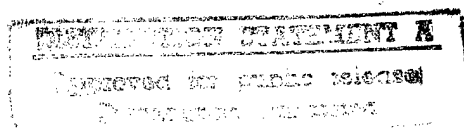

Logistics Management Institute

**Professional Development of the
Acquisition Workforce
An Enhanced Approach**

AQ503R2

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Workforce: An Enhanced Approach

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Executive Summary

The civilian and military professionals in the acquisition workforce are the linchpin of the Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition system. They perform the difficult task of managing and supporting complicated technical programs in a controlled and regulated environment. To be effective, those professionals must be properly trained and educated in both technical/functional and managerial/leadership competencies. They should also participate in a program of continuous learning to maintain competency.

THE CHALLENGE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DoD has a well-established program for technical/functional development. It features minimum experience, education, and training standards for entry into the acquisition corps and for certification at different levels in each of the acquisition career fields. The standards are uniform across all DoD components. A consortium of DoD education and training organizations, the Defense Acquisition University, helps coordinate the training and education program to meet mandatory standards.

Programs for developing managerial/leadership competencies are still evolving. The components are pursuing managerial/leadership development along different paths. The divergent approaches reflect the unique needs of the components and the fact that the challenge of integrating managerial/leadership development actions with technical/functional programs is distinctly different for military officers than for civilian professionals. The different challenges are the result of the manpower and personnel systems used for military officers and DoD civilians.

ENHANCING THE SYSTEM

We have developed an approach to enhance the existing system for professional development of the DoD acquisition workforce. The approach is an outline to integrate managerial/leadership education and training with the existing technical/functional system. It incorporates the latest advances in technology to take

advantage of the best development practices used by other federal agencies and the private sector. Implementing our approach requires no changes in statutes and only minimal modification of existing policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a first step, we recommend the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology modify the policy in DoD manual 5000.52-M, *Acquisition Career Development Program*, November 1995, in two areas. The Under Secretary should do the following:

- ◆ Establish managerial/leadership standards or competencies to supplement the existing technical/functional standards for each of the three certification levels for each acquisition career field civilians in grades GS-13 and above.
- ◆ Establish continuous learning requirements for all members of the acquisition workforce.

Our analysis includes an initial estimate of the size of the professional development program that is needed to meet DoD position requirements. We also have determined the managerial/leadership competencies that are the highest priorities. The Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development should take the lead in working with the components to implement the policy and refine our initial analysis. Specifically, the Director should do the following:

- ◆ Work with the components to determine the size of the selective professional development programs for acquisition workforce civilians in grades GS-13 and above.
- ◆ Work with the components to determine the funding necessary to support mandatory, enhanced, and continuous learning development programs.
- ◆ Establish, fund, and facilitate a system that provides regular review and monitoring of the managerial/leadership competency needs of the acquisition workforce.
- ◆ Provide an advisory service that identifies education and training opportunities appropriate for acquisition workforce professional development.
- ◆ Provide advice for, and facilitate, cross-functional and cross-component developmental assignments.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

PURPOSE

The civilian and military professionals in the acquisition workforce are the linchpin of the Department of Defense (DoD) acquisition system. They perform the difficult task of managing and supporting complicated technical programs in a controlled and regulated environment. To be effective, those professionals must be properly trained and educated.

This study presents an approach to enhance the existing system for professional development of the DoD acquisition workforce. The approach represents an outline to integrate managerial/leadership education and training with the existing technical/functional system.

METHODOLOGY

The research started with an extensive literature review of successful professional programs. We followed the literature review with interviews of acquisition managers from DoD, the private sector, and allied nations; discussions with civilian and military personnel managers; visits with representatives from government and civilian academic institutions; and an analysis of qualification or certification standards of professional associations from disciplines related to the acquisition field. We also conducted independent assessments of the technical/functional and managerial/leadership competencies needed by members of the acquisition workforce.

The approach is based in part on the findings of an earlier Logistics Management Institute report, AQ503MR1, *The Effect of Manpower and Personnel Systems on Professional Development*.¹

BACKGROUND

The primary objective of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) is to improve the DoD acquisition system by improving the education, training, and experience opportunities of the members of the workforce. To meet that objective, DoD established minimum experience, education, and training

¹ Logistics Management Institute, *The Effect of Manpower and Personnel Systems on Professional Development*, Report AQ503MR1, John T. Durgala and Albert H. Schroetel, August 1996.

standards for entry into the Acquisition Corps and for certification at the different levels in each of the acquisition career fields.

Technical/Functional Standards

Mandatory standards are technically/functionally oriented and can usually be satisfied relatively early in an individual's career. The mandatory standards also apply uniformly across all DoD components.

The Defense Acquisition University (DAU), a consortium of DoD education and training organizations, helps coordinate the training and education program to meet the technological/functional standards of the acquisition workforce. The DAU is authorized by Section 1746 of Title 10, United States Code, and it is chartered by DoD Directive 5000.57, *Defense Acquisition University*, 22 October 1991.

Managerial/Leadership Standards

For complete development, we believe the technical program must be supplemented with instructional and experiential opportunities in managerial and leadership competencies. In our earlier report, we found the managerial/leadership portion of the professional development program to be much less mature than the technical/functional part. This is true despite the impressive efforts that are under way in all DoD components.

Unlike the DoD-wide technical/functional standards, the components are pursuing managerial/leadership development along different paths. The divergent component approaches reflect their unique needs and the fact that the challenge of integrating managerial/leadership development actions with technical/functional programs is distinctly different for military officers than for civilian professionals. For military officers, the challenge is to blend acquisition-specific technical/functional education, training, and experience into systems that already emphasize managerial/leadership skills and abilities required for success in service-unique environments. For civilian professionals, the challenge is to introduce managerial/leadership education, training, and experience into systems that are designed to promote technical/functional expertise over the course of a career.

