

Naval Postgraduate School Systems and Program Management Non-Resident Master's  
Degree Program Policy

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The following table lists several sections from the below policy that, in the view of the Army, Director Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office, warrants special attention. These sections fall into one of three general categories: they provide clarification to existing program procedures, make a relatively minor change to these procedures, or represent new guidance.

<b>PARA</b>	<b>SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS POLICY, 08 AUGUST 2017</b>
4	Program Description: Updated this paragraph to mirror information from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) website.
5.e(3)	Responsibilities (Participant's Organization/Supervisor): Added a responsibility to ensure the organization/supervisor informs their employees, in advance of submitting an application, about the program's Continued Service Agreement (CSA).
5.f(2)	Responsibilities (Participant): Added a responsibility that participants must sign and submit a CSA before assignment into the program.
6.b	Program of Study: Updated information on the internet delivery method for the program.
7.d	Eligibility: Updated this sub-paragraph to provide a more detailed explanation about inactive status and eligibility requirements.
13	Continued Service Agreements: Updated this paragraph to provide more information about the requirement to complete and sign a CSA before participating in the program. It specifies the period of obligated service for the program to be 24 months, which begins the day after the completion date of the program. The language in this paragraph is now consistent across other DACM program policies that also require a CSA.
17	Consequences for Academic Failures or No-Shows: Updated this paragraph to use the terms "instructor-led training (ILT)" and "virtual instructor-led training (VILT)" for Defense Acquisition University courses.



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**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY**  
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**WASHINGTON, DC 20310-0103**

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21 April 2022

**MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION**

**SUBJECT: Naval Postgraduate School Systems and Program Management Non-Resident Master's Degree Program Policy**

1. References: See Enclosure.
2. Purpose: To establish policy and procedures for application and selection of Army Acquisition Workforce (AAW) civilians into the Naval Postgraduate School Systems and Program Management Non-Resident Master's Degree (NPS-MSSPM) Program, which is sponsored and centrally funded by the Army Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office.
3. Applicability: This memorandum applies to current AAW civilians.
4. Program Description.
  - a. The Systems and Program Management Non-Resident Master's Degree Program two-year program is an interdisciplinary program combining systems engineering with program management knowledge and skills. The program is intended to broaden the technical capabilities of the acquisition workforce who may have non-technical backgrounds so they are able to successfully manage and lead programs/projects in support of the Defense Acquisition System. Students in this program learn the systems engineering process from establishing system requirements through test and evaluation. Simultaneously students learn how to manage, schedule, and budget programs as well as work with Department of Defense (DoD) suppliers through contracts to meet program obligations.
  - b. The Army DACM Office is responsible for announcing the Naval Postgraduate (NPS) Program educational opportunity and conducts the selection process through a Review Board once every fiscal year. Program information, eligibility criteria, application requirements and specific educational objectives are outlined in the posted NPS-MSSPM Program announcement, located on the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) Army DACM Office website at <https://asc.army.mil/>.
  - c. There is more information about the NPS-MSSPM Program on the NPS website at [https://nps.edu/web/dl/degProgs\\_MSSPM\\_nonRes](https://nps.edu/web/dl/degProgs_MSSPM_nonRes).

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5. Responsibilities.

a. Army DACM Office.

1) Provides oversight and management to the Army DACM Office's NPS-MSSPM Program annual announcement and Review Board selection process.

2) Serves as the final approval authority for AAW civilians selected to participate in the program.

b. Army DACM Office's NPS-MSSPM Program Manager (PM).

1) Develops, implements, and publishes the program policy, procedures, and announcement on the Army DACM website.

2) Partners with the NPS Program Administrator (Monterey, California) to coordinate the curriculum execution of the announcement.

3) Announces the program to eligible AAW civilians through a variety of outreach activities including the Army DACM Office website, and direct email.

4) Coordinates with Organization Acquisition Points of Contact (OAPs) and Acquisition Career Management Advocates (ACMAs) to ensure widest dissemination of the NPS education opportunity.

5) Provides administrative assistance and technical support with the application submission process, via the online Army Acquisition Professional Development System (AAPDS), which is located within the Career Acquisition Personnel and Position Management Information System (CAPPMS) and can be accessed through Career Acquisition Management Portal (CAMP) at <https://apps.asc.army.mil/camp/>.

