

## DA PAM 600-3

### Army Acquisition Functional Area 51

#### Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management

#### 1. Introduction.

20 September 2022

a. *Purpose.* The Army Acquisition Functional Area is responsible for equipping and sustaining the world's most capable, powerful, and respected Army. Our first responsibility is to the Soldier who protects and preserves our Nation. We strive to meet the needs of the Soldier throughout the full spectrum of operations by incorporating technical solutions to respond to the rapidly evolving threat environment. We ensure the delivery of quality capabilities, providing the right product or service to the right place, at the right time to ensure the Army is equipped for the 21st century. Our next responsibility is to our partners—Army, joint, industry, and international. We work with these partners to develop, acquire, deliver, sustain, and safely dispose of weapons systems and provide contracting services to our Soldiers in all military operations. We work closely with our partners to continually improve Army capabilities and ensure their interoperability. Our final responsibility is to the American public. We must be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars and work to continuously achieve the highest levels of effectiveness and efficiency in our business decisions while maintaining strict adherence to acquisition ethics policies, regulations, and laws. The Army Acquisition workforce consists of commissioned officers, noncommissioned officers, and the Department of Army Civilians.

b. *Proponent.* The proponent for the Active Component (AC), Army National Guard (ARNG), and U.S. Army Reserves acquisition workforce is the Director for Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office within the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (<https://asc.army.mil>). While each officer is his or her own best career manager, FA 51 officers are strongly encouraged to establish and maintain dialogue with the proponent for professional development information as well as for opportunities that impact the Army Acquisition Functional Area. Officers are also encouraged to maintain a dialogue with their respective Acquisition Branch Managers and senior leaders within their Chain of Command. Maintaining an open dialogue optimizes the opportunities for enhanced professional development training, education, and experience.

c. *Functions.* Unique functions performed by the Army Acquisition Workforce are based on statute, regulation, and policy and cannot be performed by non-acquisition personnel. The applicable statute is contained in the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA), consisting of 10 USC Chapter 87, and further referenced in the DODI 5000 series. FA 51 officers effectively and efficiently develop, acquire, field, test and evaluate, sustain, and safely dispose of materiel by leveraging domestic, organic, commercial, and foreign technologies, and capabilities to meet the Army's current and future mission requirements. FA 51 officers deliver decisive and synchronized business solutions and contracting support to the Army Enterprise and the Department of Defense.

d. *Acquisition Functional Areas.* Acquisition officers strive to meet the needs of the Warfighter throughout the full spectrum of operations by incorporating technical solutions to respond to the rapidly evolving threat environment. FA 51 Officers work with joint and international partners as well as those in industry and academia, to develop, acquire, deliver, sustain and safely dispose of weapons systems and provide contracting services to Soldiers in all military operations. FA 51 officers are functional experts and are therefore required to develop expertise in at least one Area of Concentration (AOC). For acquisition officers, Program Management (AOC A) and Contracting (AOC C) are the two primary AOCs in which officers may pursue education, training, and experience that will lead to professional certification. Focusing on one of these two AOCs will

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provide the Army with the expertise needed to develop, acquire, deliver, and sustain the systems and services needed for our 21st century professional Army. FA 51 officers must attain the Professional (AOC C) or Practitioner (AOC A) level certification to compete for lieutenant colonel Centralized Selection List (CSL). In some cases, based on the officer's desires and/or needs of the Army, an officer may have the opportunity to seek broadening assignments and training in both AOCs. Certification must be obtained in accordance with current DOD and Army certification guidelines.

(1) **Functional Area 51A:** Program Management (AOC A) assignments focus on the management of materiel systems or services across all phases of life-cycle management. In accordance with Acquisition Reform Initiatives, the goal for AOC A officers is to gain a wide range of experiences leading up to their colonel/O-6 CSL/Key Billet PM assignment, which could include experience in science and technology, test and evaluation, and contracting as their career timelines allow. Officers will coordinate with their career managers to ensure future assignments offer opportunities to gain experience in these functionalities. The life-cycle phases include planning and refining the initial requirements, development, and maturation of technology through a disciplined engineering process, producing and deploying a materiel capability, supporting a fielded capability in the operational force, and disposal. FA 51 officers assigned to AOC A positions will primarily perform program management duties and may experience information technology, test and evaluation, systems planning research, development, and engineering—science and technology management related work. AOC A's primary responsibilities include the government's management of program cost, schedule, performance, risk, and test and evaluation. Other AOC A responsibilities include managing supply chains, and science and technology projects. Officers coordinate with warfighters and Army Capabilities Managers (the warfighter's representative) to assist in determining requirements. Throughout the life-cycle, AOC A officers manage the efforts of the government and our industry partners. A position normally includes assignments in a Program Executive Office (PEO) which is the government organization responsible for managing Army systems. Management of IT programs is unique in their cost, schedule and performance due to rapid changes in science and technology. Program management of IT-based solutions is often knowledge management of the collaboration between laboratories, academia, and Soldiers. Other AOC A positions include test and evaluation activities with the task of ensuring material and technology-based solutions adequately address operational effectiveness, suitability, and safety criteria.