The different challenges also result from the manpower and personnel systems used for military officers and DoD civilians.²

² Logistics Management Institute, *The Effect of Manpower and Personnel Systems on Professional Development*, Report AQ503MR1, John T. Durgala and Albert H. Schroetel, August 1996, pp. 1-2.

Military Manpower and Personnel Management

Military officers are needed to participate in, or directly support, combat, peacekeeping, relief, and other operations. Their role is viewed as “operational” or “direct operational support.”

To develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary to fulfill that role, each of the military services has established systems that emphasize managerial/leadership skills and abilities. Officers are given experience in a wide range of jobs in a variety of environments. As part of personnel policy, military officers are mobile and rotate through a series of assignments that are integrated with regularly scheduled formal schooling.

Certain features of the manpower and personnel systems used for military officers are key to facilitating managerial/leadership development. Those features are discussed next.

CENTRAL MANAGEMENT

The ultimate authority for virtually all personnel management actions rests with the military service headquarters.

Each service maintains a large staff of personnel managers and specialists to guide officers' careers in a manner that best meets the needs of the military department and the individual. Assignments, attendance at schools, and geographic relocation are carefully controlled and monitored. The personnel system is designed to perform career management and job placement functions in support of the manpower program.

RANK ASSOCIATED WITH THE INDIVIDUAL

Military officers are awarded rank based on their personal qualifications and experience. This practice is commonly referred to as “rank in person.” The position they occupy is usually compatible with their rank.

Theoretically, any officer of appropriate rank and speciality can occupy any position of matching grade and speciality. The association of rank with the individual creates great flexibility in assigning military officers to new jobs.

MANDATORY MOBILITY

All military officers are subject to geographic relocation to meet the needs of their service. Mandatory mobility is an understood and accepted part of a career. Organizations know that officers typically will serve in a position or location for 3 to 4 years, or less. However, organizations also can expect a replacement upon an incumbent's reassignment.

Moneys for permanent change of station moves come from centrally managed service funds. Commands, activities, and organizations incur no financial burden from regular change of duty of officers.

The regular rotation through appropriate duty positions supports professional development (both technical/functional and managerial/leadership). An organization's operations suffer only minor disruption when an officer departs for a long-term, full-time school. A replacement will assume the position at the time of, or soon after, the former officer's departure. Upon completion of a course, the graduating officer can reasonably anticipate moving to another appropriate job. In fact, for military officers, long-term, full-time schooling is a sought-after reward for successful performance and the recognition of potential.

INDIVIDUALS ACCOUNT

The programming and accounting system for active military manpower makes a distinction between two types of personnel: those who are available for duty and are controlled by a local commander and non unit personnel. Personnel in the latter category are treated separately because they are not under the control of unit commanders and do not fill unit billets.

One of the four major subaccounts of the "Individuals" accounting category is called Trainees/Students. That subaccount includes military members who are not available for duty because they are attending formal courses of instruction in a permanent change of station move or are in a temporary duty status while executing a permanent change of station move. The Trainees/Students subaccount supports the practice of sending military officers to long-term training without encumbering a position in a unit or organization.

There also is a Transients subaccount for military members who are not available for duty while relocating from one duty station to another. The Transients subaccount enables officers to move, on a regular schedule, from one assignment to another. During the transient time, positions are not left vacant.

Civilian Manpower and Personnel Management

Civilians help execute military operations in a way that is equally important, but different from military officers. Civilians provide the continuity within DoD organizations. Traditionally, civilians lead organizations that are part of the infrastructure. Those organizations provide critical and more stable, continuous, long-term support for DoD functions. The previous assumption has been that performing such jobs does not require civilians to experience the assignments and managerial/leadership education typical of military officer development.

One result of the traditional view of the civilian role is that manpower and personnel management systems that have evolved are not conducive to supporting

attendance at long-term, full-time schools. To attend formal schools, civilian employees must be released from their positions for the duration of the course. However, the employee's status upon graduation is often unknown, both to the individual and the organization. Civilian personnel systems rarely assume any specific responsibility for placing graduates upon completion of formal instruction. Typically, individuals must find their own new appointments or return to their current job. Also, no universal method exists for regular rotation of assignments for civilians, so there is no guarantee that a position commensurate with the education just completed will be available.

The specific features of civilian manpower and personnel systems that result in the general lack of support for total professional development are discussed in the following subsections.

MERIT SYSTEM AND DECENTRALIZED MANAGEMENT

Civilians are not "commissioned" like military officers. They hold rank or grade only by virtue of the position they occupy. Under the merit system, civilians cannot be hired or promoted unless a vacancy exists unlike their military counterparts.

Even when a vacancy does exist, the individual must be aware of it, apply for it, and be competitively selected. No headquarters-level staff member is charged with matching component requirements with the career needs of civilian employees. Authority for defining the grade, qualifications for the job, and making the hiring decision rests with the local supervisor.

The combined result of the merit system and decentralized management is that, unlike military officers, civilians are not subject to periodic review based on their year of entry into service. They are not automatically scheduled for appropriate training and educational opportunities early in their careers. Later in their careers, civilians are not considered for more senior schools at a predetermined time. The review for school attendance is also not associated with promotion or other important career milestone, as is the case for military officers.

VOLUNTARY MOBILITY

Military officers are expected to change duty positions (and often geographic location) on a regular basis. That requirement for periodic change of duty simultaneously satisfies service operational needs and individual professional development goals.

Civilians below the Senior Executive Service level are subject to mandatory mobility only if they agree as a condition for entry into a development program or career field. This means that regular rotation of jobs as part of a scheduled career development program is less likely. Civilians have less opportunity to gain suit-

able, varied assignment experience because there is a lower probability of an appropriate position being available.

SINGLE ACCOUNTING CATEGORY

One result of the military's method of combining technical/functional and managerial/leadership education, training, and experience into a total professional development program is that, at any one time, people are in formal schools and are not available to staff open positions. The military services have recognized this "cost" of professional development and established and budgeted for an Individuals account. There is no comparable account for civilians.

