



ACQUISITION  
AND SUSTAINMENT

## OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3010

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, UNITED STATES CYBER  
COMMAND (ATTN: ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE)  
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
COMMAND (ATTN: ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE)  
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION  
COMMAND (ATTN: ACQUISITION EXECUTIVE)  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
(PROCUREMENT)  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
(PROCUREMENT)  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
(CONTRACTING)  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Restructuring of the Certification Program for the Contracting Functional Area

References: (a) Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment Memorandum, "Back-to-Basics for the Defense Acquisition Workforce," dated September 02, 2020  
(b) Office of the Under Secretary for Acquisition and Sustainment Memorandum, "Back-to-Basics Implementation for the Defense Acquisition Workforce," dated February 04, 2021

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) issued the reference (a) memorandum to initiate a phased implementation of a Back-to-Basics (BtB) talent management framework and new governance structure for the Defense Acquisition Workforce beginning 1 October 2020, with full deployment on 1 October 2021. The BtB initiative transforms how the workforce will be managed and trained to better align the acquisition and delivery of goods and services to support the Warfighter. The twenty A&S Acquisition Workforce career fields and paths have been restructured to six functional areas, which include Contracting. As the Department of Defense (DoD) Contracting Functional Leader, I am announcing the attached new Contracting Professional Certification Program for the Contracting Functional Area, effective 1 October 2021.

Last year, Defense Pricing and Contracting (DPC) established a Contracting Certification Taskforce with representatives and advisors from the Military Departments, the Defense Agencies, the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), and the Directors of Acquisition Career/Talent Management (DACM/DATM). In support of the BtB initiative, we directed the Taskforce to recommend a new talent development structure to replace the current three-level Contracting career field certification program, and to identify common and specialty knowledge areas for credentials. Over the course of a seven-month period, the Taskforce met weekly and performed an extensive review of the current Contracting certification structure and

competencies. I'd like to thank all Taskforce participants for their outstanding efforts. We are implementing their recommendations.

We are adopting a single level of certification with foundational training and an examination. This certification will be based on the Contracting common competencies in the new Contracting Competency Model. The redesigned Contracting Professional Certification will prepare workforce members for initial readiness in the Contracting Functional Area and provides flexibility for the Components to tailor training and experiences to job performance and mission needs.

The Contracting Competency model is based on the American National Standards Institute/National Contract Management Association (ANSI/NCMA ASD 1-2019) accredited Contract Management Standard and complies with section 861 of the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (Public Law 116-92). This provision requires a professional certification based on standards developed by a third-party accredited program. The Contracting Competency Model represents a set of competencies that are foundational and common among the Contracting workforce, regardless of the organization or mission area, and will form the basis of the Contracting training program. In addition to achieving certification in Contracting, a workforce member may earn credentials and complete specialty training relevant to the needs of their current job assignment, and will engage in continuous learning throughout their career. All positions in the Contracting Functional Area will follow the DoD Acquisition Workforce requirement to achieve 80 Continuous Learning points within a two-year period.

When the Taskforce concluded its chartered efforts, we established a Contracting Workforce Functional Integration Team (CON FIT) in August 2020 to focus on the details involved in the transition to and implementation of the approved development framework for Contracting. The CON FIT is comprised of representatives and advisors from the Military Departments, the Defense Agencies, DAU, DACMs/DATM, and the OSD Human Capital Initiatives (HCI) office. DPC is working closely with the CON FIT on the transition from the existing certification structure to the new single level of certification and training standards for the Contracting Functional Area.

Under the new structure, mandatory training for Contracting certification has been significantly reduced from approximately 650 hours to 200 hours. Beginning on 1 October 2021, the new training courses for certification will be: CON 1100 Contract Fundamentals; CON 1200 Contract Pre-Award; CON 1300 Contract Award; and CON 1400 Contract Post-Award. Additionally, there will no longer be a requirement for a baccalaureate degree as part of the DoD Contracting Professional Certification; however, 10 U.S. Code § 1724 requires a baccalaureate degree for 1102 series positions and similar military positions.