(2) **Functional Area 51C:** Contracting (AOC C) assignments focus on theater support contracting, contract administration services, and providing procurement advice and assistance during large-scale combat operations in a multi-domain environment. The goal for AOC C officers is to gain a wide range of experiences leading up to their colonel/O-6 CSL Command/Key Billet. FA 51 officers assigned to AOC C may lead contracting detachments, provide contracting support for installations, military construction, and weapon systems procurement. Officers coordinate the appropriate contracting action with the supported warfighter or program manager to address required activity needs. These officers are responsible for making determinations on contract awards and supporting the development of acquisition plans and instructions. Assignments with a contracting focus may include contracting support to the warfighter, assisting contract support planning and integration at all levels of Army and joint operations, systems and service contracting in major contracting centers. Outside of Army Contracting Command (ACC), other AOC C positions are located within the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), and Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). Duties may include determining best contract types and agreements, negotiating contract terms and conditions; obligating funds; awarding contracts; leading post-award

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actions; monitoring performance and production; providing contract surveillance; performing risk analysis; and advising warfighters, program managers, and industry.

**Figure 1. KPIs – Certified or Within Grace Period**

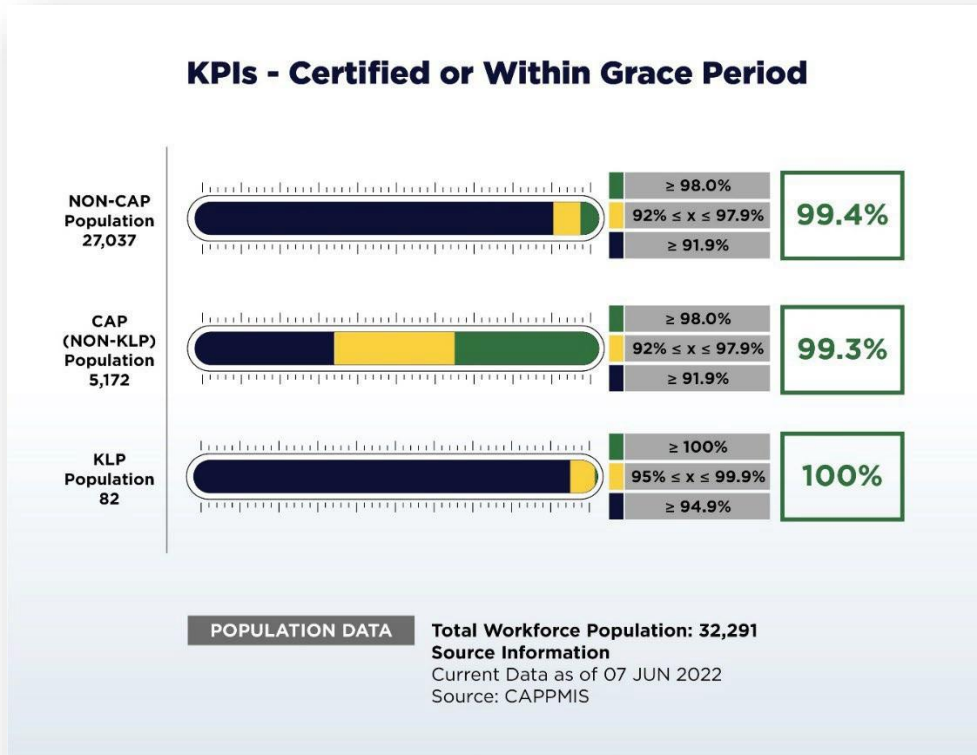
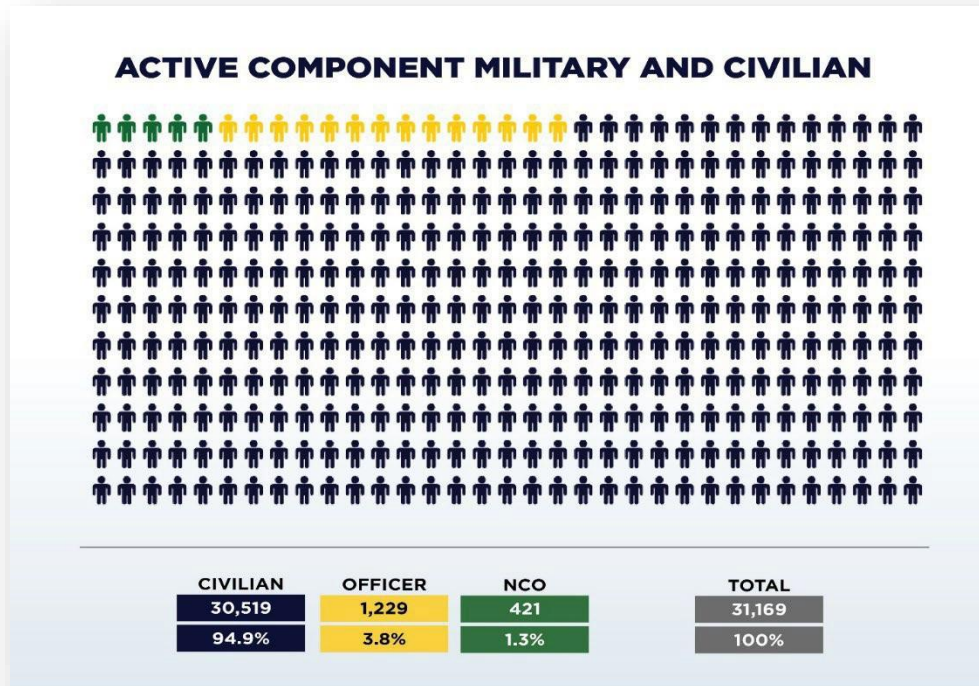