The lack of an Individuals account places an extra burden on both the individual and the parent organization when a civilian professional takes part in a long-term, full-time course.

Initial Findings and Implications

Manpower and personnel management systems for military officers support managerial/leadership development much more effectively than the corresponding systems used for DoD civilians. However, the wholesale adoption of all features of the military system for civilian professionals is not appropriate.

Instituting features such as central control of positions and people, mandatory mobility, and an Individuals account for civilians would require changes in statutes, regulations, and policies. The resources and staff needed to support a "military-like" management system for civilians may be unattainable in today's environment of severely constrained budgets. Finally, civilian professionals are a different category of personnel than military officers. It is not clear that casting programs for civilian managerial/leadership development in the traditional military mold would be effective.

Our approach borrows ideas taken from the best practices of private industry and other government career fields. It also takes advantage of the latest technological advances in education and communication.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

In Chapter 2, we describe the research and analyses that are the bases of our approach to enhancing the professional development program. The description of the research is guided by a set of principles that are central to our philosophy of a professional development program that addresses both technical/functional and managerial/leadership competencies.

We explain how the principles can be implemented into a feasible program in Chapter 2. We identify the segments and size of the workforce that should be subject to the program.

Chapter 3 contains our recommendations. For each of the proposed actions we suggest, an organization that should take the lead is identified. The proposals constitute a plan for implementing the enhanced program as a complement to the existing component programs.

Chapter 2

Foundations of an Enhanced Approach

GENERAL

In this chapter, we explain our approach to an enhanced program of professional development for the DoD acquisition workforce.

We first analyze the current acquisition career development program in terms of how well it supports total professional development. Next, we list the principles on which our approach is founded. We show how the principles can extend the current development program by taking advantage of the best practices used in the private sector and in other career areas in the federal government.

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT PROGRAM

Current procedures for career development of the DoD acquisition workforce are contained in DoD 5000.52-M, *Acquisition Career Development Program*, November 1995. That manual is issued under the authority of DoD Directive 5000.52, *Defense Acquisition Education, Training, and Career Development Program*, 25 October 1991. It implements Chapter 87 of Title 10, United States Code.

The current program establishes experience, education, and training standards for three certification levels in each of 11 acquisition career fields. There are also standards for specific acquisition workforce positions (critical positions, for example), for position categories, and for membership in the acquisition corps.

Responsibility for establishing standards, identifying career paths, and identifying and establishing assignment-specific and continuing education courses is vested in the Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training, and Career Development. Within each component, the Component Acquisition Executive, assisted by the Director of Acquisition Career Management implements the program.

The technical/functional aspects of the current program are well established and uniform across all components. There are areas for improvement within the program, however. Three of the most important areas are managerial/leadership development, continuing professional development, and succession planning.

All of the experience, education, and training standards are defined in terms of technical/functional requirements. Management/leadership competencies are largely ignored. Some of mandatory courses offered by the DAU do include management/leadership development goals. Those goals are set to support more

advanced technical/functional ability, however. Assignments and positions listed in career paths reference only the type of organization and technical/functional duties that are appropriate. Important management/leadership responsibilities are not mentioned.

Continuous learning also is not addressed in sufficient detail. By continuous learning we mean courses, training, and experiences that maintain or update technical/functional and managerial/leadership skills needed in an acquisition position. Continuous learning goes beyond mandatory standards required for certification in the current job. The most evident problem in the current program is the fact that once an individual achieves the highest certification level, there is no further requirement for additional experience, education, or training.

Finally, the current career development program for the acquisition workforce does not address succession planning or the number of individuals at each level (by grade or certification level) that must be prepared to ensure that sufficient professionals are available to assume jobs at the next level. This feature is important because it helps determine how limited education and training resources are allocated.

There is considerable activity underway to rectify those concerns. The Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development is now staffing a proposal for a continuous learning policy that includes an ambitious plan for providing continuous and enhanced experience, education, and training. Each of the components has in place, or is starting, programs that focus on managerial/leadership development to supplement the technical/functional standards. Military officers who are part of the acquisition workforce are already subject to detailed succession plans. However, those plans are part of the overall military service personnel and manpower programs and are not specific to acquisition.

PRINCIPLES FOR ENHANCED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Several effective professional development programs are now in use in government and in the private sector. Most of the government programs rely on legislative, regulatory, or policy support and benefit from generous funding. The best programs are also well publicized, understood, and accepted by the participants and managers.

Our approach is to adopt features of effective professional development programs if they meet three criteria. First, the feature must be appropriate for use in enhancing professional development for the target population—the acquisition workforce. Second, implementation of the feature must not depend on changes in statutes. Third, the funding required to implement the feature must be reasonable in the current environment of constrained resources.

Analysis of the features of effective professional development programs, in terms of the three criteria, generated principles for guiding our work. Those principles are discarded next.

Program Defined Over Entire Career

To attract high-caliber individuals, a professional development program should offer a range of opportunities at each career stage or career level. There should also be a clear definition of paths that lead to advancement to the most senior positions. The current career program for the DoD acquisition workforce includes a thorough definition of the technical/functional requirements for lateral and upward movement. The opportunity to gain experience, education, and training to meet those requirements is also provided. The same is not true for managerial/leadership requirements.

A planned system of building managerial/leadership competencies should be incorporated into the overall development program. It is not reasonable to expect individuals to become proficient managers/leaders without some planned development scheme. That scheme should begin early in a career.

In lower-grade jobs, it is appropriate to emphasize technical/functional capability. In those grades, professionals concentrate on the technical/functional aspects of their jobs and encounter only basic managerial/leadership challenges. Those junior professionals need to be exposed to fundamental management/leadership skills such as communication and problem-solving. It is not advisable to limit development opportunities for that group since they have not had the opportunity to demonstrate their managerial/leadership potential. We believe that at civilian grades GS-12 and below and military grades O-3 and below, managerial/leadership development should be available to the entire workforce.

