ARMY IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE CONTINUOUS LEARNING POLICY

I. SUMMARY:

A. The Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition &Technology) (USD (A&T) Continuous Learning Policy, effective December 1998, underpins the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act requirement for an educational framework for the acquisition workforce. The purpose of the policy is to ensure acquisition professionals develop and stay current in leadership, disciplinary and functional skills that augment the minimum education, training and experience standard established for certification purposes for their acquisition career fields. The augmentation of minimum career program standards provides for an expanded framework designed for career-long learning. The policy establishes the following standard:

Workforce members shall earn a minimum of 80 Continuous Learning Points every two years, from the date of acquisition certification for the position encumbered or from the date of the prior two-year Continuous Learning certification.

B. Individuals who are not certified for the position they encumber should concentrate on obtaining certification; **they are not subject to the Continuous Learning Standard.**

C. Effective FY 2002, the policy establishes enhanced standards for civilian and military personnel in leadership positions. Leadership positions are defined as Critical Acquisition Position (CAP) and non-CAP team leaders, supervisors and managers. (See Section II, paragraph E, for explanation of Enhanced Standards.)

D. The USD(A&T) Policy on Continuous Learning may be found on the following website: http://www.acq.osd.mil/ar/#otherhot. The purpose of this document is to provide clarification on various aspects of the policy and to provide implementing instructions specific to the Army Acquisition Workforce.

II. GUIDELINE FOR APPLICATION OF THE STANDARD:

A. Learning Categories: Workforce members may meet the Continuous Learning Standard by participating in the learning categories listed below. These

are the same categories as those found on the Individual Development Plan (IDP) and in the Acquisition Education, Training and Experience (AETE) Catalog. While the combination of activities will vary depending on the career path or developmental needs of the individual, IDPs should provide a continuum of education and training opportunities with experiential learning opportunities integrated throughout to reinforce the knowledge and skills gained. Emphasis should be on learning activities which enable workforce members to stay current in their basic acquisition career field, emerging acquisition policy and reform, and enhancement of leadership competencies. The website for the AETE Catalog is http://dacm.sarda.army.mil/careerdevelopment. The website for the IDP is https://rda.rdaisa.sarda.mil/idp/idpprod/idpstart.htm.

1. Education/Academic: This category includes academic courses taken from an accredited institution of higher learning for the purpose of obtaining an undergraduate or graduate degree. The category encompasses all academic credits earned for the purpose of professional development (semester/quarter hours), to include those courses taken to obtain a higher level of certification in one's functional area or for becoming certified in multiple disciplines.

2. Training: Training is divided into two categories.

(a) Functional and Technical: This category includes courses taken from the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) for the purpose of obtaining a higher certification level in one's primary acquisition career field or for obtaining certification in multiple disciplines. It also includes any other functional or technical training which is related to keeping current in a particular acquisition career field. (Examples: Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System course for the Business, Cost Estimating and Financial Management acquisition career field; Management of Defense Acquisition Contracts for the Contracting acquisition career field; the Test and Evaluation Basic Course for the Test and Evaluation career field; DAU's Contemporary Approaches to Acquisition Reform.) The Defense Acquisition University Catalog (http://www.acq.osd.mil/dau), Appendix G, lists academic mandatory acquisition courses offered by private and public institutions of higher education that have been certified as equivalent to mandatory acquisition courses provided by DAU.

(b) Leadership: This category includes training designed to enhance any of the twenty-seven leadership competencies, organized within the five Executive Core Qualifications, identified by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to be important for effective performance in managerial and executive positions regardless of specific functional assignment. The training should be appropriate to the developmental goals and certification level of the workforce member.

3. Experiential/Developmental: This category includes opportunities to learn from experience as a part of the workforce member's work assignment or through rotational or developmental assignments specifically structured to provide broadening experiences. These include on-the-job assignments, intra- and inter-organizational, rotational, broadening and developmental assignments, and operational experience. These assignments must be linked to the enhancement of leadership competencies or the improvement of technical or *functional skills appropriate to the career path and/or developmental goals and* certification level of the workforce member.

4. Professional: This category encompasses activities sponsored by professional societies and associations, to include government-sponsored symposiums and conferences, that enable workforce members to maintain currency in their functional or technical disciplines. It also includes professional activities unrelated to society participation, such as teaching, lecturing, speaking at symposia and conferences, writing and publishing, and consulting.