Figure 2. Active Component MIL & CIV



**2. Officer characteristics required**

a. *Characteristics required of all officers.* All officers are expected to possess the basic characteristics that will enable them to develop into agile and adaptive leaders for the 21st century. These leaders must be proficient in their core competencies and broad enough to operate across all military operations. They must be able to inform and influence activities with joint, interagency, and multinational partners. All these attributes must be balanced with cultural awareness and grounded in the Army Values and Warrior Ethos; further explanation of these characteristics can be referenced in ADP 3-0.

b. *Unique knowledge and skills of an Army Acquisition Corps officer.* The work performed by FA 51 officers requires in-depth knowledge and synergy of acquisition, business, technology, and military operations which cannot be duplicated by other branches or FAs. FA 51 officers must be able to synthesize a wealth of information in the complex world of material and services procurement, determine what is occurring or about to occur, communicate (both written and verbally) those events, and make sound, logical decisions. In addition, FA 51 officers are extremely articulate, inspirational leaders who listen skillfully, communicate tactfully, and establish excellent rapport with customers because they understand the customers’ requirements. Acquisition officers oversee and manage contracts and programs worth billions of dollars and supervise the technical development efforts and purchases which satisfy warfighter requirements in the rapidly changing operational environment. FA 51 officers of all grades operate at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels

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with joint, interagency, and multinational partners. An understanding of military operations is critical. The ability to lead a diverse workforce that includes members of the military, government, civilian industry, other services, and elements of the federal government, and is paramount. FA 51 officers must find and exploit opportunities to quickly provide mature materiel capabilities or services that satisfy warfighter needs while conducting themselves beyond reproach.

#### **3. Officer accessions**

a. *Active Component officer accession process.* Human Resources Command (HRC) executes two primary methods of accession into the U.S. Army Acquisition Corps. Primarily, officers are accessed into FA 51 through the annual Talent Base Career Alignment (TBCA) and semi-annual Voluntarily Transfer Incentive Program (VTIP) board as soon as they are eligible and have completed the key developmental assignment at the grade of captain for their branch as outlined in this DA PAM. Select officers are also accessed through the Experimental Test Pilot Program selection process. Critical to accession as a FA 51 officer is demonstrated, successful leadership performance in an appropriate key developmental position at the grade of captain as outlined for the officer's basic branch in the referenced DA PAM. Officers interested in the Army Acquisition Corps are strongly encouraged to read current military personnel (MILPER) messages to ensure sufficient time is allocated to prepare for upcoming accession processes.

b. *U.S. Army Reserve acquisition officer accessions.* HRC executes the USAR FA 51 accessions for Active Guard Reserve (AGR), Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) and Troop Program Unit (TPU) officers. AGR officers may request accessions through their current branch career manager using the Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program (VTIP) process held throughout the fiscal year (FY) as soon as they are eligible. IMA/TPU officers may request accession through the USAR Acquisition Workforce FA 51 Accession Board held during the FY biannually. Critical to accession as a USAR FA 51 officer is demonstrated, successful leadership performance in the appropriate key developmental position in the grade of captain as outlined in the officer's basic branch of this DA PAM.

c. *Army National Guard acquisition officer accessions.* ARNG Title 10 FA 51 officers assigned to AOC A are accessed by the ARNG Human Capital Management Office (ARNG-HCM) in coordination with the ARNG Acquisition Management Office (ARNG-AMO). ARNG Title 10 FA 51 officers assigned to AOC C are accessed by the ARNG Human Capital Management Office in coordination with the National Guard Bureau (NGB) Joint Staff (NGB-JS) Acquisition Office. ARNG Title 32 FA 51 officers are accessed by their respective State Guard in coordination with the ARNG Acquisition Management Office, which confers or denies Functional Area approval. Critical to accession as an ARNG FA 51 officer is demonstrated, successful leadership performance in the appropriate key developmental position in the grade of captain as outlined in the officer's basic branch of this DA PAM.