As professionals advance to higher-grade positions, they begin to assume managerial/leadership responsibilities. At the highest levels, management/leadership responsibilities may outweigh technical functional duties. More advanced abilities, like planning, evaluating, and team building, should be introduced as the individuals begin to assume managerial/leadership responsibility.

A selective managerial/leadership development program is appropriate for more senior acquisition professionals, say civilian grades GS-13 and above, and military grades O-4 and above. Individuals in those grades are eligible for membership in the DoD acquisition corps and constitute a logical starting point for a selective professional development program. From that group, professionals who demonstrate potential for higher positions should participate in the program.

Program Size Meets DoD Requirements

Civilians in the DoD acquisition system are appointed or hired to positions that are needed and can be funded within budget.

The pool of applicants for acquisition positions should be large enough to support informed hiring decisions. If the number of candidates for a given job is too limited, it may not be possible to find a suitable individual.

It is not advisable to prepare too many candidates for higher-grade positions, however. Education and training is expensive and can create a personnel management burden for DoD organizations. Furthermore, providing education and training for higher-level positions can create expectations for the individual. If those expectations are not met, morale and effectiveness may be undermined.

The size of the professional development program should be designed to meet DoD position requirements while providing an appropriate degree of selectivity for the appointing authorities. We developed a straightforward technique for estimating the number of acquisition professionals in grades GS-13 through GS-15 who should take part in the selective managerial/leadership development program. The technique is described in Appendix A.

Our technique uses the number of individuals in each grade (GS-13 through GS-15), the number of positions required in each of those grades, the amount of time an individual can expect to spend in grade, and the desired selectivity (ratio of candidates to number of positions) to produce planning figures for the size of the selective managerial/leadership program.

Based on our technique, the initial estimates of the size of the selective managerial/leadership program for the entire acquisition workforce are shown in Table 2-1. Those figures represent steady-state participation. For example, at any given time, the goal should be to have 15 percent of the GS-13 population in the acquisition workforce participating in specialized managerial/leadership training

Table 2-1. Estimates of Annual Professional Development Requirements for Civilian Acquisition Professionals

Civilian grade	Percentage of grade
GS-13	15
GS-14	40
GS-15	10

to prepare for GS-14 positions. Being a candidate does not guarantee appointment to the next higher grade. The appointing authority makes the final decision.¹

Our technique also provides estimates of the size of the selective managerial/leadership program for components, acquisition career fields, and occupational specialties. The technique is designed to facilitate coordination between Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) planners and component career managers in programming funds and scheduling development activities.

Integrated Technical/Functional and Managerial/Leadership Development

We noted in the first principle that professional development programs should address technical/functional and managerial/leadership competencies over the course of an entire career. Those two sets of competencies should be addressed in an integrated manner.

The specific types of technical/functional abilities required for each certification level are already defined. Equally detailed information on managerial/leadership abilities needed at each certification level also must be derived. Once the managerial/leadership abilities are known, they can be incorporated with the technical/functional abilities to describe the specific types of experience, including learning outcomes, that are to be gained by formal education and training and by experience at all stages in a career.

Extensive research of managerial/leadership models used by the private sector and the federal government, including the Defense Systems Management College, demonstrated that the Leadership Effectiveness Framework (LEF) provides a useful construct for our analysis. The LEF is a competency-based model of 22 managerial/leadership competencies that have been identified as important to federal supervisors, managers, and executives. The original model was developed by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in the mid-1980s. It is based on a survey of over 20,000 professionals serving in the federal government. The LEF addresses general managerial/leadership competencies. Although not designed specifically for acquisition disciplines, the LEF provides a useful reference.

The Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI) is the survey instrument associated with the LEF. The LEI contains 96 questions that relate to the 22 managerial/leadership competencies. For each of the 96 questions, the respondent is asked to rate the required proficiency for the job and their personal current proficiency. There are also provisions for an individual's supervisor, peers, and direct reportees (subordinates) to perform the same ratings. Together, the LEF and LEI can

¹ It is also important to develop plans to ensure that the proper number of military officers are prepared to assume leadership positions in the acquisition workforce. That planning is accomplished by the military services as part of the officer programs.

help assess managerial/leadership development needs and tailor development programs in response to those needs. That process can be performed for both individuals and organizations.²

We surveyed 2,000 acquisition professionals and their supervisors to assess the managerial/leadership development priorities for the acquisition workforce. The survey was designed to capture information on civilian and military personnel, DoD components (defense agencies were considered as a group), civilian and military personnel by component, and the acquisition career field.

We found that, according to members of the acquisition workforce and their supervisors, there are managerial/leadership development needs. Some of the development needs involve competencies that should be addressed early in an individual's career.

Those findings substantiate our view that complete professional development of the acquisition workforce should include both technical/functional and managerial/leadership competencies. Furthermore, both sets of competencies should be addressed over the course of an entire career.

Appendix B contains detailed information on the LEF competencies, the LEI, and the results of the survey.

Program Design Complements Existing Systems

All of the military departments and the defense agencies conduct professional development programs to meet their specific needs. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) is in the early stages of establishing the Defense Leadership and Management Program, a department-wide program to help develop senior civilian leaders. The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology is initiating a continuous learning program designed to make senior leaders for the acquisition workforce. Those programs have goals that support professional development. Any additional standards or requirements imposed by an emerging professional development program should be complementary.

Clearly, the mission or purpose of the OSD-level program should accommodate the goals of existing development programs. The OSD-level program also should support specific features of existing programs. For example, the Army has established a Competitive Development Group program for its acquisition workforce. Members of the Competitive Development Group receive expanded training, leadership, and career development opportunities in a structured 3-year program. The Air Force relies on "whole person scores" to evaluate the potential of

² On 16 September 1997, OPM's acting director approved a revised set of executive core qualifications. Those revised qualifications were scheduled to take effect on 1 January 1998. The LEF and the LEI are currently being changed in response to the revised standards.

acquisition workforce members in certain career fields. The Navy Civilian Leadership Development Continuum prescribes mentoring, training, and developmental assignments. The effectiveness of those component measures should be enhanced, not restricted by the OSD-level program.

