



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

May 7, 2014

OFFICE OF FEDERAL
PROCUREMENT POLICY

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF ACQUISITION OFFICERS
SENIOR PROCUREMENT EXECUTIVES

FROM: Lesley A. Field 
Acting Administrator

SUBJECT: Revisions to the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C)

The President's Management Agenda focuses on deploying a world-class workforce and creating a culture of excellence. This initiative is especially important for members of the acquisition workforce who ensure that taxpayers get the best value for the over \$450 billion of goods and services procured annually. The acquisition workforce plays a critical role, and contracting professionals lead efforts to ensure that mission needs are filled and expected outcomes achieved while safeguarding the interests of the Government. They are highly trained and skilled in exercising business judgment, being innovative and gaining efficiencies, all while being effective stewards of taxpayer dollars.

To be sure they are trained and developed appropriately, this memorandum refreshes the Office of Federal Procurement Policy's (OFPP's) requirements for the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C),¹ originally issued in January 2006 and revised in December 2008,² to better align the FAC-C with the Department of Defense's (DOD's) Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) contracting certification curriculum and to strengthen the development of civilian agency contracting professionals. The FAC-C is founded on core competencies that are considered essential for successful contracting, education and experience requirements, continuous learning to maintain skills currency, and developmental activities. FAC-C contains three levels of certification to allow for appropriate training and experience for contracting professionals managing a range of contract vehicles, from low-risk contracts (such as supplies) to high-risk, complex acquisitions (such as Information Technology (IT) systems). The FAC-C is only one component of strengthening the contracting function. Equally important is selecting the right individuals to be contracting professionals, providing them adequate time and resources to train and develop, providing them appropriate experience so they can understand how to apply their training, and building a culture of collaboration and innovation within the agency.

As part of OFPP's October 2009 Acquisition Workforce Development Strategic Plan for Civilian Agencies,³ a multi-agency Contracting Functional Advisory Board (CONFAB) was established to improve the FAC-C program and make recommendations to more effectively train and develop the contracting workforce. The attached revisions to the program reflect recommendations from this board, and input from the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), and other stakeholders. The refreshed program is designed to strengthen the acquisition workforce to improve program outcomes. OFPP will work with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU), FAI and the CONFAB to identify additional online and classroom training and

¹ Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/acq_wk/fac_contracting_program.pdf

² Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/procurement/fac_contracting_program.pdf

³ Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/procurement_workforce/AWF_Plan_10272009.pdf

development opportunities to continuously improve this certification program. The FAC-C curriculum will be refreshed periodically to maintain alignment with the DAWIA certification and will be maintained on FAI’s website at www.fai.gov.

We intend to establish additional training, experience, and continuous learning requirements for FAC-C holders who manage acquisitions requiring specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities, similar to the core-plus specializations we recently added to the Federal Acquisition Certification for Program and Project Managers (FAC-P/PM).⁴ Specialization is being considered for areas such as IT, services, construction, and small business acquisition. For example, having contracting professionals that have specific competencies, skills and experience in the acquisition of IT can contribute to the Administration’s effort to deliver smarter IT. In addition to training, experience, and continuous learning requirements in the specialized areas, we intend to provide helpful resources, such as a guide on innovative contracting practices for IT. We will work with the CONFAB to further develop FAC-C core-plus specializations and anticipate issuing a FAC-C-IT core-plus specialization by the end of calendar year 2014.

The chart below identifies the major changes in this refreshed FAC-C.

FAC-C of December 2008	Refreshed FAC-C
Curriculum:	
<p>Curriculum was general, without a specific course in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) fundamentals, only a basic course in cost/price analysis, and no advanced coursework.</p>	<p>Curriculum aligns more closely with the DAWIA curriculum and includes nearly 100 hours of additional targeted training. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level I classes now include FAR basics and cost/price analysis. • Level II classes include more focus on intermediate cost/price analysis and supply and service contracting. • Level III classes include electives such as Understanding Industry, Acquisition Law, and Advanced Contract Pricing to target advanced coursework in acquisition-related topics.

⁴ Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/fac-ppm-revised-dec-2013.pdf>

FAC-C of December 2008	Refreshed FAC-C
Applicability:	
FAC-C was mandatory only for those contracting professionals issued new Contracting Officer warrants on or after January 1, 2007.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting Officers, regardless of their series, and other contracting professionals in the 1102 job series must be certified at an appropriate level as of October 1, 2014, pursuant to agency policy. • Any contracting professional issued an unlimited warrant after October 1, 2014 must be Level III certified.
Experience:	
FAC-C focused on years of contracting experience.	In addition to the requirement for years of experience, agencies are encouraged to ensure contracting workforce members get the breadth and depth of experience required to strengthen their skills and capabilities. Possible developmental activities are provided in Attachment 3.
Core-plus Specialized Certification:	
None available	General core-plus requirements will be added to the core FAC-C certification, starting with an IT core-plus specialization by the end of calendar year 2014.
Workforce Management System:	
The Acquisition Career Management Information System (ACMIS) was optional and was the system of records for the FAC-C program.	All contracting professionals are required to be registered in the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS) and civilian agencies are required to utilize FAITAS to manage their acquisition workforce members.