#### **4. Officer development**

a. There are three domains of leader development: Institutional training and education, assignments, and self-development. These domains define and engage a continuous cycle of education, training, selection, experience, assessment, feedback, reinforcement, and evaluation which shapes officer development throughout career progression. Officers should balance assignments to gain a breadth and depth of operational and broadening experience across a variety

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of organizations and environments. The 21st century requires flexible and adaptable officers with a broad experience base gained by executing critical functions in different organizational cultures and practices.

(1) **Active Component career and assignments management:** AC FA 51 officers are centrally managed by the Acquisition Management Branch within the Force Sustainment Division, Officer Personnel Management Directorate, HRC. The Acquisition Management Branch provides career development through the management of schooling and assignment opportunities for FA 51 officers.

(2) **U.S. Army Reserve career and assignments management:** USAR FA 51 officers are centrally managed by the Acquisition Management Branch at HRC. The HRC Acquisition Management Branch manages FA 51 assignments for USAR officers regardless of basic branch affiliation.

(3) **Army National Guard career and assignments management:** ARNG Title 10 FA 51 officers assigned to AOC A are managed by the ARNG Human Capital Management Office in coordination with the ARNG Acquisition Management Office. ARNG Title 10 FA51 officers assigned to AOC C are managed by the ARNG Human Capital Management Office in coordination with the NGB Joint Staff Acquisition Office. ARNG Title 32 FA 51 officers are managed by their respective State Guard in coordination with the ARNG Acquisition Management Office.

b. *Officer development model.* The foundation of FA 51 officer professional development is the experience, education, and training required to obtain DAWIA certification. All acquisition officers can expect to have ample opportunities to serve in diverse assignments and receive the training required to attain DAWIA certification. Professional military schooling, acquisition of unique training, and experience, as well as a strong performance over time help officers to be competitive for subsequent positions with increasing responsibilities and challenges.

(1) **Certification:** Officers are required to obtain a professional certification in accordance with the DAWIA, Public Law 101–510, 10 USC Chapter 87, and other DOD directives and instructions. The levels of certification build upon acquisition skills and competencies gained at each level which include education, training, and experience against established criteria. Certification levels are reflected on the officer's official DA Form 4037. Information on current certification requirements is in the DAU catalog at <https://icatalog.dau.edu>.

(2) **Professional/self-development requirements:** The tool used to track and maintain self-development requirements is an Individual Development Plan (IDP). An IDP is a 5-year living document between an officer and his/her rater that outlines specific objectives and training that an officer will accomplish during an assignment. Acquisition officers should also dedicate time to professional reading and maintaining currency with industry trends and new technologies.

(a) *Continuous Learning Points (CLPS):* Officers at all ranks are required to complete 80 CLPs every two years to maintain their proficiency and professional development. IDP, CLP, and training certification tools can be accessed at <https://apps.asc.army.mil/camp>.

(b) *Credentials:* The Defense Acquisition Credential Program was established to evolve today's functional and knowledge area framework and to meet the needs of the Acquisition Workforce. Credentials provide the knowledge and associated skills to perform job-centric, niche, and/or emerging functions in the acquisition environment and serve as a documented indicator of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform an acquisition-related function. The credential equips the workforce through a set of Defense Acquisition University training courses, learning

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assets, and assessments. FA 51 officers should consult their organization's leadership to determine if a credential is required for their acquisition assignment. Credentials and credentialing requirements are published on the Defense Acquisition University website at <https://www.dau.edu/training/pages/credentials.aspx>.

#### **(3) Critical acquisition positions, key leadership positions (KLPs), and CSL: Per 10 USC Chapter 87, Section 1731.**

(a) *Critical acquisition positions (CAPs)*: CAPs are a subset of Army Acquisition Workforce positions. The Army Acquisition Executive designates CAPs based on the criticality of the position to the acquisition program, effort, or function supported. All military acquisition positions in the grade of lieutenant colonel and higher are designated as CAPs. Except for Key Leadership Positions (KLPs), officers must attain the highest level of certification in the applicable functional area, except for Program Management, which requires Practitioner or higher level certification within the grace period prescribed in the DoDI 5000.66. In addition, CAPs are assigned the position code (POSCO) of "Z." The "Z" position code indicates that the position can be filled by acquisition officers with either a predominantly Program Management (AOC A) or Contracting (AOC C) background at the grade of lieutenant colonel and above. The statutory tenure for all CAPs is three years; however, Project Managers of ACAT 1 programs will have a four-year statutory tenure.

