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**COMMERCE ACQUISITION MANUAL  
1301.6**

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
ACQUISITION CAREER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Training, Certification and  
Contracting Officer Warrant Program

# COMMERCE ACQUISITION MANUAL 1301.6

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## Acquisition Career Management Program

### Section 1 – Overview

#### 1.1 Background

The quality and effectiveness of the federal acquisition process depend on the development of a capable and competent workforce. Congress recognized the need for a professional workforce through the passage of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) (10 U.S.C. §§ 1741-46) and the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Act (41 U.S.C. § 433) which established education, training, and experience requirements for entry and advancement in the acquisition career fields for the Department of Defense (DOD) and civilian agencies respectively.

On June 24, 1992, OFPP issued Policy Letter 92-3, Procurement Professionalism Program Policy – Training for Contracting Personnel, which established policies for skill-based training in contracting and purchasing duties for all executive agencies. Subsequently, in response to the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 (40 U.S.C. § 1401(3)), OFPP issued Policy Letter 97-01, Procurement System Education, Training and Experience Requirements for Acquisition Personnel, dated September 12, 1997, which established career management, education, and training requirements for contracting personnel in civilian executive agencies.

Building on the previous efforts to improve the development of the acquisition workforce, OFPP issued Policy Letter 05-01, Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce, dated April 15, 2005, which rescinded Policy Letters 92-3 and 97-01 and consolidated OFPP policy on acquisition workforce development. Policy Letter 05-01 established the government-wide framework for creating a federal acquisition workforce with the skills necessary to deliver best value supplies and services, find the best business solutions, and provide strategic business advice to accomplish agency missions.

#### 1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Department of Commerce (DOC) Acquisition Career Management Program is to provide the framework and establish procedures for implementing the requirements of OFPP Policy Letter 05-01.

#### 1.3 Applicability

The Acquisition Career Management Program is applicable to the following acquisition workforce employees within the Department of Commerce:

- All employees in the contracting series (GS-1102)
- All employees in the purchasing series (GS-1105)
- All employees in the procurement clerical and technician series (GS-1106)
- All warranted Contracting Officers, regardless of series, with authority to obligate funds above the micro-purchase threshold

#### 1.4 Program Objectives

The primary objectives of the DOC Acquisition Career Management Program are to improve the capabilities and management of the Department's acquisition workforce by attracting, selecting, developing and retaining a highly qualified, diverse workforce capable of performing current and future acquisition functions; prepare future key

leaders; provide career guidance and opportunities for broadening experiences and progression in the career field; and ensure effective use of training and education resources. Successful implementation of the program will result in a professional, agile and motivated workforce that consistently makes smart business decisions, and delivers timely and affordable capabilities to meet the mission of the Department.

## 1.5 Core Competencies

Historically acquisition professionals have approached contracting from a process-based perspective. Acquisition reforms, technology-driven changes in work processes, and the focus on leveraging outcomes and results have driven new ways of doing business in the Federal government. Legislation, such as the Government Performance and Results Act, the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act, the Service Acquisition Reform Act and the Clinger-Cohen Act, has been enacted that has impacted the nature of tasks performed by the acquisition workforce and moved the government toward acquiring services and products that meet established performance measures and outcomes.

Today, acquisition professionals serve as business advisors, responsible for the entire business cycle, from using relevant marketplace knowledge to develop strategies, to managing contractor performance and maintaining useful business relationships into the future. Successful acquisitions now require a fresh, results-oriented view of the process with acquisition professionals serving as advisors to their stakeholders.

The transformation from a process-based view of contracting to a results-oriented view requires new standards of performance within the acquisition community, which requires new skills and knowledge. The Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) has identified and validated a set of professional business and technical competencies essential for effectively performing contracting duties. At the heart of the acquisition career model are nine core capabilities:

- Develop, negotiate and manage business deals
- Communicate effectively
- Manage and lead change
- Solve problems in an ambiguous environment
- Analyze and understand the marketplace
- Build and manage relationships across functions and organizations
- Understand and effectively operate in the customer environment
- Develop and implement outcome oriented solutions; and
- Execute.

Competencies combine knowledge, skills and abilities with behavior and other characteristics needed to successfully accomplish assignments in an acquisition environment. The competencies reinforce the need for business acumen, customer service, flexibility, leadership, and integrity and are the focus for training and development. The essential contracting competencies are summarized in Figure 1-1, Professional Business Competencies, Figure 1-2, Technical Competencies by Acquisition Phase and Figure 1-3, Technical Competencies for Specific Application. A description of each of the competencies is available at <http://www.fai.gov/acm/concomp.asp> and provided in Appendix B.

**Figure 1-1 Professional Business Competencies**

<b>Professional Business Competencies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oral Communication</li> <li>▪ Decision-Making</li> <li>▪ Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>▪ Problem Solving</li> <li>▪ Teamwork</li> <li>▪ Reasoning (analysis)</li> <li>▪ Customer Service</li> <li>▪ Reading</li> <li>▪ Attention to Detail</li> <li>▪ Contracting/Procurement</li> <li>▪ Influencing/Negotiating</li> <li>▪ Integrity/Honesty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Planning and Evaluating</li> <li>▪ Flexibility</li> <li>▪ Self-Management/Initiative</li> <li>▪ Stress Tolerance</li> <li>▪ Writing</li> <li>▪ Creative Thinking</li> <li>▪ Learning</li> <li>▪ Self-Esteem</li> <li>▪ Information Management</li> <li>▪ Memory</li> <li>▪ Arithmetic</li> <li>▪ Math Reasoning</li> </ul>

**Figure 1-2 Technical Competencies by Acquisition Phase**

<b>Technical Competencies (by acquisition phase)</b>		
<b>Acquisition Planning</b>	<b>Contract Formation</b>	<b>Contract Administration</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategic Planning</li> <li>▪ Understanding the Marketplace</li> <li>▪ Understanding Sourcing</li> <li>▪ Defining Government Requirements in Commercial and Noncommercial terms</li> <li>▪ Effective Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Defining Business Relationships</li> <li>▪ Detailed Evaluation Skills</li> <li>▪ Effective Negotiation and Analytical Skills</li> <li>▪ Effective Award Resolution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective Communication of Contract Requirements</li> <li>▪ Effective Performance Management</li> </ul>

**Figure 1-3 Technical Competencies for Specific Application**

<b>Technical Competencies (for specific application)</b>	
<b>Payment and Accounting</b>	<b>Contract Closeout and Termination</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial Management</li> <li>▪ Allowability of contract cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effectively resolving contract termination or closeout</li> </ul>

## 1.6 Career Paths for the Contracting Series (GS-1102)

The Department of Commerce has identified three career paths for the contracting series, which are designed to facilitate the development of the necessary competencies needed by the acquisition workforce to progress to senior acquisition levels. Within career paths there are experience, education, formal training and development programs, and informal growth and development opportunities. Requirements identified in each level are cumulative. All requirements for each lower level must be met in order to move to the next level.

The career paths will assist employees in planning career development activities and setting goals for accomplishing the necessary training. Pathways for career progression include both vertical and lateral movement. Lateral movement within and between career fields is highly encouraged, primarily at the intermediate level. Lateral

movements broaden the acquisition professional's experience base and can be accomplished through details, developmental opportunities and rotational assignments. Multi-specialty experience, for upper-level positions, is important for individuals who strive to secure work assignments and training in more than one of the functional areas of acquisition.

A guide to determining career path development is provided in paragraphs 1.6.1 through 1.6.3. Figure 1-4, Model Acquisition Career Paths, outlines the career paths for the contracting series and incorporates the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Qualification Standard for Contract Specialists and the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) requirements. Grades are typical and should not imply a direct correlation with timing for promotion or completing the experience, education, and training standards.

#### **1.6.1 Level I (Junior)**

Entry level standards target grades 5 and 7, or the equivalent, and are designed to establish fundamental competencies and expertise in an individual's job series or career field. Development at the entry level lays the foundation for career progression and is designed to prepare qualified and motivated personnel for positions of increasing responsibility. At the entry level, individuals are exposed to fundamental acquisition procedures and the roles of various support functions such as pricing, property administration and quality assurance.

#### **1.6.2 Level II (Intermediate)**

Intermediate level standards target grades 9 through 12, or the equivalent, and emphasize specialization. Development continues and includes on-the-job rotational assignments. As the employee progresses to the higher grades within this level they are introduced to basic management principles through training and development assignments. Although specialization is emphasized at the beginning of this level, the individual should later broaden their background toward a more general expertise in the overall processes of their career field. Development of the generalist normally involves establishing a good foundation of experience in the employee's primary specialty followed by lateral movement to a related specialty. Standards for development at Level I must be met before progressing to Level II.

#### **1.6.3 Level III (Advanced)**

The advanced level standards target grades 13 and above, or equivalent, and emphasize in-depth knowledge in a functional area and breadth of knowledge across the entire acquisition process. Management training is commensurate with the individual's job performance and their potential for advancement into managerial positions. Advanced acquisition education and training are imperative for a more global perspective. Standards for development at Level II must be met before progressing to Level III.

**Figure 1-4 Model Acquisition Career Paths**

Typical Grade	Education	Experience	Training	FAC-C Level
<b>Level I – Junior</b> GS-5/7 (or equivalent)	4 – year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree  <b>OR</b> At least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.	At least one year contracting experience.	<b>Core Courses</b> CON 100 CON 110 CON 111 CON 112 CON 120 (or equivalents/ predecessors)  <b>1 Elective</b>  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>	Level I
<b>Level II– Intermediate</b> GS-9/11/12 (or equivalent)	4 – year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree  <b>OR</b> At least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.	At least two years of contracting experience.	<b>Core Courses</b> All Level I Training  CON 214 CON 215 CON 216 CON 217 CON 218 (or equivalents/ predecessors)  <b>2 Electives</b>  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>	Level II
<b>Level III – Advanced</b> GS-13 and above (or equivalent)	4 – year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree that includes or is supplemented with at least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.	At least four years contracting experience.	<b>Core Courses</b> All Level I and II Training  CON 353 (or equivalent/ predecessor)  <b>2 Electives</b>  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>	Level III

### 1.7 Management Information System

Section 37(d) of the OFPP Act, as amended (41 U.S.C. 433(d)) requires each executive agency to collect, maintain and utilize information to ensure effective management of the acquisition workforce. Senior Bureau Procurement Officials are responsible for establishing policies for maintaining complete, training, education, certification and continuous learning records for members of their acquisition workforce. The Federal Acquisition Institute maintains a Government-wide Acquisition Career Management Information System used to track acquisition personnel training and certification information. Paragraph 3.10 provides requirements for documenting and recording training, education and certification information in the management information system. Information on ACMIS is available at <http://www.fai.gov/acm/acmis.asp>.

## **1.8 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **1.8.1 Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO)**

The Chief Acquisition Officer is responsible for developing and maintaining an acquisition career management program to ensure the development of a competent, professional workforce to support the accomplishment of the Department's mission; and implementing a budget strategy that reflects the workforce development needs and organizational structure of the Department. The Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration has been designated the Chief Acquisition Officer for the Department of Commerce.

### **1.8.2 Senior Procurement Executive (PE)**

The Senior Procurement Executive is responsible for implementing the Acquisition Career Management Program department-wide; approving waivers to the OPM Qualification Standard; and granting acquisition certifications. The Director for Acquisition Management has been designated Senior Procurement Executive for the Department of Commerce.

### **1.8.3 Acquisition Career Manager (ACM)**

The Acquisition Career Manager is responsible for ensuring that the Department's acquisition workforce meets the requirement of the Acquisition Career Management Program by identifying staffing needs, training requirements and other workforce development strategies; recommending to the SPE waivers to the OPM Qualification Standard; and reviewing FAC-C and Purchasing Certification packages. The Director, Workforce and Policy Development Division has been designated Acquisition Career Manager for the Department of Commerce.

### **1.8.4 Senior Bureau Procurement Official (BPO)**

The Senior Bureau Procurement Official is responsible for workforce planning to ensure the operating unit's acquisition workforce receives training and development opportunities consistent with the Acquisition Career Management Program, operating unit-specific needs, and Individual Development Plans (IDP); coordinating annual training needs; coordinating and submitting requests for education and training waivers to the PE for approval; establishing policies for maintaining complete, accurate and current training, education, certification and continuous learning records for members of their acquisition workforce; and submitting annual warrant report.

### **1.8.5 Head of Contracting Office (HCO)**

The Heads of Contracting Offices are responsible for tracking and reporting completed education and training requirements in the Acquisition Career Management Information System and in accordance with operating unit policies and procedures; ensuring that an IDP is prepared for each acquisition workforce employee; and submitting requests for education and training waivers to the BPO.

### **1.8.6 Supervisor of Acquisition Workforce Employee**

Supervisors are responsible for filling vacancies with employees that meet specific organizational needs as well as minimum qualification standards as set forth in the OPM Qualification Standard; determining if an employee has met the

mandatory requirements to enable them to move to the next career path; determining if an employee has the requisite qualifications to participate in a training course or developmental assignment; providing assistance to the employee in identify training and development opportunities; providing guidance to the employee during the development of the IDP; reviewing and approving employee IDPs; providing career guidance to the employee as appropriate; and maintaining and recording employee training, education and certification requirements in the Acquisition Career Management Information System in accordance with operating unit policy.

**1.8.7 Acquisition Workforce Employee**

Acquisition Workforce Employees are responsible for their own personal career progression and development which includes: developing an IDP to identify training and development opportunities for a multi-year time frame; identifying development opportunities that may contribute to the advancement of career goals; submitting proof of completed education and training requirements and entering and maintaining training and education requirements in the Acquisition Career Management Information System in accordance with operating unit policy.

