



DACM NEWS

DIRECTOR, ACQUISITION CAREER MANAGEMENT OFFICE

The Army DACM Office is responsible for talent management, career/leader development, Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act certification, policy, and advocating for the professionals who are members of the Army Acquisition Workforce.

FROM THE FIELD

Leverage the power of your peers

By Carol Vesier, Diane Alvarez, Paul Crise and Earl Heaps

The authors are Army acquisition professionals with a combined 100 years of test and evaluation experience. As members of the Army Evaluation Center Emerging Leaders Cohort, they have identified peer feedback as an underutilized technique to improve their organization's effectiveness.

What would you think if we told you there was a powerful, free technique used for employee development? You might think that we're just joking, but there is. Leveraging your peers' feedback is a potent, underutilized tool for developing yourself and others. The following tips can help you unleash the power of peer feedback:

Understand how your peer feedback complements formal coaching, training and mentoring. Like formal coaching, peer feedback is task-focused, while training is skill-focused. Training teaches skills, while peer feedback develops the required skill proficiency to successfully complete a task. Mentoring is career-oriented and can provide a career road map. Both formal coaching and peer feedback support navigating the career road map by eliminating internal obstacles, such as a skill deficit

or an unwanted behavior. Finally, peer feedback supports and complements a formal coaching program such as the Leadership Coaching for Acquisition Professionals, a new Army Director for Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office program.

Embrace peer feedback as a gift. Do you view peer feedback as a positive gift or a negative criticism? The way you and your organization view feedback often determines how effectively you can use it. If you do not know how your organization views feedback, ask yourself how often you solicit or provide feedback. If the answer is not often, it may be that many individuals in your organization view feedback as implied criticism.

Ask your peers for feedback. Most of us expect our supervisors to provide feedback when it is needed. Supervisors often have other commitments that minimize the time they can spend providing feedback to their employees. If you are serious about improving performance and enhancing skills, ask for help. Leverage your



supervisor and mentor to identify an improvement opportunity, but also seek out a peer for feedback and assistance. And when selecting someone, remember that you want a peer who will observe key moments and can provide immediate, targeted feedback.

Be willing to provide feedback to others. Providing feedback should not be a one-way street. Everyone has something that is an obstacle to his or her success. If you want to benefit from feedback, you need to be willing to help others.

Unleashing the power of peer feedback starts with you!

BACK TO BASICS

What is the difference between an Army acquisition career field and an Army career program?



By Brian Cole and Shardey Mitchell, Acquisition Career Managers

Army acquisition career fields (ACFs) and Army career programs (CPs) are two very closely related training models, but they can be confusing concepts. Understanding the difference between the two will alleviate confusion within the acquisition and nonacquisition community and increase awareness of additional training opportunities available to the workforce.

Every Department of the Army civilian is aligned under a CP; however, only acquisition-coded civilians and military are assigned an ACF. They both strive to close functional and leadership competency gaps and afford each workforce member the opportunity to pursue their career goals. The Army defines talent management as "a deliberate and coordinated process to optimize leader development practices and align talent with current and future Army requirements to improve the individual or organization."

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Acquisition Career Fields:

The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) responded to the need for increased emphasis on the development of a qualified and professional defense acquisition workforce. It requires the DOD to establish education and training standards, requirements and courses for the civilian and military workforce as mandated by Chapter 87 of Title 10, United States Code, and encompasses the following:

- Requires acquisition career field certification training through the Defense Acquisition University (DAU).
- Acquisition Corps memberships (applies to critical acquisition positions (CAPs) and key leadership positions (KLPs)).
- Tenure agreements (applies to CAPs and KLPs).
- Assignment-specific training.
- Continuous learning requirement (every two years).
- Best-qualified individuals selected for acquisition positions.

Training and development opportunities for ACFs are funded by the Army Director for Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office and the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund. For more information on the Army DACM Office’s centralized training and development opportunities, visit <https://asc.army.mil/web/career-development/programs/>.

For more information about the 14 acquisition career fields visit <https://asc.army.mil/web/career-development/civilian/career-models/>.

