

Section 1: Welcome

Welcome to AcqDemo 101. This introductory course is designed to familiarize you with the Department of Defense Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration Project, or AcqDemo for short, and is the foundation for understanding other available AcqDemo courses.

After completing the course, you will understand:

- The History and Purpose of AcqDemo
- Classification and Staffing
- Factors, Descriptors and Discriminators
- CCAS, the AcqDemo Contribution-based Compensation and Appraisal System
- CAS2Net
- Career Growth and Development
- AcqDemo Support and Additional Training Opportunities

AcqDemo was created to provide a flexible and responsive personnel system for DoD business environments; one that will continue to enhance the Department's ability to attract, retain, and motivate a high quality acquisition workforce.

Federal employees who are familiar with the General Schedule, Title 5 and the Merit System Principles established in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, will find that many of the fundamental benefits of DoD employment remain unchanged. Among those things NOT affected by AcqDemo are benefits, veteran's preference, merit system principles, and anti-discrimination laws.

Among the major goals of AcqDemo is to provide a system that retains, recognizes and rewards employees for their contribution, and also supports their personal and professional growth.

The phrase "rewards employees for their contribution" is really the key element that separates AcqDemo from other systems. Rather than focusing on performance, AcqDemo focuses on the impact of contributions an employee makes to the mission of an organization. We will discuss this unique concept further in this course, as well as other follow-on courses.

History

The majority of our current AcqDemo population transitioned into AcqDemo in 2011 after the repeal of the National Security Personnel System. However, the program goes back further than that.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 1996 encouraged the DoD to conduct a personnel demonstration project within the civilian acquisition workforce. A Process Action Team was chartered by the Secretary of Defense under the sponsorship of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, with representatives from each of the Services and DoD agencies along with civilian personnel experts.

This team developed initiatives that, together, represent sweeping changes to the entire spectrum of human resource management for the DoD acquisition workforce. Several initiatives were designed to assist DoD acquisition activities in hiring and placing the best people to fulfill mission requirements.

Others focused on developing, motivating, and equitably compensating employees based on their contribution to the mission. Initiatives to maintain organizational excellence were also developed.

These initiatives were endorsed and accepted in total by the acquisition leadership.

The Federal Register Notice establishing AcqDemo's design was issued in January 1999.

Section 2: Classification and Staffing

AcqDemo vs GS

There are key differences between the classification structure of the General Schedule (GS) and AcqDemo.

The GS structure is comprised of 15 grades (GS-1 thru GS-15). Each grade then has a salary assigned for each of 10 steps (Step 1 thru Step 10). The higher the grade and step, the more responsibility a position encompasses and the higher the compensation.

AcqDemo positions are first grouped into 3 Career Paths defined by the characteristics of the work performed:

- 1) NH - Business Management and Technical Management Professional
- 2) NJ - Technical Management Support
- 3) NK - Administrative Support

Each Career Path then has a pay plan designator associated directly with it, and each pay plan designator is further delineated by the use of three or four broadband levels.

Career Path and Broadband Placement

There are three basic steps to classify a position in AcqDemo:

- 1) First, identify the title and series from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Classification Standards (i.e. Contracting Specialist, 1102 or General Engineer, 0801)
- 2) Next, determine the applicable career path based on Table 2 of the Federal Register. During this step, your position will be grouped into one of three separate and distinct career paths:

NH – Business Management and Technical Management Professional

NJ – Technical Management Support

NK – Administrative Support

3) Finally, identify the appropriate broadband level by applying the broadband level descriptors to the duties and responsibilities of the position and the qualifications necessary to perform those duties and responsibilities

Broadbands

AcqDemo broadbands represent natural breaks in professional growth which are typical of acquisition business environments:

- Level I = entry level positions
- Level II = journeyman level positions
- Level III = professional or master level positions
- Level IV = senior management or master level positions, as well as experts within a particular functional specialty

This structure is designed to facilitate pay progression and internal assignment of duties, and to allow for more competitive recruiting of quality candidates at differing pay rates.

It is important to understand how broadbanding works, as professional growth and compensation relate directly to broadbanding. Advancement within broadband levels is contingent upon contribution to the mission. Advancement to a higher broadband level requires a promotion.