6) Reviews and determines completeness and eligibility of all submitted applications.

7) Plans, coordinates, and conducts the Review Board selection process.

8) Compiles data and briefs the Army DACM on the results from the Review Board.

9) Notifies applicants of the Review Board's results immediately after the Army DACM has approved the Order of Merit List (OML).

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10) Provides the NPS Program Administrator (Monterey) with a list of new participants.

11) Manages the NPS budget and processes all funding using Military Interdepartmental Purchase Requests (MIPRs).

12) Tracks the progress of all students to ensure that they maintain the grade requirements of a "B" in each class.

13) Retains a copy of each student's signed Continued Service Agreement (CSA) and monitors the execution and fulfillment of each student's period of obligated service.

c. USAASC, G-8.

1) Processes requests for submitted MIPRs.

2) Forwards completed MIPRs to the NPS Budget Office in Monterey.

3) Receives the Acceptance of MIPR from the NPS Budget Office in Monterey, California and forwards a copy to the Army DACM Office's NPS-MSSPM PM.

d. NPS.

1) Partners and coordinates with the NPS-MSSPM PM to offer this educational opportunity.

2) Evaluates candidates for admission to the NPS Program prior to the close of the posted announcement.

3) Receives and reviews MIPRs from the USAASC G-8. Approves and returns acceptance of MIPRs to the USAASC G-8.

4) Reviews curriculum on an annual basis with the Army DACM Office.

e. Participant's Organization/Supervisor.

1) Maintains responsibility for salary, administration of leave, and maintenance of leave records. AAW civilians selected for the program will remain on the Table of Distribution and Allowances of their current organization.

2) Ensures AAW civilians applying to the program have met the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification level required for their

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current position. Employees must maintain eligibility requirements throughout their entire participation in the program.

3) Ensures employees are informed about and understand, in advance of submitting their application, the NPS-MSSPM Program's Continued Service Agreement (CSA) terms and period of service obligation. See paragraph 13 for more information on CSAs.

4) Ensures AAW civilians are allowed the specific time to complete the 24-month distance learning program. No AAW civilians will be required to use leave or make up time when the specified time is devoted to program completion.

5) Approves participant's NPS courses on their Individual Development Plan (IDP) within CAPPMS.

6) Approves Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) in CAPPMS earned by AAW civilians who successfully complete NPS courses in the program. The number of CLPs awarded are identified in the program's curriculum. See Reference 1.e for more information on CLPs.

7) Notifies the NPS-MSSPM PM immediately when a change in employment no longer qualifies the AAW civilian to participate in the program.

8) Notifies participant's new supervisor that a CSA is in effect, if applicable. Informs the NPS-MSSPM PM if one of their AAW civilians will fail to complete the period of obligated service, if applicable.

#### f. NPS-MSSPM Participant.

1) Attend the NPS offering designated in the program announcement.

2) Sign and submit a CSA before assignment in the NPS-MSSPM Program, acknowledging and agreeing to the CSA terms and period of obligation.

3) Current participants who are pending deployment must provide a copy of their orders to the NPS-MSSPM PM. These participants will be allowed to return to the program, if feasible, or will be placed in the next offering. These individuals are not required to reapply.

4) Ensures their first and second level supervisors are made fully aware of academic and other challenges that might interfere with the selectee's success in the program.

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5) Notifies the NPS-MSSPM PM immediately when a change in employment no longer qualifies the student to participate in the program or if acceptance into another acquisition education and training opportunity will interfere with NPS participation.

6) Must complete all requirements for graduation within the specified 24-month academic period identified in the curriculum.

7) Must maintain a grade of at least a "B" in all courses. If two or more grades are received that are less than a "B", the employee will be removed from the program. Students will provide a copy of their unofficial transcripts, showing grades to the NPS PM no later than 30 days after the course completion date.

8) Must notify their supervisor, NPS instructors, NPS Program Administrator (Monterey), and the NPS-MSSPM PM before making a decision to withdraw from the program.

