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# International Acquisition Career Path

By

**Jeffrey S. Grafton**

**Associate Professor, DISAM**

An International Acquisition Career Path (IACP) has been created by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (AT&L). Mr. Al Volkman, the Office Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD) AT&L Director for International Cooperation serves as the Functional Advisor for this new career path. Initial execution of the IACP begins in FY09 aligned with the Program Management Career Field.

## **Background**

The origins of the new IACP can be traced back to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) of 1990. DAWIA required the DoD to establish policies and procedures for education, training, and career development for persons serving in acquisition positions. The law initially identified eleven functional areas as containing acquisition related positions. DAWIA requires formal career paths be identified for these functional areas in terms of the education, training, and experience necessary for acquisition career progression.

As a result of DAWIA, a structured three-level acquisition career field certification process is used to validate and record each individual acquisition workforce member's achievement within the certification construct. This information enables appropriately qualified acquisition professionals to be identified and selected to fill acquisition positions with the DoD. DoD Directive 5000.52, Defense Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Workforce Education, Training, and Career Development Program outlines the policy on DoD acquisition workforce development. The DAWIA acquisition career field certification standards are published by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU). The current DAWIA acquisition certification standards are accessible from the DAU website at [www.dau.mil](http://www.dau.mil).

## **International within DAWIA**

DAWIA recognized international acquisition activities by identifying "joint development and production with other government agencies and foreign countries" as one of the eleven functional areas cited in the law. Within DoD, this functional area is commonly referred to as "international acquisition". The area of international acquisition has been problematic in regard to establishing education, training, career development, and certification standards. The reason for this difficulty is that, in practice, international acquisition predominately is not an autonomous career field. International acquisition is cross cutting and could apply to a number of acquisition career fields. For example, conducting a joint development and production with a foreign country requires a team of DoD personnel that possess core functional expertise in multiple areas such as program management, systems development, contracting, logistics, manufacturing, and financial management. As a result, an autonomous international functional career field was not separately established. However, the need existed to insert international competencies within select acquisition career fields.

## **Core Plus Concept**

In June 2007, the Under Secretary of Defense (USD) AT&L directed the development of an international acquisition career path in support of the AT&L strategic goal to achieve and sustain a high performing, agile, and ethical workforce. The terminology used in his direction makes an important distinction. Rather than creating a new international career field, the task was to create an international

career path within the existing functional acquisition career fields. This concept of inserting tailored international competency requirements within the existing career field is referred to as the core plus concept. This approach supports the fact that most of DoD’s acquisition workforce will engage the international environment within the context of their primary functional discipline.

Under core plus, an individual acquisition workforce member must attain the existing certification standards applicable to their respective functional career field. This aspect correlates to achieving the core functional competencies necessary to be proficient at the respective functional discipline at levels I, II, or III of expertise. The plus component of the core plus concept is to delineate additional competency components necessary to effectively execute the respective functional discipline within certain specialized environments such as international acquisition.

**Program Management—International Acquisition Career Path**

As a first step, the USD (AT&L) specified that an international acquisition career path be aligned with the existing DAWIA program management career field. An integrated process team (IPT) was formed to identify the appropriate international competencies necessary for program managers to perform effectively within an international program environment and to develop the requirements of a new a career path for program managers. The IPT includes representation from OUSD (AT&L), Army, Navy, Air Force, Defense Technology Security Administration, Missile Defense Agency, Defense Acquisition University, and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) which is represented by the DISAM.

**International Program Management Competencies**

Below are the level I, II, and III international competencies identified for the program management career field. Of particular interest to those in the security assistance community, these program management competencies consider both the Foreign Military Sales and international armaments cooperation environments. In initially approving these competencies, Mr. Volkman noted that they may require updating or additional levels of definition as the IACP is implemented and executed. A numbering construct applies to these competencies. Competencies beginning with “1” apply to the International Acquisition Environment, “2” applies to Strategy and Planning for International Involvement, and “3” concerns International Business Processes & Tools.

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>International Program Management Competencies</b>	
<b>Level I Competencies</b>	
1.1	Identify statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements
1.2	Identify stakeholders
1.3	Describe International Program Security and Tech Transfer procedures
2.1	Differentiate between a U.S. and an international strategy
2.2	Identify international elements of technology development and acquisition strategies
2.3	Outline proper international technology security considerations
3.1	Describe Pol-Mil principles as part of customer/partner relationship

**Table 1**  
**International Program Management Competencies**

3.2	Describe international acquisition management tools
<b>Level II Competencies</b>	
1.1	Identify and apply statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements
1.2	Identify and coordinate with stakeholders to determine common positions
1.3	Use international program security and tech transfer procedures
2.1	Plan an international strategy—both cooperative and security assistance
2.2	Plan and modify technology development and acquisition strategies to incorporate international considerations
2.3	Employ proper international technology security
3.1	Apply Pol-Mil principles to customer/partner relationships leading to signed Letters of Offer and Acceptance (LOAs) or international agreements
3.2	Categorize the technical capabilities of your customer/partner
3.3	Support international agreement negotiation
3.4	Identify international program contracting impacts
3.5	Develop funding strategies for international programs
3.6	Employ international acquisition management tools
<b>Level III Competencies</b>	
1.1	Assess and integrate statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements
1.2	Organize and blend stakeholders' needs and requirements
1.3	Recommend, justify, and defend international program security and tech transfer procedures
2.1	Formulate an international strategy—both cooperative and security assistance
2.2	Critique and recommend technology development and acquisition strategies to incorporate international considerations
2.3	Employ and validate proper international technology security
3.1	Integrate Pol-Mil principles into customer/partner relationships
3.2	Assess and evaluate the technical capabilities of your customer/partner

<b>Table 1</b> <b>International Program Management Competencies</b>	
3.3	Conduct international agreement negotiation
3.4	Select and evaluate international acquisition management processes

### **DAU Training for IACP**

The new International Acquisition Career Path has three levels of international program management courses offered at DAU. The 2009 DAU catalog, available at [www.dau.mil](http://www.dau.mil), contains the additional course training requirements for the program management IACP at the corresponding I, II, and III certification levels.

