



ACQUISITION AND
TECHNOLOGY

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3000

MEMORANDUM FOR UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ACQUISITION & TECHNOLOGY)
PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(ACQUISITION AND TECHNOLOGY)

ASL
2/11/99

THROUGH: DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ACQUISITION REFORM)

FROM: PRESIDENT, DEFENSE ACQUISITION UNIVERSITY

Prepared by: Thomas M. Crean/DAU/845-6733, February 5, 1999

SUBJECT: Student Prerequisites for Defense Acquisition University Courses—
ACTION PLAN - APPROVAL DECISION

PURPOSE: Reply to Memorandum from Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition & Technology)

DISCUSSION:

- In a Memorandum dated November 30, 1998, you requested an action plan from DAU concerning prerequisites for courses. The issue was raised in a November 16, 1998 letter from Dr. Gertrude Eaton, Chair, and Defense Acquisition University Board of Visitors (DAU BoV). The course prerequisite issues have been considered since your tenure as Chair of the BoV. DAU has established and published course prerequisites, where appropriate. The prerequisites are DAU courses the student must take before taking another course. Procedures have been established with the Directors of Acquisition Career Management (DACM) for enforcement of the course prerequisites. The DACMs ensure students meet course prerequisites but have the authority to waive the requirement. Under present procedures, DAU does not refuse students who do not meet course prerequisites. Based on the data available, a significant percentage of students do not meet course prerequisites.
- I recommend we continue the actions started as well as the proposed:
 - Gather data to determine the extent of the problem and the effect on student learning. The comments on prerequisites in Dr Eaton's letter are based on information gathered by DAU in early 1998. Since then, the DACMs have made an effort to ensure students meet prerequisites. Based on informal comments from faculty, the percentage of students meeting prerequisites has significantly improved. In the Acquisition Program Management Course (APMC) just graduated from DSMC, 78% of the students met prerequisites, a significant improvement over the previous class. DAU will conduct a spot survey of students in January and February 1999 to determine the current status of the prerequisite issue. This information will be available for the next BoV meeting and provide an up-to-date assessment of the issue.



- DAU has also started a test program in six technical courses that measures acquisition experience and course prerequisites with performance in and evaluation of lessons in courses. This information should also be available for the next Board meeting.
- DAU will develop tests to serve as pre-course assessments of the knowledge that one normally acquires in prerequisite course(s) and needs to be prepared to participate fully and successfully in a more advanced course. For certain courses, including the technology-based, distance-learning offerings and the 14-week Advance Program Management Course such tests have already been prepared. Pre-test for the remaining courses will be available by June 30, 1999.
- DAU will not allow unqualified students to enroll. Pre-course tests and/or other individual assessments will be used by DAU to screen all applicants who lack course prerequisites, and only those who satisfactorily evidence the necessary knowledge will be permitted to enroll. This policy would be effective after pre-test assessments are available.

By initiating the above procedures, I believe we can resolve the issue of prerequisites.

USD (A&T) DECISION: 24 FEB 1999

APPROVED: *JL*
 DISAPPROVED: _____
 OTHER: _____

Tom,

Per your first bullet, you also should be able to gather data on the number of DACM waivers being granted (which should be an indicator as well)

Jack