Experience, education, and training opportunities offered and recommended by component programs also should be recognized by the OSD-level program (within the constraints of the certification standards).

Multiple Program Paths

There should be several options for attaining the education and training prescribed by the professional development program.

Traditionally, DoD sends emerging leaders to full-time, long-term courses that last for 6 months or longer. Examples of those courses are the “intermediate and senior professional military education” courses of the military services, the programs at the National Defense University (to include the Senior Acquisition Course), and fellowships at civilian colleges and universities. Long-term, full-time education and training is valuable, and DoD should continue to take full advantage of all such opportunities. However, there are not enough quotas for long-term, full-time training and education to meet the needs of the acquisition workforce, especially for civilian professionals. Furthermore, it is very difficult to maintain organizational effectiveness and support many civilians attending long-term, full-time training and education.

There should be recognized, equivalent alternatives to long-term, full-time training that present comparable material and produce the same training or educational benefits. Alternative methods can take advantage of correspondence options, grouping and sequencing of instruction in short duration over extended periods, and distance learning.

Figure 2-1 shows three general alternatives for providing managerial/leadership education and training to support professional development for the acquisition workforce. Individuals in grades GS-12 and below are offered the current training and education opportunities. They participate in their component’s program on an open, nonselective basis. The alternatives apply to individuals in grades GS-13 and above who are *selected* to participate in the program.

The first alternative features long-term, full-time courses that are traditionally provided by DoD. The second alternative includes short-term or part-time courses typically used by DoD; those offerings are sequenced to provide an experience that is equivalent to long-term, full-time approach. The third alternative involves the most diverse set of courses; short-term courses, workshops, and seminars provided by private-sector organizations are featured.

Figure 2-1. Alternative Paths for Professional Development

Certification level	Level I	Level II	Level III (selective programs)		
Grade	GS-5 through GS-9	GS-9 through GS-12	GS-13	GS-14 and GS-15	SES
Career category	Entry level/interns	Nonsupervisory	Supervisors	Managers	Executives
Managerial/leadership development goals	Basic-level LEF competencies		First-level LEF competencies	Mid-level LEF competencies	Higher-level LEF competencies
Traditional long-term, full-time courses	Nonselective program: • Open to all individuals • Courses required by components ➢ Orientation ➢ Intern ➢ Supervisory ➢ Management/leadership		• Resident intermediate/senior professional military education • Senior acquisition course at ICAF • Fully funded, full-time graduate study • Fellowships at civilian colleges and universities • Federally sponsored fellowships		
Traditional short-term, part-time courses			• Correspondence intermediate/senior professional military education • Part-time and tuition-assisted graduate study • Federal executive institute • Defense Leadership And Management Program • Seminars/workshops at civilian colleges and universities • Executive leadership course		
Nontraditional courses			• Workshops/seminars provided by private institutions • Workshops/seminars provided by vendors • Defense acquisition corps institute • Contractor training funded by DoD organizations • Distance learning offerings		

Note: ICAF = Industrial College of the Armed Forces; LEF = Leadership Effectiveness Framework; SES = Senior Executive Service.

The courses listed in Figure 2-1 are listed as examples. They are not presented as an approved or exclusive listing. Also, taking a course on one of the alternative paths early in a career does not preclude participation in a program listed on another path later in a career.

Figure 2-1 is limited to managerial/leadership development opportunities. In many cases, the technical/functional certification standards for acquisition career fields already have multiple paths to fulfillment. We show how the technical/functional offerings are combined with managerial/leadership courses at the end of the chapter.

Program Employs Best Practices

Other federal agencies, allied nations, and private companies also face the challenge of conducting professional development programs that are effective and economical in terms of time and resources. The best practices of those institutions should be employed whenever possible.

Techniques like “just-in-time” training and experiential learning, when used in conjunction with multiple development paths, can enhance DoD’s professional development program for the acquisition workforce.

APPLYING THE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Each of the principles that form the foundation of our proposal for an enhanced professional development program for DoD’s acquisition workforce are important in their own right. However, the principles have the greatest impact when implemented as a set.

In Figure 2-2 we show how the principles are used to create an total professional development program that integrates technical/functional and managerial/leadership competencies.

There are three sets of standards (mandatory technical/functional, desired technical/functional, and managerial/leadership) for each of the three development paths. The mandatory and desired technical/functional standards are the same for each of the three development paths. The managerial/leadership standards correspond to the types of offerings listed in Figure 2-1.

The mandatory technical/functional standards meet the certification requirements for each level. The desired standards provide broadened technical/functional qualifications and prepare individuals for the next certification level.

As indicated in Figure 2-1, individuals below the grade of GS-13 participate in open, nonselective managerial/leadership programs to satisfy component requirements. Civilian acquisition professionals in grades GS-13 and above may be selected for enhanced managerial/professional development. Selection for the program is based on position requirements and individual performance and potential.

Using the principles together produces multiple advantages. For example, by offering multiple options for meeting the desired standards and using the DoD program to complement existing programs, members of the acquisition workforce gain a broader perspective on their duties and can relate to their counterparts in other organizations more effectively. The organization also realizes more flexibility in planning for professional development opportunities.

Certificate Levels		
Grade		SES
Career category		Executives
Managerial/leadership development		Higher-level LEF competencies
Long-term, full-time development path	Mandatory technical functional standards Desired technical standards Managerial/leadership standards	Level III certification in primary career field Level III certification in secondary career field Capstone courses graduate fellowships
Short-term, part-time development path	Mandatory technical functional standards Desired technical standards Managerial/leadership standards	Level III certification in primary career field Level III certification in secondary career field Center for creative Leadership Executive Leadership
Non-traditional development path	Mandatory technical functional standards Desired technical standards Managerial/leadership standards	Level III certification in primary career field Level III certification in secondary career field Private institute courses federal/contractor courses

Note: DACI = Defense Acquisition Corps Institute education.