The revised FAC-C program is effective October 1, 2014. The education requirement has not changed. Current FAC-C holders certified under the previous FAC-C will be transitioned at their current level of certification, as long as their continuous learning requirements are met. Transition options are detailed in Attachment 2 to this memorandum, but agencies have the option of transitioning to the new FAC-C standards earlier than the October 1, 2014 effective date. Agencies should ensure guidance is in place to enable the appropriate certification and development of their contracting professionals.

If you have questions regarding the FAC-C program or suggestions for core-plus specializations, please contact Joanie Newhart at (202) 395-4821 or jnewhart@omb.eop.gov.

Attachment 1: Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C)

Attachment 2: FAC-C Transition Options on the October 1, 2014 Implementation Date

Attachment 3: Developmental Opportunities

Attachment 4: FAC-C Curriculum

Attachment 5: Guidance on Meeting the Requirement for Continuous Learning Points

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers
Acquisition Career Managers

Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C)

1. Purpose. The purpose of the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting (FAC-C) is to establish general training, experience and development requirements for contracting professionals in civilian agencies. This certification program will promote continued development of essential technical and professional competencies for contracting professionals.

2. Effective Date. The revised FAC-C program is effective October 1, 2014. Current FAC-C holders certified under the previous FAC-C will be grandfathered in at their current level of certification, as long as their continuous learning requirements are met. Transition options are detailed in Attachment 2 to this memorandum.

3. Authority. The FAC-C is issued pursuant to the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) Act, 41 U.S.C. § 1101 et. seq., and OFPP Policy Letter 05-01.

4. Background. OFPP Policy Letter 05-01 established a requirement for Federal acquisition certification programs. In January 2006, OFPP issued the first FAC-C, and revised it in December 2008.⁵ In October 2009, OFPP issued the Acquisition Workforce Development Strategic Plan,⁶ which established a multi-agency Contracting Functional Advisory Board (CONFAB) to improve the FAC-C program and make ongoing recommendations to more effectively manage the contracting workforce. This FAC-C revision is part of the continuous improvement of the contracting function.

5. Applicability. The FAC-C program applies to all executive agencies, except the Department of Defense (DOD).⁷ This is a Federal certification program, and as such, shall be accepted by all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets core education, training and experience requirements to perform contracting functions.⁸ Agencies may require additional competencies and experience if needed for their agency-specific projects and programs.

The Federal certification in contracting is not mandatory for all contracting professionals; however, members of the workforce holding Contracting Officer (CO) warrants as of the effective date of this certification program, regardless of GS series, and other contracting professionals in the 1102 job series must be certified at an appropriate level, pursuant to agency policy. Those COs not required to be certified under the previous policy shall be given a period of two years to complete their certification requirements. This requirement does not apply to:

⁵ Available at

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/acq_wk/fac_contracting_program.pdf

⁶ Available at

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/procurement_workforce/AWF_Plan_10272009.pdf

⁷ Department of Defense (DOD) will continue to follow DOD policy.

⁸ As necessary, civilian agencies covered by this FAC-C program may require additional training and experience, beyond the FAC-C requirements and in accordance with DOD policy, for their Contracting Officers who are appointed to support DOD-funded requirements.

- senior level officials responsible for delegating procurement authority (unless these individuals also sign contracts); or
- non-1102s whose warrants are either generally used to procure emergency goods and services; or whose warrants are so limited as to be outside the scope of this program, as determined by the agency Chief Acquisition Officer (CAO) or his/her designee.

Agencies have discretion to establish additional warranting requirements. CAOs shall tie warrant levels to certification levels based on agency needs; however, any contracting professional issued an unlimited CO warrant after October 1, 2014 is required to be Level III certified.

6. Certification Program Administration.

a. General. In accordance with the Services Acquisition Reform Act (SARA),⁹ the CAO is responsible for developing and maintaining an acquisition career management program to ensure an adequate and professional acquisition workforce. As such, the certification process shall be managed by each agency. The CAO may delegate implementation authority and functional responsibility to the Senior Procurement Executive (SPE).

b. Certification Waiver Authority. The agency's CAO, or SPE if so delegated, may waive the requirement for obtaining a certification for warranting purposes in writing, on a case-by-case basis, if granting a waiver is in the best interest of the agency. Waivers shall only be granted for exceptional and compelling reasons. This authority may not be delegated further. A written justification shall include the reason for and conditions of the waiver, and the agency's Acquisition Career Manager (ACM) or designee shall maintain all supporting documentation. This waiver is not transferable to another agency. See paragraph 8.d for waivers relating to education requirements.

c. Responsibilities.

1) *OFPP Associate Administrator for Acquisition Workforce Programs.* The OFPP Associate Administrator for Acquisition Workforce Programs, in consultation with the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC), the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI), the FAI Board of Directors, the Interagency Acquisition Career Management Council (IACMC), the Federal Acquisition Fellows Coalition (FAFC), the CONFAB and other stakeholders, as appropriate, shall provide strategic direction and lead the efforts to develop a competent and capable civilian agency acquisition workforce.