9) Will obtain approval from their parent organization and the organizational point of contact (POC) responsible for authorizing government training requests of any proposed change in the approved training program involving course and schedule changes, withdrawals, drops, or incompletions, as well as increased costs.

10) Responsible for updating their Acquisition Career Record Brief (ACRB) with their acquired educational credentials and degree by submitting a copy of their NPS certificate and transcript to the CAPPMS Help Desk (<https://apps.asc.army.mil/camp/index.cfm?fuseaction=support.helpRequest>).

#### 6. Program of Study.

a. The NPS-MSSPM Program is an eight quarter, part-time degree program conducted by distance learning. Please refer to the announcement for the specific curriculum that this program is designed to provide to AAW civilians.

b. The NPS-MSSPM Program is delivered over the internet on Tuesdays and Thursdays 0800-1100 (Pacific Time). The internet tool used by NPS will be identified in the program announcement and during orientation. Students will need internet access, a personal computer (PC) microphone, and a PC camera (optional). There is no special software required. Students can connect directly into their NPS session using a web browser.

c. Students who complete the degree program earn several Defense Acquisition University (DAU) course equivalencies, as indicated in the program announcement. While completion of the NPS education opportunity provides some of the required

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training for DAWIA certification in other Functional Areas, individuals still must complete the additional DAU training, experience, and education standards required for certification in each specific Functional Area. Refer to the announcement for the specific DAU equivalencies earned for the NPS-MSSPM Program (see the NPS-MSSPM Program webpage, located on USAASC Army DACM Office website at <https://asc.army.mil/>).

## 7. Eligibility.

a. AAW civilians must meet both the NPS eligibility/academic requirements and Army DACM Office eligibility requirements outlined in the posted announcement in order to apply to the program.

b. Participants must maintain eligibility requirements throughout their tenure in the program.

c. Participants who no longer meet their certification level required for their current position due to a promotion, may remain in the program.

d. Participants who, through reorganization or reassignment, are converted to a non-acquisition coded position, will be made inactive in the program. They will remain in an inactive status until their ACRB reflects that they meet eligibility requirements to participate in the program. The eligibility must be reflected on their ACRB prior to the next scheduled quarter, in order to remain active in the program and receive Army DACM Office funding. Participants who do not meet the eligibility requirements, will no longer receive Army DACM Office funding, but they may continue to attend the NPS-MSSPM as long as their organization funds NPS directly.

8. Application Process. Applying to the NPS program is a two-part process detailed in paragraphs 8.a and 8.b below.

### a. Applying to NPS.

1) NPS applicants must first submit an admissions application directly to NPS and obtain a "Conditional" Letter of Acceptance by following procedures outlined in the Army DACM Office's program announcement. The "Conditional" Letter of Acceptance obtained from NPS allows an applicant to submit an application via the Army DACM Office application process and allows their application to be reviewed by the Board for consideration of funding.

2) Applicants must then upload a copy of the "Conditional" Letter of Acceptance into AAPDS, located with CAPPMS, as part of the official DACM Office application.

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3) The "Conditional" Letter of Acceptance does not guarantee approval to participate in the NPS-MSSPM Program. It does allow eligible applicants to submit an application for consideration of funding. Applicants must meet all academic standards required by NPS after NPS has completed evaluation of official transcripts and after board results have been approved. NPS academic requirements must be met in order to participate in the program sponsored by the Army DACM Office.

b. Applying to the Army DACM Office.

1) The application process for funding approval is an automated process. After obtaining a "Conditional" Letter of Acceptance from NPS, AAW civilians must log into CAPPMS, navigate to AAPDS, complete and submit an application in accordance with the instructions in the posted announcement.

2) After applications are submitted in AAPDS, the NPS-MSSPM PM will review eligible applications for accuracy and completeness. The NPS-MSSPM PM will return incorrectly submitted applications to the AAW civilian to correct errors. AAW civilians must resubmit their corrected application in CAPPMS no later than the closing date of the announcement. The NPS-MSSPM PM will forward correctly completed applications to the Review Board for evaluation.

