviors and qualifications members perceive necessary for advancement and promotion, as compared to the actual performance results and promotion potential recognized by their agencies.² Today, pipeline members race to become Level III certified within their first 5 years in the AWF, expecting several promotions along the way.³ This promotion momentum creates a false impression that members are fully qualified and proficient at or near the 5-year mark, whether or not the members have actually performed well in critical elements of their positions and demonstrated competencies needed for future positions.⁴

Career Paths

Career paths are used to illustrate *career possibilities* for employees to progress in their field. Career paths help ensure that qualified members are available to fill positions in DoD that require specific professional qualifications. A long-range career path includes jobs of increasing variety, complexity, responsibility, and accountability, leading to management and leadership opportunities. They describe the occupational qualifications (i.e., education, training, and competencies) and key work experiences required to advance.⁵ Career advancement does not constitute a race up the career ladder, but rather, it is an escalation of skills to enhance mission success and fulfill the employee. Career paths would provide AWF members and their supervisor's guidance to help determine what each member needs for career success.

¹ Sean McKenna et al., *Retirement in the Acquisition Workforce: Update and Insights for the Section 809 Panel Research*, RAND Corporation, August 30, 2018, 39.

² AWF stakeholders, communication with the Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For purposes of this recommendation, the panel defines *key work experiences* as interactions inside and outside of government that foster professional development and career broadening (e.g., rotational assignments, temporary assignments, managerial and leadership experience, defense joint/service/agency collaboration, or simulation/exercise engagement).

Competency Models

The purpose of a competency model is to provide measurable and objective means to determine if members have demonstrated the needed proficiency to execute tasks and meet position requirements for a given job. Competencies are generally gained by a combination of education, training, and practice. They are initially verified when the member demonstrates the task, and validated when someone who has already mastered the competency, such as a supervisor, acknowledges the member's mastery. In the AWF, most positions require competencies that are characterized by varying proficiency requirements. Competency models can add data and direction to career development planning by objectively quantifying skill gaps for the individual and DoD Components.⁶ Competencies are not measures of performance, and are not used to evaluate how well AWF members are performing in their current jobs. A member could demonstrate a task competency to a specified proficiency standard, yet when expected to execute that task fall short. Competencies are used to determine a member's qualifications, and what level of proficiency a member has mastered for a new competency task, or to validate that they have gained or maintained proficiency in a competency task. The nontechnical or soft skills are also necessary. AWF members often demonstrate technical proficiency but it is equally important that they demonstrate leadership skills that result from confidence and commitment.

For example, new cadet-pilots are gradually introduced to increasingly complex skills under the guidance of instructor pilots. The instructor must observe the cadet successfully perform a skill or maneuver to specific standards before certifying that the cadet can move on to learn new skills. Only when cadets have demonstrated to the instructor that they can handle the aircraft without supervision, are they allowed to solo.

When veteran pilots move to a different aircraft, or return to flying after an extended period away, they go through the same process. Although they may not have to recertify on basic flight principles, they have to demonstrate to a flight examiner who is experienced and current in the particular aircraft that they are qualified to fly that type of aircraft safely. Similarly, AWF members should demonstrate task competencies at the required proficiency standard to a more senior AWF member that is qualified and experienced in those skills to be considered qualified to perform duties requiring those skills.

Career Development Culture

Creating a policy that simply publishes career paths and implements a competency model, without recognizing the heavy lifting needed to change culture, would be inadequate. Creating career paths and competency models through changes in statute and DoD policy would trigger a fundamental pivot, allowing DoD to transform the acquisition culture. This approach would bring together the acquisition team in new ways, requiring more interdisciplinary/multifunctional collaboration in training and execution. It would shift away from a singular focus on technical skills, to qualifying members based on a mix of technical and nontechnical skills necessary for career development and mission needs. It would emphasize practices that, if implemented, would be the forcing function to change the status quo with respect to how DoD shares new ideas and practices. Shifting to a system

⁶ For example, Military Departments are U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Army; DoD Agencies can be Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), Defense Logistics Agency (DLA).

that allows the AWF to develop tailored practical experiences across occupational boundaries would enhance DoD’s ability to build teams, think critically, collaborate, innovate, and become less risk averse.

Discussion

Career Paths

Career paths are the range of opportunities available within an AWF functional career field and the criteria for vertical and horizontal movement to positions of increasing responsibility and opportunity, up to the highest position in that field.

Existing Statute

Although Congress has provided statutory direction that specifically requires DoD to develop career paths with key work experiences for more than 27 years, little evidence exists that those measures have been implemented comprehensively for the AWF. DAWIA (codified in Chapter 87 of Title 10 U.S. Code) provided direction to DoD concerning career paths and key work experiences. The statutory sections in Table 5-1 all specify career path requirements. In each case Congress’s direction has not been implemented in DoD.⁷

Table 5-1. Chapter 87, Title 10 U.S.C., Statute Governing Career Development

DAWIA Statute	Purpose
§ 1701a(b) Performance Management	Requires DoD development of <i>attractive career paths</i> . Requires managers to develop performance plans to give members an understanding of how their performance contributes to their organization’s mission and the success of the defense acquisition system.
§ 1721 Designation of acquisition positions	Chapter 87, 10 U.S.C, states that as a minimum the AWF comprises the following acquisition-related positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program management ▪ Systems planning, research, development, engineering, and testing ▪ Procurement, including contracting ▪ Industrial property management ▪ Logistics ▪ Quality control and assurance ▪ Manufacturing and production ▪ Business, cost estimating, financial management, and auditing ▪ Education, training, and development ▪ Construction ▪ Joint development and production (other agencies and foreign) ▪ Intellectual property
§ 1722 Career Development	Requires <i>appropriate career paths</i> that include education, training, experience, and assignments necessary for career progression to the most senior acquisition positions.

⁷ Defense Acquisition Workforce, 10 U.S.C. Chapter 87.

DAWIA Statute	Purpose
§ 1722b Special requirements for civilian employees in the acquisition field	Requires DoD to establish policy/guidance for proper development, assignment, and employment of civilian members. Specifically requires the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Career paths ▪ Workforce strategy ▪ Opportunities for promotion ▪ Succession planning ▪ Workforce development strategy which focuses on diversity in promotion, advancement, and experiential opportunities.
§ 1723(b) Career Path Requirements	Requires career paths to include “completion of course work, on-the-job-training and demonstration of qualifications.” Requires DoD to “develop key work experiences to foster interaction with AWF & end-user.” Specifically for the AWF, these experiences are to be imbedded in the end-user environment to enhance experiential learning and help AWF members become seasoned.

Need for Change

10 U.S.C. § 1722 “requires appropriate career paths that include education, training, experience, and assignments necessary for career progression to the most senior acquisition positions,” yet DoD has not created career paths for all of its acquisition career fields.⁸ Congress purposefully allowed DoD to use discretion in applying this statute; however, DoD failed to make substantial strides to implement career paths and key experiences for career progression. Congress needs to reinforce what is already in statute.

Discussion with all of the DoD Directors, Acquisition Career Management (DACMs) and several key DAU stakeholders highlighted that DoDI 5000.66, Defense Acquisition Workforce Education, Training, Experience, And Career Development Program, and its accompanying *Defense Acquisition Workforce Program Desk Guide (Desk Guide)*, issued on July 27, 2017, do not clearly explain the workforce requirements for career paths.⁹ For example, the DoDI contains Section 6.2, Career Path Requirements, however it provides no actual requirements. DACM and DAU engagement also revealed that Section 6.2 currently only applies to specialty career fields (e.g., international acquisition). The *Desk Guide* defines the AWF by adding a career field not previously defined anywhere else (small business), and excludes international acquisition. DoD fails to use instructions and policy consistently for the AWF to identify which DoD policy requirements apply to them, falling short of congressional intent. DoD’s instructions and guides governing career paths and key work experiences is summarized in Table 5-2 below.¹⁰

⁸ Career Development, 10 U.S.C. § 1722.

⁹ Defense Acquisition Workforce Education, Training, Experience, and Career Development Program, DoDI 5000.66 (2017).

¹⁰ Defense Acquisition Workforce, 10 U.S.C. Chapter 87.

Table 5-2. DoD Instruction Governing Career Paths and Development

DoDI	Purpose
DoDI 5000.66 Defense Acquisition Workforce Education, Training, Experience, and Career Development Program [AWF Program] Replaces any other policy and procedure formally issued by the DoD to the AWF for career development.	“In order to establish a consistent framework for constructing acquisition competency models and to facilitate the analysis of cross-functional competencies, the AWF has adopted the 5-tiered DoD Competency Management Framework outlined in Volume 250 of DoDI 1400.25.” Contains Section 6.2, Career Path Requirements, which states, “AWF members assigned to career path positions must complete requirements for the career path.”

Current DoD policy is confusing to the point that it has become unusable, largely because its regulations fail to define terms to specify the career fields to which this guidance applies. For example, 10 U.S.C § 1721, Designation of Acquisition Positions, broadly designates positions that are considered *related to* the AWF; however, DoD never crosswalks any AWF career fields to this designation. “DoDI 5000.66 gives no direction to its workforce; it’s not written for the workforce, it’s written to describe roles.”¹¹ Adding a layer of confusion to the problem, existing workforce career development guidance such as the DAU websites, DoDI 5000.66, and the Acquisition Workforce Strategic Plan FY16–21, indicate either 14 or 15 career fields.

Requirements for Career Paths—Key Work Experience

Congress has directed DoD to develop and implement key work experiences in career paths for decades.¹² *Key work experiences* are interactions inside and outside of government that foster professional development and career broadening (e.g., industry exchange, temporary/rotational assignments, managerial and leadership experience/development, multidiscipline/multi-occupational collaboration, simulation/exercise engagements, and contingency deployments).

