

## Product Director FAQs (21 Oct 14 Update)

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1. Q: Why a centralized Product Director (PD) Board?  
A: The PD Board Pilot is an effort to provide high performing civilians additional opportunities for development and growth, and to build a larger talent pool, for future senior leader requirements.
  
2. Q: When is the first Product Director Centralized Board?  
A: The FY15/FY16 PD Pilot is scheduled to convene at the end of the calendar year (4-5 December 2014), immediately following the FY16 COL/GS15 Program Manager (PM) Centralized Selection List (CSL) Board (2-5 Dec 14). The PD Pilot Board will use the same board members and process to select the initial FY15/16 Product Directors.
  
3. Q: How do I apply for the PD Board?  
A: The first PD Pilot Board is scheduled to be announced 23 September 2014. The announcement will highlight the minimum eligibility qualifications for applicants. Interested civilians will have approximately 45 days to apply on line via the Army Acquisitions Professional Development System (AAPDS) application on the Career Acquisition Management Portal (CAMP).
  
4. Q: What if I've applied for the FY16 LTC/GS14 or COL/GS15 CSL PM Board, do I need to reapply?  
A: Yes. Civilians that have applied to the CSL Boards can opt-in to have their application activated for the FY15/FY16 PD Board. There will be some other requirements needed for this board application. The USAASC DACM Office will work with all applicants to ensure all application requirements are met. Details will be highlighted during the board announcement process.
  
5. Q: Will a regionalized position list be available at the time of application, similar to previous year LTC CSL boards?  
A: No. The intent is to provide a geographical preference sheet as part of the application process. After the PD Selection Board, primary and alternate selectees will be provided with a list of FY15 vacancies by location which will be utilized in the slating process.
  
6. Q: Who will slate the selectees?  
A: Slating will be conducted by a Talent Management Board of Directors, comprised of the Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM), the Deputy DACM and the PEOs/DPEOs, and will convene after the selection board. The slating will determine regional and at-large placement.
  
7. Q: If selected, can I decline?  
A: Yes, you may decline without prejudice this year, if you are selected and then slated to a geographical region which you did not choose. You may then compete again the following year if so inclined. In the future, however, if you are selected and slated to a geographic region/location you requested, but declined, you will be considered to decline with prejudice and will not allowed further consideration for PD.
  
8. Q: If selected for a PD outside my geographical region, how will that movement work?  
A: Permanent Change of Station, associated with PD assignment selection would be similar to the current LTC CSL process. You would pick a desired geographic location and have the ability to turn down (without prejudice) offers outside that area.

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9. Q: Which PDs will be filled by this pilot board process?  
A: All PDs will be centrally selected. The pilot has been coordinated with PEOs to obtain initial Product Director Positions for FY15 and FY16. Additional positions will become available as the annual review process looks at PDs.
10. Q: Will Product Directors be three-year rotations like the CSL Product Manager assignments?  
A: Yes the designed product director tenure is 3 years, but can be curtailed to 2 years or extended to a total of 5 years. Product Director post-utilization will be centrally managed by the DACM Office or geographically by the PEO.
11. Q: Will a Product Director centralized position provide additional weighting on future boards?  
A: As with any central selection, proper documentation on your ACRB, of any and all key acquisition and leadership positions is strongly recommended.
12. Q: If selected for a Program Director, what would the appointment timeline look like?  
A: The intent is to announce the initial FY15 and FY16 PD slate in 2<sup>nd</sup> QTR FY15. That would allow sufficient time for pre-utilization training and development prior to being assigned to the PEO which owns the PD. A tentative timeline, beginning with application and ending with appointment to PD slot, will be included on our website. This timeline will also include tentative post-utilization options and projected paths forward.
13. Q: Would PMT401 still be a requirement prior to entering position?  
A: Yes. PMT 401 will be a requirement prior to reporting to the PEO for those selected by this first pilot board. Adjustments may be made to allow those PDs selected for ACAT III programs to attend like training (i.e. PMT 403). Additional requirements may be added.
14. Q: How will a Product Director's reporting/evaluation chain work?  
A: The rating chain will be the same as a Product Manager. The rater will be the Project Manager or Project Director and the Senior Rater the PEO or DPEO.
15. Q: What is the difference between the PD and a PdM?  
A: The PD's job description and PdM's job description will be like in responsibilities. PDs will lead one or more APMs and programs.
16. Q: What criteria will be utilized to select the best qualified applicants from the centralized PD Board?  
A: Applicants going before the Product Director Board will be evaluated utilizing the same criteria as the PM CSL boards. Board members will evaluate each applicant's qualifications, competencies, experience, performance, and potential.
17. Q: How many Product Director positions will there be?  
A: PD positions are being established through a review process with the PEOs and will be reviewed annually alongside the CSL/MAPL Review process. All PDs will meet a standardized definition. A small percentage of PDs will be military only and filled through a nominative selection process. All civilian PDs will be centrally selected through the PD Selection Board process. The DACM's vision is

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to develop a substantial number of centrally select Product Director positions throughout the PEOs to ensure we provide high performing civilians additional opportunities for development and growth to build a larger talent pool for future senior leader requirements.