**END OF SECTION 1**

## Section 2 – Qualification Standards for Contracting Career Field

### 2.1 Background

The Clinger-Cohen Act, P.L. 104-106, required the Administrator of OFPP to establish General Schedule (GS) 1102 employment qualification standards for acquisition workforce positions in civilian agencies. As a result, the Contract Specialist Qualification Standard was established by the Office of Personnel Management which set forth the education and experience requirements for civilian employees in the GS-1102 series (<http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-iv/b/gs1100/1102.htm>). Appendix C provides answers to frequently asked questions concerning the GS-1102 Qualification Standard. There are no formal standards stipulated by OPM for the GS-1105/1106 series.

### 2.2 Basic Requirements for GS-1102 Grades 5 through 12

The Basic education requirements for employees in the GS-1102 series at grades 5 through 12 are:

- A. A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree with a major in any field;

**OR**

- B. At least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following fields: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

Figure 2-1, OPM GS-1102 Qualification Standard, outlines the education and experience required to qualify for positions at the GS-7 through GS-12 level covered by this standard.

**Figure 2-1 OPM GS-1102 Qualification Standard**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Or Specialized Experience</b>
<b>GS-7</b>	1 full academic year of graduate education or law school or superior academic achievement	1 year equivalent to at least GS-5
<b>GS-9</b>	2 full academic years of progressively higher level graduate education or masters or equivalent graduate degree or LL.B. or J.D.	1 year equivalent to at least GS-7
<b>GS-11</b>	3 full academic years of progressively higher level graduate education or Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree	1 year equivalent to at least GS-9
<b>GS-12 and above</b>	None	1 year equivalent to at least next lower grade level
<b>Equivalent combinations of education and experience are qualifying for all grade levels for which both education and experience are acceptable.</b>		

In addition to meeting the basic education requirements outlined above, applicants who are qualifying for positions at grades GS-7 through GS-12 based on experience must possess at least one year of specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level that provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position. Graduate education in one or a combination of the following fields is required to qualify for GS-1102 positions on the basis of graduate education: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

### **2.3 Basic Requirements for GS-1102 Grades 13 and Above**

The Basic education requirements for employees in the GS-1102 series at grades 13 and above are:

- A. Completion of all mandatory training prescribed by the head of the agency for progression to GS-13 or higher level contracting positions, including at least 4-years experience in contracting or related positions. At least 1 year of that experience must have been specialized experience at or equivalent to work at the next lower level of the position, and must have provided the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform successfully the work of the position.

**AND**

- B. A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree with a major in any field that included or was supplemented by at least 24 semester hours in any combination of the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.

### **2.4 Exceptions**

#### **2.4.1 Exceptions for GS-1102 Grades 5-12**

Employees in GS-1102 positions are considered to have met the standard for positions they occupied on January 1, 2000. Employees who occupied GS-1102 positions at grades 5 through 12 are considered to meet the basic requirements for other GS-1102 positions up to and including those classified at GS-12. This includes positions at other agencies and promotions up through grade 12. However, employees must meet specialized experience requirements when seeking another position. This exception does not apply if there was a break in service after January 1, 2000.

#### **2.4.2 Exceptions for GS-1102 Grades 13 and Above**

Employees in the GS-1102 positions at grades 13 and above are considered to have met the standard for positions they occupied on January 1, 2000. This also applies to positions at the same grade in the same agency or other agencies if the specialized experience requirements are met. However, the employee must meet the basic requirements and specialized experience requirement in order to qualify for a promotion to a higher grade, unless granted a waiver as set forth in paragraph 2.5 below. This exception does not apply if there was a break in service after January 1, 2000.

### **2.5 Waiver Authority**

The OPM Qualification Standard **cannot** be waived for new entrants into the GS-1102 career field or individuals applying for contracting series positions at grades 12 and below. Qualification standards for individuals applying to contracting series positions at grades 13 and above can be waived at the discretion of the Senior Procurement

Executive. The PE is required to certify that the applicant for such positions possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience. Waiver authority cannot be delegated and will only be granted in rare and unusual circumstances of a specific hiring action such as when there are no qualified candidates readily available. There are no “blanket” waivers for an individual or an organization.

### 2.5.1 Waiver Process

If it is determined that a waiver will be necessary to fill a vacancy for a GS-1102 position at grade 13 and above, the vacancy announcement must state that the agency will consider applicants who require a waiver. The vacancy announcement must state that candidates who do not meet the qualification requirements may be considered for a waiver in accordance with the GS-1102 qualification standard. HCOs are responsible for coordinating with their servicing Human Resource Management office to ensure proper notification is placed within the vacancy announcement.

When making a selection, if an applicant does not meet the qualification standards, the HCO must provide the request for waiver to the BPO for review. The BPO is responsible for ensuring that the request clearly documents the need for the waiver and indicates that there are no qualified candidates readily available to fill the position. Upon concurrence by the BPO the waiver request shall be forwarded to the PE for approval. **The waiver request must be approved prior to making an offer.** In most instances the waiver provision will be utilized when hiring for hard-to-fill positions or duty locations where it may be difficult to attract qualified candidates.

### 2.5.2 Waiver Packages

Waiver packages forwarded to the PE for approval should include the following information:

- Copy of the position description and vacancy announcement;
- Description of the recruiting efforts undertaken by the organization and the results of those efforts including the sources used for recruiting;
- Application or resume of tentatively selected individual;
- Narrative from the HCO describing the potential of the applicant for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority based on demonstrated analytical and decision-making capabilities, job performance, and qualifying experience;
- Draft plan, agreed to by the tentatively selected individual and the supervisor, which delineates a time line for achieving the educational and/or training requirements. The plan should be finalized and signed by both parties after the waiver is granted and selection has taken place. A copy of the final plan shall be provided to the ACM within 5 days of entry on duty ;
- Documentation that demonstrates the tentatively selected individual is actively pursuing completion of the requirements;
- Justification that relates the applicant’s background and experience to the performance requirements of the job to be filled. The justification must address why the individual was selected in lieu of candidates who fully met the education and training requirements (if any), and any impact a disapproval of the waiver would have on the organization;
- Identification of actions that will be taken if the conditions of the waiver are not met; and

- Memorandum of concurrence and a recommendation for approval of the waiver from the BPO.

Requests for waivers that do not include the documentation listed above will be returned to the recommending BPO without further action. A sample waiver memorandum is provided in Appendix D. The waiver request package should be submitted to:

U. S. Department of Commerce  
Director for Acquisition Management and Procurement Executive  
Office of Acquisition Management  
1401 Constitution Ave., NW  
HCHB Room 6422  
Washington, DC 20230

**END OF SECTION 2**

## Section 3 – Training and Certification Program

### 3.1 Background

The development of a highly-qualified, well-trained workforce is critical to ensuring the Department accomplishes its mission. Investment in training and development of the acquisition workforce will improve the ability to meet mission needs. The Office of Federal Procurement Policy developed the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting program, a common training and certification program for the Federal contracting workforce that reflects a government-wide standard for education, training and experience leading to achievement of core competencies. In addition the Department of Commerce has established a Purchasing Certification Program for individuals in the Purchasing (GS-1105) and Procurement Clerical and Technician (GS-1106) series that will demonstrate achievement of training and experience requirements.

### 3.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Training and Certification Program is to implement OFPP Policy Letter 05-01, *Developing and Managing the Acquisition Workforce*, dated April 15, 2005 [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/policy\\_letters/05-01\\_041505.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/policy_letters/05-01_041505.html) and the DOC Purchasing Certification Program. The program will be used to demonstrate that an individual has achieved a practical, well-rounded understanding of acquisition and business process skills that will enhance their ability to perform as a business leader within the Department.

### 3.3 Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting Program

The Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting program was developed by FAI to promote the development of core acquisition competencies government-wide and to facilitate employee mobility. The FAC-C certification serves as one means to demonstrate that an individual meets the core education, training and experience requirements for the contracting career field.

#### 3.3.1 Applicability

Members of the acquisition workforce issued new Contracting Officer (CO) warrants on or after **January 1, 2007**, regardless of GS series **must** be certified at an appropriate level to support their warrant obligations. New CO warrants are defined as warrants issued to employees for the first time at the Department of Commerce. All contracting officers, regardless of job series, must meet the FAC-C certification requirements stated in this policy.

Effective **January 1, 2012**, all employees in the GS-1102 series must meet the FAC-C certification requirements for their career path. New entrants in the 1102 career field shall have 24 months to meet FAC-C certification requirements. Individuals in the 1102 series who are promoted into a new career path shall have 24 months to meet the FAC-C training requirements for the new career path. (**NOTE:** Employees must meet the OPM Qualification Standards for education and experience in order to be hired or promoted, therefore, the 24 month requirement only applies to FAC-C training requirements.)

#### 3.3.2 Certification Requirements

The FAC-C program is based on DAWIA requirements for certification at the junior, intermediate, and senior levels to reflect the need for an individual to meet

increasingly more rigorous standards for education, training, and experience throughout their career. Achievement of FAC-C is based on requirements for education, experience, and training as outlined below and summarized in Figure 3-1, FAC-C Certification Requirements. The requirements for certification are cumulative. All requirements for each lower certification level must be met to be certified at the next level. Maintenance of a FAC-C is a function of continuous learning.

**Figure 3-1 FAC-C Certification Requirements**

<b>FAC-C Level I (Junior)</b>	<b>FAC-C Level II (Intermediate)</b>	<b>FAC-C Level III (Advanced)</b>
<b>Education:</b> Baccalaureate degree <b>OR</b> 24 semester hours in a business discipline.	<b>Education:</b> Baccalaureate degree <b>OR</b> 24 semester hours in a business discipline.	<b>Education:</b> Baccalaureate degree <b>AND</b> 24 semester hours in a business discipline.
<b>Experience:</b> 1 year of contracting experience	<b>Experience:</b> 2 years of contracting experience	<b>Experience:</b> 4 years of contracting experience
<b>Core Training:</b> CON 100 CON 110 CON 111 CON 112 CON 120 (or equivalents/ predecessors)  <b>1 Elective</b> (minimum of 16 hours of organized instruction)  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>	<b>Core Training:</b> All Level I Training CON 214 CON 215 CON 216 CON 217 CON 218 (or equivalents/ predecessors)  <b>2 Electives</b> (each elective a minimum of 16 hours of organized instruction)  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>	<b>Core Training:</b> All Level I and II Training CON 353 (or equivalent/ predecessor)  <b>2 Elective</b> (each elective a minimum of 16 hours of organized instruction)  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>

**3.3.2.1 Education**

An individual must meet the education requirements established in the OPM Contract Specialist Qualification Standard. There are no exceptions to these requirements and candidates must provide evidence to the Acquisition Career Manager. In accordance with the OPM Qualification Standard, individuals in positions at grades 5 through 12 are required to have, from an accredited institution, 24-semester hours of business related education **or** a baccalaureate degree. Individuals in positions at grades 13 and above must have, from an accredited institution, 24-semester hours of business related education **and** a baccalaureate degree. Employees in GS-1102 positions will be considered to have met the education requirement, for positions they occupied on January 1, 2000. Education waivers granted in accordance with the Qualification Standard do not satisfy the education requirement for FAC-C.

### 3.3.2.2 Experience

Experience requirements are based on the OPM Contract Specialist Qualification Standard. Experience may be time spent on the job in a contracting related job assignment, either in the private or public sector, which reflects the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and abilities during years of progressively more responsible work assignments.

### 3.3.2.3 Core Training

The FAC-C core training requirements follow the training curriculum established by the Department of Defense for their contracting career field. In order to become FAC-C certified an individual must document satisfactory completion (training certificates and/or school transcript) of core training classes. Course information including course titles, descriptions, objectives, target audiences, prerequisites, course lengths, and predecessor and equivalent course information is available in the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) catalog at: <http://catalog.dau.mil/>.

Courses are progressive and build upon previously learned skills in an integrated curriculum. Therefore, course prerequisites are strictly enforced and courses must be attended in the order listed. Supervisors are responsible for determining that prospective students have demonstrated the ability to effectively apply competencies and learning objectives of previously attended courses and possess sufficient knowledge and/or background to attend requested courses.

Individuals must meet the training requirements by taking DAU training, DAU-equivalent courses, or through the fulfillment process described in paragraph 3.6. DAU publishes a list of predecessor classes that associates past training with the current requirements. In addition, FAI has developed a course equivalency crosswalk which is available on at:

[www.fai.gov/certification/specialist.asp](http://www.fai.gov/certification/specialist.asp). These tools will assist individuals in determining the DAU courses or DAU-equivalent courses that meet training requirements.

### 3.3.2.4 Electives

Each elective must be a minimum of 16 continuous learning points of organized instruction. As agreed to by the employee and supervisor, electives may be any training opportunity related to the employee's job, necessary for career development, or used for cross training.

Generally, electives may include no-cost distance learning training, assignment-specific courses, or other training opportunities. Individuals are encouraged to take courses that add to their knowledge base or enhance existing skills and electives should generally be increasingly more complex throughout an employee's career progression. The employee's supervisor shall review each elective separately and determine whether it meets FAC-C elective requirements. There are no DAU equivalency requirements for electives.

### 3.3.2.5 Continuous Learning

To maintain a FAC-C certification contracting professionals are required to earn 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency training every two years. Supervisors are encouraged to use continuous learning opportunities to assist individuals in obtaining core competencies, maintaining critical acquisition skills, and acquiring operating unit-specific training. Appendix E provides guidance on earning CLPs and assigning points to various developmental activities. Continuous learning activities may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Training activities, such as teaching, self-directed study, and mentoring;
- Courses completed to achieve training requirements at the next higher level;
- Professional activities, such as attending/speaking/presenting at professional seminars/symposia/conferences, publishing, and attending workshops; or
- Educational activities, such as formal training, and formal academic programs.