Providing AWF members with a variety of key work experiences is vital for enhancing their proficiency in collaboration and networking as technology evolves and becomes increasingly prevalent in the AWF’s daily operations.

*Technology is also making some jobs far more important, especially those that only smart government managers can perform, like building bridges among the increasingly networked government and connecting with the ever-growing array of government’s constituencies.*¹³

Each AWF career path should include key work experiences that can give AWF members opportunities to develop technical and nontechnical competencies necessary by acquiring skills for innovatively solving real-world problems. AWF stakeholders emphasized the importance of determining how well a

¹¹ DACM, AWF stakeholders, communication with the Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018.

¹² General Education, Training, and Experience Requirements, 10 U.S.C. § 1723.

¹³ “Excellence in Government: Solving the Right Problem with the Federal Workforce,” Terry Gerton and Donald F. Kettl, Government Executive, September 25, 2018, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.govexec.com/excellence/management-matters/2018/09/solving-right-problem-federal-workforce/151511/>.

member learns to reflect on and solve problems.¹⁴ These key experiences can allow individual members and the organization to which they belong to experience different roles and prepare for additional responsibilities.

Rotational Assignments

Recommendation 61 of this chapter stresses the importance of PPEPs for building the AWF's understanding of how industry contributes to national security. The opportunities for professional development fostered by an exchange with industry cannot be matched by internal government mechanisms.¹⁵ Specific opportunities like PPEPs should be identified for each career field, and integrated into career paths. Rotational assignments within DoD can also be used to provide joint key work experience and to spread best practices among the acquisition community.

SME Track

Many AWF members are specialists in their craft, and although they want to skillfully master their jobs, they have no desire to lead organizations. These members' goals may be to have a career as an SME. Similarly, DoD has many missions that require specific technical career paths. DoD needs the flexibility to identify career paths that focus on accumulating high expertise in a particular domain or key technical skills. Providing key work experiences that focus on enhancing domain expertise and technical skills would support members who want to pursue the SME track. Supervisors and members should continue career development conversations throughout members' careers. Members who select an SME track should, however, have an option to change course and gain the competencies necessary for leading people.

Managerial/Leadership Track

A recurring theme in stakeholder feedback was the importance of leadership. In general, stakeholders indicated DoD needs to identify members with managerial and leadership interests earlier in their careers and provide avenues for them to practice small-scale leadership before taking on a supervisory role. This practice is common in military career models, but not often practiced in the civilian workforce. DoD should facilitate early leadership experiences for members interested in managerial/leadership tracks and prepare them in nontechnical skills discussed below.

Implementing a Career Path Framework in the AWF

The Section 809 Panel assessed the case study below, focused on the financial management (FM) workforce, as an example that could be emulated for the AWF. This case study notes similarities between the AWF and the financial-management sector, with its 13 distinct career fields, and acknowledged the AWF career fields have a broader array of disciplines that perform drastically different roles within DoD. Because the AWF performs across many different domains and supports many different missions, functional communities should provide input to the DoD Components regarding the broad body of knowledge that is common across their functional career fields, and the

¹⁴ AWF senior leader, communication with the Section 809 Panel, June-August 2018.

¹⁵ AWF stakeholders, communication with the Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018.

DoD Component should be responsible for developing career paths that consider the functional input yet are tailored to the DoD Components' respective missions.

Case Study: Best Practice Civilian Career Roadmap and Competency Development in the FM Workforce

This case study provides overarching career development information for the FM workforce, which marries measurable job activities and aligns competencies for its workforce into career paths.¹⁶ This case study, which highlights career paths, as a best practice and is similar to what is recommended for the DoD AWF. More information about the FM competency model is available at: <https://fmonline.ousdc.osd.mil/Professional/Civilian-Career.aspx>.

Problem: The DoD FM community recognized that no institutionalized, standard body of knowledge existed for the FM workforce and used a competency foundation to improve the overall proficiency of the workforce.

Example: An Air Force hiring manager looking for a GS-12 0510 Accountant could not determine the competency or proficiency of an Army GS-12 0510 Accountant.

Context: The Human Capital and Resource Management unit for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) (Comptroller) developed a comprehensive FM workforce portfolio that includes DoD-wide FM civilian career roadmaps. The portfolio also includes a competency-based certification program that mirrors the expectations in the career roadmaps. After a pilot in 2013 and approval of DoDI 1300.26, implementation began in 2014 and the program was fully operational in 2015.

Highlights: The program's foundation is a set of 24 enterprisewide competencies aligned to applicable occupational series, their associated proficiency levels, and selected leadership competencies. FM community leaders are able to assess and close gaps between current competencies and capabilities and those required in the future. Because the program is based on enterprisewide FM competencies, it is the centerpiece of the community's strategic human capital mosaic, which binds together career roadmaps, IDPs, competency gap assessments, associated strategies to close the gaps, and ultimately hiring practices.

- As members progress, at a certain level there is a mandate for a minimum 3-month developmental assignment.
- An e-catalogue includes a course inventory with more than 13,000 courses aligned to the FM competencies to include 80 web-based courses developed by the OUSD(Comptroller) office.
- The program spans the tenure of the employee and uses technical and nontechnical competencies and proficiency levels.
- The program operates within a governance structure of DoD FM leaders from the DoD Components; they provide input and recommendations on the program's policy and overall operation.

The program enables DoD FM leadership to focus training in necessary areas and track progress. It reinforces the culture of professional development within DoD, ultimately increasing proficiency in technical and leadership disciplines and enabling the FM community to keep pace with evolving warfighter needs.

In this construct, members of the AWF can visualize what experiences, (i.e., education, competencies, potential assignments, leadership) constitute a path toward career progression that aligns with their individual goals to move toward being an SME or leader. It is important to identify how the AWF could develop these two integrated concepts for each career field, similar to the FM community's *career roadmap*.

¹⁶ "Civilian Career Roadmaps & Job Items Library," DoD FM Online, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://fmonline.ousdc.osd.mil/Professional/Civilian-Career.aspx>.

How DoD establishes its policies and funding to support these initiatives will dictate the range and success they will have on influencing the workforce. To be truly effective, echelons below OSD (i.e., DoD Components) should manage their own programs' Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF) allocations to match specific mission-related, career-broadening opportunities to what would be best for the individual AWF members and their organizations' mission requirements. DoD also must understand that talent management plays an important role in integrating career paths within its workforce. Successfully implementing a talent management framework would help unleash the benefits of career paths for individual employees and DoD as a whole.

Competency Models

Congress needs to enact statute and guidance to require competency models with proficiency standards that include technical and nontechnical skills to be implemented for the AWF. A competency model requires a tailored, mission-related task set of competencies, with proficiency standards that measure both technical and nontechnical skills. It must be designed to assist each AWF member to develop and demonstrate the competencies and proficiencies for success through all phases of their careers, based on the following definitions:

- **Task Competency:** Methods for a member to demonstrate individual tasks or task elements specific to the member's current position in an effort to occupationally qualify the member in "an observable, measurable pattern of knowledge, abilities, skills, and other characteristics that individuals need to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully."¹⁷ Task competencies use specific mission-related tasks that require direct supervisor feedback to identify any on-the-job training gaps present in real-time. At all stages of their career, AWF members should be assessed by a more senior acquisition professional for each task competency using proficiency standards. Competencies may be gained through education, training, or experience. Task competencies can be categorized as technical or nontechnical as follows:
 - **Technical:** Associated with a specific occupation or functional skills to perform the job task required. These competencies reflect domain-specific requirements and are associated with critical functions particular to the mission.¹⁸
 - **Nontechnical:** Demonstrate the ability to relate, manage, lead and/or develop others. Personal attributes and characteristics associated with "people skills or soft skills."¹⁹
- **Proficiency Standards:** Distinct formal categories used to describe various levels of expertise which represent a scale of demonstrated occupational skills. These categories describe the member's ability to execute a task competency successfully and are used as an occupational qualification measure.

¹⁷ DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Civilian Strategic Human Capital Planning (SHCP), DoDI 1400.25, Volume 250, 21 (2016).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

DoD should consider following proficiency standards, which would correspond to specific task competencies, as a way for the supervisor to determine how a member demonstrates a single task for purposes of occupational qualification. The following are examples of possible proficiency standards:

- **Entry:** The level at which an individual demonstrates a particular task competency in basic acquisition situations. As related to tasks, the member can identify “simple processes; name parts, tools, and simple facts/terms about the task; requires close/extensive guidance, and needs to be told or shown how to do most of the tasks.”²⁰
- **Intermediate:** The level at which the individual demonstrates a particular task competency in some difficult acquisition situations. As related to the task, the member demonstrates successfully most parts of the task but requires frequent guidance and oversight.²¹ On-the-job training is necessary to develop task proficiency. Intermittently executes tasks independently.
- **Advanced:** The level at which the individual demonstrates a particular task competency in select complex acquisition situations. As related to the task competency, the member demonstrates extensive skill and is technically competent in most complex situations in one or more areas. “Applies the competency in difficult situations, needing only spot checks; can determine step-by-step procedures for the tasks; only requires occasional guidance.”²²
- **Expert:** The level at which the individual demonstrates a particular task competency in the widest variety of acquisition situations. As related to the task competency, the member demonstrates expert technical skills at the highest level of complexity with no assistance. Superior ability to transform technical skill into teachable actions for the occupational series in which they reside.

