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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
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MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

1. References:

- a. Army Strategy, 01 November 2018.
- b. Department of Defense Instruction 1322.06, "Fellowships, Legislative Fellowships, Internships, Scholarships, Training-With-Industry, and Grants Provided to DoD or DoD Personnel for Education and Training," October 12, 2016.
- c. Army Regulation 621-1 (Training of Military Personnel at Civilian Institutions), 28 August 2007.
- d. Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 (Officer Professional Development and Career Management), 3 April 2019.
- e. Army Acquisition Workforce Human Capital Strategic Plan, 2017-2021.
- f. Memorandum, Deputy Director, Acquisition Career Management, 23 May 2016, subject: United States Army Acquisition Support Center Advanced Civil Schooling and Training with Industry Policy and Procedure.
- g. Memorandum, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology), 4 May 2018, subject: Policy Guidance on Improving Acquisition Talent Management.
- h. Message, MILPER Number 19-312, 1 October 2019, subject: Administrative Instructions for Officers Requesting to Defer Promotion Consideration (Opt Out).

2. The Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) will continue to seek real-time solutions to immediate and future battlefield requirements amidst strategic competition with near-peer rivals and rapid technological advancement. To accomplish this mission, we must leverage the collective intelligence and experience of the Army by recruiting personnel with the desired knowledge, skills, and behavior. Furthermore, we must prioritize the education of our Functional Area 51 (FA51) Acquisition Corps officers and find ways to optimize talent management and utilization in the AAC. This memorandum, along with its three appendices, provides detailed guidance for implementing my vision and strategy on the recruitment, education, and career management of our FA51 officers.

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SUBJECT: Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

It is a living document and will be updated as necessary to reflect changes in requirements or objectives.

3. The point of contact for this strategy is the Army DACM Office, Mr. Jason Pitts, 703-664-5681, DSN 654-5681 or jason.r.pitts.civ@mail.mil.



Bruce D. Jette
Army Acquisition Executive

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Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

Appendix 1 - Recruitment Plan

1.1 Problem Statement. In conjunction with Army Modernization, the Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) has organizationally re-structured to better support Army needs and requirements. A key element of this analysis is the identification of the crucial technical knowledge gaps within the Army Acquisition Workforce (AAW). How does the AAW identify, recruit, develop, and retain highly specialized officers?

1.2 Background: The Army Strategy (reference 1a) calls for a future fighting force to compete and dominate in all domains (land, sea, air, space, cyber, and electromagnetic spectrum). Today's challenges, threats and opportunities are unprecedented and our Soldiers depend on a fully engaged and highly effective AAC to ensure they have the resources/products needed to conduct full spectrum operations. In an ever-changing, increasingly complex world facing multi-domain threats, it is critical that the AAC has the right mix of educated and experiential officers; but also compensate for expertise shortages by retaining and developing highly specialized officers who are prepared to bring knowledge and skills to solve problems, make sense of information, and understand how to gather and evaluate evidence for critical decisions. To meet this need, the Army Acquisition Executive (AAE) and the Director, Army Acquisition Corps (DAAC) are establishing a targeted recruiting initiative to attract high performing and motivated junior officers with broad backgrounds, but with an emphasis on identified and critical undergraduate or graduate degrees into the AAW. One particular area of focus is the retention of high performing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) educated officers. Historically, 23 percent of a cohort year group's commissioned officers possess a STEM degree at commissioning. However, that number shrinks to approximately three percent by the time the cohort enters the Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program (VTIP) window. Other emphasis areas include officers with undergraduate and advanced degrees such as Juris Doctorate's, Business, Finance, and other key areas. This strategy, in alignment with the Army's People Strategy and Army Talent Alignment Process, will work to identify, actively recruit, and attract the right mix of talented officers leveraging their knowledge, skills, behaviors and preferences. Annually, the Army and Acquisition Corps will determine the essential skills mix vital to solve present and future challenges. The Army's strength is its people and the same goes for the Acquisition Corps. We need to identify, engage, and recruit the right talent mix of high performing officers with the fundamental operational relevance, education, and potential for development and future service in the AAC working to solve the operational and strategic challenges facing our Army.