The Acquisition Career Manager will monitor the continuous learning requirements for employees holding certifications to ensure they meet the requirement. The certification will expire if the 80 CLPs are not earned every two years and the PE may choose to revoke or modify a warrant if this condition is not met.

### 3.3.3 DAWIA Certifications

An Individual who has obtained a Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certification in contracting at any time during their career is eligible for a FAC-C at the same certification level [provided the education criteria for the FAC-C are satisfied] if continuous learning requirements have been maintained and can be documented. The employee is responsible for providing the necessary documentation of the FAC-C or DAWIA certification and the appropriate continuous learning history to ensure validity and currency of the certification.

## 3.4 Purchasing Certification Program

To promote the development of core purchasing competencies Department-wide, DOC has developed the Purchasing Certification Program. This certification will serve as one means to demonstrate that an individual meets the core training and experience requirements for the purchasing career field.

### 3.4.1 Applicability

All employees in the purchasing (GS-1105) and procurement technical (GS-1106) series must meet the purchasing certification requirements stated in this policy. New entrants in the 1105 or 1106 career field shall have 24 months to meet the Purchasing Certification requirements. Individuals who are promoted shall have 24 months to meet the certification requirements for their new grade level.

### 3.4.2 Certification Requirements

Achievement of a Purchasing Certification is based on requirements for experience and training as outlined below and summarized in Figure 3-2,

Purchasing Certification Requirements. Maintenance of a Purchasing Certification is a function of continuous learning.

**Figure 3-2 Purchasing Certification Requirements**

<b>Purchasing Certification Level I</b> (GS-3/4/5)	<b>Purchasing Certification Level II</b> (GS-6/7/8/9)	<b>Purchasing Certification Level III</b> (GS-10 and above)
<b>Experience:</b> 1 year of purchasing or contracting experience	<b>Experience:</b> 2 years of purchasing or contracting experience	<b>Experience:</b> 3 years of purchasing or contracting experience
<b>Training:</b> CON 100 CON 237 GSA Purchase Card Online Training (or equivalents/predecessors)  <b>1 Elective</b> (minimum of 16 hours of organized instruction)  <b>40 CLPs every 2 years</b>	<b>Training:</b> All Level I Training  CON 110 CON 111 CON 112 CON 120 (or equivalents/predecessors)  <b>2 Electives</b> (each elective a minimum of 16 hours of organized instruction)  <b>40 CLPs every 2 years</b>	<b>Training:</b> All Level I and II Training  <b>2 Electives</b> (each elective a minimum of 16 hours of organized instruction)  <b>40 CLPs every 2 years</b>

**3.4.2.1 Experience**

Experience may be time spent on the job in a purchasing related job assignment, either in the private or public sector that reflects the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

**3.4.2.2 Core Training**

In order to receive a purchasing certification, an individual must document satisfactory completion (training certificates and/or school transcript) of core training classes. An individual must meet the training requirements by taking DAU training or DAU-equivalent courses (Note: GSA Purchase Card training does not have a DAU-equivalent). Training requirements are cumulative; therefore, all training requirements for lower level certifications must also be met. DAU publishes a list of predecessor classes that associates past training with the current requirements and will assist individuals in determining the DAU courses or DAU-equivalent courses that meet training requirements. Course information, including course description, objectives, target audience, prerequisites, course lengths, and predecessor and equivalent courses is available in the DAU catalog at: <http://icatalog.dau.mil/>.

### 3.4.2.3 Electives

Each elective must be a minimum of 16 continuous learning points of organized instruction. As agreed to by the employee and supervisor, electives may be any training opportunity related to the employee's job, necessary for career development, or used for cross training. Electives may include no-cost distance learning training, assignment-specific courses, or other training opportunities. Employees are encouraged to take courses that add to their knowledge base or enhance existing skills. There are no DAU equivalency requirements for electives.

### 3.4.2.4 Continuous Learning

To maintain a purchasing certification purchasing professionals are required to earn 40 continuous learning points of skills currency training every two years. The Acquisition Career Manager will monitor the continuous learning requirements for employees holding certifications. The certification will expire if the 40 CLPs are not earned every two years.

Supervisors are encouraged to use continuous learning opportunities to assist individuals in obtaining core competencies, maintaining critical purchasing skills, and acquiring agency-specific training. Continuous learning activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Training activities such as teaching, self-directed study, and mentoring;
- Courses completed to achieve training requirements at the next higher level;
- Professional activities such as attending/speaking/presenting at professional seminars/symposia/conferences, publishing, and attending workshops; or
- Educational activities such as formal training, and formal academic programs.

## 3.5 Training Providers

### 3.5.1 Federal Acquisition Institute Sponsored Training

The Federal Acquisition Institute manages the Acquisition Workforce Training Fund to ensure that equitable training opportunities are available for all civilian agencies. FAI uses the training fund to offer DAU-equivalent core training courses to civilian agency employees at no charge. Employees can view the current FAI course schedule and register for courses at <https://www.atrs.army.mil/channels/faitas/student/logon.aspx?caller=1>. As the Department of Commerce has a limited number of quotas for FAI sponsored classroom courses, the Acquisition Career Manager will review each registration to ensure that quotas are effectively managed.

### 3.5.2 Defense Acquisition University Training

DAU training courses are available to civilian agency employees at no charge. Employees can view the current course schedule and register for DAU training courses at <https://www.atrs.army.mil/channels/faitas/student/logon.aspx?caller=1>.

### 3.5.3 DAU-Equivalent Training

Several training providers offer courses that have been certified equivalent to DAU curriculum courses. DAU-equivalent courses can be used to meet the core

training requirements. A list of DAU-equivalent courses and training providers is located in the DAU catalog at: <http://icatalog.dau.mil/>.

### **3.6 Fulfillment**

The fulfillment process for acquisition certification is a program based on accepting prior related work experience, or courses taken from other federal agencies, other training providers, or through institutions of higher learning to satisfy the mandatory training requirements under the FAC-C program. The FAC-C fulfillment process will follow the fulfillment process for Department of Defense. In seeking FAC-C certification via the fulfillment process, individuals must follow the Defense Acquisition Fulfillment Program at <http://www.dau.mil/learning/DAUFulfillmentPgm.aspx>. Individuals must satisfactorily meet all requirements for certification at a particular level, and the competencies shall have successfully been completed and documented to qualify for fulfillment credit.

#### **3.6.1 Fulfillment Methods**

Methods of fulfilling competencies can include alternative training, experience, education or certification by another recognized organization.

##### **3.6.1.1 Alternative Training**

If competencies were obtained through courses that were not DAU or DAU-equivalent courses, the individual must document for each competency the dates of training, course descriptions, provider names, grades (if applicable), and competencies achieved, to the maximum extent practicable.

##### **3.6.1.2 Experience**

If competencies were obtained through related job experience, the individual must provide the agency name, dates, location, position title, and the duties performed that provided the relevant competencies.

##### **3.6.1.3 Education**

If competencies were obtained through academic courses provided at an accredited institution, the individual must provide the date of each class, course descriptions, provider names, grades (if applicable), and competencies achieved.

##### **3.6.1.4 Certification by a Recognized Organization**

Determinations made by DOD regarding full or partial acceptance of certifications by organizations outside the federal government for DAWIA certification will be recognized under the FAC-C program. Determinations made by DOD are available at: <http://www.dau.mil/aboutDAU/AboutDocs/partners.aspx>.

### **3.7 Certification Application Process**

#### **3.7.1 Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting**

Employees must initiate and prepare their applications for FAC-C certification and submit the application package to their supervisor for approval. Employees are responsible for producing certificates, transcripts, and records that provide evidence that they satisfy the requirements of the program. An employee must complete the FAC-C Application (Appendix F) and submit it to their supervisor and HCO for endorsement. Application packages for certification shall include:

- Completed FAC-C application form;
- Documentation of Education requirement (i.e. Transcript);
- Optional Form 612, resume, or equivalent document that specifically details the applicant's acquisition experience, training, and education;
- Copy of the applicant's most recent performance appraisal;
- Copy of applicant's performance plan;
- Documentation of completion of DAU or DAU-equivalent courses (such as training certificates and/or transcript);
- Documentation of continuous learning points; (if applicable)
- Documentation of fulfillment as outlined in paragraph 3.6 (if applicable); and
- Previous FAC-C or DAWIA Certification (if applicable).

The HCO should assess the skills and competencies of the applicant and develop a plan for enhancing or adding to the employee's competencies, if appropriate. The HCO must forward the package to the BPO for approval. Once the BPO approves the application, the package shall be forwarded to:

U. S. Department of Commerce  
Acquisition Career Manager  
Office of Acquisition Management  
1401 Constitution Ave, NW  
HCHB Room 1854,  
Washington, DC 20230

The Acquisition Career Manager will review each application to determine whether the individual satisfies the requirements for the requested certification and forward the package, along with their recommendation, to the PE. In the event the ACM needs additional information to make a determination, the application will be returned to the employee, through supervisory channels, with a request to furnish supporting data.

The Senior Procurement Executive has final authority for certifying an employee at a particular level. Applications will be processed within two weeks of receipt of a complete package. Whenever the PE determines that an employee does not meet the established criteria for the level of certification requested, the PE will furnish the employee, through supervisory channels, a written explanation of the reasons the request was denied. The employee's immediate supervisor should develop a strategy that will assist the individual in obtaining certification by planning the employee's work assignments and training to gain competency in deficient areas. The strategy shall be documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan.

### **3.7.2 DOC Purchasing Certification**

Employees must initiate and prepare their applications for Purchasing Certification and submit the application package to their supervisor. Employees are responsible for producing certificates, and records that provide evidence that they satisfy the requirements of the program. An employee must complete the Purchasing Certification Application (Appendix G) and submit it to their supervisor and HCO for endorsement. Application packages for purchasing certification must include:

- Completed Purchasing Certification application form;
- Optional Form 612, resume, or equivalent document that specifically details the applicant's acquisition experience and training;
- Copy of the applicant's most recent performance appraisal;
- Documentation of completion of DAU or DAU-equivalent courses (such as training certificates and/or transcript); and
- Documentation of skills currency/continuous learning points.

The HCO should assess the skills and competencies of the applicant and develop a plan for enhancing or adding to the employee's competencies, if appropriate. The HCO must forward the package to the BPO for approval. Once the BPO approves the application, the package shall be forwarded to:

U. S. Department of Commerce  
Acquisition Career Manager  
Office of Acquisition Management  
1401 Constitution Ave, NW  
HCHB Room 1854  
Washington, DC 20230

The Acquisition Career Manager will review each application to determine whether the individual satisfies the requirements for the requested certification. In the event the ACM needs additional information to make a determination, the application will be returned to the employee, through supervisory channels, with a request to furnish supporting data.

The PE has final authority for granting the DOC Purchasing Certification. Whenever the PE determines that an applicant does not meet the established criteria for the level of certification requested, the PE will furnish the employee, through supervisory channels, a written explanation of the reasons the request was denied. The employee's immediate supervisor should develop a strategy that will assist the individual in obtaining certification by planning the employee's work assignments and training to gain competency in deficient areas. The strategy shall be documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan.

### **3.8 Certification Waivers**

The Senior Procurement Executive may waive the requirement for obtaining a certification, on a case-by-case basis, if granting a waiver is in the best interest of the Department. This authority may not be delegated. A certification waiver allows an individual who does not meet the certification requirements of the position to remain in that position. This is an assignment waiver and is only valid for the particular position to which assigned. This waiver is not transferable to another position or agency.

### **3.9 Changes in Certification Requirements**

Once an individual is certified they remain certified if continuous learning requirements are maintained, even if the certification requirements change. However, individuals are encouraged to use continuous learning requirements to complete any new certification requirements.

### **3.10 Documenting and Recording Training and Certification Requirements**

The Senior Bureau Procurement Official is responsible for establishing policies for maintaining official training, education and certification records on their acquisition workforce employees and ensuring information is entered in the Management Information System. Training records must be available for inspection by OAM upon request.

Employees are responsible for maintaining all transcripts and training certificates for their records. Upon completion of training or relevant college coursework, the employee is responsible for submitting proof of successful completion to their supervisor and updating their information in the Acquisition Career Management Information System. Supervisors are responsible for maintaining the employee's course completion information in accordance with operating unit policies. The BPO is responsible for ensuring that official training, education and certification records are maintained and information is updated in the Acquisition Career Management Information System at least annually.

### **3.11 Additional Training Requirements**

In addition to training required for FAC-C certification, contracting and purchasing professionals shall complete additional training requirements, as applicable, as outlined below. This additional training may count towards continuous learning requirements.

#### **3.11.1 Information Technology (IT) Security in the Acquisition Process**

All contracting and purchasing professionals are required to successfully complete the online course entitled "Effectively Integrating Information Technology Security into the Acquisition Process". The course is located at: [http://oam.eas.commerce.gov/docs/CAPPS\\_IT\\_Security\\_course/default.htm](http://oam.eas.commerce.gov/docs/CAPPS_IT_Security_course/default.htm) and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete.

#### **3.11.2 Earned Value Management**

All contracting professionals who award or administer contracts for major acquisitions for development are required to successfully complete an Earned Value Management course. DOC defines a "major acquisition for development" as an acquisition that includes \$25 million or more in development, modernization, and enhancement (DME) costs over the life cycle of the acquisition. Other projects may be designated "major acquisition for development" if they merit special attention due to their sensitivity, mission criticality, or risk potential. An online course entitled "Fundamentals of Earned Value Management" is available, at no charge, through the Federal Acquisition Institute at <https://www.atrs.army.mil/channels/faitas/student/logon.aspx?caller=1>.

