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## Functional Advisers 'Quarterback' Career Development

The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) was designed to bring a greater degree of professionalism and training to the acquisition workforce. For the Secretary of Defense and the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD(AT&L)) to meet their acquisition, technology and logistics career planning requirements under DAWIA, the Director, Acquisition Education, Training and Career Development (AET&CD), advises them on education, training and experience requirements for each acquisition career field. But, with 12 different acquisition career tracks, how can one individual set all those requirements?

Functional Advisers (FAs) are at the center of a new process designed to assist the Director, AET&CD in this task. FAs are senior-level experts in specific acquisition career fields, and DoD proponents for career development requirements for all occupational specialties in their designated functional area.

FAs advise the USD(AT&L) in the establishment of acquisition position category descriptions, development of education, training and experience requirements and determination of career field requirements and certification levels. Annually, they certify to the USD(AT&L) that position category descriptions and the education, experience and training standards for each career field are current, complete and accurate.

FAs work with the Director, AET&CD on career development issues. They make recommendations

on performance requirements working with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) to establish appropriate courses, identify required future competencies needed in the acquisition workforce and provide needs assessments for their designated functional area. FAs also recommend initiatives to enhance universal competencies – the personal, organizational, leadership and managerial competencies required by all workforce members to apply required functional competencies effectively.

Because FAs are senior acquisition professionals with other significant responsibilities, they are assisted by an Executive Secretary who oversees necessary day-to-day coordination. Each FA also designates a Functional Integrated Product Team (FIPT) leader for each career ladder within a functional area. The FIPT assists the FA in identifying career development requirements and specifying the education, training and experience products needed to achieve them. It consists of the FA-designated leader, one functional frontline expert from each Service, selected by the Service Acquisition Executive and Service Defense Acquisition Career Manager (DACM); one functional frontline expert from the Defense Logistics Agency, Defense Contract Management Agency or other DoD agency; and a DAU representative selected by the DAU president (usually the program director or a DAU education specialist). Subject matter expert advisors also may be selected on an ad hoc basis.

FIPT performance requirements are submitted by the FA to the Career Management Overarching

Integrated Product Team (CMOAIPT), led by the Director, AET&CD. Other members of the CMOAIPT are the Service DACMs, DAU president; the Director, Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Career Management; the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civilian Personnel Policy and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Personnel Policy. FAs are the principal advisors to CMOAIPT. This team, in turn, makes recommendations to the DAU president regarding performance requirements for new courses or major revisions to existing courses and to the Director, AET&CD for career paths, experience, education and training standards. These officials make final recommendations to the USD(AT&L).

But, the new process all starts with the FA, the functional expert in touch with both headquarters and the field. At a November 3, 2000 ceremony, then-Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition Reform, Mr. Stan Soloway, formally appointed the Functional Advisers, saying, "It is your role to take inputs from our proponents – both in the headquarters and in the field – and evaluate them for inclusion in our career development program. You are the quarterback of our education, training and career development requirements generation process."

As acquisition management, and the workforce that manages it, continues to change, the FAs' vigilance in determining what universal and specialized requirements are necessary will become increasingly important.

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