It is important to note that the AcqDemo design does not vary from the GS grade equivalent pay structure and that the minimums and maximums of each band level match the limits of the GS grades included.

Position Requirements Document (PRD)

Under AcqDemo's classification system, a new Position Requirements Document (PRD) will replace the current agency-developed Position Description (PD) form. The PRD will combine the position information, staffing requirements, and contribution expectations into a single document.

The PRD will include a description of job-specific information, reference the broadband level descriptors for the assigned broadband level, and provide other information pertinent to the position.

PRD's are written at the top of the broadband to provide more flexibility in work assignments and to encourage employee growth and development within each broadband.

Classification Appeal

If unsatisfied with the classification of their position, the employee may formally appeal the occupational series, title, or broadband level of their own position at any time, verbally or in writing. The employee must first raise the areas of concern to their supervisor. If the employee is not satisfied with the supervisory response, they then may appeal to the DoD appellate level. If not satisfied with the DoD response, they may then appeal to OPM. Appellate decisions from OPM are final.

An employee may not appeal the accuracy of the position requirements document, the demonstration project classification criteria, the pay-setting criteria, the propriety of a salary schedule, or matters grievable under an administrative or negotiated grievance procedure or an alternative dispute resolution procedure.

Check your local policy for specific process timeline details.

Appointments and Periods

Under its Appointment Authority, AcqDemo provides three methods for expanding and contracting the workforce as needed. They are:

Permanent Appointments

Employees who are serving on permanent appointments (this matches the existing Career or Career-Conditional option under GS).

Temporary Appointments

AcqDemo temporary appointments match the existing GS authority for temporary appointments which is "not-to-exceed-one-year". Temporary appointments are for 1 year only, with an option for 1 additional year. Employees who convert to AcqDemo during a temporary appointment will maintain their original "not-to-exceed date from their current appointment.

Modified Term

The modified term is a new appointment authority that is based on the existing term appointment, but may extend up to five years with a one-year locally approved extension. The one-year extension must be approved by the commander or his designated representative. Reasons for making a modified term appointment include, but are not limited to, carrying out special projects, staffing new or existing programs of limited duration, filling a position in activities undergoing review for reduction or closure, and replacing permanent employees who have been temporarily assigned to another position, are on extended leave, or have entered military service.

Internal Promotions and Reassignments

Change in Assignment

Today's working environment mandates organizations have maximum flexibility to assign individuals to the highest priority work. Broadbanding enables the organization to assign an employee work assignments within broad descriptions, consistent with the needs of the organization and the individual's qualifications. Assignments may be accomplished as realignments and do not constitute a position change, nor a change to their rate of basic pay. For instance, a technical expert can be assigned to any project, task, or function requiring similar technical expertise. Likewise, a manager could be assigned to manage any similar function or organization consistent with that individual's qualifications. This flexibility allows broader latitude in assignments and further streamlines the administrative process and system.

Promotion

A promotion within AcqDemo is considered to be to either a higher broadband within the existing career path or to a different career path with a higher salary potential.

An increase in salary, resulting from a promotion, will be at least 6% but will not exceed more than 20% of the employee's existing salary, unless 20% would not place the employee at the minimum salary of the higher broadband to which he or she is being promoted. In this case a higher percentage may be applied so that the employee's pay is at least at the minimum salary of the higher broadband.

Conversions and External Placements

When employees enter AcqDemo directly from a GS position as a result of an organization conversion, lateral reassignment, realignment, or transfer, they may receive a Within Grade Increase Buy-In (or WIGI) which equates to a prorated step increase based on the amount of time they have served towards their next GS step. The buy-in is computed by the number of weeks an employee has completed towards the next higher step or grade. Employees at the maximum step (i.e. step 10) are not eligible for a WIGI buy-in. This buy-in will be adjusted to the employee's base salary. Employee buy-in ensures that the employee will not lose any pay as a result of reassignment into AcqDemo.

Salaries must meet the minimum of the new broadband level and cannot exceed the broadband maximum.

Revised Reduction-in-Force (RIF) Procedures

When an agency must abolish positions, the reduction-in-force (RIF) regulations determine whether an employee is able to keep his or her present position, or whether the employee has a right to a different position. Its objectives are to prevent the loss of high-contributing employees with needed skills. RIF also offers a simplified displacement procedure to reduce the disruption and costs to components and organizations.