2) *Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) Board of Directors.* The FAI Board of Directors provides general oversight and administration of the FAC-C program. The Board also ensures that the program meets the needs of the civilian agency acquisition workforce.

⁹ 41 U.S.C. § 1702(b)

3) *FAI*. Specific FAI responsibilities for administration of the FAC-C are to:

- develop, review, and revise competencies and certification standards in collaboration with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU),
- participate in contracting curriculum development with DAU,
- collaborate with agency ACMs on acquisition workforce development,
- collaborate with agency acquisition training organizations on training development and delivery,
- manage the Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS)(see paragraph 9),
- review agency certification programs for compliance with this refreshed FAC-C program,
- analyze acquisition workforce and human capital information and Acquisition Workforce Competency Survey results to determine gaps in competencies,
- in collaboration with civilian agencies, develop training standards to be used by agencies, vendors, or other organizations in assessing existing courses against these standards or developing new courses to satisfy the requirements of the FAC-C, and
- chair the Federal Acquisition Council on Training (FACT), a Government-wide acquisition training council that focuses on increasing efficiencies and obtaining the best value in acquisition training and development to optimize Federal dollars and resources.¹⁰

4) *Agency Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs)*. Agency ACMs, appointed by the CAO or his/her designee under Policy Letter 05-01, are responsible for administering the agency certification program in accordance with this guidance and any subsequent guidance provided by OFPP or FAI. The ACM also serves on the IACMC, which is led by FAI, to share best practices across the government and to ensure that workforce development policies and opportunities meet the needs of the acquisition workforce. Authority for overseeing the agency FAC-C program, resolving disputes, and granting certifications will be at the CAO or designee level.

Essential ACM responsibilities for program administration are to:

- ensure all contracting professionals are accurately registered in FAITAS,¹⁰
- identify and assess the qualifications of the agency's contracting workforce,
- develop the contracting workforce in accordance with these standards,
- determine appropriate certification levels and issue FAC-Cs,
- monitor the continuous learning process.

FAITAS and tools on the FAI website at www.fai.gov can assist ACMs with all of these responsibilities.¹¹

¹⁰ Per September 3, 2013 OFPP memorandum, "Increasing Efficiencies in the Training, Development, and Management of the Acquisition Workforce," available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/increasing-efficiencies-in-the-training-development-and-management-of-the-acquisition-workforce.pdf>.

¹¹ FAC-C guidance and other information will be available at www.fai.gov under the Certification tab.

5) *Contracting Professionals*. Contracting professionals have responsibilities under this refreshed FAC-C program.

- Identify short-term and long-term career goals.
- With supervisor collaboration, create an Individual Development Plan based upon goals, formal training and experiential activities.
- Apply the new techniques and strategies learned in training and share the information with colleagues and customers.
- Obtain a technical and/or professional mentor to help in career navigation.
- Be a lifelong learner, which includes continuous learning and keeping up with best practices in acquisition.
- Pursue developmental and other experiential activities to help increase the depth and breadth of contracting skills and expertise.
- Be innovative --- if an acquisition strategy or approach is not addressed in the Federal Acquisition Regulation, nor prohibited by law, Executive order or other regulations, and it is driven by sound business judgment, it CAN be done.
- Continuously gain valuable experience, be innovative and seek to learn and apply lessons learned and best practices.
- Give back. Share knowledge, skills, lessons learned, and best practices with others.

7. Oversight and Continuous Improvement.

a. Oversight. The FAI Board of Directors provides general oversight of the FAC-C program. Upon agency request, FAI will review existing agency programs against the requirements contained in this document to identify the extent to which an agency's certification program meets these FAC-C guidelines.

b. Continuous Improvement. Changes to the program will be made through updates to this document. FAI will issue guidance and other information through its website, including refreshing the curriculum in accordance with changes to the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification program.¹² OFPP will work with DAU, FAI and the CONFAB to identify additional classroom and online training and development opportunities to continuously improve this certification program.

8. Certification Requirements for Contracting Professionals.

a. General. The FAC-C is founded on (1) core competencies that are considered essential for successful contracting, (2) education, (3) training, (4) experience, (5) continuous learning to maintain skills currency, and (6) developmental activities. FAC-C contains three levels of certification to allow for appropriate training and experience for contracting professionals managing a range of contract vehicles, from low-risk contracts (such as supplies) to high-risk, complex acquisitions (such as IT systems). *The goal is not to have all contracting professionals obtain Level III certification; instead, agencies are encouraged to consider the appropriate certification level needed for a contracting professional to be competent and capable.* The

¹²FAC-C guidance and other information will be available at www.fai.gov under the Certification tab.

requirements for the various levels of this certification are cumulative (i.e., an individual seeking certification must meet the requirements of Level I before obtaining Level II certification, and must meet the requirements of Levels I and II before obtaining Level III certification). An employee must meet the appropriate education, training, and experience requirements in order to be certified.

b. Transition of Current Certification Holders. FAC-C holders certified under the previous FAC-C will be grandfathered in at their current level of certification, as long as their continuous learning requirements are met. Current FAC-C holders may have to meet course pre-requisites for courses they take in the new curriculum, which may require that they take additional courses at a FAC-C level at which they are already certified. Workforce members should check the most current curriculum which will be maintained by FAI at www.fai.gov. Transition options are detailed in Attachment 2.

c. Contracting Competencies. Although DOD and OFPP retain responsibility for managing their respective workforces, the establishment of common core competencies will ensure that the contracting community develops common skills that may be transferable between agencies, thereby resulting in a capable and mobile workforce. In collaboration with DAU and the CONFAB, FAI will update, expand, or otherwise modify the technical and professional competencies for contracting professionals¹³ to meet current and future acquisition workforce requirements.