By reference (b) memorandum, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (Performing the Duties Of) approved this new Contracting framework and the plan for further BtB implementation which includes a Component review to verify that Contracting positions are properly designated. As part of the review, Components may also review and re-designate Purchasing and Industrial and Contract Property Management (Property) positions into the Contracting Functional Area. Purchasing and Property are not functional areas as part

of the new BtB framework. DACM/DATM directors are responsible for providing procedures to review and update position designations consistent with the DoD Position Category Description for Contracting.

Individuals certified at Levels I, II, or III before 1 October 2021 in the Contracting acquisition career field will retain any previously earned certifications and automatically be certified in the new DoD Contracting Professional Certification Program. This applies to incumbents in Contracting-designated positions as of 1 October 2021. DACM/DATM directors will establish a process for Components to review individuals in-progress, but who have not met legacy Level 1 Contracting certification requirements by 1 October 2021, and determine what is needed to complete the new Contracting Functional Area certification requirement. Individuals are advised to retain documentation of prior certifications as part of their record of professional career achievements.

Individuals certified at any level before 1 October 2021 in the Purchasing and Property acquisition career fields will retain any previously earned certifications and automatically be certified in the new DoD Contracting Professional Certification Program. This applies to incumbents in Component-designated Contracting positions as of 1 October 2021. DACM/DATM directors will establish a process for Components to review individuals in-progress, but who have not met, at any level, legacy Purchasing or Property certification requirements by 1 October 2021, and to determine what is needed to complete the new Contracting Functional Area certification requirement. Individuals are advised to retain documentation of prior certifications as part of their record of professional career achievements.

Acquisition professionals in the Purchasing and Property career fields that have not attained any level of certification may be concerned that the requirements for certification in Contracting, coupled with completing specialty training, may increase their training requirements. While training hours may increase for some individuals, it is noted that the current training requirements for the two legacy career fields are predominantly Contracting specific courses. In addition, under the new single level of certification for the Contracting Functional Area, training hours have been significantly reduced. Finally, I want to reassure our Purchasing and Property professionals that we will work with your Senior Procurement Executives and DACMs/DATMs to make this transition to the new BtB structure as seamless as possible.

The referenced documents, the Contracting Competency Model, and the transition plan for this change may be viewed on the Workforce Development page of the DPC website at: [https://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/cpic/cp/workforce\\_development.html](https://www.acq.osd.mil/dpap/cpic/cp/workforce_development.html). We will continue to post the latest information to the DPC website as the BtB implementation evolves over the next year. The HCI website includes BtB updates at <https://www.hci.mil/btb.html>. Additionally, DAU, in collaboration with the Fourth Estate DACM office, developed a short video that provides an overview of the changes to the Contracting certification structure. The video may be viewed at: [https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner\\_id/2203981/uiconf\\_id/39997971/entry\\_id/1\\_yn26gx4w/embed/dynamic](https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/2203981/uiconf_id/39997971/entry_id/1_yn26gx4w/embed/dynamic).

This transformation of the Contracting certification program is a significant undertaking and I look forward to your support as we work collectively on a successful transition. Our deployment of the new certification program and credentials will enable an improved talent development approach for a professional, capable, and mission-focused Contracting workforce.

My senior staff lead for workforce policy is Ms. Susan Pollack who may be contacted at 571-309-8525 or [susan.w.pollack.civ@mail.mil](mailto:susan.w.pollack.civ@mail.mil).

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John M. Tenaglia  
Principal Director,  
Defense Pricing and Contracting

Attachment:  
As stated

cc:  
Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment  
Defense Acquisition Workforce Leadership Team  
Director, Human Capital Initiatives  
President, Defense Acquisition University  
Director, Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service  
Army Director, Acquisition Career Management  
Navy Director, Acquisition Talent Management  
Air Force Director, Acquisition Career Management  
Fourth Estate Director, Acquisition Career Management