AcqDemo retention standing refers to an employee's standings on a retention register based on three factors:

- **Tenure** – which determines the retention group:
 - Group I – Career employees (≥3 yrs govt. service)
 - Group II – Career-conditional employees (<3 yrs govt. service)
 - Group III – Term/indefinite appointment
- **Veterans' Preference** – which determines the retention subgroup:
 - AD – Veterans' compensable preference (≥30% disability)
 - A – Veterans' non-compensable preference (all others)
 - B – Employees not eligible for Veterans' preference
- **Length of Service** – as adjusted by contribution credit to produce a Retention Service Credit.

Retention Service Credit Associated with Appraisal Results					
Business Management & Technical Management Professional					
Broadband	OCS	OCS Range			
		Years Retention Service Credit			
Level	Normal Range	20	16	12	0
I	0-29	21 or above	11-20	1-10	0
II	22-66	56 or above	39-55	22-38	21 or lower
III	61-83	76 or above	69-75	61-68	60 or lower
IV	79-100	95 or above	87-94	79-86	78 or lower

Table 7 (excerpt), 1999 Federal Register Notice

Within the groups, competing employees are listed on the master retention list in descending order as determined by their adjusted service computation date. The adjusted service computation date is defined by tenure group, veteran's preference, length of service, and OCS (Overall Contribution Score, which is the rating of record based on contribution.)

Prior to RIF, employees may be offered a vacant position in the same broadband as the highest broadband available by displacement. Employees may also be offered placement into vacant positions for which management has waived the qualifications requirements. If the employee is not placed into a vacant position and cannot be made an offer of assignment via displacement, the employee shall be separated.

Under the demonstration project, all employees affected by a reduction-in-force action, other than a reassignment, maintain the right to appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) if they believe the process/procedures were not properly applied.

Section 3: The Factors

As a new AcqDemo employee, it's important that you understand the common criteria for both classifying a position and evaluating your contribution at the end of the cycle. These common criteria are called Factors.

In AcqDemo, there are six Factors. These Factors cover the tasks performed within a typical acquisition business environment. Each of the six Factors apply to all employees. The six factors are:

- Problem Solving: describes personal and organizational problem solving results
- Teamwork/Cooperation: describes individual and organizational teamwork and cooperation for both formal and informal teams

- Customer Relations: describes the effectiveness of personal and organizational interactions with customers, both internal and external
- Leadership/Supervision: describes individual and organizational leadership and/or supervisory contributions
- Communications: describes the effectiveness of oral/written communications, and
- Resource Management: describes personal and organizational use of resources to accomplish the mission. Resources include, but are not limited to, personal time, equipment and facilities, human resources, and funds

For position classification purposes, the Factors are the only grade controlling information on an employee's Position Requirements Document (or PRD).

For compensation and appraisal purposes, these six Factors are used to set expectations during the contribution planning process and later used to assess the level of contribution at the end of the cycle.

Descriptors

Every Factor contains Descriptors for each respective broadband level within each career path. The Descriptors state what is important to the mission of the organization and describe employees' contributions at different broadband levels. Descriptors are developed at the top of the broadband level to foster employee growth within each broadband level.

Discriminators

Discriminators refine the Factors. They are the same for all levels of contribution. Discriminators include: leadership role, breadth of influence, mentoring/employee development, complexity/difficulty, level of interaction, and planning/budgeting.

Section 4: CCAS

This section provides an introduction to the appraisal and reward system of AcqDemo. It is called the Contribution-based Compensation and Appraisal System, or CCAS for short. We will highlight its key elements throughout this section.

4.1 The Appraisal Cycle

The CCAS appraisal period follows the government fiscal year, beginning on 1 October and ending on 30 September of the following year. The full CCAS cycle includes this appraisal period plus the three months immediately following the appraisal period for the pay pool panel process.

As long as an employee is under AcqDemo for at least 90 consecutive calendar days and in AcqDemo on 30 September, they will receive an appraisal and be eligible to be considered for a compensation payout.