Competency Model with Proficiency Standards

To date, AWF qualifications have centered on skills that were largely unmeasurable because they lack proficiency standards to gauge the competency level. Consequently, DoD has used time served and certification levels as a proxy for experience when qualifying the workforce. This model does not allow DoD to plan for future career development, while measuring current competencies. “We need to move from a focus on rules and compliance to a focus on performance and learning.”²³ A formalized method to determine individual proficiency standards would identify how a member *actually demonstrates* the job tasks, and to what level of proficiency, rather than just cataloging how many years a member has held an acquisition position. By knowing what proficiency is expected of them in the future, members and their supervisors can address appropriate development needs when creating IDPs.

²⁰ OUSD, *DoD Financial Management: Certification Program Handbook*, October 2016, accessed November 6, 2018, https://fmonline.ousdc.osd.mil/Assets/documents/docs-certification/DoD_FM Certification_Handbook.pdf.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ “Excellence in Government: Solving the Right Problem with the Federal Workforce,” Terry Gerton and Donald F. Kettl, Government Executive, September 25, 2018, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.govexec.com/excellence/management-matters/2018/09/solving-right-problem-federal-workforce/151511/>.

At the DoD Component or unit level, hiring activities do not have a method to effectively qualify members using a set of competencies, so they cannot effectively determine their person's fitness for the next job.²⁴

Replace the over-defined job specifications of the current system with a competency-based, talent-management model. Competencies should be vested in individuals and individuals should be matched to missions, instead of having static occupations define both. Rules have calcified the federal personnel system to the point that compliance has become the driving rule. What the federal government most needs is a system that recognizes that it doesn't matter where government employees sit—what matters is what they know and how they contribute to the mission. It's the capacity of the government's managers, not the specifications of their seats, that counts. As work becomes more complex and more managers need to work across complex networks to get the job done, that's going to be increasingly important.²⁵

In today's system, if new members demonstrate the same tasks every year for 4 years in a row with no attempt made to broaden their career experiences, they are presumed to be equally qualified as individuals who demonstrated a variety of tasks over the same period.²⁶ In either case, 4 years' experience provides no information about how proficient the members are at the tasks they demonstrated, or to what degree new tasks have been introduced and mastered.

DoD must stop attempting to categorize the AWF into buckets of apprentice, journeyman, and expert. Every AWF occupation requires varying degrees of expertise as it relates to mission tasks. Those tasks represent an array of proficiency standards. Individuals should be considered for moving to the next tier based on how they perform mission-related tasks at the appropriate mission-related proficiency standard.

Many stakeholders and senior leaders reported that AWF members need a level of proficiency that directly correlates to a current position and current and future mission requirements. They indicated there is no value in attempting to master a general list of competencies for a career field, some of which their AWF members may never be required to use. Some pointed to their own careers, for which they have mastered a specific AWF competency so long ago that their skills atrophied far below what would be considered expert level today.²⁷ Not all competencies are necessary to master, and competency requirements should be tailored for each position. DoD should consider the following in implementing competency models:

²⁴ *Unit* is a level of organization below the Military Department/Defense Agency. It is usually associated with a command led by a flag officer. Designation of the unit to participate in the development of competency and proficiency standards is left to the Military Department/Defense Agency.

²⁵ "Excellence in Government: Solving the Right Problem with the Federal Workforce," Terry Gerton and Donald F. Kettl, Government Executive, September 25, 2018, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.govexec.com/excellence/management-matters/2018/09/solving-right-problem-federal-workforce/151511/>.

²⁶ AWF stakeholders, communication with the Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018

²⁷ *Ibid.*

- Key work experiences have a return on investment greater than a classroom can offer.²⁸
- A competency model allows for DoD to consider the competencies commercial-sector employees gained by their experience in industry that could satisfy competencies in the government AWF, and enable DoD to recruit qualified midcareer candidates when needed. It would allow AWF members to leave government for jobs in industry and return later, bringing with them an increased understanding of industry that DoD needs. If DoD considers the competencies developed in industry as part of the competency models, AWF members may regard opportunities with industry as career enhancements, rather than career interruptions.
- The AWF is dynamic. DoD's mission evolves continuously, so the AWF must be able to innovate with changes in mission, technology, law, policy, operating concepts, or other factors. AWF members' skills cannot be static, and must be tailored to the mission.

Defense Acquisition Corps

As articulated in 10 U.S.C. § 1731, Defense Acquisition Corps (DAC) and 10 U.S.C. § 1732, Selection Criteria and Procedures, the DAC construct has outlived its purpose, and should be eliminated from statute. 10 U.S.C. § 1732, Critical Acquisition Positions, requires AWF members to meet a 4-year experience requirement, specific education requirements, and “demonstrated analytical and decision-making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience.” These criteria flow over to § 1733 (CAP) because these candidates are required to be members of DAC. A shift in focus from years of experience to demonstrated skill would render DAC qualification criteria obsolete.

Interviews with DoD stakeholders showed that, for the most part, the DoD Components do not use the DAC construct to manage the AWF. Since DAWIA was enacted in statute, other means have been used to track and manage the AWF to ensure that the requirements of these provisions are met. Specific DAC provisions, such as officer promotion rate and the mobility statement, should be retained in statute but not explicitly linked to DAC.

Critical Acquisition Positions

The requirements in 10 U.S.C. § 1733, Critical Acquisition Positions, do not appropriately describe the competencies necessary for these positions. Experience based on years in a job as well as specific education requirements should be replaced with competency requirements. DoD should specify competency requirements for CAPs. The implementation of career paths and a competency model for the AWF should allow DoD the flexibility to define the standards for the AWF and CAPs within each career field.

Basis for Statutory Change to Require Competency Model

DoD has dedicated substantial resources toward competency development (e.g., AWQI, Acquisition Qualification Standard, DoDI 1400.25 Civilian Personnel Management System).²⁹ Although these

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ DAU Stakeholder Engagement, August 2018. DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Civilian Strategic Human Capital Planning (SHCP), DoDI 1400.25, Volume 250, 2 (2016). R. Wood, “Knowledge vs. Experience; The Need for an Acquisition On-the-Job Qualification Standard,” *Defense AT&L Magazine*, May-June 2009, 10-12.

models were developed, they have not been successfully implemented into the civilian AWF. Because all of these efforts and guidance are not mandatory for the AWF, they have not been implemented. The panel does not endorse any particular model, rather examples are provided to demonstrate that a significant body of knowledge already exists to begin the work needed to develop a competency model for each AWF career field.

Nontechnical Competencies

With implementation of this recommendation, AWF members would be required to demonstrate the appropriate balance of technical and nontechnical skills, as both technical and nontechnical skills are required to meet mission needs. The AWF has failed to appropriately develop nontechnical competencies before members begin to supervise. Requiring AWF members to demonstrate nontechnical competencies helps their supervisors determine members' readiness for positions that requires them to interact more with people. The following are examples derived from the DoD FM community requirements:³⁰

- brainstorming in a group setting
- flexibility
- patience
- resilience
- interpersonal skills
- credibility
- team building

Congress has repeatedly directed DoD to “develop key work experiences that foster interaction with the acquisition workforce and end-user.”³¹ In doing so, DoD should include appropriate nontechnical competencies that meet Congress's intent for each AWF career field.

Arguably, the civilian workforce is reluctant to evaluate the same type of character traits known as *people skills* that the military evaluates. Military performance reports target individual nontechnical competencies in addition to technical competencies to assess performance and encourage specific behaviors to build military culture. For example, the Army officer rating system evaluates individuals on these skills:³²

- communication
- teamwork
- followership
- team building
- interpersonal skills (i.e., people, coaching, teaching, counseling, motivating, empowering)
- emotional characteristics (i.e., self-control, calm under pressure)

³⁰ “Civilian Career Roadmaps & Job Items Library,” DoD FM Online, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://fmonline.ousdc.osd.mil/Professional/Civilian-Career.aspx>.

³¹ Career Path Requirements, 10 U.S.C. § 1723(b).

³² See sample Army Officer Evaluation Report, DA Form 67-9, October 2011, accessed September 5, 2018, <https://www.femplate.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/army-oeer-support-form-army-oeer-support-form-army-oeer-support-form-examples-army-oeer-support-form-character-bullets-army-oeer-support-form.jpg>.

- ability to develop subordinates
- conducting assessments (i.e., after action reports, facilitating continuous improvement)

The Senior Executive Service (SES) qualification standards provide an example of how the civilian workforce assesses critical nontechnical skills (e.g., collaboration, team building, innovation). Almost all of the SES skills depend on employees' ability to successfully master nontechnical skills that demonstrate their ability to lead people, lead change, drive results, build business acumen, and build coalitions.³³ To qualify for an SES position, an employee must draw from accomplishments only within the last 10 years prior to appointment.³⁴

There are specific things DoD can do to help develop critical nontechnical competencies, as they relate to career development. Enhancing these competencies could help alleviate cultural boundaries that exist around stove-piped career fields in the AWF. Some examples include fostering the ability to build and lead cohesive teams, applying critical thinking to technical problems, collaborating, and experimenting with ways to eliminate risk-averse habits and build innovative solutions.

Change Status Quo Culture

There is a continuous demand for culture change in the AWF, yet DoD does not routinely provide AWF members with the nontechnical skills needed to drive change. To build practical experience, reduce gaps, and cultivate these nontechnical competencies, DoD must develop these nontechnical skills earlier in members' careers. "Innovation occurs when organizations solve difficult problems in an environment that encourages experimentation, risk taking and allows for short term failure."³⁵ With new ideas come increased risk, unacquainted procedure, and inexperience. Often, it can be difficult for a good idea to withstand the momentum familiarity carries.