(b) *Centralized Selection List (CSL)*: The CSL process identifies the CAPs that require centrally selected leaders to meet the leadership and functional/technical competencies required for mission success. This process selects the best-qualified leaders, with the right skill and experiences, to lead Army professionals, prepare for the full spectrum of military operations, and manage the Army's resources. All Army Acquisition Corps CSL positions are designated as Command/Key Billets and include project manager, product manager, contracting brigade commander, contracting battalion commander, and acquisition director (both at the colonel and lieutenant colonel level).

(c) *Acquisition Leader Assessment Program (ALAP)*: In furtherance of the Secretary of the Army's prioritization of talent management, the Army Acquisition Executive (AAE) has implemented an additional step to the AAC CSL Command/Key Billet process - ALAP. It combines the Army's CSL board system with a new assessment and screening process to ensure the Army makes the most informed choices for Acquisition Commands and Key Billets.

(d) The purpose of the ALAP is to expand the Army's understanding of each candidate's talents and assess their readiness for Acquisition Commands/Key Billets. ALAP resources can be found at <https://talent.army.mil/cap/>. All officer positions are developmental. Developmental positions expose an acquisition officer to a full spectrum of experiences either outside of or inside their primary AOC which allows the officer to develop and enhance acquisition skills and become technically proficient throughout their acquisition career. There are two categories of positions, operational and broadening. Most assignments for AC, USAR, and ARNG FA 51 officers will be between 24–48 months. OCONUS assignments may require shorter tour lengths. The goal is to expose officers to multiple acquisition experiences to grow agile and adaptive leaders who are prepared to lead highly complex, multifunctional organizations and provide acquisition expertise throughout the full range of military operations. Operational positions provide an officer the opportunity to use, hone, and build on what they learned through the formal education process as well as experience gained through on-the-job training. Operational positions develop the officer's core competencies and are directly related to the officer's acquisition career field. Operational positions normally exist at the tactical and operational levels. There are three types of operational



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positions:

(1) *Foundational positions* are non-key developmental assignments in the Army Contracting Command (ACC) that are unique to the contracting AOC and build a solid foundation of contracting knowledge. Officers assigned to foundational positions will be assigned increasingly complex tasks exposing them to acquisition procedures, mission analysis, and tactical and operational planning. Officers will normally serve 18-24 months in their foundational assignment. If, while assigned to a foundational position, an officer deploys in support of an overseas contingency operation for at least nine months, and the deployment extends the duration of their foundational assignment to 30-36 months, the officer will receive Key Developmental completion credit. AOC C should refer to the Army Contracting Command (AAC) memorandum dated 11 February 2022; "Recommended assignments and career progression for Army Acquisition Corps officers within Army Contracting Command." The memorandum is an update to the Acquisition Professional Workforce on the changes to functional area 51 (51C) officer positions post FDU Jr implementation.

- a. Operations Officer
- b. Contracting Support Officer
- c. Support Operations Officer (SPO)
- d. Contracting/Procurement Officer

(2) A *Key Development (KD) position* is deemed fundamental to the development of an officer's primary AOC competencies or deemed critical by the senior Army acquisition leadership to provide experience across the Army's core acquisition mission. FA 51 Officers should expect to serve in only one KD assignment, with a small percentage serving in two KD assignments. AOC A KD assignments are for 18-24 months, with a small percentage serving beyond 24 months. Assignment to an AOC C KD position requires the successful completion of a foundational assignment. AOC C KD assignments are for 12 months, with a small percentage serving beyond 12 months. The KD positions are:

- a. Assistant Program Manager (APM) (AOC A) (Program Executive Office or Missile Defense Agency)
- b. Operations Officer In Charge (OIC) (AOC C) (ACC)
- c. Contracting Support OIC (AOC C) (ACC)
- d. Executive Officer (AOC C) (ACC)
- e. Support Operations OIC (AOC C) (ACC)
- f. Detachment Commander (AOC C) (ACC)

(3) *Centralized Selection List – Command/Key Billet (CSL-KB)* is a duty position at the lieutenant or colonel rank (or civilian equivalent) requiring specific, highly developed skills and experience, that is deemed so critical to a unit's mission that an individual is selected for assignment by Headquarters Department of the Army. Officers selected for CSL- KB must complete all prescribed Pre-Command Courses (PCC) and complete CSL position statutory requirements. Examples of CSL-Command/KB positions are:

- a. Product/Project Manager
- b. Contracting Battalion/Brigade Commander
- c. Acquisition Director