B. Documentation:

1. The IDP is used to record the workforce member's plan for meeting the Continuous Learning Standard and for documenting continuous learning points. IDPs are tailored to the specific needs of each workforce member based upon his or her career path and certification level. It is the responsibility of each workforce member and his or her supervisor to ensure the IDP meets these needs and projects a minimum of 80 Continuous Learning Points for the individual's two-year cycle.

2. Using information from the Director, Acquisition Career Management database, each workforce member's IDP is automatically updated with the appropriate continuous learning cycle. The cycle is based on the date of acquisition certification for the position encumbered or from the date of the prior two-year Continuous Learning Certification.

3. Workforce members are responsible for maintaining records supporting the completion of learning activities. First line supervisors are responsible for verifying that activities have been completed by annotating the "Continuous Learning Points/Actual Points" section of the IDP. When 80 continuous learning points have been recorded on the IDP within the designated two-year cycle, the Acquisition Civilian Records Brief (ACRB) is automatically updated to indicate Continuous Learning Standard certification. It is the responsibility of military workforce members to ensure accomplishment of the standard is annotated on their Officer Records Brief (ORB).

C. Crediting Continuous Learning Points: The following AAW guidance for crediting continuous learning points supplements and clarifies that contained in the USD (A&T) policy:

1. For Experiential/Developmental learning activities, the following guidelines apply.

a. For organizational, rotational, broadening, developmental and on-the job assignments, documentation in the form of a written agreement between the workforce member and supervisor is required. The agreement must stipulate the time period, the tasks to be accomplished and the learning outcomes expected. This agreement must demonstrate that the assignment is directly linked to enhancement of one or more of the OPM leadership competencies and/or improvement of functional or technical skills and is experience not attainable through normal performance of the workforce member's job assignment.

b. Organizational, rotational, broadening, and developmental activities earn a maximum of 7 continuous learning points per month. It is OSD policy that workforce members may earn up to 80 continuous learning points in a two-year cycle for rotational and developmental assignments.

c. On-the-job assignments designed to enable workforce members to gain new technical or functional skills or enhance leadership skills earn a maximum of 5 continuous learning points per month. It is OSD policy that points earned in this activity not exceed 40 in a two-year cycle.

2. There are many approaches to meeting the continuous learning standard within the provisions and the spirit of the continuous learning policy. While it is not feasible to address every situation, the following general guidelines will apply:

a. Awarding continuous learning points for attendance at or participation in activities such as routine, work-related briefings, meetings, working groups, etc. which are in conjunction with performance of the employee's duties, will not be allowed. The learning activities must be directly related to keeping current with acquisition reform issues or directly related to enhancement of leadership competencies and/or technical or functional skills which are over and above those acquired on the job. (Example: Credit would be awarded for attendance at the DDACM's Army Acquisition Workforce 2000 briefing (2 points), whereas attendance at duty-related activities such as an in-process review or an annual budget review associated with the performance of one's duties would not be awarded points.)

b. Training sessions, workshops or other learning activities developed locally within organizations for the sole purpose of providing a learning experience which earns continuous learning points must be documented on a plan. The plan must include the following: explanation of the nature of the learning activity; the goals and expected outcomes; the leadership competencies and/or functional or technical skills to be developed; the total continuous learning points to be earned. These plans must be approved one supervisory level above the initiating organization and a copy of record furnished to and maintained by the Acquisition Career Management Advocate (ACMA). Continuous learning points awarded for locally developed training may not exceed 40 per two-year cycle.

3. Members of the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) use Continuing Education Units (CEU) as measures of academic credit. The DAU, as well as many training providers, are members of the IACET and assign CEUs to courses offered. One CEU is equal to ten continuous learning points. (Example: 3.5 CEUs would equal 35 continuous learning points.)

4. For activities which do not provide academic credit or CEUs (e.g., seminars, workshops, in-house developed training) credit points will be assigned based on actual contact hours; i.e., one for each clock hour (60 minutes) of interaction between a learner and instructor.

5. For training or education courses offered through distance learning (Internet, CD ROM or other computer-based source) which do not have assigned academic credits or CEUs, one continuous learning point is awarded per 60 minutes of minimum running time.

6. Correspondence courses will be credited based on the total number of hours assigned to the course. (Example: The Supervisory Development Course, which is by correspondence, is listed as a 40-hour course and would count as 40 continuous learning points.)