*Furthering a culture of innovation within the DoD will contribute to the achievement of these transformational visions. Senior DoD leaders have endorsed and promulgated a culture of innovation ... and challenged officers during a speech at the U.S. Naval Academy to 'risk failure, because in failure, we will learn and acquire the knowledge that will make successful innovation possible.'*³⁶

The functional communities and DoD Components must provide means for the AWF to cultivate new experiences—cross-functional and cross-organizational discussions with scenarios that highlight best practices in critical thinking, collaboration, innovation, and reduced risk aversion—resulting in a more mission focused mindset. AWF members can benefit from trusted sources that have navigated similar situations. AWF members are often reluctant to try innovative practices without a coach or a mentor.³⁷

³³ "Senior Executive Service: Executive Core Qualifications," OPM.gov, accessed September 1, 2018, <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/senior-executive-service/executive-core-qualifications/>.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Jeff Windham, "20 Observations on Innovation," *Defense AT&L Magazine*, July-August 2016, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.dau.mil/library/defense-atl/DATLFiles/Jul-Aug2016/Windham.pdf>.

³⁶ Craig Whittinghill, David Berkowitz, and Phillip A. Farrington, "Does Your Culture Encourage Innovation?," *Defense Acquisition Research Journal*, Volume 22, Issue 2, 216-239 (2015).

³⁷ AWF stakeholders, communication with Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018.

Mentorship

Military leaders spend much of their time developing subordinates; it is engrained in their culture, and they are evaluated on how well they develop people and teams.³⁸ Military leaders encourage critical thinking skills by coaching and mentoring at all levels.³⁹ Much can be gained from how the private-sector provides mentoring as well. A February 2018 GAO report noted that in one Fortune 500 company “leaders are expected to participate in long-term career development for people two-levels below them, and provide managers access to external coaches who focus more on leadership.”⁴⁰

Case Study: Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Energy’s Contracting Officer Mentoring Program

This case study of DLA Energy’s Contracting Officer Mentoring Program, illustrates the power of mentorship and collaboration. The agency cross-populates its contracting officers within an organization. This program resulted in a chain-reaction of critical thinking and innovation, while cultivating acquisition conversations in small-group settings to help solve unique problem sets.

DLA Energy’s Contracting Officer Mentoring Program enhances experiential and collaborative skills. This program purposefully brings together individuals from diverse experiences regarding contract types, complexity, tactics, policy barriers, career path, and rotational experiences. This method provided a platform for cross-directorate networking and experiential learning.

The Contracting Officer Mentoring Program runs annually for 8-months, meeting monthly to discuss a specific topic with senior leaders or SMEs. The program has a mix of small-group sessions and large-group guest speaker sessions. The large-group sessions are led by an assigned emerging leader (someone new to supervision), which provides these individuals the opportunity to lead a larger group and interact independently with the senior leader when establishing a forum for the session. In the small group sessions, contracting officers interact with an organizational senior leader on topics chosen based on workforce feedback.

The idea-sharing approach resulted in new uses of contracting methods and techniques to streamline award time, learn more about industry challenges, and collaborate on best practices. It also forged informal mentoring matches. Workforce feedback regarding this program indicates it has been completely successful and rewarding to both the participants and the organization.

Implementing a Competency Model Framework in the AWF

Although functional communities play a critical role identifying career field foundational knowledge that is common across DoD, the role of the DoD Components in shaping competencies based on mission requirements and the role of members’ direct units in determining the competencies and proficiencies for specific jobs is more important.⁴¹ DoD should consider the FM Case Study’s best practice of the functional community only flowing down the broadest competencies from the top. For example, the FM community had just 24 DoD-wide competencies established across all 13 FM career

³⁸ Ibid. Army Officer Evaluation Report, DA Form 67-9, October 2011, accessed September 5, 2018, <https://www.femplate.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/army-oer-support-form-army-oer-support-form-army-oer-support-form-examples-army-oer-support-form-character-bullets-army-oer-support-form.jpg>.

³⁹ AWF stakeholders, communication with Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018.

⁴⁰ GAO, *Defense Acquisition Workforce: Opportunities Exist to Improve Practices for Developing Program Managers*, GAO-18-217, February 2018, accessed July 25, 2018, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/690094.pdf>.

⁴¹ AWF stakeholders, communication with Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018.

fields. FM's additional competencies were tailored at the DoD Component and unit level. In the AWF context, equivalent inputs could come from the following:

- Functional communities (i.e., functional leads and functional integrated product teams) for broad technical knowledge.
- DoD Components (e.g., U.S. Air Force, Defense Contract Management Agency) for mission- and domain-specific knowledge.
- Unit (e.g., Acquisition Systems Command, DLA Energy) for job-specific requirements.

The broadest input would come from the functional communities, which would determine each acquisition career field's baseline range of competencies, define the terms that describe proficiency standards, and ensure the baseline is consistent across DoD. Then, the DoD Components would add competencies specific to their respective current or future mission requirements. Lastly, the unit would develop occupational competencies unique to its specific jobs and mission needs. DoD must recognize that the competency model would be best served by placing the functional communities in a supporting role in relation to the DoD Components. DoD Components are well-positioned to understand their own competency requirements, and they should take the lead in developing the competency model within their ranks.

At this lowest level, the unit would draw from the functional communities' and DoD Components' catalogs of competencies for the career fields to determine which requirements for a particular job or position are necessary. Supervisors would then qualify AWF members by assessing their competencies and proficiencies against job requirements to determine their development needs.

These layers would not produce competencies that duplicate each other, but rather would build off of the foundational competencies described at the functional community level, and become more mission focused with the agency and unit task competencies. This example shows the functional community, DoD Components, and units as decision makers for task competency and proficiency standard development; however, DoD should be given the flexibility to implement this arrangement in any appropriate fashion to allow the development of the proficiency standards. DoD would have the flexibility to recognize existing models from career fields, like FM, that may have already implemented competency models.

Conclusions

To help ensure members of the DoD AWF are adequately qualified to perform tasks associated with their respective positions and prepared to traverse their chosen career trajectory, DoD must clearly identify and define AWF career paths and create competency models.

It's no secret that Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition professionals work in a very challenging, high-pressure environment. The acquisition process involves an integrated product team of diverse functional experts who must employ critical thinking skills, collaborative problem-solving and robust

*communications to be effective. This dynamic means that the acquisition team's behaviors often can be critical factors in a program's outcome.*⁴²

Integrating Career Paths and Competency Models

DoD could accelerate cultural change in the AWF by using career paths and competency models together. Although either could be implemented independently, integrating them adds leverage to create change. If, for example, acquisition units map the competencies and proficiencies to acquisition career field career paths, AWF members would see “the range of opportunities available within an AWF functional career field and the criteria for vertical and horizontal movement to positions of increasing responsibility and opportunity, up to the highest position in that field,” and could direct their career development to acquire needed technical and nontechnical skills.⁴³ Although some DoD Components have made progress in creating an integrated career path and competency model, none have a complete system as described here.

Such a model can best be achieved when DoD Components use key work experiences to bring acquisition teams together in ways that transform the workforce culture. The following are three key areas that illustrate how DoD can reinforce competency model skills by creating key career path work experiences:

- Building and leading cohesive teams to enhance critical thinking.
- Providing opportunities for collaboration.
- Encouraging risk taking and innovation.

AWF members need opportunities to practice certain nontechnical skills that would match well with the key work experiences needed to reinforce the acquisition team concept (i.e., multidiscipline/cross organizational teams). These interconnected competencies (i.e., building teams, critical thinking, collaboration, innovation, and risk taking) embody the core nontechnical skills required to navigate defense acquisition in the 21st century dynamic marketplace. The examples below illustrate a sample of the broader opportunities.

Creating Key Work Experiences that Broaden Culture and Break Down Barriers

Building and Leading Cohesive Teams in Effort to Enhance Critical Thinking

Successful teams identified in academic literature—such as New Zealand’s All Blacks rugby team, the Navy Seals, Clemson Football, the Miami Heat, Apple, and Ford—consistently practice team building, cohesiveness, and distinct team development using team-oriented critical thinking to solve problems.⁴⁴ Much of the academic research showed that critical thinking occurs in multidiscipline/ cross-occupational collaborative group settings, exercises, and simulations that bring together the acquisition team to practice specific decision-making and problem-solving skills. To capitalize on this success model, DoD needs to do the following:

⁴² Brian Schultz, “The Seven Lethal Acquisition Diseases,” *Defense AT&L Magazine*, January-February 2017, 32-35, accessed September 13, 2018. <https://www.dau.mil/library/defense-atl/DATLFiles/Jan-Feb2017/Schultz.pdf>.

⁴³ As cited under the *career path* definition earlier in this section.

⁴⁴ Jon Gordon, *The Power of Positive Leadership* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2017).

- Transition all AWF career paths from presentation-based training to experiential learning that incorporates simulation exercises for which critical thinking, rather than rote learning, is demonstrated.
- Include open-ended exercises for which critical thinking is emphasized throughout all AWF career paths. Training, other than for basic technical skills, should include multidiscipline/cross-occupational, team-based scenarios.

Collaboration

Many programmatic roadblocks and cultural issues can be addressed if DoD enhances internal and external collaboration. “Collaboration is NOT cooperation...it is more than the intersection of common goals, but a collective determination to reach an identical objective by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus.”⁴⁵ Every conversation that explores how other entities solve acquisition problems induces innovation.

