



ACQUISITION

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3600

JUN 16 2021

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Summary of Program Management Functional Integrated Product Team Meetings Regarding the Defense Acquisition Workforce Back to Basics Initiative

- References:
- (a) Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Memorandum, "Back to Basics for the Defense Acquisition Workforce", September 2, 2020
 - (b) Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Memorandum, "Back to Basics Implementation for the Defense Acquisition Workforce", February 4, 2021
 - (c) Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment Memorandum, "Defense Acquisition Workforce Leadership Team (December 10, 2020) Meeting Minutes – Back-to-Basics Implementation", December 21, 2020
 - (d) Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Memorandum, Summary of the Program Management Functional Integrated Product Team Meetings Regarding the Defense Acquisition Workforce Back to Basics Initiative", January 15, 2021

The Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment (USD(A&S)) announced the phased implementation for the Back-to-Basics streamlined acquisition workforce talent management framework and new governance structure with planned implementation by October 1, 2021 (reference (a)). The USD(A&S) and the Chair of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Leadership Team has approved of the functional area framework changes to date (references (b) and (c), respectively).

In response to reference (a), the Functional Leads were tasked in 2020 to lay the groundwork on how to implement such an initiative. A Program Management Development Task Force was formed with representation from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Services, the Defense Acquisition University, the Human Capital Initiative office, the Defense Information Systems Agency and the Missile Defense Agency. The Task Force studied the issues, developed options to implement the initiative, provided recommendations and briefed the Program Management Functional Leaders on June 10, 2020, and November 9, 2020, during Functional Integrated Project Team meetings. A summary of the discussion and decisions from these meetings describe the changes to be implemented for the Program Management workforce and were the included in reference (d). Enclosure (1) is a summary of the new or modified certification requirements. The following includes additional details that were included in reference (d) along with some administration updates and clarification.

- The Program Management (PM) approach to this initiative will clearly define more efficient and thorough certification standards for the Department of Defense program

management workforce while delegating many aspects of training and development for specific positions to the Components.

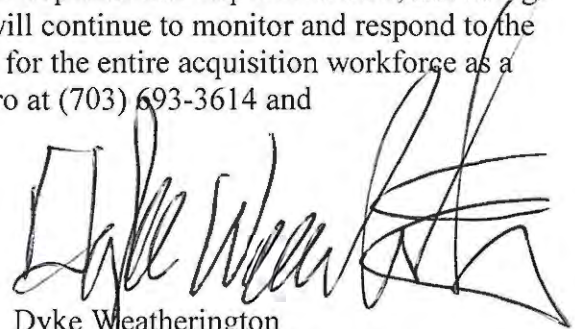
- Mandatory training for program management certification has been significantly reduced by approximately 58% and allows for additional training beyond certification to be taken only when needed depending on the person, position, product and the acquisition lifecycle stage of the program.
- Currently, the three level certification construct of the PM career field created an unnecessary rush of the workforce to obtain certification ahead of need. This leads to training that will be forgotten or obsolete when needed, or receiving elements of training that will never be used (referred to as “scrap training”). There will now be only two certification levels; Practitioner and Advanced (Practitioner). The Practitioner level requirements have been developed to accommodate the vast majority of the PM workforce positions. The Advanced level certification will apply to a much smaller percentage of the workforce that requires the highest level of expertise and is assigned the highest levels of responsibility (e.g., Acquisition Category Program Managers, Program Executive Officers, Directors).
- Practitioner and Advanced Certifications will be supplemented with Specialty training that is taken at time of need and is based on specific abilities of the employee compared to the requirements of the position, product, and program lifecycle stage. Credentials (defined by specific training and or experience) may be a requirement for certain positions.
- Although mandatory training requirements for certification are being reduced, standards for achieving certification will be more rigorous. Increased standards include: a more comprehensive certification application that demonstrates the applicant has attained the core PM competencies; endorsement and validation by program management certified leadership; and a comprehensive exam. The amount of experience required for certification is also increasing to four years of relevant acquisition experience for Practitioner and eight years of relevant program management experience for Advanced. These increased standards will add more credibility, confidence and pride to the PM workforce.
- Given the size of the PM workforce and the goal to fully implement the new framework by October 1, 2021, a grandfathering policy has been developed and approved that will automatically transition individuals with Level III certification and eight or more years of relevant experience to the Advanced Level certification. All other Level III and Level II certified individuals will automatically transition to the Practitioner Level of certification. Individuals with Level I or no certification will follow the new requirements for obtaining Practitioner certification.
- A greater emphasis will be placed on continuous learning (CL) to maintain competence and currency in today’s fast changing and agile acquisition environment. To this end, 80 hours of CL will still be required every two years to retain certification. For those who fail to achieve 80 hours in their designated period,

