

## Why GAO Did This Study

The President has announced his intention to improve the acquisition process, particularly given the half a trillion dollars the federal government spent in fiscal year 2009 on acquiring goods and services. The Department of Defense (DOD) spent \$384 billion in fiscal year 2009 on goods and services—double what it spent in 2001. A high-quality workforce with the right competencies and skill sets will be critical to improving DOD acquisitions.

GAO was mandated to determine the efficacy of DOD's certification training for its acquisition workforce. GAO assessed (1) DOD's capability to provide certification training, (2) the extent that such training reaches members of the workforce, and (3) the extent that previous training recommendations have been implemented. To conduct this work, GAO compared DOD's certification training to GAO guidance for effective training programs and analyzed policies, data, and previous reports on acquisition training.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends DOD establish milestones for developing metrics to measure how certification training improves acquisition workforce capability and a time frame for acquiring and implementing an integrated information system. DOD concurred with the second but not the first recommendation. GAO continues to believe DOD needs to develop additional metrics.

View [GAO-11-22](#) or key components. For more information, contact John Needham at (202) 512-4841 or [NeedhamJK1@gao.gov](mailto:NeedhamJK1@gao.gov).

## DEFENSE ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

### DOD's Training Program Demonstrates Many Attributes of Effectiveness, but Improvement Is Needed

## What GAO Found

DOD's certification training program—provided by the Defense Acquisition University (DAU)—generally demonstrates the capability to provide effective training, though some attributes of an effective training program are lacking. DAU ensures that strategic and tactical changes are promptly incorporated into training; uses centralized and decentralized training approaches in design and development; collects data during implementation to ensure feedback on its training programs; and analyzes its training during evaluation. However, DOD lacks complete information on the skill sets of the current acquisition workforce and does not have outcome-based metrics to assess results achieved in enhancing workforce proficiency and capability through training efforts. In 2009, GAO recommended that the Secretary of Defense identify and update on an ongoing basis the number and skill sets of the total acquisition workforce—including civilian, military, and contractor personnel—that the department needs to fulfill its mission. DOD agreed and to date has completed about one-fifth of its workforce competency assessments.

At the end of fiscal year 2009, 90 percent of DOD's acquisition workforce personnel had completed required certification training or were within required time frames to do so, according to DAU data. However, DAU reports that it cannot provide for all training requested for the entire acquisition workforce. DAU has offered more courses in recent years, and high-priority personnel—those needing to complete classes for certification in their current position—constitute the majority in DAU classes. DAU plans the number and location of its classes based on data that DOD officials noted are generally incomplete when submitted, and DAU must adapt during the year to support new requirements as they are identified. DAU has identified the need for a new, integrated student information system that will provide better insight into the workforce it supports and is in the early stages of its procurement.

DOD reports that most of the training-related recommendations from previous reviews—the Gansler Commission, the Panel on Contracting Integrity, and a prior GAO report—have been fully implemented and some actions are still under way. DOD has either fully or partially implemented 15 of the 19 recommendations GAO reviewed. Both the Army and the Office of the Secretary of Defense have taken steps to respond to the Gansler Commission recommendations. Most of the recommendations made by the Panel on Contracting Integrity have been implemented, with the exception of two recommendations related to assessing guidance and reviewing a specific training topic. GAO made four recommendations pertaining to the Defense Contract Audit Agency's government auditing standards training and expertise, of which one has been partially implemented and three have not been implemented, but some actions have been taken.