9. Review Board Process.

a. The Review Board considers the best qualified AAW civilians for funding and participation into the program. The best qualified AAW civilians are those applicants who have been identified by their command/organization as demonstrating the potential for selection into senior leadership positions and programs.

b. Applications going before the Review Board will receive fair and equitable evaluation in accordance with the current announcement and Review Board process. The Review Board evaluates and prepares an OML of submitted applications and provides the OML to the NPS-MSSPM PM.

c. The NPS-MSSPM PM compiles application statistics and briefs the DACM on the results from the Review Board. The Army DACM approves the results of the OML based on availability of funds and the needs of the Army. The DACM is the final approval authority of results. AAW civilians must meet both DACM Office's eligibility requirements and NPS's academic requirements in order to participate in the DACM Office sponsored program.



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d. The NPS-MSSPM PM notifies applicants and the NPS Program Administrator (Monterey) of approved board results. The NPS-MSSPM PM will then notify OAPs and ACMAs of approved board results.

e. Applicants are responsible for notifying their supervisor of approved board results.

10. Acceptance. Upon official notification of approval into the program, AAW civilians must accept or decline, via email, their participation in the NPS-MSSPM Program no later than the date identified in the notification email or forfeit their participation in the program.

11. Academic Standards. Students must complete all courses with at least a grade of "B" for each course. AAW civilians must reimburse the government for all costs associated with dropped, withdrawn, failed, or incomplete courses. See paragraph 14 below for more information about reimbursement.

12. Funding.

a. The Army DACM Office centrally funds the program. The number of new participants approved to participate in the program can increase or decrease each year based on funding constraints and the needs of the Army.

b. TDY costs are not associated with participating in the program.

c. The Army DACM Office will not fund a second master's degree for any AAW civilian who already has a master's degree in a business or acquisition-related discipline.

13. Continued Service Agreement (CSA).

a. All federal employees approved to participate in the NPS-MSSPM Program must complete and sign a CSA before participating in the training, acknowledging and agreeing to the CSA terms and period of obligated service. AAW civilians will be denied the opportunity to have their application reviewed by the Board if they fail to complete and submit a CSA as part of their application. Employees are deemed ineligible to apply for training if they fail to sign a CSA. Supervisors will ensure employees are informed in advance of the obligation. Employees will submit a request to post a copy of the signed CSA to his/her electronic official personnel file.

b. Supervisors at all levels are charged to protect the Federal Government's interest should their AAW civilians fail to successfully fulfill their signed CSA.

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c. Supervisors must contact their supporting Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) and the NPS-MSSPM PM immediately, if it appears that a CSA will not be fulfilled. A completed copy of the CSA must be maintain in the organization's case file.

d. The period of obligated service for the NPS-MSSPM Program is 24 months. The period of obligated service begins the day after the completion date of the program. The period of obligated service is annotated on the CSA and signed by the applicant and the applicant's supervisor.

#### 14. Reimbursements

a. Balances must be paid in full if AAW civilians do not make financial arrangements within 30 days of notification to reimburse. AAW civilians will be removed from the program and the DACM Office will notify the individual's supervisor regarding the balance owed to the Federal Government. AAW civilians are required to reimburse the Federal Government in connection with the training under the following situations:

- 1) An "incomplete", "failed", or grade less than a "B" in a course.
- 2) A "drop" or "withdrawal" from a course after the course start date.
- 3) Withdrawal from the entire program after the commencement of the program.
- 4) Voluntarily leave the DoD to enter service of another Federal agency other than the DoD prior to completing the period of obligated service.
- 5) Retire from the DoD before completing the period of obligated service.
- 6) Does not graduate from the program.

b. All reimbursements will be made by money order or certified check, payable to the U.S. Treasury and mailed to: U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center, DACM Office, ATTN: NPS-MSSPM Program Manager, 9900 Belvoir Road, Building 201, Suite 101, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5567.

#### 15. Non-Reimbursement.

a. AAW civilians will not be held liable to reimburse the Federal Government under the following situations:

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1) Drops or withdraws from a course prior to the course start date. Participants must completed the course that was withdrawn/dropped within the 24 month program and graduate from the program.

2) Withdraws from the program prior to the program commencement date.

3) Drops or withdraws from a course under extenuating personal circumstances, such as a serious medical/health condition or personal/family issue of the AAW civilian.