1.3 Goal. The objective of the targeted recruiting initiative is to actively engage highly specialized officers and cadets to encourage interest, emphasize the importance of their skills in the U.S. Army, retain more technically qualified officers, and promote opportunities within FA51, the Army's acquisition mission, and how it impacts the total Army.

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

1.4 Strategy. Communication is the cornerstone of this strategy. Messaging up front and early is the strategic focus of this initiative at current pre-commissioning sources, Professional Military Education, and the VTIP window for Army officers. This strategy uses varied approaches to engage, encourage, and attract high performing officers and is outlined further on in this document.

1.5 Director of Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Responsibilities: The Army DACM Office will establish the targeted military recruiting initiative. The recruiting initiative will solicit interest in the Acquisition Officer Corps from incoming Officer cohorts and continue to communicate with officers at targeted opportunities during company grade assignments, enabling officers to plan further service as Acquisition officers at the six to eight year mark in their careers. The metric is the retention and development of STEM educated officers in the AAW.

1.5.1 The targeted recruiting cell is the primary engagement team for all these initiatives and will lead the alignment of these opportunities within the AAW.

1.5.2 The targeted recruiting cell will focus recruiting efforts on the following populations:

- a. Officers within the VTIP window
- b. Captains Career Course (CCC)
- c. Pre-commissioning sources: U.S. Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Programs, and Officer Candidate School (OCS).

1.6 Officers within the VTIP Window. This approach utilizes targeted messaging across the basic branches, with a specific aim to attract underrepresented groups of officers and their criticality to efforts supporting the Army Strategy.

1.7 Professional Military Education. The Army DACM Office's recruiting cell will coordinate with Training and Doctrine Command's (TRADOC) Centers of Excellence (COE)'s to gain access to students at the CCCs. The goal is to educate and provide information to basic branch students of FA51 career opportunities. The Army DACM Office will focus on branches aligned to cross functional teams and technologies that support the force modernization plan. The branches include but are not limited to Aviation, Maneuver, Signal, Field Artillery, and Air Defense Artillery.

1.7.1 CCC provides the DACM office with an ideal setting to engage with officers that make up the bulk of the target population. By engaging with captains that are preparing to go into their basic branch key-developmental (KD) assignment, the DACM office will be able to provide relevant post KD information to officers who are exploring career options.

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

1.8. Pre-Commissioning Sources (USMA, ROTC, and OCS). The Army DACM Office's recruiting cell will inform pre-commissioning sources about FA51 (Army Acquisition) to cadets, key faculty and staff. The responsibilities of the Army DACM Office's recruiting cell are to:

- a. Coordinate with commissioning sources on interfacing with cadets. The goal is to inform all cadets, with a focus on those pursuing STEM degrees, that the AAC is an option for continued service after their initial active-duty service obligation and are basic branch qualified in the Army where they can utilize and enhance their STEM undergraduate education. The primary engagement opportunity is during each respective branch day.
- b. Coordinate with select Program Executive Offices (PEOs) to support the recruiting cell as a proverbial "face of the acquisition workforce."

1.8.1 USMA Details. The Army DACM Office will work with USMA to accomplish the following tasks:

- a. USMA Office of Economic Manpower and Analysis (OEMA). Establish and maintain a relationship with USMA OEMA: to obtain the names and contact information of cadets from the senior or junior classes majoring in STEM. This information supports the digital outreach campaign and will allow the targeted recruiting cell to continue to engage these officers until the VTIP window.

- b. USMA Department of Military Instruction (DMI) Accessions Division: Coordinate with DMI's Accessions Division to establish and maintain a regular FA51 presence during Branch Week, held every September. Branch Week is an opportunity for the basic branches and participating functional areas to interface with cadets. The purpose of this week is to inform cadets in the freshman, sophomore, and junior classes about the respective basic branches and functional areas and collect data to effectively align cadets' talents and interests. The FA51 display and corresponding tables at the junior class symposium is the culminating event for the Acquisition community. This provides approximately 4,000 cadets an opportunity to learn about FA51 over the course of the event.

- c. Additional Outreach Opportunities. The Army DACM Office intends to raise the profile of FA51 among the USMA staff, faculty, and cadets. The initial outreach efforts include conducting office calls with the department heads (and their deputies, as well as Course Directors, to develop interest in two areas:

- 1) Individual Academic Development (IAD) Summer Programs. As part of this initiative, the cadets would work directly with the AAW in the PEOs and apply their technical expertise to analyze and solve real Army acquisition issues. The academic departments would provide oversight for the cadets. This opportunity would expose the

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

cadets to FA51 in a meaningful way and increase their knowledge of the acquisition mission.