(4) *Broadening Positions* develop an officer's capability to see, work, learn and contribute outside one's perspective or individual level of understanding for the betterment of both the individual officer and the institution. Broadening opportunities may vary in scope, responsibility, and developmental outcomes and typically fall in one of four major categories: functional/institutional, academia and Civilian enterprise, joint or multinational, and interagency or intergovernmental. There



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are also nominative positions within the broadening domain that will be filled through the applicable nomination process. Broadening opportunities provide exposure to experiences inside and outside of Army organizations, characterized by different organizational cultures and practices. Broadening opportunities can be found within many organizations to including but are not limited to: HQDA, OSD, Joint Staff, Army Test Evaluation Command, Army Futures Command, Defense Agencies, United States Corps of Engineers, Special Mission Units and service in a cross-component billet, or different AOC. Acquisition broadening assignments can be categorized as:

1. High-Value Position (HVP). Deemed as highly mission critical and require an officer who has completed their O-6 CSL. Examples of HVP positions include but are not limited to:

- a. Military Assistant to Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition & Sustainment)
- b. Military Assistant to Under Secretary of the Army
- c. ASA(ALT) Chief of Staff
- d. Army Contracting Command Chief of Staff
- e. Executive Officer to ASA(ALT) Principal Official

2. Functional Broadening. A position that provides a developmental opportunity directly related to an officer's primary AOC. Examples include but are not limited to:

- a. Test and Evaluation (T&E) Officer
- b. Science and Technology Advisor
- c. Army Assistant Capabilities Manager/Cross Functional Team (ACM)
- d. Acquisition Officer
- e. Support Operations Officer (CUOPS / FUOPS)
- f. ACC Staff Officer
- g. Experimental Test Pilot
- h. Worldwide Individual Augmentation (WIAS) Tasking
- i. Assistant / Service Portfolio Manager
- j. Contracting/Procurement Officer

3. Institutional Broadening. A position that provides a developmental opportunity that may or may not directly relate to an officer's AOC but increases the officer's understanding of how the Army operates as an institution. Examples include but are not limited to:

- a. Department of the Army Systems Coordinator (DASC)
- b. ASA(ALT) Action Officer
- c. HQDA G-Staff Action Officer
- d. Office of the Chief Legislative Liaison Officer
- e. Office of the Inspector General Investigation Officer

4. Academia and civilian enterprise. An assignment with an industry partner or institution of higher learning where an officer can gain new perspectives, knowledge, skills, and abilities not generally obtained from organic experiences, training, or education. These programs include Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) and Training with Industry (TWI). ACS provides an opportunity for Army officers to pursue a master's degree or Ph.D. in business or STEM programs at a top tier school of choice or the Naval Post Graduate School. The TWI program partners with industry leading companies around the country for a 1-year immersive opportunity to observe best in class business practices. All FA 51 officers may apply for the opportunity to participate in the ACS or TWI programs. Selection is contingent upon the needs of the Army, the officers' promotion potential, their potential for academic success, and their career timeline. Eligible officers pursuing off-duty undergraduate or graduate civilian education courses may apply for tuition assistance under the provisions of AR 621-5.

5. Joint or multinational Broadening. An assignment with significant interaction with

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other Services, OSD, Defense agencies, or partner nation military organizations at the operational and strategic level. Examples include but are not limited to assignments at:

- a. OSD or Joint Staff
- b. Defense Contract Management Agency
- c. Missile Defense Agency
- d. Defense Logistics Agency
- e. Defense Information Systems Agency
- f. National Reconnaissance Office
- g. Combatant Commands

(5) *Interagency or intergovernmental Broadening*. An assignment or experience at U.S. Government agencies outside DoD or with partner nation governmental agencies. Examples are assignments at: Office of Defense Cooperation, North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Office of the Program Manager, Saudi Arabian National Guard.

(6) *Joint qualification*. The Joint Qualification System acknowledges both designated joint billets as well as experience-based joint duty assignments in contributing to the development of joint qualified officers. These assignments with the necessary Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) culminate with an officer being identified as a fully Joint Qualified Officer and the receipt of the Army designation of Joint Qualified Officer coded as a 3L SI. Additional information can be found in DODI 1300.19.

(7) *Mentorship*. Mentorship is a powerful tool that can help build competence, leadership skills, self-awareness, and morale. FA 51 officers are strongly encouraged to pursue mentorship opportunities at all levels. Senior acquisition officers should actively serve as mentors to junior acquisition officers, to offer their perspective on what it takes to succeed in the Army Acquisition Corps and pass on their knowledge and experience. It will be critical for key leaders to support mentoring efforts publicly. Military leaders must take care to avoid micromanaging mentors and requiring participation in formal mentoring programs. When developing formal mentoring programs, planners should consider vetting mentors and deliberately select those with demonstrated efficacy in other interpersonal relationships.

(8) Some of these key interpersonal skills are:

- a. Communication ability,
- b. Empathy
- c. Listening
- d. Emotional intelligence.