Innovation, in the commercial and the DoD context, tends to be based on collaboration. Multiple technical disciplines often have to come together, and the synergy between multiple disciplines may be the central feature of the innovative idea. In the DoD, technical ideas only reach the market when the using [M]ilitary Service decides to embrace the new concept or new product. This is not quite the same as the commercial market where ‘early adopters’ from a large customer base may help a technology establish a foothold and gain credence. Commercial entrepreneurs build the better mouse trap first and expect customers to come. In DoD the customers, the [M]ilitary Departments, ask for fairly specific products and then budget the resources to pay for the development of those products.⁴⁶

DoD could enhance collaboration by promoting and using a platform specifically for the AWF to effectively share ideas, collaborate, and trade documents representing best practice.⁴⁷ Examples that illustrate how such collaboration can work already exist:

- One stakeholder organization indicated that it recognizes and rewards implementation of other agencies’ best practices.⁴⁸ Often, recognition is given to the inventor of a best practice, which fosters recreating the wheel, rather than collaboration. Real problem solving occurs when two DoD components talk to each other when trying to implement a solution.
- The FM community has mandatory developmental assignments as part of its career progression, which greatly aids collaboration and generation of new ideas.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ “Leadership Collaboration Skills: Everyone Focuses on Developing These,” Mike Schoultz, Digital Spark Marketing, January 11, 2016, accessed September 13, 2018, <https://digitalsparkmarketing.com/leadership-collaboration-skills/>.

⁴⁶ Frank Kendall, “Innovation in the Defense Acquisition Enterprise,” *Defense AT&L Magazine*, November-December 2015, 4-5.

⁴⁷ AWF stakeholders, communication with the Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018.

⁴⁸ Deputy DACM, AWF stakeholders, communication with Section 809 Panel, July-August 2018.

⁴⁹ “Civilian Career Roadmaps & Job Items Library,” DoD FM Online, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://fmonline.ousdc.osd.mil/Professional/Civilian-Career.aspx>.

Risk and Innovation

Lack of opportunity and risk-aversion limit opportunities to innovate. To get the AWF comfortable with accepting more risk will require a convergence of key work experiences and nontechnical skill development. “DoD is afraid to fail, and if you cannot fail, there is no learning environment.”⁵⁰ To create an avenue for practical experience to innovate means to create an environment that allows for short-term failures, trial and error, and latitude to make decisions at a lower level.

*We have a very punitive, risk-averse system that treats most every mistake or failure as an ethical or criminal act as opposed to just a mistake. So we shouldn't be surprised that the workforce, particularly those on the acquisition side, is risk averse.*⁵¹

Scenarios for critical thinking need to be fostered by leadership, but driven by AWF members who have the passion to create change. “Passion drives innovation—not rank, power or position.”⁵² Leadership must create an environment accepting of appropriate risk, or the AWF will lack an avenue for practical experience to innovate. “Leaders can't order innovation to occur; they can be champions and help clear roadblocks, but, in general, senior leaders are not the driving force in innovation.”⁵³

Culture and Leadership

Unless DoD is willing to take a holistic approach to culture change, to include building the AWF professionals' qualifications, rather than relying on certifications, no change will occur.⁵⁴ Applying a concise, well defined competency model in career paths (similar to the *FM Case Study*) will better establish what qualifications should look like. A career path illuminates the possibilities and potential areas of focus, and the competency model proposed here goes beyond focusing on qualification. When combined, career paths and competency models support cultural change.

To date, DoD has operated with disjointed instructions and inconsistent application. Instead, DoD should operate with tailored competencies and proficiency standards with integration of technical and nontechnical skills, so AWF members can understand what is expected of them, and how to work toward managerial/leadership and SME positions. The legislative changes associated with this recommendation will require AWF leadership to develop AWF members capable of building a cohesive, mission-focused team that thrives on exchanges inside and outside of government. Implementing career paths for each AWF career field and a competency model tailored for each AWF career field together, provides AWF members a developmental and experiential career progression, and clarifies what qualifications members requires for their current jobs and for future jobs. These frameworks complement each other and act as key components to transform workforce development.

⁵⁰ “Acquisition: Eliminating the culture barrier to innovative acquisition,” Billy Mitchell, FedScoop, April 27, 2015, accessed August 27, 2018, <https://www.fedscoop.com/the-cultural-roadblock-to-innovative-acquisition>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Jeff Windham, Jeff, “20 Observations on Innovation,” *Defense AT&L Magazine*, July-August 2016, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.dau.mil/library/defense-atl/DATLFiles/Jul-Aug2016/Windham.pdf>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ James N. Phillips, Jr., “Instruction, Direction and Correction: Improving the Acquisition Culture,” *Defense AT&L Magazine*, March-April 2018, 26-28, accessed November 6, 2018, https://www.dau.mil/library/defense-atl/DATLFiles/Mar-April_2018/Phillips.pdf.

Implementation

Legislative Branch

Career Paths

- Establish a requirement in 10 U.S.C. § 1701a, Performance Management, requiring DoD to develop career paths for every designated career field in the AWF within 24 months of enactment of this recommendation.
 - Amend 10 U.S.C. § 1722, Career Development, to require DoD to develop appropriate career paths for all AWF career fields.
- Establish a requirement in 10 U.S.C. § 1721, Designation of Acquisition Positions, directing DoD to define in policy which occupational career fields are designated for the AWF. These career fields must be codified in DoD instruction and kept current.⁵⁵ In statute, require DoD to publish a policy adhering to this statute 6 months after enactment of this recommendation.
- Establish in 10 U.S.C. § 1722b, Special Requirements for Civilian Employees in the Acquisition Field, a requirement that DoD develop key work experience in the form of multidiscipline training (e.g., multifunctional, cross-discipline, multi-occupational).
 - Require DoD to submit a plan in 12 months from enactment that identifies specific actions the department will take to develop key work experiences for each AWF career field.
- Amend the requirement in 10 U.S.C. § 1723, Career Path Requirements, to apply to all AWF career fields (as opposed to only critical acquisition-related duties and tasks).
 - Require DoD to develop a strategic target that specifies a percent of the workforce, or a percent of funding, it will dedicate annually to identifying, developing, and establishing key work experiences. Include the target and rationale in the report(s) to be submitted in response to the change to 10 U.S.C. § 1722b above.

Competency Model

- Establish a requirement in 10 U.S.C. § 1701a, Performance Management, that DoD develop a competency-based model with defined proficiency standards and technical and nontechnical competencies for every designated career field in the AWF within 24 months of enactment of this recommendation.
 - Require civilian qualification assessments to include both technical and nontechnical competencies.

⁵⁵ Currently, 14-15 AWF career fields exist, managed under 20 functional leaders. These career fields are not the same as the *acquisition related positions* designated in 10 U.S.C. § 1721, nor are they designed to be the same; however, DoD must decide exactly which AWF career fields are officially part of the AWF, understanding that each requires a career path.

- Repeal 10 U.S.C. § 1731, Defense Acquisition Corp and 10 U.S.C. § 1732, Selection Criteria and Procedures.
 - Preserve 10 U.S.C. § 1731 (b), Promotion Rate for Officers.
 - Preserve the Mobility Statement and Promotion Rate for Officers currently included in 10 U.S.C. § 1732(e).
 - Relocate Mobility Statement and Promotion Rate for Officers to 10 U.S.C. § 1733 Critical Acquisition Positions.

Executive Branch

- Cancel DoDI 5000.66, Defense Acquisition Workforce Education, Training, Experience, and Career Development Program.
- Replace DoDI 5000.66, Defense Acquisition Workforce Education, Training, Experience, and Career Development Program, with guidance that clearly establishes responsibility, scope, and definitions of the AWF career influencers and DoD’s developmental program within 18 months of enactment of this recommendation.
 - Delegate the responsibilities and authorities to the DoD Components to develop and implement the guidance on career paths and competency models. The guidance should establish the OSD HCI office role as a facilitator in support of the DoD Components in developing and implementing the guidance codified in this recommendation.
 - Ensure a peer review, at a minimum with the Military Services’ senior acquisition executives (SAEs) or agency component acquisition executives (CAEs).
 - Clarify how career fields are affected by the changes created by the split of Acquisition, Technology and Logistics into Acquisition and Sustainment and Research and Engineering, identify which career fields will be managed by Acquisition and Sustainment and which by Research and Engineering, and indicate how the two organizations will collaborate on career management responsibilities.
- Delegate responsibility and authority to the DoD Components to develop a user guide for AWF supervisors.
 - Require DoD Component user guides to include all AWF career fields assigned to the respective organizations.
 - Require career paths to include guidance to identify SME and managerial/leadership tracks in career paths.
- Require a report to the Secretary of Defense, within 6 months of enactment of this recommendation, that details how DoD will implement Congress’s direction.

Implications for Other Agencies

- The changes in how the AWF is trained, qualified, and developed should be presented to OFPP. If these recommendations are implemented, they may affect how the AWF in other executive branch agencies are managed.

RECOMMENDED REPORT LANGUAGE

SEC. ____. DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CAREER DEVELOPMENT.

This section would amend title 10, United States Code, by modifying several sections of Chapter 87 to institutionalize career paths for all acquisition workforce career fields, and by inserting a new section 1765 to develop competencies for every acquisition career field.

The committee is aware that while Chapter 87 has general career path requirements in several sections, none specifically apply to all acquisition career fields, and do not mandate recommended attributes to enhance a highly qualified workforce, such as key work experience. The committee notes that a key factor in the success of this implementation is in Section 1721, as amended; this would require the Department of Defense to identify which specific career fields represent the acquisition workforce in order to better institutionalize career paths throughout all acquisition career fields.

The committee recognizes the scope of the new Section 1765, Competency development, is designed to establish proficiency standards throughout the acquisition workforce in an effort to qualify and assess the technical and nontechnical competencies for all acquisition career fields. The committee notes that the inclusion in statute of such standards will require the Department to establish occupational qualifiers to enable the workforce to reach their full potential.