#### **3.11.3 Information Technology Systems and Software Applications**

All contracting and purchasing professionals shall have sufficient training in information technology systems (e.g., contract writing systems, FPDS, etc.) and software applications (e.g., Word, Excel, etc.) that are required to successfully accomplish assignments in an acquisition environment.

#### **3.11.4 Ethics**

All contracting and purchasing professionals shall successfully complete ethics training. Beginning in 1993, all federal employees have been required to receive a one-hour block of initial ethics training within 90 days of beginning federal employment. This initial ethics training satisfies the ethics training requirement. In addition, the DOC Office of General Counsel (OGC) provides annual ethics training which also satisfies the requirement for ethics training.

#### **3.11.5 Green Procurement**

All contracting and purchasing professionals who award and administrator acquisitions with significant environmental attributes (e.g., computer products acquisition; design and construction of new building; etc.) shall successfully complete green procurement training. An online course entitled Green Procurement (CLC 046) is available at no charge through the Federal Acquisition Institute at <https://www.atrs.army.mil/channels/faitas/student/logon.aspx?caller=1>.

**END OF SECTION 3**

## Section 4- Contracting Officer Warrant Program

### 4.1 Background

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 1.603 sets forth requirements for the selection, appointment, and termination of Contracting Officers. The Commerce Acquisition Regulation (CAR) supplements the FAR with policies specific to the Department of Commerce. Office of Federal Procurement Policy Letter 05-01 requires agencies to establish requirements to tie warrant levels to certifications under the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting program.

### 4.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Contracting Officer Warrant Program is to mandate the specific standards which must be met prior to the delegation of Contracting Officer authority. The Warrant Program will ensure that only fully qualified employees are delegated the authority to obligate the Department in the expenditure of public funds through the acquisition system.

### 4.3 Applicability

The requirements of the Contracting Officer Warrant Program apply to all individuals nominated to be Contracting Officers and all individuals currently serving as Contracting Officers. All new Contracting Officer warrants issued on or after **January 1, 2007** must be issued in accordance with the requirements of this policy. New warrants are defined as warrants issued to employees for the first time at the Department of Commerce. All individuals with Contracting Officer warrants must meet the requirements of this policy.

### 4.4 Exemptions

Contracting Officer delegations are not required to make the following types of transactions. However these transactions may require a delegation from another source.

- Purchase Card transactions below the micro-purchase threshold (see CAM 1313.301 Commerce Purchase Card Procedures ([http://oamweb.osec.doc.gov/CAPPS\\_cam.html](http://oamweb.osec.doc.gov/CAPPS_cam.html)));
- Call orders against Blanket Purchase Agreements;
- Standard Form 44 (Purchase Order-Invoice-Voucher);
- Government Bills of Lading;
- Real Property Acquisitions;
- Standard Form 182, Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training;
- Paid Advertisements for personnel recruitment actions; and
- Financial Assistance Agreements.

### 4.5 Warrant Qualification Standards

To qualify to serve as a Contracting Officer with authority to award or administer contracts valued above the micro-purchase threshold, an individual must have a Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting at an appropriate level to support their warrant obligations. Section 3 outlines the FAC-C requirements.

### 4.6 Warrant Levels and Limitations

Within the Department of Commerce there are three (3) warrant levels. Bureaus may further restrict the warrant levels at their discretion. Specific education, training, and

experience requirements for each level are identified in Figure 4-1, Warrant Level Requirements.

**Figure 4-1 Warrant Level Requirements**

<b>Warrant Level</b>	<b>Warrant Threshold Authority</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>FAC-C Level</b>
<b>Level I</b>	In accordance with contract terms and conditions or a maximum of \$150,000.	4 – year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree  <b>OR</b> At least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.	At least 1 year of contracting experience.	<b>Core Courses</b> CON 100 CON 110 CON 111 CON 112 CON 120 (or equivalents/ predecessors)  <b>1 Elective</b>  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>	Level I
<b>Level II</b>	In accordance with contract terms and conditions or a maximum of \$1,000,000.  Up to the limits established in FAR 12.203 when using commercial item procedures	4 – year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree  <b>OR</b> At least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.	At least 2 years of contracting experience.	<b>Core Courses</b> All Level I Training  CON 214 CON 215 CON 216 CON 217 CON 218 (or equivalents/ predecessors)  <b>2 Elective</b>  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>	Level II
<b>Level III</b>	Unlimited	4 – year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree that includes or is supplemented with at least 24 semester hours from among the following disciplines: accounting, business, finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management.	At least four 4 years of contracting experience.	<b>Core Courses</b> All Level I and II Training  CON 353 (or equivalents/ predecessors)  <b>2 Elective</b>  <b>80 CLPs every 2 years</b>	Level III

**4.7 Selection, Appointment and Termination of Appointment**

Prior to delegating warrant authority, the Appointing Official shall ensure that a valid organizational need for the requested authority has been demonstrated.

**4.7.1 Selection of Warrant Levels**

Appointment of Contracting Officers should be commensurate with the volume and complexity of acquisition actions to be handled. Individuals selected for Contracting Officer delegations must meet the FAC-C education, experience and training requirements that are commensurate with the warrant levels established in Figure 4-1, Warrant Level Requirements. In addition, Appointing Officials shall consider the following criteria:

- Warrant levels are based on the aggregate contract value, not the individual contract action.
- If the basis of award involves evaluating options, the option periods are included in the contract value to determine the warrant level required for award.
- If an action includes both additions and deductions the aggregate, absolute value of the changes determines the warrant level required for the transaction (e.g., the value of an action that adds \$30,000 of work and deducts \$80,000 is \$110,000).

#### **4.7.2 Issuance of Appointments**

All warrants shall be issued on Standard Form (SF) 1402, Certificate of Appointment and shall indicate the Contracting Officers warrant level and dollar threshold and any other limitations. Additional limits may be placed on the authority granted by the warrant; such limitations must be stated on the actual SF 1402. Prior to issuance of a warrant, the Appointing Official must ensure that the warrant applicant has a valid FAC-C certification and meets any specialized training required by the operating unit.

Senior Bureau Procurement Officials are authorized to issue all Level I, II, and III warrants. The HCO should prepare requests for warrants in the format provided in Appendix H and submit requests to the BPO for approval. Senior Bureau Procurement Officials may authorize HCOs to issue Level I warrants to program officials.

The Senior Procurement Executive will issue warrants for the BPO. Warrant requests for the BPO should be sent from the Head of Contracting Activity (HCA) using the format provided in Appendix H.

#### **4.7.3 Maintaining an Appointment**

In order to maintain an appointment, Contracting Officers must complete 80 continuous learning points every two years. If this condition is not met, the FAC-C certification will expire and the Senior Procurement Executive may choose to revoke or modify a warrant.

The Appointing Official must perform a review of all delegations of authority issued to validate the continued need for the warrant and determine if Contracting Officers have maintained professional proficiency to qualify for appointment. Contracting Level I and II warrants should be reviewed at least annually; and Level III warrants should be reviewed at least every two years. Based on the review, warrant authority should be terminated or reduced in scope, when appropriate.

#### **4.7.4 Termination of Appointment**

Appointments of Contracting Officers remain in effect as long as the appointee is assigned to the position stated on the warrant unless terminated sooner by the Appointing Official, their successor, or the Senior Procurement Executive. Contracting Officer warrants may be terminated at any time for justifiable reasons such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Appointee fails to comply with applicable statutes, Executive Orders, OMB Circulars, Federal Acquisition Regulation, Commerce Acquisition Regulation, Commerce Acquisition Manual, and other internal policies;
- Appointee fails to satisfy continuous learning requirements;

- Appointee violates the Code of Ethics;
- A valid organizational need for the delegation of authority no longer exists;
- Appointee is reassigned to a new position where the need for a warrant no longer exists;
- Appointee transfers to another agency, retires, resigns or is terminated from Government employment; or
- Appointee does not complete required continuous learning points.

Warrant holders shall be notified in writing of the effective date of the termination. The notification shall provide enough time and sufficient instruction to ensure that unauthorized obligations are not made. Upon termination the original SF 1402 should be returned to the issuing office for placement in the official Contracting Officer appointment file. The SF 1402 should be annotated as "CANCELLED" and accompanied by a brief cover memorandum indicating the reason for termination.

#### **4.8 Additional Requirements for Program Officials**

Contracting authority is generally reserved for employees working in a DOC contracting office. However, in limited circumstances where there is a demonstrated organizational need, contracting authority may be granted by the Senior Bureau Procurement Official to a DOC employee in a Program Office. Such authority shall be limited to a Level I Warrant.

In addition to the FAC-C education, experience, and training requirements outlined in Figure 4.1 Warrant Level Requirements, employees who are not employed by a contracting office shall meet the additional requirements outlined in paragraphs 4.8.1 through 4.8.5.

The Head of Contracting Office shall conduct annual acquisition management reviews of acquisitions processed by program officials with delegated contracting authority.

##### **4.8.1 Performance Plan Requirements**

The nominated employee shall have Acquisition Management as a critical element in their performance plan weighted no less than 15%. In addition, the performance plan shall provide for input into the employee's interim and final performance appraisal by the Head of Contracting Office. Appendix I provides sample language for a performance plan element.

##### **4.8.2 Funding for Training, Travel and Oversight**

The requesting organization shall fund all expenses related to travel, training and oversight audits for the nominee.

##### **4.8.3 On-the-Job Training**

Upon acceptance of the nomination, nominees shall be assigned to work in the servicing contracting office to perform contracting duties for a minimum of one (1) week. For a period of six (6) months after the initial assignment in the servicing contracting office, the nominee shall perform contracting duties under the review, approval and signature of the Head of Contracting Office or a Level II or above Contracting Officer in the servicing acquisition office.

At the end of the on-the-job training period, the Head of Contracting Office shall assess the performance of the nominee and provide a recommendation to the Senior Bureau Procurement Official for approval or disapproval of the request for contracting authority.

#### **4.8.4 Approval of Contract Actions**

Program Officials who are granted contracting authority shall submit the complete acquisition file (current action plus basic award and any other previously awarded modifications) to the Head of Contracting Office for approval and signature when the total value of the contractual action will exceed the warrant level as a result of modifications to the basic award. For example, an award was made for \$75,000 and it later becomes necessary to modify that award and increase its value by \$26,000.

#### **4.8.5 Annual Training and Evaluation**

Program Officials who are granted contracting authority shall serve one (1) week annually in the servicing contracting office for refresher acquisition and systems training and evaluation. In lieu of the annual training, the BPO may approve alternative training and development activities that shall include a minimum of 40 hours of organized instruction annually.

#### **4.9 Warrant Waivers**

In unique situations, on a case-by-case basis, the Senior Procurement Executive may approve, in writing, any deviation from the policies, procedures, and requirements of the Contracting Officer Warrant Program. The Senior Bureau Procurement Official shall submit all requests for waivers to the PE with the following documentation:

- Optional Form 612, Optional Application for Federal Employment, prepared and signed by the candidate, or a resume detailing the candidate's experience, education, and training relevant to the position;
- Justification that relates the candidate's background and experience to the contract action(s) for which the warrant is required;
- Plan agreed upon by the candidate and HCO, delineating a time frame for achieving the requirements; and
- Statement that identifies the impact a disapproval of the waiver would have on the organization.

#### **4.10 Administration of Warrant Program**

The Senior Bureau Procurement Official shall establish procedures for administering the Warrant Program within the bureau. Appointing Officials shall maintain official files documenting the qualifications of each Contracting Officer. Such files shall be available for oversight reviews. The BPO is responsible for ensuring that current, accurate and complete information regarding each individual with delegated procurement authority is maintained in the Acquisition Career Management Information System.

#### **4.11 Contracting Officer Performance Evaluation**

The responsibility for accuracy and submission of individual contract action reports to the Federal Procurement Data System (FPDS) resides with the Contracting Officer. Supervisors of individuals with delegated procurement authority, with assistance of the bureau servicing Human Resources Office, shall include a requirement for "complete, accurate, and timely reporting to FPDS" in performance plans for all Contracting Officers. The FPDS data accuracy requirement may be incorporated in performance plans as a separate critical element or into an existing performance element. Supervisors of individuals with delegated procurement authority shall discuss the submission of complete, accurate, and timely reports to FPDS with Contracting Officers during interim and final performance reviews.

## **4.12 Reporting Requirements**

The Senior Bureau Procurement Official shall submit an annual report to the Office of Acquisition Management by the 30<sup>th</sup> of January each year. The report shall include the following information for all Warrants:

- Name of Appointee;
- Grade and series;
- Organization;
- Warrant Level;
- Date of Appointment; and
- Any limitation on the warrant.

The report shall be forwarded to:

U. S. Department of Commerce  
Acquisition Career Manager  
Office of Acquisition Management  
1401 Constitution Ave, NW  
HCHB Room 1854  
Washington, DC 20230

## **4.13 Warrant Program Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.13.1 Senior Procurement Executive**

The Senior Procurement Executive is responsible for establishing the policies, procedures, and requirements that govern the Warrant Program and approving/disapproving deviations from the warrant program requirements.

### **4.13.2 Senior Bureau Procurement Official**

The Senior Bureau Procurement Official is responsible for establishing procedures for administering the Warrant Program within the operating unit; appointing Level I, II, and III Contracting Officers within the operating unit, in accordance with FAR 1.603; submitting requests for waivers or deviations from the Warrant Program to the PE; and ensuring official records on individuals with delegated authority are maintained and information is entered into the Acquisition Career Management Information System.