(9) These skills will help to ensure greater success in the mentor role. Supervising and mentoring junior leaders is an integral component of an effective professional development program, while on-the-job experience will fulfill some of the requisites for acquiring tactical and technical proficiency. Leaders must establish a sound process for subordinate development that furnishes the guidelines and establish the parameters for arming and infusing our subordinates with honed leadership capabilities. Using this knowledge, junior officers as mentees can advance their confidence, skills,

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and capabilities and grow as leaders. Mentoring is also available to officers' following participation in ALAP if that's something worth referencing.

(10) *Captain/Major development. Captain/Major development.* En route to their first Acquisition assignment, all acquisition officers are required to attend the Army Acquisition Transition Course (AATC). AATC is an eight-week course for AOC A. For AOC C AATC is a nine-week course due to the additional requirement to attend the Army Contracting Writing Lab at the Army Acquisition Center of Excellence (AACoE), located in Huntsville, Alabama. Acquisition officers assigned to an AOC C operational assignment will attend the Army Contract Writing Lab for one additional week. The completion of AATC and the Army Contracting Writing Lab ensures that FA 51 officers have met the training requirements needed for Practitioner Level Certification in AOC A and Professional Level Certification in AOC C before they report to their first acquisition assignment. It is preferred that USAR and ARNG officers attend these courses (in lieu of DAU courses) on a space-available basis and in coordination with their career manager. An additional Army Acquisition Corps goal is for FA 51 officers to obtain a master's degree in an acquisition or Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) related discipline. One of the avenues to obtain a master's degree is through the Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) Program. The two paths included in this program are to earn your degree is through Naval Post Graduate Schooling or a school of choice. Upon graduation from AATC, newly trained captains and majors will be assigned to a position designed to develop their functional understanding in either program management or contracting.

(11) *FA 51 officers assigned to an AOC of A* can expect their first assignment to be a Key Developmental (KD) position. FA 51 officers that are also Experimental Test Pilots will complete their KD assignment after their first test pilot assignment. ARNG officers assigned to an AOC of A can expect their first assignment to be an Assistant Portfolio Manager or an Assistant Program Manager. The APM assignment will serve as their KD assignment. FA 51 officers assigned to an AOC C can expect their first assignment to be a Foundational Assignment followed by a KD assignment. AOC C should refer to the ACC memorandum dated 11 February 2022 titled "Recommended assignments and career progression for Army Acquisition Corps officers within Army Contracting Command." The memorandum is an update to the Acquisition Professional Workforce on the changes to functional area 51 (51C) officer positions post FDU Jr implementation. Upon completion of the foundational assignment, FA 51 officers will complete their KD assignments. Upon completion of a KD assignment, FA 51 (A or C) officers will either be assigned to a broadening assignment or a second KD assignment based on the needs of the Army.

(12) To be competitive for promotion to lieutenant colonel, officers should achieve Military Education Level (MEL) 4, which for most officers includes satellite Intermediate Level Education (ILE) and the acquisition Intermediate Qualification Course (IQC) at the AACoE. More information can be found at <https://asc.army.mil>. Careful planning and attention to an individual's qualifications and expertise are essential in facilitating an officer's growth to a high level of technical proficiency. A KD assignment with multiple broadening opportunities in a single AOC best achieves this goal and facilitates a Practitioner Level Certification (AOC A) or Professional Level Certification (AOC C) prior to promotion to lieutenant colonel. In some cases, based on officer desires and/or needs of the Army, an officer may have the

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opportunity to seek broadening assignments and training in the AOC that is not their primary AOC upon achieving at least a Practitioner Level Certification (AOC A) or Professional Level Certification (AOC C).

(13) *Lieutenant Colonel Development.* The career development goal for a lieutenant colonel is to leverage acquired acquisition skills in CSL and other critical acquisition positions. Selection to a CSL position represents the pinnacle of service at the lieutenant colonel level and successful performance in a CSL position serves as an indicator of the potential for promotion to colonel and selection to attend SSC. Officers who do not serve in a CSL position will continue to serve an essential role in the success of the Army Acquisition Corps by providing leadership in critical acquisition position billets. All lieutenant colonels should progressively seek challenging CSL and non-CSL positions including product manager, contracting battalion commander, acquisition director, product lead, Joint and HQDA staff positions, and other key positions. FA 51 officers compete for Senior Service College (SSC) (MEL 1) along with other branches/FAs. SSC is the highest-level military educational program available to prepare officers for the positions of greatest responsibility in the DOD.

(14) *Colonel development.* The career development goal for a colonel is to serve in a FA 51 CSL Command/Key Billet as project manager, contracting support brigade commander, or acquisition director to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities to influence acquisition outcomes at the strategic level. Colonels who have completed a CSL assignment will receive a follow-on assignment to senior acquisition leadership positions with significant and strategic importance to the future of the Army and DOD.