Army Career Programs:

The objective of career program management, according to Army Regulation 690-50, is to build and sustain an Army Civilian Corps ready for the current and future mission through:

- Directly or indirectly, and in support of commands, sustaining Army civilians by providing opportunities for training, education, and professional development programs and assignments.
- Addressing competency gaps, developing and executing gap-closure strategies, and understanding future workforce requirements.
- Standardizing career ladders and career maps to facilitate the career planning and the continuity of leadership and technical proficiency.
- Providing organization and system processes to allocate, prioritize and execute Army Civilian Training, Education and Development Systems (ACTEDS) resources.
- Fostering collaborative, enterprise-wide decision-making and succession planning.
- Facilitating the employment of comparable forecasting and workforce planning methodologies.

Training and development opportunities for the career programs are funded by the Army G-3/5/7.

For more information about the 31 career programs visit <http://www.asamra.army.mil/cwt/career.html>. All career program-related question should be sent to the ACT NOW help desk: <https://actnow.army.mil/>.

Acquisition career fields vs. career programs

	ACQUISITION CAREER FIELDS	CAREER PROGRAMS
COMPOSITION	39,000 Army Acquisition Workforce members	330,000 Army civilians
TYPES	14	31
GOVERNED BY	DAWIA, Chapter 87, Title 10	AR 690-50
REQUIREMENTS	Office of the Secretary Defense Functional Integrated Product Team	Army Functional Chief Representatives

Also read: **“Army Acquisition Workforce advocacy network running strong”** on page 3.

Now that we understand the differences, how do they relate? Acquisition career fields and Army career programs provide a basic blueprint for civilians through career maps, leader development programs and training for professional advancement.

So if you’re looking for training dollars, seek out your career program or the Army DACM Office. They’re both here to help!

While you are in an acquisition-coded position, you will receive email notifications from the Army DACM Office and the career program office promoting developmental opportunities specific to each office. Take note of these opportunities, talk with your supervisor, update your individual development

plan in the Career Acquisition Personnel and Position Management Information System, and take advantage of the professional training resources available to advance your career.

Please remember your Army DACM Office is here for everything acquisition career-related. Our focus is on the 39,000 Army Acquisition Workforce professionals.



CAREER CORNER

Is CES really worth it? (Hint: It is)

By Scott Greene, Chief, Leader Development Branch

The Civilian Education System (CES) essentially is the Army's civilian version of professional military education (PME). The Army developed this multilayered level of courses to ensure that every civilian (regardless of rank) has the opportunity to learn and grow as a leader.

The foundation course is required for all new civilians. However, each of the other level of courses (basic, intermediate and advanced) is geared toward a target audience—for example, CES advanced is geared toward GS-13 to -15s. Beyond being a position requirement, CES is an opportunity to step outside of the office for a short period to learn about the bigger Army and how your role plays into the greater mission. In fact, one of the best things about attending a course like this is that your classmates will be from a variety of locations and organizations within the Army. My small group at the advanced course a few summers ago had individuals from audit readiness, the Office of General Counsel, the Army Museum, and staff from program executive offices. Personally, I really enjoyed the group exercises—working an international case, down to a national case, down to an Army case and then finally focusing on oneself. Everyone on the team brought a different perspective and I learned a lot. It was a growth experience for me to learn from individuals with varied backgrounds of experience and assignments.

A friendly reminder that there are three ways to get credit for CES: Take the actual course, have taken an equivalent Army course, or apply for constructive credit. Information on how to apply for constructive credit is listed below, if applicable to you.

https://www.atrrs.army.mil/CHANNELS/CHRTAS/default.asp?page=student/cesmfr.asp

APPLYING FOR CES CONSTRUCTIVE CREDIT

In order to process requests for CES constructive credit, applicants must submit a memorandum signed by their supervisor along with supporting documentation to the Army Management Staff College (AMSC) at constructivecredit@conus.army.mil.

As the proponent school, AMSC will review the applicant's request and evaluate the applicant's training, education and supervisory experience against the CES Critical Tasks/Learning Outcomes and associated leadership competencies (Basic, Intermediate, Advanced). This evaluation process may take up to 90 days. The applicant's request will then be forwarded to HQDA, G-3/5/7, for final decision.

All requests must include the following documentation:

- 1. Request for CES Constructive Credit Memorandum
2. CES Quota Manager (Training Coordinator) Statement
3. Resume
4. Position/job description(s)
5. College/university transcript and course descriptions (if applicable)
6. Training program certificate(s)

Note: AMSC reserves the right to request additional documentation.