### **4.13.3 Head of Contracting Office**

The Head of Contracting Office is responsible for determining the number of Contracting Officer warrants and levels of authority necessary for the organization; submitting requests for Level I, II, and III Contracting Officer appointments to the BPO for approval; submitting requests for waivers to the BPO; monitoring the performance of Contracting Officers; ensuring that a FPDS data accuracy element is included in the performance plan for all Contracting Officers; and establishing controls to ensure compliance with laws, regulations, procedures, and good business judgment.

### **4.13.4 Contracting Officer**

The Contracting Officer is responsible for performing all necessary actions for effective contracting; ensuring timely and accurate submission of individual contact action reports to FPDS; ensuring compliance with the terms of the

contract, and safeguarding the interests of the United States in all contractual relationships; ensuring that the requirements of FAR 1.602-1(b) have been met and that sufficient funds are available for obligation; complying with the terms and conditions of the warrant and any specified limitations; ensuring contractors receive impartial, fair, and equitable treatment; and requesting and considering the advice of specialists in audit, law, engineering, transportation, and other fields, as appropriate.

**END OF SECTION 4**

## **Section 5 – Career Planning**

### **5.1 Background**

Career planning is a process whereby an employee chooses and sets their career goals and identifies the means to achieve them. The process involves the employee and supervisor working together to set attainable career goals for the employee that are identified through projects, training, rotations, special assignments, and other career enhancing opportunities. The objective of the career planning process is to help employees choose realistic career paths and provide direction in developing and reaching their career goals.

### **5.2 Individual Development Plan**

The Individual Development Plan is an essential tool in the career planning process. It is based on both formal and informal assessments and identifies areas in which the employee should increase their knowledge and skills to reach career goals. An IDP specifically addresses the education, training, development and job assignments required by an employee to progress in their career, improve business skills, and grow professionally and personally over the next several years. The use of the IDP allows the necessary planning, scheduling, and budgeting of training and development for each employee.

An IDP is required for each employee in the contracting and purchasing series (GS-1102, GS-1105 and GS-1106). A sample IDP is provided in Appendix J. Using the plan as a guide, and with the support and approval of the supervisor, each employee must develop an IDP that shows specific training and development needs for both short term and long-term career goals and objectives. The IDP should specifically identify developmental activities over a two to three year period, consistent with the employee's career path, capabilities, aspirations and the agency mission. The IDP should identify mandatory core training courses and recommended courses. In addition, employees may request on-the-job training, more challenging work assignments, participation in a rotational assignment, mentor relationship, participation in a professional association, outside education, and other job-related activities.

Individual Development Plans should be integrated into the performance plan process and reviewed in conjunction with mid-year and end-of-year performance reviews. An IDP should be updated each year to reflect the progression of the employee, and adjusted as appropriate.

### **5.3 Developmental Opportunities**

In addition to the mandatory education and training requirements identified in Section 3, there are non-mandatory developmental opportunities that will broaden experiences and expand acquisition and business skills. Examples of such opportunities include rotational and or developmental assignments, participation in mentoring programs, teams and workgroups, or membership in professional associations. Developmental opportunities are a vital component to developing the acquisition workforce as business leaders. The variety and depth of experiences gained through developmental opportunities are not necessarily available through traditional classroom training or from normal work experiences. Developmental opportunities provide individuals with the ability to obtain additional skills that enable them to become more well-rounded acquisition professionals, which benefits both the employee as well as the organization.

### **5.3.1 Rotational and Developmental Assignments**

Rotational and developmental assignments are a vital tool for career development. Valuable experience is gained by working on a variety of assignments in other organizations within a bureau, across bureaus, and in the Office of Acquisition Management. Rotational and developmental assignments provide cross-training and establish skills in other disciplines which, in turn, foster a better understanding of other disciplines and builds team relationships within the acquisition community. Generally rotational assignments involve an assignment to another organization for a specified period of time and may involve a variety of work assignments or a specific project. Developmental assignments are generally project specific and the individual may maintain their current workload as well as a special assignment from another organization. Through these types of assignments the acquisition office can create professional development opportunities without expending additional funds.

### **5.3.2 Mentoring**

Mentoring provides an opportunity for an individual to receive coaching and feedback on their career planning and career choices. Bureau acquisition offices are encouraged to sponsor voluntary mentoring programs. The HCO is responsible for ensuring that Mentors are employees that have progressed sufficiently in their own career and can provide career guidance to junior level employees in the same profession. Mentoring outside the normal employee/supervisory relationship allows the mentor a chance to share valuable information from their own professional experiences as well as gain experience in communication, team building, coaching and feedback. Acquisition offices are encouraged to work with their servicing Human Resource Office for guidance in establishing mentor programs.

### **5.3.3 Teams and Workgroups**

Participation on inter-office, agency or department teams and/or workgroups often provides opportunities to network with acquisition professionals of various backgrounds, gain knowledge in new acquisition related fields or subject matter, share best practices and improve team building and communication skills.

### **5.3.4 Professional Associations**

Membership in professional associations is voluntary but strongly encouraged. It provides opportunities for sharing information and ideas on a variety of issues. Information is available to allow the professional to keep abreast of current topics through professional journals, seminars, and networking opportunities.

## **5.4 Performance Plans**

Performance standards should reflect the core business and technical competencies identified in Appendix B. The Individual Development Plan is a tool that should be used as part of the process of establishing performance standards. The IDP should reflect the employee's most recent performance appraisal and identify any education, training, or special assignments needed to improve performance or maintain the current acceptable level of performance. Acquisition offices are encouraged to work with their servicing Human Resource Office in establishing performance plans.

## **5.5 Performance Incentives**

The Department of Commerce rewards employees who serve as business leaders by focusing on outcomes and performance, partnering with customers and industry, and effectively leveraging technology and commercial best practices to facilitate innovative,

streamlined, and flexible business arrangements that result in mission success and support the goals and objectives of the DOC acquisition community. Acquisition offices are encouraged to work with their serving Human Resource Office to provide monetary and other recognition to employees who have made substantive contributions to the Department's acquisition system.

## **5.6 Tuition Assistance**

Senior Bureau Procurement Officials are strongly encouraged to budget for tuition assistance to help employees in acquisition positions meet the positive education requirement, including a full-time course of study leading to a degree in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 4107.

## **5.7 Obtaining College Credit for Training Courses and Examinations**

### **5.7.1 American Council on Education**

Employees may be eligible to receive college credit through a national program sponsored by the American Council of Education (ACE). ACE's purpose is to help individuals obtain academic credit for learning they have acquired outside of colleges and universities. ACE evaluates and makes credit recommendations for formal education programs and courses sponsored by non-collegiate organizations. These credits must be awarded by an accredited college or university to be considered as credit toward the degree requirement or the 24-semester hour requirement. Some classes offered by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) are ACE certified. Information on the ACE advisory service is available at: <http://www.acenet.edu>.

### **5.7.2 CLEP and DANTES Examinations**

College credit may be obtained through the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) or through Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) Program. These credits must be awarded by an accredited college or university to be considered as credit toward the degree requirement or the 24-semester hour requirement. The following website has information on CLEP exams: <http://www.collegeboard.com/>. The following website offers information bulletins on DANTES: <http://www.dantes.doded.mil/>.

**END OF SECTION 5**

## APPENDIX A - DEFINITIONS

**Acquisition** - The acquiring of supplies or services (including construction) with appropriated funds by contract for the use of the Federal Government through purchase or lease, whether the supplies or services are already in existence or must be created, developed, demonstrated, and evaluated.

**Acquisition Career Manager** – The Individual appointed pursuant to OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 to lead the Department's acquisition career management program. The Director of Commerce Acquisition Performance, Policy and Support (CAPPS) has been designed as the Acquisition Career Manager.

**Acquisition Experience** - Experience gained while assigned to an acquisition position which includes: related cooperative education and other acquisition developmental assignments; experience in DOC acquisition positions and in comparable positions outside of DOC.

**Acquisition Positions** - Employees who are in the acquisition system with duties that fall into an acquisition category. These positions comprise the contracting series (GS-1102), the purchasing series (GS-1105), and positions in other job series in which significant acquisition-related functions are performed.

**Acquisition Workforce** - Employees performing acquisition-related work. The acquisition workforce includes permanent civilian employees who occupy acquisition positions.

**Appointing Official** – Person authorized to grant individual Contracting Officer warrant authority consistent with the applicable regulations of the Federal Acquisition Regulations and Commerce Acquisition Regulations.

**Business Leader** - Individual that possesses the ability to: develop, negotiate and manage business deals; communicate effectively; manage and lead change; solve problems in an ambiguous environment; analyze and understand the marketplace; build and manage relationships across functions and organizations; understand and effectively operate in the customer environment; develop and implement outcome oriented solutions; and execute.

**Career Development** -The professional development of employees by integrating the capabilities, needs, interests, and aptitudes of employees in acquisition positions with designated training and development designed to meet organizational objectives. Career development is accomplished through a combination of work assignments, education, job rotation, training, and self-development programs.

**Career Path** - The range of opportunities at each career level and the optimum route for progression in a career field.

**Career Planning** - A process by which the supervisor and the employee constructively and realistically assess the employee's career goals and development needs and the supervisor gives guidance on planning alternatives to achieve the goals.

**Chief Acquisition Officer** – The Department’s Executive-level non-career employee designed pursuant to the Services Acquisition Reform Act (SARA) to advise and assist the head of the agency and other agency officials to ensure the mission of the agency is achieved through the management of the agency’s acquisition activities.

**Competencies** – Observable, measurable patterns of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics than an individual needs to perform in occupational functions.

**Continuous Learning Points** - Continuing education or training opportunities such as agency-sponsored training and management/executive seminars, special job and/or professional association related projects and/or participation in seminars/workshops, or other appropriate developmental activities to remain current in the acquisition field.

**Contracting Officer** – Individuals designated authority to enter into, administer, and/or terminate contracts and to make related determinations and findings.

**Core Training Course** - An approved course of study that meets FAC-C training requirements for a career level.

**Critical Skills** – Business and technical skills that are needed by a member of the acquisition workforce to sufficiently perform their duties.

**Defense Acquisition University** - A consortium of Department of Defense education and training institutions and organizations providing mandatory acquisition courses for certification.

**Defense Acquisition University-Equivalent Course** – Courses offered by various training providers that have been certified as equivalent to mandatory acquisition courses provided by the Defense Acquisition University.

**Delegation of Procurement Authority** – Written authority to obligate Government funds that is delegated to an individual.

**Electives** – Any training opportunity related to the employee’s job, those necessary for career development, or those used to for cross training. Electives may include no-cost distance learning, assignment-specific courses, or other training opportunities.

**Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting** – A certification program establishing core requirements for education, training, and experience for contracting professionals in civilian agencies.

**Fulfillment Process** - The DOD process through a determination is made based alternative training, experience, education, certification by another recognized organization, or other developmental activities that the required competencies for a particular certification level have been attained.

**Head of Contracting Activity** – Officials who are designated as Heads of Operating Units in orders establishing the respective operating units.

**Head of Contracting Office** - Individual's designated to head the contracting offices within each operating unit that has designated contracting authority to award and administer contracts to the full limit of the Department's contracting authority.

**Individual Development Plan** - Document used to plan an employee's education, training, experience and other developmental activities for progression in the procurement career field. Developing the plan is a joint effort of the employee, supervisor, and possibly other knowledgeable persons in the training and/or acquisition fields.

**Qualification Standard** - The standard issued by the Office of Personnel Management that specifies the minimum requirements an individual must meet for a specific job series.

**Senior Bureau Procurement Official** – The senior career procurement official, within each operating unit that has been delegated contracting authority.

**Senior Procurement Executive** - The official appointed pursuant to Executive Order 12931 and the Services Acquisition Reform Act (SARA) to carry out the responsibilities identified in both the Executive Order and SARA.

**Skills Currency** – Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting requires at least 80 hours of continuous education or training every two years to maintain certification.

**Specialized Experience** – Work experience in or related to the work to be performed.

**Waiver (Qualification Standard)** -- A provision that permits the Department of Commerce SPE to waive the education or training requirements for an applicant for a GS-1102 grade 13 or above position based on a certification that the applicant possesses significant potential for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority.

**Warrant** – The delegation of Contracting Officer authority that allows an individual to obligate funds subject to any stated limitations.

## APPENDIX B – CONTRACT SPECIALIST CORE COMPETENCIES

### PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS COMPETENCIES

- ***Oral Communication***  
Expresses information to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information; makes clear and convincing presentations, listens to others; attends to nonverbal cues.
- ***Decision-Making***  
Makes sound, well informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change.
- ***Interpersonal Skills***  
Shows understanding, courtesy, tact, empathy; develops and maintains relationships; deals with difficult people; relates well to people from varied backgrounds; is sensitive to individual differences.
- ***Problem Solving***  
Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives, and make recommendations.
- ***Teamwork***  
Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust; fosters commitment; works with others to achieve goals.
- ***Reasoning***  
Identifies rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data or other information; analyzes information and makes correct inferences or accurate conclusions.
- ***Customer Service***  
Works with customers to assess needs, provide assistance, resolve problems, satisfy expectations; knows products and services.
- ***Reading***  
Understands and interprets written material including technical material, rules, regulations, instructions, reports; applies what is learned from written material.
- ***Attention to Detail***  
Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attending to detail.
- ***Contracting/Procurement***  
Has knowledge of various types of contracts, techniques for contracting or procurement, and contract negotiation and administration.
- ***Influencing/Negotiating***  
Persuades others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior; work with others towards an agreement; negotiates to find mutually acceptable solutions.