4.1.1 New Cycle Contribution Planning

The New Cycle discussion is the first of three annual formal conversations that must be held between supervisors and employees and is focused on contribution planning for the new appraisal cycle. It should be held within 30 days of the start of each appraisal cycle.

It is imperative that supervisors understand the mission, and more importantly the annual organizational goals, and convey that information to employees. This information is the driver for contribution planning purposes.

It is expected that not all work assignments will be known at the beginning of the appraisal cycle. Therefore the contribution planning that takes place in October will likely need to be adjusted throughout the appraisal cycle as new contribution expectations materialize.

Ensure that all 6 factors are addressed in the Contribution Plan, as all 6 factors must be scored at the conclusion of the appraisal period. Any metrics used should point to contribution expectations.

Check local policy for the format to be used to document the contribution planning results.

4.1.2 Mid-Point Review Discussion

The second required conversation during the appraisal cycle occurs in the March-April timeframe and is called the Mid-Point Review.

As part of the Mid-Point Review, a self-assessment is optional but highly encouraged, subject to local policy. Written by an employee, it is meant to portray a complete, concise picture of their contributions, and communicate the impact made to the organization's strategic goals through this part of the contribution cycle. It is an opportunity to see if the expected contributions identified during the contribution planning phase are on track to be met or if any course corrections need to be made.

4.1.3 Employee Self-Assessments

At the end of appraisal cycle, an Annual Appraisal Self-Assessment is optional but highly encouraged, subject to Component or local policy. Written by an employee, it is meant to portray a complete, concise picture of their contributions, and communicate the impact made to the organization's strategic goals.

4.1.4 Supervisor Annual Appraisal

A supervisor's annual appraisal does not need to document every one of an employee's contributions. Rather, the purpose is to highlight those contributions that had the largest impact on accomplishing the goals of your organization.

Before beginning to write an appraisal, Supervisors should obtain a copy of the factors for the broadband level to which the employee is assigned, as well as the levels immediately above and below. Seldom will an employee perfectly match all of the descriptors in the set for a particular level, and it is not necessary to write something to match every descriptor. Using the factor descriptors and discriminators, supervisors can write statements that describe how and what the employee has contributed that relates to the mission.

4.2 Broadband Level Point Ranges

This chart shows the different point ranges for each AcqDemo broadband level.

At the beginning of the appraisal cycle each employee receives an Expected Overall Contribution Score which is calculated using their current base salary. This becomes the expected target at which employees should aim to contribute.

At the end of the performance cycle, Supervisors and Pay Pool Panels will rate the employee's level of contribution to the mission for each of the six factors. The average of the six factor scores will create an Overall Contribution Score (OCS). The OCS is then compared with the Expected OCS to determine if and how much of a change in compensation is appropriate.

The goal of CCAS is to make pay consistent with employees' contributions to the mission of the organization.

4.3 Expected Contribution Range Calculator

Employees may determine their Expected Overall Contribution Score (EOCS) and Expected Contribution Range (ECR) at any time by using the online OCS Calculator. The OCS Calculator provides the employee's expected score in the Standard Pay Line (SPL) column, as well as the upper and lower ranges for that score.

The website calculator can be found on-line at:

http://acqdemo.dau.mil/tools/2015_Expected_Calculator.xls

4.4 Overall Contribution Score

At the end of the appraisal cycle, the pay pool process begins.

Using assessment information provided by the supervisors, and optionally the employees as well, based on local policy, the pay pool considers the context of the contributions of each member of the pay pool. Numerical scores are then assigned to each of the six factors for each employee, and those scores are averaged and rounded to the nearest whole number to produce a preliminary Overall Contribution Score (OCS).

After considering each preliminary OCS for equity and consistency, the pay pool manager approves a final OCS for each employee.

4.5 Pay Pool Funds Distribution

Based on the scoring results, the pay pool manager, in consultation with the pay pool panel, determines the potential salary adjustment and contribution award for each employee. Overall, there are three pots of money available to the pay pool for distribution at the end of each appraisal cycle:

The amount of money available within the pay pool for salary increases, here called a Contribution Rating Increase (or CRI), is determined by the money that would traditionally have been available in GS for quality and within-grade step increases, and career promotions. The CRI pool of money will be set at no less than 2% of the activity's total salary budget (base salaries plus locality pay). These floors represent a budgetary minimum amount. Components may set higher amounts within their budgetary limits, unless a ceiling amount is directed by the Program Office within any given year.