Army Acquisition Workforce advocacy network running strong

In FY17, with your help, your Army Director for Career Management (DACM) Office stood up a Human Capital Strategic Plan focused on you as an Army Acquisition Workforce (AAW) professional. We've learned a lot in the last year with the governance structure we created and filled with AAW representatives and human capital experts from your offices. These Army and acquisition professionals, in partnership with the Army DACM Office, have detailed best practices regarding workforce shaping, development, engagement and communication and collaboration initiatives.

One new initiative to share is the implementation of Army acquisition functional leaders (AAFLs) assigned to each of the acquisition career fields (ACFs). These Senior Executive Service-level AAFLs are subject matter experts who can focus (in addition to the responsibilities of their "day" job) on ACF competencies as well as human capital life cycle challenges, such as recruitment, retention and recognition, to keep the ACF fresh and on point. This type of focus on each ACF will ultimately go a long way toward a strong state of the health of the entire AAW.

The article focused on ACFs and CPs in this Army DACM Newsletter is a nice complement to this specific initiative. AAFLs and your Army DACM Office will partner with Army career program leadership to ensure integration of efforts both from an ACF perspective and a CP perspective. The payoff to you is a more cohesive understanding of what both the ACF and the CP bring to an AAW professional.

With over 39,000 AAW professionals, it is critical that these leadership, partnership and stakeholder relationships are forged. Stay tuned for updates on how this new focus on your ACF impacts you.



MILITARY (OFFICER) CORNER

Army Acquisition Centralized Selection List

By Maj. Sheila L. Howell, Army DACM Office Propensity Officer

The summer brings many changes to our careers as military acquisition professionals. Chief among these are the many permanent change of station (PCS) moves, changes of command and changes of charter that transpire. Promotion board results are released and many promotable majors are faced with brand new career decisions. Once an officer has crossed the mandatory promotion threshold of lieutenant colonel, for most officers, the options for continued service can be varied.

To help you understand some of the questions surrounding Centralized Selection List (CSL), we talked to a range of officers who have either recently entered, are about to enter, and who have long since been settled into their CSL positions. Here is their take on CSL and what you should be doing and thinking about to prepare yourself for this responsibility.

Why did you choose to opt-in for CSL?

"To have the opportunity to lead a program office at the O-5 level and to be able to use all of the skills that I have learned as an acquisition officer. CSL is the pinnacle for O-5 acquisition leaders and essential for O-6 CSL."

"I believe it is our duty as professional Soldiers to strive for command. I want to make a positive impact on the future of our Army. Commanding a program is one way to do that."

What did you do to prepare for your CSL position once selected?

"The key is to use whatever methods will help you to learn the most about your program office or battalion. Reaching out to the incumbent and the leadership is paramount. Get involved, dial into meetings as appropriate, meet with your new boss and discuss expectations. Meet as many key stakeholders as possible and discuss the program status. Seek out potential contacts in the Pentagon and staff and initiate a relationship that will help your program. Look into Defense Acquisition University (DAU) courses that are pertinent and could be of value."

What do you wish you had done prior to arriving in your current position?

"Because I took command earlier than expected, I wish I had been able to take more time off."
"Meet with my industry partners prior to [change of command] and more time to spend with my predecessor."

What was the most valuable preparation item for you?

"The most valuable preparation item was having an ongoing dialog with my future O-6 PM. We had weekly telecons to discuss expectations, training, ideas and paths forward. I was included on decisions, meetings, issues, etc."

"Ninety percent of our craft is personal relationships and information flow. Having that open and ongoing discourse with the sitting O-6 PM was extremely helpful to me. It allowed me to further understand the specified nuances of the program prior to being thrust into the decision cycle."

"Time spent on a contracting team where an abundance of hands-on contracting experience was obtained, staff time for understanding how contracting fits into the bigger Army picture and deployments where our acquisition skill sets are used as a force multiplier."

Are there any particular skills, knowledge or abilities that you feel are important for a CSL select to have or work on prior to assuming command or a charter?

- Understand cost, schedule and performance;
• Be familiar with DOD 5000.01 and 5000.02;
• Really understand the acquisition process and the PPBE [planning, programing, budget and execution] process;
• Join a Toastmasters group (for briefing purposes)."