Specialized competencies may be developed to support emerging trends in government acquisition practices. Updates to the competencies will be available on the FAI website. Some agencies may have additional competencies associated with essential mission areas that overlay these common elements. An applicant can satisfy the competency requirements through successful completion of certification or equivalent training, completion of comparable education or certification programs, or demonstration and documentation of knowledge, skills, and abilities through the process of fulfillment (see paragraph 8.g).

d. Education. The education requirement has not changed. This FAC-C program continues to utilize the education requirement in the Qualification Standard for Contract Specialists (GS-1102s)¹⁴. In accordance with the Qualification Standard, persons in civilian (non-DOD) GS-1102 positions in grades 5 through 12 are required to have either 24 semester hours of business-related education¹⁵ OR a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution. Persons in civilian GS-1102 positions in grades 13 and above must have both 24 semester hours of business-related education AND a baccalaureate degree. Every 1102, regardless of grade, is considered to have met the education requirements for certification in the position and grade held as of January 1, 2000. The certification is transferable to other civilian agencies at the same grade. The education requirement must be met for certification at the next level. There is no provision that

¹³ Available at <http://www.fai.gov/drupal/node/92#tech>

¹⁴ Available at <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/1100/contracting-series-1102/>. FAQs are available at <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/1100/questions-and-answers-concerning-revised-1102-qualification-standard/>.

allows experience to substitute for education in order to receive a higher level certification or grade than that held prior to January 1, 2000.

e. Experience. The requirements for experience are generally based upon the Contract Specialist (GS-1102) Qualification Standard. Experience may be time spent on the job in a contracting-related job assignment, either in the private or public sector, which reflects the accumulation of knowledge, skills and abilities during years of progressively responsible work assignments. Experience requirements for each level of certification are:

- **Level I** – one year of contracting experience.
- **Level II** – two years of contracting experience.
- **Level III** – four years of contracting experience.

There is no exception to the experience requirements and candidates must provide evidence of their experience to the certifying official. Satisfaction of experience requirements from one certification level may be applied to the satisfaction of experience requirements of a higher certification level. Agencies should ensure contracting workforce members get not only the right number of years of experience, but also the breadth and depth of experience required to strengthen their skills and capabilities. Agencies may consider utilizing DOD's On-the-Job training tool.¹⁶ Workforce members and contracting organizations can use the tool to document demonstrated work experiences in the contracting career field. The tool is competency-based and outlines sample tasks that align to the competencies.

Professionals learn certain technical skills through training, but they learn most effectively how to apply these skills through on-the-job experience. Sample developmental opportunities that agencies should consider providing to their contracting workforce are detailed in Attachment 3. This list is not exhaustive; agencies may determine other developmental alternatives.

f. Training. The current FAC-C curriculum is detailed in Attachment 4. Training requirements for this updated FAC-C program are closely aligned with the training requirements under DAWIA, but are not identical. The FAC-C curriculum will change periodically to maintain alignment with the DAWIA training requirements and will be maintained at www.fai.gov. Agencies may add additional training requirements, but the FAC-C shall be recognized by all civilian agencies as evidence that an employee meets core training requirements to perform contracting functions. Contracting professionals should refer to agency guidance for specific training required by their agency.

g. Fulfillment. The FAC-C fulfillment process will continue to align with the fulfillment process established for DOD agencies to ensure close alignment with the DAWIA certification program. General guidelines regarding the fulfillment process will be maintained in FAITAS. Generally, candidates must submit, and supervisors must review, evidence as to how the required competencies for a particular certification level were attained through alternative training, experience, education, certification by another organization, or other developmental activities. Agencies are expected to ensure approved fulfillment packages are in FAITAS. Approval of

¹⁶ Available at <https://acc.dau.mil/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=398979&lang=en-US>

fulfillment requests resides with the CAO unless otherwise delegated. Agencies have discretion to establish additional fulfillment requirements.

h. Continuous Learning. To maintain a FAC-C, contracting professionals are required to earn 80 continuous learning points (CLPs) of skills currency every two years, beginning with the date of their certification. ACMs shall monitor the continuous learning requirements for individuals holding FAC-Cs to ensure they meet these requirements. It is the contracting professional's responsibility to ensure that his/her continuous learning requirements are met.

