

Why GAO Did This Study

DOD spends hundreds of billions of dollars annually acquiring products and services. Since 1990, Congress and DOD have taken numerous steps to address issues related to the quality of DOD's acquisition workforce, which consists of contracting officers, cost estimators, and personnel in several other career fields. But tens of thousands of others, referred to as non-acquisition personnel, also affect how DOD acquires products and services such as major weapon systems and logistics support. These personnel have a wide range of primary responsibilities, such as piloting aircraft and managing facilities, and they are sometimes directed to perform acquisition-related functions, such as overseeing contracts.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 included a provision for GAO to review steps DOD has taken to ensure non-acquisition personnel receive appropriate acquisition-related training. This report addresses the extent to which DOD can identify (1) non-acquisition personnel supporting acquisitions, and (2) their need for acquisition training. GAO analyzed training data; reviewed policies, guidance, and memorandums; and interviewed personnel from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the military departments.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DOD: (1) designate an official responsible for identifying non-acquisition personnel contributing to services acquisitions, and (2) ensure components provide DAU comprehensive information about non-acquisition personnel training needs. DOD concurred with the recommendations.

View [GAO-19-556](#). For more information, contact Timothy J. DiNapoli at (202) 512-4841 or DiNapoliT@gao.gov.

DEFENSE WORKFORCE

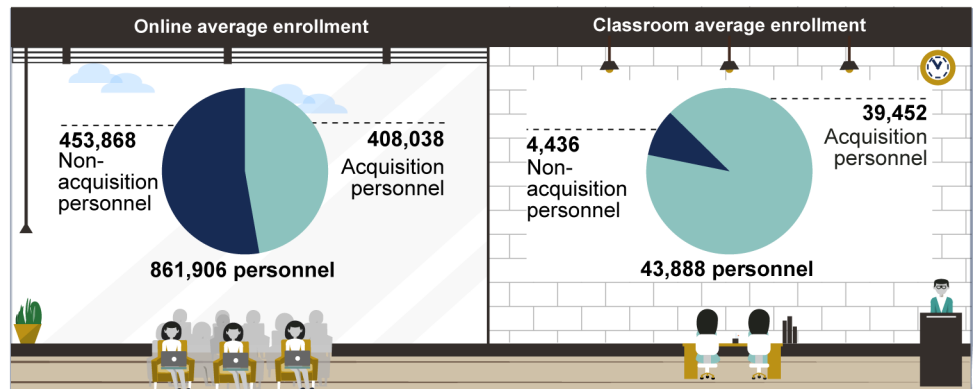
Steps Needed to Identify Acquisition Training Needs for Non-Acquisition Personnel

What GAO Found

The Department of Defense (DOD) has implemented two of three key initiatives to identify non-acquisition personnel supporting acquisitions. DOD has implemented initiatives to identify non-acquisition personnel who (1) develop requirements, and (2) oversee contracts. However, DOD has not implemented a third initiative to identify non-acquisition personnel contributing to services acquisitions more generally. In fiscal year 2018, DOD obligated \$175 billion for contracts for services such as management support and information technology. In April 2016, the DOD Acquisition Executive (DAE) directed a team comprised of representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force, and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) to develop a schedule for identifying these personnel by October 2016. However, the team did not complete this task by March 2019, when the current DAE directed the team to focus on other issues, and the DAE has not yet determined who will be responsible for completing this task. As a result, DOD has not established how and when it will identify non-acquisition personnel contributing to services acquisitions, or what policy updates and resources may be necessary to identify them.

DOD does not comprehensively identify non-acquisition personnel's need for acquisition-related training. As a result, the department cannot determine the extent to which it is meeting their needs. All non-acquisition personnel have access to DAU's online training, but many of DAU's more advanced courses are only provided in a classroom setting. DAU prioritizes training acquisition personnel—its primary mission—when delivering the resource-constrained classroom training (see figure).

Average Annual Enrollment in Defense Acquisition University Courses, Fiscal Years 2016 through 2018



Source: GAO analysis of DAU data for fiscal years 2016 through 2018. | [GAO-19-556](#)

DOD policy requires that DOD components provide DAU information about the training needs of non-acquisition personnel as part of the annual budgeting process. However, GAO found that the components only provide DAU this information for acquisition personnel and requirements developers. Without comprehensive information about non-acquisition personnel's acquisition-training needs, DOD cannot determine the extent to which it is meeting those needs.