18. Q: Is this program an intermediary step for gaining experience prior to becoming a PdM/PM since those types of assignments are so difficult to get as civilians?  
A: The intent of centrally selected Product Director positions are to provide high performing civilians additional opportunities for development and growth to build a larger talent pool for future senior leader requirements. Although Product Directors and Product Managers are considered like in responsibility, civilians may continue to apply for other broadening opportunities such as the annual PM CSL Board.
19. Q: How will the Senior Rater Potential Evaluations (SRPE) be utilized to assist in the civilian development process?  
A: : It is anticipated that effective January 2015, an annual SRPE will be mandatory for all AAW members, in Non Bargaining Unit Status in the Direct Reporting Unit. The future goal is to expand the SRPE utilization/mandate to the entire AAW.
20. Q: Which PEOs or organizations will establish centrally selected PDs?  
A: All PEO PDs will be centrally selected. Future coordination, with all PEOs, will determine the final number of Product Director positions.
21. Q: What can I expect for post-utilization as I finish my 2-5 years as a PD?  
A: Centrally Selected Product Directors can expect multiple years of broadening developmental experiences and training including the PD.
22. Q: Are the Project and Product Director positions interchangeable between military and civilians? For example our converted CSL COL position is currently designated as a non CSL COL. Could this position be filled with a civilian GS15?  
A: Project and Product Director positions will go before the annual CSL/PD/MAPL review board. That body will recommend to the DACM what PDs should be filled by a centralized civilian selection or filled by a nominated military officer under a MAPL authorization and when that position should be filled. The DACM will be the final approval authority.
23. Q: Can current PD incumbents apply for their position?  
A: Yes, we highly encourage those serving product directors to apply for the PD boards. However if you have successfully served that PD tenure, we encourage you to apply for other PD or CSL positions or seek a lateral broadening opportunity within a PEO.
24. Q: Will we receive an authorization for the approved product director positions?  
A: No. The intent is for the PEO to apply an authorization against their product director positions and provide salary and administration. By exception only, USAASC may provide the approval to assign a slated product director against an USAASC authorization.

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25. Q: .The PD Board announcement states that Army acquisition workforce members below the NH-04 level may only apply for consideration by exception. The Deputy, DACM is the final review and approval authority. I am a highly qualified NH03 and have been acting in NH04 positions for sometime but due to hiring freezes I will be for an undetermined amount of time unable to compete permanently for an NH4 slot. I meet all the other qualifications listed. What is the exception to be considered if below the NH04, and how do I get that exception?

A: At the time of the announcement, USAASC was still exploring legal avenues that would allow us to open this pilot opportunity to the GS13s within the ASA(ALT) Competitive Development Program (CDG) and thus that caveat. At this time, USAASC has determined this initial board can only consider NH-04s since the intent of this pilot is to utilize management directed reassignments (MDR) to fill the FY15 product director position vacancies.

26. Q: Should Return Rights documents be required within the application process?

A: In a memorandum dated April 16, 2003, the Deputy Chief of Staff for G-1 approved a request to grant centrally selected Army civilian employee’s administrative reemployment rights across major Army Command (MACOM) lines to their former positions, upon conclusion of PM assignments. For those employees who wish to have a guaranteed position upon conclusion of their assignments, return rights must be included on the SF 50 that assigns the employee to the PD position.

27. Q: What are the requirements needed for a Senior Rater Potential Evaluation (SRPE)?

A: To be rated, the employee must have been in the AAW position a minimum of 120 days and under the Senior Rater (SR) for a minimum of 90 days. The SR must be a supervisor and senior in grade/band to the rated employee. The SR should be the rater of the employee's supervisor. The only exception are for employees providing collocated/dedicated matrix support to Department of Army chartered Centrally Select List Project/Product Managers (PM), Program Executive Offices (PEO), and Joint PEO. In this case, the SR should be the PM or PEO that is supported, regardless of pay plan. The rater will adjust the default Senior Rater identification accordingly.

<b>When the grade of the rated individual is:</b>	<b>If a military senior rater, the minimum grade of the senior rater -</b>	<b>If a civilian senior rater, the minimum grade of the senior rater -</b>
GS-14/15 or Broadband Equivalent	Brigadier General-07	Senior Executive Service

28. Q: Will the Product Director (PD) positions be released soon?

A: The DACM released the seven (7) FY15 PD positions under separate cover. Additionally, the forecast of PDs from FY15-FY18 was also prepositioned to the PEOs. The annual Military Acquisition Position List (MAPL)/CSL review will be formally revised in calendar year 2015, to include a review and validation of all military and civilian PD positions. The MAPL/CSL/PD review process will include criteria to evaluate each program for cost, schedule, performance, funding profile, ACAT level and complexity, to delineate between project/product managers and project/product directors.