Continuous learning points can be awarded for training classes, participation in professional organizations and their events, publication of articles, and participation in experiential activities. Contracting professionals are encouraged to take new classes added to the contracting certification curriculum since obtaining their certification. Also, per OFPP's guidance on specialized information technology acquisition cadres,¹⁷ contracting professionals are encouraged to strengthen their skills and capabilities in the specialized areas in which they work.¹⁸ Additional guidance on determining continuous learning points is available in Attachment 5 and is maintained on the FAI website. Individuals and their supervisors are responsible for maintaining continuous learning records in FAITAS, which is available on FAI's website.

If an individual fails to obtain the 80 CLP requirement, the FAC-C will lapse. To regain certification status after a certification has lapsed, the 80 CLP requirement must be completed within the two year period.¹⁹

i. Reciprocity With Other Certifications.

- *DOD Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) certification* – A valid, current DAWIA certification in contracting is equivalent to a FAC-C at the same certification level, provided the education and continuous learning criteria for FAC-C is met. A valid, current FAC-C does not necessarily meet the requirements for the DAWIA certification. Determination of equivalency will be made by DOD on an individual basis.
- *Federal Acquisition Certification for Contracting Officer's Representative (FAC-COR)* – A valid, current FAC-C Level I or II is considered to have met the FAC-COR requirements for Level II. A valid, current FAC-C Level III is considered to have met the FAC-COR requirements for Level III. An individual with FAC-COR certification does not necessarily meet the requirements for the FAC-C.

¹⁷ Available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/guidance-for-specialized-acquisition-cadres.pdf>

¹⁸ For example, Level III contracting professionals buying services may want to take CON 280, "Source Selection and Administration of Service Contracts" or DAU's online CLC 013, "Performance-Based Services Acquisition." Contracting professionals buying IT systems may want to take DAU's online IRM 101, "Basic Information Systems Acquisition."

¹⁹ Should the lapse be longer than two years, agencies should review the situation on a case-by-case basis and make a reasonable determination of what training will make the individual current on the required competencies.

Employees are responsible for providing the necessary proof of their existing certification along with the appropriate continuous learning history to the agency ACM in order to obtain the reciprocal certification.

9. Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System (FAITAS). For all civilian agencies, FAITAS will be the official system of records for the FAC-C program. Agencies and individuals are responsible for maintaining certification supporting documentation for quality assurance purposes. All contracting professionals were required to be registered in FAITAS by January 1, 2014.²⁰

10. Core-Plus Specialization.

a. General. The purpose of the FAC-C core-plus specialization is to establish additional training, experience and continuous learning requirements for FAC-C certified personnel who manage specific investments requiring specialized knowledge, skills and abilities. Core-plus specializations will be recommended by the CONFAB, approved by OFPP, and maintained by FAI at www.fai.gov.

b. Assignment. Assignment of personnel remains an agency-specific function.

c. Competencies. In conjunction with the IACMC, FACT, CONFAB and other functional organizations (such as the CIO Council for IT competencies), FAI shall identify the competencies required for a FAC-C core-plus specialization based upon the FAC-C core-plus model. As with FAC-C, an applicant can satisfy the core-plus competency requirements through education, training, other relevant certification programs, or demonstration and documentation through fulfillment of knowledge, skills, and abilities. The competencies for a FAC-C core-plus specialization shall be maintained by FAI at www.fai.gov. Core-plus competencies will be updated periodically to meet current and future acquisition workforce requirements and to reflect emerging trends in the government's acquisition practices. To obtain a FAC-C core-plus specialization, some agencies may require additional competency requirements beyond the core competencies established by FAI for a given core-plus area.

d. Certification Levels. Contracting professionals requiring FAC-C core-plus specialization must also be core FAC-C certified as described below. The ability to specialize implies a demonstrated level of skill beyond the entry level. For this reason, a FAC-C core-plus specialization will generally only be granted to holders of Level II and Level III FAC-Cs. For those contracting professionals having a core-plus specialization, advancing from mid-level to the senior-level core FAC-C carries with it the core-plus specialization, assuming the core-plus continuous learning requirements have been met.

e. Training. Training that is current and results in gaining the required contracting core-plus competencies is strongly recommended, as technology and best practices in these specialty areas

²⁰ Per September 3, 2013 OFPP memorandum, "Increasing Efficiencies in the Training, Development, and Management of the Acquisition Workforce," available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/procurement/memo/increasing-efficiencies-in-the-training-development-and-management-of-the-acquisition-workforce.pdf>.

may evolve rapidly. The primary outcome of training is not to require a specific number of hours, but to provide an instructional approach best suited to deliver the learning outcomes that align to the competencies. While a specific curriculum is not articulated, training plans for FAC-C core-plus specializations that can assist agencies and individuals in determining their training and development needs will be maintained by FAI at www.fai.gov.

f. Experience. At least two years of contracting experience supporting projects and/or programs within the given core-plus area is typically required to obtain the FAC-C core-plus specialization. Core-plus experience can be considered in obtaining core FAC-C, or it may be in addition to that experience. Specific experience requirements for future core-plus areas will accompany the core-plus competency models and be available on www.fai.gov.

g. Continuous Learning. As required by core FAC-C, FAC-C core-plus professionals are required to earn 80 CLPs of skills currency every two years. Maintenance of CLPs is shared between the core-plus area and the core FAC-C continuous learning requirement. At least a portion of the 80 CLPs required must be dedicated to continuous learning in topics associated with the core-plus area. If an individual fails to obtain the 80 CLP requirement the core FAC-C and core-plus specialization will simultaneously lapse. To regain certification status after a certification has lapsed, the 80 CLP requirement must be completed within the two year period, including the requirement for the portion of the 80 CLPs dedicated to continuous learning in topics associated with the core-plus area.