Chapter 3

Recommendations

GENERAL

Senior members of the DoD acquisition workforce, especially civilian professionals, should be developed according to a formal, uniform plan that addresses managerial/leadership competencies as well as technical/functional skills and abilities. Furthermore, there should be a formal program of continuous learning to enable acquisition professionals to maintain overall competence at the level required by their position.

In this chapter, we present our recommendations to enhance the existing acquisition career development program. The recommendations support a system that better prepares members for critical leadership jobs.

MODIFY POLICY

Department of Defense Directive 5000.52, *Defense Acquisition Education, Training, and Career Development Program*, 25 October 1991, sets policy for education, training, and experience standards for the acquisition workforce. The wording in that directive is general.¹ Specific standards are listed in DoD manual 5000.52-M, *Acquisition Career Development Program*, November 1995.

Because of the existing formats for defining education, training, and experience standards, we recommend that policy for the enhanced professional development program for the acquisition workforce be stated in DoD manual 5000.52-M. Specifically, we recommend that the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology do the following:

- ◆ Establish managerial/leadership standards or competencies to supplement the existing technical/functional standards for each of the three certification levels for each of the acquisition career fields.
- ◆ Establish continuous learning requirements for all members of the acquisition workforce.

¹ The specific wording is “The USD(A&T) shall establish education, training, and experience standards for each acquisition position based on the level of complexity of duties carried out in that position. Those standards shall be designated as either “mandatory” or “desired” and shall provide a DoD-wide, common foundation of knowledge necessary to ensure that the acquisition workforce is fully proficient in the acquisition process.”

We describe the procedure of establishing the managerial/leadership competencies and continuous learning requirements to be included in the enhanced program of professional development in the next section.

Our discussion of implementation procedures emphasizes the needs of civilian professionals. The enhanced program also applies to military officers. However, all of the military departments have effective systems for professional development, and we believe that the provisions of the enhanced system can be readily incorporated into those systems.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development should take the lead in implementing the policy that establishes managerial/leadership competencies and continuous learning requirements. During the implementation process the Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training, and Career Development should work closely with the functional boards and the directors of acquisition career management in each of the components.

Specifically, the Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training, and Career Development should take action in five areas:

- ◆ Work with the Components to determine the size of the selective professional development programs for civilian professionals in grades GS-13 and above.

Our model (see Appendix A) provides estimates of the number of civilian professionals in grades GS-13, GS-14, and GS-15 who should participate in the selective program. Those estimates are available for each component and the entire DoD acquisition workforce. The estimates should be coordinated with personnel and manpower managers to ensure that the estimates reflect conditions that may be unique to the components and that planned programming actions are considered.

- ◆ Work with the components to determine the funding necessary to support mandatory, enhanced, and continuous learning development programs.

The enhanced professional development program and the continuous learning program will require funding support. That support likely will affect funding for the existing mandatory certification program. Plans for addressing the likely impact of the enhanced and continuous learning programs should be developed with advice from component representatives.

- ◆ Establish, fund, and facilitate a system that provides regular review and monitoring of the managerial/leadership competency needs of the acquisition workforce.

We used the Leadership Effectiveness Framework and Leadership Effectiveness Inventory to perform an initial assessment of the managerial/leadership competencies needs of the acquisition workforce. That assessment is in Appendix B. Those competencies should be reviewed on a regular schedule to ensure that development goals continue to reflect development needs. We envision a system in which the Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development obtains funding for, and establishes the mechanism for, the review. Components would then submit plans for reviewing certain segments of the acquisition workforce (e.g., a specific organization, a career field, and/or a certification level). The Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development would then coordinate survey plans and allocate review quotas to ensure that the managerial/leadership competencies of the acquisition workforce are thoroughly and uniformly analyzed on a regular basis. An appropriate framework and survey instrument (we recommend the Leadership Effectiveness Framework and Leadership Effectiveness Inventory that is currently being revised) should be adopted for the regular reviews.

- ◆ Provide an advisory service that identifies education and training opportunities appropriate for acquisition workforce professional development.

Our proposed enhanced professional development program includes a complete range of education and training opportunities. Long-term, full-time traditional courses; short-term, part-time offerings; workshops; seminars; conferences; correspondence study; and distance-learning programs are all viable options. The set of appropriate education and training opportunities will be dynamic. The Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development should maintain a listing of appropriate offerings for use by the components.

- ◆ Provide advice for, and facilitate, cross-functional and cross-component developmental assignments.

It is important to integrate education and training with job experience. For some professionals, it may be important to gain experience in more than one acquisition career field or more than one component. The Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development should establish a service to assist in arranging assignments outside the component. Such assignments could include these outside the primary acquisition career field.

SUMMARY

Our recommendations provide the outline of a plan to implement the enhanced professional development program for DoD's acquisition workforce.

The plan starts with the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology formally establishing managerial/leadership competencies and continuous learning requirements as part of the professional development program. Those standards augment the existing technical/functional requirements.

The Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development then takes the lead in implementing the policy. Close coordination with the functional boards and the directors of acquisition management will help ensure that the enhanced program complements the efforts already underway within the components.

Appendix A

Estimating the Size of the Professional Developmental Program

GENERAL

It is important to prepare the proper number of acquisition professionals for senior leadership positions. There must be enough candidates for senior jobs to ensure that qualified individuals can be hired. It is not advisable to open the development for all members of the acquisition workforce, however. Education and training is expensive and can create a personnel management burden for DoD organizations.

In this appendix, we describe our technique for estimating the size of the selective managerial/leadership program for civilian professionals in the acquisition workforce. We do not address the number of military officers that need to be developed for senior acquisition positions because that planning is accomplished by each service's manpower and professional development program.

APPROACH TO ESTIMATING SIZE

Program Size

The process of developing detailed estimates of the size of personnel programs is complex. Information on the number of individuals by grade, occupational series, and organizational assignment must be contrasted with organizational position requirements by considering promotion and retention patterns and long-range funding for positions. In general, such detailed data on personnel patterns are not available for civilian professionals. Furthermore, civilian professionals are not managed according to their time in service or time in grade; there are no scheduled promotion points as there are for military officers. Finally, the civilian system is not "closed." It is possible to fill a vacant position by hiring an individual from outside the DoD system.