- ***Integrity/Honesty***  
Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.
- ***Planning and Evaluating***  
Organizes work, sets priorities, determines resource requirements, determines goals and strategies; coordinates with other organizations, monitors progress; evaluates outcomes.
- ***Flexibility***  
Is open to change and new information; adapt behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacle; effectively deal with ambiguity.
- ***Self-Management/Initiative***  
Sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrate responsible behavior.
- ***Stress Tolerance***  
Deals calmly and effectively with high stress situations (for example, tight deadlines, hostile individuals, emergency situations, and dangerous situations).
- ***Writing***  
Recognizes or uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information in a succinct and organized manner, produces written information that is appropriate for the intended audience.
- ***Creative Thinking***  
Uses imagination to develop new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to problems; design new methods where established methods and procedures are not applicable or are unavailable.
- ***Learning***  
Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills, uses training, feedback, etc., for self-learning and development.
- ***Self-Esteem***  
Believes in own self-worth; maintains a positive view of self and displays a professional image.
- ***Information Management***  
Identifies a need for and knows where or how to gather information; organizes and maintains information or information management systems.
- ***Memory***  
Recalls information that has been presented previously.
- ***Arithmetic***  
Performs computations using whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percentages.
- ***Math Reasoning***  
Solves practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical and statistical techniques.

## TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES

- ***Strategic Planning***  
Advise customers on their acquisition-related roles as well as the development and implementation of strategies needed to assure that supplies and services are available when needed to meet mission requirements.
- ***Understanding the Marketplace***  
Collect and analyze relevant market information from Government and non-government source; analyze and provide business advice on the procurement request; review and provide business advice in the preparation of requirements documents and related elements of the procurement request.
- ***Understanding Sourcing (Commercial/Government Practices)***  
Identify possible sources for the acquisition through effective market analysis and knowledge of suppliers. Limit competition when it is appropriate to the acquisition situation based on business strategies and market environments. Determine whether to limit competition to small business concerns, eligible 8(a) concerns, or a single 8(a) concern.
- ***Defining Government Requirements in Commercial and Non-Commercial Terms***  
Select appropriate offer evaluation factors for incorporation into the solicitation that tie back to clear and unambiguous technical requirements included in the RFP; determine the method of acquisition.
- ***Defining Business Relationships***  
Select the most appropriate pricing arrangement(s) to solicit. Determine whether and how to provide for recurring requirements. Prepare unpriced orders and contracts. Determine whether to provide for Government financing and where necessary the method of financing. Determine bonding requirements for the solicitation and contract. Determine the method of payment. Determine whether a written source selection plan is necessary or desirable.
- ***Effective Communication***  
Select and implement a method or methods of publicizing the proposed procurements. Establish appropriate subcontracting and make-or buy requirements. Conduct oral solicitations. Prepare a written solicitation that includes the appropriate provisions and clauses tailored to the requirement and assembled in a format appropriate to the acquisition method and market for the required supply or service. Respond to an inquiry about the solicitation received prior to contract award or a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. Conduct a pre-quote, pre-bid, pre-proposal conference when appropriate. Amend or cancel a solicitation.

- **Detailed Evaluation Skills**  
Receive bids including the safeguarding, opening, reading, recording, and abstracting of each bid. Evaluate offered bid acceptance periods and take appropriate action. Determine whether a bid is late, and if late, whether it can be considered for contract award. Identify and resolve mistakes in bids. Calculate the evaluated price for each bid and determine whether the lowest price is reasonable. Determine responsiveness for the invitation for bids (IFB).
- **Effective Negotiation Skills and Effective Analytical Skills**  
Receive quotations/proposals including the safeguarding, opening, tracking, assessing compliance with minimum solicitation requirements, and identifying of quotations/proposals that will not receive further consideration. Apply non-price factors in evaluating quotations, proposals, and past performance. Determine what pricing information (if any) to require from offerors. Consider the adequacy of a firm's accounting and estimating systems in making contracting decisions. Assure that a firm properly discloses its accounting practices when required by Government cost accounting standards (CAS) and that the disclosed practices comply with CAS requirements. Obtain any necessary audit support. Establish pre negotiation positions on price including: the need to cancel and re solicit for price related reasons; the need for communications; the need for cost information; and the need to negotiate. Establish pre negotiation positions related to cost reasonableness and cost realism by analyzing cost and technical data from the offeror and other sources. Develop pre negotiation positions on terms and conditions other than price. Determine whether to award without discussions. Conduct communications to enhance Government understanding of proposals; allow reasonable interpretation of a proposal; or facilitate the Government's evaluation process. Select offerors/quoters for discussions (i.e., establish the competitive range under FAR Part 15). Prepare negotiation strategy. Conduct a negotiation session and document in the contract file the principal elements of the negotiated agreement.
- **Effective Award Resolution**  
Determine and document the responsibility or non-responsibility of a prospective contractor. Prepare purchase orders/contract and document the award recommendation. Help in distributing the contract award and related notifications. Debrief offerors at their request. Act to resolve acquisition complaints and concerns.
- **Effective Communication of Contract Requirements for Administration**  
Plan for contract administration. Conduct a post-award orientation. Monitor contractor subcontract management in accordance with prime contract requirements. Modify or adjust a contract when needed. Determine whether or not to exercise an available option. Utilize task

order contracts, delivery order contracts, and basic ordering agreements.

- ***Effective Performance Management***  
Monitor contract performance and take any necessary action related to delays in contract performance or the need to stop work under the contract. Apply remedies to protect the rights of the Government under commercial item contracts and simplified acquisitions. Apply remedies to protect the rights of the Government under noncommercial item contracts. Document past performance information.
- ***Effective Financial Management***  
Approve or disapprove the request for an assignment of claims. Require the contractor to provide a bond or other securities to apply toward completing the contract in case the contract is terminated for cause or default. Assure that the contractor receives the appropriate contract financing in accordance with contract financing requirements and relate contract performance. Make decisions related to allowability of contract costs. Adjust the price or fee. Determine if cost or pricing data were defective (i.e., not current, accurate, and complete) and appropriate remedies. Determine whether to authorize payment against an invoice in full, in part, or not at all. Refer indications of fraud or other civil or criminal offenses to responsible officials. Determine and recover debts from contractors. Enforce Government and contractor compliance with special contract terms and conditions.
- ***Make Decisions Related to Allowability of Contract Costs***  
Adjust the price or fee. Determine if cost or pricing data were defective (i.e., not current, accurate, and complete) and appropriate remedies. Determine whether to authorize payment against an invoice in full, in part, or not at all. Refer indications of fraud or other civil or criminal offenses to responsible officials. Determine and recover debts from contractors. Enforce Government and contractor compliance with special contract terms and conditions.
- ***Effective Resolution of Contract Termination and /or Closeout***  
Analyze and negotiate and prepare a Contracting Officer's decisions. Terminate contracts when it is in the best interest of the Government. Perform contract closeout.

## APPENDIX C - 1102 QUALIFICATION STANDARD Q&A

### General Information

1. Why does the GS-1102 series have a separate qualification standard?

The Clinger-Cohen Act, issued in February 1996, amended the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Act to require that the Administrator of OFPP establish qualification requirements, including educational requirements, for positions at civilian agencies in the GS-1102 series (see 41 U.S.C. 433). Five years earlier, Congress had established requirements for 1102 positions in defense agencies through the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (see 10 U.S.C. 1724, 1732). The Clinger-Cohen language stipulates that qualification requirements established by OFPP shall be comparable to the DAWIA requirements. In June 1997 the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) published a qualification standard imposing requirements established by OFPP pursuant to Clinger-Cohen.

2. In a nutshell, how is this standard different than its predecessor?

The predecessor to this standard introduced educational requirements that were effective January 1, 1998 for new hires and January 1, 2000 for existing employees. The revised standard does not change the minimum educational levels defined by the former standard. However, it does make three changes. First, it expands the waiver authority related to filling GS-13 and above positions. The former standard only allowed the senior procurement executive to waive one of the two educational requirements, whereas the revised standard permits waiver of any or all requirements. Second, it removes language that permitted examinations to substitute for the 24-hour requirement since acceptable examinations have not been designated. With the exception of college course credit obtained through testing programs designed to grant credit by examination (such as the College Level Examination Program), you cannot take a test to qualify in lieu of the 24 hours. Third, it replaces the January 1, 1998 date found in the former standard with a January 1, 2000 date, meaning employees hired under the former standard have grandfathering rights as "current" employees.

3. When does this standard go into effect?

This revised qualification standard was effective January 1, 2000. It applies to all new hires and to existing employees selected to fill GS-1102 positions in civilian agencies.

## **Educational Requirements**

1. Summarize the basic educational requirements of the qualification standard.

In order to qualify for positions at grades GS-5 through GS-12, you must possess either a bachelor's degree OR have completed at least 24 semester hours of coursework in certain business-related fields. In order to qualify for positions at grades GS-13 and above, you must possess a bachelor's degree AND at least 24 semester hours of coursework in certain business-related fields. The 24 hours may be included in, or in addition to, coursework taken to complete the degree program.

2. Does the phrase "a 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree" mean I must have a degree, or just that I must be enrolled in a degree program?

The phrase means you must possess a bachelor's degree conferred or approved by an accredited U.S. college or university based on a 4-year course of study. Simply being enrolled and working toward a degree does not meet the qualification standard. Furthermore, "honorary" degrees or other degrees with no basis in coursework do not satisfy the standard.

3. Does "4-year course of study" mean I had to finish my degree in four years?

No. You can earn the bachelor's degree in whatever length of time is necessary and accepted by the college or university conferring the degree. The descriptive phrase relates to how the educational institutions characterize the degree program, not to how long it takes you personally to complete the program.

4. Does the degree have to be a business degree?

No. A qualifying bachelor's degree may be in any field of study and may be of any type, such as Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Bachelor of Business Administration. The 24 semester hours, however, must be in some combination of the eleven fields listed in the standard.

5. How do I document that I have satisfied the degree and coursework requirements?

You need to check with your local human resource office to see what procedures they use. If you already had a degree when you were hired, you probably furnished a college transcript with your application and, if so, that information is included in your personnel records. If you have

completed courses since being hired, you will probably need to furnish evidence to your human resource office, such as a new transcript and a copy of your diploma, as applicable. It may be necessary also to provide descriptive information on a course (e.g., course syllabus) to convince a human resource specialist that a particular course qualifies toward the 24-hour requirement. You should periodically review your personnel records to ensure information has been recorded accurately, and work with your human resource office to update the records as needed. In the near future, your educational status will be maintained with other personnel and training data in a Government-wide acquisition career management information system.

6. When the degree AND 24-hour coursework requirements must be met for GS-13 and above positions, can I count courses taken as part of my degree program to satisfy the 24-hour requirement?

Yes, coursework could simultaneously count for the degree requirement and the 24-hour requirement. For example, if you earned a business degree, you should have completed sufficient credits in the required fields to satisfy the 24-hour requirement. However, if your degree is in another field, such as sociology, you might need to take some additional courses in the fields identified in the qualification standard to complete the 24-hour requirement.

7. The qualification standard identifies eleven fields for the 24-hour coursework requirement. Does this mean an acceptable course must have a course number identifying one of the fields (for example, an "economics" course might be "ECN 401")?

The answer to this question first requires an understanding of the purpose of the 24-hour coursework requirement, which is to provide a person with a minimum amount of business knowledge. This is particularly important because the primary function of contract specialists is to negotiate and execute business relationships on behalf of the Government. The eleven fields listed in the standard are identical to those set forth by Congress in DAWIA, and presumably they were selected because they capture the types of knowledge and skills desired for members of the acquisition workforce to execute this function.

Colleges and universities do not use a standard convention for course numbering aligned to the eleven fields. For example, one institution identifies its accounting curriculum as "AMIS" courses, standing for "accounting and management information systems." Therefore, it is neither practical nor reasonable to restrict interpretation of the word "fields" to institutional programs using precisely the same language. Instead, it is appropriate to consider the identified fields as general subject

areas. If the content of a course arguably fits within the general subject area represented by one of the fields, it should qualify toward the 24-hour requirement. A human resource specialist, or whoever in your organization credits completion of the 24 hours, may need to review course syllabus whenever it is not obvious from the course title that content fits the field. Consider these examples: a sociology course in statistics; a public administration course in quantitative techniques; a psychology course in organizational behavior. If the content of these courses is comparable to, or perhaps is recognized by the academic institution as a substitute for, courses clearly resting in the listed fields, you should receive credit toward the 24-hour requirement. It is your responsibility to furnish supporting descriptive information if credit for a course is being questioned.

8. Can I credit procurement training courses toward the 24-hour requirement?

Not unless a college actually gives you credit under its curriculum. Education and training are separate components of agency career development programs. Training courses are designed to build job-specific knowledge and skills, complementing and supplementing the general level of knowledge and skills acquired through formal college education. The 24-hour requirement is intended to be satisfied through coursework taken at colleges and universities. A college may give credit for certain on-the-job training courses, or teach a course that has been determined "equivalent" to a prescribed training course. In such cases, you may be satisfying educational and training requirements simultaneously. However, unless a college specifically awards you course credit, your training courses do not count toward the 24-hour requirement. This is at the discretion of the college, and you do not have an automatic entitlement to the credit.

### **"Grandfathering" -- The Exception Provisions**

1. I am currently working as an 1102 in a civilian agency. Am I "grandfathered" for civilian agency positions based on having a certain number of years of experience (meaning the requirements do not apply to me)?

The 1102 qualification standard does have some grandfathering features for the existing workforce, although none of those features are tied to a prescribed number of years of experience. Every 1102, regardless of grade, is considered to meet the standard for the position and grade held as of January 1, 2000, and is qualified for positions in other civilian agencies at the same grade without having to meet the educational and training requirements. In addition, an 1102 can be promoted through grade GS-12 without meeting the qualification requirements. There is no

grandfathering provision that allows experience to substitute for education in order to qualify for promotions to GS-13 and above.