4) Civilians who involuntary separate (such as reduction in force) from the DoD due to no fault of their own, are neither liable to reimburse the Federal Government nor fulfill the period of obligated service on the CSA. AAW civilians must notify both NPS and the Army DACM Office NPS-MSSPM PM of their particular situation for review.

b. All requests for compassionate exceptions must be supported by a written statement from a medical doctor or legal professional and a memorandum from their first line supervisor. Supervisors must respond to their employees' request for compassionate exceptions.

c. Supervisor's memorandum must be addressed to the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center, Army DACM Office, ATTN: Chief, AAW Development Branch, 9900 Belvoir Road, Building 201, Suite 101, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5567. Employees must provide both memorandums and supporting documents by attaching them in an email to the Army DACM Office NPS-MSSPM PM for review.

#### 16. Voluntary Separation.

a. AAW civilians, who voluntarily leave the Department of the Army to enter service in another Federal agency outside of the DoD before completing the period of obligated service, must provide their servicing CPAC or training office of the losing agency advance notice of at least 45 working days. During this timeframe, the DACM Office will make a determination concerning reimbursement to the losing agency prior to departure to the non-DoD gaining agency.

b. AAW civilians, who voluntarily leave the Department of the Army to enter service within another DoD agency or organization before completing the period of obligated service, must provide their servicing CPAC or training office of the losing agency advance notice of at least 10 working days. During this timeframe, the DACM Office will identify the remaining period of obligated service and notify the employee and their supervisor in the losing agency. The employee and their supervisor in the losing agency will provide a copy of the CSA to the gaining DoD agency. The supervisor in

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the gaining agency is responsible for uploading a copy of the CSA in the employee's official personnel file.

c. AAW civilians who voluntarily withdraw from the program after the program start date will be restricted from applying to any future NPS program for three years.

d. AAW civilians who voluntarily withdraw from the program will be restricted from applying to other Army acquisition education opportunities or programs sponsored by the Army DACM Office for one year, in accordance with Reference 1.d. The date of restriction is effective on the date that the NPS-MSSPM PM receives notification from the participant to withdraw from the program.

#### 17. Consequences for Academic Failures or No-Shows.

a. Academic Failures. AAW civilians who academically fail an instructor-led training (ILT) or virtual instructor-led training (VILT) DAU course required for DAWIA certification in their current position, will not be eligible to apply for the program. They will remain ineligible to apply for the program until they successfully meet their DAWIA certification requirements.

b. No-Shows. AAW civilians who are enrolled in an ILT or VILT DAU course (regardless if the course is required for certification or not) and fail to show up for the class, will be considered as a "no-show" by the DACM Office and DAU. The DACM Office takes this "no-show" status seriously because it can negatively impact the Army's future seat allocation for these courses. "No-show" AAW civilians will remain ineligible to apply to the NPS-MSSPM Program for a period of one year, starting on the last day of the scheduled ILT or VILT course for which they failed to appear.

18. Effective date and implementation: This document supersedes the previous NPS Policy, effective immediately.

19. For general questions about this policy, please contact the Army DACM Office NPS-MSSPM PM through the DACM Policy Mailbox at [usarmy.belvoir.usaasc.mbx.dacm-policies@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.belvoir.usaasc.mbx.dacm-policies@army.mil).

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RONALD R. RICHARDSON, JR.  
Director  
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ENCLOSURE – REFERENCES

- a. Title 10, United States Code, Chapter 87, Defense Acquisition Workforce, Sections 1701-1764, Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act of 1990, as amended (DAWIA II).
- b. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology), SFAE memorandum (Senior Rater Potential Evaluation (SRPE)), 1 July 2020.
- c. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology), SFAE memorandum (Department of the Army, Acquisition Career Field Certification Policy), 10 October 2019.
- d. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology), SFAE memorandum (Defense Acquisition University Training Policy and Procedures), 10 October 2019.
- e. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology), SFAE memorandum (Continuous Learning Point Policy and Implementation Guidelines for the Army Acquisition Workforce), 11 January 2019.
- f. Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology), SFAE memorandum (Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Master of Science in Program Management (MSPM) and Master of Science in Systems Engineering (MSSE) with a System of Systems Focus Policy and Procedures), 08 August 2017 – hereby superseded.