2) Academic Capstone Projects. This annual West Point program leverages the faculty and cadets across all departments to solve real world Army problems. Utilizing this program can benefit program offices across the enterprise in providing possible solutions on specific concerns for a program.

1.8.2 U.S. Army Cadet Command (USACC) at Fort Knox, Kentucky Details. The Army-DACM Office will work with USACC Accessions and Standards Division to accomplish the following tasks:

a. Establish and maintain an FA51 presence during USACC annual Branch/Components Orientation at Fort Knox, Kentucky, which is held in the summer from June through August. Similar to USMA's Branch Week, the recruiting cell will establish static displays, utilize support from across the acquisition commands and organizations, and foster interest in the AAC.

b. Raise the profile of FA51 among the staff, faculty and cadets. The initial outreach efforts will be to get office calls with the department heads and their deputies, as well as course directors, to determine if there is interest in establishing IAD summer programs and academic capstone projects for the cadets.

c. Continued outreach to the six senior military colleges (Norwich University, Texas A&M University, The Citadel, Virginia Military Institute, Virginia Polytechnic University, and University of North Georgia) and the Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership at Mary Baldwin University to allow the targeted recruiting cell to continue to engage these officers until the VTIP window.

1.8.3 Officer Candidate School (OCS). OCS has multiple annual courses at Fort Benning, Georgia. The targeted recruiting cell will work with the OCS chain of command to conduct targeted and appropriate recruiting efforts.

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

Appendix 2 - Career Management

2.1 General.

a. The AAE and DAAC have focused on establishing a career management plan that provides FA51 officers with education, training, and development opportunities to advance their competency and professionalism. Army leaders must identify and manage our high performing/high potential acquisition officers to meet the mission and the vision of the AAC to ensure we have the very best trained and qualified acquisition officers across the enterprise to lead and manage our acquisition programs. The Army DACM Office is responsible for the strategy and path forward.

b. Future military workforce turnover, including the reduction of Centralized Selection List (CSL) positions, is a reality. Therefore, it is incumbent upon our leaders to identify and manage high performers and high potential acquisition officers to meet the mission and vision of the AAW. Crucial to creating these leaders, requires the development of a cohesive plan with strategic messaging which highlights both individual and leader accountability.

c. The current FA51 Acquisition Officer Career Model identifies acquisition categories to depict career progression from functional, to career broadening, to our most senior levels. The model further defines high-visibility positions to be filled by high-performing/high potential officers. This model allows the Army DACM Office Proponency Officer and senior leaders to view the military acquisition talent pool and to identify personnel with the potential for these higher-level job responsibilities from the more junior grades all the way to General Officer. However, we must also be diligent to ensure the highest potential military acquisition personnel capabilities are identified and developed to ensure proper succession planning and to support a robust talent management (TM) strategy.

2.2 Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program (VTIP). The Army Acquisition Corps targets top performing Captains and Majors who are branch qualified within their respective branches. Officers with STEM degrees, specialized technical skills, and in-demand basic branches are given priority during the accessions process. U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC) Acquisition Management Branch (AMB) is also able to execute requests for an Exception to Policy for closed year groups in order to acquire highly desirable officers who otherwise do not meet the VTIP screening requirements.

2.3 On-Boarding Programs.

a. The Army DACM Office will ensure officers who come from a variety of backgrounds and operational experiences on-board as cohorts at the Army Acquisition Center of Excellence (AACoE) or Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) during their initial training or education and build personal connections with other students. These cohorts are designed for student success but also build personal networks that allow officers to

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

leverage these connections to gain advantages with their career development, personal advancement and knowledge sharing after the program has ended.

b. Mentoring within the acquisition community was identified as an important need as a result of the Section 809 Panel and Section 853 review, as well as through several Program Management functional integrated product team recommendations. The Army DACM Office must expand on best practices of providing mentors and mentees training throughout the AAW (i.e., preparation for mentoring, coaching for mentors, and assessment for mentors and mentees). A biographical match of mentors and mentees has also proven to be useful. Other programs that can be expanded are the establishment of a midterm (10-12 month) mentorship program for both mentors and mentees. Partnerships with local colleges also could assist with development of mentoring skills for civilian and military acquisition members.