This section would make several conforming amendments to legislative provisions associated with career path requirements in title 10, United States Code.

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1 **SEC. ____ . DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CAREER DEVELOPMENT.**

2 (a) CAREER PATHS.—

3 (1) CAREER PATH REQUIRED FOR EACH ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CAREER FIELD.—

4 Section 1701a(b)(4) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking “develop
5 attractive career paths” and inserting “develop and implement a career path, as described
6 in section 1722(a) of this title, for each career field designated by the Secretary under
7 section 1721(a) of this title as an acquisition workforce career field”.

8 (2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 1722(a) of such title is amended—

9 (A) by striking “appropriate career paths” and inserting “an appropriate
10 career path”; and

11 (B) by striking “are identified” and inserting “is identified for each
12 acquisition workforce career field”.

13 (3) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CAREER PATHS.—The implementation of a
14 career path for each acquisition workforce career field required by paragraph (4) of
15 section 1701a(b) of title 10, United States Code (as amended by paragraph (1)), shall be
16 completed by the Secretary of Defense not later than the end of the two-year period
17 beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

18 (b) CAREER FIELDS.—

19 (1) DESIGNATION OF ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CAREER FIELDS.—Section 1721(a)
20 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: “The Secretary
21 shall also designate in regulations those career fields in the Department of Defense that
22 are acquisition workforce career fields for purposes of this chapter.”.

1 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—(A) The heading of such section is amended to
2 read as follows:

3 “§ 1721. Designation of acquisition positions and acquisition workforce career fields”.

4 (B) The item relating to such section in the table of sections at the beginning of
5 subchapter II of chapter 87 of such title is amended to read as follows:

“1721. Designation of acquisition positions and acquisition workforce career fields.”.

6 (3)(A) The heading of subchapter II of chapter 87 of such title is amended to read
7 as follows:

8 “SUBCHAPTER II—ACQUISITION POSITIONS AND ACQUISITION
9 WORKFORCE CAREER FIELDS”

10 (B) The item relating to such subchapter in the table of subchapters at the
11 beginning of such chapter is amended to read as follows:

“II. Acquisition Positions And Acquisition Workforce Career Fields1721”.

12 (4) DEADLINE FOR DESIGNATION OF CAREER FIELDS.—The designation of
13 acquisition workforce career fields required by the second sentence of section 1721(a) of
14 title 10, United States Code (as added by paragraph (1)), shall be made by the Secretary
15 of Defense not later than the end of the six-month period beginning on the date of the
16 enactment of this Act.

17 (c) KEY WORK EXPERIENCES.—

18 (1) DEVELOPMENT OF KEY WORK EXPERIENCES FOR EACH ACQUISITION
19 WORKFORCE CAREER FIELD.—Section 1722b of such title is amended by adding at the end
20 the following new subsection:
21

1 “(c) KEY WORK EXPERIENCES.—In carrying out subsection (b)(2), the Secretary shall
2 ensure that key work experiences, in the form of multidiscipline training, are developed for each
3 acquisition workforce career field.”.

4 (2) PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY WORK EXPERIENCES.—Not later than one
5 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to
6 the congressional defense committees a plan identifying the specific actions the
7 Department of Defense has taken, and is planning to take, to develop and establish key
8 work experiences for each acquisition workforce career field as required by subsection
9 (c) of section 1722b of title 10, United States Code, as added by paragraph (1). The plan
10 shall include specification of the percentage of the acquisition workforce, or funds
11 available for administration of the acquisition workforce on an annual basis, that the
12 Secretary will dedicate towards developing such key work experiences.

13 (d) APPLICABILITY OF CAREER PATH REQUIREMENTS TO ALL MEMBERS OF ACQUISITION
14 WORKFORCE.—Section 1723(b) of such title is amended by striking “the critical acquisition-
15 related”.

16 (e) COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—(A) Subchapter V of chapter 87 of such title is amended by
18 adding at the end the following new section:

19 **“§ 1765. Competency development**

20 “(a) IN GENERAL.—For each acquisition workforce career field, the Secretary of Defense
21 shall establish, for the civilian personnel in that career field, defined proficiency standards and
22 technical and nontechnical competencies which shall be used in personnel qualification
23 assessments.

1 “(b) NEGOTIATIONS.—Any action taken by the Secretary under this section, or to
2 implement this section, shall not be subject to the requirements of chapter 71 of title 5.”.

3 (B) The table of sections at the beginning of such subchapter II is amended by
4 adding at the end the following new item:

“1765. Competency development.”.

5 (2) DEADLINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—The establishment of defined proficiency
6 standards and technical and nontechnical competencies required by section 1765 of title
7 10, United States Code (as added by paragraph (1)), shall be made by the Secretary of
8 Defense not later than the end of the two-year period beginning on the date of the
9 enactment of this Act.

10 (f) TERMINATION OF DEFENSE ACQUISITION CORPS.—

11 (1) The Acquisition Corps for the Department of Defense referred to in section
12 1731(a) of title 10, United States Code, is terminated.

13 (2) Section 1733 of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

14 (A) by striking subsection (a); and

15 (B) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (a).

16 (3) Subsection (b) of section 1731 of such title is transferred to the end of section
17 1733 of such title, as amended by paragraph (2), and amended—

18 (A) by striking “ACQUISITION CORPS” in the heading and inserting “the
19 ACQUISITION WORKFORCE”; and

20 (B) by striking “selected for the Acquisition Corps” and inserting “in the
21 acquisition workforce”.

1 (4) Subsection (e) of section 1732 of such title is transferred to the end of section
2 1733 of such title, as amended by paragraphs (2) and (3), redesignated as subsection (c),
3 and amended—

4 (A) by striking “in the Acquisition Corps” in paragraphs (1) and (2) and
5 inserting “in critical acquisition positions”; and

6 (B) by striking "serving in the Corps" in paragraph (2) and inserting
7 “employment”.

8 (5) Sections 1731 and 1732 of such title are repealed.

9 (6)(A) Section 1733 of such title, as amended by paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), is
10 redesignated as section 1731.

11 (B) The table of sections at the beginning of subchapter III of chapter 87 of such
12 title is amended by striking the items relating to sections 1731, 1732, and 1733 and
13 inserting the following new item:

“1731. Critical acquisition positions.”.

14 (7)(A) The heading of subchapter III of chapter 87 of such title is amended to
15 read as follows:

16 “SUBCHAPTER III—CRITICAL ACQUISITION POSITIONS”

17 (B) The item relating to such subchapter in the table of subchapters at the
18 beginning of such chapter is amended to read as follows:

“III. Critical Acquisition Positions1731”.

19 (8) Section 1725 of such title is amended—

20 (A) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “Defense Acquisition Corps” and
21 inserting “acquisition workforce”; and

1 (B) in subsection (d)(2), by striking “of the Defense Acquisition Corps”
2 and inserting “in the acquisition workforce serving in critical acquisition
3 positions”.

4 (9) Section 1734 of such title is amended—

5 (A) by striking “of the Acquisition Corps” in subsections (e)(1) and (h)
6 and inserting “of the acquisition workforce”; and

7 (B) in subsection (g)—

8 (i) by striking “of the Acquisition Corps” in the first sentence and
9 inserting “of the acquisition workforce”;

10 (ii) by striking “of the Corps” and inserting “of the acquisition
11 workforce”; and

12 (iii) by striking “of the Acquisition Corps” in the second sentence
13 and inserting “of the acquisition workforce in critical acquisition
14 positions”.

15 (10) Section 1737 of such title is amended—

16 (A) in subsection (a)(1), by striking “of the Acquisition Corps” and
17 inserting “of the acquisition workforce”; and

18 (B) in subsection (b), by striking “of the Corps” and inserting “of the
19 acquisition workforce”.

20 (11) Section 1742(a)(1) of such title is amended by striking “the Acquisition
21 Corps” and inserting “acquisition positions in the Department of Defense”.

Changes to Existing Law made by the Legislative Proposal related to career development:

TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE

CHAPTER 87—DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

Subchapter	Sec.
I. General Authorities and Responsibilities	1701
II. Defense Acquisition Positions and Acquisition Workforce Career Fields	1721
III. Acquisition Corps Critical Acquisition Positions	1731
IV. Education and Training	1741
V. General Management Provisions	1761

SUBCHAPTER I—GENERAL AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sec.
1701. Management policies.
1701a. Management for acquisition workforce excellence.
1702. Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics: authorities and responsibilities.
[1703. Repealed.]
1704. Service acquisition executives: authorities and responsibilities.
1705. Department of Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund.
1706. Government performance of certain acquisition functions.
[1707. Repealed.]

§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~~ **develop and implement a career path, as described in section 1722(a) of this title, for each career field designated by the Secretary under section 1721(a) of this title as an acquisition workforce career field;**

(5) encourage continuing education and training;

(6) develop appropriate procedures for warnings during performance evaluations for members of the acquisition workforce who consistently fail to meet performance standards;

(7) 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.);

(8) 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

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

(c) 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.

(d) 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.

SUBCHAPTER II—~~DEFENSE~~ ACQUISITION POSITIONS *AND ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CAREER FIELDS*

Sec.

- 1721. Designation of acquisition positions.
- 1722. Career development.
- 1722a. Special requirements for military personnel in the acquisition field.
- 1722b. Special requirements for civilian employees in the acquisition field.
- 1723. General education, training, and experience requirements.
- 1724. Contracting positions: qualification requirements.
- 1725. Senior Military Acquisition Advisors.