The General Pay Increase (or GPI) is an optional annual increase recommended by the President of the United States and approved by Congress.

The Contribution Award (or CA) pool includes what were formerly performance awards under the General Schedule. This pool will be used for awards given under the CCAS process. The fund will be set at no less than 1 % of the activity's total salary budget. This fund will not exceed 90 % of the total awards budget, so as to allow for other awards not related to the CCAS process, e.g., on the spot awards and group awards.

The dollar amounts to be included in the pay pool will be computed based on the employees in the pay pool as of 30 September each year.

4.6 End-of-Cycle Discussion

At the conclusion of the CCAS cycle, an End-of-Cycle Discussion is held between each employee and their supervisor. The purpose is to discuss the employee's appraisal, OCS, and pay pool payout decision. It should be a retrospective look at lessons learned and insights that can be carried forward into the current appraisal period to improve outcomes and organizational impact. It occurs in December or January, following the conclusion of the pay pool process.

4.7 Inadequate Contribution

The demonstration project aims to go beyond a performance-based rating system by linking rewards to the levels of contribution. Therefore, the system also accounts for those whose contributions are documented to be less than adequate.

During the appraisal cycle, informal and frequent communication between supervisor and employee is essential. This must include discussion of any inadequate contribution in one or more of the factors. Inadequate contribution in any one factor at any time during the appraisal period is considered grounds for reassigning employees, reducing their pay or removing them from Federal Service.

Every effort should be made to provide the guidance and tools necessary to help the employee improve their contribution. If, however, the desired improvement is not made, the supervisor may place the employee on a Contribution Improvement Plan (CIP).

There are many component unique requirements of preparing improvement actions so we advise all supervisors to work with their HR specialist for assistance on these matters but a CIP must contain these items:

- Specific areas in which the employee is inadequately contributing
- Standards for adequate contribution
- Actions required of the employee
- Time in which contribution improvement must be accomplished
- Assistance from the service or agency
- Consequences of failure to improve

4.8 CCAS Grievance Process

An employee may grieve their OCS (rating of record). If an employee is covered by a negotiated grievance procedure that includes grievances over appraisal scores, then the employee must resolve a grievance over an appraisal score under that procedure.

If an employee is not covered by a bargaining unit, then they should follow these, or other local, procedures:

Employee will submit the grievance first to the supervisor, who will submit a recommendation to the pay pool panel.

Pay pool panel may accept the supervisor's recommendation or reach an independent decision. In the event that the pay pool panel's decision is different from the supervisor's recommendation, appropriate justification will be provided.

Pay pool panel's decision is final unless the employee requests reconsideration by the next higher official to the pay pool manager. That official would then render the final decision on the grievance.

Check with your Component for specific grievance process timeline details.

Section 5: CAS2Net

Now that you have been introduced to all of the individual components of CCAS, this section discusses the mechanism for electronically capturing CCAS-related data.

The Contribution-based Compensation and Appraisal System Software for the Internet, or CAS2Net for short, is a DoD-sponsored application which is maintained by the DoD AcqDemo Program Office. It is the software tool that is used to capture CCAS related data necessary in the annual appraisal cycle process.

- Access the CAS2Net site by going to: <https://acqdemoii.army.mil>
- For initial login, CAS2Net redirects to the ALTESS single sign-on site
- The Usage Policy screen is shown
- Click the "I Agree" button to continue
- From there, click the "CAC Login" button to sign-in
- Once you have successfully logged in, the system screen appears.

CAS2Net includes modules for contribution plans, mid-point review data, employee self-assessments, supervisor annual appraisals, and any additional feedback a supervisor would like to record during the appraisal cycle.

The menu on the left-hand side of the screen is customized for each user to match their access rights to the modules available. Simply click on the name of any module to access a particular portion of the system.

If you are having any problems with the system, contact your local Pay Pool Administrator to report your issue.

Section 6: Career Growth and Development

This section introduces four provisions of AcqDemo for career growth and development.