2.4 Initial Acquisition Training at the AACOE. The Acquisition Professional Education Program (APEP) is a course designed to provide a broad spectrum of knowledge pertaining to the acquisition process, program management and contracting. It covers legal and regulatory policies and guidelines that shape the acquisition process and application of contracting principles, program management, systems engineering and information technology, cost and pricing fundamentals, contingency contracting practices and procedures and Procurement Desktop – Defense to include software and practical application. Course content and instructional techniques are designed to provide participants with a knowledge and understanding of basic materiel acquisition and contracting principles and processes and how to apply those across the acquisition lifecycle “from cradle to grave”.

2.5 Acquisition Key Developmental (KD) Assignments (reference 1d).

a. A KD position is one that is deemed fundamental to the development of an Officer in his or her core competencies or deemed critical by the senior Army leadership to provide experience across the Army's strategic mission. Ideally, this would be the Officer's first assignment and if the Officer has sufficient time in his or her timeline, some will be able to be assigned to both program management (51A) and contracting (51C) KD assignments. KD Assignments are listed in reference 1d, chapter 41.

b. Broadening and Nominative Assignments. Broadening and nominative assignments develop an Officer's capability to see, work, learn, and contribute outside one's own perspective or individual level of understanding for the betterment of both the individual and institution. broadening and nominative assignments are listed in reference 1d, Chapter 41.

c. Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) Certification. Officers gain acquisition experience required for DAWIA Certification during KD and broadening and nominative assignments. Officers are able to earn DAWIA Certification in 3 of the

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

14 Acquisition Career Fields (ACFs), 51C, 51A, and T&E (51T). Officers earn DAWIA Certification based on the designated field of each Military Acquisition Position List.

2.6 Broadening and Civilian Education Opportunities.

a. **Officer Requirements.** The Officer also must possess operational experience and a willingness to potentially accept both a deferment for consideration by a Promotion Selection Board (PSB) and the required active-duty service obligation for the program. The deferment for consideration (Opt out) may be necessary to complete other acquisition requirements and be competitive for promotion. The deferment may be up to two Opt Out times per grade. This deferment provides the opportunity for the Officer to maintain a competitive file and gain valuable acquisition experience through contracting focused assignments.

b. **Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS)** (references 1c and 1f). ACS provides the AAW with the capability to educate high potential acquisition officers at civilian universities nationwide. Degrees offered are Master's degrees and Doctor of Philosophies (PhDs) in acquisition relevant fields of study. Relevant fields of study include, but are not limited to business administration, and STEM.

c. **The Training with Industry (TWI) Program** (references 1b and 1f) provides FA51's best officers with hands-on experience working in private industry, to include top defense, information technology, and pioneering commercial companies. It creates a mutually beneficial relationship between the Army, the company and the participating Officer. Selectees experience industry best practices through assignments with leading industry partners in order to benchmark lessons learned and affect positive change in the AAC upon their return to the army acquisition ranks. The AAE strongly encourages TWI participants to partner with a senior leader (such as Program Manager, Vice President, or Chief Executive Officer) to learn business strategy and development as well as understand financial management, corporate structure, innovative uses of incentives, proposal development, industry motivations, and participate in investor calls. Annual manning guidance states that the intent is for every Officer to have completed a TWI tour sometime during their career prior to assuming their Colonel level CSL position. Assignments following TWI should provide significant value and return on investment to the Army, the AAW and the AAC.

2.7 CSL Programs. CSL selections will be the best qualified and highest potential military AAW members in FA51 at the Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel (O-6) ranks respectively. An annual AAC Key Billet/CSL Board Process will centrally select these AAW members. Board announcements and application information will be posted by the Army HRC for military members.