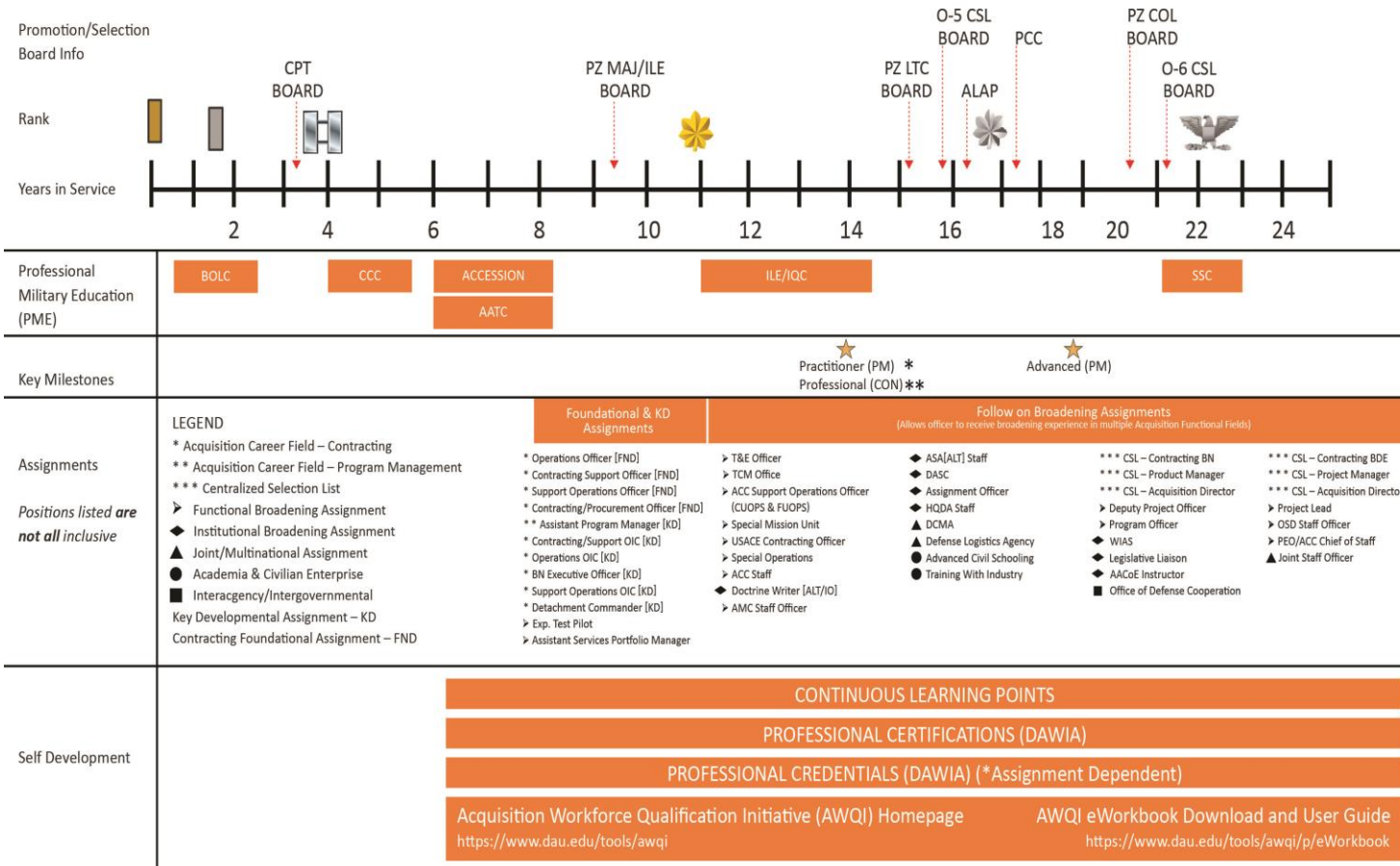
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Figure 2. AAC Officer Development: AC and USAR FA 51 officers are centrally managed by the Acquisition Management Branch (AMB) within the Force Sustainment Division, Officer Personnel Management Directorate, Human Resources Command (HRC).

# Army Acquisition Corps (AAC) Officer Career Timeline



\*FA 51 officers must attain the Professional (AOC C) or Practitioner (AOC A) level certification in order to compete for lieutenant colonel Centralized Selection List (CSL). In some cases, based on the officer desires and/or needs of the Army, an officer may have the opportunity to seek broadening assignments and training in both AOCs. Certification must be obtained in accordance with current DOD and Army certification guidelines.

Reference DA PAM 600-3; Chapter 41

\*\*CON professional certification can be attained in one (1) year and PM practitioner certification can be attained in 4 years.