§1721. Designation of acquisition positions *and acquisition workforce career fields*

(a) Designation.—The Secretary of Defense shall designate in regulations those positions in the Department of Defense that are acquisition positions for purposes of this chapter. ***The Secretary shall also designate in regulations those career fields in the Department of Defense that are acquisition workforce career fields for purposes of this chapter.***

(b) Required Positions.—In designating the positions under subsection (a), the Secretary shall include, at a minimum, all acquisition-related positions in the following areas:

- (1) Program management.
- (2) Systems planning, research, development, engineering, and testing.
- (3) Procurement, including contracting.
- (4) Industrial property management.
- (5) Logistics.
- (6) Quality control and assurance.
- (7) Manufacturing and production.
- (8) Business, cost estimating, financial management, and auditing.
- (9) Education, training, and career development.
- (10) Construction.
- (11) Joint development and production with other government agencies and foreign countries.

(c) Management Headquarters Activities.—The Secretary also shall designate as acquisition positions under subsection (a) those acquisition-related positions which are in management headquarters activities and in management headquarters support activities. For purposes of this subsection, the terms "management headquarters activities" and "management headquarters support activities" have the meanings given those terms in Department of Defense Directive 5100.73, entitled "Department of Defense Management Headquarters and Headquarters Support Activities", dated November 12, 1996.

§1722. Career development

(a) Career Paths.—The Secretary of Defense, acting through the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, shall ensure that ~~appropriate career paths~~ ***an appropriate career path*** for civilian and military personnel who wish to pursue careers in acquisition ~~are identified~~ ***is identified for each acquisition workforce career field*** in terms of the education, training, experience, and assignments necessary for career progression of civilians and members of the armed forces to the most senior acquisition positions. The Secretary shall make available published information on such career paths.

(b) Limitation on Preference for Military Personnel.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that no requirement or preference for a member of the armed forces is used in the consideration of persons for acquisition positions, except as provided in the policy established under paragraph (2).

(2)(A) The Secretary shall establish a policy permitting a particular acquisition position to be specified as available only to members of the armed forces if a determination is made, under criteria specified in

the policy, that a member of the armed forces is required for that position by law, is essential for performance of the duties of the position, or is necessary for another compelling reason.

(B) Not later than December 15 of each year, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics shall submit to the Secretary a report that lists each acquisition position that is restricted to members of the armed forces under such policy and the recommendation of the Under Secretary as to whether such position should remain so restricted.

(c) Opportunities for Civilians To Qualify.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that civilian personnel are provided the opportunity to acquire the education, training, and experience necessary to qualify for senior acquisition positions.

(d) Best Qualified.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that the policies established under this chapter are designed to provide for the selection of the best qualified individual for a position, consistent with other applicable law.

[(e) Repealed.]

(f) Assignments Policy.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall establish a policy on assigning military personnel to acquisition positions that provides for a balance between (A) the need for personnel to serve in career broadening positions, and (B) the need for requiring service in each such position for sufficient time to provide the stability necessary to effectively carry out the duties of the position and to allow for the establishment of responsibility and accountability for actions taken in the position.

(2) In implementing the policy established under paragraph (1), the Secretaries of the military departments shall provide, as appropriate, for longer lengths of assignments to acquisition positions than assignments to other positions.

(g) Performance Appraisals.—The Secretary of each military department, acting through the service acquisition executive for that department, shall provide an opportunity for review and inclusion of any comments on any appraisal of the performance of a person serving in an acquisition position by a person serving in an acquisition position in the same acquisition career field.

(h) Balanced Workforce Policy.—In the development of defense acquisition workforce policies under this chapter with respect to any civilian employees or applicants for employment, the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a military department (as applicable) shall, consistent with the merit system principles set out in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 2301(b) of title 5, take into consideration the need to maintain a balanced workforce in which women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups are appropriately represented in Government service.

§1722b. Special requirements for civilian employees in the acquisition field

(a) Requirement for Policy and Guidance Regarding Civilian Personnel in Acquisition.—The Secretary of Defense, acting through the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics, shall establish policies and issue guidance to ensure the proper development, assignment, and employment of civilian members of the acquisition workforce to achieve the objectives specified in subsection (b).

(b) Objectives.—Policies established and guidance issued pursuant to subsection (a) shall ensure, at a minimum, the following:

(1) A career path in the acquisition field that attracts the highest quality civilian personnel, from either within or outside the Federal Government.

(2) A deliberate workforce development strategy that increases attainment of key experiences that contribute to a highly qualified acquisition workforce.

(3) Sufficient opportunities for promotion and advancement in the acquisition field.

(4) A sufficient number of qualified, trained members eligible for and active in the acquisition field to ensure adequate capacity, capability, and effective succession for acquisition functions, including contingency contracting, of the Department of Defense.

(5) A deliberate workforce development strategy that ensures diversity in promotion, advancement, and experiential opportunities commensurate with the general workforce outlined in this section.

(c) Key Work Experiences.—In carrying out subsection (b)(2), the Secretary shall ensure that key work experiences, in the form of multidiscipline training, are developed for each acquisition workforce career field.

§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.

§1725. Senior Military Acquisition Advisors

(a) Position.—

(1) In general.—The Secretary of Defense may establish in the ~~Defense Acquisition Corps~~ **acquisition workforce** a position to be known as "Senior Military Acquisition Advisor".

(2) Appointment.—A Senior Military Acquisition Advisor shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

(3) Scope of position.—An officer who is appointed as a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor—

(A) shall serve as an advisor to, and provide senior level acquisition expertise to, the service acquisition executive of that officer's military department in accordance with this section; and

(B) shall be assigned as an adjunct professor at the Defense Acquisition University.

(b) Continuation on Active Duty.—An officer who is appointed as a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor may continue on active duty while serving in such position without regard to any mandatory retirement date that would otherwise be applicable to that officer by reason of years of service or age. An officer who is continued on active duty pursuant to this section is not eligible for consideration for selection for promotion.

(c) Retired Grade.—Upon retirement, an officer who is a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor may, in the discretion of the President, be retired in the grade of brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half) if—

(1) the officer has served as a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor for a period of not less than three years; and

(2) the officer's service as a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor has been distinguished.

(d) Selection and Tenure.—

(1) In general.—Selection of an officer for recommendation for appointment as a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor shall be made competitively, and shall be based upon demonstrated experience and expertise in acquisition.

(2) Officers eligible.—Officers shall be selected for recommendation for appointment as Senior Military Acquisition Advisors from among officers ~~of the Defense Acquisition Corps~~ ***in the acquisition workforce serving in critical acquisition positions*** who are serving in the grade of colonel or, in the case of the Navy, captain, and who have at least 12 years of acquisition experience. An officer selected for recommendation for appointment as a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor shall have at least 30 years of active commissioned service at the time of appointment.

(3) Term.—The appointment of an officer as a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor shall be for a term of not longer than five years.

(e) Limitation.—

(1) Limitation on number and distribution.—There may not be more than 15 Senior Military Acquisition Advisors at any time, of whom—

(A) not more than five may be officers of the Army;

(B) not more than five may be officers of the Navy and Marine Corps; and

(C) not more than five may be officers of the Air Force.

(2) Number in each military department.—Subject to paragraph (1), the number of Senior Military Acquisition Advisors for each military department shall be as required and identified by the service acquisition executive of such military department and approved by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics.

(f) Advice to Service Acquisition Executive.—An officer who is a Senior Military Acquisition Advisor shall have as the officer's primary duty providing strategic, technical, and programmatic advice to the service acquisition executive of the officer's military department on matters pertaining to the Defense Acquisition System, including matters pertaining to procurement, research and development, advanced technology, test and evaluation, production, program management, systems engineering, and lifecycle logistics.

SUBCHAPTER III—ACQUISITION CORPS *CRITICAL ACQUISITION POSITIONS*

Sec.

- 1731. ~~Acquisition Corps: in general.~~ *Critical acquisition positions.*
- 1732. ~~Selection criteria and procedures.~~
- 1733. ~~Critical acquisition positions.~~
- 1734. Career development.
- 1735. Education, training, and experience requirements for critical acquisition positions.
- [1736. Repealed.]
- 1737. Definitions and general provisions.

~~§1731. Acquisition Corps: in general~~

- (a) ~~Acquisition Corps.~~—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that an Acquisition Corps is established for the Department of Defense.
- (b) ~~Promotion Rate for Officers in Acquisition Corps.~~—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that the qualifications of commissioned officers selected for the Acquisition Corps are such that those officers are expected, as a group, to be promoted at a rate not less than the rate for all line (or the equivalent) officers of the same armed force (both in the zone and below the zone) in the same grade.

~~§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) has received a baccalaureate degree at an accredited educational institution authorized to grant baccalaureate degrees, or
 - (ii) 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.~~

~~(e) Exceptions.—(1) The requirements of subsections (b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B) 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) 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.~~

§1733 1731. Critical acquisition positions

~~(a) Requirement for Corps Member.—A critical acquisition position may be filled only by a member of the Acquisition Corps.~~

~~(b) (a) Designation of Critical Acquisition Positions.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall designate the acquisition positions in the Department of Defense that are critical acquisition positions. Such positions shall include the following:~~

~~(A) Any acquisition position which—~~

~~(i) in the case of employees, is required to be filled by an employee in a senior position in the National Security Personnel System, as determined in accordance with guidelines prescribed by the Secretary, or in the Senior Executive Service; or~~

~~(ii) in the case of members of the armed forces, is required to be filled by a commissioned officer of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps who is serving in the grade of lieutenant colonel, or, in the case of the Navy, commander, or a higher grade.~~

~~(B) Other selected acquisition positions not covered by subparagraph (A), including the following:~~

~~(i) Program executive officer.~~

~~(ii) Program manager of a major defense acquisition program (as defined in section 2430 of this title) or of a significant nonmajor defense acquisition program (as defined in section 1737(a)(3) of this title).~~

~~(iii) Deputy program manager of a major defense acquisition program.~~

(C) Any other acquisition position of significant responsibility in which the primary duties are supervisory or management duties.