FAC-C Transition Options on the October 1, 2014 Implementation Date

The new FAC-C program is effective October 1, 2014, but agencies have the option of transitioning to the new FAC-C standards earlier than the October 1, 2014 effective date. The implementation of the new program is being transitioned in over the following year in order to give contracting professionals across the Federal Government flexibility in attaining their FAC-C.

Contracting professionals who have started but not completed their certification training have several options. Please carefully read the criteria and options below to better understand the available flexibility.

	Scenario	Level I*	Level II*	Level III*
1	Contracting Professionals who have not started the FAC-C program as of October 1, 2014.	Use new FAC-C certification curriculum		
2	Contracting Professionals who have started but not completed FAC-C Level I as of October 1, 2014.	<p>a. Complete FAC-C Level I using the old program, except that students must take CON 121/124/127 if they have not already taken CON 110/111/112. <i>All Level I certification training from the old program must be completed by September 30, 2015.</i></p> <p>OR (as established by each agency)</p> <p>b. Start over with the new FAC-C Level I Program. Must take all the courses identified in the new program.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Use new FAC-C certification curriculum</p> <p>Individuals who completed FAC-C Level I using the old program, must take the following courses before starting their Level II training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAC 023 – Basic Contracting for GSA Schedules <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAC 031 – Small Business Programs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 057 – Performance Based Payments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 058 – Introduction to Contract Pricing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 170 – Fundamentals of Cost/Price Analysis 	

	Scenario	Level I*	Level II*	Level III*
3	Contracting Professionals who <i>have completed FAC-C Level I but not started FAC-C Level II</i> as of October 1, 2014	N/A	<div data-bbox="1079 315 1764 399" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Use new FAC-C certification curriculum </div> <p>Individuals who completed FAC-C Level I using the old program, must take the following courses before starting their Level II training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAC 023 – Basic Contracting for GSA Schedules <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAC 031 – Small Business Programs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 057 – Performance Based Payments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 058 – Introduction to Contract Pricing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 170 – Fundamentals of Cost/Price Analysis 	

	Scenario	Level I*	Level II*	Level III*
4	Contracting Professionals who have completed FAC-C Level I and who have started but not completed FAC-C Level II as of October 1, 2014.	N/A	<p>a. Complete FAC-C Level II using the courses in the old program. <i>All Level II certification training from the old program must be completed by September 30, 2015.</i></p> <p>OR (as established by each agency)</p> <p>b. Start over with the new FAC-C Level II taking all the courses identified in the new program.</p> <p>Individuals following this option must take the following courses in addition to completing their Level I and before starting their Level II training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAC 023 – Basic Contracting for GSA Schedules <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAC 031 – Small Business Programs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 057 – Performance Based Payments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 058 – Introduction to Contract Pricing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CLC 170 – Fundamentals of Cost/Price Analysis 	Use new FAC-C certification
5	Contracting Professionals who have completed FAC-C Level II but not started Level III as of October 1, 2014.	N/A	N/A	Use new FAC-C certification
6	Contracting Professionals who have completed FAC-C Level II and have started but not completed Level III as of October 1, 2014	N/A	N/A	Use new FAC-C certification

Developmental Opportunities

Professionals learn certain technical skills through training, but they learn most effectively how to apply these skills through on-the-job experience. In addition to creating informal learning opportunities, this experience builds intra- and interagency networks to which contracting professionals can turn when seeking advice or best practices. This experience also provides additional perspectives on contracting challenges, which is always helpful in developing solutions. Agencies and workforce members are encouraged to take responsibility for their careers by creating IDPs that document their career goals, assess their competency, and provide a path for their development.²¹ Agencies are encouraged to consider providing the following development opportunities for their contracting workforce:

- *Onboarding* – An onboarding program helps new employees get up to speed more quickly on their job, understand what is expected of them, meet their colleagues, and helps them to understand the mission of the agency.²²
- *Rotational assignments* in other procurement organizations or related organizations (for example, the CIO office, budget office, or a program office) within the agency or at another agency.
- Contracting professionals are encouraged to get a *peer, technical and/or leadership mentor* to assist them in navigating their career. If agencies don't have formal mentoring programs, contracting professionals are encouraged to obtain a mentor informally. More information and resources on mentoring can be found at <http://www.opm.gov/wiki/training/mentoring-and-coaching.ashx>.
- Participating on intra - or interagency *teams* to address specific acquisition challenges or other broader leadership issues, such as Integrated Project Teams (IPTs).
- *Professional associations* – participating in professional associations is helpful for gaining insight into acquisition initiatives and challenges across the government and in industry and for building a network.