2.8 Military Development.

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

a. FA51 officers should have a wide range of experiences leading up to their O-6 CSL assignment, including broadening opportunities such as Science and Technology (S&T), Test and Evaluation (T&E), Army Staff, Joint Staff, Army Contracting Command Staff, and Program Integrator. Senior leadership will manage FA51 officers to ensure these officers gain experience in multiple functions based on the Acquisition Workforce Qualification Initiative (AWQI) and Acquisition Qualification Standards. Officers will work with their leadership to ensure the essential experience is documented within their Individual Development Plan, marked complete within their AWQI workbook, and appropriately annotated on the Officer Evaluation Report. Senior leaders will ensure complete understanding of required experiences and ensure officers are counseled appropriately upon assignment. FA51 officers will coordinate with their career coaches to ensure their assignments offer opportunities to gain experience in these functionalities as well as an operational assignment. To gain a deeper understanding of warfighter needs and requirements, Army acquisition officers should be assigned to a minimum of 12 months in an operational assignment (e.g., division and below, Worldwide Individual Augmentation System tasker, TRADOC, Army Test and Evaluation Command).

b. Army Directive 2017-22, Implementation of Acquisition Reform Initiatives, dated 12 September 2017, requires the development of a TM plan for program managers to gain skills and experience in S&T, T&E and contracting before becoming an O-6 program manager. Development plans for O-6 may vary depending on personal experiences and career timelines, but they will include the above experiences before an O-6 program manager position. Army program managers must understand the full life cycle of the services and materiel to effectively manage the myriad of portfolios in which the Army invests. Ensuring program managers are well-versed in the operational needs of their users and customers as well as a deeper understanding of all functional aspects of program management helps the Army provide the best equipment in the right place and at the right time to the warfighters. The goal is to expose officers to multiple acquisition experiences in order to grow agile and adaptive leaders who are prepared to lead highly complex, multifunctional organizations and provide acquisition expertise throughout the full range of military operations.

2.9 Senior Officer Utilization:

a. Utilization of trained senior-level talent is an integral piece of an effective TM strategy. Specifically, the ability to capitalize on skills gained during CSL assignments and appropriately placing these officers in nominative and career enhancing follow-on opportunities.

b. The post-utilization process for our most senior acquisition programs must be centralized and deliberate. Taking a deliberate, transparent approach to AAW career development/TM initiatives will positively impact the candidate pool by ensuring that each Officer feels valued for their contributions while filling some of our most prestigious

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

positions. The post-utilization placement process must commence far enough in advance of the conclusion of the tour/schooling to enable open dialogue with incumbents, and vetting of the most opportune post-utilization assignments and/or schooling.

c. To ensure proper development of our military officers, leaders, supervisors and talent managers will:

1) Ensure newly accessed acquisition officers are trained to DAWIA Level III standards in Program Management and Contracting before their first duty assignment.

2) Capture appropriate gained experience through the use of AWQI checklists, Individual Developmental Plans and Officer Evaluation Reports.

3) Collaborate to ensure officers are placed in positions to cultivate broadened expertise in various ACFs as well as an operational assignment.

4) Utilize various Special Operations Command, combat training centers and forward rotations for officers to gain additional operational experience.

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

Appendix 3 - Education Plan for FA51 Officers

3.1 General.

a. The AAE and DAAC have focused on establishing an education plan that will allow newly accessed officers to receive their graduate degree, accrue sufficient business credits to achieve AAC membership, and undergo DAWIA training – all completed before reporting to their first acquisition assignment. The Army DACM Office is responsible for this new direction.

b. This education plan also allows select FA51 officers to further their education by pursuing a PhD in an acquisition-related field. This effort will be supported by the USAASC and HRC.

c. Newly assessed FA51 officers will be assigned to educational tracks and appropriate positions in accordance with this plan and the Army Talent Alignment Program. AACoE will support the DAWIA education requirements of acquisition officers in accordance with Army DACM policies and guidance, maintaining a relationship with relevant education partners such as Defense Acquisition University, the University of Alabama, Huntsville (UAH), and the NPS.

3.2 Goal. The goal of the education plan is to ensure all FA51 acquisition officers report to their first acquisition assignment with:

a. An acquisition-relevant Master of Science in a STEM field, Master of Business Administration (MBA), or a Master of Science in Systems Engineering/Management.

b. Sufficient business credits to achieve AAC membership.

c. DAWIA required training in the primary ACF of Contracting Level III and Program Management Level III to achieve certification. Additionally, officers will receive the DAWIA training for Engineering Level III and T&E Level II.

