



# Army Acquisition Career Development Model

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**T**he U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center's (USAASC's) goal is to have an educated and appropriately trained Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology (AL&T) Workforce that supports the Army's transformation, and sustains and improves current weapons systems critical to the support of our Soldiers. To ensure this goal is met, USAASC provides the best education and career development opportunities possible to create a qualified AL&T Workforce that is properly trained, educated, and poised to meet the future needs of our joint forces.

Joan L. Sable, USAASC Acquisition Career Development Division Chief, meets with personnel to discuss AL&T Workforce education and career development opportunities. (U.S. Army photo by McArthur Newell II, BRTRC.)

The success of the Army begins with educating its current and future leaders. Army civilians will become 21st century leaders who personify the warrior ethos in all aspects, from war-fighting support, to statesmanship, to business management. The basic acquisition career path can be best described as three progressive developmental levels that facilitate increased career advancement over time. These levels—Functional Expertise, Broadening Experience, and Strategic Leadership—are displayed in the Army Acquisition Career Development Model on Page 6.

The three career levels depicted in the model are key to the progression and education of the AL&T Workforce. The focus is to build the entire organization through a holistic approach, ensuring that our workforce members are trained and certified while providing a solid foundation of complementary experience. Leadership and functional competencies are important fundamentals in ensuring that we are fulfilling the Army's business strategies. This applies across the spectrum of the AL&T Workforce, from senior acquisition leaders to the most junior interns.

To advance from one level to the next, individuals are required to meet defined requirements or "standards" and to create and maintain an Individual Development Plan that will build the necessary leadership and management competencies in preparation for the next level.

### Functional Expertise

At the first level, civilians should focus on developing technical competencies in their primary acquisition career field (ACF) by achieving the education, training, and experience required for Level I certification. This can be accomplished by completing acquisition training, such as that offered by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) or alternate training sources, including the Army Acquisition Basic

Course (AABC). The AABC, revised for FY10, prepares officers, noncommissioned officers, civilians, and international students for entry-level acquisition workforce positions by providing *Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA)* Level I training in program management and contracting. Additional information can be obtained at <http://www.almc.army.mil/hsv/aabc.htm> for AABC training and <http://www.dau.mil> for DAU training.

Each acquisition position within DOD is assigned an acquisition position category and is aligned with both an ACF and a certification level that must be achieved. There are minimum education, training, and experience standards that must be attained to meet the certification requirements for the position. The competencies gained from fulfilling these requirements are fundamental to successful performance in the ACF at the stated level. Similar to the ACF certification standards, DOD has identified Core Plus Standards for each ACF at each level—Level I (Entry), Level II (Intermediate), and Level III (Advanced). These standards can be reviewed at [http://www.dau.mil/workforce/index\\_sub1\\_coreplus.asp](http://www.dau.mil/workforce/index_sub1_coreplus.asp).

The DAU Core Plus construct was designed to advance the DOD AL&T competency management model by providing a "road map" for the development of acquisition workforce members beyond the minimum certification standards required for their position. Core Plus helps identify the right learning for the right people at the right time during their professional development. Core Plus connects workforce members with their ACF, level, and particular job assignment needs.

### Broadening Experience

At the second level, workforce members are encouraged to complete training that builds cross-functional/leadership competencies through

