
DISAM On-Site Courses Bring Foreign Military Sales Awareness to the Workplace

**By
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The on-site courses offered by DISAM are designed to enhance Foreign Military Sales (FMS) understanding of U.S. Government and industry personnel who are not necessarily assigned to specific FMS or Security Assistance (SA) positions but do work with the FMS or SA community. For example, procurement specialists and program managers at the services' implementing agencies primarily procure and manage U.S. military systems; but sometimes these systems are purchased by foreign partners. These are the folks who most benefit from a two or three day on-site course.

At the request of an organization, DISAM instructors will travel to the organization and teach the very basics about foreign military sales. If there is a particular emphasis for the organization in a specific area, such as finance, training, or logistics, instructors who specialize in those areas will be the ones chosen to participate in that on-site. Also, the instructors will tailor the time devoted to those blocks in class to meet the needs and requests of the sponsoring organization.

DISAM offers specific on-site timeframes as given in the course schedule which can be found on the DISAM website under "Courses". These three-day blocks of time are set aside every year to ensure there are instructors available to conduct the class. DISAM has had organizations ask for out-of-cycle on-sites. These are hit-and-miss; if the faculty is available, DISAM will support the on-site—if the faculty members are already committed to other requirements or the faculty members with the expertise needed are not available, DISAM will offer to conduct the on-site at an alternate time.

All U.S. Government civilians in grades GS-5 to GS-15 or equivalent (all NSPS [National Security Personnel Service] pay bands), U.S. military personnel in grades E-7 to O-6, and U.S. Government support contractor equivalents may attend an on-site (course title is "SAM-OS" [Security Assistance Management On-Site]). This includes personnel in non-DoD agencies. Also, there is an industry ("SAM-OS(I)" [Security Assistance Management On-Site Industry]) version of this course for industries who would like to sponsor an on-site.

The catch to all of this is that U.S. Government organizations requesting an on-site are responsible for all travel and per diem costs for the DISAM instructor team, including local transportation and any special requirements that might arise as well as \$23 per student for training materials (which includes shipping and handling). Industry has the additional cost of the instructors' salaries and other inherent costs (such as a proportionate share of retirement, health benefits, etc). This tuition is calculated annually and used throughout the year.

The requesting activity must also arrange for a suitable classroom and teaching equipment which usually consists of PowerPoint projection, white board, and possibly audio enhancement for the instructors (microphones). Also, to use the instructors' time wisely, DISAM requires a minimum of twenty students. We also request the class be kept to a maximum of 40 students. This is to maximize the student's participation in the classroom discussions. The faculty at DISAM have found that discussions between students and instructors in a class with more than 40 students is reduced, which lessens the total learning environment for everyone.

The good news for the students is that members of the U.S. Government acquisition workforce will earn 19 continuous learning points for completing the SAM-OS course as well as meeting the requirement of

an introductory security assistance course for International Affairs Certification. Additionally, completion of the SAM-OS, along with considerable experience in a specific area, can qualify an individual for taking one of DISAM's more advanced courses, such as Case Financial Management (CF), Case Management (CM), and Case Reconciliation and Closure (CR).

One advantage to holding an on-site is the convenience of educating a large number of people in a short amount of time. A disadvantage is that there is only so much information that can be taught in two or three days—the depth of knowledge is not enough for someone who will be working the business as their primary duty. Also courses taught at DISAM have personnel from all over the Security Assistance/FMS world, and the exchange of viewpoints may be as valuable as the course material taught—this is missing from an on-site.

There are the financial advantages and disadvantages as well. DISAM pays for students attending courses at DISAM (one to two week minimum), and the requesting agency pays for DISAM instruction at an on-site. However, for a large group, the time spent away from the office may be well worth the cost.

On-sites can be a valuable tool when used well. If this type of training will best meet your need, please contact the DISAM on-site coordinator at Barbara.ochsner@disam.dsca.mil or call COMM: (937) 255-8302 or DSN: 785-8302.