6.1 Scholastic Achievement Appointment Authority

This demonstration project establishes a Scholastic Achievement Appointment that provides the authority to appoint candidates with degrees into positions with positive education requirements. Candidates may be appointed under this procedure if:

- they meet the minimum standards for the positions as published in OPM's Operating Manual "Qualification Standards for General Schedule Positions," plus any selective factors stated in the vacancy announcement
- the occupation has a positive education requirement

- the candidate has a cumulative undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 or better (on a 4.0 scale) in those courses in their fields of study that are specified in the Qualification Standards for the occupational series and an overall undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale

Appointments may also be made at the equivalent of GS-9 through GS-11 on the basis of graduate education and experience, but with the requirement of a GPA of at least 3.7 on a scale of 4.0 for graduate courses in the field of study required for the occupation.

Veterans' preference procedures will apply when selecting candidates under this authority.

In cases of an undergraduate candidate, the appointment must be into a position at a pay lower than the top step of GS-7. And for a master's candidate, it must be lower than the top step of GS-11.

6.2 Academic Degree & Certificate Training

DAWIA has always helped fund degrees for acquisition designated personnel. AcqDemo broadens that provision to include support personnel.

This feature also provides authorization at the local level to administer these degree and certificate training programs. It is intended to facilitate continuous acquisition of advanced, specialized knowledge essential to the acquisition workforce, and provide a capability to assist in the recruiting and retaining of personnel critical to the present and future requirements of the acquisition workforce.

Funding for this training, while potentially available from numerous sources (including DAWIA for employees in acquisition-coded positions), is the responsibility of the participating organization.

6.3 Sabbaticals

AcqDemo organizations have the authority to grant sabbaticals without application to higher levels of authority. These sabbaticals will permit employees to engage in study or work experience that contributes to their development and effectiveness. The sabbatical provides opportunities for employees to acquire knowledge and expertise that cannot be acquired in the standard working environment. These opportunities should result in enhanced employee contribution.

The AcqDemo sabbatical program is available to all demonstration project employees who have seven or more years of Federal service. Each sabbatical may be three to twelve months' in duration and must result in a product, service, report, or study that will benefit the acquisition community as well as increase the employee's individual effectiveness.

Requests for a sabbatical must be made by the employee through the chain of command to the employee's installation Commander, Executive Director or equivalent, or their designee who has final approval authority and who must ensure that the program benefits both the acquisition workforce and the individual employee.

Funding for the employee's salary and other expenses of the sabbatical is the responsibility of the participating organization.

6.4 Voluntary Emeritus Program

New screen comes in with informational bullets as the avatar discusses the voluntary emeritus program

Even after an employee retires or separates from federal service, the opportunity to contribute to the acquisition workforce may continue.

The Voluntary Emeritus Program is designed to ensure continued quality acquisition by allowing higher level employees to accept retirement while still retaining ties to the acquisition community. It permits acquisition professionals to share their knowledge through the mentoring and training of less-experienced professionals. Volunteers are not paid a salary or any other compensation except for reimbursement of official travel expenses and allowances.

This initiative is available only to employees in the Business Management and Technical Management Professional career path. Former employees interested in continuing to serve the acquisition workforce as a volunteer should contact a human resources specialist for information.

Section 7: The Way Forward

This section provides program support information, as well as a list of other AcqDemo training offerings.

The AcqDemo Program Office provides a variety of support. These include overall program operating procedures; a website that includes reference material, tutorials, and newsletters; and classroom training on subjects including a Senior Leader Brief, HR training, Employee training, and Supervisor training.

Contact your local AcqDemo POC for additional information and support.

Alternately, you may also email questions to the AcqDemo Helpdesk at AcqDemo.Helpdesk@dau.mil, or visit the AcqDemo website at <http://acqdemo.dau.mil>

The following on-line courses are also available:

- CCAS for Employees
- CCAS for Supervisors
- Giving & Receiving Feedback
- Writing an Annual Appraisal Self-Assessment
- CAS2Net Operations for Employees
- CAS2Net Operations for Supervisors

New courses will be developed and existing courses updated as needed, in accordance with the AcqDemo eLearning plan. Check the AcqDemo website often for the latest training information.