Number to Be Trained

Our approach provides the steady-state estimate of the number of civilians who should participate in the selective managerial/leadership development program each year. This estimate is the number of individuals who, at any given point in time, should be in the process of being prepared for positions at the next higher grade. The technique applies to individuals in grade GS-13 preparing for grade

GS-14, individuals in grade GS-14 preparing for grade GS-15, and individuals in grade GS-15 preparing for Senior Executive Service (SES) positions. All acquisition professionals below the grade of GS-13 participate in an open, nonselective program.

ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL TO BE TRAINED EACH YEAR

The estimation technique first considers the number of positions required in a given grade. For example, to estimate the number of civilian professionals in grade GS-13 to participate in the selective program, the position requirements for grade GS-14 are targeted. There are about 7,800 total GS-14 positions in the acquisition workforce. That number would be the target for the GS-13 estimate.

The second factor in the technique is the time an individual can expect to serve in a given grade before being appointed to the next higher grade. In the example for GS-13 personnel, we consider the mean time a civilian professional spends as a GS-13 before being appointed to GS-14.¹ Assuming that mean time in grade is 5 years, the technique then calculates the quotient of the target and the mean time in grade:

7,800 GS-14 position requirements / 5 years mean time in grade as GS-13 = 1,560 GS-13 positions
ready to be promoted, per year.

The last step in the technique is to include the selectivity factor. The selectivity factor is the desired number of candidates to be considered for each potential vacancy at the next higher grade. Suppose the goal is to have two qualified GS-13 candidates available for each potential GS-14 vacancy. The number of participants would be

1,560 positions per year × 2 candidates per position = 3,160 candidates must be fully trained
in any given year.

The interpretation of the estimate is that 3,160 or about 3,200 individuals in grade GS-13 should be participating in the selective managerial/leadership professional development at any point in time.

That process is repeated for each grade level (GS-14 to GS-15 and GS-15 to SES) to determine the size of the total selective managerial/leadership professional development program.

¹ Not all individuals will be appointed to the next higher grade. The technique considers the mean time in grade only for individuals who are appointed to the next higher grade.

USING THE ESTIMATE

We do not envision that the technique would be applied to the total number of positions in the acquisition workforce for a given grade. The inputs for mean time in grade before appointment to the next higher grade and selectivity factor are best determined for each acquisition career field within each component.

The technique should be applied to each acquisition career field within each component and then summed to determine the DoD total. The figures in Chapter 2 are based on our estimates of mean time in grade before appointment to the next higher grade and desired selectivity for each acquisition career field within each component.

In practice, the Office of the Director of Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development would work with the directors of acquisition career management and the functional boards to use the best estimates for the input factors or apply another appropriate estimation technique.

Appendix B

Leadership Effectiveness Framework and Leadership Effectiveness Inventory

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS FRAMEWORK

The Leadership Effectiveness Framework (LEF) is a continuum of supervisory, managerial, and executive competencies that have been determined to be important for successful performance in the federal sector. The 22 competencies that comprise the LEF are based on a validated study of 20,664 federal supervisors, managers, and executives.

There are four categories of LEF competencies: basic, first-level, mid-level, and higher-level. All professionals, even individuals at entry-level grades, need to master the basic competencies. As professionals progress to higher grade positions, they should increase their proficiency in the basic competencies and begin to develop new abilities. Supervisors need to be proficient in the basic competencies and first-level competencies. Managers should master basic, first-level, and mid-level competencies. Executives should be proficient in basic, first-level, mid-level, and higher-level competencies.

The LEF competencies, listed by category, are described in the sections below.¹

Basic Competencies Needed by All Professionals

Decisiveness: Takes action and risks when needed; makes difficult decisions when necessary.

Flexibility: Adapts to change in the work environment; effectively copes with stress.

Interpersonal Skills: Considers and responds appropriately to the needs, feelings, capabilities, and interests of others; provides feedback; treats others equitably.

Leadership: Demonstrates and encourages high standards of behavior; adapts leadership style to situations and people; empowers, motivates, and guides others.

¹ United States Office of Personnel Management, *Occupational Study of Federal Executives, Managers, and Supervisors: An Application of the Multipurpose Occupational Systems Analysis Inventory—Closed Ended (MOSAIC)*, 1992, pp. 3–4.

Oral Communication: Listens to others; makes clear and effective oral presentations to individuals and groups.

Problem-Solving: Recognizes and defines problems; analyzes relevant information; encourages alternative solutions and plans to solve problems.

Self-Direction: Realistically assesses own strengths, weaknesses, and impact on others; seeks feedback from others; works persistently towards a goal; demonstrates self-confidence; invests in self-development; manages own time efficiently.

Technical Competence: Demonstrates technical proficiency and an understanding of its impact in areas of responsibility.

Written Communication: Communicates effectively in writing; reviews and critiques others' writing.

Additional First-Level Competencies Needed by Supervisors

Conflict Management: Anticipates and seeks to resolve confrontations, disagreements, and complaints in a constructive manner.

Human Resource Management: Ensures effective recruitment, selection, training, performance appraisal, recognition, and corrective/disciplinary action; promotes affirmative employment, good labor relations, and employee well-being.

Influencing/Negotiating: Networks with, and provides information to, key groups and individuals; appropriately uses negotiation, persuasion, and authority in dealing with others to achieve goals.

Managing Diverse Workforce: Recognizes the value of cultural, ethnic, gender, and other individual differences; provides employment and development opportunities for a diverse workforce.

Team Building: Fosters cooperation, communication, and consensus among groups.

Additional Mid-Level Competencies Needed by Managers

Creative Thinking: Develops insights and solutions; fosters innovation among others.

Customer Orientation: Actively seeks customer input; ensures customer needs are met; continuously seeks to improve the quality of services, products, and processes.