7. Training to meet the Enhanced Standard (starting in FY 2002) for Team Leaders, Supervisors and Critical Acquisition Position (CAP) managerial positions may be counted toward meeting the Continuous Learning Standard in the two-year cycle in which training occurs.

8. Continuous learning points will not be granted for courses fulfilled under the provisions of the DoD Acquisition Career Management Mandatory Fulfillment Program.

9. ACMAs will meet periodically to assess the Army's implementation of the Continuous Learning policy in an effort to eliminate ambiguities or resolve other issues which may arise.

D. Waivers:

1. Grace Periods: It is OSD policy that supervisors may approve a three-month grace period beyond the date established for meeting the Continuous Learning Standard. Grace periods should only be granted when work assignments, personal hardship or other circumstances beyond the workforce member and supervisor's control result in the inability to meet the standard within a two-year cycle. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to annotate approval of the three-month grace period on the workforce member's IDP, thereby extending the cycle to 27 months. Written justification for an extension must be maintained by the supervisor. If the standard is not met within the grace period, previous Continuous Learning Standard certification will be lost and a new cycle will commence. Any points acquired in the previous cycle may not be carried over to the new cycle.

2. Waiver: It is OSD policy that under extraordinary conditions beyond the workforce member or supervisor's control, waivers may be issued when Continuous Learning certification cannot be obtained within the Grace Period (27 months). The waiver must have a finite expiration date and be based on the number of points which the individual lacks in meeting the standard (e.g., two years for 80 points and one year for 40 points). As a general rule, the conditions justifying a waiver will be limited to the following:

a. Assignment to a highly work-intensive position for a designated length of time, such as Program, Project or Product Manager.

b. Assignment to a remote area, such as Korea, for a designated length of time due to the unavailability of opportunities to meet the standard within the required time period.

Authority for waiver approval resides with the Deputy Director, Acquisition Career Management (DDACM). Approved waivers must be forwarded to the Regional Acquisition Workforce Support Specialist (AWSS) who is responsible for annotating the IDP, which updates the ACRB or the ORB to indicate a waiver is in place.

E. Enhanced Standards: Effective FY 2002, workforce members serving in team leader and supervisory positions (CAP and non-CAP) are subject to enhanced standards. Workforce members shall be certified in their acquisition career fields at the level designated for their position and have met the

Continuous Learning Standard over each two-year period following certification, in addition to the following:

a. Workforce members in Team Leader positions must have appropriate team leader training within 12 months of assignment to the position. Appropriate training is considered to be a minimum of 40 hours in a leadership course which specifically focuses on leading teams.

b. Workforce members in Supervisory positions must complete the Supervisory Development Course within 6 months of assignment to the position and the Leadership Education and Development Course within 12 months of assignment to the position. (See the AETE Catalog for course listing and details.)

c. In addition to the above, individuals occupying CAP managerial positions must have 40 hours of management training within 12 months of assignment to the position. (The Management Development Course, 20 continuous learning points, is required for new managers, regardless of grade, within 6 months of assignment to the managerial position.) Other training which leads to enhancement of the OPM leadership competencies would be considered appropriate.

3. Because of the rapidly changing environment in which we function and the need to stay current in the latest personnel and management practices, the following is highly recommended:

a. Workforce members who occupy positions subject to the enhanced standard, prior to the effective date, and have not received the required training should make every effort to meet the standard.

b. Workforce members who have met the enhanced standard should take periodic refresher courses to maintain currency.

F. Incentives:

1. Attainment of the Continuous Learning Standard shall be a factor considered in selecting workforce members for advanced acquisition development opportunities, assignments and promotions. (For example: Defense Leadership and Management Program; Competitive Development Group program; Acquisition Education, Training and Experience Selection Board.)

2. Support of the Continuous Learning Standard and the enhanced standard for those in leadership positions shall be included as a major objective on civilian and military supervisors' support forms or as a contribution under the

Leadership/Supervisor Factor for the Civilian Acquisition Workforce Demonstration Project.

3. At the end of each fiscal year, the Acquisition Career Management Office (ACMO) will provide a report to the USD(A&T) on the number of workforce members who were certified during that fiscal year. In conjunction with this report, ACMO will issue a regional report for distribution to commands which lists the names of individuals who did not meet the continuous learning standard.

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