3.3 Strategy. The Army DACM Office will establish and execute an education plan for FA51 acquisition officers that meets the needs of the AAC. The education plan will outline the FA51 acquisition officers' ACS education programs and opportunities in the following areas:

a. Cooperative Degree Program with DAWIA Acquisition Training (e.g. NPS, UAH).

b. School of Choice opportunities (Typical ACS Opportunity).

c. Acquisition PhD opportunity (STEM Focused).

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

3.4 Officer Initial Education (references 1c and 1f). Typically, newly accessed officers fall into one of three educational tracks for FA51 initial training:

a. Track 1: Officers who possess an acquisition-relevant advanced degree with sufficient business credits to meet AAC membership requirements at the time of entry into FA51. These officers will attend the initial acquisition-specific DAWIA training at AACoE for Program Management and Contracting. Officers in this track will only be considered for the PhD opportunities, if applicable.

b. Track 2: Officers with an acquisition-relevant advanced degree but who lack sufficient business credits at the time of entry into FA51. These officers will attend the 7-month AACoE initial education track, APEP, in tandem with the UAH business certificate program, to obtain the requisite number of business hours needed for AAC membership. Officers in this track will only be considered for the PhD opportunities, if applicable.

c. Track 3: Officers who have an undergraduate degree and therefore require an acquisition-relevant advanced degree before their first assignment. This track is further detailed into four sub-tracks based on the degree source chosen by AMB for the Officer to achieve an advanced degree. There are no minimum or maximum participation requirements for these programs.

(1) NPS Programs: NPS programs are designed to solve a wide range of systems engineering and integration challenges by providing the technological tools relevant to better meet the needs of the customer. The Master of Science in Systems Engineering Management is designed to provide acquisition officers with a curriculum to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities to lead and manage more effectively through advanced concepts, methodologies and analytical techniques necessary to manage successful programs and projects within complex organizations.

(2) Civilian advanced degree blended with the Acquisition Professional Education Course. The Army DACM Office has an agreement with the UAH that combines DAWIA training with an MBA in Engineering Management in an 18-month program.

(3) ACS School of Choice opportunity at a civilian institution.

(i) On a case-by-case basis, officers can attend their school of choice if, depending on the needs of the AAC, they are pursuing an acquisition-related area of study of particular importance to the Army (e.g. STEM) or are accepted by a top-tier university for an acquisition-relevant degree. This is the primary feeder to the PhD education opportunity.

(ii) Officers who possess a non-acquisition-relevant advanced degree may pursue an acquisition-related advanced degree, on a case-by-case basis, depending on resource constraints.

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

(4) Advanced degree funded with tuition assistance. Officers who do not meet ACS fully funded program participation criteria or whose career development timeline does not support a fully funded ACS timeline follow this track. There is no minimum or maximum participation requirement for this track.

3.5 Doctor of Philosophy Opportunity.

a. The AAC is providing a path for select officers to earn a doctorate degree and become acquisition technical experts. A technical expert supports the Army's scientific and engineering needs across a broad spectrum of assignments, including product and project managers, to achieve real-time technology solutions to immediate and future battlefield challenges. Acquisition-relevant doctorate degrees include:

- Cyber and Networks
- Computer Science and Engineering
- Robotics
- Physics
- Aerospace Engineering
- Artificial Intelligence – Machine Learning
- Autonomous Systems
- Directed Energy
- Material Engineering
- Aeronautical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Biotechnology

b. This opportunity is Army-supported and Army-funded, ensuring that officers selected will have the time they need to complete their requirements and compete for promotion. Participants are chosen through semi-annual selection boards, which are usually held in conjunction with the officer's movement cycles. FA51 acquisition officers should apply for the program roughly 6 to 12 months before the anticipated start date of classes.

c. Officer Requirements.

(1) An officer must be eligible to be accepted into a doctorate degree program at an accredited civilian college or university in an area of study relevant to Army acquisition.

(2) The Officer also must possess operational experience and a willingness to potentially accept both a deferment for consideration by a PSB and the required active-duty service obligation for the program. The deferment for consideration (opt out) may be necessary to complete other acquisition requirements and be competitive for

Functional Area 51 Recruitment, Education, and Career Management Strategy

promotion. The deferment may be up to two opt out times per grade. This deferment provides the opportunity for the Officer to maintain a competitive file and gain valuable acquisition experience through uniquely focused assignments.