²¹ The Office of Personnel Management has a training and development policy wiki at <http://www.opm.gov/wiki/training/Individual-Development-Plans.ashx> that provides information on IDPs, including templates and resources. The Department of Veterans Affairs has tips for preparing an IDP at this link: <http://mycareeratva.va.gov/about/currentemployees/Pages/idp.aspx>.

²² The Department of Agriculture has an onboarding manual which is available at <http://www.dm.usda.gov/obp/docs/SupervisorGuide.pdf>. The Department of the Interior Office of the CIO has a helpful onboarding checklist at <http://www.doi.gov/ocio/onboarding/upload/OCIO-Employee-Checklist.pdf>.

The following chart details developmental activities that may be appropriate at the various FAC-C levels. Agencies may select additional possible developmental activities.

FAC-C Level	Possible Developmental Activities
Level I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in an onboarding program. • Obtain a peer mentor and/or technical mentor.
Level II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain a technical mentor and a leadership mentor. • Participate in a rotational assignment within the agency. • Participate in a leadership development program. • Participate in an intra-agency team on an agency acquisition initiative. • Consider a core-plus certification. • Write an article for an acquisition-related magazine or journal. • Present an acquisition topic at a training forum. • Conduct special procurement-related research projects.
Level III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a technical mentor. • Obtain a leadership mentor. • Participate in a rotational assignment outside of the agency. • Consider an additional core-plus certification. • Lead an intra-agency team on an agency acquisition initiative. • Participate on an intra-agency team on a non-acquisition initiative. • Present a leadership topic at a training forum. • Participate on an interagency team on an acquisition initiative. • Conduct special procurement-related research projects.

To assist OFPP and FAI in developing entry and mid-level contract specialists, OFPP has re-chartered the Federal Acquisition Fellows Coalition (FAFC), a multi-agency coalition comprising contracting and human capital experts. OFPP, FAI, and the FAFC have partnered with the Office of Personnel Management to develop 1102 career paths. In consultation with the CONFAB, these career paths are anticipated to be completed in the first quarter of FY15 and will give workforce members a roadmap on possible career paths for a contracting professional. When completed, the career paths will be located on the FAI website.

FAC-C Curriculum

<i>Course Information</i>			<i>Options</i>	
<i>Level I</i>	<i>(in this order)</i>		<i>FAC-C Level I Option 1</i>	<i>FAC-C Level I Option 2</i>
<i>Course #</i>	<i>Title of Course</i>	<i>Classroom or Online?</i>		
CON 100	Shaping Smart Business Arrangements	Online		20
	OR (as established by each agency)			
FCN 101	Contracting Fundamentals (online FAR research course) (being developed)	Online	18	
	PLUS			
CON 121	Contract Planning	Online	12	12
CON 124	Contract Execution	Online	13	13
CON 127	Contract Management	Online	10	10
FAC 023	Basic Contracting for GSA Schedules	Online	4	4
FAC 031	Small Business Programs	Online	2	2
CLC 057	Performance-Based Payment	Online	4	4
CLC 058	Introduction to Contract Pricing	Online	2	2
CON 170	Fundamentals of Cost/Price Analysis	Classroom	76	76
	PLUS			
FCN 190	FAR Fundamentals	Classroom	80	
	OR (as established by each agency)			
CON 090	FAR Fundamentals	Classroom		148
		TOTAL HOURS	221	291
		<i>Classroom Hours/Days</i>	156/19.5	224/28
<i>Level II</i>	<i>(in this order)</i>			
<i>Course #</i>	<i>Title of Course</i>	<i>Classroom or Online?</i>		
CON 200	Business Decisions for Contracting	Online	25	
CON 216	Legal Considerations in Contracting	Online	23	
CLC 056	Analyzing Contract Costs	Online	17	
CON 270	Intermediate Cost/Price Analysis	Classroom	80	
CLC 051	Industrial Property	Online	2	
HBS 428	Harvard Business Module - Negotiating	Online	2	
CON 280	Source Selection and Administration of Service Contracts	Classroom	76	
CON 290	Contract Administration and Negotiation Techniques in a Supply Environment	Classroom	76	
		TOTAL HOURS	301	
		<i>Classroom Hours/Days</i>	232/29	

<i>Level III</i>	<i>(in this order)</i>		
<i>Course #</i>	<i>Title of Course</i>	<i>Classroom or Online?</i>	
CON 360	Contracting for Decision Makers	Classroom	76
Choice of 1 of the following:			
ACQ 315	Understanding Industry (Business Acumen)	Classroom	38
ACQ 370	Acquisition Law	Classroom	29
CON 370	Advanced Contract Pricing	Classroom	76
ACQ 265	Mission-Focused Services Acquisition	Classroom	23
CON 244	Construction Contracting	Classroom	27
CON 252	Fundamentals of Cost Accounting Stds	Classroom	64
	Electives		32*
HBS	Any module other than HBS 428	Online	2
		TOTAL HOURS	101-154
		Classroom Hours/Days	max 152/19

*The 32 hours of electives may be one course or a series of courses. Each course should be at least eight hours in length and can be classroom, online or a combination of the two. Topics must be related to acquisition and may include general business courses, such as statistics or budgeting. Topics or subject areas may also be in a technical area related to the individual’s specific work, such as IT. Agencies have the option of specifying the courses their workforce members must take to meet the 32 hours of electives.