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29. Q: What can a PD expect for post-utilization?

A: Approximately one year out from completion of your PD tour, Civilian PMs should contact the Army DACM Office for placement assistance. The objective is a post-utilization that provides education, training, and developmental experience. PDs should expect to attend the Senior Service College Fellowship (SSCF) in one of three areas – Huntsville, Aberdeen, or Warren or they may apply for the Army centralized SSC selection at the Eisenhower School in Washington, DC. PDs will then be placed in developmental assignments such as a Deputy Project Director or Deputy Project Manager, PEO Staff, HQDA Staff, or OSD staff. Other training and education is not limited to, but may include Training with Industry, Leadership Training, and civilian executive education. The Army DACM Office will provide assistance to all civilian PDs with obtaining new positions at the end of their tour. However, we ask that you be proactive in looking for follow-on positions that will allow you to use the valuable experiences you have gained. Look for challenging positions and use the contacts you have made to assist us in locating an appropriate broadening assignment.

30. Q: What is the difference between PM and PD?

A: A project or product manager (PM) is defined as a leader for an Army acquisition system or program management office designated by the Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA) for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology (ALT)/Army Acquisition Executive (AAE. This position is based upon the management level of intensity (Acquisition Category, funding profile, complexity, responsibility, span of control and life cycle phase of the program) the Army or DoD assigns to a particular weapon system or information system. As a general rule, a program manager is a general officer or SES member and Direct Reporting (DRPM) to the AAE. As a general rule a project manager is an O-6, a GS-15, or the broadband/payband equivalent; a product manager is an O-5, a GS-14, or the broadband/payband equivalent. The best qualified acquisition personnel (military and civilian) are selected by a HQDA Centralized Selection List (CSL) board process and slating to those positions is approved by the AAE.

A project or product director (PD) is defined as a leader for an Army acquisition system or program management office designated by the ASA(ALT)/AAE and managed by the AAE or the PEO. This position is based upon the management level of intensity (Acquisition Category, funding profile, complexity, responsibility, span of control and life cycle phase of the program) the Army assigns to a particular weapon system or information system, but generally will be an acquisition program of record that has yet to transition to sustainment and still has cost, schedule and performance responsibilities. A project director is an O-6, a GS-15, or the broadband/payband equivalent and will be subordinate to a PEO or DRPM; a product director is an O-5, a GS-14, or the broadband/payband equivalent and will be subordinate to a PEO, project manager, or project director. Project and product director positions are designated by an annual ASA (ALT)/AAE Review Board and will be filled through an annual centralized selection board (CSB) process.

31. Q: With a tenure agreement, could a PD stay 4 years?

A: Based on the needs of the program, a PD may serve 4 years, but that extension must be coordinated between the PEO and approved by the DACM. Again, the normal PD tenure length is three (3) years, but may be curtailed to no less than two (2) years or extended to five (5) years. PD selectees must sign a DD-2888 Critical Acquisition Position Service Agreement.

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32. Q: The new PD Policy mentions military PD positions, but no mention of evaluating military as part of the board. How will this be done?  
A: During the annual CSL/PD/MAPL review board, those project and product director positions determined to be a military fill based on requirements, will be recommended for a Military Acquisition Position List (MAPL) authorization by the board. The DACM will be the final approval authority. The Army Human Resources Command (HRC) will fill those requirements through a nomination selection process.
33. Q: What happens to an AAW member who is currently in a PD position which is slated for fill in FY15 by a centralized selection?  
A: First, you should apply for the FY15 Product Director Centralized Selection Board (CSB). The PEO is responsible for notification and developing a rotational plan for incumbents. The Army DACM Office along with the PEO HR will work with the incumbent to determine a reassignment within the organization utilizing a management-directed reassignment (MDR).
34. Q: What if I am in a current PD position?  
A: Much of the same applies as above. All product director positions will be centrally selected, so check with your HR office to see if your position will remain a PD and if so, when it will rotate. Secondly, you should compete for the PD by applying to the CSB the year before it is scheduled to rotate. Lastly, work with your organizational HR personnel now, to craft a rotational plan that is right for you.
35. Q: Much of this refers to Product Directors (GS14). What is the plan for Project Directors (GS15)?  
A: As part of a phased concept, the DACM Office will analyze and review the recommended PEO positions to determine project director (GS15) future fill. Several courses of action are being developed at this time.
36. Q: The DACM, LTG Williamson, has identified seven (7) product director positions for fill by the centralized board in FY15. Will any of the forecasted 20 positions scheduled for FY16 be filled early?  
A: That is a very good possibility. If there are board selectees who possess the rights skills for projected FY16 vacancies, they may be slated and early activated for FY15 by the Board of Directors.