Financial Management: Prepares and justifies budget; monitors expenses; manages procurement and contracting.

Management Controls/Integrity: Ensures the integrity of the organization's processes; promotes ethical and effective practices.

Planning and Evaluating: Establishes policies, guidelines, plans, and priorities; identifies required resources; plans and coordinates with others; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes; improves organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Technology Management: Encourages staff to stay informed about new technology; applies new technologies to organizational change.

Additional Higher-Level Competencies Needed by Executives

External Awareness: Stays informed on laws, policies, politics, Administration priorities, trends, special interests, and other issues; considers external impact of statements or actions; uses information in decision-making.

Vision: Creates a shared vision of the organization; promotes wide ownership; champions organizational change.

LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS INVENTORY

The Leadership Effectiveness Inventory (LEI) is a systematic assessment instrument designed to measure the leadership competencies important to successful performance in a federal position.

The LEI can be used to assess both the leadership competency needed for the job (required proficiency level) and the leadership competency of the individual (current proficiency level). It consists of 96 leadership tasks and activities derived from the LEF competencies. For each of the 96 tasks and activities, a rating is recorded for both the required proficiency level and the current proficiency level. The rating scale is as follows:²

- ◆ 1—No Proficiency
- ◆ 2—Low Proficiency
- ◆ 3—Moderate Proficiency
- ◆ 4—High Proficiency

² United States Office of Personnel Management, *Occupational Study of Federal Executives, Managers, and Supervisors: An Application of the Multipurpose Occupational Systems Analysis Inventory—Closed Ended (MOSAIC)*, 1992, p. 11.

◆ 5-Very High Proficiency

◆ D-Don't Know.

An automated reporting evaluates the ratings for the required proficiency level, current proficiency level, and the difference between the two ratings. Development priorities for the individual can then be identified. When the LEI is administered to groups of individuals, managerial/leadership development needs and priorities for those groups can be assessed.

Typically, the LEI is administered to both an individual and the individual's supervisor.³ That technique provides different perspectives on managerial/leadership development priorities that can be useful for organizational planning and programming.

Application of the LEI to the Acquisition Workforce

To assist in the initial assessment of the managerial/leadership needs of the DoD acquisition workforce, we administered the LEI to a random sample of civilian and military acquisition professionals.

The sample consisted of 1,250 civilians in the grades of GS-14 and above and 350 military officers in the grades of O-5 and above. We selected the sample to ensure adequate representation by personnel type (i.e., civilian and military professionals); component (three military departments and the defense agencies as one group); personnel type by component and acquisition career field. The grades selected correspond to critical acquisition positions that carry significant responsibility in supervision or management.

We asked each individual in the sample to make two ratings: the required proficiency level for their present job and their current proficiency level. Individuals in the sample also were asked to have their direct supervisor rate the proficiency level required of the individual's job. To ensure that the survey would not be interpreted as a performance rating, we did not ask the direct supervisor to rate the individual's current proficiency level.

Results of LEI Survey of the Acquisition Workforce

Of the total 1,600-person sample, 411 civilians (32 percent) and 92 military officers (26 percent) responded. The responses verified our belief that managerial/leadership competencies are important to success in senior positions in the acquisition workforce.

³ The LEI also can be administered to peers and individuals who are under the supervision of the individual (direct reportees or subordinates).

We analyzed the responses for the entire sample and for each of the groups represented in the experimental design. Overall, we found that the supervisors' ratings of required proficiency level equal the individuals' ratings. The ratings of required proficiency level and current proficiency level are similar across components and between civilian and military acquisition professionals. The required proficiency level and current proficiency level rating are more varied across the acquisition career fields.

In order to prioritize the development needs for members of the acquisition workforce, we formulated a scoring system. The system addresses the difference of an individual's rating of required proficiency level and current proficiency level (current proficiency level minus required proficiency level) and the associated supervisor's rating of required proficiency level. A series of straightforward calculations produces a list of development priorities in terms of the LEF competencies. In Table B-1, we show the development priorities along with the number of survey responses received by category of sample subgroup.

We provided the methodology and the results of our analysis to the directors of acquisition career management for each of the components and the directors of the functional boards.

Table B-1. Summary of Managerial/Leadership Development Priorities

Category	Civilian responses	Military responses	Total responses	Development priorities
Department of the Army	113	18	131	• Customer orientation • Flexibility • Self-direction
Department of the Navy	113	26	139	• Customer orientation • Flexibility • Self-direction
Department of the Air Force	81	44	125	• Customer orientation • Flexibility • Conflict management
Defense agencies	103	4	107	• Customer orientation • Flexibility • Oral communication
Program management	68	29	97	• Conflict management • Customer orientation • Flexibility
Communications-computer systems	27	9	36	• Conflict management • Customer orientation • Flexibility
Contracting	43	9	52	• Customer orientation • Flexibility • Self-direction
Industrial/contract property management	2	0	2	• Planning and evaluating
Systems planning, research, development and engineering	69	15	84	• Conflict management • Creative thinking • Flexibility
Test and evaluation	40	12	52	• Customer orientation • Oral communication • Flexibility
Manufacturing, production, and quality assurance	20	7	27	• Flexibility • Influencing/negotiating • Self-direction
Acquisition logistics	37	6	43	• Flexibility • Customer orientation • Self-direction
Business, cost estimating, and financial management	49	7	56	• Flexibility • Customer orientation • Self-direction
Auditing	51	0	51	• Flexibility • Customer orientation • Creative thinking

Appendix C

Abbreviations

AET&CD	Acquisition Education, Training, and Career Development
DACI	Defense Acquisition Corps Institute
DAU	Defense Acquisition University
DoD	Department of Defense
GS	General Schedule
ICAF	Industrial College of the Armed Forces
LEF	Leadership Effectiveness Framework
LEI	Leadership Effectiveness Inventory
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
SES	Senior Executive Service
USD(A&T)	Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology (formerly USD(A))

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