(2) The Secretary shall periodically publish a list of the positions designated under this subsection.

(b) Promotion Rate for Officers in Acquisition Corps the Acquisition Workforce.—The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that the qualifications of commissioned officers selected for the Acquisition Corps in the acquisition workforce are such that those officers are expected, as a group, to be promoted at a rate not less than the rate for all line (or the equivalent) officers of the same armed force (both in the zone and below the zone) in the same grade.

(c) Mobility Statements.—(1) The Secretary of Defense is authorized to require civilians in the Acquisition Corps in critical acquisition positions to sign mobility statements.

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

§1734. Career development

(a) Three-Year Assignment Period.—(1) Except as provided under subsection (b) and paragraph (3), the Secretary of each military department, acting through the service acquisition executive for that department, shall provide that any person who is assigned to a critical acquisition position shall be assigned to the position for not fewer than three years. Except as provided in subsection (d), the Secretary concerned may not reassign a person from such an assignment before the end of the three-year period.

(2) A person may not be assigned to a critical acquisition position unless the person executes a written agreement to remain on active duty (in the case of a member of the armed forces) or to remain in Federal service (in the case of an employee) in that position for at least three years. The service obligation contained in such a written agreement shall remain in effect unless and until waived by the Secretary concerned under subsection (b).

(3) The assignment period requirement of the first sentence of paragraph (1) is waived for any individual serving as a deputy program manager if the individual is assigned to a critical acquisition position upon completion of the individual's assignment as a deputy program manager.

(b) Assignment Period for Program Managers.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall prescribe in regulations—

(A) a requirement that a program manager and a deputy program manager (except as provided in paragraph (3)) of a major defense acquisition program be assigned to the position at least until completion of the major milestone that occurs closest in time to the date on which the person has served in the position for four years; and

(B) a requirement that, to the maximum extent practicable, a program manager who is the replacement for a reassigned program manager arrive at the assignment location before the reassigned program manager leaves.

Except as provided in subsection (d), the Secretary concerned may not reassign a program manager or deputy program manager from such an assignment until after such major milestone has occurred.

(2) A person may not be assigned to a critical acquisition position as a program manager or deputy program manager of a major defense acquisition program unless the person executes a written agreement to remain on active duty (in the case of a member of the armed forces) or to remain in Federal service (in the case of an employee) in that position at least until completion of the first major milestone that occurs closest in time to the date on which the person has served in the position for four years. The service obligation contained in such a written agreement shall remain in effect unless and until waived by the Secretary concerned under subsection (d).

(3) The assignment period requirement under subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) is waived for any individual serving as a deputy program manager if the individual is assigned to a critical acquisition position upon completion of the individual's assignment as a deputy program manager.

(c) Major Milestone Regulations.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall issue regulations defining what constitutes major milestones for purposes of this section. The service acquisition executive of each military department shall establish major milestones at the beginning of a major defense acquisition program consistent with such regulations and shall use such milestones to determine the assignment period for program managers and deputy program managers under subsection (b).

(2) The regulations shall require that major milestones be clearly definable and measurable events that mark the completion of a significant phase in a major defense acquisition program and that such milestones be the same as the milestones contained in the baseline description established for the program pursuant to section 2435(a) of this title. The Secretary shall require that the major milestones as defined in the regulations be included in the Selected Acquisition Report required for such program under section 2432 of this title.

(d) Waiver of Assignment Period.—(1) With respect to a person assigned to a critical acquisition position, the Secretary concerned may waive the prohibition on reassignment of that person (in subsection (a)(1) or (b)(1)) and the service obligation in an agreement executed by that person (under subsection (a)(2) or (b)(2)), but only in exceptional circumstances in which a waiver is necessary for reasons permitted in regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

(2) With respect to each waiver granted under this subsection, the service acquisition executive (or his delegate) shall set forth in a written document the rationale for the decision to grant the waiver.

(e) Rotation Policy.—(1) The Secretary of Defense shall establish a policy encouraging the rotation of members of the Acquisition Corps **of the acquisition workforce** serving in critical acquisition positions to new assignments after completion of five years of service in such positions, or, in the case of a program manager, after completion of a major program milestone, whichever is longer. Such rotation policy shall be designed to ensure opportunities for career broadening assignments and an infusion of new ideas into critical acquisition positions.

(2) The Secretary of Defense shall establish a procedure under which the assignment of each person assigned to a critical acquisition position shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis for the purpose of determining whether the Government and such person would be better served by a reassignment to a different position. Such a review shall be carried out with respect to each such person not later than five years after that person is assigned to a critical position.

(f) Centralized Job Referral System.—The Secretary of Defense shall prescribe regulations providing for the use of centralized lists to ensure that persons are selected for critical positions without regard to geographic location of applicants for such positions.

(g) Exchange Program.—The Secretary of Defense shall establish, for purposes of broadening the experience of members of the Acquisition Corps **of the acquisition workforce**, a test program in which members of the Corps **of the acquisition workforce** serving in a military department or Defense Agency are assigned or detailed to an acquisition position in another department or agency. Under the test program, the Secretary of Defense shall ensure that, to the maximum extent practicable, at least 5 percent of the members of the Acquisition Corps **of the acquisition workforce in critical acquisition positions** shall serve in such exchange assignments each year. The test program shall operate for not less than a period of three years.

(h) Responsibility for Assignments.—The Secretary of each military department, acting through the service acquisition executive for that department, is responsible for making assignments of civilian and military personnel of that military department who are members of the Acquisition Corps **of the acquisition workforce** to critical acquisition positions.

§1737. Definitions and general provisions

(a) Definitions.—In this subchapter:

(1) The term "program manager" means, with respect to a defense acquisition program, the member ~~of the Acquisition Corps~~ **of the acquisition workforce** responsible for managing the program, regardless of the title given the member.

(2) The term "deputy program manager" means the person who has authority to act on behalf of the program manager in the absence of the program manager.

(3) The term "significant nonmajor defense acquisition program" means a Department of Defense acquisition program that is not a major defense acquisition program (as defined in section 2430 of this title) and that is estimated by the Secretary of Defense to require an eventual total expenditure for research, development, test, and evaluation of more than the dollar threshold set forth in section 2302(5)(A) of this title for such purposes for a major system or an eventual total expenditure for procurement of more than the dollar threshold set forth in section 2302(5)(A) of this title for such purpose for a major system.

(4) The term "program executive officer" has the meaning given such term in regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

(5) The term "senior contracting official" means a director of contracting, or a principal deputy to a director of contracting, serving in the office of the Secretary of a military department, the headquarters of a military department, the head of a Defense Agency, a subordinate command headquarters, or in a major systems or logistics contracting activity in the Department of Defense.

(b) Limitation.—Any civilian or military member ~~of the Corps~~ **of the acquisition workforce** who does not meet the education, training, and experience requirements for a critical acquisition position established under this subchapter may not carry out the duties or exercise the authorities of that position, except for a period not to exceed six months, unless a waiver of the requirements is granted under subsection (c).

(c) Waiver.—The Secretary of each military department (acting through the service acquisition executive for that department) or the Secretary of Defense (acting through the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics) for Defense Agencies and other components of the Department of Defense may waive, on a case-by-case basis, the requirements established under this subchapter with respect to the assignment of an individual to a particular critical acquisition position. Such a waiver may be granted only if unusual circumstances justify the waiver or if the Secretary concerned (or official to whom the waiver authority is delegated) determines that the individual's qualifications obviate the need for meeting the education, training, and experience requirements established under this subchapter.

§1742. Internship, cooperative education, and scholarship programs

(a) Programs.—The Secretary of Defense shall conduct the following education and training programs:

(1) An intern program for purposes of providing highly qualified and talented individuals an opportunity for accelerated promotions, career broadening assignments, and specified training to prepare them for entry into ~~the Acquisition Corps~~ **acquisition positions in the Department of Defense**.

(2) A cooperative education credit program under which the Secretary arranges, through cooperative arrangements entered into with one or more accredited institutions of higher

education, for such institutions to grant undergraduate credit for work performed by students who are employed by the Department of Defense in acquisition positions.

(3) A scholarship program for the purpose of qualifying personnel for acquisition positions in the Department of Defense.

(b) **Scholarship Program Requirements.**—Each recipient of a scholarship under a program conducted under subsection (a)(3) shall be required to sign a written agreement that sets forth the terms and conditions of the scholarship. The agreement shall be in a form prescribed by the Secretary and shall include terms and conditions, including terms and conditions addressing reimbursement in the event that a recipient fails to fulfill the requirements of the agreement, that are comparable to those set forth as a condition for providing advanced education assistance under section 2005. The obligation to reimburse the United States under an agreement under this subsection is, for all purposes, a debt owing the United States.

SUBCHAPTER V—GENERAL MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS

Sec.

1761. Management information system.

1762. Demonstration project relating to certain acquisition personnel management policies and procedures.

[1763. Repealed.]

1764. Authority to establish different minimum requirements.

1765. Competency development.

§1765. Competency development

(a) IN GENERAL.—*For each acquisition workforce career field, the Secretary of Defense shall establish, for the civilian personnel in that career field, defined proficiency standards and technical and nontechnical competencies which shall be used in personnel qualification assessments.*

(b) NEGOTIATIONS.—*Any action taken by the Secretary under this section, or to implement this section, shall not be subject to the requirements of chapter 71 of title 5.*

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