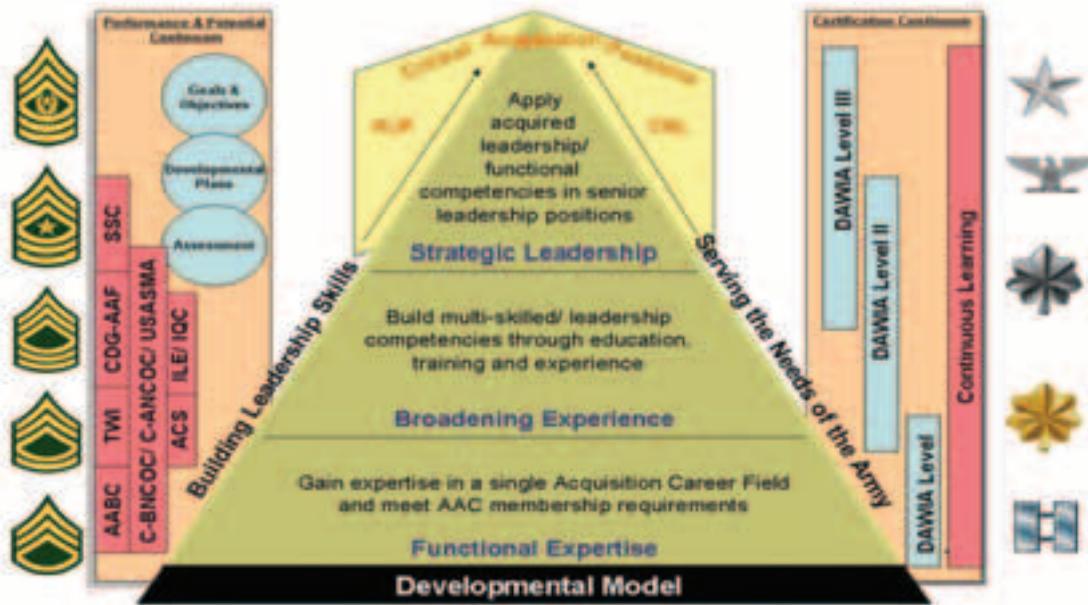
education, training, and experience. The Competitive Development Group/Army Acquisition Fellowship (CDG/AAF) Program is a 3-year leadership developmental program that offers expanded training, leadership, experiential, and other career development opportunities. The program is designed to develop our future Army acquisition leaders. Additional information on the CDG/AAF Program can be found at <http://asc.army.mil/career/programs/cdgaaf>.

### Strategic Leadership

At the third level, workforce members are encouraged to apply for and attend a Senior Service College (SSC). The DAU SSC Fellowship (SSCF) Program, Industrial College of Armed Forces (ICAF), Army War College (AWC), and National War College (NWC) are recommended SSCs that workforce members are encouraged to attend. Completion of at least one SSC provides a senior-level master's degree and, in some cases, training for Level III *DAWIA* certification. These senior-level opportunities prepare workforce members for positions of greater responsibility within DOD. A brief description of the SSCs follows.

- DAU's SSCF Program develops acquisition leaders for critical senior leadership roles, such as product and project managers, program executive officers, and other key acquisition positions.
- ICAF prepares selected military officers and civilians for senior leadership and staff positions by conducting postgraduate, executive-level courses of study and associated research dealing with the resource component of national power.
- AWC prepares military and civilians for leadership responsibilities in a strategic security environment during peacetime and wartime, while the NWC provides military and civilians a broad understanding of national security policy and strategy.

# Developmental Model



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In addition, Senior Executive Service (SES)-level employees are encouraged to complete leadership training. For example, the Team Learning Event is a “by invitation” senior executive leadership, acquisition, and sustainment course developed for current U.S. Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) General Officers (GOs) and SES employees. This course is designed to accommodate the review, analysis, and discussions of major issues impacting the AL&T Workforce. SES members and GOs are invited to this event by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for AL&T (ASAALT), USAASC, or the U.S. Army Materiel Command. The 2009 Acquisition

Education, Training, and Experience Catalog ([http://asc.army.mil/docs/pubs/aete/AETE\\_2009\\_Appendix\\_C.pdf](http://asc.army.mil/docs/pubs/aete/AETE_2009_Appendix_C.pdf)) identifies other non-mandatory learning and training opportunities in leadership, acquisition, sustainment, and operational exposure. Many of these opportunities are sponsored by the federal government (e.g., Office of Personnel Management, DOD, and defense organizations and commands), colleges and universities, and private industry (e.g., commercial-off-the-shelf). AL&T SES members are also encouraged to participate in these learning/training opportunities to fulfill their mandatory AL&T requirement for 80 continuous learning points every

2 years. At this level, SES members and GOs are able to apply their acquired leadership and functional competencies while serving in key leadership positions.

An overarching goal of the ASAALT in his role as the Army Acquisition Executive is to grow and enhance the capability of the acquisition workforce to create a more professional AAC to ensure quality products and services for the Soldier—our ultimate customer. The career levels shown in the Army Acquisition Career Development Model provide the framework to enable our entire workforce to achieve this goal.

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