2. Do existing Federal employees in other series, such as GS-1105, have to meet the educational requirements to move into the 1102 field?

Yes. The 1102 standard applies to every civilian agency 1102 position and must be met by individuals entering the series from outside the Government, or from other series within the Government. If you are a current 1105, you must meet the educational requirements to lateral or promote into the 1102 series.

3. What does this phrase mean: "Employees who occupy GS-1102 positions at grades 5 through 12 will be considered to meet the basic requirements for other GS-1102 positions up to and including those classified at GS-12"?

This statement is found in the "exceptions" paragraph for GS-5 through GS-12. Simply stated, it exempts employees hired by January 1, 2000 from the educational requirements for any position up to GS-12. If you meet neither the degree nor 24-hour requirement, you can still be promoted through GS-12. All individuals hired since January 1, 1998 should meet the educational requirements since they were hired under the former standard. However, many 1102s hired before January 1, 1998 do not have the education now required, and the exception accommodates those employees. Additionally, in the event someone was inadvertently hired into the 1102 series between January 1998 and January 2000 who did not actually meet the former standard, that employee would be covered by the exception.

### **The Waiver Provision**

1. Who is the "senior procurement executive" as referred to in the standard?

For purposes of this qualification standard, the "senior procurement executive" is the highest career civil servant having responsibility for the procurement function within an agency (e.g., policy, procedures, workforce, etc.). Typically, this person is located in the agency headquarters office. This person may be different from the person designated as a "senior procurement executive" pursuant to the OFPP Act (41 U.S.C. 414(3)) and as defined in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, who is a political appointee in some agencies. OFPP established the requirements of this standard with the intention that senior career procurement officials would possess the waiver authority.

2. Can the senior procurement executive delegate the waiver authority to my contracting office so waivers can be issued locally?

No. The waiver authority is not delegable. The contracting office desiring to hire an applicant who needs a waiver would probably have to provide justification to the senior procurement executive to aid the waiver decision, but only the senior procurement executive can grant waivers.

3. Can the qualification requirements for positions in grades GS-5 through GS-12 be waived?

No. All new entrants into the GS-1102 career field at grades 5 through 12 must meet the qualification requirements. The requirements cannot be waived. However, if you are already an 1102 below grade GS-12 as of January 1, 2000, the "exception" language of the standard allows you to be promoted through GS-12 even if you do not have the education specified by the standard.

4. Do I need a waiver for any promotions up to GS-12?

No. A waiver is not necessary for promotions under grade GS-13 because all promotion candidates would either meet the standard or qualify for the "exception" at those lower grades. Waivers only exist for the requirements that apply to positions at GS-13 and above.

5. I do not meet the educational requirements for a position at GS-13 and above. Do I have to obtain a waiver to apply for a job?

No. The senior procurement executive of the hiring agency must grant a waiver only if the agency wants to select you to fill a position. If the vacancy announcement indicates that waivers may be granted, you can apply for the position. The human resource office will forward your application for review, along with the other applications, with a note that one or more applicants may need a waiver.

6. How will vacancy announcements inform potential applicants about the possibility of a waiver?

When drafting vacancy announcements, human resource offices extract information from relevant qualification standards. In the case of 1102 positions, if an agency has decided for a specific vacancy that it will consider applicants who need a waiver, the vacancy announcement will state that candidates who do not meet the qualification requirements may be considered for a waiver in accordance with the standard. At the agency's option, the waiver may be applied to any of the educational, training, or experience requirements, or combination thereof, as specified

in the vacancy announcement.

7. Can I get a waiver and "carry it with me" every time I apply for a job?

No. A waiver is the prerogative of the hiring agency and would be granted based on the unique circumstances of a hiring action. "Blanket" waivers do not exist.

8. If I receive a waiver for a GS-13 position, do I need a new waiver for a GS-14 promotion, even if it is in the same agency?

Yes. Waivers are specific to a selection action, so any selection for a future promotion would require another waiver if you still did not meet the qualification requirements.

9. Do I need a waiver to lateral?

The answer depends on the circumstances. A "lateral" is a reassignment into a position at the same grade. If you meet the qualification requirements, obviously you can lateral into positions within your own agency or other agencies without a waiver. If you do not meet the qualification requirements, the rules vary by grade and circumstances as described here. There is no waiver provision applicable to grades GS-5 through GS-12, only for grades GS-13 and above. Below GS-13, the "exceptions" language of the standard permits you to lateral into a position at any agency and then to continue to be eligible for promotions through GS-12. For grades GS-13 and above, the "exceptions" language permits you to lateral into positions at your agency or other agencies at the grade you occupy as of January 1, 2000 without a waiver. These "exceptions" are "grandfathering" features afforded to the existing workforce.

Suppose you are promoted into grade GS-13 or above after December 31, 1999 on the basis of a waiver. The need for a waiver for a subsequent lateral in this circumstance depends on whether you are changing agencies. If another agency wants to lateral you into one of its GS-13 or above positions, that agency must grant a waiver in order to give you the lateral. If your own agency (the one that gave you the waiver for the position you now occupy) wants to lateral you into another position within the agency, it may do so without processing a new waiver, even if geographic relocation is involved. For example, if you were promoted to a GS-13 Contract Specialist position at NIH-Bethesda MD based on a waiver, you could be selected for a lateral into a GS-13 Procurement Analyst position at CDC-Atlanta GA without the HHS senior procurement executive granting another waiver (since both organizations are within HHS). However, you could not lateral from the NIH position into a GS-13 Contract Specialist position at EPA unless the EPA senior procurement

executive granted you another waiver.

10. Have criteria been established for issuing waivers?

No. The waiver authority was created to provide flexibility to accommodate unique circumstances faced in each agency, but it is expected that waivers will be the exception rather than the rule. Waivers will be considered on a case-by-case basis within an agency and granted in those exceptional cases where the best candidate for a specific job does not meet some requirement of the standard. For example, an agency could benefit from this authority when hiring for hard-to-fill positions or duty locations where it is difficult to attract qualified candidates. Another case may be where a strong performer is on a career ladder but fails to meet the requirements for promotion. Hiring is an agency responsibility, and the decision to grant a waiver of the qualification requirements is at the discretion of the agency's senior procurement executive. Since you do not need a waiver to be considered for a position, and provided the announcement states waivers may be considered, hiring officials will review your qualifications and rate you against other applicants. If the hiring official considers you the best candidate for a position, presumably the official would seek a waiver to allow your selection.

11. Must the applicant specifically request a waiver when applying for a position where the vacancy announcement indicates waivers may be considered?

Submittal of the application implies a request for waiver when the applicant does not meet the requirements of the standard. Although the standard specifically identifies the senior procurement executive as having waiver authority and responsibility, the likely practice will be that a selecting official prepares and submits a justification document to the senior procurement executive relating the applicant's background and characteristics to the performance requirements of the job being filled. It is the agency's responsibility to document its decision to issue a waiver.

### **Relationship Between Civilian Agency and Defense Agency Positions**

1. I am a civilian agency 1102. Can I qualify for a DoD position?

The qualification standard does not apply to defense agency positions; instead, applicable requirements are set forth in DAWIA. However, comparability exists between both sets of requirements. DoD positions through grade GS-13 require either a bachelor's degree OR 24 semester hours in identified fields, which is the same requirement the 1102 standard sets for civilian agency positions through grade GS-12. DoD has also created an "acquisition corps" to fill GS-14 and above positions, with GS-

13s eligible for membership. The acquisition corps requires a bachelor's degree AND 24 semester hours, like the 1102 standard requires for GS-13 and above positions. If you meet the DAWIA educational requirements, you could qualify for DoD jobs. If you do not meet the educational requirements, but you have at least ten years of acquisition experience as of October 1991, you are grandfathered by DAWIA and could qualify for DoD jobs. If you do not meet the educational requirements or have enough experience to be grandfathered, you are not qualified for DoD jobs, even though you may be grandfathered for civilian agency positions under the qualification standard. However, DAWIA does allow DoD to waive the requirements to hire you.

2. I am a defense agency 1102. Can I qualify for a civilian agency position?

Like anyone else competing for a civilian agency position, generally you would have to meet the educational requirements of the standard for the position you seek in order to qualify. Suppose you do not meet the educational requirements. If you were an 1102 as of January 1, 2000, the standard allows you to obtain a lateral or a promotion into a civilian agency position at grades GS-5 through GS-12. At grades GS-13 and above, you could lateral only into a position at the same grade that you held as of January 1, 2000. For promotions into civilian agency positions at grades GS-13 and above, you are not qualified if you do not meet the educational requirements; hence, you could only receive such a promotion if the hiring agency issued you a waiver. Your "DoD grandfathering" does not extend to civilian agency positions and does not give you access to promotions outside DoD. After you are placed in a civilian agency position, you are subject to the qualification standard for future civilian agency promotions. If you lateral into a civilian agency position below GS-12, you would be eligible for promotions through GS-12 even though you do not meet the educational requirements. For promotions to grades GS-13 and above, you would have to obtain a waiver if you do not meet the educational requirements.

## APPENDIX D - SAMPLE REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF OPM QUALIFICATION STANDARDS

MEMORANDUM FOR: Senior Procurement Executive

THROUGH: Bureau Senior Procurement Official

FROM: Head of Contracting Office

SUBJECT: Request for Waiver of OPM Acquisition Workforce Standards

It is requested that a waiver be granted for: ***Insert Name, Position, Series, Grade, Organization, and Address.***

This request is to waive the \_\_\_\_\_24 semester hours of business-related courses, \_\_\_\_\_ four years of college leading to a degree, \_\_\_\_\_experience requirements, and/or \_\_\_\_\_training requirements. ***Specifically identify the portion of the standard that the individual does not meet (e.g., lacks 10 or the 24 credit hours in the required business related fields, has 24 semester credit hours, but lacks the degree, has completed all but one of the mandatory training requirements, etc).***

The applicant has been determined to be the best-qualified individual for the position. In accordance with CAM 1301.6 the following narrative is provided. ***Provide a narrative that describes the potential of the applicant for advancement to levels of greater responsibility and authority based on demonstrated analytical and decision making capabilities, job performance and qualifying experience.***

In accordance with CAM 1301.6 the following justification is also provided. ***Provide justification for requesting the waiver that relates the applicant's background and experience to the performance requirements of the position to be filled. Address why the individual was selected in lieu of candidates who fully met the requirements of the GS-1102 OPM Qualification Standard (if any). Include a discussion of any impact a disapproval of the waiver would have on the organization.***

If there are questions or if assistance is needed please contact \_\_\_\_\_ ***insert name of contact*** on \_\_\_\_\_ ***insert phone number for contact.***

Attachments ( ***See CAM 1301.6 paragraph 2.5.2 Waiver Packages*** )

Position Description  
Vacancy Announcement  
Description of recruiting efforts  
Tentative selectee's application/resume  
Plan for meeting the Qualification Standard

## APPENDIX E - GUIDANCE ON MEETING CONTINUOUS LEARNING POINTS

These guidelines are generally based on DOD's requirements for achieving continuous learning points (CLPs). Agencies have flexibility in assigning points and ACMS and/or supervisors, as appropriate should work with employees to identify appropriate opportunities. Below is guidance on how training, professional activities, education, and experience can be used to meet the CLP requirements. All activities must be job-related.

### A. Training

- 1) *Completing awareness training.*** Periodically agencies conduct briefing sessions to acquaint the workforce with new or changed policy. Generally, no testing or assessment of knowledge gained is required.
- 2) *Completing learning modules and training courses.*** These may be formal or informal offerings from a recognized training organization, including in-house training course/sessions, which include some form of testing/assessment for knowledge gained.
- 3) *Performing Self-Directed Study.*** An individual can keep current or enhance his or her capabilities through a self-directed study program agreed to by the supervisor.
- 4) *Teaching.*** Employees are encouraged to share their knowledge and insights with others through teaching of courses or learning modules. Teaching is also a part of the Professional Activities category.
- 5) *Mentoring.*** Helping others to learn and become more productive workers or managers benefits the agency and the individuals involved. Mentoring is also a part of the experience category.

### B. Professional Activities

- 1) *Participating in Organization Management.*** Membership alone in a professional organization will not be considered as fulfilling continuous learning requirements, but participation in the organization leadership will. This includes holding elected/appointed positions, committee leadership roles, or running an activity for an organization that you are permitted to join under current ethics law and regulation. The employee must first ensure that participating in the management of an organization is allowed by the agency.
- 2) *Attending/Speaking/Presenting at Professional Seminars/Symposia/Conferences.*** Employees can receive points for attending professional seminars or conferences that are job related. However, the supervisor needs to determine

that the individual learned something meaningful from the experience. Because significant effort is involved in preparing and delivering presentations, credit should be given for each hour invested in the preparation and presentation.

**3) Publishing.** Writing articles related to acquisition for publication generally meets the criteria for continuous learning. Points will be awarded only in the year published. Compliance with agency publication policy is required.

**4) Participating in Workshops.** Points should be awarded for workshops with planned learning outcomes.

### C. Education

**1) Formal Training.** ACMs and supervisors should use Continuing Education Units (CEUs) as a guide for assigning points for formal training programs that award CEUs. The CEUs can be converted to points at 10 CLP points per CEU.

**2) Formal Academic Programs.** For formal academic programs offered by educational institutions, each semester hour is equal to one CEU. A three-hour credit course would be worth three CEUs and 30 CLP points, assuming that it is applicable to the acquisition function.