beginning two years after the PM Back to Basics policy is implemented, certification extension requests will need to be prepared and approved to retain certifications for up to one year beyond the 80 hour CL due date. The Component DACM will review and, if appropriate, approve extension requests before forwarding them to the DOD and Component PM Functional Leaders. Should members still not comply with the 80 hour requirement at the end of the certification extension, their certifications will be deactivated until such time that currency is achieved and the comprehensive exam is retaken and passed. This CL policy will continue to be reviewed over the next two years; any changes in this policy will be widely disseminated.

- Individual Development Plans and routine discussions with Supervisors and mentors will become even more important under the new Framework of streamlined certification training, increased emphasis on obtaining training at time of need, and relevant Specialty Training and Credentials. This must be emphasized in order for the initiative to be successful. Individuals should discuss their Individual Development Plans with their supervisor in the context of the new framework while continuing to work towards meeting their current certification requirements during fiscal year 2021 while positions are being reviewed and position descriptions updated.

Since the Functional Leaders' approval of the above elements in November 2020, Components representatives attending the Workforce Leadership Group+1 forum, requested Functional Leaders provide more standardized guidance regarding the appropriate type and quantity of CL training. In response to this, guidelines are included in Enclosure (1). This guidance is similar to that provided for Key Leadership Positions in the past.

The Task Force will continue to work out implementation details of the above points as well as many other issues that include credential development and implementation, knowledge area coordination, timelines, etc. The Task Force will continue to monitor and respond to the overarching Back to Basics initiative being worked for the entire acquisition workforce as a whole. My point of contact for this is Mr. Ken Spiro at (703) 693-3614 and kenneth.v.spiro.civ@mail.mil.



Dyke Weatherington
Assistant Secretary of Defense
for Acquisition, Performing the Duties of

Enclosure: As stated

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Program Management Functional Integrated Product Team Membership

DoD Program Management Certification Requirements

	PM Practitioner	PM Advanced Practitioner
Education	Technical degree preferred	Technical degree preferred
Training	PM core competencies	PM core competencies
Experience¹	At least 4 years relevant acquisition experience with evidence of demonstrated proficiency in PM competencies.	8 or more years relevant program management experience, with at least 2 of these years with cost, schedule and performance responsibilities in a program management office or similar organization (dedicated matrix support to a PM, PEO, DCMA program integrator, or supervisor of shipbuilding).
Assessment & Validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-nominating process containing evidence of applicable experience over time • Endorsement / Validation by certified PM designated by Component • Comprehensive Examination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-nominating process containing evidence of applicable experience over time • Endorsement by certified PM designated by Component • Validation by 1 or more senior PM professionals designated by Component • Comprehensive Examination
Verification	Components verify and document completion of above requirements and provide DoD Program Management Certification.	
Currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80 hours of Continuous Learning (CL) / 2 years • CL is training taken to address technical, professional, and specialty competencies. • A certain amount/type of CL as determined by supervisor shall directly map to professional competencies. • PM workforce members who do not fulfil the 80 hour requirement will need to submit certification extension requests through their Component. Extensions are limited to 12 months. Requests are approved by the Component DACM with results passed to the OSD and Component Functional Leaders. Should members still not comply with the 80 hour requirement at the end of the extension, their certifications will be deactivated. • CL Guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The 80 hours of CL shall pertain to Program Management or other related functional areas; common reoccurring DoD or other non-acquisition training should not be counted toward the 80 hours. ○ No fewer than 10 hours of the required 80 shall pertain to leadership training. ○ No more than 20 hours of the required 80 shall be conference attendance. 	

Notes: 1. Fulfillment options available when onboarding more experienced personnel
2. This version of requirements updates and clarifies the version approved at the November 2020 PM FIPT