"You MUST have [Pentagon] experience. If you have never worked around the ASA(ALT) [assistant secretary of the Army for acquisition, logistics and technology] staff, HQDA staff, know who to go to and how to navigate the [Pentagon], you

will have a hard time as a [program manager] and your program will suffer."

"The reflection and focus obtained in [PMT] 401 was invaluable. Prior to assuming charter most people are finishing up a vigorous previous assignment or moving. Ten days permissive temporary duty (TDY) specifically to give leaders opportunity to seek out DAU experts and SME would be of great value."

What is the one piece of advice you would tell more junior officers preparing for CSL?

"Follow the money and know your programs backwards and forward."

"If you want to be a PM work multiple [assistant program manager (APM)] jobs, be a [Department of the Army systems coordinator], be an [executive officer] for a [general officer], build relationships on the Army staff, stay current on regulations and laws."

"Make sure your [Officer Evaluation Reports] are enumerated against your peers and keep up with current changes in the big acquisition world. Most people are focused only on the area in which they are an APM but can be assigned anywhere in the Acquisition Corps. The current DAU training schedule is not enough and does not keep you current enough. Seek out learning opportunities to understand and be the expert in the entire field."

"Ask your commander to take you with them the next time they have to engage with any organization outside of your comfort zone (civilian organization) or volunteer to assist with these actions."

"Ensure that you truly understand your individual strengths and weaknesses. After they are known, surround yourself with a team of folks that can assist in your weak areas."

"Don't shy away from broadening assignments that can align with your future goals. Performance in all jobs matter."



Did you know you can get all the newest AAW career and other applicable acquisition information emailed straight to your inbox? Go to https://asc.army.mil/web/news-july-hot-topics-2018/ and subscribe at the bottom of the page.



Acquisition professionals complete DAU-SSCF program

By Kristine Faria, Army DACM Office Acquisition Education and Training Manager

Congratulations and well done to the 24 senior civilian acquisition professionals who graduated May 22 from the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Senior Service College Fellowship (SSCF) Program. The fellows were recognized at graduation ceremonies held at the three sites where DAU offers this Army Director for Career Management (DACM) Office-sponsored program: Aberdeen, Maryland; Huntsville, Alabama and Warren, Michigan.

The fellows spent the past 10 months engaged in an enriching and rigorous program that prepared them for senior leadership positions across the Army Acquisition Workforce (AAW). SSCF sharpened their skills in a host of leadership competencies that ranged from problem solving to team building, from developing others to thinking strategically.

The fellows spent a portion of their time in a classroom setting, where they took the advanced DAU program manager course (PMT 401) as well as graduate-level classes such as organizational development and change, managerial leadership, developing executive leaders and managing a global workforce. They also took part in numerous workshops: crucial accountability, international acquisitions, leading at the speed of trust and contracting for executives, to name just a few.

Time spent in outside-the-classroom activities proved just as valuable to the fellows' professional and self-development. Site visits to



DAU-SSCF fellows at the Civil War battle site at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The fellows pose at Little Round Top, the site where, on July 2, 1863, Union forces held the line and defended the summit from the Confederate forces that attacked from the low ground (behind the fellows). (Photo courtesy of DAU)

Army, DOD and industry facilities broadened their insight and perspective into how multiple organizations and business enterprises come together to train, sustain and equip the Soldier. Visits from senior leaders gave the fellows the opportunity to hear from and ask questions of those who lead at the highest levels in DOD acquisition. Attendance at Army War College events, such as Industry Day and the Annual Strategy Conference, allowed the fellows to enrich their learning experience as well as to engage with their War College peers and develop their networks. The staff ride to Gettysburg was a particularly moving experience for the fellows. During this capstone learning experience, they toured the battlefield

and considered not only decision-making strategies and leadership principles but also the enormity of the sacrifices made at the Civil War site.

Friends, families, co-workers, supervisors and other guests celebrated the fellows' completion of the prestigious program at the graduation ceremonies. Senior leaders presented the hard-earned diplomas and delivered keynote speeches to inspire and encourage the graduates as they embark on the next phase of their careers. Inspired to learn more about this program? **Visit the Army DACM website.**

Army DACM Office Highlights

- ▶ Civilian women making waves in acquisition leadership positions
- ▶ July Hot Topics
- ▶ AAE accepting nominations for Excellence in Leadership Awards
- ▶ Eight graduate, six enter army leader development program



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