

Military Steps to Planning Your Acquisition Career

The following will provide you with general information, points of contact, policies, procedures and terminology that are important to your Acquisition career development. While many of the steps will overlap, they are generally sequentially ordered.

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1. **Contact your Acquisition Branch Manager.** Upon accession into **Functional Area 51 (FA51)**, the **military component of the Army Acquisition Corps**, your first step should be to contact your **Assignments Officer** from the **Acquisition Management Branch (AMB)** at HRC. **Your Assignments Officer** will be able to advise and assist you in planning your career development. **Note that you need an AKO account to log into the AMB homepage.**

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2. **Newly accessed acquisition officers are required to attend the FA51 Basic Qualification Course(BQC) prior to their first assignment (exceptions may be made for officers attending masters' programs that provide Level III DAU training equivalencies). The FA51 BQC provides instruction in Acquisition doctrine, leadership, and lessons learned, and also provides Level II DAU training equivalencies in several career fields.**

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3. **Determine career objectives and select primary and secondary Areas of Concentration (AOC).** **Acquisition officers in Year Groups 99 and subsequent will be expected to achieve certification in two or more AOCs. Note that assignments will be based on needs of the Army, professional development needs, and officer preferences, in that order.** There are five AOCs and one personnel management tool in the FA51. **The AOCs equate to the Acquisition Career Fields found in the DAU catalog in parenthesis below:**

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- o 51A: Systems Development (Program Management).
- o 51C: Contracting and Industrial Management (Contracting).
- o 51R: Systems Automation Engineering and Acquisition (Information Technology).
- o 51S: Research and Engineering (Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering – Systems Engineering (SPRDE-SE) or Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering – Science and Technology Manager (SPRDE-STM)).
- o 51T: Test & Evaluation (Test and Evaluation).

o **51Z: Multi-Functional Acquisition Leader: a lieutenant-colonel or colonel who is certified in two or more of the above AOCs**

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A more detailed description of these **AOCs** may be found in DA Pam 600-3, Chapter 48 at: http://www.usapa.army.mil/pdffiles/p600_3.pdf. **Note that we are in the process of updating DA PAM 600-3; the draft submitted to the Army G-1 can be found here: Final Draft FA51 DA Pam 600-3 AUG 06 submitted to G-1.pdf**. Certification requirements can be found in Appendix B of the DAU Catalog: http://www.dau.mil/catalog/cat2007/Appendix_B.pdf

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4. **Evaluate Advance Civil Schooling (ACS) opportunities.** There are many opportunities for the Acquisition Corps officer to attend ACS. However, career timelines and type of degree sought will influence which program fits your career. Contact your ACM for a detailed discussion of the opportunities for your specific goals. **More information can be found here at the AMB ACS webpage:** https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/protect/active/opfam51/ACS_Update_Aug04.html

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5. **Refer to the Development Model in DA Pam 600-3 FA51 Career Models draft DA Pam 600-3.pdf**. **Note: Officers can expect to rotate through several different developmental jobs in the ranks of captain and major. The text boxes in the figure do not necessarily depict the actual length of the event, but instead depict the window during which the event occurs.** This model provides a framework with which to conduct career planning. Request that your **Assignments Officer** assist you in determining where you are on the model and in planning your career

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progression strategy.

6. Prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The IDP is a 5-year plan that outlines your education, training and experience goals. Determine and define your career goals and objectives in concrete terms; i.e., where are you in your career and where do you want to be in the short term and the long term. Using guidance provided by your **Assignments Officer**, work with your supervisor and agree upon a plan that is consistent with the model and your goals. Document the desired education, training or experience on your IDP. For detailed information on completing the IDP, go to <https://rda.altess.army.mil/cappmis/index.cfm>  

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7. Become certified in your primary Area of Concentration. The goal for proficiency in your AOC is attainment of Level III certification. The certification requirements, by acquisition career field, may also be found in Appendix C of the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Catalog, www.dau.mil.   If you do not understand any of the requirements, you may contact your ACM for clarification. There are a number of ways to obtain the training necessary to meet the certification training standards, as follows: - Attend DAU resident/on-site courses - Take DAU Distance Learning (Web-based) courses via the internet - Obtain credit for equivalent courses - Obtain credit through the Fulfillment Program. For more information on the Army Implementing Instructions for Fulfillment see the DoD Fulfillment policy in the Policies & Procedures section.  

(All Level III DAU courses and those offered through distance learning may not be fulfilled.) For DAU course schedules, go to www.dau.mil.  

8. Commence Career Broadening Activities. Once you have become proficient in your primary career field, you should commence career-broadening activities. - Pursue functional assignments in your secondary career field. - Become certified at least at Level II in one or more other career fields. - Apply for learning opportunities offered in the AETE/ATAP Catalog. These opportunities range from leadership development courses to degree completion/master's degree programs. For information on acquisition funding as well as other opportunities and application instructions see the AETE/ATAP Catalog.  

9. Meet Corps membership requirements and apply for membership. In order to become a member of the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC), a subset of the Army Acquisition Workforce, individuals must meet the status, experience, training and education requirements as listed in the Army Acquisition Corps **Membership Requirements document**  . Military must be serving in the grade of major, or above. Officers interested in applying for Acquisition Corps membership should contact their **AMB Assignment Officer**   and request Corps Membership.

10. Participate in Continuous Learning (CL) activities. Throughout your career, you should participate in continuous learning activities. Once you are certified in the position you encumber, the USD (AT&L) Policy on Continuous Learning for the Acquisition Workforce requires that you complete a minimum of 80 CL points every two years. Attainment of CL points is not limited to the traditional classroom setting but may be earned in numerous ways. Work with your supervisor to ensure attainment of CL points is considered when developing your IDP and ensure points earned are captured on your IDP, which is used to document continuous learning.

11. Be aware of the various promotion, school and command boards. Monitor HRC online for updated career information and timelines. Go to the following link for detail on promotion, school, and command boards. <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil>  

12. Complete Command and General Staff College. AAC officers should attain MEL4 certification either through resident or non-resident completion of CGSC prior to primary zone consideration for selection to LTC. AAC

officers compete for selection to attend resident CGSC just like the officers in all other OPMS XXI career fields.

13. Compete for Acquisition Command and Product Manager positions (LTC). Best-Qualified Boards are held annually. Information on available positions, eligibility, and application requirements may be found at <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil>. 

14. Compete for Senior Service College (LTC/COL). Best-Qualified Boards are held annually. Information on available positions, eligibility, and application requirements may be found at <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil>. 

15. Compete for Acquisition Command and Project Manager positions (COL). Best-Qualified Boards are held annually. Information on available positions, eligibility, and application requirements may be found at <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil>. 