Guidance on Meeting the Requirement for Continuous Learning Points

Introduction

Professional learning by acquisition workforce members serves to improve the outcome of Federal procurements and benefits the public interest. Regular participation in continuous learning activities and programs enhances the skills of acquisition professionals, affords them opportunities for professional growth, and improves the quality of services rendered. Acquisition Career Managers (ACMs) and supervisors shall work with acquisition workforce members to identify opportunities and determine the appropriate number of Continuous Learning Points (CLPs) obtained from each learning activity. Accounting for and documenting continuous learning activities are mutual responsibilities between the acquisition workforce member, supervisor and ACM.

Acquisition workforce members should refer to Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) certification policies²³ to determine how many CLPs they must earn in order to maintain their certification. For discrete activities related to acquisition, such as attending learning events or training, each hour spent in a continuous learning activity is equal to one CLP. Experiential activities that do not have a definite number of learning hours, such as rotational assignments and mentoring are discussed below. Hours in excess of the minimum requirements may not be carried forward for credit beyond the current period. In general, no single activity should be used to accumulate all CLPs required for certification maintenance. Workforce members should make an effort to participate in a variety of acquisition-related activities designed to give the member a well-rounded perspective of his/her acquisition function.

CLP Activities

The following activities can generally be used to obtain CLPs:

A. Training/Education

CLPs may be earned through formal or informal training activities that are related to the acquisition workforce member's job, including participating in self-directed study,²⁴ presenting training, and taking higher education coursework.

B. Participating in Professional Organizations and/or their Events

CLPs may be earned for participating in professional organizations, attending events sponsored by them, and obtaining professional licenses or certifications. Membership in a professional organization alone will not be considered as fulfilling continuous learning requirements, but participation in the organization leadership will. Before participating in professional organizations, workforce members must ensure that their participation is authorized by their agency and is permitted by ethics laws and regulations. Examples of activities that may qualify for CLPs include holding elected/appointed positions, such as committee leadership roles, or attending and/or presenting at educational learning events or meetings.

²³ Available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement_index_workforce/

²⁴ Self-directed study programs must be approved by the employee's supervisor.

C. Publishing

Publishing articles related to acquisition are generally acceptable for CLPs. Points will only be awarded in the year published. Authors must comply with agency publication policy.

D. Participating in Experiential Activities

Experiential activities are those at-work experiences that serve to enhance workforce professional skills and improve agency acquisition delivery, such as rotational and developmental assignments or mentoring. CLPs accumulate for learning; simply performing an already understood work function should not be used to accumulate CLPs. Longer experiences can be more beneficial than shorter experiences, but the granting of CLPs should be focused on what the workforce member has learned, rather than what they have done.

Supervisors and workforce members should pre-define, as much as possible, the learning activities to be accomplished in each experience, and should work together to determine the appropriate number of CLPs that each experience will accumulate for the member. Mentoring of workforce members during experiential learning is encouraged, as is sharing of knowledge gained in an experiential assignment through reports, briefings, project designs or formal or informal training.

Sample Activities

Below are sample activities and the number of CLPs recommended for completing them. This sample list is not intended to be all-inclusive and workforce members and supervisors should work together to identify qualifying events and experiences. Agencies can establish different CLP values for the listed activities; therefore, workforce members should seek agency guidance and consider the advice of their ACM in the assignment of CLP values for activities listed and those being contemplated.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	POINTS
Formal or Informal Training (such as FAI/DAU classroom or online courses)	1 CLP per hour of instruction (NOTE: excludes meal time)
Accredited Higher Education Courses (such as university courses)	Generally, 10 CLPs per semester or quarter hour
Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	10 CLPs per CEU
Equivalency Exam	Same points as awarded for the course
Learning event, training or seminar presentation	1 CLP per hour, including preparation; maximum of 20 CLPs per year
Attendance at professional association meeting	1 CLP per meeting hour, maximum of 20 CLPs per year
Participation in intra- or interagency group on an acquisition topic	1 CLP per meeting hour, maximum of 20 CLPs per year
Association Leadership Role	1 CLP per hour; maximum of 20 CLPs per year

SAMPLE ACTIVITY	POINTS
Professional License or Certification	20 to 40 CLPs
Publication	1 CLP per hour of material preparation; maximum of 20 CLPs per year
On-the-job Experiential Learning	1 CLP per hour of activity; maximum 20 CLPs per year
Mentoring	1 CLP per hour of activity; maximum 20 CLPs per year
Rotational or Developmental Assignment	Based on learning achieved and length of assignment/detail. Generally:
12 month assignment/detail	80 CLPs
9 months	65 CLPs
6 months	45 CLPs
3 months	35 CLPs
2 months	30 CLPs
1 month	20 CLPs