**Not all training providers issue certificates based on hours. Some training providers issue certificates based on continuing education units (CEUs) or continuing learning points (CLP). When converting to hours, one CEU equals 10 hours of instruction, and one CLP equals 1 hour of instruction.**

CREDITABLE ACTIVITIES	POINT CREDIT (see note)
<b>Academic Courses:</b>	
Quarter Hour	10 per Quarter Hour
Semester Hour	10 per Semester Hour
Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	10 per CEU
Equivalency Exams	Same points as awarded for the course
<b>Training Courses/Modules:</b>	
DAU Courses/Modules	10 per CEU (see DAU catalog) or:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness Briefing/Training---no testing/assessment associated</li> <li>• Continuous Learning Modules---testing/assessment associated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• .5 point per hour of instruction</li> <li>• 1 point per hour of instruction</li> </ul>
Other Functional Training	1 point per hour of instruction
Leadership or Other Training	1 point per hour of instruction
Equivalency Exams	Same points as awarded for course
<b>Professional Activities:</b>	
Professional Exam/License/Certificate	10-30 points
Teaching/Lecturing	2 points per hour; maximum of 20 points per year
Symposia/Conference Presentations	2 points per hour; maximum of 20 points per year
Publications	10 to 40 points

Note: - All activities may earn points only in the year accomplished, awarded or published.

**D. Experience**

Experience includes on-the-job experiential assignments, and intra/inter-organization rotational career broadening and developmental experiences. While agencies can use discretion in arriving at a reasonable point value to be awarded for rotational and developmental assignments, a sliding scale is recommended. Suggested points for such assignments are in the table below.

The assumption is that longer assignments are more beneficial than shorter assignments. The supervisor may feel that an individual may deserve more or less than the value shown. In determining the points for a rotational/developmental assignment, the supervisor should consider both the long-term benefit to the agency, and the immediate benefit to the supervisor’s organization and the workforce member. For example, a second rotational of the same sort would be less valuable than a different type of rotational assignment.

When experience or other non-assessed activities are to be used to earn CLPs, certain principles should be followed. Supervisors and employees should pre-define, as closely as possible, the tasks to be accomplished, expected outcomes, and the learning opportunities. If it is in an assignment, the individual should be mentored during the assignment. Accomplishment of a product, such as a briefing, a project design, a report, or other work product that shows the learning attained, is desirable. Sharing the knowledge and experience gained and the product with others in the organization is encouraged.

<b>CREDITABLE ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>POINT CREDIT</b>
<b>Experience:</b>	
On-the-Job Experiential Assignments	Maximum of 20 points per year
Integrated Product Team (IPT)/ Special Project Leader	Maximum of 15 points per year
IPT/Special Project Member	Maximum of 10 points per year
Mentor	Maximum of 5 points per year
<b>Assignment Length (Rotational Assignments or Training with Industry):</b>	<b>Recommended Points:</b>
12 Months	80
9 Months	60
6 Months	40
3 Months	15
2 Months	10
1 Month	5

## **APPENDIX F - FEDERAL ACQUISITION CERTIFICATION IN CONTRACTING APPLICATION FORMS**

# Federal Acquisition Certification – Contracting Level I

## PART A - EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Title, Series, Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Grade and Level (I, II or III) \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART B – CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Education:** Baccalaureate degree or at least 24 hours among accounting, law, business finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.
2. **Experience:** Minimum of one year contracting experience (SERIES 1102).
3. **Training requirements:** Send all certificates for applicable courses below to the Acquisition Career Manager
4. **Method of Completion** (Check appropriate space and complete applicable information).
5. **Copy of Performance Plan and Performance Appraisal**

### CON 100 SHAPING SMART BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 110 MISSION SUPPORT PLANNING

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 111 MISSION PLANNING EXECUTION

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 112 MISSION PERFORMANCE

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 120 MISSION FOCUSED CONTRACTING

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### ELECTIVE (one):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

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## PART C – SIGNATURES

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Supervisor's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for certification at Level I.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Head of Contracting Office and Senior Bureau Procurement Official's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for certification at Level I.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Federal Acquisition Certification – Contracting Level II

## PART A - EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Title, Series, Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Grade and Level (I, II or III) \_\_\_\_\_

## PART B – CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Education:** Baccalaureate degree or at least 24 hours among accounting, law, business finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.
- Experience:** Minimum of two years contracting experience (SERIES 1102).
- Training requirements:** Send all certificates for applicable courses below to the Acquisition Career Manager
- Method of Completion** (Check appropriate space and complete applicable information).
- Copy of Performance Plan and Performance Appraisal**

### CON 214 Business Decisions for Contracting

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 215 Intermediate Contracting for Mission Support

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 216 Legal Considerations in Contracting

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 217 Cost Analysis and Negotiation Techniques

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 218 Advanced Contracting for Mission Support

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### ELECTIVES (two):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

## PART C – SIGNATURES

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Supervisor's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for certification at Level II.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Head of Contracting Office and Senior Bureau Procurement Official's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for certification at Level II.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Federal Acquisition Certification – Contracting Level III

## PART A - EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Title, Series, Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Grade and Level (I, II or III) \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART B – CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Education:** Baccalaureate degree and at least 24 hours among accounting, law, business finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management.
- Experience:** Minimum of four years contracting experience (SERIES 1102).
- Training requirements:** Send all certificates for applicable courses below to the Acquisition Career Manager
- Method of Completion** (Check appropriate space and complete applicable information).
- Copy of Performance Plan and Performance Appraisal.**

### CON 353 Advanced Business Solutions for Mission Support

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

### ELECTIVES (two):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

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## PART C – SIGNATURES

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Supervisor's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for certification at Level III.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Head of Contracting Office and Senior Bureau Procurement Official's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for certification at Level III.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX G - DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE PURCHASING CERTIFICATION APPLICATION FORMS**

# Department of Commerce Purchasing Certification - Level I

## PART A - EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Title, Series, Grade \_\_\_\_\_

## PART B – CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Experience:** Minimum of one year purchasing or contracting experience (SERIES 1102, 1105 or 1106).
2. **Training requirements:** Send all certificates for applicable courses below to the Acquisition Career Manager
3. **Method of Completion** (Check appropriate space and complete applicable information). For course equivalencies, see Appendix D of the DAU Catalog (<http://www.dau.mil/catalog/default.asp>).

### CON 100 SHAPING SMART BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course\* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed) (Course name, Date completed)

### CON 237 Simplified Acquisition Procedures

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course\* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed) (Course name, Date completed)

### GSA Purchase Card Online Training

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course\* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed) (Course name, Date completed)

### ELECTIVE (one):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

## PART C – SIGNATURES

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Supervisor's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for purchasing certification at Level I.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Head of Contracting Office Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for purchasing certification at Level I.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Department of Commerce Purchasing Certification - Level II

### PART A - EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Title, Series, Grade \_\_\_\_\_

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### PART B – CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Experience:** Minimum of two years purchasing or contracting experience (SERIES 1102, 1105 or 1106).
2. **Training requirements:** Send all certificates for applicable courses below to the Acquisition Career Manager
3. **Method of Completion** (Check appropriate space and complete applicable information). For course equivalencies, see Appendix D of the DAU Catalog (<http://www.dau.mil/catalog/default.asp>).

#### CON 110 MISSION SUPPORT PLANNING

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course\* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

#### CON 111 MISSION PLANNING EXECUTION

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course\* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

#### CON 112 MISSION PERFORMANCE

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course\* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

#### CON 120 MISSION FOCUSED CONTRACTING

Actual course \_\_\_\_\_ or  Equivalent course\* \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date completed or Date Fulfillment Approved) (Course name, Date completed)

#### ELECTIVE (one):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

#### ELECTIVE (two):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

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### PART C – SIGNATURES

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Supervisor's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for purchasing certification at Level II.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Head of Contracting Office Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for purchasing certification at Level II.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Department of Commerce Purchasing Certification - Level III

## PART A - EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Agency Name U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Title, Series, Grade \_\_\_\_\_

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## PART B – CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. **Experience:** Minimum of three years purchasing or contracting experience (SERIES 1102, 1105 or 1106).
2. **Training requirements:** Send all certificates for applicable courses below to the Acquisition Career Manager
3. **Method of Completion** (Check appropriate space and complete applicable information). For course equivalencies, see Appendix D of the DAU Catalog (<http://www.dau.mil/catalog/default.asp>).\*

### ELECTIVE (one):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

### ELECTIVE (two):

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Course name) (Date completed)

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## PART C – SIGNATURES

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Supervisor's Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for purchasing certification at Level III.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Head of Contracting Office Endorsement:

I recommend the above individual for purchasing certification at Level III.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX H - SAMPLE REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTING OFFICER

MEMORANDUM FOR: Senior Bureau Procurement Official\*

FROM: Head of Contracting Office\*

SUBJECT: Request for Appointment of Contracting Officer

There is a clear and convincing need to appoint {name of nominee} as a Level {warrant level} Contracting Officer. This need is evidenced by {discuss factors which necessitate contracting authority}.

The nominee is employed in the following organizational position: {insert job title, series, grade, Office, Branch/Division and complete address}.

The nominee meets the education, training and experience requirements established by CAM 1301.6 Paragraph 4.5, and the warrant level requested is commensurate with the nominee's qualifications. The attached OF 612 (or resume) is current and specifically identifies the nominee's education, procurement related training, and procurement experience. The nominee's education is clearly identified as to the type of degree held and/or the number of credit hours completed within the fields designated in CAM Chapter 1301.6 Paragraph 4.5. Procurement training is identified as to course titles, dates, number of hours, and training provider. Procurement experience is identified which relates the nominee's background and experience to the types of contract actions that the nominee will be responsible for as a Contracting Officer.

The nominee's conflict of interest disclosure statement is on file in the Human Resources Office.

The nominee's recent performance appraisal(s) rating is fully successful or higher (or equivalent).

The level of authority requested per contract action is \_\_\_\_\_.

{If applicable: The {insert organization} agrees to set aside funding for training, audits and required travel to servicing contracting offices as required for nominee.}

{If applicable: A copy of the nominee's Performance Plan reflecting a separate critical element for acquisition management or acquisition management as part of an existing critical element, with a minimum weight of 15% is attached}

{The nominee will complete a minimum of one week mandatory training at the servicing contracting office prior to appointment and will meet annually training and evaluation requirements}

{insert any additional comments}

Attachments

\*In those instances where the request is for the appointment of a Senior Bureau Procurement Official, the request should be addressed to the Senior Procurement Executive from the HCA.

## APPENDIX I - SAMPLE PERFORMANCE PLAN ELEMENT

<b>SECTION 1 - PERFORMANCE PLAN</b>		
Employee's Name	Rating Period 10/01/05 - 09/30/06	Element No. <u>1</u> of 3
<b>ITEM 1. Performance Element, Objective and Point Weight</b>		
Critical Element: <u>Acquisition Management</u>		
Objective: <u>To provide timely and effective acquisition service.</u>		
Point Weight: <u>15</u>		
The weight must reflect the importance of the element or the time required to perform it, or both. Element weight must be in 5-point increments, with no element weight higher than 60 points, and all element weights must equal 100 points.		
<b>ITEM 2. Major Activities or Required Results Related to the Above Element</b> <i>(Maximum of 5)</i>		
Acquisitions are conducted timely and effectively in accordance with applicable law, regulation and policy.		
Data integrity is maintained through the use of all appropriate acquisition reporting systems.		
Contract administration is executed timely and effectively.		
Integrity, sound judgment and the highest ethical standards are demonstrated in all actions.		
<b>ITEM 3. Evaluation Criteria</b> <i>(Benchmark performance standards must be used; add supplemental standards, if needed.)</i>		
NIST/OAM Benchmark Performance Standards		
Acquisitions are awarded within established procurement action lead times 85% of the time.		
Contract file documentation is generally complete, well-organized, and reflects the acquisition was conducted in accordance with applicable policies, procedures and regulations and supports proposed actions.		
Contract administration is generally timely and ensures compliance with contract terms and conditions and is consistent with applicable law, regulation and policy.		
Procurement data is timely and accurately entered into the appropriate automation system and identified errors are corrected timely.		
Sound judgment is generally exercised in Contracting Officer decision on contractual actions.		

## APPENDIX J - SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

### S A M P L E Acquisition Career Management Program--Individual Development Plan

<b>NAME</b> J. Sample	<b>CURRENT POSITION, SERIES, GRADE AND ORGANIZATION</b> Contract Specialist GS-1102-09, Department of Commerce	<b>FOR FY xx</b>			
<b>SHORT-RANGE GOALS (1 year)</b>	To develop knowledge, skills, and abilities for career advancement				
<b>LONG-RANGE GOALS (3-5 years)</b>	To become supervisory contracting officer				
<b>DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES/FORMAL TRAINING</b>					
<b>ACTIVITY/COURSE TITLE</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>DURATION</b>	<b>PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE AND ESTIMATED COST</b>		
(1) Obtain appropriate training, education, and experience for developing strong procurement skills and leadership qualities. Take Intermediate Contracting (CON 202) course. Take class in Interpersonal Communication.	To increase knowledge and broaden contracting skills and to take core training course	160 hours 8 hours	11/98      \$1,000.00 1/99      \$ 250.00		
(2) Participate in government-wide procurement conferences, workshops, seminars, and outside professional organizations.	To broaden perspective and keep current by interacting with Government-wide personnel on acquisition topics.	24 hours	5/99		
(3) Obtain a procurement role model or mentor.	To obtain advice and guidance on career matters.	Ongoing			
(4) Request developmental assignment with senior level CO.	To assist in high-level acquisition for experience.	90 days	3/99		
(5) Learn to use spreadsheet applications.	To support contract projects and presentations.	24 hours	10/98		
(6) Join a professional organization.	To stay abreast of current acquisition issues.	Ongoing	10/98		
<b>EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>

**END OF DOCUMENT**

**END OF CAM 1301.6**