At International Program Management Level I, the three online DAU courses required are: “International Armaments Cooperation” Parts 1, 2, and 3. Each of these online courses is two hours in length. International Program Management Level II requires completion of two DAU online courses: “Information Exchange Program DoD Generic for RDT&E (Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation)” and “Technology Transfer and Export Control Fundamentals.” Each course is two hours in length. In addition, completion of two one-week residency courses is required: PMT (Program Management) 202 “Multinational Program Management Course” and PMT 203 “International Security and Technology Transfer/Control Course.” International Program Management Level III requires completion of a one-week residency course, PMT 304 “Advanced International Management Workshop.”

It is important to note that these mandatory courses for the IACP are in addition to all existing mandatory training requirements for the program management career field. However, the total IACP addition to the existing training requirement for the career field is only ten hours of online training and three weeks of resident training to attain IACP Level III competency.

DAU is continuing an evaluation process of current course offerings to consider potential curriculum changes or additional course development to facilitate the workforce achievement of the desired competencies. Although very preliminary at this point, there has been some discussion to consider the applicability of some training offered by DISAM in the international acquisition career development process.

### **Practical Value of IACP**

The International Acquisition Career Path establishes a formal career path within the overall program management career field. Formalizing the career path systematically with the personnel systems enables two important actions. First, specific manpower billets can be coded as international program management positions requiring individuals possessing both core and IACP qualifications to fill the respective positions. Second, the existing personnel management infrastructure will record each acquisition workforce member’s achievement toward both core and core plus certifications. This information will ultimately provide visibility to senior management enabling them to identify and select appropriately internationally qualified persons to lead international programs, thus precluding most problems with international programs rising to the Under Secretary level for resolution.

### **IACP International Program Definition**

For purposes of the International Acquisition Career Path, an international program is characterized by one or more of the following criteria.

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Designated an international program/project or high-potential future foreign sales program, either Foreign Military Sales or Direct Commercial Sales, by the USD(AT&L) or Component Acquisition Executive or as further delegated

Associated with a Technology Development Strategy as required for Milestone A or Acquisition Strategy at Milestones B and C with an international system or cooperative opportunity identified

Associated with an international agreement, upon submission or approval of a Summary Statement of Intent or with international agreement entered into force

Associated with an approved Letter of Offer and Acceptance for purposes of international sale, lease, or logistics support of U.S. major defense equipment

Of note, Foreign Military Sales is a factor in defining a program as international. Under this initiative, the expectation is that program managers of all international programs will be selected based on achieving IACP requirements within the program management career field.

### **IACP Implementation to Other Career Fields**

The program management International Acquisition Career Path is just the first step in addressing international acquisition across the DoD. The long term objective is to implement the same core plus approach across the other acquisition career fields. The “plus” international competencies for other acquisition career fields will differ, in varying extents, from the “plus” international competencies for program management. The intent is to complete this process for the other acquisition career fields over the next two years.

### **IACP Relationship to DSCA’s International Affairs (IA) Certification Program**

Many individuals ask how the new IACP relates to the DoD international affairs (IA) certification and career development program managed by DSCA. It is important to recognize that these two programs are complementary rather than duplicative. An important distinction between the DSCA IA certification and the USD (AT&L) IACP initiative is the target population. The DSCA IA program is open to all career fields and applies to the entire IA workforce at large. Although the IA workforce does include some DAWIA acquisition personnel, many IA professionals are not in acquisition organizations or acquisition career fields. As such, the DSCA administered IA program’s training, education, and experience requirements are focused on IA competencies as a whole rather than having separate individually tailored qualifications for each respective functional career field.

As described in this article, the USD (AT&L) IACP has a tailored focus for each respective acquisition career field. Eligible international acquisition personnel may elect to participate in both programs. More information on the DoD IA program is available at [www.personnelinitiatives.org](http://www.personnelinitiatives.org) .

### **Summary**

The new International Acquisition Career Path is an important development not only to the acquisition community but also to the security assistance community. Successful execution of security assistance programs, in particular the Foreign Military Sales program, relies heavily on DoD’s acquisition manpower, processes, and infrastructure. The IACP will enable the acquisition workforce to become more knowledgeable of various processes and the implications for international programs through improved education, training, and professional development.

### **About the Author**

Jeffrey Grafton is currently an Associate Professor at the DISAM. In addition to teaching, he is also the functional coordinator for DISAM’s acquisition curriculum and the focal point for the Institute’s “Ask

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an Instructor” program. He has previously worked for the Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command, Electronic Systems Center Detachment 16 (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia), and the Air Force Security Assistance Center. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from Cedarville College and a Master’s of Science degree in Logistics Management from the Air Force Institute of Technology.